

TAP ANY BOOK OF THE BIBLE

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The Beginning - Genesis 1:1-2:3

Topics: Creation, Darkness, Earth, God, Goodness, Image, Life, People, Plans, Purpose, Rest, Satisfaction, Sovereignty, World

Open It

1. What makes beginning a new project, job, school year, or relationship so exciting?
2. What theories about the origins of life are generally accepted by people in our society?
- * 3. How does it make you feel when you have created something or when you have completed a big project?

Explore It

4. How did the author describe the earth at the beginning of creation? (1:1-2)
5. What important events did the author describe in these verses? (1:1-2:3)
6. What did God do on the first day of creation? (1:3-5)
7. What did God create on the second day of creation? (1:6-8)
8. What did God do on the third day of creation? (1:9-13)
9. What did God create on the fourth day of creation? (1:14-19)
10. What did God do on the fifth day of creation? (1:20-23)
- * 11. What did God create on the sixth day of creation? (1:24-26)
- * 12. How did God create man? (1:26-27)
- * 13. What instructions did God give the man and woman after he created them? (1:28)
14. What did God give to man and woman? (1:29-30)
15. How did God describe what he had created? (1:31)
16. What did God do on the seventh day of creation? (2:1-3)

Get It

17. What does the creation story reveal about God's character?
- * 18. What does the creation story tell us about humankind?
19. How does your belief about the origins of life affect the way you live your life on a daily basis?
20. How should the fact that human beings are created by God impact the way we see life?
21. What does the fact that God made us in his image tell us about people?
22. How does the fact that people are made in God's image affect the way you feel about yourself?
23. How does the fact that people are made in God's image affect the way you treat other people?
24. What difference does it make that people are created in the image of God?
25. What can we learn from God's resting on the seventh day of creation?
- * 26. What have you learned from this passage about your worth?

Apply It

27. What created thing do you enjoy that you want to thank God for today?
28. In what way do you need to change the way you treat other people (since they are made in God's image)?
- * 29. What do you want to remember the next time you are feeling worthless or useless?

The Fall - Genesis 2:4-3:24

Topics: Creation, Death, Deceit, Embarrassment, Evil, Fellowship, God, Goodness, Husbands, Life, Loneliness, Marriage, Name, Nature, Needs, Pain, Partnerships, Punishment, Satan, Sex, Shame, Sin, Soul, Temptation, Testing, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What makes forbidden things so tempting?
- 2. What are some of the joys and frustrations of marriage?
- 3. When was the first time you stole a cookie?

Explore It

- 4. What are the main events described in these verses? (2:4-3:24)
- 5. When and how did God create man? (2:4-7)
- 6. What did God put in the middle of the Garden of Eden? (2:9)
- 7. For what purpose did God put man in the Garden of Eden? (2:8, 15)
- * 8. What command did God give man? (2:16-17)
- 9. What did God say was not good? (2:18)
- 10. How did God create woman, and what was Adam's response to her? (2:21-23)
- 11. What would be the result of man becoming united with his wife? (2:24)
- * 12. What did the serpent ask the woman, and how did she respond? (3:1-3)
- 13. Why did the serpent say that God did not want the woman to eat the forbidden fruit? (3:4-5)
- * 14. What happened when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit? (3:6-7)
- 15. What did Adam and Eve do when they heard God? Why? (3:8-10)
- 16. How did Adam and Eve respond when God asked them why they disobeyed? (3:11-13)
- 17. How did God punish the serpent, the man, and the woman? (3:14-19)
- 18. Why did God drive Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden? (3:22-24)

Get It

- 19. How is it significant that God created man and "breathed into him the breath of life"?
- 20. What does the fact that it was not good for man to be alone tell us about the importance of relationships?
- 21. What is the significance of the fact that Adam felt no shame at being naked?
- 22. What does it mean to become one flesh?
- 23. What difference does it make what we think about Satan and his attempts to deceive us?
- * 24. What's the problem with having "knowledge of good and evil"?
- 25. Why are we attracted to do what God has forbidden?
- 26. How does this original sin affect us on a daily basis?
- * 27. What do these verses tell us about temptation and how to resist it?
- 28. What lies do people tend to believe these days?
- 29. What does the fact that Adam and Eve felt no shame before their sin and that they felt shame after their sin tell us about the effects of sin?

Apply It

- 30. What is one thing you can do to improve your relationship with your spouse or a good friend?
- 31. What can you do to help you remember God's truth this week?
- * 32. How can you become wiser about the schemes of the devil?

Cain and Abel - Genesis 4:1-5:32

Topics: Acceptance, Anger, Bitterness, Children, Choices, Consequences, Creation, Death, Denial, Ego, Emotions, Envy, God, Guilt, Image, Jealousy, Life, Life-style, Murder, Punishment, Rejection, Sacrifice, Sin, Temptation, Wives

Open It

1. What do you think is the most powerful emotion and why?
- * 2. How did you and your siblings get along when you were young? (Think of neighborhood kids if you didn't have any siblings.)
3. What do you think is the worst sin a person can commit?

Explore It

4. What did Eve say when Cain was born? (4:1)
5. What new people are introduced in this passage? (4:1-5:32)
- * 6. What sins were committed for the first time at this point in history? (4:1-5:32)
7. How did the author describe Cain and Abel? (4:2)
8. What did Cain and Abel offer to the Lord? (4:3-4)
9. How did the Lord react to Cain's and Abel's offerings? (4:4-5)
10. What did the Lord tell Cain he needed to do? (4:6-7)
- * 11. What did Cain do? (4:8)
- * 12. How did the Lord punish Cain for his sin? (4:10-16)
13. How did the author describe Lamech? (4:23-24)
14. With whom did God replace Abel? (4:25-26)
15. How did the author summarize God's creation of people? (5:1-2)
16. What unique facts do we know about Enoch? (5:21-24)
17. What did the author say about Noah? (5:28-30)

Get It

18. Why did God accept Abel's offering but not Cain's?
19. What would motivate someone like Cain to kill his brother?
20. Why did Cain kill his brother?
21. What makes all of us vulnerable to Cain's kind of sin?
- * 22. Why are family relationships more intense than other relationships?
23. What positive or negative effect have your parents' life-style had on you?
24. How do you usually react when you have been accused of doing something wrong?
- * 25. What lessons can we learn from Cain's action and subsequent punishment?
26. How does a person's sin affect his or her children and grandchildren?
27. What does it mean to walk with God?
28. What fractured relationship do you need to try to heal?

Apply It

- * 29. What temptation will you ask God to help you resist?
30. What one thing can you do this week to develop your walk with God?
31. What can you do to smooth over a conflict you have been having with someone else?

The Flood - Genesis 6:1-8:22

Topics: Covenant, Creation, Death, Earth, Evil, God, Grace, Judgment, Life, Life-style, Punishment, Rebellion, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin, Society, World, Worship

Open It

1. What is the most significant natural disaster you have witnessed or experienced?
- * 2. What do you find most disturbing about society today?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did God limit life to a hundred and twenty years? (6:1-3)
4. What are the main events in these verses? (6:1-8:22)
- * 5. Why did God say He would wipe mankind off the face of the earth? (6:5-7)
- * 6. What kind of man was Noah? (6:8-10)
 7. What did God tell Noah to build? Why? (6:11-14)
 8. What did God tell Noah He was going to destroy? (6:17)
 9. What did God say He would establish with Noah? (6:18)
 10. With what did God instruct Noah to fill the ark? (6:19-21)
 11. Why did God tell Noah he was allowed to enter the ark? (7:1)
 12. What happened to all the living creatures that were not on the ark? (7:21-23)
 13. What happened after the Flood ended but before Noah and his family got off the ark? (8:1-14)
 14. Why did God tell Noah to bring the animals off the ark? (8:15-17)
 15. What did Noah do when he got off the ark? (8:20)
 16. How did the Lord respond to Noah's offering? (8:21-22)

Get It

- * 17. How does Noah's world compare to our society?
18. Why was God willing to destroy most every living thing?
19. Who is someone you know whom you would describe as blameless?
- * 20. How can we maintain a blameless reputation?
 21. What is the significance of God's covenant with Noah?
 22. How does God respond to the evil in our society?
 23. Why did Noah worship God after getting off the ark?
 24. Why do you think God promised never to destroy the earth with a flood again?
 25. Among whom do you have a reputation for serving God?

Apply It

- * 26. What is one thing you can do to cultivate a blameless reputation among your coworkers?
Neighbors?
27. What is one act of protection or provision from God for which you want to praise Him?

God's Covenant with Noah - Genesis 9:1-10:32

Topics: Blessing, Character, Children, Covenant, Death, Drinking, Earth, Family, God, Heritage, Life, Murder, Parents, Promises, Punishment, Respect

Open It

1. Why do you think that it's OK or not OK to eat meat?
- * 2. What do you think is appropriate or inappropriate about capital punishment?

Explore It

3. What did God tell Noah and his sons to do? (9:1, 7)
4. What different types of people are described in these verses? (9:1-10:32)
- * 5. What did God give to Noah and his sons? (9:2-3)
- * 6. For what did God say He would demand an accounting? (9:4-6)
- * 7. What was the covenant that God established with Noah? (9:8-17)
8. What sign of His covenant with Noah did God give? (9:8-17)
9. What did Noah do after he got off the ark? (9:18-21)
10. What did Noah's sons do in response to what Noah did? (9:22-24)
11. How did Noah respond to what his sons did? (9:25-27)
12. What happened to Noah's son Japheth? (10:2-5)
13. What happened to Noah's son Ham? (10:6-20)
14. What did the author say about Nimrod? (10:8-9)
15. What happened to Noah's son Shem? (10:21-31)

Get It

- * 16. Why do you think God instituted capital punishment?
- * 17. What is the connection between capital punishment and the image of God?
18. What are the significant elements in the covenant between God and Noah?
19. Why is it significant that the author of Genesis included the account of Noah getting drunk?
20. Why is it easy to fall into sin after a significant spiritual victory?
21. What did the actions of Noah's sons reveal about their character?
22. What lessons can we learn from Noah's experience and the actions of his sons?
23. Why do you think the author gave an account of the family history of Noah's sons?
24. Why is it important to study our family heritage?
25. What sort of things have you learned from studying your family history?

Apply It

- * 26. What can you do today to acknowledge the fact that all people are created in the image of God?
27. What is something you can do to celebrate, acknowledge, or add to your family heritage?
28. What is one way you can demonstrate respect for your parents this week?

The Tower of Babel - Genesis 11:1-32

Topics: Accomplishments, Achievements, God, Insecurity, Name, Priorities, Punishment, Rebellion, Security, Self-esteem, World

Open It

1. How much do you know about any foreign language?
- * 2. To what sort of things do people in our society commit themselves in order to find meaning in life?
3. What is the one accomplishment or achievement in your life from which you have received the most personal satisfaction?

Explore It

4. What did the author say that the whole world had? (11:1)
5. What significant events are described in this chapter? (11:1-32)
- * 6. What did the men in the plain of Shinar set out to do? (11:2-4)
7. What did the men of Shinar hope to accomplish? (11:2-4)
- * 8. What did the Lord see, and what did He say about it? (11:5-6)
- * 9. What did the Lord do, and why did He do it? (11:7-9)
10. What happened to Shem? (11:10-26)
11. To what person did the author trace Shem's descendants? (11:10-26)
12. Where did Abram live? (11:27-28)
13. Whom did Abram marry? (11:29)
14. What did the author say about Abram's wife? (11:30)
15. Where did Abram's father take his family? (11:31)

Get It

16. In what activities do people engage in order to make a name for themselves?
- * 17. In what sort of activities do you engage in order to increase your sense of self-worth?
18. What institutions, activities, or accomplishments compete for our ultimate attention or allegiance?
19. Why do you think God thought it was necessary to confuse the language of the world?
20. What did God set out to prevent by confusing everyone's language?
- * 21. With what or whom are you sometimes tempted to replace God in your life?
22. How does a person's place of origin impact the course of that person's life?
23. How does a person's family of origin impact that person's life?

Apply It

- * 24. What can you do today to find satisfaction in your relationship with God rather than in other people, things, or accomplishments?
25. How can you modify one activity of yours so that it does not merely make a name for yourself?

The Call of Abram - Genesis 12:1-20

Topics: Blessing, Character, Circumstances, Consequences, Covenant, Deceit, Family, God, Husbands, Lying, Motives, Moving, Promises, Wives, Worship

Open It

1. What is a significant promise that you have made or that someone has made to you?
2. When did you leave home for the first time to stay overnight at a friend's house?
- * 3. When you were growing up, what was the biggest lie you got caught telling?
4. Why is moving so hard?

Explore It

5. What did the Lord tell Abram to do? (12:1)
6. What did the Lord promise to do for Abram? (12:2-3)
7. What did Abram do? (12:4-5)
8. Whom did Abram take with him when he left home? (12:4-5)
9. What did the Lord tell Abram He would do, and how did Abram respond? (12:6-7)
10. What did Abram do in Bethel? (12:8-9)
- * 11. What did Abram tell Sarai to do when they went to Egypt? (12:10-13)
12. Why did Abram tell Sarai to lie? (12:10-13)
- * 13. What happened to Sarai when she arrived in Egypt? (12:14-15)
14. How did the Egyptians treat Abram? (12:16)
15. What did the Lord do to Pharaoh and his household? (12:17)
16. Why did Pharaoh and his household get sick? (12:17)
- * 17. What did Pharaoh do when he discovered that Sarai was Abram's wife? (12:18-20)

Get It

18. Why might it have been hard for Abram to leave his country, his people, and his father's household?
19. How did you feel when you left home for the first time for an extended period of time?
20. How would you describe the promise the Lord made to Abram?
21. Why do you think Abram built altars after the Lord appeared to him?
22. How do you memorialize your significant experiences with God?
- * 23. Why do you think Abram thought it was necessary to lie after all that the Lord had promised to do?
24. When do you think it would be OK to do something wrong in order to achieve something good?
25. When has God helped you out of a bad situation for which you were responsible?
- * 26. In what setting do you need to make a greater effort to be honest?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do to be more honest at home? At work? With your neighbors?
28. How can you mark or memorialize one of your significant experiences with God?

Abram and Lot - Genesis 13:1-14:24

Topics: Character, Conflict, Covenant, Depend, Differences, Disagreements, Family, God, Greed, Tithing

Open It

1. What do you think is inevitable and is avoidable about conflict between family members?
- * 2. How do you generally deal with conflicts?
3. For what sort of things do you find it hard to depend on other people?

Explore It

4. What happened to Abram after he left Egypt? (13:1-2)
5. What were the main events described in these verses? (13:1-14:24)
- * 6. What problem arose between Abram and Lot? (13:5-7)
- * 7. What solution did Abram propose? (13:8-9)
8. What land did Lot choose? Why? (13:10-11)
9. Where did Abram and Lot end up living? (13:12)
10. How did the author describe Sodom? (13:13)
11. What did the Lord tell Abram he was going to give him? (13:14-18)
12. What happened to Lot while he was living in Sodom? (14:11-12)
- * 13. What did Abram do when he found out what had happened to Lot? (14:13-16)
14. Who came out from Sodom to meet Abram? (14:17-18)
15. What did Melchizedek say when he blessed Abram? (14:19-20)
16. What did Abram give to Melchizedek? (14:20)
17. Why did Abram refuse to take anything from the king of Sodom? (14:22-24)

Get It

- * 18. Why is it sometimes hard to get along with family members and other people you love?
- * 19. What lessons can be learned from the way Abram resolved his conflict with Lot?
20. How do our choices in life reflect our values and character?
21. What sort of values and considerations should guide our decision-making process?
22. When do you tend to be greedy?
23. What lessons can be learned from Abram's rescue of Lot?
24. When might you be tempted to rely on ungodly means to achieve a godly goal?
25. When might it be wrong to depend upon other people rather than God to meet our needs?

Apply It

26. What person with whom you do not get along will you make a special effort to get along with this week?
- * 27. What is something specific that you can change about the way you deal with conflict this week?
28. When can you take time this week to reevaluate motives?

God's Covenant with Abram - Genesis 15:1-17:27

Topics: Age, Believe, Blessing, Children, Covenant, Culture, Doubt, Fear, God, Name, Parents, Patience, Promises, Relationships, Righteousness, Trust, Waiting

Open It

1. What do you think about the practice of surrogate mothering?
- * 2. When have you had a scheme that you concocted backfire on you?

Explore It

3. Why did the Lord tell Abram not to be afraid? (15:1)
4. What promises did God make, and to whom did He make them? (15:1-17:27)
5. What did the Lord promise Abram? (15:4-5)
6. How did the Lord show Abram that he would take possession of the Promised Land? (15:7-17)
- * 7. What did Sarai tell Abram to do in light of their childlessness? (16:1-2)
- * 8. How did Sarai respond after Hagar became pregnant? (16:4-6)
- * 9. What happened to Hagar after she fled from Sarai? (16:7-16)
10. Why did the Lord change Abram's name to Abraham? (17:1-5)
11. What sort of covenant did the Lord establish with Abraham? (17:6-8)
12. How were Abraham and his descendants supposed to keep the covenant that the Lord had established with them? (17:9-14)
13. How did the Lord promise to bless Sarai? (17:15-16)
14. How did Abraham respond to the Lord's promise? (17:17-18)
15. What promises did the Lord make with respect to Isaac and Ishmael? (17:19-21)
16. What did Abraham do when God had finished speaking to him? (17:23-27)

Get It

17. What is the basis of both Abraham's and our relationship with God?
18. Why is it sometimes hard to trust God?
- * 19. When have you been tempted to take ungodly steps to achieve a godly goal?
20. What was wrong with Abram sleeping with Hagar to gain an heir?
21. When are you tempted to take shortcuts?
22. Why do people sometimes blame other people for problems they have created?
23. What lessons can be learned from the advice God gave to Hagar?
24. Why is it hard to forgive people who have hurt or mistreated us?
25. When have you doubted God?
- * 26. Why is it sometimes difficult to trust God and His timing in our lives?

Apply It

- * 27. In what area of your life in which you find it difficult to trust God will you ask Him to help you trust Him?
28. To what person who has mistreated you can you go out of your way to be kind?

Sodom and Gomorrah - Genesis 18:1-20:18

Topics: Angels, Backslide, Culture, Deceit, Environment, Evil, Family, God, Hardheartedness, Homosexuality, Hospitality, Immorality, Life-style, Lust, Morality, Punishment, Sex, Sin, Society, Temptation, Trust, World

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite city or part of the country, and what do you like about it?
- 2. When do you think it is important to be hospitable to strangers?

Explore It

- 3. Who visited Abraham, and how did Abraham respond to their visit? (18:2-8)
- 4. What did Abraham's visitors tell him, and how did Sarah respond to their message? (18:9-12)
- 5. How did Sarah respond when the Lord confronted her? (18:13-15)
- 6. How did Abraham respond to the Lord's plan? (18:16-33)
- 7. Who visited Lot? (19:1-2)
- 8. How did the men in Sodom and Gomorrah treat Lot's guests, and how did Lot respond? (19:4-8)
- 9. What happened to the men surrounding Lot's house? (19:9-11)
- 10. When Lot and his family fled the city, what did his visitors tell them to do and not to do? (19:16-25)
- * 11. Why did Lot leave Sodom at the last minute? (19:12-22)
- * 12. What did Lot's wife do, and what happened to her? (19:26)
- * 13. What did Lot's daughters do? Why? (19:30-38)
- 14. What did Abraham say about Sarah, and what happened as a result? (20:1-2)
- 15. How did God speak to Abimelech, and what did He tell him? (20:3-7)
- 16. What did Abimelech do in response to what God told him? (20:8-10)
- 17. What explanation did Abraham give for what he did? (20:11-13)
- 18. What did Abimelech give Abraham, and what was Abraham's response? (20:14-18)

Get It

- * 19. In what ways do we become hardened to the evil around us?
- 20. How does our society desensitize people to sinful behavior?
- 21. What is something you have thought was impossible for God to do?
- 22. What is something for which you have found it hard to trust God? Why?
- 23. How does Sodom and Gomorrah compare to our society?
- 24. In what ways do people sometimes make their family suffer in order to uphold someone else's expectations?
- 25. Why is it sometimes hard to flee from sin?
- 26. Why are we tempted to resort to sinful means to achieve our goals rather than to trust God to work things out?
- 27. Why are some temptations harder to resist than others?
- * 28. How can we avoid falling into the sinful patterns that others consider good or normal?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you do to become a better critic of the world's standards?
- 30. With what area of your life do you need to trust God more?
- 31. What specific steps will you take this week to be on guard against temptation?

Isaac - Genesis 21:1-23:20

Topics: Age, Angels, Atonement, Blessing, Character, Children, Death, Faith, Faithfulness, God, God's Will, Mourning, Parents, Promises, Sacrifice, Testing, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What do you think most tests people's faith?
- 2. In what different ways do people respond to a loved one's death?

Explore It

- 3. How was the Lord gracious to Sarah, and how did she respond? (21:1-7)
- 4. How is Abraham depicted in these verses? (21:1-23:20)
- 5. Why was Sarah upset with Hagar and her son, and what did she tell Abraham to do? (21:8-10)
- 6. How did Abraham respond to Sarah's request? (21:11-13)
- 7. What happened to Hagar and her son? (21:14-20)
- 8. What happened between Abraham and Abimelech? (21:22-34)
- * 9. How did God test Abraham? (22:1-2)
- 10. What did God tell Abraham to do? (22:1-2)
- * 11. How did Abraham respond to God's test? (22:3-10)
- 12. How did God spare Isaac's life? (22:10-12)
- 13. What substitute did God provide? (22:13-14)
- * 14. What did God tell Abraham He would do because Abraham had not withheld his son? (22:15-18)
- 15. What did Abraham do when Sarah died? (23:1-20)

Get It

- 16. How has God been gracious to you?
- 17. How do you deal with the consequences of bad decisions you have made in the past?
- * 18. Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice his son?
- 19. What circumstances or events have tested your faith?
- * 20. When and how has God tested your faith?
- 21. What rituals and traditions accompany someone's death in our society?
- 22. What should we do when a loved one dies?

Apply It

- * 23. In what area of your life will you ask God to give you the strength to be obedient?
- 24. With what command of God will you ask Him to help you this week?

Isaac and Rebekah - Genesis 24:1-25:18

Topics: Children, Culture, Death, Faith, Family, God, God's Will, Guidance, Husbands, Love, Marriage, Parents, Plans, Praise, Prayer, Sovereignty, Trust, Wives

Open It

- * 1. How do people generally choose whom they are going to marry?
- 2. When was your first date?

Explore It

- * 3. What did Abraham make his chief servant promise? (24:1-9)
- 4. What are the main events described in these verses? (24:1-25:18)
- 5. Where did Abraham's servant go? (24:10-11)
- * 6. For what did Abraham's servant pray? (24:12-14)
- * 7. How did the Lord answer the servant's prayer? (24:15-25)
- 8. What did the servant do after the Lord had answered his prayer? (24:26-27)
- 9. What did Rebekah do? (24:28)
- 10. Who went out to meet Abraham's servant? (24:29-31)
- 11. What did Abraham's servant tell Laban? (24:34-49)
- 12. How did Laban respond to what Abraham's servant said? (24:50-51)
- 13. How did Abraham's servant respond to what Laban said? (24:52-54)
- 14. What did Rebekah's brothers say to her when she left with Abraham's servant? (24:59-60)
- 15. What did Rebekah do when she saw Isaac? (24:64-65)
- 16. What did Abraham do after Sarah died? (25:1-4)
- 17. To whom did Abraham leave everything he owned when he died? (25:5)
- 18. Where was Abraham buried when he died? (25:10)
- 19. What happened to Ishmael? (25:12-18)

Get It

- * 20. Why is it important or unimportant to marry someone from the same religious, social, and cultural background?
- 21. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the way people typically get married?
- 22. What advantages might there be in having your parents arrange your marriage?
- 23. When was the last time God specifically answered one of your prayers?
- * 24. For what major decisions have you asked God to give you guidance?
- 25. How do you respond when God specifically answers your prayers?

Apply It

- * 26. For what major decisions will you ask God to give you guidance this week?
- 27. For what answered prayers do you want to praise God?

Jacob and Esau - Genesis 25:19-34

Topics: Abilities, Character, Children, Choices, Consequences, Decisions, Faults, Favoritism, Impulsiveness, Love, Needs, Parents, Right, Temptation, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. When was the last time an impulsive decision got you into trouble?
- 2. How do TV commercials and other advertisements encourage us to act impulsively?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Isaac pray? (25:21)
- 4. How did the Lord answer Isaac's prayer? (25:21)
- 5. What did Rebekah ask the Lord? Why? (25:22)
- 6. What did the Lord tell Rebekah? (25:23)
- 7. How did the author describe Esau? (25:25)
- 8. How did the author describe Jacob? (25:26)
- 9. How old was Isaac when Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob? (25:26)
- 10. How did the author describe Esau and Jacob after they had grown up? (25:27)
- 11. Why did Isaac love Esau? (25:28)
- 12. Whom did Rebekah love? (25:28)
- * 13. For what did Esau ask Jacob? Why? (25:29-30)
- * 14. On what condition did Jacob agree to give Esau some stew? (25:31)
- * 15. What was Esau's response to Jacob's condition? (25:32)
- 16. What did Jacob make Esau do? (25:33)
- 17. What was Esau's attitude? (25:34)

Get It

- 18. Why might God choose to make us wait before He grants our requests?
- 19. Why do parents sometimes favor one child over another?
- 20. What makes children from the same home turn out so differently?
- * 21. When or under what circumstances do you tend to act on impulse?
- 22. When and why might we fulfill an urge or desire without thinking through the consequences?
- 23. What are some of the consequences of making impulsive decisions?
- * 24. How can we avoid making rash, impulsive decisions in life?
- 25. When is it proper to exploit a situation or a person's weakness to get something we want?
- 26. In what situations do you need more consistently to think before acting?

Apply It

- 27. What can you do to be more patient about the requests of yours that God has not answered?
- * 28. What action can you take this week to help yourself avoid making impulsive decisions?

Isaac and Abimelech - Genesis 26:1-35

Topics: Blessing, Character, Children, Covenant, Deceit, Enemies, God, Habits, Husbands, Influence, Lying, Neighbor, Parents, Success, Wealth, Wives, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the “polite” reasons people have for lying?
- 2. What habits or tendencies have you picked up from your parents?
- 3. What would you tell a boy or girl who kept getting picked on by a bully?

Explore It

- 4. What did Isaac do when there was a famine in the land? (26:1)
- 5. What did God tell Isaac to do? (26:2-6)
- 6. What did God promise Isaac? (26:2-6)
- * 7. What did Isaac do when he arrived in Gerar? Why? (26:7)
- * 8. How did Abimelech find out that Isaac was lying, and what did he do when he found out? (26:8-11)
- 9. What happened to Isaac, and how did the Philistines respond? (26:12-15)
- 10. What did Abimelech ask Isaac to do? (26:16)
- * 11. What did Isaac do after his meeting with Abimelech? (26:17-22)
- 12. What happened to Isaac in Beersheba? (26:23-24)
- 13. Why did Abimelech visit Isaac? (26:26-29)
- 14. What did Isaac do in response to Abimelech’s visit? (26:30-32)
- 15. Whom did Esau marry, and how did this affect Isaac and Rebekah? (26:34-35)

Get It

- * 16. Generally, what is your first response to problems?
- * 17. Why do we tend to ask God to help only after exhausting all other alternatives?
- 18. What’s wrong with lying to protect ourselves?
- 19. How have your parents shaped and influenced your life?
- 20. How are you shaping and influencing the lives of your children?
- 21. How do you generally respond to conflict with people you consider your enemies?
- 22. When is it best not to retaliate for a hostile act?
- 23. What lessons can we learn from how Isaac resolved his conflicts with the Philistines and Abimelech?
- 24. Why might in-laws be a source of conflict?

Apply It

- 25. How should you respond the next time someone bullies or teases you?
- * 26. With what problem do you want to ask God to help you?
- 27. What blessings in your life do you want to thank God for today?

Jacob Gets Isaac's Blessing - Genesis 27:1-28:9

Topics: Anger, Blessing, Character, Children, Consequences, Deceit, Envy, Family, Goals, God's Will, Lying, Motives, Parents, Patience, Rationalizing, Relationships

Open It

- * 1. What was the most outrageous trick you played on your parents when you were growing up?
- 2. What facts about themselves do people like to hide?

Explore It

- 3. What did Isaac ask Esau to do? (27:1-4)
- 4. What are the important events described in these verses? (27:1-28:9)
- 5. What title would you give to this passage? Why? (27:1-28:9)
- * 6. What did Rebekah do after she heard Isaac talking to Esau? (27:5-10)
- * 7. What was Jacob's initial concern with Rebekah's plan? (27:11-12)
- 8. What did Jacob do to make Isaac think he was Esau? (27:14-17)
- * 9. What lies did Jacob tell to convince Isaac that he was Esau? (27:19-25)
- 10. What blessing did Isaac give Jacob? (27:27-29)
- 11. What happened when Esau came back with the food he had prepared for Isaac? (27:30-38)
- 12. How did Isaac answer Esau's request for a blessing? (27:39-40)
- 13. What did Esau plan to do? (27:41)
- 14. What did Rebekah tell Jacob to do? (27:42-45)
- 15. What did Rebekah say to Isaac? (27:46)
- 16. What did Isaac tell Jacob to do, and what blessing did he give him? (28:1-4)
- 17. What did Esau do when he learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob? (28:6-9)

Get It

- * 18. Why would a person do something wrong in order to accomplish something right?
- 19. When might it be OK to use whatever means necessary to achieve a good goal?
- 20. What tends to cause friction in family relationships?
- * 21. What excuses do people use to rationalize their sinful behavior?
- 22. Why is it hard to wait for God to work out his will in our lives?
- 23. When is it difficult to accept the consequences for our behavior?
- 24. How should we deal with anger and disappointment?
- 25. When is it foolish to try to please your parents?
- * 26. What sinful behavior do you tend to rationalize?

Apply It

- * 27. Who can you ask to hold you accountable when you're tempted to rationalize?
- 28. What is something specific you can do to ease the friction between you and a family member?
- 29. In what area of your life will you ask God to help you be patient this week?

Jacob's Dream at Bethel - Genesis 28:10-30:43

Topics: Angels, Bargaining, Blessing, Character, Children, Culture, Deceit, Envy, God, God's Will, Husbands, Marriage, Patience, Success, Tithing, Traditions, Vows, Wealth, Wives, Work, Worship

Open It

1. Which do you like better, hymns or choruses? Why?
- * 2. Growing up what was your first big purchase for which you saved your allowance or got a part-time job?

Explore It

3. What happened in Jacob's dream? (28:10-15)
4. Who are the main people in this story, and what was their importance? (28:10-30:43)
5. What was Jacob's response to his dream? (28:16-22)
6. What did Jacob ask the shepherds at the well? (29:1-6)
7. Who came to the well, and how did Jacob respond to her? (29:9-12)
- * 8. For what wage did Jacob agree to work for Laban? (29:15-18)
- * 9. What happened after Jacob had worked for Laban seven years? (29:20-30)
10. What did the Lord do when He saw that Leah was not loved? (29:31)
11. For what did Leah hope? (29:32-34)
12. What did Rachel do when she realized she would not be able to have children? (30:1-8)
13. What did Leah do when she had seen what Rachel had done? (30:9-12)
14. What exchange did Rachel and Leah make, and what was the result? (30:14-21)
- * 15. What did God do for Rachel? (30:22-24)
16. What agreement did Jacob and Laban make? (30:25-34)
17. How did Jacob increase the number of his flocks? (30:37-43)

Get It

18. Why did Jacob make a vow to serve God?
19. How should we respond to the blessing of God?
20. What sort of bargains do people try to make with God?
21. What rituals accompany courting and engagement in our society?
22. In what way do our sins catch up with us?
23. What are some socially acceptable customs in our world today that violate God's law?
24. How does culture influence our practice of faith in Christ?
25. How do parents today sometimes use their children to achieve their own goals?
- * 26. How do you generally respond to unanswered prayer?
- * 27. When is it difficult for you to trust God patiently?
28. What about the future is difficult for you to entrust to God?

Apply It

29. For what blessings in your life do you want to praise God?
30. What is one culturally accepted practice that you need to reevaluate this week?
- * 31. For what unanswered prayer will you ask God to give you the patience to wait for His perfect timing?

Jacob Flees from Laban - Genesis 31:1-36:43

Topics: Achievements, Blessing, Children, Conflict, Covenant, Death, Deceit, Envy, Family, Forgiveness, God, Habits, Idolatry, Jealousy, Parents, Persistence, Pride, Promises, Reconciliation, Relationships, Revenge, Security, Sex, Success, Wealth, Worship

Open It

- * 1. Which is harder for you: to ask for forgiveness from someone you have wronged or to forgive someone who has wronged you?
- 2. To whom in your family are you closest and why?
- 3. What do people try to run away from?

Explore It

- 4. Why did Jacob flee from Laban and return to his native land? (31:1-13)
- 5. What significant events in the life of Jacob are described in these verses? (31:1-36:43)
- 6. How did Rachel and Leah respond to the plan to leave? (31:14-20)
- 7. What did Rachel take with her? (31:14-20)
- 8. What was Laban looking for among Jacob's possessions, and why didn't he find it? (31:22-35)
- * 9. How did Jacob prepare for his meeting with Esau? (32:1-21)
- 10. With whom did Jacob wrestle, and what promise did Jacob elicit from him? (32:22-31)
- * 11. What happened when Jacob met Esau? (33:1-20)
- * 12. What happened to Jacob's daughter Dinah, and what did Jacob's sons do about it? (34:1-29)
- 13. What did God tell Jacob to do, and how did Jacob respond? (35:1-7)
- 14. What did God promise Jacob, and what was Jacob's response? (35:9-15)
- 15. How did Rachel die? (35:16-19)
- 16. Who were Jacob's sons? (35:22-26)
- 17. How old was Isaac when he died, and who buried him? (35:27-29)
- 18. Who were Esau's descendants? (36:1-40)

Get It

- 19. On what idols do people in our society depend?
- 20. Why might someone else's success or prosperity cause us to become jealous or envious?
- 21. How can we avoid being jealous about another person's success?
- * 22. How should we resolve our problems and conflicts with other people?
- 23. To what idols do you tend to cling for security?
- 24. What good habits of Jacob should we imitate?
- 25. Why is it difficult to reconcile broken relationships?
- * 26. Why is it difficult to forgive someone who has wronged you in the past?
- 27. Concerning what does God require our persistence?
- 28. What's the best way to satisfy our desire for justice?
- 29. How should we respond to our encounters with God and His blessing?

Apply It

- 30. What can you do to guard against jealousy toward people who succeed or prosper more than you?
- 31. What idol to which you have clung will you remove from your life this week?
- * 32. What broken or damaged relationship can you work to reconcile this week?

Joseph Is Sold into Slavery - Genesis 37:1-36

Topics: Affections, Anger, Bitterness, Character, Children, Deceit, Emotions, Envy, Family, Favoritism, God's Will, Jealousy, Lying, Murder, Parents, Relationships, Slavery

Open It

- * 1. What do you think is the most powerful emotion? Why?
- 2. What was the greatest gift you ever received from your parents?

Explore It

- 3. What kind of report did Joseph bring to his father? (37:1-2)
- 4. How did the author describe Joseph? (37:1-36)
- 5. How did the author describe Reuben? (37:1-36)
- 6. How did the author describe Jacob or Israel? (37:1-36)
- * 7. Why did Israel love Joseph more than his other sons, and how did he show it? (37:3)
- 8. How did Joseph's brothers treat him? (37:4)
- * 9. What kind of dreams did Joseph have, and how did his brothers respond when he told them about them? (37:5-11)
- 10. What did Israel ask Joseph to do? (37:12-14)
- 11. What did Joseph's brothers plot to do? (37:18-20)
- 12. What did Reuben do, and what did he intend to do? (37:21-22)
- * 13. What did Joseph's brothers do to him? (37:23-28)
- 14. What did Reuben do when he found out what his brothers had done to Joseph? (37:29-30)
- 15. What did Joseph's brothers do, and what did they tell their father? (37:31-33)
- 16. How did Jacob respond to the news about Joseph? (37:34-35)
- 17. What happened to Joseph? (37:36)

Get It

- 18. Why might a parent favor one child over another?
- 19. What causes jealousy between siblings?
- 20. How can parents avoid fueling jealousy between their children?
- 21. How does boasting get people into trouble?
- 22. When have you had to learn a lesson in life the hard way?
- * 23. What makes jealousy such a powerful emotion?
- * 24. How should we deal with feelings of jealousy?
- 25. What lessons can we learn from the actions of Reuben?

Apply It

- 26. What can you do this week to show all of your close family members that you love them?
- * 27. How can you change the way you deal with feelings of jealousy?

Judah and Tamar - Genesis 38:1-30

Topics: Accusation, Adultery, Consequences, Death, Deceit, Desires, Emotions, Guilt, Husbands, Immorality, Life-style, Lust, Marriage, Morality, Punishment, Sex, Sin, Society, Temptation, Traditions, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What makes sex such a powerful advertising theme?
- 2. What are some of the double standards that exist for men and women in our society?

Explore It

- 3. What did Judah do? (38:1-5)
- 4. Who were the main people in this story, and what sort of people were they? (38:1-30)
- 5. Whom did Er marry, and what happened to him? (38:6-7)
- 6. What did Judah tell Onan to do, what did he do, and what happened to him? (38:8-10)
- 7. Why did Onan die? (38:8-10)
- 8. What did Tamar do? (38:11)
- 9. Why did Tamar go to live in her father's house? (38:11)
- 10. What did Tamar do when she heard that Judah had gone to Timnah? (38:13-14)
- * 11. What happened to Judah and Tamar in Timnah? (38:15-19)
- * 12. What did Judah do about his promise? (38:20-23)
- 13. How did Judah respond to the news about Tamar? (38:24)
- * 14. How did Judah respond when he found out the truth? (38:25-26)
- 15. What happened when Tamar gave birth? (38:27-30)

Get It

- 16. In what ways was Judah inconsistent in his morals?
- 17. How is a person's character revealed in his or her behavior?
- 18. What's wrong with not fulfilling an obligation?
- 19. What intense desires often get people into trouble?
- 20. Why might a person be eager to see someone else punished for his or her sin when he himself has committed the same sin?
- * 21. What makes sexual sin so tempting?
- 22. What are some of the consequences of sexual immorality?
- * 23. How should we deal with the temptation to engage in sexual immorality?
- 24. How should we deal with our past sexual sins?
- 25. What temptations to sexual sin are there in today's society?
- 26. What is one area of your behavior or life-style in which you need to be more consistent?

Apply It

- 27. What activity do you want to start or stop because of your Christian identity?
- * 28. What can you do this week to avoid or guard against sexual temptation?

Joseph Is Thrown in Jail - Genesis 39:1-40:23

Topics: Adultery, Character, Circumstances, Employment, Example, God's Will, Life-style, Lust, Lying, Purity, Sex, Slavery, Temptation

Open It

1. What do most people find tempting?
- * 2. What's your favorite example of "an offer you can't refuse"?
3. What's the strangest dream you ever had?

Explore It

4. Who were the main people in these events, and what kind of people were they? (39:1-40:23)
5. What did Potiphar observe about Joseph, and what did he do as a result? (39:2-6)
- * 6. What did Potiphar's wife ask Joseph to do, and what was his response? (39:7-12)
- * 7. How did Potiphar's wife react when Joseph refused her? (39:13-18)
- * 8. How did Potiphar respond to his wife's story? (39:19-20)
9. What happened to Joseph in prison? (39:21-23)
10. What did Joseph ask Pharaoh's officials, and what was their answer? (40:7-8)
11. What did Joseph say about dreams? (40:8)
12. What did the chief cupbearer dream, and what did Joseph say about it? (40:9-15)
13. What did the chief baker dream, and what did Joseph say about it? (40:16-19)
14. What happened at Pharaoh's birthday party? (40:20-22)
15. What did the chief cupbearer do? (40:23)

Get It

16. How do you generally respond when bad things happen?
17. Why is it difficult to trust God when bad things happen?
18. How did Joseph make the most of the bad situations in which he found himself?
- * 19. Why is sexual purity so important?
20. What are the consequences of sexual sin?
- * 21. How can we resist sexual temptation?
22. How can we honor God in our employment?
23. How do you respond when you are mistreated by another person?
24. How should you respond the next time someone mistreats you?
25. What attitude do we need when our situation seems hopeless?
26. When have you been disappointed with God?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one step you can take to keep your thoughts and actions pure?
28. In what difficult situation will you ask God to help you each day this week?
29. In what specific way can you honor God in your work this week?

Joseph Is Placed in Charge of Egypt - Genesis 41:1-57

Topics: Abundance, Achievements, Advice, Forget, God, God's Will, Greatness, Life-style, Opportunities, Preparation, Responsibility, Serving, Success

Open It

1. Why are people so fascinated by dreams and dream interpretation?
- * 2. How would you describe success?

Explore It

3. What did Pharaoh dream? (41:1-7)
4. What were the significant events in this chapter? (41:1-57)
5. Whom did Pharaoh ask to interpret his dreams, and what was the result? (41:8)
6. What did the chief cupbearer tell Pharaoh? (41:9-13)
7. Why did Pharaoh send for Joseph? (41:14-15)
- * 8. What did Pharaoh say to Joseph, and how did Joseph respond? (41:15-16)
9. What did Joseph tell Pharaoh about his dreams? (41:25-32)
- * 10. What did Joseph tell Pharaoh he should do in light of his dreams? (41:33-36)
- * 11. What did Pharaoh do in response to Joseph's advice? (41:37-45)
12. What did Joseph do? (41:49)
13. How did Joseph respond to the birth of his sons? (41:50-52)
14. What happened when the years of abundance came to an end? (41:53-57)

Get It

- * 15. How would you describe Joseph's eleven-year climb to the top?
16. What can we learn from Joseph's path of success?
17. How does God speak to people today?
18. How do you feel when people forget about you after you have helped them out?
- * 19. What should we do to prepare for unexpected opportunities to serve?
20. Why is it important to give God credit for the deeds He accomplishes through us?
21. Who are the "magicians" and "wise men" to whom the leaders in our society turn for answers?
22. What can we learn from Joseph's plan to guide Egypt through the years of abundance and famine?
23. How should we live our lives so that those around will view us as people in whom the Spirit of God dwells?
24. In what way can you inject God's wisdom in the advice you give to people?

Apply It

25. What about God's perspective can you share with a friend, neighbor, or family member this week?
26. For what success or accomplishment do you want to give God credit?
- * 27. What will you do to prepare yourself for unexpected opportunities to serve God?

Joseph and His Brothers Meet in Egypt - Genesis 42:1-45:28

Topics: Affections, Change, Character, Children, Composure, Emotions, Family, Forgiveness, God's Will, Guilt, Parents, Power, Reconciliation, Relationships, Responsibility, Sovereignty, Testing

Open It

1. Why do families have family reunions?
- * 2. What is difficult about asking for forgiveness? forgiving someone?

Explore It

3. Who went to Egypt, and why did they go? (42:1-5)
4. Who were the main people and what were the main events in these chapters? (42:1-45:28)
- * 5. What did Joseph do when he recognized his brothers? (42:6-26)
6. What happened after Joseph's brothers left Egypt? (42:27-34)
7. What happened when Joseph's brothers got home? (42:35-38)
8. Who went with Joseph's brothers on their second trip to Egypt, why, and under what circumstances? (43:1-14)
9. What happened when Joseph's brothers arrived in Egypt the second time? (43:15-34)
10. What happened when Joseph's brothers left Egypt the second time? (44:1-13)
11. What happened when Joseph's brothers returned to Egypt? (44:14-33)
- * 12. When and why did Joseph finally make himself known to his brothers? (45:1-2)
- * 13. What did Joseph tell his brothers when he revealed who he was? (45:3-13)
14. What did Joseph do after he told his brothers who he was? (45:14-15)
15. What did Pharaoh do when he heard about what had happened? (45:16-20)
16. What happened when Joseph's brothers returned to Canaan? (45:25-28)

Get It

- * 17. Why did Joseph test his brothers?
18. How does God sometimes help us by allowing us to go through adverse circumstances?
19. Why is it important to be willing to accept responsibility?
20. What are the benefits of being honest?
21. Under what circumstances have you been tempted to be less than totally honest?
22. How does adversity reveal and shape our character?
23. When have you accepted responsibility for another person's welfare?
24. When has God used the bad intentions or bad actions of others to bring about good in your life?
- * 25. Why is it hard to forgive someone who has wronged you?
26. Why is it important to forgive others?

Apply It

27. What set of adverse circumstances will you ask God to use to shape your character?
- * 28. How can you extend forgiveness to someone who has wronged you?
29. In what situation will you ask God to help you to be more honest this week?
30. What is one thing you can do to enjoy your family more?

Jacob's Family Moves to Egypt - Genesis 46:1-47:27

Topics: Administration, Children, Emotions, Employment, Family, Friendship, God, Parents, Promises, Relationships, Resources, Worship

Open It

1. What, in your opinion, makes family relationships both difficult and rewarding?
- * 2. Who is someone you have not seen in a long time that you would like to see?

Explore It

3. What did Israel do when he reached Beersheba? (46:1)
- * 4. What are the significant events described in these verses? (46:1-47:27)
- * 5. What did God tell Jacob? (46:2-4)
6. What did Jacob do after God spoke to him? (46:5-7)
7. How many children did Jacob have? (46:8-25)
8. Who went to Egypt with Jacob? (46:26-27)
- * 9. What happened when Jacob arrived in Egypt? (46:28-30)
10. What did Joseph say he would do, and what did he tell his brothers to do? (46:31-34)
11. What did Joseph ask Pharaoh, and what was Pharaoh's response? (47:1-6)
12. What happened when Joseph presented his father to Pharaoh? (47:7-10)
13. What happened when people in both Egypt and Canaan ran out of money? (47:13-19)
14. Whose land did Joseph buy for Pharaoh? (47:20-22)
15. What law did Joseph establish? (47:23-26)
16. What happened to the Israelites in Egypt? (47:27)

Get It

17. When do you turn to God for reassurance?
18. When is it difficult to remember and rely on the promises of God?
- * 19. What makes moving away from home so difficult?
20. How would you describe your relationships with your family members?
- * 21. How do you feel when you see someone whom you have not seen in a long time?
22. What are the rewards of being a diligent and faithful employee?
23. What lessons can we learn from the way Joseph carried out his duties?
24. What difference does it make how we work at our jobs?

Apply It

25. What can you do to celebrate and enjoy your family relationships?
26. What can you do this week to be a more diligent and faithful employee?
- * 27. What family member or friend whom you have not seen or talked to for a long time will you call or write this week?

Jacob Blesses Manasseh and Ephraim - Genesis 47:28-48:22

Topics: Age, Blessing, Children, Death, Expectations, God, Guidance, Parents, Preparation, Promises, Responsibility, Sickness, Society, Swearing

Open It

- * 1. What is the most important promise you have made?
- 2. What promises do people tend not to take seriously?
- 3. Why do people care where they are buried when they die?

Explore It

- 4. What significant events took place? (47:28-48:22)
- * 5. What happened when the time for Jacob to die drew near? (47:28-31)
- * 6. What did Joseph do when he heard that his father was ill? (48:1-2)
- 7. What did Jacob tell Joseph? (48:3-7)
- 8. What did Jacob ask Joseph? (48:8-10)
- 9. What did Jacob say he never expected? (48:11)
- 10. Whom did Joseph bring before Jacob, and what did Jacob do? (48:13-14)
- 11. What did Jacob say when he blessed Joseph? (48:15-16)
- 12. What concerned Joseph, and what did he ask Jacob to do about it? (48:17-18)
- 13. How did Jacob respond to Joseph's request? (48:19-20)
- * 14. What did Jacob tell Joseph, and what responsibility did he give him? (48:21-22)

Get It

- 15. What rituals go along with significant promises in our society?
- * 16. Why is it important to keep one's promises?
- * 17. When is it easy to keep promises? break them?
- 18. Why did Jacob care where he was buried, and why does it matter?
- 19. What sort of things become important to a person who knows he or she is going to die soon?
- 20. What do people often do to prepare for death?
- 21. How is God our shepherd?
- 22. Why is it sometimes difficult to allow God to guide us in our lives?
- 23. Why do you think God sometimes chooses to work in unexpected ways?

Apply It

- * 24. What promise that has become difficult to keep will you publicly commit yourself to keeping?
- 25. Through what circumstance will you allow God to lead you this week?

Jacob Blesses His Sons - Genesis 49:1-33

Topics: Abilities, Age, Blessing, Character, Children, Confidence, Consequences, Death, Family, God, Life-style, Parents

Open It

- * 1. Why do children from the same parents, growing up in the same home, often turn out to be very different?
- 2. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- 3. What is one of your happiest childhood memories involving your father? your mother?

Explore It

- 4. What did Jacob do before he died? (49:1-2)
- * 5. What did Jacob say about Reuben? (49:3-4)
- 6. What did Jacob think of his sons? (49:3-27)
- 7. How did Jacob bless his sons? (49:3-27)
- 8. What did Jacob say about his sons Simeon and Levi? (49:5-7)
- * 9. What did Jacob say concerning Judah? (49:8-12)
- 10. What was said about Zebulun? (49:13)
- 11. What did Jacob say about Issachar? (49:14-15)
- 12. What did Jacob say concerning Dan? (49:16-18)
- 13. What was said about Gad, Asher, and Naphtali? (49:19-21)
- * 14. What did Jacob say about Joseph? (49:22-26)
- 15. What was said about Benjamin? (49:27)
- 16. What instructions did Jacob give his sons? (49:29-32)
- 17. What happened after Jacob blessed his sons? (49:33)

Get It

- 18. What is the relationship between how Jacob's sons lived their lives and what Jacob said would happen to them?
- * 19. What do these verses tell us about the consequences that result from the choices we make?
- * 20. How can we avoid wasting our lives and squandering our potential?
- 21. What is the consequence of trusting in one's own abilities rather than in God?
- 22. When are we tempted to trust in our own abilities rather than in God?

Apply It

- * 23. What is one plan or change you can make to avoid wasting or squandering your potential?
- 24. In what area of natural ability or talent will you look to God for wisdom and strength this week?

The Death of Jacob - Genesis 50:1-26

Topics: Age, Blessing, Children, Culture, Death, Family, Follow-through, Forgiveness, God, God's Will, Mourning, Parents, Promises, Society, Sovereignty

Open It

1. What do you want to happen to your body when you die?
2. If you were going to die today, what would be your last request?
- * 3. What is the hardest promise you have had to keep?

Explore It

4. What did Joseph do when his father died? (50:1-3)
5. What is the theme of this chapter? of the entire book of Genesis? (50:1-26)
- * 6. What did Joseph ask Pharaoh? (50:4-5)
7. What was Pharaoh's response to Joseph's request? (50:6)
8. Where did Joseph go, and who went with him? (50:7-9)
9. What did Joseph do when he reached Atad? (50:10)
10. What did the Canaanites who saw Joseph think? (50:11)
11. What did Joseph do? (50:12-14)
12. What worried Joseph's brothers after their father died, and what did they do about it? (50:15-18)
- * 13. How did Joseph respond to his brothers? (50:19-21)
- * 14. What did Joseph do when he was about to die? (50:22-25)
15. How old was Joseph when he died, and how was he buried? (50:26)

Get It

16. What makes a loved one's death so difficult to accept?
17. What are the mourning and burial customs practiced in our society?
18. When is it OK and not OK to participate in another culture's customs?
- * 19. Why is it important to keep one's promises even when it is inconvenient or difficult to do so?
20. How can we earn the trust of the people with whom and for whom we work?
- * 21. What makes forgiving someone who has wronged us so difficult?
22. Why is it sometimes hard to accept someone's forgiveness?
23. How can God bring good out of evil?
24. How should we live our lives so that we can face death with confidence?

Apply It

- * 25. What promise do you want to follow through on this week? How?
26. What set of bad circumstances will you ask God to use for good?
27. Who is someone you will forgive today, even without him or her asking you to do so?
28. What is something you need to say or do before you die, and when can you do it?

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The Israelites Oppressed - Exodus 1:1-22

Topics: Fear, Infanticide, Lying, Murder, Obedience, Oppressed, Power, Slavery

Open It

- * 1. Who is one person you admire for the strength of his or her beliefs? Why?
- 2. When have you ever been asked to do something you knew was wrong?
- 3. What are the risks involved in standing up for your convictions?

Explore It

- 4. Who went to Egypt with his family? (1:1)
- 5. What were the names of the family members who went to Egypt? (1:2-5)
- 6. What happened to the people of Joseph's generation? (1:6)
- 7. How is the population growth of the Israelites described? (1:7)
- 8. Who came to power in Egypt? (1:8)
- 9. What was the king's fear about the growth of Israel? (1:9-10)
- 10. What did the king do to the Israelites? (1:11)
- 11. What were the working conditions for the Israelites? (1:12-14)
- 12. Who were the Hebrew midwives to whom the king spoke? (1:15)
- * 13. What did the king tell the midwives to do? (1:16)
- * 14. Why did the midwives refuse to obey the king's order? (1:17)
- 15. What explanation did the midwives give for disobeying the king? (1:19)
- * 16. How did God respond to the midwives' obedience? (1:20-21)
- 17. What order did Pharaoh issue to all the people of Egypt? (1:22)

Get It

- 18. What can our fears cause us to do?
- 19. How do you think Pharaoh's fear led him to making bad decisions?
- * 20. What risks would be involved in disobeying the orders of a king?
- 21. What is wrong or right about concealing our actions when we refuse to do something wrong?
- 22. What would be your options if an authority told you to do something within the law but against God's law?
- * 23. What is the difference between fearing God and fearing people?
- 24. What are the benefits of respecting God?
- 25. In what ways do you find it easier to obey the wishes of people instead of God?
- 26. What risks might you face in standing up for what you believe?

Apply It

- 27. What is one way you can take a stand for God this week?
- * 28. What do you want to say or do the next time you are asked to compromise an important moral principle?

The Birth of Moses - Exodus 2:1-25

Topics: Adoption, Compassion, Covenant, Escape, Fear, Heroism, Infanticide, Marriage, Murder, Slavery

Open It

1. What would it be like to live with the fear of someone wanting to kill you?
- * 2. Where would you go if you had to flee for your life? Why?
3. What do you think would go through your mind if you suddenly found out you were adopted?
4. In what ways do you take steps to protect your children?

Explore It

5. Who got married? (2:1)
6. How long did the Levite woman hide her newborn son? Why? (2:2)
7. What did the Levite woman do when she could no longer hide her baby? (2:3-4)
8. Who came to bathe in the Nile, and what was her reaction to finding a baby? (2:5-6)
9. What critical part did the baby's sister play in this situation? (2:7-8)
10. What was the baby named, and who adopted him? (2:9-10)
- * 11. What did Moses observe about the conditions of his own people? (2:11)
- * 12. How did Moses deliver his version of justice, and what happened as a result? (2:12-14)
- * 13. Why did Moses flee Egypt, and where did he go? (2:15)
14. Who showed up at the well where Moses was sitting? (2:16)
15. What heroic act did Moses perform at the well? (2:17)
16. How did the girl's father respond to Moses' act of kindness? (2:20)
17. Whom did Moses marry, and what was the name of their son? (2:21-22)
18. While Moses was in Midian, what was going on in Egypt? (2:23)
19. What was God's response to the cries of the Israelites? (2:24-25)

Get It

20. How does God work in people's hearts despite unjust and wicked laws?
21. If you discovered an abandoned baby, what do you think you would do?
22. What do you think adopted children often feel about their birth parents?
- * 23. What was right or wrong about Moses' murdering the Egyptian slave master?
- * 24. What makes it right or wrong to take justice into our own hands?
25. What is it like to be caught for doing something wrong?
26. Why do some people get involved in risky situations and others steer clear from them?
27. How does it make you feel to know that God hears your cries for help?

Apply It

- * 28. Knowing that God hears you, how can you face rather than run from your fears today?
29. How can you help someone who runs instead of deals with problems?

Moses and the Burning Bush - Exodus 3:1-4:31

Topics: Challenge, Courage, Excuses, Obedience, Promises

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the reasons people do not take on certain challenges?
- 2. What are some typical excuses people give for avoiding challenges?
- 3. How have difficult challenges helped your personal growth and character?

Explore It

- 4. How does God miraculously appear to Moses? (3:1-4)
- * 5. What challenges did Moses face? (3:1-4:31)
- 6. What did God tell Moses to do? (3:5-10)
- 7. Who did God say He was to Moses? (3:6)
- * 8. What was Moses' response to God's challenge? (3:11)
- * 9. How did God reassure Moses that he could face his challenge? (3:12)
- 10. What did God want Moses to say to the elders of Israel? (3:16-17)
- 11. How did God describe Egypt's response to what Moses would say? (3:19-22)
- 12. What was the excuse Moses gave to God? (4:1)
- 13. What miracles did God perform for Moses? (4:2-9)
- 14. How did Moses describe himself as a public speaker? (4:10)
- 15. How did God adjust for Moses' lack of confidence in public speaking? (4:14-17)
- 16. What were the details of Moses' trip back to Egypt? (4:18-28)
- 17. What happened when Moses and Aaron gathered all the elders of Israel? (4:29-30)
- 18. How did the elders respond to the news of God's concern for them? (4:31)

Get It

- * 19. How did Moses feel about the challenge God was giving him?
- 20. What are some of the fears you think Moses was feeling?
- 21. When you are faced with challenges that require your weaknesses, how do you tend to respond?
- 22. Why is it easy to make excuses?
- 23. When is it easiest to make excuses for not trying something new?
- 24. What are the benefits of obeying God?
- 25. In what ways do we lose when we disobey God?
- * 26. Why does God put certain challenges before us?
- 27. What are the risks you face when you take on a difficult challenge?
- 28. How will you benefit whenever you trust God with the challenges you face?

Apply It

- * 29. What difficult challenge do you need to face courageously this week?
- 30. What is a practical way you can depend on God instead of making excuses?

God Sends Moses to Pharaoh - Exodus 5:1-7:13

Topics: Commitment, Conflict, Difficulty, Stubbornness, Suffering, Trust

Open It

1. When was the last time you said yes to something and later wished you had said no?
- * 2. What makes it difficult to follow through on tasks that you don't want to do?

Explore It

3. Pharaoh responded to Moses and Aaron in what way? (5:1-9)
- * 4. In what way did Moses find it difficult to lead Israel out of Egypt? (5:1-7:13)
5. What conflict arose among the Israelite workers? (5:10-19)
6. What heated words did the Israelite foreman share with Moses and Aaron? (5:20-21)
- * 7. How did a discouraged Moses describe his difficulties to God? (5:22-23)
8. In specific detail, how did God remind Moses of His covenant? (6:1-8)
9. How responsive were the Israelites to Moses' message? (6:9)
10. What families were mentioned in the genealogy? (6:13-27)
- * 11. What kind of difficulty did Moses keep complaining to God about? (6:28-29)
12. What was God's solution to Moses' speech problems? (7:1-2)
13. What was God going to do to Pharaoh? (7:3)
14. What was God going to do as a result of Pharaoh's refusal to listen? (7:4-5)
15. How did Moses respond to the Lord? (7:6)
16. What did God tell Moses and Aaron to do when they went to Pharaoh? (7:8-9)
17. Pharaoh countered the miracles of Moses and Aaron in what way? (7:10-12)
18. Even after seeing amazing miracles, what was the condition of Pharaoh's heart? (7:13)

Get It

- * 19. How do you think you would have felt if you had faced the difficulties Moses was facing?
20. What do Moses' struggles tell you about his personal character?
21. What thoughts go through your mind when you feel like giving up?
22. How do you think Aaron was a support and encouragement to Moses?
- * 23. When you're facing difficulties, how does having a good friend help?
24. How can struggles and problems cause our hearts to grow hard toward God?
25. What can we do to keep ourselves sensitive and responsive to God (unlike Pharaoh)?
26. What are the consequences of not listening to God?
27. Why is it important to follow through on commitments?

Apply It

- * 28. What is a commitment that you are having difficulty keeping?
29. How is your character being shaped by sticking to your commitments?
30. What can you do this week to follow through on your commitments?

Plagues Strike Egypt - Exodus 7:14-11:10

Topics: Consequences, Hardheartedness, Opposition, Stubbornness, Suffering

Open It

1. What is it like to speak to someone who is not listening to you?
- * 2. What's the difference between a good listener and a poor listener?
3. What can result when someone is not a good listener?

Explore It

- * 4. Who was and who was not listening to God in the plague of blood? (7:14-24)
5. Why was Egypt filled with frogs? (8:1-15)
6. What miracle were the magicians unable to reproduce? (8:18)
7. What is distinctive about where the flies were in Egypt? (8:20-24)
8. What was a major difference between the livestock of the Egyptians and Israelites? (9:1-7)
9. How was furnace soot useful for making Egyptians miserable? (9:8-12)
10. Why didn't the plague of hail change Pharaoh's heart? (9:13-35)
- * 11. What purpose would Pharaoh's refusal to listen to God play in Israel's history? (10:1-2)
12. What did Pharaoh's officials say to Pharaoh about Egypt's destruction? (10:7)
13. What insincere request did Pharaoh make? (10:16-20)
14. In the plague of darkness, what condition did Pharaoh give Moses for leaving? (10:21-26)
15. What final warning did Moses give Pharaoh? (11:1-8)
- * 16. What did God say about Pharaoh's willingness to listen to God? (11:9)

Get It

17. If Pharaoh had allowed the Israelites to leave when he was first asked, what would he have lost?
- * 18. By refusing to listen to God, what losses did Pharaoh suffer?
19. How can our refusal to listen to God have negative consequences on others?
- * 20. Why did Moses and Aaron keep listening to God?
21. What are the characteristics of a hard heart?
22. What could have happened if Moses refused to listen to God?
23. How did Moses and Aaron help each other in listening to God?
24. Why does listening to God keep our hearts soft and not hard toward Him?

Apply It

- * 25. What can you do today to be sensitive to God and His Word?
26. In what specific area of your life do you need to listen more closely to God?

The Passover - Exodus 12:1-30

Topics: Celebration, Death, Instructions, Obedience, Sacrifice, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is it like trying to assemble something without an instruction manual?
- 2. Why do airplanes have detailed emergency exit plans?
- 3. What happens when people fail to follow instructions?

Explore It

- 4. What did God tell Moses and Aaron about a new Jewish calendar? (12:1-2)
- * 5. What specific instruction did God give Moses to tell all of Israel? (12:3)
- 6. What was a family to do if their lamb was too big for them to eat? (12:4)
- 7. How did God describe what the condition of the lambs must be? (12:5)
- 8. What were the Israelites supposed to do with the lambs they got? (12:6-7)
- * 9. What were God's instructions about how the Passover meal was to be eaten? (12:8-11)
- 10. What did God say He was going to do on the Passover night? (12:12)
- 11. What would happen if the Israelites had blood on their homes? (12:13)
- 12. Why did God want bread prepared in a certain way? (12:15)
- 13. What were God's instructions about the Feast of Unleavened Bread? (12:16-20)
- 14. What did Moses tell the elders of Israel? (12:21-23)
- * 15. How were God's instructions significant for Israel's future? (12:24-27)
- 16. How did the Israelites respond to Moses and Aaron? (12:28)
- 17. What happened at midnight in Egypt? (12:29)
- 18. What was the final result of Pharaoh's hard heart against God? (12:30)

Get It

- * 19. Why did God give the Israelites detailed instructions about celebrating Passover?
- 20. How important was it for the Israelites to obey every detail of God's instructions?
- 21. What could have happened if the Israelites had disobeyed God?
- 22. Why do some people refuse to listen to and obey God?
- * 23. What has God done to ensure that we know what His instructions are?
- 24. Why was Moses and Aaron's role important in communicating God's wishes clearly?
- 25. What happens when instructions are difficult to understand?
- 26. How is obeying God an act of worship?
- 27. How does death motivate people to listen to God?

Apply It

- * 28. What can you do today to follow God's instructions for your life?
- 29. How could you help someone this week who is suffering the consequences of ignoring God's instructions?
- 30. How could you share with a friend the benefits of obeying God?

The Exodus - Exodus 12:31-13:16

Topics: Believe, Commands, Possessions, Purpose, Remembering

Open It

- * 1. What do you remember most about growing up?
- 2. What do memories have to teach us about where we are today?
- 3. How do many possessions make packing and moving difficult?

Explore It

- 4. What did Pharaoh tell Moses and Aaron to do? (12:31-32)
- 5. How did the Egyptians help the Israelites leave Egypt? (12:33-36)
- 6. Where did the Israelites go? (12:37)
- 7. What did the Israelites bring with them out of Egypt? (12:37-39)
- * 8. How did the Israelites' years in Egypt relate to remembering the Lord? (12:40-42)
- 9. What instructions did God give Moses and Aaron regarding the Passover? (12:43-49)
- 10. In what way did the Israelites respond to the Lord's command? (12:50)
- 11. What did God command Moses to do to every firstborn male? (13:1-2)
- 12. Why did Moses tell the people to commemorate the day they left Egypt? (13:3-5)
- 13. What type of bread were the Israelites supposed to eat? (13:6-7)
- 14. What were the Israelites to pass along to their children? (13:8)
- * 15. What was the purpose of the Israelites' remembering God? (13:9-10)
- * 16. What were the Israelites to do with their livestock? (13:11-13)
- 17. Why did God want the Israelites to sacrifice the firstborn males of their livestock? (13:14-16)
- 18. What was a father to tell his son concerning God's deliverance of Israel? (13:14-16)

Get It

- 19. How do you think it would feel to be freed from slavery?
- * 20. Why did God want the Israelites to remember how He delivered them?
- 21. In what ways can forgetting what God has done in our lives hurt us?
- * 22. Why did God command Moses and Aaron to remember His mighty works?
- 23. How does telling our children about what God has done help them grow?
- 24. Why do you think God gave such specific instructions about remembering Him?
- 25. How can remembering God's goodness and grace make us thankful?
- 26. In what ways do your possessions ever weigh you down?
- 27. Materialism can bring the worst out of us in what ways?

Apply It

- * 28. What can you do to remember and include God in everything you do this week?
- 29. In what specific ways are you thankful for God's protection in the past?
- 30. How can you teach your children this week to remember and honor God?

Crossing the Sea - Exodus 13:17-15:21

Topics: Direction, Fear, Listening, Obedience, Protection, Victory

Open It

1. When you were growing up, what were ways you didn't listen to your parents?
- * 2. What are some of the reasons parents tell children to follow specific directions?
3. What is the most ridiculous thing you've ever been asked to do?

Explore It

- * 4. What was God's reason for directing the Israelites toward the Red Sea? (13:17-18)
- * 5. How did God supernaturally use fire and clouds to lead the Israelites? (13:20-22)
- * 6. For what purpose did God give Moses very specific directions? (14:1-4)
 7. How did Pharaoh react when he was told that the Israelites left? (14:5-9)
 8. What did the Israelites cry to Moses when the Egyptians came after them? (14:10-12)
 9. How did Moses respond when the Egyptians were bearing down on the Israelites? (14:13-14)
 10. What did God say to Moses to get the Israelites moving? (14:15-18)
 11. Who was used to protect the Israelites? (14:19-20)
 12. What miraculous events took place at the Red Sea? (14:21-31)
 13. How did Moses and the Israelites respond to the victory God gave them? (15:1-5)
 14. What are some of the attributes of God described by the Israelites? (15:6-13)
 15. What are significant differences between the people of Israel and pagan nations? (15:14-18)
 16. How did Moses' sister, Miriam, respond to God's deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians? (15:19-21)

Get It

- * 17. How do you think Moses felt when God gave him specific directions?
- * 18. How is it hard to follow God when we know He wants to direct us to safety?
 19. How do you imagine God felt when the Israelites cried to return to Egypt?
 20. How is listening to God tied to our safety and protection?
 21. What might the Israelites have felt about their bad attitudes after God rescued them?
 22. How can bad attitudes and not listening to God get us in trouble?
 23. What do we have to do to be obedient to God even when we don't feel like it?
 24. How has God performed amazing "Red Sea" miracles in your life?

Apply It

25. How can you give your fears to God this week?
26. What is a practical way you can consciously listen to God today?
- * 27. What benefits can you see in following God's direction in your life right now?

Complaining in the Desert - Exodus 15:22-17:7

Topics: Attitude, Backslide, Complaining, Disobedience, Provision

Open It

- * 1. How would you describe the personality of someone who complains a lot?
- 2. How does a bad attitude spread to others?
- 3. What does it feel like to find a twenty dollar bill when you're short on cash?

Explore It

- 4. After the Red Sea, in what condition did the Israelites find themselves? (15:22)
- * 5. What did the Israelites complain about? (15:23-24)
- 6. What happened when Moses threw the stick in the water? (15:25)
- 7. What did God say to test the Israelites? (15:26)
- * 8. The Israelites complained and grumbled to Moses about what? (16:1-3)
- 9. How did God say He would test and provide for Israel? (16:4-5)
- 10. Moses and Aaron responded to the Israelites grumbling in what way? (16:6-8)
- 11. What did Moses tell Aaron to do? (16:9)
- 12. How did God appear to the Israelites in the desert? (16:10-12)
- 13. With what type of food did God provide the Israelites? (16:13-16)
- 14. Moses gave Israel what kind of specific instructions? (16:17-19)
- 15. What happened to the food that was kept until morning? (16:20)
- 16. How were preparations for food on the Sabbath made? (16:21-26)
- 17. What did Moses say to the people who refused to obey his instructions? (16:27-29)
- * 18. How did Israel complain against God at Rephidim? (17:1-3)
- 19. What did God tell Moses to do so He could provide Israel with water? (17:4-7)

Get It

- 20. Why is it difficult to be with people who complain a lot?
- 21. How were the complaints and grumbings of Israel displeasing to the Lord?
- 22. Why do we complain when God doesn't provide when we expect Him to?
- * 23. How is complaining to God an act of disobedience?
- 24. What do you think Moses felt as he tried to handle the attitudes of the Israelites?
- * 25. What is it like trying to lead a group of people who are a bunch of complainers?
- 26. Why does God provide for us on His timing and not ours?
- 27. How has God provided for you in the past?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you say thank you to God today instead of complaining to Him?
- 29. What can you do (or not do) this week to trust God to provide for you?
- 30. How can God's provision for Israel remind you to be thankful for what you have?

The Amalekites Defeated - Exodus 17:8-16

Topics: Achievements, Challenge, Courage, Opposition, Protection, War

Open It

1. What are some of the fiercest battles our country has fought?
2. What are some of the daily challenges you face?
3. How does war bring out the true character of men and women?
- * 4. What are the different ways courage is expressed during times of war?

Explore It

5. Who attacked the Israelites at Rephidim? (17:8)
6. What did Moses tell Joshua to do? (17:9)
- * 7. How did Joshua express his courage by obeying Moses? (17:10)
8. Where did Moses, Aaron, and Hur go? (17:10)
9. What happened when Moses held up his hands? (17:11)
- * 10. Aaron and Hur had courage to help Moses in what way? (17:12)
- * 11. Who won the battle? (17:13)
12. What did the Lord ask Moses to do? (17:14)
13. What name was given to the altar Moses built for the Lord? (17:15)
14. How long did Moses say the Israelites would be at war with the Amalekites? (17:16)

Get It

15. What are daily challenges we face?
16. How do the challenges we deal with make it seem like we're at war?
- * 17. What kind of courage did Joshua need to obey Moses?
18. What challenges did Aaron and Hur face in helping Moses?
- * 19. Why do we often run away from challenges instead of being courageous?
20. In what ways does God protect us in our battles?
21. How critical was it for Moses to have his friends help him in the battle?
22. How can we be more courageous?

Apply It

- * 23. What battle are you facing that you need courage to overcome?
24. How can you rely on God's Word to help you be courageous and overcome fear?
25. When can you pray for each battle you will face this week?

Jethro Visits Moses - Exodus 18:1-27

Topics: Advice, Character, Delegation, Family, Leadership

Open It

1. When was a time you broke something important while trying to fix it yourself?
- * 2. What is some of the best advice you have ever been given?
3. How can overworking make a person's life miserable?

Explore It

4. Who was Jethro? (18:1)
5. What were the names of Moses' wife and two sons? (18:2-4)
6. What was the message that Jethro sent to Moses? (18:5-6)
7. When Moses met Jethro, what did they talk about? (18:7-8)
8. How did Jethro respond to what Moses told him? (18:9-11)
9. What did Jethro do in response to God's deliverance of Israel? (18:12)
10. What kind of work did Moses do from morning till evening? (18:13)
11. What did Jethro say to Moses when he saw how hard Moses was working? (18:14)
12. What kind of job description did Moses give to his father-in-law? (18:15-16)
13. How did Jethro express his concern for Moses? (18:17-18)
- * 14. What kind of advice did Jethro give Moses? (18:19-23)
15. What kind of people was Moses to select for leadership? (18:21)
16. What types of responsibilities were Moses' leaders supposed to have? (18:22)
- * 17. How would Jethro's advice benefit Moses and the people of Israel? (18:23)
- * 18. What did Moses do with Jethro's advice? (18:24-25)
19. How were Moses' leaders to handle difficult cases? (18:26)
20. To where did Jethro return after being with Moses? (18:27)

Get It

21. What are the dangers of trying to do too much by yourself?
22. How do you think Moses felt trying to handle all the problems of Israel?
23. How would you have felt if Jethro told you what he told Moses?
24. What kind of personal character does God desire for people in leadership?
25. What character qualities would you like to develop as a leader?
26. What are the signs of burnout in ministering to others?
27. Why are the personal qualities of a leader important to working with people?
- * 28. Why is it hard to take advice from in-laws?
29. In what ways do you overextend yourself or tend toward being a workaholic?
- * 30. How did you think all of Israel benefitted from Jethro's advice?
31. What's wrong with the saying "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself"?

Apply It

32. What do you need to delegate to someone else this week?
- * 33. How can Jethro's advice to Moses make a definite difference in your life?

At Sinai - Exodus 19:1-25

Topics: Direction, Instructions, Limitations, Listening, Obedience

Open It

1. What is it like being caught in a place where you're not supposed to be?
- * 2. Why do people put up No Trespassing signs?
3. When you are given a job, why is it important to have detailed instructions?

Explore It

4. When did the Israelites arrive at the Desert of Sinai? (19:1)
5. Where did the Israelites set up camp? (19:2)
6. What did God tell Moses from the mountain? (19:3-6)
- * 7. How did Moses respond to God's instructions? (19:7)
8. What did the people of Israel say to Moses? (19:8)
9. What did God say to Moses? (19:9)
- * 10. What specific instructions did God want the Israelites to follow? (19:10-13)
- * 11. How did the Israelites listen to Moses' instructions? (19:14-15)
12. What were the weather conditions on the morning of the third day? (19:16)
13. Where did Moses lead the people of Israel? (19:17)
14. What did Mount Sinai look like? (19:18)
15. How did God warn Moses on Mount Sinai? (19:20-22)
16. What limits did Moses talk to God about? (19:23)
17. Whom did God tell Moses to go down the mountain and bring back? (19:24)

Get It

18. Why are instructions so critical to carrying out specific tasks?
19. What types of limitations do certain institutions have on our lives?
20. How can boundaries prevent us from harming ourselves?
- * 21. Why does God place certain limitations on our lives?
22. What are the potential problems we face when we ignore No Trespassing signs?
23. Why do you think God wanted only Moses and Aaron on Mount Sinai?
24. How do you deal with limitations and restrictions you don't always understand?
25. Why do we often ignore God's clear and unmistakable warnings?
- * 26. How can ignoring God's instructions be hazardous?
27. How can little steps of obedience improve our relationship with God?

Apply It

28. What is one of God's clear instructions you want to make a conscious effort to obey more consistently?
- * 29. What is one practical way you can follow God's direction for your life?

The Ten Commandments - Exodus 20:1-26

Topics: Awe, God, Idolatry, Law, Love, Words

Open It

1. How do you feel when you tell someone something and he or she completely ignores what you say?
2. Why do governments establish laws and policies?
- * 3. What are things our society tends to worship?

Explore It

4. Who spoke these words? (20:1)
5. How did God describe Himself? (20:2)
- * 6. What are we commanded not to put before God? (20:3)
- * 7. What did God tell us not to make? (20:4)
8. What is the consequence of bowing before false gods? (20:5)
9. To whom does God express His love? (20:6)
10. How are we to consider using the name of the Lord? (20:7)
11. How is the Sabbath to be honored? (20:8-11)
12. What is the benefit of honoring parents? (20:12)
13. How are we commanded to treat one another? (20:13-17)
14. What did the people do when they saw thunder and lighting? (20:18)
15. What did the people's fear cause them to say to Moses? (20:19)
16. How did Moses respond to the Israelites' fear? (20:20)
17. How much space did the people keep between themselves and Mount Sinai? (20:21)
18. What did God tell Moses to tell the Israelites? (20:22-23)
- * 19. How were the Israelites to honor God? (20:24)
20. In what ways were the Israelites to act around God's altar? (20:25-26)

Get It

21. Why was God so specific in giving the Law?
- * 22. How do you think God feels when we worship things other than Him?
23. Why does God not want us to commit sins against Him and others?
- * 24. What people, things, and other loyalties sometimes captivate your attention more than God?
25. How can having a healthy fear of God keep a person from sinning?
26. What do you think God feels when we don't want to hear from Him?
27. How do we put space between us and God?
28. Why is it important to honor and respect God when we come to Him in worship?

Apply It

- * 29. What is one practical step you can take to honor God this week?
30. How can worshiping God change your life today?

Servants and Injuries - Exodus 21:1-36

Topics: Arguments, Conflict, Consequences, Justice, Law, Restitution

Open It

1. What is the most unjust law you can think of?
- * 2. Why is restitution important when someone is killed or injured?
3. In your opinion what are the pros and cons of people's suing one another?

Explore It

4. What did God tell Moses to set before the people of Israel? (21:1)
5. What happened to male slaves after six years? (21:2)
6. If a slave had a family, what kind of options did he have? (21:3-6)
7. What were the laws for handling female slaves? (21:7-8)
8. What were the laws regarding female slaves' marital rights? (21:9-11)
9. If one man killed another, what was the consequence? (21:12)
- * 10. What happened if someone was accidentally killed? (21:13)
11. Where was a murderer to be put to death? (21:14)
12. What was the consequence of attacking parents? (21:15)
13. What was the penalty for kidnapping? (21:16)
14. What happened if a person cursed his or her father or mother? (21:17)
- * 15. How were injuries from fistfights supposed to be handled? (21:18-19)
16. What happened if a slave was beaten? (21:20-21)
17. If a pregnant woman was seriously injured, what were the consequences? (21:22-25)
18. What happened when slaves got an injured eye or tooth? (21:26-27)
19. How were bull goings supposed to be handled? (21:28-32)
- * 20. If an ox or donkey fell into a pit, how was the owner compensated? (21:33-34)
21. How did the law say to handle bull fights? (21:35-36)

Get It

22. What about conflict made these laws necessary?
- * 23. Why did God give so many specific laws regarding restitution?
- * 24. Why is God interested in conflicts being handled fairly?
25. What are the similarities between God's laws and civil laws?
26. What are the differences between God's laws and civil laws?
27. In what cases might we be justified in suing a person?
28. Why does God deal with murder and injuries with such harsh penalties?
29. How does God feel about the way we treat our parents?
30. What do these verses tell you about God's commitment to justice?

Apply It

31. What is a practical way you can honor your parents this week?
32. What do you want to remember the next time you have the opportunity to judge or help settle a conflict?
- * 33. With whom do you need to make amends, and what can you say or do to carry this out?

Property and Social Responsibility - Exodus 22:1-31

Topics: Giving, Oppressed, Possessions, Quarrels, Restitution, Stealing

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel to lend a prized possession to someone and receive it back broken or damaged?
- 2. When was the first time you remember mourning a pet's death?

Explore It

- 3. What was the penalty for stealing an ox or sheep? (22:1)
- 4. In what circumstances was a person not liable for killing a thief? (22:2-3)
- * 5. The owners of destroyed fields were given restitution in what ways? (22:5-6)
- 6. What happened when valuables were lost or stolen? (22:7-8)
- 7. If there was a dispute about lost possessions, how was it to be handled? (22:9)
- * 8. If something went wrong in caring for a neighbor's animal, what was the neighbor to do? (22:10-13)
- * 9. How was restitution made for borrowed animals? (22:14-15)
- 10. How were victims of seduction to be treated? (22:16-17)
- 11. What happened to people who practiced sorcery? (22:18)
- 12. People who had sex with animals were punished in what way? (22:19)
- 13. What was the penalty for sacrificing to false gods? (22:20)
- 14. Why were strangers not to be oppressed? (22:21)
- 15. How were widows and orphans to be treated? (22:22-24)
- 16. What were the conditions for lending money to a fellow Hebrew? (22:25-27)
- 17. Who was not supposed to blaspheme God or government officials? (22:28)
- 18. How were offerings to be made? (22:28-30)
- 19. Why were Hebrews not to eat animals that had been killed by wild beasts? (22:31)

Get It

- * 20. In what ways did God protect the possessions and property of His people?
- * 21. What kinds of conflicts happen when possessions are borrowed?
- 22. Why do you think God was concerned for His people's possessions?
- 23. Why does God want us to care for widows and orphans?
- 24. What importance did animals play in the lives of the Israelites?
- 25. Why are foreigners sometimes discriminated against in our society?
- 26. Why do we sometimes treat material things with greater care than people?

Apply It

- * 27. What is a practical way you can repay someone for an item you broke or lost?
- 28. How can you help a person from another country?

Various Laws and Festivals - Exodus 23:1-33

Topics: Angels, Honesty, Integrity, Oaths, Obedience, Truth, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite kind of celebration?
- 2. When was a time you were accused of something you didn't do?
- 3. What would you be willing to do for one million dollars?

Explore It

- 4. How was a person to act on the witness stand? (23:1-3)
- 5. How were the animals of an enemy to be treated? (23:4-5)
- 6. What will God not tolerate? (23:6-7)
- 7. What does God think of bribes? (23:8)
- 8. How were the Israelites to treat foreigners? (23:9)
- 9. What kind of rest did God want the Israelites to enjoy? (23:10-12)
- 10. What were the Israelites to be careful to do? (23:13)
- * 11. What three feasts were the Israelites to celebrate each year? (23:14-17)
- 12. How were the offerings to be prepared? (23:18-19)
- 13. Whom did God send to the Israelites to guard them? (23:20)
- 14. What did God tell the Israelites about listening to the angel? (23:21-22)
- 15. Where was the angel going to lead the Israelites? (23:23)
- * 16. What did God specifically tell the Israelites not to do? (23:24)
- * 17. If the Israelites worshiped God alone, what would God do for them? (23:25-26)
- 18. What would God do to the enemies of Israel? (23:27-30)
- 19. Where were the borders that God would establish for Israel? (23:31)
- 20. Why did God tell the Israelites not to make covenants with other peoples? (23:32-33)

Get It

- 21. What is the penalty for lying on the witness stand in our society?
- 22. Why does God put such a premium on honesty?
- 23. In what different ways do people accept bribes today?
- * 24. How important is regular worship in the life of a believer?
- * 25. In what ways do we benefit when we worship God?
- 26. Why do you think God uses angels to carry out some of His work?
- 27. For what reason did God continually remind Israel of their covenant?
- 28. What kinds of things lead people away from a relationship with God in today's modern world?

Apply It

- * 29. What concrete step can you take to worship God in a creative way?
- 30. How can your life be an offering to God this week?
- 31. What do you need to say or not say on a more regular basis in order to be honest and just with everyone?

The Covenant Confirmed - Exodus 24:1-18

Topics: Covenant, Glory, Law, Obedience, Worship

Open It

1. What is the most amazing act of nature you've ever seen?
2. How do you feel about people who don't keep their promises?
- * 3. When you were a little kid, what did your parents teach you about obedience?

Explore It

4. Whom did God tell to come up and worship Him? (24:1)
5. Who was not supposed to come up to worship with Moses? (24:2)
- * 6. How did all of Israel respond to hearing God's laws? (24:3)
7. What did Moses and the young Israelite men do to worship God? (24:4-6)
- * 8. What did Moses read to the people of Israel? (24:7)
9. What did Moses say when he sprinkled blood on the people? (24:8)
10. Who went with Moses to see God? (24:9)
11. What happened when Moses and the elders went to see God? (24:10-11)
- * 12. What did the Lord say He was going to give Moses? (24:12)
13. Who was Moses' aide? (24:13)
14. What did Moses tell the elders of Israel? (24:14)
15. What happened when Moses went up on the mountain? (24:15-16)
16. How long did the clouds cover the mountain? (24:16)
17. What happened on the seventh day? (24:16)
18. What did the glory of the Lord look like to the Israelites? (24:17)
19. How long did Moses stay on the mountain with God? (24:18)

Get It

20. How would you have felt if Moses asked you to go up to the mountain?
21. Why is it important to worship God with other people?
- * 22. How are knowing God's Word and worship related?
23. How do you think Joshua felt being chosen as Moses' aide?
24. How did Moses live a life-style of obedience to the Lord?
25. How would you feel seeing the glory of the Lord as the Israelites did?
- * 26. How does worshiping God change or help us?

Apply It

27. What is a specific passage in God's Word you can read and think about to help you worship Him?
- * 28. Who is someone you can worship God with?
29. What time of the week is best for you to spend time praying and worshiping God alone?

The Tabernacle - Exodus 25:1-27:21

Topics: Craftsmanship, Faithfulness, Jobs, Plans, Work

Open It

1. What is the best thing you've ever made with your own hands?
2. What types of feelings are associated with a job well done?
- * 3. How do people benefit when they work well in teams?

Explore It

4. What types of offerings did the Lord want the Israelites to bring to Him? (25:1-7)
- * 5. What did the Lord want the Israelites to make for Him? (25:8-9)
6. How was the ark of the Lord to be designed? (25:10-20)
7. What was to go in the ark of the Lord? (25:21-22)
8. How is the construction of the table of the Lord described? (25:23-30)
9. What is the design of the lampstand of the Lord? (25:31-40)
10. Out of what were the curtains of the tabernacle to be made? (26:1-14)
11. How were the frames of the tabernacle constructed? (26:15-29)
- * 12. How would the Israelites know how to set up the tabernacle? (26:30)
13. What was the curtain made by a craftsman intended to separate? (26:31-33)
14. Where were the table and lampstand to be placed in the tabernacle? (26:35)
15. Out of what was the curtain at the entrance of the tabernacle to be made? (26:36-37)
16. How was the altar to be made? (27:1-8)
17. How are the various areas of the tabernacle courtyard described? (27:9-19)
18. What was used to keep the tabernacle lamps burning? (27:20)
- * 19. What were Aaron and his sons commanded to do? (27:21)

Get It

20. How did the people of Israel benefit by working together on all these projects?
21. What are ways Christians can make a difference by working together?
- * 22. How is work a form of worship?
23. Who benefited by the construction of the tabernacle?
24. What did the tabernacle provide for the people of Israel?
25. What are the difficulties people encounter when working together?
- * 26. Why don't some people receive much satisfaction from their work?
27. How was it possible for Israel to be successful in making the tabernacle?

Apply It

- * 28. How can your work be an act of worship to God?
29. What can you do to improve a relationship with someone at work over the next few weeks?

The Priests - Exodus 28:1-29:46

Topics: Appearance, Mediator, Representatives, Sacrifice, Traditions

Open It

- * 1. What do you do to prepare for someone important coming to your home?
- 2. With what popular clothing fashions have you ever tried to keep up?
- 3. How can looking good on the outside hide what's on the inside?

Explore It

- * 4. Who was chosen by God to serve as priests? (28:1)
- 5. What were the priests supposed to wear? (28:2-5)
- 6. How was the ephod designed? (28:6-14)
- 7. Out of what was the breastpiece made? (28:15-28)
- 8. When Aaron entered the Holy Place, what was the purpose of the breastpiece? (28:29-30)
- 9. How is Aaron's robe described? (28:31-34)
- 10. What purpose did the bells on Aaron's robe serve? (28:35)
- 11. What types of clothing did the priests wear? (28:36-43)
- 12. How were Aaron and his sons ordained as priests? (29:1-9)
- * 13. How was a sin offering made? (29:10-14)
- 14. How was one of the rams sacrificed as a pleasing aroma to the Lord? (29:15-18)
- 15. What happened to the other ram in the sacrifice? (29:19-28)
- 16. How are Aaron's garments to be passed down to other generations? (29:29-30)
- 17. How was the ram for Aaron's ordination to be eaten? (29:31-34)
- 18. What was the end result of the altar after Aaron's ordination? (29:35-37)
- 19. How is the daily offering on the altar described? (29:38-41)
- 20. What would happen when these offerings were made regularly? (29:42-43)
- * 21. How did God describe his relationship with the Israelites? (29:44-46)

Get It

- 22. How did the quality of priestly garments reflect who God is?
- 23. What was God's purpose in selecting priests to serve Him for the people?
- * 24. How did the priests' clothing set them apart from the rest of the Israelites?
- 25. How did the daily offering keep the Israelites in relationship with God?
- 26. What is the role of pastors and priests in today's church?
- 27. How has our Christian faith been passed down through the centuries?
- 28. What traditions are critical to our Christian faith today?
- 29. In what way can important traditions become meaningless?
- 30. Who has taken the place of bulls and rams as a sin offering for God?
- * 31. How does the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sin bring us closer to God?

Apply It

- * 32. In what small way this week can you remember or celebrate Christ's sacrifice for you?
- 33. What is a specific way you can be set apart for God's purposes?
- 34. How can you keep Christ at the center of every Christian tradition?

Laws for the Priests and for Worship - Exodus 30:1-38

Topics: Atonement, Holiness, Honor, Instructions, Money

Open It

- * 1. How much money would you pay as ransom if a loved one was kidnapped?
- 2. How can perfume make a person more attractive?
- 3. What are some famous sacred places of worship in today's world?

Explore It

- 4. For what was the altar to be used? (30:1)
- 5. How was the altar to be designed? (30:2-5)
- 6. Where was the altar supposed to be placed? (30:6)
- * 7. When was Aaron to offer incense on the altar? (30:7-10)
- * 8. What was the purpose of offering atonement money to the Lord? (30:11-16)
- 9. Why did God want Moses to make a washing basin for the priests? (30:17-21)
- * 10. Why was anointing oil used in the tabernacle? (30:22-29)
- 11. Why was the anointing oil to be used only for Aaron and his sons? (30:30-33)
- 12. Who made the holy incense? (30:34-35)
- 13. Where was the incense placed? (30:36)
- 14. Why were the people not to make the Lord's incense for themselves? (30:37)
- 15. What happened to people who made incense like the Lord's incense? (30:38)

Get It

- 16. What do most people think of when they hear the word holy?
- 17. What church denominations use incense as an offering to the Lord?
- * 18. In what ways can money not buy everything we might want?
- * 19. How can we use money as an offering to the Lord?
- 20. How does our use of money reveal our character and values?
- 21. What does our use of money show about us?
- 22. How are the tabernacle washing basin and Christian baptism similar in what they symbolize?
- 23. What are certain religious symbols that help deepen our faith in Christ?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you give thanks to Jesus for His atonement for your sin?
- 25. In what ways can you use your money as an offering to God this week?
- 26. What attitudes can you have today that would be like a pleasing fragrance to God?

Bezalel, Oholiab, and the Sabbath - Exodus 31:1-18

Topics: Administration, Craftsmanship, Holiness, Rest, Traditions

Open It

1. What is the worst thing about getting ignored for hard work?
2. What are the reasons people get promoted?
- * 3. What do you do on Sundays?

Explore It

4. Whom did God choose to be the chief builder of the tabernacle? (31:1-2)
5. How is Bezalel described as a person? (31:3)
6. What jobs was Bezalel to perform? (31:4-5)
7. Who was appointed to help Bezalel? (31:6)
8. What were the craftsmen supposed to make? (31:7-11)
- * 9. What did the Lord tell Moses to observe? (31:12-13)
- * 10. Why were the Israelites to observe the Sabbath? (31:14)
11. What happened to people who worked on the Sabbath? (31:15)
- * 12. How was the Sabbath a sign between God and the Israelites? (31:16-17)
13. What were the tablets given to Moses from the Lord? (31:18)

Get It

- * 14. What are signs of people being addicted to work?
15. How can you tell when someone is addicted to working too much?
16. How does rest provide us with new ways to grow as Christians?
17. What is the tension between working too much and resting too little?
18. How important is it to honor God on the Sabbath?
- * 19. How do you balance your life between work and rest?
20. Why is it important to include others in building God's kingdom?
21. What happens to people who try to take on too many responsibilities?
22. What difference does it make that God told His people to rest?

Apply It

23. How can you honor God this week by resting or taking a break from work?
- * 24. What do you need to do today to develop a proper balance between work and rest?

The Golden Calf - Exodus 32:1-33:6

Topics: Anger, Disobedience, Idolatry, Sin, Stubbornness, Unfaithfulness

Open It

1. Who were some of the most worshiped musicians in your younger years? today?
2. When was a time you made an impulsive decision that turned out to be foolish?
- * 3. What are some modern-day idols you see people worshipping?

Explore It

4. What did the people say when Moses took so long to come down from the mountain? (32:1)
- * 5. What did Aaron do with all the people's gold? (32:2-4)
- * 6. What happened after Aaron built an altar for the golden calf? (32:5-6)
7. When the Lord saw what had happened, what did He say to Moses? (32:7-10)
8. How did Moses respond to the Lord's anger? (32:11-13)
9. How did the Lord relent His anger? (32:14)
10. What kind of sound did Joshua say he heard in the camp? (32:17)
- * 11. What happened to the calf when Moses returned to camp? (32:19-20)
12. What did Moses ask Aaron? (32:21)
13. How did Aaron respond to Moses? (32:22-24)
14. When Moses saw the people out of control, what did he say? (32:25-27)
15. What did the Levites do, as Moses commanded? (32:28-29)
16. What did Moses say to the people? (32:30)
17. How did Moses ask the Lord to forgive the people's sin? (32:31-32)
18. How did the Lord punish the people? (32:33-35)
19. Where did God say He would lead Moses? (33:1-2)
20. What did God call the Israelites? (33:3)

Get It

21. How can stubbornness cause us to make bad decisions?
- * 22. What type of emotions do you think Moses felt when he saw the calf?
23. Why is it easy to forget what the Lord has done for us?
24. How was God justified for being angry at the Israelites?
25. In what ways did Aaron fail as a leader?
- * 26. What are ways that people worship people or things they've made instead of Jesus Christ?
27. How did Moses remain a courageous leader in the midst of discouragement?
28. How did God remain faithful to His promise even though the people sinned?

Apply It

29. What can you do to follow Christ instead of a crowd?
- * 30. What person or thing do you need to confess to God as having been an idol?

Moses and God - Exodus 33:7-23

Topics: Friendship, Glory, Promises, Relationships, Renewal, Rest

Open It

- * 1. When you are frustrated or discouraged, what makes you feel better?
- 2. What do you do to get renewed after a stressful period of life?
- 3. What friends do you enjoy being with, and what's so enjoyable about their company?

Explore It

- 4. Where did Moses go to meet with the Lord? (33:7-8)
- 5. What would happen when Moses went into the tent? (33:9)
- 6. How would the people respond when Moses went into the tent? (33:10)
- 7. How would God speak to Moses? (33:11)
- * 8. How did Moses express his frustration to the Lord? (33:12-13)
- 9. How did the Lord respond to Moses' plea for guidance? (33:14)
- * 10. In what way was the Lord's presence critical to Moses' plea? (33:15-16)
- 11. What did the Lord say to Moses concerning their relationship? (33:17)
- 12. What incredible request did Moses make of God? (33:18)
- * 13. How did the Lord respond to Moses' request? (33:19)
- 14. What did the Lord tell Moses he could not see? (33:20)
- 15. Where did God tell Moses to stand? (33:21)
- 16. How did the Lord cover Moses when He passed by? (33:22)
- 17. What did the Lord allow Moses to see? (33:23)

Get It

- 18. How did the Lord show His faithfulness to Moses?
- 19. How do you think Moses felt knowing that God considered him a friend?
- * 20. How was Moses able to be honest with God about how he felt?
- 21. What are ways we seek rest other than from the Lord?
- * 22. How can God's presence give you perspective in your struggles?
- 23. How is the almighty God a friend to you?
- 24. What do you think Moses felt when God showed him His glory?
- 25. In what ways is it easy to get discouraged while following the Lord?
- 26. How can other Christian friends make a difference when you're sad or depressed?
- 27. How would you respond to God if He were to say, "I'm pleased with you"?
- 28. How does it make you feel to know that God knows you by name?

Apply It

- 29. What is a particular act or deed you can do to rest in the Lord's presence each day this week?
- * 30. How can you give God your frustrations and struggles today?

New Stone Tablets - Exodus 34:1-35

Topics: Compassion, Covenant, Jealousy, Obedience, Worship

Open It

1. What is the most dangerous situation you have ever been in?
- * 2. Who is someone who helped you during one of your biggest blunders?
3. When you're finishing an important project, what distracts you most?

Explore It

4. What did God ask Moses to do after the first set of stone tablets broke? (34:1)
5. What directions did God give Moses about coming to Mount Sinai? (34:2-3)
6. What did the Lord do when Moses followed His instructions? (34:4-5)
- * 7. How did God proclaim to Moses who He was? (34:6-7)
8. What was Moses' response to God's proclamation? (34:8-9)
9. What did God say He would do for the Israelites? (34:10-11)
10. What did God say to the Israelites about making treaties? (34:12)
11. Why were the Israelites not to worship other gods? (34:13-14)
- * 12. What did God tell Moses about foreign idols? (34:15-17)
13. In what way was Moses told to celebrate feasts? (34:18-23)
- * 14. What was the blessing associated with celebrating feasts? (34:24)
15. What other instructions did God give Moses concerning offerings? (34:25-26)
16. What were the words of the covenant called? (34:27-28)
17. What was Moses not aware of when he came down the mountain? (34:29)
18. Who was afraid of Moses? (34:30-31)
19. What happened after Moses finished speaking to all the Israelites? (34:32-35)

Get It

20. How do you feel when you talk to God about the same problem over and over?
21. Why doesn't God ever tire of our repentance and dependence on Him for forgiveness?
22. How would you have felt if you were Moses returning for a second set of tablets?
23. How are people reluctant to ask for forgiveness?
- * 24. How do people in our society show compassion?
25. What makes people stand in awe of heroic believers such as Mother Teresa?
26. What was it about Moses' radiance that made people afraid of him?
- * 27. How does it make you feel knowing that God is jealous for you?
28. In what way can a Christian reflect God's glory to others?

Apply It

- * 29. With what prayer could you accept God's compassion and love for you?
30. How can you demonstrate the grace of God in your life?
31. In what area of life can you make your life reflect God to others?

Materials for the Tabernacle - Exodus 35:1-38:31

Topics: Craftsmanship, Faithfulness, Knowledge, Possessions, Teaching, Work

Open It

1. How have you tried to make something that you knew absolutely nothing about?
- * 2. Who was your favorite teacher growing up? Why?
3. What is the most fascinating work of architecture you have ever seen?

Explore It

4. What did Moses tell Israel about the Sabbath after they assembled? (35:1-3)
5. How did Moses separate the work to be done for the tabernacle? (35:4-10)
6. What needed to be made for the tabernacle? (35:11-19)
7. What was the attitude of the people who brought an offering to the Lord? (35:20-29)
- * 8. What types of abilities did God give Bezalel? (35:30-35)
- * 9. Who was Oholiab? (35:34-35)
10. What problem was created as a result of the people's generous offerings? (36:1-7)
11. How is the construction of the tabernacle described? (36:8-38)
- * 12. Who made the ark of the covenant? (37:1-9)
13. What types of materials were used to make the table? (37:10-16)
14. What were the physical characteristics of the golden lampstand? (37:17-24)
15. How was the altar of incense made? (37:25-29)
16. What was unique about the construction of the altar of burnt offering? (38:1-8)
17. How is the tabernacle courtyard described? (38:9-20)
18. How many different materials were used to make the tabernacle? (38:21-31)

Get It

19. Why did God not choose Moses to build the tabernacle?
20. What attitudes did the Israelites demonstrate in their giving?
- * 21. How can using our skills and abilities be a way to worship the Lord?
22. In what ways did the Israelites show their faithfulness to God?
23. How did the people's generosity actually cause a problem?
24. What makes people reluctant to be generous in giving to God's work?
- * 25. How is teaching critical to developing skills and abilities?
26. What are the characteristics of a good teacher?
27. In what ways does God honor hard work?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you use your talents for God's kingdom this week?
29. What can you do to be generous with the resources God has given you?
30. What type of attitudes can help you to worship God in your work this week?

Priestly Garments and Setting Up the Tabernacle - Exodus 39:1-40:38

Topics: Craftsmanship, Glory, Instructions, Tasks, Teamwork

Open It

1. What is the greatest victory you have ever experienced?
- * 2. How are failure and success related to teamwork?
3. Why are athletes disqualified when they break the rules?

Explore It

4. What did the people make for ministering in the sanctuary? (39:1)
5. How was the ephod fashioned? (39:2-7)
6. The skilled craftsman made the breastpiece in what way? (39:8-21)
7. What is the description of the priestly garments besides the ephod and breastpiece? (39:22-31)
- * 8. What was the result of all the Israelites' hard work? (39:32)
- * 9. What did the Israelites bring for Moses to inspect? (39:33-41)
- * 10. Why did Moses bless the Israelites? (39:42-43)
11. When did God tell Moses to set up the tabernacle? (40:1-2)
12. Where did God tell Moses to place the tabernacle elements? (40:3-8)
13. What was Moses told to do with the anointing oil? (40:9-11)
14. How were Aaron and his sons prepared for the priesthood? (40:12-16)
15. How did Moses set up the tabernacle? (40:17-19)
16. Where did Moses place the Testimony? (40:20-21)
17. Where did Moses place the remaining elements of the tabernacle? (40:22-33)
18. What happened after Moses finished setting up the tabernacle? (40:34-35)
19. How did God guide the Israelites in all their travels? (40:36-38)

Get It

20. What are some of the benefits of good teamwork?
21. Do people work best as individuals or in groups?
22. What was the result of the Israelites' giving to the work of the tabernacle?
- * 23. Why do some teams fail to accomplish their purpose?
24. How did Moses follow God's instructions for setting up the tabernacle?
25. How would you have felt to receive Moses' blessing for your hard work?
26. What are ways people miss out on receiving God's blessings?
- * 27. How does God want the church today to work as a team?
28. What type of message is sent to the world when Christians work together?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you do to be a good "team player" with other believers?
30. How can you bless someone else this week by serving him or her?

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The Burnt Offering - Leviticus 1:1-17

Topics: Atonement, Gifts, Holiness, Sacrifice

Open It

1. What type of flower smells best to you?
- * 2. How do you prepare for important meetings or gatherings?

Explore It

3. Where did the Lord speak to Moses? (1:1)
4. From where are animals for the offering to be brought? (1:2)
5. What type of animal from the herd does the Lord require for an offering? (1:3)
- * 6. What was the purpose of the burnt offering? (1:4)
7. Where was the blood of a young bull to be sprinkled? (1:5)
- * 8. How was the burnt offering to be prepared? (1:6)
- * 9. Who was in charge of preparing the offering on the altar? (1:7-8)
10. What is said to be pleasing to the Lord? (1:9)
11. What type of animal from the flock did the Lord require for an offering? (1:10)
12. Where was an offering from the flock supposed to be slaughtered? (1:11)
13. Who arranged the cut pieces of the sacrifice? (1:12)
14. What part of the sacrifice was supposed to be washed? (1:13)
15. What types of birds were to be made for a burnt offering? (1:14)
16. How was a bird supposed to be prepared for sacrifice? (1:15-17)

Get It

17. What types of personal sacrifices are difficult for you to make?
18. What does a person usually feel when everyone else is prepared for an event except him or her?
19. What might be a few reasons God gives such specific details in preparing sacrifices?
20. What are some ways we can please God today?
21. How are we sometimes reluctant to give God our very best?
- * 22. What are examples of when we don't do things wholeheartedly?
- * 23. How important was it for the priests to be thoroughly prepared in offering sacrifices?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you give God your very best this week in all you do?
25. What is something you can sacrifice today that others will benefit from?

The Grain Offering - Leviticus 2:1-16

Topics: Covenant, Fruit, Honor, Remembering, Respect

Open It

1. When you go to a restaurant, how do you like your food prepared?
- * 2. What kinds of gifts have you received that you never really wanted?

Explore It

3. What type of grain offering did the Lord want to receive? (2:1)
- * 4. Who was supposed to present the offering to God? (2:2)
5. Who received the remainder of the grain offering? (2:3)
6. Of what were baked grain offerings to consist? (2:4)
7. How was a grain offering made on a griddle supposed to be prepared? (2:5-6)
8. Of what were grain offerings cooked in a pan to be made? (2:7)
9. Where was the priest supposed to take the grain offerings? (2:8)
- * 10. What was produced from the grain offering that is pleasing to the Lord? (2:9)
11. What was the most holy part of the offering? (2:10)
12. What ingredients were not supposed to be in a grain offering? (2:11)
13. For what purpose could honey or yeast be brought to the Lord? (2:12)
14. How were all the grain offerings to be seasoned? (2:13)
15. If a grain offering of firstfruits was brought to the Lord, how was it prepared? (2:14-15)
- * 16. What was added to the grain offerings? (2:16)

Get It

- * 17. How was God pleased by the Israelites' bringing offerings to Him?
- * 18. What does this passage say about presenting offerings that are like pleasing fragrances?
19. How is it that things that come into contact with God become holy?
20. How does the verse "Man does not live bread alone" (see Luke 4:4) relate to the grain offering here?
21. What is a popular perfume in stores today?
22. What is the purpose of a pleasing fragrance?
23. In what ways can our lives be a pleasing offering to the Lord?
24. How can our lives be a fragrance to people who don't know Christ?

Apply It

- * 25. In what specific way can you do something that you know pleases God this week?
26. How can your life be a gift to others day by day?

The Fellowship Offering - Leviticus 3:1-17

Topics: Fellowship, Law, Preparation, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. How do you like your steak cooked?
- 2. What do you do to stay in good physical shape?
- 3. What is your favorite type of fatty food?

Explore It

- 4. How was a fellowship animal presented to the Lord? (3:1)
- 5. Where was a fellowship animal to be slaughtered? (3:2)
- * 6. From where was the fat of the animal removed? (3:3-4)
- 7. Who was responsible to burn the fat at the altar? (3:5)
- 8. What type of lamb was to be presented to the Lord? (3:6-7)
- 9. Where were Aaron's sons supposed to sprinkle the blood of the lamb? (3:8)
- * 10. What parts of the lamb were cut off as part of the fellowship offering? (3:9-10)
- 11. What was the offering considered to be on the altar? (3:11)
- 12. What happened when a goat was offered to the Lord? (3:12-13)
- 13. What organs were burned in the fire to the Lord? (3:14-15)
- * 14. What part of the offering belonged to the Lord? (3:16)
- 15. The Israelites were commanded not to eat what parts of the fellowship offering? (3:17)

Get It

- 16. In what way did God not want the Israelites to become lazy when they offered a sacrifice to Him?
- 17. Why do we live in such a fitness crazed society?
- * 18. What might be some causes of physical obesity?
- * 19. How can Christians become spiritually obese?
- 20. What does this passage teach you about the importance of offering sacrifice to the Lord?
- 21. Why would God be so concerned about how sacrifices were prepared?
- 22. How do we become lazy about our diets during the holidays?
- 23. What are ways we can offer our lives as living sacrifices to God?

Apply It

- * 24. What is a specific way God is calling you to get your heart in spiritual shape this week?
- 25. What kind of spiritual fat can you ask Jesus to cut away from your life today?

The Sin Offering - Leviticus 4:1-5:13

Topics: Community, Disobedience, Guilt, Law, Leadership, Sin

Open It

1. What are ways the media takes advantage of public figures?
- * 2. What makes juicy gossip almost irresistible?

Explore It

3. What did the Lord tell Moses to say to the Israelites? (4:1-2)
4. What happened if an anointed priest sinned? (4:3-4)
5. Where was the priest to take the blood of the slaughtered bull? (4:5-6)
6. How was the priest to carry out the remainder of the offering? (4:7-10)
7. What was done with all the rest of the bull? (4:11-12)
- * 8. Who was responsible if the whole Israelite community sinned unintentionally? (4:13-14)
9. How was the sin offering for the community carried out? (4:15-21)
- * 10. What happened when a leader sinned unintentionally? (4:22-26)
11. What was the process for a member of the community who sinned unintentionally? (4:27-35)
12. Who is held responsible for not speaking up when hearing a public charge? (5:1)
13. What is considered ceremonially unclean? (5:2-3)
14. What happens when people make careless oaths? (5:4)
- * 15. What must a person do when he or she discovers that he or she has sinned? (5:5-6)
16. How was a person to present an offering if he or she could not afford a lamb? (5:7-10)
17. What happened if a person could not afford two doves for an offering? (5:11)
18. How could a priest make atonement for a poor person's sins? (5:12-13)

Get It

19. How does this passage show how the people of Israel were responsible for one another?
- * 20. How are we alone responsible for the sins we commit?
21. What does today's church need to learn about being a confessing community?
22. Why do unbelievers call Christians hypocrites?
- * 23. If we admitted our sins more regularly, how might we be a different people for God?
24. How did God provide forgiveness for the people of Israel?
25. What are the implications in this passage for Christian leaders regarding confession of sin?
26. How can we create an atmosphere of acceptance and forgiveness in our churches?

Apply It

- * 27. How can a humble confession of sin bring you closer to God today?
28. What can you do this week to share with someone the forgiveness you have received in Christ?

The Guilt Offering - Leviticus 5:14-6:7

Topics: Deceit, Failure, Guilt, Restitution, Swearing, Unfaithfulness

Open It

1. In your opinion what is the worst scandal that has recently hit the news?
- * 2. If you found a lost wallet filled with cash, why might you return it? not return it?

Explore It

3. What did the Lord say to Moses regarding unintentional sin? (5:14-15)
- * 4. How was restitution to be made by people who have sinned? (5:16)
5. What happened to people who sinned without knowing the Lord's commands? (5:17)
6. What type of animal was to be offered as a guilt offering for sin? (5:18)
7. Who has been violated when someone commits an unintentional sin? (5:19)
- * 8. What are some ways people are unfaithful to the Lord? (6:1-3)
- * 9. What was an Israelite to do when he or she had sinned against another person? (6:4)
10. How were the victims of crime to be repaid for their hardship? (6:5)
11. What was the wrongdoer to bring to the priest as an offering? (6:6)
12. What happened to a wrongdoer who offered sacrifices for his or her sins? (6:7)

Get It

13. Even if you sinned unintentionally, why would be you required to offer sacrifice to the Lord?
- * 14. How did the laws of restitution protect people from taking advantage of one another?
15. If your neighbor deceived you, how would God's laws protect you from injustice?
16. How did God's commands provide wrongdoers the opportunity to receive forgiveness?
17. If we took God's laws more seriously, how might our world be a different place?
18. How important is it to return things you borrow in good condition?
- * 19. How would God's restitution laws motivate the Israelites to be more responsible?
20. What excuses do we make for accepting responsibility for our actions?

Apply It

21. How can you be responsible in your attitude and actions this week?
- * 22. Who is someone you need to forgive today for a wrong he or she did to you?

Laws Concerning the Offerings - Leviticus 6:8-7:38

Topics: Details, Devotion, Obedience, Rules, Teaching, Thankfulness

Open It

1. What bothers you most about rude and obnoxious people?
2. How do you respond when someone cuts you off in traffic?
- * 3. In what ways do you tend to be an organized, detail-oriented person or a spontaneous, easygoing person?

Explore It

- * 4. What specific details did God tell Moses to relay to Aaron? (6:8-12)
5. What did God command that wasn't supposed to go out? (6:13)
6. What were the regulations about how the grain offering was brought to the Lord? (6:14-15)
7. What rules were given regarding eating the grain offering? (6:16-18)
8. How were the grain offerings prepared by the priests to be presented? (6:19-23)
9. What happened to anything that came into contact with the sin offering? (6:24-27)
10. How were pots cleaned after the sin offering? (6:28)
11. Who was able to eat the sin offering? (6:29-30)
- * 12. What details were given concerning the guilt offering? (7:1-6)
13. How were the sin and guilt offerings similar? (7:7-10)
14. How did a person say thanks to God with their offering? (7:11-15)
15. What happened to offering leftovers? (7:16-18)
16. How was meat to be treated by someone ceremonially unclean? (7:19-21)
- * 17. What detailed rules did God give Moses regarding fat? (7:22-27)
18. How were the priests given their fair share of the fellowship offering? (7:28-34)
19. What was the purpose for giving Aaron and his sons a portion of the offerings? (7:35-38)

Get It

- * 20. How did God not leave much room for error when He gave the priests specific details?
21. If you were one of Aaron's sons, how responsible would you feel to carry out God's law?
22. How do we get lazy about following God's Word?
23. In what ways do people often show they are thankful to God?
24. What are some ways we can show we are thankful to God?
- * 25. How difficult would it be today to carry out all the details regarding sacrifices?
26. How can people make sacrifices to God today without killing animals?
27. How does Jesus' sacrifice for our sin replace the need for animal sacrifices?
28. How can we show our devotion to God?
29. How do some Christians give God "leftovers" instead of the very best they can offer?

Apply It

- * 30. What specific detail in your life would God want you to give to Him this week?
31. How can you offer your thanks to God today?

Ordination of Aaron and His Sons - Leviticus 8:1-36

Topics: Call, Commitment, Leadership, Ministry, Position

Open It

1. What are common honors given to people today?
- * 2. What personal qualities help people receive leadership positions?
3. Why would being the president of the United States be a difficult job?

Explore It

4. Where did the Lord tell Moses to bring Aaron and his sons? (8:1-3)
5. Where did the whole Israelite assembly gather? (8:4)
- * 6. What did Moses tell the assembly regarding the priests' consecration? (8:5)
7. What did Moses do to Aaron and his sons? (8:6)
8. What clothes were placed on Aaron? (8:7-9)
9. What did Moses anoint with oil? (8:10-12)
10. What was put on Aaron's sons? (8:13)
11. How did Moses offer the bull as a sacrifice to God? (8:14-17)
12. In what way was the ram presented as an offering? (8:18-21)
- * 13. What was presented for the ordination of Aaron and his sons? (8:22-27)
14. What did Moses burn on the altar? (8:28)
15. What was presented as a wave offering? (8:29)
- * 16. How were Aaron and his sons consecrated? (8:30)
17. What did Moses tell Aaron and his sons to eat? (8:31-32)
18. What were the priests commanded to do during their ordination? (8:33-35)
19. What did Aaron and his sons do as the Lord commanded? (8:36)

Get It

- * 20. What might have made it difficult to participate in the consecration for the priests?
21. How would you have felt if thousands of people were now looking to you as a leader?
22. What keeps people from pursuing difficult positions at work?
23. How was Moses' obedience to God an example for all of Israel?
24. What does this passage teach you about the requirements for being a leader in Israel?
25. What does this passage teach you about the requirements for being a leader of God's people today?
26. Do you think it should be easy or difficult for someone to attain a leadership position in a church? Why?
- * 27. Why was the priests' consecration an important event before they began their ministry?
28. What are the dangerous results of poor Christian leadership?
29. Whose example as a Christian leader has been a very significant influence in your life?

Apply It

- * 30. What are ways you can lead other people closer to Christ this week?
31. How can you commit yourself to God's purposes today?

The Priests Begin Their Ministry - Leviticus 9:1-24

Topics: Blessing, Follow-Through, Glory, Miracles, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. For what does education prepare people?
- 2. What are some of the rewards of preparation for a difficult test?
- 3. How do you feel when your favorite team wins a game?

Explore It

- 4. When did Moses summon Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel? (9:1)
- 5. What did Moses say to Aaron about the burnt offering? (9:2)
- 6. What was Aaron supposed to say to the Israelites? (9:3-4)
- 7. Where did the people gather to listen to Moses? (9:5)
- 8. What did Moses tell the people? (9:6)
- 9. What did Moses tell Aaron to do? (9:7)
- 10. What did Aaron do to offer a sin offering for himself? (9:8-9)
- * 11. What happened to the sacrifice on the altar? (9:10)
- 12. Where were the flesh and hide burned? (9:11)
- * 13. How was the burnt offering sacrificed on the altar? (9:12-14)
- 14. What was the offering for the people? (9:15-16)
- 15. How much of the grain offering was burned on the altar? (9:17)
- 16. How was the fellowship offering prepared? (9:18-20)
- 17. What did Aaron do as Moses commanded? (9:21)
- * 18. Whom did Moses and Aaron bless after the sacrifices were completed? (9:22-23)
- 19. What happened when the Lord consumed the burnt offering? (9:24)

Get It

- * 20. How did the priests perform when they began their ministry of offering sacrifice?
- * 21. What pleased God about receiving sacrifices?
 - 22. How do you think Moses felt as a leader seeing Israel's following the Lord's command?
 - 23. Why is it important to prepare our hearts to worship God?
 - 24. How is God honored when we come to Him with humble hearts?
 - 25. What did the Israelites receive after the sacrifices were made to God?
 - 26. How were the offerings to God a great victory in the history of Israel?
 - 27. What do you think it would have been like to see the offerings consumed by fire?

Apply It

- * 28. What type of sacrifice do you need to make today to honor God?
- 29. How can you prepare your heart to worship God this week?
- 30. In what way do you need God to do a miracle in your life this week?

The Death of Nadab and Abihu - Leviticus 10:1-20

Topics: Death, Disobedience, Holiness, Honor, Rationalizing

Open It

- * 1. What types of honor are given to kings and presidents of countries?
- 2. What are positive ways of dealing with conflict at work?

Explore It

- * 3. How did Nadab and Abihu disobey the Lord's commands? (10:1)
- * 4. How did Nadab and Abihu die? (10:2)
- * 5. What did Moses remind Aaron about obeying the Lord? (10:3)
- 6. Who was told to carry the bodies out of the camp? (10:4-5)
- 7. Who was given the opportunity to mourn the loss of the two cousins? (10:6)
- 8. Why were the priests told not to leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting? (10:7)
- 9. What were Aaron and his sons told not to drink? (10:9)
- 10. What were the priests told to distinguish between? (10:10)
- 11. What were all the Israelites to be taught? (10:11)
- 12. What was Moses told to do with the grain offering? (10:12-13)
- 13. Who was allowed to eat the fellowship offering? (10:14-15)
- 14. Why was Moses mad with Eleazar and Ithamar? (10:16)
- 15. What did Moses say to Eleazar and Ithamar about eating the sin offering? (10:17-18)
- 16. How did Aaron reply to Moses in defense of his sons? (10:19)
- 17. How did Moses accept Aaron's explanation? (10:20)

Get It

- * 18. How is God honored by our obedience to Him?
- 19. What do people perceive when they see Christians who don't honor God?
- 20. In what ways do we sometimes compromise our faith in Jesus Christ?
- * 21. How do you think Aaron felt when he saw the disobedience of his own sons?
- 22. How does God want us to handle conflict with other people?
- 23. In what ways did Moses not handle the conflict with Aaron very well?
- 24. Why is it dangerous to rationalize making bad decisions?
- 25. How can people understand the holiness of God if they don't see it in our lives?
- 26. How can you honor God and His commands in your home? work? community life?

Apply It

- 27. What do you want to do to honor God before your family, coworkers, or neighbors this week?
- * 28. What is a specific way you want to obey God today?

Instructions for the People - Leviticus 11:1-15:33

Topics: Answers, Details, Expectations, Holiness, Ignorance, Purity, Sex, Vows

Open It

1. When have you received a citation, traffic ticket, or other reprimand for doing something you didn't know was wrong?
- * 2. What is your favorite kind of seafood?
3. Why do we have governmental laws for sanitation?

Explore It

4. What type of animal did the Lord tell the Israelites they were able to eat? (11:1-3)
- * 5. What kinds of fish were the Israelites allowed to eat? (11:9)
- * 6. What birds were the Israelites told not to eat? (11:13-19)
- * 7. What types of lizards were the Israelites forbidden to eat? (11:29-30)
8. What was a woman required to do after having a baby? (12:1-8)
9. What were the laws regarding infectious skin diseases? (13:1-8)
10. Where was a person with an infectious disease required to live? (13:45-46)
11. What happened if clothing became moldy? (13:47-52)
12. If someone wanted cleansing from an infectious disease, what did he or she do? (14:1-11)
13. Who came to inspect a home if it became moldy? (14:33-36)
14. How did a priest purify a home with mildew in it? (14:49-53)
15. What caused a man to become unclean? (15:1-3)
16. What was a man supposed to do after being cleansed? (15:13-15)
17. What caused a woman to become unclean? (15:19)
18. What was the reason the Israelites were to stay away from unclean things? (15:31)

Get It

19. How is it difficult to live up to God's expectations for His laws?
- * 20. How did God's laws concerning food set the Israelites apart from other nations?
21. What sets you apart from people who are not Christians?
- * 22. Why are Christians allowed to eat things that Jewish people are not?
23. How is disease control critical to our personal health?
24. How do God's laws express His protection for His people?
25. In what ways do God's laws protect you?
26. What does this passage tell us about our sexuality?
27. Why does God want us to make good decisions regarding personal purity?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you express thanks to God for the food He gives you each day?
29. What is one tangible step you can take to make your thoughts and actions pure?

Instructions for the Altar - Leviticus 16:1-17:16

Topics: Atonement, Confession, Forgiveness, Idolatry, Mercy, Sin

Open It

- * 1. What does it feel like to be unjustly accused of something you didn't do?
- 2. What do hunters have to be careful about when preparing an animal to be eaten?
- 3. Why is it difficult for some people to admit their own mistakes?

Explore It

- 4. Why was Aaron not allowed to enter the Most Holy Place whenever he wanted? (16:1-2)
- 5. How was Aaron told to enter the sanctuary? (16:3-5)
- 6. What types of offerings was Aaron told to sacrifice to the Lord? (16:6-16)
- * 7. What was the purpose of the scapegoat? (16:8-10)
- 8. Why was no one allowed in the Tent of Meeting except Aaron? (16:17)
- 9. What was Aaron told to do at the altar of the Lord? (16:18-19)
- * 10. How were the sins of the Israelites laid upon the scapegoat? (16:20-22)
- 11. What did Aaron do in preparation for the burnt offering? (16:23-25)
- 12. What men were required to bathe themselves? (16:26-28)
- 13. What was the purpose of the Day of Atonement? (16:29-31)
- 14. How often was atonement to be made for the Israelites? (16:34)
- 15. Why were the people told not to sacrifice an animal inside or outside of camp? (17:1-5)
- 16. Who was responsible for offering sacrifices for the Israelites? (17:6)
- 17. In what way were the Israelites prostituting themselves? (17:7)
- 18. What happened to Israelites who offered sacrifices outside the Tent of Meeting? (17:8-9)
- * 19. What was the significance of blood offered in sacrifices? (17:10-12)
- 20. If a person found a dead animal, what was he or she required to do? (17:13-16)

Get It

- * 21. How is Jesus Christ the scapegoat for our sins?
- 22. How would you feel if you were the scapegoat and all of Israel's sins were confessed on you?
- * 23. What are some reasons we are afraid to confess our sins to God?
- 24. Why is it important to realize that everyone makes mistakes?
- 25. How does our sin keep us separated from God?
- 26. What are some ways we can experience God's mercy through one another?
- 27. What are reasons some Christians can be so unforgiving?
- 28. In what way is God forgetful when it comes to sin?
- 29. What does it mean for God to forgive our sin?

Apply It

- * 30. When can you take time for confession to God in order to receive His forgiveness?
- 31. What do you need to confess to a friend or other person?
- 32. How can you express thanks to Jesus for being the scapegoat for your sins?

Unlawful Sexual Relations - Leviticus 18:1-30

Topics: Culture, Family, Homosexuality, Punishment, Relationships, Sex

Open It

1. What makes people nervous about going on a blind date?
- * 2. What parts of American society exploit sex?

Explore It

3. Who did God say He was to the Israelites? (18:1-2)
4. Whose practices did God tell the Israelites not to follow? (18:3-4)
5. What happens to the man who obeys the laws of the Lord? (18:5)
6. Who was allowed to have sexual relations with close relatives? (18:6)
- * 7. What did God say about having sexual relations with one's mother? (18:7-8)
8. What was God's command to the Israelites regarding sex with one's sister? (18:9)
9. Why were the Israelites not allowed to have sexual relations with grandchildren? (18:10)
10. Who is the daughter of "your father's wife"? (18:11)
- * 11. What were the Israelites told about sexual relations with close relatives? (18:12-14)
12. Why were the Israelites not to have sex with daughters-in-law? (18:15)
13. Who is dishonored if an Israelite had sexual relations with his brother's wife? (18:16)
14. What were some of the regulations regarding sexual relations? (18:17-20)
15. Whose name was profaned when children were sacrificed to Molech? (18:21)
16. What was considered detestable to the Lord? (18:22)
- * 17. With what were men and women told not to have sexual relations? (18:23)
18. Why did the Lord tell the Israelites not to defile themselves? (18:24-30)

Get It

19. How does God want to protect family members?
- * 20. What are some of the benefits of honoring God by making good sexual decisions?
21. How is sex such a powerful force in our society today?
22. In what way do God's laws about sexuality and sexual relations promote a positive view of sexuality?
- * 23. What types of abuse go on in families who don't honor God's laws on sexuality?
24. What makes it important to talk to our children about their sexuality?
25. If people honored God with their bodies, what would they gain?
26. How does God want us to be different from the rest of our world?
27. What does God promise to those who confess their sins to Him?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you honor God today in the area of your sexuality?
29. Who is someone you can talk to this week to help you be accountable to make God-honoring sexual decisions?

Various Laws - Leviticus 19:1-37

Topics: Hate, Honesty, Justice, Love, Neighbor, Occult

Open It

- * 1. Who are some modern-day heroes who fight for justice?
- 2. In what way have you seen slander or gossip hurt a person?
- 3. Who are some of your neighbors and associates (people you see at least once a week)?

Explore It

- 4. What was the reason the Israelites were told to be holy? (19:1-2)
- 5. Whom were the Israelites told to respect? (19:3)
- 6. How were the Israelites told to sacrifice burnt offerings? (19:4-8)
- 7. How did the Lord provide food for the poor? (19:9-10)
- * 8. What were four unjust things the Lord told the Israelites not to do? (19:11-12)
- * 9. What did the Lord say about defrauding a neighbor? (19:13)
- 10. Whom were the people of Israel to fear? (19:14)
- * 11. How was justice maintained? (19:15)
- 12. Why were people not to endanger their neighbor's life? (19:16)
- 13. Whom were the Israelites told not to hate? (19:17-18)
- 14. What were the Israelites told not to mix? (19:19)
- 15. How did a man make atonement for himself for sleeping with a slave girl? (19:20-22)
- 16. What were the Israelites told to do regarding fruit trees? (19:23-25)
- 17. What were the Israelites commanded not to do? (19:26-29)
- 18. Why were the Israelites to observe the Sabbath? (19:30)
- 19. How were the elderly to be treated by the people of Israel? (19:32)
- 20. Why did God want the Israelites to use honest scales? (19:35-36)

Get It

- * 21. What are some of the reasons society needs laws?
- 22. How are people responsible for how they treat others?
- 23. How do God's laws show His love for people?
- 24. How would you feel if you were a victim of injustice and nobody did anything to help you?
- * 25. What does God's desire for justice tell you about His concern for you?
- 26. In what ways were the Israelites inclined to be just or unjust?
- 27. How is God's holiness seen in His desire for justice?
- 28. In what ways do God's laws burden people or free them?
- 29. How can honoring God's laws bring you closer to Christ?

Apply It

- * 30. What specific way do you need to be just in your relationships with people this week?
- 31. What is one way you can publicly thank God for the laws He has given you?

Punishments for Sin - Leviticus 20:1-27

Topics: Children, Consequences, Death, Disobedience, Faithfulness

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite childhood memory?
- 2. What do most people you know think is God's view of sex (positive, negative, etc.)?
- 3. Why do you think some people are drawn into the occult?

Explore It

- * 4. What happened to people who gave their children to Molech? (20:1-2)
- * 5. Why were the consequences so severe to those who gave their children to Molech? (20:3)
- * 6. When people closed their eyes to what was happening to children, what resulted? (20:4-5)
- 7. What did God think of people who listened to spiritists and mediums? (20:6)
- 8. Why was Israel told to be holy? (20:7-8)
- 9. What are the consequences of cursing a mother or father? (20:9)
- 10. What were the consequences of having unlawful sexual relations? (20:10-13)
- 11. Why did God forbid a man to marry both a woman and her mother? (20:14)
- 12. What were the laws concerning sexual contact with animals? (20:15-16)
- 13. How might a man dishonor his sister? (20:17)
- 14. What restrictions did God place on a man's sexual relations with a woman during her period? (20:18)
- 15. How were relatives dishonored by unlawful sexual relationships? (20:19-21)
- 16. What did God promise Israel for abiding by His laws? (20:22-24)
- 17. What type of distinction did God ask the people to make between certain animals? (20:25)
- 18. Why did the Lord set the nation of Israel apart from the other nations? (20:26)
- 19. How were mediums and spiritists put to death? (20:27)

Get It

- 20. What are certain practices in our world today that God says are detestable?
- * 21. How do you think God feels when He sees children destroyed by their parents?
- 22. What makes it wrong when we close our eyes to evil?
- 23. How can God's people make a difference in this world by standing up for righteousness?
- 24. What did God want to guard against by forbidding unlawful sexual practices?
- 25. How can bad sexual decisions lead to severe consequences?
- * 26. What are positive ways we can protect and nurture our children?
- 27. What does this passage say about God's love for children?
- 28. Why is it dangerous to dabble in fortune-telling?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you do to stand up for the rights of innocent children?
- 30. In which of your present circumstances do you need to show child-like faith?

Rules for Priests - Leviticus 21:1-22:33

Topics: Acceptance, Follow, Marriage, Priorities, Privilege, Respect

Open It

1. What are some things people do to develop a healthy sense of pride?
- * 2. Why is the example and life-style of leaders important?
3. What happens when there is a breakdown in leadership in business and politics?

Explore It

4. What exceptions were priests given for ceremonial uncleanness? (21:1-4)
5. Why were priests told not to shave? (21:5-6)
- * 6. For what reason were priests not permitted to marry defiled women? (21:7-8)
7. What happened if a priest's daughter became a prostitute? (21:9)
8. How was the high priest different from the other priests? (21:10-12)
- * 9. What were the marriage regulations for a priest? (21:13-15)
10. What did Moses tell Aaron regarding physical defects of descendants? (21:16-24)
11. What were Aaron and his sons to treat with respect? (22:1-2)
12. If descendants of Aaron were ceremonially unclean, what were they not to do? (22:3-8)
- * 13. Why were the priests to keep the regulations of the Lord? (22:9)
14. Who was authorized to eat the sacred offerings? (22:10-13)
15. What happened if someone ate a sacred offering by mistake? (22:14-16)
16. If an Israelite wanted to make an offering to the Lord, what was acceptable? (22:17-19)
17. What types of offerings were not considered acceptable to the Lord? (22:20-25)
18. When was it acceptable to sacrifice a newborn animal? (22:26-28)
19. How were the Israelites told to sacrifice a thank offering? (22:29-30)
20. What did the Lord remind the Israelites about in keeping His commands? (22:31-33)

Get It

21. How did God want His priests to stand apart from the other Israelites?
- * 22. Why did God give His priests regulations that did not apply to other people?
- * 23. What expectations do you have for the life-style of Christian leaders today?
24. Why do some people expect more from pastors than they expect from themselves?
25. What are some of the pressures facing Christian leaders today?
26. How can you support and encourage those who commit their lives to ministry?
27. What are things we accept about our society that God does not accept?
28. How can your life-style be a powerful witness for who Jesus Christ is?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you do today to be an example of Christ for others?
30. When can you pray for the leaders of your church this week?

Seasons and Festivals - Leviticus 23:1-25:55

Topics: Blasphemy, Celebration, Freedom, Renewal, Slavery

Open It

1. What is your most memorable birthday?
- * 2. What is the most meaningful celebration you participate in each year?

Explore It

3. What was the first feast the Lord told Moses about? (23:1-3)
- * 4. When were the Israelites to celebrate the Passover feast? (23:4-8)
5. What were the conditions given regarding the feast of firstfruits? (23:9-14)
6. What kinds of sacrifices were the Israelites to offer during the feast of weeks? (23:15-22)
7. What were the Israelites commanded to do on the feast of trumpets? (23:23-25)
- * 8. How were the Israelites required to celebrate the Day of Atonement? (23:26-32)
9. Where were the Israelites supposed to live during the Feast of Tabernacles? (23:33-44)
10. What two things were the Israelites told to set before the Lord? (24:1-9)
11. What incident occurred in Israel's camp? (24:10-16)
12. What laws were given concerning harm done to others? (24:17-22)
13. What happened to the man who blasphemed God? (24:23)
14. What did the Lord tell Moses to do during the Sabbath year? (25:1-7)
- * 15. What was the significance of the celebration during the Year of Jubilee? (25:8-17)
16. How did God promise to provide for Israel during the Year of Jubilee? (25:18-22)
17. What were some of the laws regarding property during the Year of Jubilee? (25:23-34)
18. How were poor people helped during the Year of Jubilee? (25:35-38)
19. What were the laws for slaves during the Year of Jubilee? (25:39-55)

Get It

20. What do religious holidays mean to you personally?
- * 21. What are common ways to celebrate Easter?
- * 22. How do people today take for granted the celebration of Christmas?
23. About what was God possibly reminding the Israelites by requiring so many feasts?
24. How would you feel if you were a slave freed during the Year of Jubilee?
25. How do you respond when people blaspheme God?
26. How can we experience freedom in Christ on a daily basis?

Apply It

- * 27. How can you celebrate your freedom in Christ this week?
28. How might you help someone enjoy a time of rest this week?

Reward for Obedience and Punishment for Disobedience - Leviticus 26:1-46

Topics: Covenant, Discipline, Idols, Obedience, Rest, Rewards

Open It

1. What happens when children are not disciplined?
- * 2. How can relationships be damaged by broken promises?

Explore It

3. What did God specifically tell the Israelites regarding His commands? (26:1-2)
- * 4. How did God promise to bless Israel if they obeyed His decrees? (26:3-13)
- * 5. What were some of the results of not obeying God? (26:14-20)
6. What tragedies would come upon Israel if they were hostile to God? (26:21-26)
7. What emotion did God say He would express if Israel was hostile to Him? (26:28)
8. How was God going to destroy the Israelites if they turned against Him? (26:29-33)
9. What did the land enjoy when the Israelites were taken away by their enemies? (26:34-35)
10. With what types of fear would Israel live if they abandoned God? (26:36-39)
- * 11. What did God say He would remember if the Israelites confessed their hostility? (26:40-42)
12. Why would Israel pay for its sin against God? (26:43)
13. What did God say He would do when Israel was in the land of their enemies? (26:44)
14. For whose sake would God remember Israel? (26:45)
15. Where did God establish His laws between Himself and the Israelites? (26:46)

Get It

16. In what ways did God treat Israel like little children?
- * 17. What are the benefits of obeying God today?
18. How do we break our promises to God?
19. What circumstances tend to make people hostile to God?
- * 20. For what reasons do we disobey God even when we know we will suffer the consequences?
21. What makes obedience to God difficult?
22. What does God's covenant with the Israelites tell you about His love?
23. How does it make you feel knowing that even if you reject God, He won't reject you?

Apply It

24. What promise to God do you need to fulfill or follow through on?
- * 25. How can you nurture a desire for obedience to God each day?
26. Who is someone you can ask to pray for your obedience to Christ on a regular basis?

Redeeming What Is the Lord's - Leviticus 27:1-34

Topics: Commitment, Dedication, Promises, Value, Vows

Open It

1. What are some of the reasons people make marriage vows?
- * 2. How would you feel if someone affirmed you for being a very dedicated person? Why?

Explore It

- * 3. What did God say to Moses about vows for dedicating people? (27:1-2)
4. What was a man's value between twenty and sixty who was dedicated to the Lord? (27:3)
5. What was a woman's value between twenty and sixty who was dedicated to the Lord? (27:4)
6. If a man was between age five and twenty, what value was set for him? (27:5)
7. If a woman was between age five and twenty, what value was set for her? (27:5)
8. What other values were set for people dedicated to the Lord? (27:6-7)
- * 9. If a person was too poor to pay for the vow, what was he or she told to do? (27:8)
- * 10. What conditions were made for people vowing animals to the Lord? (27:9-13)
11. Who determined the quality of a house that was dedicated to the Lord? (27:14-15)
12. What were the laws when a man dedicated his land to the Lord? (27:16-21)
13. Who decided how valuable land was? (27:22-24)
14. How were values set? (27:25)
15. Why was no one allowed to dedicate the firstborn of an animal to the Lord? (27:26-27)
16. What did God say could not be sold or redeemed? (27:28)
17. What was the law concerning people devoted to destruction? (27:29)
18. What laws were given to the people of Israel regarding tithes? (27:30-33)

Get It

19. How would the number of lawsuits in this country be reduced if people kept their promises?
- * 20. How is our ability to keep vows a reflection of our personal character?
21. How do you feel when something valuable to you is destroyed?
22. Who is someone you admire for his or her dedication to the Lord?
23. What happens in relationships when one person is found to be untrustworthy?
- * 24. What are common examples today of people who suffer when others break vows?
25. In what way is God the real owner of everything we possess?
26. How can dedicating our possessions to God free us to serve Him more?
27. What happens when we value people or things more than the Lord?

Apply It

- * 28. What is something you're hanging on to that you need to dedicate to the Lord today?
29. What symbolic act would help you put Christ before your possessions?

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The First Census of the Nation - Numbers 1:1-2:34

Topics: Administration, Citizenship, Direction, Divisions, Leadership, People, Tasks

Open It

- * 1. How many people are in your family?
- 2. What type of math are you best at?
- 3. What is scary about getting lost in a crowd?

Explore It

- 4. When did the Lord speak to Moses in the Desert of Sinai? (1:1)
- * 5. What did the Lord tell Moses to do regarding a census? (1:2)
- 6. How old did men have to be to serve in the army? (1:3)
- * 7. Who was to help Aaron and Moses with the census? (1:4-15)
- 8. What were the newly appointed leaders commanded to do? (1:17-19)
- 9. What was the total number of people from the twelve tribes? (1:45-46)
- * 10. Who was not included in the total count? (1:47)
- 11. What were the Levites told to be in charge of? (1:50-54)
- 12. Where were the Israelites told to camp? (2:1-2)
- 13. What tribes were told to camp on the east side of the Tent of Meeting? (2:3-9)
- 14. Who camped on the south side of the Tent of Meeting? (2:10-16)
- 15. Where were the Levites supposed to camp? (2:17)
- 16. On the west side of the Tent, what tribes were told to camp? (2:18-24)
- 17. Who was told to camp on the north side of the Tent of Meeting? (2:25-31)
- 18. What was the total number of Israelites who camped by their divisions? (2:32)
- 19. How did the Israelites follow the Lord's commands through Moses' leadership? (2:33-34)

Get It

- 20. How useful is strong leadership without good administration?
- 21. What was important to God about taking a census?
- 22. How did Moses' men have a critical role in carrying out the Lord's command?
- * 23. How did God show His concern for Israel by wanting individuals to be counted?
- 24. What is the purpose of a shepherd counting his sheep?
- * 25. What does accuracy in counting people enable a local church to do?
- 26. How was camp administration possible by assigning the tribes specific locations?
- 27. How is God pleased when we carry out exactly what He tells us to do?

Apply It

- * 28. Who is someone you haven't seen in a while whom you can invite to church this week?
- 29. What is a specific way you can carry out God's commands?
- 30. How can you be a servant leader for the body of Christ this week?

The Role of the Levites - Numbers 3:1-4:49

Topics: Family, Jobs, Preparation, Responsibility, Service, Work

Open It

- * 1. How are work responsibilities divided in your family?
- 2. What chores around the house do you enjoy most?
- 3. When moving, what are you most careful about packing?

Explore It

- 4. Who was in the family of Aaron and Moses? (3:1-4)
- 5. Whom did the Lord tell Moses to bring to Aaron? (3:5-6)
- * 6. What responsibilities were the Levites told to have? (3:7-10)
- 7. Why did the Lord say the Levites were His? (3:11-13)
- 8. Whom did God command Moses to count? (3:14-16)
- 9. Who were the people in the Levite tribes? (3:17-20)
- * 10. What responsibilities were the Gershonites given? (3:21-26)
- 11. For what were the Kohathites told to be responsible? (3:27-31)
- 12. What job did the Merarites have? (3:33-37)
- 13. What commands did the Lord give Moses regarding firstborn males? (3:39-43)
- 14. What was Moses asked to do with the redemption money? (3:44-51)
- 15. Who was told to serve in the work in the Tent of Meeting? (4:1-3)
- 16. How were Aaron and his sons told to pack the Tent of Meeting? (4:4-14)
- 17. Who was in charge of carrying the things in the Tent of Meeting? (4:15)
- * 18. What was Eleazar's chief responsibility? (4:16)
- 19. What dangerous task did the Lord warn Moses and Aaron about? (4:17-20)
- 20. What final instructions did the Lord give Moses about carrying the Tent? (4:21-49)

Get It

- * 21. How was Moses wise in following the Lord's command to delegate responsibility?
- 22. What happens at work when people do not follow through on their responsibilities?
- * 23. How is it easy for you to avoid being responsible?
- 24. What makes following Christ a dangerous commitment to keep?
- 25. What would have happened if Moses and Aaron had tried to do all the work by themselves?
- 26. How is more accomplished when people have specific tasks?
- 27. What would others say about how responsible you are?

Apply It

- * 28. What is a responsibility you have been avoiding that you need to address today?
- 29. How can specific attention to your responsibilities this week show others your love for God?

The Purity of the Camp - Numbers 5:1-31

Topics: Confession, Jealousy, Shame, Sickness, Sin, Unfaithfulness

Open It

- * 1. What is one disease you would never want to get? Why?
- 2. What celebrity couple is known for their rocky relationship?
- 3. What are important characteristics of a healthy relationship?

Explore It

- 4. Whom did the Lord command to be sent away from the Israeli camp? (5:1-4)
- * 5. What did God say to Moses concerning those who wrong others? (5:5-7)
- 6. To whom did the restitution belong if a person had no close relatives? (5:8)
- 7. To whom did the sacred contributions belong? (5:9-10)
- * 8. How does God describe the conflict of a woman wronging her husband? (5:11-14)
- 9. What was the jealous husband told to do? (5:15)
- 10. What did the priest have the accused woman do? (5:16-18)
- 11. What did the priest say to the woman about the curse of the bitter water? (5:19-22)
- 12. What did the priest write on a scroll? (5:23)
- 13. What would the water cause for the woman? (5:24)
- 14. What did the priest wave before the Lord? (5:25)
- 15. What was the woman told to drink after the priest burned the offering? (5:26)
- 16. If the woman had been unfaithful to her husband, what would happen to her body? (5:27)
- * 17. What would happen if the woman had not wronged her husband? (5:28)
- 18. What are the conditions for the jealousy law? (5:29-30)
- 19. Who will bear the consequences of their sin? (5:31)

Get It

- 20. What does this passage tell us about the importance of the marriage relationship?
- * 21. How is it easy to wrong the ones we love the most?
- * 22. How do we often defend our positions instead of admitting our mistakes?
- 23. What are the many consequences of adultery?
- 24. How can jealousy destroy our relationships?
- 25. What makes it difficult to admit our wrongs to one another?
- 26. How does restitution play a part in restoring relationships?

Apply It

- * 27. Who is someone you have wronged that you need to ask for forgiveness?
- 28. How can the Lord help you mend a severed relationship?

The Nazirite - Numbers 6:1-27

Topics: Blessing, Holiness, Separation, Serving, Vows

Open It

- * 1. What religious groups are known for separating themselves from the rest of society?
- 2. Why are most people afraid of being labeled “weird”?
- 3. Who is someone you know that stands out in a crowd but doesn’t mind what others think?

Explore It

- * 4. What was the name given to people who wanted to separate themselves to the Lord? (6:1-2)
- 5. From what were Nazirites told to abstain? (6:3)
- 6. What plant were the Nazirites told not to eat? (6:4)
- 7. What were Nazirites commanded not to do? (6:5)
- 8. When was a Nazirite forbidden to go near a dead body? (6:6)
- * 9. What was the symbol of a Nazirite’s separation? (6:7)
- 10. How long was a Nazirite consecrated to the Lord? (6:8)
- 11. What defiled the hair on a Nazirite’s head? (6:9)
- 12. What was a Nazirite supposed to do on the eighth day? (6:10)
- 13. What offerings were given for the Nazirite’s sin? (6:11)
- * 14. Under what circumstances did a Nazirite have to start his or her separation over? (6:12)
- 15. Where did the Nazirite go when his or her period of separation was over? (6:13)
- 16. What was the Nazirite told to offer to the Lord? (6:14-15)
- 17. How was the priest involved in presenting the Nazirite’s offering? (6:16-17)
- 18. What happened after the Nazirite shaved off his or her hair? (6:18-20)
- 19. How were Aaron and his sons told to bless the Israelites? (6:22-27)

Get It

- 20. What do the Nazirites’ vows tell you about their commitment to God?
- * 21. How might a Nazirite be misunderstood by others when separating himself or herself for the Lord?
- * 22. How are we misunderstood when we are separated for the Lord’s sake?
- 23. What blessings do we receive by yielding ourselves completely to God?
- 24. Why is it not necessary for Christians to abstain from certain foods?
- 25. What is the benefit of abstaining from certain foods?
- 26. How is long hair misunderstood today?
- 27. In what way is a person’s appearance important? not important?

Apply It

- * 28. How does this passage challenge you to set yourself apart for God?
- 29. In what concrete way can you “separate” yourself for Christ’s service?

Offerings at the Dedication of the Tabernacle - Numbers 7:1-89

Topics: Community, Dedication, Fellowship, Gifts, Leadership, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite type of gift to receive?
- 2. What kinds of sacrifices have others made that have benefited you?
- 3. Who is someone you consider to be a very giving person?

Explore It

- 4. What did Moses do after setting up the tabernacle? (7:1)
- 5. Who came to make offerings to the Lord? (7:2)
- * 6. What gifts did the leaders bring to the Lord? (7:3)
- * 7. What did the Lord tell Moses to do with the gifts that the leaders brought? (7:4-8)
- 8. To whom did Moses not give any of the gifts? (7:9)
- 9. Who brought their offerings for the dedication of the altar? (7:10-11)
- 10. What did Nahshon bring as an offering to the Lord? (7:12-17)
- 11. Who presented their gifts after Nahshon? (7:18-23)
- 12. On the third day, what did Eliab bring for his offering? (7:24-29)
- * 13. What gifts did Elizur present to the Lord? (7:30-35)
- 14. What do we know about Shelumiel? (7:36-41)
- 15. What did Eliasaph bring as an offering on the sixth day? (7:42-47)
- 16. Who brought their gifts on the seventh day? (7:48-53)
- 17. Of what tribe was Gamaliel the prince? (7:54-59)
- 18. Who presented their gifts on the ninth day? (7:60-65)
- 19. Who offered gifts to the Lord on the remaining three days? (7:66-83)
- 20. What was the total of the combined offerings presented to the Lord? (7:84-88)

Get It

- * 21. How are we takers instead of givers to the Lord?
- * 22. What does this passage tell us about each person's ability to give something to the Lord?
- 23. How is giving contagious?
- 24. How does always receiving make us self-centered?
- 25. How can you use your talents as a gift to the Lord?
- 26. In what way does worship involve giving something away?
- 27. What type of person can you become through worshiping God?

Apply It

- * 28. What is a specific talent you want to give to God this week?
- 29. What have you received from the Lord that you can give to others today?

The Lamps, the Levites, and the Passover - Numbers 8:1-9:14

Topics: Atonement, Celebration, Light, Purity, Remembering, Work

Open It

- * 1. When you need help with an important task, what are your criteria for choosing people?
- 2. What type of training did you go through to prepare for your job?

Explore It

- 3. What did Moses tell Aaron to set up? (8:1-2)
- 4. How did Aaron set up the lamps? (8:3-4)
- 5. How did the Lord tell Moses to purify the Levites? (8:5-7)
- 6. What were the Levites to sacrifice as a sin offering? (8:8)
- 7. How was Moses to present the Levites before the Lord? (8:9-11)
- 8. What were the two types of offerings the Levites were told to sacrifice? (8:12)
- 9. What kind of offering were the Levites to be presented as? (8:13)
- * 10. From whom were the Levites told to be set apart? (8:14)
- 11. Where were the Levites instructed to do their work? (8:15)
- * 12. For whom was God setting the Levites apart? (8:16-17)
- * 13. What reasons did God give for setting apart the Levites for Himself? (8:18-19)
- 14. How did the Israelites do what the Lord commanded? (8:20-22)
- 15. What age requirements for their work did God give the Levites? (8:23-26)
- 16. When did God tell Moses to celebrate the Passover? (9:1-5)
- 17. Why were some people not able to celebrate the Passover? (9:6)
- 18. What problem did the unclean people present to Moses? (9:7-8)
- 19. How did God respond to the problem of unclean people celebrating Passover? (9:9-14)

Get It

- * 20. What was the significance of the Levites being set apart for God's purposes?
- 21. How are we to be set apart from the world as Christians?
- 22. What are the reasons for God's stringent laws for holiness?
- 23. How are people prepared for ministry today?
- 24. What biblical requirements are made for people who choose ministry as a profession?
- * 25. What difficulties do we face when we want to be set apart for the Lord?
- 26. How can we celebrate who God is by being set apart for Him?
- 27. What message do we give to the world when we live for Christ?

Apply It

- * 28. What step can you take today to be set apart for God's purposes?
- 29. How can you show others that living for God is a celebration?

Receiving Guidance for the Journey - Numbers 9:15-10:10

Topics: Commands, Community, Follow, Obedience, People, Testing

Open It

- * 1. What sports team or athlete do you most enjoy following?
- 2. What musical instrument do you enjoy the most?
- 3. What do you like about sitting near a campfire?

Explore It

- 4. What covered the tabernacle the day it was set up? (9:15)
- 5. What did the cloud look like at night? (9:16)
- 6. What did the Israelites do when the cloud lifted above the Tent? (9:17)
- 7. What happened when the cloud stayed over the tabernacle? (9:18)
- * 8. How did the Israelites obey the Lord's order? (9:19)
- 9. What occurred when the cloud was over the tabernacle for a few days? (9:20)
- 10. At what time during the day or night would the Israelites be ready to set out? (9:21)
- 11. For what different time periods would the cloud stay over the tabernacle? (9:22)
- * 12. When did the Israelites obey the Lord's command? (9:23)
- 13. What did the Lord tell Moses to make? (10:1-2)
- 14. What happened when both trumpets were sounded? (10:3)
- 15. Who was to assemble if only one trumpet was sounded? (10:4)
- 16. What happened when the trumpet was blasted? (10:5-6)
- 17. How was Moses to gather the assembly? (10:7)
- * 18. Who were the only ones commanded to blow the trumpets? (10:8)
- 19. How were the Israelites told they would be rescued from their enemies? (10:9)
- 20. What was the purpose of sounding the trumpets during feasts? (10:10)

Get It

- 21. How would having the Lord lead you by a cloud make obeying Him easier than if He were completely invisible?
- * 22. What does this passage show about the difficulty of obedience?
- 23. In what ways does God lead or guide us today?
- 24. What is the value in worshiping the Lord with groups of people?
- 25. How do different congregations worship the Lord today?
- * 26. What is the relationship between worship and obedience to God?
- 27. How was Moses' obedience to the Lord critical for Israel as a nation?
- 28. What influence do Christian leaders have on others?

Apply It

- * 29. How can you worship the Lord this week through your obedience to Him?
- 30. What is a practical way to follow the Holy Spirit's lead in your life today?

The People Complain - Numbers 10:11-11:35

Topics: Anger, Complaining, Follow, Provision, Testing

Open It

1. What kind of food do you hate the most?
- * 2. What makes it difficult to be around people who complain a lot?
3. What is your favorite kind of meat?

Explore It

4. When did the Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai? (10:11-13)
5. What divisions went out of the camp first? (10:14-16)
6. Who carried the tabernacle? (10:17)
7. Who was in command of the second division to leave camp? (10:18-20)
8. Who was in charge of carrying the holy things of the tabernacle? (10:21)
9. Who led the third division out of camp? (10:22-24)
10. What divisions were the rear guard for all the units? (10:25-28)
11. What did Moses say to Hobab? (10:29)
12. What was Hobab's response about going with Moses? (10:30)
13. How did Moses explain how important Hobab's role was in leading the Israelites? (10:31-32)
14. How was the ark of the covenant critical to leading the Israelites? (10:33-36)
- * 15. What did the Israelites complain about? (11:1)
16. What happened when the people cried out to Moses? (11:2-3)
- * 17. What was the second complaint the Israelites brought against the Lord? (11:4-9)
- * 18. How did Moses respond to the Lord when he heard the Israelites' complaints? (11:10-15)
19. What conversation did the Lord and Moses have about meat? (11:16-25)
20. How did the Lord provide meat for the Israelites? (11:26-35)

Get It

21. What type of people are not cut out for camping? Why?
22. How does a person's attitude affect his or her suitability for demanding activities?
23. How was Hobab an important travel companion to Moses?
24. How do other Christians make an important difference in your walk with Christ?
25. How did the Israelites' bad attitudes lead to upset stomachs?
- * 26. What influence can complainers have on our lives?
- * 27. What kept Moses from being a complainer?
28. How does fatigue affect our attitudes?
29. What does the Lord want to provide you when you don't think you can go any further?

Apply It

- * 30. In what part of your life do you need to trust God to provide this week?
31. How can resting in God today change your attitude?

Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses - Numbers 12:1-16

Topics: Conflict, Criticism, Divisions, Faithfulness, Humility, Sin

Open It

1. What types of personalities drive you crazy?
- * 2. What do most people dislike about criticism?
3. What is a recent conflict that you resolved in a positive way?

Explore It

4. Who began to speak against Moses? (12:1)
- * 5. What did the conflict with Moses deal with? (12:2)
6. What kind of man was Moses? (12:3)
- * 7. How did the Lord call the people together who were involved in the conflict with Moses? (12:4)
8. Whom did the Lord summon? (12:5)
9. What did the Lord say about how He spoke to prophets? (12:6)
10. What character quality did the Lord say Moses had? (12:7)
- * 11. What did the Lord say to Miriam and Aaron for creating a conflict with Moses? (12:8)
12. What emotion did the Lord express against Miriam and Aaron? (12:9)
13. What disease did Miriam receive? (12:10)
14. How did Aaron respond to Moses when he saw Miriam's leprosy? (12:11-12)
15. How did Moses cry out to the Lord? (12:13)
16. What did the Lord say to Moses about Miriam? (12:14)
17. Where was Miriam confined? (12:15)
18. Where did the people camp after they left Hazeroth? (12:16)

Get It

- * 19. What character trait enabled Moses to deal with conflict in a positive way?
20. How do you think Moses felt when the people closest to him began to criticize him?
21. What hurts most when people we love criticize us?
22. How can our negative criticism wound the ones closest to us?
- * 23. What does this passage teach you about handling conflict?
24. How can humility be a critical ingredient to handling conflicts appropriately?
25. In what ways can unresolved conflicts spread like disease?
26. Who gets hurt when conflicts are not resolved?

Apply It

- * 27. What conflict is the Lord calling you to deal with this week?
28. What can you share with others about how to resolve conflicts you have had with friends or coworkers?
29. How can the Lord be a mediator in your problems with others?

Exploring Canaan - Numbers 13:1-33

Topics: Courage, Delegation, Fear, Fruit, Leadership, Strength

Open It

1. With what type of person would you want to go on a long adventure?
2. What kinds of risks are involved in standing up for what you believe?
- * 3. Who is the most courageous leader you know?

Explore It

4. Whom did the Lord tell Moses to send into the land of Canaan? (13:1-2)
5. From where did the spies leave on their journey? (13:3)
6. What were the names of the spies sent by Moses? (13:4-16)
7. Where did Moses tell the spies to go? (13:17)
8. What did Moses tell the spies to look for? (13:18-20)
9. What were the spies told to bring back? (13:20)
10. What territory did the Israelites explore? (13:21)
11. Where did the descendants of Anak live? (13:22)
12. What did the spies bring back from the Valley of Eshcol? (13:23-24)
13. How long did the Israelite spies explore the land? (13:25)
14. When the spies returned, to whom did they make their report? (13:26)
15. What startling report did the Israelite spies give to Moses? (13:27-29)
16. Who silenced the people? (13:30)
- * 17. What did Caleb say? (13:30)
- * 18. How did the other spies react to Caleb's comment? (13:31)
- * 19. What rumors did the Israelite spies spread among the rest of the Israelites? (13:32-33)

Get It

20. What is the difference between good and bad leadership?
- * 21. What are the character qualities of a good leader?
22. If you were Moses, who would you think was telling the truth about the land of Canaan?
23. What kinds of fears keep people from taking risks for God?
24. How is it difficult to stand up for what you believe when others disagree with you?
25. What makes rumors dangerous?
- * 26. How are Christians to respond when they don't agree with church leadership?
27. If people have a difficult time with authority, how will they follow the authority of God?

Apply It

28. What can you do this week to stand up for what you believe?
- * 29. What specific risk do you think God is calling you to take for Him?
30. How can trusting in Christ give you the courage to face difficulties this coming week?

The People Rebel - Numbers 14:1-45

Topics: Complaining, Consequences, Forgiveness, Guilt, People, Rebellion, Sin

Open It

1. When children act like spoiled brats, what do you usually think of the parents?
- * 2. Who are some famous or high-profile rebels in our society that you're aware of?
3. What exciting new product have you purchased that turned out to be a lemon?

Explore It

- * 4. What complaints did the Israelites make against Moses and Aaron? (14:1-3)
5. What did the Israelites say to one another? (14:4)
- * 6. How did Moses and Aaron respond to the Israelites' grumbling? (14:5)
7. What did Joshua and Caleb say to all the people? (14:6-9)
8. What did the whole assembly consider doing? (14:10)
9. What did the Lord say to Moses about the sin of the Israelites? (14:11-12)
10. How did Moses intervene on behalf of the Israelites? (14:13-19)
- * 11. What consequences did the Israelites receive because of their grumbling? (14:20-23)
12. What did God say about Caleb? (14:24)
13. What new directions did God give Moses for the Israelites? (14:25)
14. What did the Lord tell Moses and Aaron would happen to the Israelites? (14:26-32)
15. Who was to suffer for the Israelites' unfaithfulness? (14:33-35)
16. What happened to the men who turned the Israelite community against God? (14:36-37)
17. Who were the only two men who were spared the plague? (14:38-39)
18. What did the people decide to do despite Moses' warnings? (14:40-43)
19. What happened to the people who went to take the hill country? (14:44-45)

Get It

20. What consequences are usually the result of complaining?
- * 21. Why is it difficult to forgive people in our lives who are constant complainers?
22. If someone took a hard look at your life, what would you want said about you?
23. How does Caleb stand up in the midst of adversity?
24. What risks were involved when Joshua and Caleb trusted the Lord?
25. In what ways do we commit stupid acts even when we know we'll fail?
- * 26. How does complaining lead to making bad choices?
27. What choices do you regularly face when you take a stand for God?

Apply It

- * 28. In what area of your life can you show more gratitude to God and complain less?
29. What is a specific way you need God's strength to stand up for God?

Additional Regulations - Numbers 15:1-41

Topics: Fellowship, Honor, Lust, Remembering, Sacrifice, Sin

Open It

1. What are your favorite pictures in your photo albums?
- * 2. With whom do you enjoy getting together to tell old stories?
3. In what ways do you try to remind yourself not to forget something important?

Explore It

4. What were the Israelites told to present to the Lord after they made their offerings? (15:1-4)
5. What were the Israelites told to prepare for a drink offering? (15:5)
6. What offering was to be prepared along with a ram? (15:6-7)
7. What else is to be offered when a young bull is brought for sacrifice? (15:8-12)
8. How did God's law apply to Israelites and aliens alike? (15:13-16)
9. When the Israelites ate the food of the new land, what were they told also to do? (15:17-21)
10. What was the community told to do if they sinned unintentionally? (15:22-26)
11. What were the conditions given if only one person sinned unintentionally? (15:27-29)
12. How could someone be cut off from the Israelite community? (15:30-31)
- * 13. Who did not remember the Lord's command about not working on the Sabbath? (15:32)
14. What happened to the man who gathered wood on the Sabbath? (15:33)
15. What did the Lord tell Moses to do with the man who broke the Sabbath? (15:34-35)
16. How was the man punished for gathering wood on the Sabbath? (15:36)
17. What did the Lord tell Moses to put on the corners of his garments? (15:37-38)
- * 18. What purpose did the tassels on Moses' garment serve? (15:39-40)
- * 19. What did God say to remind the Israelites about who He was? (15:41)

Get It

- * 20. How were Israel's sacrifices a reminder of their covenant with God?
21. What part does weekly worship play in reminding you of your commitment to God?
22. What temptations do you think Moses faced as a leader?
- * 23. How does forgetting God's commands have consequences in our lives?
24. What does God's Word do to help us control our thought lives?
25. How are our lives similar to the people of Israel's lives?

Apply It

- * 26. What can you do this week to remember the Lord in all you do?
27. How can God's Word help you follow Christ?

Many Leaders Rebel against Moses - Numbers 16:1-17:13

Topics: Challenge, Holiness, Opposition, Punishment, Rebellion

Open It

1. What are the most notorious rivalries in pro sports today?
- * 2. How do people typically react to those who oppose them?
3. How does opposition show others who we really are?

Explore It

4. What men rose up against Moses? (16:1-2)
- * 5. What did the men opposing Moses and Aaron say to them? (16:3)
- * 6. How did Moses respond to those opposing him? (16:4-5)
7. What did Moses tell Korah and his followers to do? (16:6-10)
- * 8. Whom did Moses tell the Levites they were really opposing? (16:11)
9. How did Dathan and Abiram reply when Moses summoned them? (16:12-14)
10. What did Moses tell the Lord not to accept from the men opposing him? (16:15)
11. What directions did Moses give to Korah? (16:16-17)
12. Who appeared before the entire assembly? (16:18-19)
13. How did God punish the people who opposed Moses? (16:20-35)
14. What did Moses tell Eleazar to do? (16:36-40)
15. How did the Israelites grumble against Moses and Aaron the very next day? (16:41)
16. How did the Lord say He was going to punish the Israelites? (16:42-45)
17. What terrible consequence did the Israelites face because of their rebellion? (16:46-50)
18. What did the Lord tell Moses about the twelve staffs? (17:1-5)
19. What happened to Aaron's staff? (17:6-9)
20. How was Aaron's staff to be a sign for the people of Israel? (17:10-13)

Get It

- * 21. How do a person's true colors come out when facing opposition?
22. What does complaining do to our hearts?
- * 23. How can opposition be handled in a positive way?
24. What part does prayer play when we face difficulties in relationships?
25. How can grumbling attitudes lead to rebelling against God?
26. If you were Moses, how would you have handled Korah and his followers?
27. What consequences do nations face when they rebel against God?
28. What do these verses teach us about dealing with power struggles?

Apply It

- * 29. How can you entrust to God the opposition you are facing this week?
30. What is one concrete step you can take to change a bad attitude?

Duties of Priests and Levites - Numbers 18:1-19:22

Topics: Devotion, Duty, Holiness, Law, Responsibility

Open It

- * 1. What are the most important responsibilities in your life?
- 2. What do you hope to teach your children about responsibility?
- 3. How do people commonly make excuses for being irresponsible?

Explore It

- * 4. For what did the Lord tell Aaron he and his sons were responsible? (18:1)
- * 5. For what were the Levites responsible? (18:2-4)
 - 6. Why was Aaron responsible for the care of the sanctuary and altar? (18:5)
 - 7. How were the responsibilities of Aaron's sons different from those of the Levites? (18:6-7)
 - 8. What were Aaron and his sons given as priests of the Lord? (18:8-19)
 - 9. What did the Lord say would be Aaron's inheritance? (18:20)
 - 10. What did the Levites receive for their inheritance? (18:21)
 - 11. Where were the Israelites told not to go? (18:22)
 - 12. Why did the Levites have no inheritance among the Israelites? (18:23-24)
 - 13. What commands did the Lord give the Levites regarding their tithes? (18:25-32)
 - 14. What requirement of the law did the Lord give Moses and Aaron? (19:1-5)
 - 15. What was the priest to throw on the burning heifer? (19:6)
 - 16. What washing instructions were given after the sacrifice was offered? (19:7-10)
- * 17. What was a person responsible to do if he or she touched a dead body? (19:11-14)
 - 18. Why was it important to keep lids fastened on containers? (19:15)
 - 19. How could an unclean person be made clean? (19:16-21)
 - 20. What happened to the things touched by an unclean person? (19:22)

Get It

- * 21. What made it necessary for the Levites to have specific responsibilities?
- * 22. How does God's law help make us responsible people?
 - 23. What was it about the offerings that made a division of labor necessary?
 - 24. Why are certain people given more responsibilities than others in today's world?
 - 25. What are specific ways people become responsible for their lives?
 - 26. Why isn't it possible for sin to mix with holiness?
 - 27. What are some of the different responsibilities we have as Christians?
 - 28. To whom is every person ultimately responsible?

Apply It

- * 29. What is an area of your life in which you need to be more responsible this week?
- 30. In what way can you make a particular part of your life a more fitting service to God?

Water from the Rock, Edom, and the Death of Aaron - Numbers 20:1-29

Topics: Anger, Death, Example, Mourning, Quarrels, Trust

Open It

1. What makes people look foolish when they're angry?
2. What is your favorite water sport?
- * 3. How do cemeteries remind us of what's really important?

Explore It

- * 4. Who died in the Desert of Zin? (20:1)
5. What new problem did Moses and Aaron face? (20:2)
6. What did the quarreling people say to Moses? (20:3-5)
7. What happened when Moses and Aaron fell facedown at the Tent of Meeting? (20:6)
8. How did God say He would solve the water problem? (20:7-8)
9. What did Moses say to the people in his anger? (20:9-10)
10. What did Moses do with his staff to get water out of the rock? (20:11)
11. How was the Lord displeased with Moses and Aaron? (20:12)
12. What was significant about the waters of Meribah? (20:13)
13. To whom did Moses send his messengers? (20:14)
14. What message was sent to the king of Edom? (20:15-17)
- * 15. How did Edom threaten the Israelites? (20:18)
16. What did Moses ask Edom a second time? (20:19)
17. How was Israel turned away from Edom? (20:20-21)
18. What did the Lord say to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor? (20:22-26)
19. Who received Aaron's garments? (20:27-28)
- * 20. Who died on Mount Hor? (20:28-29)

Get It

21. How do we try to take problems into our own hands instead of leaving them to God?
22. Why did Moses strike the rock?
23. How is God dishonored when we make hasty or emotion-charged decisions?
24. What do you think Moses felt when Miriam and Aaron died?
- * 25. What does death remind us about our responsibilities to God?
26. Knowing he was heading for death as he climbed Mount Hor, how do you think Aaron felt?
27. What is important to pass on to your family before you die?
- * 28. What can the deaths of others teach us about how we should honor God?

Apply It

- * 29. What is a specific action you can take this week to honor God?
30. How can the reality of death motivate you to consider the reality of eternity?

The Bronze Snake, Moab, and Sihon and Og - Numbers 21:1-35

Topics: Patience, Sin, Victory, Vows, War

Open It

- * 1. What are some of your pet peeves?
- 2. What happens when you pray to the Lord for patience?
- 3. What is a hasty decision you made that you later regretted?

Explore It

- 4. Who was captured by the Canaanite king? (21:1)
- 5. What vow did Israel make to the Lord? (21:2)
- 6. How did the Lord respond to Israel's plea? (21:3)
- * 7. Where did the people of Israel become impatient? (21:4)
- * 8. How did the people express their impatience against God and Moses? (21:5)
- * 9. What kind of punishment did the Lord give the Israelites for being impatient? (21:6)
- 10. How did the people ask Moses to intervene on their behalf? (21:7)
- 11. What did the Lord tell Moses to do with a snake? (21:8)
- 12. If someone was bitten by a snake, how could he or she be healed? (21:9)
- 13. Where did the nation of Israel go after Oboth? (21:10-15)
- 14. What did the Lord say to Moses at Beer? (21:16)
- 15. What song did the Israelites sing to the Lord? (21:17-18)
- 16. Where did Israel travel before sending a message to Sihon? (21:19-21)
- 17. How did Sihon respond to the message of the Israelites? (21:22-23)
- 18. Whom did Israel defeat in their battle campaign? (21:24-26)
- 19. What did the poets say about the battles of Israel? (21:27-30)
- 20. How did Israel win the battle against the king of Bashan? (21:31-35)

Get It

- * 21. What does this passage teach us about becoming impatient with God?
- 22. How was Moses able to remain patient even when those around him were not?
- * 23. In what ways do our sins come back to hurt us?
- 24. How can we allow the Lord to fight our battles?
- 25. When you're in a spiritual battle, how can patience bring a victory?
- 26. How can singing to the Lord make a difference when your patience is tested?
- 27. What are positive ways to deal with impatient people?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you allow the Lord to develop your character through testing times this week?
- 29. What is a specific area of your life today in which you would like to develop patience?

Balak Summons Balaam - Numbers 22:1-41

Topics: Anger, Blessing, Compromise, Decisions, Fear, Greed

Open It

1. What would you do with a million dollars if you suddenly got that much money?
- * 2. How can money distract people from what is really important?
3. What television shows do you know about that have talking animals for characters?

Explore It

4. Where did the Israelites camp? (22:1)
5. Who feared the Israelites? (22:2-3)
6. What did the Moabites say to the elders of Midian? (22:4)
7. What did Balak ask Balaam to do? (22:5-6)
8. How did Balaam respond to the requests of the elders? (22:7-8)
9. What conversation did God and Balaam have? (22:9-12)
10. What did Balaam tell Balak's princes? (22:13-14)
- * 11. What did the more distinguished princes offer Balaam? (22:15-17)
- * 12. How did Balaam respond to Balak's promise of riches? (22:18-19)
- * 13. What did the Lord do when He became angry with Balaam's attitude about riches? (22:20-22)
14. What conflict did Balaam have with his donkey? (22:23-27)
15. What heated words did Balaam and his donkey exchange? (22:28-30)
16. What happened when the Lord opened Balaam's eyes? (22:31)
17. What did the angel of the Lord and Balaam talk about? (22:32-35)
18. Where did Balak and Balaam meet each other? (22:36)
19. What did Balaam tell Balak about speaking for God? (22:37-38)
20. What events took place after Balak and Balaam met each other? (22:39-41)

Get It

- * 21. How did Balaam's desire for riches distract him from what God wanted him to do?
22. What are some of the ways we covet other people's wealth?
23. How would you have felt if you were Balaam's donkey?
- * 24. In what ways do we make it hard for God to get our attention?
25. Why do we often desire riches more than God?
26. How can listening to God help us keep wealth in perspective?
27. What does this passage tell us about obeying God?

Apply It

- * 28. In what specific way can you follow Christ over riches?
29. What can you do this week to keep from being distracted from God?

Balaam's Oracles - Numbers 23:1-24:25

Topics: Blessing, Destruction, Listening, Obedience, Rewards

Open It

- * 1. What projects have you taken on that were doomed to failure from the start?
- 2. In what way are you easily convinced or more of a skeptic?
- 3. What makes some people easily fooled by slick advertising or phony investment schemes?

Explore It

- 4. What did Balaam say to Balak after preparing an offering to God? (23:1-3)
- * 5. What message did God put in Balaam's mouth? (23:4-10)
- 6. How did a shocked Balak respond to Balaam's message? (23:11-14)
- * 7. What was the second message the Lord gave Balaam? (23:15-24)
- * 8. How did Balak try to convince Balaam for the third time to curse Israel? (23:25-30)
- 9. What did Balaam refrain from doing when he saw that God was pleased? (24:1)
- 10. Why did Balaam refrain from sorcery? (24:1)
- 11. What did the Spirit of God reveal to Balaam? (24:2-9)
- 12. How did Balak lash out in anger at Balaam? (24:10-11)
- 13. What did Balaam say about speaking for the Lord? (24:12-14)
- 14. From whom did Balaam receive his visions? (24:15-16)
- 15. According to Balaam, who was going to grow strong? (24:17-19)
- 16. What did Balaam say about nations that seemed to be secure? (24:20-24)
- 17. To where did Balaam return? (24:25)

Get It

- 18. How was Balak doomed from the beginning in trying to destroy Israel?
- * 19. What does this passage tell us about trying to change the plans of God?
- * 20. How did Balaam keep himself from being persuaded by Balak?
- 21. How do we sometimes try to change the mind of God?
- 22. What blessings do we receive when we listen to God?
- 23. What prevents us from listening to the voice of the Lord?
- 24. Who are people you know who boldly take a stand for God?
- 25. How does this passage reveal the sovereignty of God over all nations?

Apply It

- * 26. When can you take some time this week to listen to the voice of God through prayer and Bible reading?
- 27. How can you allow God to change your mind today instead of trying to change His?

Moab Seduces Israel - Numbers 25:1-18

Topics: Anger, Compromise, Culture, Disobedience, Idolatry, Sex

Open It

1. What are things people commonly do to be accepted by others?
- * 2. How is sex used by advertising companies to attract people's attention?
3. To what exotic country would you like to travel?

Explore It

4. Who became involved in sexual immorality? (25:1)
5. To whom did the men of Israel offer sacrifices? (25:2)
- * 6. What idol did Israel begin to worship? (25:3)
7. What did the Lord tell Moses to do to the leaders of Israel? (25:4)
- * 8. What were the Israelite judges told to do to the idol worshipers? (25:5)
9. What did one of the Israelites do right in front of Moses' eyes? (25:6)
10. How did Phinehas react to the sexually immoral man? (25:7-8)
11. How many people died in the plague sent by God? (25:9)
12. What did the Lord say to Moses about Phinehas? (25:10-13)
13. What was the name of the Israelite that was killed by Phinehas? (25:14)
14. Who was the Midianite woman? (25:15)
15. How was Moses to treat the Midianites? (25:17)
- * 16. How did God say the Israelites were guilty of idol worship? (25:17-18)

Get It

17. What in our society can distract us from worshiping God?
- * 18. What idols are Americans often guilty of worshiping?
19. How can sexual immorality destroy our relationship with God?
20. How do you think Moses felt to have a man like Phinehas on his side?
21. What does Phinehas's zeal for God tell you about his character?
- * 22. How is it risky to honor God when others would prefer to worship idols?
23. What are modern-day plagues that can result from sexual immorality?
24. How does God bless us when we honor Him?

Apply It

25. In what way can you honor God this week?
- * 26. What is an idol in your life that you need to put in its proper place?

The Second Census of the Nation - Numbers 26:1-27:23

Topics: Authority, Community, Delegation, Family, Leadership, People

Open It

- * 1. Who has the largest family that you know?
- 2. Where are your ancestors from?
- 3. What are some of the significant events in your family history?

Explore It

- 4. What were Moses and Eleazar told to do by the Lord? (26:1-4)
- * 5. How many people were in the clan of Reuben? (26:7)
- 6. How many men were devoured by fire? (26:10)
- * 7. How many people belonged to Judah's clan? (26:22)
- 8. Who were the descendants of Zebulun? (26:26)
- * 9. How many people were from the clan of Manasseh? (26:34)
- 10. What relatives belonged to the clan of Asher? (26:45)
- 11. What did the Lord tell Moses about an inheritance? (26:52-56)
- 12. Where did the census of the Israelites take place? (26:63)
- 13. What daughters came to Moses at the Tent of Meeting? (27:1-2)
- 14. What concern did the daughters bring to Moses? (27:3-4)
- 15. How did the Lord deal with the daughters' problem? (27:5-11)
- 16. What did the Lord say to Moses on the mountain? (27:12-14)
- 17. What did Moses ask the Lord to do for Israel? (27:15-17)
- 18. Who was appointed to lead Israel? (27:18)
- 19. What did the Lord tell Moses to do for Joshua? (27:19-21)
- 20. How was Joshua commissioned by Moses? (27:22-23)

Get It

- 21. How important for military purposes was it to know how many men Israel had?
- 22. With so many people in the world, how does it make you feel to know that God cares for you?
- 23. How did Moses have to depend on his leaders to help with the census?
- * 24. What is important about knowing who goes to the church you attend?
- * 25. What happens when people get lost in the crowd at church?
- 26. What lessons did Joshua learn from Moses' leadership?
- 27. What people in God's family have you relied on and considered important?
- 28. What makes it necessary to have strong leadership with large groups of people?

Apply It

- * 29. Who is someone you haven't seen at church lately that you can call this week?
- 30. What is one concrete way you can be a positive influence on someone else today?

Instructions Concerning Offerings - Numbers 28:1-30:16

Topics: Celebration, Fellowship, Obligation, Sacrifice, Vows, Worship

Open It

1. What is your favorite gourmet food?
- * 2. What makes a wedding feast exciting or boring?
3. What elaborate rituals do people do to get God's attention?

Explore It

4. What burnt offering did God command the Israelites to sacrifice to Him? (28:1-6)
5. What was prepared along with the drink offering? (28:7-8)
6. What offering was to be made on the Sabbath? (28:9-10)
- * 7. What was presented to the Lord on the first of every month? (28:11-15)
- * 8. How was the Passover feast to be celebrated? (28:16-25)
- * 9. The Feasts of Weeks was celebrated in what manner? (28:26-31)
10. When was the Feast of Trumpets celebrated? (29:1-6)
11. What offerings were made on the Day of Atonement? (29:7-11)
12. How long was the Feast of Tabernacles? (29:12)
13. What celebrations took place during the Feast of Tabernacles? (29:13-39)
14. What did Moses tell the Israelites? (29:40)
15. What did Moses say to the leaders of Israel about vows? (30:1-2)
16. What was the law concerning a young woman's vows? (30:3-5)
17. How were vows made within a marriage relationship? (30:6-15)
18. Who gave Moses the regulations concerning relationships? (30:16)

Get It

- * 19. How was it important for the Lord to remind Moses of all the feasts?
20. What does regular worship of the Lord do to our hearts?
- * 21. How are people transformed when they celebrate who God is?
22. What elements of worship help you to experience the presence of God?
23. What happens to our lives if we don't spend time worshiping God?
24. What is the relationship between worship and keeping our vows?
25. What is the difference between celebrating the Lord and celebrating at a party?
26. How can our worship to the Lord be authentic?

Apply It

27. What vow can you make to worship the Lord?
- * 28. What is a specific way you can celebrate who God is?
29. How can you offer yourself as a living sacrifice to worship God?

Vengeance on the Midianites - Numbers 31:1-54

Topics: Battle, Death, Revenge, Victory, War

Open It

1. What war veterans do you know personally?
- * 2. What is the most tragic war you can think of?
3. What kind of spiritual battles do Christians face?

Explore It

4. On whom did the Lord tell Moses to take vengeance? (31:1-2)
- * 5. Whom did Moses send into battle? (31:3-4)
- * 6. How many men did Israel send to fight the Midianites? (3:5-6)
7. Whom did the Israelites kill in the battle? (3:7-8)
8. Where was all the plunder brought? (3:9-12)
9. Why was Moses angry with his officers? (31:13-15)
10. What did Moses tell his officers to do with the women and children? (31:16-18)
11. How were the men told to cleanse themselves? (31:19-20)
12. What did Eleazar tell the soldiers? (31:21-24)
13. How did the Lord tell Moses to divide the spoils? (31:25-30)
14. How many animals were part of the spoils? (31:31-39)
15. How many people were given as a tribute to the Lord? (31:40)
16. What did the Israelite community receive from the spoils? (31:41-46)
17. What were the Levites given? (31:47)
- * 18. What message from the officers of the army did Moses receive? (31:48-49)
19. What offering to the Lord did the army officers bring? (31:50)
20. What did Moses and Eleazar accept from the officers? (31:51-54)

Get It

- * 21. How did Moses show his military leadership in the battle against Midian?
22. How is war a controversial topic among believers?
23. How can we know when we should fight and when we should try to avoid fighting?
24. What does the Bible have to say about spiritual warfare?
25. How does Satan try to thwart God's plans?
26. For what purposes does God allow wars to happen?
27. What battles do Christians get into that are best to avoid?
- * 28. What spiritual battles do we fight?
29. How did God use Moses to communicate His battle plans?

Apply It

- * 30. What can you do to be prepared for spiritual battles in your life?
31. What do you want to remember the next time you must defend someone else or fight for a noble cause?

The Transjordan Tribes - Numbers 32:1-42

Topics: Assumptions, Bargaining, Conflict, Disagreements, Promises, Sincerity

Open It

- * 1. What are people trying to achieve when they make deals?
- 2. What is it like to be on a team where some members aren't doing their part?
- 3. What types of agreements are you hesitant to make?

Explore It

- 4. Who came to Moses and Eleazar? (32:1-2)
- * 5. What kind of deal did the Reubenites and Gadites try to make with Moses? (32:3-5)
- 6. How did Moses react to the Reubenites' and Gadites' request? (32:6)
- 7. What was Moses' explanation for denying the Reubenites' and Gadites' request? (32:7-15)
- * 8. What kind of deal did the Reubenites and Gadites counterpropose? (32:16-19)
- 9. How did Moses agree with the counterproposal? (32:20-22)
- * 10. What warning did Moses give if the people failed to follow through on their promise? (32:23)
- 11. How did the Gadites and Reubenites answer Moses? (32:25-27)
- 12. What orders did Moses give to Eleazar and Joshua? (32:28-30)
- 13. What property did the Gadites and Reubenites say they wanted? (32:31-32)
- 14. What property did Moses give the Reubenites and Gadites? (32:33)
- 15. What did the Gadites build? (32:34-36)
- 16. What cities did the Reubenites build up? (32:37-38)
- 17. Where did the descendants of Manasseh settle? (32:39-41)
- 18. After what did Nobah name his city? (32:42)

Get It

- * 19. What is the danger of trying to make deals with God?
- 20. How does our sin eventually catch up with us?
- 21. What is the danger in jumping to conclusions?
- 22. Why is it important to be equitable when making agreements?
- 23. In what ways did Moses jump to conclusions about the Gadites and Reubenites?
- 24. What is created in relationships when people follow through on their agreements?
- * 25. How do agreements reflect our true character?
- 26. What might have Moses been feeling when two nations wanted to stay behind?

Apply It

- * 27. In what specific way can you stick to your agreements this week?
- 28. How can you become more trustworthy in your relationships?

Stages in Israel's Journey - Numbers 33:1-56

Topics: Direction, Idolatry, Possessions, Remembering, Trouble

Open It

- * 1. What is the longest trip you have ever been on?
- 2. What makes jet lag so terrible?
- 3. How do road maps make a critical difference when you're lost?

Explore It

- 4. What is this passage describing about Israel? (33:1)
- * 5. Who recorded the Israelites' journey? (33:2)
- * 6. When did the Israelites leave Egypt? (33:3)
 - 7. What was at Elim? (33:9)
 - 8. What was missing at Rephidim? (33:14)
 - 9. Where did the Israelites camp after leaving Libnah? (33:21)
 - 10. After the Israelites left Mithcah, where did they camp? (33:29)
 - 11. Where was Kadesh located? (33:36)
- * 12. Where did Aaron die on the trip to the Promised Land? (33:38)
 - 13. How old was Aaron when he died? (33:39)
 - 14. Who heard that the Israelites were coming? (33:40)
 - 15. Where did the Israelites camp? (33:47)
 - 16. Where did the Lord speak to Moses about crossing the Jordan? (33:50)
 - 17. What did the Lord command Moses to do? (33:51-53)
 - 18. How was the land to be distributed? (33:54)
 - 19. What did God promise to Israel if they didn't drive out the inhabitants? (33:55-56)

Get It

- * 20. What are the similarities between the Israelites' journey and your experience with Christ?
 - 21. What reasons did Moses have for keeping a record of the Israelites' journey?
- * 22. How can a Christian become weary in following Christ?
 - 23. What are ways we can refresh ourselves when we get tired of walking with God?
 - 24. How could the Israelites have been tempted not to destroy the idols in Midian?
 - 25. What makes it difficult to wait for God's blessings?
 - 26. What was God's message to the Israelites when He said He wanted all the idols destroyed?
 - 27. How do certain sins remain barbs in our heart when we don't give them to God?

Apply It

- * 28. What can you do this week to look back and record what God has done in your life?
- 29. What younger person can you influence in a godly way?
- 30. What concrete way can you drive out any idols in your life this week?

Dividing the Land - Numbers 34:1-36:13

Topics: Commands, Direction, Moving, Murder, Schedule

Open It

1. What do you dislike about moving?
- * 2. If you were to inherit something important, what would you want it to be?
3. How do you feel when you're left out and forgotten on special holidays?

Explore It

4. What land were the Israelites about to enter? (34:1-2)
- * 5. What were the boundaries of the Israelites' inheritance? (34:3-12)
6. What did Moses command the Israelites? (34:13-15)
7. Who were the men appointed to help assign the land? (34:16-29)
- * 8. What were the Levites given as part of their inheritance? (35:1-5)
9. What was the purpose for some of the towns given to the Levites? (35:6-8)
10. For whom were the towns of the Levites? (35:9-15)
11. How was someone found guilty of murder? (35:16-21)
12. Who judged whether a killing was accidental? (36:22-28)
13. What legal requirements did the Lord give the Israelites regarding bloodshed? (36:29-34)
14. What difficulty did the leaders of Gilead and Manasseh bring to Moses? (36:1-4)
- * 15. What was the Lord's command regarding the inheritance of Zelophedad's daughters? (36:5-9)
16. Whom did Zelophedad's daughters marry? (36:10-12)
17. Who gave Moses commands and regulations? (36:13)

Get It

- * 18. How do you think the Israelites might have been feeling before moving into the Promised Land? Why?
19. In what way was Moses like a real estate broker?
20. How does moving challenge your patience with others?
21. For what did the Israelites have to prepare before going into Canaan?
22. How does the Lord prepare us when He moves us in new directions?
- * 23. What feelings do you experience when you're not sure where the Lord is leading you?
24. How is it important not to put our trust in an inheritance?
25. What do you want your children to inherit from your example as a Christian?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you yield your life to God today even if you're not sure where God is leading you?
27. In what area of your life is God wanting you to move ahead or make a change?

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Moses Talks to the People - Deuteronomy 1:1-46

Topics: Covenant, Faithfulness, Miracles, Power, Remembering, Sovereignty

Open It

1. What kinds of mementos do you keep to remember special events?
2. What pictures do you hold in your wallet?
- * 3. If you wanted people to remember you by one thing, what would it be?

Explore It

- * 4. When did Moses remind the Israelites about what God had commanded them? (1:1-5)
5. What did the Lord say to the Israelites at Horeb? (1:6-8)
6. What problem did Moses present to the Lord? (1:9-15)
7. How were the judges told to settle disputes? (1:16-18)
8. Where were the Israelites told to go take the land? (1:19-21)
9. Who was sent into the land to spy it out? (1:22-25)
- * 10. How did the Israelites grumble against the Lord? (1:26-28)
- * 11. What did Moses say to remind Israel of God's presence? (1:29-31)
12. How did Moses say Israel did not trust God? (1:32-33)
13. What did God say when Israel rebelled against Him? (1:34-37)
14. Whom did God promise to allow into the land? (1:38-40)
15. What did Israel do after God told them not to go up into the hill country? (1:41-42)
16. What happened to Israel after not listening to God? (1:43-44)
17. To whom did Israel return after getting beaten back to Hormah? (1:45-46)

Get It

- * 18. How do we so quickly forget to follow God when He always remembers us?
19. What are the dangers of taking problems into our own hands?
20. How is it important to have many leaders in working with large crowds?
21. What moves God to be faithful to us even when we are not faithful to Him?
- * 22. How can your memory of God serve you to be obedient to Him?
23. What are things in this society that people tend to trust?
24. What does this passage teach you about trusting God?
25. In what ways is it difficult to trust God?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you remember to walk with God this week in everything you do?
27. What specific need do you want to entrust to God in prayer today?

Stuck in the Wilderness - Deuteronomy 2:1-37

Topics: Direction, Giving Up, Suffering, Victory, War, Weaknesses

Open It

1. What is your greatest victory in life so far?
2. What is the difference between winners and quitters?
- * 3. What does it feel like when you're lost and there's no one to give you directions?

Explore It

- * 4. What new direction did the Israelites take? (2:1)
5. What did the Lord say about passing through the new territory? (2:2-6)
6. What did the Israelites lack during their forty-year journey? (2:7)
7. Where did the people of God travel after passing Seir? (2:8)
8. What did God say about harassing the Moabites? (2:9-12)
9. What had happened to the generation of men who left Kadesh Barnea? (2:13-16)
10. How were the Israelites told to pass by the region of Moab? (2:17-23)
- * 11. What directions did God give Israel about passing through Heshbon? (2:24-29)
12. How did Sihon respond to Moses' request? (2:30)
- * 13. How did the Lord direct the Israelites into battle? (2:31-33)
14. What did Israel gain with the Lord on their side? (2:34-36)
15. How did Israel keep the Lord's commands? (2:37)

Get It

16. What is the relationship between following instructions and winning?
- * 17. What makes it difficult to take directions from others?
- * 18. How does God give us direction in our lives?
19. In what ways is it difficult to direct a large, stubborn group of people?
20. How would you have felt if you were Moses trying to get Israel to follow the Lord?
21. What happens when we allow God to fight our battles?
22. What happens to people in our society who can't follow directions?
23. If someone is willing to follow directions, what might he or she have to give us?

Apply It

- * 24. What is a concrete way you can follow the Lord's direction in your life today?
25. What is an area of your life that you would like the Lord to redirect?

Dividing the Land - Deuteronomy 3:1-29

Topics: Anger, Community, Divisions, Fear, Opposition, War

Open It

1. What is it like arriving at the airport and forgetting your tickets?
- * 2. What do you think of when you see war-torn countries on television?
3. What struggles do refugees of war face?

Explore It

- * 4. Who met the Israelites to do battle against them? (3:1)
5. What did the Lord say to Moses about fighting the king of Bashan? (3:2)
- * 6. What happened in the battle against Og? (3:3-7)
- * 7. What land did the Israelites take over after the battle? (3:8-11)
8. What land did Moses give to the Reubenites and Gadites? (3:12)
9. What land did Manasseh receive? (3:13)
10. Who was Jair? (3:14)
11. What land did Makir receive? (3:15)
12. What were the territories received by the Reubenites and Gadites? (3:16-17)
13. What did the Lord command the men of Israel to do? (3:18)
14. Where did the women and children stay? (3:19-20)
15. What did Moses command Joshua? (3:21-22)
16. How did Moses plead with the Lord? (3:23-25)
17. How did the Lord respond to Moses' request? (3:26-27)
18. How did God tell Moses to support Joshua? (3:28-29)

Get It

- * 19. How was it important for the Israelites to follow God's specific battle instructions?
20. What types of victories do we receive when we persevere through personal battles?
21. How would you have felt if you were Moses looking into the land you couldn't enter?
22. What does this passage have to say about encouraging emerging leaders?
- * 23. What types of fears do we face in personal battles?
24. How do these verses encourage you not to fear struggles?
25. What are the positive outcomes we experience during difficult times?

Apply It

26. In what area of your life do you need God's strength this week?
- * 27. How can you deal with your personal battles in a positive way?

Obedience to God - Deuteronomy 4:1-43

Topics: Blessing, Character, Instructions, Law, Obedience, Remembering

Open It

1. How much time have you spent in traffic court?
- * 2. How do you benefit when other people obey the laws of our country?
3. What nations are good examples of lawlessness?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Moses say to Israel about God's laws? (4:1-2)
5. What happened at Baal Peor? (4:3-4)
- * 6. What would other nations say about Israel if Israel followed God's laws? (4:5-8)
- * 7. How was Israel to be careful in following God's laws? (4:9)
8. What happened when Israel stood before the Lord at Horeb? (4:10-14)
9. How was Israel commanded to carefully watch themselves? (4:15-20)
10. What happened when the Lord was angry with Moses? (4:21-22)
11. For what reasons were the Israelites told not to forget their covenant with God? (4:23-28)
12. What would happen if Israel would seek God? (4:29-31)
13. What were the Israelites told to ask about the former days? (4:32-38)
14. What was Israel told to acknowledge? (4:39-40)
15. What was the purpose of the three cities Moses set aside? (4:41-43)

Get It

- * 16. What blessings come with keeping God's laws?
17. What are the consequences for those who reject God's commands?
- * 18. How are God's laws and living a meaningful life related?
19. What are ways that we are not careful about obeying the Word of God?
20. What consequence did Moses receive for not honoring God?
21. How do you think God feels when we don't want to obey Him?
22. What does this passage teach you about seeking God?
23. To what degree is seeking God and obeying His Word related?

Apply It

- * 24. What is a specific Bible verse that you would like to use to encourage others to honor God?
25. What is one command of God's that you can highlight or memorize this week?

Obedience Commanded - Deuteronomy 4:44-5:33

Topics: Commands, Consequences, Glory, Idolatry, Law, Listening, Obedience, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What few Bible movies have been made by Hollywood?
- 2. What does it mean to be a good and moral person?
- 3. How do some people try to figure out their future through astrology?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Moses set before the Israelites? (4:44-45)
- 5. Where did Moses defeat Sihon? (4:46)
- 6. What land did the Israelites take possession of? (4:47-49)
- * 7. What did Moses say about the law to the Israelites? (5:1-4)
- 8. What did the Lord say to the Israelites? (5:5-10)
- * 9. What other laws did the Lord give the Israelites? (5:11-15)
- 10. What did the Lord tell the people about their relationship with their parents? (5:16)
- 11. What did God say about murder? (5:17)
- 12. What were the people told about committing adultery? (5:18)
- 13. What did the Lord command the Israelites concerning stealing? (5:19)
- 14. How are neighbors told to be treated? (5:20)
- 15. What were the Israelites commanded not to covet? (5:21)
- 16. Who gave the commandments to Moses? (5:22)
- 17. What did the Israelites say to Moses? (5:23-27)
- 18. What was God's response to Moses? (5:28-33)

Get It

- 19. What is important about the Ten Commandments?
- * 20. How might our country be different if people followed God's laws?
- 21. What is the passage telling us about listening to God?
- * 22. What makes people responsive to some of God's laws but not all of them?
- 23. How does this passage challenge you to take God's laws more seriously?
- 24. How do some people think having good morals will get them to heaven?
- 25. What does this Scripture tell us about the use of our tongue?
- 26. How does our relationship with God affect our relationship with others?

Apply It

- * 27. What is a creative way you can take God's law to heart this week?
- 28. What concrete way will help you to obey the Ten Commandments?

Love the Lord Your God - Deuteronomy 6:1-25

Topics: Children, Commitment, Disobedience, God, Home, Love, Obedience, Responsibility

Open It

1. What is the most important thing you have learned from your parents?
2. How have you seen God act in a powerful way?
- * 3. What do you enjoy most about children?

Explore It

4. What did God direct Moses to teach to the Israelites? (6:1)
- * 5. What was a very important reason for the Israelites to know God's laws? (6:2)
6. With what was the Promised Land filled? (6:3)
7. What was Israel commanded to hear? (6:4)
8. How was Israel told to love the Lord? (6:5)
9. Where are the commandments of the Lord to be? (6:6)
- * 10. How are parents to teach their children God's Word? (6:7)
11. Where is God's Word to be placed? (6:8-9)
12. What was Israel told to remember when the Lord brings them into the land? (6:10-12)
13. How was Israel commanded to fear God? (6:13)
14. What is the consequence for following other gods? (6:14-15)
15. Where did the Israelites test the Lord? (6:16)
16. For what reason are the Israelites told to keep the commands of God? (6:17-19)
- * 17. How are the Israelites told to respond when their children ask about God's law? (6:20-23)
18. What does the Lord say are the benefits of keeping His law? (6:24-25)

Get It

19. How do children view God differently from adults?
20. What does it mean to live with child-like faith?
- * 21. What makes it possible for children to learn about God from their parents?
22. How does this passage explain the benefits of following God?
23. What does God promise when we obey His commands?
24. What makes it easier to follow gods other than the God of Israel?
- * 25. What can children teach older people about honoring God?

Apply It

- * 26. What is practical way you can teach you children about God today?
27. How can you thank God this week for how far He has brought you in your faith?

Driving Out the Nations - Deuteronomy 7:1-26

Topics: Blessing, Change, Faithfulness, Holy, Power, Promises, Religion

Open It

1. What do you find most fascinating about ancient empires?
- * 2. What “gods” are worshiped in our culture today?
3. How do some people worship things without even realizing it?

Explore It

4. What did God command the Israelites to do when He drove out the nations? (7:1-2)
5. For what reason are the Israelites told not to intermarry? (7:3-4)
- * 6. What are the people told to do with the altars of idols? (7:5)
7. How is Israel the treasured possession of God? (7:6)
8. What was the motive of God to choose Israel over other nations? (7:7-8)
9. How faithful is God? (7:9-10)
10. To what was Israel told to pay special attention? (7:11-12)
11. How would Israel be blessed by obeying God? (7:13-15)
- * 12. How would other gods hurt Israel’s relationship with God? (7:16)
13. What fearful question do the people of Israel ask? (7:17)
14. How was Israel told not to fear the other nations? (7:18-20)
15. What characteristics of God are described in this passage? (7:21)
16. How was Israel promised by God to drive out the other nations? (7:22-24)
- * 17. What was Israel told to do with the pagan gods? (7:25-26)

Get It

18. What do you think others think of when they hear the word idol?
- * 19. What is the danger of Christians’ following idols?
20. In what ways do people sometimes make idols out of other people?
- * 21. How do impersonal idols ruin a personal relationship with God?
22. What type of statement did God make by asking for the complete destruction of all idols?
23. How does the warning God gave Israel about idols relate to us today?
24. How is God able to drive out the idols in a person’s life?

Apply It

- * 25. What is an idol you need to forsake in order to follow God faithfully?
26. How can you bolster your confidence in the great and awesome power of God?

Do Not Forget the Lord - Deuteronomy 8:1-9:6

Topics: Abandon, Accountability, Evil, Forget, Forsake, Honesty, Mercy, Zeal

Open It

1. Who are some of the wealthiest people in the world today?
2. What is the important accomplishment you have achieved?
- * 3. What is one thing you tend to be forgetful about?

Explore It

- * 4. How were God's people told to remember the commands of God? (8:1-2)
5. How did the Lord humble the Israelites? (8:3-4)
6. How does God discipline us? (8:5)
7. Why did God want Israel to remember His commands? (8:6-9)
- * 8. How was Israel told not to forget God? (8:10-14)
9. How did the Lord provide for Israel in the desert? (8:15-16)
- * 10. What was Israel commanded to remember about God? (8:17-20)
11. How strong were the nations Israel was going to fight against? (9:1)
12. What were the physical characteristics of the Israelites' opponents? (9:2)
13. How would the Lord go before the enemies of Israel? (9:3)
14. What was Israel told not to say to itself? (9:4)
15. What was the reason Israel was taking possession of the land? (9:5)
16. How did God describe the people of Israel? (9:6)

Get It

17. What is the relationship between forgetfulness and responsibility?
18. How do you feel when you have to keep reminding people to do things?
19. How do you think God feels when He keeps reminding us not to forget Him?
- * 20. What does this section of Scripture teach you about remembering God?
21. How can wealth distract us from God?
22. How can we remember that God is the ultimate provider of everything we have?
23. What can we humbly give to God for all the blessings He gives us?
- * 24. How are we inclined to take credit for the things God does for us?

Apply It

- * 25. What is a practical way you can remember God in all you do this week?
26. What is a clear way you can integrate God's commands into your life today?

The Golden Calf - Deuteronomy 9:7-29

Topics: Anger, Idolatry, Prayer, Punishment, Stubbornness, Testing, Unfaithfulness

Open It

1. What is it about some people that prevents them from keeping a promise?
2. How do you feel when you do something kind for someone and he or she doesn't say thank you?
- * 3. If you could destroy one evil in this world, what would it be?

Explore It

- * 4. What does Moses say about Israel's rebellion against God? (9:7)
5. Where did Israel arouse the Lord's wrath? (9:8)
6. How long was Moses up on the mountain? (9:9)
7. What was on the tablets the Lord gave Moses? (9:10)
8. What were the tablets given to Moses called? (9:11)
9. What did the Lord say to Moses? (9:12)
- * 10. How did the Lord describe the stubbornness of the people of Israel? (9:13)
11. What did God want Moses to do? (9:14)
12. What did Moses have in his hands when he went down the mountain? (9:15)
13. What had the Israelites made while Moses was gone? (9:16)
14. What did Moses do after he broke the tablets? (9:17-19)
15. How did Moses intervene on behalf of Aaron? (9:20)
16. What did Moses do with the golden calf? (9:21)
17. Where else did the people of Israel make the Lord angry? (9:22-23)
- * 18. How did Moses plead for Israel's rebellious ways? (9:24-29)

Get It

- * 19. What do you consider to be the root of rebellion?
20. What are possible reasons the Israelites were so rebellious against God?
21. How can prayer make a difference in someone else's life?
22. If you were Moses, how might you have become sick and tired of the Israelites?
23. How should we treat people who never cooperate?
24. What does this passage teach us about the patience of God?
- * 25. In what ways are we stubborn against God?
26. What keeps God from destroying those who rebel against Him?

Apply It

- * 27. What is an area of rebellion in your life that you need to confess to God today?
28. Who is someone who has turned away from God that you can encourage to return to the Lord?

Tablets like the First Ones - Deuteronomy 10:1-22

Topics: Commands, Expectations, Law, Praise, Promises, Work

Open It

- * 1. What bothers you most when someone is not listening to you?
- 2. What types of risks are involved in dreaming big dreams?
- 3. If you were walking alone at night, whom would you want alongside you?

Explore It

- 4. What did the Lord tell Moses to chisel out? (10:1)
- 5. What did God say He would write on the tablets? (10:2)
- 6. Where did Moses go after he made the ark? (10:3)
- 7. What did God put on the tablets? (10:4)
- 8. Where did Moses put the tablets when he came down the mountain? (10:5)
- 9. Where was Aaron buried? (10:6)
- 10. What is the reason the Levites have no inheritance? (10:7-9)
- * 11. Who listened to Moses when he was on the mountain? (10:10)
- 12. What did God tell Moses to do? (10:11)
- * 13. How did the Lord ask Israel to listen to Him? (10:12-13)
- 14. What belongs to the Lord? (10:14)
- 15. On whom does the Lord set His affection? (10:15)
- 16. What did God command Israel to do? (10:16)
- 17. How is the character of God described in this passage? (10:17-18)
- 18. Whom is Israel called to love? (10:19)
- * 19. What are the reasons Israel is told to listen to God? (10:20-22)

Get It

- * 20. What difficulties do we face when we don't listen to God?
- 21. How does God's negative description of Israel relate to how we treat God?
- 22. What is the difference between listening and hearing?
- 23. How can listening to God and hearing God be two separate things?
- 24. How can you know whether God is speaking to you?
- 25. What does the character of God in this passage tell us of His desire to speak to us?
- * 26. In what way are the Ten Commandments a good place to begin listening to the Lord?

Apply It

- * 27. When is a time you can listen to the voice of God through His Word this week?
- 28. Where is a quiet place you can spend time listening to God today in prayer?
- 29. Which one of the Ten Commandments challenges you the most in honoring God?

Love and Obey the Lord - Deuteronomy 11:1-32

Topics: Carelessness, Heart, Love, Miracles, Obedience

Open It

- * 1. What rules in your home were you expected to obey as a child?
- 2. What makes some people skeptical about miracles?
- 3. What is your favorite time of the day?
- 4. What do you think is the most important law in this country? Why?

Explore It

- 5. Whom were the people of Israel told to love? (11:1)
- 6. What was Israel commanded to remember? (11:2-4)
- 7. What did the Lord do to Dathan and Abiram? (11:5-7)
- * 8. What were the people of Israel told to observe? (11:8-9)
- 9. What was the land the Israelites were entering like? (11:10-12)
- * 10. What would happen if Israel obeyed the commands of the Lord? (11:13-15)
- 11. How was Israel to be careful? (11:16-17)
- 12. Where were the people told to put the commands of God? (11:18)
- * 13. Who was supposed to be taught the laws of the Lord? (11:19)
- 14. What was the purpose of writing the laws of the Lord on their homes? (11:20-21)
- 15. What did God promise if Israel carefully observed His commands? (11:22-25)
- 16. What was the Lord setting before Israel? (11:26-28)
- 17. Where are Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal located? (11:29-30)
- 18. What was Israel told to do when they took possession of the land? (11:31-32)

Get It

- * 19. What do you think God considers to be His most important law?
- 20. In light of this passage of Scripture, what do you think is the most important law in this country? Why?
- 21. How are both good and bad consequences related to laws?
- * 22. What happens when we fix God's law upon our heart and mind?
- 23. What does this passage teach you about being careful to love the Lord?
- 24. How does the fear of punishment keep people from breaking God's law?
- 25. How does God want us to be motivated by fear?
- 26. What blessings do we receive when we obey God's commands?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one practical way you can memorize or remind yourself of God's Word this week?
- 28. How can you love God with all your heart at home? at work?

The One Place of Worship - Deuteronomy 12:1-32

Topics: Celebration, Direction, Disobedience, Idolatry, Right, Sacrifice, Worship

Open It

- * 1. Why is it important to read the owner's manual when you buy a new car?
- 2. What's the first thing you like to do when you get home from a trip?
- 3. What is your favorite room in your home?

Explore It

- 4. What did God command Israel to do to all the altars of worship? (12:1-3)
- 5. What was Israel told about worshiping the Lord? (12:4)
- * 6. What directions was Israel given regarding worshiping the Lord? (12:5-6)
- 7. About what were the families of Israel told to worship? (12:7)
- 8. When was Israel to worship the Lord? (12:8-9)
- * 9. What specific directions did God give Israel about where to worship the Lord? (12:10-14)
- 10. What did God say about eating animals? (12:15-16)
- 11. Where was Israel commanded to eat? (12:17-18)
- 12. Whom were the Israelites told not to neglect? (12:19)
- * 13. What clear direction were the people given concerning eating meat? (12:20-25)
- 14. Where was Israel told to present their burnt offerings to the Lord? (12:26-27)
- 15. For what reason was Israel to be careful to obey the Lord? (12:28)
- 16. How was Israel to be careful about being ensnared by other gods? (12:29-30)
- 17. How did the pagan nations worship other gods? (12:31)
- 18. What were the Israelites told not to do with God's commands? (12:32)

Get It

- * 19. How is life more significant when we follow directions?
- 20. What does this passage teach about the importance of worship?
- 21. What happens when we don't take worship seriously?
- 22. What does God want our attitudes to be when we come to worship Him?
- 23. How is it important to worship God as He wants and not how we want?
- * 24. What was Israel's track record for following God's directions for worship?
- 25. What can Christians learn about worship for today from this passage?
- 26. How does God show His concern for Israel by giving very specific instructions?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do today to follow God's direction for worship in your life?
- 28. How can you deepen your walk with Christ this week through authentic worship?

Worshipping Other Gods - Deuteronomy 13:1-18

Topics: Compassion, Honor, Mercy, Occult, Slavery, Testing

Open It

- * 1. How do you know when someone is telling the truth or lying?
- 2. What unusual habits do you have while driving a car?
- 3. What kinds of situations move people to be compassionate?

Explore It

- * 4. How was Israel commanded not to listen to false prophets? (13:1-3)
- 5. To whom was Israel told to hold fast? (13:4)
- * 6. What was supposed to happen to false prophets? (13:5)
- 7. What happened if a family member tried to pull another away from God? (13:6-8)
- 8. What was the punishment for a family member who turned people away from God? (13:9-10)
- 9. What was the purpose of severe penalties on idol-worshipping family members? (13:11)
- 10. What was to be done to investigate the actions of wicked men in a town? (13:12-14)
- 11. How was a whole town punished for the sin of idol worship? (13:15)
- 12. How was an entire town supposed to be destroyed for worshipping other gods? (13:16)
- * 13. How would God treat His people for doing away with idols? (13:17-18)

Get It

- 14. What is the purpose of such severe consequences to idol worship?
- 15. As a God of truth, how does God refuse to allow falsehood?
- 16. What does God's desire for truth tell you about His love for His people?
- 17. How can we discern truth from falsehood?
- * 18. What kinds of false prophets exist in our society today?
- * 19. In what ways are people not honest with God?
- 20. What are positive ways of dealing with family members involved in false religions?

Apply It

- * 21. What is a specific way you can be honest with God today?
- 22. Who is someone you need to be more truthful to? How?

Clean and Unclean - Deuteronomy 14:1-29

Topics: Food, Law, Money, People, Rules, Tithing

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite animal?
- 2. What kind of animal are you most afraid of?
- 3. How are generous people different from stingy people?

Explore It

- 4. What is the Israelites' identity? (14:1)
- 5. What did the Lord choose His people to be? (14:2)
- * 6. What animals did the Lord say the Israelites were able to eat? (14:3-5)
- 7. What kinds of restrictions did the Lord put on eating animals with hooves? (14:6-7)
- * 8. What specific animal were the Israelites not allowed to eat? (14:8)
- 9. What types of fish were the Israelites allowed to eat? (14:9-10)
- * 10. What birds were the people of God given permission to eat? (14:11-20)
- 11. What did the Lord say about eating dead things? (14:21)
- 12. How were the Israelites told to handle tithes? (14:22-25)
- 13. What was Israel told to do with their silver? (14:26)
- 14. Whom were the Israelites told not to neglect? (14:27)
- 15. What were the people of Israel told to do every three years? (14:28-29)

Get It

- * 16. How do the laws of God differ from the laws of the jungle?
- 17. How do humans sometimes act like animals?
- 18. How were Israel's food restrictions a way for them to honor God?
- * 19. What possible reasons exist for God's determining clean and unclean animals?
- 20. How are we called to specifically live according to God's commands today?
- 21. How do you feel knowing that God has chosen you to be His treasured possession?
- 22. What does it mean to be children of the Lord?
- 23. How can we live holy lives to the Lord?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you honor God this week by obeying His specific commands?
- 25. How can you rest in God's grace today knowing you are His treasured possession?

The Year for Canceling Debts - Deuteronomy 15:1-23

Topics: Abundance, Generosity, Money, Poor, Selfishness, Slavery, Value

Open It

- * 1. What is it like to lend someone money and not get paid back?
- 2. How can wealth create more problems than poverty?
- 3. How can helping the poor change the way we value certain things?

Explore It

- 4. What were the Israelites told to do at the end of every seven years? (15:1)
- * 5. How were canceled debts supposed to be handled? (15:2)
- 6. From whom was Israel required to cancel their debts? (15:3)
- 7. What did God not want in Israel? (15:4-6)
- * 8. What attitude did God want the Israelites to have toward people in need? (15:7-8)
- 9. What wicked thought was Israel told not to harbor? (15:9)
- * 10. What would happen if Israel gave generously? (15:10)
- 11. How did God command the people of Israel to treat the poor? (15:11)
- 12. When was a fellow Hebrew allowed to be let go? (15:12-13)
- 13. With what was a released Hebrew slave to be provided? (15:14)
- 14. What was Israel told to remember? (15:15)
- 15. What was to happen if a servant did not want to leave his or her master? (15:16-18)
- 16. What was Israel told to set apart for the Lord? (15:19)
- 17. How were the Israelites commanded to eat animals presented to the Lord? (15:20-22)
- 18. What were the Israelites told not to eat? (15:23)

Get It

- * 19. What makes lending money a difficult thing to do?
- 20. How does this passage teach us about God's concern for the poor?
- 21. What are common attitudes Christians have about giving?
- 22. What should be our attitude about giving?
- 23. How could God's church make a bigger difference in the world if people were givers?
- 24. What is the difference between a giver and a taker?
- * 25. How are relationships to be handled when one person doesn't repay another?
- 26. How can Christians fight poverty today?
- 27. How does cheerful giving demonstrate a powerful example of God's presence in our lives?

Apply It

- * 28. What is a specific step you can take to give or to help someone in need?
- 29. What can you do this week to pay back any debt you may have to someone else?
- 30. What can you do to forgive someone else's debt?

Passover - Deuteronomy 16:1-20

Topics: Celebration, Justice, Remembering, Sacrifice, Thanksgiving

Open It

1. What is your favorite time of the year?
- * 2. What celebrations does your family celebrate every year?
3. What are you most thankful for in your life?

Explore It

- * 4. What was Israel told to celebrate? (16:1)
5. What were the Israelites told to sacrifice? (16:2)
6. What type of bread was Israel told to eat? (16:3)
7. What were the Israelites not allowed to have in their possession? (16:4)
- * 8. Where were the people of Israel allowed to celebrate the Passover? (16:5-6)
9. How was the Passover sacrifice to be cooked? (16:7)
10. What were the Israelites told to do on the seventh day of Passover? (16:8)
11. When were the Israelites told to celebrate the Feast of Weeks? (16:9-11)
12. What was Israel told to remember? (16:12)
- * 13. When were the Israelites to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles? (16:13-14)
14. How would the Lord bless the Israelites? (16:15)
15. How many times a year were the men of Israel required to stand before the Lord? (16:16)
16. What was each man required to bring? (16:17)
17. Who was to be appointed in every town of the Israelites? (16:18)
18. How was justice to be carried out in Israel? (16:19)
19. For what reason was Israel to follow justice? (16:20)

Get It

- * 20. What is the purpose of celebrating the Lord?
21. What are different ways people choose to celebrate the Lord?
22. What does this passage imply about consistently celebrating God?
- * 23. How does a heart of celebration change our perspective when circumstances are not going well?
24. What is the reason God commands us to be joyful?
25. What is unattractive about people who aren't joyful?
26. Why should we discipline ourselves to be joyful?

Apply It

- * 27. What step can you take to celebrate the Lord today?
28. How can you celebrate what God has done in your life this past week?

Worshipping Other Gods - Deuteronomy 16:21-17:20

Topics: Idolatry, Judgment, Justice, Law, Sacrifice, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is the most outrageous legal case you've ever heard about?
- 2. If you were caught for a crime, how would you want to be treated?

Explore It

- 3. What was Israel commanded not to set up? (16:21-22)
- 4. What kind of sacrifice is detestable to the Lord? (17:1)
- * 5. What was to be done if someone was suspected of worshipping other gods? (17:2-4)
- 6. How was the punishment for idol worship to be handled? (17:5)
- 7. How many witnesses were required for someone to be put to death? (17:6)
- 8. Who was first required to lay hands on a person about to be stoned? (17:7)
- * 9. What were the Israelites supposed to do with cases that were too difficult to handle? (17:8)
- 10. To whom were the people required to go for legal matters? (17:9)
- * 11. How were the Israelites required to act according to the judges' decisions? (17:10-11)
- 12. What happened to someone who showed contempt for the judge? (17:12-13)
- 13. How was the appointment of a king to be handled? (17:14-15)
- 14. What was the king not permitted to do? (17:16-17)
- 15. The king is required to write down what? (17:18)
- 16. What was the king commanded to do with the law of God? (17:19)
- 17. How was the king supposed to treat his brothers? (17:20)

Get It

- * 18. What does this passage teach us about God's concern for justice?
- 19. According to this Scripture, how does God want legal matters handled?
- 20. What implications do these verses have for our attitude toward justice and fairness?
- 21. In what way was the king of Israel to be a spiritual leader of his people?
- 22. How is it crucial that Christian leaders today spend time reading the Scriptures?
- * 23. What does this passage teach us about giving others a fair trial?
- 24. How do Christians sometimes judge others without knowing all the facts?
- 25. What can we do to be fair and just to others?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you treat others with justice at home? at work?
- 27. What is one specific way you can help yourself refrain from making premature judgments against others?

Offerings for Priests and Levites; Detestable Practices; Prophets - Deuteronomy 18:1-22

Topics: Call, Choices, Evil, Giving, Occult, Promises, Prophecy

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of occult practices seem most bizarre to you?
- 2. What do you think draws people to the occult?
- 3. Whom do you know who has chosen ministry as a career?

Explore It

- 4. What were the priests of Israel not to have? (18:1-2)
- 5. What were the priests to receive from the people? (18:3-5)
- 6. What happened when a Levite moved? (18:6-7)
- 7. What types of benefits was a priest to receive when he moved? (18:8)
- * 8. What was Israel told not to imitate when they entered the new land? (18:9)
- * 9. Who was not allowed to participate in occult practices? (18:10-11)
- * 10. What does God consider witchcraft to be? (18:12)
- 11. How were the Israelites told to be before God? (18:13)
- 12. To whom do other nations listen? (18:14)
- 13. Whom did Moses say God would raise up? (18:15)
- 14. What did Israel say at Horeb? (18:16)
- 15. How did the Lord respond when Israel asked for someone to speak for God? (18:17-18)
- 16. What are the responsibilities of a prophet? (18:19-20)
- 17. How could Israel know if a prophet's words were true? (18:21-22)

Get It

- 18. What kinds of occult practices exist in our society today?
- 19. Why are some people drawn to witchcraft?
- 20. For whom does a fortune-teller speak?
- 21. How do you think Moses felt to see his people interested in false gods?
- 22. What does this passage teach us about discerning truth from evil?
- * 23. How are people naive about consulting horoscopes, fortune-tellers, and other “innocent” occult practices?
- * 24. What can Christians do to expose the falsehood of occult practices?

Apply It

- * 25. Who is someone involved in the occult for whom you can pray this week?
- 26. What is a specific way you can live for the one true God?

Cities of Refuge - Deuteronomy 19:1-20:20

Topics: Accusation, Battle, Commands, Death, Hate, Neighbor, Obedience, Opposition, War

Open It

1. How do you know if someone is a good neighbor?
2. What is your favorite mystery television show?
- * 3. If your city were attacked by another country, to where would you flee?

Explore It

4. What were the Israelites commanded to do when they received land from the Lord? (19:1-3)
5. What was the rule for someone who is accidentally killed? (19:4-7)
6. What was Israel to do if their territory enlarged? (19:8-10)
7. How was a man who hated his neighbor to be punished? (19:11-13)
8. What were the Israelites commanded not to move? (19:14)
9. How were malicious witnesses dealt with? (19:15-21)
- * 10. When Israel went to battle, what were they commanded to do? (20:1)
- * 11. What was the priest to say to the Israelite army? (20:2-4)
12. What were the officers to tell the men in the army to do? (20:5-8)
13. What did the officers appoint for the army? (20:9)
14. What were the Israelites to do if a city refused to make peace? (20:10-15)
- * 15. How was Israel supposed to conquer the cities that the Lord gave to them? (20:16-18)
16. During a siege, how were fruit trees treated? (20:19-20)

Get It

17. What does this passage tell us about God's love for our neighbors?
18. How does God want us to treat our neighbors fairly?
19. What danger do malicious witnesses pose to our legal system?
20. How does God not tolerate injustice?
- * 21. What fears are you confronted with when you have personal battles?
- * 22. How can fear cripple our trust in God?
23. Who is someone you would be willing to follow into battle?
24. How do you feel knowing that God wants to go before you in your struggles?

Apply It

- * 25. What opposition are you facing this week that you need God's strength to handle?
26. How can you give God your fears today?
27. Who is someone you can talk to this week about a battle too big to handle on your own?

Atonement for an Unsolved Murder - Deuteronomy 21:1-22:30

Topics: Adultery, Family, Forgiveness, Guilt, Murder, Neighbor, Sex

Open It

1. What is it about unsolved murders that fascinates people?
- * 2. What types of events cause families to break up?
3. What sort of offense would be most difficult for you to forgive?

Explore It

4. What were the elders and judges to do when a slain person was found? (21:1-5)
5. What did the elders declare after they had killed a heifer? (21:6-9)
6. How were the men of Israel to treat women they captured from defeated enemies? (21:10-14)
- * 7. How were the rights of the firstborn to be handled? (21:15-17)
- * 8. What was a man told to do if he had a stubborn and rebellious son? (21:18-19)
9. If a stubborn son was found guilty of rebellion, what was his punishment? (21:20-21)
10. If someone was hung for a capital offense, what happened to the body? (21:22-23)
11. What was a person supposed to do if he or she saw his or her brother's animals straying? (22:1-3)
12. How were Israelites told to treat fallen animals? (22:4)
13. What dress code did God have for men and women? (22:5)
14. How are the people of Israel required to treat a bird's nest? (22:6-7)
15. What various regulations did God give Israel? (22:8-12)
- * 16. How did a girl give proof of her virginity in Israel? (22:13-19)
17. If no proof of a girl's virginity could be found, how was she to be punished? (22:20-21)
18. How were adulterers in Israel to be punished? (22:22)
19. In what ways were virgins protected by God's law? (22:23-30)

Get It

20. How do God's laws reveal His desire to protect families?
- * 21. How can sexual immorality destroy families?
- * 22. What are different ways people handle rebellious children today?
23. What does this passage teach us about how to treat family members?
24. How does the Word of God provide healthy boundaries for people to live by?
25. How are sexual crimes handled in our society today?
26. In what ways does this passage protect the rights of unmarried women?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do today to be a positive influence in your family?
28. How can you be supportive of someone who comes from a difficult family?

Exclusion from the Assembly - Deuteronomy 23:1-25:19

Topics: Death, Divorce, Family, Guilty, Honesty, Justice, Marriage, Stress, Vows

Open It

1. Why is it important to read the fine print of a legal document?
2. What is the most ridiculous law you've ever heard of?
- * 3. What rules did you have growing up in your family?

Explore It

4. Who was prevented from entering the assembly of the Lord? (23:1-6)
5. Whom was Israel told not to abhor? (23:7-8)
6. How were the Israelites to keep good sanitary habits? (23:9-14)
7. How were refugee slaves to be treated? (23:15-16)
8. Who was prohibited from becoming a shrine prostitute? (23:17-18)
- * 9. To whom were the Israelites told not to charge interest? (23:19-20)
10. How were vows to the Lord supposed to be honored? (23:21-23)
11. How much food were Israelites allowed to take from their neighbor's fields? (23:24-25)
- * 12. How was divorce to be handled? (24:1-4)
13. What was a recently married man allowed to do? (24:5)
14. How were the Israelites commanded to treat poor people? (24:12-15)
15. How were provisions made for the poor in Israel? (24:19-22)
16. How were disputes in Israel dealt with? (25:1-3)
- * 17. What was the conflict with the Family of the Unsandaled all about? (25:5-10)
18. What did the Amalekites do to the Israelites? (25:17-19)

Get It

- * 19. What responsibilities do family members have for one another?
20. What does God think about divorce?
21. What is good or bad about lending money to family members?
22. In your experience what causes most family conflicts?
- * 23. What principles do you see here for living with family members?
24. How are we responsible to help the poor?
25. What does a good family look like?

Apply It

- * 26. What is a specific way you can show love to a family member this week?
27. How can you apply God's principles for the family to your family life today?

Firstfruits and Tithes - Deuteronomy 26:1-19

Topics: Gifts, Giving, Holiness, Honor, Obedience, Tithing, Worship

Open It

1. What is the best gift you have ever received?
2. What gifts do you think God likes to receive?
- * 3. In what circumstances do you like to give someone a gift?

Explore It

- * 4. What was Israel commanded to give when they entered the land? (26:1-2)
5. What were the people of Israel to say to the priest? (26:3)
6. What did the priest set in front of the altar? (26:4)
7. What did the Israelites declare to the Lord? (26:5-10)
8. In what were the people of Israel to rejoice? (26:11)
- * 9. To whom was the tithe of the Israelites given? (26:12)
- * 10. What did the Israelites say to the Lord about their tithe? (26:13-15)
11. What were the Israelites to observe carefully? (26:16)
12. How was Israel commanded to walk in God's ways? (26:17)
13. Who is the Lord's treasured possession? (26:18)
14. How will God set Israel above every other nation? (26:19)

Get It

- * 15. What is the purpose of tithing to the Lord?
16. What does giving our time and resources to the Lord do for our heart?
- * 17. How is God pleased when we bless others with what He has given us?
18. How are giving and following the commands of the Lord related?
19. What does this passage say to you about carefully observing the commands of God?
20. What blessings does God pour out when we honor Him with our giving?
21. What does it mean to walk in the ways of the Lord?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you specifically offer your resources to the Lord this week?
23. What is a concrete action you can take this week to tithe to the Lord?

The Altar on Mount Ebal - Deuteronomy 27:1-28:68

Topics: Blessing, Choices, Danger, Idolatry, Obedience, Promises, Remembering

Open It

1. What is a good decision you recently made?
2. In times of trouble, what are ways people resort to drastic measures?
- * 3. What do you find true about the statement “You reap what you sow”?

Explore It

4. What did Moses and the elders of Israel command the people? (27:1-4)
5. What were the Israelites told to build? (27:5-8)
6. What did Moses and the Levites say to all of Israel? (27:9-14)
7. What curse did the Levites pronounce against idol worshipers? (27:15)
8. What curse was given to people who lead the blind astray? (27:18)
9. For what reason would a person be cursed for not carrying out the law? (27:26)
- * 10. What blessings would Israel receive for following God’s commands? (28:1-13)
- * 11. What directions were the people of Israel given about where to turn? (28:14)
12. What curses would follow Israel for not following the commands of the Lord? (28:15-24)
13. How would the enemies of the Lord defeat the Israelites? (28:25-26)
14. What bad news did God have for Israel? (28:36-37)
15. Why would so many curses overcome the Israelites? (28:45-48)
16. What would happen if Israel did not carefully follow all the words of the law? (28:58-63)
17. How would Israel become scattered throughout the earth for abandoning the Lord? (28:64-67)
- * 18. Where would Israel be sent back for their sin against the Lord? (28:68)

Get It

- * 19. How do the decisions we make today affect the rest of our lives?
20. What are ways people do not always consider the severity of their actions?
21. How does God want to bless us for following His ways?
22. What does this passage teach us about considering every decision we make?
23. If you were Moses, how would you have felt challenging the people to follow God?
- * 24. How do small decisions for God have an impact on big decisions for God?
25. In what way does our sin always “find us out”?
26. How can Christian friends help us to stay on track with our love for God?

Apply It

- * 27. What is a specific decision you need to make to honor God?
28. In what area of your life do you want to invite the Holy Spirit to work?

Renewal of the Covenant - Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20

Topics: Children, Choices, Covenant, Life, Love, People, Renewal, Repentance

Open It

1. What is the most outrageous thing you would do for ten thousand dollars?
2. In what life and death situations do people find themselves?
- * 3. What is the one thing you love about life?

Explore It

- * 4. What did God command Moses to make with the Israelites? (29:1)
5. What did Moses tell the Israelites about their forty years with the Lord? (29:2-6)
6. Whose land did the Israelites take? (29:7-8)
- * 7. What did Moses say about the Israelites' covenant with the Lord? (29:9-15)
8. How did Moses remind the people not to worship other gods? (29:16-18)
9. About what attitudes did Moses warn Israel? (29:19-21)
10. What would the people of Israel encounter because of their ancestors' sin? (29:22-24)
- * 11. What would the children learn about the broken covenant of their fathers? (29:25-29)
12. What did God promise to do when Israel returned to Him? (30:1-7)
13. What would happen when Israel relearned how to obey God? (30:8-10)
14. What was not beyond Israel's reach? (30:11)
15. What made the Word of God accessible to the people of Israel? (30:12-14)
16. What did God set before His people? (30:15-16)
17. What was Israel promised if they turned away from God? (30:17-18)
18. How did God offer His promise of life to the Israelites? (30:19-20)

Get It

19. In what way does God allow us to live with our choices?
- * 20. What is the difference between a contract and a covenant?
21. How do our choices influence our children to follow or reject God?
- * 22. What kind of covenant or agreement does God ask us to live by today?
23. What do we have to leave behind when we follow God?
24. What often leads people to reject God?
25. How does this passage call us to live humble lives before God?

Apply It

- * 26. What is one concrete way you can choose to follow God this week?
27. How can you apply God's promises to your life?

Joshua to Succeed Moses - Deuteronomy 31:1-29

Topics: Courage, Leadership, Rebellion, Strength, Stubbornness

Open It

- * 1. If you were to pick someone to replace you at work, whom would you choose? Why?
- 2. Who is one person you know you can always trust (besides God)?
- 3. What characteristics do you look for in someone to follow?

Explore It

- 4. What did Moses say to Israel? (31:1-2)
- 5. Who did Moses say was going to go across the Jordan before Israel? (31:3-4)
- 6. What did God command Israel to do? (31:5-6)
- * 7. What did Moses say to Joshua about his new leadership role? (31:7)
- * 8. What did Moses promise Joshua? (31:8)
- 9. Who carried the ark of the covenant? (31:9)
- 10. What did Moses command the Israelites to do at the end of every seven years? (31:10-13)
- 11. What warning did God give Moses? (31:14)
- 12. How did God say the Israelites would forsake Him? (31:15-18)
- 13. What did God tell Moses to write down? (31:19)
- 14. What was the purpose of the song God gave to Moses? (31:20-21)
- 15. What did Moses teach the Israelites? (31:22)
- * 16. What did the Lord tell Joshua? (31:23)
- 17. What did Moses do after he wrote down the law? (31:24-25)
- 18. What did Moses say to the Levites? (31:26-28)
- 19. What was going to happen to the Israelites after Moses' death? (31:29)

Get It

- * 20. What makes it difficult to be in a leadership position?
- 21. How do you think Moses felt about Israel's impending rejection of God?
- 22. If you were Moses, how would you have tried to warn the people not to forsake God?
- 23. What emotions do you think Joshua was experiencing with his new position?
- 24. What makes it important to have a more experienced leader from whom you can learn?
- 25. How are people reluctant to take on positions they have never held before?
- * 26. What critical character qualities does an experienced leader need to pass on to a younger one?
- 27. What are some characteristics God wants in any strong leader?

Apply It

- * 28. What leadership quality can you work on as a servant-leader for Christ this week?
- 29. What specific questions do you want to ask of an older Christian you respect?

The Song of Moses - Deuteronomy 31:30-32:52

Topics: Faithfulness, Forget, Greatness, Honor, Obedience, Praise

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite song?
- 2. With whom do you share your most exciting stories or day-to-day experiences? Why?
- 3. What music group do you like best?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Moses recite to the Israelites? (31:30)
- 5. What did Moses say about God? (32:1-4)
- 6. How did Moses explain how Israel acted toward God? (32:5-6)
- 7. What did Moses tell the Israelites to remember about God? (32:7-8)
- 8. Moses described Jacob's inheritance in what way? (32:9-14)
- 9. How did Israel walk away from God? (32:15-18)
- 10. What did God say in response to Israel's rejection of Him? (32:19-27)
- 11. How did Moses compare Israel and the pagan nations? (32:28-35)
- 12. How did God say He would judge His people? (32:36-39)
- 13. How is vengeance taken out against the enemies of God? (32:40-43)
- * 14. Who came along with Moses to speak the song to Israel? (32:44)
- 15. What did Moses say God's words were to Israel? (32:45-47)
- * 16. Where did God tell Moses to go the same day he sang his song? (32:48-49)
- 17. What did God tell Moses about seeing the Promised Land? (32:50-52)

Get It

- 18. How can singing bring us closer to God?
- * 19. What different types of worship music transform our lives?
- 20. What is the purpose of singing to the Lord?
- 21. How did Moses use a song to help Israel remember who God is?
- * 22. How are songs used today to help us remember the character of God?
- 23. How is worship an act of obedience to the Lord?
- 24. What Christian musician inspires you to walk closer with Jesus Christ?
- 25. How can music help us to apply God's Word to our lives?

Apply It

- 26. What is a practical way you can give God your praise today?
- * 27. Who is someone you can encourage? How?
- 28. How can you make music a more meaningful part of your daily Christian life?

Moses Blesses the Tribes; Moses Dies - Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

Topics: Blessing, Community, Death, Mourning, People, Promises, Teamwork

Open It

1. What is the best compliment someone has ever given you?
2. What is your favorite memory of your grandparents?
- * 3. What do you like or dislike about saying good-bye to people you love?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Moses pronounce to Israel before his death? (33:1)
5. What did Moses say about God? (33:2-3)
6. What did Moses say about Reuben? (33:6)
7. What did Moses say about Levi? (33:8-11)
8. How was Naphtali described by Moses? (33:23)
9. What description is given to characterize God? (33:27)
10. In what way did Moses bless Israel? (33:29)
11. What mountain did Moses climb? (34:1)
12. What territories did the Lord show Moses? (34:1-3)
13. What did the Lord say to Moses? (34:4)
- * 14. Where did Moses die? (34:5-6)
- * 15. How old was Moses when he died? (34:7)
16. How long did the Israelites grieve for Moses? (34:8)
17. With what was Joshua filled? (34:9)
18. How close was Moses' relationship with the Lord? (34:10)
19. Where did Moses perform his miraculous signs and wonders? (34:11)
20. How powerful were the deeds that Moses did? (34:12)

Get It

21. What keeps people from telling others how they really feel about them?
22. How did Moses tell all of Israel how he felt about them?
- * 23. How can Christians give God's blessings to one another?
24. What makes death such a hard reality to face?
- * 25. What might the people of Israel been feeling at the death of Moses?
26. How can people comfort one another when a friend or loved one dies?
27. How does death offer the opportunity for us to help one another face eternity?

Apply It

- * 28. Who is someone you can bless with God's love this week?
29. What is a practical way you can honor the people in your life?
30. Whom do you know to have recently lost a loved one that you can comfort this week? How?

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The Lord Commands Joshua - Joshua 1:1-18

Topics: Advice, Affirmation, Challenge, Change, Courage, Discouragement, Endurance, Faithfulness, Fear, Guidance, Leadership, Obedience, Opportunities, Perseverance, Promises, Protection, Success, Worry

Open It

1. How would you feel if you had to move to a different country?
2. When have you experienced a major change in your life?
- * 3. Why do you think change makes people feel uncomfortable?

Explore It

- * 4. What prepared Joshua to lead the nation of Israel into the Promised Land? (1:1)
5. For what major change did the Lord want Joshua to get the Israelites prepared? (1:2)
6. What promise did the Lord give to Joshua? (1:5)
7. Why was it important for Joshua to “be strong and courageous”? (1:6)
8. Who had been promised to inherit the land, according to the Lord? (1:6)
- * 9. What specific steps did the Lord instruct Joshua to take in order to be successful? (1:7)
- * 10. What did God say meditation on the Book of the Law would accomplish? (1:8)
11. What assurance did Joshua give the Israelites that they could “take possession of the land”? (1:11)
12. Why were certain tribes given special instructions by Joshua? (1:12-15)
13. How long were the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh instructed to help the other tribes of Israel? (1:15)
14. How did the Israelite leaders respond to Joshua’s instruction? (1:16)
15. What did the leaders of Israel say to encourage Joshua in his new role? (1:17-18)
16. How did the Israelites’ relationship with Moses affect Joshua’s effectiveness as a leader? (1:17)
17. What would happen to a person who disobeyed Joshua, according to the Israelite leaders? (1:18)

Get It

18. How do you think Joshua felt when God commanded him to lead the nation of Israel into the Promised Land?
- * 19. How does Joshua’s response to God and, in turn, the Israelites’ response to Joshua motivate you to respond to overwhelming responsibilities in your own life?
20. What causes you to feel discouraged or inadequate?
- * 21. What does this passage teach you about how to deal with negative emotions, such as fear, self-doubt, and discouragement?
22. Why do you think God reminded Joshua of the relationship the Lord had with Moses?
23. What events in your past remind you of God’s faithfulness and help you to trust Him today?
24. How do you feel about the changes that are taking place in your life now?
25. In order to claim for yourself God’s promise for success, what command in this passage do you need to obey?
26. Why do you think it is important to meditate on God’s Word?

Apply It

27. What specific steps can you take today to demonstrate your trust in the Lord?
- * 28. What concrete action can you take in the next few days to get over fear or discouragement?
29. How could you encourage a friend or family member who is feeling burned-out or discouraged?

Rahab and the Spies - Joshua 2:1-24

Topics: Acceptance, Advice, Bargaining, Believe, Choices, Courage, Danger, Enemies, Escape, Fear, Hiding, Hospitality, Kindness, Promises, Protection, Risk, Silence

Open It

1. Why do you think children enjoy the game “Hide and Seek”?
2. What emotions do you associate with hiding?
- * 3. Under what circumstances do people usually try to make a deal with God?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did Joshua send spies to Canaan? (2:1)
5. What does this passage reveal about Rahab? (2:1)
6. How did the king of Jericho respond to the message that there were spies in his city? (2:3)
7. How did Rahab respond to the king’s message? (2:4-5)
8. How did Rahab protect the spies from the king’s messengers? (2:4-6)
9. What reassurance did Rahab give to the spies? (2:8-9)
10. How did Rahab know that the Lord had given the land over to the Israelites? (2:9)
11. What instilled fear in the hearts of the Canaanites? (2:10-11)
- * 12. What were Rahab’s beliefs about the God of Israel? (2:11)
13. What deal did the spies make with Rahab? (2:14)
14. What were the conditions of the deal between Rahab and the spies? (2:17-20)
15. What was the nature of the spies’ report to Joshua? (2:24)
- * 16. Who received the credit for the Canaanites’ fear of the Israelites? (2:24)

Get It

17. How do you imagine the spies felt about sneaking into Canaan?
18. When have you ever been scared to do something that you knew was right?
19. In what specific ways do Christian values today differ from the standards of our modern culture?
- * 20. What is one Christian value that you feel you need to take a stand on to be a more effective witness for Christ?
21. What does this passage teach us about the kind of people God uses to accomplish His purposes?
22. What do you think inspired Rahab’s belief in the God of Israel?
23. What are some specific ways you think Rahab had to sacrifice by giving refuge to the Israelite spies?
24. What did Rahab gain through her brave actions in this passage?
25. What have you lost or gained because of your Christian beliefs?
- * 26. What does the conclusion of this passage teach us about God’s faithfulness to believers who take risks because of their faith?

Apply It

27. How could you demonstrate thankfulness to God today for His faithfulness in your life?
- * 28. What is one small risk you think God might want you to take in sharing your faith or standing up for what is right?
29. What specific step can you take in the next few days to encourage another believer who is trying to stand up for what is right?

Crossing the Jordan - Joshua 3:1-4:24

Topics: Direction, Evidence, Guidance, Impossible, Leadership, Miracles, Nature, Obedience, Power, Protection, Remembering, Traditions

Open It

1. What are some specific events or reasons for which we build or establish memorials today?
2. Why do you think family traditions are important to many people?
- * 3. What are some of your special family traditions?

Explore It

4. What is the setting of this story? (3:1)
5. What specific instructions did the officers give to the people regarding their journey? (3:3-4)
6. Why was it necessary for the Israelite people to consecrate themselves? (3:5)
7. For what reason did God choose to praise Joshua in the eyes of the Israelites? (3:7)
- * 8. How were the Israelites to know that God was with them and would drive out their enemies from the land of Canaan? (3:10-13)
9. In what season do the events of this story take place, and why is this significant? (3:15)
10. What happened when the priests who were carrying the ark reached the Jordan River? (3:15-16)
11. Why did the Lord tell Joshua to choose twelve men from among the Israelites? (4:2-3)
12. Why were stones taken from the Jordan riverbed? (4:6-7)
- * 13. How did the people of Israel respond to the miracle God performed on their behalf? (4:14)
14. What specific tradition did Joshua instruct the Israelites to initiate? (4:21-22)
- * 15. According to Joshua, for what two reasons did God perform this miracle? (4:24)

Get It

16. What is important about this story?
17. Why did God make Joshua great in the eyes of Israel?
- * 18. What does this passage teach you about the reason God works through believers?
19. How do you think the Israelites felt when they saw the waters of the Jordan stop flowing?
20. In what ways do you see God's hand at work in nature today?
21. What should be our response to the power we see in nature every day?
22. How does God show us today that He is with us?
23. What is one amazing thing that God has done for you recently?
24. Why do you think God instructed Joshua to set up a physical reminder of the miracle He performed?
- * 25. What are some tangible things that remind you of what God means to you or what He has done for you?

Apply It

26. What steps can you take to demonstrate thankfulness to the Lord for His presence with you?
- * 27. What memorial or sign could you set up to remind yourself of God's work in your life?
28. What is one specific way God has used you or helped you recently that you could share with a friend to encourage him or her?

Circumcision at Gilgal - Joshua 5:1-12

Topics: Celebration, Disobedience, Forgiveness, Guilt, Healing, Obedience, Promises, Reconciliation, Submission

Open It

1. For what reasons have you lost touch with some of your good friends from high school or college?
2. How does it feel to be separated from a close friend or loved one?
- * 3. How does it feel to be reunited with a friend you haven't seen for a long time?

Explore It

4. What did the Amorite and Canaanite kings hear about the God of Israel? (5:1)
5. What reaction did the foreign kings have toward the news about Israel and their God? (5:1)
6. What was the last thing the Israelites had to do before they could enter the Promised Land? (5:2)
- * 7. How did Joshua respond to the Lord's command to circumcise the Israelites? (5:2-3)
8. For what reasons was it necessary to circumcise the Israelites again? (5:4-7)
9. Why did the Israelites wander in the desert for forty years? (5:6)
10. To whom had the Lord promised the land of Canaan? (5:6)
11. What does this passage reveal about the expectations the Israelites had about the Promised Land? (5:6)
- * 12. How did the Lord respond to the Israelites' obedience to His command to be circumcised? (5:9)
- * 13. What issue was reconciled through the circumcision of the Israelites? (5:9)
14. How did the Israelites demonstrate their renewed commitment to the Lord after they were circumcised? (5:10)
15. How was the Israelites' celebration significant in light of what they had just done? (5:10)
16. For what reason had the manna stopped appearing for the Israelites? (5:12)

Get It

17. What do the actions of Joshua in this passage teach us about submission and obedience?
- * 18. What does this passage show us about the reliability of God's promises?
19. How do you think the Israelites felt about their relationship with the Lord while they were wandering in the desert?
20. What emotions do you think the Israelites felt when they knew they were fully reconciled with the Lord and on their way to the Promised Land?
21. How does it feel to know you are forgiven and accepted by God?
22. When have you ever felt separated from God?
23. What do we need to do if our relationship with the Lord becomes severed?
- * 24. In what creative ways can we celebrate our reconciliation with the Lord?
25. What is one area of your spiritual life that you have had difficulty fully committing to the Lord?
26. What does this passage teach us about God's forgiveness?

Apply It

27. What step could you take today to accept God's forgiveness for all your sin?
28. What specific steps can you take this week to commit to the Lord one area in your life that you have withheld from Him?
- * 29. Keeping in mind a specific promise from the Lord, how can you remind yourself to claim this promise when you need it most during the week?

The Fall of Jericho - Joshua 5:13-6:27

Topics: Abundance, Actions, Advice, Angels, Appearance, Determination, Enemies, Enthusiasm, Escape, Guidance, Heroes, Initiative, Leadership, Miracles, Obedience, Persistence, Possessions, Power, Wealth

Open It

1. Why do you think many teenagers bow to peer pressure and do things they wouldn't otherwise do?
2. When has peer pressure motivated you to do something good?
- * 3. What are some Christian traditions or practices that you think might seem unusual to someone who has never been inside a church?

Explore It

4. Whom did Joshua meet outside of Jericho? (5:13-14)
5. How did Joshua respond when the man who appeared said he was "commander of the army of the Lord"? (5:14)
- * 6. What instructions did the Lord give to Joshua about defeating Jericho? (6:2-5)
7. How did the Israelites treat the ark of the Lord? (6:6-7)
8. What did the Israelites do differently on the seventh day of their siege of Jericho? (6:15)
9. According to Joshua, who gave the city of Jericho over to the Israelites? (6:16)
- * 10. Why did Joshua instruct the Israelites to keep away from the devoted things in Jericho? (6:18)
11. What were the Israelites supposed to do with all of the wealth of Jericho? (6:19)
12. How were Rahab and her family treated by the Israelites? (6:22-23, 25)
- * 13. For what reason was Rahab's life spared? (6:25)
14. What did Joshua say would happen to the man who tried to rebuild Jericho? (6:26)
15. How did the fall of Jericho affect Joshua's reputation? (6:27)

Get It

16. Why do you think God chose this method for the Israelites to win the battle against the people of Jericho?
- * 17. What does this story teach us about the attitude God wants us to have whenever we succeed?
18. How do you imagine Joshua felt explaining to the Israelites the battle plans for their war against Jericho?
19. How do you feel when God tells you to do something that you don't think your friends will understand or approve of?
20. What temptation faced the Israelites?
21. What is our culture's attitude toward wealth?
22. What should be our attitude toward wealth?
23. Why was it important for the Israelites to devote Jericho and all of its wealth to the Lord?
- * 24. What does it mean to you to be devoted to the Lord?
25. What does this story teach us about the type of person God uses to accomplish His plans?

Apply It

26. What concrete action can you take to arm yourself against a temptation you expect to face in the next week?
27. What practical step can you take this week to have a loose hold on money and possessions?
- * 28. What is one change you can make in your life this week to move closer to being completely devoted to the Lord?

Achan's Sin - Joshua 7:1-26

Topics: Abundance, Accountability, Accusation, Atonement, Compromise, Correction, Deceit, Devotion, Discipline, Dishonesty, Disobedience, Failure, Forgiveness, Greed, Grief, Lying, Materialism, Possessions, Punishment, Reconciliation, Repentance, Reputation, Selfishness, Shame, Sorrow, War

Open It

1. What do you think of when you hear the word materialism?
- * 2. How would you describe our culture's attitude toward money?

Explore It

3. How did the Israelites act unfaithfully? (7:1)
4. How did the Lord respond to the Israelites' unfaithfulness? (7:1)
5. For what reason did Joshua send men from Jericho to Ai? (7:2)
6. What report did the spies give to Joshua regarding their mission? (7:3)
7. Why were the spies confident of their ability to overcome the city of Ai? (7:3)
8. What was the outcome of the Israelites' battle with the men of Ai? (7:4-5)
9. How did the nation of Israel react to their loss? (7:5)
10. How did the leaders of Israel demonstrate their shock and remorse over losing the war with Ai? (7:6)
- * 11. What most concerned Joshua about the ramifications of Israel's loss? (7:9)
- * 12. Why had the Lord allowed Israel to lose the battle with Ai? (7:10-12)
13. How did the Lord reveal to the Israelites who had taken the devoted things from Jericho? (7:14-15)
14. According to Joshua, for what reason was Achan asked to confess his sin? (7:19)
15. Why did Achan take the devoted things from Jericho? (7:21)
- * 16. How did the Israelites repent of their sin before the Lord? (7:22-26)
17. What was the Lord's response to the Israelites' repentance? (7:26)

Get It

18. What does this story tell us about the power of greed?
- * 19. How would you describe a good attitude toward wealth?
20. What can we learn from Israel's response to their sin?
21. Why do you think it was necessary for Israel to kill Achan and his family and destroy everything that belonged to them?
22. How does God's response to Israel's repentance encourage you?
23. For what reasons do you think it is important to remind ourselves of God's forgiveness, as the Israelites did in this instance?
24. How does our turning away from sin give glory to God?
25. In what specific ways do you think people allow greed to creep into their lives?
- * 26. How can you guard yourself against the sin of greed?

Apply It

27. What is one step you can take to restore or renew your commitment to obey the Lord?
- * 28. How can you protect yourself from being greedy?
29. What is one practical way you could remind yourself of God's forgiveness?

Victory at Ai - Joshua 8:1-35

Topics: Affirmation, Blessing, Challenge, Courage, Dedication, Enemies, Follow-through, Guidance, Instructions, Leadership, Obedience, Plans, Preparation, Remembering, Success, Teamwork, Traditions, Victory, War

Open It

1. What characteristics do you look for in a leader?
- * 2. To what extent do you consider yourself more of a leader or a follower? Why?
3. Why is it important for an army strictly to obey its commanders during wartime?

Explore It

4. Why did Joshua need special encouragement when the Lord told him to attack the city of Ai? (8:1)
5. How would the Israelites' battle with Ai compare to their war with Jericho? (8:2)
6. In what way did the battle with Ai differ from the Israelites' war with Jericho? (8:2)
7. What was Israel's strategy of war to overtake the city of Ai? (8:4-7)
8. Who was the leader of the army of Israel? (8:8)
- * 9. What role did Joshua play before and during the war with Ai? (8:9, 13, 18, 26)
10. How did the king of Ai respond to Israel's second advance against his city? (8:14)
11. What specific instructions did the Lord give to Joshua during this war? (8:18)
- * 12. What was the outcome of Israel's war with Ai? (8:20-23)
13. Why did the Israelites take the livestock and plunder of Ai? (8:27)
- * 14. What did Joshua do following Israel's victory over the city of Ai? (8:30-35)

Get It

15. What does this passage teach us about the Lord's view of obedience?
16. How do you think Joshua felt when the Lord told him to go to battle against the city of Ai when they had already lost a battle against them?
17. What happened that last time you did something for the Lord that you had thought was impossible?
18. Why did God give Israel the victory over Ai?
19. Why was it important for all of the Israelites to offer burnt offerings to the Lord and review the Book of the Law?
- * 20. Following the Israelites' example, how should we respond when the Lord gives us victory over a sin or weakness?
21. In what circumstances is it important for us to review the written instructions God has given us?
22. What can we learn from this story about "second chances"?
- * 23. In what area of your life do you need a second chance?

Apply It

24. What first step can you take to renew your commitment to obey God?
- * 25. How can you remind yourself this week of God's promise of victory over the struggles in your own life?
26. What concrete action could you take this week to encourage a friend who needs a "second chance"?

The Gibeonite Deception - Joshua 9:1-27

Topics: Acceptance, Appearance, Assumptions, Compromise, Consequences, Deceit, Discernment, Dishonesty, Enemies, Escape, Evidence, Impulsiveness, Judging Others, Leadership, Lying, Neighbor, Obligation, Partnerships, Promises, Reputation

Open It

1. In what ways do people sometimes pretend to be who they are not?
- * 2. What does it feel like to be deceived by a friend?
3. How do your friends and coworkers view people who are dishonest?

Explore It

4. What was the reaction of Israel's neighbors when they heard about the battles Israel had won? (9:1-2)
5. What kind of reputation had the Israelites established? (9:1-3)
6. How did the people of Gibeon respond differently to Israel from the rest of their neighbors? (9:3-4)
7. Under what false pretenses did the Gibeonites present themselves to the Israelites? (9:3-6)
- * 8. Why did the Gibeonites go to such lengths to make a treaty with Israel? (9:6, 24)
9. What lies did the Gibeonites tell Joshua? (9:6-13)
10. How did Joshua respond to the Gibeonites' request to establish a treaty? (9:7-8)
- * 11. What mistake did the leaders of Israel make in dealing with the Gibeonites? (9:14)
12. What did the Israelites do when they discovered that the Gibeonites had deceived them? (9:16-18)
13. Why did the Israelites not attack the Gibeonites when they discovered they were their neighbors? (9:18)
- * 14. What compromise were the Israelite leaders forced to make with the Gibeonites? (9:20-21)

Get It

15. Why do you think the Gibeonites' ruse worked?
16. How would you describe Joshua's attitude in dealing with the Gibeonites?
17. How do you think Joshua felt when he discovered his mistake?
18. What does this story teach us about the consequences of sin?
19. What does it mean to "inquire of the Lord"?
- * 20. In what circumstances do we tend to rely on ourselves instead of seeking God's wisdom?
21. Why is it dangerous to rely on appearances when making important decisions?
22. Why do you think God sometimes allows the plans of deceitful people to succeed?
- * 23. What do the actions of Joshua in this story teach you about how to deal with your own mistakes?
24. In what area of your life have you relied more on your own strength than God's wisdom?

Apply It

25. What do you want to remember the next time you make an unwise decision?
- * 26. How can you "inquire of the Lord" the next time you have an important decision to make?
27. What concrete action can you take to protect yourself from others who want to deceive or take advantage of you?

The Sun Stands Still - Joshua 10:1-15

Topics: Ambition, Challenge, Conflict, Enemies, Miracles, Nature, Neighbor, Obligation, Opposition, Surprises, Teamwork, Victory, War

Open It

1. When have you had to depend on a friend, and how did it make you feel to admit your need?
2. What is the most significant request you have ever asked of God?
- * 3. What is the most exciting answer to prayer you have ever seen or heard about?

Explore It

4. What did the king of Jerusalem hear about Joshua? (10:1)
5. Why were the people of Jerusalem alarmed to hear about Joshua's treaty with the Gibeonites? (10:2)
6. Of what significance was the city of Gibeon to the king of Jerusalem? (10:2-4)
7. Why did the king of Jerusalem want to attack Gibeon? (10:4)
8. Why did the five kings of the Amorites join forces? (10:5)
9. How did the Gibeonites respond to the attack of the Amorites? (10:6)
10. How did Joshua respond to the plea for help from the Gibeonites? (10:7)
11. What specific promise did the Lord give to Joshua? (10:8)
- * 12. What three miracles did the Lord perform to ensure the Israelites' defeat of the Amorites? (10:9-13)
13. Why did Joshua ask the Lord to make the sun and moon stand still? (10:12)
- * 14. How did God answer Joshua's unusual request? (10:13)
- * 15. According to the writer of this passage, what did the delay of the sun and moon demonstrate? (10:14)

Get It

16. What does Joshua's unusual request in this story reveal about his character?
17. How do you think the people of Israel felt when the Lord stopped the setting of the sun for them?
18. What does this story teach us about faith?
19. What role does faith play in your life?
- * 20. How can we cultivate and increase our faith in God?
21. When do you think it is appropriate to ask God to do miracles?
22. What can we learn from the actions of the Gibeonites in this story?
23. Why do you think it is difficult for many Christians to admit that they need the help of others?
- * 24. What does this story tell us about God's nature?
25. What does this story reveal about the kind of relationship God wants to have with us?

Apply It

- * 26. What specific step do you think you could take this week to increase your faith in God?
27. To whom can you go for help and support the next time you face a problem too difficult to handle alone?
28. How could you support a friend who is going through a difficult time right now?

Five Amorite Kings Killed - Joshua 10:16-43

Topics: Accomplishments, Achievements, Ambition, Courage, Danger, Determination, Enemies, Fear, Hiding, Humiliation, Initiative, Obedience, Perseverance, Success, Victory, War

Open It

1. What to you is a good example of ambition, or whom do you know who exemplifies it?
- * 2. What will motivate you to go beyond the call of duty?
3. What would you say is the most significant accomplishment in your life so far?

Explore It

4. What is the opening scene of this story? (10:16)
5. Why were some of the most powerful kings in the region hiding in caves? (10:16)
6. What did Joshua do when he heard that the five Amorite kings were hiding from him? (10:18-19)
- * 7. Why was Joshua so determined to pursue the Amorites? (10:19)
8. Why were all of the Israelites' enemies terrified even to "utter a word" against them? (10:21)
9. What did Joshua do to humiliate the Amorite kings? (10:24)
- * 10. What lesson did Joshua teach the Israelites through his actions toward the Amorite kings? (10:25)
11. Where did Joshua go after he had defeated the city of Makkedah? (10:29-39)
12. Who gets the credit for all of the Israelites' victories? (10:30)
13. What command did Joshua obey? (10:40)
- * 14. Why was Joshua able to conquer the whole region in one campaign? (10:42)

Get It

15. Why was it necessary for the Israelites to defeat all of the cities in the region?
16. Why do you think God commanded Joshua to destroy everything when he conquered cities?
17. What does this passage show us about obedience?
18. What motivated Joshua to persevere despite the fierce opposition he faced?
- * 19. What obstacle or opposition do you now face or expect to face soon?
20. What should motivate us to persevere in our struggle against sin?
21. In what ways can we give God credit when we experience success in our lives?
- * 22. What is one battle that you need the Lord to fight for you?

Apply It

23. What step can you take this week to ensure victory over the obstacles you face?
24. What is one command of the Lord that you need to concentrate more on obeying?
- * 25. How can you remember to "be strong and courageous" because of God's presence with you?

Northern Kings Defeated - Joshua 11:1-12:24

Topics: Achievements, Affirmation, Challenge, Encouragement, Enemies, Hardheartedness, History, Instructions, Obedience, Perseverance, Problems, Success, Victory, War

Open It

1. What words or comparisons would you use to describe something very, very big?
- * 2. What emotions do you feel when you face an overwhelming problem?
3. What problem-solving techniques do you practice at work or at home?

Explore It

4. Who initiated the plan for the northern kings to join forces and attack Israel? (11:1)
5. How is the combined army of the northern kings described? (11:4)
6. Why was it necessary for all of the northern cities to combine their armies? (11:4-5)
- * 7. What encouragement did the Lord give to Joshua when he faced this immense army? (11:6)
8. What specific instructions did the Lord include in His promise of victory to Joshua? (11:6)
9. What strategy did Joshua use against the armies of the northern cities? (11:7)
- * 10. What was the outcome of the battle between Israel and the northern cities? (11:8)
11. Who is given credit for Israel's victory? (11:8)
- * 12. In what specific way did Joshua obey the Lord? (11:9)
13. In addition to the Lord, whom was Joshua obeying by destroying the royal cities? (11:12)
14. How long did Israel's war with the northern cities continue? (11:18)
15. Why did the northern kings decide not to make treaties of peace with Israel? (11:20)
16. Why did the Lord harden the hearts of the northern kings against Israel? (11:20)
17. How was the land divided after Israel had won it through battle? (11:23)

Get It

18. How do you think Joshua felt when he saw a huge army ready to fight Israel?
19. What do the Lord's actions in this story reveal about His sovereign control over history?
20. Why is the land that the Israelites won referred to as an "inheritance"?
21. How did Joshua deal with problems that seemed too big to solve?
- * 22. What do Joshua's actions teach us about obedience?
23. What do God's actions in this situation reveal about the relationship He wants us to have with Him?
24. How has the Lord encouraged you recently to deal with a difficult issue in your life?
25. In what ways can we give God praise for victories we experience in our lives?
- * 26. What is the one problem you are facing that seems too difficult to handle?

Apply It

- * 27. What steps of obedience do you need to take in resolving a problem you are now facing?
28. What concrete action can you take to entrust your "impossible" circumstances to the Lord?
29. How could you encourage a friend who is facing a difficult situation in the next few days?

Hebron Given to Caleb - Joshua 13:1-17:18

Topics: Accomplishments, Disagreements, Enemies, Faithfulness, History, Instructions, Obedience, Patience, Peer Pressure, Rewards, Victory, War

Open It

1. Why do you think peer pressure is so powerful?
2. How long are you usually able to wait for an answer to prayer before feeling impatient about it?
- * 3. What are some of the ways you've seen advertisers use "instant gratification" to sell products?

Explore It

4. At what point in Joshua's life did the events in this passage take place? (13:1)
- * 5. What specific instructions and promise did the Lord give to Joshua about the land that remained to be conquered? (13:6-7)
6. Why did the tribe of Levi not inherit a portion of the land? (13:14, 33)
7. How did Joshua know how to divide the land between the tribes of Israel? (14:2, 5)
8. Why did Caleb approach Joshua at Gilgal? (14:6-12)
9. What role did Caleb play in Israel's history before they conquered the Promised Land? (14:7-8)
10. In what way did Caleb stand firm to his convictions when his peers did not? (14:7-8)
- * 11. What did Moses promise Caleb because of his obedience? (14:9)
12. How had the Lord kept His promise to Caleb? (14:10)
- * 13. How long did Caleb have to wait before God fulfilled His promise to him? (14:10)
14. Where did Caleb place his confidence? (14:12)
15. How did Joshua respond to Caleb's request? (14:13)
16. What reason did the author of this passage give to explain why Hebron was given to Caleb? (14:14)
17. Why did the people of Joseph complain to Joshua? (17:14)
18. What was Joshua's response to the tribe of Joseph's request for more land? (17:17-18)

Get It

19. What do these chapters reveal about the reliability of God's promises?
20. What character traits of Caleb make him a good role model for us today?
- * 21. What is one character trait of Caleb that you would want to develop in your own life?
22. Why was it significant that Caleb brought back a good report about the Promised Land?
23. What do Caleb's actions teach us about standing firm in our convictions?
24. In what circumstances has it been difficult for you to do what you knew was right?
25. In what ways did God show His faithfulness to Caleb?
26. How have you experienced God's faithfulness?
- * 27. What does it mean to follow the Lord wholeheartedly?

Apply It

28. What is one promise of God that you want to claim and trust God to fulfill for you?
- * 29. In what area of your life do you need to stand up against the pressure of others and do what is right?
30. What concrete step could you take to say thank You to God for His faithfulness to you?

Division of the Rest of the Land - Joshua 18:1-19:51

Topics: Apathy, Example, Follow-through, Guidance, Humility, Initiative, Obedience, Serving

Open It

- * 1. How would you describe a good leader?
- 2. How highly is humility valued in your place of work?

Explore It

- 3. Where did the events of this story take place? (18:1)
- 4. What did the Israelites do at Shiloh? (18:1)
- 5. Why was it necessary for Joshua to give instructions to the Israelites? (18:2)
- * 6. Whom did Joshua credit for giving Israel the Promised Land? (18:3)
- 7. What were the three appointed men from each tribe supposed to do? (18:4)
- 8. For what purpose did Joshua want to cast lots? (18:6)
- 9. How did Joshua know how to divide the land? (18:6)
- 10. Why did the Levites not receive an inheritance of land? (18:7)
- 11. Who gave Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh their inheritance of land? (18:7)
- 12. What specific instructions did Joshua give to the men who went to map out the land? (18:8)
- * 13. How did Joshua distribute the land among the Israelite tribes? (18:10)
- 14. What inheritance did Joshua receive? (19:49)
- * 15. When did Joshua receive his inheritance in relation to the rest of Israel? (19:49)

Get It

- 16. Why do you think the Israelites were slow to divide the land they had conquered?
- 17. In what ways was Joshua a good leader?
- * 18. What is one characteristic of Joshua that you would like to have in your own life?
- 19. How was Joshua's servant attitude revealed?
- 20. Why do you think Joshua received his inheritance last?
- 21. How can we follow Joshua's example in making important decisions?
- * 22. What important decision do you have to make in the near future?

Apply It

- 23. In what specific situation could you demonstrate a servant attitude? How?
- * 24. What specific steps could you take this week to rely on God's help in making an important decision?

Towns for the Levites - Joshua 20:1-21:45

Topics: Accusation, Consequences, Obedience, Promises, Protection, Punishment, Reliability

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel when a friend breaks a promise?
- 2. How important is it to you that a friend be trustworthy? Why?

Explore It

- 3. Why did the Lord tell the Israelites to designate cities of refuge? (20:2-3)
- * 4. From what did the cities of refuge offer people protection? (20:3)
- 5. Who would go to a city of refuge? (20:3)
- 6. What role did elders play in a city of refuge? (20:4)
- 7. How long would a person remain in a city of refuge? (20:6)
- 8. Why did the family heads of the Levites approach Eleazar, Joshua, and the heads of the other Israelite tribes? (21:2)
- 9. How did the Israelites respond to the request of the Levites? (21:3)
- * 10. Why did each of the Israelite tribes give up some of their land to the Levites? (21:8)
- * 11. What specific promise did the Lord fulfill to Israel? (21:43)
- 12. What was life like for the Israelites after they conquered the land the Lord had promised them? (21:44)

Get It

- 13. Why was it important to establish places of refuge in Israel?
- * 14. In what specific ways has the Lord provided protection for you?
- 15. How do you think the church today should be involved in protecting Christians from the stresses of life?
- 16. What does this passage reveal about the character of God?
- 17. What have you learned from this passage about the reliability of God's promises?
- * 18. What is one promise you have seen the Lord fulfill in your own life?
- 19. What do you think we should do when it seems as if God's promises are not fulfilled?

Apply It

- 20. What is one specific promise in the Bible that you would like to claim?
- * 21. What concrete action could you take this week to demonstrate your trust in God's promises?

Eastern Tribes Return Home - Joshua 22:1-34

Topics: Accusation, Advice, Answers, Assumptions, Blessing, Criticism, Denial, Disagreements, Judging Others, Obedience, Rebellion, Reputation, Rewards, Unfairness

Open It

1. To the best of your knowledge, why is our legal system based on the concept of “innocent until proven guilty”?
- * 2. How do you think you would feel if you were falsely accused of a crime?
3. How can the average person protect himself or herself against false accusations?

Explore It

4. Why did Joshua summon the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh? (22:1)
5. How had the eastern tribes been obedient? (22:2)
6. What was the mission that the Lord had given the eastern tribes? (22:3)
7. Why did Joshua encourage the eastern tribes to return home? (22:4)
8. What did the eastern tribes receive from Joshua before he sent them on their way? (22:5-6)
- * 9. How had the eastern tribes been blessed by their obedience to the Lord? (22:8)
10. What did the eastern tribes build near the Jordan River? (22:10)
11. Why did the Israelites plan to go to war against the eastern tribes? (22:11-12)
12. What assumptions did the Israelites make about the eastern tribes’ behavior? (22:12)
- * 13. How did the Israelites resolve their dispute with the eastern tribes? (22:13-14)
14. Why did the Israelites think that the eastern tribes were rebelling against the Lord? (22:16)
15. What did the Israelites believe would be the consequences of the eastern tribes’ rebellion? (22:18)
16. How did the eastern tribes respond to the accusations of the Israelites? (22:22-23)
17. What were the intentions of the eastern tribes when they built the altar on the Jordan River? (22:24-28)
18. How did the leaders of Israel respond to the eastern tribes’ defense of their actions? (22:30)
- * 19. How did the Israelites react to the news that the eastern tribes were not rebellious toward the Lord? (22:33)

Get It

20. What does this story teach us about obedience?
21. Why do we need to “be very careful” to obey God, as Joshua advised Israel?
22. What does it mean to serve the Lord “with all your heart and all your soul”?
23. How do you think the eastern tribes felt when they heard the false accusations of the Israelites?
24. When have you ever been falsely accused? What happened?
- * 25. What lessons can this story teach us about resolving conflicts?
26. How should we respond to false accusations?
- * 27. What does this passage reveal about the consequences of one person’s sin on others?
28. How do you think your own actions and attitudes affect the reputation of the church and of Christ?

Apply It

- * 29. What could you do to resolve the conflict peacefully the next time you have a misunderstanding with a friend or family member?
30. What is one “extra precaution” you can take to ensure your loyalty and obedience to the Lord?

Joshua's Farewell to the Leaders - Joshua 23:1-16

Topics: Advice, Challenge, Consequences, Devotion, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Idolatry, Neighbor, Obedience, Promises, Rewards, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What is one thing you would want to do if you did not have much longer to live?
- * 2. How seriously would you take a dying friend's last request? Why?

Explore It

3. When did the events of this passage take place? (23:1)
4. Why did Joshua summon the Israelites and all of their leaders? (23:2)
- * 5. Whom did Joshua credit for Israel's success in subduing their enemies? (23:3)
6. Of what promise did Joshua remind the Israelites? (23:5)
7. What specific advice did Joshua give to Israel? (23:6)
8. Why was it important for Israel not to associate with the nations around them? (23:7)
9. How was Israel capable of conquering the powerful nations that occupied the Promised Land? (23:9)
- * 10. What did Joshua say would happen to Israel if they turned away from the Lord? (23:12-13)
11. Why was it dangerous for the Israelites to intermarry with their neighbors? (23:12-13)
12. How did Joshua describe what it would be like for Israel if they chose to associate with their neighbors? (23:13)
13. Why is it significant that Joshua gave this advice to Israel when he thought he would die soon? (23:14)
14. What did Joshua believe about the reliability of God's promises? (23:14)
- * 15. What stipulation was combined with the promise of the Lord's protection of Israel? (23:16)

Get It

16. Why do you think Joshua thought it was necessary to give Israel such a harsh warning?
17. What are some of the promises you have seen God fulfill in your life?
- * 18. What specific steps can we take to insure that we carefully obey the commands God has given us?
19. With whom, if anyone, do you think God would not want us to associate today?
20. What do you think can be a snare to Christians today as Israel's neighbors were to them?
- * 21. In what way are the promises and stipulations God gave to Israel applicable to our relationships?
22. In what specific way does this passage encourage or challenge you?

Apply It

- * 23. What step could you take to protect yourself against the temptations to compromise with the world?
24. What is one promise of the Lord that you would like to remember day by day?

The Covenant Renewed at Shechem - Joshua 24:1-33

Topics: Accountability, Advice, Beliefs, Choices, Commitment, Convictions, Criticism, Devotion, Disobedience, Faithfulness, History, Idolatry, Loyalty, Obedience, Promises, Remembering, Serving

Open It

1. What would you list as the three most significant events in your life?
- * 2. What benefit do you see in remembering important events from your past?
3. What do you think would be the benefits of keeping a journal about your relationship with God?

Explore It

4. Why did Joshua assemble all of the tribes of Israel at Shechem? (24:1-2)
- * 5. Why was it necessary for Joshua to remind the Israelites what God had done for them? (24:1-14)
6. What role did Abraham play in the history of Israel? (24:3)
7. Why did the Lord save Israel from the Egyptians? (24:7)
8. What did the Lord give to Israel, and what did He ask in return? (24:13-14)
9. What choice did Joshua present before the Israelites? (24:15)
- * 10. What decision had Joshua made about his own faith? (24:15)
11. How did the Israelites respond to Joshua's challenge? (24:16-18)
12. Why did Joshua say that the people of Israel were not able to serve the Lord? (24:19)
13. Why did Joshua doubt the sincerity of the people of Israel? (24:19, 23)
14. What was keeping the Israelites from fully surrendering to the Lord? (24:23)
- * 15. What did Joshua do to help the Israelites remember their promise to the Lord? (24:25)
16. In what way could the stone that Joshua set up be a witness for Israel? (24:27)

Get It

17. Why do you think fellowship with other believers is so important?
- * 18. When is it most helpful for you to be reminded of God's faithfulness in the past?
19. What are the most significant things that you have seen the Lord do in your life?
20. When did you make the decision to serve the Lord?
21. How do you feel when you think about the time that you first came to the Lord?
22. What are some of the things that hinder you from fully surrendering to the Lord?
- * 23. What is helpful about setting up a "witness" to our commitment to serve the Lord?
24. How can Christians keep each other accountable?

Apply It

- * 25. What sort of witness could you establish to remind you of your commitment to the Lord?
26. What area of your life do you want to surrender more fully to the Lord?
27. How could you remind a friend of God's faithfulness?

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Israel Fights the Remaining Canaanites - Judges 1:1-2:5

Topics: Accomplishments, Achievements, Barriers, Challenge, Consequences, Covenant, Death, Disobedience, Emotions, Enemies, Failure, Faithfulness, Grief, Marriage, Oppressed, Punishment, Victory, War

Open It

1. What are your top three priorities in life?
- * 2. What is one adult responsibility or chore that you dislike?
3. What do you think are the top priorities of your best friend?

Explore It

4. What were the Israelites concerned about? (1:1)
5. Why did the men of Judah and the Simeonites join forces? (1:3)
6. What happened when Judah attacked the Canaanites? (1:4)
7. Who was given credit for Judah's success in battle? (1:4)
8. For what did Adoni-Bezek think God had paid him back? (1:7)
9. How was it obvious that the Lord was with the men of Judah? (1:19)
10. Why were the men of Judah unable to drive their enemies from the plains? (1:19)
11. How did the Lord help the men of Joseph capture the town of Bethel? (1:22-24)
12. Why did the author of this book list the groups of people Israel did not drive out from the land of Canaan? (1:27-36)
- * 13. Why did the Lord withdraw His help from the Israelites? (1:27-2:5)
14. What role did the angel of the Lord play in this incident? (2:1)
- * 15. What condition did the Lord put on His covenant with the nation of Israel? (2:1-2)
- * 16. In what way did Israel suffer because of breaking their covenant with the Lord? (2:3)
17. How did the gods of the Canaanites become a problem for the Israelites? (2:3)
18. How did the Israelites react to the Lord's separation from them because of their disobedience? (2:4-5)

Get It

19. How have you seen the Lord's help in your life recently?
20. Of what significance is it that Israel failed to subdue the Promised Land completely?
21. When have you ever felt separated from the Lord?
22. What are some distractions that hinder your relationship with the Lord?
23. How does God want us to react when we learn of a sin in our lives?
24. What happens to our relationship with the Lord when we turn away from sin?
- * 25. What are some of your God-given responsibilities, jobs, roles, or tasks?
- * 26. What obstacles do you need to overcome in fulfilling your God-given responsibilities?
27. What would you say are some of the gods that people worship today?
28. To what extent or in what way should Christians separate themselves from the world?
29. How can we guard against giving in to worldly temptations?

Apply It

- * 30. What can you do today to fulfill the responsibilities God has given you?
31. What specific steps can you take this week to guard against worldly temptations?

Disobedience and Defeat - Judges 2:6-3:6

Topics: Backslide, Beliefs, Compassion, Complaining, Consequences, Correction, Disobedience, Enemies, Faithfulness, Leadership, Neighbor, Oppressed, Patience, Peer Pressure, Punishment, Rebellion

Open It

- * 1. Why do you think bad things sometimes happen to good people?
- 2. In what ways are you different from your parents? your grandparents?

Explore It

- 3. When were the Israelites faithful to their covenant with the Lord? (2:7)
- 4. How was the generation that followed Joshua's described? (2:10)
- 5. In what way were the Israelites unfaithful to the Lord? (2:11)
- 6. Who influenced the Israelites to worship other gods? (2:12)
- 7. Why was God angry? (2:13)
- * 8. What happened to Israel because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord? (2:14)
- 9. Why did the Lord no longer protect Israel against their enemies? (2:14)
- * 10. How did the Lord show His mercy toward Israel even when they were unfaithful? (2:16)
- 11. How did the Israelites respond to the judges God raised to save them from their enemies? (2:17)
- 12. What did the Israelites do after a judge had saved them from their enemies? (2:19)
- * 13. How did the Lord react to Israel's disobedience? (2:20-21)
- 14. How were Israel's enemies used by the Lord? (2:22)
- 15. Why did the Lord want this generation of Israelites to learn warfare? (3:2)

Get It

- 16. What does this passage reveal about God's purpose for the nation of Israel?
- 17. How would you describe the battle that Christians are in today?
- 18. Why do you think Israel was faithful to God only while someone like Joshua or one of the judges was alive?
- 19. What is important about the influence and responsibility Christian leaders have in the church?
- 20. How can a Christian response to negative experiences be different from that of a nonbeliever?
- 21. Why do you think the presence of evil in the world keeps some people from embracing Christianity?
- 22. What role did peer pressure play in Israel?
- 23. What role does peer pressure play in our lives and in the way we live our faith?
- 24. What caused Israel's downfall?
- 25. What are some of the temptations Christians face in our modern culture?
- * 26. What does this story tell us about why God allows bad things to happen to believers?
- 27. What can we learn from this story about the importance of remembering what God has done for us?
- * 28. How has the Lord shown compassion to you recently?
- 29. What has God used to show you an area of disobedience in your own life?

Apply It

- * 30. How could you say thank You to God for the compassion He has shown you?
- 31. What could you do this week to encourage a leader in your church?

Ehud - Judges 3:7-31

Topics: Abilities, Accomplishments, Actions, Challenge, Character, Courage, Determination, Effectiveness, Enemies, Leadership, Murder, Oppressed, Prayer, Protection, Resources, Success, Victory, War

Open It

- * 1. When have you ever had to be resourceful or especially creative to solve a problem?
- 2. What do you think are your two best talents or abilities?
- 3. What special talent do you wish you had?

Explore It

- 4. Why was the Lord angry with Israel? (3:7)
- 5. What did the Lord do because of Israel's rebellion? (3:8)
- 6. How did God respond to Israel's prayers for deliverance? (3:9)
- 7. How was Othniel able to bring Israel peace? (3:9-11)
- * 8. Why did Eglon gain power over Israel? (3:12)
- 9. How is Ehud described? (3:15)
- * 10. What strategy did Ehud use to defeat the Moabites? (3:15-28)
- 11. Of what significance is it that Ehud was able to cut down the king of Moab single-handedly? (3:15-28)
- 12. What was Eglon's fatal mistake? (3:17-20)
- 13. How did Ehud gain entrance to see the king of Moab? (3:18)
- 14. How was Ehud able to escape after he had killed Eglon, the king of Moab? (3:23-26)
- * 15. To whom did Ehud give credit for Israel's victory over Moab? (3:28)
- 16. How did Israel subdue the rest of the Moabites after their king (Eglon) was killed? (3:28-30)

Get It

- 17. What words would you use to describe Ehud?
- 18. Which character traits of Ehud would you like to have yourself?
- 19. How did God use Ehud?
- * 20. What does this story teach you about the kind of people God uses to achieve His purposes?
- 21. How does this story challenge you to view believers who may not seem as capable as others?
- 22. What characteristics of yours has God used in ministry to others?
- 23. What have you learned from this passage about prayer?
- * 24. For what difficulty or challenge in your own life do you need God's help?
- 25. When have you seen God answer prayer in a unique or creative way?

Apply It

- 26. In what way could you say thank You to God this week for the special talents He has given you?
- * 27. What specific steps could you take in the next few days to use one of your gifts or abilities for God's glory?
- 28. How could you encourage a friend today to use an ability God has given him or her?

Deborah - Judges 4:1-5:31

Topics: Accomplishments, Blessing, Celebration, Challenge, Deceit, Enemies, Escape, Faithfulness, Heroes, Hiding, Justice, Leadership, Neighbor, Opposition, Peace, Praise, Punishment, Risk, Sin, Success, Victory, War

Open It

1. What is your favorite song? Why?
2. What are some of the themes you've noticed in songs today?
- * 3. If you wrote a song about your life, what would be the title?

Explore It

4. Why did the Lord sell Israel into the hands of Jabin, a Canaanite king? (4:1-2)
5. Why did the Israelites cry to the Lord for help? (4:3)
6. What does this passage tell us about Deborah? (4:4-5)
- * 7. What message from the Lord did Deborah give to Barak? (4:6-7)
8. How did Barak respond to the message that Deborah gave him? (4:8)
9. Why did Barak want Deborah to go to war with him? (4:8)
10. For what reason did Barak not receive the glory for his victory over Israel's enemy? (4:9)
11. What did Sisera do when he discovered that Barak had gone to Mount Tabor? (4:13)
- * 12. What encouragement did Deborah give Barak in the battle against Jabin's army? (4:14)
13. What happened when Barak led Israel against their enemy? (4:15)
14. What happened to Sisera when he went to Jael's tent to escape Israel's troops? (4:18-21)
- * 15. What is the unifying theme of Deborah's song? (5:1-31)
16. What is the purpose of Deborah's song? (5:2-3)
17. What did Deborah mean by, "The stars fought . . . against Sisera"? (5:20)
18. How did Deborah conclude her song? (5:31)

Get It

- * 19. What does this passage reveal about God's providence?
20. What does Barak's request of Deborah reveal about his trust in God?
21. In what circumstance of your life has it been difficult for you to trust the Lord?
22. What can we learn from Barak's negative example?
23. What character traits did Deborah have?
24. What have you learned from this passage about God's view of women?
- * 25. With what situation in your life do you need to trust the Lord more?
26. What enemy are you facing?
27. How should we respond whenever the Lord delivers us from an enemy?
28. If you wrote a song about God's work in your life, what would be its theme?

Apply It

- * 29. What specific steps could you take in the next several days to entrust a problem or enemy to the Lord?
30. What could you do this week to praise the Lord for His faithfulness in your life?
31. How could you use music this week to celebrate God's work in your life?

Gideon - Judges 6:1-40

Topics: Abilities, Assurance, Challenge, Consequences, Danger, Disobedience, Doubt, Excuses, Faithfulness, Fear, Guidance, Leadership, Miracles, Obedience, Patience, Risk, Testing

Open It

- * 1. What would you say are some of the costs of being a Christian in today's world?
- 2. What risks have you had to take because of your faith in God?

Explore It

- 3. In what familiar situation did the Israelites find themselves? (6:1-2)
- 4. How were the Israelites oppressed by the Midianites? (6:2-5)
- 5. How did God respond to the cries of Israel? (6:6-8)
- * 6. What message did the prophet bring to Israel from the Lord? (6:8-10)
- 7. Why did the angel of the Lord appear to Gideon? (6:11-14)
- 8. For what reasons did Gideon doubt whether the Lord was with Israel? (6:13)
- 9. What did the angel of the Lord challenge Gideon to do? (6:14)
- * 10. How did Gideon respond to the challenge of the Lord? (6:15)
- 11. What encouragement did Gideon receive from the Lord? (6:12, 14, 16)
- 12. What miracle did the angel of the Lord perform for Gideon? Why? (6:17-21)
- 13. How did Gideon react to the miracle the angel performed? (6:22-24)
- 14. What specific instructions did the Lord give to Gideon? (6:25-26)
- 15. How did the Israelites react to what Gideon had done? (6:28-30)
- 16. What do the Israelites' actions reveal about their spiritual state? (6:28-30)
- 17. What reasoning did Gideon's father use to save his life? (6:31)
- 18. What further tests did Gideon put before the Lord? Why? (6:36-40)
- * 19. How did the Lord show His patience and love to Gideon? (6:38, 40)

Get It

- 20. How would you describe Gideon?
- 21. Why do you think Gideon needed so much reassurance before he would obey God?
- * 22. In what ways has the Lord reassured you that you were doing what was right?
- 23. What does this passage tell us about the kind of people God uses to fulfill His purposes?
- 24. When have you ever felt like Gideon?
- 25. What is good or bad about testing the Lord the way Gideon did?
- 26. What should we do when we are not sure whether God is leading us to go a certain way?
- * 27. What step do you need to take while feeling hesitant to move forward?
- 28. What can you learn from this story about God's patience and love for you?

Apply It

- 29. In what specific way do you need to obey the Lord in faith that He will lead you?
- 30. What risks do you need to take to obey the Lord?
- * 31. What is the first step you need to take in an area in which you fear moving ahead?

Gideon Defeats the Midianites - Judges 7:1-25

Topics: Abilities, Challenge, Confidence, Courage, Depend, Doubt, Enemies, Fear, Glory, Guidance, Help, Inadequacy, Insecurity, Interpretation, Leadership, Limitations, Miracles, Obedience, Strength, Surprises, Trust, Victory, Worship

Open It

1. What is one of your most memorable dreams, and what was memorable about it?
- * 2. When have you ever been part of an amazing or unlikely victory?

Explore It

3. What is the setting of this story? (7:1)
4. Why did God say that Gideon had too many fighting men? (7:2)
- * 5. What did the Lord tell Gideon to do? (7:2-3)
6. What was the second strategy God used to shrink Gideon's army? (7:4-6)
7. With how many men was Gideon left to conquer the Midianites? (7:7)
8. How did Gideon feel about attacking the Midianites with only three hundred men? (7:10)
- * 9. What did the Lord do to encourage Gideon? (7:9-15)
10. How does this passage describe Israel's enemies? (7:12)
11. What was the meaning of the man's dream? (7:13-14)
12. How did Gideon react to what he heard in the camp of the Midianites? (7:15)
13. What strategy did Israel use against the Midianites? (7:16-21)
14. What was Israel's war cry, and what was significant about it? (7:18)
- * 15. What miracle did the Lord do on behalf of Israel? (7:22)

Get It

16. What leadership qualities did Gideon display?
17. What important lesson did God teach Gideon and Israel through these events?
18. In what circumstances do we tend to depend on ourselves?
- * 19. How should a Christian's perspective of life's challenges be different from a nonbeliever's?
20. When have you ever faced a challenge that seemed too big for you to handle?
21. How can we draw encouragement from the Lord during difficult times in our lives?
- * 22. What difficult situation are you facing right now?
23. How can you depend more on God's strength in the challenges you face?
24. What does this passage say about giving God the glory for success in life?

Apply It

- * 25. What specifically can you do to depend on the Lord for help?
26. What can you do today to give the Lord credit for victories you have experienced in your life recently?

Gideon's Ephod - Judges 8:1-35

Topics: Abilities, Accusation, Achievements, Backslide, Challenge, Consequences, Criticism, Death, Disobedience, Enemies, Forget, Idolatry, Possessions, Revenge, Success, Temptation

Open It

- * 1. Why do people sometimes say to others who experience success, "Don't let it go to your head"?
- 2. How does it feel to win? to be popular? to be labeled "successful"?
- 3. When have you seen success or popularity change a person in a negative way?

Explore It

- 4. Why were the Ephraimites upset with Gideon? (8:1)
- 5. How did Gideon respond to the criticism he received? (8:2)
- 6. What strategy did Gideon use to appease the Ephraimites? (8:2-3)
- 7. What did Gideon ask of the men of Succoth? (8:5)
- 8. Why were the men of Succoth afraid to help the Israelites? (8:6)
- 9. How did Gideon respond to those who refused to help Israel? (8:7-9)
- 10. In what shape was the Midianite army at this point? (8:10)
- 11. Why did Gideon return to Succoth after he had conquered the Midianites? (8:13-17)
- 12. Whom did the kings of Midian admit to killing? (8:18)
- 13. What did Gideon do to the kings of Midian? Why? (8:19-21)
- * 14. How did the Israelites respond to Gideon's success in battle? (8:22)
- 15. Why did Gideon refuse to rule over Israel? (8:23)
- * 16. How did Gideon respond to his newfound popularity? (8:23-24)
- 17. For what did Gideon ask from the Israelites? (8:24)
- * 18. In the end what unfortunate outcome resulted from Gideon's success? (8:27)
- 19. What happened in Israel after Gideon died? (8:33)

Get It

- * 20. What role did pride play in Gideon's life?
- * 21. How can we guard ourselves against pride?
- 22. What does this story reveal about God's character?
- 23. In what ways have you had to depend on the Lord's strength?
- 24. What does Gideon's spiritual downfall teach us about human nature?
- 25. What would you say are some of the idols that distract us from serving God?
- 26. What are some good things that you think can cause Christians to become proud or lose their focus on serving God?
- 27. Why is pride dangerous?
- 28. In what way could pride interfere with a person's relationship with others and God?
- 29. What do we need to remember whenever we experience success?
- 30. What one temptation do you face that threatens your relationship with the Lord?

Apply It

- * 31. What concrete action could you take each day to keep yourself from pride?
- 32. What other believer could keep you accountable in your relationship with God?

Abimelech - Judges 9:1-10:5

Topics: Ambition, Consequences, Criticism, Deceit, Enemies, Evil, Greed, Humiliation, Materialism, Murder, Power, Revenge, Risk, Sin, Status, Temptation

Open It

1. What benefits come with being powerful?
- * 2. What is so appealing about getting rich?

Explore It

3. Who was Abimelech, and what did he want? (9:1-2)
4. What did Abimelech have to do to become king? (9:3-6)
5. What did Abimelech's younger brother, Jotham, do when he heard what had happened? (9:7)
6. What do the trees in Jotham's story represent? (9:8-15)
- * 7. What is the meaning of Jotham's story? (9:8-20)
8. Why did Jotham use a thornbush to represent Abimelech? (9:15)
9. What was the most shocking part of Shechem's sin in the eyes of Jotham? (9:17)
10. What did Jotham predict would happen to Abimelech and the people of Shechem? (9:20)
11. Why did the Lord send an evil spirit between Abimelech and the people of Shechem? (9:23-24)
12. What advice did Zebul give to Abimelech about how to deal with Gaal? (9:30-33)
13. How was the element of surprise lost for Abimelech's men? (9:36)
- * 14. What was the final outcome of Abimelech's battle with Shechem? (9:42-45)
15. What happened to Abimelech when he attacked the tower of Thebez? (9:52-53)
16. How did Abimelech eventually die? (9:54)
- * 17. What was God's purpose in all of this war and death? (9:56-57)

Get It

18. What does this story say about God's sovereignty?
19. What risks do you think Jotham took in standing up to Abimelech and the people of Shechem?
20. What risks have you had to take to stand up for what was right?
21. What lessons can we learn from Abimelech's negative example?
22. What do you think was Abimelech's most dangerous character flaw?
23. What have you learned about the danger of power and greed from this passage?
- * 24. What attitude should we have toward power and wealth?
- * 25. How can we guard against the temptation to seek wealth and power?
26. How has this study challenged you to change your attitudes or actions?

Apply It

27. What risks do you think you need to take this week to stand up for what is right?
28. What specific step could you take to protect yourself from the sin of greed?
- * 29. How can you keep a tight rein on the power you have over others?

Jephthah - Judges 10:6-12:15

Topics: Abilities, Actions, Challenge, Children, Compassion, Conflict, Consequences, Courage, Criticism, Disobedience, Enemies, Forgiveness, Grief, Leadership, Promises, Repentance, Sin, Victory, Vows, War

Open It

- * 1. Under what circumstances do people often make poor decisions?
- 2. When have you ever regretted a decision or promise you made?
- 3. What is one consequence you have suffered for a poor decision or choice?

Explore It

- 4. How were the Philistines and Ammonites able to defeat Israel? (10:6-8)
- 5. Why did the Lord not save Israel when He had forgiven and delivered them so often in the past? (10:11-14)
- 6. How did Israel show the Lord that their repentance was sincere? (10:15-16)
- 7. How did God respond to Israel's repentance? (10:16)
- 8. What were the Israelites lacking that Jephthah offered? (10:17-11:1)
- 9. Why was Jephthah driven out of his family? (11:2-3)
- 10. Why did the elders of Gilead get Jephthah? (11:4-6)
- 11. What did the elders promise Jephthah if he would help them? (11:8-10)
- * 12. What strategy did Jephthah use to save Israel from the Ammonites? (11:12-29)
- 13. What reason did the king of the Ammonites have for attacking Israel? (11:13)
- 14. What message did Jephthah send to the Ammonite king? (11:14-27)
- 15. How did the king of the Ammonites respond to Jephthah's message? (11:28)
- * 16. What vow did Jephthah make to the Lord? Why? (11:30-31)
- * 17. What happened as a result of Jephthah's vow to the Lord? (11:30-39)
- 18. Why did Jephthah have to fight the men of Ephraim? (12:1-4)
- 19. How did the Gileadites conquer the Ephraimites? (12:4-6)

Get It

- 20. What caused Israel to recognize and repent of their sin?
- 21. What has God used in your life to convict you of sin?
- 22. What good qualities did Jephthah exemplify?
- 23. In what areas of your life do you need to depend more on the Lord?
- * 24. What have you learned from Jephthah about problem solving?
- 25. What fatal mistake did Jephthah make?
- * 26. How can we guard against making rash decisions, promises, or agreements?
- 27. What does the Lord's treatment of Israel in this situation reveal about His character?
- 28. How does God's patience and compassion encourage you?

Apply It

- * 29. What specific steps could you take in the next few days to guard against making hasty and unwise promises or decisions?
- 30. What could you do today to thank the Lord for His patience and compassion?

The Birth of Samson - Judges 13:1-25

Topics: Advice, Angels, Children, Drinking, Evidence, Good News, Guidance, Life-style, Miracles, Parents, Promises, Responsibility

Open It

- * 1. What three words would you use to describe your family?
- 2. What do you think is the biggest challenge of parenting?
- 3. What would you say are the greatest rewards of being a parent?

Explore It

- 4. Why did the Philistines have power over Israel? (13:1)
- * 5. What instructions and promise did the angel of the Lord give to Manoah's wife? (13:2-5)
- 6. What did the woman do when the angel of the Lord appeared to her? (13:6)
- 7. How did Manoah react to the news his wife received from the Lord? (13:8)
- 8. How did the Lord answer Manoah's prayer? (13:9)
- 9. Under what circumstances did the angel appear to the woman a second time? (13:9)
- 10. What did Manoah want to find out from the angel of the Lord? (13:12)
- 11. Why did the angel advise Manoah to prepare a burnt offering rather than a meal? (13:16)
- * 12. What amazed Manoah and his wife? (13:19-20)
- 13. How did Manoah and his wife react when they saw the angel ascend in the flame of their offering? (13:20)
- 14. When did Manoah realize that he had seen an angel of the Lord? (13:21)
- 15. Why did Manoah think he and his wife would die? (13:22)
- 16. How did Manoah's wife respond to her husband's fearful prediction? (13:23)
- * 17. How was the angel of the Lord's promise fulfilled? (13:24-25)

Get It

- 18. How would you describe Manoah's wife?
- 19. What kind of people were Manoah and his wife?
- 20. In what ways was Manoah's wife prepared to be the mother of Samson?
- 21. What can we learn about parenting from this story?
- 22. Keeping in mind that she was childless, how do you imagine Manoah's wife felt when the angel told her she would have a child?
- * 23. From what disappointing experience or situation has the Lord delivered you?
- 24. How has the Lord used painful experiences in your past to make you a better person today?
- * 25. How have you experienced the compassion and forgiveness of the Lord?

Apply It

- 26. What is one way you can remind yourself or a friend of God's goodness in giving children?
- * 27. What new perspective could you have this week on a difficult situation in your life?
- 28. In what way could you encourage a friend or family member who is dealing with disappointment or loss?

Samson's Marriage - Judges 14:1-20

Topics: Abilities, Accomplishments, Affections, Bargaining, Conflict, Disobedience, Intimidation, Love, Marriage, Parents, Rebellion, Strength, Temptation, Unfaithfulness, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What are some techniques people use to persuade others?
- 2. What methods have you used to convince someone to do something he or she didn't want to do?
- 3. How have you ever been persuaded to do something you didn't want to do?

Explore It

- 4. What resulted from Samson's visit to Timnah? (14:1-2)
- 5. How did Samson approach his parents about what he desired? (14:2)
- 6. How did Samson's parents respond to his demand? (14:3)
- 7. What does Samson's parents' response reveal about their feelings toward the Philistines? (14:3)
- 8. Why did Samson refuse to listen to his parents' advice? (14:3)
- * 9. How did the Lord plan to use Samson's sinful desires to fulfill God's purposes? (14:4)
- 10. What happened to Samson on the way to Timnah? (14:5-6)
- * 11. How was Samson able to tear apart a lion with his bare hands? (14:6)
- 12. What happened to Samson on his second trip to Timnah? (14:8-9)
- 13. How did Samson and his family celebrate his wedding? (14:10-11)
- 14. Why did Samson tell a riddle to his wedding party? (14:12-14)
- 15. What did Samson's companions do when they could not solve the riddle? (14:15)
- * 16. What reasoning did Samson's wife use on him to discover the answer to the riddle? (14:16)
- 17. Why did Samson tell his wife the answer to his riddle? (14:17)
- 18. What did Samson do when the men solved his riddle? (14:18-20)

Get It

- 19. How would you characterize Samson?
- * 20. Which character traits of Samson would you like to have, and which would you rather avoid?
- 21. How did the Lord show His faithfulness to Samson?
- 22. How has the Lord been faithful to you, despite your shortcomings?
- * 23. What weakness has the Lord used in your life to achieve His purposes?
- 24. Over what temptation in your life would you like to have victory?
- 25. What is one temptation you often have to face?
- 26. What are some ways we can resist temptation?
- 27. What does this story teach us about what to do when we give in to temptation?

Apply It

- 28. What practical steps can you take to limit or avoid a temptation you often face?
- * 29. What specific step could you take this week to guard against temptation?
- 30. How can you say thank You to the Lord today for using you despite your weaknesses?

Samson and Delilah - Judges 15:1-16:31

Topics: Abilities, Accomplishments, Affections, Bargaining, Blindness, Character, Complaining, Conflict, Consequences, Death, Disobedience, Enemies, Failure, Faithfulness, Handicapped, Humiliation, Peer Pressure, Punishment, Relationships, Sacrifice, Sin, Strength, Unbelievers

Open It

1. If you could have one wish, what would it be?
- * 2. What one character trait or special talent do you wish you had?
3. How have you seen God use one of your weaknesses or failures to accomplish something good?

Explore It

4. What happened when Samson went to visit his wife? (15:1-2)
5. What deal did Samson's father-in-law try to make with Samson? (15:2)
6. Why did Samson believe he had a right to get even with the Philistines? (15:3)
7. What did Samson do to the Philistines to get revenge? (15:4-5)
8. What had the Philistines done that made Samson attack them so viciously? (15:6-7)
9. Why did the Israelites turn Samson over to the Philistines? (15:9-13)
10. What happened when Samson was turned over to the Philistines? (15:14-17)
- * 11. What weakness of Samson did the Philistines use against him? (16:1-5)
12. What secret did the Philistines want Delilah to discover for them? (16:5)
13. How trustworthy was Delilah? (16:6-20)
14. How did Delilah convince Samson to reveal the secret of his strength? (16:15-16)
- * 15. What was the source of Samson's strength, and why did he lose it? (16:17-20)
- * 16. How was Samson victorious even in his own death? (16:28-30)

Get It

17. What was Samson's fatal weakness?
18. What were the consequences of Samson's sin?
19. What did Samson take for granted?
20. What were the consequences of Samson's character weaknesses?
21. What caused Samson's downfall?
22. What are the dangers in taking our relationship with the Lord for granted?
23. In what area of your life do you often succumb to temptation?
- * 24. What can you learn from this story about dealing with your own weaknesses and failures?
25. How did the Lord demonstrate His forgiveness and faithfulness to Samson?
26. How has the Lord shown His compassion to you?
27. What does this passage reveal about the kind of people God uses to achieve His will on earth?
28. What has this story taught you about both humility and self-esteem?
- * 29. What are some of your strengths that you think God could use?

Apply It

30. What could you do this week to protect yourself against taking your relationship with the Lord for granted?
- * 31. How could you use an ability or talent for God's glory?
32. What could you do to encourage a friend who is struggling with self-doubt or discouragement?

Idolatry in the Tribe of Dan - Judges 17:1-18:31

Topics: Blessing, Compromise, Disobedience, Evil, Greed, Hypocrisy, Idolatry, Intimidation, Power, Sin, Unfaithfulness, War

Open It

- * 1. What bad habits do people commonly excuse or shrug off?
- 2. What do you like or dislike about where your family has settled?

Explore It

- 3. What motivated Micah to return the money he stole? (17:1-2)
- 4. Why did the mother bless the son when he returned the money? (17:1-3)
- * 5. In what way were both Micah and his mother disobedient to God? (17:3-5)
- 6. How did the author of this story describe Israel at this point? (17:6)
- 7. Why did the young Levite agree to stay with Micah? (17:10)
- * 8. How did Micah attempt to rationalize his shrine and gain God's favor? (17:12-13)
- 9. What was the situation of the Danites at this point? (18:1-2)
- 10. What did the Danite spies request of the Levite priest? (18:5)
- 11. What advice did the spies give to their people when they returned from exploring the land? (18:8-10)
- 12. How did the five spies convince the priest to go with them? (18:19)
- 13. How did the Danites protect themselves against attack? (18:21)
- 14. What did Micah do when he realized his priest and idols were gone? (18:22-23)
- * 15. What do Micah's words reveal about his faith? (18:24)
- 16. How did Micah and the Danites resolve their disagreement? (18:25-26)
- 17. What kind of relationship did the Danites have with the Lord? (18:29-31)

Get It

- 18. How would you characterize Micah?
- 19. In what way was Micah hypocritical?
- 20. What excuses do people use today to rationalize or explain away their sin?
- 21. When have you ever had a guilty conscience, and how did it affect you?
- 22. What do you think it means not to be hypocritical?
- * 23. How can we guard against the sin of hypocrisy?
- 24. How can we protect ourselves against false religiosity?
- 25. Where did Micah put his faith?
- 26. How did Micah appease his conscience while living in disobedience to the Lord?
- 27. What weakness caused the demise of the young Levite priest?
- 28. In what way did the Levite priest use his religion for selfish gain?
- 29. What role can greed play in a person's faith?
- 30. What's wrong with trying to use God for our own gain?
- 31. What temptation threatens your relationship with the Lord?
- * 32. In what area of your life do you need to be more consistent with your faith?

Apply It

- * 33. Whom could you ask to help you be more consistent with your faith?
- 34. What is one thing you can do to set your attention on serving God?

Israelites Fight the Benjamites - Judges 19:1-21:25

Topics: Abandon, Accusation, Bargaining, Complacency, Conflict, Danger, Death, Direction, Disobedience, Evil, Example, Fear, Hardheartedness, Homosexuality, Hospitality, Humiliation, Immorality, Injustice, Insensitivity, Judging Others, Lust, Murder, Revenge, Sex, War

Open It

- * 1. What specific actions do you associate with hospitality?
- 2. When has it been a sacrifice for you to be hospitable to others?
- 3. When was a time you felt unwelcome in someone else's home?

Explore It

- 4. What happened when the Levite man went to the city of Gibeah? (19:15-20)
- 5. Why did the old man from Ephraim advise the Levite not to spend the night in the town square? (19:20-22)
- 6. What did the wicked men of the city want when they surrounded the house where the Levite was staying? (19:22)
- 7. How did the owner of the house respond to the demands of the wicked men? (19:23-24)
- 8. How did the Levite save himself from assault? (19:25)
- 9. What happened to the Levite's concubine? (19:25-28)
- 10. How did the Levite react to what the men of Gibeah had done? (19:29-30)
- * 11. Why did the Israelites assemble at Mizpah? (20:1-3)
- 12. What did the Israelites decide to do about the sin of the men of Gibeah? (20:8-10)
- * 13. What happened in the battle between the Benjamites and the Israelites? (20:14-48)
- 14. Where did the Israelites get their direction and strength in battle? (20:18, 23, 26, 35)
- * 15. With whom did the Lord side in this situation? Why? (20:23)
- 16. What two oaths did the Israelites take? (21:1-5)
- 17. In what way was the Israelites' defeat of the Benjamites a hollow victory? (21:3)
- 18. What did the Israelites do to prevent the tribe of Benjamin from becoming extinct? (21:5-25)
- 19. How did the author of this passage describe Israel? (21:25)

Get It

- 20. Which characteristics of the old man do you admire?
- 21. Which characteristics of the Levite man should we avoid?
- 22. Why were such drastic and gruesome measures necessary for Israel to recognize their sin?
- 23. When has the Lord taken drastic measures to make you recognize sin in your life?
- * 24. What lesson can be learned from the way the Israelites approached their battle with the Benjamites?
- 25. What challenge do you face in the near future?
- * 26. How can you depend on the Lord for strength and direction in your life?

Apply It

- 27. To whom and how could you offer hospitality this week?
- 28. What do you want to remember the next time you discover a sin that needs to be corrected?
- * 29. In what situation that you're now facing do you need God's wisdom and guidance?

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Naomi and Ruth - Ruth 1:1-22

Topics: Advice, Affections, Blessing, Children, Death, Decisions, Devotion, Family, Friendship, Love, Loyalty, Relationships, Sacrifice, Sorrow, Stubbornness

Open It

1. How does it feel to be in a foreign country?
- * 2. What characteristics do you think are most important in a friend?
3. What is the nicest thing a friend or family member has ever done for you?

Explore It

4. What is the setting of this story? (1:1-2)
5. What was Naomi's background? (1:1-2)
6. Why did Naomi want to return to Judah? (1:1-6)
7. What blessing did Naomi give to her daughters-in-law? (1:8-9)
8. What do Naomi's wishes for Ruth and Orpah reveal about their character? (1:8-9)
- * 9. What kind of relationship did Naomi have with her daughters-in-law? (1:8-10)
10. What reasons did Naomi give to her daughters-in-law to convince them to return to their home? (1:11-13)
11. Why did Naomi feel that God was against her? (1:13)
12. What did Naomi say about Orpah's return? (1:15)
- * 13. Why did Ruth decide to stay with her mother-in-law, Naomi? (1:16)
- * 14. How did Ruth reveal her commitment to Naomi's God? (1:17)
15. How did the people of Bethlehem react to Naomi's return? (1:19)
16. Why did Naomi call herself Mara? (1:20-21)
17. In what season did Naomi and Ruth return to Judah? (1:22)

Get It

18. How did Naomi feel at this point in her life?
19. What could Ruth expect for her future when she decided to go with Naomi to Judah?
20. How was Ruth's response to God different from Naomi's?
21. How does Ruth's commitment to the God of Israel offer hope and encouragement to you?
22. What does Ruth's speech reveal about her desires and character?
- * 23. What is one characteristic you see in the life of Ruth that you want to have?
24. Why do you think Ruth's words to Naomi are often used in modern wedding ceremonies?
- * 25. In what specific ways can we demonstrate loyalty or devotion to God?
26. How does the relationship between Naomi and Ruth inspire you to relate to loved ones in your own life?

Apply It

27. What concrete action can you take today to show your loyalty to a friend or family member?
- * 28. How could you develop or reaffirm your devotion to God this week?

Ruth Meets Boaz - Ruth 2:1-23

Topics: Advice, Affirmation, Benefits, Blessing, Devotion, Employment, Generosity, Humility, Instructions, Loyalty, Needs, Neighbor, Productivity, Protection, Relationships, Sacrifice, Sensitivity, Success, Thankfulness, Work

Open It

1. What emotions do you usually feel when you start a new job?
- * 2. How does the praise of an employer or friend usually affect you?
3. When have you ever faced danger in doing what you thought was right?

Explore It

4. Who was Boaz, and what kind of man was he? (2:1, 4-5)
5. In what situation did Naomi and Ruth find themselves? (2:1-2)
- * 6. How did Ruth provide for her mother-in-law? (2:2-3)
7. How did Boaz's foreman describe Ruth? (2:6-7)
- * 8. How was Ruth treated on her first day of work? (2:8-9, 14-16)
9. What specific instructions did Boaz give to Ruth, and how did she respond to him? (2:8-11)
10. What danger did Ruth face in gleaning the fields? (2:9-22)
11. What sacrifices had Ruth made to stay with her mother-in-law? (2:11)
- * 12. What reason did Boaz give Ruth for his special attention to her? (2:11-12)
13. What words of blessing did Boaz offer to Ruth? (2:12)
14. What kind of relationship did Ruth have with Naomi? (2:17-23)
15. How did Naomi respond to Ruth's success? (2:19-20)
16. What advice did Naomi give to Ruth? (2:22)

Get It

17. How did God show His faithfulness to Ruth and Naomi?
18. How do you think Ruth felt about her first day at work?
- * 19. What character traits of Ruth stand out to you?
20. What is significant about the fact that Ruth was a foreigner in Judah?
- * 21. Judging from the events in this story, what character traits does God honor in His people?
22. How was divine providence evident in Ruth and Naomi's life?
23. How have you seen God's providence at work in your life?

Apply It

- * 24. What is a step you can take this week toward developing your character?
25. How could you demonstrate your thankfulness to the Lord for His provision for you?
26. What can you do in the next few days to help a friend who is struggling to make ends meet?

Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor - Ruth 3:1-18

Topics: Accountability, Advice, Affections, Authority, Character, Confidence, Follow-through, Future, Gentleness, Guidance, Obedience, Protection, Relationships, Remarriage, Responsibility

Open It

1. What kind of reputation do you think Christianity has in the world today?
- * 2. What about your reputation do you value most and want to protect at all costs?
3. On whom do you depend for advice when you need it?

Explore It

4. What motivated Naomi to tell Ruth to go to Boaz? (3:1-2)
5. What specific instructions did Naomi give to Ruth? (3:1-4)
6. How did Naomi refer to Boaz, and how is this significant? (3:2)
- * 7. How did Ruth respond to Naomi's unusual request? (3:5)
8. How did Ruth answer Boaz when he discovered her at his feet? (3:8-9)
9. To what was Boaz referring when he said, "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier"? (3:10)
10. Why was Boaz willing to fulfill his obligation? (3:10-13)
- * 11. What reputation did Ruth have in the town? (3:11)
- * 12. What did Boaz tell Ruth to do? Why? (3:13-14)
13. What did Boaz do to protect Ruth's good reputation? (3:13-14)
14. In what way did Boaz show kindness to Ruth's mother-in-law? (3:15-17)
15. How did Naomi predict Boaz would handle the situation? (3:18)

Get It

16. What does Ruth's obedience to Naomi reveal about her character?
17. What does Boaz's willingness to fulfill his obligation reveal about him?
- * 18. What positive character traits stand out in this story?
19. When have you ever found yourself in an "impossible" situation like Ruth?
- * 20. Judging from this passage, what does God want you to do when you cannot see the solution to a problem in your life?
21. What have you learned from this passage about the role mature Christian friends can play in your life?
22. What problem or challenge do you face in the next few weeks?
23. Who is a Christian friend you could rely on for wise advice?

Apply It

24. How could you encourage or advise a Christian friend who is struggling with a problem?
- * 25. What is one specific step you can take this week to benefit from the wisdom and insight of a more mature Christian?

Boaz Marries Ruth - Ruth 4:1-22

Topics: Authority, Blessing, Caring, Character, Choices, Commitment, Devotion, Family, Husbands, Marriage, Obligation, Praise, Relationships, Remarriage, Traditions, Wives

Open It

1. What are some of the unwritten social rules in your family?
2. Why do you think people are embarrassed by faux pas (social blunders)?
- * 3. In what circumstances or situations are witnesses important?

Explore It

- * 4. What is the central event in this chapter? (4:1-12)
5. How did Boaz adhere to Jewish tradition in his dealing with the kinsman-redeemer? (4:1-12)
6. What strategy did Boaz use with the kinsman-redeemer, and what effect did it have? (4:4-7)
7. Why did the kinsman-redeemer decline to buy the land? (4:6)
8. What significance was there in the kinsman-redeemer's removing his sandal? (4:7)
9. Why was it important for this transaction to take place at the town gate? (4:9-10)
- * 10. How is the elders' blessing on Boaz and Ruth's marriage significant in light of the rest of the chapter? (4:11-12)
- * 11. What extra blessing did the Lord give to Ruth? (4:13)
12. In what way could the child Obed renew Naomi's life and sustain her in her old age? (4:15)
13. Why did the women of Bethlehem say Ruth was "better . . . than seven sons" to Naomi? (4:15)
14. What reputation did Ruth have in the town? (4:15)
15. What does the genealogy at the end of the chapter add to the story? (4:17-22)

Get It

16. What character traits did Boaz and Ruth display?
17. In what situation in your life do you need to display a characteristic of Boaz or Ruth?
18. What character trait do you want to concentrate on developing?
19. What have you learned from this passage that could help you improve your relationship with a good friend or family member?
- * 20. How is this chapter an example of God's providence in our lives?
21. How have you seen God at work in your own life recently?
22. In what specific ways could we demonstrate thanks to the Lord for His personal involvement in our lives?
- * 23. What does the story of Ruth teach you about God's view of the details in your daily life?

Apply It

24. How can you praise the Lord today for His work in your life?
- * 25. With what prayer could you entrust your life to the Lord's care?
26. In the next few days, how could you support or help a friend or family member?

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The Birth of Samuel - 1 Samuel 1:1-20

Topics: Emotions, Grief, Husbands, Isolation, Marriage, Prayer, Vows

Open It

1. In our society what stigma, if any, do you think is attached to being a childless woman? Why?
- * 2. Why is it difficult to be faced with constant reminders of things we wish we had but do not?

Explore It

3. What are the names of the family members described in 1 Samuel 1? (1:1-2)
- * 4. What was a primary difference between the two wives of Elkanah? (1:2)
5. Where did the family go yearly to worship God? (1:3)
6. Who were the priests at this time? (1:3)
7. How did the husband treat Hannah on the occasion of feasts? Why? (1:5, 8)
8. How was Hannah treated? (1:6)
9. Who observed Hannah in the temple? (1:9, 13)
- * 10. What was Hannah's emotional state when the feasting ended? (1:10)
11. What was Hannah's vow before the Lord? (1:11)
12. What did Eli assume about Hannah? (1:13-14)
13. How did Hannah explain her behavior? (1:15-16)
14. What was Eli's response to Hannah's situation? (1:17)
- * 15. How did Hannah's mood change after she had prayed? (1:18)
16. How was Hannah's prayer answered? (1:19-20)

Get It

17. Why does competition tend to arise between family members?
18. What reactions, good and bad, can we have to cruel taunts?
- * 19. Why did Hannah's demeanor change so dramatically after she prayed?
20. What other responses to her predicament could Hannah have chosen?
- * 21. Why is it important to take our requests to God?
22. In what ways do we try to ease the pain of someone's obvious loss or lack?
23. Why does the account in 1 Samuel say that God "remembered" Hannah?
24. What was Eli the priest's role in the life of this family?

Apply It

- * 25. What deep desire do you need to turn into earnest prayer and leave before God?
26. What ongoing trial or grief can you commit to God in prayer?

Hannah Dedicates Samuel - 1 Samuel 1:21-2:11

Topics: Faithfulness, Joy, Judgment, Praise, Sacrifice, Separation, Sovereignty, Strength, Vows

Open It

1. Why is it often easier to make a promise than to carry it through?
- * 2. What are some modern-day instances of a total reversal of fortune?
3. What examples of human arrogance do you see in the world around you?

Explore It

4. Why did Hannah want to stay behind when the rest of the family went to offer the annual sacrifice? (1:22)
5. How did Elkanah react to Hannah's plan? (1:23)
6. What was his main concern? (1:23)
- * 7. What did Hannah take along with the child to the house of the Lord? (1:24)
8. What was the purpose of these items? (1:25)
- * 9. How did Hannah explain her vow and its fulfillment? (1:25-28)
- * 10. What was the prevailing emotion of Hannah's prayer? (2:1)
11. In what way had her position changed with respect to her rival within the family? (2:1)
12. What is one trait of God's character which particularly inspired Hannah's praise? (2:2)
13. What is the ultimate answer for human arrogance? (2:3)
14. What are some of the total reversals named by Hannah as acts of God? (2:4-8)
15. How do the poor and downtrodden of the earth ultimately fare with God? (2:8)
16. How does human strength weigh in against the judgment of God? (2:9-10)
17. Which of Hannah's praises foreshadowed the coming of Messiah? (2:10)
18. How did Samuel's life change? (2:11)

Get It

- * 19. How do you imagine Hannah felt about carrying through with her promise?
20. How would it feel to be delivered or vindicated by God?
- * 21. Why is it important to remind ourselves that God is the source of all good gifts?
22. Why is God opposed to those who are proud and self-important?
23. In what ways do we seek to enhance our strength or security in earthly terms?

Apply It

24. What vow or promise to God do you need to see through to completion?
25. What instance of pride or unhealthy self-reliance do you need to confess today?
- * 26. What unique act of divine reversal can channel your praises to God this week?

Eli's Wicked Sons - 1 Samuel 2:12-36

Topics: Accountability, Consequences, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Family, Greed, Immorality, Injustice, Position, Punishment

Open It

1. What sins are particularly abhorrent when committed by Christian leaders?
- * 2. To what extent do you think parents should be held accountable when their children break the law?

Explore It

- * 3. How does the passage describe Eli's sons? (2:12)
4. How were the priests claiming more than their share of the people's sacrifices? (2:13-15)
5. If anyone sought to argue with them, how did the servants of the priests respond? (2:16)
6. Why did the taking of the meat before the burnt offering particularly grieve the Lord? (2:17)
7. What sign of remembrance did Hannah take with her to the yearly sacrifice? (2:19)
8. How were Hannah and Elkanah blessed for their faithfulness? (2:20-21)
9. What was reported to Eli about his sons' behavior? (2:22)
- * 10. What did Eli do about his sons' sinful practices? (2:23-24)
11. How did the sons respond to Eli's rebuke? (2:25)
12. What characterized Samuel's childhood years? (2:26)
13. Who brought a message to Eli about the conditions in God's house? (2:27)
14. How did Eli's family come into the priesthood in the first place? (2:28)
15. What three questions did the man of God ask of Eli? (2:27-29)
16. In what specific ways was the house of Eli cursed by God? (2:30-33)
17. What sign did God promise to send to show His displeasure with Eli's family? (2:34)
- * 18. How did God propose to remedy the tragic situation in His house? (2:35)

Get It

19. How can the blessings of God be revoked?
20. Why is faithfulness such a valuable quality to God?
- * 21. What does God mean by the pronouncement, "you honor your sons more than me"?
- * 22. How might Eli have responded differently to reports of his sons' behavior?
23. In what ways do parents need to take responsibility for their children's behavior?
24. What kind of person does God seek to serve Him?

Apply It

25. What blessing that you have regarded as a "birthright" can become a reason for humble praise this week?
26. What blessings have you taken for granted for which you want to praise God?
- * 27. How can you begin now to teach your family the proper fear of God?
28. What act of faithfulness can you perform that will remind someone in ministry of your love and support?

The Lord Calls Samuel - 1 Samuel 3:1-21

Topics: Acceptance, Atonement, Blindness, Call, Children, Consequences, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Family, Judgment, Listening, Obedience, Parents, Prophecy, Punishment, Sacrifice, Sin, Sincerity, Submission, Unfaithfulness

Open It

1. How have the relations of children to adults changed since you were a child?
2. What are some examples of a child's refreshing naiveté about God?
- * 3. Why is it sometimes risky to be honest with another person?

Explore It

4. How is Eli described in this passage? (3:2)
5. Why was Samuel lying down in the temple of the Lord? (3:3)
- * 6. How would you characterize Samuel's relationship to Eli? (3:4-5)
7. What did Samuel assume about the voice he heard in the night? (3:5)
8. How many times did Samuel come to Eli before Eli realized what was happening? (3:8-9)
9. How did Eli instruct Samuel to react to the voice he heard? (3:9)
- * 10. What future events did God reveal to Samuel that night? (3:11-12)
11. What decision regarding the priesthood of Israel did God reveal? (3:12)
12. What reasons did God give for judging Eli so harshly? (3:13)
13. How did Samuel react to what he heard God speak? (3:15)
14. What question did Eli ask of Samuel the morning after Samuel met with God? (3:17)
15. How did Samuel respond to Eli's inquiry about what God had said the night before? (3:18)
16. What was Eli's reaction to the prophecy concerning himself and his descendants? (3:18)
- * 17. What was unique about Samuel's words as contrasted to those of the other priests? (3:19)
18. What was Samuel's relationship with God after God first spoke to him? (3:19-21)

Get It

- * 19. What dilemma faced Samuel when Eli questioned him about God's message?
20. What was Israel's relationship to God at the time of this story?
21. How would you characterize our day and age with regard to people hearing from God?
22. What characteristics of the boy Samuel made him a suitable person to hear from God?
- * 23. What was good or bad about Eli's reaction to the gloomy prophecy about his descendants?

Apply It

- * 24. What first step could you take the next time it would be more comfortable to lie than to tell the truth to someone close to you?
25. In what concrete way could you make yourself available to God this week?

The Philistines Capture the Ark - 1 Samuel 4:1-22

Topics: Age, Assumptions, Blindness, Death, Despair, Discouragement, Enemies, Fear, Glory, Grief, History, Humiliation, Name, Risk, War, Wives, Worry

Open It

1. What role does religion play in motivating people to go to war?
- * 2. What are some religious symbols that have been meaningful to you?
3. When was the last time you anxiously awaited some news?

Explore It

- * 4. What were the Israelite losses in battle before and after the priests brought the ark of the covenant to the battlefield? (4:2, 10)
- * 5. After their initial defeat by the Philistines, what strategy did the elders of Israel take for granted in approaching the next battle? (4:3)
6. Who accompanied the ark from Shiloh to the battlefield? (4:4)
7. How did the army of Israel react when the ark of the covenant arrived at the front? (4:5)
8. What reaction did the news of the ark's arrival provoke among Israel's enemies? (4:7)
9. With what historical event concerning God and the Hebrews were the Philistines familiar? (4:8)
10. How did the Philistine commanders motivate their troops to fight harder rather than be discouraged? (4:9)
- * 11. What became of the ark and the priests at the end of the battle? (4:11)
12. How did news of the battle's outcome reach Shiloh? (4:12)
13. Why was Eli anxiously awaiting news from the front? (4:13)
14. Of all the bad news reported to Eli, what was the proverbial "last straw"? (4:18)
15. What other family member ultimately died as a result of hearing the bad news? (4:19-20)
16. How did the naming of Phinehas' son relate to the worst outcome of the battle against the Philistines? (4:21-22)

Get It

17. Why do you suppose the elders decided to bring the ark to the battlefield?
- * 18. Why isn't it safe to assume that the presence of the symbols of God guarantee the presence of God?
19. How were the lives of the people waiting at home affected by the decisions of the priests and elders?
- * 20. When are we most likely to become overconfident?
21. What does the phrase "fear of God" mean to you?

Apply It

- * 22. What symbol of God's presence and power can you resolve not to take for granted?
23. How can you voice your concerns about an important issue the next time it differs from the majority?

The Ark in Ashdod and Ekron - 1 Samuel 5:1-12

Topics: Enemies, Fear, Giving Up, God, Humiliation, Idolatry, Intimidation, Self-Centeredness, Sickness, Suffering, Traditions, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What is one artifact or souvenir you have from another country?
2. Why would a person or group seek to transfer a difficult responsibility to someone else?
- * 3. In what circumstances might a “winner” seek to return the prize he or she has won?

Explore It

4. Where did the Philistines place the ark once it was in the city of Ashdod? (5:2)
5. What did the Philistines find on the first morning after placing the ark in the temple of Dagon? (5:3)
6. What did the Philistines find the second morning, after standing up their idol once already? (5:4)
7. How did the Philistines’ superstition carry into future generations? (5:5)
- * 8. What misfortune befell the “victorious” Philistines when they took the ark of God into their territory? (5:6)
9. Besides the damage to Dagon, what were the repercussions of the ark’s presence in Ashdod? (5:6)
- * 10. What did the Philistines conclude about the power of the God of Israel over their god, Dagon? (5:7)
- * 11. What was the general conclusion regarding what should be done to try to reduce the panic? (5:7)
12. Where did the people of Ashdod send the ark? (5:8)
13. What result followed the ark from city to city? (5:9)
14. What did the people of Gath do with the ark? (5:10)
15. How did the people of Ekron react to receiving the ark of God? (5:10-11)
16. Besides the suffering caused by disease, what effect did the presence of the ark have among the Philistines? (5:11)

Get It

17. What different conclusions might the Philistines have reached when they found Dagon fallen over the first morning after the arrival of the ark of God?
18. How do we feel when cherished symbols of power are revealed to be powerless?
- * 19. What kept the Philistines from enjoying their victory over Israel?
20. Why might the Philistine rulers have decided to move the ark from one of their cities to another?
21. How might an Israelite spy have reacted if he had been able to witness the events in Philistia?
- * 22. Ultimately, who is able to defend the reputation of God?

Apply It

- * 23. Rather than be disheartened when a specific “setback” for the church comes to your attention, how could you turn your dismay into a prayer that God would vindicate His own name?
24. This week, in defending yourself from a difficult person or situation, how can you find a creative way to avoid simply passing the trouble on to someone else?

The Ark Returned to Israel - 1 Samuel 6:1-7:1

Topics: Advice, Atonement, Bargaining, Celebration, Consequences, Curiosity, Death, Disobedience, Fear, Foolishness, Guilt, Hardheartedness, Image, Impulsiveness, Instructions, Intimidation, Joy, Judgment, Mercy, Motives, Mourning, Punishment, Questions, Remembering, Restitution, Restoration, Sacrifice, Sin, Unbelievers

Open It

1. Do you think “chance” thinking or “cause and effect” thinking is more prevalent in our society?
2. Who are the wise persons or counselors to whom we turn when we find ourselves in trouble?
- * 3. Why do you think human beings so commonly ask, “Why is this happening to me?”

Explore It

4. How long did the ark of God remain with the Philistines? (6:1)
5. To whom did the Philistine people turn when they were desperate for a solution to their problem? (6:2)
- * 6. Why did the diviners recommend sending gold back to Israel along with the ark? (6:5)
7. How did the Philistine wise men know that it would be a miracle if the two cows went straight to Israel with the cart instead of heading back to their pens? (6:7)
8. What “test” did the Philistine diviners design to determine whether God was really behind the plagues that came upon them when they took the ark captive? (6:8-9)
9. Who followed behind the cart to see what would become of it? (6:12)
10. What was the ark’s first stop once it arrived in Israel? (6:13)
11. What were the people doing when they saw the ark coming on the cart? (6:13)
- * 12. What was the reaction of the Israelites to the unexpected arrival of the ark? (6:13)
13. What appropriate action did the Israelites take to acknowledge God’s hand in the miraculous return of the ark? (6:14)
14. What was the significance of five gold tumors and five gold rats? (6:17-18)
15. What specific first resting place of the ark was remembered by Israel long after it was moved? (6:18)
16. How did God react to the mishandling of the ark by His own people? (6:19)
- * 17. What sin caused the deaths of seventy Israelites? (6:19)
18. Why was the ark sent on from Beth Shemesh? (6:20)

Get It

19. What assumptions underlay the recommendation of the Philistine wise men to send back an offering with the ark?
- * 20. Why was it a problem that some of the Israelites looked inside the ark?
21. What is your first reaction when confronted by an unexpected miracle from God in your life?
- * 22. In what ways is it a heavy responsibility to be the people of God?

Apply It

23. In what concrete ways can you show respect for the Bible?
24. How could you make restitution a part of your next act of repentance?
- * 25. In what concrete way could you model the fear of the Lord for your friends or children?

Samuel Subdues the Philistines at Mizpah - 1 Samuel 7:2-17

Topics: Administration, Atonement, Authority, Change, Correction, Danger, Fasting, Fear, Heart, Idolatry, Leadership, Miracles, Mourning, Obedience, Peace, People, Persecution, Persistence, Protection, Remembering, Repentance, Restoration, Revenge, Running, Sacrifice, Security, Sin, Spiritual Disciplines, Success, Thankfulness, Victory, War

Open It

1. How would it feel to take part in a religious observance and see armed troops bearing down on you?
- * 2. What do you suppose would provoke people all over the country suddenly to turn to God?
3. What sorts of places tend to become national memorials?

Explore It

4. Although the ark was again within the borders of Israel, what was the mood of the subdued Israelites? (7:2)
- * 5. How did Samuel define “returning to the Lord with all your hearts”? (7:3)
6. What was God’s promise if Israel would rid itself of idolatry? (7:3)
7. What characterized the spiritual climate of Israel under the judgeship of Samuel? (7:4)
8. What was Samuel’s role when he assembled all the people at Mizpah? (7:5)
- * 9. For what purpose had the Israelites assembled at Mizpah when they were attacked? (7:5-6)
- * 10. What were three significant actions taken by the people of Israel in the process of repenting? (7:6)
11. How did the assembled Israelites feel when they heard that the Philistines were attacking? (7:7)
12. What was the people’s request of Samuel when they realized they were under attack? (7:8)
13. What was Samuel doing as the army was approaching? (7:9)
14. How does the passage characterize God’s response? (7:9)
15. By what miraculous circumstance was the Philistine army defeated? (7:10)
16. What was the significance of the stone Samuel set up between Mizpah and Shen? (7:12)
17. What was Israel’s relationship to the powerful Philistines in the ensuing years? (7:13-14)
18. What was Samuel’s title and function throughout his lifetime? (7:15)
19. In what locations did Samuel judge Israel and worship God? (7:16-17)

Get It

- * 20. Why did Samuel see Israel’s repentance and abandonment of idols as a necessary first step to their military deliverance?
21. How might the story have been told to future generations at the Ebenezer stone?
22. Why might some people consider the offering of a sacrifice in the path of the enemy army as foolish?
- * 23. When the people reacted to the approaching army by asking Samuel to “cry out to the Lord our God for us,” how had the stage been set for God’s positive response?
24. What are some of the concrete ways we can demonstrate that we are returning to the Lord with all our hearts?

Apply It

- * 25. What would be a good first step for you as you seek God’s response to a request that is especially important to you?
26. How could you, figuratively, set up an “Ebenezer” stone? Create a small reminder of a particular instance of God’s unmerited favor so that you remember to praise Him for it?

Israel Asks for a King - 1 Samuel 8:1-22

Topics: Age, Anger, Answers, Arguments, Authority, Backslide, Children, Choices, Comparisons, Complaining, Consequences, Desires, Disagreements, Disobedience, Ego, Envy, Family, Foolishness, Forsake, Freedom, God's Will, Government, Habits, Hardheartedness, Humanness, Idolatry, Instructions, Leadership, Materialism, Parents, Priorities, Rebellion, Rejection, Representatives, Stubbornness

Open It

- * 1. What example can you recall, from your experience or from the media, of someone who chose to ignore good advice?
- 2. What sort of stubbornness do you find particularly maddening in other people?
- 3. What do you think is the appeal of royalty for those nations that have the institution?

Explore It

- 4. Whom did Samuel intend to succeed him when he died? (8:1)
- 5. In what ways did Samuel's sons differ from their father? (8:3)
- * 6. What request by the elders of Israel angered Samuel in his old age? (8:4-6)
- * 7. What were some of the reasons that the Israelites wanted a king rather than a priest/judge? (8:5)
- * 8. How did God help Samuel put the people's request in perspective? (8:7)
- 9. What was God's overview of Israel throughout its history? (8:8)
- 10. God commanded Samuel to listen to the people's request, but what else was he to do? (8:9)
- 11. What were some of Samuel's predictions about what life would be like for the king's new subjects? (8:10-17)
- 12. According to Samuel's prophecy, how would God respond if they found that they did not like the king? (8:18)
- 13. How were the people affected by Samuel's warnings? (8:19)
- 14. What were the primary reasons that having a king appealed to the people of Israel? (8:20)
- 15. When Samuel brought the reaction of Israel before God, what did God command him? (8:21-22)
- 16. What did the delegation of elders do at the end of the interchange with Samuel? (8:22)

Get It

- 17. How can Samuel's predicament help us to keep perspective when we are rejected because of our stand for Christ?
- * 18. Why did God include the request for a king in the same category with idolatry?
- 19. Why was it hard for the Israelites to see the negative side of the Israelites' request?
- 20. In what way was Israel more "free" than other nations before it was ruled by a king?
- * 21. In what way is the desire to be like the people around us more of a hindrance than a help to our spiritual lives?
- 22. In what way is your life not "like other people" and yet it is good because God has ordained it?

Apply It

- * 23. Before you make requests of God this week, how could you go about seeking His perspective on what is best for you?
- 24. How can you resolve to think about the next words of warning you receive from a Christian brother or sister?

Samuel Anoints Saul - 1 Samuel 9:1-10:8

Topics: Advice, Authority, Blessing, Direction, Doubt, Family, Gifts, Giving Up, God's Will, Heart, Honor, Hospitality, Humility, Instructions, Invitation, Limitations, Obedience, Possessions, Preparation, Prophecy, Questions, Reputation, Sacrifice, Timing, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. How would you assess your chances of suddenly being singled out for a prestigious national position?
- 2. Why are we awed when a person is able to predict the future with accuracy?
- 3. If you have ever been prayed over individually for a blessing, what was the experience like for you?

Explore It

- 4. What unique physical characteristics set Saul apart from his peers? (9:2)
- 5. How did Saul and his servant come to be traveling through the land? (9:3)
- 6. Why was Saul inclined to go home without the donkeys? (9:5)
- 7. When Saul and the servant disagreed about the next step of the search, whose opinion prevailed? (9:6)
- 8. Why did the servant want to consult with the prophet before heading home? (9:6)
- 9. Who were the first people to give Saul directions to help him find the "man of God"? (9:11)
- * 10. Why was Samuel not taken by surprise when Saul and his servant arrived in the town where the prophet was staying? (9:15-16)
- * 11. For what special mission had God singled out Saul? (9:16)
- 12. What had God commanded Samuel just the day before Saul's arrival? (9:16)
- 13. What information and what honors did the prophet have waiting for Saul when they first met? (9:19-20)
- * 14. What objection did Saul raise when he first heard Samuel's prophecy? (9: 21)
- 15. When Samuel escorted Saul on his way back home, why did he send the servant on ahead? (9:27)
- 16. What important symbolic action accompanied Samuel's pronouncement over Saul? (10:1)
- 17. What three signs did Samuel predict as proof that Saul's anointing was truly from God? (10:2-6)
- 18. What specific instructions were given to Saul before he parted company with the prophet? (10:8)

Get It

- * 19. In what ways did God use His faithful servant, Samuel, to answer the prayers of His people?
- 20. What might be your reaction if you had experiences similar to Saul's while performing a mundane task?
- 21. God acted to "change" Saul, but what were some natural aspects of his character that were previously unsuited to kingship?
- 22. What are some of your thoughts and feelings when you are the recipient of an award or honor?
- * 23. How does it make you feel to know that God uses us in spite of our weaknesses and natural limitations?
- 24. Why would the fulfillment of three specific signs help Saul believe that God was at work?

Apply It

- 25. What practical signs of esteem can you prepare in advance this week for someone who has an important task?
- * 26. What specific new habit of listening can you adopt to help you be ready when God wants to use you to answer someone's prayer?

Saul Made King - 1 Samuel 10:9-27

Topics: Affirmation, Answers, Appearance, Call, Change, Complaining, Criticism, Disobedience, Doubt, Government, Hiding, History, Instructions, Opinions, People, Popularity, Prophecy, Questions, Rules, Silence, Stress, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. When was the first time you wished you could “crawl into a hole” rather than make an appearance or presentation in public?
- 2. In what circumstances might you tend to tell the truth but not necessarily the whole truth?

Explore It

- 3. What event, prophesied by Samuel, surprised the people who had known Saul before? (10:11)
- * 4. How did Saul respond to his uncle’s questioning about his travels and his interactions with the prophet? (10:14-16)
- 5. What important detail did Saul leave out of the story he told his uncle? (10:16)
- 6. How did God characterize Himself in the words He spoke through Samuel? (10:18)
- 7. By what action did Samuel say that Israel had “rejected your God”? (10:19)
- 8. What was the methodology used by Samuel to discern and appoint God’s choice for king? (10:20-22)
- * 9. When the whole nation came together at Mizpah for Samuel to discern whom the Lord had chosen as Israel’s king, where was Saul? (10:21-22)
- 10. Who revealed the whereabouts of Saul so that he could be brought forward as king? (10:22)
- * 11. What did the people notice about Saul when they brought him out of his hiding place? (10:23)
- 12. How did Samuel present Saul to the people in order to enhance his popularity? (10:24)
- 13. How did the people react to their new king? (10:24)
- 14. What task remained for Samuel to do before the people went home? (10:25)
- 15. What was the significance of writing down the rules of the kingship and depositing them before the Lord? (10:25)
- 16. When Saul returned home to Gibeah, who accompanied him? (10:26)
- 17. How was Saul treated initially by a small minority of the people? (10:27)
- 18. What was Saul’s response to his critics among the Israelites? (10:27)

Get It

- * 19. What might have motivated Saul to keep the prophecy and anointing for the kingship from his uncle?
- * 20. What was good or bad about Saul’s response to his critics?
- 21. Why would you be eager or reluctant to assume a position of national honor and responsibility?
- 22. What “leadership qualities” did Saul have?
- 23. What sorts of characteristics might cause people to disrespect a leader?
- 24. To what extent is it a problem that “image” matters so much in politics?

Apply It

- * 25. How could you pray for courage the next time you are tempted to decline a call of God?
- 26. In what current situation might it be effective to maintain silence in the face of your critics?

Saul Rescues the City of Jabesh - 1 Samuel 11:1-15

Topics: Affirmation, Anger, Authority, Celebration, Challenge, Confidence, Consequences, Deceit, Delegation, Enemies, Grace, Help, Holy Spirit, Humiliation, Humility, Intimidation, Isolation, Leadership, Mercy, Neighbor, Opposition, Perspective, Popularity, Relationships, Representatives, Respect, Responsibility, Revenge, Unity, Victory

Open It

1. What is an example that demonstrates the saying, “Actions speak louder than words”?
- * 2. How does it feel to be reduced to your last line of defense?
3. How would you go about motivating someone to do something that involved some risk?

Explore It

4. Why did the people of Jabesh Gilead propose a treaty with the Ammonites? (11:1)
5. What condition did Nahash the Ammonite insist on before he would accept the Israelites’ surrender? (11:2)
6. What “last ditch effort” did the Israelites undertake before surrendering? (11:3)
7. What was Saul’s reaction to the plight of Jabesh Gilead? (11:6-7)
8. What added strength and authority to Saul’s response? (11:6)
9. How did Saul motivate all Israel to join him for the rescue of Jabesh Gilead? (11:7)
10. What was the size of the army that Saul led into battle? (11:8)
11. What message did Saul send to Jabesh Gilead? (11:9)
12. What ruse was employed to take the Ammonites by surprise? (11:10)
13. What was Saul’s battle plan? (11:11)
14. What was the result of the Israelite attack? (11:11)
15. How did Saul’s authoritative response make the people feel toward his former critics? (11:12)
- * 16. What consequence did the people propose for Saul’s critics? (11:12)
- * 17. What was Saul’s reaction to the idea of getting revenge on his detractors? (11:13)
- * 18. What positive plan did Samuel the prophet initiate instead of vindictiveness within Israel? (11:14)
19. What did the Israelites do at Gilgal following the victory at Jabesh Gilead? (11:15)
20. What was the mood in Israel after Saul’s stunning victory? (11:15)

Get It

21. To whom should we be able to turn when “our backs are up against a wall”?
22. What are the pros and cons of not just defeating but humiliating an enemy?
23. What was good or bad about Saul’s way of motivating solidarity?
- * 24. What is the advantage of showing mercy to one’s detractors rather than getting even with them?
- * 25. In what sense is Saul’s rescue of Jabesh Gilead an example of actions speaking louder than words?
26. Why is it good to mark a communal milestone with public thanksgiving or celebration before returning to the routines of daily life?

Apply It

- * 27. The next time you are vindicated or proven right, in what concrete way could you show mercy toward those who were wrong?
28. What “victory” should your church, Bible study, or family commemorate together before moving on?

Samuel's Farewell Speech - 1 Samuel 12:1-25

Topics: Accountability, Awe, Backslide, Challenge, Character, Choices, Conscience, Consequences, Covenant, Faithfulness, Fear, Forget, Forsake, Guilt, Help, Heroes, History, Idolatry, Obedience, Prayer, Punishment, Rebellion, Repentance, Reputation, Restoration, Righteousness, Sin, Vows

Open It

1. What politician or leader can you think of who can back up his or her claims of a clear conscience?
- * 2. What sort of events are the most likely to inspire awe toward God?

Explore It

3. What was Samuel's age and stage of life when he made his farewell speech? (12:2)
4. What were some of the common corruptions of power in the days of ancient Israel? (12:3)
5. How did the Israelites judge Samuel's honesty and integrity? (12:4)
- * 6. What pattern was repeated over and over in the history of God's dealings with Israel? (12:6-12)
7. For what sin did God punish Israel by defeat at the hands of the Philistines and Moabites? (12:10)
8. What instruments did God use to deliver Israel when they cried out to Him? (12:11)
- * 9. What was the most recent sin of which Samuel accused Israel? (12:12)
10. Why did Samuel feel that Israel didn't need a king? (12:12)
- * 11. What two conditions would Israel have to fulfill in order to keep God's blessing? (12:14)
12. What sign did Samuel perform to convince the people that they had displeased God? (12:16-17)
13. How did the people respond to the sign provided by Samuel and God? (12:18-19)
14. According to Samuel, why are idols "useless"? (12:21)
15. Why would God not reject Israel despite their unfaithfulness? (12:22)
16. Why did Samuel agree to pray for the people again? (12:23)
17. What two things did Samuel ask the Israelites to do in order to avoid God's wrath? (12:24)
18. According to Samuel, what would be the consequence if Israel continued to do evil? (12:25)

Get It

19. Why is it important to establish personal integrity before becoming a critic of others?
- * 20. What is the meaning of the expression, Israel "forgot the Lord their God"?
21. Why would rain at harvest time inspire awe of God and His prophet?
- * 22. What is it about calamity that causes people to reassess their attitudes and deeds?
23. In what way was Israel's call to follow God made more difficult by the installation of a king?
24. How is the living God set apart from useless idols?

Apply It

25. How might you present your requests to God so that you invite His best in your life?
- * 26. What is one personal story of God's deliverance that could remind you to "fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart" this week?

Samuel Rebukes Saul - 1 Samuel 13:1-15

Topics: Anger, Choices, Compromise, Consequences, Decisions, Delay, Despair, Disobedience, Doubt, Excuses, Failure, Faith, Fear, Foolishness, Guilt, Hiding, Hopelessness, Humiliation, Instructions, Intimidation, Leadership, Patience, Peer Pressure, Punishment, Rationalizing, Rejection, Schedule, Self-Righteousness, Stress, Temptation, Timing, Waiting, Weaknesses, Worry

Open It

- * 1. What experience comes to mind when you think of endless waiting (or waiting so long that you feel like giving up)?
- 2. What feelings go along with being completely overpowered at a team sport?
- 3. What experience have you faced that proved to be a test of your character?

Explore It

- 4. How old was Saul when he was named king of Israel? (13:1)
- 5. How long was Saul king of Israel? (13:1)
- 6. How many men did Saul keep with him as an “armed guard”? (13:2)
- 7. How were the Philistines provoked into attacking Israel? (13:3)
- 8. What was Saul’s response to the Philistine threat? (13:3-5)
- 9. What were the numbers of the Philistine forces assembled to fight Israel? (13:5)
- 10. How did the Israelites react to the massive Philistine army? (13:6-7)
- 11. What was the mood of Saul’s troops waiting at Gilgal? (13:7)
- 12. How long did Saul wait for Samuel? (13:8)
- * 13. What circumstance prompted Saul to go ahead with the burnt offering? (13:9)
- 14. When did Samuel arrive at Gilgal? (13:10)
- 15. What was Samuel’s question to Saul? (13:11)
- * 16. How did Saul rationalize his actions? (13:11-12)
- 17. How did Samuel judge Saul’s action? (13:13)
- * 18. What difference did Saul’s choice make? (13:13-14)
- 19. What provision did God make for Israel, knowing that Saul had proven unworthy? (13:14)
- 20. How many men were left in Saul’s army after this incident? (13:15)

Get It

- * 21. Why was Saul particularly vulnerable to the temptation to take matters into his own hands?
- 22. From the hindsight of the storyteller, what do we know about Samuel’s intention to arrive at the appointed time?
- 23. What rings true or false about Saul’s reasoning about needing God’s blessing before battle?
- * 24. What commands of God can become tests of our character?
- 25. In what ways can people be motivated to face tremendous odds without resorting to simple self-preservation?

Apply It

- * 26. What verse of Scripture could you post in a prominent place to remind you to wait for God’s timing rather than to take matters into your own hands?
- 27. What could you say or do to help your fellow Christians trust God in a circumstance where they feel increasingly afraid?

Israel without Weapons - 1 Samuel 13:16-14:23

Topics: Achievements, Alone, Answers, Confidence, Confusion, Convictions, Courage, Enemies, Faith, Follow, God's Will, Heroes, Initiative, Intimidation, Leadership, Loyalty, Miracles, Opportunities, Persistence, Plans, Restoration, Risk, Success, Victory

Open It

- * 1. What act of individual bravery has impressed you lately?
- 2. Why does the bravery of one individual often set the stage for others to dare something difficult?
- 3. What are the characteristics of the initiative-takers you know or know of?

Explore It

- 4. In what ways were the Philistines flexing their muscles before Israel? (13:16-17)
- 5. Why did the Philistines deprive the Israelites of the blacksmith's trade? (13:19)
- 6. How did the Israelites have their farming implements sharpened? (13:20)
- 7. How were the Israelite soldiers armed? (13:22)
- * 8. What plan did Jonathan propose to his armor-bearer? (14:1)
- 9. Who was aware of Jonathan's plan besides his armor-bearer? (14:1, 3)
- 10. Where was Saul staying while the Philistines were on the move? (14:2)
- 11. What was the ancestry of the priest who was with Saul on the outskirts of Gibeah? (14:3)
- 12. What physical barriers would Jonathan have to navigate in order to reach the Philistines? (14:4)
- * 13. How did Jonathan express his faith when he proposed the plan to his armor-bearer? (14:6)
- 14. What was the servant's answer to Jonathan's plan? (14:7)
- 15. What method did Jonathan propose for determining whether God would give them victory? (14:8-10)
- 16. Why did Jonathan go ahead despite the Philistine taunts? (14:10)
- 17. What was the Philistine taunt when they saw Jonathan and his armor-bearer? (14:11-12)
- * 18. What was the initial Philistine loss at the hands of Jonathan and his armor-bearer? (14:14)
- 19. What was the effect of the initial loss on the rest of the Philistine troops? (14:15)
- 20. How did Saul determine who had started the rout of the Philistines? (14:17)
- 21. Why did Saul cut short the consultation of the ark of God? (14:18-19)
- 22. When Saul and his men entered the battle, what was the condition of the Philistine troops? (14:20)
- 23. What was one of the symptoms of confusion among the Philistines? (14:20)
- 24. What groups joined in to help defeat the Philistines? (14:21-22)
- 25. What was God's part in the battle that followed Jonathan's bravery? (14:23)

Get It

- 26. What was particularly pitiful about the Hebrew army as they faced the Philistines?
- * 27. What did Jonathan know about God's nature that enabled him to be bold?
- 28. Why were the Philistines feeling cocky in relation to the Hebrews?
- 29. Why might Jonathan have decided to act alone, without telling his father's troops?
- 30. Why are we more likely to "come out of hiding" when the enemy is already in retreat?
- * 31. From God's perspective, why were Jonathan's actions wise?

Apply It

- * 32. In what circumstance or area of life has God given you the faith to blaze a trail where others see only hopelessness?
- 33. What problem confronting you this week could be put in perspective by reminding yourself, "Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving"?

Jonathan Eats Honey - 1 Samuel 14:24-52

Topics: Accountability, Answers, Authority, Consequences, Criticism, Discernment, Discipline, Disobedience, Enemies, Example, Fairness, Fasting, Fear, Follow-Through, Foolishness, Frustration, Guilt, Ignorance, Impulsiveness, Injustice, Intimidation, Judgment, Justice, Leadership, Mercy, Parents, Power, Pride, Punishment, Rules, Self-Righteousness, Silence, Sin, Unfairness, Vows, Words

Open It

1. What instance do you know about in which one person was embarrassed because he or she didn't know something that everyone else knew?
- * 2. To what extent do you think penalties should be more lenient for people who break a law unintentionally?

Explore It

3. What decision of Saul was causing distress for his troops? (14:24)
4. What temptation was placed before Saul's army? (14:25-26)
5. What action did Jonathan take that the others wanted to but were afraid to do? (14:27)
- * 6. Why did Jonathan eat some of the honey he found on the ground? (14:27)
7. What was the immediate result when Jonathan ate the honey? (14:27)
- * 8. What piece of information did Jonathan learn after he had already eaten the honey? (14:28)
9. What was Jonathan's assessment of Saul's vow? (14:29-30)
10. How did the exhausted army behave at the end of the day? (14:31-33)
11. What remedy did Saul offer when he saw the sin of the troops? (14:33-34)
12. What did Saul do for the first time after the troops had already begun to eat? (14:35)
13. Before the troops left to do battle again, what did the priest propose to do? (14:36)
14. How did Saul know that a sin had been committed by someone in Israel? (14:37-38)
- * 15. What new oath did Saul swear, assuming that he and his family were innocent? (14:39)
16. What was Jonathan's response when confronted with his guilt? (14:43)
17. What was Saul prepared to do when he found out about Jonathan's mistake? (14:44)
18. Who intervened on behalf of Jonathan? (14:45)
19. Why did the people consider it unjust to put Jonathan to death? (14:45)
20. What reputation did Saul gain as a warrior king? (14:47)

Get It

- * 21. Why is a vow not something to be taken lightly?
22. How did Saul's original vow hurt his military progress?
- * 23. How did Saul's vow lead to the sin of the people at the end of the day?
24. Why was the priest unable to get a word of direction from the Lord?
25. Why were the troops afraid to tell Saul who had sinned?
26. When is it good to break a promise?
27. When is it important to keep a promise, no matter what?
28. If you had to choose between keeping a bad promise and going back on your word, which route would you take? Why?

Apply It

29. What difficult decisions facing your church or governmental leaders can you commit to prayer this week?
- * 30. In what tangible way can you remind yourself to assess the possible consequences before you promise anything?

The Lord Rejects Saul As King - 1 Samuel 15:1-35

Topics: Accountability, Accusation, Assumptions, Compromise, Consequences, Dishonesty, Disobedience, Enemies, Evidence, Excuses, Follow-Through, Forget, Greed, Guilt, Hypocrisy, Instructions, Judgment, Leadership, Materialism, Motives, Peer Pressure, Punishment, Rationalizing, Rejection, Revenge, Sin, War

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the primary reasons people rationalize their behavior?
- 2. How might it feel to be authorized to carry out revenge against someone who had committed a terrible wrong against your family?
- 3. Why does someone just breaking into politics seek the endorsements of well-known public figures?

Explore It

- 4. To what authority did Samuel appeal when he gave God's command to Saul? (15:1)
- 5. What did God command Saul to do to the Amalekites? (15:2-3)
- 6. Why were the Amalekites so hated by the Hebrews? (15:2)
- 7. Why did the Hebrews warn the Kenites to get away from the Amalekites? (15:6)
- 8. After winning the battle, what part of the population and livestock did Saul and his men destroy? (15:7-9)
- 9. How did Samuel learn of Saul's disobedience? (15:10-11)
- 10. How did God feel about Saul after he disobeyed? (15:11)
- 11. What was Samuel's reaction to God's revelation about Saul? (15:11)
- 12. What was Saul's greeting for Samuel when Samuel caught up to him? (15:13)
- 13. What was Samuel's sarcastic remark, serving notice that he was not fooled? (15:14)
- * 14. Where did Saul place the initial blame for saving the prime animals? (15:15)
- * 15. Whom did Samuel hold responsible for disobeying God? (15:16-19)
- * 16. How did Saul rationalize his behavior even after Samuel's confrontation? (15:20-21)
- 17. How did Samuel express God's mind about religiosity versus true obedience? (15:22-23)
- 18. What was the judgment that Samuel pronounced against Saul for his disobedience? (15:26)
- 19. How did Saul demonstrate that he was desperate to have the legitimacy of Samuel's presence? (15:27)
- 20. By what figure of speech did Samuel turn Saul's desperation into another statement of God's judgment? (15:28)
- 21. What truth did Samuel emphasize to Saul about God's nature? (15:29)
- 22. How did Agag (the Amalekite king) feel when he was called before Samuel? (15:32)
- 23. What did Samuel say and do when he confronted Agag? (15:33)
- 24. After this incident what contact was there between Samuel the prophet and Saul the king? (15:34-35)

Get It

- * 25. In what way was Saul obeying the letter or the spirit of God's command?
- 26. How was God showing His concern for the Hebrews by commanding them to destroy the Amalekites?
- * 27. Why does God prize obedience more highly than offerings or sacrifices?
- 28. What are modern-day equivalents of Israel's offerings and sacrifices?
- 29. In what way is rebellion and arrogance toward God like idolatry?
- 30. What difference does it make whether Saul really believed that he had carried out the Lord's instructions?
- 31. Why were the Israelites hesitant to totally destroy their enemy as God told them to?

32. What was good or bad about the fact that Samuel grieved over the fall of Saul?
33. Why was it important for Samuel to finish the job that Saul didn't finish by killing Agag?

Apply It

- * 34. How can you place a higher value on obedience than on appearances or practical considerations in your life?
- 35. How can you avoid rationalizing the next time you are "caught in the act" of something you know you shouldn't do?

Samuel Anoints David - 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Topics: Appearance, Assumptions, Beauty, Children, Comparisons, Discernment, Family, God's Will, Heart, Invitation, Obedience, Prejudice, Rejection, Sacrifice, Surprises, Youth

Open It

- * 1. What physical characteristics tend to attract public attention and inspire respect among the people you know?
- 2. Why do children tend to be left out of the most solemn religious observances?
- 3. In what way might being singled out for an honor make your life more complicated?

Explore It

- 4. What was Samuel doing when the Lord called him to anoint the next king? (16:1)
- 5. Why was Samuel afraid to carry out the Lord's instructions? (16:2)
- 6. What provision did God make to give the appearance of normality to Samuel's journey? (16:2-3)
- * 7. What did God promise to do when Samuel arrived at Jesse's house? (16:3)
- 8. How did the elders of Bethlehem feel about Samuel's arrival in their town? (16:4)
- 9. What did Samuel command the people of Bethlehem to do? (16:5)
- * 10. Why did Samuel think that Eliab might be the son God had chosen? (16:6)
- * 11. What mattered to God in choosing the next king for Israel? (16:7)
- 12. What answer did Samuel give as each son in turn came before him? (16:8-10)
- 13. Why did Samuel ask Jesse if he had any other sons? (16:11)
- 14. When he learned of the existence of another son, what did Samuel command? (16:11)
- 15. How is David described in his meeting with Samuel? (16:12)
- 16. What did God say to Samuel regarding David? (16:12)
- 17. What was the result of the anointing of David by Samuel? (16:13)

Get It

- * 18. Why was Samuel reviewing the sons of Jesse one by one?
- * 19. What qualities should we look for in our leaders, particularly in the church?
- 20. Why was it important for Samuel to anoint David, although he was too young to assume the kingship at that time?
- 21. Why might the people of Bethlehem have been afraid to have Samuel there?
- 22. What commands of God should we be prepared to obey even if they arouse the authorities against us?

Apply It

- * 23. Toward what individual in your life could you resolve to look at the heart rather than outward appearances?
- 24. In what concrete way could you include children in your worship at home or at church this week?

David in Saul's Service - 1 Samuel 16:14-23

Topics: Accomplishments, Advice, Appearance, Consequences, Depression, Emotions, Evil, Gifts, Ministry, Serving, Suffering, War, Youth

Open It

- * 1. What work of art (song, picture, book, movie, etc.) is sure to put you in a better mood when you're feeling low?
- 2. What associations do you have with the harp as an instrument?

Explore It

- * 3. What were two unfortunate characteristics of Saul's spiritual life after his disobedience? (16:14)
- 4. How did Saul's attendants explain his moods to him? (16:15)
- * 5. What solution did Saul's servants propose for his periods of suffering? (16:16)
- 6. How did Saul locate a musician to play for him? (16:18)
- 7. How did Saul's servant describe David? (16:18)
- 8. What message did Saul send to Jesse? (16:19)
- 9. How did Jesse respond to the king's request to send his youngest son? (16:20)
- 10. How did Saul respond to David when David joined Saul's court? (16:21)
- 11. What further message did Saul send to Jesse after David's arrival? (16:22)
- * 12. What relationship developed between Saul and David? (16:23)

Get It

- 13. How do you imagine you would feel if, like Saul, you were first chosen by God and then rejected by God?
- 14. Why did Saul have trouble with depression?
- 15. Why were Saul's attendants eager to find a solution to his moodiness?
- * 16. What was good or bad about the way Saul relied on David's music to help him get out of his sour moods?
- 17. What else do you think Saul could have done about his moodiness?
- 18. Which of David's characteristics discussed in this passage reflect well on his upbringing and his own discipline and accomplishment?
- * 19. What was the highest praise of David given by the servant of Saul?

Apply It

- * 20. What step could you take this week to help assure that you do not become like Saul, from whom the Spirit of the Lord departed?
- 21. Using the example of the young David, how could you encourage a young person to develop into the person God wants him or her to be?

David and Goliath - 1 Samuel 17:1-58

Topics: Alone, Arguments, Armor, Assurance, Attitude, Challenge, Courage, Criticism, Determination, Enemies, Faith, Family, Fear, Glory, Heroes, Humiliation, Insults, Intimidation, Limitations, Name, Persistence, Power, Preparation, Protection, Revenge, Rewards, Risk, Self-Esteem, Strength, Success, Trust, Victory, War, Words, Youth, Zeal

Open It

1. What is your image of a totally intimidating person?
- * 2. When will people root for the underdog, even when there is little or no chance of victory?

Explore It

3. What was the placement of the Philistine and Israelite armies at the beginning of the story? (17:3)
4. What were the superhuman characteristics of Goliath? (17:4-7)
5. What was Goliath's challenge to the Israelites? (17:8-9)
6. How did Saul's army react to the challenge? (17:11)
7. What was David's position among Jesse's sons? (17:13-15)
8. How long had Goliath been coming forward with his daily challenge? (17:16)
9. How did David happen to be going to the front lines? (17:17-20)
10. What was happening just as David arrived where the army was camped? (17:20-23)
11. What reward had the king promised to the man who would kill Goliath? (17:25)
- * 12. In David's view, why should the Israelites not have been intimidated by Goliath? (17:26)
13. What was Eliab's reaction when he found David asking about the reward? (17:28)
14. How did David come to meet with Saul? (17:31)
- * 15. How confident was young David when he met the king? (17:32)
16. Why was Saul skeptical about David's ability to defeat Goliath? (17:33)
17. What experiences helped David to believe that God would deliver him? (17:34-37)
18. What happened when David tried on Saul's armor? (17:38-39)
19. How did David end up arming himself for the confrontation with Goliath? (17:40)
20. How did Goliath react when he saw David approaching? (17:42-44)
- * 21. What was David's answer to the Philistine champion's taunts? (17:45-47)
22. What was David's weapon of choice? (17:48-49)
23. What action did David take after he had felled the giant? (17:51)
24. How did the Philistines react to the defeat of their hero? (17:51-52)
25. How did the Israelite army follow up David's victory? (17:52-54)

Get It

26. What part do words and posturing play in intimidation?
27. Why was the Israelite army paralyzed at the Valley of Elah?
28. Why was it so surprising that David took an interest in confronting the giant Goliath?
29. What circumstances can make a group of people lose heart?
30. In what sense is there a fine line between bravery and stupidity?
- * 31. What viewpoint on spiritual warfare can give courage to the seemingly helpless?
- * 32. In the story of David and Goliath, what "weapons" were the most powerful?

Apply It

33. How can you move from cowering to courage the next time you find yourself the underdog?
- * 34. In what concrete way can you confront a "giant" problem or trouble with faith?

Saul's Jealousy of David - 1 Samuel 18:1-30

Topics: Abandon, Achievements, Affections, Anger, Approval, Bitterness, Celebration, Comparisons, Conflict, Covenant, Danger, Dishonesty, Effectiveness, Enemies, Envy, Family, Fear, Friendship, Generosity, Gifts, Humility, Hypocrisy, Isolation, Jealousy, Marriage, Motives, Popularity, Rejection, Relationships, Reputation, Resentment, Rewards, Success

Open It

1. What were some of the characteristics of your “best friend” relationships as a child?
- * 2. How would you describe your feelings about someone you know for whom everything seems to go right?

Explore It

3. How does this passage describe the bond between David and Jonathan? (18:1)
4. How did Jonathan cement the covenant between David and himself? (18:4)
- * 5. How did the officers and people of Israel respond to David's successes and promotions? (18:5)
6. What refrain was heard in the streets when Saul and David returned from the battle in which Goliath was slain? (18:7)
- * 7. How did Saul feel about David's popularity? (18:8-9)
8. When did Saul make his first attempt on David's life? (18:10-11)
9. Why was Saul afraid of David? (18:12)
10. How did David fare when Saul sent him out to lead the war campaigns? (18:14)
11. What was Saul's reaction to David's successes? (18:15)
12. How did “all Israel” feel about David the general? (18:16)
13. What was Saul really hoping for when he offered his daughter in marriage to David in exchange for feats of bravery in battle? (18:17)
14. What was David's attitude about the rewards and honors offered him by King Saul? (18:18)
15. How was David persuaded to pursue the “price” of Saul's second daughter? (18:21-25)
- * 16. What two facts galled Saul most about David? (18:28)
17. What was Saul's attitude toward David from his marriage onward? (18:29)

Get It

18. What traits might have made Jonathan and David feel as if they were “one spirit”?
19. Why might David have been lauded as more of a hero than Saul from the time of his very first exploit?
20. Why did Saul bestow honors on David even though he resented him?
- * 21. Why might we just wish for something bad to happen to a rival rather than choosing actually to harm him or her ourselves?
22. How did David express humility and deference to King Saul?
- * 23. Why was Saul afraid of David even though Saul was king?
24. What conclusion do you think Saul drew from the fact that his son and his daughter both loved David?
25. What were some evidences that “the Lord was with David”?

Apply It

- * 26. What concrete step could you take to counteract bitterness the next time you find yourself wishing harm on someone near you who is prospering?
27. What token of lasting friendship could you offer a friend this week?

Saul Tries to Kill David - 1 Samuel 19:1-24

Topics: Advice, Change, Conversation, Danger, Deceit, Emotions, Escape, Evil, Excuses, Friendship, Help, Hiding, Influence, Injustice, Instructions, Loyalty, Mediator, Murder, Persecution, Promises, Prophecy, Reconciliation, Resentment, Running, Trust, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What is one of your favorite stories of escape (true or fictional)?
- 2. What is challenging about giving advice to someone older than yourself?

Explore It

- 3. What order did Saul give to all his attendants, including his son Jonathan? (19:1)
- 4. Why did Jonathan warn David of Saul's designs on his life and attempt to intervene on his behalf? (19:1-2)
- * 5. What were some of Jonathan's reasons that Saul should not harm David? (19:4-5)
- 6. What did Saul promise Jonathan concerning David? (19:6)
- 7. What did David do after the threat to his life had passed? (19:7-8)
- * 8. What incident occurred inside Saul's house? (19:9-10)
- 9. What plan did Saul set in motion when he was unable to kill David with his spear? (19:11)
- 10. How did Michal, David's wife, aid in his escape? (19:11-14)
- 11. What justification did Michal offer when Saul confronted her about helping David? (19:17)
- 12. Where did David go when he fled from the king? (19:18)
- 13. What did Saul do when he found out where David was staying? (19:20)
- * 14. What happened to each delegation that Saul sent to capture David? (19:20-21)
- 15. What happened when Saul himself went after David? (19:23-24)
- 16. What saying was passed down in Israel concerning this incident? (19:24)

Get It

- 17. How did Jonathan prove the depth of his affection for David?
- * 18. Why did Saul want to murder a man who did him no wrong?
- 19. How did God protect David when Jonathan and Michal were no longer able to do so?
- * 20. Why might someone hate a person who has done nothing but good for him or her?
- 21. How does it feel when two people you are close to are at odds with one another?
- * 22. What is the likely outcome when we allow irrational anger or hatred to dictate our actions?
- 23. In what current circumstance might God be calling you to be a peacemaker?
- 24. In what circumstance might your loyalty to God prove costly in the near future?

Apply It

- * 25. In what way can you be a peacemaker for someone else?
- 26. What can you do to prepare for the next time your loyalty to God is tested?

David and Jonathan - 1 Samuel 20:1-42

Topics: Accountability, Anger, Answers, Assurance, Caring, Character, Children, Commitment, Confidence, Conversation, Danger, Devotion, Emotions, Escape, Evidence, Excuses, Family, Feelings, Follow-Through, Friendship, Grief, Guidance, Hatred, Hiding, Honor, Instructions, Intentions, Jealousy, Mourning, Murder, Parents, Persecution, Questions, Relationships, Risk, Running, Separation, Shame, Sincerity, Swearing, Trust, Vows, Waiting

Open It

- * 1. In what way do you agree or disagree with the conventional wisdom that “when the going gets tough, you find out who your real friends are”?
- 2. What is particularly tragic about a love story “across enemy lines”?

Explore It

- 3. What was the difference between David’s and Jonathan’s perceptions of Saul’s behavior? (20:1-2)
- 4. What was David’s theory about why Saul might not have included Jonathan in his plans as he usually did? (20:3)
- 5. What situation did David and Jonathan set up to test Saul’s intentions toward David? (20:5-7)
- * 6. What promise did Jonathan make to David before God? (20:12-13)
- * 7. What promise did Jonathan ask David to make to him? (20:14-15)
- 8. What emotion prevailed in the relationship between David and Jonathan? (20:17)
- 9. How did Jonathan plan to signal David to let him know whether or not he was in danger? (20:19-22)
- 10. How did Saul react when David’s place was empty on the first day of the feast? (20:26)
- 11. How did Jonathan answer when Saul questioned him about David’s absence on the second day of the feast? (20:28-29)
- 12. What was Saul’s immediate emotional reaction when he heard the agreed-upon answer as to David’s whereabouts? (20:30)
- 13. What accusation did Saul make against his son Jonathan? (20:30)
- 14. Why did Saul believe it was contrary to Jonathan’s interests to support David? (20:31)
- 15. What did Saul do when Jonathan continued to question the justice of the death sentence against David? (20:33)
- 16. What emotions did Jonathan feel after arguing with his father? (20:34)
- 17. Which signal did Jonathan execute for David the next day? (20:35-38)
- 18. Why did David bow down to Jonathan when they met alone in the field? (20:41)
- * 19. Why did Jonathan and David weep in their last meeting together? (20:41-42)
- 20. What did Jonathan remind David of before they parted company? (20:42)

Get It

- 21. What moral or legal justification did Saul have for trying to kill David?
- 22. How do you think Jonathan felt about being caught between his father and his friend?
- * 23. What does it say about Jonathan that he chose to remain loyal to David, even to the point of working against his own father’s commands?
- 24. What did Jonathan show that he knew by faith about the future when he secured David’s promise to be kind to his descendants?
- 25. Why did David and Jonathan confer in a field with no one else around?
- * 26. What is good or bad about forming loyalties that can surpass loyalty to family?
- 27. If your own self-interest were to conflict with the obvious will of God, which would you choose to promote?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you resolve to strengthen your commitment to God so that it could withstand even the agendas of your closest family or friends?
- 29. For what strong friendship bond can you thank God and your friend this week?

David at Nob - 1 Samuel 21:1-9

Topics: Alone, Assurance, Conversation, Dishonesty, Escape, Fear, Help, Holiness, Hospitality, Isolation, Life-Style, Needs, Preparation, Purity, Questions, Resources, Rules, Status

Open It

- * 1. Whom do you know who is able to “think fast on his or her feet” and come up with plausible answers in difficult situations?
- 2. What is the most difficult aspect of spur-of-the-moment guests?
- 3. How do you imagine it might feel to aid a fugitive?

Explore It

- 4. What was David’s first stop as he fled from King Saul? (21:1)
- 5. What questions did Ahimelech the priest ask of David? (21:1)
- * 6. How did David explain the fact that he was alone? (21:2)
- * 7. For what provision did David ask Ahimelech? (21:3)
- 8. Because he had only consecrated bread, what condition did Ahimelech have to put on the gift? (21:4)
- * 9. How did David’s answer reassure Ahimelech and embellish his tale of a secret mission? (21:5)
- 10. Why was there consecrated bread on the premises that was not on the altar? (21:6)
- 11. Who happened to be at Nob on the same day David visited there? (21:7)
- 12. For what further provision did David ask Ahimelech? (21:8)
- 13. What famous sword was the only sword in the priest’s possession? (21:9)

Get It

- 14. Why would the priests have special concerns about purity and obedience to the law?
- * 15. How might the story have turned out differently if David had told the priest that he was fleeing from Saul?
- 16. For what reasons might Goliath’s sword have been kept in the place of worship?
- 17. What was it about David that probably prompted Ahimelech to fulfill his requests?
- 18. What sort of person would you be inclined to help, even if he or she were in trouble with the authorities?
- * 19. What was good or bad about the fact that David misled the priest?

Apply It

- * 20. How could you cultivate an attitude that would enable you to maintain your composure even if you were persecuted and pursued?
- 21. What steps could you take to become better prepared to be hospitable to unexpected guests?

David at Gath - 1 Samuel 21:10-22:23

Topics: Accusation, Achievements, Advice, Alone, Anger, Assumptions, Authority, Children, Conscience, Danger, Death, Deceit, Disobedience, Enemies, Escape, Family, Guidance, Hatred, Injustice, Instructions, Intimidation, Knowledge, Murder, Opposition, Parents, Partnerships, Protection, Punishment, Revenge, Self-Centeredness

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel to be caught between two former friends who have become enemies?
- 2. In what situations might someone's reputation for bravery actually put him or her in jeopardy?

Explore It

- 3. Where did David seek safety as he fled from King Saul? (21:10)
- 4. What popular saying about David was known among the people of Gath? (21:11)
- 5. Why was David afraid when he realized that his reputation had preceded him? (21:12)
- 6. How did David employ his cleverness to avoid harm at the hands of Achish, king of Gath? (21:13-15)
- 7. What sorts of people gathered around David at the cave of Adullam? (22:2)
- 8. What provision did David make for his parents' safety while he was a fugitive? (22:3-4)
- 9. What made David decide to leave Adullam and go to the forest of Hereth? (22:5)
- 10. With what reasoning did Saul appeal to his officials to support him rather than David? (22:7-8)
- 11. What piece of information did Saul especially resent that his officials had withheld? (22:8)
- 12. Which of Saul's officials took advantage of the opportunity to ingratiate himself by exposing someone who had aided David? (22:9-10)
- 13. What did Saul do when he learned that David had visited the priests at Nob? (22:11)
- * 14. What accusation did Saul make against the priests at Nob? (22:13)
- * 15. On what grounds did Ahimelech maintain that he was innocent of aiding rebellion against Saul? (22:14)
- * 16. Why, according to Ahimelech, did he not suspect that David was at odds with Saul? (22:15)
- 17. Despite the priest's protests, what verdict did Saul arrive at and what sentence did he pronounce? (22:17)
- 18. Who was the only one willing to strike down the priests of the Lord? (22:18-19)
- 19. Where did Abiathar, the only son to escape, seek refuge? (22:20)
- 20. How did David respond to the news that Saul had killed the priests? (22:22)
- 21. What dubious distinction did David and Abiathar have in common? (22:23)

Get It

- * 22. Why did David find himself in a dangerous situation in the very place he had sought refuge from Saul?
- 23. Why was David's ruse (pretending to be insane) effective in getting Achish to dismiss him as a threat?
- 24. What sorts of people tend to gather around someone who has become a very visible enemy of the state?
- 25. How did David's concern for his parents' safety reflect obedience for the Word of God?
- 26. Why isn't the ability to hand out favors (such as prime land and powerful government positions) a secure way for a ruler to gain the loyalty of his or her subjects?
- 27. What are some of the motives of a "snitch" or "tattletale"?
- * 28. Do you think loyalty is more or less important than the discernment of right and wrong? Why?
- 29. What qualities might cause one person to commit a vicious act from which others have shied away?

Apply It

- * 30. What loyalty in your life should be examined to be sure that obedience to God's Word takes precedence?
- 31. How could you offer protection this week to someone who has been subjected to persecution or teasing?

David Saves Keilah - 1 Samuel 23:1-6

Topics: Answers, Arguments, Assurance, Courage, Decisions, Enemies, Fear, Goals, God's Will, Guidance, Help, Instructions, Mission, Neighbor, Obedience, Peer Pressure, Plans, Prayer, Questions, Risk, Success, Victory, War

Open It

1. What are some examples of appropriate and inappropriate “rescuing”?
- * 2. What method or methods do you use to make decisions in your life?

Explore It

3. What news did David get about Keilah? (23:1)
- * 4. What was David's first response to the news that an Israelite town was being attacked by an enemy? (23:2)
5. How did the Lord answer David's specific request for guidance? (23:2)
- * 6. Why were David's men hesitant to follow him into battle? (23:3)
- * 7. How did God reassure David when he came the second time for guidance? (23:4)
8. What were the results of David's attack on the Philistines? (23:5)
9. By what method was David seeking God's guidance? (23:6)
10. How did the ephod come to be in David's possession? (23:6)

Get It

11. How did David show his leadership qualities by considering an attack when he heard the news about Keilah?
12. How did David show humility by the order in which he proceeded with his plans?
- * 13. What was good about the way David made his decisions?
14. Why were David's men afraid to go attack the Philistines?
15. What is your first reaction when you hear about someone in close proximity to you who is in trouble?
16. What would be difficult or easy about believing that God would deliver a city with a ragtag band of misfits?
17. As a leader, how is it effective or ineffective to minimize the fears of your supporters?
18. How did the lone remaining priest benefit David and his followers when he sought their protection?
- * 19. Why is it important to seek God's guidance before embarking even on an errand of mercy?

Apply It

- * 20. What instinct to rescue should you check with the Lord this week before you act?
21. What verse of Scripture could you memorize to remind yourself that you succeed by God's strength rather than your own?

Saul Pursues David - 1 Samuel 23:7-29

Topics: Affirmation, Answers, Covenant, Decisions, Discernment, Encouragement, Enemies, Escape, Fellowship, Friendship, Guidance, Hiding, Humility, Hypocrisy, Loyalty, Moving, Murder, Persistence, Protection, Representatives, Salvation, Separation, Timing

Open It

- * 1. What is the most exciting chase scene you've seen or read about recently?
- 2. What associations do you have with the term betrayer?

Explore It

- 3. What was Saul's thought when he learned that David was at Keilah? (23:7)
- * 4. What action did Saul take immediately upon learning of David's whereabouts at Keilah? (23:8)
- 5. What action did David take when he learned that Saul was coming after him? (23:9)
- 6. What were David's two questions to God using the ephod, and how were they answered? (23:10-12)
- 7. What strategy did David use to escape Saul? (23:13)
- 8. Why was Saul unable to catch David? (23:14)
- 9. Where was David when he learned that Saul planned not only to capture him but also to kill him? (23:15)
- * 10. What was accomplished when David and Jonathan met in secret? (23:16)
- 11. What did Jonathan predict about David's future? (23:17)
- * 12. What did the two friends, Jonathan and David, do before they parted ways? (23:18)
- 13. What group of people offered to turn David over to Saul? (23:19-20)
- 14. What did Saul ask the Ziphites to do for him? (23:21-23)
- 15. In what desert area was Saul catching up to David and his men? (23:24-25)
- 16. What unforeseen circumstance rescued David when Saul was about to catch him? (23:27-29)

Get It

- 17. How would you compare the way Saul and David arrived at their respective decisions about what to do next?
- 18. What might have motivated the people of Keilah to surrender David and his men to Saul?
- 19. In what circumstance have you known repeated supernatural preservation from harm?
- 20. Why do you think Saul continued to try to kill David, although he knew David was God's anointed?
- * 21. What are some of the ways that Christians can help one another "find strength in God"?
- * 22. Who are some of the friends you can encourage?
- 23. How important was the cooperation of the people of Ziph to Saul's "search and destroy" operation?

Apply It

- * 24. What friend or acquaintance can you help to find strength in God this coming week?
- 25. For what act of deliverance should you make a point of thanking God publicly?

David Spares Saul's Life - 1 Samuel 24:1-22

Topics: Authority, Character, Choices, Compassion, Confession, Conscience, Courage, Emotions, Enemies, Escape, Evidence, Evil, Grace, Humility, Impulsiveness, Integrity, Judgment, Mercy, Rebellion, Respect, Righteousness, Temptation

Open It

1. What does the saying “Actions speak louder than words” mean to you?
- * 2. How does it feel when you find a rival or enemy suddenly and unexpectedly at your mercy?
3. What is good or bad about a face-to-face meeting between feuding parties?

Explore It

4. What activity did Saul resume as soon as the Philistine threat abated? (24:1-2)
5. How did Saul come to be alone for a short time? (24:3)
- * 6. What did David's men tell him when they discovered Saul alone in the cave? (24:4)
- * 7. What action did David take while Saul was unaware? (24:5)
8. Why did David have second thoughts about what he had just done? (24:6)
9. How did Saul learn that David had just had him at his mercy? (24:8)
10. What arguments did David give to prove that he was not conspiring against the king? (24:9-11)
11. In what context did David invoke the name of the Lord? (24:12)
- * 12. For David, what was the authoritative proof that he was not an evil man? (24:13)
13. Besides judging between him and Saul, what did David ask of God? (24:15)
14. What emotion overcame Saul when he heard David's voice? (24:16)
15. What confession did Saul make regarding his own behavior? (24:17)
16. Why did Saul ask God to reward David? (24:18-19)
17. What did Saul admit that he knew about the future? (24:20)
18. What did Saul ask David to swear he would do when he became king? (24:21)
19. On what terms did Saul and David part after their meeting in the cave? (24:22)

Get It

- * 20. How do you think Saul would have behaved toward David if their situations had been reversed?
21. What was the single most important reason David had for not harming Saul?
- * 22. When does restraint speak more loudly than action?
23. In what way does God expect us to honor a position even when the person filling it is unrighteous?
24. In what ways might God vindicate someone who does not use force to vindicate himself or herself?
25. Why did David and Saul go their separate ways after Saul learned that his life had been spared?
26. Why did Saul not make any promises to David after David swore to preserve Saul's descendants when he became king?

Apply It

27. How could you prepare yourself not to “finish off” your enemy should you get a chance?
28. What concrete action could you take to honor someone in authority this week?
- * 29. In what situation might it be wise to let your actions speak rather than your words?

David, Nabal, and Abigail - 1 Samuel 25:1-44

Topics: Approval, Death, Decisions, Drinking, Faults, Foolishness, Forgiveness, Gifts, Heart, Hospitality, Husbands, Ignorance, Initiative, Insults, Marriage, Protection, Remarriage, Respect, Revenge, Serving, Wisdom, Wives

Open It

1. How important is hospitality in your day-to-day life?
2. In what instances can foolishness actually be hazardous to your health?
- * 3. What good or bad connotations does the word vengeance have for you?

Explore It

4. What was the measure of Nabal's wealth? (25:2)
5. How did Nabal's character contrast with that of his wife? (25:3)
6. What favor did David ask of Nabal through his representatives? (25:6-8)
7. Why did David feel that Nabal should be willing to give him gifts? (25:7-8)
8. What answer did Nabal send back to David? (25:10-11)
9. What excuse did Nabal use for refusing to give provisions to David's men? (25:10)
- * 10. How did David react to the message from Nabal? (25:13)
11. Why did the servant seek out Abigail instead of confronting Nabal? (25:17)
- * 12. What action did Abigail take when she heard about Nabal's blunder? (25:18-19)
13. What had David resolved to do in response to Nabal's insult? (25:21-22)
14. What was Abigail's attitude when she went out to meet David? (25:23-24)
15. How did Abigail evaluate her husband's judgment? (25:25)
16. What did Abigail ask of David in return for the gifts she brought? (25:27-28)
17. Why, according to Abigail, would David be taking the moral high ground by sparing Nabal's household? (25:29-31)
- * 18. How did David view the fact that Abigail came out to meet him? (25:32-34)
19. On what terms did David and Abigail part? (25:35)
20. Why did Abigail wait until morning to tell Nabal what had happened? (25:36-37)
21. How did Nabal react to the news of his near destruction? (25:37-38)
22. What was David's response to Nabal's death? (25:39)
23. What invitation did David extend to Abigail after her husband's death? (25:40-41)

Get It

24. What were Abigail's virtues?
25. Why did Abigail take responsibility for the insult to David?
26. In what way did David see God's hand in sending Abigail?
27. What was Nabal's reputation?
28. What was David's reputation?
29. How does a person get a reputation among his or her peers?
- * 30. Why is or isn't it fair to assume that someone to whom we have done good should be willing to return the favor?
- * 31. In what way is it preferable to let God vindicate you rather than to avenge yourself of wrongs done to you?

Apply It

32. How could you appeal to a friend's highest spiritual instinct when encouraging him or her to do the right thing?
- * 33. In what way could you shoulder responsibility for something that is going wrong in your home or place of business and, by doing so, "redeem" the situation?

David Again Spares Saul's Life - 1 Samuel 26:1-25

Topics: Accusation, Assumptions, Blessing, Confession, Embarrassment, Enemies, Evidence, Foolishness, Giving Up, Mercy, Murder, Opportunities, Protection, Questions, Repentance, Sleep, Value, Vows

Open It

1. What are the duties of the bodyguards of famous and powerful people?
2. What are some of the duties you have that prevent you from doing what you really want to do?
- * 3. How does it feel to win an argument?

Explore It

4. How many troops did Saul take with him to hunt for David? (26:2)
5. How did David manage to avoid falling into the trap Saul set for him? (26:3-4)
6. Who was willing to go with David into Saul's camp alone at night? (26:6)
- * 7. Where did David and Abishai find Saul? (26:7)
- * 8. What did Abishai assume when he realized that Saul was sleeping and vulnerable? (26:8)
- * 9. Why did David prevent Abishai from killing Saul? (26:9)
10. What did David predict would become of Saul? (26:10)
11. What did David take with him before he left Saul's camp? (26:12)
12. How had the Lord intervened for David when he entered Saul's camp at night? (26:12)
13. When David was a safe distance away, what message did he have for Abner? (26:13-16)
14. How did Saul recognize David from a distance? (26:17)
15. What was David's complaint against Saul? (26:18-19)
16. By pursuing David, what precious right was Saul denying to David? (26:20)
17. How did Saul react to having his life spared a second time? (26:21)
18. What promise did Saul make to David after David penetrated his camp by night? (26:21)
19. On what terms did David and Saul part company? (26:25)

Get It

20. When David penetrated Saul's camp at night, what was his mission?
21. Why did David address Abner, Saul's commander, when he reached a safe distance?
22. Why was the life of a fugitive on the outskirts of Israel particularly bitter for David?
23. What was foolish about Saul's behavior toward David up to this time?
- * 24. What would be wise or foolish about sparing an enemy rather than finishing him off?
- * 25. Why isn't it wise to take every opportunity we are given for personal advancement and advantage?
26. How is it possible to make peace with one's enemies without entirely trusting them?
27. Why might the repentance of an enemy be of greater value than the defeat of that enemy?

Apply It

28. In what concrete way can you value the life of someone who aggravates or opposes you?
- * 29. What would it mean to let God vindicate you when you encounter a conflict this week at work or at home?

David Among the Philistines - 1 Samuel 27:1-12

Topics: Deceit, Escape, Family, Habits, Hospitality, Husbands, Loyalty, Obligation, Partnerships, Protection, Rejection, Relationships, Reliability, Reputation, Success, Trust, War, Wives

Open It

- * 1. How strong is the bond that comes from having a common enemy?
- 2. What sorts of attitudes or behavior in another person inspire you to trust him or her?

Explore It

- 3. Why did David feel it necessary to protect himself from Saul? (27:1)
- 4. What plan did David devise to escape from Saul once and for all? (27:1)
- * 5. Where did David and his men settle when they left Israel? (27:2-3)
- 6. What was Saul's response when he heard that David had left the country? (27:4)
- 7. What request did David make of Achish, king of Gath? (27:5)
- 8. What city was given to David as a gift by Achish? (27:6)
- 9. How long did David live in Philistine territory? (27:7)
- 10. How did David conduct his raids from Philistine territory? (27:8-9)
- 11. With what impression was Achish left concerning David's raids? (27:10)
- * 12. What was David's reason for killing all the people wherever he raided? (27:11)
- * 13. What was Achish's primary reason for trusting David? (27:12)

Get It

- 14. In what different ways did David ingratiate himself with the king of Gath?
- * 15. Why did David want to create the impression in Gath that he was raiding Israelite territory?
- 16. If fleeing and hiding cease to be options, how else might you protect yourself from a more powerful enemy?
- * 17. What is the place of strategy and cunning in the life of the believer?
- 18. To what extent should we avoid appearing to be a traitor?

Apply It

- * 19. How might you use your God-given intelligence to solve a dilemma facing you this week?
- 20. What could you keep in a prominent place to remind yourself that your loyalty to God transcends all others?

Saul and the Witch of Endor - 1 Samuel 28:1-25

Topics: Answers, Confusion, Consequences, Conversation, Darkness, Deceit, Despair, Disobedience, Enemies, Fasting, Fear, Frustration, Guidance, Guilt, Hopelessness, Hypocrisy, Judgment, Occult, Prophecy, Rationalizing, Rejection, Silence, Sin

Open It

1. Why are human beings often eager to know the future?
- * 2. What instance do you know of someone who exempts himself or herself from his or her own rules?

Explore It

- * 3. What was the status of mediums and spiritists in Israel in the days of Samuel and Saul? (28:3)
4. What new danger struck terror in the heart of Saul? (28:5)
5. What did God have to say to Saul in light of his predicament? (28:6)
- * 6. Where did Saul turn for guidance when he got no word from God? (28:7-8)
7. Why was the woman at Endor afraid to call up a spirit for her visitors? (28:9)
8. Whose spirit did Saul seek to consult? (28:11)
9. What did the spiritist know as soon as she saw Samuel? (28:12)
10. What did Saul ask of the spirit of Samuel when they faced one another at Endor? (28:15)
- * 11. What was Samuel's reply to Saul about his fortunes in the battle to come? (28:16-19)
12. In what condition was Saul after his encounter with Samuel? (28:20)
13. What did the spiritist and Saul's assistants do for Saul after Samuel left them? (28:21-25)

Get It

14. What did Saul reveal about himself when he chose to consult a medium?
15. What does this incident tell us about Saul?
- * 16. Why did Saul try to bend the rules for himself?
17. Why was Saul's deception suddenly apparent to the medium when she saw Samuel?
18. How was Samuel's message to Saul just like those he had given to Saul before?
- * 19. In what circumstances might you be tempted to make yourself the exception to your own rule?
20. What's wrong with consulting spiritists and mediums?
21. Why had God become Saul's "enemy"?
22. Why isn't it possible to sidestep God's laws and God's judgments?

Apply It

23. How can you begin to work toward balancing your desire to know the future with your respect for God and His laws?
- * 24. How can you remind yourself to check your own obedience before you impose a rule on someone else?

Achish Sends David Back to Ziklag - 1 Samuel 29:1-11

Topics: Citizenship, Confidence, Criticism, Enemies, Insecurity, Leadership, Loyalty, Motives, Obedience, Partnerships, Reliability, Reputation, Trust, War

Open It

- * 1. How strong does ethnic and family loyalty tend to be when one group feels attacked by another? Why?
- 2. If you were a military commander, what qualities would you look for in an ally?

Explore It

- 3. What forces were gathering for battle? (29:1)
- 4. Where did David and his men find themselves as the Philistines lined up against Israel? (29:2)
- * 5. What was the primary basis for the suspicions against David? (29:2-3)
- 6. On what basis did Achish defend David's presence in the fighting force? (29:3)
- 7. How did the Philistine commanders feel toward Achish? (29:4)
- * 8. What was the fear of the other commanders about David's presence at the front? (29:4-5)
- 9. How did Achish frame his first request that David return home? (29:6-7)
- 10. How did David respond to Achish's request that he leave the front? (29:8)
- * 11. What was Achish's final decision about David's involvement in the battle? (29:9-10)
- 12. Where did David and his men go? When? (29:11)

Get It

- * 13. Why didn't David's presence among their troops make sense to the Philistine generals?
- 14. What is good or bad about considering a person's recent behavior above his or her past history when evaluating that person's trustworthiness?
- 15. Why might David have objected when he was first asked to leave the Philistine army?
- 16. What is good or bad about taking the advice of the many over the few?
- * 17. How is it possible to see God's providence at work when we are rejected by others?

Apply It

- * 18. How do you see God's hand at work in the decisions of the people above you in the chain of command?
- 19. How can you improve your judgment of the character of other people?

David Destroys the Amalekites - 1 Samuel 30:1-31

Topics: Abundance, Answers, Arguments, Benefits, Bitterness, Celebration, Children, Correction, Despair, Disagreements, Emotions, Enemies, Equality, Family, Generosity, Gifts, Greed, Guidance, Hardheartedness, Law, Leadership, Materialism, Mercy, Mourning, Perspective, Possessions, Rebellion, Selfishness, Success, Unity, Wealth, Wisdom, Wives

Open It

1. What qualities keep a leader in office even through hard times?
- * 2. What rules governing your life or work do you consider unfair?

Explore It

3. What did David and his men find when they returned to Ziklag, the city in Gath where they had been living? (30:1-3)
4. What was the reaction of David and his troops to the destruction of their city? (30:4)
5. What was David's personal loss in the Amalekite raid? (30:5)
6. What was the attitude of the troops toward David when they returned to find their families gone? (30:6)
7. How did David handle his own loss and the criticism of others? (30:6)
8. As a leader, what first step did David take with regard to his dilemma? (30:7-8)
9. What did the Lord reveal to David through Abiathar and the ephod? (30:8)
- * 10. Why did some of David's men stay behind at the Besor Ravine? (30:9-10)
11. What method did David use to locate the troops that had captured his family and subjects? (30:11-15)
12. What did David and his men find the Amalekites doing? (30:16)
13. What was the outcome of David's battle with the Amalekites? (30:17)
14. To what extent were the Israelites able to recover their families and property? (30:18-19)
15. How had the attitude of the fighters changed toward David after the battle? (30:20)
- * 16. What did some of David's men want to do about the two hundred troops who had not gone into battle? (30:22)
- * 17. What was David's perspective on the sharing of the spoils of war? (30:23-25)
18. To whom did David send presents from the plunder of the Amalekite raiders? (30:26-31)

Get It

19. What is or isn't fair about holding a leader responsible for the misfortunes that befall the group?
20. What is the best first step for a believer before beginning any enterprise?
- * 21. What were some positive leadership qualities exhibited by David on the occasion of the recovery of the plunder of Ziklag?
- * 22. Why is an extreme concern for fairness sometimes a camouflage for greed?
23. To what extent was God's word to David fulfilled in the course of this story?
24. What seems fair or unfair about David's decree regarding the division of spoils?
25. Why did David feel that to punish those who had to stay behind would not be honoring to God?
26. What might have prompted David to send some of his share of the plunder to friends in Israel?

Apply It

- * 27. The next time you find yourself obsessed with an issue of fairness, how can you check your heart for greed and uncharitable thoughts?
28. What reminders can you use to pray for your church and civil leaders this coming week?

Saul Takes His Life - 1 Samuel 31:1-13

Topics: Abandon, Armor, Courage, Death, Despair, Devotion, Disobedience, Enemies, Fasting, Giving Up, Honor, Idolatry, Initiative, Loyalty, Mourning, Murder, Obedience, Risk, Running, War, Zeal

Open It

1. When you or someone close to you has been grieving, what activities or ceremonies have been most meaningful?
- * 2. What's the most difficult thing about knowing someone who is terminally ill?
3. Why is the capture or killing of a king or general so significant in warfare?

Explore It

4. How was Israel faring against the Philistines at Mount Gilboa? (31:1)
- * 5. What happened to Saul and his sons in the fierce battle with the Philistines? (31:2-3)
- * 6. Why did Saul ask his armor-bearer to finish him off with his sword? (31:4)
- * 7. What did Saul do when his armor-bearer refused to kill him? (31:4)
8. How did the armor-bearer respond to Saul's death? (31:5)
9. What toll did this one battle take on Israel's leadership? (31:5-6)
10. What became of the Israelites in the towns Saul's army had been defending? (31:7)
11. What did the Philistines do when they discovered the bodies of Saul and his sons? (31:8-10)
12. What did the valiant men of Jabesh Gilead do in response to the Philistines' treatment of their leaders' bodies? (31:11-13)
13. What rituals were performed on the bodies of Saul and his sons? (31:13)

Get It

- * 14. In your opinion, what circumstances make Saul's desire to die quickly either understandable or cowardly?
15. Why do you think Saul's armor-bearer was unwilling to kill him?
16. Why was the honorable burial performed by the men of Jabesh Gilead important for Israel's morale?
17. Why is it important to honor the dead?
- * 18. What duties do we have toward those who are near death or terminally ill?
19. In what ways can having to deal with death or a terminal illness be a blessing in disguise?
20. In what circumstances might a speedy death be the best thing one can hope for?
21. In what way was the defeat and death of Saul not a surprise?

Apply It

22. What act of remembrance can help you with your grief for someone you have lost recently or someone of whom you've been reminded?
- * 23. What small action on your part could make life more worth living for someone whose prospects are bleak?

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David Hears of Saul's Death - 2 Samuel 1:1-16

Topics: Appearance, Assumptions, Choices, Citizenship, Consequences, Death, Emotions, Fasting, Fear, Flattery, Grief, Guilt, Honor, Motives, Mourning, Murder, Possessions, Punishment, Zeal

Open It

1. What is the purpose of symbols of office for those in government leadership?
2. How do people react whenever a winning team gloats over a victory?
- * 3. How would you feel if someone who hated you suddenly died?

Explore It

4. Where had David been while Saul was engaged in his last battle? (1:1)
5. When did David learn about Saul's death? (1:2)
6. What was the appearance and attitude of the messenger who came to David? (1:2)
- * 7. What news did the messenger bring to David? (1:3-4)
8. What question remained in David's mind even though the messenger said that Saul was dead? (1:5)
- * 9. According to the messenger, what was his own role in Saul's demise? (1:5-10)
10. What did the messenger take from Saul's body with the express purpose of bringing it to David? (1:10)
- * 11. How did David and his men react to the messenger's story? (1:11-12)
12. How long did David wait before dealing with the messenger? (1:12-15)
13. Who was the messenger? (1:13)
14. What did David hold against the Amalekite messenger? (1:14)
15. What sentence did David impose on the Amalekite messenger? (1:15)
16. What was David's reason for executing the messenger? (1:16)

Get It

17. Why should the messenger have been afraid to destroy Saul even though Saul was mortally wounded and asked to be killed?
- * 18. What reaction did the messenger expect when he came to David with the news of Saul's death?
19. How do you think David would have reacted to Saul's wish to be put out of his misery had he been on Mount Gilboa?
- * 20. What's wrong with taking justice into our own hands even when the offender clearly deserves punishment?
21. Why is it important to mourn someone's death?

Apply It

- * 22. How could you show reverence for the God-given life of someone who hates you?
23. In what way can you show that you refuse to take death lightly, even if you hear a lot about it on a day-to-day basis?

David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan - 2 Samuel 1:17-27

Topics: Achievements, Armor, Death, Enemies, Friendship, Glory, Grief, Heroes, Love, Mourning, War, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. At what times in your life is a favorite sad song especially meaningful to you?
- 2. What do the living gain by reminding themselves of the exploits and accomplishments of those who have gone before?
- 3. How do you remember events in the past that are important to you?

Explore It

- 4. Who composed the lament for Saul and Jonathan? (1:17)
- * 5. What order did David give regarding the lament for Saul and Jonathan? (1:18)
- 6. What words of high praise did David use to describe Saul and Jonathan? (1:19)
- 7. What was the refrain that started and ended David's lament? (1:19, 27)
- 8. Why did David not want the news of Saul's and Jonathan's death proclaimed in Gath and Ashkelon? (1:20)
- 9. What unfortunate association would David have with the mountains of Gilboa from this time forward? (1:21)
- * 10. What figures of speech did David use to describe Saul's and Jonathan's valor in battle? (1:22)
- * 11. How did David extol the relationship between Saul and Jonathan? (1:23)
- 12. Why did David say that the daughters of Israel should weep for Saul? (1:24)
- 13. How did David express his personal grief over Jonathan? (1:26)

Get It

- 14. What made David particularly qualified to write the lament for Saul and Jonathan?
- 15. Why would David want this song to be taught to all the men of Judah?
- * 16. What advantage was there in David's memorializing only Saul's good qualities?
- 17. How is it valuable to remember the good deeds of those who have gone before us?
- 18. Why did David not seem to begrudge the fact that his friend Jonathan stayed loyal to his father?
- 19. What example does David set for us by recording this lament?
- * 20. What is the value of remembering the past with all of its joy and sorrow?

Apply It

- * 21. What sort of lament (sad lyric) could you create that would help you preserve the memory of a loved one?
- 22. What story of a faithful and valiant saint could you share with your friends or children this week?

David Anointed King over Judah - [2 Samuel 2:1-7](#)

Topics: Affirmation, Authority, Blessing, Courage, Enemies, Guidance, Honor, Invitation, Kindness, Loyalty, Moving, Respect, Rewards, Sovereignty

Open It

1. What would it feel like to be widely identified as a loyal supporter of a defeated candidate?
2. When can you recall receiving thanks from a most unexpected source?
- * 3. What are some of your formal and informal roles of leadership?

Explore It

4. What two specific questions did David ask of the Lord following Saul's death? ([2:1](#))
5. Where did God direct David to go in Judah? ([2:1](#))
6. Who accompanied David back into Judah after his self-imposed exile? ([2:2-3](#))
7. When they learned that David was living in Hebron, what did the men of Judah do? ([2:4](#))
- * 8. What message did David send to the men of Jabesh Gilead? ([2:5](#))
9. For what blessing did David ask God to grant Jabesh Gilead? ([2:6](#))
- * 10. What promise did David make to Jabesh Gilead? ([2:6](#))
11. What did David exhort the men of Jabesh Gilead to do in the face of their loss? ([2:7](#))
- * 12. What piece of news did David want the men of Jabesh Gilead to hear from him directly? ([2:7](#))

Get It

13. Why did David stop to ask God's direction when he knew that his rival for the kingship was dead?
14. What was appealing about the decision of David and his men to settle their families in Judah rather than acting like a conquering army?
15. Why would David prefer to have the people of Judah anoint him king rather than declaring himself king based on Samuel's anointing?
16. What reaction might the people of Jabesh Gilead have expected from David because they salvaged the honor of Saul after his death?
- * 17. Why was it wise for David to acknowledge the bravery of the men of Jabesh Gilead and solicit their loyalty?
- * 18. How should a godly leader step into leadership and strengthen his or her position?
19. Even when the answer seems obvious, why should we seek God's guidance?

Apply It

- * 20. In the leadership roles in your life (family, business, church), how can you acknowledge the positive qualities and contributions of your predecessors?
21. In what matter do you need to seek God's guidance today?
22. How can you make yourself available to be drafted rather than announcing yourself the next time there is an opening in leadership?

War between the Houses of David and Saul - [2 Samuel 2:8-3:5](#)

Topics: [Ambition](#), [Bitterness](#), [Challenge](#),
[Conscience](#), [Consequences](#), [Death](#),
[Decisions](#), [Determination](#), [Divisions](#),
[Enemies](#), [Giving Up](#), [Government](#),
[Humiliation](#), [Impulsiveness](#), [Leadership](#),
[Loyalty](#), [Mediator](#), [Persistence](#), [Revenge](#),
[Stubbornness](#), [War](#)

Open It

- * 1. Why is a civil war often the most fierce and brutal kind of war?
- 2. What are some examples of sibling rivalry?
- 3. What are some examples of the recklessness of youth or the restraint of age?

Explore It

- 4. Who was the leader who rallied Israel behind Saul's remaining son instead of accepting David as king? ([2:8](#))
- 5. How long did David remain in Hebron as king of Judah? ([2:11](#))
- 6. Where did the armies of Israel and Judah meet one another? ([2:12-13](#))
- 7. Who was the commander of David's forces? ([2:13](#))
- 8. How did Abner propose to deal with the rivalry between the kings? ([2:14](#))
- 9. What was the outcome of the duel between the representative young men? ([2:16](#))
- 10. What transpired after the duel had played itself out in tragedy? ([2:17](#))
- 11. Which side prevailed in the fighting between the armies of Saul's son Ish-Bosheth and David? ([2:17](#))
- 12. Who were the three sons of Zeruiah who followed David? ([2:18](#))
- 13. What unique ability belonged to Asahel? ([2:18](#))
- 14. What rash action did Asahel take in battle? ([2:19](#))
- 15. What did Abner try to get Asahel to do once he realized Asahel was chasing him? ([2:20-21](#))
- 16. Why was Abner loathe to strike down Asahel? ([2:22](#))
- 17. What finally occurred when Abner turned to confront Asahel? ([2:23](#))
- 18. What was the reaction of the troops of Judah when they discovered Asahel? ([2:23](#))
- 19. Where did Abner and his fleeing troops take a stand and gather reinforcements? ([2:24-25](#))
- * 20. On what basis did Abner appeal to Joab? ([2:26](#))
- * 21. Why did Joab decide to call off his pursuit of Abner and his men? ([2:27-28](#))
- 22. What were the losses on each side of the battle? ([2:30-31](#))
- 23. What became of the body of the fallen Asahel? ([2:32](#))
- * 24. What gradually happened in the war between the rival kings David and Ish-Bosheth? ([3:1](#))

Get It

- 25. How do you think God felt about Abner mustering resistance against David?
- 26. Why were the two sides, Israel and Judah, initially hesitant to engage in full-scale battle?
- 27. What was good or bad about the idea of allowing twelve young men to fight on behalf

Abner Goes Over to David - 2 Samuel 3:6-21

Topics: Accusation, Ambition, Change, Enemies, Family, Fear, Fellowship, Government, Husbands, Influence, Insults, Intimidation, Leadership, Loyalty, Marriage, Partnerships, Promises, Rebellion, Reconciliation, Relationships, Remarriage, Reputation, Resentment, Sovereignty, Status, Teamwork, Unfaithfulness, War, Wives

Open It

1. What is your definition of a good politician?
- * 2. What would someone have to do in order to lose your loyalty?

Explore It

3. What had Abner been doing during the war between David and Ish-Bosheth? (3:6)
4. What accusation did Ish-Bosheth make against Abner? (3:7)
5. How did Abner react to the accusation of Saul's son? (3:8)
6. Why was Ish-Bosheth intimidated by Abner's response? (3:9-11)
7. What message did Abner send to David? (3:12)
8. What condition did David want fulfilled before he would make an agreement with Abner? (3:13)
9. How was Michal (David's wife) reunited with him after Saul's death? (3:14-16)
- * 10. What did Abner urge the elders of Israel to do? (3:17-18)
11. How did Abner persuade the Benjamites to join him? (3:19)
- * 12. What news did Abner bring to David at Hebron? (3:19)
13. How did David receive Abner's delegation? (3:20)
- * 14. What did Abner intend to do after he left David? (3:21)

Get It

15. What special skills did Abner, Saul's general, possess?
16. Why was David's request to have his wife Michal restored to him granted by Ish-Bosheth and Abner?
- * 17. What was the most persuasive argument for the people of Israel to declare David their king?
- * 18. What is unwise about setting yourself in opposition to the revealed will of God?
19. Why is hospitality such a powerful bridge-builder between people?
20. What is needed to convince a group of people to reverse their course of action?
21. In what areas of life might you be engaged in a futile resistance of something you know God has ordained?

Apply It

22. How could you use hospitality to communicate esteem for someone this week?
- * 23. In what way can you show deference to God's will in an area of life that needs it?

Joab Murders Abner - 2 Samuel 3:22-39

Topics: Accountability, Advice, Authority, Commitment, Conscience, Death, Deceit, Emotions, Evil, Family, Heroes, Intentions, Judgment, Mourning, Murder, Popularity, Revenge, Sincerity, Sovereignty, Stubbornness, Vows

Open It

- * 1. How do you go about judging the sincerity of another person?
- 2. What seems appealing about the idea of getting revenge?

Explore It

- 3. Where was Joab while David was meeting with Abner? (3:22)
- 4. What did Joab learn when he returned to David's camp at Hebron? (3:23)
- 5. What did Joab think of David's decision to negotiate a truce with Abner? (3:24-25)
- 6. How did Joab choose to interpret Abner's desire to meet with David? (3:25)
- 7. What action did Joab take without David's knowledge? (3:26)
- 8. How did Joab set up an opportunity to murder Abner? (3:27)
- 9. Why did Joab murder Abner? (3:27)
- * 10. How did David react to the news of Abner's death? (3:28)
- 11. What judgment did David pronounce on Joab for his violent act? (3:29)
- 12. What did David force Joab and his men to do? (3:31)
- 13. What feelings did David evidence when Abner was buried? (3:32)
- 14. What attitude did David convey toward Abner's death in the lament he composed? (3:33-34)
- * 15. How did the people of Judah who followed David react to Abner's death? (3:34)
- 16. What vow did David make out of respect for Abner? (3:35)
- * 17. Why did most of the people approve of David's reaction to Abner's death? (3:36-37)
- 18. How did David eulogize Abner? (3:38)
- 19. What was David's attitude toward Joab and Abishai? (3:39)

Get It

- 20. Why was Joab disappointed that Abner was already gone by the time he returned to Hebron?
- 21. Why was it to Joab's advantage to have the king mistrust Abner?
- * 22. Why were the people watching to see if David's grief over Abner was sincere?
- 23. What did David mean when he said, "these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me"?
- 24. Why didn't David punish Joab and Abishai for the murder of Abner?
- 25. Why isn't a leader always able to bring off diplomacy according to his own vision?
- 26. In what situations is it important to demonstrate sincerity before speaking?
- * 27. What behaviors on your part could convince others of your sincerity better than words?
- 28. To whom do you need to prove your sincerity?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you do this week to prove your sincerity to someone who needs to be convinced?
- 30. What current grievance against another person would you do well to leave to God's judgment?

Ish-Bosheth Murdered - 2 Samuel 4:1-5:5

Topics: Ambition, Anger, Assumptions, Children, Comparisons, Consequences, Covenant, Death, Enemies, Evil, Expectations, Family, Flattery, Foolishness, Guilt, Ignorance, Injustice, Justice, Motives, Mourning, Murder, Power, Punishment, Representatives, Sovereignty

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the ways that people try to gain favor and influence with powerful people?
- 2. What can we learn from the mistakes of others?
- 3. What is one thing you have learned from someone else's mistake?

Explore It

- 4. How did Israel and its leader react to the news that Abner was dead? (4:1)
- 5. Who were the two leaders of Israel's raiding bands? (4:2-3)
- 6. How was Jonathan's son rescued after Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle? (4:4)
- 7. How did Mephibosheth become crippled? (4:4)
- 8. How did Recab and Baanah manage to murder Ish-Bosheth without being detected? (4:5-6)
- * 9. What did Recab and Baanah expect when they went directly to David with the head of Saul's son? (4:7-8)
- * 10. What similar incident did David recount for Recab and Baanah? (4:9-10)
- 11. How was this incident amazingly like the one that transpired after Saul's death? (4:10)
- * 12. Why were the leaders of Israel's raiding bands even more guilty than the man who reported Saul's death to David? (4:11)
- 13. How did David go about making an example of the men who had planned to please him? (4:12)
- 14. How did David treat Ish-Bosheth after his death? (4:12)
- 15. Of what common history did the leaders of Israel remind David when they came to make him king? (5:1-2)
- 16. What significant event took place at Hebron after years of fighting between Israel and Judah? (5:3)
- 17. How long was David king over both Israel and Judah? (5:5)

Get It

- 18. Why did the death of Abner cause alarm in Israel?
- * 19. Why did the two leaders assume that David would want Ish-Bosheth dead?
- * 20. Why was David able to resist and condemn violence against his own enemies?
- 21. In what sense was Ish-Bosheth innocent?
- 22. Why is it dangerous to make assumptions about what will please those in authority?
- 23. Why is it better to be asked to assume leadership as opposed to establishing yourself by force?
- 24. What two reasons made it logical for Israel to make David their king?

Apply It

- * 25. In what way can you resist defending yourself and let God deliver you?
- 26. In what practical way can you honor someone you were close to who is now dead?

David Conquers Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 5:6-25

Topics: Abandon, Accomplishments, Achievements, Answers, Assurance, Blessing, Blindness, Challenge, Children, Confidence, Craftsmanship, Decisions, Effectiveness, Evidence, Foolishness, Gifts, Guidance, Government, Insults, Leadership, Opposition, Popularity, Power, Priorities, Security, Sovereignty, Status, Strength, Success, Victory, Weaknesses, Wives

Open It

1. Do you consider yourself mainly a “leader” or a “follower”? Why?
- * 2. What burdens and rewards go along with leadership?

Explore It

3. What city did David set out to conquer once he had been anointed king of Israel and Judah? (5:6)
4. What taunt did the Jebusites throw at David’s army? (5:6)
5. What was the outcome of David’s siege of Jerusalem? (5:7)
6. How did David turn the taunt of the Jebusites against them? (5:8)
7. What did David do in Jerusalem after he conquered it? (5:9)
- * 8. Why did David continue to prosper and grow more powerful? (5:10)
- * 9. What honor did David receive from a foreign king? (5:11)
- * 10. How did David interpret the honors he was receiving? (5:12)
11. What children were born to David after he had settled in Jerusalem? (5:14-16)
12. How did the Philistines respond to David’s expanded kingship? (5:17)
13. What did David seek before he engaged the Philistines in battle? (5:18-19)
14. What was the significance of the name given to the place where David defeated the Philistines? (5:20)
15. How did David behave when the Philistines gathered against him for a second time? (5:22-23)
16. What was different about the Lord’s response to David’s second inquiry? (5:23-24)
17. What was the outcome of the second battle? (5:25)

Get It

18. Why did David need to establish a new capital city after becoming king of both Judah and Israel?
- * 19. In what different ways could David have responded to an honor such as gifts sent from a foreign king?
20. What was David’s first instinct when he heard about the Philistines amassing against him?
21. How did the naming of the place of David’s first victory against the Philistines give glory to God rather than to himself?
22. Why was it a good thing that David did not assume that the second battle would go exactly like the first?
- * 23. What are the potential pitfalls of success in the life of the believer?
24. What lessons should we draw from our successes and the congratulations of others?
25. When is God more concerned with our attitudes than our outcomes?

Apply It

- * 26. What could serve as a concrete reminder that your successes are an indication of God’s grace?
27. How can you develop the habit of asking for God’s help instead of taking it for granted?

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 6:1-23

Topics: Accountability, Accusation, Anger, Awe, Blessing, Celebration, Consequences, Criticism, Death, Delay, Dignity, Disagreements, Discouragement, Ego, Embarrassment, Enthusiasm, Fear, Heart, Husbands, Pride, Relationships, Responsibility, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What was the most elaborate public celebration you've ever attended?
- 2. What Christian worship practices or styles of worship embarrass you or make you uncomfortable?

Explore It

- 3. What was the mission on which David and his men went to Baalah of Judah? (6:2)
- 4. How was the ark being transported from the house of Abinadab? (6:3-5)
- 5. What prompted Uzzah to reach out and hold onto the ark? (6:6)
- 6. How did God judge Uzzah's action of reaching out for the ark? (6:7)
- 7. What was David's emotional reaction to the death of Uzzah? (6:8)
- 8. After the death of the priest, what change of plans did David make out of fear? (6:9-10)
- 9. What persuaded David to go back for the ark after three months? (6:12)
- 10. How was the public procession handled differently the second time? (6:13)
- * 11. What was the mood of David and the people as they transported the ark? (6:14-15)
- * 12. How did Michal react when she saw David dancing before the Lord? (6:16)
- 13. How did David culminate the celebration when the ark reached Jerusalem? (6:17-19)
- 14. What was Michal's response to David when he returned home after the celebration? (6:20)
- * 15. What was David's attitude about the way in which he had worshiped God? (6:21-22)
- 16. What became of Michal after this incident in which she "despised" David? (6:23)

Get It

- 17. Why was Uzzah's action irreverent even though he was trying to protect the ark?
- 18. If you had been present on the day of Uzzah's death, how would you have felt about having the ark brought to your home?
- 19. What was God's response to David's anger and fear?
- * 20. Why was Michal so upset by David's behavior in the procession?
- 21. In what ways can we become subtly irreverent in our behavior before God?
- * 22. How can we combine proper reverence before God with unparalleled joy and celebration?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you express your wholehearted joy before the Lord this week?
- 24. What is an appropriate response for someone who finds your worship practices "undignified"?

God's Promise to David - 2 Samuel 7:1-17

Topics: Blessing, Correction, Covenant, Discipline, Enemies, Family, Future, Goals, God's Will, Greatness, Heritage, Honor, Jesus Christ, Love, Name, Oppressed, Peace, Plans, Punishment, Rejection, Security, Sovereignty

Open It

- * 1. In what way do you think church buildings should reflect our humility? our esteem for God?
- 2. In what sense can prosperity be both comfortable and uncomfortable?

Explore It

- * 3. What contrast bothered David after he was well established in Jerusalem? (7:1-2)
- 4. What was Nathan's initial reaction to David's instinct to build a house for the ark of God? (7:3)
- * 5. According to the word Nathan received from the Lord, how did God feel about the fact that no permanent house of worship had been built? (7:5-7)
- 6. What did God remind David about how he had achieved his current prosperity? (7:8-9)
- 7. What promise did God make concerning His people, Israel? (7:10-11)
- 8. What was God's covenant with the house of David? (7:11-12, 16)
- * 9. What was God's will concerning the building of a house for His Name? (7:13)
- 10. How long did God promise to establish the throne of David? (7:13)
- 11. What relationship did God promise to have with David's son and his descendants? (7:14)
- 12. How did God promise to treat David differently than He had treated Saul? (7:15)
- 13. What did Nathan do after God had revealed these things to him in the night? (7:17)

Get It

- * 14. Initially, did David's concern for the house of God sound pious or presumptuous?
- 15. Why is it significant that Nathan heard from God immediately after he had spoken with David?
- 16. What gentle correction did God include with His promises to David?
- 17. What was God's intention in making David powerful and prosperous?
- * 18. How should we determine the appropriate setting and methods for worshiping God?
- 19. What statement sums up the worst that happened to King Saul?
- 20. What is the most reassuring aspect of God's covenant with the house of David?
- 21. How is God's punishment consistent with His unfailing love?

Apply It

- 22. How might God be intending to bless others through His blessings to you personally?
- * 23. What is the most important "temple" you can offer to God, and what is one thing you can do to offer it?

David's Prayer - 2 Samuel 7:18-29

Topics: Abundance, Awe, Blessing, Courage, Covenant, Future, God's Will, Humility, People, Praise, Prayer, Promises, Thankfulness, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What is the first thing you want to do when you receive very good news?
- 2. What's your favorite example of a pleasant surprise?
- 3. How much do your ancestors and your descendants figure into your day-to-day life?

Explore It

- 4. After David heard Nathan's word from God, what did he do? (7:18)
- * 5. What was David's attitude toward the blessings he was currently enjoying? (7:18)
- * 6. What was even more amazing to David than his current prosperity? (7:19)
- * 7. Why did David find himself almost speechless before God? (7:20-21)
- 8. What attributes of God did David begin to praise? (7:22)
- 9. What did David proclaim to be unique about Israel? (7:23)
- 10. Who was the initiator in the relationship between God and Israel? (7:24)
- 11. What request did David make of God in the midst of his praises? (7:25)
- 12. What testimony did David envision coming out of the blessing of his family? (7:26)
- 13. According to David, where did he find the courage to pray to God? (7:27)
- 14. How did David demonstrate his confidence in God and His word? (7:28-29)
- 15. What did David ask of God at the end of his prayer? (7:29)

Get It

- * 16. How did David demonstrate that he understood the uniqueness of God's covenant with him?
- 17. Why was David in shock?
- 18. Why is it important to thank God for the good things we enjoy?
- 19. What are the benefits of praising God?
- 20. In what way had God used Israel to "make a name for himself"?
- 21. What was unusual about the request David made of God?
- 22. Why is it appropriate to ask God for things He has already promised?
- * 23. In what sense does it take courage to approach God in prayer?

Apply It

- 24. In what area of life could you benefit by praying that God will do as He has promised?
- * 25. In the coming week, how can you cultivate a sense of awe at God's goodness?
- 26. For what great gift or blessing do you want to thank God now?

David's Victories - 2 Samuel 8:1-18

Topics: Administration, Achievements, Advice, Authority, Death, Dedication, Enemies, Government, Help, Justice, Lifestyle, Possessions, Power, Reputation, Righteousness, Submission, Victory, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. Why do successful people tend to forget about those who helped them reach success?
- 2. What are some instances of governmental success or failure with regard to issues of justice?

Explore It

- 3. How did David fare in his battles with Israel's traditional enemies, the Philistines? (8:1)
- 4. How did David ensure the fear and subjection of the Moabites? (8:2)
- 5. From what king did David capture soldiers, horses, and chariots? (8:3-4)
- * 6. What unusual step did David take when he captured a thousand chariot horses? (8:4)
- 7. What was the result of David's encounter with the Arameans? (8:5-6)
- * 8. What valuable plunder did David take from Hadadezer? (8:7-8)
- 9. From what king did David receive gifts because of his victory over a common enemy? (8:9-10)
- * 10. What did David do with the valuable articles and precious metals he captured in his campaigns? (8:11-12)
- 11. What spectacular victory spread David's fame even farther than it already had? (8:13)
- 12. How did David reinforce his sovereignty in Edom? (8:14)
- 13. What qualities characterized David's reign over the united Israel? (8:15)

Get It

- * 14. Which of David's activities as a conquering ruler were unusual or unexpected?
- 15. What strategies assured David of expanded territory and continual income?
- 16. Why was David so successful?
- 17. Why did David dedicate the most valuable plunder he got through warfare?
- 18. What incentive is there for powerful rulers to be just?
- * 19. What dangers are inherent in sudden, overwhelming success?
- 20. What are some of the ways that one powerful ruler can acknowledge another?

Apply It

- * 21. What could you do to dedicate the fruits of your successes to the Lord?
- 22. In your positions of leadership (whether formal or informal), what can you do to ensure that you are just and right toward the people God has entrusted to you?

David and Mephibosheth - 2 Samuel 9:1-13

Topics: Family, Gifts, Grace, Handicapped, Honor, Humility, Kindness, Remembering, Restoration, Serving

Open It

- * 1. If you had it within your power, whom would you elevate from “rags to riches” and why?
- 2. What activities of daily life are a continual challenge for people with disabilities?

Explore It

- * 3. What commitment did David remember when he was established in the kingship of Israel? (9:1)
- 4. From whom did David seek information about Saul’s survivors? (9:2)
- 5. Which relative of Saul did David learn about from the servant Ziba? (9:3)
- 6. Where did David find Jonathan’s son living? (9:4-5)
- 7. What attitude did Mephibosheth assume toward David when they met? (9:6)
- * 8. What promises did David make to Mephibosheth? (9:7)
- 9. How did Mephibosheth expect to be treated by David? (9:8)
- 10. What commands did David give to Ziba concerning Mephibosheth? (9:9-10)
- * 11. What kind of treatment did Mephibosheth receive in David’s house? (9:11)
- 12. How would another generation of Saul’s family continue in Israel? (9:12)
- 13. Why did Mephibosheth live in Jerusalem from this time onward although his family’s lands were elsewhere? (9:13)

Get It

- 14. Why was it especially important to David to find the surviving members of Saul’s family?
- 15. Why did Mephibosheth have reason to be afraid of David?
- 16. What special provision did David make because of Mephibosheth’s disability?
- 17. Why is it important to carry through on promises made, even if the person to whom you made them is dead and gone?
- * 18. Why is it a bad idea to hold a grudge against the heirs or associates of a person who has persecuted you?
- * 19. Why is it a greater honor to ask someone to eat with you than simply to give him or her a meal?

Apply It

- 20. What promise from the past can you take steps to fulfill today?
- * 21. What concrete way can you find to honor a friend or relative who is deceased?
- 22. The next time you encounter someone who has a disability, how can you be sure to respect his or her dignity?

David Defeats the Ammonites - 2 Samuel 10:1-19

Topics: Ambassadors, Anger, Consequences, Courage, Deceit, Delegation, Doubt, Enemies, Friendship, Help, Honor, Humiliation, Instructions, Insults, Intimidation, Kindness, Motives, Mourning, Neighbor, Opposition, Partnerships, Peace, Plans, Representatives, Revenge, Submission, Trust, Victory, War

Open It

- * 1. What sincere gesture on your part has been grossly misinterpreted?
- 2. What are the differences between a war on your own soil and war on behalf of another nation?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did David send a delegation to Hanun, king of the Ammonites? (10:1-2)
- * 4. What suspicion was planted in Hanun's mind by his nobles? (10:3)
- * 5. What did Hanun do to the men David had sent to him? (10:4)
- 6. How did David seek to comfort his humiliated representatives? (10:5)
- 7. What did the Ammonites do when they realized they had made an enemy of David? (10:6)
- 8. What was David's response to the mobilization of Ammonite and mercenary troops? (10:7)
- 9. What was the military situation confronting Joab? (10:8-9)
- 10. How did Joab choose to deal with the situation of being surrounded by hostile troops? (10:9-10)
- 11. What agreement did Joab make with Abishai concerning the battle? (10:11)
- 12. Why was Joab not panicked by the way the battle was shaping up? (10:12)
- 13. What was the outcome of the battle on the two fronts? (10:13-14)
- 14. What did the Arameans do after they were initially turned back by Joab? (10:15-16)
- 15. How did David respond to the regrouping of the Arameans? (10:17)
- 16. What was the extent of David's victory over the Arameans? (10:18-19)

Get It

- * 17. What kind of advice did Hanun get from his noblemen?
- 18. How widespread was the damage from one error of judgment in this situation?
- * 19. Why should a slight or insult of another person not be undertaken lightly?
- 20. What are the advantages of a flexible "battle plan"?
- 21. What is most likely to make allies part ways?
- 22. How can knowledge of God's character make us more courageous in the challenges we face?

Apply It

- 23. What is one thing you can do to increase your knowledge of God's character?
- * 24. How can you become a better judge of character and intentions?

David and Bathsheba - 2 Samuel 11:1-27

Topics: Abandon, Adultery, Anger, Authority, Children, Danger, Death, Deceit, Dedication, Devotion, Dishonesty, Drinking, Encouragement, Guilt, Home, Honor, Hospitality, Husbands, Immorality, Instructions, Integrity, Involvement, Isolation, Loyalty, Lust, Marriage, Morality, Motives, Mourning, Murder, Neighbor, Plans, Power, Remarriage, Selfishness, Sex, Sin, Temptation, War, Wives

Open It

- * 1. In what ways do you agree or disagree with the adage “Power corrupts”?
- 2. Whom have you ever known who seemed so loyal and honest as to be “too good to be true”?

Explore It

- 3. Where was David while the Israelite army was engaged in battle against the Ammonites? (11:1)
- 4. What did David observe one night from the roof of the palace? (11:2)
- * 5. How did David misuse his authority as king in relation to the woman he observed? (11:3-5)
- 6. After David found out Bathsheba was pregnant, what did he do next? (11:6)
- 7. What was David’s pretext for sending for Uriah from the battlefield? (11:7)
- 8. Where did David send Uriah after he spoke with him? (11:8)
- 9. Why didn’t Uriah take David up on the invitation to go to his own home? (11:9-11)
- * 10. What ploy did David try to get Uriah to go home to his wife? (11:13)
- 11. When Uriah did not go home, what message did David send back with him to Joab? (11:14-15)
- 12. What steps did Joab take to fulfill the king’s wishes? (11:16-17)
- 13. What special instructions did Joab give to the messenger in case David grew angry at the losses taken by the Israelites? (11:18-21)
- * 14. How did David receive the news of the battle when he realized that his purposes had been accomplished with regard to Uriah? (11:25)
- 15. How did Bathsheba react to the death of Uriah the Hittite? (11:26)
- 16. How did David treat Bathsheba once her husband was out of the way? (11:27)
- 17. How did God feel about what David had done? (11:27)

Get It

- * 18. Why did David try everything within his power to get Uriah to sleep with his wife while he was home from the wars?
- 19. How did one sin lead to another and another in David’s case?
- 20. What was the immediate human cost of David’s lust and selfishness?
- 21. Why do you suppose Joab put a whole group of men in peril instead of following David’s suggestion about abandoning Uriah?
- 22. If he had been thinking like a responsible leader, how should David have reacted to the losses Joab reported from the battle?
- 23. Why does one sin often lead to other sins?
- * 24. How does a position of authority exaggerate the human tendency to take what we want?

Apply It

- 25. How can you break the cycle the next time you find yourself committing one sin to cover up another?
- * 26. What can you do to maintain respect for people in the way you use power and authority?
- 27. In what area of your life would you like to develop an unwavering loyalty like Uriah’s?

Nathan Rebukes David - 2 Samuel 12:1-31

Topics: Accountability, Adultery, Anger, Atonement, Children, Death, Evil, Fasting, Grief, Injustice, Judgment, Murder, Parents, Persistence, Poor, Prayer, Prophecy, Repentance, Selfishness, Sickness, Sin, Victory, Waiting, Worship

Open It

1. When was a time you were eventually thankful that someone didn't grant a request of yours?
- * 2. To what extent do you believe public officials should be accountable for their private behavior?

Explore It

3. In Nathan's story what was special about the ewe lamb belonging to the poor man? (12:1-3)
4. What injustice was perpetrated by the rich man against the poor man in Nathan's story? (12:4)
5. How did David react to Nathan's story? (12:5-6)
- * 6. How did Nathan use the story to convict David? (12:7-9)
7. What judgment did God pronounce on David through Nathan? (12:10)
8. How did God say He would bring David's secret sin into the open? (12:11-12)
9. What did David admit after Nathan had spoken? (12:13)
- * 10. According to Nathan, what would be the consequences of David's sin? (12:13-14)
11. What happened in David's family after Nathan left the palace? (12:15)
12. What did David do in response to his son's illness? (12:16-17)
13. Why were the servants afraid to tell David that David's child had died? (12:18)
14. How did David find out that his son was dead? (12:19)
- * 15. How did David act after he knew that God was not going to change His mind and allow the child to live? (12:20)
16. How did David explain his sudden change of demeanor to the puzzled servants? (12:21-23)
17. What was the name of the next child of David and Bathsheba? (12:24-25)
18. How was Joab and the army of Israel faring in the war? (12:26-27)
19. What message did Joab send from the front to his commander in chief? (12:28)
20. What was the outcome of David's battle against Rabbah? (12:29-31)

Get It

21. Why was the parable Nathan told to David so effective?
- * 22. In what sense did David "despise" God by taking Uriah's wife and having Uriah killed?
23. In what sense can a definite "no" from God in response to our request actually be a relief?
24. Why did God not strike David dead because of his sin?
- * 25. How did David's fasting and prayer before the child died show the quality of his relationship with God?
26. What did David mean when he said, "I will go to him, but he will not return to me"?
27. How can "getting on with our lives" after a crisis be an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God?
28. Why is our sense of outrage easily sparked against strangers but difficult to muster in relation to our own actions?
29. Why does a good servant or employee let his or her superior take the credit for accomplishments he or she might have engineered?

Apply It

30. How can you develop an ear for parables so that you will recognize your situation when it is appropriate to do so?
- * 31. On what matter of concern can you plead for God's mercy while there is still a chance that God might grant it?

32. In what situation before you now should you step aside and let someone else have the glory?

Amnon and Tamar - 2 Samuel 13:1-22

Topics: Alone, Anger, Arguments, Beauty, Deceit, Desires, Despair, Dishonesty, Evil, Foolishness, Friendship, Frustration, Grief, Guilt, Hatred, Honor, Hopelessness, Hospitality, Immorality, Instructions, Intentions, Love, Lust, Marriage, Mourning, Rejection, Self-Centeredness, Sex, Shame, Sickness, Sin, Strength

Open It

1. In your mind what character, real or fictional, best personifies the evil instigator?
- * 2. Why, when we finally get the thing we have wanted most, are we often less than satisfied?

Explore It

3. Which of David's sons fell in love with one of David's daughters? (13:1)
4. Why was Amnon frustrated? (13:1-2)
5. What was the reputation of Jonadab? (13:3)
6. What plan did Jonadab propose for Amnon to get what he wanted? (13:4-5)
7. When Amnon feigned illness, what request did he make of King David? (13:6)
8. How did David respond to Amnon's request? (13:7)
9. What did Amnon do when Tamar had followed all of his instructions? (13:8-10)
- * 10. What proposition did Amnon make to Tamar when they were alone? (13:11)
11. How did Tamar respond to Amnon's advances? (13:12)
- * 12. What were Tamar's arguments to try to get Amnon to leave her alone? (13:12-13)
13. How did Amnon finally get what he wanted from Tamar? (13:14)
- * 14. How did Amnon feel about Tamar after he had slept with her? (13:15)
15. Why didn't Tamar want Amnon to send her away? (13:16)
16. How did Amnon get rid of Tamar when he no longer wanted her? (13:17)
17. What did Tamar do when Amnon turned her out? (13:18-19)
18. What did Absalom guess had happened to his sister Tamar? (13:20)
19. What became of Tamar after she was raped by Amnon? (13:20)
20. What was David's reaction when he heard about the incident involving Amnon and Tamar? (13:21)
21. What did Absalom do with his anger toward Amnon? (13:22)

Get It

22. How would you characterize the advice given to Amnon by his "friend" Jonadab?
23. In what way was Amnon's sin like the sin of his father David with Bathsheba?
24. On what did Tamar base her resistance to Amnon's advances?
25. What more could David have done with his anger at Amnon?
- * 26. Why is obsession with a person or thing dangerous?
- * 27. Why are lust and genuine love seldom related?
28. What should we do when we become angry—act immediately, store it up for a future occasion, or something else?

Apply It

- * 29. What overwhelming desire should you examine for its purity before you pursue it at all costs?
30. What steps can you take to evaluate objectively the character and motives of your "advisors"?

Absalom Kills Amnon - 2 Samuel 13:23-39

Topics: Acceptance, Advice, Affections, Bitterness, Blessing, Death, Deceit, Drinking, Emotions, Escape, Family, Fear, Feelings, Grief, Instructions, Intentions, Invitation, Mourning, Murder, Plans, Questions, Revenge, Running, Sorrow

Open It

- * 1. What are the pitfalls of taking justice into your own hands?
- 2. What invitation have you received that turned out to have a hidden agenda behind it?

Explore It

- * 3. How long did Absalom harbor anger against Amnon? (13:23)
- 4. For what occasion did Absalom invite the king and all his officials? (13:24)
- 5. Although he would not agree to go himself, whom did David agree to send to Absalom's feast? (13:25-27)
- * 6. What order did Absalom give to his men concerning his brother Amnon? (13:28)
- 7. How did David's other sons react when Amnon was murdered? (13:29)
- 8. What rumor reached David concerning what had happened at Absalom's feast? (13:30-31)
- 9. Who stepped in with "inside information" to clarify the rumor David had heard? (13:32-33)
- 10. What did Absalom do after the murder of Amnon? (13:34)
- 11. How did David learn that Jonadab's version of events was true? (13:34-35)
- * 12. What was the mood among David and his sons and servants following the news of Amnon's murder? (13:36)
- 13. Where did Absalom go into self-imposed exile? (13:37)
- 14. How did David view what had transpired between his sons? (13:39)
- 15. What did David want to do more than anything once the incident was past? (13:39)

Get It

- 16. What should have alerted David that Absalom's motives for holding the feast were less than pure?
- 17. Why did David's other sons flee from the banquet after Amnon's murder?
- 18. What might we surmise about Jonadab's involvement in the second part of the Amnon/Tamar incident?
- 19. What did it mean that David was "consoled concerning Amnon's death"?
- 20. Why do you suppose David was hesitant to speak to either Amnon concerning his sexual sin or Absalom when he contracted a murder?
- * 21. Why is enmity and injury between close family members so painful for everyone involved?
- * 22. What does it take to keep good relationships between family members?
- 23. Ultimately, why isn't it loving for a parent to withhold discipline from an unruly child?

Apply It

- 24. What would be a constructive way to express anger you feel toward someone you love?
- * 25. What interpersonal "disaster waiting to happen" could you deal with before greater harm is done?

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 14:1-33

Topics: Appearance, Blessing, Change, Children, Complaining, Conflict, Death, Deceit, Determination, Evil, Family, Forgiveness, Grief, Guilt, Help, Heritage, Honor, Instructions, Life, Mourning, Name, Parents, People, Persistence, Restoration, Revenge, Separation, Words

Open It

1. What is the most bizarre thing anyone has done to get your attention?
- * 2. What sort of extenuating circumstances, if any, do you think should bar a person from having to bear the full punishment for a crime he or she has committed?

Explore It

3. What did Joab know about the king's true desires? (14:1)
- * 4. What elaborate ruse did Joab arrange to help David do what he wanted to do? (14:1-3)
5. What dilemma did the "widow" present to David? (14:4-7)
6. What promises did David make to the woman before he knew her real purpose? (14:8-11)
7. After David had promised to help the woman who came to him, what did she reveal about her real purpose for coming? (14:12-14)
8. What did the woman say "the people" felt about Absalom's exile? (14:15)
9. What question did David have for the woman when she had finished her plea? (14:18-19)
- * 10. Whom did the woman admit had put her up to her encounter with the king? (14:19-20)
- * 11. What did David tell Joab to do? (14:21-23)
12. What limitations were put on Absalom when he returned to Jerusalem? (14:23-24)
13. What were the unique aspects of Absalom's physical appearance? (14:25-26)
14. How long did Absalom live in Jerusalem again without seeing David? (14:28)
15. When Joab did not answer Absalom's request, what did Absalom do to get Joab's attention? (14:29-32)
16. What did Absalom demand that Joab ask of the king? (14:32)
17. On what terms were David and his son reunited? (14:33)

Get It

18. Why did Joab devise such an elaborate plan rather than simply asking David to send for Absalom?
19. Why did David take the halfway measure of allowing Absalom to return but not to see him?
20. What did Absalom's insistence on his rights reveal about his character?
- * 21. How far should a friend go in helping you fulfill your desires?
- * 22. What is good or bad about overcoming your own barriers of principle?

Apply It

- * 23. With what close friend could you share your spiritual goals so that he or she is not placed in the position of helping you compromise?
24. What judge or official do you know of who needs prayer in order to make wise judgments?

Absalom's Conspiracy - 2 Samuel 15:1-12

Topics: Affections, Complaining, Criticism, Ego, Equality, Flattery, Government, Habits, Heart, Influence, Justice, Loyalty, Popularity, Promises, Rebellion, Relationships, Reputation, Self-Centeredness, Unfaithfulness, Vows

Open It

- * 1. What are some ways that ambitious individuals can “buy” a following?
- 2. What are the characteristics of the ambitious people you know?

Explore It

- * 3. What symbols of status and power did Absalom acquire? (15:1)
- 4. Whom was Absalom in the habit of intercepting at the city gate? (15:2)
- * 5. How did Absalom flatter the people he met at the gate? (15:3)
- 6. With what “if only” statement did Absalom plant the idea of himself as leader? (15:4)
- 7. How did Absalom treat anyone who bowed down to him? (15:5)
- * 8. How did the Israelites react to Absalom? (15:6)
- 9. What request did Absalom make of David when some years had passed? (15:7-9)
- 10. When he had gone to Hebron, what did Absalom ask his supporters to do? (15:10)
- 11. By what trick did Absalom give the appearance of having a large following? (15:11)
- 12. Whom else did Absalom find to join his rebellion? (15:12)

Get It

- 13. Why was the city gate a particularly good place for Absalom to ingratiate himself with the Israelites?
- 14. How many of Absalom's interactions with people seem to you to have been sincere?
- * 15. How do ambitious people manipulate the truth to their own advantage?
- 16. Why might it be wise to wonder about the motives of people who seem unusually helpful?
- 17. What circumstances make people susceptible to rebellion?
- * 18. How is it possible to reconcile a strong personal ambition with devotion to God?

Apply It

- * 19. What ambition should you examine to see if it is submitted to the will of God?
- 20. What steps can you take to avoid being gullible to nay-sayers and influence-gatherers?

David Flees - 2 Samuel 15:13-37

Topics: Abandon, Advice, Burdens, Decisions, Escape, Faithfulness, Family, Foolishness, Friendship, Giving Up, God's Will, Heart, Help, Instructions, Kindness, Loyalty, Mourning, Moving, Obedience, Plans, Prayer, Sacrifice, Sorrow, Teamwork, Vows, Waiting

Open It

- * 1. What would you be thinking and feeling if a sudden calamity forced you to leave your home?
- 2. To what person do you feel such loyalty that you would gladly endure danger along with him or her? Why?

Explore It

- * 3. What discouraging message came to David in Jerusalem? (15:13)
- * 4. Why did David feel it was necessary to leave the city? (15:14)
- * 5. How did the king's officials respond to David's orders? (15:15)
- 6. Who were some of the specific groups who left Jerusalem with David? (15:16-18)
- 7. Why did David offer to send one group back with his blessing? (15:19-20)
- 8. What was Ittai's response to David's urgings? (15:21)
- 9. What was the response of the people in the countryside when the king and his retinue passed by? (15:23)
- 10. What did the priests do with the holy articles when David left Jerusalem? (15:24)
- 11. Why did David send the ark of the covenant back into the city? (15:25-26)
- 12. What did David hope to accomplish by leaving the priests inside the city? (15:27-29)
- 13. What was the mood and appearance of David and the people with him at the Mount of Olives? (15:30)
- 14. What was David's prayer when he learned who was advising his son Absalom? (15:31)
- 15. Who met David at the summit of the Mount of Olives? (15:32)
- 16. What role did David assign to his friend Hushai in order to assist his cause? (15:33-37)

Get It

- * 17. Why was David so quick to leave Jerusalem without a fight?
- 18. What quality characterized David's close officials?
- 19. What actions of David showed that he was not ready to relinquish the kingship?
- 20. By letting events take their course, what was David waiting to find out from God?
- 21. What are the different roles that can be taken by helpful friends in time of calamity?
- * 22. Why is an attitude of penitence and mourning appropriate when we are confronted with trials?
- 23. Why might it be a good idea to ask God to search your motives and vindicate you the next time you are confronted by setbacks or problems?

Apply It

- 24. How can you make strategic requests of your loyal friends when you are in need?
- 25. To whom do you owe loyalty, even when he or she appears to be in trouble?
- * 26. How can you entrust yourself to God the next time you face a setback?

David, Ziba, and Shimei - 2 Samuel 16:1-14

Topics: Accusation, Ambition, Correction, Criticism, Discipline, Expectations, Gifts, God's Will, Hatred, Hope, Humiliation, Humility, Insults, Interpretation, Judging Others, Judgment, Justice, Opposition, Patience, Persecution, Perspective, Punishment, Rebellion, Revenge, Rewards, Serving, Swearing, Toleration, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. In what circumstances can it be difficult to tell your friends from your enemies?
2. As a child of God, who is likely to rejoice if you stumble?
- * 3. How does it feel to be in a crowd that includes a heckler?

Explore It

4. Who met David with provisions as he was fleeing Jerusalem? (16:1-2)
5. What difference of opinion did Ziba report between himself and Mephibosheth? (16:3)
6. What was David's response to Ziba's actions? (16:4)
- * 7. What did Shimei son of Gera do when David's entourage passed his way? (16:5-6)
8. What accusation and curse did Shimei level against David? (16:7-8)
- * 9. Why was Shimei so bitter against David? (16:8)
10. What did Abishai propose to do to Shimei? (16:9)
- * 11. How did David's view of the situation differ radically from Abishai's? (16:10)
12. What order did David give concerning Shimei, and what was his reason for doing so? (16:11)
13. For what outcome did David hope instead of the immediate death of the heckler? (16:12)
14. What did Shimei continue to do as David and his men journeyed on? (16:13)
15. What did David do when he arrived at his destination? (16:14)

Get It

16. Why is it not wise to take one person's version of events at face value without hearing the other side?
- * 17. What character traits did David exhibit through his reaction to Shimei?
18. In what ways did David think Shimei's behavior was "understandable"?
- * 19. What can a person learn from his or her critics?
20. In what ways is it appropriate to distance yourself from "enemies"?
21. Would you prefer to vindicate yourself or to be vindicated by God in due time? Why?
22. How does our belief in God enable us to respond charitably toward our enemies?

Apply It

23. How do you need to distance yourself from people whose attitudes and methods conflict with your own?
- * 24. To what critic in your life would you like to learn to respond with silence and faith in God?

The Advice of Hushai and Ahithophel - 2 Samuel 16:15-17:29

Topics: Advice, Choices, Danger, Deceit, Escape, Friendship, Frustration, God's Will, Guidance, Hiding, Influence, Instructions, Lying, Plans, Rejection, Relationships, Reliability, Reputation, Respect, Teamwork, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What are the pros and cons of a head of state relying on advisors?
- 2. To whom do you turn for advice?
- 3. What makes your favorite "chase" scene from a book or movie so exciting?

Explore It

- 4. Who was at Absalom's side when he entered Jerusalem? (16:15)
- 5. What question did Absalom have for Hushai the Arkite when they met? (16:16-17)
- 6. What reasons did Hushai give to convince Absalom that he would change his loyalties? (16:18-19)
- 7. What was Ahithophel's advice on how Absalom should proceed in his bid to become king instead of David? (16:20-22)
- 8. How was Ahithophel regarded as an advisor to kings? (16:23)
- * 9. What plan of attack did Ahithophel recommend to Absalom? (17:1-4)
- * 10. What was Hushai's reasoning to convince Absalom that Ahithophel's plan was not good? (17:5-10)
- 11. What alternate advice did Hushai give to Absalom? (17:11-13)
- 12. Which advisor's plan was more likely to bring success to Absalom? (17:14)
- * 13. Why did Absalom choose to follow Hushai's advice? (17:14)
- 14. What message did Hushai send to David via the priests? (17:15-16)
- 15. Why did the priests' sons end up hiding from Absalom's men? (17:17-18)
- 16. Who assisted Ahimaaz and Jonathan in hiding from Absalom's men? (17:18-20)
- 17. What did David and his followers do in response to Hushai's message? (17:21-22)
- 18. How did Ahithophel take the news that his advice had not been followed? (17:23)
- 19. Who led the armies of Absalom to Gilead in pursuit of David? (17:24-26)
- 20. Who brought provisions to David at Mahanaim? (17:27-29)

Get It

- 21. Why was Ahithophel such a valuable asset to Absalom?
- * 22. In what sense was the struggle between Absalom and David more a struggle of wits than of armies?
- 23. What evidence do we have that intelligence and even wisdom can be used for either good or evil?
- * 24. How can we filter the advice we receive to ensure that it is according to God's wisdom?
- 25. Why is teamwork often essential to achieving our objectives?
- 26. Why are outrageous and detestable actions used as a strategy of war?
- 27. How important is motivation and morale in the outcome of military fighting?

Apply It

- * 28. What safeguards should you employ before taking the advice of a widely acknowledged expert?
- 29. How can you make a contribution this week to the teamwork of the people of God?

Absalom's Death - 2 Samuel 18:1-18

Topics: Affections, Anger, Arguments, Compassion, Criticism, Death, Decisions, Disagreements, Disobedience, Excuses, Initiative, Instructions, Love, Mercy, Murder, Opportunities, Protection, Self-Centeredness, Value, Waiting, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What instance can you name when you decided to do what seemed best for someone else rather than what he or she wanted you to do?
- 2. What do you want people to say about you after you are gone?

Explore It

- 3. How did David organize his army of supporters? (18:1-2)
- 4. For what reasons did David's followers ask him not to go into battle himself? (18:3)
- * 5. What command did all the troops hear David giving his commanders as they left the city? (18:5)
- 6. How did Absalom's side (Israel) fare in the battle against David? (18:6-7)
- 7. How did the location of the battle add a unique element to the fighting? (18:6-8)
- 8. What happened to Absalom just as he encountered David's men? (18:9)
- * 9. What was Joab's complaint against the man who reported Absalom's whereabouts? (18:10-11)
- 10. How did the soldier explain his reasons for not killing Absalom on the spot? (18:12-13)
- * 11. How did Joab make sure that Absalom was not taken alive? (18:14-15)
- 12. How was the battle brought to an end? (18:16)
- 13. What became of Absalom and of the Israelite army? (18:17)
- 14. Why had Absalom built a monument to himself while he was still alive? (18:18)

Get It

- 15. Why did David want his army to "be gentle with the young man Absalom"?
- * 16. Why do you suppose Joab chose to ignore David's plea and killed Absalom himself?
- 17. To what extent can human beings control how they will be remembered?
- 18. In what sense was Absalom's death good news for Israel and Judah?
- * 19. When is a person's fondest wish not in his or her best interest?
- 20. What can be good or bad about taking advantage of someone's sudden vulnerability?

Apply It

- * 21. What close friend can help you determine whether your desires really constitute what is best for you?
- 22. What habits can you establish that will partly ensure that you will be remembered favorably?

David Mourns - 2 Samuel 18:19-19:8

Topics: Accusation, Advice, Alone, Apathy, Arguments, Attitude, Children, Confusion, Correction, Death, Depression, Discouragement, Encouragement, Enemies, Expectations, Family, Forget, Goodness, Grief, Hatred, Humiliation, Indifference, Injustice, Leadership, Love, Loyalty, Mourning, Neglect, Parents, Praise, Priorities, Resentment, Responsibility, Running, Shame, Unfairness, Victory

Open It

1. What would you do if someone urged you not to grieve a loved one's death?
- * 2. To what extent do you expect a leader to set aside his or her personal feelings for the good of the group?
3. Why would you or would you not want to be the one to break bad news to your best friend?

Explore It

4. Who wanted to take the news of the battle's outcome to David? (18:19)
5. Why did Joab want to send a different messenger than the one who wanted to go? (18:20)
6. Whom did Joab send with the news of Absalom's defeat and death? (18:21)
7. What did Joab do when Ahimaaz insisted that he wanted to run with the news of Absalom's death? (18:23)
8. What did the watchman report to David, who was waiting inside the city? (18:24-26)
9. What did David assume about the two lone runners coming his way? (18:24-27)
10. Why did David assume that Ahimaaz came with good news? (18:27)
11. What positive message did Ahimaaz convey to David? (18:28)
12. How did Ahimaaz respond to David's inquiries about Absalom's safety? (18:29)
13. How did the Cushite answer the question from David? (18:32)
- * 14. What was David's response to the news of the death of his son? (18:33)
- * 15. Why was the spirit of victory squashed among David's supporters? (19:2-3)
16. What was David's lament from the time he learned the news of his son's death? (19:4)
- * 17. What were Joab's accusations against David? (19:5-6)
18. What did Joab warn would happen if David didn't encourage the troops? (19:7)
19. What did David do in response to Joab's urgings? (19:8)

Get It

20. Why was Joab hesitant to send the son of a priest to David with bad news?
21. Why did both of the messengers present the good news first?
- * 22. Why was David's reaction confusing and disheartening to his followers?
23. Why is it difficult to give up hope about someone we love, even when there is no logical reason to hope?
24. Why is it impossible for grief and rejoicing to happen side by side?
25. What level of responsibility does God require of leaders?
- * 26. To what extent does God expect a leader to set aside his or her own emotions and work for the good of the group?
27. Why is it wise to reward loyalty and sacrifice?

Apply It

28. In what concrete way can you show appreciation for someone who has sacrificed on your behalf?
- * 29. What are some responsibilities that you need to fulfill despite how you feel?
30. How can you reach out to someone who is dealing with bad news?

David Returns to Jerusalem - 2 Samuel 19:9-43

Topics: Age, Anger, Arguments, Change, Comparisons, Complaining, Confidence, Conflict, Death, Delegation, Desires, Differences, Disagreements, Enemies, Flattery, Generosity, Handicapped, History, Home, Hospitality, Humility, Hypocrisy, Initiative, Insults, Judging Others, Mercy, Popularity, Promises, Protection, Rationalizing, Relationships, Restoration, Swearing, Wealth

Open It

1. What do you do when you have to judge between two completely different reports of the same incident?
- * 2. What, in your opinion, is the right balance between justice and mercy for criminals?

Explore It

3. What was the sentiment among the Israelites who had fled to their homes after the death of their leader, Absalom? (19:9-10)
4. How did David communicate to the leaders in Jerusalem his readiness to return? (19:11)
5. To what did David appeal to get the leaders to name him king once again? (19:12)
6. What special message did David send to Amasa, Absalom's general? (19:13)
7. What was the effect of David's overtures to the people of Israel and their leaders? (19:14)
8. Who were the people who rushed to meet David and offer their assistance as he returned from exile? (19:16-18)
- * 9. What was the attitude of Shimei, who had cursed David on his way out of the city? (19:19-20)
10. How did Abishai think Shimei should be treated now that David was victorious? (19:21)
- * 11. Why did David rebuke Abishai? (19:22)
12. What promise did David make to Shimei? (19:23)
- * 13. Who came to meet David in an attitude of mourning and waiting? (19:24)
14. What was Mephibosheth's explanation of why he hadn't followed David when David retreated from the city? (19:26-27)
15. How did David's reaction to Mephibosheth indicate that he wasn't sure whom to believe? (19:29)
16. Why was David eager to reward Barzillai the Gileadite? (19:31-33)
17. Why was Barzillai not eager to accept the king's generosity for himself? (19:34-37)
18. Whom did Barzillai ask David to reward in his stead? (19:38)
19. Which of the troops from the previous fighting were with David when he crossed the Jordan? (19:40)
20. How would you characterize the disputing between the people of Israel and Judah once the kingship was restored? (19:41-43)

Get It

- * 21. What challenges faced David as he resumed the kingship of both Israel and Judah?
22. How many decisions did David have to make as soon as the outcome of the rebellion was settled?
23. From a position of power is it more difficult to deal with friends or enemies? Why?
24. Why do we want to be identified with the winner, even if we weren't initially on his or her side?
25. Why are there such differences between the various historical accounts of the same war?
- * 26. How is mercy more conducive to building a strong consensus than vengeance?
27. What's most difficult for you when it comes to granting mercy?

Apply It

28. What judgments will you have to make in the coming week for which you could seek wisdom from God?
- * 29. What habits of thought and prayer can enable you to forgive a former enemy?

Sheba Rebels against David - 2 Samuel 20:1-26

Topics: Advice, Caring, Conversation, Death, Deceit, Enemies, Escape, Faithfulness, Hiding, Leadership, Listening, Loyalty, Murder, Peace, Rebellion, Wisdom, Wives

Open It

- * 1. Whom do you know who has defused a potentially disastrous situation with reason?
- 2. What are the pros and cons of being a ruthless competitor?

Explore It

- * 3. Who was the troublemaker who started another rebellion against David? (20:1)
- 4. How did the kingdom split for and against David? (20:2)
- 5. How did David treat his concubines with whom Absalom had slept? (20:3)
- 6. Why did David give up on his first commander and turn to Abishai? (20:4-6)
- 7. Who were the soldiers who fought with Abishai? (20:7)
- 8. When Amasa met up with Joab, what was notable about Joab's military dress? (20:8)
- 9. How did Joab seem to be greeting Amasa? (20:9)
- 10. What did Joab do to Amasa? (20:10)
- 11. What message did one of Joab's men have for the troops who stopped to look at Amasa's body? (20:11)
- 12. What had to be done before the troops would move past Amasa's body and fight? (20:12-13)
- * 13. Where did Joab and Abishai catch up with Sheba and begin a siege? (20:14-15)
- 14. What message did a wise woman in the city have for Joab? (20:16-19)
- * 15. How did one woman save the city of Abel Beth Maacah from attack? (20:16-22)
- 16. What objective did Joab have which, once fulfilled, would remove the danger from the city? (20:20-21)
- 17. What did the wise woman get the people of the city to do? (20:22)
- 18. What did Joab do in response to the death of Sheba? (20:22)
- 19. Who led the entire army after this rebellion was put down? (20:23)

Get It

- 20. Why did David feel he had no time to waste in defeating Sheba son of Bicri?
- 21. Why did Joab treacherously kill Amasa?
- 22. Why were the people of Abel Beth Maacah unwilling to defend Sheba?
- * 23. Why was it in the best interests of David and Joab to let the rest of the troops go home once Sheba was dead?
- 24. What unique challenges face a country in the wake of a civil war?
- * 25. Why might one wise person be of greater value to a group of people than many strong ones?

Apply It

- * 26. Which of the conflicts that you see in your daily life could benefit from a peacemaker's approach?
- 27. What can you do to help the next time a friend is plagued by a troublemaker?

The Gibeonites Avenged - 2 Samuel 21:1-22

Topics: Armor, Atonement, Bargaining, Blessing, Children, Compassion, Death, Devotion, Family, Grief, Guilt, Judgment, Loyalty, Mourning, Persecution, Prayer, Protection, Punishment, Strength, Suffering, Swearing, War, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. In your opinion how much does a leader or governor need to know about the history of the people he or she leads or governs?
- 2. In what ways do you feel the effects of the way your parents lived?
- 3. What characteristics make a person an honorable man or woman?

Explore It

- 4. Why was Israel suffering famine during David's reign? (21:1)
- 5. How had the Gibeonites been wronged by Israel under Saul? (21:2)
- 6. What bargain did David propose to strike with the Gibeonites in exchange for their blessing on Israel? (21:3-4)
- 7. What price did the Gibeonites request to settle Israel's wrongs against them? (21:5-6)
- 8. What oath did David have to take into consideration in meeting the Gibeonites' demands? (21:7-9)
- * 9. How did the mother of two of the slain Israelites demonstrate her devotion and grief for the dead? (21:10)
- * 10. What gesture of respect did David make toward Saul's family in response to Rizpah's devotion? (21:11-14)
- * 11. How did God respond to David's gestures to right old wrongs? (21:14)
- 12. What happened to David the next time he went out with his troops to fight the Philistines? (21:15-16)
- 13. What new policy was established after Abishai rescued David from mortal danger? (21:17)
- 14. How did Israel fare against the giant Philistine warriors, descendants of Rapha? (21:18-22)

Get It

- 15. Based on the case of the Gibeonites, how seriously does God take our oaths, even those made to unbelievers?
- 16. How do unresolved sins come back to haunt us or successive generations?
- 17. As David got older, why was it more important to preserve his life than to have his leadership at the battlefield?
- 18. What delicate balance did David have to maintain as he made judgments on behalf of the nation?
- * 19. How were Rizpah's actions more effective than if she had made a verbal plea to the king?
- 20. Why is it unwise for a government to completely satisfy one party at the expense of another?
- * 21. In what sense are respect for the dead and justice for the living both ways of removing shame?

Apply It

- 22. What unresolved conflict should you address today in order to prosper spiritually in the future?
- * 23. What gesture of respect could help heal a damaged relationship?

David's Song of Praise - 2 Samuel 22:1-51

Topics: Anger, Authority, Darkness, Death, Dishonesty, Enemies, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Foundation, Freedom, Help, Holiness, Honor, Hopelessness, Humility, Kindness, Light, Name, Obedience, Perfect, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Purity, Righteousness, Running, Salvation, Strength, Victory, Weaknesses

Open It

1. What is your emotional response when you are honored by others? Why?
2. What kind of songs do you like to sing? When?
- * 3. Where do you see God's hand at work in the world today?

Explore It

- * 4. What events prompted David to compose this song of praise? (22:1)
5. How did David characterize God's actions on his behalf in times of trouble? (22:2-4)
6. What images did David use to express being in mortal danger? (22:5-7)
7. What sort of creatures come to mind in David's description of God's anger? (22:8-11)
8. What is the weather metaphor with which David described God's power? (22:12-16)
- * 9. How did David describe God's actions on his behalf? (22:17-20)
10. What are God's priorities for the behavior of His people? (22:21-25)
11. In what way do people experience God to have traits like their own? (22:26-28)
12. What images did David use to portray his supernatural strength with God's help? (22:29-30)
- * 13. What aspect of God's nature does He make available to His people? (22:31-33)
14. What is David's word picture of a warrior of the Lord? (22:34-37)
15. What was the fate of David's enemies? (22:38-43)
16. Because of God's help, how was David regarded by people near and far? (22:44-46)
17. What are the reasons for David's resounding song of praise to God? (22:47-51)

Get It

18. What aspects of God's character became the subject of David's song of praise?
19. What did David credit God with doing for him?
20. What are some of the images from nature that David used to describe God?
- * 21. What conclusion did David draw from the fact that people fear and honor him?
22. What are some of the contrasts in this song of praise (such as darkness and light)?
- * 23. In the course of this song, why did David praise God?

Apply It

- * 24. What psalm or hymn can you offer today in heartfelt thanksgiving to God?
25. How can you make your next success an opportunity to praise God for what He has done for you?

The Last Words of David - 2 Samuel 23:1-7

Topics: Covenant, Desires, Evil, Fear, Growth, Holy Spirit, Judgment, Leadership, Light, Righteousness, Salvation, Words

Open It

- * 1. If you had the opportunity to make a farewell speech to your friends and loved ones before you died, what would you say?
- 2. Which do you consider yourself—an optimist or a pessimist? Why?

Explore It

- 3. What are the different descriptions of David given in the introduction to his “last words”? (23:1)
- 4. Whose words did David speak? (23:2)
- * 5. To what did David compare a righteous ruler? (23:3-4)
- 6. What did David claim about the status of his “house” before God? (23:5)
- 7. What were the characteristics of God’s covenant with David? (23:5)
- 8. In contrast to His treatment of David, how did God promise to deal with evil people? (23:6)
- * 9. What farming analogy did David use to describe how evil persons are treated by God ? (23:6)
- * 10. What practical method did David use (figuratively) to get rid of evil? (23:7)

Get It

- 11. What kind of message did David leave in his last words?
- * 12. Why is it important to us as believers to know that God will punish evil?
- 13. In what way can God’s people speak for Him?
- 14. In what way can you speak for God?
- 15. Why should we “fear God”?
- 16. What does it mean to fear God?
- 17. How do God’s criteria for excellence in leadership differ from the ones called for by conventional wisdom?
- 18. In what way does having a righteous leader affect the followers?
- * 19. What gifts has God given you for the building up of His Kingdom?

Apply It

- * 20. What steps can you take to help your family be “right with God”?
- 21. How can your faith be built by rehearsing God’s covenant with you?

David's Mighty Men - 2 Samuel 23:8-39

Topics: Achievements, Alone, Courage, Endurance, Greatness, Heroes, Honor, Leadership, Perseverance, Popularity, Power, Risk, Status, Victory, War, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What sorts of feats make a person into a hero or heroine?
- 2. Why do you think people take extraordinary and unnecessary risks?

Explore It

- * 3. What select group is listed in this chapter? (23:8)
- 4. Who was considered “chief of the Three”? (23:8)
- * 5. What story was circulated about Eleazar son of Dodai’s endurance in battle? (23:9-10)
- 6. What was the story of Shammah in the field of lentils? (23:11-12)
- 7. What daring (and perhaps foolish) exploit was attributed to the three mighty men? (23:13-16)
- 8. Why did David refuse to drink the very water he had wanted? (23:16-17)
- 9. In what sense did Abishai receive greater honor, although he was not one of the Three? (23:18-19)
- * 10. What stories were told about the chief of David’s bodyguard? (23:20-23)
- 11. How many “mighty men” served King David? (23:39)

Get It

- 12. What was special about the men in this passage?
- 13. Which of the mighty men were famous for the large numbers of enemy troops they had killed?
- * 14. Which of the mighty men fought alone when everyone else fled?
- 15. Which of the celebrated feats of the mighty men could be considered foolish?
- 16. Besides accomplishments in battle, what feats made Benaiah famous?
- * 17. What qualities did all of these people have in common that made them valuable to David?
- 18. How did the stories of the mighty men parallel some of the incidents in David’s own life?

Apply It

- 19. Which of God’s mighty servants, past or present, can serve as an inspiration for your spiritual life this week?
- * 20. What difficult task lies ahead of you for which you can ask God to give you courage?
- 21. To what friend or relative can you be a loyal and dedicated servant?

David Counts the Fighting Men - 2 Samuel 24:1-25

Topics: Angels, Anger, Authority, Choices, Confession, Conscience, Consequences, Disagreements, Family, Foolishness, Gifts, Guilt, Mercy, Prayer, Punishment, Questions, Results, Sacrifice, Sin, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What modern day status symbols do we regard as “the more the better”?
- 2. What are some examples of the followers’ suffering when the leader does something wrong?

Explore It

- * 3. How did God use David to punish Israel? (24:1)
- 4. What did the king want his commanders to find out for him? (24:2)
- * 5. Who objected to David’s plan and tried to dissuade him? (24:3)
- 6. Whose opinion prevailed as to what should be done? (24:4)
- 7. How long did it take for the commanders to go throughout the land counting the fighting men? (24:8)
- 8. How many fighting men did David have in Israel and Judah? (24:9)
- * 9. What did David realize after the census was finished? (24:10)
- 10. What was David’s prayer when he realized his error? (24:10)
- 11. What did God instruct the prophet Gad to ask David? (24:11-12)
- 12. What choice did Gad present to David? (24:13)
- 13. What punishment did David choose from the three options God put before him? (24:14)
- 14. How many people died in the plague? (24:15)
- 15. Where was the angel of death when God instructed him to stop? (24:16)
- 16. What was David’s confession when he saw what was happening to Israel? (24:17)
- 17. What did Gad instruct David to do as part of ending the plague? (24:18)
- 18. What was Araunah’s response when David asked to buy the threshing floor in order to build an altar? (24:19-23)
- 19. Why did David insist on paying for all of the items for the sacrifice? (24:24)
- 20. What did God do for David and Israel when all of these actions were completed? (24:25)

Get It

- * 21. What does it mean that God “incited” David against Israel when God was angry with Israel?
- * 22. Why was it wrong for David to want to count his fighting men?
- 23. How did David demonstrate his knowledge of God by the choice he made of the means of punishment?
- 24. How does God feel when He sees the suffering we bring on ourselves through our sin?
- 25. Why is a “cheap” sacrifice inappropriate to offer to the living God?
- 26. What sort of offering does God find acceptable from us today?
- 27. What does it mean to offer sacrifices to God today?
- 28. How can we make sure that the things we offer to God have not cost us nothing?

Apply It

- * 29. What temptation to count or calculate the value of your blessings can you resist by faith?
- 30. What can you offer to God that is valuable or important (not cheap)? How?

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Adonijah Sets Himself Up as King - 1 Kings 1:1-27

Topics: Advice, Age, Ambition, Beauty, Caring, Discipline, Drinking, Expectations, Follow-through, Instructions, Invitation, Life, Loyalty, Parents, Partnerships, Promises, Questions, Rebellion, Sacrifice, Surprises, Swearing, Timing, Waiting, Weaknesses, Youth

Open It

1. Why is the succession from one ruler to the next a particularly vulnerable time for a nation?
2. What instances do you know of when a parent's will has been bitterly contested between siblings?
- * 3. Who are some of the "elders" in your life-older people in a position of authority over you?

Explore It

4. What was one of the practical provisions made for David in his old age? (1:1-4)
- * 5. With David in a weakened condition, what did Adonijah decide to do? (1:5)
6. What was at least one reason why Adonijah had grown up to be rebellious and ambitious? (1:6)
7. Which of David's officials supported Adonijah? (1:7)
8. Which of David's officials did not join the rebellion? (1:8)
- * 9. What did Adonijah do in order to establish his influence and build support for his succession? (1:9-10)
10. Which officials and relatives were conspicuously missing from Adonijah's guest list? (1:10)
11. What warning did Nathan the prophet carry to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother? (1:11)
12. What advice did Nathan have for Bathsheba? (1:12-14)
13. Of what promise did Bathsheba remind David? (1:17)
- * 14. What action did Bathsheba urge David to take before the decision was out of his hands? (1:18-20)
15. What did Bathsheba fear if David were to die under the present circumstances? (1:21)
16. Who came into the king's chambers to corroborate Bathsheba's story? (1:22-23)
17. Of what activities in the court did Nathan give a thorough account to the king? (1:24-26)
18. What question did Nathan ask of the king in light of what had transpired in the kingdom? (1:27)

Get It

- * 19. Why is it important to the rest of the passage to understand how old and frail David was?
- * 20. To what extent was David responsible for the way his son Adonijah behaved?
21. Why were certain people not asked to Adonijah's sacrifice?
22. Why might Nathan have considered it wise to send Bathsheba to David first?
23. How can it be useful to ask a question about someone's motives, even if you think it might be safe to assume you know what he or she wants?
24. What, if anything, obligates someone's relatives to respect his or her wishes after he or she is dead?
25. What was one characteristic of Adonijah that had drawn Israel to other leaders in the past?

Apply It

26. What steps do you need to take to ensure that promises you have made will be kept, whether or not you are around to enforce them?
- * 27. How can you come to an older person in an attitude of loyalty and assistance, rather than telling him or her what to do?
28. The next time you must discipline a young person, how can you do so with the perspective of his or her long-term development?

David Makes Solomon King - 1 Kings 1:28-53

Topics: Abandon, Answers, Authority, Blessing, Call, Celebration, Character, Denial, Evil, Failure, Fear, Goodness, Good News, Government, Joy, Justice, Mercy, Praise, Promises, Protection, Questions, Relationships, Running, Swearing, Thankfulness

Open It

1. What feelings go along with following through on a promise you have made?
- * 2. What are some of the greatest blessings a person can experience in his or her old age?
3. What did you and your siblings fight about when you were teenagers?
4. EXPLORE
5. What oath did King David reiterate to his wife Bathsheba? (1:28-30)
- * 6. What did David command Zadok, Benaiah, and Nathan to do? (1:32-34)
- * 7. When did David intend Solomon's reign to begin? (1:35)
- * 8. How did Benaiah express his approval and his gratitude to David? (1:36-37)
9. What important ceremony was performed for Solomon that had not been done for the rebel, Adonijah? (1:38-39)
10. What was the mood among the people when Solomon was crowned king? (1:40)
11. Who brought the news to Adonijah and his supporters while they were still feasting? (1:41-42)
12. How did Jonathan son of Abiathar explain what he had just seen and the noise that Adonijah could hear? (1:43-45)
13. What circumstances made David's provision for the succession more authoritative and final? (1:46-48)
14. What did Adonijah's guests do when they heard the news of Solomon's coronation? (1:49)
15. Why did Adonijah seek sanctuary at the altar of God? (1:50-51)
16. How did Solomon respond to his brother's plea for mercy? (1:52)
17. How did Solomon show his authority over Adonijah? (1:53)

Get It

- * 18. How did David demonstrate his kingly skills by the way he handled the dispute between Adonijah and Solomon?
19. What traditional elements of the coronation of a king of Israel were present in Solomon's coronation?
- * 20. In what sense was it a compliment or blessing to wish David that his son would be even greater than he had been?
21. In terms of political power, why is a defeated rival a dangerous person to have around?
22. How important is the loyalty of one's friends when the going gets rough?
23. What are the advantages of choosing your own successor in a job or a position of authority?
24. In what sense was it up to Adonijah to determine how he would be treated under his brother's authority?

Apply It

25. What person who has been working against you should you give the benefit of the doubt before you take strong action against him or her?
- * 26. This week how can you help a friend achieve a goal that is very important to him or her?
27. How can you bless or affirm an "elder statesman" in your life?

David's Charge to Solomon - 1 Kings 2:1-12

Topics: Age, Children, Consequences, Death, Earth, Faithfulness, Government, Guilt, History, Instructions, Insults, Justice, Kindness, Law, Leadership, Murder, Obligation, Parents, Peace, Promises, Punishment, Relationships, Remembering, Righteousness, Strength, Swearing, War, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. Which of your life goals or values would you like to see carried on by your children?
- 2. In what respect is a knowledge of the country's history important for anyone in leadership?

Explore It

- * 3. What did David feel it was important to do before he died? (2:1)
- 4. With what words of encouragement did David begin his charge to Solomon? (2:2-3)
- * 5. In what sense was Solomon responsible for the continuation of God's promise to David? (2:3-4)
- 6. What actions from the past did David hold against Joab? (2:5)
- 7. What did David tell Solomon to do with regard to Joab? (2:6)
- * 8. What did David want to make sure Solomon did for the sons of Barzillai of Gilead? (2:7)
- 9. What wrong that David suffered did he want Solomon to settle after his death? (2:8-9)
- 10. What expression does the writer of 1 Kings use to describe David's death? (2:10)
- 11. How long did David reign over Israel? (2:11)
- 12. How secure was Solomon's kingship from the beginning? (2:12)

Get It

- * 13. According to David, what must Solomon do as king in order to prosper?
- 14. What condition had God built into His covenant with the house of David?
- 15. Why did David believe that Joab did not deserve to die peacefully of old age?
- 16. How did Joab injure David when he killed first Abner and then Amasa?
- 17. Why do you think David did not punish Joab himself?
- 18. Why would a person who had befriended you in your hour of need be the most likely to be remembered in your will?
- 19. Although David had sworn that he would not execute Shimei, how did he make sure that justice was done?
- * 20. What personal "vote of confidence" did David repeat twice in his charge to Solomon?

Apply It

- * 21. What can you do to insure that someone's act of kindness or generosity toward you will not be forgotten?
- 22. Why should you take the fear of the Lord and the observance of His commands as seriously as did King Solomon?

Solomon's Throne Established - 1 Kings 2:13-46

Topics: Accountability, Ambition, Anger, Blessing, Children, Conversation, Death, Desires, Evil, God's Will, Guilt, Marriage, Obedience, Parents, Peace, Prophecy, Questions, Rules, Security, Self-Centeredness, Swearing, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What has been your reaction when someone tried to influence you by sending one of your close friends or relatives to ask a favor?
- 2. What motivates people to test limits or to see if they can get by with more than is allowed?

Explore It

- 3. After Solomon became king, who came to see his mother Bathsheba? (2:13)
- 4. How did Adonijah present himself as a “hard luck” case? (2:15-16)
- * 5. What request did Adonijah want Bathsheba to make for him? (2:17-18)
- 6. How did King Solomon show honor to his mother? (2:19-20)
- * 7. Why was Solomon outraged when his mother presented Adonijah's request? (2:21-22)
- * 8. What oath did Solomon swear regarding Adonijah after Adonijah had revealed his true colors in making the request for Abishag? (2:23-24)
- 9. What sentence was carried out against Adonijah? (2:25)
- 10. Why did Solomon refrain from executing Abiathar although he had been one of the conspirators? (2:26)
- 11. How did the removal of Abiathar from the priesthood fulfill a prophecy from long ago about Eli's descendants? (2:27)
- 12. How did Joab, the last conspirator, react to the news of what Solomon was doing? (2:28)
- 13. Why was Benaiah forced to kill Joab in the tent of the Lord before the altar? (2:31-32)
- 14. What order did Solomon give to Shimei “on pain of death”? (2:36-37)
- 15. According to Solomon, who was most familiar with the wrongs that Shimei had done to David? (2:44)
- 16. Who executed justice on behalf of King Solomon? (2:46)
- 17. By the end of the chapter, what was the result of all of the decisions made by King Solomon? (2:46)

Get It

- 18. Why was Adonijah's request to marry Abishag really another bid to take the kingship away from Solomon?
- 19. When is it a good idea to be skeptical of the motives of someone who asks you to intercede for him or her with someone you know?
- * 20. Why would it have been unwise for Solomon to leave people like Adonijah, Abiathar, and Joab unrestrained and unpunished?
- 21. In what sense did Solomon let Adonijah and Shimei “hang themselves”?
- 22. What was good or bad about Solomon choosing to ignore the tradition in Israel that made the “horns of the altar” a place of refuge from those seeking vengeance for murder?
- 23. To what extent are we obligated to fulfill a promise that we were tricked into making?
- * 24. Why are greed and the thirst for power such difficult desires to reverse in the life of an individual?

Apply It

- 25. How can you develop a healthy realism toward the people who ask favors of you?
- * 26. What daily habit can you cultivate that will add to your wisdom in making difficult decisions?
- 27. What can you do to guard against being tricked by people who only want to use or harm you?

Solomon Asks for Wisdom - 1 Kings 3:1-15

Topics: Administration, Approval, Choices, Covenant, Discernment, Faithfulness, Government, Honor, Justice, Kindness, Law, Love, Obedience, People, Pleasure, Promises, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Spiritual Gifts, Wealth, Wisdom, Youth

Open It

- * 1. What have you fantasized you would ask for if you had three wishes?
- 2. If you had to stand trial, what qualities would you value most in a judge?

Explore It

- 3. With what country did Solomon make an alliance by marriage? (3:1)
- 4. What major projects did Solomon undertake? (3:1)
- 5. Where were the people of Israel making sacrifices at this time? (3:2)
- 6. How did Solomon show that he loved God? (3:3)
- 7. What was one area in which Solomon did not entirely please God? (3:3)
- 8. What impressive sacrifice did Solomon offer at Gibeon? (3:4)
- * 9. What did God say to Solomon in a dream while he was at Gibeon? (3:5)
- 10. How did Solomon see his own place in the history of God and Israel? (3:6)
- 11. What did Solomon find humbling about being king? (3:7-8)
- 12. In Solomon's view whose nation was Israel? (3:8)
- * 13. What request did Solomon make of God and for what purpose? (3:9)
- 14. How did God feel about what Solomon had chosen to request? (3:10)
- * 15. What difference did it make that Solomon asked God for wisdom? (3:10-14)
- 16. What other things might Solomon have asked for when God gave him one request? (3:11)
- 17. What did God promise to Solomon in response to his request? (3:12)
- 18. What did God promise to Solomon that he had not asked for? (3:13)
- 19. What blessing did God offer to Solomon if he would walk in His ways as David had? (3:14)
- 20. What did Solomon realize when he awoke from his sleep? (3:15)
- 21. How did Solomon offer his praise and thanksgiving to God? (3:15)

Get It

- 22. What was one practice of Solomon that had evidently not been the custom of David?
- 23. What did God reveal about His nature by meeting Solomon at the most important high place?
- * 24. Given the opportunity to ask God "for whatever you want [Him] to give you," what sort of request would you expect from our human nature?
- 25. Why are awe and humility appropriate reactions to the responsibility of governing a nation?
- * 26. Why are riches and honor of less ultimate value than wisdom?

Apply It

- * 27. What practical steps can you take to place a higher value on wisdom this coming week?
- 28. What can you request from God and be fairly certain that He will say yes?
- 29. How can you seek God's wisdom as a matter of habit?

A Wise Ruling - 1 Kings 3:16-4:34

Topics: Arguments, Awe, Children, Death, Deceit, Government, Greatness, Insight, Judgment, Justice, Leadership, Listening, Lying, Security, Serving, Teaching, Understanding, Wisdom

Open It

1. What are some of the characteristics of an opulent (rich) life-style?
- * 2. What sorts of knowledge can bring a person fame in this day and age?

Explore It

3. Who came to King Solomon with a dispute to be settled? (3:16)
- * 4. What series of events was described by one of two prostitutes who came to Solomon? (3:17-21)
- * 5. What version of events did Solomon hear from the second prostitute? (3:22)
6. How did Solomon confirm his understanding of the situation before he proceeded? (3:23)
7. How did Solomon propose to settle the argument? (3:24-25)
- * 8. How did Solomon settle the matter? (3:24-27)
9. How did the two women react differently to the prospect of “dividing” the baby? (3:26)
10. What was Solomon’s ruling in the case of the disputed child? (3:27)
11. What was the reaction when word got out about Solomon’s ruling? (3:28)
12. What positions of leadership constituted the “chief officials” of Israel under Solomon? (4:1-6)
13. What was Solomon’s system for keeping his household supplied throughout the year? (4:7)
14. What were some of the measures of the prosperity of Israel and Judah? (4:20-21)
15. What was one of the key national blessings during Solomon’s lifetime? (4:25)
16. What was God’s primary gift to Solomon? (4:29)
17. How did Solomon’s wisdom compare to that of the wisest men of his day? (4:30-31)
18. What were some of Solomon’s intellectual accomplishments? (4:32-33)
19. What was the response of other kings when they heard of Solomon’s wisdom? (4:34)

Get It

- * 20. Why is it a good idea to be sure you understand the facts before jumping to a conclusion?
- * 21. In the case of the prostitutes, how was Solomon so sure that he could tell the real mother from the pretender?
22. Why is it such a big job to provision a king or head of state?
23. What were the different evidences of Solomon’s wisdom?
24. How did the wisdom Solomon requested from God end up bringing him fame and wealth as well?
25. Why is peace the greatest blessing that a nation can enjoy?
26. What sources of wisdom has God given us?

Apply It

27. What positive qualities can you affirm in a leader or your church or community this coming week?
- * 28. In what situation do you need to step back, look at God’s perspective, or investigate further before making a judgment?

Preparations for Building the Temple - 1 Kings 5:1-18

Topics: Ambassadors, Approval, Bargaining, Craftsmanship, Enemies, Foundation, Friendship, Intentions, Name, Peace, Praise, Promises, Relationships, War, Wisdom, Work

Open It

1. What is the most satisfying agreement you've ever reached (or contract negotiated)?
- * 2. Who has been one of your favorite bosses, coworkers, or assistants? Why?
3. Why is it ideal to begin a big project only when other areas of your life are reasonably stable?

Explore It

4. Why did Hiram king of Tyre send envoys to King Solomon? (5:1)
5. What intention did Solomon declare to Hiram in his return message? (5:2-5)
- * 6. What assistance did Solomon ask from Hiram in his project to build a temple for the Lord? (5:6)
- * 7. How did Hiram react to Solomon's message and his plans for the future? (5:7)
8. What did Hiram request in return when he agreed to supply all of David's building materials? (5:8-9)
9. What goods and resources changed hands between Israel and Tyre? (5:10-11)
10. What promise did God fulfill for Solomon? (5:12)
11. What was the relationship between Tyre and Israel during the reigns of Hiram and Solomon? (5:12)
12. Why were Solomon and Hiram able to help each other? (5:12)
- * 13. How did Solomon recruit and organize the workers from Israel? (5:13-14)
14. How many workers of different sorts did Solomon have for the work on the temple? (5:15-16)
15. What was prepared as the foundation for the temple? (5:17)
16. What international partnership was involved in building the temple? (5:18)

Get It

17. How did Solomon demonstrate wisdom in the steps he took to prepare for building the temple?
- * 18. Why does it make more sense to call upon recognized experts than to try to do everything yourself?
19. Why was Solomon concerned with getting the very best materials and craftsmen for the work on the temple?
20. Why would a person's friends be favorably disposed toward his or her children?
21. What makes it possible for individuals or nations to be glad about one another's accomplishments?
- * 22. What makes it possible for people to work well together?
23. What can individuals do to make the work environment more pleasant for all?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you cooperate with and draw on someone else's strengths to serve God more effectively in the near future?
25. What friendship with someone of an older generation can you cultivate this week?

Solomon Builds the Temple - 1 Kings 6:1-38

Topics: Abandon, Accomplishments, Administration, Craftsmanship, Details, History, Management, Preparation, Promises, Quality, Results, Schedule, Tasks, Work

Open It

- * 1. What project have you undertaken that has given you great satisfaction?
- 2. What examples do you know of where measurement has proven crucial to the successful completion of a project?
- 3. What's some task that you have worked on for more than a year, and what's good or bad about how long you've been working on it?

Explore It

- 4. What are the different ways of expressing the date that the temple was begun? (6:1)
- 5. What was unusual about the building activity on the actual temple site? (6:7)
- 6. Besides stone what was the chief building material for the temple? (6:8-10)
- * 7. What word did Solomon receive from God concerning the temple? (6:11-13)
- 8. What was God's promise to David, which He vowed to carry out if Solomon and Israel were obedient? (6:12-13)
- * 9. What was a unique characteristic of the inner sanctuary and its furnishings? (6:20-22)
- * 10. What impressive sculptures were to be found in the inner sanctuary? (6:23-28)
- 11. What symbols appeared throughout the temple, carved into the wood? (6:29-35)
- 12. How long did it take to complete the temple? (6:37-38)

Get It

- 13. Why do you suppose Solomon was so exacting in the specifications for the temple of the Lord?
- * 14. What attitudes and values were evidenced by the fact that the Israelites used only the finest materials in building the temple?
- 15. What's significant about the fact that no iron tool was heard on the temple site itself?
- 16. What was the king's role in the building of the temple?
- * 17. Why was great care and expense in the construction of the temple not enough to ensure that God would always live among the Israelites?
- 18. Even though God blessed the building of the temple, what did He really want from the Israelites?
- 19. What does God want from us besides mere attendance at church?
- 20. What significance did "inner" and "outer" areas have for the architects of the temple?

Apply It

- * 21. In what activity for the Lord can you evidence your reverence through your concern for quality and your avoidance of shoddiness?
- 22. To what unmeasurable or unobservable areas of life do you want to remember to give daily attention?

Solomon Builds His Palace - 1 Kings 7:1-51

Topics: Abundance, Accomplishments, Administration, Craftsmanship, Delegation, Details, Employment, Experience, Home, Instructions, Jobs, Productivity, Reputation, Responsibility, Results, Tasks, Training, Value, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What feelings do you have when you enter a stately and impressive building?
- 2. How does an architect or artisan become nationally known?
- 3. Why is experience so important when you are looking for a tradesman for a demanding project?
- 4. What do you think of when you hear the word palace?

Explore It

- 5. How long did it take to complete Solomon's palace? (7:1)
- 6. What were some of the unique features of the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon? (7:2-6)
- 7. What were three of the structures that Solomon had built? (7:7-8)
- * 8. What was notable about the man Solomon brought from Tyre as chief craftsman for his projects? (7:13-14)
- * 9. In what sense was Hiram not a foreigner in Israel? (7:14)
- 10. What material was used to make the pillars for the temple and their decorations? (7:15-20)
- 11. What names were given to the pillars of the temple? (7:21)
- * 12. What were the impressive characteristics of the Sea that Hiram made for the temple? (7:23-26)
- 13. How does the passage describe the ten movable stands? (7:27-37)
- 14. What other items were cast from bronze? (7:38-40)
- 15. What method was used for making all of the objects of burnished bronze? (7:45-46)
- 16. What amount of bronze was used in the construction of the temple? (7:47)
- 17. What were some of the gold furnishings Solomon had made for the temple? (7:48-50)
- 18. How were the items that King David had collected for the temple incorporated into the finished project? (7:51)

Get It

- 19. Why was it appropriate that the temple was finished before the palaces?
- 20. What impression do you think the palace of King Solomon made on visitors? Why?
- * 21. Why would Solomon go to the trouble of bringing in a famous craftsman for the bronze work?
- 22. What adjectives do you think should describe buildings and articles used in the worship of God?
- 23. What do you think the plants and animals in the decorations of the temple signified?
- 24. What conclusion do you draw from the fact that the weight of bronze used was so great that they didn't even try to weigh it?
- * 25. Why were the items in the treasury of the temple of special significance to all Israel?

Apply It

- 26. What gift can you offer freely to God this week without "weighing or measuring" it?
- * 27. How can you affirm a skilled person who uses his or her talents for the glory of God?

The Ark Brought to the Temple - 1 Kings 8:1-66

Topics: Accomplishments, Actions, Anger, Blessing, Celebration, Commitment, Confession, Covenant, Dedication, Earth, Enemies, Fear, Fellowship, Forgiveness, Glory, Guilt, Heart, Heaven, History, Humility, Joy, Judgment, Law, Love, Mercy, Name, People, Praise, Prayer, Promises, Repentance, Right, Sin, Soul, Swearing, War, Words

Open It

- * 1. What was the most memorable Fourth of July celebration in your experience? What made it so?
- 2. Why does a locked box arouse so much curiosity?
- 3. What things do you own that you reserve for only very special occasions or observances?

Explore It

- * 4. When did Israel bring the ark of the covenant into the newly completed temple? (8:1-2)
- 5. What religious activity was taking place while the ark was being brought to the temple? (8:3-5)
- 6. Where was the ark of the covenant placed in the new temple? (8:6-8)
- 7. What did the ark contain? (8:9)
- 8. What happened when the priests withdrew from the Holy Place? (8:10)
- * 9. How did Solomon explain the significance of the event to the people? (8:12-21)
- 10. What praises did Solomon offer at the beginning of his prayer? (8:22-24)
- * 11. How did Solomon express his awe and humility before the Lord? (8:27-28)
- 12. How did Solomon ask God to regard the temple and the prayers offered there? (8:29-30)
- 13. What sorts of prayers did Solomon envision being offered at the temple? (8:31-40)
- 14. Why did Solomon pray that even the foreigner's prayer would be answered? (8:41-43)
- 15. What cycle of sin and repentance did Solomon consider inevitable? (8:46-51)
- 16. Of which of His own actions does Solomon remind God in asking Him to remember His people? (8:52-53)
- 17. What were three aspects of Solomon's blessing of the whole assembly? (8:56-61)
- 18. How long did Israel celebrate the dedication of the temple? (8:62-65)
- 19. What was the mood of the people as they returned to their homes? (8:66)

Get It

- * 20. Why isn't it possible to build a "house" for God?
- 21. Why was the dedication of the temple the culmination of Israel's history to that point?
- 22. What details of Christ's life, death, and resurrection are important for us to remember?
- * 23. Why was rebellion and repentance such a prominent theme in Solomon's prayer?
- 24. When God's people are unfaithful, why can they expect an interruption of the peace and blessing they have enjoyed?
- 25. What did Solomon know about the human tendency to sin?
- 26. How did God show His acceptance of the temple as Israel's place to meet Him?
- 27. How can we today dedicate our lives to God's service?

Apply It

- * 28. What opportunity will you have this week to rehearse the details of God's covenant with His people?
- 29. In what way can you dedicate your life, home, and possessions to God's use?
- 30. Where can you set aside time and space to meet with God in a spirit of awe and repentance?

The Lord Appears to Solomon - 1 Kings 9:1-28

Topics: Achievements, Appearance, Disobedience, Fellowship, Forsake, Gifts, Heart, Idolatry, Integrity, Law, Marriage, Name, Obligation, Partnerships, Possessions, Prayer, Rejection, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Slavery, Wealth, Worship

Open It

1. Who in your family has been a “hard act to follow” because of his or her achievements?
- * 2. How do you tend to react to warnings?

Explore It

3. When did the Lord appear to Solomon a second time? (9:1-2)
- * 4. What positive response did God make to the prayers Solomon had offered at the dedication of the temple? (9:3)
- * 5. What “if” did God reiterate to Solomon concerning his relationship to God? (9:4-5)
- * 6. What did God promise to do if Solomon or his descendants failed to obey His commands? (9:6-9)
7. During what time period was Solomon busy with building the temple and palace? (9:10)
8. How did Hiram feel about the “gift” Solomon gave him in thanks for the raw materials for the temple? (9:11-13)
9. For what sorts of projects did Solomon conscript laborers? (9:15-19)
10. Who provided the slave labor in Solomon’s kingdom? (9:20-21)
11. What sorts of positions were filled by Israelites? (9:22-23)
12. How did Solomon go about fulfilling the temple obligations? (9:25)
13. What seafaring venture did Solomon and Hiram enter into together? (9:26-28)

Get It

14. What could possibly cause God to reject Israel and the temple that had been built for Him?
15. What conclusion would passers-by draw if they were to see the temple in Israel devastated?
16. Why was it wise that Solomon did not make any Israelites slaves?
- * 17. What behavior does God expect of His people today?
- * 18. Why is it so abhorrent to God for His people to turn away from Him and worship other gods?

Apply It

- * 19. What practices can help you to live in obedience to God day by day?
20. What “temple” can you ask God to consecrate?

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon - 1 Kings 10:1-29

Topics: Answers, Believe, Craftsmanship, Gifts, Greatness, Happiness, Justice, Love, Mind, Praise, Questions, Righteousness, Testing, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. Who is the most famous or important visitor you have ever entertained?
- 2. Why do we often have to “see for ourselves” before we will believe something?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did the queen of Sheba come to visit Solomon? (10:1)
- 4. What gifts did the queen of Sheba bring to Solomon? (10:2)
- * 5. What was the queen’s reaction to Solomon’s wisdom and his court? (10:4-7)
- 6. Why did the queen of Sheba offer praise to God? (10:9)
- 7. What did the queen of Sheba receive from Solomon before she returned to her country? (10:13)
- 8. What were some of the measures of Solomon’s wealth? (10:14-17)
- 9. What unique piece of furniture was created specifically for Solomon? (10:18-20)
- 10. What was the availability and value of precious metals in Solomon’s day? (10:21-22)
- * 11. In what two areas was Solomon graced with greater wealth than anyone else in the world? (10:23)
- 12. Why did people continually come seeking an audience with Solomon? (10:24-25)

Get It

- 13. What kind of “hard questions” do you think the queen of Sheba asked Solomon?
- * 14. In what way did a visit to Solomon’s court reveal that God loved Israel?
- 15. What does a visitor mean when he or she brings a gift to the host?
- 16. What were some of the evidences of Solomon’s power?
- * 17. Why is wisdom valued equally or above possessions?

Apply It

- * 18. How can you place a higher value on wisdom among the people you encounter on a daily basis?
- 19. How can you use a small gift to indicate esteem for someone you visit this week?

Solomon's Wives - 1 Kings 11:1-43

Topics: Age, Anger, Appearance, Attitude, Children, Covenant, Death, Devotion, Enemies, Evil, Gifts, Heart, History, Idolatry, Law, Marriage, Murder, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Rewards, Righteousness, Running, Sacrifice, Wives

Open It

1. What experience do you have of yourself or someone close to you “getting in with the wrong crowd”?
- * 2. What are the potential problems of a marriage between two people of different faiths?

Explore It

- * 3. What was one of Solomon's primary downfalls and areas of disobedience against God? (11:1-2)
4. How many wives did Solomon marry? (11:3)
5. What happened to Solomon's devotion to God as he got older? (11:4)
- * 6. What gods did Solomon allow to be worshiped in Israel because of his foreign wives? (11:5-8)
- * 7. What reason did God have to be especially angry with Solomon? (11:9-10)
8. What word did God speak in judgment of Solomon? (11:11)
9. Why did God choose not to utterly destroy Solomon and remove the whole kingdom from him? (11:12-13)
10. What was the history of the first enemy God raised up against Solomon? (11:14-22)
11. To which of David's battles did Rezon's enmity hearken back? (11:23-25)
12. Which of the rebels against Solomon came from the ranks of his own officials? (11:26-28)
13. What prophecy did Ahijah reveal to Jeroboam when they were alone? (11:29-33)
14. What conditions would Jeroboam have to meet in order for God to be with him? (11:34-39)
15. How did Solomon respond to the presence of Jeroboam? (11:40)
16. How long did Solomon reign over the combined tribes? (11:42)

Get It

17. How did the condition of Solomon's heart differ from David's before him?
- * 18. Why is it not acceptable to follow God any less than completely?
19. In what countries did Solomon's enemies take refuge during his lifetime?
20. Why did the prophet Ahijah deliver his message to Jeroboam in such secrecy?
- * 21. Why isn't a word from God or a supernatural intervention by God any guarantee against our human tendency to sin?

Apply It

- * 22. What “loves” and influences should you examine to be sure that they are not drawing you away from devotion to God?
23. What can you do to cultivate a wholehearted commitment to God this coming week?

Israel Rebels against Rehoboam - 1 Kings 12:1-24

Topics: Advice, Age, Answers, Death, Delegation, Escape, Home, Listening, Loyalty, Mercy, Obedience, People, Prophecy, Rebellion, Rejection, Serving, War, Youth

Open It

- * 1. When you need advice about something you want to do but are unsure about, to whom do you turn?
- 2. What are the pros and cons of old age? youth?

Explore It

- 3. Where did Solomon's son Rehoboam go to be crowned king? (12:1)
- 4. Where was Jeroboam when he heard the news of Solomon's death? (12:2)
- 5. What request did the people want Jeroboam to bring to Rehoboam on their behalf? (12:3-4)
- 6. Initially, what did Rehoboam tell the people who came to him? (12:5)
- * 7. What did the elders of Israel, Solomon's advisors, advise Rehoboam? (12:7)
- * 8. To whom did Rehoboam turn for a second opinion? (12:8)
- 9. What advice did the young men give Rehoboam? (12:10-11)
- * 10. What did Rehoboam ultimately decide to tell the people? (12:12-15)
- 11. How did Jeroboam and the people respond to Rehoboam's harshness? (12:16)
- 12. What happened when the king tried to conscript forced labor from among the Israelites? (12:18-19)
- 13. Whom did the people of Israel proclaim king? (12:20)
- 14. What part of the kingdom was loyal to Rehoboam? (12:21)
- 15. Why was Rehoboam preparing for war? (12:21)
- 16. What word did Shemaiah bring to Rehoboam from the Lord? (12:22-24)
- 17. Why did God instruct Judah not to fight? (12:24)

Get It

- 18. How did God prevent civil war in the kingdom of David and Solomon?
- 19. Why are harshness and fear not the best means of generating respect and loyalty?
- 20. What made Jeroboam a "natural" for leading the protest and then the rebellion?
- * 21. Why is the advice of older people often sounder than the advice of younger people?
- * 22. What older, more mature Christians do you have access to when you need advice?
- 23. Why is it pointless to try to oppose something that is ordained by God?
- 24. In what relationship do you need to resist using force and intimidation?

Apply It

- * 25. To what mature Christian could you turn for advice on some area of difficulty in your life?
- 26. How can you be respectful of people whom you might normally be able to dominate or push around?

Golden Calves at Bethel and Dan - 1 Kings 12:25-33

Topics: Advice, Celebration, Choices, Fear, Idolatry, Laziness, Loyalty, Murder, Sacrifice, Self-Centeredness, Sin, Worship

Open It

- * 1. To what extent do you think people can be motivated by fear?
- 2. What are the pros and cons of finding a more convenient way of doing things?

Explore It

- 3. Where did Jeroboam consolidate his power as king of Israel? (12:25)
- * 4. Why did Jeroboam see traditional religious practices as a threat to his power and an advantage for Rehoboam? (12:26-27)
- 5. What prompted Jeroboam to make two golden calves? (12:28)
- * 6. To what human vice did Jeroboam appeal in offering Israel alternate sites for worship? (12:28)
- * 7. What became of the moral and spiritual climate of Israel when worship was instituted at Bethel and Dan? (12:29-30)
- 8. Where did Jeroboam build shrines? (12:31)
- 9. Who were the priests who served at Jeroboam's command? (12:31)
- 10. What practice of Judah did Jeroboam imitate by creating a new festival? (12:32-33)
- 11. What role did Jeroboam play in the worship at the festival? (12:33)

Get It

- 12. What motivated Jeroboam to depart from the historical laws and practices of Israel?
- * 13. Why was Jeroboam afraid of Israel's traditional religious practices?
- * 14. What was particularly heinous about the worship alternatives Jeroboam gave the people of Israel?
- 15. What was the quality of Jeroboam's advisors?
- 16. Why should our own desires and convenience never dictate the terms of our worship of God?
- 17. What is likely to happen if we hold too tightly to the things we now possess?

Apply It

- 18. How can you be sure that you are not changing the nature of your worship to suit your own needs and wants?
- * 19. What fear can you leave before the throne of God before it motivates you to take inappropriate action?

The Man of God from Judah - 1 Kings 13:1-34

Topics: Age, Angels, Anger, Consequences, Death, Disobedience, Evil, Follow, Gifts, Healing, Hospitality, Judgment, Lying, Mourning, Prayer, Prophecy, Punishment, Sacrifice, Serving, Sin, Truth

Open It

- * 1. When have you encountered a “wolf in sheep’s clothing”?
- 2. What are some examples of guilt by association?

Explore It

- 3. Where did the prophet come from who met Jeroboam making sacrifices at the altar? (13:1)
- 4. What did the man of God say would happen to the altar at Bethel? (13:2)
- 5. What sign did the man of God claim would confirm the prophecy? (13:3)
- 6. What did Jeroboam try to do when he heard the prophecy? (13:4)
- 7. What happened to Jeroboam when he tried to capture the man of God? (13:4)
- 8. What happened at Bethel to confirm the truth of God’s Word through the prophet? (13:5)
- 9. What did the man of God do at Jeroboam’s request? (13:6)
- 10. What did God do in answer to prayer? (13:6)
- 11. What invitation did the king extend after he had been healed? (13:7)
- 12. How did the man of God respond to the king’s invitation? (13:8-10)
- 13. Where did the second prophet catch up to the man of God? (13:11-14)
- * 14. How did the man of God respond to the old prophet’s invitation to come back and eat and drink? (13:15-17)
- * 15. What deception did the old prophet use to get the man of God to come back with him? (13:18-19)
- 16. What revelation came to the old prophet while he was eating with the man of God? (13:20-22)
- * 17. What happened to the man of God when he left the home of the old prophet? (13:23-24)
- 18. What did the old prophet know immediately when he heard about a lion standing beside a body on the road? (13:25-26)
- 19. What did the old prophet do for his brother prophet whom he had tricked? (13:27-30)
- 20. What special instructions did the old prophet give his sons and why? (13:31-32)
- 21. What sinful practices did Jeroboam continue? (13:33-34)

Get It

- 22. How did the man of God show Jeroboam that God was with him in powerful ways?
- 23. Why would God send someone to confront Jeroboam in such a dramatic fashion as did the man of God?
- 24. How might you have felt if you were the “man of God” and an older prophet claimed God’s authority and contradicted your instructions?
- 25. What is potentially good or bad about using deception to put someone to the test?
- * 26. How do we know that God’s clear instructions are not meant to be corrected or amended?
- * 27. Why is it easier to resist temptation that comes from an enemy than from a friend?

Apply It

- * 28. In what situation should you pray for the courage to do what you know to be God’s will?
- 29. What young Christian could use your prayers that he or she would see through and resist subtle temptations?

Ahijah's Prophecy against Jeroboam - 1 Kings 14:1-31

Topics: Age, Anger, Answers, Blessing, Blindness, Consequences, Death, Deceit, Evil, Family, Gifts, Goodness, Idolatry, Jealousy, Mourning, Prophecy, Punishment, Sickness, Sin, War, Wealth, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What sorts of circumstances will make even a “nonreligious” person pray to God?
- 2. What feelings does a parent experience when his or her child is very sick?
- 3. What drives us to put up a good front even when things are not going well?

Explore It

- * 4. What misfortune drove Jeroboam to consult with a prophet? (14:1-2)
- 5. What elaborate scheme did Jeroboam concoct for his wife to carry out? (14:2-4)
- 6. What was the physical condition of the prophet Ahijah? (14:4)
- * 7. How did Ahijah know the identity of his visitor? (14:5)
- * 8. When Jeroboam's wife arrived, what kind of news did Ahijah have for her? (14:6)
- 9. What was God's evaluation of Jeroboam's reign as communicated through the prophet? (14:7-9)
- 10. What did God decree concerning Jeroboam's descendants? (14:10-11)
- 11. What was to become of the son about whom Jeroboam had initially inquired? (14:12-13)
- 12. Whom was God going to use to “cut off” the family of Jeroboam? (14:14)
- 13. For what sins did God hold the people of Israel accountable? (14:15-16)
- 14. What happened when Jeroboam's wife returned home? (14:17-18)
- 15. What was the nationality of Rehoboam's mother (Solomon's wife)? (14:21)
- 16. What was the spiritual condition of Judah under Rehoboam? (14:22-24)
- 17. How did God use the king of Egypt to punish Judah? (14:25-26)
- 18. How did Rehoboam choose to carry on a pretense of wealth and power? (14:27-28)
- 19. What was the relationship between Jeroboam of Israel and Rehoboam of Judah? (14:30)
- 20. What was the name of the son that succeeded Rehoboam in Judah? (14:31)

Get It

- * 21. Why do you think Jeroboam tried to question the prophet anonymously?
- * 22. Why do we try to “fool” God when we know it's not possible?
- 23. Against what yardstick was Jeroboam judged?
- 24. In what sense was the answer about the sick son the best news Ahijah had for Jeroboam's wife?
- 25. What is difficult about having a relative or friend die anonymously, without a funeral or mourners?
- 26. What is notable about Ahijah's prophecy against Jeroboam in contrast to the conditional promise when Ahijah first told him he would be king?
- 27. How were the sins of Jeroboam and Rehoboam similar although they were enemies?
- 28. How can we be assured that the blessings God gives us will continue?
- 29. What are some ways in which people try to look more wealthy or powerful than they really are?

Apply It

- * 30. What Christian friend could you ask to hold you accountable in an area where your obedience is challenged?
- 31. How can you avoid calling on God only when you are afraid or in great need?

Abijah King of Judah - 1 Kings 15:1-24

Topics: Bargaining, Comparisons, Death, Devotion, Disobedience, Family, Gifts, Heart, History, Idolatry, Obedience, Righteousness, Sin, Strength, War, Wealth

Open It

1. When you were young, when was a time you wished for someone older and stronger to come to your rescue?
- * 2. Why do people do “spring cleaning”?
3. In what situations is distraction of your opponent a useful tactic?

Explore It

4. How long did Rehoboam’s son reign when he succeeded his father? (15:1-2)
- * 5. In what way was Abijah like his father? (15:3)
6. Why did God strengthen Jerusalem in spite of Abijah’s disobedience? (15:4)
7. What was the chief instance in which David failed to keep God’s commands? (15:5)
- * 8. How long was Abijah’s son Asa in power in Jerusalem? (15:10)
- * 9. What were some of the righteous actions taken by Asa? (15:11-14)
10. What was the relationship between Judah and Israel during the time of Asa? (15:16)
11. What did Israel’s fortification of the city of Ramah do to Judah? (15:17)
12. Where did Asa seek help for Judah’s predicament? (15:18)
13. How did the king of Aram help Asa, king of Judah? (15:20-21)
14. What did Asa do with the abandoned building materials at Ramah? (15:22)

Get It

15. How did David’s commitment to God influence the history of Judah after him?
- * 16. What was remarkable about Asa, given the character of his father?
17. How did Asa show that he did not exempt his own family from God’s standard of righteousness?
18. What seemed less than wise about Asa’s deal with Ben-Hadad?
19. Why do we often turn to human sources of help before we turn to God?
- * 20. What area of your life could use a thorough spiritual “housecleaning”?

Apply It

- * 21. When can you take an hour or two for reflection on areas of your life that may need to change?
22. How can you work toward consulting God first whenever you face difficulties even before you assess your own options?

Kings of Israel - 1 Kings 15:25-16:34

Topics: Accountability, Achievements, Anger, Comparisons, Death, Drinking, Evil, Family, History, Idolatry, Leadership, Murder, Plans, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Sin, Strength, Unfaithfulness, War

Open It

- * 1. Why should a judge be held accountable to the same standards he or she imposes on others?
- 2. What determines whether a rebel inside a government is more successful than the person he or she overthrows?

Explore It

- 3. Who was the prophet that God sent to pronounce judgment on Baasha, king of Israel? (16:1)
- * 4. What was Baasha's problem? (16:2-4)
- 5. Who was Baasha's successor? (16:6)
- * 6. Of what deed was Baasha considered guilty although he had been God's tool to punish Jeroboam? (16:7)
- 7. Who led the revolt against Baasha's son Elah? (16:8-10)
- 8. How did Zimri treat Baasha's family once he became king? (16:11-12)
- * 9. For what actions did God hold Baasha and his family accountable? (16:13)
- 10. How long did Zimri manage to hold on to power in Israel? (16:15)
- 11. To whom did the Israelites turn for leadership when Elah was dead? (16:16-17)
- 12. What became of the rebel Zimri? (16:18)
- 13. Which of the two factions was successful in replacing Zimri? (16:21-22)
- 14. What major project did Omri undertake as king? (16:23-24)
- 15. Who was the first king of Israel to rule from the city of Samaria? (16:24)
- 16. How did Omri compare to his predecessors? (16:25-26)
- 17. What is God's assessment of idols? (16:26)
- 18. How did Ahab compare to the kings of Israel before him? (16:30)
- 19. What new form of worship did Ahab add to Israel's idolatry? (16:31)

Get It

- 20. Why would it be especially significant that Baasha's house was going to come to the same end as had Jeroboam's?
- 21. Why did several kings of Israel in a row die violent deaths?
- * 22. Why might kings after Jeroboam have felt that the "sin of Jeroboam" would be a good practice to prolong?
- 23. What "idols" would some of today's world rulers prefer that we serve rather than the living God?
- 24. Why does God take it so seriously when a person leads others into sin?
- 25. When we break the commands of God, how can we know whether we have led anyone else into sin?
- * 26. Who is likely to follow your example?

Apply It

- 27. When you are involved in correcting a fellow Christian, how can you avoid falling into the same sin you are pointing out to him or her?
- * 28. How can you remind yourself to set a good example for the people who may copy your actions?

Elijah in Hiding - 1 Kings 17:1-24

Topics: Accusation, Believe, Death, Despair, Faith, Fear, God's Will, Guidance, Instructions, Obedience, Poor, Prayer, Priorities, Promises, Prophecy, Resurrection, Serving, Sickness, Swearing, Truth

Open It

- * 1. How do you go about assessing the truth of the news stories you read and hear every day?
- 2. What was one of the worst pieces of news you've ever had to convey to another person? the best news?

Explore It

- 3. Where did the prophet Elijah come from? (17:1)
- 4. What was the prophecy that Elijah took to Ahab, king of Israel? (17:1)
- 5. After speaking with Ahab, why did God direct Elijah to hide? (17:2-3)
- 6. How were Elijah's needs met while he was alone in the desert? (17:5-6)
- 7. Where did God send Elijah after the brook dried up? (17:7-9)
- 8. What two requests did Elijah make of the widow at Zarephath? (17:10-11)
- 9. What did the widow consider inevitable for herself and her son during the drought in Israel? (17:12)
- * 10. What step did Elijah ask the widow to take in faith? (17:13)
- 11. What promise did Elijah make if the widow would be obedient to God? (17:14)
- * 12. What did the Lord do for Elijah, the widow, and her son? (17:15-16)
- 13. What did the woman of Zarephath assume when her son became ill and died? (17:17-18)
- 14. When Elijah took the son from his mother, what question did he have for God? (17:19-20)
- 15. How did Elijah go about petitioning God for the boy's life? (17:21-22)
- * 16. How did the widow react when her son was returned to her alive? (17:23-24)

Get It

- 17. How do you imagine Ahab felt about Elijah after Elijah pronounced judgment on him?
- 18. What would make you willing or unwilling to be the one to pronounce judgment on a really evil person?
- 19. What was unusual about the ways God chose to provide for Elijah during the drought?
- 20. What kind of faith is required for living with just enough for each day and no more?
- * 21. How would the miracle of the flour and oil have appeared to the widow in retrospect if her son had died?
- 22. What indicates that Elijah did not expect the death of the widow's son?
- 23. Why did God raise the widow's son from the dead?
- 24. What is the importance of action to back up our words as believers?
- * 25. In what way do you find it easy or difficult to obey God when you don't know what the outcome will be?
- 26. In what peculiar but sufficient ways is God meeting your needs today?

Apply It

- * 27. What step of faith do you need to take at this time in your life?
- 28. What evidence do the people around you need in order to believe that you are a child of God?

Elijah and Ahab - 1 Kings 18:1-46

Topics: Ambassadors, Answers, Appearance, Arguments, Believers, Challenge, Choices, Confidence, Decisions, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Fear, Heart, Hiding, Holy Spirit, Honor, Idolatry, Instructions, Murder, People, Power, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Respect, Revenge, Running, Sacrifice, Silence, Suffering, Swearing, Testing, Waiting, Worship, Youth

Open It

- * 1. What is so exciting about a showdown between long-standing rivals?
- 2. What is good or bad about Christians' holding office in a secular government?

Explore It

- 3. What did God tell Elijah to do after almost three years of drought? (18:1-2)
- 4. What was Obadiah's story? (18:3-4)
- 5. What were Ahab and Obadiah looking for as they traveled through the land? (18:5-6)
- 6. Whom did Obadiah meet in the course of his journey? (18:7)
- 7. What attitude did Obadiah have toward Elijah? (18:7)
- 8. Why was Obadiah dismayed by Elijah's orders? (18:8-12)
- 9. What did Obadiah assume about Elijah's ability to escape the king? (18:12)
- 10. Why did Obadiah feel he didn't deserve to die at the hands of an angry Ahab? (18:12-14)
- 11. What promise did Elijah make to allay Obadiah's fears? (18:15)
- 12. Whom did Elijah hold accountable for Israel's troubles? (18:18)
- 13. What groups did Elijah want to assemble? (18:19-20)
- * 14. How did the people respond when Elijah confronted them with their double-mindedness? (18:21)
- * 15. How did the people respond to the confrontation Elijah proposed between Baal and God? (18:22-24)
- 16. How did Elijah taunt the prophets of Baal when their god did not ignite the sacrifice? (18:27-29)
- 17. What preparations did Elijah make in the sight of the people before he prayed to God? (18:30-35)
- 18. How did Elijah address God in prayer? (18:36-37)
- * 19. What happened to the altar of the Lord when Elijah prayed? (18:38)
- 20. How did the people react when they saw fire burn up Elijah's offering? (18:39)
- 21. What vengeance did Elijah exact against the prophets of Baal? (18:40)
- 22. What prediction did Elijah make to Ahab concerning the drought? (18:41)
- 23. In what attitude did Elijah wait for the Lord's answer? (18:42-44)
- 24. What happened when the power of the Lord came upon Elijah? (18:46)

Get It

- 25. What did Obadiah's closeness to Ahab enable him to do for the people of God?
- 26. What might the faithful of that day have believed about why the king had been unable to capture Elijah for three years?
- 27. Why do you think stories abound with clear showdowns between good and evil?
- 28. Why does sarcasm cut to the core of our self-respect?
- 29. What measures did Elijah take to make the lighting of his sacrifice much harder than the sacrifice to Baal?
- * 30. What did Elijah perceive that God was doing in Israel through this showdown?
- 31. Despite the drama of the fire's consuming the sacrifice, why did Elijah not assume that God would come through with the promised rain?
- * 32. To what extent is God obligated to answer our prayers to vindicate His own name?

Apply It

- * 33. How can we be confident of the power of God yet humble about our ability to dictate anything to Him?
- 34. What “god” might the Lord use you to unmask before a friend or acquaintance?

Elijah Flees to Horeb - 1 Kings 19:1-21

Topics: Alone, Angels, Circumstances, Covenant, Death, Despair, Faithfulness, Fear, Gentleness, Instructions, Life, Power, Prayer, Rejection, Running, Sacrifice, Serving, Sleep, Swearing, Waiting, Weaknesses, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What was one of the loneliest moments you can remember?
- 2. Why do you suppose natural disasters have been called “acts of God”?

Explore It

- 3. Why was Queen Jezebel determined to kill Elijah the prophet? (19:1-2)
- * 4. What did Elijah pray when he had fled to a lonely place? (19:3-5)
- 5. How did God miraculously care for Elijah in the desert? (19:6-9)
- 6. What did God say to Elijah when the prophet had taken refuge in a cave? (19:9)
- * 7. How did Elijah express his despair about his circumstances? (19:10)
- 8. What did God command Elijah to do? (19:11)
- 9. What disturbances of nature did Elijah witness from inside the cave? (19:11-13)
- 10. In which of the manifestations that Elijah saw was God present? (19:11-13)
- 11. What question did God repeat in the “gentle whisper”? (19:13)
- 12. What was Elijah’s reply after seeing the demonstrations of God’s power? (19:14)
- * 13. What “marching orders” did Elijah receive from God? (19:15-17)
- 14. How many faithful worshipers did God report to be in Israel? (19:18)
- 15. Where was Elisha when Elijah found him? (19:19)
- 16. What symbolic action did Elijah perform when he found Elisha? (19:19)
- 17. What did Elisha call his family together to do before he left to follow Elijah? (19:20-21)

Get It

- * 18. To what extent do you think Elijah was justified in being discouraged by his circumstances?
- 19. Why did God reveal Himself to Elijah when the prophet was discouraged?
- 20. What strikes you as unusual about God’s question to Elijah in the cave?
- * 21. In what settings have you felt that you were the only believer?
- 22. Of all of the manifestations of God’s power, which might have Elijah wished God would show to his enemies?
- 23. What important lesson did Elijah learn about how God chooses to speak to people?
- 24. How was Elijah to be involved in the punishment of God’s enemies?
- 25. How did Elisha make a dramatic break with his past before he followed Elijah?
- 26. What would be difficult about making a sudden break with your present life-style if God were to ask you to do it?

Apply It

- * 27. In what discouraging circumstances can you remind yourself that God is in control?
- 28. What habit could you cultivate to make you more ready to respond to God’s call at a moment’s notice?

The Defeat of Ben-Hadad - 1 Kings 20:1-43

Topics: Advice, Anger, Answers, Bargaining, Children, Compromise, Consequences, Death, Delegation, Disobedience, Drinking, Escape, Freedom, God's Will, Judgment, Leadership, Partnerships, Peace, Preparation, Prophecy, Running, Strength, Submission, Swearing, War, Wealth, Wives, Youth

Open It

1. When have you had to draw the line in terms of “knuckling under” to another person?
- * 2. Why do we often prefer to be generous as opposed to exacting justice?
3. What unreasonable demands have been placed on you from time to time?

Explore It

4. What was Ahab's predicament when Ben-Hadad besieged Samaria? (20:1-3)
5. After Ahab had agreed to be subservient to the king of Aram, what more was demanded of him? (20:4-6)
6. How did the elders of Israel advise Ahab to respond to the latest demand from Aram? (20:7-9)
7. What did Ben-Hadad swear to do to Ahab and Israel? (20:10)
8. Why did Ahab say, “One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off”? (20:11)
9. What did one of God's prophets tell Ahab about the outcome of the ensuing battle? (20:13)
10. How did Ahab develop the specific battle plan? (20:14-17)
11. What did Ben-Hadad assume about his ability to subdue Israel? (20:18)
12. What was the result of the battle between the young officers and the Aramean army? (20:19-21)
13. What warning did Ahab receive from the prophet after his victory? (20:22)
14. What false conclusion did the Arameans draw from their defeat in the first encounter? (20:23-27)
- * 15. Why did God determine that He would cause the small army of Israel to defeat the large army of Arameans on the plains? (20:28)
16. What was the extent of the disaster that came upon the Arameans? (20:29-30)
- * 17. What plan did Ben-Hadad's official come up with to save his life? (20:31-32)
- * 18. What did Ahab do when he had Ben-Hadad at his mercy? (20:33-34)
19. What dramatic action did the prophet take in order to have an illustration when he confronted Ahab? (20:35-38)
20. What “parable” did the prophet tell to get Ahab to condemn himself? (20:39-40)
21. What sentence did the prophet pronounce on Ahab for not killing Ben-Hadad? (20:42)

Get It

22. When God comes to the assistance of a nation, what can we reasonably conclude and not conclude about its leadership?
23. What sorts of things are human beings willing to die for rather than give up?
24. Why aren't numbers and weapons the only determinants of the outcome of a battle?
25. What does it tell us about Ahab's character that he would follow God's instructions only when it suited him?
26. When is it inconvenient for us to obey God?
27. Who is responsible for defending God's name when it is maligned?
- * 28. What might have motivated Ahab to spare the rival king when he was at Ahab's mercy?
29. When is mercy not a good thing to grant?
30. Ultimately, how do we know that God is not a “live and let live” kind of God?
31. Why is it easier for us to see a failing in someone else than in ourselves?
- * 32. In what areas do you find yourself tempted to compromise with the forces of evil?

Apply It

33. What can you do to motivate yourself to obey God this week even when it's inconvenient?
- * 34. In what situation do you need to avoid being unduly merciful or kind to someone in order to stop bad or evil acts?

Naboth's Vineyard - 1 Kings 21:1-29

Topics: Accusation, Anger, Consequences, Death, Deceit, Enemies, Evil, Family, Fasting, Greed, Humility, Idolatry, Instructions, Judgment, Lying, Murder, Obedience, Power, Punishment, Questions, Repentance, Selfishness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. How do most people feel about a bully who takes what he or she wants by force?
- 2. How reasonable do you think it is to expect a notorious villain to “turn over a new leaf” after being caught?

Explore It

- * 3. What did Ahab want from Naboth the Jezreelite? (21:1-2)
- 4. On what grounds did Naboth refuse to sell his vineyard? (21:3)
- * 5. What was Ahab's mood when he didn't get what he wanted? (21:3-4)
- 6. What did Ahab's wife Jezebel do to end his unkingly sulking? (21:5-10)
- 7. What conspiracy took place in Naboth's city in response to Jezebel's letters? (21:11-14)
- 8. What news did Jezebel take back to Ahab? (21:15-16)
- 9. What did God command Elijah to do? (21:17-19)
- 10. How did Ahab greet Elijah when they met? (21:20)
- * 11. What was the judgment Elijah pronounced on Ahab and his house? (21:20-24)
- 12. What additional information did the author of the story give us about Ahab? (21:25-26)
- 13. How did Ahab react to Elijah's words? (21:27)
- 14. What was God's response to Ahab's penitence? (21:28-29)

Get It

- * 15. To what extent should rulers, bosses, or leaders be able to do whatever they want within the boundaries of their authority?
- * 16. In what ways do we need to restrain and discipline our desires even if they are, on the surface, “good”?
- 17. In what way was Ahab responsible for what Jezebel did without his knowledge but in his name?
- 18. How many people were involved in the wicked scheme that killed the innocent Naboth?
- 19. Why is it impossible for an evil ruler not to taint those he or she rules?
- 20. Why did Ahab consider Elijah his enemy?
- 21. What were some of the measures of Ahab's wickedness?
- 22. Why does God sometimes hold back His hand of judgment when a truly evil person shows repentance?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you turn an unfulfilled desire into an occasion for humility before God rather than a cause of bitterness?
- 24. How can you learn from other Christians?

Micaiah Prophecies against Ahab - 1 Kings 22:1-53

Topics: Achievements, Children, Death, Deceit, Dishonesty, Evil, Faithfulness, Families, Giving Up, God's Will, Guidance, Hatred, History, Humiliation, Idolatry, Instructions, Insults, Integrity, Lying, Partnerships, Peace, Prophecy, Questions, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Success, Swearing, Truth, Unity, Victory, War

Open It

1. When have you been asked for an opinion and you knew what answer the questioner wanted to hear?
- * 2. Why do we sometimes insist on following through on our plans even when we've received good advice against it?

Explore It

3. How had affairs changed between the rival kingdoms of Israel and Judah? (22:1-3)
4. What was bothering the king of Israel? (22:3)
5. What favor did the king of Israel ask of the king of Judah? (22:4)
- * 6. What one condition did Jehoshaphat impose before he went into battle with Ahab? (22:4-5)
7. What was the unanimous counsel of the four hundred prophets? (22:6)
- * 8. What did Jehoshaphat find lacking in the advice of the prophets? (22:7)
- * 9. What did Ahab tell Jehoshaphat about the one remaining prophet of the Lord? (22:8)
10. Where were the two kings when Micaiah was summoned before them? (22:10-12)
11. How did the messenger who summoned Micaiah advise him to counsel the kings? (22:13)
12. What one criterion did Micaiah use to determine what he would say? (22:14)
13. What was the first answer that Micaiah gave to Ahab? (22:15)
14. How did Micaiah's message change when the king insisted he wanted the truth? (22:16-17)
15. What story did Micaiah tell about a consultation in heaven? (22:19-23)
16. What did Ahab decide to do with Micaiah while he went to war? (22:26-27)
17. How did the two kings dress when they went into battle against Ramoth Gilead? (22:29-30)
18. Why did Jehoshaphat narrowly miss being killed in battle? (22:31-33)
19. How was Ahab wounded in spite of the fact that he had concealed his identity? (22:34)
20. How did the armies of Israel and Judah react when they heard of Ahab's death? (22:36)
21. Although Ahab was given a king's burial, how was the prophecy against him fulfilled anyway? (22:37-38)
22. What kind of king was Jehoshaphat? (22:41-44)
23. What were some of Jehoshaphat's accomplishments and failures? (22:43-50)
24. How was Ahaziah like his father Ahab? (22:51-53)

Get It

25. What are the indications that Jehoshaphat respected God?
26. What might have been the tone of Micaiah's voice when he first gave the answer he knew Ahab wanted to hear?
- * 27. Why would someone totally ignore God's revealed will and do what he or she wants anyway?
28. How had Ahab's advisors changed the definition of "prophet" from what Micaiah understood it to be?
- * 29. How can we conduct our lives in such a way that we are not expecting God to "rubber stamp" all of our goals and desires?
30. What can we learn from the fact that even Ahab knew that Micaiah alone was a prophet of the living God?
31. What purpose is there in a believer taking a stand for the truth even when he or she is ignored?
32. How did Ahab take advantage of Jehoshaphat's desire for peace and cooperation?

- 33. What are the pros and cons of trusting someone who has demonstrated scorn for God's wisdom?
- 34. When, if ever, do you think Ahab realized that his prophets had been lying?
- 35. As far as we know from this account, what became of the prophet Micaiah?

Apply It

- 36. How can you pray so that you will be ready to represent God's Word even when it is unpopular with those around you?
- 37. Before you act on a significant decision you now face, how should you pray?
- * 38. What can you do to be receptive the next time someone wisely advises you to not do something that you really want to do?

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The Lord's Judgment on Ahaziah - 2 Kings 1:1-18

Topics: Ambassadors, Angels, Consequences, Death, Fear, History, Idolatry, Judgment, Life, Mercy, Obedience, Power, Prophecy, Questions, Respect, Unfaithfulness

Open It

- * 1. At what age did you have the most curiosity about other religions and belief systems?
- 2. Why do you think there is a popular association between being struck by lightning and being judged by God?
- 3. What public figures do you know for whom a certain style of clothing or accessory has become an unmistakable trademark?

Explore It

- * 4. When Ahaziah was injured accidentally, what did he send messengers to do? (1:2)
- * 5. With what message did God send Elijah to intercept the king's messengers? (1:3-4)
- 6. What did the messengers do after speaking with Elijah? (1:5-6)
- 7. How did the messengers describe for the king the man they had met? (1:7-8)
- 8. What did Ahaziah know immediately when he heard the description of the man who sent him the message? (1:8)
- 9. What order from the king was delivered by a captain and fifty men? (1:9)
- 10. What was Elijah's dramatic answer to the captain who came to capture him? (1:10)
- 11. What happened to the second captain and his men? (1:11-12)
- 12. With what attitude did the third captain approach Elijah? (1:13-14)
- 13. How did God instruct Elijah to react to the third captain who came to get him? (1:15)
- 14. What message did Elijah personally deliver to the king? (1:16)
- * 15. What became of Ahaziah, king of Israel? (1:17)

Get It

- * 16. What might have motivated a king of Israel to consult one of the gods of Ekron when he wanted to know the future?
- 17. Why do we have such a strong desire to know what will happen to us in advance?
- * 18. In what ways are modern believers tempted to consult false gods?
- 19. What should Ahaziah have concluded about God because God's prophet intercepted his messengers?
- 20. How might the outcome have been different for Ahaziah had he consulted first with the Lord?
- 21. Why was Elijah hesitant to go back to the king with the captains and their armed men?
- 22. What conclusion should Ahaziah have drawn from the disappearance of the first captain?
- 23. Although we sometimes find ourselves alone as believers, in what sense are we not necessarily at the mercy of our enemies?
- 24. What action of Ahaziah clearly aroused the Lord's anger and led to the Lord's judgment on him?

Apply It

- * 25. What can you do to keep your mind focused on God and His power in your life rather than on other possible sources of strength and wisdom?
- 26. For what positive spiritual trait can you aspire to become "notorious"?

Elijah Taken up to Heaven - 2 Kings 2:1-25

Topics: Awe, Blessing, Devotion, Healing, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Instructions, Insults, Miracles, Partnerships, Prophecy, Shame, Silence, Spiritual Gifts, Swearing, Testing, Waiting

Open It

- * 1. What Christian's spiritual gifts would you like to inherit if that were possible?
- 2. What's good, bad, convenient, or inconvenient about being liked very much by someone else?
- 3. In your opinion are young people more or less respectful today than when you were young? Why?

Explore It

- * 4. Although Elijah and Elisha were in the habit of traveling together, why did Elijah try to go to Bethel on his own? (2:1-2)
- 5. What was Elisha's reply to Elijah's suggestion that he stay behind? (2:2)
- 6. What did the prophets at Bethel want to make sure that Elisha knew? (2:3)
- * 7. What was Elisha's reply to the prophets who told him his master would be taken that very day? (2:3)
- * 8. What journey did Elijah propose to take alone but could not because Elisha would not leave him? (2:4)
- 9. How did the prophets at Jericho greet Elisha? (2:5)
- 10. Where did Elijah and Elisha go? (2:6)
- 11. What remarkable event was witnessed by fifty prophets at the Jordan River? (2:7-8)
- 12. What was Elijah's question for Elisha when they were alone? (2:9)
- 13. What did Elisha want to inherit from Elijah? (2:9)
- 14. On what condition did Elijah say Elisha's prayer would be granted? (2:10)
- 15. What amazing event did Elisha witness? (2:11-12)
- 16. What was Elisha's first test of whether Elijah's power had come upon him? (2:13-15)
- 17. What did Elisha know about whether Elijah could ever be found on this earth? (2:16-18)
- 18. What problem did the city elders bring to Elisha? (2:19-22)
- 19. What befell some youngsters who taunted Elisha? (2:23-25)

Get It

- * 20. Why do you suppose the younger prophet refused to be elsewhere when his master was taken by the Lord?
- 21. What words might describe Elisha's emotions when he saw Elijah taken up?
- * 22. What older Christian could (or does) disciple or help you grow in your faith?
- 23. How can the deeds of believers who have gone before us encourage us today?
- 24. By repeating the parting of the Jordan, what did Elisha know about the power he would have as a prophet?
- 25. What likely effect did Elisha's early miracles have on his popularity?
- 26. Why is scorn for God and the servants of God not a youthful prank to be excused or taken lightly?

Apply It

- * 27. Whom can you seek out this week as a mentor and example for your faith? How?
- 28. In what practical ways can we teach our children to respect faithful servants of God?

Moab Revolts - 2 Kings 3:1-27

Topics: Complaining, Confusion, Decisions, Discouragement, Evil, God's Will, Idolatry, Influence, Insults, Miracles, Partnerships, Promises, Prophecy, Questions, Rebellion, Rejection, Respect, Revenge, Sacrifice, Serving, Surprises, Victory, War

Open It

1. How much difference does it make to you when a person you respect endorses a group that you have doubts about?
2. What does the expression mean, "Don't count your chickens before they hatch"?
- * 3. For what have you heard people blame God?

Explore It

4. What sins of previous kings did Joram discontinue and which did he embrace? (3:1-3)
5. What tribute did the king of Israel require of the king of Moab? (3:4)
- * 6. Why did Joram need to amass an army against Moab? (3:5)
7. Whom did Joram secure as an ally against Moab? (3:6-7)
- * 8. What problem did the three armies encounter after they had been in the desert for seven days? (3:8-9)
9. What part did the king of Israel assume God was playing in his army's predicament? (3:10)
- * 10. What did Jehoshaphat want to do before he jumped to conclusions about God's will? (3:11-12)
11. What sort of greeting did Elisha have for the king of Israel? (3:13)
12. What assumption had driven Joram to seek out Elisha? (3:13)
13. Why did Elisha agree to tell the three kings what God had to say? (3:14)
14. What message did Elisha deliver, accompanied by a harpist? (3:15-19)
15. When was Elisha's prediction proven to be true? (3:20)
16. How had the Moabites responded to the armies gathering against them? (3:21)
17. What did the Moabites incorrectly presume about the redness on the valley floor? (3:22-23)
18. How badly did the battle turn against Moab? (3:24-25)
19. At the siege of what city did the king of Moab offer a staggering sacrifice? (3:27)
20. How did the momentum of the battle change after the king of Moab sacrificed his son? (3:27)

Get It

21. When have you feared the worst and instead seen the Lord intervene for you in miraculous ways?
22. Why are some people so willing to blame God for the troubles they experience?
23. Why might the Lord consider the unauthorized worship of God less of an offense than the worship of other gods?
- * 24. Why do you think Joram was all too ready to blame God for his troubles even though he had not consulted God before he embarked on his enterprise?
25. To what extent did Elisha feel obligated to seek God on behalf of Joram because he was his king?
- * 26. How can we find out God's perspective on the things we want to do?
27. How did Elisha characterize the difficulty (for God) of bringing abundant water in the desert?
28. In what way does God discriminate among whom He preserves and blesses?
29. How does the death of a prominent person sometimes mobilize a group of people to greater heroism?

Apply It

- * 30. For what challenge facing you this week can you seek God's will before you encounter discouragements?
31. What person of faith in potentially compromising company deserves your respect and support?

The Widow and the Shunammite - 2 Kings 4:1-44

Topics: Abundance, Bitterness, Children, Death, Despair, Doubt, Healing, Help, Home, Hospitality, Husbands, Instructions, Miracles, Neighbor, Possessions, Prayer, Promises, Prophecy, Questions, Respect, Resurrection, Rewards, Sickness, Slavery, Stubbornness, Thankfulness, Wealth, Wives

Open It

1. What are the feelings that go along with debt and financial hardships?
- * 2. Whose prayers do you want when you are facing life's most daunting problems?

Explore It

3. What was the predicament of the widow of one of the prophets? (4:1)
4. How did Elisha make use of what little the widow had to provide for her by faith? (4:2-6)
5. When did the oil stop flowing for the widow and her sons? (4:6)
6. How did the miracle of the oil take care of the widow's financial difficulties? (4:7)
7. What do we know about the woman who extended hospitality to Elisha? (4:8-10)
8. What did the woman request when Elisha offered to reward her? (4:11-13)
9. How did Elisha learn of a need the Shunammite woman had but did not verbalize? (4:14)
10. What promise did Elisha make to the Shunammite woman? (4:15-16)
- * 11. What calamity befell the family in Shunem after several years? (4:17-20)
12. What action did the woman take after her son died? (4:21-25)
13. What did the woman tell Gehazi about her predicament? (4:26)
14. How did the woman tell Elisha about her problem? (4:27-28)
- * 15. What did the Shunammite woman insist that Elisha do? (4:27-30)
16. How did Elisha propose to meet the woman's need? (4:29)
17. What different measures were taken before life returned to the widow's dead son? (4:31-35)
- * 18. What was the Shunammite woman's response to the return of her son? (4:36-37)
19. How did Elisha reverse an inadvertent but deadly mistake for a group of prophets? (4:38-41)
20. What resources were at Elisha's disposal when he fed a hundred men? (4:42-44)

Get It

21. What circumstance have you faced in which you were afraid to hope?
- * 22. What were the evidences of faith in how the Shunammite woman behaved after her son's death?
23. In what different ways did Elisha show compassion in this set of incidents?
24. Why do you think God works through the resources we have rather than always doing miracles?
25. What was Elisha's attitude when people came to him with perplexing problems?
26. What can enable you to feel confident about the good things God wants to do in people's lives?
- * 27. When have you hesitated to ask someone to pray for you because you felt self-conscious?
28. What were the "raw materials"—the everyday items and actions—that formed the basis for Elisha's miracles?

Apply It

29. What "insignificant" thing do you have that you can ask God to make sufficient for a practical need you are facing right now?
- * 30. What urgent need should you bring before God more persistently until you see His answer?

Naaman Healed of Leprosy - 2 Kings 5:1-27

Topics: Anger, Appreciation, Assumptions, Blessing, Courage, Deceit, Dishonesty, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, Forgiveness, Gifts, Greatness, Greed, Healing, Hiding, Idolatry, Impossible, Instructions, Insults, Knowledge, Lying, Perspective, Punishment, Quarrels, Questions, Restoration, Serving, Sickness, Slavery, Victory, Youth

Open It

1. What is the purpose of offering a reward for the return of a missing item, animal, or person?
- * 2. In what way can a serious illness make a person more or less inclined to trust God?

Explore It

3. What made Naaman a “great man” in Aram? (5:1)
4. How was God involved with the fortunes of the pagan nation of Aram? (5:1)
5. How did Naaman learn about the healing powers of the prophet of God? (5:2-3)
6. When the king of Aram approved Naaman’s expedition, to whom did he send the commander? (5:4-6)
7. How did the king of Israel react when he received the letter from the king of Aram? (5:7)
8. What message did Elisha send to the king when he heard of the letter and the king’s reaction? (5:8)
- * 9. What promise did Elisha make to Naaman? (5:9-10)
- * 10. What was Naaman’s reaction to the instructions to wash in the Jordan? (5:11-12)
11. How did Naaman’s servants reason with him to help him overcome his pride? (5:13)
12. What happened when Naaman obeyed Elisha’s instructions? (5:14)
- * 13. How had Naaman changed internally by the time he went back to Elisha? (5:15)
14. What did Naaman offer to Elisha out of gratitude? (5:15)
15. How did Elisha respond to the offer of gifts? (5:16)
16. How did Naaman propose to live as a believer in the Lord God in a pagan land? (5:17-18)
17. On what terms did Naaman and Elisha part? (5:19)
18. What bothered Gehazi about the way Elisha had treated Naaman? (5:20)
19. What did Gehazi try to do, without Elisha’s knowledge, to enrich himself? (5:21-24)
20. How did Elisha find out about what his servant had done? (5:25)
21. What was Gehazi’s punishment for being deceitful and greedy? (5:26-27)

Get It

22. Why was the king of Israel at his wits’ end when he received the request from the king of Aram?
- * 23. How did it help Naaman that God (through Elisha) chose the Jordan to wash and heal him?
- * 24. How can our unwillingness to humble ourselves actually deprive us of good gifts from God?
25. Why do you think Naaman’s cleansing was a conversion experience for him?
26. Why would it have compromised the name of God and His prophet if Elisha had accepted payment for Naaman’s healing?
27. How did Gehazi underestimate Elisha’s relationship with God?

Apply It

- * 28. What tangible benefits do you see in humbling yourself to do what God requires of you?
29. What can you do to serve someone else without payment?

An Axhead Floats - 2 Kings 6:1-7

Topics: Accountability, Despair, Fear, Goals, Help, Miracles, Needs, Plans, Questions

Open It

- * 1. When have you felt the sinking feeling that comes with losing or damaging someone else's property?
- 2. What do you think you would enjoy or loathe about being involved in a church building project?
- 3. Why is the presence and attention of the leader such an encouragement to the people working under him or her?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did the prophets want to build a new community living and meeting space? (6:1-2)
- 5. What hesitations, if any, did Elisha have about the proposed building project? (6:2)
- * 6. What did the prophets want from Elisha? (6:3)
- 7. What building material was chosen by the prophets? (6:4)
- 8. What accident befell one of the workers? (6:5)
- 9. Why was the worker especially distressed about the loss of an axhead? (6:5)
- 10. From what material was the axhead made that was used to cut down trees? (6:5)
- * 11. To whom did the younger prophet turn when he found himself in a predicament? (6:5)
- 12. What question did Elisha ask the prophet who had lost the axhead? (6:6)
- 13. What strange action did Elisha take at the place where the axhead dropped? (6:6)
- 14. What miraculous occurrence followed when Elisha threw the stick in the river? (6:6)
- 15. What command did Elisha issue when the axhead floated up? (6:7)
- 16. How did the potentially disastrous incident of the lost axhead end? (6:7)

Get It

- 17. In your opinion to what extent were the setbacks in the building project a result of someone's disobedience?
- 18. What was a common practice of groups of "prophets" in Elisha's day?
- 19. Why did the prophets who followed Elisha need more room?
- 20. What did the prophets want from Elisha besides his "go-ahead."
- * 21. What is good or bad about having your immediate boss oversee your work?
- 22. What is the most responsible way to handle the situation if you lose or damage someone else's property?
- * 23. How was Elisha's presence important to the miracle of the axhead floating?
- 24. Why is faith the believer's most important tool when beginning a project?

Apply It

- * 25. What project of concern to you could benefit from the presence of an older and wiser member? How?
- 26. What borrowed item do you need to return to its owner in good condition this week?

Elisha Traps Blinded Arameans - 2 Kings 6:8-23

Topics: Accusation, Assurance, Confidence, Death, Fear, Guidance, Help, Mercy, Plans, Prayer, Prophecy, Questions, Resources, Revenge, Security, Strength, Surprises, Unfaithfulness, War

Open It

1. What can inside information about the enemy do for a fighting force?
- * 2. When is the spread of secrets or confidences alarming or dangerous?

Explore It

3. What two kingdoms were at war? (6:8)
4. Who was making the decisions about the movement of the troops of Aram? (6:8)
- * 5. How was the king of Israel avoiding the king of Aram again and again? (6:9-10)
- * 6. How did the king of Aram assume the enemy was getting privileged information? (6:11)
- * 7. What did one of the officers tell the king of Aram about his “security leak”? (6:12)
8. Where did the king of Aram catch up to Elisha? (6:13-14)
9. What was the reaction of Elisha’s servant when he saw the army of Aram surrounding the city? (6:15)
10. Why was Elisha not alarmed by what the servant reported? (6:16)
11. What did Elisha ask God to show his servant? (6:17)
12. What did Elisha ask God to do to the force that was closing in on him? (6:18)
13. With their perception altered, what was Elisha able to do with the army that had come after him? (6:19)
14. Once he had led them to Samaria, what did Elisha ask God to show the Arameans? (6:20)
15. When the king of Israel saw his enemies at his mercy, how did he propose to seize the day? (6:21)
16. To what ethic of warfare did Elisha appeal when he ordered the king to spare the prisoners? (6:22)
17. What was done for the Arameans who found themselves at Israel’s mercy? (6:23)
18. How did the war between Aram and Israel go after this incident? (6:23)

Get It

- * 19. What advantage did Israel have in its conflict with Aram?
20. What negative consequences can issue from a breach of confidence?
- * 21. Why was Elisha not alarmed about a whole army seeking to capture him?
22. What was the purpose of the blindness that God brought on the Arameans?
23. What are the advantages and disadvantages of military versus divine help?
24. How can mercy for one’s enemies show greater strength than vengeance?

Apply It

- * 25. What problem might seem less intimidating if you asked God for His help and intervention?
26. How can you monitor your intentions and behavior so you don’t betray the people who confide in you?

Famine in Besieged Samaria - 2 Kings 6:24-7:2

Topics: Abundance, Bitterness, Death, Doubt, Fairness, Frustration, Help, Hopelessness, Justice, Murder, Promises, Prophecy, Repentance, Serving, Suffering, Swearing, Waiting, War

Open It

- * 1. What are some of your strongest associations with the words famine and starvation?
- 2. Do you believe that hardship brings out the best or the worst in people, and why?

Explore It

- 3. What was the size and origins of the army besieging Samaria? (6:24)
- * 4. What were the living conditions and prices of goods for the people trapped inside the city of Samaria? (6:25)
- 5. Who called out to the king of Israel as he was walking along the wall? (6:26)
- * 6. How did the king express his sense of helplessness in the current conditions? (6:27)
- 7. What awful grievance did the woman detail for the king? (6:28-29)
- 8. What was the king's reaction to the woman's story? (6:30)
- 9. What action symbolic of mourning and repentance did the people see the king had already taken? (6:30)
- * 10. Whom did the king of Israel hold accountable for the suffering in Israel? (6:31)
- 11. What did Elisha predict to the elders assembled with him before it ever occurred? (6:32)
- 12. What was the king of Israel ready to do in his desperation? (6:33)
- 13. What did Elisha prophesy about the suffering in Samaria? (7:1)
- 14. How did Elisha use the values of foodstuffs to illustrate the promised abundance from God? (7:1)
- 15. Who heard Elisha's prophecy and found it incredible? (7:2)
- 16. What did Elisha predict would happen to the doubter? (7:2)

Get It

- 17. What sorts of things were the people of the besieged city reduced to eating?
- 18. What kind of help did the woman expect from the king?
- 19. Why do you think people will do things under extreme hardship that they would consider unthinkable otherwise?
- * 20. What was good and bad about the king's reactions to the hardships of his subjects?
- 21. Are you like or unlike the man who doubted that even God could totally reverse a desperate situation in twenty-four hours?
- * 22. Why is it tempting to blame others when we are suffering?

Apply It

- 23. What practical investment can you make this week in increasing your stamina for waiting for God?
- * 24. Next time you find yourself waiting anxiously for some trial to end, how can you avoid blaming another person?

The Siege Lifted - 2 Kings 7:3-20

Topics: Abandon, Abundance, Assumptions, Awe, Darkness, Death, Deceit, Doubt, Fear, Giving Up, Good News, Hiding, Mercy, Murder, Possessions, Punishment, Right, Risk, Running, Selfishness, Sickness, Wealth

Open It

1. Why would you consider or avoid volunteering for a hazardous mission?
- * 2. When has a piece of news struck you as literally too good to be true?

Explore It

- * 3. What decision did four lepers make out of desperation? (7:3-4)
4. What did the lepers find when they entered the Aramean camp? (7:5)
5. Why had the Aramean army panicked and fled? (7:6-7)
6. What did the lepers do when they found all of the abandoned provisions? (7:8)
- * 7. What did the lepers realize was wrong about their behavior? (7:9)
- * 8. How did the news of the abandoned enemy camp reach the king? (7:10-11)
9. What was the king of Israel's theory about the startling turn of events? (7:12)
10. How did one of the officers propose to find out the truth? (7:13)
11. What did the messengers find when they went as far as the Jordan? (7:14-15)
12. How abundant was the provision for Israel from the abandoned enemy camp? (7:16)
13. Whom did the king put in charge of the gate when news of the plunder reached the city? (7:17)
14. How did the manner of his death bear out the prophecy Elisha had spoken against the officer? (7:17-20)

Get It

15. Why, in the cases of the lepers and the scouts, was it worth the risk of leaving the besieged city?
- * 16. Why might the lepers not have felt an immediate need to notify the city?
17. How did the Arameans' beliefs about what was happening line up with what really happened?
18. When have you started on a course of action only to become convinced that it is too selfish?
19. What obligation do we have to share with others?
- * 20. Why do we have an obligation to share with others?
21. Why is it best to act quickly when you become convicted of sin?
22. What is good and bad about habitually mistrusting your enemies?
23. How easy or difficult is it for you to believe that God could turn around a hopeless situation literally overnight?

Apply It

- * 24. What news, possession, or other blessing do you need to share with someone in need during this coming week?
25. With whom can you share on a regular basis? How?
26. How can you cultivate a faith that believes all things are possible for God?

The Shunammite's Land Restored - 2 Kings 8:1-6

Topics: Friendship, Government, Greatness, Home, Instructions, Miracles, Moving, Obedience, Prophecy, Restoration, Resurrection, Timing

Open It

1. How long do you think an owner should be given to reclaim property he or she has abandoned?
- * 2. How do you feel when you approach two people and they say, "We were just talking about you"?
3. If you were forced to leave your native land for some reason, do you think you would want to return as soon as possible or would you be likely to adopt a new homeland? Why?

Explore It

4. What was Elisha's relationship to the woman whom he warned about the famine? (8:1)
5. What was the prophet's instruction for surviving the famine? (8:1)
6. How did the woman respond to Elisha's warning? (8:2)
7. Why did the Shunammite woman return to Israel after seven years? (8:3)
8. What did the woman need in order to resume her life in her homeland? (8:3)
9. To whom did the king happen to be talking when the woman came to him to plead her cause? (8:4)
- * 10. What was the subject of the king's conversation with Gehazi? (8:4-5)
11. What specific story had Gehazi chosen to tell the king? (8:5)
- * 12. What was noteworthy about the timing of the woman's arrival? (8:5)
13. What did the king want to discuss after being introduced to the Shunammite woman? (8:6)
- * 14. How did the king deal with the woman's request to have her house and land restored? (8:6)

Get It

- * 15. How do we know that Elisha put a priority on long-term relationships?
16. If you knew of an impending disaster, what advice would you have for your friends?
17. What are the issues of fairness surrounding the widow's choice to leave and then come back?
- * 18. How did the widow's association with the prophet aid her cause although he was not present to intervene for her?
19. What is so compelling about hearing a story firsthand?
20. What might have motivated the king's generosity toward the widow?
21. When have you seen the hand of God in the timing of events in your life?
22. What would you be willing to risk in terms of goods and relationships in order to be obedient to God?

Apply It

- * 23. What long-standing friendship needs an investment of time and energy from you in order to keep it current?
24. How can you check your spiritual temperature to be sure that earthly attachments would not prevent you from hearing and obeying the Lord?

Hazael Murders Ben-Hadad - 2 Kings 8:7-15

Topics: Answers, Beliefs, Gifts, Knowledge, Murder, Prophecy, Questions, Shame, Sickness, Sorrow, Truth

Open It

- * 1. Why does an unwavering stare tend to make us uncomfortable?
- 2. What person have you known or known of who strikes you as truly unscrupulous?
- 3. Why would you like (or not like) to see into the future?

Explore It

- 4. Where had Elisha journeyed? (8:7)
- * 5. What did the king of Aram want to know about his future? (8:8)
- 6. In what different ways did the king of Aram show respect for God and His prophet? (8:8-9)
- 7. Whom did the king send to inquire of Elisha? (8:8-9)
- 8. What was the discrepancy between Elisha's answer to the king and what he knew would actually happen? (8:10)
- * 9. After Elisha had revealed his insights to Hazael, what did he do? (8:10-11)
- * 10. What was Hazael's reaction to Elisha's stare? (8:11)
- 11. How did Elisha explain his weeping to Hazael? (8:12)
- 12. What awful deeds did Elisha predict for Hazael? (8:12)
- 13. What seems insincere about Hazael's reaction to Elisha's prophecy? (8:13)
- 14. What specific turn of historical events had God revealed to Elisha? (8:13)
- 15. What answer did Hazael report back to the king? (8:14)
- 16. What did Hazael do in fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy? (8:15)

Get It

- 17. Why did Ben-Hadad see Elisha's visit as an opportunity to learn his own fate?
- 18. What are some indications that Ben-Hadad trusted Hazael?
- 19. Why do you think Elisha sent one message to the king but revealed another outcome to Hazael?
- * 20. Why would Elisha's stare have made Hazael feel ashamed?
- 21. What difference does it make that God knows the outcome of our choices before we make them?
- * 22. In what sense was Elisha's God-given knowledge a burden to him?
- 23. Why do you think Hazael acted as if he didn't understand Elisha's implications?
- 24. Do you think his encounter with Elisha in any way changed Hazael's plans? Why?

Apply It

- * 25. How might you use the truth of God's Word to shed light on the choices facing someone in authority?
- 26. What instance of suffering (whether near by or far away) can be the subject of your earnest prayers this week?

Jehoram and Ahaziah - 2 Kings 8:16-29

Topics: Death, Evil, History, Idolatry, Marriage, Mercy, Promises, Rebellion, Relationships, War

Open It

- * 1. In your own life or the life of someone close to you, when have you observed the negative influence of the wrong friends?
- 2. What notorious villain, famous antihero, or popular figure would you least like to have as an in-law, and why?

Explore It

- 3. Who was king of Israel when Jehoram succeeded his father, Jehoshaphat, in Judah? (8:16)
- 4. How long did Jehoram's reign last? (8:17)
- * 5. Why was Jehoram's reign similar to that of the kings of Israel? (8:18)
- * 6. What promise was God honoring when He did not destroy Judah because of the sin of its king? (8:19)
- 7. Which conquered people rebelled against the rule of the king of Judah? (8:20)
- 8. What happened when Jehoram sought to subdue the Edomites with military power? (8:21)
- 9. What two groups rebelled at that time and were not reconquered? (8:22)
- 10. How old was Jehoram's son Ahaziah when he began to reign as king? (8:26)
- 11. How was Ahaziah related to the kings of Israel? (8:27)
- * 12. Why did Ahaziah become an evil man? (8:27)
- 13. Against what foreign king did Ahaziah and Joram go to war? (8:28)
- 14. Which king was wounded in the battle with Hazael? (8:28-29)
- 15. Why did Ahaziah go to visit Joram? (8:29)

Get It

- * 16. How did the son of one of Judah's better kings fall into the sins of the kings of Israel?
- 17. On what did God base His judgment?
- 18. What are some reasons why the army of Judah was quick to disband and give up the fight?
- 19. How did Jehoram's marriage to a daughter of Ahab perpetuate the kingdom's problems into the next generation?
- 20. Why did Joram have to withdraw from the battle against Aram?
- * 21. How much do you think good people influence unsavory characters with whom they associate and vice versa? Why?
- 22. Why isn't it possible to marry someone with very different values from your own and not be influenced by him or her?

Apply It

- * 23. What associations or friendships in your life should you examine to make sure they are not subtly drawing you away from God?
- 24. In what area would you like to ask God to help you overcome the heritage of your own family?

Jehu - 2 Kings 9:1-37

Topics: Escape, God's Will, Help, Idolatry, Justice, Murder, Occult, Peace, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Rebellion, Running, Vengeance

Open It

1. What fictional villain or villainess do you find fascinating?
- * 2. What would it be like for our country to be ruled by a tyrant?
3. Who are some of your favorite Christian leaders or teachers? Why?

Explore It

4. Where did Elisha send one of the young prophets on an urgent errand? (9:1)
5. What message was the prophet to convey to Jehu in secret? (9:2-3)
6. How did the young prophet separate Jehu from the group of officers? (9:4-6)
- * 7. According to the prophecy, how was Jehu to carry out God's will concerning Ahab's family? (9:6-10)
8. When the prophet had left, what did the other officers ask Jehu? (9:11)
9. How did Jehu summarize the prophet's actions for his fellow officers? (9:12)
10. How did Jehu's officers respond to the idea of raising up a new king? (9:13)
11. Why was Joram, king of Israel, particularly vulnerable at the time Jehu was anointed? (9:14-15)
12. After asking his supporters to keep his kingship a secret, where did Jehu go? (9:16)
13. What order did Joram give when Jehu's army was spotted coming toward Jezreel? (9:17)
14. What question did the messenger ask of Jehu? (9:18)
- * 15. How did Jehu reply to the king's plea for peace? (9:18-19, 22)
16. What did Joram do when the first messenger didn't come back? (9:19)
17. After the second messenger deserted in the same manner as the first, how did Joram take matters into his own hands? (9:21-22)
18. What happened when Joram tried to flee? (9:23-24)
19. What did Jehu want Joram's chariot officer to do in order to fulfill God's prophecy? (9:25-26)
20. What were the circumstances of Ahaziah's death? (9:27-29)
21. How did Jezebel attempt to show that she was not intimidated by Jehu? (9:30-31)
- * 22. How did Jehu manage to destroy Jezebel without lifting a hand against her? (9:32-33)
23. What did Jehu discover later when he sent servants to bury Jezebel? (9:34-35)
24. What prophecy of Elijah did Jehu realize had been fulfilled? (9:36-37)

Get It

25. How would you explain the haste and secrecy of the errand on which Elisha sent the young prophet?
- * 26. How did Jehu justify the fact that he did not come in peace?
27. When can conflict be a good thing?
28. What or who are some of the enemies of goodness and truth today?
29. What does it mean for us today to avoid "making peace with idolatry and witchcraft"?
30. What responsibility do we have to stand for God, as Jehu did?
31. What do you assume about a government from which there are wholesale defections when the opportunity arises?
- * 32. What loyalty supersedes king and country for every believer?
33. Of what two evils did Jehu claim to want to rid Israel?
34. Why was it significant that the bodies of Ahaziah and Jezebel were thrown unceremoniously on a certain plot of ground at Jezreel?
35. Why is dishonorable treatment of a body after death reserved only for the most hated individuals?

36. In what sense is a proper burial a sign of respect?

Apply It

- * 37. How can you show your support for a Christian leader or teacher?
- 38. For what fulfillment of prophecy do you praise God?

Ahab's Family Killed - 2 Kings 10:1-17

Topics: Approval, Challenge, Children, Death, Example, Family, Fear, Friendship, Loyalty, Murder, Promises, Prophecy, Rebellion, Relationships, Serving, Swearing, Teamwork, Zeal

Open It

1. Whom would you want to raise your children should something happen to you and your spouse?
- * 2. What are some of the ways that politicians form alliances?

Explore It

3. When Joram and Jezebel were dead, what threats to Jehu's kingship still remained? (10:1)
4. What challenge did Jehu issue to the elders and guardians of Joram's children? (10:2-3)
5. Why were the officials in Samaria afraid of Jehu? (10:4)
6. Instead of mounting a defense, what message did the officials send back to Jehu? (10:5)
7. What request of the officials did Jehu make by return message? (10:6)
- * 8. Why were all of Joram's potential heirs in one place and vulnerable? (10:6)
- * 9. What action did the guardians take against their charges? (10:7-8)
- * 10. For which violent acts did Jehu take responsibility, and which ones did he lay at the feet of the people? (10:9)
11. Who was guilty of what? (10:9-11)
12. How extensive did Jehu plan to make his cleansing of Israel? (10:10-11)
13. What citizens of Judah were included in Jehu's purge of Israel? (10:12-14)
14. Whom did Jehu meet while en route to Samaria? (10:15)
15. How did Jehu see his various actions against the house of Ahab? (10:16)

Get It

- * 16. In what way does shared guilt bind people together?
17. What was effective about Jehu's strategy of telling Ahaziah's officials to prepare to defend their master's dynasty?
- * 18. Why was it shrewd for Jehu to let others do some of the killing?
19. In our day and age how do people show "zeal for the Lord"?
20. Besides fulfilling Elijah's prophecy, what pragmatic purpose did Jehu have in destroying all of the family, friends, and allies of Ahaziah?
21. How would you feel if you were appointed by God to carry out a judgment against someone else?

Apply It

- * 22. As a Christian how can you free yourself from people who want to control you with shared guilt?
23. What tasks can you delegate among fellow family members, church members, or employees so that individuals have more of a sense of ownership in the enterprise as a whole?

Ministers of Baal Killed - 2 Kings 10:18-36

Topics: Achievements, Compromise, Death, Deceit, Escape, Faults, Flattery, Heart, Idolatry, Instructions, Law, Life, Motives, Murder, Obedience, Plans, Preparation, Punishment, Purpose, Rewards, Right, Sacrifice, Separation

Open It

1. What are some ways that criminals can be lured into a trap and then arrested?
- * 2. What is one job or project that you would like to see completed?
3. What place or building would you like to see reduced to rubble and never rebuilt? Why?

Explore It

4. How did Jehu deliberately misrepresent himself when he first began to rule in Israel? (10:18)
5. Why was Jehu eager to gather every priest of Baal in one place? (10:19)
6. Who came to the assembly proclaimed by Jehu? (10:20-21)
7. With what attention did Jehu flatter the assembled priests? (10:22)
8. What did Jehu and Jehonadab do to make sure they didn't destroy any innocent people? (10:23)
9. What orders did Jehu give to eighty men outside the temple? (10:24)
10. What did Jehu's guards and officers do to the priests of Baal? (10:25)
11. What became of the temple of Baal? (10:26-27)
- * 12. Which of God's mandates did Jehu fulfill completely? (10:28)
- * 13. What unorthodox religious practices did Jehu fail to eliminate? (10:29)
14. Why did the Lord promise Jehu that his descendants would sit on the throne to the fourth generation? (10:30)
- * 15. What was the condition of Jehu's heart before God? (10:31)
16. What was happening to the kingdom of Israel during Jehu's reign? (10:32-33)
17. How long did Jehu reign in Samaria? (10:36)

Get It

18. Why is shrewdness sometimes as important as zeal in achieving specific goals?
19. What could Jehu have done short of deception to be sure he destroyed every last prophet of Baal?
20. How did Jehu and Jehonadab manipulate the gathering of prophets to make their "devotion" look genuine?
- * 21. What was the danger in leaving the temple of Baal standing, even though all the priests were dead?
- * 22. Why is unwavering obedience over a long time more difficult than a single instance of bold, zealous action?
23. In what areas do Christians today have difficulty being consistent?
24. Whom does God use to carry out His purposes?
25. To you what is most difficult about being consistent with your stated beliefs?

Apply It

- * 26. What habit can you cultivate that will help you to keep the law of the Lord with all your heart?
27. How can careful planning help you to achieve a goal you have set for yourself?

Athaliah and Joash - 2 Kings 11:1-21

Topics: Armor, Children, Covenant, Death, Hiding, Idolatry, Instructions, Joy, Murder, People, Plans, Protection, Purity, Quiet, Rebellion, Swearing, Timing, Vows

Open It

1. What are the pros and cons of religious officials becoming involved in government affairs?
2. When do you most long for “peace and quiet”?
- * 3. How would you finish the sentence “A grandmother is . . .”?

Explore It

- * 4. How did the king of Judah’s mother show herself to be ruthless? (11:1)
- * 5. How was one of Ahaziah’s sons saved from the massacre? (11:2)
- * 6. Where was the child prince kept safe while Athaliah ruled? (11:3)
7. How long did Athaliah rule unchallenged? (11:4)
8. What leaders of Judah were called together by Jehoiada the priest? (11:4)
9. What did Jehoiada require of everyone before he revealed the existence of a legitimate heir? (11:4)
10. What natural routine did Jehoiada alter slightly in order to give the young king the maximum protection? (11:5-7)
11. What were the guards instructed to do if anyone tried to approach Joash? (11:8)
12. How did Jehoiada arm the troops that would guard the young king? (11:10)
13. When the guards were in place, what did Jehoiada do in the presence of the assembled people of Judah? (11:12)
14. How did Athaliah find out that something unusual was happening? (11:13)
15. What did Athaliah see taking place in the temple? (11:14)
16. What was Athaliah’s reaction to the plan Jehoiada was carrying out? (11:14)
17. Why were the commanders careful to seize and kill Athaliah before she reached the temple? (11:15-16)
18. What two covenants did Jehoiada institute? (11:17)
19. How did the people respond to the restoration of the rightful king and the covenant with God? (11:18)
20. What was the mood in Jerusalem when the new king was taken up to the throne? (11:20)

Get It

21. Why was Athaliah willing to destroy members of her own family?
- * 22. Why was it so important to the future of Judah that at least one of Ahaziah’s sons was rescued?
23. How do you think the loyal commanders reacted when they learned that an heir to the throne had been kept alive?
24. Why was Jehoiada in an ideal position to muster protection for the young king?
25. What is particularly repugnant about a person who will even destroy his or her own relatives in order to reach his or her ambitions?
26. Why do you suppose Athaliah had few if any supporters in Judah?
27. Why does the exercise of raw power not always inspire loyalty?
- * 28. How did Jehoiada show respect for God even in the destruction of His enemies?

Apply It

- * 29. To what child in a difficult situation can you reach out with the love of God? How?
30. How could you personally reaffirm the covenant between the Lord and yourself?

Joash Repairs the Temple - 2 Kings 12:1-21

Topics: Accountability, Advice, Death, Disobedience, Employment, Enemies, Family, Gifts, Guilt, Honor, Instructions, Integrity, Money, Rebellion, Right, Sin, War, Wealth, Work

Open It

1. What aspect of personal finances do you find most trying?
2. What do you appreciate most about honest tradesmen?
3. In what situations is honesty very important to you?
- * 4. What are the pros and cons of doing home repairs yourself versus calling a professional?

Explore It

5. How long did Joash reign in Judah? (12:1)
6. What was a major factor in making Joash's reign pleasing to God? (12:2)
7. What displeasing practices from earlier monarchs did Joash not eliminate? (12:3)
- * 8. What was the original plan for funding and accomplishing the repairs on the temple? (12:4-5)
9. How much time elapsed without any real change in the condition of the temple? (12:6)
- * 10. What change did Joash order in the procedure for repairing the temple? (12:7-8)
11. What was Jehoiada's innovation, which allowed only two people to handle the money that came in? (12:9-10)
- * 12. Who received the money and channeled it into the work in the new arrangement? (12:11-12)
13. What ceased when repairs on the temple speeded up? (12:13-14)
14. How reliable were the on-site supervisors of the temple repairs? (12:15)
15. What types of offerings were being received by the priests? (12:16)
16. What military threat did Israel face during Joash's reign? (12:17)
17. What did Joash decide to give away in order to stave off an invasion? (12:18)
18. What brought about the end of Joash's reign? (12:20-21)
19. Who succeeded Joash as king of Judah? (12:21)

Get It

20. What interpersonal relationship proved beneficial for Joash and for Judah?
21. What popular practice of the people of Judah did Joash and Jehoiada decline to challenge?
- * 22. Why were the repairs to the temple less than successful when each priest was given supplementary money and expected to do the work himself?
23. How did Joash ensure that the money given to the temple restoration was used wisely?
24. What does it mean to use money wisely?
25. What are the advantages of having organizational funds handled by the fewest individuals possible?
26. How did Jehoiada make sure that the needs of the priests were still met when the accounting system changed?
- * 27. How did Jehoiada ensure that all the work got done and all responsibilities were carried out satisfactorily?
28. What difference does it make how honest we are?
29. What was good and bad about the way Joash held off the threat from Hazael?
30. What are the pitfalls of "buying off" a bully?

Apply It

- * 31. In what area of life where you guide or supervise others could you call forth the best in them by trusting them with more responsibility?
32. What is one thing you can do to earn the trust of your boss, spouse, or other important person this

week?

33. In what situation do you need to trust God instead of “buying” security for the moment?

Jehoahaz King of Israel - 2 Kings 13:1-9

Topics: Anger, Escape, Evil, Freedom, Habits, Listening, Oppressed, Repentance, Sin

Open It

- * 1. What do you think you would find hardest about being a slave?
- 2. Why do you think bad habits are so hard to break?

Explore It

- 3. Who was king of Judah when Jehoahaz took over in Israel? (13:1)
- * 4. Why did the Lord view Jehoahaz as evil? (13:2)
- * 5. What hardship did God use to punish Israel for its unfaithfulness? (13:3)
- * 6. Why did God listen to Jehoahaz' plea for help? (13:4)
- 7. How was the suffering of Israel alleviated for a time? (13:5)
- 8. What vestiges of idolatry did the people fail to give up even when God had mercy on them? (13:6)
- 9. What was the condition of Israel's army after the war with the king of Aram? (13:7)
- 10. Who succeeded Jehoahaz as king when he died? (13:9)

Get It

- * 11. What sin kept cropping up in Israel and bringing suffering on the people?
- 12. Why does the Bible contain so many mentions of the need for repentance?
- * 13. What can we glean from this passage about God's sense of pity for sufferers?
- 14. Why is "home" one of our most cherished possessions?
- 15. Why is a sin of society seldom limited to one generation?

Apply It

- * 16. For what suffering person can you pray and appeal to God's care for that person's pain?
- 17. What act of praise and thanksgiving can express your gratitude for your political freedom?

Jehoash King of Israel - 2 Kings 13:10-25

Topics: Achievements, Anger, Body, Compassion, Covenant, Death, Evil, Grace, History, Idolatry, Miracles, Mourning, Oppressed, Resurrection, Sickness, Sin, Sorrow, Testing, Victory, War

Open It

1. How do you respond to contemporary stories of miracles occurring in certain special locations?
- * 2. Why do some people make a deathbed visit when they have not seen the dying person in many years?

Explore It

3. How long did Jehoahaz' son Jehoash reign in Israel? (13:10)
4. With what kingdom was Israel at war during Jehoash's reign? (13:12)
5. How ill was Elisha when the king visited him? (13:14)
6. What was Jehoash's demeanor when he came to Elisha? (13:14)
- * 7. What symbolic action did Elisha have Jehoash make, which then became a prophecy? (13:15-17)
- * 8. After the first favorable prophecy, what did Elisha tell Jehoash to do next? (13:18)
- * 9. Why was Elisha angered that Jehoash only struck three times? (13:19)
10. What additional miracle is associated with Elisha even after his death? (13:20-21)
11. Why did the Lord have compassion on Israel after they had suffered for a time under the oppression of Aram? (13:22-23)
12. Once Hazael was dead, what was Jehoash able to recapture from Aram? (13:24-25)

Get It

- * 13. Why do you suppose the king went down to see the dying prophet Elisha when the king was not living in accordance with God's will?
- * 14. What about the intentional blessing of the next generation by the elders before they die would be good for us to do today?
15. After being told that he would prevail in his first battle with Aram, how did Jehoash evidence a lack of faith in the way he responded to Elisha's next command?
16. What did the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have to do with God's relationship with Israel under Jehoahaz and Jehoash?
17. How was Elisha's prophecy of the arrows fulfilled during Jehoash's reign?

Apply It

18. In what area of your life would you like to pray for greater courage to pursue what God has for you to do?
- * 19. What can you do to learn from an elderly believer who could give you wisdom or advice?

Amaziah King of Judah - 2 Kings 14:1-22

Topics: Achievements, Ambition, Challenge, Children, Comparisons, Confidence, Death, Example, Home, Justice, Law, Listening, Murder, Name, Parents, Punishment, Rebellion, Restoration, Revenge, Right, Running, Sacrifice, Victory, War, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the honorable and dishonorable reasons that people fight one another?
- 2. How do you feel about laws that require sentencing of parents when juveniles break the law?
- 3. What instance do you know of in which one success made someone too cocky and willing to take risks?

Explore It

- 4. Who was king of Israel during most of Amaziah's reign in Judah? (14:1)
- 5. How did Amaziah compare spiritually with David? (14:3)
- 6. Whose reign did Amaziah's most resemble in terms of faithfulness to God? (14:3-4)
- 7. What did Amaziah do in response to the rebellion that had ended his father's life? (14:5)
- 8. Why did Amaziah decide not to execute the sons along with the fathers, as was often the practice in the ancient world? (14:6)
- 9. What was Amaziah's greatest military victory? (14:7)
- * 10. After Amaziah's victory over the Edomites, what message did Amaziah send to Jehoash? (14:8)
- * 11. What was the parable that Jehoash used to demean Amaziah but also to discourage a confrontation? (14:9-10)
- 12. Where did the confrontation between Israel and Judah take place? (14:11)
- * 13. What was the outcome of the battle between Israel and Judah? (14:12-14)
- 14. What was the extent of Jehoash's destruction and plundering in Judah? (14:13-14)
- 15. How did Amaziah die? (14:19-20)

Get It

- 16. Where would you place Amaziah on the spectrum of kings of Judah, from godly to evil?
- 17. What seems wise or unwise about Amaziah's decision to execute only the assassins and not their families?
- * 18. What do you suppose motivated Amaziah to issue a challenge to the king of Israel?
- 19. What evidence is there that Jehoash's reply to Amaziah was designed to defuse conflict? to spark conflict?
- 20. What reasons can you see for Amaziah's unpopularity?
- * 21. What verbal goads and challenges to pride do you often see and hear?
- 22. If you were a coach, how would you speak to your team about their first big victory?
- 23. What are some areas in which Christians can and should resist the competitive rivalries that pervade our society?
- 24. What spiritual tools are at our disposal to keep us from becoming unwisely carried away with our own successes?
- 25. What are the greatest challenges to your pride?

Apply It

- 26. What do you need to remember the next time you are feeling particularly successful?
- * 27. How can you respond the next time someone tries to goad you into a confrontation through an attack on your self-respect?

Jeroboam II King of Israel - 2 Kings 14:23-29

Topics: Achievements, Evil, History, Influence, Mercy, Prophecy, Restoration, Salvation, Sin, Suffering, War

Open It

- * 1. What, in your mind, is an unforgettable example of helplessness?
- 2. What person in your life could be seen as one who comes to the rescue of others? How?
- 3. When have you relied on someone else to get you out of a jam?

Explore It

- 4. Who was king in Judah when Jeroboam took over in Israel? (14:23)
- 5. What was God's evaluation of Jeroboam, like so many other kings of Israel before him? (14:24)
- 6. What were Jeroboam's historic accomplishments? (14:25)
- * 7. Who predicted what? (14:25)
- 8. What did God see with regard to the plight of Israel? (14:26)
- * 9. Who was suffering? Why? (14:26)
- * 10. How did Israel get out of the mess it was in? (14:26-28)
 - 11. What had God not said with regard to Israel? (14:27)
 - 12. Who actually saved Israel, and who was His instrument? (14:27-28)
 - 13. By whom was Jeroboam succeeded after his death? (14:29)

Get It

- 14. How do we know that God is not limited to using only "righteous" people to accomplish His purposes?
- 15. What limits does God put on His acts of discipline?
- 16. What is striking to you about the spiritual evaluation of Jeroboam and the record of his exploits?
- * 17. In what sense was the restoration of territory for Israel "bigger than the king"?
- 18. What has God been known to do for either individuals or nations that have no helper?
- * 19. How can this story inspire humility in us?
- 20. How can the biblical evidence of God's pity on suffering be an encouragement to you or someone near you when you find yourself in dire circumstances?

Apply It

- * 21. The next time you see that you have been used of God, how can you remember to give credit to God?
- 22. For what "rescue" from suffering do you want to praise God today?

Azariah King of Judah - 2 Kings 15:1-7

Topics: Children, Family, Government, History, Parents, Right, Separation, Sickness, Traditions

Open It

- * 1. Why do you think so many people take notice when a prominent person gets sick or contracts an illness?
- 2. What advantages and disadvantages do you see in a government ruled by one person who is succeeded by his son from generation to generation?

Explore It

- 3. How far into Jeroboam's reign in Israel did Azariah take the throne in Judah? (15:1)
- 4. How old was Azariah when he assumed the throne? (15:2)
- 5. How long was Azariah king in Judah? (15:2)
- 6. Unlike some of the sons of the kings of Judah, what was the national origin of Azariah's mother? (15:2)
- * 7. What did God think of Azariah's deeds? (15:3)
- 8. How were Azariah and his father alike? (15:3)
- 9. What ongoing sin of the people of Judah was not addressed under Azariah? (15:4)
- * 10. What was the cause of Azariah's unusual isolation? (15:5)
- * 11. Who actually conducted the affairs of government during Azariah's reign? (15:5)
- 12. Who was Azariah's successor? (15:7)

Get It

- 13. What qualities do you think a leader would have needed in order to remove the high places from Israel?
- * 14. Why do you think Azariah is credited with the accomplishments of his reign although the Scripture records that his son was the "power behind the throne"?
- * 15. How does it feel to have someone else get the credit when you have done most of the work?
- 16. Judging from this passage, how do we know that an illness or disability is not necessarily a sign of God's disapproval?
- 17. What difference might it have made that Azariah's mother was from Jerusalem?
- 18. How would you feel if you could know exactly what God thinks of the life-style you lead?
- 19. Why was Jotham more qualified than most royal heirs to succeed his father?

Apply It

- * 20. How might you be able to help someone who is not receiving the credit he or she is due?
- 21. Whom do you know who is working hard "behind the scenes" and would appreciate a gesture of thanks from you this week?

Kings of Israel - 2 Kings 15:8-31

Topics: Ambition, Bargaining, Enemies, Evil, Murder, Prophecy, Rebellion, Sin

Open It

- * 1. In your experience how often is it true that “those who live by the sword will die by the sword”?
- 2. In your opinion what is good or bad about a total change of staff when a new president is elected?
- 3. What examples have you seen of power changing a person?

Explore It

- 4. After Jeroboam (the king who had restored some of Israel’s territory) died, how long did his son last as king? (15:8)
- 5. What was God’s evaluation of Zechariah son of Jeroboam? (15:9)
- * 6. How did Zechariah die and lose the kingship? (15:10)
- 7. What prophecy was fulfilled when Shallum assassinated Zechariah and took over as king? (15:12)
- 8. While the succession was happening peacefully in Judah, what happened to Shallum in Israel? (15:13-14)
- 9. What example do we have of the way Menahem used violence and intimidation to consolidate his power? (15:16)
- 10. How long did Menahem reign after he assassinated his predecessor? (15:17)
- 11. Why did God see Menahem as no better than his predecessors? (15:18)
- 12. How did Menahem use a foreign invader to strengthen his own hand in Israel? (15:19-20)
- 13. What became of the threat of Assyrian invasion during Menahem’s reign? (15:20)
- 14. What happened after Menahem’s death? (15:21-22)
- * 15. How was the succession to the throne of Israel determined again after Pekahiah? (15:25)
- 16. After Pekah son of Remaliah became king by assassinating Pekahiah, what changes did he make in the way Israel related to God? (15:28)
- 17. What foreign king invaded significant portions of Israel during Pekah’s reign? (15:29)
- * 18. How did Pekah son of Remaliah die? (15:30)

Get It

- 19. What judgment is repeated over and over again about the kings of Israel?
- * 20. How many of the kings in this period died by assassination and were succeeded by someone unrelated to them?
- 21. What do you suppose God would have liked to see the threat of foreign invasion inspire in the leaders and people of Israel?
- 22. How secure would you feel if you were able to pay someone with superior strength to leave you alone?
- 23. Which king, of those mentioned in this passage, seemed particularly evil? Why?
- * 24. What’s wrong with the thinking that ruthlessness is necessary for success in leadership?
- 25. How do you suppose the average citizen of Israel was affected by this succession of selfish and violent kings?

Apply It

- * 26. For what leaders of our country or the world do you feel moved to pray this week?
- 27. In what role of leadership in your life (whether formally recognized as a position or not) can you ask God to temper your ambition with concern for those you lead?

Jotham and Ahaz - 2 Kings 15:32-16:20

Topics: Ambassadors, Children, Disobedience, Enemies, Evil, Fear, Flattery, Gifts, Help, History, Idolatry, Instructions, Parents, Right, Sacrifice, Submission, War, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What changes might you be willing to make in order to show your loyalty to a new boss?
- 2. In what ways do you think of yourself as flexible or inflexible when it comes to styles of worship?

Explore It

- 3. Who was king in Israel when Jotham succeeded his father in Judah? (15:32)
- 4. What religious practice of the people did Jotham leave unchallenged? (15:34-35)
- 5. What restoration was Jotham able to accomplish in Jerusalem? (15:35)
- 6. What nations were hostile toward Judah during Jotham's reign? (15:37)
- 7. How did Ahaz son of Jotham compare to his father? (16:2)
- 8. What nations did Ahaz' religious practices resemble? (16:3)
- 9. Besides the sacrifices in the high places, which had been going on for generations, what did Ahaz add? (16:4)
- 10. How did the kings of Aram and Israel fare in their war against Judah? (16:5-6)
- 11. To whom did Ahaz appeal for help against his enemies? (16:7)
- * 12. How did Ahaz buy the friendship of Tiglath-Pileser? (16:8-9)
- * 13. What new religious idea did Ahaz send home during his visit to Damascus? (16:10-11)
- * 14. What new practices did Ahaz inaugurate when he returned to Judah? (16:12-14)
- 15. How did Ahaz order the priest to reorder the sacrificial practices? (16:15)
- 16. How did Uriah the priest respond to the changes in worship ordered by Ahaz? (16:16)
- 17. Why did Ahaz feel it was necessary to remove some of the more glorious elements of Hebrew worship? (16:17-18)

Get It

- 18. Since the Scripture says, "the Lord began to send Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah," what might God have been hoping that Judah would do in response?
- * 19. What was good and bad, for the average Israelite, about Ahaz' willingness to appease the king of Assyria?
- 20. To what extent do we have the freedom to innovate in our worship of the Lord God?
- 21. Why do political leaders, even those who are not religious, often want the approval of religious figures for their actions?
- * 22. If you had been the chief priest under Ahaz, how do you think you would have responded to his orders?
- 23. To what extent are the ministers of God responsible for the continuing faithfulness of their people to God's commands?

Apply It

- 24. How can you be open to different styles of worship without giving up on the essentials of the faith?
- * 25. To what church or political leader can you write to encourage him or her not to compromise on important values?

Israel Exiled because of Sin - 2 Kings 17:1-23

Topics: Anger, Covenant, Disobedience, Enemies, Evil, Forsake, History, Idolatry, Influence, Law, Occult, Peer Pressure, Power, Prophecy, Rejection, Sacrifice, Sin, Slavery, Stubbornness, Suffering, War, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What warning from your parents or teachers do you wish you had heeded?
- 2. Why do you think human beings rarely avoid the mistakes of previous generations?

Explore It

- 3. How long did Hoshea son of Elah reign in Israel? (17:1)
- 4. To what foreign power was Israel paying tribute? (17:3)
- 5. Why was the king of Assyria angry with the king of Israel? (17:4)
- * 6. What became of the kingdom of Israel during the reign of Hoshea? (17:5-6)
- 7. To where were the Israelites deported by the Assyrians? (17:6)
- * 8. Why did disaster befall the people of Israel? (17:7-8)
- 9. What secret practices were flourishing in Israel at the time of its downfall? (17:9-12)
- * 10. What had the Lord done through the years to offer Israel and Judah an alternative to their idolatry? (17:13)
- 11. How did God characterize the people of Israel from one generation to the next? (17:14)
- 12. How do we know that God's people were aware that they were disobeying God? (17:15)
- 13. What were some of the different gods that were worshiped in Israel? (17:16)
- 14. What practices were common in Israel that were particularly hateful to God? (17:17)
- 15. When Israel was deported, what did that represent in terms of God's relationship with them? (17:18)
- 16. How did the tribe of Judah differ from Israel with regard to its obedience to God? (17:19)
- 17. What was the final result of the hardships God brought on Israel? (17:20)
- 18. What was the error of Israel's first king that eventually led to its collapse as a kingdom? (17:21-23)

Get It

- 19. How long had God been working with Israel and Judah to make them a people set apart?
- * 20. Why were a multitude of worship places and gods unacceptable for the children of the Holy One of Israel?
- 21. How did the overwhelming evil of Israel affect it?
- 22. What led to Israel's conquest?
- * 23. What emotion do we provoke in God when we knowingly disobey His commands?
- 24. What would be particularly difficult about the job of a prophet?
- 25. What do you think motivates people to do what they see other people doing?
- 26. Why isn't God endlessly patient with sin in individuals and nations?
- 27. Why should we take God seriously?
- 28. Why should we take sin seriously?
- 29. In what way do we benefit ourselves when we respect God's wishes and obey?

Apply It

- * 30. What warning from Scripture would you do well to take seriously in your life this coming week?
- 31. In what area would you like to ask God to help you resist the pressure of the culture around you?

Samaria Resettled - 2 Kings 17:24-41

Topics: Children, Compromise, Covenant, Disobedience, Enemies, Forget, Idolatry, Ignorance, Listening, People, Persistence, Power, Punishment, Sacrifice, Teaching, Worship

Open It

1. What amusing anecdotes do you know about foreigners trying to interpret or imitate American culture?
- * 2. What conflicting loyalties do people sometimes try to maintain?
3. What are some examples of stubbornness?

Explore It

4. What peoples were brought by the Assyrians to settle in the land vacated by the Israelites? (17:24)
5. What happened to the people when they first settled in the land of Israel? (17:25)
6. What did the king's officials decide that the settlers needed to know? (17:26)
- * 7. Why did the king send a priest back to the land of Israel after exiling the Israelites? (17:27-28)
- * 8. What religious practices flourished in addition to what was taught by the priest of the Lord? (17:29)
9. What different nationalities brought their religious practices into the land of Israel? (17:30-33)
10. How did the new inhabitants of the land adjust their life-style once they were settled? (17:34)
- * 11. What specific prohibition was part of God's original covenant with Israel? (17:35-38)
12. What did God promise to do for the people if they would worship Him alone? (17:39)
13. How closely did the people who heard God's commands live by the conditions He set down for them? (17:40-41)

Get It

14. What was the king of Assyria hoping to accomplish by moving his captives to unfamiliar lands?
15. What response did God make to a total absence of the worship of Yahweh in the land that had belonged to His people?
16. How did the Assyrian governors view the worship of God?
- * 17. How did God view the Assyrians' compromise—reintroducing worship of God alongside worship of idols?
- * 18. Why isn't God satisfied when people merely add worship of Him to their other spiritual practices?
19. Why does God command us not to serve other gods at the same time He commands us to serve Him?
20. What does God consistently do for those who serve Him and Him alone?
21. What idolatries in modern life are Christians tempted to mix with their worship of God?
22. How can we tell when some person or thing has usurped God's proper place in our lives?

Apply It

- * 23. What question would help you know when something or someone has become an idol to you?
24. What missionary would appreciate your prayers and a note of encouragement and as he or she seeks to convert people from the worship of idols to the true and living God?

Hezekiah King of Judah - 2 Kings 18:1-16

Topics: Comparisons, Covenant, Faithfulness, Gifts, Idolatry, Law, Obedience, Rebellion, Renewal, Right, Submission, Success, Trust, Victory, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What reformer of the church or society do you admire?
- 2. What five years of your life do you view as the most successful, and why?

Explore It

- 3. How long was the reign of Hezekiah son of Ahaz in Judah? (18:1-2)
- 4. How did Hezekiah compare to King David? (18:3)
- 5. What were some of the ways that Hezekiah brought Judah into compliance with God's law? (18:4)
- 6. Why did Hezekiah destroy a historical national artifact? (18:4)
- * 7. Where does Hezekiah stand morally among the kings of the separate kingdom of Judah? (18:5)
- * 8. To what did Hezekiah turn for direction in governing Judah? (18:6)
- * 9. How did God reward Hezekiah for his faithfulness? (18:7-8)
- 10. What was happening in Israel at the time Hezekiah assumed the throne in Judah? (18:9-11)
- 11. Why did misfortunes come upon some of the Hebrew people, the kingdom of Israel? (18:12)
- 12. What happened in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign? (18:13)
- 13. With what message did Hezekiah appease the king of Assyria, to whom he had not been paying the expected tribute? (18:14)
- 14. What price did Hezekiah have to pay to get the Assyrian army to leave Judah? (18:14-16)

Get It

- 15. Why was David always the standard of comparison for the kings of Israel and Judah?
- 16. What symbol of the mercy of God had itself become an idol in Judah?
- 17. Why did Hezekiah destroy the bronze snake that Moses had made?
- 18. How is it possible for symbols of Christian faith and history to become idols to us?
- 19. What do we need to do whenever a thing or person becomes an idol to us?
- * 20. What are the stark contrasts between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah at this point in history?
- 21. Why is it noteworthy when someone consistently obeys God?
- 22. What indications do we have of the intimidating power of Assyria?
- 23. What was difficult about what Hezekiah did in obeying God?
- * 24. Why is obedience to God's commands part and parcel of truly worshiping Him?
- 25. In what way is it difficult to serve God?

Apply It

- * 26. What can you do this week to remind yourself that God is above all things and people in your life?
- 27. What difficult Christian responsibility do you want to fulfill more consistently?
- 28. What call for reform can you help your church to take seriously?

Jerusalem Delivered from Sennacherib - 2 Kings 18:17-19:37

Topics: Answers, Bargaining, Blasphemy, Challenge, Death, Deceit, Depend, Earth, Enemies, Fear, Giving Up, God's Will, Heaven, Idolatry, Insults, Intimidation, Life, Listening, Mourning, Murder, Obedience, Peace, People, Prayer, Pride, Prophecy, Repentance, Reputation, Salvation, Shame, Silence, Sovereignty, Trust, Weaknesses, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. When is a threat most intimidating?
- 2. How do you feel when someone threatens you?
- 3. What is disconcerting when you discover that someone knows a lot about you that you didn't reveal?
- 4. What is one of the most arrogant statements you have ever heard?

Explore It

- 5. What officials of the king of Judah went out of Jerusalem to meet with representatives? (18:17-18)
- 6. What did the Assyrians despise as they called Hezekiah to make a bargain? (18:19-23)
- * 7. What claim did the king of Assyria make in order to intimidate and demoralize Judah? (18:25)
- 8. Why did the Assyrian messengers refuse to speak to the officials of Judah in a language that the people on the walls of the city could not understand? (18:26-27)
- * 9. What message did the Assyrians address directly to Hezekiah's subjects? (18:28-32)
- 10. What examples did the Assyrians offer to urge the people to give up? (18:33-35)
- 11. Why were the people silent in the face of the taunts of the Assyrians? (18:36)
- 12. What was the attitude of the officials of Judah after they heard the provocation of the Assyrians? (18:37; 19:1)
- * 13. What did Hezekiah hope would motivate the Lord to respond with a rebuke to the king of Assyria? (19:3-4)
- 14. What message did Isaiah send back to the king of Judah? (19:5-6)
- 15. What prediction did Isaiah make concerning the field commander who had uttered the threats? (19:7-8)
- 16. What rhetorical questions filled the second message that the king of Assyria sent to Hezekiah? (19:9-13)
- 17. What did Hezekiah do with the letter from the king of Assyria? (19:14)
- 18. Whom did Hezekiah rightly perceive to be the brunt of the Assyrian insults? (19:15-16)
- 19. How did Hezekiah show that he understood the difference between the true God and the gods of the other nations Assyria had conquered? (19:17-18)
- 20. On what basis did Hezekiah ask God to deliver Judah? (19:19)
- 21. What answer did God send to Hezekiah through Isaiah the prophet? (19:20)
- 22. How did God show that He understood the thinking of someone like the king of Assyria? (19:23-24)
- 23. Where did the power of Assyria originate? (19:25-26)
- 24. How did God promise to deal with the arrogance of the Assyrian king? (19:27-28)
- 25. With what promises did God reassure Hezekiah? (19:29-34)
- 26. In what amazing way did God show His power over Assyria? (19:35)
- 27. What was the fate of Sennacherib, king of Assyria? (19:36-37)

Get It

- 28. What did Sennacherib misunderstand about Judah's recent cleansing of the high places and how that affected their relationship with God?
- 29. What could have happened if the people of Jerusalem had turned against Hezekiah and his

officials?

- 30. What was Sennacherib's insult against Hezekiah?
- 31. What was Sennacherib's insult against God?
- * 32. How did Sennacherib try to intimidate Hezekiah?
- 33. What were the signs of humility in Hezekiah's requests to Isaiah?
- 34. What did Hezekiah understand that Sennacherib did not?
- 35. What did Hezekiah want the whole world to understand through this unique confrontation?
- 36. What elements of Isaiah's prophecy against Sennacherib should have given him pause?
- 37. Who allows the despots of this world their temporary power?
- * 38. Why is it better to pray for God to avenge His own name rather than that He will avenge us?
- 39. Why can't we afford to believe everyone who claims to be doing God's bidding?
- 40. How can we tell when someone who claims to be on God's side really isn't?

Apply It

- * 41. What concerns do you have currently in which you could rightly ask God to vindicate His name?
- 42. As you review the ways in which God is not like the other "gods" of this world, which of the Lord's qualities can become the subject of your praise this week?

Hezekiah's Illness - 2 Kings 20:1-21

Topics: Achievements, Ambassadors, Death, Ego, Faithfulness, Foolishness, Gifts, Goodness, Healing, Ignorance, Miracles, Peace, Prayer, Preparation, Pride, Promises, Prophecy, Questions, Remembering, Salvation, Security, Sickness, Sorrow, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. If it were up to you, what age would you like to be when you die?
- 2. How do you feel when someone shows you all of his or her most valuable possessions?
- 3. What do most parents want for their children and their children's children?

Explore It

- * 4. What message from the Lord did Isaiah carry to Hezekiah when he was at the point of death? (20:1)
- * 5. How did Hezekiah respond to his own impending death? (20:2-3)
- * 6. What second message and set of promises did God give to Hezekiah? (20:4-6)
 - 7. After Hezekiah had heard God's promises, what did he request from God? (20:8)
 - 8. Of the signs that Isaiah offered to show Hezekiah, which did Hezekiah choose and why? (20:9-11)
 - 9. Who sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah when he was ill? (20:12)
 - 10. What did Hezekiah show the messengers from Babylon? (20:13)
 - 11. When Isaiah heard what had happened, what did he predict about Babylon? (20:14-18)
 - 12. Why did Hezekiah call the prophecy about Judah's future good? (20:19)

Get It

- * 13. In what sense might it have been better for Judah if Hezekiah had died at the earlier date?
- * 14. From God's perspective why do you think our heart's desire is or is not always best for us?
 - 15. What was good or bad about Hezekiah asking for a sign that God's promise regarding his illness would be fulfilled?
 - 16. In what ways did the Lord show patience to Hezekiah?
 - 17. What would have been a better reaction to the news that Hezekiah's descendants would suffer for his folly?
 - 18. What is unwise about boasting and showcasing our possessions?
 - 19. What drives us to try to impress our peers?

Apply It

- * 20. What prayer that reflects your heart's desire do you need to submit to the wisdom of an all-knowing God?
- 21. In what company might it be wise for you to resist talking about your "blessings" because it might stir up envy or covetousness in your listeners?

Manasseh King of Judah - 2 Kings 21:1-26

Topics: Anger, Children, Death, Enemies, Evil, Forsake, Idolatry, Influence, Injustice, Judgment, Law, Leadership, Listening, Murder, Name, Occult, Parents, Prophecy, Rebellion, Sacrifice, Sin, Worship

Open It

1. What is one of the worst disasters you've ever heard about through the news media?
2. Who is one person you know who turned out to be quite different from his or her parents?
- * 3. In what situation have you seen a flagrant abuse of power?

Explore It

4. How long did Hezekiah's son Manasseh reign over Judah? (21:1)
5. What kings did Manasseh resemble in the way he handled the spiritual life of Judah? (21:2-3)
- * 6. What were some of Manasseh's many deeds that angered the Lord? (21:2-6)
- * 7. What changes did Manasseh make in the temple of God? (21:4-5, 7)
8. What wonderful promises had God made that depended on whether the people kept the Law? (21:7-8)
- * 9. For what portion of the sin of Judah was Manasseh responsible, and for what portion were the people responsible? (21:9)
10. How did Judah of Manasseh's time compare with the nations that God had driven out in order to give them the land? (21:9, 11)
11. Who spoke the word of the Lord with regard to Judah's despicable condition? (21:10)
12. What was the extent of the disaster that God promised to visit on Judah? (21:12)
13. What standard of judgment would be used against Judah? (21:13)
14. What image did the prophecy contain concerning how God would deal with Judah? (21:13)
15. What punishment would God mete out against His people for their disobedience from the days of Moses onward? (21:14-15)
16. What were God's two chief complaints against Manasseh as the leader of His people? (21:16)

Get It

17. How could the son of a righteous king become one of the most evil kings in the history of all Israel?
18. How did Manasseh go one step beyond the rebuilding of the high places and the erection of altars to foreign gods?
19. What special relationship had Judah had with the Lord up to this time?
20. In what way is God's patience limited?
- * 21. To what extent is a leader responsible for causing followers to sin?
- * 22. How did Manasseh abuse his power?
23. In what sense were Manasseh's sins abuses of the power granted him by God?

Apply It

- * 24. What recourse do you have as a Christian whenever a leader, boss, or authority asks you to break God's law?
25. What is one thing you can do to cultivate a love for God's law and a hate for sin?

The Book of the Law Found - 2 Kings 22:1-20

Topics: Anger, Answers, Children, Comparisons, Conscience, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Forsake, Humility, Idolatry, Instructions, Integrity, Law, Peace, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Repentance, Right, Sensitivity, Sorrow, Words, Work

Open It

- * 1. What interesting item have you found while sorting through an attic, basement, or old box?
- 2. What is the best way to deliver bad news?
- 3. When someone must deliver bad news to you, what do you most want that person to do?
- 4. How do you feel when someone responds defensively to valid criticism? when he or she responds with a humble apology?

Explore It

- 5. How old was Josiah when he was made king of Judah? (22:1)
- 6. What kind of a king did Josiah prove to be? (22:2)
- 7. As a young man, what important work did Josiah want to see resumed? (22:3-5)
- 8. How did Josiah want the supervision and payment of the repair work to be handled? (22:4-7)
- 9. What news did the high priest give to Josiah's trusted secretary? (22:8)
- 10. What did Shaphan the secretary do with the book shown to him by the high priest? (22:8)
- 11. What two parts did Shaphan's report contain when he returned to the king? (22:9-10)
- * 12. What did Shaphan do in the presence of the king? (22:10)
- * 13. How did Josiah react to the words of the book that was read? (22:11)
- 14. What instructions did Josiah give his most trusted officials? (22:12-13)
- 15. From reading the book, what did Josiah know about God's feelings toward Judah? (22:13)
- 16. To whom did Josiah's officials go to "inquire of the Lord"? (22:14)
- 17. Which part of the prophetess' answer confirmed Josiah's worst fears? (22:15-17)
- * 18. What promise did the prophetess communicate to Josiah personally? (22:18-20)
- 19. Why was the Lord favorably inclined toward Josiah? (22:19)

Get It

- 20. What does it indicate about the spiritual condition of Judah that the Book of the Law had been missing for a long time?
- 21. What attitude did Josiah have toward the supervisors and their workmen?
- 22. What important choices did Shaphan the secretary make after he received the book from the priest?
- 23. What makes the job of delivering bad news so difficult?
- 24. When should we be willing to deliver bad news?
- 25. How does it feel to receive the news that it is too late to remedy a situation?
- 26. What are some of the different ways people respond when they hear that they are not obeying God?
- * 27. What is admirable about the way Josiah responded when he heard the Book of the Law read?
- 28. What was it about Josiah that enabled him to tear his robes in repentance when he realized that he and his people had not been obeying God?
- * 29. Why was God favorably disposed toward Josiah?
- 30. What can we learn about God from the fact that though Josiah's repentance pleased God, it was not enough to turn away His anger from Judah?
- 31. What conclusions can we draw from the fact that Josiah was the son and grandson of wicked kings?

Apply It

- * 32. What is one concrete step can you take to make sure that God's Word is not lost to you and your family?
- 33. What relationship in your life gives you an opportunity to work on an attitude of faithful service?

Josiah Renews the Covenant - 2 Kings 23:1-35

Topics: Anger, Celebration, Covenant, Death, Evil, Follow-Through, Heart, Idolatry, Initiative, Judgment, Law, Leadership, Name, Obedience, Occult, People, Prophecy, Purity, Rejection, Renewal, Sacrifice, Slavery, Soul, Words, Zeal

Open It

1. How would you dispose of an object if you wanted to make sure that no one would ever recognize it or use it again?
- * 2. What does each member of your family contribute to the overall tone and personality of the whole?
3. What is satisfying about conquering a tough cleanup job?

Explore It

- * 4. To whom did Josiah the king read the recently discovered book of God's law? (23:1-2)
- * 5. What did the king and the people do in response to the words they heard? (23:3)
- * 6. What did Josiah do with the objects, buildings, and priests associated with pagan worship in Judah? (23:4-7)
7. How did Josiah treat the high places and shrines where people had worshiped other gods? (23:8)
8. Prior to Josiah, what privileges did the pagan priests have in Judah? (23:9)
9. What were some of the gods represented by the altars that Josiah desecrated and made unusable? (23:10-14)
10. What important, historic symbol of disobedience did Josiah destroy at Bethel? (23:15)
11. Whose tomb did Josiah happen upon while using human bones to desecrate pagan worship sites? (23:16-18)
12. What practices of the kings of Israel did Josiah root out of the remnant of God's people in Judah? (23:19-20)
13. What did the king order the people to do when his cleansing work had been completed? (23:21)
14. How long had it been since Israel had celebrated the Passover as commanded by God? (23:22-23)
15. What abhorrent spiritual practices did Josiah eliminate? (23:24)
16. How did Josiah compare with other kings? (23:25)
17. What had provoked God to be angry enough to destroy Judah before Josiah had ever come on the scene? (23:26-27)
18. How did Josiah's death and burial fulfill the prophecy that he would not see the judgment that was coming upon Judah? (23:29-30)
19. How did Jehoahaz compare to his father, Josiah? (23:32)
20. What foreign king removed Jehoahaz from the throne and replaced him with his brother? (23:33-34)

Get It

21. Why do you suppose Josiah called the whole nation to repentance even though he had already heard the prophecy of doom for Judah?
- * 22. What did Josiah's actions do for Judah's relationship with God?
23. What did Josiah contribute to the nation of Israel?
- * 24. For whom do you set an example (whether you intend to or not)?
25. In what various ways had the temple of God been defiled and compromised?
26. What foreign influences were represented in the panoply of shrines and worship sites?
27. Why was it not sufficient for Josiah to halt the pagan worship practices?
28. Why do you suppose that the presence of human bones was a universally recognized desecration that would prevent worship in that site ever again?
29. Why do you think people fall out of the habit of observing traditional celebrations, even those

with religious significance?

30. What mood do you suppose prevailed in Judah during Josiah's reforms?

Apply It

- * 31. What opportunities do you have to set a moral example for others this week?
- 32. The next time you learn of an area of disobedience to God's Word in your life, how can you respond to fulfill your desire to obey?
- 33. What step of obedience, however small, can you offer to God as a confirmation of His covenant with you?

Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin - 2 Kings 23:36-24:17

Topics: Enemies, Evil, Giving Up, God's Will, History, Justice, Murder, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Slavery, Wealth

Open It

1. What do you imagine to be some of the hardships of living in a small country that is continually being conquered by one large neighbor or another?
- * 2. If you had to choose between these two options, would you prefer to be banished from your native country for life or confined in your current home under house arrest?

Explore It

3. How long did Jehoiakim (who was installed and renamed by the Pharaoh Neco of Egypt) rule in Jerusalem? (23:36)
4. What kind of a king was Jehoiakim? (23:27)
5. How did Jehoiakim's relationship with Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon change during his rule? (24:1)
6. When raiders from Babylon and other countries attacked Judah, what prophecy was being fulfilled? (24:2)
- * 7. When the Lord executed judgment against Judah, what sins in particular was He unwilling to forgive? (24:3-4)
8. Who succeeded Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah? (24:6)
9. Why was the king of Egypt no longer a potential ally and protector for Judah against Babylon? (24:7)
10. How long did Jehoiachin sit on the throne of Judah? (24:8)
- * 11. What happened when Nebuchadnezzar and his army laid siege to Jerusalem? (24:10-12)
- * 12. What was left of Judah's people and wealth after Nebuchadnezzar captured the king and the city? (24:13-14)
13. Who were some of the notable people taken captive to Babylon? (24:15-16)
14. What was the relationship of Nebuchadnezzar's puppet king to the previous king? (24:17)

Get It

15. Why did Nebuchadnezzar install a new king rather than deal with the old one?
16. Who were the various enemies that contributed to the downfall of Judah?
- * 17. According to the prophets, why was Judah destroyed?
18. Why does God take it upon Himself to avenge "innocent blood"?
19. In what ways did Judah push God too far?
20. What are the pitfalls of relying on someone else's strength, whether physical or spiritual?
21. What advantage was there in Nebuchadnezzar taking captive all but the poorest people of Judah?
- * 22. What "riches" and "strength" do we possess in Christ that cannot be taken away by anyone?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you reaffirm your relationship with Christ and that you are not depending on anyone else's faith or goodness to save you?
24. For what innocent or defenseless person could you step forward? In what way?

The Fall of Jerusalem - 2 Kings 24:18-25:30

Topics: Alone, Death, Escape, Evil, Fear, Honor, Kindness, Punishment, Rebellion, Running, Serving, Suffering, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What is painful about watching people who refuse to learn from their mistakes?
- 2. Why is the punishment for a second or third infraction of the law usually more severe than for the first?

Explore It

- 3. How long did Zedekiah (the king installed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon) rule in Jerusalem? (24:18)
- * 4. How was Zedekiah like so many of the earlier kings of Judah? (24:19)
- * 5. What was the final result of God's anger, which the people had provoked for so long? (24:20)
- * 6. What happened in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign? Why? (25:1-7)
- 7. How long did Nebuchadnezzar lay siege to Jerusalem? (25:2)
- 8. What did the army attempt when there was no food left in the city? (25:3-4)
- 9. What happened to Zedekiah and his army? (25:5-6)
- 10. How did the Babylonians punish Zedekiah for his rebellion? (25:6-7)
- 11. Whom did the king of Babylon send back to Jerusalem to deal with the rebels? (25:8)
- 12. What became of the landmarks of Jerusalem when the Babylonians invaded? (25:9-10)
- 13. What did the commander of the guard do with most of the people in the city? (25:11-12)
- 14. What items of religious and monetary value were broken up and taken by the Babylonians? (25:13-17)
- 15. What became of the leaders of the city who remained after Zedekiah and the army had fled? (25:18-21)
- 16. With most of the people in captivity, who was appointed to rule over Jerusalem? (25:22)
- 17. How did Gedaliah advise the men who remained in the land? (25:23-24)
- 18. What happened to Gedaliah and the people loyal to him? (25:25)
- 19. Why did the few remaining people in Judah flee to Egypt? (25:26)
- 20. How did the fortunes of Jehoiachin (the first king of Judah deported to Babylon) change after thirty-seven years? (25:27-30)

Get It

- 21. How would you summarize the last years of the kingdom of Judah?
- * 22. How did God use the motives of evil men to fulfill His Word and drive the people of Judah from His presence?
- 23. Why did the king who surrendered peacefully fare better than those who rebelled against Babylon?
- 24. What evidence is there that God remembered His people while they were in Babylon?
- 25. When Judah went into captivity, what chapter in their history were they revisiting?
- 26. What gift that God had originally given to His people did He take away because of His anger?
- 27. Which of the awful events of the last years of the kingdom do you think were most traumatic for the Jews?
- * 28. Why is it instructive for us to know that we serve a God who has limits to how much evil He will tolerate?

Apply It

- 29. For what contemporary crisis can you pray, confident that God can use even evil people to accomplish His purposes?

* 30. For what great gift from God (which you might otherwise take for granted) do you want to thank and praise God today?

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Ancestry of the Nation - 1 Chronicles 1:1-3:24

Topics: Family, Heritage, History, Name

Open It

- * 1. What do you know about your family's ancestors?
- 2. Who in your family has an unusual name (first, middle, or last)?
- 3. Why would it be interesting or important to learn about your ancestors?

Explore It

- 4. Who is the first person listed in the genealogical records? (1:1)
- * 5. What kind of people are mentioned in this genealogical record? (1:1-3:24)
- 6. Who were the sons of Noah? (1:4)
- 7. Who was the father of Abram (Abraham)? (1:26-27)
- 8. Who were the sons of Abram (Abraham)? (1:28)
- 9. Who were the sons of Isaac? (1:34)
- 10. Who were the sons of Israel? (2:1-2)
- * 11. Who was the father of David? (2:13-15)
- * 12. Who were the sons of David? (3:1-9)

Get It

- * 13. What is important about the people mentioned in this genealogical record?
- 14. How can knowing your family history give you a sense of identity, heritage, or destiny?
- 15. What does a long list of names in the Bible tell us about the kind of relationship God has with His chosen people?
- 16. Why is this genealogical listing important as related to the birth of Jesus?
- * 17. How have the lives of your ancestors (including grandparents and parents) positively or negatively affected your life?
- 18. Who among your family and ancestors has provided you with a positive spiritual foundation?
- 19. How do you want to be remembered by your descendants?
- 20. What spiritual heritage do you want to leave to your children?

Apply It

- 21. Who could help you discover and record your family's spiritual heritage?
- * 22. Which of your living family members who has been a positive spiritual force for you could you take time this week to thank with a note or a call?

The Tribes of Israel - 1 Chronicles 4:1-9:1

Topics: Family, Heritage, History, Name, Prayer

Open It

1. How much does the review of a movie or a play influence your decision to see it?
- * 2. What is the hardest part about praying?

Explore It

- * 3. For what is Jabez remembered? (4:9-10)
- * 4. What was the content of Jabez's prayer? (4:10)
5. What are the names of the people who were craftsmen? (4:13)
6. Who was married to Pharaoh's daughter? (4:18)
7. What were some of the skilled trades of the clans? (4:21-23)
- * 8. What was noteworthy about the men listed in this chapter? (4:38-40)
9. Who was the firstborn son of Israel, and what did he do that dishonored his name? (5:1)
10. Who gained the birthright of Israel although he was not the firstborn son? (5:2)
11. What tribes of Israel had a large force of men ready for military service? (5:18)
12. Who were unfaithful to God and worshiped false gods? (5:24-26)
13. Who was the father of Moses? (6:3)
14. Who were the brother and sister of Moses? (6:3)

Get It

- * 15. In what way should we model our prayers after Jabez's prayer?
16. Jabez is remembered for being one who prays rather than one who did a heroic act; whom do you know who is like Jabez?
- * 17. Why should we pray for God to be at the center of all areas of our life?
18. If we pray for God to protect us from evil, what is our human responsibility to avoid or resist evil?
19. Like Reuben (see 5:1), how do the consequences of sexual sin follow a person and their family members?
20. Like the half-tribe of Manasseh who had skill and strength but failed to put God first in their life, what goals do we substitute for pursuing God in our life?
21. What does God want us to do more than anything else?
22. How could your Christian life be summarized in one sentence?

Apply It

- * 23. When could you pray daily this week for God to be the center of your life?
24. What changes in attitude or action do you need to make so your life may be more pleasing to the Lord?

Returnees from Exile in Babylon - 1 Chronicles 9:2-44

Topics: Church, Idolatry, Security, Service, Unfaithfulness, Worship

Open It

1. What are the major challenges for a family when they move?
- * 2. What jobs or occupations are commonly despised or avoided by most people?
3. What do people substitute in their life for God?

Explore It

4. To where were the people of Judah taken captive? (9:1)
5. Why were the people of Judah taken into captivity? (9:1)
6. What period of Jewish history does this passage describe? (9:1-2)
7. When the people of Judah returned from captivity, who were among the first to resettle on their own property? (9:2)
8. Who had initiated the job of the gatekeepers? (9:22-23)
- * 9. What was the main job of the gatekeepers? (9:22-27)
10. What did the gatekeepers guard? (9:26)
- * 11. What additional duties did the gatekeepers have? (9:28-33)
- * 12. Why were some of the temple workers exempt from certain duties? (9:33)
13. Who administered the temple in Jerusalem? (9:34)
14. What does this passage tell us about Saul? (9:35-44)

Get It

15. What are the consequences of worshiping idols or material things other than the true living God?
16. In what ways do you think our society has succeeded or failed to honor and obey God?
17. In what way do children sometimes suffer consequences for their parents' sin?
- * 18. What are some of the most important and least important jobs in the church?
19. What can we do to recognize the importance of all jobs in the church and honor all workers regardless of their position?
20. What qualities should a worker in the church have?
- * 21. What job in the church has God prepared you to do?
22. What must a person do to be known as reliable, honest, and trustworthy?
23. How do you think our commitment to worshiping God today compares to the commitment of the Israelites?
24. What makes a worship service more than just attending another church meeting?
25. In what ways can we make our worship of God more meaningful?

Apply It

26. In what area of your life do you want to be more faithful than you have been?
- * 27. In what way can you offer your skills in service to the church this week?
28. What can you do to prepare yourself for the corporate worship service of your church this coming week?

Saul Takes His Life - 1 Chronicles 10:1-14

Topics: Disobedience, Judgment, Results, Sin

Open It

1. What do you think of tabloid newspapers and television shows that report scandals about famous people?
2. What examples can you recall of famous people whose career went downhill or who died in disgrace?
- * 3. What sort of pressures or crises have you been facing lately?
4. What do you think might cause a person to think about suicide?

Explore It

5. Who were the enemies of Israel who fought against them? (10:1-2)
- * 6. What important event in the history of Israel does this passage describe? (10:1-14)
7. How did the Philistines wound Saul? (10:3)
- * 8. What awkward conversation did Saul have with his armor-bearer? (10:4)
9. What did Saul want his armor-bearer to do to him? (10:4)
10. What was the armor-bearer's response to Saul's request? (10:4)
- * 11. What happened to the Israelite towns after Saul killed himself? (10:7)
12. What did the Philistines do to Saul's body to celebrate their victory? (10:8-10)
13. Who retrieved the bodies of Saul and his men to give them a decent burial? (10:11-12)
14. Why did Saul die? (10:13)
15. Where had Saul sought guidance during his reign as king? (10:13-14)
16. What did God do to Saul because of his unfaithfulness? (10:14)
17. Who became the new king of Israel? (10:14)

Get It

- * 18. What kind of a man was Saul?
19. What did Saul do that was disobedient to God?
20. In what way can a wrong decision be the start of a person's destruction?
21. Why was Saul willing to kill himself rather than be captured?
22. What was wrong with Saul's committing suicide rather than letting himself be captured by his enemies?
23. How can a person facing tremendous personal problems find help from God to cope and continue on in life?
- * 24. What causes someone to be stubborn and resistant to God's commands?
25. How might God bring judgment on a person who stubbornly disobeys Him?

Apply It

26. What is one small step you can take this week to develop your love for and loyalty to God?
- * 27. The next time you are feeling pressure or opposition, in what ways can you turn to the Lord for help and guidance?
28. What Christian friend could you ask to counsel and help you in your obedience to God?

King David and His Mighty Men - 1 Chronicles 11:1-47

Topics: Friendship, Giving, Obedience, Rewards, Trust

Open It

1. How do you react when you hear someone brag?
2. What is an example of what it means to really love someone?
- * 3. For what kind of national leaders do most people wish?

Explore It

- * 4. Why were the leaders of Israel comfortable with David's becoming king? (11:1-3)
5. Who anointed David king of Israel? (11:3)
6. What steps did David take to establish himself as king? (11:3-9)
7. What city did David rename Jerusalem? (11:4)
8. What were the qualifications and name of the man who became David's commander-in-chief? (11:6)
9. What nickname did Jerusalem get after David took up residence there? (11:7)
- * 10. What caused David to become more and more powerful? (11:9)
11. Who were the three mighty men, and what did they do to gain their reputation? (11:11-14)
12. What did the chiefs do for David when he longed for a drink of water from a well in Bethlehem? (11:17-18)
- * 13. How did David react when his three chiefs risked their lives to get him water from Bethlehem? (11:18-19)
14. Who was the commander of the three mighty men? (11:20-21)
15. For what exploits was Benaiah held in great honor? (11:22-25)

Get It

16. In what ways does God reward people who serve Him?
- * 17. In light of the fact that David's triumph in Jerusalem came seven and a half years after he had become king and twenty years after he had been anointed by Samuel, what does this story say about the timing of God's acts in our life?
- * 18. How should we react when we work hard for God and we get little or no recognition?
19. How does trusting in God increase a person's strength and power?
20. What pressure do we put on ourselves when we are trying to get attention from others and build our own reputation?
21. If we desire to leave the results of our work to God, what type of work habits should we practice?
22. What are the risks of trying to help someone and meet his or her needs?
23. When is it worth taking a risk to serve others and meet his or her needs?
24. How should we react whenever someone gives us a gift that he or she sacrificed greatly to obtain?

Apply It

25. What can you do this week in your job to please or glorify God?
- * 26. Throughout this week, how can you remind yourself to be more concerned with what God thinks of you than what others think?
27. What appropriately sacrificial or risky act could you do this week to help another person who is in need?

Warriors and Others Join David - 1 Chronicles 12:1-40

Topics: Commitment, Friendship, Heroes, Leadership

Open It

1. What do you think makes it hard for people to commit themselves to a cause?
- * 2. What qualities of effective leaders do you value most?
3. What is an example of a movement of people mobilized for a cause?

Explore It

4. What does this passage tell us about David's development as a powerful king? (12:1-40)
5. What were the special skills of the men from the tribe of Benjamin? (12:2)
6. What reputation and skills did the Gadites have as fighting men? (12:8)
7. What were David's concerns when the Benjamites came to offer their services to him? (12:16-17)
8. Who was chief of "the Thirty"? (12:18)
- * 9. What word of blessing and statement of loyalty did the chief of "the Thirty" give to David? (12:18)
- * 10. How did the warriors of Manasseh that joined David help him? (12:19-21)
- * 11. What was the result of the warriors coming to join David? (12:22)
12. What was the goal of the fighting men who joined David's fighting ranks? (12:38)
13. What role did the families of the fighting men play in supporting these men and their allegiance to David as king? (12:39-40)

Get It

- * 14. What were the qualities of a good warrior in David's time?
15. What are the qualities of a good coworker?
16. Why do weak leaders often surround themselves with weak followers?
17. What qualities must a leader have to attract and employ strong followers?
18. Why is it hard for many people to commit themselves to working with a church or Christian ministry?
19. How should Christians decide whether to give their time and money to serve in a church or work under a particular leader?
20. What are (or were) the leadership qualities of the finest Christian leader you have known?
- * 21. Who are some Christian leaders you admire?
22. What Christian leaders rely on you in some way?
23. What are some of the many skills and abilities a church or Christian organization needs to succeed in their mission?
24. In what way can you be a help to a Christian leader?
25. What are the qualities of a Christian "hero" that we should strive for in our own life?

Apply It

26. What are some specific skills you possess that you can use for God?
27. What can you do this week to develop your skills either as a leader or a follower?
- * 28. To what pastor or Christian leader can you show support with a phone call or note of commitment to their cause?

Bringing Back the Ark - 1 Chronicles 13:1-14

Topics: Direction, Disobedience, Instructions, Punishment

Open It

- * 1. Which people in your family read the instruction manual for assembling or operating things you purchase? Who doesn't?
- 2. Who do you think is often better at asking for help and following directions—men or women? Why?

Explore It

- 3. What project did David undertake? (13:1-3)
- 4. How did David reach a decision about whether he should move the ark? (13:1-4)
- 5. Where had the ark been located? (13:5-6)
- * 6. By what means of transportation did the Israelites move the ark? (13:7)
- * 7. What happened to Uzzah as he marched beside the ark? (13:9-10)
- * 8. How did David feel toward God when Uzzah died? (13:11-12)
- 9. What did David do with the ark after Uzzah died? (13:12-13)
- 10. What happened to the family who provided housing for the ark? (13:14)

Get It

- * 11. How had David and the people ignored God's rules for handling the ark? (See 1 Chronicles 15:13.)
- 12. How can a person know what God wants him or her to do in a particular situation?
- 13. What are the dangers of doing what you think is best rather than consulting the Bible for direction?
- 14. What are some of the subjects for which God has given clear commands and instruction in the Bible?
- 15. What makes it difficult for us to listen to God's Word and be obedient to it?
- 16. What help can a Christian seek from others when making decisions?
- * 17. How can Christians help each other be wise?
- 18. What decisions are you in the process of making for which you need God's wisdom?

Apply It

- * 19. Who can help you search the Bible for guidance for a decision you have to make?
- 20. To whom do you want to turn the next time you need wisdom beyond your own?
- 21. When can you read the Bible this week for guidance concerning some area of your life?
- 22. Where in the Bible do you want to read this week to refresh your memory of God's commands?

David, His Family, and the Philistines - 1 Chronicles 14:1-17

Topics: Guidance, Idolatry, Victory

Open It

1. How has your ability to handle problems changed as you have grown older?
- * 2. What person has given valuable guidance to you in your life?
3. When are you most likely to ask for a friend's help? most unlikely?

Explore It

4. What did Hiram, king of Tyre, send to David? (14:1)
5. How did David feel about his position and role as king of Israel? (14:2)
6. In his prosperity what happened to the size of David's family? (14:3-6)
7. Who were the enemies of King David and Israel? (14:8)
- * 8. What did David do about the Philistines' raid on the Valley of Rephaim? (14:9-10)
9. What prompted David to pray? (14:9-10)
10. What promise did God make to David regarding the Philistines? (14:10)
- * 11. Why did David attack the Philistines? (14:10-11)
12. What was the result of David's battle with the Philistines? (14:11)
13. What did David do with the abandoned Philistine idols? (14:12)
- * 14. What orders did God give David about his second battle with the Philistines? (14:13-15)
15. What did defeating the Philistines do to David's reputation? (14:17)

Get It

- * 16. How important is it to ask God's help or guidance when we are facing a decision?
- * 17. What decisions in life require God's help, and which ones can we handle on our own?
18. In what ways does God give us direction and guidance?
19. What role can active listening play in our prayer life?
20. Why do we often forget to praise God or give Him credit when we are successful?
21. David did not allow his men to keep any idols (false gods); what are some of the idols we should not allow to be in our possession?
22. What stops us from getting rid of things, loyalties, or habits that we have served as false gods?
23. How has God used different methods in different situations to make His will known to you?

Apply It

- * 24. When can you take time this week to listen to God's voice of guidance for a decision you need to make?
25. For what concern or problem will you pray for wisdom each day this week?
26. What ungodly materials or influences do you want to remove from your life today?

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem - 1 Chronicles 15:1-16:6

Topics: Failure, Obedience, Praise, Success, Tasks, Worship

Open It

1. What major task have you spent a long time trying to complete, and how does it feel when you finally complete such a project?
2. What role does dancing play in your life?
- * 3. In your line of work, what tasks or procedures are important to carry out correctly?
4. What is one mistake you have corrected and overcome in your life?

Explore It

5. To where did David want to bring the ark of the Lord? (15:1)
6. What had David prepared to house the ark? (15:1)
- * 7. What event does this passage describe? (15:1, 3)
8. Whom did David appoint as the sole transporters of the ark? (15:2)
- * 9. What instructions did David give the Levites about transporting the ark of the Lord? (15:11-16)
10. How were the Levites to prepare themselves to transport the ark? (15:12)
11. How did the Levites carry the ark of the Lord? (15:15)
12. What were the jobs of the people who accompanied the ark of the Lord as it was transported? (15:16-24)
13. How did David dress and act when the ark was transported? (15:25-29)
14. Why was David dancing? (15:29)
15. How did Michal, David's wife, react when she saw David accompanying the ark into the city? (15:29)
- * 16. What did David and the Levites do when they had placed the ark in its new location? (16:1-6)

Get It

- * 17. How was David careful to obey God's instructions?
18. What had David learned from his mistakes?
19. How does God use our mistakes and failures to teach us to obey Him?
20. How has following God's Word changed the results of decisions you have made in your life?
21. How should we be preparing ourselves to serve God and do what He commands?
- * 22. In what way is following God's instructions carefully a freeing experience?
23. What emotional and physical restraints do we put on ourselves when we worship God?
24. What are some appropriate ways to celebrate God's goodness?
25. In what settings should we be willing to release our praise and thankfulness to God regardless of what others might think of us?

Apply It

- * 26. In what area of your life do you want to renew your commitment to obeying God's commands?
27. What about God's goodness to you do you celebrate today?

David's Psalm of Thanks - 1 Chronicles 16:7-43

Topics: Praise, Thankfulness, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite hymn or praise song? Why?
- 2. When was the last time you felt overwhelmed with thankfulness or gratitude?
- 3. In what place or location have you most enjoyed worshiping God?

Explore It

- * 4. What is the subject of the song David wrote? (16:7-36)
- * 5. In writing this song, what did David call on people to do? (16:7-36)
- * 6. According to David, why should we give thanks to the Lord? (16:8)
 - 7. What should people tell others about God? (16:9)
 - 8. What attitude should a person have toward God? (16:10-12)
 - 9. What are the character qualities of God listed in this psalm? (16:15-22)
 - 10. What had God done for Israel? (16:15-22)
 - 11. What is the difference between the God of Israel and other gods? (16:26)
 - 12. What jobs did David give to those he assigned to stay with the ark? (16:37-42)
 - 13. What did David do when the celebration was over? (16:43)

Get It

- 14. How often do you take time to think about what God has done for you?
- 15. What can you tell others about what God has done for you?
- * 16. How did David express his thanks to God?
 - 17. How should we express our thanks and appreciation to God?
 - 18. What kind of protection does God promise to His people?
 - 19. Why is the God of the Bible the only true God?
 - 20. What kind of offerings can we bring to God?
- * 21. Why is music a useful way of praising God?
 - 22. For what specific reasons should we praise the Lord?
 - 23. How can praising the Lord change our attitude and outlook on life?
 - 24. How much should we verbally praise God during the week?

Apply It

- 25. What are some of the reasons you have to be thankful to God?
- * 26. How can you use music to help you focus on and celebrate God in your life this week?
- 27. Instead of talking only about family, sports, shopping, or weather with your friends this week, what about the greatness of God can you mention as praise?

God's Promise to David and David's Response - 1 Chronicles 17:1-27

Topics: God's Will, Humility, Patience, Promises, Tasks, Thankfulness

Open It

1. If you could solve one problem in the world, what problem would you solve?
- * 2. What have you always wished you could do?
3. In what ways have you been privileged?

Explore It

- * 4. What concerned David about where the ark was being housed? (17:1)
5. What is the major subject of this account? (17:1-27)
6. Who are the major persons in this passage? (17:1-27)
7. How did God make His will known to David? (17:3)
- * 8. What was God's message to David about housing the ark? (17:4-15)
- * 9. Whom had God selected to build a temple to house the ark? (17:11-14)
10. What assurances did God give David about his successor? (17:11-14)
11. For what did David express thanks to the Lord? (17:16-19)
12. What special qualities of God did David recount? (17:20-22)
13. What did David say about the promise that God has made to him and his family? (17:23-27)

Get It

- * 14. What would be wrong about David's or any other Christian leader's pushing ahead with his or her plans despite warnings that those plans were unwise or not God's will?
15. In what way would you like to make a big impact in this world?
16. How do you know if a person's motives are pure when he or she wants to do something for God?
17. How can we know if what we want to do for God is really His will?
18. How should we respond when God prevents us from carrying out our plans?
19. How is David's prayer (17:16-27) a model for us in how we pray?
20. What are the signs of true humility in a person?
21. What is true humility?
22. For what reasons would a Christian leader ignore the signs of God's disapproval of his or her plans?
23. What kind of attitude can keep us open and receptive to hearing and knowing God's will for us?
- * 24. What do you wish you could do for God?

Apply It

25. When can you take time this week to check your motives for serving God, to see whether you are serving yourself or God's glory?
- * 26. Using David's prayer as a model, what dream or plan that God has disallowed can you entrust to the Lord in prayer?

David's Victories - 1 Chronicles 18:1-17

Topics: Courage, Culture, Giving, Morality, Righteousness, Victory

Open It

1. What sorts of competition do you like to play or watch?
2. In your opinion what's the best thing about winning?
- * 3. Why do we value leaders who are both strong and just (or scrupulously fair)?
4. How would you define courage?

Explore It

5. In what geographic areas did David and Israel expand? (18:1-6)
- * 6. What kings and nations did David subdue? (18:1-6)
7. What price did the Moabites pay for being subdued by David? (18:2)
8. What did David gain through his conquests? (18:4-10)
- * 9. Why did Tou king of Hamath send his son to David's court? (18:9-10)
10. What evidence is there that David was building a reputation for being a strong and commanding leader? (18:9-10)
11. What did David do with all the gifts he received? (18:11)
12. How did David honor God with his success? (18:11)
13. What was the reason for David's expansion and success? (18:13)
- * 14. What did David do for his people as their leader? (18:14)
15. How did David's sons get to serve their father as king? (18:17)

Get It

- * 16. Where have enemies of God established strongholds in our society and around the world?
- * 17. What social and spiritual battles do God's people fight today?
18. What is good or bad about Christians being actively involved in social issue protests?
19. What is the danger of not giving God credit for our successes?
20. David was successful wherever he went; what amount of success can we expect to see in our life because of our faith in God?
21. How should a Christian use the "spoils" of his or her victories over evil for God's glory and not for personal gain?
22. What was courageous about what David did?
23. What kind of courage does it take to fight evil in our society today?

Apply It

- * 24. In what way can you stand up against evil in society?
25. In what way can you set an example of dedication to fairness?
26. How can you give credit and glory to God in everyday conversation for your successes?

David at War - 1 Chronicles 19:1-20:8

Topics: Arguments, Disagreements, Quarrels, Relationships, Revenge

Open It

- * 1. Why are most people eager to hear and believe bad news about someone else?
- 2. When was the last time one of your acts of kindness was misinterpreted as a trick or mean gesture?
- 3. What untrue (bad) reports have people ever heard about you?

Explore It

- * 4. What started David's dispute with the Ammonites? (19:1-5)
- 5. How did Hanun misread David's intentions in sending a delegation to visit him? (19:3)
- 6. What did Hanun do to David's men to humiliate them? (19:4)
- * 7. What did the Ammonites do when they realized they had made a mistake in how they handled David's men? (19:6-7)
- 8. How did the Ammonites misjudge David a second time? (19:6-7)
- * 9. What was Joab's military strategy? (19:8-13)
- 10. What did the Arameans do after their first battle loss? (19:16)
- 11. When David joined the fight against the Arameans, what was the result? (19:17-18)
- 12. From where did David get a new crown to wear? (20:1-2)
- 13. Who were some of the enemies of Israel that David's armies defeated? (20:4-8)

Get It

- * 14. When Hanun realized his mistake with David's men, why did he prepare for hostilities rather than just apologizing and correcting the situation?
- 15. What false assumptions did the Ammonites make?
- * 16. What are some common misunderstandings between people, friends, or in families?
- 17. When have you believed something told to you about someone that (you eventually found out) wasn't true?
- 18. In what ways are we more suspicious of people today than we used to be?
- 19. Why are we so quick to respond to people with hostility?
- 20. In what ways do we try to cover up our mistakes?
- 21. What is so hard about admitting our mistakes and making peace?
- 22. How hard do you find it to forgive a person who has hurt or humiliated you?
- 23. What can we do to avoid prejudging or misunderstanding the truth whenever we hear bad news about someone else?
- 24. What steps can you take to correct a misunderstanding or repair a broken relationship?

Apply It

- * 25. To whom do you need to talk this week about mending a broken relationship or correcting a misunderstanding?
- 26. How do you want to respond the next time you hear a bad report about someone that may or may not be true?
- 27. What can you do to judge others' motives as generously as you judge your own?

David Numbers the Fighting Men - 1 Chronicles 21:1-22:1

Topics: Confession, Giving, Judgment, Pride, Repentance, Restitution, Wrath

Open It

1. In what ways do you think it is more difficult for rich or successful people to trust in God?
2. Of what do you most like to have an up-to-date and accurate accounting (checkbook, clean dishes, change in your pockets, etc.)?
- * 3. What is one lesson you've learned the hard way?

Explore It

- * 4. What caused David to take a census of his fighting men? (21:1-2)
- * 5. Who tried to stop David from taking a census? (21:3)
6. What was Joab's response to King David's command? (21:3-5)
7. How many fighting men did David have in Israel? (21:5)
8. Why did Joab not carry out the full extent of David's command? (21:6)
9. What did God think of David's call for a census? (21:7)
- * 10. What did David do when he realized his mistake? (21:8)
11. What choices did God give David? (21:9-12)
12. What punishment did David choose? Why? (21:13)
13. How did the Lord change the punishment He had originally intended? (21:15)
14. When David saw his people being killed, what did he ask the Lord to do? (21:17)
15. What did Gad tell David to do? (21:18)
16. Why did David want to buy Araunah's threshing floor? (21:22)
17. Why did David refuse Araunah's offer and insist that he pay full price? (21:24)
18. How did God respond to David's sacrificial offering? (21:26-28)
19. What decision did David make about how the threshing floor site would be used in the future? (22:1)

Get It

20. Why was God displeased with David's call for a census?
21. In what way does having success or gaining material wealth tempt us to forget our dependence on God?
- * 22. Just as David refused to listen to Joab, what causes us not to heed the warning of friends and leaders about unwise decisions we are considering?
23. Why is it often so difficult for us to admit and confess our disobedience to God?
24. What was admirable about David's response to God's punishment of plagues on the people?
25. How does David's refusal to take Araunah's offer to give him the property to use for a sacrifice set an example for us?
26. Judging from David's experience, what is the secret of turning a personal failure into a success?
27. Why is it so difficult to make restitution and pay the full price for our mistakes?
28. What example does David set for all believers regarding giving to God?
29. How did David's purchase of the threshing floor work into God's plan for the building of the temple?
- * 30. How can we take our defeats and failures and turn them into something that will help us and others in the future?

Apply It

31. What lesson that you've learned from failure or defeat do you want to share with others?
- * 32. In what area of your life do you need to pay greater attention to what a Christian friend has

already suggested or warned?

33. In what way can you give sacrificially to God's work?

Preparations for the Temple - 1 Chronicles 22:2-19

Topics: Advice, Encouragement, Instructions, Preparation, Tasks

Open It

1. What projects have you undertaken that required planning?
- * 2. If you were to have a house built for you, in which tasks would you probably want to be involved?
3. What do you think is most important for a parent to pass on to his or her children?

Explore It

4. Whom did David hire to help him? (22:2)
5. What preconstruction steps did David take in preparing to build the temple? (22:2-4)
6. What human and material resources did David make available to Solomon for use in building the temple? (22:2-4, 14-18)
- * 7. Why didn't David leave all the preparations to his son Solomon? (22:5)
8. According to David, why was Solomon to build the temple? (22:6-10)
9. What had God promised to Solomon for his reign as king? (22:9)
- * 10. What instructions did David give Solomon about his relationship with the Lord? (22:11-13)
- * 11. What spiritual reminder did David keep giving to Solomon? (22:19)
12. What was the purpose of building the temple? (22:19)

Get It

13. In what ways was David like a typical father looking out for his son?
14. Why did God want the temple built by a man of peace and not a man of war?
- * 15. How is it important for a father to give instruction and encouragement to his children?
16. How can a father inspire his children to seek God's will and serve Him with full devotion?
- * 17. What should parents share with children about their own spiritual journey and their hopes for how their children will serve God?
18. What spiritual advice would you give to your children about what it means to follow the Lord?
19. From what other sources can a parent find spiritual help for their children?

Apply It

- * 20. To whom in your family can you be a spiritual encouragement this week?
21. What can you do this week to begin building a spiritual heritage in your family?

The Levites - 1 Chronicles 23:1-32

Topics: Administration, Church, Instructions, Jobs, Ministry

Open It

1. In what ways have you been involved in church work over the years?
2. What's the difference between being a church volunteer and giving your time to any other charity organization?
- * 3. What do people mean when they say, "That person is a real professional"?

Explore It

4. What major event took place? (23:1)
- * 5. Whom did David gather together for his instructions? (23:2)
6. How did David provide for and support worship in Israel? (23:2-6)
7. What were the main job categories that David designated for certain men? (23:4-6)
8. What age requirement did David place on those counted among the Levites who could serve in the temple? (23:24, 27)
- * 9. Why did David redefine the jobs of the Levites? (23:25-26)
10. What were the various duties of the Levites? (23:28-31)
11. When did the Levites serve? (23:31)
12. Who led worship in Israel? (23:32)

Get It

- * 13. What is the value of having certain people whose sole duty is to lead and assist others in worship?
14. How have others helped you or led you in worship?
15. What's wrong with coming to church just for worship and staying out of all the administration and service jobs in the church?
16. What opportunities for service in the church exist for people who are excessively busy?
- * 17. What are the essential jobs in a present day church?
18. In what ways can a person get too involved in church work?
19. What instructions has God given to Christians about how they should worship?
20. What jobs in the church are most important?
21. What can a church do to teach people that all jobs are equally important in God's plan and are vital to a healthy church?

Apply It

22. What job or duty can you do in your church?
- * 23. In what way can you show honor and respect this week to someone who leads in worship at your church?
24. When can you take time this week to express your appreciation to someone in the church who is quietly serving?

The Divisions of Priests - 1 Chronicles 24:1-31

Topics: Accountability, Administration, Church, Fairness, Favoritism

Open It

- * 1. Who is the most organized person in your family?
- 2. How do you react to a person who believes he or she deserves special treatment because of his or her family name or seniority?

Explore It

- 3. Who was the ancestor of all the priests of Israel? (24:1)
- 4. Who were the two sons of Aaron from whom all the priests came? (24:2)
- * 5. Why did David divide the priests into specific groups? (24:3)
- 6. How were the priests divided and assigned to serving times and order? (24:5)
- * 7. How did the Israelites ensure fairness and objectivity in how the priests' duties were assigned? (24:5, 31)
- 8. How many lots did the priest draw? (24:18)
- * 9. Where did the prescribed regulations for the priests originate? (24:19)
- 10. Who was the original ancestor of the nation's clergy? (24:20)
- 11. What role did the age of descendants play in how they were assigned their duties? (24:31)

Get It

- 12. How would our families today be different if all of our children followed their parents' occupation as did the descendants of Aaron and Levi?
- * 13. Why did the Israelites give the job assignments to the priests and Levites based on a drawing of lots and without regard for family or birth order?
- 14. How can favoritism hurt a family, an organization, or a church?
- 15. What role can personal ego play in the leadership problems a church might be having?
- 16. How can order and structure in a church give freedom to worship God? How can it stifle worship?
- 17. In what ways do we need to guard against overorganizing or underorganizing our lives? our worship? our churches?
- * 18. In what relationships or settings do you need to take steps to ensure objectivity and avoid favoritism?

Apply It

- * 19. What can you do to be objective and fair at home? at work or school? somewhere else?
- 20. What can you do this week at church to make new members or younger people feel just as important as those who have been members for a long time?
- 21. How can you use a gift for organizing or spontaneity to help others worship God?

The Singers - 1 Chronicles 25:1-31

Topics: Church, Praise, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What was your favorite music when you were growing up?
- 2. How have your musical tastes changed over the years?
- 3. What is your favorite Christian song or hymn?

Explore It

- * 4. What special group of people did David set apart for the ministry of prophesying? (25:1)
- * 5. What accompanied the prophesying? (25:1)
 - 6. What kinds of instruments did the musicians use in worship? (25:1, 6)
 - 7. What was Jeduthun's style when he prophesied? (25:3)
 - 8. What was Heman's job for the king? (25:5)
 - 9. How had God exalted Heman? (25:5)
 - 10. Who supervised the musicians? (25:6)
 - 11. In what way was the ministry of music a family affair? (25:6-7)
- * 12. Who participated in the ministry of music? (25:6-8)
- 13. What role did age and seniority play in determining the musicians' assignments? (25:8)

Get It

- 14. What were some of the ways people could contribute to worship in the temple?
- 15. What are some of the ways you can contribute to worship in your church?
- * 16. What can music do to praise God and teach about His character?
- * 17. What role does music play in your Christian life and your worship of God?
- 18. How might you expand the role of sacred music in your life?

Apply It

- 19. Which of your gifts or talents can you offer for use in the worship services of your church?
- * 20. What is one piece of music to which you can listen this week to strengthen and nourish your Christian life?

The Gatekeepers, Treasurers, and Other Officials - 1 Chronicles 26:1-32

Topics: Giving, Jobs, Tasks

Open It

1. What is the most beautiful church building you have ever seen?
2. How do you think most people decide how much to give in the church offering?
- * 3. How have you benefited from an especially skilled leader or boss?

Explore It

- * 4. What made some of Shemaiah's sons rise to leadership in their family? (26:6)
- * 5. What was the job of a gatekeeper in the temple? (26:12)
 6. What method was used to divide up the assignments? (26:13-16)
 7. How did the families ensure fairness in who got which assignments? (26:13-16)
 8. How many gatekeepers were on duty each day? (26:17)
 9. Who was in charge of the treasury? (26:20-24)
 10. From where had some of the contents of the treasury come? (26:27)
 11. Who was assigned for duty as judges and officials away from the temple? (26:29)
- * 12. What assignments did David make? (26:30-32)

Get It

13. What provision did the Israelites make for administering the temple?
- * 14. Why is it important to administer a church well—a place where God's people worship together?
 15. What responsibility do we have to place capable people in positions of leadership?
 16. What responsibility do capable people have to lead?
 17. The temple gatekeepers were called ministers; in what way is everyone who serves the Lord a minister?
18. What is the proper attitude we should have when we give a gift to the church?
- * 19. What important jobs in the church are sometimes overlooked? Why?

Apply It

20. What skills or services can you offer in helping your local church work effectively?
- * 21. What is one way this week you can affirm the leaders and servants God has placed in your life?
22. In what ways can you share from your money, time, or other resources to serve God and His people this week?

David's Army and Officers - 1 Chronicles 27:1-34

Topics: Administration, Jobs, Tasks

Open It

1. What items do you collect (or have you collected)?
2. How does serving in the armed forces change a person?
- * 3. Who was the best boss you ever had?

Explore It

- * 4. What list of people does this passage contain? (27:1)
5. How often were the army divisions on duty? (27:1)
6. How many men were in each army division? (27:1)
7. How many tribes of people were in the nation of Israel? (27:16-22)
- * 8. What group of young men did David exclude from his counting? Why? (27:23-24)
9. Why was the counting of men not completed? (27:24)
- * 10. What were the major jobs to which leaders were assigned? (27:25-34)
11. Who was the commander of the royal army? (27:34)

Get It

12. What value is there in having a detailed list of officers who served in Israel's army?
- * 13. In what way did David spread the key responsibilities of running the kingdom among many people?
14. How did David delegate responsibility to others?
15. What is the value of spreading key responsibilities in an organization among a large group of people?
- * 16. In what way does a family, church, or organization run better when many people are involved in leadership and assigned regular duties?
17. In what way were all of the jobs in the king's service—from serving in the military to ministering in the temple—equally important?
18. Why do leaders deserve to be recognized?

Apply It

19. Who are the "commanders," "officers," or other leaders whom you want to recognize?
- * 20. To whom can you delegate a responsibility that needs to be done?

David's Plans for the Temple - 1 Chronicles 28:1-21

Topics: Advice, Holiness, Instructions, Tasks, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What do you think is important for parents to pass on to their children?
- 2. What are some of the difficult tasks or challenges you have faced in your life?
- 3. What advice about life would you give to a young person graduating from high school?

Explore It

- 4. Whom did David gather for a meeting in Jerusalem? (28:1)
- 5. What did David say to the gathered leaders about his desire to build a house of worship? (28:2)
- 6. Why was David not allowed to build a house of worship? (28:3)
- 7. What did David acknowledge about his own role in rising to power in Israel? (28:4)
- 8. How did David get to be king of Israel? (28:4)
- 9. Who would be the next king after David? (28:5)
- * 10. What tasks did God have for Solomon while he was king? (28:6)
- 11. What conditional promise did God make to Solomon? (28:7)
- 12. What charge of responsibility did David give the leaders? (28:8)
- * 13. What life principles did David give his son Solomon? (28:9-10)
- * 14. What type of detailed instructions did David give to Solomon about the building and furnishing of the temple? (28:11-18)
- 15. What did David say was the source of the temple plans he had written down for Solomon? (28:19)
- 16. What words of encouragement did David give to Solomon about his task of building the temple? (28:20-21)

Get It

- * 17. What responsibility do Christians have to prepare younger Christians for duties and responsibilities that they will pass on?
- 18. What spiritual responsibility does the older generation have to the younger generation?
- * 19. What advice would you give to a person who is succeeding you in a work you are doing for God?
- 20. Why didn't God follow the normal line of succession (father to firstborn son) in picking the kings of Israel?
- 21. What are the qualities God would desire and look for in selecting a leader?
- 22. Why is knowing and obeying God's written Word a crucial factor for the success of a Christian leader?
- 23. What does the condition of our mind and heart have to do with our ability to worship God?
- 24. How does it make you feel to know that God knows all of your secrets?
- 25. How should knowing that nothing can be hidden from God affect our actions?
- 26. What can a Christian leader do to overcome discouragement or fear when facing a big task?

Apply It

- 27. What can you do each week to learn from God's Word?
- * 28. What advice or counsel could you pass on to a younger believer who would be receptive to it? Who?
- 29. In what challenging situation in your life do you need to trust God and seek His help?

David's Reign Ends, Solomon's Begins - 1 Chronicles 29:1-30

Topics: Blessing, Building, Giving, Praise, Worship

Open It

1. What great challenge or task would you like to attempt or accomplish during your lifetime?
- * 2. How have you seen the life and legacy of a parent affect the accomplishments of his or her sons or daughters?
3. What words of advice helped you when you were first striking out on your own?

Explore It

4. How did King David describe his son Solomon? (29:1)
5. According to David, what made Solomon's task great? (29:1)
6. What resources had David provided for the building of the temple? (29:2-5)
7. After David listed his personal gifts, what was his challenge to the people? (29:5)
8. How did the leaders respond to David's challenge? (29:6-9)
9. What did David do in front of the entire crowd? (29:10-13)
10. How did David describe the Lord when he praised Him? (29:10-15)
11. How did David describe himself as he praised the Lord? (29:14-15)
12. What does the Lord God want to find in a person when he or she is tested? (19:17)
- * 13. What did David wish and pray for his son Solomon? (29:19)
- * 14. How did the people respond when David told them to praise the Lord God? (29:20)
- * 15. In what ways did the Lord bless and confirm Solomon as Israel's king? (29:23-25)
16. For how long did David serve as king over Israel? (29:27)

Get It

17. How important is the personal example of a parent or leader when challenging others to give to a worthy cause?
18. What kind of response can generous giving bring from those who are considering giving?
19. What is the best financial or material gift a person could give to a church?
20. For what qualities and actions should we praise God?
21. How would you describe God's greatness?
22. How would you describe yourself in light of God's presence in the world and in your life?
- * 23. How did David challenge Israel with his charge to Solomon? with his public prayer?
24. In what ways can we challenge other believers to follow God wholeheartedly?
- * 25. What kind of character does God look for in a person?
26. What advice would you give to a leader who is just beginning his or her term of service?
27. What causes a person to have a wholehearted devotion to serving and pleasing God?
28. In what ways have you seen God bless and prosper people and leaders who seek to please Him?

Apply It

- * 29. What young or inexperienced believer can you support or encourage this week? How?
30. What resources can you give to God's work this week?
31. At what point during each day can you praise God with a spoken word, written word, or song?

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Solomon Asks for Wisdom - 2 Chronicles 1:1-17

Topics: Answers, Choices, Enemies, Gifts, Greatness, Heart, Honor, Kindness, Knowledge, Leadership, Life, Promises, Responsibility, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. If you could win a giveaway contest, which prize would you want to win?
2. What living leader do you admire? Why?
- * 3. If your son or daughter had the choice of a college scholarship or a one-million-dollar sports contract, which would you advise him or her to choose? Why?

Explore It

4. Who was Solomon's father? (1:1)
5. What key event in Solomon's reign as king does this passage describe? (1:1-17)
6. With whom did Solomon meet? (1:2)
7. Where was the location of the meeting with Solomon and the leaders of Israel? (1:3-6)
8. What was significant about the location of the meeting? (1:4-6)
- * 9. What did God say to Solomon when He appeared to him during the night? (1:7)
- * 10. What did Solomon ask God to give to him? (1:8-10)
- * 11. What was God's response to Solomon's request? (1:11-12)
12. What did God promise to give to Solomon that was beyond his request? (1:12)
13. What material possessions did Solomon obtain? (1:14-17)

Get It

14. What pressure does a person feel when he or she takes over a parent's job or position?
15. What are some of the positives and negatives you would experience as the top leader of a country?
16. What responsibility does a leader have to be an example to others with his or her worship of God?
17. If God offered to grant their requests, what would most of today's world leaders ask God to give to them?
- * 18. If God promised to grant you one request, for what would you ask?
19. Why was Solomon's request so pleasing to God?
- * 20. Why would it be more valuable to have wisdom from God rather than riches, power, or fame?
21. How does God bless the people who seek to please Him?
22. If you had recorded your petitions during this past week, how would they stack up to Solomon's request?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you refine your requests of God to make them more pleasing to God?
24. What steps could you take this week to enhance your knowledge of God and His wisdom?

Preparations for Building the Temple - 2 Chronicles 2:1-18

Topics: Church, Craftsmanship, Dedication, Greatness, Humility, Instructions, Leadership, Preparation, Promises, Wisdom, Worship

Open It

- * 1. In your mind, what makes a church attractive and worshipful?
- 2. How much money do you think a church should spend on its physical building? Why?

Explore It

- 3. What two buildings did Solomon give orders to build? (2:1)
- 4. What preparations for major building projects does this passage describe? (2:1-18)
- 5. How did Solomon get the workers to do the construction? (2:2, 17-18)
- 6. To whom did Solomon send a message requesting assistance? (2:3)
- 7. What material resources did Solomon gather for use in construction? (2:3, 7-9)
- * 8. What did Solomon plan to do in the temple to worship God? (2:4)
- * 9. Why did Solomon believe so strongly that a temple must be built? (2:4-6)
- * 10. How did Solomon feel about his ability to build a temple that would be worthy of God? (2:5-6)
- 11. By what means was Solomon going to pay all of Hiram's workers? (2:10, 15)
- 12. What did Hiram write in reply to Solomon's request? (2:11-16)
- 13. Who was the skilled master builder Hiram promised to send to Solomon? (2:13-14)

Get It

- 14. What sorts of things can parents do to help their children succeed?
- 15. Why should we worship God in the company of other believers?
- 16. What is the purpose of a church building?
- 17. How does God want us to express our thankfulness to Him?
- 18. When you need work done, when should you hire a fellow Christian and when should you hire a competent secular worker?
- 19. How does the quality of a church building reflect something of what the worshipers feel about God?
- * 20. How did Solomon's plans for the temple reflect his attitude toward God?
- * 21. How could you express Solomon's style of worship and commitment to God without building a physical building?

Apply It

- * 22. What can you do this week to express your worship and thankfulness to God?
- 23. What could you do to make your church's worship better reflect its attitude toward God?

Solomon Builds the Temple - 2 Chronicles 3:1-5:1

Topics: Church, Craftsmanship, Giving, History, Wealth, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What style of home furnishings do you favor?
- 2. What house have you visited recently that impressed you?
- 3. What is your favorite room in your house?

Explore It

- * 4. On what site did Solomon build the temple? (3:1)
- * 5. What temple furnishings does this passage describe? (3:1-4:22)
 - 6. What was the primary resource used for decorating the temple? (3:5-9)
 - 7. What was sculpted and covered with gold? (3:10-13)
 - 8. What were the key features of the altar? (4:1)
 - 9. For what were the basins and the Sea to be used? (4:4-6)
 - 10. What furniture and furnishings were made specifically for the temple? (4:7-8, 19-22)
 - 11. Who was the master craftsman, and what did he make? (4:11-16)
- * 12. What did Solomon do with the items that his father, David, had collected for the temple? (5:1)

Get It

- 13. What was the significance of the location Solomon selected for the temple?
- 14. Why was the temple decorated so lavishly and ornately?
- * 15. How do the furnishings of a church affect the way you worship God?
- 16. How can an expensively furnished church building reflect the priorities of the people of the church?
- 17. Which do you feel is better for worship—a simple, plain setting or an ornately furnished building? Why?
- 18. Why was the temple important to the worship of the people of Israel?
- * 19. What part of your church building has special significance for you?
- 20. How does the amount of money and time we put into our church buildings reflect our priorities?
- 21. If you examined where you spent your money this week, what would it reveal about your priorities?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you model the importance of corporate worship for younger Christians on a week-to-week basis?
- 23. How can your use of money and attention to detail reflect your love for God?

The Ark Brought to the Temple - 2 Chronicles 5:2-6:11

Topics: Abundance, Covenant, Encouragement, Goodness, Help, Instructions, Leadership, Love, Praise, Promises

Open It

1. What experiences have you had with helping someone move furniture and possessions?
- * 2. How does the promise of a friend differ from the promise of an acquaintance or stranger?

Explore It

3. Whom did Solomon get involved in moving the ark of the covenant? (5:2)
4. When the temple building was completed, what did Solomon move to the site? (5:2-10)
5. Which group of people physically moved the ark? (5:5)
- * 6. What did Solomon and the people do as the ark was being moved? (5:6)
7. Where did Solomon order the Levites to place the ark? (5:7-9)
8. What was inside the ark? (5:10)
9. What did the Levites and priests sing as praise to the Lord? (5:13)
- * 10. How did God show His presence in the temple? (5:13-14)
- * 11. What did Solomon recount for the people on the day the ark was brought up to the temple? (6:1-11)

Get It

12. What did the ark represent to the people of Israel?
13. Why was the ark moved with such care and attention to detail?
- * 14. What did God's promises and covenant mean to the people of Israel?
15. How can knowing and repeating God's promises help us deal with the pressures of life?
- * 16. What promise of God is particularly meaningful to you at this point in your life?
17. How do we sense God's presence with us today?
18. What reasons do we have to sing praise to God?

Apply It

19. How could you praise God this week, whether through singing, writing, or some other means?
- * 20. What promise of God could you share as a word of encouragement to a friend this week?

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication - 2 Chronicles 6:12-42

Topics: Awe, Confession, Covenant, Fear, Forgiveness, Goodness, Heart, Judgment, Love, Name, Prayer, Promises, Repentance, Right, Salvation, Sin, Soul, Swearing, War, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What clues do you see that people today are praying more or less than they did in past generations?
- 2. If someone asked you for help in learning how to pray, what would you say?

Explore It

- 3. Whose words are recorded in this passage? (6:12-42)
- * 4. What was Solomon's posture in front of the assembly of people? (6:13)
- 5. What did Solomon say to the Lord about the promises made to his father, David? (6:14-17)
- 6. What did Solomon say about the idea of God dwelling in the temple he had built? (6:18-21)
- * 7. What request did Solomon make to God concerning forgiveness? (6:21-25)
- 8. What were the people to do when they faced disasters or disease? (6:26-31)
- * 9. What did Solomon want God to teach each person who prayed to him? (6:27, 31)
- 10. What did Solomon ask on behalf of the foreign people who came to the temple to pray? (6:32-33)
- 11. What provision to be forgiven was made for a person who had disobeyed God? (6:36-39)
- 12. What were Solomon's crowning requests of God concerning the temple? (6:40-42)

Get It

- 13. How do we know God hears and answers our prayers?
- 14. What benefit is there in repeating the written promises of God when we pray?
- 15. For what sins do we regularly need to be forgiven?
- 16. What can stop God from forgiving our sins?
- * 17. Why do you think we wander away from God so frequently?
- * 18. What makes it hard for us to confess our sins to God?
- 19. What does God do or allow to happen to us to make us want to repent and change our ways?

Apply It

- 20. How often do you think you might need to reexamine your life for cleansing of sin and a renewal of commitment to the Lord?
- * 21. What would be an appropriate expression of your personal thankfulness to God for His forgiveness?

The Dedication of the Temple - 2 Chronicles 7:1-10

Topics: Abundance, Dedication, Giving, Glory, Goodness, Home, Joy, Love, Praise, Prayer, Thanksgiving, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What dedication ceremonies or services have you ever attended?
- 2. Why do some people dislike the practice of taking an offering during a church service?

Explore It

- * 3. Why were Solomon and all the people gathered at the new temple? (7:1-10)
- * 4. What remarkable events happened after Solomon finished praying in the new temple? (7:1)
 - 5. Why couldn't the priests enter the temple? (7:2)
 - 6. How did all the people respond when they saw what was happening in the temple? (7:3)
- * 7. What did the people say as they were worshiping the Lord? (7:3)
 - 8. What did the people and Solomon give to the Lord as an act of worship? (7:4)
 - 9. What kind of sacrifice did Solomon offer to the Lord? (7:5)
 - 10. What role did the priests and Levites play in the worship? (7:6)
 - 11. What did Solomon do when he consecrated the middle part of the courtyard of the temple? (7:7)
 - 12. For how many days did the Israelites observe the festival? (7:8)
 - 13. How many total days did the Israelites celebrate and dedicate? (7:8-9)
 - 14. With what attitude did the people return home? (7:10)

Get It

- * 15. What does it mean to dedicate something to God?
 - 16. How can a Christian dedicate his or her life to God's service?
 - 17. What is appropriate to say when we are worshiping the Lord?
 - 18. What role does giving play in our worship of God?
 - 19. What type of offerings can we bring to the Lord today?
 - 20. What kind of offering does God want us to bring to Him as part of worship?
- * 21. In what situations have you ever sensed the presence of God?
 - 22. How would our worship of God be different if we saw fire from heaven consume our offerings and sacrifices?
 - 23. How does the worship of God in spirit and in truth change the worshiper?
 - 24. What does worship do to your outlook and perspective on life?

Apply It

- 25. How can you prepare yourself to worship this next week with an attitude of giving and praise rather than wanting something for yourself?
- 26. For what specific reasons can you praise God this week?
- * 27. What part of your life do you need to dedicate anew to the Lord?

The Lord Appears to Solomon - 2 Chronicles 7:11-22

Topics: Backslide, Confession, Covenant, Faithfulness, Forsake, Future, Humility, Idolatry, Law, Name, People, Prayer, Rejection, Repentance, Success, Unfaithfulness

Open It

- * 1. What might cause a team (or an individual athlete) with a huge lead to lose the game?
- 2. What do some people substitute in their life for a relationship with God?

Explore It

- 3. To what extent had Solomon accomplished his goals? (7:11)
- 4. What memorable experience in Solomon's life does this passage describe? (7:11-22)
- * 5. What did the Lord tell Solomon about the effectiveness of his prayers and the building of the temple? (7:12)
- * 6. What did the Lord instruct the people to do when they were experiencing drought, pestilence, or plagues? (7:13-14)
- * 7. What are God's people to do as they pray? (7:14)
- 8. What did God promise to do when the people pray? (7:14)
- 9. What promises did God make regarding the prayers said from the temple? (7:15-16)
- 10. What promise did the Lord make to Solomon if he was faithful and devoted to the Lord? (7:17-18)
- 11. What promise did the Lord make to Solomon if he turned away from God's commands? (7:19-22)
- 12. What would happen to the fabulous temple Solomon had built and dedicated to the Lord if he began to worship and serve other gods? (7:20-22)
- 13. Why would God bring disaster on Solomon and Israel? (7:22)

Get It

- 14. How have you felt after you have accomplished some of your major goals in life?
- 15. How do you find purpose and direction from God for what you should do in the future?
- 16. When have you seen a prayer answered after a considerable amount of time had passed?
- 17. What did God assure Solomon about His response to true repentance?
- * 18. What kind of prayers have you prayed when you have been in your worst trouble?
- 19. How does God's promise in 7:14 apply to our country today?
- * 20. In what way can God's promise and warning to Solomon be applied to each one of us?

Apply It

- * 21. How might repentance figure into the solution to a problem you face this week?
- 22. What healing do you desire for your city or country, and how might you help to bring it about?

Solomon's Other Activities - 2 Chronicles 8:1-18

Topics: Choices, Desires, History, Holiness, Hypocrisy, Leadership, Obedience, Sacrifice, Slavery, Wealth

Open It

1. How can a person lose the skills he or she has developed in a sport or other pursuit?
- * 2. What makes someone a hypocrite?

Explore It

3. How many years did it take Solomon to complete the temple and his own palace? (8:1)
- * 4. What kind of success did Solomon have as king of Israel? (8:1-18)
5. What did Solomon do with the villages that Hiram had given to him? (8:2)
6. Besides rebuilding the villages that Hiram gave him, what building projects did Solomon undertake? (8:3-6)
7. What groups of people did Solomon conscript into a slave labor force? (8:7-9)
8. What did Solomon do for his wife (who was also Pharaoh's daughter)? (8:11)
- * 9. Why did Solomon not want Pharaoh's daughter living in David's palace where the ark of the Lord was kept? (8:11)
- * 10. What was Solomon's habit in regard to sacrifices and offerings to the Lord? (8:12-13)
11. In what ways did Solomon continue the routines that his father had started? (8:14-15)
12. What did Hiram's ships obtain for Solomon? (8:17-18)

Get It

- * 13. What might cause us to grow lax in our relationship with God?
14. Why might Solomon have felt uncomfortable or guilty about Pharaoh's daughter living in the same palace with the ark of the Lord?
15. Why might Solomon have married foreign wives and tolerated their worship of false gods?
- * 16. What "small" or "unrelated" decisions do we make that can lead us away from God?
17. How could Solomon be making daily sacrifices to God and yet ignore God's command in his daily decisions?
18. How does a person justify going to church regularly and ignoring some of God's commands during the week?

Apply It

- * 19. When ungodly influences take root in your life, how might you find the wisdom and resolve to eliminate them?
20. What "mirror" can you use to discover the inconsistencies between your religious talk and your daily living?

Solomon's Fame - 2 Chronicles 9:1-31

Topics: Achievements, Answers, Believe, Death, Gifts, Happiness, Heroes, History, Justice, Love, Money, Possessions, Praise, Questions, Righteousness, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. What fancy or wealthy homes have you visited?
2. How would you describe your dream house?
- * 3. What person's wisdom or intelligence most impresses you?

Explore It

4. Why did the queen of Sheba visit Solomon? (9:1)
- * 5. What famous queen's visit to Solomon is recorded in this passage? (9:1-12)
- * 6. What did Solomon do that was so impressive to the queen of Sheba? (9:2-8)
7. How did the queen of Sheba's real-life impression of Solomon match up to what she had heard about him? (9:5-6)
8. What did the queen of Sheba give to Solomon? (9:9)
9. How much did Solomon give to the queen of Sheba? (9:12)
10. How much gold did Solomon receive each year? (9:13-14)
11. What did Solomon do with the gold he received in tribute? (9:15-16)
12. What expensive decorations did Solomon make for his palace? (9:17-20)
13. What exotic items did Solomon's trading ships bring back to him? (9:21)
- * 14. How rich was Solomon and the nation of Israel? (9:22-28)
15. How long was Solomon king of Israel? (9:30)
16. When Solomon died, who succeeded him? (9:31)

Get It

- * 17. What was the source of Solomon's impressive wisdom?
18. How can other people see God through the wisdom and skills He has given to us?
19. To what extent, or in what way, is prosperity an indicator of God's approval of our life?
20. How would it make you feel to be as wealthy as Solomon?
21. How do you think being wealthy would affect your relationship with God?
22. If you had great wealth, how might you use it to help other people?
23. In what ways can you use your present finances and resources to help others?
- * 24. How does reading about all of Solomon's exquisite possessions, followed by the account of his death, help to put life into perspective for you?

Apply It

- * 25. How could you appropriately give credit to God whenever other people compliment your skills or talents this week?
26. What "riches" can you begin to accumulate today that will follow you into eternity?

The Northern Tribes Revolt - 2 Chronicles 10:1-11:17

Topics: Advice, Age, Answers, Conflict, Escape, Home, Idolatry, Kindness, Leadership, Listening, Obedience, Prophecy, Rebellion, Rejection, Serving, War, Youth

Open It

1. What does your family fight about?
- * 2. How has bad advice ever hurt you?

Explore It

3. Who succeeded Solomon as king? (10:1)
- * 4. What happened to the kingdom that David and Solomon had developed and ruled? (10:1-11:17)
5. What rival leader returned from Egypt after Solomon died? (10:2)
6. What request did Jeroboam make to Rehoboam? (10:4)
- * 7. What conflicting advice did Rehoboam get when he sought counsel in making his response to Jeroboam's request? (10:6-11)
- * 8. Whose advice did Rehoboam follow when answering the people of Israel? (19:12-15)
9. How did the people of Israel react to Rehoboam's promise of harsher treatment? (10:16-19)
10. What caused Rehoboam to change his mind about going to war against Israel? (10:1-4)
11. What did Rehoboam do to build defenses for his kingdom? (10:5-12)
12. Why did the priests and Levites of Israel leave their homes in Israel and move to Jerusalem? (10:13-17)

Get It

- * 13. What mistakes did Rehoboam make when he sought advice?
- * 14. How can following bad advice ruin your life?
15. How can you determine who is giving you good advice?
16. What role should prayer play in deciding what we should do?
17. How can listening to advice from just our peer group keep us from making the best decisions?
18. What are the benefits and dangers of treating people harshly?
19. Why did the division of the kingdoms go virtually uncontested?
20. Right after the division of the kingdom, which of the two pieces, Israel or Judah, was closer to God? Why?
21. What can we do to bring peace and deter conflict in a family where a disagreement has divided people?
22. What should we do if we ever feel that the leaders of our church are straying from the true Christian faith?

Apply It

- * 23. From whom can you seek godly advice and prayer the next time you need help making a decision?
24. In what family conflict can you intervene this week in hopes of restoring peace and harmony? How?

Rehoboam and Shishak - 2 Chronicles 11:18-12:16

Topics: Abandon, Anger, Backslide, Children, Death, Evil, Failure, Faithfulness, Goodness, Heart, Humility, Justice, Leadership, Marriage, Name, Prophecy, Repentance, Serving, Strength, Success, Unfaithfulness, War, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. How does becoming rich or famous change people?
- 2. What causes a person to forsake a good habit and pick up a bad habit?

Explore It

- 3. How would you summarize the reign of Rehoboam as king? (11:18-12:16)
- 4. How many wives did Rehoboam have? (11:21)
- 5. Which wife did Rehoboam love more than the rest? (11:21)
- 6. Which of his sons did Rehoboam designate as chief prince and his eventual successor? (11:22)
- * 7. At the height of his success, what did Rehoboam and all of Judah do that brought disaster to the nation? (12:1)
- 8. Why did Shishak, the king of Egypt, attack Judah? (12:2)
- 9. What did the prophet Shemaiah come and say to Rehoboam? (12:5)
- 10. What was the response of Israel's leaders to the prophet Shemaiah's words? (12:6)
- * 11. What did the Lord do when the leaders humbled themselves? (12:7)
- 12. What lesson did the Lord want to teach Israel by making them subject to their enemies? (12:8)
- 13. What did Shishak take from the temple and the royal palace? (12:9)
- 14. What changed when Rehoboam humbled himself? (12:12)
- 15. How long did Rehoboam reign as king? (12:13)
- * 16. Why did Rehoboam do evil? (12:14)

Get It

- 17. Why do you think Rehoboam and Judah abandoned the Lord?
- * 18. What causes people to abandon God when they are experiencing the fruit of their former obedience to God?
- 19. Which is better for building a strong relationship with the Lord—hardship or prosperity? How?
- 20. How can prosperity and easy times lead to our spiritual downfall?
- * 21. How can hard times be good for our spiritual life?
- 22. Why didn't God let the Egyptians totally destroy Rehoboam?
- 23. What important fact about God's character is revealed through this story?
- 24. How will our life be less than what God intended when we don't set our heart on fully seeking the Lord?

Apply It

- * 25. The next time you find yourself prospering, what can you do to keep in mind the Source of every good and perfect gift?
- 26. To whom can you tell the good news that God is eager to forgive the person who turns to Him?

Abijah King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 13:1-14:1

Topics: Death, Forsake, Gifts, Idolatry, Leadership, Listening, Obedience, Opposition, Peace, Power, Prayer, Rebellion, Religion, Running, Self-centeredness, Serving, Success, Training, Unbelievers, Victory, War, Weaknesses, Youth

Open It

1. Why might an agnostic person begin to pray?
- * 2. What clues or signs would make you think that a religious group is a cult or religious fringe group?

Explore It

- * 3. What event during the reign of Abijah does this passage recount? (13:1-20)
4. Against whom did Abijah go to war? (13:2)
5. What was the difference in size between the armies of Judah and Israel? (13:3)
6. What did Abijah shout to Jeroboam's troops to convince them they would not win? (13:4-12)
7. Why was God on the side of David's descendants? (13:5)
8. Who influenced Jeroboam to lead a second rebellion against Solomon's son after the rebellion against Solomon had failed? (13:6-7)
- * 9. What idols had Jeroboam substituted for the worship of the true God? (13:8)
10. How had Jeroboam treated the priests and Levites? (13:9)
11. What lower standards had Jeroboam instituted by which a man could become a priest? (13:9)
12. What was the difference between the worship practices of Jeroboam's priests and the sons of Aaron? (13:10-11)
13. What was Jeroboam's battle strategy? (13:13)
- * 14. What turned the battle in the favor of Abijah's army? (13:14-18)
15. After the battle, what happened to Jeroboam? (13:20)
16. After the battle, what happened to Abijah? (13:21-14:1)

Get It

17. How did an army half the size of its opponent win the battle?
18. What had Jeroboam done that angered the Lord?
- * 19. What false gods do some religious leaders offer to people nowadays?
20. Why should we be skeptical of people who say they are church leaders but who lack training?
21. Why is training for service in the church important?
22. What does it mean to rely on the Lord when the opposition is greater than your abilities or resources?
23. Why do we sometimes not rely on the Lord?
24. In what ways does praying change a situation or a person?
- * 25. How does our allegiance to the Lord affect the outcome of our life's battles and struggles?

Apply It

- * 26. What training or spiritual instruction do you need to serve the Lord more effectively?
27. How can you be certain that your church stands squarely in the teachings established by God?

Asa, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 14:2-15

Topics: Fear, Goodness, Help, Holiness, Idolatry, Law, Name, Obedience, Peace, Power, Prayer, Purity, Repentance, Rest, Right, Sin, Victory, Wealth

Open It

1. What household cleaning task gives you the greatest satisfaction?
- * 2. What should a homeowner do to prepare in advance for natural disasters?

Explore It

- * 3. What were some of the successes of Asa's reign as king? (14:2-15)
- * 4. What did Asa do that was right in God's sight? (14:2-6)
 5. What elements of pagan worship did Asa eliminate from Judah? (14:3, 5)
 6. What were King Asa's commands to the people of Judah? (14:4)
 7. What did Asa do during the years of peace to strengthen Judah? (14:6-7)
 8. What did God do for Judah when the people sought God? (14:7)
 9. How big was Asa's army? (14:8)
- * 10. What did Asa pray and say to God before his army went into battle? (14:11)
 11. How did Asa see the significance of Judah's battle against the Cushites? (14:11)
 12. What was the result of Asa's battle with the Cushites? (14:12-15)

Get It

13. What was the connection for Judah between obedience to God and possessing the land in peace?
- * 14. Why was Asa so active in removing the idols and false gods from the towns around his nation?
- * 15. What sinful practices and idols do Christians often fail to remove from their lives?
 16. How can we find out if some of our actions or attitudes are displeasing to the Lord?
 17. How can we use times of peace and comfort to build our spiritual lives in preparation for future difficulties?
18. How does crying out to God actually help a person overcome his or her problems and enemies?

Apply It

- * 19. What standard can you use to determine whether any idols (loyalties that take God's place) exist in your life today?
20. How can you be strengthening and preparing yourself this week for future spiritual battles?

Asa's Reform - 2 Chronicles 15:1-19

Topics: Commitment, Courage, Covenant, Death, Encouragement, Forsake, Heart, Holy Spirit, Idolatry, Joy, Law, Listening, Peace, Prophecy, Rewards, Sacrifice, Soul, Strength, Swearing, Teaching, War

Open It

1. Who has given you valuable and timely words of encouragement?
- * 2. Which reward would you choose—one thousand dollars for one month of good work, or two million dollars after doing twenty years of faithful service? Why?
3. What is the value of making a public statement about your intentions to do something in the future?

Explore It

- * 4. Who came to Asa to bring him a word from the Lord? (15:1-2)
- * 5. What did the prophet say to Asa about God's relationship to him and his nation? (15:2-7)
 6. What was it like in Israel when they did not worship the true God? (15:3-6)
 7. What was the source of the people's distress? (15:6)
- * 8. What statement of encouragement did the prophet give to Asa? (15:7)
 9. What kind of action did the statement of encouragement enable Asa to take? (15:8)
 10. Why did Asa gather all the people in Jerusalem? (15:9-15)
 11. What was the covenant into which Asa and all the people entered? (15:12-15)
 12. What happened to the people who would not agree to the covenant? (15:13)
 13. What happened to the people when they sought the Lord? (15:15)
 14. What did Asa do to his grandmother? (15:16)
 15. What did Asa bring back into the temple? (15:18)
 16. How long did Judah have peace under king Asa? (15:19)

Get It

17. What does it mean to have a close relationship with God?
18. How can we be receptive to what God's messengers want to say to us?
- * 19. Why is it important to stay in regular contact with Christian leaders who can teach us God's Word and pray with us?
- * 20. How does reminding someone of a reward motivate the person?
 21. What is the value of making a public commitment to seek the Lord?
 22. What is the difference between serving the Lord wholeheartedly and giving God just part of our life?
 23. What is our responsibility to help our family members be wholehearted followers of the Lord?
 24. How should we respond to family members who don't follow the Lord?

Apply It

- * 25. What reminders of God's faithfulness to you can help you endure your next period of discouragement or trial?
26. How can you prepare yourself to hear and obey the next time God speaks to you through a fellow believer?

Asa's Last Years - 2 Chronicles 16:1-14

Topics: Abandon, Anger, Commitment, Death, Enemies, Faithfulness, Foolishness, Gifts, Help, History, Honor, Leadership, Obedience, Oppressed, Remembering, Sickness, Strength, Stubbornness, Trust, War

Open It

1. When you have trouble with your car, whom do you call?
- * 2. What recent problems in your life have required help beyond your usual resources?

Explore It

3. Who was threatening Asa and the nation of Judah? (16:1)
4. What portion of Asa's reign as king does this passage cover? (16:1-14)
- * 5. From whom did Asa seek help? (16:2-3)
6. What did Asa receive for his payment of silver and gold to Ben-Hadad? (16:4-6)
7. Who was Hanani? (16:7)
8. What message did Hanani deliver to Asa? (16:7-9)
- * 9. For what is the Lord constantly looking? (16:9)
- * 10. What consequences would Asa and his people suffer for not trusting the Lord? (16:9)
11. What was Asa's response to Hanani's message? (16:10)
12. How was Asa's response to his foot disease consistent with his approach to other problems in his life? (16:12)
13. At what point in his reign did Asa die? (16:13)

Get It

- * 14. What critical mistake did Asa make in trying to solve his problems?
15. Which of our problems can we solve ourselves, and with which of them should we ask the Lord for help?
16. What lessons from the past had Asa failed to internalize?
17. What causes us to forget to trust the Lord when we are having problems?
18. Why is it so difficult to accept criticism or correction from someone else?
- * 19. Why does God want us to commit our hearts fully to Him and trust Him in all situations?

Apply It

- * 20. What difficult situations do you face this week that will give you opportunities to seek first God's kingdom?
21. What words of correction from a caring Christian friend or leader have you rejected in the past which you need to reconsider?

Jehoshaphat, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 17:1-19

Topics: Devotion, Faithfulness, Fear, Gifts, Heart, Honor, Idolatry, Learning, Obedience, Peace, People, Power, Serving, Strength, Success, Teaching, War, Wealth, Youth

Open It

- * 1. Who was the best teacher you ever had?
- 2. How did you feel about school, and why do you think you felt that way?

Explore It

- 3. What did Jehoshaphat do to strengthen Judah against Israel? (17:1-2)
- * 4. What kind of a spiritual influence was Jehoshaphat on Judah during the early days of his reign? (17:1-19)
- 5. To what faithful king did Jehoshaphat compare in his youth? (17:3)
- * 6. Why was the Lord with Jehoshaphat? (17:3-4)
- 7. How did the people respond to Jehoshaphat's leadership? (17:5)
- 8. What did Jehoshaphat do to uproot the false gods? (17:6)
- * 9. What did Jehoshaphat do to educate the whole nation to know the Law of the Lord? (17:7-9)
- 10. What did the surrounding nations think of Judah during this period of time? (17:10)
- 11. What nations brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah? (17:11)
- 12. What fortifications and armed forces did Jehoshaphat develop? (17:12-19)

Get It

- 13. What did Jehoshaphat choose for and against when he assumed the kingship?
- * 14. What does it mean for a person to live according to the ways of the Lord?
- 15. What influences can tempt a Christian not to live according to the ways of the Lord?
- 16. What should Christians be doing to remove evil influences from society?
- 17. How could our society be reeducated about the ways of the Lord and the Law of God?
- 18. Why are Christian efforts to educate adults and young people about God often hindered or ignored?
- * 19. What should Christians be doing to teach God's Word to others?

Apply It

- 20. How can your choices of whom to consult reflect a devotion to God?
- * 21. How could you begin (or continue) this week to be involved in a program to educate yourself or others in knowing God's Word?

Micaiah Prophecies Against Ahab - 2 Chronicles 18:1-27

Topics: Answers, Death, Disobedience, Encouragement, God's Will, Guidance, Hardheartedness, Hatred, Holy Spirit, Honor, Lying, Marriage, Partnerships, Peace, People, Prophecy, Questions, Swearing, Success, Truth, Victory, War, Wealth

Open It

1. How do people attempt to learn what is going to happen in the future?
2. What ruins business partnerships between people?
- * 3. What pressures do a married couple face when they are not following the same religion?

Explore It

- * 4. By what means had Jehoshaphat allied himself with Ahab, king of Israel? (18:1)
- * 5. How did Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab bring about a prophetic confrontation about Ahab's death? (18:1-27)
6. What military campaign did Ahab want Jehoshaphat to undertake with him? (18:2-3)
7. What was Jehoshaphat's response to Ahab's request? (18:3-4)
8. Whom did Ahab bring in to ask God's guidance? (18:5)
9. Why did Jehoshaphat want to consult another prophet of the Lord? (18:6)
- * 10. Why didn't Ahab want to hear from Micaiah? (18:7)
11. What did Ahab's prophets predict would happen in the battle? (18:9-11)
12. What was Micaiah's prophesy from the Lord about the outcome of the battle? (18:14-22)
13. What did Micaiah prophesy about how the Lord and the angels were planning to bring down Ahab? (18:18-21)
14. What did Micaiah prophesy would happen to Ahab? (18:19)
15. How did Ahab respond to Micaiah and his prophesy? (18:23-26)
16. By what means did Micaiah say that his prophesy could be judged as being from God? (18:27)

Get It

- * 17. What are the dangers of forming a partnership with people who do not share your spiritual values and priorities?
- * 18. How can people who say they are doing God's will be mistaken or absolutely wrong?
19. What enables a person to ignore a clear warning given in his or her best interest?
20. When have you been tempted to shun the people who will not say only what you want to hear?
21. What are the potential dangers of 100 percent agreement among a council of leaders?
22. How do we know if someone claiming to know God's will is truly speaking for Him?

Apply It

- * 23. If you are involved in any partnership with people who oppose God's ways, what steps can you take to insure that you are not trapped into an unacceptable compromise?
24. In what setting do you need to have the courage to speak God's words even if they prove unpopular to your hearers?

Ahab Killed at Ramoth Gilead - 2 Chronicles 18:28-19:3

Topics: Anger, Death, Deceit, Disobedience, Evil, Goodness, Hatred, Heart, Help, Instructions, Punishment, Safety, War

Open It

1. Whom have you known who seemed unusually gullible and likely to be used by others?
- * 2. When have you, or someone you loved, had a brush with death?

Explore It

3. Who was the king of Israel with whom Jehoshaphat king of Judah went into battle? (18:28)
- * 4. What was the king of Israel's plan to avoid being killed in the battle? (18:29)
5. What did the king of Aram direct his charioteers to do with regard to the king of Israel? (18:30)
6. What did the charioteers do when they saw Jehoshaphat? (18:31)
7. How did Jehoshaphat avoid being killed by the charioteers? (18:31-32)
- * 8. By what means was the king of Israel fatally wounded? (18:33-34)
9. With what question was Jehoshaphat greeted by Jehu the seer when he returned safely to the palace in Jerusalem? (19:2)
- * 10. Why was the wrath of God upon Jehoshaphat? (19:2)
11. For what good did Jehu commend Jehoshaphat? (19:3)

Get It

- * 12. Why didn't Ahab's plan of disguising himself succeed in keeping him alive?
13. What role did God play in the circumstances of Ahab's death?
14. Why didn't God punish Jehoshaphat as He did Ahab?
15. How does God punish or reward people?
- * 16. What lesson do you think Jehoshaphat should have learned from this incident?
17. In what ways might Christians be used by God's enemies for their own purposes?
18. How are we responsible before God for any ways in which we support or help the spread of evil?

Apply It

- * 19. What instance of God's mercy in response to your own foolishness can be the subject of your personal praise and thanksgiving this week?
20. In any of your alliances which might be construed as helping the wicked, how can you discern how God wants you to handle the situation?

Jehoshaphat Appoints Judges - 2 Chronicles 19:4-11

Topics: Anger, Courage, Faithfulness, Fear, Injustice, Instructions, Judgment, Justice, Law, Leadership, Sin

Open It

1. What positive or negative feelings do you associate with jury duty?
- * 2. If you could serve in any of the various courtroom jobs (judge, bailiff, recorder, defense attorney, etc.), which job would you choose?

Explore It

3. Why did Jehoshaphat venture out among the people throughout the land? (19:4)
- * 4. What appointments did Jehoshaphat make? (19:4-8)
5. By what standards were the judges to make their verdicts? (19:6)
- * 6. What instructions did Jehoshaphat give to the judges? (19:6-7)
7. Who was appointed in Jerusalem to administer the law and settle disputes? (19:8)
8. What instructions were given to the Levites? (19:9-10)
- * 9. What warning was to be given to everyone who came before the judges? (19:10)
10. What was the job of Amariah, the chief priest? (19:11)
11. What was the job of Zebadiah, the leader of the tribe of Judah? (19:11)
12. How did Jehoshaphat admonish all of the leaders to act? (19:11)

Get It

13. How would the king's visit to a community help people turn back to the Lord?
14. What is the role of a judge?
- * 15. By what standards was a judge in Israel to deliver a verdict?
16. How are God's people supposed to settle disputes?
17. How can partiality or bribery undermine the justice given in a courtroom?
18. How can seeing people or situations through God's eyes help us judge fairly?
19. How often should we be warned of the consequences of sinning against the Lord?
- * 20. What are the qualities of a good judge?
- * 21. In what ways are we called to be judges of people or situations?

Apply It

- * 22. What could you do this week to bring an unresolved dispute in your life to a positive resolution?
23. How can you treat all people you contact this week with a spirit of fairness and justice?

Jehoshaphat Defeats Moab and Ammon - 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

Topics: Discouragement, Enemies, Faith, Family, Fasting, Fear, Friendship, Gifts, Heaven, Help, Instructions, Judgment, Listening, Name, Obedience, People, Power, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Salvation, Testing, War

Open It

- * 1. What is your normal method of dealing with problems?
- 2. When was the last time you had so many problems you felt like crying or giving up?

Explore It

- 3. Who attacked Judah and plunged her into war? (20:1)
- 4. How did Jehoshaphat prepare the people when he heard of the potential attack? (20:3)
- 5. Of what did Jehoshaphat remind the Lord when he prayed? (20:6-9)
- * 6. What did Jehoshaphat pray before the gathering of the people? (20:6-12)
- 7. What appeal did Jehoshaphat make to the Lord? (20:10-12)
- 8. What happened to Jahaziel while they stood before the Lord? (20:13-14)
- * 9. What instructions from the Lord did Jahaziel give the people? (20:15-17)
- 10. How did Jehoshaphat and the people respond after they heard the Lord's instructions? (20:18-19)
- 11. What were Jehoshaphat's words of encouragement to the people the morning after the Lord gave them instructions? (20:20)
- 12. What did the people sing as they marched out to battle? (20:21)
- * 13. What happened as the people sang and praised the Lord? (20:22)
- 14. How were the enemies of Israel killed? (20:23-24)
- 15. What did Jehoshaphat and the people do when they saw the dead bodies of the enemy soldiers? (20:25-26)
- 16. What was the attitude of God's people when they returned to Jerusalem? (20:27-28)
- 17. How did the surrounding nations react when they heard the outcome of the battle? (20:29-30)

Get It

- 18. What was notable about Jehoshaphat's response to the threat of attack?
- 19. How can prayer be a response or a defense against trouble?
- * 20. What was the secret of Israel's success in battle?
- 21. What does God want us to do when we face problems and threats?
- 22. What did it take for the people of Israel to march into battle greatly outnumbered, singing praises to the Lord?
- * 23. What kind of faith does it take for us to trust the Lord in our battles and struggles?
- 24. How can our enemies destroy themselves when we trust the Lord and refuse to fight them with their methods?
- 25. How can our trust in the Lord during difficult challenges be an effective witness for the Lord to those around us?

Apply It

- 26. What conflict are you facing this week for which faith should be your primary defense?
- * 27. What literal song of praise (words from Scripture or a hymnal) can be your "battle song" in the difficulties you will face this week?

The End of Jehoshaphat's Reign - 2 Chronicles 20:31-21:3

Topics: Children, Death, Evil, Gifts, Guilt, Heart, History, Leadership, Prophecy, Punishment, Right, Reputation

Open It

1. How do you feel walking through a cemetery in the daytime? at night?
- * 2. Whom would you like to speak, sing, or officiate at your funeral? Why?

Explore It

3. How long was Jehoshaphat king of Judah? (20:31)
4. What transition of leadership does this passage describe? (20:31-21:3)
- * 5. What was the spiritual legacy of Jehoshaphat's life? (20:32)
- * 6. Despite Jehoshaphat's good example, how did evil continue to survive in the land? (20:33)
- * 7. What unwise alliance did Jehoshaphat make? (20:35-36)
8. Who prophesied against Jehoshaphat's alliance? (20:37)
9. What happened to the ships Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah built? (20:37)
10. Who succeeded Jehoshaphat as king? (21:1)
11. How many brothers did Jehoram have? (21:2)
12. Why did Jehoshaphat give gifts to all of Jehoram's brothers? (21:3)

Get It

13. For what was Jehoshaphat known at the end of his life?
- * 14. For what would you like to be known when your life is over?
15. How will people describe your walk with the Lord when your life is over?
16. What makes it so hard for some people to seek the Lord?
- * 17. Why does evil and unbelief continue to exist in each generation?
18. What were the pros and cons of the trading alliance with Ahaziah?
19. What are some of our rationalizations about the compromises we decide to make with the world?
20. Why do we keep falling back into familiar sins in our life?

Apply It

- * 21. What would you like your friends and family to say about you when you die?
22. Which of your business dealings might not stand the scrutiny of one of God's prophets, and what can you do about it this week?

Jehoram, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 21:4-20

Topics: Covenant, Death, Enemies, Escape, Evil, Forsake, Idolatry, Judgment, Marriage, Murder, Pain, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Reputation, Sickness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. What was the most effective discipline you ever received from your parents?
- 2. For what forbidden behavior were you never caught or punished?

Explore It

- 3. Who was Jehoram's father? (21:1)
- 4. What did Jehoram do to his brothers when he became king? (21:4)
- 5. How long was Jehoram's reign as king? (21:5)
- 6. To what kings was Jehoram compared? (21:6)
- 7. To whom was Jehoram married? (21:6)
- * 8. What did the Lord think of Jehoram's reign as king? (21:6)
- 9. Why didn't the Lord destroy Judah when it was under the rule of Jehoram? (21:7)
- 10. What two cities rebelled against Judah and Jehoram? (21:8-11)
- * 11. What words of prophecy and judgment did Elijah deliver to Jehoram? (21:12-15)
- 12. Why did the Philistines attack Jehoram? (21:16)
- 13. What was the result of the Philistine attack? (21:17)
- * 14. How did Jehoram die? (21:18-19)
- 15. How was Jehoram's body treated after he died? (21:20)

Get It

- 16. Why would Jehoram kill all his brothers after he became king?
- 17. How was Jehoram's marriage to Ahab's daughter connected with his downfall?
- 18. How can marrying a non-Christian affect a believer's life with the Lord?
- 19. Why would God keep his promises to Judah in spite of their disobedience?
- 20. Why would God not strike down an evil king immediately but allow him to continue his reign?
- * 21. Why does God allow us to continue in sinful living without any immediate punishment?
- * 22. What are the long-term consequences of willful sin in the life of any individual?

Apply It

- 23. About what persistent evil in the world around you could you pray until God brings about either repentance or justice?
- * 24. What personal testimony can you share with someone this week about God's long-suffering nature?

Ahaziah, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 22:1-9

Topics: Advice, Consequences, Death, Disobedience, Encouragement, Evil, Family, God's Will, Hiding, Judgment, Murder, Plans, Power, War, Youth

Open It

- * 1. How can you tell the difference between good advice and bad advice?
- 2. What are the frequent causes of the downfall of a famous person?

Explore It

- 3. Who was Jehoram's youngest son? (22:1)
- 4. Why was the youngest son selected to succeed the king? (22:1)
- 5. How old was Ahaziah when he became king? (22:2)
- 6. How many years did Ahaziah reign as king? (22:2)
- 7. Whose ways did Ahaziah follow as king? (22:3)
- * 8. Who were the evil influences on Ahaziah? (22:3-4)
- 9. What effect did Ahaziah's parents have on him? (22:3-4)
- 10. With whom did Ahaziah align himself when he went to war? (22:5)
- * 11. What event brought Ahaziah's downfall as king? (22:6-9)
- 12. Whom did the Lord anoint to destroy the house of Ahab? (22:7)
- * 13. What did Jehu do to Ahaziah when he found him? (22:9)

Get It

- * 14. How can following bad advice get us into serious trouble?
- 15. Why is the choice of advisors surrounding a leader so important?
- 16. By what means can we determine who is giving us good advice?
- 17. What was tragic about Ahaziah's reign as king?
- 18. How can a series of unwise decisions ruin a person's life?
- * 19. What does God do to help us recognize bad advice and avoid wrong decisions?

Apply It

- * 20. How does any advice you have received recently square with what you know of God's righteous commands?
- 21. What is one thing you can do in the coming week to develop a deeper love for God's ways?

Athaliah and Joash - 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:21

Topics: Courage, Covenant, Death, Families, Heroes, Hiding, Idolatry, Instructions, Joy, Leadership, Murder, Parents, People, Plans, Praise, Promises, Protection, Quiet, Strength

Open It

1. What true story that you've heard best exemplifies human courage?
- * 2. For what cause would you be willing to risk your life?

Explore It

3. What relationship did Athaliah have with Ahaziah? (22:10)
4. What did Athaliah do when she heard that Ahaziah was dead? (22:10-12)
- * 5. Who was Jehosheba's husband, and what was his job? (22:11)
- * 6. How did Jehosheba save Ahaziah's baby son from being killed? (22:11-12)
7. How many years was the child Joash hidden while Athaliah ruled the land? (22:12)
8. Where did Jehoiada and Jehosheba hide the baby, Joash? (22:12)
9. When did Jehoiada make his move to oppose Athaliah? (23:1)
10. What preparations did Jehoiada make with the Levites? (23:1-10)
- * 11. How was the new king Joash presented to the people? (23:11)
12. What was the reaction of Athaliah when she saw the new king being honored by the people? (23:12-13)
13. What did the guards do to Athaliah? (23:14-15)
14. What covenant did Jehoiada, the people, and the king make? (23:16)
15. What happened to the false gods and idols? (23:17)
16. To whom did Jehoiada give the oversight of the temple? (23:18)
17. What was the reaction of the people to the installation of the boy king? (23:20-21)

Get It

18. Why did Athaliah want to kill all of her son's children?
- * 19. What ruined Athaliah's plan to rule Judah?
20. What kind of courage did it take for Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, to hide the heir to the throne for six years and for her husband, Jehoiada, to plan Athaliah's overthrow?
21. What do you think motivated Jehoiada to oppose Athaliah?
22. In what situations today do Christians need courage to oppose what is wrong?
- * 23. What stops people from standing up for what is right and opposing what is wrong?
24. In what settings might you need to be prepared to take a courageous stand for what is right?
25. In what way was Athaliah's death appropriate to what she did during her life?
26. Why did Jehoiada restore the worship procedures in the temple according to David's instructions?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do to be prepared for the next time you need to stand for what is right?
28. In what situation would you like to see change through your careful and prayerful waiting?

Joash Repairs the Temple - 2 Chronicles 24:1-16

Topics: Accountability, Children, Church, Commitment, Consistency, Craftsmanship, Death, Evil, Gifts, Goodness, Idolatry, Instructions, Marriage, Reputation, Restoration, Right, Teaching, Tithing, Work, Youth

Open It

1. Who (outside your immediate family) did you most admire when you were a child?
- * 2. What material possession would be hard for you to give away to help the church or someone in need?

Explore It

3. How old was Joash when he became king? (24:1)
4. Who was Joash's spiritual mentor and guide? (24:2-3)
5. Who had the idea to restore the temple of God? (24:4)
6. How did Joash go about gathering the money and building materials for the temple restoration? (24:5-6)
- * 7. What delayed the temple restoration project? (24:6)
8. What had happened to the previous furnishings of the temple? (24:7)
- * 9. How did the people respond when given the command and the opportunity to give toward the restoration of the temple? (24:8-10)
10. For what purposes were the gifts used in refurbishing the temple? (24:11-14)
11. What happened every day while Jehoiada was living? (24:14)
- * 12. What was the legacy of Jehoiada's life as a priest? (24:14-16)

Get It

- * 13. What role did Jehoiada play in Joash's life and reign as king?
14. How can another committed Christian help us be faithful in our commitment to Christ?
15. What caused the people to bring and give their gifts for the temple with an attitude of joy?
16. What makes giving a joyful experience?
- * 17. What is the benefit of daily prayer and worship?
18. For what acts of courage and faithfulness to God would you like to be remembered?

Apply It

- * 19. If you have not yet identified a spiritual mentor or helper, whom could you approach about helping you to stay on track in your commitment to God?
20. What could you give to God's work this week that would bring you joy?

The Wickedness of Joash - 2 Chronicles 24:17-27

Topics: Abandon, Accountability, Anger, Backslide, Change, Death, Disobedience, Evil, Flattery, Forget, Forsake, Guilt, Hardheartedness, Holy Spirit, Idolatry, Influence, Judgment, Kindness, Leadership, Listening, Murder, Plans, Prophecy, Punishment, Remembering, Stubbornness, War, Worship

Open It

- * 1. In hindsight, when was a time you were too easily influenced by others?
- 2. How have you felt when someone you have helped later shows his or her ingratitude by turning against you?

Explore It

- * 3. What caused Joash to stray away from God? (24:17-18)
- 4. How did the people respond to God's efforts to remind them of the truth? (24:19)
- 5. Who did God use as a prophet to confront Joash with his sin? (24:20)
- 6. Who was Zechariah's father? (24:20)
- * 7. What did Joash do to Zechariah? (24:21-22)
- 8. What had Joash forgotten about Zechariah's father? (24:22)
- 9. What did Zechariah say as he lay dying? (24:22)
- * 10. How did God punish Judah for their evil actions? (24:23-24)
- 11. How did Joash die? (24:25)
- 12. Who were the conspirators who killed Joash after he was wounded in battle? (24:26)

Get It

- 13. What influences turned Joash away from the Lord?
- * 14. What choices were available to Joash that could have kept Judah on course with God?
- 15. What were the early influences that drew you to Christ, and what is your current relationship to them?
- 16. For what reasons do people who have been Christians for a long time slip and falter in their faith?
- 17. Why did Joash kill Zechariah?
- 18. How did Zechariah's dying words come true?
- * 19. How do we try to silence God's voice in our lives when we are living in disobedience?
- 20. How was Joash's death related to what he had done in his life?
- 21. How were Joash's reforms and accomplishments tarnished by his choices later in life?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you remember to remain faithful to your early teachers in the faith and essential truths they taught you?
- 23. What can you do on a daily basis to make yourself less susceptible to ungodly influences?

Amaziah, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 25:1-28

Topics: Accountability, Advice, Anger, Backslide, Challenge, Compromise, Courage, Enemies, God's Will, Government, Heart, Help, Idolatry, Law, Listening, Money, Murder, Partnerships, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Rescue, Right, Running, Sacrifice, Unfaithfulness, Victory

Open It

- * 1. How would you handle a child who says he or she loves you but continues to disobey what you instruct him or her to do?
- 2. What are your buying habits like (impulsive, careful, bargain hunter, etc.)?
- 3. To what kind of insult or challenge are you most vulnerable?

Explore It

- 4. Who succeeded Joash as king? (25:1)
- * 5. How devoted to the Lord was Amaziah? (25:2)
- 6. What did Amaziah do to avenge the death of his father? (25:3)
- 7. What did the Law of Moses command about punishing sons or fathers for each others' sins? (25:4)
- 8. Who did Ahaziah hire to serve in his army? (25:6)
- 9. What warning did the man of God give to Ahaziah about blending his army with the men from Israel? (25:7-8)
- 10. What did Ahaziah do about the men he had hired for his army? (25:9-10)
- 11. How did Ahaziah's smaller army fare in their battle against the men of Seir? (25:11-12)
- * 12. How did Ahaziah stray from the Lord upon returning home victorious from battle? (25:14-15)
- 13. How did Ahaziah respond when he was confronted by the prophet? (25:16)
- 14. How did Jehoash trick Ahaziah into meeting him in battle? (25:17-21)
- * 15. What role did God play in Jehoash's defeat of Ahaziah? (25:20)
- 16. What was the outcome of the direct confrontation between the armies of Judah and Israel? (25:21-22)
- 17. What damage did Jehoash do to Jerusalem and the temple? (25:23-24)
- 18. How did Ahaziah finish out his life? (25:25-28)

Get It

- * 19. Why would Ahaziah be described as someone who did what was right, but not wholeheartedly?
- 20. What are some of the indications in this story of Ahaziah's less-than-wholehearted devotion to God?
- * 21. What are the major reasons some Christians wander away from the Lord?
- 22. How did pride contribute to Ahaziah's problems?
- 23. What are some instances in which your pride has been used against you?
- 24. What are the signs when a person is wholehearted in his or her commitment to the Lord?
- 25. How could Ahaziah worship false gods immediately after he had seen God give his undersized army a victory?
- 26. What has the power to come between you and your faithfulness to God?
- 27. How does God discipline us or try to get our attention when we are unfaithful to Him?

Apply It

- * 28. What change do you need to make in your habits or relationships this week to become wholehearted in your commitment to the Lord?
- 29. What can you do this week to remain humble and restrained so that you can't be goaded into foolish actions because of pride?

Uzziah, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 26:1-23

Topics: Abundance, Anger, Courage, Disobedience, Fear, Government, Help, History, Honor, Impulsiveness, Leadership, Obedience, Power, Pride, Punishment, Restoration, Success, Teaching, Thankfulness, Unfaithfulness, War, Youth

Open It

- * 1. How can pride be either a good or bad quality in a person?
- 2. How does wealth, fame, or power change people?

Explore It

- 3. Who succeeded Ahaziah as king? (26:1-4)
- * 4. What was the spiritual reputation of Uzziah? (26:5)
- 5. Who was Uzziah's spiritual mentor and instructor? (26:5)
- 6. What success did Uzziah have in establishing his kingdom? (26:6-8)
- 7. What building projects did Uzziah undertake? (26:9-10)
- 8. What were the numbers and capabilities of Uzziah's army? (26:11-15)
- * 9. What led to Uzziah's downfall? (26:16)
- * 10. What did Uzziah do in the temple that displeased the Lord? (26:16-18)
- 11. What happened to Uzziah when he became angry at the priests for rebuking him? (26:19)
- 12. How did having leprosy change Uzziah's life? (26:21)
- 13. Where else in the Bible is the story of Uzziah told? (26:22)

Get It

- 14. Why did God afflict Uzziah with leprosy?
- * 15. What deadly temptations are faced by people who achieve fame, wealth, or power?
- 16. How can being successful in life have a negative influence on our relationship with God?
- 17. What did the priestly duties represent for someone like Uzziah, who was not descended from Aaron?
- * 18. How can possessing power make us think we are above the law?
- 19. What fatal mistake did Uzziah make with regard to his successes as king?
- 20. How can the failure to give thanks to God lead to our spiritual downfall?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you remind yourself each day to give thanks for God's blessing on your life?
- 22. What checks can you devise to make sure you are not coveting privileges beyond those that God has granted you?

Jotham, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 27:1-9

Topics: Achievements, Faithfulness, People, Power, Restoration, Right, Sin, Success, War, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. If you were given an award for outstanding achievement in your job, what would you say in your acceptance speech?
- 2. Who is someone you think is an example of both success in this life and faithfulness in following the Lord?

Explore It

- 3. Who succeeded Uzziah as king? (27:1)
- 4. How old was Jotham when he became king? (27:1, 8)
- 5. How long did Jotham reign? (27:1, 8)
- * 6. In what way was Jotham like his father? (27:2)
- * 7. In what significant way did Jotham's actions differ from his father's? (27:2)
- 8. What were the religious practices of the people during Jotham's reign? (27:2)
- 9. What building projects did Jotham undertake? (27:3-4)
- 10. What nation did Jotham conquer? (27:5)
- * 11. Why did Jotham grow powerful? (27:6)
- 12. Who succeeded Jotham as king of Judah? (27:9)

Get It

- 13. Why do you think Jotham was careful not to make the mistake his father had made?
- 14. What lessons have you learned about following the Lord by watching other people and their faith?
- 15. What have you learned not to do by watching someone close to you during the past month or two?
- 16. To what extent can a ruler influence the spirituality of the people he or she governs?
- 17. How do you feel when others around you don't seem interested in hearing about your Christian faith?
- * 18. What would Jotham say was his secret of success in life?
- * 19. What measures of success in life should be secondary to our focus on loving and serving God?
- 20. How could a personal inventory of obedience to God be a good first step in a project you are ready to undertake?

Apply It

- * 21. What is one change you can make in your plans for the near future to reflect your commitment to God?
- 22. What person will you observe this week for lessons in living for God?

Ahaz, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 28:1-27

Topics: Anger, Children, Comparisons, Death, Disobedience, Evil, Forsake, Giving Up, Guilt, Help, History, Humility, Idolatry, Listening, Problems, Prophecy, Punishment, Right, Sacrifice, Slavery, Sin, Unfaithfulness, Worship, Youth

Open It

1. What sorts of tragedies or catastrophes tend to get people's attention or "sober them up"?
- * 2. What do you appreciate most about children?

Explore It

- * 3. What religious atmosphere marked the reign of Ahaz? (28:1-4)
4. What type of evil practices and idol worship were instituted by Ahaz? (28:1-4)
5. What evil practice regarding children did Ahaz practice and promote? (28:3)
- * 6. How did God punish Ahaz? (28:5-8)
7. What cruel acts did the armies of Israel commit against the leaders and people of Judah? (28:6-8)
8. What did the prophet, Oded, say to armies returning to Samaria? (28:9-11)
9. Why would it be wrong for Israel to take the people of Judah into captivity? (28:10-11)
10. Who stepped forward to urge the army of Israel to do the right thing? (28:12-13)
11. What did the soldiers do with their prisoners? (28:14-15)
12. From whom did Ahaz seek help? (28:16)
13. What problems was Ahaz having because of his unfaithfulness to the Lord? (28:17-18)
14. What humiliation (on top of what he had already suffered) did Ahaz face because of his stubborn disobedience? (28:19-20)
- * 15. What "solutions" did Ahaz seek to his problems with his enemies? (28:21-23)
16. Why did Ahaz worship Aram's gods? (28:23)
17. What did Ahaz do to the temple and its furnishings? (28:24)
18. What did Ahaz do to spread the false religions? (28:25)
19. What honor traditionally given to kings was denied to Ahaz? (28:27)

Get It

20. How does God deal with people who forsake Him and practice evil?
21. In what way do you think our problems and difficulties are God's way of getting our attention?
22. What crimes against children in our society might be comparable with the pagan practice of child sacrifice in Ahaz's time?
- * 23. Why didn't all his troubles turn Ahaz's heart back to God?
24. Where did Ahaz's problem-solving in his own wisdom leave him?
25. How can struggles and difficulties be used by God to spark revival and growth in us?
26. Judging from Ahaz's experiences, what makes God angry?
- * 27. How can our unfaithfulness to God hurt others around us?
28. What makes it hard for a person heavily involved in sinful activities to turn to God for help?

Apply It

- * 29. Of all the solutions that come to your mind for your current difficulties, how can you determine which are the product of flawed human reason and which are from God?
30. What concrete action can you take this week to value human life and the lives of children in particular?

Hezekiah Purifies the Temple - 2 Chronicles 29:1-36

Topics: Abandon, Abundance, Anger, Change, Comparisons, Covenant, Dedication, Disobedience, Evil, Forsake, Heart, Instructions, Joy, Leadership, Neglect, Praise, Purity, Representatives, Restoration, Revival, Right, Sacrifice, Serving, Sin, Thankfulness, Unfaithfulness, Words, Work, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What person do you know, or know of, who has made a dramatic and major change in his or her life?
- 2. What would appeal to you or repulse you about being involved in reforming an institution (government, agency, business, etc.)?

Explore It

- 3. What major changes did Hezekiah make when he became king? (29:1-36)
- 4. What was Hezekiah's relationship with the Lord? (29:2)
- * 5. What did Hezekiah have to do to restore the temple? (29:3-5, 15-17)
- 6. What did Hezekiah instruct the priests and Levites to do? (29:5)
- 7. What had the previous generation done to the temple that displeased the Lord? (29:6-7)
- 8. How did God punish the people for their disobedience? (29:8-9)
- * 9. In what mission did Hezekiah encourage the priests and Levites to join him? (29:10-11)
- 10. What did the priests and Levites do to purify and consecrate the temple? (29:15-19)
- 11. What type of sacrifices did Hezekiah and the priests make to the Lord? (29:20-24)
- 12. Why was the blood of the goats presented on the altar? (29:24)
- 13. What did the people do as the burnt offering was being sacrificed to the Lord? (29:27-28)
- * 14. What did Hezekiah and all the people do after the offerings were finished? (29:29-30)
- 15. What were the three types of offerings the people brought to the Lord? (29:31)
- 16. How numerous were the offerings the people brought to the Lord? (29:32-35)
- 17. To whom did Hezekiah give credit for the rapid restoration of the temple worship according to God's commands? (29:36)

Get It

- 18. How did Hezekiah's leadership change the direction of the nation?
- * 19. What priorities did Hezekiah set when he became king of Judah?
- 20. How could Hezekiah have been so eager to please the Lord when his father had been so evil?
- 21. How did the blood of animals presented on the altar foreshadow the death of Jesus Christ on the cross?
- * 22. How important was Hezekiah's example in bringing about the revival of the nation?
- * 23. What happens to people when a spiritual revival touches a church or a community today?
- 24. In what ways did Hezekiah show himself to be a good leader?

Apply It

- 25. How could you set an example for others this week with your commitment to worshiping and serving God?
- * 26. What kind of diligence and hard work might be required of you in order to see a revival of commitment to God in your church?

Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover - 2 Chronicles 30:1-31:1

Topics: Ambassadors, Anger, Answers, Atonement, Blessing, Call, Celebration, Compassion, Encouragement, Escape, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Gifts, Goodness, Grace, Healing, History, Humility, Idolatry, Instructions, Invitation, Joy, Law, Obedience, Plans, Prayer, Purity, Rejection, Repentance, Responsibility, Right, Righteousness, Serving, Shame, Stubbornness, Submission, Understanding, Unfaithfulness, Unity, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What kind of preparations do you make for a major holiday celebration?
- 2. How interested are people in discussing religious issues?

Explore It

- 3. To whom did Hezekiah send invitations to come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration? (30:1)
- 4. What special celebration did Hezekiah reinstitute? (30:1-3)
- 5. Why hadn't the Passover been celebrated at the traditional time of year? (30:3)
- * 6. What reasons did Hezekiah give in his letter for why people should come to the temple in a spirit of repentance? (30:6-9)
- * 7. How were the couriers bearing the invitation received by the people? (30:10-12)
- 8. What did the crowd of people do to the altars of false gods when they gathered in Jerusalem? (30:13-14)
- 9. What did the priests and Levites do with the blood of the Passover lamb? (30:15-17)
- 10. Why did Hezekiah pray to the Lord on behalf of the people of Manasseh, Ephraim, Issachar, and Zebulun? (30:18)
- * 11. What attitude in the people did Hezekiah ask the Lord to accept in spite of their ceremonial cleanliness? (30:19)
- 12. How did the Lord respond to Hezekiah's prayer? (30:20)
- 13. How did the Levites perform as they reinstituted the Passover celebration? (30:22)
- 14. What was the attitude of the people as the Passover celebration ended? (30:25-26)
- 15. How did God respond to the prayers of the priests? (30:27)
- 16. What did the people do to the idols and false gods as they left to return home? (31:1)

Get It

- 17. What was the significance of the people's celebrating the Passover again?
- 18. Where did the people find the unity of mind to carry out such massive reforms?
- * 19. In what ways did the celebration of the Passover in Hezekiah's day deviate from the instructions in the law, and how did God treat those deviations?
- 20. What kind of leadership skills did Hezekiah demonstrate?
- 21. What does obedience to God's ancient commands have to do with serving Him today?
- 22. How does Hezekiah's invitation to the people compare to today's church proclaiming the message of Christ?
- * 23. Why do people reject and ridicule the invitation to believe and receive the invitation to accept and follow Christ?
- 24. What experience have you had trying to interest people in responding to God's plan of salvation?
- 25. What does God want to see in people who are seeking forgiveness and salvation?

Apply It

- 26. What traditional act of Christian worship over the centuries could enrich your walk with God this week?
- * 27. To whom can you give an invitation to receive God's forgiveness through Christ?

The Restoration of the Worship of God - 2 Chronicles 31:2-21

Topics: Abundance, Blessing, Devotion, Fairness, Faithfulness, Family, Generosity, Goodness, Instructions, Law, Leadership, Ministry, Obedience, Possessions, Praise, Responsibility, Serving, Thanksgiving, Tithing

Open It

1. What is one of the biggest management responsibilities you've ever had?
2. How have some of the people you've known handled the issue of giving to the church?
- * 3. What have been the results of projects on which you have worked wholeheartedly?

Explore It

4. What were the duties of the various divisions of priests and Levites as assigned by Hezekiah? (31:2)
5. Where did Hezekiah get the required offerings for the appointed feasts in the temple? (31:3)
6. How did Hezekiah make sure that the priests and Levites had time to do their jobs properly? (31:4)
7. What was the response of the people when Hezekiah called on them to bring the required portion of their wealth for the support of the priests? (31:5-7)
8. How did Hezekiah and his officials respond to the generosity of the people? (31:8)
9. What did the chief priest tell Hezekiah about the abundance piled up in heaps around the temple? (31:9-10)
10. What organizational structure did Hezekiah put in place for taking care of the goods that were brought by the people? (31:11-13)
- * 11. What sort of distribution system was developed to get the provisions to all of the priests? (31:14-15)
- * 12. Whose needs were provided through the administrators of the offerings? (31:16-19)
- * 13. What qualities characterized all of Hezekiah's actions as king, especially in relation to the temple worship? (31:20-21)

Get It

14. How did Hezekiah show himself willing to set an example for the people in the practices he was instituting or reinstituting?
- * 15. What response on the part of the people indicated that the revival that took place during the Passover celebration was a lasting change of heart for many of the people?
16. What "happy problem" developed when Hezekiah called for the offerings to be brought for the support of the priests?
17. When have you seen God supply so abundantly that a whole new structure was required to handle the quantity of gifts?
- * 18. Why is it appropriate to praise God when His people give generously?
19. What are the pros and cons of Christian ministers being responsible for raising their own support versus being on salary?
20. What was the source of Hezekiah's guidance for these ambitious projects?

Apply It

21. When can you set aside time to read up on a ministry you support with your finances so that your gifts might be wholehearted and generous?
- * 22. How can you say thank you to God for the work His people do?
23. What can you do to develop a servant's attitude in dependence upon God?

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem - 2 Chronicles 32:1-23

Topics: Angels, Believe, Caring, Confidence, Courage, Danger, Death, Deceit, Discouragement, Encouragement, Enemies, Faithfulness, Fear, Help, Idolatry, Insults, Plans, Power, Prayer, Preparation, Pride, Restoration, Sacrifice, Salvation, Selfishness, Victory, Weaknesses, Work, Worship

Open It

1. What type of problems upset or bother you the most?
- * 2. When you are facing a problem, to what extent does prayer affect your attitude about it?

Explore It

3. What king and nation invaded Judah? (32:1)
- * 4. How did Hezekiah prepare for the threat of attack? (32:3-6)
5. What did Hezekiah tell his army? (32:7-8)
- * 6. Why was Hezekiah confident of victory? (32:7-8)
7. What did King Sennacherib say in an attempt to persuade the people of Jerusalem to surrender? (32:9-19)
8. What did King Sennacherib say that mocked God? (32:12-17)
9. What message did the Assyrians take directly to Hezekiah's subjects to try to intimidate them? (32:18-19)
- * 10. How did God respond when Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed? (32:20-22)
11. What happened to Sennacherib? (32:21)
12. How did defeating the Assyrians change the perception other nations had of Hezekiah and Judah? (32:23)

Get It

13. In light of God's power and willingness to help us, how should we respond to problems that arise in our lives?
14. How did Hezekiah combine clever action with an attitude of dependence on God?
- * 15. What was the source of Hezekiah's confidence against his enemies?
16. How does God help people who lack financial or material resources?
17. How can the Lord help us when we feel overwhelmed by an opponent or problem?
- * 18. How can prayer defeat an enemy or solve a problem?
19. How should we proceed when people mock the Lord God?
20. How should a believer balance planning and action with waiting on God?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you make sure that prayer will be a regular part of your problem-solving this week?
22. What fellow believer could you encourage with the story of Hezekiah's faith in the face of great odds?

Hezekiah's Pride, Success, and Death - 2 Chronicles 32:24-33

Topics: Abundance, Accomplishments, Achievements, Anger, Answers, Death, Delay, Devotion, Healing, Heart, History, Honor, Kindness, Miracles, Prayer, Pride, Repentance, Sickness, Success, Testing, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What kind of response do you hope for when you give someone a gift?
- 2. How does gaining fame and fortune affect a person's tendency to express appreciation to others?

Explore It

- 3. What was the occasion of Hezekiah's prayer to the Lord? (32:24)
- * 4. How did the Lord respond to Hezekiah's prayer? (32:24)
- * 5. What kind of attitude did Hezekiah display after he was healed? (32:25)
- 6. What kept Hezekiah and the people from being under the wrath of God? (32:26)
- 7. What did Hezekiah do with all of his wealth and power? (32:27-30)
- 8. What remarkable engineering feat had Hezekiah accomplished while he was king? (32:30)
- * 9. How did God test Hezekiah? (32:31)
- 10. What famous Bible prophet wrote about Hezekiah? (32:32)
- 11. What did the people think of Hezekiah when he died? (32:33)
- 12. Who succeeded Hezekiah as king? (32:33)

Get It

- * 13. How does a serious illness or accident change our prayer habits?
- 14. What causes us to forget to thank or praise God for His blessings?
- * 15. What kind of response does God want from us when He gives us good gifts?
- 16. Once we have sinned and disappointed God, what can we do to avoid His discipline?
- 17. In what ways do you feel God has tested you recently?
- 18. What unfortunate legacy did Hezekiah leave another generation because of his pride?
- 19. Why might a person turn down a gift offered by another person or even by God?

Apply It

- 20. What could you do this week to help your regular prayer life become more like your emergency prayer life?
- * 21. If the Lord tested you this week, what would be your greatest motivation and priority?

Manasseh, King of Judah; Amon, King of Judah - 2 Chronicles 33:1-25

Topics: Age, Anger, Backslide, Change, Comparisons, Disobedience, Evil, Example, Forgiveness, Guilt, Humility, Idolatry, Instructions, Law, Listening, Murder, Name, Obedience, Occult, Prayer, Prophecy, Purity, Repentance, Restoration, Sacrifice, Unfaithfulness, Words, Worship, Youth

Open It

1. Why do you think it is often gratifying for a parent to see his or her child continue in the family business or the same line of work?
- * 2. How would you respond to a convicted murderer who said he or she had repented and become a Christian and wanted to be released?

Explore It

3. How old was Manasseh when he became king? (33:1)
- * 4. What direction did Manasseh take the nation spiritually? (33:2)
5. How did Manasseh undo his father's work? (33:3)
6. How did Manasseh desecrate the temple as a place of worship? (33:4-5)
- * 7. What evil acts did Manasseh commit personally? (33:6)
8. How did Manasseh's actions defy the conditions of the promises God had made to David and Solomon? (33:7-8)
9. How did the paganism of Judah under Manasseh compare to what had existed before God gave the land to His people? (33:9)
10. How did Manasseh respond to warnings from the Lord? (33:10)
11. How did the Lord punish Manasseh for his sins? (33:11)
12. How did Manasseh change when he was taken into captivity? (33:12)
- * 13. What happened to Manasseh while he was being punished? (33:12-13)
14. How did the Lord answer Manasseh's prayer? (33:13)
15. What did the new Manasseh build and destroy? (33:14-16)
16. How did the people use the altars previously used for worshiping false gods? (33:17)
17. Who succeeded Manasseh as king, and how long was his reign? (33:20-21)
18. What spiritual leadership did Amon provide? (33:22)
19. How was Amon different from his father? (33:23)
20. What ended Amon's reign as king? (33:24)

Get It

- * 21. What causes the children of some committed Christians to rebel against God and live sinful lives?
22. What sins show total rejection and defiance toward God?
23. How would you like to see God punish people who promote evil and destroy young lives?
- * 24. What does the forgiveness of someone as evil as Manasseh tell us about God?
25. When have the unhappy conditions of your life prodded you to humble yourself before God?
26. To what lengths is God willing to go to get our attention and cause us to repent?
27. In what ways did the people fail to follow the Lord's instructions for worship completely?
28. What is the danger in not following the Lord's commands completely or precisely?

Apply It

29. For whom can you pray this week who is presently defiant toward God?
- * 30. What do you want to remember about Manasseh and the way God changed him?

Josiah's Reforms - 2 Chronicles 34:1-13

Topics: Church, Culture, Evil, Faithfulness, Idolatry, Involvement, Leadership, Money, Obedience, Purity, Restoration, Right, Sacrifice, Trust, Work, Worship, Youth

Open It

- * 1. How hopeful do you think today's young people are about their ability to change the world for good?
- 2. What significant jobs in a local church could be done by a young person?

Explore It

- * 3. How old was Josiah when he became king? (34:1)
- * 4. What kind of spiritual leadership did Josiah give the nation? (34:2)
 - 5. When did Josiah begin to search for God? (34:3)
 - 6. What symbols and evidences of false gods did Josiah destroy? (34:3-4)
 - 7. What did Josiah do in an attempt to remove the guilt of the people for their previous idol worship? (34:5)
- * 8. How extensive were Josiah's efforts to clean up the nation? (34:6-7)
 - 9. What did Josiah send via trusted messengers to enable the high priest to repair the temple? (34:8-9)
 - 10. What did Josiah do to repair the temple? (34:8-11)
 - 11. What skilled tradesmen were hired to work on rebuilding the temple? (34:10-11)
 - 12. What roles did the Levites fill in the temple restoration and worship? (34:12-13)

Get It

- * 13. In what ways is Josiah an example of what a young person can do for God?
 - 14. What can a young person do to fight against evil today?
 - 15. Why did Josiah get personally involved in destroying the altars of the false gods?
 - 16. What can a young person do to give spiritual leadership to others?
 - 17. Why was it wise for Josiah to leave no stone unturned in getting rid of idolatry?
- * 18. What are some of the specialized skills needed in the operation of a local church?
 - 19. Why is it difficult to be thorough in taking spiritual inventory of our lives?

Apply It

- 20. What would help you to take a thorough inventory of your spiritual life?
- * 21. What young person can you encourage by phone or letter to serve the Lord wholeheartedly?

The Book of the Law Found - 2 Chronicles 34:14-33

Topics: Anger, Answers, Bible, Change, Covenant, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Forsake, Heart, Humility, Idolatry, Instructions, Knowledge, Law, Leadership, Life-style, Mourning, Obedience, Peace, Prophecy, Renewal, Repentance, Soul, Truth, Words

Open It

- * 1. What surprising “finds” have you made while cleaning your attic, closets or garage?
- 2. How did you obtain your first Bible?

Explore It

- 3. What did Hilkiah find in the temple? (34:14)
- 4. What was important about the old scroll? (34:14)
- * 5. What discovery changed Josiah and his nation? (34:14-33)
- 6. To whom did the high priest give the scroll when he found it? (34:15)
- 7. How did Shaphan break the news to the king about the scroll? (34:16-18)
- * 8. How did Josiah react to hearing God’s law read aloud? (34:19)
- 9. What did Josiah send his men to do at the temple? (34:20-21)
- 10. Why was God’s anger being poured out on Judah? (34:21)
- 11. Who did Josiah’s men go to see about God’s message for them? (34:22)
- 12. What was the bad news in the prophecy? (34:24-25)
- 13. What was the good news in the prophecy? (34:26-28)
- 14. How had Josiah’s reaction to hearing God’s Word influenced God’s response? (34:27)
- 15. To whom did Josiah first read the scroll? (34:29-30)
- * 16. What pledge did Josiah make to the Lord? (34:31)
- 17. What did Josiah require the people to do? (34:32)
- 18. How did Josiah and the people live after reading the scroll? (34:33)

Get It

- * 19. How can reading or not reading the Bible influence the way you live?
- 20. How knowledgeable is our society about what is written in the Bible?
- 21. What does the Bible contain that is helpful to us?
- * 22. What action, beyond just reading and studying, does the Bible require of us?
- 23. What good news does the Bible contain?
- 24. What bad news does the Bible contain?
- 25. When we read God’s Word and are confronted with our shortcomings and sins, how should we respond?
- 26. What shows that we are truly sorry for not following God’s Word?

Apply It

- * 27. What commitment will you make to read God’s Word regularly this week?
- 28. What action could give teeth to conviction and repentance you have already experienced?

Josiah Celebrates the Passover; Josiah's Death - 2 Chronicles 35:1-36:1

Topics: Celebration, Death, Devotion, Encouragement, Gifts, God's Will, History, Holiness, Listening, Mourning, Obedience, Preparation, Remembering, Sacrifice, Serving, Teaching, War

Open It

1. What kind of birthday party would you really enjoy?
2. What would you write in your diary about this past week?
- * 3. What do you remember most clearly—your bad experiences or your good experiences?

Explore It

- * 4. What special celebration did Josiah reinstitute? (35:1-19)
- * 5. What were the priests and Levites to do in preparation for the Passover? (35:2-6)
 6. How were the priests and Levites to handle the sacred ark? (35:3)
 7. What three actions were the Levites to perform? (35:6)
 8. What did Josiah provide for the Passover? (35:7)
 9. What did the officials provide for the Passover? (35:8-9)
 10. What was done to the Passover lambs? (35:11-12)
 11. What offerings were prepared for the people to eat? (35:12-14)
 12. What did the musicians and gatekeepers do? (35:15)
- * 13. How long had it been since the Passover celebration had been observed exactly according to God's command? (35:18)
 14. What confrontation did Josiah have with the king of Egypt? (35:20-21)
 15. What mistake did Josiah make when he decided to fight Neco? (35:22)
 16. How was Josiah killed? (35:23-24)
 17. How was Josiah remembered by the people? (35:25-26)

Get It

- * 18. Why was it so significant that Josiah reinstituted the Passover celebration?
19. Why was it so important to get the details right in the temple of the Lord?
20. Why do we tend to grow lax about the repetitious aspects of worshiping God?
- * 21. Why is it important to remember and talk about what God has done for us?
 22. On what occasions do Christians gather to celebrate and remember what God has done for them?
 23. How can church celebrations and holidays become perfunctory or misrepresent their original purposes?
 24. Why is it important to celebrate together with others?
 25. Why do you think Josiah persisted in making war against Pharaoh Neco?
 26. When have you gotten a message about God's will for you from an unexpected source?
 27. How has failing to listen to the Lord led to trouble in your life?

Apply It

- * 28. When can you take time to recall and celebrate or tell someone about something God has done for you?
29. How can you be spiritually alert and ready to accept God's leading, even from an unexpected source?

Judah Is Exiled to Babylon - 2 Chronicles 36:2-23

Topics: Anger, Consequences, Discipline, Evil, Forsake, God's Will, Heart, Idolatry, Judgment, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Rest, Restoration, Serving, Stubbornness, Unfaithfulness

Open It

1. What do you think is the best way to discipline a disobedient child?
2. What do you think is the best way to discipline an employee who doesn't do his or her job?
- * 3. What instance of discipline had a particularly lasting effect on you (whether in childhood or later)?

Explore It

4. How long did Jehoahaz reign? (36:2)
5. Who dethroned Jehoahaz? (36:3)
6. How long did Jehoiakim reign? (36:5)
7. What was Jehoiakim's spiritual influence on the nation? (36:5)
8. Who conquered Jehoiakim and took him into captivity? (36:6-7)
9. How long did Jehoiachin reign? (36:9)
10. Who deposed Jehoiachin from his throne? (36:10)
11. How long did Zedekiah reign? (36:11)
12. What was Zedekiah's spiritual influence on the nation? (36:12-14)
- * 13. How did the people respond to God's messengers? (36:15-16)
- * 14. Whom did God raise up to destroy Jerusalem? (36:17)
15. What did Nebuchadnezzar do to the city and the people of Jerusalem? (36:18-20)
- * 16. How long were the Jews in exile in Babylon? (36:21)
17. Who gave permission for the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem? (36:22-23)

Get It

- * 18. What was the primary cause of the total destruction of Judah?
19. How does God discipline people who ignore or disobey Him?
20. What could any of Judah's last kings have done to save the nation and the people?
21. What did all of the last kings of Judah fail to do?
22. How many chances did Judah have to respond to God's call to return to Him?
23. What makes us resistant to hearing God's warnings?
- * 24. How can God's discipline be good for us?

Apply It

- * 25. What warnings has God been trying to communicate to you in recent weeks which you need to receive with humility?
26. What personal examples of the long-suffering nature of God can you share with a fellow believer to encourage him or her?

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Cyrus Helps the Exiles to Return - Ezra 1:1-11

Topics: Challenge, Church, Commitment, Craftsmanship, Generosity, Gifts, Giving Up, God, Government, Guidance, Involvement, Possessions, Prophecy, Resources, Restoration, Teamwork

Open It

1. How do you think your view of the church is different from your grandparents'?
- * 2. When was the last time you felt there was something you "just had to do"?
3. What's something you have rebuilt, restored, refinished, or fixed up?

Explore It

4. Who was Cyrus? (1:1)
5. Why did Cyrus make his proclamation? (1:1)
6. Whose prophecy did Cyrus's decree fulfill? (1:1)
- * 7. What motivated Cyrus to make his announcement? (1:1)
8. What did Cyrus believe he was appointed to do? (1:2)
9. Who gave Cyrus the authority to build the temple? (1:2)
- * 10. What specific instructions did Cyrus give to the people? (1:3-4)
11. Who was to provide the materials to build the temple? (1:4)
12. Who went to Jerusalem to build the temple? (1:5)
- * 13. What motivated the people of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi to go to Jerusalem? (1:5)
14. What specific materials were provided to build the temple in Jerusalem? (1:6)
15. Where did King Cyrus get the articles that he provided for the temple? (1:7)
16. Who took all of the temple articles from Persia to Jerusalem? (1:8-11)
17. What had been stolen from the temple by Nebuchadnezzar? (1:9-11)

Get It

18. What does this passage reveal about Cyrus, the king of Persia?
19. What kind of relationship do you think Cyrus had with Israel and their God?
20. In what specific ways was Cyrus's generosity demonstrated to the Jews?
21. Why were freewill offerings necessary to rebuild the temple?
22. What specific acts can we do to show respect for church?
23. What role did God play in these events?
- * 24. What can you learn from this story about God's sovereignty over history?
25. How does this passage motivate you to pray for political leaders?
- * 26. When have you ever felt the Lord "move your heart"?
27. How have you seen the Lord change the attitudes or actions of a nonbeliever?
28. In what specific way do you need God to change the attitude of your heart?

Apply It

- * 29. What steps can you take to allow the Lord to work in you?
30. Who are two political leaders for whom you could pray this week?

The List of the Exiles Who Returned - Ezra 2:1-70

Topics: Citizenship, Commitment, Delegation, Evidence, Faithfulness, Family, Freedom, Generosity, Gifts, Heritage, Home, Money, Oppressed, Restoration, Tithing

Open It

1. If you had to be away from home (the place, not your family) for years, what would you first want to do upon returning?
2. What are some of the reasons people give to charity?
- * 3. What motivates you to give to your church?

Explore It

4. Why were the Israelites in exile? (2:1)
5. Where were the Jews held in captivity? (2:1)
- * 6. What did the Israelites do when they were released from captivity? (2:1)
7. How did the Jews keep the memories of their homes while in exile? (2:1-2)
8. Which families were unable to prove their Jewish heritage? (2:59-60)
9. Why were some of the Israelites excluded from the priesthood? (2:62)
10. The ratio of servants who returned with their masters was quite high (one to six); what does this reveal about the character of the Jews even while exiled? (2:64)
11. Why were freewill offerings given to the house of the Lord? (2:68)
- * 12. What did the Jews do when they reached Jerusalem? (2:68-69)
- * 13. How was the size of each family's offering determined? (2:69)

Get It

14. What can we learn from this passage about how to deal with difficult circumstances in life?
- * 15. What does this passage teach about the attitude we should have toward any place of worship?
16. How can you support your own church and its leaders?
17. How should we determine the size of our financial gifts to God's work?
- * 18. What gifts can we give to God besides money?
19. How do you feel when you tithe to the Lord?
20. In what specific ways do you think the Lord wants you to change your financial habits?

Apply It

21. What gift do you want to give to the Lord?
- * 22. What steps could you take in the next few weeks to make your spending, saving, and other uses of money an act of worship to God?

Rebuilding the Altar - Ezra 3:1-6

Topics: Actions, Celebration, Fear, Honor, Obedience, Preparation, Restoration, Sacrifice, Tithing

Open It

1. What do you think you would like or dislike about living in Old Testament times?
- * 2. What is your first memory of church?

Explore It

3. At what point in Israel's history did these events take place? (3:1)
4. Where did the Israelites assemble? (3:1)
5. Who began to build the altar in Jerusalem? (3:2)
- * 6. Why did the Israelites build the altar? (3:2)
7. What were the Israelites obeying by building the altar? (3:2)
8. What did the Israelites have to overcome to build the altar? (3:3)
- * 9. Why were the Israelites afraid? (3:3)
10. Of what were the Israelites afraid? (3:3)
- * 11. What did the Israelites do when they had completed their building project? (3:3)
12. Why did the Israelites celebrate? (3:4)
13. On what occasions was it appropriate to give offerings to the Lord? (3:4-5)
14. What happened after the Feast of Tabernacles? (3:5)
15. What had still not been completed at this point? (3:6)

Get It

16. What would you list as your three worst fears?
17. When have you had to overcome your fears to do what was right?
18. How does your fear of what other people think affect your obedience to the Lord?
- * 19. What does God want us to do about our fears and anxieties?
20. Why were the Israelites' sacrifices important?
21. Why do we not continue the Israelites' tradition of offering sacrifices on an altar?
22. What does this passage tell you about the sacrifice that Jesus made by giving His life for our sins?
- * 23. What and how does God want us to give to Him?
24. What do you think you can give to the Lord as an offering?

Apply It

25. How could you thank the Lord today for the gift of Jesus Christ?
26. What is one concrete action you could take this week to combat your fears?
- * 27. What kind of "sacrifice" can you give to the Lord as a freewill offering of praise?

Rebuilding the Temple - Ezra 3:7-13

Topics: Abilities, Accomplishments, Administration, Celebration, Differences, Emotions, Feelings, Foundation, Help, Involvement, Money, Needs, Partnerships, Praise, Restoration

Open It

- * 1. How do you feel when a friend or coworker compliments you?
- 2. What do you think prevents people from complimenting one another more often?

Explore It

- 3. Who was given money to begin restoring the temple? (3:7)
- 4. What was given to the people of Sidon and Tyre? (3:7)
- 5. What did the people of Sidon and Tyre provide for the Jews? (3:7)
- 6. Who authorized the transactions between the Israelites and their neighbors? (3:7)
- 7. When did the work on the temple begin? (3:8)
- 8. Who is listed in the passage as working on rebuilding the temple? (3:8)
- 9. Who was appointed to supervise the building project? (3:8-9)
- * 10. What happened when the foundation of the temple was laid? (3:10)
- * 11. What did the priests and the Levites use to praise the Lord? (3:10)
- 12. How did Israel praise the Lord? (3:10-11)
- * 13. What motivated the uprising of praise from the Israelites? (3:10-11)
- 14. How did the older leaders react to the laying of the temple's foundation? (3:12-13)

Get It

- 15. Why do you think there was such a mixture of emotion when the new foundation for the temple was laid?
- 16. Why is it significant that so many people were involved in rebuilding the temple?
- 17. When have you seen Christians work together to accomplish something important?
- 18. What important project would you like to accomplish with the help of other believers?
- 19. How would you describe in modern terms the celebration in this passage?
- * 20. How do you think Christians today differ in their praise to God as compared to the Israelites?
- 21. What usually motivates you to praise the Lord spontaneously?
- * 22. Besides words, what can we use to praise the Lord?
- 23. Why is God deserving of our praise?

Apply It

- * 24. What specific offering of praise could you give to the Lord today?
- 25. With what other believer could you praise the Lord?
- 26. Who is another Christian with whom you could join efforts in serving the Lord this next week?
- 27. What can you contribute to an important project or ministry of your local church?

Opposition to the Rebuilding - Ezra 4:1-5

Topics: Determination, Differences, Discouragement, Enemies, Fear, Help, Integrity, Involvement, Judging Others, Neighbor, Obedience, Opposition, Restoration, Testing, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What comes to your mind as an example of an offer that seemed “too good to be true”?
- 2. When have you distrusted an offer of help or favor?

Explore It

- 3. For whom did Israel build the temple? (4:1)
- 4. What did the enemies of Israel hear? (4:1)
- 5. What is the setting of this story? (4:1-2)
- 6. What did Israel’s enemies do when they heard about the rebuilding of the temple? (4:1-2)
- * 7. Why did Israel’s enemies say they wanted to help build the temple? (4:2)
- 8. How did Israel’s enemies try to prove that they worshiped the Lord? (4:2)
- 9. How did the Israelite family heads respond to their enemies’ offer? (4:3)
- * 10. Why did Israel not want help in rebuilding the temple? (4:3)
- 11. What did Israel’s enemies do when Israel refused their help? (4:4)
- * 12. How did the enemies of Israel attempt to discourage the rebuilding of the temple? (4:4-5)
- 13. Why were counselors hired? (4:5)
- 14. How long did Israel’s enemies try to discourage them from their task? (4:5)

Get It

- 15. Why did Israel refuse their neighbors’ help?
- 16. What was wrong with Israel’s neighbors’ worship of the God of Israel?
- 17. Why is exclusive worship of God so important?
- 18. What tools do you think Satan uses against Christians?
- 19. When are you most vulnerable to temptation?
- 20. What tools can Christians use to guard themselves from sin?
- * 21. What distracts you from exclusively seeking and serving God alone?
- 22. Why was it important for Israel to rebuild the temple by themselves?
- 23. In what ways can faith be both personal and part of a group?
- 24. In what ways has your faith ever come under attack, been tested, or opposed?
- 25. What opposition have you experienced in your Christian walk?
- * 26. How does God want us to deal with long-term opposition from unbelievers?

Apply It

- * 27. What concrete action could you take over the next few weeks to protect yourself from discouragement or fear?
- 28. What specific steps can you take to insure you will not be distracted from serving the Lord?

Later Opposition under Xerxes and Artaxerxes - Ezra 4:6-24

Topics: Accusation, Actions, Administration, Authority, Criticism, Enemies, Government, Opposition, Power, Pressure, Punishment, Rebellion, Work

Open It

- * 1. In what ways does Christianity go against the flow of society today?
- 2. What sacrifices do you think Christians have to make for their faith?
- 3. What would you do if it were illegal to go to church?

Explore It

- 4. At what point in Israel's history did these events take place? (4:6)
- 5. Who lodged an accusation against the Israelites? (4:6)
- 6. Who wrote a letter to Artaxerxes? (4:6-7)
- * 7. Why did Israel's enemies write a letter to Artaxerxes? (4:8-16)
- 8. How was Jerusalem described in the letter to Artaxerxes? (4:12)
- 9. What danger was there in Jerusalem, according to Rehum? (4:13)
- 10. What motivated Rehum and Shimshai to send their letter to the king? (4:14)
- 11. What advice did Rehum give to the king? (4:15)
- 12. According to Rehum, what would the king's records reveal about the Jews? (4:15)
- 13. Why was Jerusalem originally destroyed, according to the letter? (4:15)
- * 14. What did Rehum and Shimshai's letter say would result from Jerusalem's restoration? (4:16)
- 15. How did the king respond to Rehum and Shimshai's letter? (4:17)
- * 16. Why did Artaxerxes order the Israelites to stop rebuilding the temple? (4:18-22)
- 17. What did the king's records reveal about Jerusalem? (4:20)

Get It

- 18. Why did Israel's enemies not want them to build a temple to the Lord?
- 19. What does this story reveal about the strategies Satan uses to thwart good?
- 20. How have you experienced opposition from others to your Christian faith?
- * 21. How should believers respond to opposition?
- 22. What can Christians do to protect themselves against Satan's attacks?
- 23. What can you do when it seems as if you have lost a spiritual battle?
- * 24. Why do you think God allows believers to experience failure?
- 25. What good can result from failure?
- 26. What lesson have you learned from a recent failure in your life?
- 27. How has this story affected your view of opposition or failure in the Christian life?

Apply It

- * 28. What specific steps can you take this week to protect yourself from Satan's attacks?
- 29. How could you encourage another believer who is struggling with a failure or setback?

Tattenai's Letter to Darius - Ezra 5:1-17

Topics: Accomplishments, Achievements, Answers, Authority, Consequences, Determination, Doubt, Enemies, Evidence, History, Opposition, Perseverance, Questions, Restoration, Teamwork, Work

Open It

- * 1. Under what circumstances do you find it difficult to persevere in doing what is right?
- 2. When have you faced opposition from others for doing the right thing?

Explore It

- 3. Who are the prophets in this passage? (5:1)
- 4. In whose name did the prophets prophesy? (5:1)
- * 5. How were Zerubbabel and Jeshua able to start rebuilding the temple again? (5:2)
- 6. Why did the governor and his associates approach Zerubbabel and Jeshua? (5:3)
- 7. What prevented the governor from stopping the work on the temple? (5:5)
- 8. Who sent a letter to King Darius? (5:6)
- 9. How did the governor describe Israel's God in his letter to the king? (5:8)
- 10. What did the letter to the king say about the Israelites' work on the temple? (5:8)
- * 11. Why was a letter sent to the king? (5:8-17)
- 12. How had the Jewish leaders responded to their enemies' questions? (5:11-16)
- * 13. How did the Jews view themselves and their work? (5:11)
- 14. According to the Jews, why was Israel handed over to their enemies? (5:12)
- 15. What had King Cyrus done for Israel? (5:13-15)
- 16. What did Tattenai request of King Darius in the letter? (5:17)

Get It

- 17. How is the Lord's hand evident in this incident?
- 18. How was God involved in protecting the Jews from their opponents?
- * 19. When have you experienced God's protection in your life?
- 20. What does this passage reveal about how Christians should view themselves and the work God has given them?
- * 21. What have you learned from this study about God's control over the events of your life, both good and bad?
- 22. What should be our response to opposition from unbelievers?
- 23. In what way did the Jews use their enemies' persecution as an opportunity for good?
- 24. When have you been able to share your faith in a difficult situation?
- 25. What difficult circumstance or challenge do you anticipate this week?

Apply It

- 26. How can you turn your next difficult circumstance into an opportunity to minister to others?
- * 27. How can you demonstrate your thankfulness to the Lord for His protection over you?

The Decree of Darius - Ezra 6:1-22

Topics: Administration, Advice, Affirmation, Answers, Approval, Authority, Celebration, Consequences, Craftsmanship, Enthusiasm, Generosity, Good News, Government, Help, History, Instructions, Joy, Leadership, Needs, Opposition, Possessions, Punishment, Restoration, Sacrifice, Serving, Teamwork, Work

Open It

- * 1. What do you think is valuable about studying history?
- 2. When have you discovered something about the past that has helped you in the present?
- 3. How has your study of Israel's history helped you in your own Christian walk?

Explore It

- 4. Why were the archives in Babylon searched? (6:1)
- 5. What was found in the archives of the Babylonian treasury? (6:2)
- 6. What decree had King Cyrus issued concerning the temple in Jerusalem? (6:3-5)
- 7. What specific instructions were given to those rebuilding the temple? (6:3-5)
- * 8. What order did King Darius give to Tattenai and his associates? (6:6-7)
- 9. What additional help did King Darius order the governor to give to the Israelites? (6:8-12)
- 10. How did the king insure that his edict would not be changed? (6:11)
- 11. How did the governor and his associates react to the king's decree? (6:13)
- * 12. Under whose instruction did the work of the Jews prosper? (6:14)
- 13. When was the temple in Jerusalem completed? (6:15)
- * 14. How did Israel react to the completion of the temple? (6:16-22)
- 15. Why were priests installed at the temple? (6:18)
- 16. When and how was Passover celebrated? (6:19-22)
- 17. How did the restoration of the temple affect those Israelites who had been involved in the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbors? (6:21)
- 18. Why was this Passover celebrated with such great joy? (6:22)

Get It

- 19. How do you think the Israelites felt when they heard King Darius's decree?
- 20. What causes Christians to drift away from the Lord as some of the Israelites did?
- * 21. What does this passage tell us about God's involvement in the lives of unbelievers and Christians alike?
- 22. How have you seen God's hand at work in the life of a non-Christian friend?
- 23. When has the Lord ever provided for your needs in a miraculous way?
- 24. How was Israel's celebration in this situation different from the way we celebrate our faith today?
- 25. Why do we not give sin offerings to the Lord nowadays?
- 26. What reasons do Christians have to celebrate?
- * 27. What is one thing the Lord has done for you that causes you to praise Him?

Apply It

- * 28. What is one tangible way this week you can celebrate what God has done for you?
- 29. What could you do this week to encourage a friend who has drifted away from God?
- 30. What are some steps you can take in the next month to guard yourself from drifting away from the Lord?

Ezra Comes to Jerusalem - Ezra 7:1-28

Topics: Abundance, Approval, Authority, Blessing, Courage, Desires, Devotion, Example, Generosity, Gifts, Government, Habits, Honor, Instructions, Involvement, Jobs, Leadership, Life-style, Mission, Opportunities, Position, Possessions, Power, Praise, Privilege, Responsibility, Teaching, Thankfulness

Open It

- * 1. What motivates people to be generous?
- 2. When have you experienced the generosity of others?
- 3. How do you think Christians should respond differently from unbelievers to success in life?

Explore It

- * 4. How is Ezra described? (7:1-6, 9-11, 25)
- 5. Why was the king so favorable toward Ezra? (7:6)
- 6. To what was Ezra devoted? (7:10)
- 7. Why had the king given Ezra a letter? (7:11-26)
- 8. Why was Ezra sent to Jerusalem? (7:14)
- 9. What gifts did the king give to Ezra to take to Jerusalem? (7:15-17)
- 10. What was Ezra supposed to do with the gifts that the king gave him? (7:17-20)
- 11. What order did King Artaxerxes give to his treasurers? (7:21)
- 12. What limits did the king put on his gifts to Ezra? (7:22-23)
- * 13. What motivated the king to give so generously to Ezra? (7:23)
- 14. How was Ezra qualified to appoint leaders to administer justice in the king's realm? (7:25)
- 15. What punishment did the king prescribe for those who would not obey the laws of God? (7:26)
- * 16. How did Ezra react to the king's giving him so much power and authority? (7:27)
- 17. Whom did Ezra credit for his success? (7:28)
- 18. What action did Ezra take in response to the king's letter? (7:28)

Get It

- 19. How would you describe Ezra?
- 20. How do you explain Ezra's great success?
- * 21. What character traits of Ezra would you like to have?
- 22. What blessings has the Lord bestowed on you?
- 23. What can we learn from Ezra's response to success?
- 24. How do you usually react when good things happen to you?
- 25. To what are you most devoted?
- * 26. How can you change your spiritual habits to become more devoted to God?
- 27. How do you think God would want you to change your priorities in life?
- 28. Why do you think God grants power and financial security only to some people?

Apply It

- 29. What specific steps could you take this week to thank God for the gifts He has given you?
- * 30. In what way can you give credit to God at this point for any successes you've enjoyed?

The Return to Jerusalem - Ezra 8:1-36

Topics: Accountability, Challenge, Circumstances, Confidence, Danger, Delegation, Depend, Environment, Faith, Fasting, Generosity, Gifts, Help, Needs, Plans, Possessions, Prayer, Protection, Reliability, Traditions, Trust, Wealth

Open It

1. What are some common dangers everybody faces?
2. How does the average person protect himself or herself from the dangers in life?
- * 3. What makes you feel safe?

Explore It

4. Where did Ezra and his traveling companions assemble? (8:15)
5. What was Ezra unable to find in his camp? (8:15)
6. Why did Ezra choose these particular men? (8:16)
7. Whom did Ezra send to Iddo and for what reason? (8:16-17)
8. What did the men ask of Iddo, the leader in Casiphia? (8:17)
9. Whom did Ezra credit for the men's success? (8:18)
- * 10. Why did Ezra proclaim a fast? (8:21)
- * 11. Why was Ezra ashamed to ask the king for protection? (8:22)
- * 12. How did God respond to the Israelites' prayers and fasting? (8:23)
13. Why did Ezra set apart twelve men? (8:24)
14. What was donated for the house of the Lord? (8:25-27)
15. What specific instructions did Ezra give to the twelve priests? (8:28-29)
16. How was Ezra's caravan able to travel safely between the Ahava Canal and Jerusalem? (8:31)
17. What happened on the fourth day after Ezra and his group arrived in Jerusalem? (8:33-34)
18. What did the exiles do upon returning to their homeland? (8:35-36)

Get It

19. Why would thieves have been more tempted to rob Ezra's caravan than others?
20. How did Ezra show his own faith in God's protective hand?
21. Why do you think Ezra chose to fast and pray on this occasion?
- * 22. What does this story reveal about God's protection of His people?
23. How did Israel demonstrate their thankfulness to the Lord for His protection?
24. What results have you experienced when you have fasted and prayed?
25. Under what circumstances do you think it is good to fast and pray?
26. For what danger or challenge in your life do you need God's protection or help?
- * 27. How does God want us to deal with fear and anxiety?
28. What should be our response whenever we experience God's protection or guidance?

Apply It

29. For what concern in your life do you want to fast and pray? When can you?
30. If you were to fast and pray on a regular basis, who is one person who could join you or help keep you disciplined?
- * 31. What steps could you begin to take this week to depend less on your own strength and more on God's power to help you through the challenges you face?

Ezra's Prayer about Intermarriage - Ezra 9:1-15

Topics: Accountability, Accusation, Confession, Despair, Disobedience, Emotions, Evil, Failure, Faults, Feelings, Grief, Humiliation, Humility, Marriage, Prayer, Punishment, Relationships, Sorrow, Unbelievers, Unfaithfulness, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. How much influence do you think your friends have on you?
- 2. Why do you think peer pressure is so powerful?
- 3. What would you say are the most important relationships in your life?

Explore It

- * 4. Of what sin were the Israelites guilty? (9:1-2)
- 5. What was wrong with the Israelites' not being separate from their neighbors? (9:1-2)
- 6. Who initiated a sinful practice among the Israelites? (9:2)
- 7. How did Ezra react to the news about Israel's sin? (9:3)
- 8. Who gathered around Ezra when he was grieving for Israel's sin? (9:4)
- 9. What did Ezra do at the evening sacrifice? (9:5-6)
- 10. Why was Ezra ashamed? (9:6)
- 11. How did Ezra explain the oppression Israel had experienced? (9:7)
- 12. In what way had the Lord been gracious to Israel? (9:8-9)
- 13. How did Ezra view himself in God's sight? (9:9)
- * 14. What did Ezra confess to God? (9:10)
- * 15. Why did the Lord not want the Israelites to intermarry with their neighbors? (9:11-12)
- 16. What blessing did God promise Israel if they obeyed Him? (9:12)
- 17. What did Ezra believe Israel deserved for their sin? (9:14)
- 18. Why did Ezra feel unfit to stand in the Lord's presence? (9:15)

Get It

- 19. Why do you think Ezra reacted so strongly to the news that the Israelites had intermarried with their neighbors?
- 20. What does Ezra's reaction to Israel's sin reveal about his character?
- 21. Why did God want the Israelites not to intermarry with their neighbors?
- * 22. In what ways do Christians need to avoid mixing themselves with the world?
- 23. What kind of relationships should Christians have with unbelievers?
- 24. What danger is there in associating too closely with someone who has different beliefs?
- * 25. What can we learn from Ezra about confession of sin?
- 26. How has God shown His graciousness and forgiveness to you?

Apply It

- 27. When can you take some time today for confession to the Lord?
- * 28. What specific steps can you take this week to sharpen your sensitivity to sin in your life?
- 29. How could you thank the Lord for His forgiveness?

The People's Confession of Sin - Ezra 10:1-44

Topics: Accountability, Actions, Advice, Commitment, Confession, Convictions, Disobedience, Emotions, Fasting, Feelings, Forgiveness, Grief, Guidance, Humility, Marriage, Mourning, Obedience, Reconciliation, Relationships, Repentance, Sin, Sorrow, Unfaithfulness, Wives

Open It

- * 1. How do you usually feel when you realize you've made a big mistake?
- 2. When do you tend to feel guilty?

Explore It

- 3. What was Ezra doing? (10:1)
- 4. Why was Ezra so upset? (10:1)
- 5. Why did a large crowd gather around Ezra? (10:1)
- 6. Why did Ezra wait for the Israelites to come up with their own plan to solve their problem? (10:1-2)
- 7. Who offered a ray of hope to the guilt-ridden Israelites? (10:2)
- * 8. What advice did Shecaniah give to the Israelites? (10:3)
- 9. What role did Ezra play in the repentance of Israel? (10:5)
- 10. Why did Ezra withdraw from the house of the Lord? (10:6)
- 11. How was the covenant the Israelites made before God enforced? (10:8)
- * 12. What specific instructions did Ezra give to the Israelites? (10:10-11)
- 13. How did the people respond to Ezra's call to repentance? (10:12-14)
- 14. Why was the Israelites' problem not resolved immediately? (10:13)
- * 15. How did the Israelites turn from their sin and reconcile themselves with God? (10:16-17)

Get It

- 16. In what specific ways did Ezra demonstrate his wisdom as a leader?
- 17. What character traits of Ezra would you like to see evidenced in your own life?
- 18. What can we learn from this story about how to deal with sin?
- 19. Why do you think it was necessary for the Israelites to take such drastic measures to deal with their sin?
- 20. Of what benefit was it for the Israelites to confess as an entire group?
- * 21. How has this passage changed your attitude toward sin and repentance?
- 22. Under what circumstances do you think it is wise to repent of sin in the presence of other believers?
- * 23. When is it wrong to feel guilty?
- 24. How do you think God wants us to feel after we have repented of sin?
- 25. In what specific ways should Christians separate themselves from the world nowadays?
- 26. What concrete action could you take to guard yourself against the world's temptations?

Apply It

- * 27. The next time the Lord convicts you of sin, what can you plan to do in response?
- 28. In what practical way can you limit the negative influence others have on you?

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Nehemiah's Prayer - Nehemiah 1:1-11

Topics: Confession, Consequences, Despair, Emotions, Faithfulness, Fasting, Feelings, Instructions, Involvement, Mourning, Needs, Obedience, Prayer, Praise, Promises, Questions, Remembering, Repentance, Sin, Success

Open It

1. How do you react when you hear bad news about a friend?
2. What action do we usually take when we hear a friend is experiencing hardship?
- * 3. If you were going through a painful experience, what would you want your friends to do for you?

Explore It

4. When did the events of this passage take place? (1:1)
5. Why did Nehemiah question his brother? (1:1-2)
6. What report did Hanani and his men give to Nehemiah? (1:3)
- * 7. How did Nehemiah react to the news about Jerusalem and the exiles? (1:4)
8. How did Nehemiah describe God in his prayer? (1:5)
9. According to Nehemiah, with whom does God keep His covenant of love? (1:5)
10. What made Nehemiah more aware of his own sinfulness? (1:5-6)
- * 11. What is the major theme of Nehemiah's prayer? (1:5-11)
12. On whose behalf did Nehemiah pray and fast? (1:6)
13. Of what sins were the Israelites guilty? (1:7)
14. What instruction did the Lord give to Moses? (1:8)
- * 15. What promise of the Lord could the Israelites claim, according to Nehemiah? (1:9)
16. How did Nehemiah describe the people of Israel in his prayer? (1:10)
17. What specific request did Nehemiah ask God to grant him? (1:11)

Get It

18. What admirable traits do you see demonstrated by Nehemiah?
19. What did Nehemiah's prayer accomplish?
20. What are the benefits of focusing on the attributes of God?
21. What role does prayer play in your life?
- * 22. How do you think you need to change your prayer habits?
23. Why does God want Christians to pray?
24. In what circumstances do you think it would be wise to fast and pray?
- * 25. What can we learn from Nehemiah's example about how to deal with disappointment?
26. With what disappointment or challenge are you struggling?
27. In light of this story, how can we overcome the problems we face?

Apply It

28. What specific steps could you take this week to strengthen or improve your prayer life?
29. How can you remind yourself this week to turn to God in prayer when you experience disappointment?
- * 30. How do you plan to react differently to setbacks from now on?

Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem - Nehemiah 2:1-10

Topics: Answers, Approval, Conversation, Courage, Depend, Desires, Emotions, Employment, Fear, Generosity, Help, Initiative, Involvement, Leadership, Mission, Needs, Obligation, Opportunities, Opposition, Prayer, Protection, Questions

Open It

- * 1. How would you go about asking a big favor of a boss or other influential person?
- 2. What situations make you nervous or scared?
- 3. What techniques do people often use to cope with fear?

Explore It

- 4. At what time did this story take place? (2:1)
- 5. Why was Nehemiah able to meet with the king? (2:1)
- 6. How had Nehemiah acted in the king's presence in the past? (2:1)
- 7. How did Nehemiah's behavior present an opportunity for him? (2:1)
- 8. What did the king ask Nehemiah? (2:2)
- 9. What did the king assume about Nehemiah's demeanor? (2:2)
- * 10. What did Nehemiah have to overcome to give the king an honest answer? (2:2-3)
- 11. How did Nehemiah describe his problem to the king? (2:3)
- * 12. What did Nehemiah do before he told the king what he wanted? (2:4)
- * 13. What did Nehemiah ask of the king? (2:5-7)
- 14. Why did Nehemiah ask that letters be sent to the governors of Trans-Euphrates? (2:7)
- 15. How did Nehemiah explain the generosity of the king? (2:8)
- 16. Who was disturbed by Nehemiah's actions? Why? (2:10)

Get It

- 17. How would you describe Nehemiah's actions in this situation?
- 18. To you what were Nehemiah's most admirable traits?
- 19. How did Nehemiah overcome his fears?
- 20. How did Nehemiah demonstrate his dependence on God?
- * 21. What fears do you need to overcome?
- 22. In what situations in your life do you need to depend more on the Lord?
- 23. What can you learn from Nehemiah about the role prayer should play in your everyday life?
- 24. What scary situation or overwhelming problem do you face in your life?
- * 25. How can you handle differently the challenges you face in light of Nehemiah's example?

Apply It

- 26. What specific problem do you want to confront with greater courage this week?
- * 27. How can you remember to pray each time you must deal with a problem or fear?

Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Walls - Nehemiah 2:11-20

Topics: Actions, Advice, Approval, Authority, Circumstances, Complacency, Conflict, Criticism, Determination, Differences, Encouragement, Example, Guidance, Help, Involvement, Leadership, Preparation, Procrastination, Restoration, Success, Teamwork, Work

Open It

1. How do people usually respond to criticism?
- * 2. How do you usually respond to criticism?
3. What do you think sometimes causes people to be overcritical of others?

Explore It

4. What did Nehemiah do when he first arrived in Jerusalem? (2:11-12)
5. What strategy did Nehemiah use in surveying the state of the city? (2:11-16)
- * 6. How did Nehemiah prepare himself to present his plan to the Jews? (2:11-16)
7. From where did Nehemiah receive his motivation to rebuild Jerusalem? (2:12)
8. What attitude did Nehemiah have about himself and about God? (2:12, 18, 20)
9. What did Nehemiah find in his inspection of the city? (2:13)
10. Why were the officials unaware of Nehemiah's plan? (2:16)
11. Why did Nehemiah say that the Israelites were in disgrace? (2:17)
12. How did Nehemiah motivate the Israelites to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem? (2:17-18)
13. How did the Jews respond to Nehemiah? (2:18)
- * 14. What encouragement did Nehemiah offer those people who may have initially doubted his plan? (2:18)
15. Why did Nehemiah experience opposition to the work of rebuilding Jerusalem? (2:19)
- * 16. How did Nehemiah respond to his critics? (2:20)
17. Whom did Nehemiah credit for the Israelites' expected success? (2:20)

Get It

18. What made Nehemiah a good leader?
19. Why do you think Nehemiah surveyed the city himself before he approached the Jews with his plan?
20. What can we learn from Nehemiah's example of leadership?
- * 21. In what specific ways could you emulate Nehemiah to become a better leader in your family, on the job, or in some other setting?
22. What have you learned from Nehemiah about responding to criticism?
23. How can Christians protect themselves from developing a critical attitude?
- * 24. How can you prepare yourself to deal with criticism better in the future?
25. Why do you think Nehemiah was so confident that the Lord would grant him success?
26. In what area of your life would you like to ask God for success?
27. How do you think God wants you to deal with the challenges and problems you face?

Apply It

28. What action can you take this week to improve your leadership at your job or in your home?
- * 29. What specific steps could you take in the next few days to anticipate criticism and handle it in a way that gives glory to the Lord?
30. How can you demonstrate your dependence on the Lord for success?

Builders of the Wall - Nehemiah 3:1-32

Topics: Accomplishments, Achievements, Actions, Ambition, Challenge, Commitment, Craftsmanship, Dedication, Determination, Example, Help, Involvement, Laziness, Leadership, Perseverance, Productivity, Restoration, Success, Tasks, Teamwork, Work

Open It

1. When have you most enjoyed working with a team of people?
- * 2. What are the benefits of teamwork?
3. What do you think prevents people from asking others for help when they need it?

Explore It

4. How did the priests set the example for all the Israelites? (3:1)
5. What did the priests do when they had completed sections of the walls and gates of Jerusalem? (3:1)
- * 6. What project were the Israelites working on? (3:1)
- * 7. What does the priests' dedication of their work reveal about their motivation? (3:1)
- * 8. What kinds of people were involved in rebuilding Jerusalem? (3:1-32)
9. What does the wide spectrum of people involved reveal about the Israelites' commitment to this project? (3:1-32)
10. Keeping in mind the practical reason for the restoration of the city, why was most of the rebuilding focused on the gates? (3:1-32)
11. What criticism was leveled at the men of Tekoa? (3:5)
12. Why did the common people of Tekoa have to do double-duty work in rebuilding the walls of the city? (3:5, 27)
13. How did the Israelites decide who would rebuild what? (3:10, 28, 30)

Get It

14. Why do you think the people of Jerusalem were so committed to rebuilding the city walls?
15. What effect do you think this accomplishment had on the people involved?
16. What can we learn from the priests' example in this situation?
17. Why did the nobles of Tekoa refuse to help with the work?
18. How can you guard against the conceited attitude of the nobles of Tekoa?
- * 19. What does this passage reveal about the best way to accomplish an overwhelming task?
20. What overwhelming challenge do you face?
- * 21. How can you depend more on the Lord's help to accomplish the work He has given you to do?
22. In what ways do you think you should depend more on the help of other believers?
23. What should we do whenever we finish a big project or experience success?

Apply It

- * 24. What steps can you take this week to depend on God and others to help you face the challenges in your life?
25. How could you help a friend with a problem or difficult situation he or she is facing?
26. How can you thank God publicly for a success you have experienced?

Opposition to the Rebuilding - Nehemiah 4:1-23

Topics: Accomplishments, Advice, Affirmation, Answers, Challenge, Complaining, Confidence, Conflict, Dedication, Determination, Discouragement, Enemies, Fear, Frustration, Guidance, Insults, Opposition, Oppressed, Peer Pressure, Persecution, Perseverance, Prayer, Productivity, Protection, Restoration, Teamwork, Work

Open It

- * 1. Why do you think some people get upset when they see others succeed?
- 2. When has jealousy ever affected you?
- 3. In what situations is competition good?

Explore It

- 4. Why did Sanballat become angry with the Jews? (4:1)
- 5. How did Sanballat treat the Jews? (4:1-2)
- 6. What did Sanballat and Tobiah do to discourage the Jews from rebuilding the city walls? (4:1-3)
- * 7. What role did Nehemiah play in these events? (4:1-23)
- * 8. How did Nehemiah respond to the taunts of his enemies? (4:4-5)
- 9. According to Nehemiah, why were the Jews so successful in their work? (4:6)
- 10. In what specific ways did Nehemiah and the Israelites show commitment to this project? (4:6-23)
- 11. What did Israel's enemies do when they heard of Israel's success in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls? (4:7-8)
- 12. How did Nehemiah and the Jews respond to the evil plotting of their enemies? (4:9)
- * 13. What did Nehemiah do to encourage the Israelites and protect them from their enemies? (4:10-14)
- 14. How were the Jews able to return to their work of rebuilding the city walls? (4:15)
- 15. Who frustrated the plotting of Israel's enemies? (4:15)
- 16. What sacrifices did the people have to make because of the threats of their enemies? (4:16-18)

Get It

- 17. What do you admire about the Israelites in this incident?
- 18. To what area of life today do Nehemiah's words speak?
- 19. What kinds of events, opposition, or setbacks most discourage you?
- 20. How does God want us to deal with discouragement?
- * 21. How should we respond to negative events or criticism from others?
- 22. When have you ever felt opposition from other people when you have done what you thought was morally right?
- 23. What practical steps could you take the next time you feel opposition from others for doing what is right?
- 24. How does God respond to the diligence of His people?
- * 25. To what project or work do you need to renew your commitment?
- 26. How have you seen the Lord fight for you?

Apply It

- * 27. What specific steps could you take this week to renew your commitment to a project you believe is important to accomplish?
- 28. What concrete action can you take today to prepare yourself to deal with opposition or criticism from others?
- 29. How can you encourage a friend or family member who you know is discouraged?

Nehemiah Helps the Poor - Nehemiah 5:1-19

Topics: Accusation, Answers, Circumstances, Complaining, Conflict, Criticism, Despair, Dishonesty, Divisions, Example, Frustration, Greed, Injustice, Involvement, Judging Others, Leadership, Life-style, Listening, Materialism, Money, Needs, Opportunities, Persecution, Possessions, Praise, Problems, Repentance, Resources, Sacrifice, Unfairness, Wealth

Open It

1. What do you think are some of the most pressing social problems today?
2. What are some reasons people choose not to get involved in social issues?
- * 3. How do you feel when solicitors ask you to give your time or money to charity?

Explore It

- * 4. What is the conflict between some of the Jews at the beginning of this story? (5:1-5)
5. What caused the Israelites' problems? (5:3-5)
6. How did Nehemiah react to the Israelites' complaints? (5:6)
7. What did Nehemiah do before he took any action? (5:7)
8. What accusations did Nehemiah make against the officials? (5:7-11)
- * 9. What action did Nehemiah take on behalf of the Israelites? (5:7-18)
10. How did the officials respond to Nehemiah's accusations? Why? (5:8, 12)
11. Why were the actions of the officials wrong? (5:9)
12. How did Nehemiah insure that the officials would keep their promise? (5:12-13)
13. In what ways was Nehemiah different from other officials? (5:14-18)
- * 14. What prevented Nehemiah from acting the same way the other officials did? (5:15)
15. What did Nehemiah want in return for his generosity to the Israelites? (5:19)

Get It

- * 16. In what ways is Nehemiah a role model for us today?
17. What does it mean to be devoted to the work God has given us, as was Nehemiah?
18. Why do you think Nehemiah sacrificed what he rightfully deserved as a governor?
19. In what circumstances might it be good for you to accept less than what you deserve?
20. What should motivate us to get involved in social issues?
21. How do you think Christians should be involved in social issues?
22. What social injustice concerns you?
- * 23. How would you like to contribute to solving a particular social problem that concerns you?
24. What should we desire in return for the good deeds that we do?

Apply It

- * 25. What concrete action could you take this week to help solve a social problem?
26. What could you do today to encourage a friend who is struggling or hurting?

Further Opposition to the Rebuilding - Nehemiah 6:1-14

Topics: Accusation, Advice, Arguments, Assumptions, Barriers, Choices, Commitment, Conflict, Convictions, Courage, Criticism, Danger, Determination, Discernment, Discouragement, Dishonesty, Enemies, Excuses, Fear, Integrity, Judging Others, Leadership, Lying, Opposition, Peer Pressure, Prayer, Reputation, Restoration, Strength, Temptation, Testing, Work

Open It

1. When have you ever felt intimidated by someone, and how did it make you feel?
- * 2. What would you tell a child who was being picked on by a bully?

Explore It

3. What prompted Sanballat and his associates to send Nehemiah a message? (6:1)
- * 4. What motivated Sanballat and his associates to summon Nehemiah? (6:1-2)
5. What did Sanballat ask of Nehemiah? (6:2)
6. How did Nehemiah respond to Sanballat's invitation? (6:3)
7. What reason did Nehemiah give for why he could not meet with Sanballat? (6:3)
8. What was different about the fifth time Sanballat sent the message to Nehemiah? (6:5-7)
- * 9. How did Nehemiah respond to Sanballat's accusations? (6:8)
10. What did Nehemiah's opponents assume would be the result of their threats? (6:9)
11. From where did Nehemiah receive his strength to continue the work? (6:9)
12. What advice did Shemaiah give to Nehemiah? (6:10)
13. What did Nehemiah think of Shemaiah's advice? (6:11)
14. What insight did the Lord give to Nehemiah regarding Shemaiah's advice? (6:12)
15. What caused Shemaiah to prophesy against Nehemiah? (6:12-13)
- * 16. Why didn't Nehemiah back down as his opponents wanted? (6:12-13)
17. Toward what goal were Nehemiah's enemies working? (6:13)
18. Why did Nehemiah pray? (6:14)

Get It

- * 19. What basic principles did Nehemiah follow when he faced opposition?
20. What sin did Nehemiah want to avoid?
- * 21. In what ways is Nehemiah a good example for us to follow?
22. When do you think it is important to fight back, and when is it better to back down?
23. What opposition do you face in your Christian walk?
24. How can we discern insincerity or dishonesty when we see it?
25. From what work do you think Satan wants to distract you?
26. What temptations threaten to distract you from doing what is right?
27. How can you prevent yourself from being distracted from the work God has given you?
28. To what task or project do you want to recommit your efforts?

Apply It

29. What specific responsibilities or challenges will you face this next week?
- * 30. What specific steps can you take to strengthen your commitment to the responsibilities God has given you?
31. What can you do to prepare yourself for the next time someone tries to influence you through intimidation?

The Completion of the Wall - Nehemiah 6:15-7:73

Topics: Accomplishments, Actions, Authority, Commitment, Conflict, Devotion, Enemies, Family, Guidance, Heritage, Home, Initiative, Leadership, Opposition, Protection, Relationships, Representatives, Respect, Responsibility, Restoration, Righteousness, Success, Teamwork, Work

Open It

- * 1. What do you think are the most important attributes in a good leader?
- 2. How does it feel to finish a project that no one thought you could finish?
- 3. What insights or help for your own life have you learned from parents, grandparents, or other ancestors?

Explore It

- 4. How did the Israelites' enemies react to the news that the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt? (6:15-16)
- 5. Why did the nations surrounding Israel lose their self-confidence? (6:16)
- * 6. Who was given credit for Israel's success, even by their enemies? (6:16)
- 7. Why was it necessary for guards to be posted around the walls of Jerusalem? (6:17-7:3)
- 8. Why did Tobiah continue to send letters to Nehemiah? (6:19)
- 9. What happened after the walls of Jerusalem had been completed? (7:1-2)
- * 10. How did Nehemiah choose the men to put in charge over Jerusalem? (7:2)
- 11. How is Hananiah described? (7:2)
- 12. What extra precaution did Nehemiah take to insure the safety of the city? (7:2-3)
- 13. What specific instructions did Nehemiah give to the men in charge of Jerusalem? (7:3)
- 14. How is the city of Jerusalem described? (7:4)
- 15. Why was it important for the people to prove they were Israelites? (7:4-73)
- * 16. What motivated Nehemiah to organize the genealogical record of the Israelites? (7:5)
- 17. What happened to some of the priests who could not find their family records? Why? (7:64-65)

Get It

- 18. How did God lead Nehemiah?
- 19. When have you felt God's guidance or leading in your life?
- 20. In what ways can you be open to God's leading?
- 21. What can you do to be more sensitive to God's leading?
- 22. What situation or problem do you anticipate this week that will require God's help for you to handle properly?
- * 23. In light of Nehemiah's example, what criteria should we follow in choosing leaders?
- 24. How should our criteria for choosing leaders be different from the world's?
- * 25. How can we develop integrity so that God can use us as leaders?
- 26. Why is it important for us to choose church leaders (and other spiritual leaders) carefully?
- 27. What role can you play in assuring the careful selection of leaders in your church?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you focus on following God's leading this week?
- 29. What is one way you can lead by example?

Ezra Reads the Law - Nehemiah 8:1-18

Topics: Acceptance, Advice, Answers, Authority, Celebration, Dedication, Devotion, Emotions, Encouragement, Enthusiasm, Follow-through, Inspiration, Interpretation, Joy, Leadership, Listening, Obedience, Openness, Praise, Sensitivity, Spiritual Disciplines, Strength, Thankfulness, Understanding, Worship

Open It

- * 1. When or in what circumstances do you find it easy to be enthusiastic about what you are doing?
- 2. What events or occasions do people celebrate nowadays?

Explore It

- 3. At what point in Israel's history does this story take place? (8:1)
- 4. Why did the people of Israel assemble at the Water Gate? (8:1)
- 5. What did the people want Ezra to read? (8:1)
- 6. Who was included in the assembly at the Water Gate? (8:2)
- * 7. What attitude did the people of Israel have toward the Book of the Law? (8:3, 6, 9, 17)
- 8. What did the people do when Ezra opened the Book of the Law? (8:5)
- * 9. What specific steps did Ezra and the other leaders take to make this event practical for everyone? (8:5-8)
- 10. How did Ezra and the people of Israel respond to the reading of the Law? (8:6)
- 11. Why did the leaders declare the day sacred? (8:9)
- 12. Why were the people of Israel weeping? (8:9)
- 13. What words of encouragement did Nehemiah offer the people of Israel? (8:10)
- * 14. How had the events of this day changed the lives of the people of Israel? (8:12)
- 15. Why did the leaders of Israel gather on the second day of the month? (8:13)
- 16. What specific instructions did the leaders glean from the Book of the Law? (8:14-15)
- 17. How did the people react to the newly discovered instructions? (8:16)

Get It

- 18. How would you describe Israel's view of God's written Word?
- * 19. In what specific ways are Israel's actions in this passage a good model for us today?
- 20. As Christians what reasons do we have to celebrate?
- 21. Why is it important for believers to meet corporately?
- * 22. How should we follow the example of the leaders of Israel in this story?
- 23. Generally speaking, how should we respond to God's Word?
- 24. In what ways do you think you should change your attitude toward reading the Bible?
- 25. What prompts you to praise and worship the Lord?
- 26. What steps can we take to be sensitive to the message of God's Word?
- 27. What is one message from Scripture or one biblical command that you need to take more seriously?
- 28. How can we guard against apathy toward God's Word?

Apply It

- 29. What gift of praise or worship can you offer the Lord today?
- * 30. What specific changes do you want to make in your Bible reading habits this week?

The Israelites Confess Their Sins - Nehemiah 9:1-37

Topics: Actions, Attitude, Blessing, Burdens, Confession, Consequences, Convictions, Disobedience, Emotions, Evil, Failure, Faithfulness, Faults, Forgiveness, God, Hardheartedness, History, Holy Spirit, Humility, Inadequacy, Kindness, Love, Oppressed, Patience, Pride, Punishment, Rebellion, Repentance, Sin, Unfaithfulness, Weaknesses

Open It

1. What did you think of history when you were in school?
- * 2. When has it been helpful for you to look back at your past and think about what you've gone through?
3. What's something you've learned the hard way despite clear warnings from others?

Explore It

4. Why did the Israelites gather together at this time? (9:1)
5. How did the Israelites demonstrate their spirit of repentance? (9:1)
6. What specific steps did the people take to restore their relationship with the Lord? (9:1-3)
7. What role did the Levites play in this event? (9:4-5)
8. What instructions did the Levites offer the people? (9:5)
- * 9. Why did the Levites offer praise to God? (9:5-15)
- * 10. What were some of the ways God provided for and protected the people of Israel? (9:5-15)
11. On what accomplishments of the Lord did the people focus? (9:6-15)
12. What reason did the Levites give to explain why God made a covenant with Abraham? (9:8)
13. According to the Levites, why did the Lord keep His promises? (9:8)
14. How did the people of Israel view God's laws? (9:13)
15. What mistake did Israel's forefathers make? (9:16-17)
16. How did God demonstrate His love for the people of Israel? (9:17-25)
17. How did the Lord reveal His will to the nation of Israel? (9:20, 30)
18. Why did the Lord allow Israel to be oppressed by their enemies? (9:26-27)
- * 19. What request did the Levites present to the Lord? (9:32-36)

Get It

20. What sinful pattern did Israel repeat?
21. What motivated the leaders of Israel to confess their sins to the Lord?
22. Why is it our tendency to remember God only in the good times?
- * 23. If you wrote a passage about your own history of walking with the Lord, what themes would you see?
24. When can fasting and praying be beneficial?
25. In what concrete ways has the Lord demonstrated His love for you?
26. Why does the Lord deserve our praise?
27. What offering of praise can you give to the Lord?
28. How does remembering God's provision for you in the past encourage you?
- * 29. What should we do to restore our relationship with the Lord whenever we realize we have been acting selfishly?
30. How can we be sure God will continue to forgive us?

Apply It

31. How can you thank the Lord today for His forgiveness?
- * 32. When can you take some time this week for confession and recommitment to obeying God?
33. What do you want to remember about your past so you won't forget its lessons?

The Agreement of the People - Nehemiah 9:38-10:39

Topics: Accountability, Actions, Change, Choices, Commitment, Convictions, Covenant, Decisions, Determination, Devotion, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Giving Up, God's Will, Habits, Integrity, Leadership, Life-style, Morality, Obedience, Plans, Possessions, Priorities, Promises, Reconciliation, Resources, Tithing, Vows

Open It

- * 1. When is a written contract important?
- 2. What New Year's resolutions have you made, and how well have you kept them?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did the people of Israel want to make a binding agreement? (9:38)
- 4. How was the agreement of the people made legal? (9:38)
- 5. Why did the people separate themselves from their neighbors? (10:28)
- 6. With what general oath did the people bind themselves? (10:29)
- * 7. What were the specifics of the oath between God and the people of Israel? (10:30-39)
- 8. How did the people plan to keep the Sabbath holy? (10:31)
- 9. What offerings did the people promise to give to the Lord? (10:32-33)
- 10. Why was it necessary to cast lots? (10:34)
- 11. What responsibility did the people take on to insure that the temple was run properly? (10:34-39)
- 12. Why was it necessary for the people to bring offerings to the temple? (10:34-39)
- 13. In what ways did the people promise to care for the priests and the temple? (10:34-39)
- * 14. What was significant about the people's offering that demonstrated their commitment to the Lord and their respect for the temple? (10:36-38)
- 15. How did the people decide what they should tithe? (10:37)

Get It

- 16. What prompted the Israelites to renew their commitment to God?
- * 17. When have difficult circumstances in your life motivated you to seek the Lord?
- 18. Why do you think it sometimes takes negative experiences to refocus our attention on God?
- 19. What area of your life do you need to recommit to the Lord?
- * 20. How can it be helpful to write a declaration of commitment to God?
- 21. What methods can we use to keep ourselves accountable to the promises we make to the Lord?
- 22. What commitments did the people make to worship?
- 23. How can we demonstrate thankfulness to the Lord for His forgiveness?
- 24. How can you depend on the Lord to help you truly repent and change your bad habits?

Apply It

- * 25. When could you set aside some time to write down your commitment to serve the Lord?
- 26. How can you show a commitment to regular worship?
- 27. Who can help you be accountable to stay true to your intentions to serve God?

Nehemiah's Final Reforms - Nehemiah 11:1-13:31

Topics: Accountability, Accusation, Administration, Advice, Attitude, Beliefs, Blessing, Citizenship, Complacency, Confession, Convictions, Correction, Criticism, Devotion, Disobedience, Example, Faithfulness, Faults, Gifts, Greed, Marriage, Neglect, Obedience, Praise, Problems, Renewal, Repentance, Sin, Thankfulness, Tithing, Unfaithfulness, Vows, Worship

Open It

1. What do you think are the benefits of weekly days off from work?
2. How do you like to spend Sundays?
- * 3. How do you like to spend your weekends?

Explore It

4. Why were the Levites sought out and brought to Jerusalem? (12:27-30)
- * 5. How did Israel celebrate the completion of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem? (12:27-47)
6. How did the people demonstrate their thankfulness to God for His goodness? (12:43-47)
7. What did the Israelites discover when they read the Book of Moses at the celebration? (13:1-2)
8. What did the people do in response to what they discovered in the Book of Moses? (13:3)
9. What evil deed had Eliashib the priest done? (13:4-5)
10. How did Nehemiah react to Eliashib's sin? (13:7-9)
11. What had forced the Levites to return to their own fields? (13:10)
12. Why did Nehemiah rebuke the officials? (13:11)
13. How did Nehemiah choose the men to put in charge of the storerooms? (13:13)
14. What request did Nehemiah ask of the Lord for his diligence in keeping Israel accountable? (13:14, 22)
- * 15. Of what sins were the people of Israel guilty? (13:15-16, 23-24)
- * 16. What action did Nehemiah take to insure Israel kept the Sabbath holy? (13:19-22)
17. How did Nehemiah react to Israel's sin of intermarriage with foreigners? (13:23-27)

Get It

18. What has the Lord done in your life recently that motivates you to praise Him?
19. What does this passage reveal about how believers should respond to the written Word of God?
20. What does Nehemiah teach us through his example in choosing leaders?
21. What role did prayer play in Nehemiah's life?
22. Who has helped keep you accountable in your Christian walk?
23. What are the benefits to having a friend in whom to confide about spiritual things?
24. What responsibility do you think Christians have to keep each other accountable?
25. What does this story reveal about the attitude we should have toward worshiping God?
26. In what ways do you think Christians today tend to neglect worship?
- * 27. How do you need to change your actions or attitudes toward church or worship?
- * 28. What have you learned from this story about respecting the Sabbath?
29. In what ways should our treatment of the Sabbath differ from Old Testament law?
30. How can you show respect for worship?

Apply It

31. When can you take time to pray each day this week?
32. What gift of praise can you offer to God today?
33. Who is one person who could help keep you accountable in your spiritual life?
- * 34. In what way can you renew your commitment to a day of worship?

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Queen Vashti Deposed - Esther 1:1-22

Topics: Abundance, Actions, Advice, Answers, Appearance, Authority, Beauty, Choices, Consequences, Discipline, Disobedience, Drinking, Example, Government, Husbands, Influence, Leadership, Life-style, Possessions, Power, Pride, Punishment, Rebellion, Relationships, Sacrifice, Status, Wealth, Wisdom, Wives

Open It

1. What are some of the benefits of power and prestige?
- * 2. What do you think are some of the drawbacks of having status and power?
3. What do people like so much about banquets and feasts?

Explore It

4. What is the background of this story? (1:1-3)
5. Who attended the king's banquet? (1:3-5)
6. What events preceded the banquet that the king gave? (1:4)
7. How is the setting of the banquet described? (1:5-8)
8. What motivated the king to summon the queen on the seventh day of the banquet? (1:10)
- * 9. Why did the king want Queen Vashti to leave her own banquet to come to his? (1:11)
- * 10. How did Queen Vashti respond to the king's command? (1:12)
11. How did King Xerxes react to Vashti's disobedience? (1:12)
12. Whom did the king consult about what to do about the queen's disobedience? (1:13-14)
13. What advice did the wise men give to King Xerxes? (1:16-20)
14. What fear did the wise men have about the ramifications of Queen Vashti's behavior? (1:17-18)
15. What impact did the wise men want the king's decree to have in the kingdom? (1:19-20)
16. What did the king decide to do about Queen Vashti? (1:21-22)
- * 17. How did Vashti's actions affect all the women in the kingdom? (1:22)

Get It

18. Why do you think Queen Vashti refused to obey the king's command?
- * 19. Why was it so important to the king that he punish the queen for her disobedience?
20. When have your actions had greater ramifications than you originally expected?
21. When have you ever stood up for what you believed was right, despite the dire consequences?
22. What are some consequences you have experienced for standing up for what was right?
23. How has this passage influenced how you plan to make decisions in the future?
- * 24. In what ways have you seen your own actions influence other Christians or nonbelievers?
25. What kinds of things can Christians do to encourage others to seek the Lord?

Apply It

- * 26. What can you do today to set an example for someone else?
27. What sacrifices are you willing to make in the next few weeks to stand up for what is right?

Esther Made Queen - Esther 2:1-23

Topics: Actions, Advice, Affections, Appearance, Attitude, Authority, Beauty, Character, Citizenship, Danger, Example, Faithfulness, Family, Favoritism, Feelings, Generosity, Guidance, Help, Humility, Husbands, Loyalty, Marriage, Morality, Opportunities, Plans, Position, Power, Punishment, Relationships, Responsibility, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What do you sense society believes are the most important qualities in a person?
- 2. What would you say are your three best qualities?
- 3. What are your top priorities in life?

Explore It

- 4. What did the king's attendants propose, and why? (2:1-4)
- 5. How did the king plan to find another queen for himself? (2:3-4)
- 6. What background information does the passage give us about Mordecai? (2:5-7)
- 7. What does the passage reveal about Esther and her background? (2:7)
- * 8. What kind of treatment did Esther receive at the palace, and why? (2:9)
- 9. For what reason did Esther not reveal her heritage? (2:10)
- 10. How did Mordecai keep in contact with Esther? (2:11)
- 11. What events preceded a woman's turn to go to the king? (2:12-14)
- 12. What was the only way a woman would get a second chance to see the king? (2:14)
- 13. What did Esther do when it was her turn to go to the king? (2:15)
- 14. What did King Xerxes think of Esther? (2:17)
- * 15. How did Esther become queen? (2:17-18)
- * 16. How did Esther continue to show her respect for Mordecai even after she had become queen? (2:20-23)
- 17. What did Mordecai discover while he was sitting at the king's gate? (2:21-22)
- 18. How did the king find out about the plot to assassinate him? (2:21-23)

Get It

- 19. How would you describe Esther?
- 20. What kind of relationship did Esther and Mordecai have?
- 21. In what ways is Esther a good role model for women and men today?
- 22. What impact did power and status have on Esther?
- 23. How have you allowed wealth or power to influence your character?
- * 24. How can we guard against the temptation to allow money, status, or power to influence our motivations and actions?
- * 25. What do you think is the proper attitude toward wealth and prestige?
- 26. What qualities does God value most highly in a person?
- 27. How do your priorities influence the way you live every day?
- 28. What does this passage teach you about God's sovereignty?

Apply It

- * 29. What do you most want to remember from this story about money, status, and power?
- 30. What is one step you can take this week to conform your character more to that of Christ?
- 31. What steps can you take this week to guard against greed and materialism?

Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews - Esther 3:1-15

Topics: Accusation, Actions, Ambition, Authority, Conflict, Consequences, Criticism, Danger, Dishonesty, Disobedience, Example, Frustration, Greed, Hatred, Instructions, Intimidation, Obligation, Plans, Position, Power, Pride, Punishment, Risk, Status, Submission

Open It

- * 1. When have you ever felt unfairly treated?
- 2. How do most people normally react to unfair treatment?
- 3. In your opinion, what's the best way to earn the respect of others?

Explore It

- 4. How did King Xerxes honor Haman? (3:1-2)
- * 5. In what way did Mordecai disobey the king's order? (3:2)
- 6. How did Mordecai respond to the officials' questions about his behavior? (3:3-4)
- 7. For what reason did the officials tell Haman about Mordecai's behavior? (3:4)
- 8. How did Haman react to Mordecai's refusal to bow down to him? (3:5)
- * 9. Why did Haman want to kill all of the Jews? (3:5-6)
- 10. When did Haman decide to kill all the Jews in the kingdom? (3:7)
- 11. How did Haman present his intentions to the king? (3:8-9)
- * 12. Which parts of Haman's speech to the king were true, and which were false? (3:8-9)
- 13. What important piece of information did Haman neglect to tell the king? (3:8-9)
- 14. How did King Xerxes respond to Haman's request? (3:10-11)
- 15. How did Haman add authority to his edict? (3:12)
- 16. What did Haman do to carry out his plan? (3:12-15)
- 17. How did Mordecai's behavior affect the whole kingdom? (3:12-15)

Get It

- 18. How does the king's and Haman's response to the edict contrast to the reaction of the common people of the city?
- 19. Why do you think Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman?
- 20. What character flaws of Haman are revealed in this part of the story?
- 21. What similarities or differences do you see between Haman and yourself?
- * 22. How can Christians guard against the temptations of pride and greed?
- 23. Why do you think King Xerxes failed to see through Haman's selfish and deceitful plot?
- 24. To what human weakness in the king did Haman appeal when he presented his request?
- 25. What blinded the king from seeing the truth of the situation?
- * 26. When has your pride ever interfered with your ability to discern the truth?
- 27. What do you think we can do to become more discerning people?

Apply It

- * 28. What specific steps can you take this week to guard against the sin of pride?
- 29. For what problem or challenge do you need to ask God and other Christians for wisdom and discernment?

Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help - Esther 4:1-17

Topics: Abilities, Actions, Advice, Answers, Barriers, Challenge, Choices, Circumstances, Citizenship, Consequences, Courage, Danger, Death, Depend, Despair, Disobedience, Escape, Expectations, Fasting, Feelings, Guidance, Help, Initiative, Leadership, Mourning, Obligation, Position, Power, Prayer, Problems, Risk, Sacrifice

Open It

1. When have you felt helpless to solve a problem that you faced?
2. When have the expectations of others overwhelmed or discouraged you?
- * 3. What do you think makes some people brave and others cowardly?

Explore It

4. How did Mordecai and the Jews react to the king's edict? (4:1-3)
5. What did Esther do when she heard that Mordecai was in mourning? (4:4)
6. How did Esther discover the reason behind Mordecai's grief? (4:5)
7. What key details did Mordecai know about Haman's evil plot? (4:7)
8. How do we know that Mordecai had a significant connection to the palace? (4:7)
9. What proof did Mordecai send to Esther about the king's edict? (4:8)
- * 10. In what specific way did Mordecai want Esther to help the Jews? (4:8)
11. Why was Mordecai's advice to Esther dangerous for her to carry out? (4:11)
12. What was the only exception to the king's law about a person entering his inner court uninvited? (4:11)
13. How did Mordecai answer Esther's fears? (4:12-14)
14. What finally convinced Esther to follow Mordecai's advice? (4:12-14)
- * 15. How does Mordecai's answer to Esther reveal his belief in God's sovereignty? (4:14)
16. What warning did Mordecai give Esther if she did not help her people? (4:14)
17. In what way did Mordecai believe that God had already worked His sovereign will in Esther's life? (4:14)
- * 18. How did Esther prepare for her meeting with the king? (4:15-16)
19. What risk did Esther take to save her people from annihilation? (4:16)

Get It

20. What kind of relationship did Esther and Mordecai have?
21. What character traits of Esther would you like to have?
22. What action did Esther take to prepare herself for the life-and-death challenge she faced?
23. Where did Esther get her courage?
24. In what kind of circumstances is it good for Christians to fast and pray?
- * 25. How can you depend on the Lord and on other mature Christians to help you through difficult times?
26. What risks are you willing to take for doing what is right?
- * 27. What does this passage teach us about God's sovereignty and our responsibility?
28. What difference does it make that God is sovereign, as Esther acknowledged?

Apply It

29. What can you do to prepare yourself to deal with challenges that require courage?
- * 30. What steps can you take to depend on God and Christian friends to help you?
31. How could you acknowledge the Lord's sovereignty in your life?

Esther's Request to the King - Esther 5:1-14

Topics: Abundance, Accomplishments, Affirmation, Approval, Composure, Courage, Danger, Ego, Generosity, Greed, Help, Invitation, Materialism, Needs, Patience, Plans, Pleasure, Preparation, Priorities, Questions, Risk, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What things are most valued and sought after by many people these days?
- 2. Why do you think people strive after money and power when those things do not bring true happiness?
- 3. What brings you the most satisfaction in life?

Explore It

- 4. Why did Esther approach the king uninvited? (5:1)
- 5. How did the king react to Queen Esther's presence in his court? (5:2)
- 6. Of what significance is the fact that the king held out his golden scepter? (5:2)
- * 7. What did the king offer to Esther? (5:3)
- 8. What did Queen Esther ask of the king? (5:4)
- 9. How does the tension and suspense in the story build? (5:4-8)
- 10. What infuriated Haman after he attended Esther's banquet? (5:9)
- 11. Why was Haman most proud? (5:10-13)
- * 12. What do we learn about Haman at this point? (5:11)
- * 13. What kept Haman from enjoying all of his success and wealth? (5:13)
- 14. What advice did Haman's wife and friends give him? (5:14)
- 15. How did Haman feel about his friends' advice? (5:14)
- 16. Why did Haman build gallows? (5:14)

Get It

- 17. What risks did Esther take when she approached the king?
- 18. What does the king's generosity reveal about Esther's character?
- 19. How is Esther a good example to us today?
- 20. What do you admire about Esther?
- 21. What do you find repulsive about Haman?
- 22. What can we learn from the negative example of Haman?
- * 23. What character traits of Haman should we be careful to avoid?
- 24. What does this passage reveal about wealth, power, and happiness?
- 25. Why was Haman not satisfied?
- * 26. How have you seen pride hurt your relationship with the Lord or others?
- 27. How can Christians guard against the sin of pride?

Apply It

- * 28. What can you do today to restore any relationship damaged by pride?
- 29. What is one way you can place your focus on serving God and off of getting money and influencing others?

Mordecai Honored - Esther 6:1-14

Topics: Advice, Ambition, Answers, Assumptions, Authority, Blessing, Consequences, Ego, Embarrassment, Example, Expectations, Faults, Honor, Humiliation, Instructions, Justice, Obedience, Position, Power, Pride, Privilege, Questions, Remembering, Rewards, Shame

Open It

- * 1. What were some of your favorite bedtime stories growing up?
- 2. What do people usually think of someone who “toots his (or her) own horn”?
- 3. What elements make a story interesting to you?
- 4. What interesting literary techniques have you noticed in Bible stories?

Explore It

- 5. What did King Xerxes do to deal with insomnia? (6:1)
- 6. What did the king discover when the book of the chronicles was read to him? (6:2)
- 7. What honor had Mordecai received for exposing the men who plotted to assassinate the king? (6:3)
- 8. Why did Haman enter the outer court of the king? (6:4)
- * 9. What advice did the king request of Haman? (6:6)
- 10. What significant detail did the king choose to exclude from his question to Haman? (6:6)
- * 11. What did Haman assume about the king’s question? (6:6)
- 12. How did Haman flatter the king? (6:7-9)
- 13. What did Haman think would be the best way to be honored by the king? (6:7-9)
- 14. What command did King Xerxes give to Haman? (6:10)
- * 15. What humiliating action was Haman forced to take because of his arrogance? (6:11)
- 16. How did Haman feel about honoring Mordecai? (6:12-13)
- 17. How did Haman’s wife and friends react to what had happened? (6:13)

Get It

- 18. What is ironic about what happened to Haman and Mordecai?
- 19. How do we see the sovereignty of God at work in the lives of these people?
- 20. How have you seen God’s sovereignty at work in your own life?
- * 21. In what way does this event encourage you to do what is right even though you do not always see immediate rewards in it?
- 22. What will eventually happen to people who love God and obey Him?
- 23. How did Haman’s pride influence the events of this story?
- 24. What are some of the consequences of pride?
- 25. Who or what tempts you to feel proud?
- * 26. How can we protect ourselves against the temptation to be proud or arrogant?
- 27. What temptations to pride do you expect to face this coming week?

Apply It

- 28. What concrete actions can you take this week to cultivate a spirit of humility?
- * 29. How can you prepare yourself for the temptations to pride you expect to face this week?
- 30. How can you encourage a friend to persevere in doing what is right even if it hurts?

Haman Hanged - Esther 7:1-10

Topics: Accusation, Actions, Anger, Answers, Assumptions, Authority, Consequences, Convictions, Death, Deceit, Despair, Discipline, Emotions, Flattery, Help, Injustice, Intentions, Judging Others, Motives, Plans, Position, Power, Punishment, Risk, Truth, Wisdom

Open It

1. How would you go about asking your boss for a really big favor?
- * 2. When have you ever exposed an injustice, and what happened as a result?
3. In what settings is it difficult for you to stand up for what you believe?

Explore It

4. What did the king offer Queen Esther at the banquet she prepared for him? (7:1-2)
5. How did the queen present her request to King Xerxes? (7:1-4)
- * 6. What did Esther ask of the king? (7:3-4)
7. How did King Xerxes react to Esther's request? (7:5)
8. Whom did Esther reveal as the person behind the plot to kill her people? (7:6)
9. What did the king do when he discovered the truth about Haman? (7:7)
10. How did Haman react when his wicked plan was exposed? (7:7)
- * 11. What final twist in the story guaranteed Haman's demise? (7:8)
12. What tidbit of information did one of the king's eunuchs mention at this opportune point in the story? (7:9)
13. How did the eunuch's revelation to the king further indict Haman? (7:9)
14. What ironic circumstances surrounded Haman's death? (7:9-10)
- * 15. How was the king's fury finally abated? (7:10)

Get It

16. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this story?
17. When have you felt you were in an impossible situation?
18. How has God helped you through difficult circumstances in your life?
19. What does this story reveal about the consequences of sin?
- * 20. In what ways do you think Christians should be involved in confronting injustice?
21. What injustices do you see in your community, place of work, or church?
- * 22. What can you do to confront the injustice you see around you?
23. How is Esther's wisdom displayed in this part of her story?
24. In what way can you follow Esther's example to solve a problem in your life?
25. What have you learned from this passage about problem solving?
26. What problem or challenge are you now facing?

Apply It

27. How can you praise the Lord for His sovereign work in your difficult situations?
- * 28. What is one small step you could take this week to confront an injustice that concerns you?
29. In what situation do you need to stand up more firmly for what you believe?

The King's Edict in Behalf of the Jews - Esther 8:1-17

Topics: Actions, Advice, Answers, Authority, Compromise, Consequences, Courage, Danger, Determination, Escape, Fairness, Family, Fear, Government, Help, Honor, Hope, Influence, Joy, Justice, Leadership, Loyalty, Needs, Position, Power, Problems, Protection, Responsibility, Rewards, Risk, Status, Thankfulness

Open It

- * 1. Whom do you admire most, and why?
- 2. What sacrifices would you be willing to make for the people you love?
- 3. For what cause or person would you be willing to risk your life?

Explore It

- 4. What did Esther gain from risking her life to stand up for her people? (8:1)
- 5. How was Mordecai honored by the king? (8:2, 15)
- 6. Why did Esther have to plead with the king a second time? (8:3)
- * 7. What dilemma did the king face? (8:3-8)
- 8. How did the king respond to Esther's request? (8:4)
- 9. How did Esther suggest to solve the quandary the Jews were in? (8:5)
- 10. Why did Esther want the king to overrule Haman's edict? (8:5-6)
- 11. How did the king insure that his second edict would not be revoked? (8:8)
- 12. To whom did the king give the responsibility for drafting the new decree? (8:8)
- * 13. How was Mordecai involved in saving the Jewish people? (8:9-10)
- 14. In what way did the king's new edict provide a way out for the Jews? (8:11)
- 15. How did Mordecai insure that all Jews would be able to protect themselves? (8:12-14)
- 16. How did the Jews react to the king's edict? (8:16-17)
- * 17. In what way did Mordecai's actions affect not only the Jews but also people of other nationalities? (8:17)

Get It

- 18. How did Esther risk her life for the second time?
- 19. What have you had to sacrifice for your faith?
- * 20. What value is there in taking a risk to do what is right?
- 21. How do the benefits of faith in Christ compare to the costs?
- 22. What blessings has the Lord given to you?
- 23. What does this story reveal about God's treatment of righteous versus wicked people?
- * 24. How is God's control and direction evident in this story even though He is never mentioned directly?
- 25. In what specific ways have you seen God at work in your life?

Apply It

- 26. How can you thank the Lord today for the blessings He has given you?
- * 27. What specific risk would you be willing to take this next week to stand up for what is right?
- 28. Who is one person you could tell this week about God's desire to help and guide him or her?

Triumph of the Jews - Esther 9:1-10:3

Topics: Actions, Celebration, Challenge, Consequences, Courage, Danger, Effectiveness, Effort, Encouragement, Enemies, Generosity, Gifts, Greatness, Honor, Integrity, Joy, Justice, Leadership, Opportunities, Poor, Protection, Remembering, Revenge, Righteousness, Traditions

Open It

1. What family traditions are most important to you?
- * 2. Which traditions in your family have spiritual significance to you?
3. Why do people establish traditions?

Explore It

4. What did the Jews' enemies plan to do when they heard about the king's first edict? (9:1)
5. How were the tables turned in this situation? (9:1)
- * 6. How were the Jews protected from annihilation? (9:1-3)
7. In what way was Mordecai affected by these events? (9:4)
8. What happened on the day the king's edict was to be carried out? (9:5-10)
9. What important detail did the author mention about the Jews' behavior? (9:10, 15-16)
10. How did the king demonstrate his generosity to Esther above what he had already done? (9:12)
11. What did Esther ask the king to do for her beyond the requests she had already made? (9:13)
12. How did the Jews get relief from their enemies? (9:16)
13. Why did the Jews in Susa celebrate on a different day from the Jews in rural areas? (9:18-19)
- * 14. Why did Mordecai tell the Jews to celebrate? (9:20-22)
15. How did the author of this book summarize the events that had taken place? (9:24-28)
- * 16. What did the celebration of Purim represent to the Jews? (9:28)
17. How did Queen Esther confirm the celebration of Purim? (9:29-32)
18. Why was Mordecai held in such high esteem in the kingdom? (10:3)

Get It

19. How would you characterize Mordecai?
20. In what specific ways is Mordecai a good role model for us today?
21. What character traits do you see in Esther or Mordecai that you would like to have?
22. What responsibility do you have to speak up for the welfare of your Christian brothers and sisters?
23. What did the Jews do after God had delivered them from their enemies?
24. How have you experienced God's help or deliverance in your life?
25. How can we celebrate God's goodness today?
- * 26. What should motivate us to give gifts to the poor?
- * 27. What celebration could you turn into an opportunity to do good for others?
28. How can we use family traditions to celebrate and share God's goodness?
29. How does this passage encourage you to strive after righteousness?

Apply It

30. What good deed could you do this week to thank God for His goodness to you?
- * 31. What is one new tradition you could start in your family that would benefit others?

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Prologue - Job 1:1-22

Topics: Character, Circumstances, Death, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, God, Greatness, Perseverance, Possessions, Problems, Reputation, Satan, Suffering, Testing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. Who is the greatest person you know?
- 2. Why do you think bad things happen to people?
- 3. What is the most disappointing thing that has happened to you this week?

Explore It

- 4. Whom did Job fear, and what did Job shun? (1:1)
- * 5. What kind of man was Job? (1:1-3)
- 6. Who are the three main people in these events? (1:1-22)
- * 7. What is surprising about what happened to Job? (1:1-22)
- 8. How did Job purify his children? Why? (1:4-5)
- 9. What were the angels doing? (1:6)
- 10. Where did Satan come from? (1:7)
- 11. Why did Satan say that Job feared God? (1:9-10)
- 12. What did Satan say Job would do if God took away everything Job had? (1:11)
- 13. What authority did God give to Satan? (1:12)
- 14. What happened to Job's livestock? (1:13-17)
- 15. What happened to Job's children? (1:18-19)
- * 16. How did Job respond to the tragedies that happened to him? (1:20-21)
- 17. In what way did Job not sin? (1:22)

Get It

- 18. In what way do you fear God and shun evil?
- 19. Why do you think God gave Satan authority over everything Job had?
- * 20. What kind of people are considered great in our society?
- 21. How does society view individuals who are blameless and upright?
- 22. If you had been in Job's situation, how do you think you would have responded?
- 23. Why is it easy to praise God when circumstances are going well?
- 24. How do you usually respond when tragedies happen to you?
- 25. When do you feel most like praising God?
- 26. When do you feel most like cursing God?
- 27. For what type of events do people blame God?
- 28. For what sort of events do people blame Satan?
- * 29. Why is it so hard to respond like Job when tragedies happen?

Apply It

- 30. What is one way you can fear God and shun evil today?
- * 31. What is one step you can take this week to improve your reputation as a godly person?

Job's Second Test - Job 2:1-13

Topics: Character, Circumstances, Compassion, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Friendship, God, Integrity, Perseverance, Problems, Satan, Suffering, Testing

Open It

1. What does it mean to have integrity?
2. Who is someone you know with integrity?
- * 3. What physical ailment do you fear suffering from the most?

Explore It

4. What major events occurred? (2:1-13)
5. From where did Satan come? (2:2)
6. Why did God ask Satan to consider Job again? (2:3)
7. What did God say Job had maintained? (2:3)
- * 8. Why did Satan say that it was no big deal that Job had maintained his integrity? (2:4-5)
- * 9. What authority did God give to Satan? (2:6)
10. What did Satan do to Job? (2:7)
11. What did Job's wife tell him to do? (2:9)
12. How did Job respond to his wife's suggestion? (2:10)
- * 13. What did Job not do in the midst of his troubles? (2:10)
14. For what purpose did Job's friends set out to meet Job? (2:11)
15. What did Job's friends do when they saw him? (2:12)
16. Why were Job's friends silent for seven days? (2:13)

Get It

17. In what way is it true that a person will give all he or she has for his or her life?
18. How do you maintain your integrity?
19. Why is it hard to maintain one's integrity when bad things happen?
20. In what way would it have been easier for Job to curse God and die?
21. When have you been tempted to curse God and die?
- * 22. Why is it easy to accept good from God but not trouble?
- * 23. How should we respond when trouble comes?
24. What good things have you received from God?
25. When have you set out to sympathize and comfort a friend in trouble?
26. Why do we want our friends to sympathize with and comfort us when bad things happen?
27. When have you wanted your friends just to sit with you silently?
28. How would sitting in silence with a friend be helpful?

Apply It

29. Who is someone you can comfort this week?
- * 30. What is one thing you can change about how you respond when bad things happen?
31. What one thing can you do to improve your integrity?

Job Speaks - Job 3:1-26

Topics: Bitterness, Circumstances, Darkness, Death, Depression, Despair, Emotions, Feelings, Frustration, God, Grief, Hopelessness, Openness, Problems, Suffering

Open It

1. What types of emotions are best described with pictures or images?
2. When is it appropriate to share your disappointments in life with others?
3. What can make it difficult to be open and honest about your feelings?
- * 4. What feelings are the most difficult for you to put into words?

Explore It

- * 5. What did Job do when he opened his mouth? (3:1)
- * 6. What did Job say about the day of his birth? (3:2-10)
 7. What questions did Job ask about his birth? (3:11-12)
 8. Where did Job say he would be if he had died at birth? (3:13-15)
 9. Where did Job say the weary are at rest? (3:17)
 10. What beneficial effect did Job say death would have on slaves? (3:18-19)
 11. What did Job say is given to those who search for death? (3:20-22)
- * 12. How did Job describe his groans? (3:24)
 13. What did Job say had happened to him? (3:25)
 14. What did Job say he did and did not have? (3:26)

Get It

- * 15. How would you describe Job's mood?
16. What are some of the hard questions Job asked?
17. What descriptive words or pictures did Job use to describe his emotions?
18. In what way might a person's mood affect the way he or she sees and values life?
19. When have you felt like cursing the day you were born?
- * 20. In what way do you identify with Job?
 21. Why do you think Job used such vivid language to describe his emotions?
 22. In what way are the dead better off than the living?
 23. When is it helpful for a person to talk honestly about his or her disappointments in life?

Apply It

- * 24. About what disappointment in your life do you want to be honest with God today?
25. What friend can you encourage to be more honest and open about his or her feelings?
26. With whom do you want to be more open and honest about your feelings?

Eliphaz - Job 4:1-5:27

Topics: Advice, Answers, Circumstances, Confidence, Discipline, Discouragement, God, Humanness, Life-style, Repentance, Sin, Suffering, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. When is it hard to accept the advice of a friend?
- 2. When was the last time you were discouraged by the advice a friend gave you?
- 3. How might a person's life-style negatively or positively impact his or her life?

Explore It

- 4. What did Eliphaz say that Job had done in the past? (4:2-6)
- * 5. What did Eliphaz say about Job's piety and confidence? (4:6)
- * 6. According to Eliphaz, why do bad things happen to people? (4:7-11)
 - 7. How did Eliphaz receive the message brought to him? (4:12-16)
 - 8. What kind of people die without wisdom? (4:17-21)
 - 9. Whom does resentment kill? (5:2)
 - 10. To what did Eliphaz say a person is born? (5:7)
 - 11. To whom did Eliphaz say Job should appeal? (5:8)
 - 12. What type of things did Eliphaz say God did? (5:9-15)
 - 13. According to Eliphaz, why did God do what He had done? (5:16)
 - 14. Why did Eliphaz tell Job not to despise the discipline of God? (5:17-18)
 - 15. What did Eliphaz tell Job would happen when God rescued him? (5:19-26)
- * 16. What did Eliphaz tell Job to do? (5:27)

Get It

- * 17. How would you summarize Eliphaz's speech?
- * 18. What was wrong with Eliphaz's advice?
 - 19. How is a person's life-style his or her confidence?
 - 20. In what way are people who do evil paid back with evil?
 - 21. What type of people die without wisdom, and why?
 - 22. How do resentment and envy "kill" people?
 - 23. When have you felt like taking your case before God?
 - 24. Why is it easy to despise the discipline of God?
 - 25. How do you normally react when bad things happen to you?
 - 26. Why might a person think God is punishing him or her when something bad happens?
 - 27. Why might you be tempted to think that bad things happen only to people who somehow deserve it?

Apply It

- 28. What is something negative about your life-style that you want to change this week?
- * 29. What is one way in which you will be more sensitive when giving advice to someone who is hurting?

Job - Job 6:1-7:21

Topics: Advice, Bitterness, Character, Confusion, Death, Depression, Despair, Discouragement, Friendship, Frustration, God, Hopelessness, Integrity, Life, Problems, Suffering, Unfairness

Open It

1. When have you felt let down by your friends?
2. What is something you think is unfair about life?
- * 3. In your opinion what is the single most important quality a good friend should possess?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Job say about his misery? (6:1-3)
5. What did Job say had been marshaled against him? (6:4)
6. What did Job want God to do, and what consolation did he say it would bring him? (6:8-10)
- * 7. What did Job say about his friends? (6:14-27)
- * 8. What did Job ask his friends to do, and on what basis did he ask them? (6:28-30)
9. How did Job describe life? (7:1-2)
10. What did Job say about his days and nights? (7:3-6)
11. To what did Job compare life? (7:7-10)
12. Why did Job say he would not be silent? (7:11)
13. Why was Job not able to find any comfort in sleep? (7:13-16)
14. Why did Job despise his life? (7:16)
15. In what way did Job say God made a big deal about mankind? (7:17-18)
16. What questions did Job ask God? (7:17-21)

Get It

17. How would you describe Job's reply to Eliphaz?
18. What is the basic theme in Job's answer?
19. When have you wished you could weigh your misery on a scale?
- * 20. When might you be tempted to abandon a friend who was going through a tough time?
- * 21. How can you be helpful to a person who is going through a tough time?
22. In what way do you think life seems meaningless?
23. In what way is life like a breath or a cloud?
24. When have you felt like life was either too short or too long?
25. Under what circumstances do you think someone would prefer death to life?
26. How might suffering make a person more sensitive to others?
27. Why does God care about people, and how does He show His concern?

Apply It

- * 28. What is one way you can be an encouragement to a friend who is going through a tough time this week?
29. What is something that you think is unfair about life that you will ask God to help you accept?

Bildad - Job 8:1-22

Topics: Advice, Answers, Character, Enemies, Foundation, Friendship, God, Integrity, Life, Life-style, Problems, Punishment, Questions, Righteousness, Suffering, Unfairness

Open It

1. What type of person do you go to when you need good advice?
2. For what type of infractions did your parents punish you when you were a child?
- * 3. When have you felt that you were being punished unjustly?

Explore It

4. How did Bildad characterize Job's reply to Eliphaz? (8:2)
- * 5. What did Bildad ask Job about God? (8:3)
- * 6. Why did Bildad say God punished Job's children? (8:4)
- * 7. What did Bildad say God would do if Job was pure and upright? (8:5-7)
8. Whom did Bildad suggest Job consult, and why? (8:8-10)
9. To what did Bildad compare the destiny of those who forget God? (8:11-13)
10. On what sort of foundation did Bildad say the godless were relying? (8:14-15)
11. To what did Bildad compare the godless person? (8:16-19)
12. How did Bildad say God would treat the blameless person and the evildoer? (8:20)
13. With what did Bildad say God would fill Job's mouth? (8:21)
14. What did Bildad say God would do to Job's enemies? (8:22)

Get It

15. How would you summarize Bildad's speech?
- * 16. What did Bildad imply about Job?
17. Under what circumstances would you conclude that God was punishing someone to whom bad things were happening?
- * 18. Why might it be easy to assume that God was punishing someone to whom bad things were happening?
19. When have you felt as if God were punishing you for no apparent reason?
20. What can you learn from an older person that you cannot learn from anyone else?
21. When is it wise to consult an older person about your problems?
22. What kind of people forget God, and why do they forget Him?
23. How do we forget God in our daily life?
24. Why do you agree or disagree with Bildad's description of the destiny of the righteous and the wicked?

Apply It

- * 25. How can you guard against judging others?
26. About what problem will you seek the advice of an older believer this week?
27. What is one thing you can change about your life-style in order to develop a more blameless and upright character?
28. What is one thing you can do to remember God in your daily routines?

Job - Job 9:1-10:22

Topics: Attitude, Circumstances, Confusion, Creation, Death, Despair, Discouragement, Frustration, God, Justice, Life, Problems, Righteousness, Shame, Sin

Open It

- * 1. If you were describing God to someone, what characteristics of God would you emphasize?
- 2. For what type of events or transactions would you seek out a lawyer?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did Job think that it is impossible for a mortal to be righteous before God? (9:2-13)
- * 4. How did Job describe the power and wisdom of God? (9:4-12)
 - 5. In what way did Job think being innocent or blameless would change things? (9:14-20)
 - 6. How did Job think God treats the blameless and the wicked? (9:22-24)
 - 7. How did Job describe his days? (9:25-26)
- * 8. What did Job wish he had the opportunity to do? (9:32-35)
 - 9. What did Job want God to tell him? (10:1-2)
 - 10. Why did Job think that God was unfair? (10:3-7)
 - 11. Who did Job say created him, and why is that important? (10:8-12)
 - 12. What did Job say God concealed in His heart? (10:13-14)
 - 13. What did Job ask God? (10:18)
 - 14. Where did Job say he was headed? (10:21-22)

Get It

- 15. How would you summarize Job's response to Bildad?
- * 16. What kind of picture of God did Job paint?
- * 17. In what way is it possible to be righteous or blameless before God?
 - 18. When have you felt as if nothing you could say or do would change things?
 - 19. When have you thought that God was letting wicked people go unpunished?
 - 20. Why is it sometimes helpful to have someone else arbitrate a dispute?
 - 21. When have you ever needed someone to arbitrate a dispute between you and another person?
 - 22. When have you felt as if you needed a lawyer to represent you before God?
 - 23. What difference does it make that people are created by God?
 - 24. Why is it significant that God created you?
 - 25. What purpose does shame serve?

Apply It

- * 26. What attitude about God will you make a commitment to reevaluate this week?
- 27. What can you do today to celebrate the fact that you were created by God?

Zophar - Job 11:1-20

Topics: Advice, Answers, Evil, Foolishness, God, Justice, Life, Life-style, Punishment, Questions, Repentance, Righteousness, Security, Sin, Suffering, Wisdom

Open It

1. What unusual ideas about God did you have when you were a child?
- * 2. What things in life give you a sense of security?
3. In what way would each of these give you a greater sense of security—more money in the bank and more friends?

Explore It

4. How did Zophar describe Job's speech? (11:2-3)
5. What did Zophar wish God would do? (11:5-6)
6. How did Zophar depict the mysteries of God? (11:7-9)
7. Of what did Zophar say God took note? (11:11)
8. What did Zophar say about the witless person? (11:12)
- * 9. What did Zophar tell Job to do? (11:13-14)
10. What did Zophar say Job would forget? (11:16)
11. What did Zophar say life would be brighter than? (11:17)
- * 12. Why did Zophar say Job would be secure? (11:18)
- * 13. What did Zophar say would happen to the wicked? (11:20)

Get It

14. How would you summarize Zophar's reply to Job?
- * 15. With what do you agree or disagree in Zophar's speech? Why?
16. What is something that you wish God would speak up about?
17. Why is it impossible to totally understand God?
18. How can a person "keep evil from dwelling in his tent"?
19. When have you felt at peace with God?
- * 20. What can make a person feel secure in his or her relationship with God?

Apply It

21. What can you do today to gain a better understanding of God's character?
22. What one change can you make this week to keep evil away from your home?
- * 23. What is something that you can do today to improve your relationship with God?

Job - Job 12:1-14:22

Topics: Age, Answers, Death, Discouragement, Embarrassment, Future, God, God's Will, Hope, Life, Plans, Power, Questions, Sin, Sovereignty, Suffering

Open It

1. When was the last time you were really small or insignificant?
2. What is the dumbest advice you have been given by a friend?
- * 3. When have you felt misunderstood by your friends?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Job say about his "friends"? (12:1-3)
- * 5. Why was Job embarrassed? (12:4-6)
 6. What kind of people did Job say are secure? (12:6)
 7. What did Job think a long life should bring? (12:12)
 8. How did Job describe God's power? (12:13-25)
 9. With whom did Job say he would like to argue his case? (13:3)
- * 10. How did Job characterize his friends and their advice? (13:4-12)
 11. What did Job say he would do if God killed him? (13:15)
 12. What did Job think would happen if he defended himself to God? (13:15-19)
 13. What did Job ask God to grant him? (13:20-23)
 14. How did Job feel God was treating him? (13:24-27)
 15. What did Job say about the length of a person's life? (14:5)
 16. What did Job say about life after death? (14:7-14)
 17. How did Job describe a person's life? (14:11-12)
 18. What did Job say God would do with his sins? (14:16-17)

Get It

- * 19. How would you summarize Job's reply to Zophar?
20. How did Job feel about God, his friends, and his life?
- * 21. When have you felt like a laughingstock?
 22. In what way does old age bring understanding?
 23. How should the fact that God is all-powerful make us feel?
 24. How should we demonstrate our hope in God in times of trouble?
 25. In what way can a person be vindicated by his or her life-style?
 26. In what way is life like a flower or shadow?
 27. How has the fact that life is fleeting affected the way you live your life?
 28. How is your understanding of life after death like or unlike Job's?
 29. In what way has God sealed all our sins in a bag?

Apply It

- * 30. With what disappointment in your life will you ask God to help you come to terms this week?
31. How can you make better use of your time in light of the fact that life is fleeting?

Eliphaz - Job 15:1-35

Topics: Advice, Age, Anger, Deceit, Evil, Foolishness, God, Life-style, Problems, Righteousness, Sin, Suffering, Trust, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. When is the last time you got so angry about something that you wanted to scream?
- 2. In what sort of things do people trust?

Explore It

- * 3. What did Eliphaz say about Job's speech? (15:2-4)
- 4. What did Eliphaz say prompted Job to speak? (15:5)
- 5. Against whom did Eliphaz say Job had testified? (15:6)
- 6. What questions did Eliphaz ask Job? (15:7-9)
- 7. Who did Eliphaz say was on his side? (15:10)
- * 8. Against whom did Eliphaz say Job had vented his rage? (15:12-13)
- 9. Who did Eliphaz say is pure in God's eyes? (15:14-16)
- 10. What did Eliphaz say he would tell Job? (15:17-19)
- * 11. How did Eliphaz describe the life of the wicked? (15:20-35)
- 12. In what did the wicked person trust, and what benefit did it bring? (15:31)
- 13. To what did Eliphaz say the wicked would conceive and give birth? (15:35)

Get It

- 14. What is the main point of Eliphaz's speech to Job?
- * 15. What kind of person did Eliphaz indicate Job was?
- * 16. When do you get angry with God?
- 17. How do you express your anger toward God?
- 18. In what ways do wicked people suffer?
- 19. How do people deceive themselves?
- 20. What are some of the worthless things we trust in?
- 21. How do we sometimes create our own problems in life?

Apply It

- * 22. What feelings of anger toward or disappointment in God do you want to resolve this week?
- 23. In what area of your life will you determine to trust God more?

Job - Job 16:1-17:16

Topics: Circumstances, Death, Desires, Despair, Discouragement, Encouragement, Enemies, Evil, Friendship, God, Hope, Hopelessness, Life, Mediator, Pain, Perspective, Plans, Suffering

Open It

1. What type of person offers the best advice and encouragement?
- * 2. What do you like to do after you have had a really bad day at work, school, or home?

Explore It

3. What kind of comforter did Job say his three friends were? (16:2-3)
4. What did Job say he would do if his friends were in his place? (16:4-5)
5. What did Job say God had done to him? (16:7-14)
6. According to Job, how had he responded to what God had done to him? (16:15-17)
7. Where was Job's advocate-intercessor, and what was he doing? (16:19-21)
8. On what sort of journey did Job say he would be going? (16:22)
- * 9. What did Job say about his spirit? (17:1-2)
- * 10. What did Job say about God? (17:6)
11. How did the upright and the innocent respond to Job's misery? (17:8-9)
12. What happened to Job's plans and the desires of his heart? (17:11)
13. What did Job's friends say was near? (17:12)
- * 14. What sort of hope did Job envision? (17:12-16)

Get It

15. How much do you think Job's circumstances influenced his outlook on life?
- * 16. How would you describe Job's mood at this point?
17. How did Job describe God in this speech?
18. As Job's friend, what encouragement would you offer him?
19. How would your encouragement differ from the speeches that Job's friends offered?
20. When have you felt that you had been turned over to evil people?
21. What was wrong with Job's perspective?
- * 22. How would you respond differently from the way Job responded to his problems?
23. What sort of advocate-intercessor did Job envision?
24. Who is our advocate-intercessor?
25. When have your plans in life been shattered?
26. What is your hope in life, and how does that differ from Job's hope?

Apply It

27. To what friend will you offer some words of genuine encouragement today?
28. How can you express your thanks to God for providing an advocate-intercessor in the person of His Son Jesus Christ?
- * 29. What can you do today to prevent your circumstances from clouding your perspective?

Bildad - Job 18:1-21

Topics: Anger, Answers, Darkness, Death, Evil, Foolishness, God, Judgment, Life, Life-style, Name, Pain, Problems, Punishment, Questions

Open It

- * 1. When was the last time you sat through a really long and senseless speech?
- 2. How can anger hurt a person?

Explore It

- * 3. How did Bildad respond to Job? (18:1-21)
- * 4. What faults did Bildad see in Job? (18:1-21)
- * 5. How did Bildad characterize the wicked? (18:1-21)
 - 6. What did Bildad think of Job's speeches? (18:2)
 - 7. What did Bildad say Job did to himself? (18:4)
 - 8. What did Bildad say would happen to the wicked? (18:5-6)
 - 9. How do the schemes of a wicked person affect him or her? (18:7-10)
 - 10. What did Bildad say is hungry and ready for the wicked? (18:12)
 - 11. Where did Bildad say the wicked were taken? (18:14)
 - 12. According to Bildad, what will happen to the wicked? (18:17)
 - 13. What is the fate of the person who does not know God? (18:18-21)

Get It

- * 14. What was wrong with Bildad's speech?
- * 15. What topics do you sometimes find yourself rambling on about when talking to friends?
 - 16. How do people tear themselves to pieces with their anger?
 - 17. How do the wicked bring harm to themselves?
 - 18. What sort of people would you characterize as people who do not know God?
 - 19. What does it mean to know God?
 - 20. How does knowing or not knowing God affect your life?

Apply It

- * 21. In what contexts can you make an effort to restrain your tongue?
- 22. How can you change the way you deal with anger so that it does not destroy you?
- 23. What one activity can you do this week to get to know God better?

Job - Job 19:1-29

Topics: Abandon, Assurance, Convictions, Death, Embarrassment, Family, Friendship, God, Honor, Hope, Life, Mediator, Relationships, Resurrection, Salvation

Open It

1. What badges of honor do people wear?
2. What is one thing you long for in life?
- * 3. What relationships are the most important to you?

Explore It

- * 4. What question did Job ask his friends? (19:1-3)
- * 5. Whose concern did Job say it would be if he had truly gone astray? (19:4)
6. How did Job say his friends had exalted themselves? (19:5)
7. What did Job say God had done? (19:6)
8. What response did Job say he had gotten? (19:7)
9. Of what did Job say God had stripped him? (19:9)
10. Among what group of people did Job say God counted him? (19:11)
- * 11. What happened to all Job's relationships? (19:13-19)
12. Why did Job ask his friends to have pity on him? (19:21-22)
13. What did Job wish would happen to his words? (19:23-24)
14. What did Job say about God? (19:25)
15. What did Job say he would see after his death? (19:26-27)
16. Where did Job's friends say his troubles came from? (19:28)
17. What warning did Job give to his friends? (19:29)

Get It

18. How would you describe Job's mood at this point?
- * 19. How do you think Job felt in light of the fact that all his relationships had gone sour?
- * 20. If you had been in Job's shoes, how would you have felt?
21. In what way do you agree or disagree with Job's statement that if he had truly gone astray, it would have been his concern alone?
22. Why is a person's honor so important to most people?
23. When have you felt that God was treating you like an enemy?
24. When was the last time you felt pity for someone?
25. What did Job mean when he said that he knew his Redeemer lived and that he would see God?
26. In what way should believers fear God?

Apply It

27. What friend who is going through a tough time will you make an effort to comfort? When?
28. What can you do today to make certain that you will see God when you die?
- * 29. What broken relationship can you try to mend this week? How?

Zophar - Job 20:1-29

Topics: Accomplishments, Achievements, Ambition, Anger, Consequences, Darkness, Death, Evil, God, Life, Life-style, Possessions, Pride, Punishment, Security, Success, Truth, Wealth

Open It

1. When have you been so upset by an article in the newspaper that you wanted to (or actually did) write a reply letter?
- * 2. What is an example of a “truth” or axiom about life that most everyone accepts?

Explore It

3. What prompted and inspired Zophar to answer Job? (20:1-3)
- * 4. What did Zophar say about the happiness of the wicked or godless person? (20:4-5)
5. In the long run, what difference do the achievements of the godless person make? (20:6-7)
- * 6. What did Zophar say would eventually happen to the godless person? (20:6-11)
7. What is sweet in the godless person’s mouth? (20:12-13)
8. What will happen to the good things that the godless person enjoys? (20:14-18)
9. Why is the godless person prevented from enjoying the things he or she acquired in life? (20:19)
10. What did Zophar say about the godless person’s ability to save himself or herself? (20:20-23)
11. What is the ultimate fate of the wicked? (20:24-29)
- * 12. What did Zophar say about the role God plays in determining the fate of the wicked? (20:29)

Get It

13. When have you been prompted to speak because you were disturbed by what someone else said?
14. What sort of portrait of the godless (or evil) person did Zophar paint?
15. How did Zophar view God?
- * 16. What did Zophar consider obvious?
- * 17. What was true and what was false about what Zophar said?
18. What was Zophar trying to tell Job about Job’s life?
19. What false assumption about Job did Zophar make?
20. Why did Zophar assume that Job was a wicked man?
21. Why do you agree or disagree with Zophar’s belief that the happiness of an evil person is short-lived?
22. In what way do people try to save themselves with their money?
23. What “treasures” are you using to give you a sense of security in life?
24. According to Zophar, what determines the fate of the wicked?

Apply It

25. What step can you take this week to place security in your relationship with God rather than in money or things?
- * 26. What people have you misjudged because of an assumption that people who suffer misfortune bring it on themselves?

Job - Job 21:1-34

Topics: Advice, Answers, Assumptions, Beliefs, Consequences, Evil, Experience, Fairness, Friendship, God, Life, Life-style, Punishment, Questions, Unbelievers, Unfairness

Open It

1. What is the most nonsensical piece of advice you have ever received?
2. What belief that you held as a child have you given up as an adult?
- * 3. In what way have you found that life is not fair?

Explore It

4. What did Job ask his friends to do? (21:1-3)
5. What questions did Job ask about the wicked? (21:7)
- * 6. What observations did Job make about the wicked? (21:8-13)
- * 7. What attitude did Job say the wicked had toward God? (21:14-15)
- * 8. Why did Job avoid the advice of wicked people? (21:16)
9. What questions did Job ask about the fate of the wicked? (21:17-18)
10. For whom did Job say God stored up a person's punishment, and why did this bother Job? (21:19-21)
11. What did Job ask about teaching? (21:22)
12. What common fate is shared by the person who dies full of vigor and the person who dies in bitterness? (21:23-26)
13. What did Job say his friends thought about what he said? (21:27-28)
14. What did Job say about the fate of the evil person? (21:29-33)
15. Why did Job conclude that his friends' consolation was nonsense? (21:34)

Get It

16. To what extent do you believe people get what they ultimately deserve in life?
17. How did Job characterize the advice his friends had given him?
18. How would you describe Job's attitude?
19. When have your experiences in life contradicted your desire for fairness?
- * 20. Why do you think Job was so astonished by his observations about the fate of the wicked?
21. Why do you agree or disagree with Job's conclusions about the fate of evil people?
22. In what way do you think evil people today get away with their wicked life-styles?
23. What did Job mean by his statement that God stores up a person's punishment for his or her children?
24. What assumptions about life do you think influenced Job's conclusions about the fate of the wicked?
- * 25. What has caused or would cause you to conclude that life is not fair?
26. If you were one of Job's friends, what kind of advice or consolation would you give to him?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do to take consolation in the fact that God is the ultimate judge?
28. What is one thing you will change about the way in which you advise hurting people or about the way in which you try to console them?

Eliphaz - Job 22:1-30

Topics: Advice, Answers, Backslide, Beliefs, Consequences, Doubt, Enemies, Evil, God, Life-style, Problems, Punishment, Repentance, Righteousness, Salvation, Sin, Submission

Open It

1. What strongly held belief of yours has been challenged lately?
- * 2. How does it feel to be falsely accused or to have your actions misunderstood as being malicious?
3. When have you found it difficult to submit to authority?

Explore It

4. What answer did Eliphaz seem to imply in his question about people benefiting God? (22:2-3)
- * 5. Why did Eliphaz think God was punishing Job? (22:4-5)
- * 6. What did Eliphaz accuse Job of doing to his brothers and others? (22:6-9)
- * 7. What explanation did Eliphaz give for Job's troubles? (22:10-11)
8. What was Eliphaz implying about God by asking, "Is not God in the heights of heaven?" (22:12)
9. How did Eliphaz describe Job's questions about God? (22:13-14)
10. In what did Eliphaz say the righteous and innocent rejoice? (22:19-20)
11. What did Eliphaz tell Job to do? (22:21-22)
12. What did Eliphaz say would happen if Job returned to God? (22:23-28)
13. Whom did Eliphaz say God would save? (22:29-30)

Get It

14. How would you summarize the main idea in Eliphaz's reply to Job?
15. How did Eliphaz view God?
- * 16. What was wrong with Eliphaz's accusations against Job?
17. How is it that God could find pleasure in the righteousness of a person?
18. What truth did Eliphaz's speech contain?
19. Despite believing that God knows everything and can do anything, when have you ever wondered what in the world God was doing?
20. When is it proper for a righteous or innocent person to rejoice in the destruction of his or her enemies?
21. What is the purpose of punishment?
22. When and how do you delight in your relationship with God?
23. How can a person return or submit to God?
24. In what way did Job need to return to God?
- * 25. If you had been Job, how would you have responded to Eliphaz's speech?

Apply It

- * 26. How should you reply the next time someone falsely accuses you or misunderstands your actions to be malicious?
27. What is one specific area in your life that you want consciously to submit to God today?

Job - Job 23:1-24:25

Topics: Answers, Assurance, Character, Darkness, Evil, God, Injustice, Life, Life-style, Light, Materialism, Obedience, Poor, Problems, Questions, Righteousness, Security, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. When have you ever wondered why something was happening?
- 2. With what kind of people do you find it difficult to schedule an appointment?
- 3. Why do you think there are poor and homeless people?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Job wish he could do? (23:1-7)
- * 5. Why did Job think God would not press charges against him? (23:6-7)
- * 6. How did Job characterize his response to his suffering? (23:8-12)
 - 7. Why was Job terrified and fearful before God? (23:13-17)
 - 8. What kind of appointments did Job wish he could set up with God? (24:1)
 - 9. In what type of evil activities did Job say people engage? (24:2-4)
 - 10. How did Job describe the poor? (24:5-11)
 - 11. What did Job say God did not do despite people's dying groans and cries for help? (24:12)
 - 12. Why do evil people prefer to do their evil deeds in darkness? (24:13-17)
 - 13. What did Job say would be the fate of evil people? (24:18-22)
 - 14. Why did Job say God kept a watch on the ways of evil people? (24:23)
 - 15. How long will evil people get their way? (24:24)

Get It

- 16. What title would you give to Job's speech?
- 17. Why do you think Job was so eager to confront God with his complaint?
- 18. If you were Job, why would you or would you not have been so eager to take your case before God?
- * 19. Why did Job long for an explanation of his suffering?
- 20. How do you think most people respond to suffering?
- 21. How can we follow closely in God's steps and treasure His words more than daily bread?
- * 22. Why do you think God allows some evil to go unpunished and some suffering to go unexplained?
- 23. Why do you agree or disagree with Job's assertion that the exaltation of evil people will be short lived?
- 24. Why would it matter if evil people were not eventually brought low?

Apply It

- * 25. In what area of life can you trust God despite your lack of understanding of His ways?
- 26. How will you treasure God's Words today?
- 27. In what one area of your life will you begin to look to God rather than things, people, or pleasant circumstances for happiness?

Bildad and Job - Job 25:1-31:40

Topics: Accomplishments, Achievements, Approval, Character, Confusion, Embarrassment, Evil, God, God's Will, Humiliation, Integrity, Justice, Life, Life-style, Perspective, Popularity, Problems, Punishment, Relationships, Reputation, Righteousness, Security, Self-esteem, Sin, Success, Suffering, Unfairness, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What saying, proverb, Bible verse, slogan, etc., would you use to summarize your approach to life?
- 2. What makes a person popular or unpopular with others?
- 3. What thing, event, or person has had the biggest impact on your concept of God?

Explore It

- 4. How did Bildad think God viewed humankind? (25:1-6)
- 5. What was Job's initial reply to Bildad? (26:1-4)
- 6. How did Job describe God's power? (26:5-14)
- 7. What did Job say God had denied him? (27:2)
- 8. What did Job pledge that he would not do as long as he lived? (27:3-6)
- 9. According to Job, what is the fate of the wicked? (27:7-23)
- 10. Where did Job say people search for wisdom? (28:1-19)
- 11. According to Job, what is wisdom and where can it be found? (28:20-28)
- 12. How did Job describe his life before his suffering? (29:1-25)
- * 13. What kind of man was Job before his suffering began? (29:1-25)
- * 14. How did Job describe his life since his suffering began? (30:1-15)
- * 15. How did Job characterize his present relationship with God? (30:16-23)
- 16. How did Job describe his suffering? (30:24-31)
- 17. What did Job wish God would do? Why? (31:1-40)
- 18. Based on the evidence Job supplied in his own defense, what kind of man was he? (31:1-40)

Get It

- * 19. How would you summarize Job's approach to life, both before and after the onset of his troubles?
- 20. Before his suffering, where did Job get his sense of security?
- * 21. How did Job let his circumstances shape his perception of his life?
- 22. How did Job let his circumstances affect his relationship with God and his relationship with others?
- 23. How do you let circumstances shape your perception of life?
- 24. How do you let circumstances affect your relationship with God and your relationship with others?
- 25. What significant events in your life have helped to shape your view of life and your view of God?
- 26. How is our self-esteem affected by our achievements or failures?
- 27. Why do you think Job found his personal suffering so confusing and unfair?
- 28. When have you ever felt that you did everything right and yet still God did not come through for you?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you do today to avoid letting circumstances spoil your relationship with God?
- 30. In what way can you seek security in your relationship with God rather than in your personal accomplishments this week?
- 31. What is one thing you can do today to improve your relationship with God?

Elihu - Job 32:1-37:24

Topics: Advice, Answers, Assumptions, Character, Circumstances, Correction, Faith, God, God's Will, Life, Life-style, Mediator, Obedience, Opinions, Perspective, Problems, Punishment, Relationships, Repentance, Rewards, Sin, Suffering, Wisdom

Open It

1. When you were growing up, what sort of discipline did your parents use?
2. When you were a child, what motivated you to be obedient or disobedient to your parents and other authority figures?
- * 3. What do you think is an awesome display of power?

Explore It

4. Why did Elihu become angry with Job? (32:1-5)
5. Why did Elihu wait to speak, and what finally prompted him to answer Job? (32:6-22)
6. By what authority did Elihu claim to speak? (33:1-7)
7. In what different ways does God speak to people (according to Elihu)? (33:12-22)
8. According to Elihu, how does God turn people from the pit? (33:23-30)
9. How did Elihu summarize Job's speeches? (34:5-9)
10. What did Elihu say about God? (34:10-30)
11. How did Elihu describe Job's reply to God? (34:31-37)
12. According to Elihu, how does a person's sin or righteousness affect God? (35:1-8)
13. Why did Elihu say God does not always answer people who cry out to him? (35:9-15)
14. According to Elihu, how does God treat the wicked and the righteous? (36:1-15)
- * 15. How did Elihu describe the greatness of God? (36:22-33)
- * 16. How did Elihu describe the power of God? (37:1-13)
- * 17. What series of questions did Elihu ask Job? (37:14-20)
18. With what advice did Elihu conclude his speech? (37:21-24)

Get It

19. How would you describe Elihu and his speech?
20. What is one theme that runs through Elihu's speech?
21. What assumptions about God or about life in general influenced Elihu's evaluation of Job's situation?
22. In what way do you agree or disagree with Elihu's evaluation of Job's response to his suffering?
23. What false assumption did Elihu make about the connection between suffering and sin?
24. What valuable point did Elihu make that Job's other "friends" had not made?
25. What general assumptions about life or God influence the way you think, live, or relate to other people?
26. What methods does God use to bring people back to Him?
27. How does our wickedness or righteousness impact God and others?
28. How does obedience to God result in a better life?
29. In what way does disobedience to God diminish a person's quality of life?
- * 30. Why did Elihu get so excited when speaking about the power and greatness of God?
- * 31. What effect did Elihu's view of God have on his view of life?
32. What do your relationships with other people say about your relationship with God?

Apply It

- * 33. What is one step you can take today to affirm God's greatness, wisdom, and high purposes for your life?

34. What can you do this week to improve your relationship with one other person?
35. How can you respond with faith and trust in God the next time you face a big disappointment or hurt?

The Lord Speaks - Job 38:1-41:34

Topics: Angels, Answers, Awe, Challenge, Creation, Earth, God, God's Will, Humility, Justice, Perspective, Purpose, Questions, Strength, World

Open It

1. When in your life have you been utterly speechless?
2. As a child, what decisions or actions of your parents did you question?
- * 3. If you could ask God any question about life, what would it be?

Explore It

- * 4. What do the Lord's questions reveal about Him? (38:1-39:30)
- * 5. What do the Lord's questions reveal about Job and human nature? (38:1-39:30)
6. For what did the Lord tell Job to brace himself? (38:3)
7. What is the focus of the Lord's first round of questions to Job? (38:4-41)
8. What is the focus of the Lord's second round of questions to Job? (39:1-30)
9. What did God challenge Job to do? (40:1-2)
- * 10. How did Job respond to God's challenge? (40:4-5)
11. What did God say Job must do before God would admit that Job could save himself? (40:6-14)
12. What did God say about the behemoth? (40:15-24)
13. What did God say about the leviathan? (41:1-34)
14. What belongs to God? (41:11)

Get It

15. How would you summarize the Lord's answer to Job?
16. What point did God want Job to understand through this series of questions?
- * 17. In what way did Job find God's answers to his questions satisfying or dissatisfying?
- * 18. Why was Job unable to defend himself?
19. If you were Job, how do you think you would have responded to the opportunity to present your case to God?
20. If you were Job, what questions would you have asked God?
21. Why did God tell Job to look at the behemoth and leviathan?
22. What questions did God's reply to Job leave unanswered or unresolved?
23. How does God's answer to Job affect your perspective on God or life?

Apply It

24. What is one thing you can do today to appreciate the awesomeness of God?
- * 25. What can you do this week to gain a deeper understanding of God's character?
26. How can you be more respectful and less demanding of God?

Job - Job 42:1-17

Topics: Anger, Attitude, Blessing, Forgiveness, Friendship, God, Greatness, Humility, Justice, Life, Reconciliation, Repentance, Sacrifice, Wealth

Open It

1. What event, thing, or person has had the biggest impact on your life?
- * 2. When have you ever had to take back something you said?
3. Why do people often associate material prosperity with God's blessing?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Job say about God? (42:1-2)
- * 5. What did Job say about what he had previously said? (42:3)
- * 6. Why did Job say he would repent? (42:4-6)
 7. Why was God angry with Job's three friends but not with Job? (42:7)
 8. What did the Lord tell Eliphaz and his two friends to do? (42:8-9)
 9. What did the Lord do for Job? (42:10)
 10. What did Job's brothers, sisters, and friends do for Job? (42:11)
 11. How did the Lord bless Job's life? (42:12-15)
 12. What was the rest of Job's life like? (42:16-17)

Get It

13. How did God's reply change Job's attitude?
14. In what way did Job speak about things that he did not understand?
- * 15. Why was it necessary for Job to repent?
 16. How should we repent or turn away from our sins?
 17. Why did God have Job pray for his three friends?
 18. If you had been Job, how would you have felt about having to pray for friends like the ones Job had?
- * 19. What difference does it make that God made Job prosperous again?
20. What is the relationship between God's blessing and prosperity?

Apply It

21. What is one thing you can do this week to develop a greater appreciation for God's greatness?
- * 22. What can you do this week to develop a greater sense of humility before God?
23. What friend who has hurt you will you pray for today?

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Psalm 1 - Psalm 1:1-6

Topics: Bible, Blessing, Character, Dedication, Desires, Evil, Example, Faithfulness, Fruit, Joy, Peer Pressure, Promises, Protection, Punishment, Righteousness, Sin, Spiritual Disciplines, Unbelievers, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. When has peer pressure influenced your attitudes or actions?
- 2. What's most important to you about your friendships with Christians?
- 3. How do you think you would feel if you were not allowed to attend church?

Explore It

- * 4. What activities does the righteous person avoid? (1:1-3)
- 5. What is the theme of this psalm? (1:1-6)
- * 6. How are the righteous and the wicked different? (1:1-6)
- * 7. What are the main points the psalm writer makes in this poem? (1:1-6)
- 8. How does the psalm writer connect delight and meditation? (1:2)
- 9. What does a righteous person do a lot? (1:2)
- 10. What does the image of the tree tell us about the righteous person? (1:3)
- 11. In what way is a righteous person rewarded for being righteous? (1:3)
- 12. What differences are there between righteous people and unrighteous people? (1:3-5)
- 13. What differences are implied by the references to "tree" and "chaff"? (1:3-5)
- 14. How are the righteous described in the psalm? (1:4-5)
- 15. How are the wicked described in the psalm? (1:4-5)
- 16. What consequences do the wicked face? (1:5)
- 17. What role does the Lord play in relation to the righteous and the wicked? (1:6)
- 18. How do the futures of the righteous and the wicked differ? (1:6)

Get It

- 19. What does it mean to meditate on God's law day and night?
- 20. Why is Christian fellowship important?
- 21. What positive ideals does this psalm encourage us to follow?
- * 22. What does this psalm teach us about spiritual discipline?
- 23. In what sense does a righteous person "prosper"?
- 24. What image or mental picture would you use to describe yourself?
- 25. What activities should you avoid because of your desire to be righteous?
- 26. Whose company should you avoid and why?
- 27. How can we demonstrate our delight in God's Word?
- 28. What kind of "fruit" should we yield?
- * 29. In what specific ways does this psalm encourage you to seek righteousness?
- 30. How have you experienced the Lord's protection in your life?

Apply It

- 31. What specific steps can you take in the next few weeks to demonstrate your delight in God's Word?
- 32. What concrete action can you take to avoid an unrighteous behavior?
- * 33. What righteous attitude or action would you like to cultivate in your life over this next week?

Psalm 2 - Psalm 2:1-12

Topics: Anger, Blessing, Challenge, Choices, Consequences, Fear, Joy, Judgment, Leadership, Power, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Respect, Serving, Unbelievers, Wisdom, World

Open It

- * 1. What characteristics make a good leader?
- 2. What do you think are some of the dangers in being a leader?

Explore It

- 3. What rhetorical question opens this psalm? (2:1)
- 4. How successful are people when they plot against the Lord? (2:1)
- 5. What aspects of the Lord's character are revealed in this psalm? (2:1-12)
- 6. Who tries to stand against the Lord? (2:2)
- 7. What do the rulers of the world want to accomplish? (2:3)
- 8. How does God react to the leaders of the earth trying to overthrow Him? (2:4)
- 9. How does God demonstrate His righteousness to wicked people? (2:5)
- * 10. What does God want us to know? (2:6-9)
- 11. How far does God's power extend? (2:8)
- 12. What will God's Anointed One accomplish? (2:9)
- * 13. What warning are leaders given in this psalm? (2:10)
- 14. What are some dangers in being a leader? (2:10)
- 15. What attitude of worship should we have? (2:11)
- * 16. What advice does this passage give us? (2:11-12)

Get It

- 17. How do you think the nations today are similar to the ones described in this psalm?
- 18. In what ways do you think rulers of our modern world conspire against Christ?
- * 19. What are some of the dangers of being in leadership?
- * 20. How is the psalm writer's advice to leaders relevant to you?
- 21. Practically speaking, how can we "take refuge" in God?
- 22. What should we do to avoid God's wrath?
- 23. How can Christian leaders protect themselves from using their status or power for selfish purposes?
- 24. What does this psalm teach us about God's character?
- 25. How does this poem change your perception of God?
- 26. How do you think the words of this psalm could be applied to Christ?
- 27. In what practical ways can you demonstrate your respect for the Lord?

Apply It

- * 28. What steps can you take in the next few weeks to use your influence for God's glory?
- 29. What is one act of service to God that you could do today?
- 30. How can you "take refuge" in the Lord this next week?

Psalm 3 - Psalm 3:1-8

Topics: Answers, Blessing, Circumstances, Confidence, Courage, Doubt, Enemies, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, Glory, Hope, Protection, Prayer, Security, Trust

Open It

1. In what circumstances do you feel safe and secure?
2. What often threatens our sense of security?
- * 3. What measures do people commonly take to protect themselves?

Explore It

- * 4. What predicament prompted David to write this poem? (3:1-2)
5. How were David's enemies intimidating him? (3:2)
6. Where did David get his hope? (3:3)
7. What image did David use to describe God's protection? (3:3)
- * 8. How did the Lord show His love for David? (3:3)
9. What is God like? (3:3)
10. How did David deal with his fears? (3:4)
11. How did God respond to David's cries for help? (3:4)
12. How did David demonstrate his faith in God's protection? (3:5)
13. Whom did David credit for his sense of security when he was surrounded by enemies? (3:5)
- * 14. To what extent was David willing to trust the Lord? (3:6)
15. What action did David ask the Lord to take on his behalf? (3:7)
16. What expression of confidence concludes David's prayer? (3:8)
17. What did David ask God to do? (3:8)

Get It

18. When have you ever felt you were in a hopeless situation?
19. How have you experienced God's protection?
- * 20. What does this psalm teach us about God's protection of His loved ones?
21. What should we do when we feel intimidated by others or overwhelmed by our problems?
- * 22. How can you follow David's example in dealing with your own fears?
23. What action do you need the Lord to take on your behalf?
24. What expression of confidence can you offer in prayer to the Lord?

Apply It

- * 25. What step can you take to entrust God with one of your fears?
26. How can you show your thankfulness to the Lord for His protection over you?

Psalm 4 - Psalm 4:1-8

Topics: Advice, Anger, Answers, Attitude, Glory, Goodness, Joy, Mercy, Patience, Peace, Prayer, Promises, Quiet, Rebellion, Relationships, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Security, Sin, Trust, Waiting

Open It

- * 1. If you were to write a poem about your relationship with God, what would you focus on?
- 2. What attributes of God's have you thought about most in your life?

Explore It

- 3. How is the Lord described in this passage? (4:1)
- 4. From what did David need to be saved? (4:1)
- 5. What motivated David to write this psalm? (4:1-8)
- * 6. What is the theme of this psalm? (4:1-8)
- 7. Why does David rebuke others in this poem? (4:2-3)
- 8. What assurance does this psalm offer? (4:3)
- 9. What weakness can draw people away from the Lord? (4:4)
- * 10. What advice does David give to those who want to remain righteous? (4:4-5)
- * 11. How did David's relationship with the Lord affect his attitude? (4:7)
- 12. How did David describe his joy? (4:7)
- 13. How did David demonstrate his trust in the Lord? (4:8)
- 14. Where did David get his sense of security? (4:8)

Get It

- 15. How would you describe your relationship with the Lord at this time in your life?
- 16. How does your relationship with God affect your attitude?
- * 17. What weakness or temptation threatens to draw you away from the Lord?
- 18. How does God want us to handle temptations?
- * 19. What do you think you could do to strengthen your relationship with God?
- 20. What steps can we take to help each other overcome our weaknesses?
- 21. What does this psalm teach us about how to become righteous?
- 22. What is one way you can show your trust in the Lord?
- 23. What promise in this poem would you like to claim for yourself?

Apply It

- * 24. What small steps could you take in the next week to strengthen your relationship with God?
- 25. What concrete action can you take to guard against a temptation in one area of weakness?
- 26. How can you encourage a friend in his or her relationship with God?

Psalm 5 - Psalm 5:1-12

Topics: Answers, Deceit, Dishonesty, Evil, Expectations, Faith, Faithfulness, Guidance, Guilt, Help, Joy, Listening, Love, Lying, Mercy, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Respect, Revenge, Righteousness, Sin, Waiting

Open It

- * 1. Why do you think personal crises motivate people to pray more?
- 2. When has an emergency or personal problem caused you to pray?

Explore It

- 3. What were the psalm writer's main requests? (5:1-12)
- 4. How is the psalm writer's main request repeated throughout the poem? (5:1-12)
- 5. When and how did David pray? (5:2-3)
- 6. How are wicked people limited? (5:4-5)
- 7. To what characteristics of God did the psalm writer appeal? (5:4-12)
- 8. How did David describe wicked people? (5:5)
- * 9. What attitude did David have in presenting his request to the Lord? (5:7)
- 10. How did David describe his enemies? (5:9-10)
- 11. How did David trust God to judge the wicked, rather than seeking revenge himself? (5:10)
- * 12. How did David deal with the offenses against him? (5:9-10)
- 13. What did David ask God to do? (5:10-12)
- 14. Whom did David include in his prayer? (5:11)
- 15. Whom does the Lord protect and bless? (5:11-12)
- * 16. What attitude should believers have and why? (5:11-12)
- 17. How did David use the image of a shield to describe what God does for the righteous? (5:12)
- 18. What does God do for the righteous? (5:12)

Get It

- 19. What many reasons do people have for praying?
- 20. What usually motivates people to pray?
- 21. In light of this passage, what attitude should we have when we pray?
- 22. How do you need to change your attitude toward prayer?
- * 23. How are faith and prayer connected?
- 24. When has your faith been challenged or stretched?
- 25. What distracts you from praying?
- * 26. What steps can you take to keep up a consistent habit of prayer?
- 27. What does this passage teach us about arrogance?
- 28. How can we guard against the sin of arrogance?
- 29. What have you learned about the character of God from this psalm?

Apply It

- * 30. What is one step you can take in the next week to improve your prayer habits?
- 31. How could you publicly praise God for His protection over you?

Psalm 6 - Psalm 6:1-10

Topics: Answers, Bargaining, Confidence, Despair, Discipline, Emotions, Enemies, Evil, Faith, Feelings, Grief, Healing, Love, Mercy, Praise, Prayer, Punishment, Questions, Restoration, Shame, Sickness, Sorrow, Weaknesses

Open It

1. What emotions do you feel when you are sick with the flu?
- * 2. How do most people deal with sickness?
3. When have you felt the Lord's presence during a time of illness or sorrow?

Explore It

4. What request opens this psalm? (6:1)
5. What did the psalm writer think was the reason for his illness? (6:1)
6. How does the psalm writer's response to his crisis unify this poem? (6:1-10)
- * 7. What feelings did the psalm writer have? (6:1-10)
8. Why did the psalm writer believe that the Lord would be willing to save him? (6:4)
- * 9. What motivated the psalm writer to ask the Lord for mercy? (6:5)
10. What did the psalm writer believe would happen to him if the Lord did not show him mercy? (6:5)
11. According to the psalm writer, what would God forfeit if He were not merciful? (6:5)
12. How depressed was the psalm writer? (6:6-7)
13. What encouraged the psalm writer? (6:8-9)
14. How is the psalm writer protected from his enemies? (6:8)
15. What expression of confidence concludes this prayer? (6:8-10)
- * 16. What is the Lord's response to the psalm writer's cries for mercy? (6:9)
17. How would the psalm writer's enemies react to his restoration? (6:10)

Get It

18. When have you ever felt like the writer of this psalm?
19. How do you usually deal with feelings of fear, sadness, or depression?
20. What motivates you to cry out to the Lord?
- * 21. How do you think the Lord wants you to deal with life's difficulties?
22. In what specific ways should we follow the psalm writer's example?
23. What does this poem reveal about the psalm writer's relationship with the Lord?
24. How would you like your relationship with God to be similar to the psalm writer's?
25. How would you describe the psalm writer's prayer in this passage?
- * 26. What does this psalm teach us about prayer?
27. What does this psalm teach us about dealing with depression?
28. How has the Lord shown His love for you?
29. What gift of praise can you offer the Lord?

Apply It

30. What feelings or problems do you want to trust the Lord with today?
- * 31. What steps could you take to spend more time telling God your honest thoughts or feelings?
32. How can you demonstrate your thankfulness to the Lord for His love for you?

Psalm 7 - Psalm 7:1-17

Topics: Accountability, Accusation, Anger, Convictions, Danger, Enemies, Evil, Fairness, Fear, Guilt, Integrity, Judgment, Justice, Praise, Prayer, Righteousness, Sin, Thankfulness

Open It

1. When was a time you saw justice served?
- * 2. What fears have you heard people express?
3. When have you seen our justice system fail?

Explore It

- * 4. What fears inspired David to write this psalm? (7:1-2)
5. What familiar image did David, as a former shepherd, use to describe his fears? (7:1-2)
6. What qualified David to plead with God for deliverance? (7:3-5)
7. Under what conditions was David willing to forgo God's protection? (7:3-5)
8. To what character traits of God did David appeal? (7:6-11)
9. How did David want to be judged by God? (7:8)
10. According to the psalm writer, how does God demonstrate His righteousness? (7:9-11)
- * 11. How did David demonstrate his confidence in God? (7:10-13)
12. What image did David use to describe how God will express His wrath against the wicked? (7:11-13)
13. What general principle of life did David use to comfort himself? (7:14-16)
14. What are the consequences of evil? (7:14-16)
- * 15. What motivated David to praise God? (7:17)

Get It

16. What is unique about God's character that enables Him to be a perfect judge?
17. What are some of your fears?
18. How do you usually deal with your fears?
- * 19. In what ways is David a good example for us in handling fear?
20. What does this passage teach you about the character of God?
- * 21. How does God's character encourage you to face the fears and problems in your life?
22. How can you demonstrate your confidence in God's deliverance?
23. What do you think are some of the consequences of disobedience to God?
24. What motivates you to offer praise to the Lord?

Apply It

- * 25. What specific steps could you take in the next few days to trust God with your fears?
26. What could you do to remind yourself of God's righteousness this week?
27. Who is another person you could encourage with what you have learned in this lesson?

Psalm 8 - Psalm 8:1-9

Topics: Angels, Authority, Caring, Children, Creation, Enemies, Glory, God, Heaven, Holy, Honor, Humanness, Name, Praise, Responsibility, Silence

Open It

- * 1. What do you like most about the outdoors?
- 2. What lessons about life have you learned from nature?

Explore It

- 3. What theme or themes hold this psalm together? (8:1)
- 4. How does the first verse introduce the focus of the poem? (8:1)
- 5. How did David describe the Lord? (8:1-9)
- 6. Why do children praise God? (8:2)
- 7. How does the Lord silence His enemies? (8:2)
- 8. What motivated David to write this psalm? (8:3)
- * 9. What did David find most amazing about God's creation? (8:3-4)
- * 10. How do people get all of their power and responsibility? (8:3-6)
- 11. What attitude did David have about himself and all people? (8:4)
- 12. With what value did God create people? (8:5)
- 13. How do people fit into the heavenly realm of beings? (8:5)
- 14. What has God done for us? (8:5-8)
- * 15. What are some responsibilities that all of us have? (8:5-8)
- 16. How does the last verse unify the poem? (8:9)

Get It

- 17. Why do you think God chose to surround us with creation?
- 18. What prompts you to praise the Lord?
- 19. What do you find most amazing about God's creation?
- 20. What does creation reveal to us about God's nature?
- * 21. What does this psalm tell us about self-esteem and responsibility?
- 22. What can we learn from David about the attitude we should have about ourselves?
- 23. Over what (in today's world) has God given us responsibilities?
- 24. How should we treat nature? animals?
- 25. How does our attitude toward creation reflect our perspective of God?
- * 26. What responsibility do you have in caring for nature?
- 27. How has this psalm changed your attitude toward nature and God?

Apply It

- * 28. When could you spend a few minutes in the next few days enjoying God's creation?
- 29. What small step could you take this week to help care for God's creation?

Psalm 9 - Psalm 9:1-20

Topics: Answers, Authority, Believe, Burdens, Challenge, Consequences, Enemies, Heart, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Listening, Mercy, Needs, Praise, Protection, Righteousness, Salvation, Witnessing

Open It

1. What misconceptions do you think many people have about God?
- * 2. When was a time you doubted God's presence or willingness to help?
3. What is one cause for which you have fought?

Explore It

- * 4. What prompted David to offer this poem of praise to the Lord? (9:1-18)
5. What theme unifies this poem? (9:1-20)
6. What did God accomplish in destroying Israel's enemies? (9:3-6)
7. To what extent were David's enemies defeated? (9:3-6)
8. How did David describe God's rule? (9:4, 7-8)
9. How does the Lord meet the needs of people who are oppressed? (9:9-10)
- * 10. What lesson did David learn about God's character? (9:10)
- * 11. Why did David call people to praise the Lord? (9:11-12)
12. For what reason did David ask the Lord to rescue him from his enemies? (9:13-14)
13. What will eventually become of the wicked under God's just rule? (9:15-18)
14. What reputation does the God of Israel have? (9:16)
15. How does God defeat the plans of wicked people? (9:16)
16. What will happen to the needy and afflicted, regardless of their place in society? (9:18)
17. What prayer concludes the psalm? (9:19-20)

Get It

18. How do the actions of Christians influence people's perception of God?
- * 19. What does this psalm call you to do?
- * 20. How should we pray when we are concerned about a wicked or unjust practice?
21. What challenge or problem do you face in your life?
22. How does God want you to handle your fears and anxieties?
23. How does this psalm encourage you about your present situation?
24. How should we follow David's example in this psalm?
25. When has the Lord been a stronghold for you in times of trouble?
26. How can you demonstrate to the Lord your praise for His help and deliverance?
27. How do the actions and attitudes of Christians influence what others think about God?
28. What do you think unbelievers could learn about God from your actions?

Apply It

29. What steps could you take to give your fears or concerns over to God?
- * 30. What is one way you can contribute to a righteous cause or movement?

Psalm 10 - Psalm 10:1-18

Topics: Accountability, Commitment, Confidence, Ego, Emotions, Enemies, Evil, Fear, God, Greed, Grief, Isolation, Murder, Needs, Pride, Protection, Strength, Unfairness, Weaknesses, Words

Open It

1. When has your mouth gotten you in trouble?
- * 2. What unfair or wrong actions do people often seem to get away with?
3. What's one thing you remember your mother saying to you?

Explore It

4. How did the psalm writer feel about his circumstances before he put his confidence in the Lord's deliverance? (10:1)
5. From what did the psalm writer need to be rescued? (10:1-18)
6. How are innocent people affected by the actions of wicked people? (10:2, 8-10)
7. Where do wicked people get their confidence? (10:2-10)
- * 8. How are wicked people described in this psalm? (10:2-11)
9. What are the sins of the wicked? (10:2-11)
10. What accusations did the psalm writer make against the wicked? (10:2-11)
11. What attitudes do wicked people have toward God? (10:3-11)
12. What three weapons of the tongue do wicked people employ? (10:7)
- * 13. What action did the psalm writer want the Lord to take on his behalf? (10:12, 15)
14. In what way did the psalm writer want God to prove the wicked wrong? (10:13-14)
15. To what character trait of the Lord did the psalm writer appeal? (10:14)
- * 16. Where did the psalm writer place his confidence and why? (10:16-18)

Get It

17. Why do you think the words that we say have such power?
18. What are some ways words can be used for good?
19. What does the psalm writer's boldness in this prayer reveal about his relationship with the Lord?
20. How would you like your prayer habits to change, in light of the psalm writer's example?
21. How do you sometimes feel about your problems before you trust the Lord with them?
22. In what ways do you feel different about your problems after you have committed them to the Lord in prayer?
23. How does praying about our problems help us?
24. Who is one person you have a hard time tolerating?
- * 25. How does this passage encourage you to handle your problems?
26. How should we handle our frustration with unfairness or wrongdoing that goes unpunished?
27. What action would you like the Lord to take on your behalf?
28. To what character traits of the Lord can you appeal?
29. What reasons do you have to place your confidence in the Lord?
30. What are the sins of the wicked today?
31. How can we guard against committing the sins described in this psalm?
32. What action can we take to control our tongues?
- * 33. What injustice do you need to commit to the Lord?

Apply It

34. In what situation can you demonstrate trust the Lord's justice?
- * 35. Concerning what "wicked" person or situation do you need to pray Psalm 10?

Psalm 11 - Psalm 11:1-7

Topics: Advice, Answers, Consequences, Evil, Fairness, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, Goals, Hatred, Heaven, Hope, Hopelessness, Judgment, Justice, Motives, Protection, Punishment, Questions, Rewards, Righteousness, Trust

Open It

1. When have you ever felt like giving up on something you thought was important?
- * 2. What failures, obstacles, or situations often cause us to feel like giving up?
3. How do you feel when you accomplish something that was difficult to do?

Explore It

4. What theme holds this poem together? (11:1-7)
- * 5. Why did the people around David want to flee to a mountain refuge? (11:1-3)
6. What attitude did David have toward the fears of those around him? (11:1-3)
7. On whom do wicked people focus their attacks? (11:2)
8. How did the threats of wicked people influence the righteous? (11:2-3)
9. Why did the people around David feel so hopeless? (11:3)
- * 10. What actions does the Lord take on behalf of His people? (11:4-6)
- * 11. How does the Lord treat the wicked and the righteous differently? (11:4-6)
12. What reply did David give to the fearful? (11:4-7)
13. In what specific ways did David encourage the fearful to trust in God? (11:4-7)
14. Why does God treat wicked and righteous people differently? (11:7)
15. What characteristics did David ascribe to the Lord? (11:7)
16. What is God like? (11:7)
17. What does God love? (11:7)
18. What special hope encouraged David to seek the Lord? (11:7)

Get It

19. When have you felt like there was no solution to a problem you faced?
20. What gives you hope when your problems seem overwhelming?
21. When has the Lord saved you from a hopeless situation?
22. How does remembering God's faithfulness in the past encourage you about the future?
- * 23. What challenges are you facing at this point in your life?
- * 24. How does this psalm encourage you to handle the challenges you are facing?
25. What people or actions help you entrust your fears and problems to the Lord?
26. In what way does the last line of this psalm influence your perspective on life?
27. What have you learned from this psalm about God's character?
28. How can what you have learned about God's character change your attitude toward your circumstances?

Apply It

29. How can you demonstrate your thankfulness to God for His faithfulness to you?
- * 30. What challenges in your life can you entrust to God?

Psalm 12 - Psalm 12:1-8

Topics: Consequences, Criticism, Deceit, Enemies, Faith, Flattery, Help, Judgment, Lying, Needs, Prayer, Pride, Punishment, Righteousness, Security, Sin, Trust, Weaknesses, Words

Open It

- * 1. What character traits do your friends and co-workers value most?
- 2. Why do people lie?
- 3. In what ways do you think Christians should be different from non-Christians?

Explore It

- * 4. What was on David's mind? (12:1-2)
- 5. How did David describe the problem that concerned him? (12:1-2)
- 6. What spiritual problem unifies this poem? (12:1-8)
- 7. What evidence did David give to prove that the "faithful have vanished"? (12:2)
- 8. What attitude do the wicked have toward themselves and God? (12:3-4)
- 9. Of what sins were the wicked guilty? (12:3-4)
- * 10. What attitudes and behavior did David ask the Lord to put a stop to? (12:3-4)
- 11. What motivates the Lord to take action on behalf of His people? (12:5)
- * 12. What reassuring word from the Lord follows David's plea for help? (12:5-6)
- 13. How did God reassure David? (12:5-6)
- 14. How did David describe the word of the Lord? (12:6)
- 15. What are God's words like? (12:6)
- 16. How did David demonstrate his trust in the Lord? (12:7)
- 17. How did David show his belief and confidence in God? (12:7)
- 18. In what way was David's expression of confidence in God an act of faith? (12:8)
- 19. Why did David need faith? (12:8)

Get It

- 20. What does the image David uses to describe the Lord's words reveal about David's view of God?
- 21. When have you ever had to step out in faith to trust in the Lord?
- 22. Why do you think God leaves us in difficult circumstances instead of rescuing us from our problems immediately?
- 23. What circumstances or people has God used in your life to stretch your faith?
- 24. In light of what you have learned from this passage, what new perspective should you have about the challenges you face?
- 25. When are you most tempted to lie?
- 26. In what ways do people twist the truth to manipulate others?
- * 27. According to this passage, what attitudes and behaviors do we need to guard against?
- * 28. How can we show respect for the truth?

Apply It

- 29. What action can you take this week to demonstrate your respect and appreciation for God's words?
- * 30. What specific steps could you take to guard against lying?
- 31. How can you encourage a friend who is going through a difficult time?

Psalm 13 - Psalm 13:1-6

Topics: Abandon, Answers, Assurance, Believe, Confidence, Death, Doubt, Enemies, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, Goodness, Heart, Hope, Joy, Listening, Love, Praise, Prayer, Questions, Sickness, Sorrow, Trust

Open It

1. What emotions do you feel when you are sick at home?
2. What techniques do you use to combat discouragement when you are sick?
- * 3. In what ways have your friends or family helped you through a time of illness or discouragement?

Explore It

- * 4. What questions went through David's mind as he waited for the Lord's answer to his prayer? (13:1-2)
5. Why did David cry out to the Lord? (13:1-6)
6. Why did David question the Lord in this prayer? (13:1-6)
- * 7. What emotions did David reveal in this psalm? (13:1-6)
8. What did David ask God to do? (13:3)
9. For what reason did David want the Lord to save him? (13:4)
10. What impact did David think his death would have on his enemies? (13:4)
11. What two character traits of the Lord's encouraged David in his despair? (13:5)
12. How did David's illness affect his relationship with God? (13:5-6)
13. How did David's emotions change when he reminded himself of God's character? (13:5-6)
14. What expression of confidence concludes this poem? (13:5-6)
- * 15. How did David's memory of the past change his perspective on the present? (13:6)

Get It

16. When have you ever questioned the Lord?
17. What role should honesty play in our prayers to the Lord?
18. What negative emotions do you struggle with when you find yourself in a difficult situation?
19. How do your emotions change when you remind yourself of God's character and what He has done for you in the past?
20. How does your memory of the past change your perspective on the present and future?
- * 21. In what specific ways do you think we should follow David's example of questioning God about difficult circumstances?
22. How do difficult circumstances in your life usually affect your relationship with the Lord?
- * 23. How should life's challenges impact our Christian walk?

Apply It

24. What is one step you can take this week to protect yourself from doubt and discouragement?
- * 25. What past acts of God's goodness to you can you write down as reminders to trust Him today?

Psalm 14 - Psalm 14:1-7

Topics: Despair, Doubt, Evil, Example, Heaven, Joy, Learning, Poor, Praise, Restoration, Righteousness, Safety, Salvation, Security, Self-Centeredness, Selfishness, Unbelievers, Understanding, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. In what ways have you seen peer pressure influence people?
- 2. Under what circumstances can peer pressure be a positive influence?
- 3. What role has the influence of other believers played in your own Christian walk?

Explore It

- 4. According to the psalm writer, what do foolish people fail to recognize? (14:1)
- 5. What characterization does this poem give of the wicked? (14:1-4)
- * 6. What does this psalm teach about the wicked? (14:1-7)
- 7. What does God look for? (14:2)
- 8. What conclusion can be drawn about all humanity? (14:3)
- 9. What two mistakes of the wicked did David point out in this psalm? (14:4)
- 10. How do evildoers treat the poor? (14:4, 6)
- 11. What are wicked people unable to learn? (14:4-5)
- 12. Why are wicked people “overwhelmed with dread”? (14:5)
- * 13. Who protects the poor from the evil plans of the wicked? (14:6)
- 14. What did the psalm writer want for Israel? (14:7)
- 15. When will Israel’s deliverance come? (14:7)
- * 16. What should people do when the Lord restores His people? (14:7)

Get It

- 17. What does this passage teach us about God’s view of the poor?
- 18. How do you think you should change your attitude toward the poor?
- 19. When have you seen God’s presence “in the company of the righteous”?
- 20. How should we respond when God helps us?
- 21. How did you respond the last time you experienced God’s help?
- 22. What is one of the most serious sins of the wicked, as described in this psalm?
- * 23. How can we guard against our own self-reliance drawing us away from the Lord?
- 24. What does it mean to seek God?
- * 25. In what ways can you seek God?
- 26. What can we do to encourage others to seek the Lord for themselves?

Apply It

- 27. In what way can you depend more on the Lord and less on yourself?
- * 28. What is one new, creative way you can pray, think about Scripture, or develop your faith this week?
- 29. How could you have a positive influence in someone else’s life this week?

Psalm 15 - Psalm 15:1-5

Topics: Beliefs, Character, Consequences, Convictions, Deceit, Example, Faith, Faithfulness, God, Holy, Honor, Money, Security, Relationships, Righteousness, Truth, Words

Open It

- * 1. What's your definition of customer service?
- 2. Under what circumstances (if any) do you think it is good to go back on your word?
- 3. What is one promise you made that you found difficult to keep?

Explore It

- 4. What question opens this poem? (15:1)
- 5. To whom is this psalm directed? (15:1)
- * 6. How does a blameless person treat others? (15:2-5)
- 7. How did the psalm writer answer his own question? (15:2-5)
- 8. According to the psalm writer, what gives a person access to God? (15:2-5)
- * 9. What can prevent a person from dwelling in God's presence? (15:2-5)
- 10. How did David describe the person who dwells with God? (15:2-5)
- 11. What is a person like who dwells with God? (15:2-5)
- 12. What characteristics did David ascribe to the person who has access to God? (15:2-5)
- 13. What actions and attitudes did David recommend? (15:2-5)
- 14. According to David, how should we treat others? (15:3-4)
- 15. Who should righteous people honor and who should they despise? (15:4)
- 16. Under what circumstances should a person keep his or her oaths? (15:4)
- 17. What advice did the psalm writer give regarding money? (15:5)
- 18. What promise is given to the person who fits the description in this psalm? (15:5)
- * 19. What reward is there in speaking the truth, respecting people, and being charitable with money? (15:5)

Get It

- 20. What does it mean to be blameless?
- * 21. In what ways should Christians be different from others?
- 22. What is an attitude or action mentioned in this psalm that you would like to see more evident in your own life?
- * 23. In light of this psalm, what changes do you need to make in the way you treat others?
- 24. What have you learned from this passage about handling money?
- 25. How do you need to change the way you use money?
- 26. What does this psalm teach about keeping one's word?
- 27. What's easy about making promises?
- 28. What's difficult about keeping promises?
- 29. What guarantees our access to God?

Apply It

- 30. What is one way you can be more generous with money?
- 31. What steps could you begin to take in the next few days to treat others with greater respect?
- * 32. What can you do for a friend, coworker, neighbor, or relative to treat him or her in a more respectful way?

Psalm 16 - Psalm 16:1-11

Topics: Abandon, Depend, Eternal Life, Faith, Guidance, Heaven, Hope, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Joy, Obedience, Praise, Prayer, Priorities, Prophecy, Righteousness, Security, Sorrow, Thankfulness, Trust

Open It

- * 1. To whom do you usually go for advice and why?
- 2. How have you experienced God's guidance in your life?

Explore It

- 3. With what request did David open this psalm? (16:1)
- 4. What unifying prayer is the focus of this psalm? (16:1-11)
- 5. How did David demonstrate his dependence on the Lord? (16:2)
- 6. In what way did David benefit from the Lord? (16:2)
- 7. How did David feel about the "saints who are in the land"? (16:3)
- 8. What happens to people who "run after other gods"? (16:4)
- 9. What did David refuse to do, despite the example of those around him? (16:4)
- 10. From where did David gain his sense of security? (16:5, 8)
- 11. In what specific ways did God provide for David? (16:5-8)
- 12. What did God do for David? (16:5-8)
- 13. What attitude did David have toward what God had given him? (16:5-8)
- 14. How did David describe his inheritance? (16:6)
- 15. How did David react to the Lord's blessings? (16:7-8)
- * 16. In what specific ways did David experience the Lord's guidance? (16:7-8)
- * 17. What reasons did David give to explain his sense of security? (16:9-11)
- 18. How far did David's confidence in the Lord extend? (16:10)
- 19. Who is the "Holy One"? (16:10)
- * 20. What did David expect of his future? (16:11)

Get It

- 21. How can remembering God's guidance in the past encourage you about the present or future?
- 22. How was this psalm fulfilled not only in the life of David, but also in the life of Jesus Christ?
- * 23. In what areas of life do we often need wisdom beyond what we have?
- * 24. In what ways can we turn to God to guide us?
- 25. In what ways do people run after other gods?
- 26. What activities, possessions, or people sometimes influence you more than God does?
- 27. How can we guard against putting activities, possessions, or people before the true God?
- 28. What action can you take to "set the Lord always before" you?
- 29. What inheritance has the Lord given you?
- 30. What attitude should you have toward the blessings God has given you?
- 31. How does your hope in the Lord extend beyond your earthly life?

Apply It

- 32. What is one way you can remind yourself of God's supreme place in your life this week?
- 33. How can you say thank You to God for the good things you enjoy?
- * 34. For what problem or need can you ask God to guide you this week?

Psalm 17 - Psalm 17:1-15

Topics: Answers, Character, Deceit, Decisions, Enemies, Evil, Faith, Faithfulness, Heart, Heaven, Hope, Judgment, Justice, Listening, Love, Obedience, Perseverance, Prayer, Punishment, Purity, Right, Righteousness, Salvation, Sin, Testing, Trust

Open It

1. What resolutions do people often make at the beginning of a new year?
2. What resolutions have you successfully kept?
- * 3. What do you think prevents people from keeping New Years resolutions?

Explore It

4. To which of the Lord's roles did the psalm writer appeal? (17:1-3)
- * 5. How did David want to be treated by the Lord? (17:1-3)
6. What claims did David make about his own character? (17:1-5)
7. What resolution did David make about his behavior? (17:3)
- * 8. To what standard did David hold himself accountable? (17:4-5)
9. What motivated David to trust in the Lord? (17:6)
10. What request did David present before the Lord in this prayer? (17:6-9)
11. How does God show His great love toward His people? (17:7)
12. What mental pictures did David use to describe God's protection over him? (17:8)
13. What accusations did David make against his adversaries? (17:10-12)
14. What image did David use to describe his enemies? (17:12)
- * 15. What specific action did David ask the Lord to take on his behalf? (17:13-14)
16. How were the motivations and goals of David's enemies different from his own? (17:14)
17. How does God provide for those He loves? (17:14-15)
18. With what sentiments did David conclude his prayer? (17:14-15)

Get It

19. What does this psalm teach us about prayer?
20. What action has the Lord taken in your behalf?
21. What picture or image would you use to describe what the Lord has done for you?
22. How did David keep himself pure despite pressure from those around him?
23. What steps can Christians take to withstand the temptations of the world?
24. What temptations do you think present the strongest challenge to Christians today?
- * 25. What is one adversary or conflict that you face?
- * 26. What resolutions would you like to make about your own attitudes and actions?
27. How do you need to handle the challenges in your life?
28. How does David's conclusion of this psalm encourage you?

Apply It

29. What step could you take today to guard against the temptations that threaten your purity?
- * 30. What step can you take this week to trust the Lord with one conflict or problem?
31. How could you remind yourself that one day you will be completely satisfied in God's presence?

Psalm 18 - Psalm 18:1-50

Topics: Abilities, Accomplishments, Actions, Affections, Answers, Appreciation, Attitude, Authority, Blessing, Burdens, Character, Circumstances, Commitment, Confidence, Consequences, Danger, Depend, Devotion, Enemies, Evil, Fairness, Faith, Faithfulness, Help, Judgment, Kindness, Leadership, Love, Morality, Obedience, Praise, Prayer, Righteousness, Success, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What struggles or challenges do you think politicians face?
- 2. Who has helped you over the years?
- 3. What are the benefits and dangers of being a Christian leader?

Explore It

- * 4. What did David reveal about his relationship with God? (18:1-3, 6, 18-19, 20-24, 28-29, 32-36, 47-48)
- 5. What motivated David to write this song of praise to the Lord? (18:1-6)
- 6. What images or mental pictures did David use to describe the Lord? (18:2, 14, 30)
- * 7. What are the three major themes of this poem? (18:4-19, 20-29, 30-45)
- 8. How did God help David? (18:4-19)
- 9. From what did the Lord deliver David? (18:4-19)
- 10. In David's mind, why did the Lord save him from his enemies? (18:20-29)
- 11. How does God show Himself to us? (18:25-27)
- 12. What resulted from David's righteousness and pure character? (18:20-24)
- 13. Where did David get his confidence and courage? (18:29, 32-45)
- * 14. In what specific ways did God enable David? (18:32-45)
- 15. Why was David motivated to praise the Lord? (18:46-50)
- 16. What vow did David make? (18:49)
- 17. How did David view himself and his relationship with God? (18:50)

Get It

- 18. What does this psalm teach us about the way God relates to people?
- 19. In what ways would you like your relationship with the Lord to be like David's?
- * 20. What new perspective does this passage offer you about yourself or about God?
- 21. What motivates you to praise God?
- 22. What has the Lord done for you recently?
- 23. How God's actions influenced your relationship with Him?
- * 24. In what ways has God enabled you to do things that were beyond your normal capabilities?
- 25. How should we follow David's example in responding to God's help?
- 26. What challenging responsibilities has God given you?

Apply It

- 27. What step could you take this week to strengthen your relationship with the Lord?
- * 28. What do you want to remember the next time you doubt your ability to do what God has given you to do?
- 29. For what can you give praise to God today?

Psalm 19 - Psalm 19:1-14

Topics: Appreciation, Comparisons, Creation, Desires, Earth, Faults, Fear, Guidance, Heaven, Honor, Joy, Knowledge, Law, Nature, Perfect, Prayer, Purity, Rebellion, Respect, Rewards, Right, Righteousness, Sin, Trust, Value, Weaknesses, Words, World

Open It

1. What is your favorite outdoor scene?
- * 2. What do you think of when you hear the word law?
3. In what ways does nature impact your everyday life?

Explore It

4. What do the heavens and skies have to say to us? (19:1)
5. On what two themes did David focus in this psalm? (19:1-14)
6. In what way do the heavens “display knowledge”? (19:2)
7. How far does the voice of the heavens extend? (19:3-4)
8. How does the sun affect the earth? (19:4-6)
9. How did David describe the sun and its role? (19:4-6)
10. What role did God’s law play in David’s life? (19:7-14)
- * 11. What words did David use to describe God’s law? (19:7-14)
- * 12. What power does God’s law have in the lives of His people? (19:7-14)
13. How did the psalm writer describe the worthiness of God’s law? (19:10)
14. What results from keeping God’s laws? (19:11)
15. What did David say about our faults? (19:12)
- * 16. What two types of sins or faults do we need God’s help with? (19:12-13)
17. What was David’s desire and prayer? (19:13-14)
18. What did David want? (19:13-14)

Get It

19. What can we learn about God from nature?
20. How can people who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ still learn about God?
21. What has nature taught you about God?
- * 22. What attitude did David have toward God’s law?
23. What role does God’s Word play in your everyday life?
24. What steps could you take to be more open to God’s Word?
25. In what ways can we show respect and appreciation for God’s Word?
26. For what “hidden fault” or “willful sin” do you need forgiveness?
27. What action can we take to protect ourselves from a rebellious spirit and willful sinning?
- * 28. What changes do you think you need to make to ensure that your thoughts and words are pleasing to the Lord?

Apply It

29. What step could you take this week to show a commitment to God’s Word?
- * 30. What can you change in your thoughts or habits this next week to make them more pleasing to the Lord?

Psalm 20 - Psalm 20:1-9

Topics: Answers, Challenge, Consequences, Desires, Faithfulness, Heart, Heaven, Help, Joy, Leadership, Plans, Power, Prayer, Preparation, Problems, Protection, Responsibility, Sacrifice, Salvation, Self-Centeredness, Success, Trust, Victory, War

Open It

- * 1. How do you feel before an important test or interview?
- 2. How do you usually prepare for challenges?
- 3. How do people often celebrate success?

Explore It

- 4. What action did the psalm writer ask the Lord to take? (20:1-4)
- * 5. What challenges did the king face? (20:1-9)
- 6. From where did the psalm writer expect help and support? (20:2)
- 7. How did the king prepare for the challenges he faced? (20:3)
- 8. What general blessing did this prayer offer the king before he went to battle? (20:4)
- * 9. How did the people promise they would respond to the king's success? (20:5)
- 10. Whom did the people credit for the king's military success? (20:5)
- 11. On what elements of God's character does this psalm focus? (20:6)
- * 12. How was the people's confession of trust in the Lord unique? (20:7)
- 13. In whom did the people put their trust and why? (20:7-8)
- 14. What will happen to those who trust in God, as compared to those who trust in their own abilities? (20:7-8)
- 15. What final request concludes this psalm? (20:9)

Get It

- 16. In what do people often put their trust these days?
- 17. How is your faith in God viewed by your non-Christian friends?
- 18. In what ways do you think your faith in God could be strengthened?
- 19. How should Christians respond to success?
- 20. What promise in this psalm encourages you to continue trusting God?
- * 21. What challenges are you facing?
- 22. What specific advice from this psalm can you apply to the challenges you are now facing?
- * 23. How can you prepare yourself, both physically and emotionally, for the challenges you face?
- 24. Where can you expect to receive the help and support you need?

Apply It

- 25. What is one way you can share your confidence in God with another person this week?
- 26. Besides the Lord, who is one person you could go to for the help and support you need?
- * 27. When can you pray to prepare yourself to handle the challenges of each day?

Psalm 21 - Psalm 21:1-13

Topics: Anger, Answers, Blessing, Consequences, Depend, Desires, Enemies, Evil, Future, Glory, Greatness, Heart, Joy, Life, Love, Praise, Prayer, Rewards, Security, Strength, Success, Thankfulness, Trust, Victory

Open It

1. How do people usually respond when their team wins?
2. What emotions do people feel when they experience defeat?
- * 3. Why is it so hard to lose?

Explore It

- * 4. How did the king respond to the victory that God granted him? (21:1-6)
5. From whose perspective was this psalm written? (21:1-13)
6. How is the theme of this psalm introduced, developed, and summarized? (21:2, 3-5, 6)
7. What specific blessings did the Lord give the king? (21:2-6)
- * 8. What was the king's main request and how did God answer it? (21:4-5)
9. What extra blessing did God give to the king? (21:5-6)
10. How does this psalm explain the king's security? (21:7)
11. What characteristic of the Lord protects the king? (21:7)
- * 12. What kind of future did the king have to look forward to? (21:8-12)
13. How will the king be rescued? (21:9)
14. What will happen to the king's enemies? (21:10)
15. How is the last verse of the poem a fitting conclusion? (21:13)

Get It

16. What benefits did the king see as a result of his trust in the Lord?
- * 17. How should Christians respond uniquely to defeat and victory?
18. How do you think the king felt about himself and his relationship with God?
19. In what specific ways has the Lord been good to you?
20. How have you reacted to the victories God has granted you in the past?
21. How have you reacted to your past successes and failures?
- * 22. In what ways would you like your response to God's work in your life to be different in the future?
23. What has God been teaching you through your prayers lately?
24. What is one of your recent, significant prayer requests and how has God answered it?
25. Why do you think God sometimes delays in answering our prayers, and other times we see God's answers immediately?
26. What is one request that you would like to commit to praying about for the next month?

Apply It

27. Who can help you remember to pray consistently about your needs and concerns?
- * 28. What steps can you take to remember to credit God with the next success that you experience?
29. How can you praise the Lord for the answers to prayer He has already given you?

Psalm 22 - Psalm 22:1-31

Topics: Answers, Danger, Death, Depend, Despair, Emotions, Evil, Faith, Faithfulness, Family, Fear, Future, Help, Holy, Honor, Hope, Insults, Peer Pressure, Persecution, Poor, Praise, Prayer, Remembering, Righteousness, Salvation, Security, Self-Esteem, Strength, Trust, Vows, Witnessing, World, Worship

Open It

- * 1. When was a time that you felt God was unreachable or silent?
- 2. Why does it hurt when a friend rejects you or turns a cold shoulder?
- 3. What can make a person feel distant from God?

Explore It

- * 4. How did the psalm writer feel about his relationship with God? (22:1-3)
- 5. What was the focus of David's prayer? (22:1-31)
- 6. What did the psalm writer say about what God had been to Israel in the past? (22:3-5)
- 7. Why did people mock David and how did their insults make him feel? (22:6-7)
- 8. What did David say about what God had been for him? (22:9-10)
- 9. How did David describe his enemies? (22:12-13, 16)
- 10. What four figures did the psalm writer use to describe the attacks of his enemies? (22:12-13, 16-18)
- 11. How did the psalm writer feel under the attacks of his adversaries? (22:14-15)
- 12. How did the psalm writer recall the four figures he used to describe his enemies later in the psalm? (22:20-21)
- * 13. What changed David's attitude? (22:22-24)
- * 14. What vows did David make to the Lord? (22:22-31)
- 15. What will motivate other people to turn from their idols and praise the true God? (22:25-31)
- 16. Who will join the psalm writer in praise to the Lord? (22:26-31)

Get It

- 17. Why do you think portions of this psalm are quoted or alluded to so often in the New Testament in reference to Christ's crucifixion?
- 18. What should we do whenever we feel we have been forsaken by God?
- * 19. What should we do when God seems far away?
- 20. Why do you think people often feel distant from God?
- * 21. How can we follow the psalm writer's example when we want to draw closer to God?
- 22. What are the benefits of remembering what God has done for us in the past?
- 23. How has this psalm motivated you to praise the Lord?
- 24. For what reasons are you inspired to praise God?
- 25. How can we be involved in telling future generations about the Lord?
- 26. How can you share with others what God has revealed about Himself to you?

Apply It

- 27. What is one step you can take to draw closer to God this next week?
- * 28. Whom can you encourage who feels distant from God?
- 29. With whom could you share what God has done for you?

Psalm 23 - Psalm 23:1-6

Topics: Benefits, Blessing, Challenge, Contentment, Danger, Death, Despair, Enemies, Eternal Life, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Goodness, Guidance, Help, Hope, Love, Name, Needs, Preparation, Protection, Quiet, Restoration, Righteousness, Security

Open It

1. What sometimes threatens your peace of mind or sense of security?
2. What do people usually take for granted?
- * 3. When do you most want peace and quiet?

Explore It

4. How did David describe the Lord? (23:1)
5. What is God like? (23:1)
6. What mental picture did David use to describe his role in relationship with the Lord? (23:1-3)
- * 7. What comforted David? (23:1)
8. How does the Lord provide for His people? (23:1-3)
9. How did God help David? (23:1-3)
10. What motivates God to guide His people? (23:3)
11. What gave David the confidence to face death? (23:4)
12. How was David comforted in difficult times? (23:4)
13. What were David's fears? (23:4-5)
- * 14. How far does the guidance and protection of the Lord extend for His people? (23:4-5)
15. How does God provide for His children, even in the face of death? (23:4-5)
16. How does God honor those He loves? (23:5-6)
- * 17. What did the Lord give to David? (23:5-6)
18. How did David feel about his future? (23:6)

Get It

19. How has the Lord guided you through difficult times?
20. What do you think David meant when he said that his cup overflowed?
21. David spoke of a shepherd and sheep—how would you picture your relationship with the Lord?
22. In what ways does God “restore our souls”?
23. What are some of your fears?
- * 24. How can you follow David's example in dealing with your fears?
25. How has God provided for your needs in the past?
26. How have you experienced God's comfort?
27. In what way has God made your “cup overflow”?
28. What good things in life do you find it easy to take for granted?
29. How can we thank the Lord for the many blessings He has given us?
- * 30. How does this passage encourage you to face the future?
31. How has this psalm changed your perspective of the challenges you are facing?

Apply It

- * 32. What can you do to celebrate God's goodness and provision?
33. How could you comfort or encourage a friend who is struggling with fear or grief?
34. What good things, experiences, and people do you want to thank God for now?

Psalm 24 - Psalm 24:1-10

Topics: Atonement, Blessing, Character, Church, Commitment, Convictions, Creation, Devotion, Glory, God, Heart, Holy, Honor, Idolatry, Life-style, Morality, Praise, Purity, Righteousness, Strong, Swearing, Words, World, Worship

Open It

1. Where do people turn for ultimate answers and solutions today?
- * 2. What are some of the good things in our world that can distract us from serving God?

Explore It

3. What does the beginning of this psalm reveal about God's character? (24:1-2)
- * 4. Why is God worthy of worship and praise? (24:1-2)
5. What is the purpose of this psalm? (24:1-10)
6. What does this psalm celebrate? (24:1-10)
7. Who may enter God's presence? (24:3-4)
- * 8. What should a person do who wants to enter God's presence? (24:3-6)
9. What specific character traits do we need in order to enjoy God's presence? (24:4-6)
10. What do the righteous receive from the Lord? (24:5)
11. How does this psalm use gates and doors to tell us about the Lord? (24:7, 9)
- * 12. How does the psalm writer welcome the victorious King into His sanctuary? (24:7-10)
13. How is the "King of glory" described? (24:8, 10)

Get It

14. What difference does it make that the earth and everything in it belongs to God?
15. In light of this psalm, what view should we have of ourselves? of the world? of God?
16. What does it mean to have clean hands and a pure heart?
17. What does this passage tell us about God's character?
18. In your mind, why is God worthy of worship and praise?
19. What is an idol?
20. What's wrong with worshiping things, people, or ourselves instead of God?
21. What offerings of praise can you give to the Lord?
22. How does this psalm affect your attitude toward church?
23. How do we need to prepare for entering God's house each week?
- * 24. Why is it good to go to church?
- * 25. What changes do you need to make in your schedule or activities to make worship a top priority?
26. How can we guard against the temptation to serve things, other people, or ourselves instead of the Lord?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one thing you can do this week to prepare yourself for the next time you go to church?
28. What do you have that you want to "give back" to God?

Psalm 25 - Psalm 25:1-22

Topics: Conflict, Covenant, Depend, Enemies, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Forgiveness, Goodness, Guidance, Hatred, Hope, Humility, Insecurity, Integrity, Loneliness, Love, Mercy, Protection, Rebellion, Salvation, Sin, Soul, Teaching, Trust, Truth, Words

Open It

1. When have you felt that you were treated unfairly?
2. How would you complete the sentence: "It's not fair that . . .?"
- * 3. What troubles go with your station in life (parenting, singleness, student, overworking, empty-nester, etc.)?

Explore It

4. What prayer request opens this psalm? (25:1-3)
5. What is the central focus of this psalm? (25:1-22)
6. Whom did David want God to "put to shame"? (25:3)
7. How did David feel about the hostility of his enemies? (25:3)
8. What did David ask the Lord to reveal to him and why? (25:4-5)
- * 9. What requests did David present to the Lord? (25:4-7, 16-22)
10. What did David want God to remember, and what did he want God to forget? (25:6-7)
11. How did David want to be remembered by the Lord? (25:7)
12. What does God do for sinners? (25:8)
13. How does this psalm describe the Lord and the kind of relationship He wants to have with us? (25:8-10)
14. Where did David place his confidence and why? (25:8-15)
15. What attitude did David have about himself and God? (25:11)
- * 16. Why was David praying? (25:16-19)
- * 17. What did David desire? (25:21-22)
18. What prayer concludes this psalm? (25:22)
19. What did David ask God to do? (25:22)

Get It

20. How can good come from being unfairly treated?
21. How do you think Christians should respond to unfair treatment?
22. How can we follow David's example of trusting God?
- * 23. What trouble and "enemies" do you face?
- * 24. In light of this psalm, how should we deal with the pressures and problems in our lives?
25. In light of this psalm, how can you deal with the pressures and problems in your life?
26. What does this passage tell you about the relationship God wants to have with you?
27. How do you think you could strengthen your relationship with the Lord?
28. What motivates you to put your confidence in God?
29. How has God proven His reliability to you?
30. How does this passage change your perception of yourself? of God?

Apply It

31. What requests would you like to present before the Lord today?
32. In what specific ways can you put your hope and trust in the Lord?
- * 33. In what way might you be able to demonstrate your trust in God in a troublesome circumstance this week?

Psalm 26 - Psalm 26:1-12

Topics: Character, Church, Deceit, Evil, Faithfulness, Heart, Hypocrisy, Involvement, Judgment, Life-style, Love, Loyalty, Mercy, Ministry, Morality, Praise, Prayer, Purity, Righteousness, Salvation, Security, Sin, Testing, Trust, Truth, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. What keeps you coming back to your local church?
- 2. Why do you think many people hesitate to get involved in ministry at their local church?
- 3. To what or whom (sports teams, family, locations, etc.) are you very loyal?

Explore It

- * 4. How had David shown his faithfulness to the Lord? (26:1, 3-8)
- 5. What appeal did David present to the Lord? (26:1-8)
- 6. What aspects of his own character did David want the Lord to consider? (26:1-8)
- 7. What central theme unifies this psalm? (26:1-12)
- 8. With whom did David refuse to associate? (26:4-5)
- 9. How are the wicked described in this psalm? (26:4-5, 9-10)
- 10. What are wicked people like? (26:4-5, 9-10)
- * 11. What public act of devotion did David offer to the Lord? (26:6-7)
- 12. How did David share his faith with others? (26:6-7)
- * 13. How was David involved in ministry in God's house? (26:6-8)
- 14. How did David feel about his place of worship? (26:8)
- 15. How did David want to be treated differently by God from the wicked? (26:9-11)
- 16. Why did David believe he should be treated differently from others? (26:11)
- 17. What final words of confidence conclude this poem? (26:12)
- 18. What promise did David make to the Lord? (26:12)

Get It

- * 19. Why is it important to be part of a local church?
- 20. What steps did David take to ensure that he remained pure and righteous before God?
- 21. What temptations threaten to tarnish your integrity?
- 22. What steps can you take to insure you remain morally upright?
- 23. What can we do to demonstrate our commitment and faithfulness to God?
- * 24. How have you shown your faithfulness to the Lord?
- 25. How do you feel about going to church?
- 26. What should we do to demonstrate our respect for God's house?
- * 27. How are you involved in ministry at your local church, and what benefits do you gain from your commitment?
- 28. How can you show support for worship at your local church?

Apply It

- 29. What specific places, people, or things do you need to avoid this week to lessen the temptations you have to face?
- * 30. What is one way you could demonstrate support for your church this week?

Psalm 27 - Psalm 27:1-14

Topics: Beauty, Blessing, Church, Confidence, Conscience, Danger, Depend, Desires, Enemies, Evil, Expectations, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, Future, Goodness, Guidance, Heart, Hope, Lying, Mercy, Patience, Persecution, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Sacrifice, Safety, Salvation, Security, Sin, Strength, Teaching, Trust, Waiting

Open It

1. How do you feel when you have to wait a long time for something you really want?
- * 2. What are some events, people, or things that are worth waiting for?

Explore It

3. What did David mean when he said, "The Lord is my light"? (27:1)
- * 4. Why was David able to trust God in the face of danger? (27:1-3, 5-6)
5. How was the king's faith in the Lord challenged? (27:1-3, 12)
6. How is faith shown in this passage? (27:1-6, 10, 13)
7. What main attitude permeates this psalm? (27:1-14)
8. What dangers did the king face? (27:2-3, 12)
- * 9. How was God's house a comfort to David? (27:4-5)
10. Where did David find safety and strength? (27:4-6)
11. How did David plan to respond when the Lord exalted him above his enemies? (27:6)
12. From what did David pray for deliverance? (27:7-12)
13. What did David's own conscience encourage him to do? (27:8)
14. To what extent did David depend on the Lord? (27:9-10, 13-14)
15. What did David expect of his future and why? (27:13-14)
16. How did David conclude this prayer for deliverance? (27:13-14)
- * 17. What gave David courage while he awaited God's deliverance? (27:13-14)

Get It

18. When has your faith in the Lord been challenged?
19. When have difficult times strengthened your relationship with the Lord?
20. What role should faith play in our everyday lives?
- * 21. How could you strengthen or renew your dependence on the Lord?
22. When have you found comfort or a renewed sense of security in church?
23. What dangers or problems are you facing?
24. How can you follow David's example in handling your fears?
25. How can you plan to respond when God does answer your prayers?
26. What does it mean to "wait for the Lord"?
- * 27. What action can you take to show your faith while you wait for the Lord to answer your prayers?

Apply It

28. What is one step you could take right now to renew your faith in the Lord?
- * 29. About what concern do you need to continue praying, confident that God will answer in His own time and in His own way?

Psalm 28 - Psalm 28:1-9

Topics: Blessing, Body, Danger, Death, Deceit, Enemies, Evil, Heart, Hypocrisy, Judgment, Justice, Listening, Mercy, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Punishment, Salvation, Sin, Strength, Thankfulness, Trust, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is a hypocritical politician? Teacher? Journalist? Christian?
- 2. Under what circumstances is it easy to be hypocritical?
- 3. What hypocrisy do you see in the world today?

Explore It

- 4. What image did David use to refer to death and the grave? (28:1)
- 5. What did David believe would happen if the Lord did not answer his prayer? (28:1)
- 6. How did David refer to the Lord? (28:1, 7-9)
- 7. What is the main focus of David's prayer in this psalm? (28:1-9)
- 8. What physical act of worship did David combine with his prayers? (28:2)
- 9. How did David tangibly demonstrate his worship to the Lord? (28:2, 7)
- * 10. What hypocrisy did David see in the people around him? (28:3)
- 11. What request did David present to the Lord in this psalm? (28:3-5)
- * 12. How are the wicked described? (28:3-5)
- 13. How did David want the Lord to deal with the wicked? (28:4)
- 14. What reason did David have to believe that the Lord would destroy the wicked? (28:5)
- 15. What motivated David to praise the Lord? (28:6-8)
- 16. What kind of relationship did David have with the Lord? (28:7-8)
- * 17. What kind of relationship does God desire to have with His people? (28:8-9)

Get It

- 18. How does God view hypocrisy?
- 19. Why should we worship the Lord?
- 20. What motivates you to praise God?
- 21. How can you demonstrate your desire to worship the Lord?
- 22. How do you want to improve your relationship with God?
- 23. What kind of relationship should we have with our neighbors?
- 24. What hard feelings against another person do you struggle with?
- * 25. If a Christian harbors malice toward another person, what should he or she do about it?
- * 26. How can Christians guard against hypocrisy?

Apply It

- 27. What concrete action can you take this week to strengthen your relationship with God?
- 28. What injustice or difficult circumstance do you want to commit to the Lord in prayer?
- * 29. What specific step can you take this week to guard against hypocrisy in your behavior at work? at home?

Psalm 29 - Psalm 29:1-11

Topics: Advice, Blessing, Challenge, Creation, Glory, Greatness, Holiness, Honor, Instructions, Name, Nature, Peace, Power, Praise, Righteousness, Security, Strength, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What effect does nature have on your everyday activities?
- 2. What benefits have you gotten from spending time outdoors?

Explore It

- 3. Who should proclaim the majesty and power of God? (29:1-2)
- 4. What does the psalm summon people to do? (29:1-2)
- 5. On which of the Lord's attributes does this passage focus? (29:1-11)
- * 6. How is the Lord described in this poem? (29:2-11)
- 7. What does the psalm writer reveal about God's character? (29:2-11)
- 8. How does nature proclaim the glory of God? (29:3-9)
- 9. What role does the Lord play in His creation? (29:3-9)
- 10. How powerful is the voice of the Lord? (29:3-9)
- * 11. Why is the Lord worthy of praise and worship? (29:3-11)
- 12. Where do God's people find comfort? (29:10-11)
- * 13. What does the Lord provide for His people? (29:10-11)
- 14. What specific blessing did the psalm writer recognize as coming from the Lord? (29:11)

Get It

- 15. What does nature reveal to us about the character of God?
- 16. What have you learned about God's character from this passage?
- 17. How does it make you feel to ponder the awesome power of the Lord?
- 18. Practically speaking, what does this psalm instruct us to do?
- * 19. How do you plan to follow the advice of the psalm writer?
- 20. How have you seen nature proclaim the glory of God?
- * 21. How should we be involved in proclaiming the glory and power of God?
- 22. How do you think your perspective of life would be altered if you spent more time worshiping and praising God?
- 23. How does this psalm encourage you to face the challenges in your everyday life?

Apply It

- 24. What action can you take today to depend on the strength of the Lord rather than on your own abilities?
- 25. What could you do this week to "ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name"?
- * 26. When could you spend some time this week observing the power of God in nature?

Psalm 30 - Psalm 30:1-12

Topics: Anger, Death, Depend, Faithfulness, Grief, Healing, Heart, Help, Holy, Honor, Joy, Mercy, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Salvation, Security, Thankfulness, Worship

Open It

- * 1. In what ways are you self-reliant, and in what ways do you depend on others?
- 2. When was the last time a friend helped you through a difficult circumstance, and how did you feel about depending on others for support?

Explore It

- 3. How did David introduce his reason for praising the Lord? (30:1-3)
- 4. What images did David use to describe how the Lord delivered him? (30:1-3)
- * 5. What does this psalm celebrate? (30:1-12)
- 6. How did God respond to David's cries for help? (30:2)
- 7. What instructions did David give to God's people? (30:4-5)
- 8. What does this psalm say about God's character? (30:5)
- 9. What did David remember about the Lord's deliverance and how he felt about it? (30:6-12)
- 10. What sinful attitude was David guilty of when circumstances were going well for him? (30:6)
- * 11. How did the Lord remind David that He was the one who gave David his security? (30:7)
- 12. What caused David to lose his sense of security and self-reliance? (30:8-10)
- * 13. To where did David turn for help? (30:8-10)
- 14. Why did David want the Lord to save him? (30:9)
- 15. How did God answer David's prayer? (30:11-12)

Get It

- 16. How does our culture value self-reliance?
- 17. When can self-reliance be a negative characteristic?
- 18. How does this passage change your perception of God and His character?
- 19. What should motivate us to praise the Lord?
- * 20. What new insights have you learned about trusting God?
- 21. When have difficult circumstances prompted you to turn to the Lord, instead of depending on your own strength?
- 22. How has God delivered you in the past?
- 23. Why is it tempting for us to trust God only during certain times in our lives?
- * 24. How can we learn to depend more on the Lord, no matter what our circumstances?
- 25. What does it mean for you to depend on the Lord rather than on your own strength?
- 26. How do you plan to follow the instructions in this psalm?

Apply It

- 27. What difficulties or challenges do you face in the coming week?
- * 28. What action could you take to depend on the Lord (rather than yourself) for strength to face the upcoming challenges in your life?
- 29. What other person could you encourage with what you have learned about security in God?

Psalm 31 - Psalm 31:1-24

Topics: Answers, Comfort, Commitment, Conflict, Confusion, Deceit, Despair, Enemies, Faithfulness, Fear, Forsake, Freedom, Goodness, Guidance, Hatred, Hope, Idolatry, Joy, Listening, Love, Lying, Mercy, Neighbor, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Righteousness, Salvation, Sorrow, Soul, Strength, Submission, Trust, Truth, Worship

Open It

1. To you, what's the best example of strength?
- * 2. Whom would you describe as a strong person? Why?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did David appeal to the Lord for help? (31:1-5)
4. What difficult circumstance motivated David to write this poem? (31:1-24)
5. What one theme unifies this psalm? (31:1-24)
6. How did David describe the Lord in this passage? (31:2-5, 16, 19-24)
7. What was at stake in David's safety? (31:3)
- * 8. What did David commit to the Lord? (31:5, 15)
9. How are the wicked described in this passage? (31:6, 17-18)
10. How strong was the conspiracy against David? (31:9-13)
11. How did David feel about his predicament? (31:9-13)
12. What defense did David have against the schemes of his enemies? (31:14-18)
13. Why did David expect God to treat him favorably? (31:17-18)
14. What did David anticipate in the future? (31:19-20)
15. What did David's anticipation reveal about his relationship with the Lord? (31:19-24)
16. How does God treat the faithful and the proud differently? (31:23)
- * 17. What final advice concludes this psalm? (31:23-24)
18. To whom are David's concluding instructions directed? (31:23-24)

Get It

19. How is the Christian view of strength different from the world's?
20. When have you felt the same emotions that David describes in this psalm?
21. When is it most difficult for you to trust in the Lord?
22. Where do we usually turn when we face overwhelming circumstances?
23. What do people often do when they feel overstressed or overwhelmed?
24. What does David teach us about dealing with stress through his example in this psalm?
25. What defense do we have against our "enemies"?
26. What kinds of "enemies" do you face nowadays?
- * 27. What overwhelming problem or challenge do you face this week?
28. How can we demonstrate our trust in the Lord during difficult times?
- * 29. What does it mean to follow David's instructions to "be strong and take heart"?

Apply It

- * 30. How can you pray this week to help you through the challenges you face?
31. What do you want to remember the next time you feel overwhelmed or overstressed?

Psalm 32 - Psalm 32:1-11

Topics: Beliefs, Confession, Conscience, Deceit, Despair, Evil, Forgiveness, Guidance, Guilt, Heart, Influence, Joy, Love, Obedience, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Protection, Repentance, Righteousness, Sin, Strength, Stubbornness, Submission, Teaching, Trust, Understanding

Open It

- * 1. What feelings do you associate with repentance?
- 2. What's something you got blamed for when you were a kid?

Explore It

- 3. What joyful proclamation opens this psalm? (32:1-2)
- 4. What gift from the Lord did David celebrate in this psalm? (32:1-11)
- * 5. How did David describe the person who receives God's forgiveness? (32:1-11)
- 6. How did David feel when he had unconfessed sin in his life? (32:3-4)
- * 7. What personal testimony did David offer regarding God's forgiveness? (32:3-5)
- 8. How did David respond to the Lord's "heavy hand" on him? (32:4-5)
- 9. How did God motivate David to confess his sin? (32:5)
- 10. What did David experience after he confessed his sin to God? (32:5)
- 11. How did God respond to David's confession? (32:5)
- 12. What assurance do we have when we pray? (32:6)
- * 13. What conclusion did David draw from his experience? (32:6-7)
- 14. How does the Lord protect His people? (32:6-7)
- 15. What specific advice does this psalm offer to God's people? (32:8-11)
- 16. What did David advise people to avoid? (32:9)
- 17. What promise did David offer to those who trust in the Lord? (32:10)

Get It

- 18. What kinds of things prevent us from confessing known sin in our lives?
- 19. Why do you think we are sometimes hesitant to repent of sin, even when we know God will forgive us?
- * 20. Why should we confess our sins to God?
- 21. What personal testimony can you give about God's forgiveness?
- 22. How do you feel when you have unconfessed sin in your life?
- 23. What has motivated you in the past to repent of selfish behaviors or attitudes?
- 24. When have you ever felt the "heavy hand" of the Lord on you?
- 25. How do you feel when you repent and experience God's forgiveness?
- 26. How does God always respond to our repentance?
- * 27. How does God's faithfulness in forgiving us encourage you for the future?
- 28. On what specific advice in this psalm would you like to focus your attention?

Apply It

- 29. What behavior or attitude do you need to confess to the Lord today?
- * 30. What is one creative way you can remind yourself of God's forgiveness over this next week?
- 31. When can you take time for prayer each day?

Psalm 33 - Psalm 33:1-22

Topics: Blessing, Character, Creation, Death, Depend, Faithfulness, Fear, Future, Heart, Heaven, Hope, Instructions, Involvement, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Love, Plans, Power, Praise, Purpose, Relationships, Reliability, Righteousness, Salvation, Strength, Trust, Truth, Waiting, Words, World, Worship

Open It

- * 1. In what ways are you more schedule-oriented or spontaneous?
- 2. What are the benefits of being a flexible person?
- 3. What does it take to get you worked up enough to shout or sing?

Explore It

- 4. Whom does this psalm call to praise God? (33:1)
- 5. How does this psalm call people to praise the Lord? (33:1-3)
- 6. What main theme unifies this psalm? (33:1-22)
- 7. How should God's people praise God? (33:2-3)
- * 8. For what specific reasons did the psalm writer praise God? (33:4-19)
- 9. What character traits did the psalm writer ascribe to the Lord? (33:4-22)
- 10. What role does the Lord play in the events of earth? (33:5-19)
- 11. How has the Lord demonstrated His creativity? (33:6-9)
- 12. What reason do we have to fear the Lord? (33:8-9)
- * 13. How did the psalm writer describe the power and sovereignty of God? (33:9-11)
- * 14. How reliable are the plans of people in relation to God's plans? (33:10-11)
- 15. Why was the psalm writer confident of God's protection? (33:12-19)
- 16. How is the Lord involved in the lives of His people? (33:13-15, 18-19)
- 17. What happens to those who rely on their own strength? (33:16-17)
- 18. What conclusion does this psalm make about self-reliance? (33:16-19)
- 19. How does the Lord treat those who trust in Him instead of in themselves? (33:18-19)
- 20. What decision did the psalm writer make? (33:20-22)

Get It

- 21. What do you think our attitude toward our goals and plans reveals about our view of God?
- 22. What example does the psalm writer give us to follow?
- 23. Why do you think we so easily rely on our own strength rather than trust in the Lord?
- 24. What outcome can we expect when we depend on ourselves?
- 25. According to this psalm, what outcome can we expect when we trust in God?
- 26. What does this psalm teach us about the character of God?
- 27. What talents or abilities do you have?
- 28. Why is it important not to trust in our own abilities or talents?
- * 29. What does this psalm say about the reliability of our plans?
- 30. What should be your perspective on the plans you have for the future?
- * 31. How can we demonstrate confidence in the Lord's protection and guidance for the future?
- 32. In what area of life do you most need to "wait in hope for the Lord"?

Apply It

- 33. In what way could you demonstrate trust in God rather than in a particular strength you have?
- * 34. What plan of yours can you commit to the Lord in prayer?
- 35. What words of encouragement or instruction can you give to someone else concerning his or her future?

Psalm 34 - Psalm 34:1-22

Topics: Angels, Answers, Assurance, Benefits, Blessing, Deceit, Depend, Enemies, Evil, Experience, Faithfulness, Fear, Glory, Goodness, Hope, Joy, Life, Listening, Lying, Needs, Obedience, Peace, Poor, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Righteousness, Salvation, Sorrow, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What do you think is the secret of long life?
- 2. What brings you the most happiness in life?
- 3. When was a time you narrowly escaped danger or death?

Explore It

- 4. What commitment did David make? (34:1-3)
- 5. What is the main focus of this psalm? (34:1-22)
- 6. What motivated David to praise the Lord? (34:4-7)
- 7. From what did the Lord deliver David? (34:5-6)
- * 8. How did David describe those who trust in the Lord? (34:5-6)
- 9. How are angels involved in the lives of God's people? (34:7)
- 10. What are the benefits of trusting in the Lord? (34:8-10)
- * 11. What specific instructions did David offer to God's people? (34:8-14)
- 12. What do we need to know about "fear of the Lord"? (34:11-14)
- 13. Who should guard against committing the sin of deceit? (34:12-13)
- 14. How does God respond to the cries of the righteous? (34:15, 17)
- * 15. What words of assurance follow David's instructions? (34:15-18)
- 16. How are the righteous treated different from the wicked? (34:15-22)
- 17. How does this psalm describe the people whom God protects? (34:15-22)
- 18. What will happen to the wicked? (34:16, 21)

Get It

- 19. When have you experienced God's protection or deliverance?
- 20. What benefits have you seen in trusting God?
- * 21. How does this psalm encourage you to put your trust in the Lord?
- * 22. What does this passage reveal to us about prayer?
- 23. Why did David have such confidence in God's attentiveness to his prayers?
- 24. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
- 25. How has this psalm affected your idea of what it means to respect God?
- 26. What behavior or attitude does this passage advise us to avoid?
- 27. In what situations is it most tempting to lie or deceive others?
- 28. How can we guard against the sin of deceit?
- 29. What specific instructions from this psalm do you need to concentrate on following?
- 30. What promise or encouraging word would you like to claim from this psalm?

Apply It

- * 31. What troubles do you need to present to the Lord in prayer?
- 32. What reminder can you place before yourself to take God's power and justice seriously?
- 33. In what situations do you need to make a more conscious effort to tell the truth?

Psalm 35 - Psalm 35:1-28

Topics: Accusation, Angels, Confusion, Criticism, Danger, Enemies, Fasting, Fear, Grief, Help, Injustice, Mourning, Needs, Peer Pressure, Plans, Poor, Prayer, Protection, Punishment, Questions, Rejection, Righteousness, Salvation, Shame, Sickness, Sin, Soul, Thankfulness, Unbelievers, Unfairness

Open It

1. How do you think you would feel if one of your close friends suddenly turned against you?
- * 2. What can break up friendships?
3. When was the first time you felt betrayed by a friend?

Explore It

4. To what character trait of God's did David appeal? (35:1-3, 10, 23-24)
- * 5. How did David want the Lord to treat his adversaries? (35:1-8, 25-26)
6. What military images did David use to describe God's deliverance? (35:2-3)
7. Against what did David need to be defended? (35:4-10)
8. What provoked the attack of David's enemies? (35:7-8)
- * 9. How did David demonstrate his confidence in the Lord's deliverance? (35:9-10)
10. How does God treat the poor and needy? (35:10)
11. How did David reinforce his claim that he is innocent? (35:11, 13-14, 19-20)
12. How did David describe his predicament? (35:11-16)
- * 13. What accusations did David make against his enemies? (35:11-16, 19-21)
14. How did David demonstrate his compassion and willingness to befriend the people who later turned on him? (35:12-16)
15. How did David's adversaries respond to his kindness? (35:15-16)
16. How did David promise to respond to God's deliverance? (35:18)
17. How was David being treated by his enemies? (35:19-21)
18. What final sign of victory did David want the Lord to take away from his enemies? (35:23-25)
19. How did David want his friends to respond to God's deliverance? (35:27)
20. What final words of confidence conclude this psalm? (35:28)

Get It

21. How does it feel to be falsely accused or treated maliciously by others?
22. What should we do when we see others being slandered or mistreated?
23. What's our most natural reaction when people try to hurt us?
- * 24. What can we learn from David's example about handling injustice?
25. What difficult person do you need to handle better?
- * 26. In light of this passage, how can you trust God more with the injustices in your life?
27. How can we demonstrate our confidence in the Lord when we are being slandered or hurt by others?
28. What can we do to rejoice with Christian friends when they experience God's protection or guidance?

Apply It

29. What act of encouragement or help can you offer to a friend who has been falsely accused or "attacked"?
- * 30. Concerning what accuser, "enemy," or other difficult person do you need to pray this week?

Psalm 36 - Psalm 36:1-12

Topics: Character, Confidence, Consequences, Deceit, Depend, Disobedience, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Flattery, Goodness, Heart, Heaven, Justice, Life, Light, Love, Needs, Plans, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Punishment, Righteousness, Sin, Unbelievers, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What do you think about when you first wake up in the morning or right before you go to sleep at night?
- 2. What time of day have you found to be the best time to pray?

Explore It

- 3. How did David describe the wicked? (36:1-4)
- 4. What is the main focus of this poem? (36:1-12)
- 5. In what way do the wicked flatter themselves? (36:2)
- * 6. What attitude prevents the wicked from realizing their own sin? (36:2)
- 7. How does this psalm contrast the character of God with the wicked? (36:5-9)
- 8. How is God described in this psalm? (36:5-9)
- 9. How far does the love of God extend? (36:5)
- 10. What mental images did David use to describe God's righteousness and justice? (36:6)
- 11. How did David see himself and the animals in relation to God? (36:6)
- 12. Who finds refuge in the Lord? (36:7)
- 13. How did David describe God's people? (36:7-10)
- * 14. How does the Lord provide for His people? (36:8-9)
- 15. Why did David describe God as a "fountain of life"? (36:9)
- 16. What did David want the Lord to provide for His people? (36:10)
- * 17. What two-fold request did David present to the Lord? (36:10-11)
- 18. With what expectation of the future did David conclude the psalm? (36:12)
- 19. What does David's conclusion reveal of his confidence in the Lord? (36:12)

Get It

- 20. Why do you think God is sometimes described as light?
- 21. What does David teach us in this psalm about God and His character?
- 22. What can we learn from this passage about how God provides for His people?
- 23. How have you experienced God's provision or guidance?
- 24. What kind of relationship did David have with God?
- * 25. How can we imitate David's confidence when we present our requests to God in prayer?
- * 26. Through the description of the wicked, what attitudes and behaviors does this psalm warn us to guard against?
- 27. How can Christians guard against a proud spirit?
- 28. Through the description of the righteous, what attitudes and behaviors does this psalm tell us to cultivate?
- 29. How can we cultivate humility?

Apply It

- 30. What steps could you take this week to guard against pride and cultivate humility?
- * 31. What specific prayer request do you need to present to God with greater confidence?

Psalm 37 - Psalm 37:1-40

Topics: Anger, Commitment, Consequences, Depend, Desires, Disobedience, Envy, Evil, Expectations, Experience, Faith, Future, Generosity, Greed, Guidance, Hope, Humility, Joy, Justice, Money, Needs, Obedience, Patience, Plans, Poor, Pride, Protection, Punishment, Righteousness, Salvation, Strength, Trust, Waiting, Wealth, Worry

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the dangers in trying to get rich?
- 2. What do you think are some of the blessings of not being rich?
- 3. Why do you think more people seek wealth than righteousness?

Explore It

- 4. What advice does this psalm give concerning evil people? (37:1-2)
- 5. Why should the righteous not envy the wicked? (37:1-2)
- 6. What comparison is the dominant theme of this psalm? (37:1-40)
- * 7. What did David expect to happen to the wicked? (37:1-40)
- 8. What did David say people should do instead of worrying about the success of evildoers? (37:3-7)
- * 9. What specific list of actions did David advise God's people to take? (37:3-8, 27, 30-31, 34)
- 10. What are the consequences of worrying? (37:8)
- * 11. What will be the results of trusting in the Lord? (37:3-40)
- 12. What reasons did David give to motivate his listeners to take his advice? (37:3-40)
- 13. What can God's people expect? (37:10, 20, 35-36)
- 14. What does the psalm say about the meek? (37:11)
- 15. How are the wicked described? (37:12, 14)
- 16. Why does the Lord laugh at the wicked? (37:13)
- 17. How will the schemes of the wicked backfire? (37:15)
- 18. When is having "a little" better than being wealthy? (37:16-17)
- 19. How does God show His delight in people? (37:23-24)
- 20. What did David learn from his long life of experience? (37:25-26)
- 21. What blessings do the righteous enjoy? (37:27-31, 33-34, 39-40)

Get It

- 22. What can we learn from David's observations of the wicked and the righteous?
- 23. What lessons have you learned from other mature Christians?
- * 24. How is David's comparison of the righteous and wicked in this psalm relevant to us today?
- 25. What does this passage teach us about envy of others?
- 26. What does this psalm teach us about worry?
- * 27. What are the benefits of trusting in the Lord and seeking righteousness?
- 28. What is more important than trying to get rich or financially secure?
- 29. How can we guard against greed?
- 30. What blessings from the Lord do you enjoy?
- 31. What advice in this psalm about trusting God would you like to work on following?

Apply It

- 32. What concern of yours can you entrust to the Lord in prayer?
- 33. How can you make sure your priority lies in seeking to please God rather than in seeking wealth?
- * 34. What is one thing you can do to entrust your life, family, and future to God?

Psalm 38 - Psalm 38:1-22

Topics: Anger, Answers, Burdens, Confession, Convictions, Deceit, Discipline, Enemies, Fear, Forsake, Friendship, Goodness, Guilt, Hatred, Health, Heart, Help, Humility, Mourning, Needs, Neighbor, Pain, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Repentance, Sickness, Sin, Strength, Suffering, Waiting

Open It

1. How do your friends and family treat you when you are sick?
- * 2. How would you feel if all of your friends deserted you when you were sick?
3. What was the nicest thing someone did for you when you were ill?

Explore It

4. What emotion overwhelmed David? (38:1-4)
- * 5. In what way had David felt the hand of the Lord? (38:1-4)
- * 6. What urgent request did David present to the Lord? (38:1-22)
7. What did David believe to be the cause of his illness? (38:5)
8. What were the physical and emotional effects of David's illness? (38:5-8)
9. How did David demonstrate his dependence on the Lord, even in the worst of circumstances? (38:9)
10. What details did David reveal about his situation? (38:10-12)
11. Why was David deserted by his friends? (38:11)
12. How was David's suffering increased? (38:11-20)
13. How was David treated by his adversaries? (38:12)
14. Why did David describe himself as a deaf man? (38:13-14)
15. Why did David refuse to answer his enemies? (38:13-16)
- * 16. Whom did David expect to act on his behalf against his enemies? (38:15)
17. How did David feel about his condition? (38:17)
18. What did David confess to the Lord? (38:18)
19. Although David confessed sin against the Lord, in what way did he believe he was innocent? (38:19-20)
20. What renewed appeal concludes the psalm? (38:21-22)

Get It

21. What does this passage teach us about relating to God during difficult times?
22. What can we learn from David's example about how to handle sickness or depression?
23. How have your friends or family helped you through difficult times?
24. When have you felt deserted by your friends or overwhelmed by a particular problem?
25. If God is more reliable than any person, why do we hesitate to turn to Him in our times of need?
- * 26. What specific problem or challenge would you like to commit to the Lord?
27. How can you demonstrate your trust in God to help you through the challenges you face?
- * 28. What hope does this psalm offer those of us who face sickness, depression, or other overwhelming circumstances?

Apply It

29. For what aspect of God's reliability or faithfulness do you thank God today?
- * 30. What steps could you take to depend on the Lord through the challenges you are now facing?
31. What could you do for a friend or relative who is struggling with sickness or depression to encourage or help him or her this week?

Psalm 39 - Psalm 39:1-13

Topics: Confession, Convictions, Despair, Determination, Discipline, Disobedience, Emotions, Future, Guilt, Heart, Help, Hope, Humility, Joy, Life, Listening, Pride, Repentance, Salvation, Self-Centeredness, Silence, Sin, Unbelievers, Wealth, Words

Open It

- * 1. What is one thing you want to do before you die?
- 2. For what reasons do we keep secrets?
- 3. When have you ever accidentally revealed a secret, and what happened?

Explore It

- 4. What was David determined to do but failed to do? (39:1-3)
- 5. Why could David no longer suppress his despair? (39:1-3)
- 6. Why had David determined not to speak of his anguish? (39:1-3, 9)
- 7. What central prayer request unifies this psalm? (39:1-13)
- * 8. What motivated David to write this poem? (39:1-13)
- 9. What effect did David's attempt to suppress his anguish have on him? (39:2-3)
- 10. What did David want to know about his own future? (39:4)
- 11. What did David ask God to do? (39:4)
- * 12. What had David learned about the brevity of life? (39:4-6)
- 13. What prayer did David offer to the Lord? (39:4-6)
- 14. What attitude did David have about himself in relation to the Lord? (39:4-6, 12)
- 15. In whom did David place his only hope? (39:7)
- * 16. What simple request did David present before the Lord? (39:7-11)
- 17. What did David expect to happen if the Lord did not deliver him? (39:8)
- 18. What did David believe was the reason for his illness? (39:9)
- 19. How did David feel about the Lord's hand in his life? (39:10)
- 20. According to David, why does God rebuke people? (39:11)
- 21. What is one way the Lord chooses to discipline people? (39:11)
- 22. How did David demonstrate his humility in this prayer? (39:12-13)

Get It

- 23. When is it good to keep secrets? When is it bad?
- 24. What does David's determination to guard against speaking rebellious words in the hearing of his enemies reveal about his character?
- 25. How should we speak about God or one another in the presence of unbelievers?
- 26. How do you think you could change your attitude or behavior to insure you always honor the reputation of the Lord and other believers?
- 27. What can we learn about humility from David's example in this psalm?
- 28. How can you cultivate the spirit of humility in your life?
- * 29. Why do people procrastinate?
- * 30. What important goals have you put off too long?
- 31. When have you vented your emotions to the Lord in prayer, and how did it make you feel?
- 32. When have you felt chastised by the Lord?
- 33. Why do you think God chooses to discipline us?
- 34. How should we respond to feelings of guilt?
- 35. What has recently caused you to feel guilty?

Apply It

36. What could you do this week to honor the name of the Lord in what you do or say at work? at home?
- * 37. What first step could you take toward an important goal or priority this week?
38. How do you want to pray the next time you feel guilty or abandoned by God?

Psalm 40 - Psalm 40:1-17

Topics: Answers, Blessing, Confession, Conflict, Confusion, Desires, Enemies, Faithfulness, Fear, Guilt, Heart, Help, Hypocrisy, Idolatry, Law, Love, Mercy, Needs, Obedience, Pain, Patience, Plans, Poor, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Remembering, Repentance, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Trust, Truth, Waiting, Witnessing, Words, Worship

Open It

1. What, to you, is the most vivid example of hypocrisy?
- * 2. When do you hate to wait?

Explore It

3. What mental picture did David use to describe God's deliverance in the past? (40:1-2)
4. For what did David praise the Lord in the introduction of the psalm? (40:1-5)
5. What is the main theme of this psalm? (40:1-17)
6. What did David's experience of God's help in the past motivate him to do? (40:3)
7. How should we respond to God's deliverance? (40:3)
8. What specific instructions does the psalm give to God's people? (40:4)
9. In what way did David feel inadequate? (40:5)
- * 10. What does God want from us even more than sacrifices and offerings? (40:6-7)
- * 11. What testimony did David give about his own relationship with the Lord? (40:6-10)
12. What was David's main desire? (40:8)
- * 13. How did David equip himself to do God's will? (40:8)
14. How was David involved in proclaiming God's goodness to others? (40:9-10)
15. What was David's request? (40:11-17)
16. What did David believe to be the cause of his distress? (40:12)
17. How was David's difficult situation worsened? (40:14-15)
18. What did David ask the Lord to do to his enemies? (40:14-15)
19. How did David ask the Lord to treat those who seek Him? (40:16)

Get It

20. What are the dangers of letting church attendance become overly routine or perfunctory?
- * 21. How can we guard against the temptation to focus more on outward appearances than inward attitudes?
22. What does remembering God's faithfulness in the past prompt you to do?
23. What would be our modern-day equivalent to the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament?
24. What does God really want from us?
25. How can we guard against an insincere attitude and hypocrisy?
- * 26. How can you equip yourself to do the Lord's will?
27. How can we store God's Word in our hearts?
28. How can you be involved in telling others about God's goodness?
- * 29. What can you do to share your experience of God's faithfulness with those who do not know the Lord?

Apply It

- * 30. What steps can you take this next week to store God's Word in your heart?
31. What offering of praise can you give to God today?
32. In the next few days, who is one person you could tell about God's faithfulness to you?

Psalm 41 - Psalm 41:1-13

Topics: Blessing, Conflict, Deceit, Desires, Enemies, Friendship, Healing, Health, Heart, Integrity, Life, Lying, Mercy, Praise, Problems, Protection, Rejection, Reputation, Revenge, Sickness, Sin, Trust, Weaknesses, Words

Open It

- * 1. Who are the weak in our society?
- 2. What do you most appreciate when you are feeling sick or abandoned?
- 3. When have you ever felt homesick, very lonely, or utterly alone?

Explore It

- 4. How should people view the weak? (41:1)
- 5. How does the Lord treat weak people? (41:1-3)
- * 6. What blessings does God give to the weak? (41:1-3)
- 7. What motivated David to write this prayer? (41:1-13)
- 8. How did David voice his confidence in the Lord? (41:1-3)
- 9. What did David believe to be the reason for his illness? (41:4)
- 10. What request did David ask of the Lord? (41:4-6)
- 11. How did David's enemies torment him? (41:5-9)
- 12. What rumors did David's enemies spread? (41:6-8)
- * 13. What were David's adversaries guilty of doing? (41:6-9)
- 14. How was David's reputation slandered? (41:6-9)
- 15. In addition to his enemies, who else betrayed David? (41:9)
- 16. Why did David want to be healed of his sickness? (41:10)
- 17. How did the Lord treat David differently than his friends and enemies? (41:10-12)
- * 18. How did David know he was favored by God? (41:11)
- 19. Why did God protect David? (41:12)
- 20. What did David do in anticipation of God's healing and deliverance? (41:13)

Get It

- 21. Why is it so difficult to be alone?
- 22. Judging from this psalm, how did David feel when his close friend turned against him?
- 23. When have you felt betrayed by a friend?
- 24. How are weak people treated by others?
- 25. How does God want us to treat weak people?
- * 26. Why does the Lord allow us to go through difficult experiences?
- 27. Where do you usually turn when you feel helpless or abandoned?
- 28. What can we learn from David's example about handling sickness or abandonment?
- 29. What connection did David see between his sin and his sickness?
- 30. How is our sin related to what God allows us to experience?
- 31. How does God encourage you to repent?
- * 32. How can we know if God is pleased with us?
- 33. What good people, places, and things has the Lord allowed you to enjoy?
- 34. What difficult situations are you facing?
- 35. In what area of life do you feel the need to plea for God's mercy?

Apply It

- 36. What can you do to take comfort in God the next time you feel lonely or abandoned?
- * 37. What can you do to rely on God in handling the challenges you face this next week?
- 38. How can you remember to pray for God's mercy each time you pray?

Psalm 42 - Psalm 42:1-11

Topics: Depression, Desires, Doubt, Emotions, Enemies, Feelings, Fellowship, Forget, Grief, Guidance, Joy, Mourning, Needs, Pain, Prayer, Relationships, Remembering, Sorrow, Soul, Thankfulness, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What do you enjoy most about going to church?
- 2. What are some of the sacrifices you make in order to be with other believers?

Explore It

- * 3. What images did the psalm writer use to describe his longing for God? (42:1-2)
- 4. What sentiment introduces this poem? (42:1-4)
- 5. How did the psalm writer feel about not being able to worship God in His sanctuary? (42:1-4)
- 6. What main idea unifies this psalm? (42:1-11)
- 7. How is the Lord described in this psalm? (42:2, 5, 9)
- 8. What questions did the psalm writer ask? (42:2, 5, 9, 11)
- 9. What did the psalm writer remember with fondness? (42:4)
- 10. How had the psalm writer been involved in corporate worship in the past? (42:4)
- 11. How did remembering the past encourage the psalm writer? (42:4-6)
- * 12. Where did the psalm writer turn for comfort? (42:5)
- * 13. How did the psalm writer counter his depression? (42:6)
- 14. What imagery did the psalm writer use to describe God's involvement in his suffering? (42:7)
- 15. How did the Lord protect the writer? (42:8)
- 16. Why did the psalm writer feel deserted by God? (42:9-11)
- 17. What final advice concludes the psalm? (42:11)

Get It

- 18. What are the benefits of worshiping with other Christians (over worshiping by yourself)?
- 19. When have you felt deserted by God or friends?
- 20. When have you questioned God?
- 21. What is the right attitude to have when venting your doubts and frustrations to the Lord in prayer?
- 22. How can we guard against a rebellious spirit?
- * 23. How can we follow the psalm writer's example in dealing with our doubts and depression?
- 24. What advice does this psalm give to us about dealing with negative feelings?
- 25. Where do you usually turn for comfort?
- 26. What does this psalm teach us about prayer?
- 27. How do you think you could improve your prayer habits?
- 28. What are the benefits of remembering the past?
- * 29. What has God done for you in the past, and how do those memories encourage you?

Apply It

- 30. What steps could you take the next time you feel doubt or disappointment in God?
- * 31. How can you remind yourself to turn to the Lord with your problems instead of allowing them to anger or frustrate you?

Psalm 43 - Psalm 43:1-5

Topics: Church, Deceit, Depression, Despair, Emotions, Enemies, Evil, Expectations, Forsake, Hope, Light, Mourning, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Strength, Truth, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What words do people use to describe God's house?
- 2. How important do you think it is to be involved in a local church?

Explore It

- 3. How did the psalm writer use the language of the court to present his case to the Lord? (43:1)
- 4. Against whom did the psalm writer want God to plead his cause? (43:1)
- 5. From what did the psalm writer need to be rescued? (43:1)
- 6. What is the theme of the psalm writer's prayer in this passage? (43:1-5)
- * 7. What lost opportunity was the psalm writer mourning? (43:1-5)
- 8. Why did the psalm writer feel forsaken by the Lord? (43:2)
- 9. How is God described in this passage? (43:2-5)
- 10. What characteristics of the Lord did the psalm writer want to guide him? (43:3)
- 11. What is God's "holy mountain"? (43:3)
- 12. Where did David get his guidance? (43:3)
- 13. Where did the psalm writer want to be taken? (43:3-4)
- 14. Why did the psalm writer want to go to God's altar? (43:4)
- * 15. How did the psalm writer plan to praise the Lord when he had the opportunity to go to God's altar again? (43:4)
- 16. What questions did the psalm writer ask himself? (43:5)
- 17. What advice concludes the psalm? (43:5)
- * 18. How did the psalm writer handle his own feelings of despair? (43:5)

Get It

- 19. How does God guide us?
- 20. What tools has God made available to help us when we need to make a decision?
- 21. What does this psalm teach us about the privilege of freely worshiping God?
- * 22. How do we show our respect and honor for God's house?
- 23. What are the benefits of being involved in the ministries of your local church?
- 24. How can you be involved in the worship and ministries of your church?
- * 25. In what ways do you think you need to change your attitudes or behaviors in relation to your church?
- 26. In what area of ministry could you use your talents for the glory of God?
- 27. How is the psalm writer's advice to himself in this passage relevant to us today?
- 28. What does it mean to "put your hope in the Lord"?

Apply It

- * 29. What step could you take to demonstrate respect for God's house and appreciation for the opportunity to worship God?
- 30. Where can you turn for God's guidance the next time you need to make a decision that requires it?
- 31. In what way could you "put your hope in the Lord" the next time you feel discouraged?

Psalm 44 - Psalm 44:1-26

Topics: Confusion, Covenant, Death, Depend, Despair, Enemies, Failure, Faithfulness, Family, Fear, Forsake, Guidance, Heart, Help, Heritage, History, Love, Loyalty, Miracles, Name, Obedience, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Reliability, Remembering, Revenge, Success, Trust, Unfairness, Victory, War

Open It

1. What kinds of experiences make good memories?
2. What good memories do you have of your childhood?
- * 3. What are the benefits of recalling both good and bad memories?

Explore It

4. How did the people of Israel hear about God's deliverance in the past? (44:1)
- * 5. On what does the introduction of this poem focus? (44:1-8)
6. For what past victories did the psalm writer praise the Lord? (44:1-8)
7. What motivated the psalm writer to write this poem? (44:1-26)
8. How did the Lord treat the nation of Israel differently from the other nations? (44:2-3)
9. How did the Israelites know that they won their land because of the Lord's help? (44:3)
10. Why did the Lord bring the Israelites victory? (44:3)
11. How did the psalm writer voice his dependence on God? (44:4-8)
12. Why did the Israelites believe they were defeated by their enemies? (44:9)
- * 13. How did the psalm writer describe Israel's defeat and its consequences? (44:9-16)
14. Why were the Israelites confused about their defeat? (44:17-22)
15. How did the Israelites explain their innocence? (44:17-22)
- * 16. How had the Israelites been faithful to the Lord? (44:17-22)
17. What prayer concludes this psalm? (44:23-26)
18. Why did the psalm writer believe that the Lord would want to answer their prayer? (44:26)

Get It

19. How does it feel to be rejected by someone?
20. Judging from this psalm, how were the Israelites feeling at this time in their history?
- * 21. Why does the Lord allow us to face difficulties and defeat, even when we are being faithful to Him?
22. What can we learn from the Israelites' example?
- * 23. How does this passage encourage you?
24. How does remembering God's hand in your life in the past help you face the future?
25. What has God done for you in the past?
26. When has the testimony of another person encouraged you?

Apply It

- * 27. What step can you take to help you deal with defeat?
28. What has God done for you in the past that you want to share with others?
29. Who is someone you could encourage by sharing what God has done for you in the past?

Psalm 45 - Psalm 45:1-17

Topics: Advice, Beauty, Blessing, Emotions, Enemies, Evil, Expectations, Family, Feelings, Future, Heart, Honor, Humility, Husbands, Joy, Justice, Listening, Marriage, Praise, Protection, Relationships, Respect, Righteousness, Success, Truth, Wealth, Wives

Open It

1. What emotions do you associate with a wedding?
2. What are some of the traditions associated with weddings in our culture?
- * 3. What do you think are the most meaningful parts of a wedding ceremony?

Explore It

4. What occasion prompted the writing of this poem? (45:1-17)
5. How is the king described? (45:2)
- * 6. What advice was the king given by the psalm writer? (45:3-5)
7. Which words in this psalm are spoken to the king and which are addressed to the royal bride? (45:3-9, 10-15)
8. How is the king's reign described? (45:6-9)
- * 9. Why did God set this king above others? (45:7)
10. How did the Lord anoint this king on his wedding day? (45:7)
11. Why did the psalm writer advise the bride to forget her family? (45:10-11)
- * 12. What did the psalm writer want the bride to consider on her wedding day? (45:10-15)
13. What did the king feel toward his new bride? (45:11, 13)
14. How is the bride described? (45:13-14)
15. How would the king's reign be extended through this marriage? (45:16-17)
16. How did the psalm writer plan to perpetuate the king's memory through future generations? (45:17)

Get It

17. What does this psalm tell us about God's place in marriage?
- * 18. How does God use friendships, marriage, and other relationships to bless us?
19. In what specific ways is the king in this psalm a good example for us to follow today?
20. What does it mean to act "in behalf of truth, humility, and righteousness"?
21. What does this psalm teach us about husband-wife relationships?
22. How can a marriage relationship be strengthened?
23. What blessings from the Lord did the bride and groom in this poem enjoy?
- * 24. What blessings of friendship or other relationships has the Lord given you?
25. What does the Lord want in return for the many blessings He gives to us?

Apply It

26. What will it mean for you to act "in behalf of truth, humility, and righteousness" at work? at home?
- * 27. What is one concrete action you could take to demonstrate your thankfulness to the Lord for a relationship with which He has blessed you?

Psalm 46 - Psalm 46:1-11

Topics: Assurance, Circumstances, Conflict, Danger, Depend, Earth, Faith, Fear, Guidance, Help, Hope, Patience, Power, Praise, Problems, Protection, Quiet, Strength, Waiting, War, Work, Worship

Open It

1. What comes to mind when you think of a fortress?
- * 2. What makes you feel safe and secure?
3. What makes it so scary to experience a natural disaster such as a tornado, hurricane, or earthquake?

Explore It

4. What words of hope introduce the poem? (46:1)
- * 5. What imagery did the psalm writer use to describe the threats God's people face? (46:1-3)
6. What does this psalm celebrate? (46:1-11)
7. How does this psalm describe the city of God? (46:4-6)
8. How will the city of God be protected? (46:4-6)
9. How do the people of God respond to His deliverance? (46:7)
10. What did the psalm writer invite his listeners to do? (46:8)
- * 11. What benefits do God's people enjoy? (46:8-10)
12. How does this psalm describe the final victory the Messiah will bring? (46:9)
13. When does God's voice break through? (46:10)
- * 14. What specific instruction does the Lord give to His people? (46:10)
15. What will be the result of God's mighty acts on behalf of His people? (46:10)
16. What comforting promise concludes this psalm? (46:11)

Get It

17. How are the promises in this psalm meaningful to you?
18. What kinds of threats do believers face today?
- * 19. How has God been like a fortress to you?
20. What does this psalm teach us about God's power over the nations and governments of the earth?
21. How should we handle our fears?
- * 22. What does it mean to "Be still, and know that I am God"?
23. How can we practice being still before the Lord?
24. How do you feel the Lord's presence in your life?
25. How can we thank the Lord for His presence in our lives?

Apply It

26. What is one way you can remind yourself of God's presence with you each day?
- * 27. In what ways could you be still before the Lord?

Psalm 47 - Psalm 47:1-9

Topics: Appreciation, Authority, Awe, Blessing, Character, Depend, Earth, God, Government, Joy, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Leadership, Power, Praise, Status, Submission, Worship

Open It

1. What characteristics make a good leader?
2. What are some of the dangers of leadership?
- * 3. Who's in charge at your house?

Explore It

- * 4. How does this psalm instruct God's people to praise the Lord? (47:1, 5-6)
5. Why are the nations called to rejoice in the Lord? (47:1-4)
6. What is the theme of this poem? (47:1-9)
7. How is this psalm a testimony to the nations? (47:1-9)
- * 8. How is the Lord described in this psalm? (47:2-9)
9. What has the Lord done for His people? (47:3-4)
10. What makes God happy? (47:5-6)
11. What should motivate God's people to praise Him? (47:5-9)
12. Which of the Lord's roles is described by the psalm writer? (47:7-9)
13. How is God's reign described? (47:7-9)
- * 14. What relationship should the leaders of the world and the Lord have? (47:7-9)

Get It

15. What does this passage teach us about God's character?
16. What attitude should leaders have about their positions of power and authority?
17. How can Christian leaders guard against pride and self-reliance?
- * 18. What kind of relationship does the Lord want to have with us?
19. What steps can we take to obey God's rule in our lives?
20. What area of your life do you hesitate to completely commit to God?
21. What reasons does this psalm give us to praise the Lord?
22. How should we respond to the Lord's blessings in our lives?
- * 23. What have you learned from this psalm about how to praise the Lord?
24. What song or verse would you choose to voice your personal praise to the Lord?

Apply It

25. What offering of praise could you give to the Lord today?
- * 26. What one area of your life would you like to give over to God's rule today?

Psalm 48 - Psalm 48:1-14

Topics: Beauty, Character, Defeat, Enemies, Fear, Future, Guidance, Help, Instructions, Joy, Judgment, Love, Praise, Protection, Reputation, Righteousness, Strength, War, Worship

Open It

1. What techniques do modern-day countries use to defend themselves?
- * 2. What safety measures do you take to protect your family?

Explore It

3. What words of praise open the psalm? (48:1)
4. How is Zion described? (48:1-3)
5. What main theme does the psalm writer convey in this passage? (48:1-14)
6. On which of God's character traits does this psalm focus? (48:1-14)
7. What imagery did the psalm writer use to emphasize his message? (48:2, 6-7, 10)
8. How does Zion's source of defense differ from other cities? (48:3)
9. What did the psalm writer say regarding the enemy's attacks against God's city? (48:4-7)
10. Why would attacks against Zion be futile? (48:4-7)
- * 11. What is the theme of this psalm? (48:8)
- * 12. What motivates God's people to praise Him? (48:9-11)
13. How is the security of Zion described? (48:12-13)
- * 14. Why did the psalm writer instruct God's people to consider the city of Zion? (48:13)
15. What final statement of hope concludes the psalm? (48:14)

Get It

16. What does this psalm teach us about how to worship God?
17. What have you learned about God's power and presence from this psalm?
18. What "enemies" do you face?
19. What defense do we have against our adversaries?
20. When have you experienced God's protection in your life?
21. What should motivate us to worship the Lord?
- * 22. What responsibility do we have to teach the next generation about God?
- * 23. How can you be involved in sharing what you have learned about God with others?
24. What are the benefits of telling others what God has done for you?

Apply It

25. What steps could you take to depend on God every day?
26. What offering of praise could you give to the Lord today to thank Him for His presence?
- * 27. Who is one person you could tell about your relationship with God?

Psalm 49 - Psalm 49:1-20

Topics: Advice, Awe, Blessing, Consequences, Contentment, Death, Deceit, Evil, Expectations, Future, God, Greed, Heart, Heaven, Instructions, Jealousy, Judgment, Life, Money, Poor, Pride, Rewards, Righteousness, Salvation, Self-Centeredness, Trust, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

- * 1. How do you think your life would change if you suddenly became rich?
- 2. What are some of the disadvantages of being wealthy?

Explore It

- 3. To whom is this psalm addressed? (49:1-2)
- 4. What is the main message of this psalm? (49:1-20)
- 5. How did the psalm writer describe the advice he gave in this psalm? (49:3-4)
- 6. Why did the psalm writer describe his message as a riddle? (49:4)
- 7. What question introduces the subject of this psalm? (49:5-6)
- * 8. Why should the poor not be intimidated by the rich? (49:5-11)
- * 9. To what temptation do the rich often fall victim? (49:6)
- 10. What is the one thing that wealth cannot buy? (49:7-9)
- 11. What logical observation did the psalm writer encourage others to make? (49:10)
- 12. Why did the psalm writer say it is futile to store up wealth on earth? (49:10)
- 13. Despite the attempts of the rich to immortalize themselves, what is their final destiny? (49:11)
- 14. What is the fate of people who rely on themselves? (49:13-14)
- 15. Why did the psalm writer compare the wealthy to sheep? (49:14)
- 16. What different kind of future can the righteous expect? (49:15)
- * 17. What was the psalm writer's conclusion? (49:16-17)
- 18. What image did the psalm writer use to describe a rich man without understanding? (49:20)

Get It

- 19. What are some of the temptations associated with wealth?
- 20. Why do you think average people sometimes feel intimidated by rich people?
- 21. Why should we not be jealous of the rich?
- 22. What is futile about seeking wealth?
- 23. If we should not seek wealth, where should we focus our attention and effort?
- 24. What are the benefits of seeking righteousness instead of wealth?
- 25. What are the disadvantages of seeking righteousness over wealth?
- * 26. How do the benefits of seeking righteousness outweigh the disadvantages?
- * 27. What attitude does this psalm encourage us to have toward money?
- 28. What's wrong with worrying about our financial situation?
- 29. What changes do you need to make in how you handle money?

Apply It

- 30. How can you depend on the Lord instead of relying on your own abilities?
- * 31. What is one action you could take to lessen your concern about finances?

Psalm 50 - Psalm 50:1-23

Topics: Accusation, Adultery, Attitude, Beauty, Correction, Covenant, Depend, Dishonesty, Disobedience, Earth, Evil, God, God's Will, Greed, Heaven, Help, Honor, Hypocrisy, Instructions, Judgment, Needs, Obedience, Possessions, Punishment, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Silence, Sin, Thankfulness, Tithing, Vows, Words

Open It

- * 1. Who is the sincerest person you know?
- 2. What were some of the rules in your house when you were growing up?

Explore It

- 3. What announcement introduces the theme of the poem? (50:1-6)
- 4. What motivated the Lord to appear at His temple in Zion? (50:1-6)
- 5. What names and titles for God does this psalm include? (50:1-23)
- 6. What are the heavens and earth summoned by God to testify? (50:4-6)
- 7. What expressed Israel's covenant with the Lord? (50:5)
- * 8. What words of correction does the Lord give to His people? (50:7-15)
- * 9. In addition to sacrifices, what did the Lord desire from His people? (50:8-15)
- 10. In what way were the Israelites obeying the letter of the law while ignoring the spirit of the law? (50:8-15)
- 11. What did the Israelites misunderstand about the importance of sacrifices? (50:9-15)
- * 12. What kind of relationship does God want us to have with Him? (50:14-15)
- 13. What promise did the Lord offer Israel in return for their obedience and honor? (50:14-15)
- 14. What accusations does God make against the wicked? (50:16-20)
- 15. Whom does the Lord rebuke in the conclusion of the psalm? (50:16-23)
- 16. How did the wicked misinterpret God's silence? (50:21-22)
- 17. What advice does God give to the wicked? (50:22-23)

Get It

- 18. According to this psalm, what does God desire from us?
- 19. What kind of relationship does the Lord want to have with you?
- 20. How is the spirit of the law different from the letter of the law?
- 21. Why is it sometimes tempting to focus on the letter of the law instead of the spirit of the law?
- * 22. When are you tempted to focus on the letter of the law instead of the spirit of the law?
- 23. In what ways are the wicked guilty of hypocrisy?
- 24. How does God view hypocrisy?
- 25. How can we guard against insincerity in our faith?
- 26. According to this passage, how can we honor God?
- 27. In modern-day terms, what does it mean to "sacrifice thank offerings"?
- 28. How do you think the message of this psalm could be applied to tithing?
- * 29. What specific counsel does God give to us in this psalm about seeking Him?
- 30. What promises can we claim from this psalm?

Apply It

- 31. In what ways do you need to change your attitude or behavior in order to honor God in sincerity?
- 32. What action could you take to guard against the sin of hypocrisy?
- * 33. What offering of thanks could you give to the Lord today?

Psalm 51 - Psalm 51:1-19

Topics: Compassion, Confession, Example, Forgiveness, Guilt, Heart, Holy Spirit, Humility, Joy, Justice, Love, Mercy, Prayer, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin, Truth, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What character traits are most valued among your coworkers?
- 2. What are some Christian characteristics that our culture looks down upon?
- 3. What Christian traits do you think are the most difficult to cultivate because of pressure from your non-Christian friends?

Explore It

- 4. What attributes did the poet ascribe to God in this psalm? (51:1)
- 5. Why was the psalm writer able to ask for forgiveness from God? (51:1)
- 6. What common experience does this psalm typify? (51:1-19)
- * 7. What was the psalm writer's attitude toward his sin? (51:3-5)
- 8. What main picture of forgiveness is highlighted in this psalm? (51:2, 7, 9)
- 9. What does the picture of forgiveness used in this poem reflect about the psalm writer's attitude? (51:2, 7, 9)
- 10. To what do the "inner parts" and "inmost place" refer? (51:6)
- 11. Where does God desire truth? (51:6)
- * 12. What did the author of this psalm desire? (51:10-12)
- 13. How would the psalm writer's own experience of God's forgiveness affect others? (51:13)
- * 14. What did the psalm writer expect to be the outcome of God's forgiveness? (51:13-15)
- 15. What does God not require of His people? (51:16)
- 16. What does the Lord want from His people? (51:17)
- 17. How does the prayer for Jerusalem serve as a fitting conclusion for this psalm? (51:18-19)

Get It

- 18. What does this poem tell us about God's character?
- * 19. How should we respond to our sin and God's forgiveness?
- 20. What do you think it means to have a broken and contrite heart?
- * 21. How do you need to change your own attitude toward your sin and God's gift of forgiveness to you?
- 22. What should we do in response to God's forgiveness?
- 23. How can you teach God's ways to others?
- 24. With whom can you share your experience of God's forgiveness?
- 25. In what ways would you like your desires to match those of the psalm writer's in this poem?
- 26. If you have lost the joy of your salvation, what can you do to regain it again?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do to cultivate a broken and contrite heart before God?
- 28. What do you need to do about confessing sin?
- 29. Who is one person you can make a conscious effort to teach God's ways over the next month?

Psalm 52 - Psalm 52:1-9

Topics: Accusation, Blessing, Consequences, Convictions, Deceit, Dishonesty, Disobedience, Evil, Example, Future, Greed, Hope, Judgment, Love, Lying, Materialism, Money, Obedience, Praise, Pride, Punishment, Righteousness, Self-Centeredness, Status, Strength, Trust, Truth, Wealth, Worship

Open It

- * 1. How does a person's beliefs about life after death impact the way he or she chooses to live?
- 2. What expectations do you have of life after death?

Explore It

- 3. To whom is this psalm addressed? (52:1-4)
- 4. How did the psalm writer describe the wicked? (52:1-4)
- 5. How were David's enemies a "disgrace in the eyes of God"? (52:1-4)
- 6. What did David repeat three times to emphasize his point? (52:5)
- 7. What is the final destiny of the wicked? (52:5-7)
- * 8. What are the consequences of deceit? (52:5-7)
- 9. In relation to eternity, how beneficial is earthly wealth and power? (52:5-7)
- 10. How will the righteous react to the downfall of the wicked? (52:6-7)
- 11. What benefits do the wicked enjoy in their earthly lives? (52:7)
- * 12. What causes the downfall of the wicked? (52:7)
- 13. Why did David compare himself to an olive tree? (52:8)
- 14. Where did David get his sense of security? (52:8-9)
- * 15. In what specific ways was David different from the wicked? (52:8-9)
- 16. What vow did David make to the Lord in the conclusion of the psalm? (52:9)
- 17. Where did David promise to praise the Lord? (52:9)

Get It

- 18. How does your hope of heaven encourage you to live today?
- 19. What behavior does this psalm advise us to avoid?
- 20. What are the dangers of seeking after wealth and power?
- 21. How can we guard against pride and greed?
- 22. What reasons do we have to seek righteousness?
- 23. What do you think it means to be righteous?
- 24. How can a person make God his or her "stronghold"?
- * 25. How can we demonstrate our trust in God?
- * 26. What is one area of your life in which you need to trust God more?
- 27. What areas of your life do you like to have under control?
- 28. What are the benefits of praising the Lord in the presence of other believers?

Apply It

- 29. What offering of praise could you give to God today?
- 30. What specific step can you take to remind yourself not to seek after money and status?
- * 31. How can you entrust to God one area of your life that you have tried to control yourself?
- 32. The next time you are with other Christians, how could you praise the Lord together?

Psalm 53 - Psalm 53:1-6

Topics: Criticism, Consequences, Correction, Deceit, Despair, Expectations, Faith, Fear, Foolishness, Heaven, Joy, Judgment, Praise, Punishment, Restoration, Salvation, Stubbornness, Unbelievers, Worry

Open It

1. What kinds of things do you usually worry about?
- * 2. What do you think causes people to doubt the existence of God?

Explore It

- * 3. What do the foolish say about God? (53:1)
4. How did the psalm writer describe the wicked? (53:1, 3-5)
5. What main idea unifies this psalm? (53:1-6)
6. Why does God look down from heaven? (53:2)
7. What does God desire of His people? (53:2)
- * 8. How does God view those who do not respect or believe in Him? (53:2, 5)
9. What will God find when He judges mankind? (53:3)
10. How does David describe the condition of mankind? (53:3-5)
11. How are God's people affected by the wicked? (53:4)
12. How did the psalm writer describe the folly of the wicked? (53:5)
- * 13. What will happen to those who do not believe in God or respect Him? (53:5)
14. What prayer concludes this psalm? (53:6)
15. How did David expect Israel to be saved? (53:6)
16. How did David expect God's people to react to God's deliverance? (53:6)

Get It

17. How does this psalm change your perspective of what is most important in life?
18. What priorities does God want us to have?
19. What does God desire from you?
20. What behaviors and attitudes does this psalm instruct us to avoid?
21. What does this passage teach us about worrying?
22. What can we do to avoid worrying?
23. How do you need to change your habits to avoid the temptations described in this passage?
- * 24. What difference does it make what we believe about God?
- * 25. How are you affected by people who do not believe in God?
26. What responsibility do you have to share what God has revealed about Himself to you with others?

Apply It

27. What is one way you can show respect for God in your family life? work? relationships with coworkers? church life?
28. Who can help you stop worrying about concerns that overwhelm you?
- * 29. Who is one person you could tell about what God has done for you?

Psalm 54 - Psalm 54:1-7

Topics: Beliefs, Danger, Enemies, Evil, Expectations, Faithfulness, Fear, Future, Goodness, Guidance, Help, Life, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Protection, Sacrifice, Salvation, Success, Thankfulness, Trust, Unbelievers, Words, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of events or experiences do you most look forward to?
- 2. Under what circumstances do you worry about the future most?

Explore It

- 3. What request introduces the theme of this poem? (54:1)
- 4. To which of God's attributes did David appeal in this prayer? (54:1-7)
- 5. What case did the psalm writer make against his enemies? (54:3)
- 6. How did David describe the spiritual state of his adversaries? (54:3)
- * 7. How did David deal with his fears? (54:4)
- * 8. How did David describe his relationship with the Lord? (54:4)
- 9. What expectations did David have of the Lord's deliverance? (54:5)
- 10. What vow did David make to the Lord? (54:6)
- 11. How did David plan to respond to God's deliverance? (54:6)
- * 12. Why was David motivated to praise the Lord? (54:6-7)
- 13. What did David anticipate? (54:7)
- 14. What statement of confidence concludes this psalm? (54:7)

Get It

- 15. How does prayer impact the way you view your future?
- 16. What does this passage teach us about God's character?
- 17. What does this poem reveal about the kind of relationship David had with the Lord?
- 18. In what ways would you like your relationship with God to be more like David's?
- 19. What can we learn from David's example about how to handle our fears?
- * 20. What are your fears?
- 21. How can we trust the Lord with our fears?
- * 22. How does this passage encourage you to face your fears?
- 23. What expectations should we have for the future?
- 24. How should we plan to react to God's guidance and deliverance?
- 25. What has God done for you in the past that motivates you to praise Him today?

Apply It

- 26. What prayer for help do you need to offer to the Lord over the next few days?
- * 27. What specific steps can you take this week to trust the Lord with your fears and problems?
- 28. What offering of praise do you want to give to God today?

Psalm 55 - Psalm 55:1-23

Topics: Answers, Call, Confusion, Death, Deceit, Despair, Enemies, Evil, Expectations, Fear, Fellowship, Friendship, God, Heart, Hypocrisy, Insults, Lying, Needs, Opposition, Pain, Persecution, Perseverance, Prayer, Righteousness, Salvation, Suffering, Surprises, Thinking, Trust, Unbelievers, War, Worship

Open It

1. When have you ever felt betrayed by a friend?
- * 2. What do you do when your friends disappoint you?

Explore It

- * 3. What initial appeal to the Lord introduces this poem? (55:1-3)
4. What danger did David face? (55:4-5)
5. How did the psalm writer describe his heart's pain? (55:4-8)
6. What did David wish he could do? (55:6-8)
7. What did the psalm writer do when he realized he could not escape his problem? (55:9-11)
8. What prayer did David present to the Lord? (55:9-11)
9. How did the psalm writer describe his enemies? (55:9-11)
- * 10. What made the psalm writer's situation especially painful? (55:12-14)
11. How did David describe his relationship with the person who betrayed him? (55:12-14)
12. What did David want the Lord to do to his enemies? (55:15)
13. How confident was David that the Lord would hear his prayer? (55:16-19)
- * 14. How did David deal with his pain and anger? (55:16-19, 22-23)
15. When did David spend time in prayer? (55:17)
16. Why did David expect God to punish his enemies? (55:19)
17. How did the psalm writer describe the hypocrisy of his friend? (55:20-21)
18. What encouragement did David offer to others? (55:22)
19. What words of confidence conclude this psalm? (55:23)

Get It

- * 20. How do people usually react when they feel betrayed or let down by a trusted friend?
21. When have you wished you could escape from a problem?
- * 22. In what way can we follow David's example when we feel overwhelmed with anger at another person?
23. What can we learn from David's confidence in the Lord?
24. How can we follow the psalm writer's example in our prayers about others?
25. What changes could you make to become more persistent and consistent in your prayers?
26. What words of instruction does this psalm offer us?
27. What does it mean to "cast your cares on the Lord"?
28. Which of your fears or problems would you like to commit to the Lord in prayer?

Apply It

- * 29. For what friend or enemy do you need to pray this next week?
30. How can you commit a sense of anger or hurt to the Lord?
31. How could you show your confidence in the Lord as righteous judge of all?

Psalm 56 - Psalm 56:1-13

Topics: Anger, Answers, Call, Consequences, Danger, Deceit, Enemies, Faith, Fear, God, Help, Life, Light, Mercy, Opposition, Peer Pressure, Persecution, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Sacrifice, Salvation, Trust, Vows, Words

Open It

1. What do you have that no one can ever take away?
- * 2. What fears do children often have?
3. What “winning teams” have you been on, and what was it like?

Explore It

4. What motivated David to write this poem? (56:1-2)
- * 5. How did David feel about his situation? (56:1-6)
6. What is the main idea of this psalm? (56:1-13)
7. What weapon did David’s enemies use against him? (56:2)
- * 8. How did David deal with his fears? (56:3-4, 10-11)
9. How did the psalm writer demonstrate his trust in the Lord? (56:3-4, 10-11)
10. What did David have that no one could take from him? (56:4)
11. What accusations did David make against his enemies? (56:5-7)
12. What role did the psalm writer want the Lord to play? (56:7-8)
13. What appeal did the psalm writer present to God? (56:8-9)
14. What gave the psalm writer confidence to face his enemies? (56:10-11)
- * 15. What commitment did David make to God even before God had answered his prayers? (56:12-13)
16. How did David plan to respond to God’s deliverance? (56:12-13)
17. What did David expect the Lord to do for him? (56:13)
18. For what reason did David expect God to save him? (56:13)

Get It

19. When have you felt like David?
20. In what ways is David a role model for us?
21. What lessons have you learned from experiencing difficult times in the past?
22. What usually motivates you to go to the Lord in prayer?
23. What kind of prayer habits do you wish you had?
- * 24. What changes would you like to make to improve your prayer life?
25. In light of this passage, how should you change the way you deal with the challenges you face every day?
- * 26. What can we do to demonstrate our trust in God?
27. What expectations should we have of the Lord?

Apply It

28. What changes can you make this next week to improve your prayer habits?
29. What can you do to follow David’s example in dealing with daily fears or problems?
- * 30. What step of faith could you take today to demonstrate your trust in God?

Psalm 57 - Psalm 57:1-11

Topics: Consequences, Danger, Deceit, Depend, Earth, Enemies, Evil, Example, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, Glory, Heaven, Love, Mercy, Motives, Persecution, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Protection, Punishment, Purpose, Righteousness, Salvation, Security, Trust, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is one difficult event or period of time you have gone through?
- 2. Why do people often pray in times of disaster or when their lives are threatened?

Explore It

- 3. How did David deal with the challenge he faced? (57:1)
- 4. What did David expect from the Lord? (57:1-3)
- * 5. What kind of relationship did David have with God? (57:1-3, 5, 7-11)
- 6. What situation motivated the psalm writer to write this poem? (57:1-11)
- 7. What two gifts did David expect the Lord to send from heaven? (57:3)
- 8. What imagery did David use to describe his enemies? (57:4)
- 9. How did David describe his predicament? (57:4-6)
- 10. What do David's words reveal about his motives in asking the Lord for help? (57:5)
- 11. What did David expect to happen to his adversaries? (57:6)
- * 12. What did the psalm writer do in anticipation of God's help? (57:7-11)
- 13. Why did the psalm writer make a vow to praise God? (57:9-11)
- * 14. What motivated the psalm writer to praise God? (57:9-11)
- 15. How did the psalm writer describe the Lord's character in his song of praise? (57:10-11)

Get It

- 16. What kinds of dangers or adversaries do Christians face today?
- 17. How should we prepare ourselves to face opposition or temptation?
- 18. How does your relationship with God impact the way you deal with difficult times in your life?
- 19. How would you expect Christians to deal differently with disaster?
- 20. Under what circumstances do you feel insecure or scared?
- * 21. How can we follow David's example when we feel threatened?
- 22. How can we know what expectations we ought to place on God?
- * 23. What should we do while we are waiting for God to act on our behalf?
- 24. What gifts can we give to God to thank Him for His help and deliverance?
- 25. What words of praise can you offer the Lord to thank Him for what He has done for you?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you remind yourself of God's love and power as you face the challenges of the coming week?
- 27. How can you demonstrate your thankfulness to God today for His help in the past?

Psalm 58 - Psalm 58:1-11

Topics: Accusation, Comparisons, Consequences, Criticism, Deceit, Dishonesty, Evil, Faithfulness, Heart, Injustice, Joy, Judgment, Motives, Praise, Prayer, Punishment, Questions, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Stubbornness

Open It

1. What are some of the joys you remember from childhood?
2. How have you seen sinful nature evident in children?
- * 3. What do people mean when they say, “There’s no justice in this world”?

Explore It

4. What rhetorical questions did David pose? (58:1)
- * 5. What accusations did David make against the wicked? (58:1-5)
6. To which of God’s roles did the psalm writer appeal? (58:1-11)
7. How does this psalm describe the consistency of the sins of the wicked? (58:3)
8. What imagery did David use to describe the words of the wicked? (58:4)
9. Why did the psalm writer compare the wicked to a “cobra that has stopped its ears”? (58:4-5)
10. What did David ask the Lord to do to the wicked? (58:6-8)
- * 11. What imagery is used to emphasize the certainty of God’s judgment? (58:9)
12. What reassuring words does this psalm offer the righteous? (58:9-11)
13. How will the righteous react to the downfall of the wicked? (58:10)
- * 14. What will result from God’s judgment on the wicked? (58:11)

Get It

15. Why is it important to study God’s character and promises?
16. How did the psalm writer use his knowledge of God?
17. What does this psalm teach us about God?
- * 18. Why do people get angry at injustice?
19. Why did David speak so negatively about other people in this prayer?
20. Why should we turn to God for justice?
21. What attitudes and actions does this psalm teach us to value?
22. What’s wrong with taking vengeance?
23. How can we be sensitive to instruction and correction from others?
24. In what ways have you seen the righteous rewarded?
25. What should motivate us to seek righteousness?
- * 26. Why should we serve the Lord even when we do not see any short-term advantages in it?

Apply It

27. Who is one other believer you could encourage in doing good?
28. In what ways are you able to seek the Lord this next week?
- * 29. What injustice can you bring to the Lord in prayer?

Psalm 59 - Psalm 59:1-17

Topics: Consequences, Deceit, Depend, Disobedience, Enemies, Evil, Example, Forget, God, Intimidation, Judgment, Love, Lying, Mercy, Opposition, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Punishment, Purity, Salvation, Sin, Strength, Trust, Unbelievers, Witnessing, Words

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel to be an innocent victim of crime?
- 2. How does a person prove his or her innocence?

Explore It

- 3. What request introduces this psalm? (59:1-2)
- * 4. How did the psalm writer plead his innocence before the Lord? (59:1-5)
- 5. How did David describe his adversaries? (59:2-3)
- 6. How did the psalm writer expect God to treat his enemies? (59:5, 8)
- 7. What imagery is used to describe the writer's enemies? (59:6)
- 8. How did David voice his confidence in God? (59:6-8)
- 9. What attitude do the wicked have toward their sin? (59:7)
- 10. What weapon did David's enemies use against him? (59:7, 12-13)
- * 11. Of what sins were David's enemies guilty? (59:7, 12-13)
- 12. What words of confidence express the psalm writer's trust in God? (59:9)
- 13. Why did David ask the Lord to spare the lives of his enemies? (59:11)
- 14. In what way were David's adversaries to serve as an example to Israel? (59:11)
- 15. What will be the result of God's judgment of the wicked? (59:13)
- 16. How were David's actions different from the people he condemned? (59:14-17)
- * 17. Why was David motivated to praise God? (59:16-17)
- 18. What promise concludes this psalm? (59:16-17)

Get It

- 19. What sinful attitude does this psalm instruct us to avoid?
- 20. What are the consequences of a proud spirit?
- * 21. How can we guard against the sin of pride?
- 22. In what practical ways can we demonstrate our dependence on the Lord?
- 23. In what ways should we be different from people who do not believe in God?
- * 24. How can our attitudes and actions be a testimony to others?
- 25. When have you felt the Lord's protection in the past?
- 26. How does this passage encourage us to deal with our fears?
- 27. In what ways do you think Christians should be involved in fighting for justice?

Apply It

- 28. What step of faith could you take this week to demonstrate to the Lord your trust in Him?
- 29. What steps could you take over the next few weeks to cultivate a spirit of humility?
- * 30. In what way could you be a witness for the Lord among the people with whom you have contact?

Psalm 60 - Psalm 60:1-12

Topics: Anger, Depend, Despair, Discouragement, Enemies, Failure, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, Feelings, Guidance, Hope, Humility, Love, Obedience, Restoration, Salvation, Success, Trust, Victory, Weaknesses, Words

Open It

- * 1. Who or what do people sometimes blame when things seem to be going all wrong?
- 2. How do you typically feel when circumstances get out of control?

Explore It

- 3. How did the psalm writer interpret his defeat by the enemy? (60:1)
- 4. What lament introduces this psalm? (60:1-3)
- 5. What imagery did David use to describe how Israel felt when their enemies defeated them? (60:2)
- 6. What did the psalm writer mean when he said, "You have given us wine that makes us stagger"? (60:3)
- 7. For what reasons did the psalm writer hope in God's deliverance? (60:4-5)
- * 8. How did the Israelites present their request to the Lord? (60:4-8)
- 9. How did the psalm writer expect the Lord to conquer Israel's enemies? (60:4-8)
- 10. What images did David use to describe how God would help Israel? (60:8)
- 11. What rhetorical question did David ask of the Lord? (60:10)
- * 12. How did the Israelites feel about their own ability to conquer their enemies? (60:11)
- * 13. What confidence did Israel still have in the Lord, despite the defeat they had experienced? (60:11-12)
- 14. In what ways were the Israelites dependent on the Lord? (60:11-12)
- 15. What did David expect the Lord to do for His people? (60:12)

Get It

- 16. How can Christians view difficult circumstances differently from people who do not know God?
- 17. When have you ever felt defeated?
- 18. How does this psalm teach us to deal with defeat or times when we feel defeated?
- 19. What does this psalm say about depending on God?
- * 20. In what areas of your life do you need to depend more on the Lord?
- 21. What reasons do we have to place our hope in the Lord?
- * 22. Why should we continue trusting in the Lord even when we feel as if He has deserted us?
- 23. Why does God allow us to experience failure?
- 24. What expectations can you place on your relationship with God?
- 25. Where should we turn when we need help?
- 26. How can we call on God for help?

Apply It

- 27. What situation that seems out of control will you bring to the Lord in prayer?
- * 28. What concrete action could you take this week to place your confidence in the Lord's ability to care for you?
- 29. How could you remind yourself of God's power and willingness to help you?

Psalm 61 - Psalm 61:1-8

Topics: Believers, Confidence, Depend, Despair, Eternal Life, Faith, Faithfulness, Future, God, Guidance, Heart, Heaven, Heritage, Hope, Life, Love, Needs, Obedience, Perseverance, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Security, Vows

Open It

1. What makes you feel secure?
2. What would persuade you to buy a home security system (assuming you could afford one)?
- * 3. What do people often do to make themselves feel safe?

Explore It

4. What prayer request introduces the poem? (61:1-2)
5. What main idea unifies this passage? (61:1-8)
6. What kind of relationship did David have with the Lord? (61:1-8)
7. How did the psalm writer feel about his predicament? (61:2)
- * 8. What place of security did the psalm writer seek? (61:2)
9. What images did David use to describe what God had done for him? (61:2-4)
10. What motivated the psalm writer to appeal to God? (61:3)
11. What obvious truths did David speak in his prayer? (61:3, 5)
12. What was the psalm writer's longing? (61:4-5)
- * 13. Why did the psalm writer go to the Lord for help? (61:5)
14. What heritage did the psalm writer receive from the Lord? (61:5)
15. In what way did David want God to bless the king? (61:6-7)
16. What prayer concludes this psalm? (61:6-8)
17. How did the psalm writer expect the Lord to protect the king? (61:7)
18. What vow did the psalm writer make to the Lord? (61:8)
- * 19. How did David plan to demonstrate his own faithfulness to God? (61:8)

Get It

20. In what specific ways is the writer of this psalm a good role model for us?
21. Why did David pray?
22. Under what kind of circumstances did David pray?
23. Why is it important sometimes to state the obvious in our prayers?
24. Where did the psalm writer find his security?
25. How do people who do not know God seek security?
- * 26. What reasons do you have to trust the Lord with your problems?
27. In what ways has God been like a strong tower in your life?
28. What heritage has the Lord given to you?
29. What blessings have you received from God?
- * 30. Concerning what needs do you want to ask the Lord for help?
31. How should we demonstrate our faithfulness to God?

Apply It

32. What specific steps could you take this week to pray?
- * 33. What is one tangible step you can take to seek refuge in God each day?
34. What offering of praise could you give to the Lord to thank Him for His help and strength?

Psalm 62 - Psalm 62:1-12

Topics: Blessing, Character, Confidence, Convictions, Danger, Depend, Enemies, Heart, Honor, Hope, Hypocrisy, Insecurity, Love, Lying, Money, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Problems, Reliability, Rest, Rewards, Salvation, Security, Soul, Status, Strength, Trust, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What characteristics do you look for in a friend?
- 2. When do you feel comfortable confiding in a friend?
- 3. What are the benefits of having a friend you can trust?

Explore It

- 4. What statement of faith introduces this poem? (62:1-2)
- 5. What gave David peace of mind? (62:1-2)
- * 6. How did David demonstrate his confidence in God in the face of danger? (61:1-4)
- 7. What simple message unifies this psalm? (62:1-12)
- 8. What rhetorical question did David pose to his attackers? (62:3)
- 9. What figure of speech did David use to describe his fragile condition? (62:3)
- 10. How did David demonstrate a sense of insecurity in his own strength? (61:3)
- 11. What were the intentions of David's enemies? (61:4)
- 12. What accusations did David make against his adversaries? (61:4)
- * 13. Where did David find his sense of security if not in his own status or power? (61:5-6)
- 14. What exhortation did the psalm writer give to God's people? (61:8)
- 15. How did David advise God's people to pray? (61:8)
- 16. What attitude did the psalm writer have toward the frailty of humankind? (61:9)
- 17. How did David distinguish between people of different status in society? (61:9)
- 18. What warning did the psalm writer offer to his adversaries? (61:10)
- 19. Why did David suggest to his adversaries that they should not become too attached to their wealth? (61:10)
- 20. Which of God's characteristics encourage His people to rely on Him? (61:11)
- * 21. What reasons did the psalm writer give people to put their trust in the Lord? (61:11-12)

Get It

- 22. What kinds of dangers or threats do we face today?
- 23. How can we follow David's example in facing the problems and trials of life?
- 24. What do we need to do whenever we feel anxious or uptight?
- 25. What attitude should we have about our own abilities?
- * 26. What does this psalm tell us about depending on the Lord?
- 27. How does this psalm encourage us to pray?
- 28. What specific instructions does this passage give us to follow?
- * 29. What does it mean to "pour out your heart" to God?
- 30. What attitude should we have toward our money?
- 31. How do you think you are able to serve God with the money God has entrusted to you?
- 32. What reasons do we have to put our confidence and faith in God?
- 33. Which of God's characteristics motivate you to rely on Him instead of on yourself?
- 34. In what area of life could you depend more on the Lord?
- 35. What does this passage tell us about the future we can expect?

Apply It

- * 36. In the next few days, when could you set aside some time merely to express, in prayer, confidence

in God's power and strength?

37. In what way could you improve the way you handle or use money?

38. What change or action would help you depend more on the Lord?

Psalm 63 - Psalm 63:1-11

Topics: Church, Consequences, Depend, Desires, Earth, Enemies, Fear, Feelings, Glory, God, Help, Life, Love, Lying, Name, Needs, Power, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Punishment, Reliability, Remembering, Satisfaction, Silence, Worship

Open It

1. What do you like to drink when you're really thirsty?
- * 2. If you were to be stranded on a deserted island, what are three things you would want to have with you?

Explore It

3. How did the psalm writer describe his situation? (63:1)
- * 4. What images did the psalm writer use to describe his longing for God? (63:1, 5)
5. What is the theme of this psalm? (63:1-11)
6. How did the psalm writer describe his dependence on the Lord? (63:1-11)
7. What did the psalm writer remember from his experience at his place of worship? (63:2-5)
8. How did David describe his experience at the temple? (63:2-5)
- * 9. How did the psalm writer's experience in the day encourage him at night? (63:2-7)
- * 10. What motivated David to praise the Lord? (63:2-8)
11. Why did David glorify the Lord? (63:3)
12. What did David think about before he went to sleep at night? (63:6-7)
13. What did David expect to happen to his enemies? (63:9-10)
14. What did David expect to happen to those who trusted God? (63:11)
15. What will happen to liars? (63:11)

Get It

16. What would make a person long for God?
17. How would you like your relationship with God to be like David's?
18. How can we strengthen our relationship with the Lord?
19. What image would you use to describe your present situation?
20. How can we depend on the Lord to help us through the problems we encounter?
21. How would you describe your last visit to church?
- * 22. How can our memory of meeting God in worship at church encourage us throughout the week?
23. What steps can we take to make the most of the time we spend in God's house?
24. What attitude does God want us to have toward worshiping Him?
25. What are the benefits of being part of a local church?
26. Why do you think some people hesitate to commit themselves to a local church?
27. What sacrifices do we have to make to commit ourselves to worshiping at a local church?
- * 28. What changes do you need to make in your attitudes or actions at church?

Apply It

29. In what ways could you remind yourself of God's presence with you throughout the week?
- * 30. For what do you want to praise God?

Psalm 64 - Psalm 64:1-10

Topics: Complaining, Consequences, Emotions, Encouragement, Enemies, Evil, Fairness, Faithfulness, Fear, Heart, Injustice, Intimidation, Judgment, Oppressed, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Punishment, Righteousness, Salvation, Thankfulness

Open It

1. How do you feel when you're in the middle of a noisy crowd?
2. When have you ever felt threatened by those who do not share your beliefs?
- * 3. Why is it not true that "sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me"?

Explore It

4. With what request did the psalm writer open this poem? (64:1)
5. From what did the author of this psalm need protection? (64:1)
6. What are some of the military words used in this poem? (64:1-10)
7. How are the wicked described in this passage? (64:2-6)
- * 8. How do the wicked attack others? (64:3-4)
9. How are the innocent affected by the wicked? (64:4)
10. How do the wicked behave when they're in groups? (64:5-6)
11. What conclusion did the author draw while describing the wicked? (64:6)
- * 12. What action will God take against the wicked? (64:7-8)
13. Where do the righteous find "refuge" from the "war" of the wicked? (64:7-10)
14. How will the wicked be viewed by others after God's judgment? (64:8)
15. In what ways will God's action against the wicked affect all of humankind? (64:9)
- * 16. How will people respond when God intervenes? (64:9-10)
17. How are the last two verses a fitting conclusion to this poem? (64:9-10)

Get It

18. In what ways are the wicked like a "noisy crowd"?
19. What emotions do you share with this psalm writer?
20. In what ways have you felt threatened by wickedness in the world?
21. When have you ever felt under attack for your beliefs?
22. How has God delivered you from spiritual attack?
- * 23. How do we need to respond when people verbally attack us?
24. In what situations do you experience verbal abuse?
- * 25. What can we learn from the example of the psalm writer about how to deal with attacks against us?
26. How does this psalm encourage you?
27. What can we learn from the negative example of the wicked in this passage?
28. How can Christians encourage each other in righteousness?
29. How do you think you need to be involved in "proclaiming the works of God"?
30. What reasons do you have to offer praise to the Lord?

Apply It

31. What is one way you can express confidence in God's justice in our wicked world?
32. What specific steps can you take to protect yourself from spiritual attacks?
- * 33. How do you want to respond the next time someone attacks you verbally?
34. When can you praise God together with believers?

Psalm 65 - Psalm 65:1-13

Topics: Answers, Awe, Blessing, Character, Church, Confidence, Creation, Earth, Example, Fear, Forgiveness, Generosity, God, Hope, Involvement, Joy, Listening, Nature, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Righteousness, Salvation, Security, Sin, Vows, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What have you learned about nature lately?
- 2. What do you enjoy most about animals, plants, the land, or some other aspect of nature?

Explore It

- 3. What words of commitment introduce this psalm? (65:1-2)
- * 4. What character traits of the Lord did the psalm writer praise? (65:1-13)
- 5. What gift does God give to His people? (65:3)
- 6. Who can enjoy the presence of the Lord? (65:3-4)
- 7. What benefits do God's forgiven people enjoy? (65:3-4)
- * 8. How does the Lord exert His control over creation? (65:5-8)
- 9. How is God involved in the affairs of the nations? (65:5-8)
- 10. In what ways does God bring order to the world? (65:5-8)
- 11. What image did the psalm writer use to describe the turmoil of the nations? (65:7)
- * 12. What should motivate all people to praise the Lord? (65:8)
- 13. In what specific ways did the Lord answer the prayers of the Israelites? (65:9-13)
- 14. How does the earth celebrate the Lord's goodness? (65:13)

Get It

- 15. How do you see God's hand at work in creation?
- 16. What does this psalm teach us about God's character?
- 17. What can we learn about God from creation?
- * 18. How does our understanding of God's character affect the way we live our everyday lives?
- 19. What motivates you to offer praise and worship to God?
- 20. What benefits from the Lord do you enjoy?
- 21. How has God answered your prayers?
- 22. How does remembering God's guidance and provision in the past encourage you for the future?
- * 23. Out of gratitude for the Lord's forgiveness, provision, and blessings, what commitment should we make to Him?
- 24. How do you plan to respond to God's goodness to you?

Apply It

- 25. What action could you take in the next few weeks to learn more about God's character and how He wants you to live?
- * 26. In what way could you show your appreciation to the Lord for the things, people, and experiences He has enabled you to enjoy?
- 27. Who is one person you could tell about God's goodness?

Psalm 66 - Psalm 66:1-20

Topics: Advice, Awe, Call, Challenge, Church, Creation, Effectiveness, Enemies, Example, Fear, Glory, Honor, Instructions, Joy, Listening, Love, Miracles, Power, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Protection, Purity, Rebellion, Remembering, Results, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin, Testing, Vows, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What's the nicest thing anyone ever did for you?
- 2. What is something you have tried to get others to do, whether you were successful or not?

Explore It

- 3. Whom does this psalm call to praise the Lord? (66:1-4)
- * 4. What specific instructions are given about praising the Lord? (66:1-4)
- 5. Why did the psalm writer encourage others to praise God? (66:1-4)
- 6. What did the psalm writer tell God's people to remember? Why? (66:5-7)
- 7. What advice is given to those who are tempted to rebel against the Lord? (66:7)
- 8. What acts of deliverance did the psalm writer describe? (66:8-12)
- * 9. What purpose motivated God to allow His people to experience hardship? (66:9-12)
- 10. What kind of language is used to describe the way God purifies His people? (66:10)
- 11. What images did the psalm writer use to describe the testing Israel went through? (66:11-12)
- 12. Where did the Lord take His people when He removed them from their situation of distress? (66:12)
- 13. How did the psalm writer plan to fulfill his vows to the Lord? (66:13-15)
- 14. Under what circumstances did the psalm writer make his vows to God? (66:14)
- 15. What proclamation does this psalm writer address to its audience? (66:16-20)
- * 16. How did the psalm writer testify to God's goodness? (66:16-20)
- 17. According to the psalm writer, when does God answer the prayers of His people? (66:18-19)

Get It

- 18. Why does God allow us to experience hardship?
- 19. How should we react to failure or difficult experiences?
- 20. What does this psalm reveal about how we can make our prayers effective?
- 21. What do you think could inhibit the effectiveness of your prayers?
- 22. Why did the psalm writer remind others what God had done for them in the past?
- 23. What value is there in remembering what God has done for us?
- * 24. How does your memory of God's blessings in the past encourage you to praise and trust Him today?
- 25. What can we learn from the testimony of the psalm writer in this passage?
- * 26. How should we be involved in sharing what God has done for us?
- 27. What kinds of things prevent Christians from sharing their faith with others?
- 28. Why is it important to tell others about what God has done for us?
- 29. What specific instructions do we find in this psalm about how to praise God?

Apply It

- 30. What does this psalm encourage you to do?
- 31. What is one step you could take this week to make your prayers more effective?
- * 32. Who is one person you could tell about what God has done for you?

Psalm 67 - Psalm 67:1-7

Topics: Abundance, Affirmation, Benefits, Blessing, Confidence, Earth, Fairness, Faith, Fear, Gifts, Humility, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Motives, Needs, Praise, Prayer, Salvation, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

1. What do you think would help eliminate poverty or food shortages in certain parts of the world?
- * 2. What are some of your hopes for the future? for your children's (or the next generation's) future?

Explore It

3. What did the psalm writer ask the Lord to do? (67:1)
- * 4. Why did the psalm writer want the Lord to bless him and his people? (67:1-2)
5. What are the three parts to this psalm? (67:1-2, 3-5, 6-7)
- * 6. What is the theme of this communal prayer? (67:1-7)
7. What refrain is repeated in the psalm? (67:3, 5)
8. How did the people speaking this psalm seek to motivate God to answer their prayer? (67:4)
9. How should all people respond to the way God guides His people? (67:4)
10. In what specific way did Israel want to experience God's blessing? (67:6)
- * 11. What results did the psalm writer expect to see from this prayer? (67:6-7)
12. What did the psalm writer predict would happen? When? (67:6-7)

Get It

- * 13. How do you think we should follow the psalm writer's example in asking for God's blessings?
14. How is this prayer relevant to us today?
15. How would you like the Lord to "make His face shine upon" you?
16. How do your emotions affect your prayers?
17. What attitude should we have when we pray?
18. What motives should we have when we pray?
19. How can we know if we are praying with the right motivation?
- * 20. In what specific way would you like to experience God's blessing in your life?
21. How can you ensure you have the right motivation when you present your requests to God?
22. In what ways does God bless us?
23. How should we respond to God's blessings?

Apply It

- * 24. In what ways could you pray like the writer of this psalm?
25. What specific request would you like present to God this week?
26. How can you say thank You to God for the ways He has provided for you and your family?

Psalm 68 - Psalm 68:1-35

Topics: Awe, Burdens, Death, Earth, Enemies, Family, Gifts, Guidance, Holy, Honor, Hope, Humility, Joy, Loneliness, Needs, Poor, Power, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Rebellion, Righteousness, Salvation, Strength, War

Open It

- * 1. In what ways do you depend on your family and friends?
- 2. When was the last time you received an unexpected bonus or pleasant surprise?

Explore It

- 3. What does this psalm celebrate? (68:1-35)
- 4. How does this psalm foreshadow the resurrection, ascension, rule, and final triumph of Christ? (68:1-35)
- 5. How is the Lord described in this psalm? (68:1-35)
- 6. What images did the psalm writer use to describe how the wicked will perish? (68:2)
- * 7. What call to praise does this psalm give to God's people? (68:4-6)
- 8. How does God meet the needs of people who have no support from family? (68:5-6)
- 9. What acts of the Lord did the psalm writer recall for the benefit of his listeners? (68:7-14)
- 10. What poetic image did the psalm writer use to celebrate the way that God defeated Israel's enemies and abundantly provided for them? (68:13)
- 11. How does this psalm celebrate God's ascent to Zion? (68:15-18)
- * 12. What hope did the psalm writer express? (68:19-23)
- 13. How is the procession to God's temple described in this passage? (68:24-27)
- 14. What call creates the climax of this poem? (68:32-35)
- * 15. Why did the psalm writer encourage God's people to praise the Lord? (68:32-35)

Get It

- 16. What hope does this psalm give us?
- 17. What can we learn from this passage about God's character?
- 18. What can we learn from this passage about God's power?
- 19. How does this psalm inspire you to praise the Lord?
- * 20. In what ways does the Lord provide for us?
- 21. In what specific ways has the Lord provided for you or your family?
- 22. What are some ways we can praise God for His provision?
- 23. What encouragement does this passage give to people without family support?
- 24. How do you think God wants us to be involved in helping people who are lonely or defenseless?
- 25. What specific instructions does this passage give us?
- 26. How does God want us to depend on Him?
- 27. Why do you think we sometimes hesitate to trust the Lord?
- * 28. This psalm describes God as the one who "daily bears our burdens"; what burdens do you need Him to bear for you?

Apply It

- * 29. What burden could you give to the Lord this week?
- 30. In what way could you help someone who is lonely or alone?
- 31. What offering of praise do you want to express for God's provision?

Psalm 69 - Psalm 69:1-36

Topics: Answers, Confession, Conflict, Consequences, Depend, Earth, Endurance, Enemies, Family, Fasting, Goodness, Guilt, Hatred, Heaven, Help, Hope, Humility, Insults, Love, Needs, Poor, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Punishment, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin, Thankfulness

Open It

- * 1. How do you think it would feel to be deserted or mocked by your family and friends because of some decision you made?
- 2. How did your family react to your decision to follow Christ?
- 3. What sacrifices have you had to make for your faith?

Explore It

- 4. What imagery is used to describe the psalm writer's situation? (69:1-2, 14-15)
- 5. What initial plea introduces this psalm? (69:1-4)
- 6. What motivated the psalm writer to write this poem? (69:1-36)
- 7. How is the Lord described? (69:1-36)
- 8. In what ways did the psalm writer depend on God? (69:1-36)
- 9. How did David plead his case before the Lord? (69:4)
- 10. How did David explain that his enemies were spreading false accusations about him? (69:4)
- 11. What confession did David make to the Lord? (69:5)
- * 12. What was David's motivation in asking for God's deliverance? (69:5-12)
- 13. How was David mocked for his commitment to the Lord? (69:7-12)
- 14. How did the psalm writer's own family treat him during his time of distress? (69:8)
- 15. How did David demonstrate his humility before God? (69:10-11)
- * 16. How did David respond to the mocking of his enemies? (69:13-18)
- 17. How did the psalm writer feel about his predicament? (69:19-20, 29)
- 18. What did David want the Lord to do for him? (69:22-28)
- * 19. What pleases God more than sacrifices? (69:30-31)
- 20. What call to praise concludes the psalm? (69:34-36)

Get It

- 21. When have you felt overwhelmed by your problems?
- 22. What specific steps did David take to deal with his predicament?
- * 23. In what ways should we imitate David's example?
- 24. What should be our motivation when we want God to rescue us from our problems?
- 25. What sacrifices did David make for his faith in God?
- 26. What are we tempted to do when people mock us for our faith?
- 27. What sacrifices do we need to be willing to make for our faith?
- * 28. What does the Lord desire from us even more than our sacrifices of money, time, or things?
- 29. What gift of praise could you give to the Lord?
- 30. What promises from this psalm would you like to claim for yourself?

Apply It

- 31. What is one step you can take to maintain your devotion to God the next time someone mocks you for your faith or beliefs?
- * 32. In what creative way could you offer your praise or thanks to the Lord this week?

Psalm 70 - Psalm 70:1-5

Topics: Benefits, Confusion, Depend, Desires, Devotion, Enemies, Help, Joy, Love, Needs, Poor, Praise, Prayer, Righteousness, Salvation, Shame, Worship

Open It

- * 1. In what way is your life either fast paced or laid-back?
- 2. What goes through your mind when someone says to you, "Hurry up"?
- 3. What are some everyday examples of the fast-paced nature of life today?

Explore It

- 4. What attitude begins and ends this psalm? (70:1, 5)
- 5. What is the theme of this prayer? (70:1-5)
- * 6. What did David ask of the Lord? (70:1-5)
- 7. What does this prayer reveal about David's relationship with the Lord? (70:1-5)
- 8. What predicament prompted David to write this psalm? (70:2-3)
- 9. What effects of God's help are described in this passage? (70:2-4)
- 10. How did David want God to treat his adversaries in comparison to other believers? (70:2-4)
- * 11. In what specific ways did David depend on the Lord? (70:2-5)
- 12. How does this psalm describe the people whom God chooses to bless? (70:4)
- 13. How would God's deliverance of the psalm writer affect others? (70:4)
- 14. What reason did David have for praising the Lord? (70:4)
- 15. How did David feel about his ability to save himself? (70:5)
- 16. How did the psalm writer describe the Lord? (70:5)
- * 17. What did David ask God to do? (70:5)

Get It

- 18. When are you often in a hurry?
- 19. What usually motivates us to pray?
- 20. When have you felt a sense of urgency in your prayers?
- 21. What should we do whenever we panic?
- * 22. How should we pray when we feel a sense of urgency or panic?
- 23. When and how does God want us to pray?
- 24. What behavior and attitudes does this passage advise us to avoid?
- 25. According to this psalm, what should we do?
- 26. What does it mean to seek the Lord?
- 27. What can we learn from David's example of dependence on the Lord?
- 28. In what specific areas of your life do you need to depend more on the Lord?
- 29. How would you like your relationship with the Lord to be more like David's?
- * 30. About what do you feel a sense of urgency or that time is running out?
- 31. In what ways do you think you could strengthen your relationship with God?

Apply It

- * 32. What urgent or pressing matter will you bring to the Lord today?
- 33. How do you want to pray differently about your most pressing concerns?
- 34. What changes would you like to make in your prayer habits this next week?

Psalm 71 - Psalm 71:1-24

Topics: Beliefs, Comfortable, Confidence, Conflict, Depend, Enemies, Evil, Faithfulness, Future, Help, Holy, Honor, Hope, Maturity, Power, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Righteousness, Salvation, Shame, Strength, Trust

Open It

1. What is one skill or ability you wish you had?
- * 2. In what ways have you changed as you've grown older?
3. Under what circumstances or in what settings do you feel vulnerable?

Explore It

4. How does the psalm writer's appeal for help introduce the passage? (71:1-4)
5. What is the dominant theme of this psalm? (71:1-24)
- * 6. What did the psalm writer recognize about God's help in the past? (71:5-8)
7. Why did the psalm writer compare himself to a "portent" (an omen or warning)? (71:7)
8. What weaknesses were the psalm writer's enemies trying to take advantage of? (71:9-11)
9. What central prayer request did the psalm writer present to the Lord? (71:9-13)
10. Why did the psalm writer need the Lord's deliverance? (71:10-11)
- * 11. What renewed commitment did the psalm writer make to God in his old age? (71:14-18)
12. How does the Lord express His righteousness? (71:16-17)
13. In whom did the psalm writer hope in the face of all his enemies? (71:19-21)
14. How is the Lord's righteousness described? (71:19)
- * 15. What commitment to the Lord concludes this psalm? (71:22-24)
16. What did the psalm writer anticipate in the future? (71:24)

Get It

17. What does this psalm teach us about God's character?
18. How does your knowledge of God's character affect your everyday life?
- * 19. How have you experienced God's help in the past?
20. How have you seen God use one of your weaknesses for His glory?
- * 21. How does remembering God's help in the past encourage you?
22. In what areas of your life do you need God's help or deliverance now?
23. How does this psalm encourage you to trust the Lord?
24. What does it mean for you to trust the Lord with your life?
25. How would you like to renew your commitment to the Lord?

Apply It

- * 26. To whom could you tell a story of what God has done for you in the past?
27. How could you express a renewal of your faith in the Lord?
28. What small step of faith could you take this week to demonstrate your renewed commitment to trust the Lord?

Psalm 72 - Psalm 72:1-20

Topics: Abilities, Accomplishments, Attitude, Authority, Blessing, Endurance, Generosity, Gifts, Judging Others, Justice, Leadership, Needs, Oppressed, Poor, Power, Praise, Prayer, Privilege, Problems, Responsibility, Righteousness, Serving, Status, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. Who has the most power and status in our society?
- 2. What have you seen leaders use their power to accomplish?
- 3. What kinds of decisions, acts, or events determine the success of a leader nowadays?

Explore It

- 4. How did the nation of Israel want the reign of their king to be characterized? (72:1)
- 5. On whom does this prayer focus? (72:1-20)
- * 6. What specific requests for the king did this psalm writer present to the Lord? (72:1-20)
- 7. How did the psalm writer want the king to administer justice? (72:2, 4)
- 8. How did the psalm writer want the king to treat the oppressed and underprivileged? (72:2-4)
- * 9. What did the king use his power to accomplish? (72:2-7, 12-14)
- 10. What imagery did the psalm writer use to describe the king's reign? (72:3-7)
- * 11. How did the psalm writer describe the blessings the king would experience? (72:7-11, 15-17)
- 12. How did the psalm writer describe the extent of the king's domain? (72:8-11)
- 13. How would other leaders respond to the king? (72:9-11)
- 14. How is the success of the king explained? (72:12-14)
- 15. What attitude did the king have toward the needy of society? (72:14)
- 16. What words of hope and praise conclude the psalm? (72:15-19)
- 17. What motivated the psalm writer to praise the Lord? (72:18-19)

Get It

- 18. How can we explain the success and blessings we experience?
- 19. What should be our response to the success God grants us?
- * 20. What specific instructions does this psalm give to all people who want to be righteous?
- 21. How can we follow the Israelites' example in this psalm?
- 22. How should we pray for our political and church leaders?
- * 23. What should we use our abilities and resources to accomplish?
- 24. What attitude should we have toward the poor and oppressed?
- 25. Who are the underprivileged in your community?
- 26. What role can you take in helping poor or oppressed people?

Apply It

- 27. How could you say thank You to God for the blessings He has given you?
- * 28. In what small way could you help a needy person this week?
- 29. For which political or church leaders will you commit to pray?

Psalm 73 - Psalm 73:1-28

Topics: Answers, Appearance, Attitude, Circumstances, Comparisons, Complaining, Consequences, Criticism, Differences, Discouragement, Disobedience, Doubt, Envy, Evil, Faithfulness, Frustration, Injustice, Life-style, Patience, Righteousness, Self-Centeredness, Success, Truth, Unfairness

Open It

- * 1. What unfairness or injustice do you see in your day-to-day life?
- 2. What do you think is the most desirable thing on earth?
- 3. Whom do you envy most, and what do you envy about him or her?
- 4. Who are some of the most prosperous people in the public eye?

Explore It

- 5. To whom does God show His goodness? (73:1)
- * 6. What dilemma did the author of this psalm face? (73:1-3)
- 7. What is ironic about the way the wicked live? (73:4-12)
- * 8. What characterizes the wicked? (73:4-12)
- 9. Why do the wicked take pride in themselves? (73:4-12)
- 10. In what way is this a description of wicked people: “pride is their necklace, they clothe themselves with violence”? (73:6)
- 11. What attitude do wicked people have toward God? (73:11)
- 12. Why did the psalm writer think that his own righteousness was in vain? (73:13)
- 13. How was the psalm writer affected by the prosperity of the wicked? (73:13-14, 21-22)
- * 14. When did the psalm writer understand that the prosperity of the wicked didn’t matter? (73:17)
- 15. What did God reveal to the psalm writer about the wicked? (73:18-19)
- 16. How is God’s treatment of the wicked and the faithful contrasted? (73:18-19, 23-27)
- 17. How did the psalm writer respond when he realized that the prosperity of the wicked is temporary? (73:18-28)
- 18. What is the most desirable thing on earth? (73:25)
- 19. With what vow did the author conclude his psalm? (73:28)

Get It

- 20. How are we just like the writer of this psalm?
- 21. How do you usually feel when you see bad people succeed and good people fail?
- 22. Why do we envy others’ success?
- 23. How are you affected by the prosperity of wicked people?
- 24. Why do you think God allows sinful people to succeed or get rich?
- 25. What should be our response when we see sinful people succeed?
- * 26. How should you react when you experience failure in your life?
- 27. When has God guided you through a difficult problem?
- 28. What new perspective does this passage give you about your own circumstances?
- * 29. How can we have God’s perspective when we feel confused or upset about the way our world is?
- 30. What have you learned about the role of worship in our lives?

Apply It

- * 31. What can you do to be content the next time you feel unfairly unrewarded for the good you do?
- 32. How can you help yourself remember that God is in control the next time you get frustrated with the unfairness you see around you?

Psalm 74 - Psalm 74:1-23

Topics: Anger, Covenant, Creation, Depend, Despair, Disobedience, Earth, Enemies, Foolishness, History, Needs, Oppressed, Poor, Prayer, Protection, Remembering, Salvation, Worship

Open It

1. What negative remarks have you heard people make about religion or religious belief?
- * 2. What's one lesson you learned "the hard way"?
3. What's one cause you once took up or have taken up recently?

Explore It

4. What was the initial complaint of the psalm writer? (74:1-2)
5. Why did Israel feel deserted by the Lord? (74:1-2, 4-10)
- * 6. How did the psalm writer feel? (74:1-2, 9)
7. What is the major idea of this psalm? (74:1-23)
8. Why did the psalm writer need the Lord's deliverance? (74:1-23)
9. What are the "everlasting ruins" to which the psalm writer referred? (74:3)
10. How was the Lord's temple destroyed? (74:3-8)
11. What motivation did Israel's enemies have for destroying God's temple? (74:8)
- * 12. What confession of faith serves as the center of the psalm? (74:12)
13. What did the psalm writer remember about God's deeds in the past? (74:13-17)
14. What imagery is used to celebrate God's work in creation? (74:13-17)
- * 15. What did the psalm writer ask God to do? (74:18-23)
16. What prayer concludes the psalm? (74:18-23)

Get It

17. How is this prayer a good model for us to follow?
- * 18. In what way can difficulties serve as teachers for us?
19. How do you see God's hand at work in creation?
20. How does the Lord bring order to nature?
21. What can we learn from this psalm about depending on the Lord during difficult times?
22. When have you felt deserted by the Lord or others?
23. How do you feel about your present circumstances?
24. In what area of your life do you need the Lord's help?
- * 25. In what specific ways could you depend more on the Lord to help you learn from your mistakes?

Apply It

- * 26. What's one practical step you can take to turn mistakes into learning opportunities?
27. How can you discipline yourself to turn to the Lord when you fall instead of wallowing in guilt?
28. How could you encourage a friend who is going through a difficult time?

Psalm 75 - Psalm 75:1-10

Topics: Advice, Consequences, Disobedience, God, God's Will, Heaven, Humility, Judgment, Justice, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Punishment, Righteousness, Thankfulness, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What do you think it would be like to know the future?
- 2. If you had the opportunity to find out, what would you want to know about the future?
- 3. In your view, what is good or bad about “trial by jury” in our criminal justice system?

Explore It

- 4. What two elements of worship begin and end this song? (75:1, 9-10)
- 5. What is the theme of this song? (75:1-10)
- 6. When and how does the Lord judge the earth? (75:2)
- * 7. What reassuring word from God forms the first half of the passage? (75:2-5)
- * 8. In what way is God superior to any person or part of creation? (75:3)
- 9. Who offers the world stability in the face of uncertainty? (75:3)
- 10. What causes the moral order of the earth to decline? (75:3-5)
- 11. What message is there for the arrogant and the wicked in this psalm? (75:4)
- 12. What image is used to describe the defiance of the wicked against the Lord? (75:4-5)
- 13. What does the psalm writer say about the position of humankind? (75:6)
- 14. How do God's people respond to the word from heaven? (75:6-8)
- 15. How is the success or failure of humankind decided? (75:7)
- 16. The wine represents God's judgment—who will “drink” this wine? (75:8)
- * 17. What vow concludes the psalm? (75:9)
- 18. What does this psalm say about the final outcome of the wicked and the righteous? (75:10)

Get It

- 19. Under what circumstances do people sometimes feel as if the world is crumbling around them?
- * 20. How does this psalm encourage us to face the uncertainties of life?
- 21. What does this psalm teach us about God's control of the events of our lives?
- 22. How has your relationship with the Lord helped you face an uncertain future?
- 23. What makes God the only One qualified to judge us?
- 24. In what ways do we judge one another when we shouldn't?
- 25. What attitude does this psalm advise us to avoid?
- 26. How can a proud spirit bring confusion and instability into a person's life?
- 27. What does an arrogant attitude demonstrate about a person's heart toward God?
- 28. How can we guard against the sin of pride?
- * 29. What does this passage teach us about thankfulness and praise?

Apply It

- 30. What specific steps could you take this week to cultivate a spirit of humility before God?
- 31. What is one way in which you could be more tolerant of and less judgmental toward other people?
- * 32. How could you express thankfulness for the stability God brings to your life?

Psalm 76 - Psalm 76:1-12

Topics: Anger, Attitude, Character, Enemies, Faithfulness, Fear, Heaven, Honor, Judgment, Justice, Leadership, Obedience, Power, Praise, Promises, Protection, Salvation, Vows, War, Worship

Open It

1. How does it feel when a friend breaks a promise?
- * 2. Why do people root for the underdog?

Explore It

3. What act of God does the introduction of the song describe? (76:1-3)
- * 4. Why was God's name honored in Israel? (76:1-3)
5. What attribute of the Lord does this psalm celebrate? (76:1-12)
6. What motivated the psalm writer to praise the Lord? (76:1-12)
7. How did the Lord defend His dwelling place in Zion? (76:2-3)
8. How did the Lord protect the nation of Israel? (76:3, 5-6)
9. What imagery is used to celebrate the majesty of the Lord? (76:4)
- * 10. What does this passage say about the Lord's majesty and justice? (76:4-10)
11. How did the Lord's deliverance of Israel demonstrate His power? (76:5-6)
12. Why should we fear the Lord? (76:7)
13. How does the earth respond to God's judgment? (76:8)
14. What results from the wrath of God against people? (76:10)
- * 15. How does this psalm encourage us to respond to God's help? (76:11-12)
16. What attitude should leaders have toward God? (76:12)

Get It

- * 17. How have you seen God's power at work in your life?
18. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
- * 19. What reasons do we have to fear God?
20. What imagery would you use to describe the Lord's majesty and power?
21. How do the Lord's promises differ from the promises of people?
22. Why does this psalm encourage us to "make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them"?
23. What is the danger in making vows to God?
24. What kind of vows do you think we should make to the Lord?
25. What should motivate us to obey God?

Apply It

26. What new promise would you like to make to the Lord?
- * 27. What is one way you can celebrate God's power and majesty during Christian holidays such as Advent, Christmas, and Easter?
28. What offering of praise could you give to God today?

Psalm 77 - Psalm 77:1-20

Topics: Anger, Compassion, Confusion, Decisions, Desires, Despair, Faith, Faithfulness, Frustration, Guidance, Help, History, Holy, Love, Mercy, Miracles, Nature, Obedience, People, Power, Praise, Prayer, Promises, Remembering, Strength, Thinking, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What do you do to strengthen your relationships with your friends?
- 2. How are friendships weakened?

Explore It

- 3. Why was the psalm writer perplexed? (77:1-9)
- * 4. How did the psalm writer feel about God's inaction on his behalf? (77:1-9)
- 5. What main idea forms the theme of this psalm? (77:1-20)
- 6. What did the psalm writer recall about God's mercies in the past? (77:3-6)
- 7. How did remembering God's help in the past make the psalm writer feel about his present situation? (77:3-6)
- * 8. What decision did the psalm writer make about how to handle God's inactivity in his present situation? (77:10-12)
- 9. How was the psalm writer's decision to remember God's help in the past an act of faith? (77:10-12)
- 10. How does this passage describe God's character? (77:11-15)
- 11. How did God demonstrate His power to the nation of Israel? (77:13-20)
- 12. What specific historical event did the psalm writer remember to celebrate God's majesty? (77:16-19)
- 13. How did God reveal His power over nature? (77:16-19)
- * 14. What conclusion did the psalm writer make about God's involvement in the lives of His people? (77:20)
- 15. What imagery is used to describe God's guidance? (77:20)

Get It

- 16. How did the psalm writer overcome his feelings of doubt and discouragement?
- 17. How can we nurture our relationship with the Lord?
- 18. What resulted from the psalm writer's meditation on God's works in the past?
- 19. When have you felt far away from the Lord?
- 20. Why do you think we sometimes feel that God is distant and unreachable?
- * 21. How can we follow the psalm writer's example in dealing with doubt and discouragement?
- 22. How can we be sure of God's guidance in the future?
- 23. What has God done for you in the past that you want to remember?
- * 24. What memories of God's help in the past encourage you to believe that He will help you in the future?
- 25. What can we learn from the psalm writer's conclusion in this passage?

Apply It

- 26. Who is one person you can ask to pray with you the next time you feel discouraged?
- * 27. How can you remind yourself this week of God's faithfulness to you in the past?
- 28. How could you praise the Lord today for His presence, mercy, and guidance in your life?

Psalm 78 - Psalm 78:1-72

Topics: Advice, Anger, Children, Commitment, Depend, Disobedience, Enemies, Faith, Faithfulness, Flattery, Forget, Future, Guidance, Heart, History, Hypocrisy, Instructions, Judgment, Law, Leadership, Loyalty, Mercy, Miracles, Power, Praise, Rebellion, Remembering, Responsibility, Sin, Teaching, Testing, Trust, Witnessing

Open It

1. What is a “fair-weather friend”?
2. What’s most distasteful to you about the behavior of a spoiled child?
- * 3. If you were invited to do so, what advice would you give to the parents of a spoiled child?
4. Why do parents teach their children to say thank you?

Explore It

5. Why did the psalm writer encourage God’s people to tell their children of God’s faithfulness in the past? (78:1-8)
6. What is the central message of this passage? (78:1-72)
- * 7. How does this psalm serve as a warning to God’s people? (78:1-72)
8. What did the psalm writer want Israel’s future generations to avoid? (78:8)
9. What violation of God’s covenant did the psalm writer describe? (78:9-11, 17-20)
10. What had the Lord done on behalf of Israel? (78:11-16)
11. How had the Israelites responded to God’s faithful protection and guidance? (78:17-20)
12. How had the Israelites demonstrated their rebellion and unfaithfulness? (78:18-20, 32-37, 40-43, 56-58)
13. How did the Lord feel about His people’s rebellion? (78:21-22, 58-59)
- * 14. How did the Lord provide for the nation of Israel despite their disobedience? (78:23-29, 38-39, 42-55)
15. What resulted from Israel’s rebellion? (78:30-31, 59-64)
- * 16. How is the hypocrisy of the Israelites described? (78:32-37)
17. What incredible fact did the psalm writer reveal about God’s people? (78:32-37)
18. How did the Lord demonstrate His mercy to His people? (78:38-41, 68-71)

Get It

19. Why are we tempted to ignore God when things are going well?
20. What’s wrong with seeking the Lord only when we need His help?
21. How can we strengthen our relationship with the Lord even in the good times?
- * 22. How does the nation of Israel serve as a negative example to us today?
23. What behaviors and attitudes does this psalm warn us to avoid?
- * 24. How can we guard against the sin of hypocrisy?
25. How does our relationship with the Lord during the good times demonstrate the sincerity of our faith and our faithfulness to Him?
26. How have you experienced God’s help and guidance in the past?
27. Why is it important to meditate on God’s faithfulness in the past?
28. What responsibility do we have to our own children and future generations?
29. What can we do to teach our children to be loyal and faithful to God?

Apply It

30. What can you do to remember the Lord on days when you feel no need to turn to Him?
- * 31. When could you set aside some time this week to meditate on God’s faithfulness to you?
32. Whom could you tell about what God has done for you?

Psalm 79 - Psalm 79:1-13

Topics: Anger, Depend, Despair, Forgiveness, Future, Help, Home, Insults, Jealousy, Judgment, Justice, Mercy, Name, Needs, Persecution, Praise, Prayer, Reputation, Sin, Strength, War

Open It

1. Why do you think actions speak louder than our words?
2. What was your first impression of your church?
- * 3. What have you heard people say turns them off to Christianity?

Explore It

4. How was the Lord's temple violated? (79:1-3)
5. What predicament prompted the Israelites to go to God in prayer? (79:1-4)
6. How were the Israelites persecuted? (79:1-4)
7. What main request did Israel present to the Lord? (79:1-13)
8. How was the nation of Israel viewed by her neighbors? (79:4)
9. What did the Israelites think was preventing God from acting on their behalf? (79:5)
- * 10. What did the Israelites ask God to do on their behalf? (79:5-8)
11. How are Israel's enemies described? (79:6-7)
12. How did the Israelites feel about their situation? (79:8)
13. Why did the Israelites need God's mercy? (79:8-9)
- * 14. How did Israel try to convince God to come to her rescue? (79:10)
15. What did the Israelites expect to happen if God chose not to deliver them? (79:10)
16. Why did Israel believe her enemies deserved God's judgment? (79:10)
17. How did Israel view the attacks of her enemies? (79:12)
- * 18. What prayer and vow concludes the psalm? (79:12-13)
19. What does the concluding vow reveal about Israel's attitude? (79:13)

Get It

20. What do our actions and attitudes tell others about Christianity?
- * 21. How did the Israelites believe their lives reflected on God's character?
22. How do our actions reflect on the reputation of Christ?
23. How should we be involved in preserving God's reputation?
- * 24. What steps do you think you could take to improve your witness for Christ?
25. What can we learn from this passage about presenting our needs to God in prayer?
26. What different elements should our prayers include?
27. On what aspect of prayer do you need to focus more attention?
28. How should we respond to God's help in our lives?
29. What kind of commitments does God want from us?

Apply It

30. What commitment would you like to make to the Lord today?
31. When could you set aside time this week for prayer?
- * 32. What step could you take to improve your witness for Christ?

Psalm 80 - Psalm 80:1-19

Topics: Anger, Comparisons, Conflict, Despair, Enemies, Heaven, Judgment, Mourning, Needs, Obedience, People, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Promises, Punishment, Restoration, Salvation

Open It

- * 1. What metaphor, imagery, or illustration would you use to describe your spiritual journey?
- 2. What do you think of when you hear the word revival?

Explore It

- 3. What appeal did the Israelites make to the Lord in this prayer? (80:1-3)
- 4. How is the Lord described in the psalm? (80:1-19)
- 5. What refrain is repeated in this poem, and what is the effect of the repetition? (80:3, 7, 19)
- 6. How did the psalm writer explain God's inaction? (80:4)
- 7. Why did the Israelites lament over God's actions? (80:4-7)
- 8. How did Israel feel about God's inaction? (80:4-19)
- 9. How were the Israelites treated by their neighbors? (80:6)
- 10. In what ways was Israel a transplanted vine? (80:8-11)
- * 11. What imagery did the psalm writer use to describe Israel's condition? (80:8-16)
- 12. What was different about Israel's situation at the time of this prayer? (80:12-13, 16)
- 13. What specific request did the psalm writer present to the Lord? (80:14-15)
- * 14. What did Israel recognize about God's power? (80:16)
- 15. What prayer concludes the poem? (80:16-19)
- 16. How did Israel promise to respond to God's deliverance? (80:17-18)
- * 17. What vow did Israel make to God? (80:18)

Get It

- 18. What does this passage reveal about God's character?
- 19. How did the Israelites demonstrate their dependence on God?
- 20. What are the benefits of remembering God's deeds for us in the past?
- 21. How does this psalm encourage you about your present situation?
- 22. In what way do you need to be restored or revived by the Lord?
- * 23. In what areas of your life do you need to depend more on the Lord for guidance and help?
- 24. What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord?
- 25. What did Israel plan to do in response to God's deliverance?
- 26. How has God shown His faithfulness to you in the past?
- * 27. How should we respond to God's salvation and help?

Apply It

- * 28. With whom could you pray and invite God to revive your relationship with the Lord?
- 29. How could you and your family remind yourselves each day this week about what God has done for you?
- 30. What small step of faith could you take to demonstrate your commitment to trust the Lord with all the details of your life?

Psalm 81 - Psalm 81:1-16

Topics: Advice, Answers, Celebration, Depend, Despair, Disobedience, Enemies, Faithfulness, Freedom, God, Heart, History, Idolatry, Instructions, Joy, Listening, Loyalty, Music, Needs, Obedience, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Punishment, Remembering, Salvation, Satisfaction, Strength, Stubbornness, Submission, Testing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of things interfere with our spiritual growth?
- 2. How does our culture entice us to remove our focus from the Lord?

Explore It

- 3. How is the Lord described in the psalm? (81:1-5)
- * 4. What does the introduction of the song summon God's people to do? (81:1-5)
- 5. What does this song celebrate? (81:1-16)
- 6. What is the historical background of the feast that this song celebrates? (81:3-5)
- 7. From what predicament did the Lord save the Israelites? (81:6)
- 8. What did the Lord do for the nation of Israel? (81:6-7)
- 9. What words from the Lord follow the psalm writer's instructions? (81:6-10)
- * 10. How does God want His people to respond to His help? (81:8-10)
- 11. What specific instructions did God give to Israel? (81:9)
- 12. What promise does the Lord offer His people in return for their obedience? (81:10)
- 13. How does God describe the response of Israel to His faithfulness? (81:11-16)
- 14. What did God do when Israel refused to submit to Him? (81:12)
- 15. What simple reason does the Lord give to explain why Israel did not experience continued success? (81:13-16)
- * 16. What does the Lord desire to do for His people? (81:14-16)

Get It

- 17. What does this passage reveal to us about the kind of relationship God wants to have with us?
- 18. How did God want Israel to respond to His faithfulness?
- 19. How has the Lord demonstrated His faithfulness to you?
- 20. What should be your response to God's help?
- 21. What does the Lord want from us?
- 22. According to this psalm, what behavior does God want us to avoid?
- * 23. What words from the Lord do you need to listen to and obey?
- 24. What "gods" are we tempted to put before the Lord?
- 25. What steps can we take to withstand the temptation to put other things before the Lord?
- * 26. What changes do you need to make in order to make your relationship with God your number one priority?
- 27. What promises does this psalm offer to us if we submit to the Lord?
- 28. What can we expect from the Lord in return for our obedience?

Apply It

- 29. In what area of your life do you need to submit to the Lord in obedience?
- * 30. What changes do you think God wants you to make this week to put Him first in your life?
- 31. What specific steps could you take to prevent other "gods" from interfering with your relationship with the Lord?

Psalm 82 - Psalm 82:1-8

Topics: Death, Disobedience, Evil, Heaven, Judgment, Justice, Leadership, Morality, Needs, Oppressed, Poor, Protection, Responsibility, Understanding, Unfairness, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of things prevent us from getting involved in social issues?
- 2. Who are the needy people of your community?
- 3. When was the last time someone helped you out?

Explore It

- 4. To what is the psalm writer referring when he speaks of the “great assembly”? (82:1)
- 5. What is the theme of this psalm? (82:1-8)
- 6. To which of the Lord’s roles does this psalm appeal? (82:1-8)
- 7. What did the psalm writer see in his vision of God’s judgment? (82:1-8)
- * 8. What primary task of kings and judges were the leaders, whom the psalm writer condemned, failing to accomplish? (82:3-4)
- * 9. How did the psalm writer describe the leaders he condemned? (82:5)
- 10. Why did the psalm writer refer to darkness? (82:5)
- 11. For what reason were the “foundations of the earth” shaken? (82:5)
- 12. How will the wicked leaders of the world be treated by the righteous? (82:6)
- 13. How does the psalm imply that the wicked leaders took their power and status to an extreme? (82:6)
- * 14. What outcome did the psalm writer predict for the wicked rulers? (82:7)
- 15. What prayer concludes the psalm? (82:8)
- 16. Why did the psalm writer ask the Lord to judge the earth? (82:8)

Get It

- 17. What does this passage tell us about leadership?
- 18. What kind of leaders are condemned?
- 19. How do immoral leaders affect the stability of a whole nation?
- 20. What future can wicked leaders expect?
- 21. What attitudes and behaviors does this psalm advise us to avoid?
- 22. How do you need to change your attitude toward the underprivileged of your community?
- 23. What responsibility do you think Christians have to help the underprivileged of society?
- * 24. How should we be involved in defending and rescuing the needy?
- 25. What kind of leaders does God want us to be?
- 26. According to the psalm writer, what is a leader’s main task?
- * 27. In what way are you a leader at work, church, in your community, or in the home?

Apply It

- 28. What specific steps could you take this week to improve your leadership skills?
- * 29. How could you protect or help a needy neighbor, friend, or family member in a tangible way?

Psalm 83 - Psalm 83:1-18

Topics: Attitude, Confidence, Conflict, Depend, Desires, Enemies, Expectations, Fear, God, History, Hope, Judgment, Motives, Needs, Neighbor, Obedience, Oppressed, People, Power, Prayer, Pride, Problems, Silence, Trust

Open It

1. In what circumstances do you sometimes feel overwhelmed or helpless?
- * 2. In what settings or situations are you a minority?
3. How do you usually deal with feelings of discouragement or doubt?

Explore It

4. What appeal to God did the psalm writer present? (83:1-4)
- * 5. Why did the nation of Israel need God's help? (83:1-8)
6. What is the main idea of this prayer? (83:1-18)
7. How did the psalm writer describe the threats against Israel? (83:2-8)
8. How did the Israelites view themselves in God's sight? (83:3)
9. What was the goal of Israel's enemies? (83:4)
10. Who formed an alliance against Israel? (83:5-8)
11. How had the Lord demonstrated His power? (83:9-11)
- * 12. What did Israel want God to do for them? (83:9-12)
13. What imagery did the psalm writer use to describe how Israel's enemies will react to God's judgment? (83:13-16)
14. Why did the psalm writer compare God's judgment to fire? (83:14-15)
- * 15. What motive did the psalm writer have in asking God to deliver Israel? (83:16)
16. What will be the final result of God's deliverance of Israel? (83:17-18)

Get It

17. When have you ever felt like you were surrounded by threats or overwhelmed by problems?
18. How did the Israelites deal with their predicament?
- * 19. What can we learn from Israel's example?
20. In what way are Christians a minority?
21. How should we view ourselves and our relationship with God?
- * 22. How should we pray for the world (friends, family, and coworkers who do not know God)?
23. What should be our motives in asking the Lord for help?
24. How can we guard against selfish motives in our prayers?
25. What do you need from the Lord?
26. What do you think it means to trust in the Lord?
27. In light of this passage, how should you present your needs to God?
28. In what specific areas of your life do you need to depend more on the Lord?

Apply It

- * 29. What specific request would you like to present to the Lord today?
30. What small change could you make in your prayer habits?
31. Who is one person you need to pray for?
32. What small step could you take this week to demonstrate your dependence on the Lord rather than in your own strength?

Psalm 84 - Psalm 84:1-12

Topics: Blessing, Choices, Church, Desires, God, Heart, Honor, Hope, Loyalty, Praise, Prayer, Preparation, Priorities, Promises, Remembering, Righteousness, Strength, Trust, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What's one thing you like about your church? One thing you dislike?
- 2. What kind of vacations do you most look forward to?

Explore It

- 3. How did the psalm writer describe the house of the Lord? (84:1-4)
- 4. What was the psalm writer's desire? (84:1-12)
- * 5. What experience did the psalm writer miss from the past? (84:1-12)
- 6. How did the psalm writer describe his longing for God's house? (84:2)
- 7. Why was the psalm writer jealous of the birds? (84:3)
- * 8. Why did the psalm writer want to return to God's temple? (84:4)
- 9. What pilgrimage did the psalm writer describe in this passage? (84:5)
- 10. How did the psalm writer describe the joy of going to Zion to worship God? (84:5-7)
- 11. How did the travelers' expectations of God's house change his attitude toward the difficulties of the journey? (84:6-7)
- 12. What prayer did the psalm writer offer to the Lord? (84:8-11)
- 13. What would the psalm writer choose over status or power? (84:10)
- * 14. What attitude did the psalm writer have toward God's temple? (84:10-11)
- 15. What character traits of the Lord's did the psalm writer praise? (84:11)
- 16. Why did the psalm writer refer to God as a "sun and shield"? (84:11)
- 17. What conclusion did the psalm writer draw? (84:12)

Get It

- 18. How does this passage challenge us to view the opportunity to go to church?
- 19. What attitude should we have toward church?
- 20. What should be our motivation in going to church?
- 21. What kinds of distractions prevent us from looking forward to going to church?
- 22. Under what circumstances do you sometimes feel like skipping church?
- 23. Why do you think we sometimes take church for granted?
- * 24. How can we renew our desire to worship God and have a positive attitude toward going to church?
- 25. How do you need to change your attitude about church or worship?
- * 26. What change do you need to make in your everyday habits to help you have the proper attitude toward attending church each week?
- 27. Why is it sometimes most important to attend church on those days when we don't feel like going?
- 28. How should our expectations of worshipping God on Sunday mornings affect our preparations to go to church?

Apply It

- 29. In practical terms, what can you do to make getting to church less stressful or frustrating?
- * 30. What practical steps could you take this week to prepare yourself to worship God next Sunday at church?
- 31. What can you do the day before worship to help you enter worship with the right attitude and motivation?

Psalm 85 - Psalm 85:1-13

Topics: Anger, Blessing, Desires, Expectations, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Goodness, Guidance, Heaven, Hope, Joy, Listening, Love, Obedience, Past, Peace, People, Promises, Restoration, Righteousness, Salvation, Sin

Open It

1. When has another person encouraged you in your faith?
- * 2. How did your mother reassure you after you got in trouble?
3. When was a time you received mercy as a child?

Explore It

4. What mercies had the Lord granted His people in the past? (85:1-3)
5. For what reason did the psalm writer recall God's faithfulness in the past? (85:1-4)
6. What is the theme of this communal prayer? (85:1-13)
- * 7. How can God's people rest secure in His care? (85:1-13)
- * 8. What request did the psalm writer present to the Lord? (85:4-7)
9. What did the psalm writer recognize about the reason Israel was experiencing difficult times? (85:4-7)
- * 10. What promises does God offer His people? (85:8)
11. How should God's people respond to His faithfulness? (85:8)
12. What mercies did the psalm writer expect to receive from the Lord? (85:8-9)
13. What reassurance is offered? (85:10-13)
14. What will God give? (85:10-13)
15. What blessings from the Lord are personified in the passage? (85:10-13)
16. What picture did the psalm writer give of God's gracious treatment of His people? (85:10-13)

Get It

17. What does this psalm tell us about God's character?
18. What kind of relationship does the Lord want to have with us?
19. How does corporate worship strengthen our relationship with the Lord?
- * 20. What reasons does this passage give you to trust the Lord with your needs?
21. Why does God sometimes allow us to go through difficult times?
22. How have you experienced the blessing of the Lord?
23. How can reminding ourselves of God's past mercies help us through our present difficulties?
- * 24. How can we ensure we will receive God's promised blessings?
25. To whom does the Lord draw near?
26. What are the dangers in trying to keep our faith secret or hidden from others?
27. According to this psalm, what responsibility do we have to the Lord?

Apply It

28. What is one thing you could do to thank the Lord for His many blessings?
- * 29. Where or how could you display a reminder of God's faithfulness to you each day this week?
30. What small step could you take to draw near to the Lord each day?

Psalm 86 - Psalm 86:1-17

Topics: Answers, Call, Compassion, Depend, Devotion, Enemies, Fear, Forgiveness, Glory, God, Goodness, Guidance, Heart, Joy, Love, Mercy, Needs, Poor, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Problems, Protection, Salvation, Serving, Soul, Strength, Teaching, Trust, Truth, Worship

Open It

1. What would you say is one of your best character traits?
2. What do you think your friends appreciate most about you?
- * 3. What do you most appreciate about one of your friends?

Explore It

4. What was David's predicament? (86:1, 7, 14)
5. What specific blessings did David ask of the Lord? (86:1-4, 11, 16-17)
6. What motivated David to write this prayer? (86:1-17)
7. What attitude did David have toward himself? (86:1-17)
- * 8. How did David demonstrate his dependence on God? (86:1-17)
9. What does this psalm reveal about the kind of relationship David had with the Lord? (86:1-17)
- * 10. Why did David believe the Lord would answer his prayer? (86:2-3, 5, 11-13, 15-17)
11. To whom does the Lord show His mercy? (86:2-7)
12. Why did David call to God for help? (86:5-7)
13. How did David compare the Lord to other gods? (86:8-9)
- * 14. How did David want the Lord to work in his life? (86:11)
15. What did David expect to be the result of God's work in him? (86:11-12)
16. What vow did David make to the Lord? (86:11-12)
17. What did David expect from God? (86:13, 15, 17)
18. How are David's adversaries described? (86:14)

Get It

19. What does this passage tell us about God's character?
20. What do you appreciate most about God's character?
21. What difference does it make that God is faithful, merciful, and loving?
22. According to this psalm, how should we view ourselves in relation to God?
23. Why does God want us to depend on Him?
- * 24. In what specific ways is David a role model for us?
- * 25. How would you like your relationship with God to be like David's?
26. What did David mean when he asked the Lord to give him an undivided heart?
27. When should we pray for an "undivided heart"?
28. What is one thing in your life that takes your focus off of the Lord?

Apply It

- * 29. What steps could you take this week to eliminate anything that weakens your commitment to serve God?
30. How could you remind yourself each day of God's faithfulness, mercy, and love?
31. How do you want to pray differently this week?

Psalm 87 - Psalm 87:1-7

Topics: Accountability, Believers, Citizenship, Depend, Doctrine, Eternal Life, Future, God, Judgment, Love, People, Praise, Prophecy, Rewards

Open It

- * 1. What do you like and dislike about having a boss?
- 2. In what settings or places are you accountable to someone else?

Explore It

- 3. From where did the Lord rule over the nation of Israel? (87:1-2)
- 4. Why did the Lord choose to dwell in Zion? (87:1-2)
- * 5. What does this psalm celebrate? (87:1-7)
- 6. If the nations listed in this psalm are representative of peoples that do not know God, what is the message of this psalm? (87:1-7)
- 7. How is this psalm prophetic? (87:1-7)
- 8. What reputation does the “city of God” have? (87:3)
- * 9. Whose names does the Lord record as citizens of Zion? (87:4-7)
- 10. Why does the Lord carefully record the names of all of His people? (87:4-7)
- * 11. Why will God’s people sing, “All my fountains are in you”? (87:7)
- 12. How will God provide for His people in Zion? (87:7)

Get It

- 13. What does this psalm teach us about God?
- 14. Whom does the Lord choose to be His people?
- 15. What does it mean to acknowledge God?
- * 16. In what ways do we need to acknowledge the Lord?
- 17. How can we be sure our names are recorded in God’s register?
- 18. Why is Christian fellowship important?
- 19. What does it mean to be held accountable?
- 20. How should Christians keep each other accountable?
- 21. What are the dangers in being accountable to no one?
- 22. Who keeps you accountable in your Christian walk?
- * 23. In what ways do you think you could be kept more accountable?

Apply It

- * 24. Whom could you ask to keep you accountable in your Christian walk?
- 25. In what area do you need someone to hold you accountable? Whom could you ask to help you?
- 26. Practically speaking, how can you acknowledge the Lord?
- 27. What plans can you make to fellowship with other believers this next week?

Psalm 88 - Psalm 88:1-18

Topics: Anger, Call, Death, Depend, Depression, Despair, Emotions, Faithfulness, Fear, Friendship, Grief, Help, Hope, Life, Loneliness, Love, Perseverance, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Punishment, Rejection, Righteousness, Salvation, Soul, Suffering, Youth

Open It

- * 1. Why do you think people sometimes blame God for their problems?
- 2. What kinds of events cause you to feel lonely or depressed?
- 3. How has a friend helped you through a difficult time in your life?

Explore It

- 4. What is the overall mood of this poem? (88:1-18)
- 5. What appeal opens the psalm? (88:1-2)
- * 6. How is the psalm writer's situation described? (88:3-5)
- 7. Whom did the psalm writer blame for his predicament? (88:6-9)
- 8. How was the psalm writer treated by his friends? When? (88:8, 18)
- * 9. How did the psalm writer respond to his difficult situation? (88:9)
- * 10. What request did the psalm writer present to the Lord? (88:9-12)
 - 11. From what did the psalm writer need to be saved? (88:10-12)
 - 12. What imagery is used to describe death and the grave? (88:10-12)
 - 13. Why did the psalm writer question the Lord? (88:13-14)
 - 14. How is the psalm writer's life described? (88:15-18)
 - 15. What imagery did the psalm writer use to describe God's wrath? (88:7, 15-18)
 - 16. Where did the psalm writer seek comfort? (88:18)

Get It

- 17. How does this psalm help us?
- 18. When have you ever felt overwhelmed by your problems or deserted by God and all of your friends?
- * 19. How is the psalm writer a good example to us about how to deal with depression?
- 20. How does God want us to deal with feelings of loneliness and despair?
- 21. What small ray of hope does this psalm offer us?
- * 22. What hope can we have in the problems of life?
- 23. How can we depend on God to save us?
- 24. What fears or feelings of discouragement would you like to entrust to the Lord?

Apply It

- * 25. In what ways could you call on the Lord when you feel lonely or discouraged?
- 26. What person feeling overwhelmed by his or her problems could you encourage in the next few days?
- 27. What can you do or say to encourage a discouraged friend or relative?

Psalm 89 - Psalm 89:1-52

Topics: Attitude, Awe, Believers, Covenant, Creation, Death, Depend, Doubt, Enemies, Expectations, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, Frustration, Future, Glory, Heaven, Help, Holy, Justice, Light, Love, Needs, Persecution, Power, Praise, Prayer, Promises, Questions, Rejection, Righteousness, Shame, Strength

Open It

- * 1. When has someone broken a promise to you?
- 2. How does it feel to be betrayed by a friend?

Explore It

- 3. What promises did the psalm writer make to the Lord? (89:1-2)
- 4. What is the focus of the introduction of the psalm? (89:1-4)
- 5. What is the main idea of this prayer? (89:1-52)
- 6. How is the Lord described in this psalm? (89:1-52)
- 7. What two character traits of the Lord's did the psalm writer emphasize? (89:5-18)
- 8. What imagery is used to celebrate God's power over nature? (89:9-10)
- * 9. Whom did the psalm writer call "blessed"? (89:15)
- 10. What promises did God make to David? (89:19-29, 33-37)
- 11. What does the psalm say about God's agreement with His people? (89:19-37)
- 12. What were the conditions of God's agreement with David? (89:30-32)
- 13. What motivated the psalm writer to appeal to God's character and His covenant? (89:38-45)
- * 14. Why did the psalm writer feel that the Lord had broken His promises? (89:38-45)
- 15. What were the consequences of God's rejection? (89:38-45)
- 16. How was the psalm writer treated by his adversaries? (89:41-45, 50-51)
- 17. What did the psalm writer recognize about his own insignificance? (89:47-48)
- * 18. What prayer concludes the psalm? (89:46-51)

Get It

- 19. What can we learn from the psalm writer's example?
- 20. What should we do when we feel deserted by God?
- 21. What do we usually do when we feel rejected or lonely?
- * 22. In what specific ways should we follow the psalm writer's example to get through difficult times?
- 23. What promises has God made to us?
- 24. How are God's promises different from the promises of our friends?
- * 25. How do God's promises encourage you to face the future?
- 26. According to the psalm writer, whom does the Lord bless?
- 27. What does it mean to "walk in the light" of the Lord's presence?
- 28. How should we be involved in telling others about God's love and faithfulness?

Apply It

- 29. How can you prepare yourself to deal with feelings of frustration or fear?
- * 30. How can you remind yourself of God's promises throughout the week?
- 31. Whom could you tell about God's love this week? How?

Psalm 90 - Psalm 90:1-17

Topics: Anger, Blessing, Children, Compassion, Depend, Faith, Fear, Heart, Help, Humility, Joy, Judgment, Learning, Life, Perspective, Power, Praise, Pride, Problems, Punishment, Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Strength, Teaching, Wisdom, Work

Open It

1. What do you think of when you hear the phrase, “One thousand years”?
2. What are some of the things you’d like to do in the next five years? Next ten years? Before you die?
- * 3. Before you die, what is one: Book you’d like to read? Place you’d like to go? Deed you’d like to do?

Explore It

4. What mercies from God did Moses recall? (90:1-2)
5. What is the theme of this prayer? (90:1-17)
- * 6. How does this prayer reveal Moses’ humility? (90:1-17)
- * 7. What picture does this psalm paint about our state before God? (90:1-17)
8. What caused Moses to turn to God for help? (90:1-17)
9. How did Moses describe humankind’s condition under God’s wrath? (90:3-10)
10. What imagery is used to highlight humankind’s insignificance and God’s greatness? (90:4-6)
11. How did Moses feel about God’s judgment? (90:7-9)
12. What does God’s holy light reveal? (90:8)
13. How does this psalm depict the lives of people? (90:9-10)
- * 14. What did Moses want the Lord to teach him? Why? (90:12)
15. What prayer concludes the psalm? (90:13-17)
16. What promise did Moses make to God in return for His compassion? (90:14)

Get It

17. What does the psalm teach us about the attitude we should have toward ourselves? Toward God?
18. What builds a person’s self-esteem?
19. What destroys a sense of self-worth?
20. How can we balance a healthy self-esteem with a humble attitude?
- * 21. How does this passage challenge us to depend on God rather than rely on our own abilities and strength?
22. In what way should we depend on God?
23. According to the writer of this psalm, how can we “gain a heart of wisdom”?
24. What does it mean to “number our days”?
25. How much longer do you expect to live?
26. What should motivate us to turn to God for help?
- * 27. How does remembering God’s help in the past encourage you to trust Him with your future?
28. What fears do you have about your future?
29. How should you deal with your fears in light of this passage?

Apply It

30. How could you remind yourself of God’s past faithfulness more often?
31. What change do you need to make in your attitudes or actions to show God the respect and honor He deserves?
- * 32. What concrete action could you take this week to entrust the Lord with your future?

Psalm 91 - Psalm 91:1-16

Topics: Angels, Assurance, Believe, Circumstances, Courage, Danger, Depend, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, God, Hope, Love, Needs, Prayer, Protection, Relationships, Reliability, Salvation, Security, Thankfulness, Trust, Worry

Open It

- * 1. What endangers our health and safety in today's world?
- 2. What emotions do you feel when you think about the dangers you face?

Explore It

- 3. What are three images used in the passage to convey God's protection over His loved ones? (91:1-2, 4)
- 4. What is the central theme of this poem? (91:1-16)
- 5. How is the person who trusts in God described? (91:1-16)
- 6. What military words are used and what purpose do they serve? (91:1-16)
- * 7. What concrete reasons did the psalm writer give us to find our security in God? (91:1-16)
- 8. What did the psalm writer reveal as his own worst fears? (91:3-6)
- * 9. Which acts of God's deliverance are listed in the passage? (91:3-8)
- 10. How does the list of dangers in the poem highlight God's protection? (91:3-8)
- 11. What condition did the author place on God's protection? (91:9-10)
- 12. What role do angels play in our lives? (91:11-12)
- 13. What reason does the Lord give for rescuing His children? (91:14-15)
- 14. What must a person do to receive God's protection? (91:14-15)
- * 15. What specific promises does God give to His people? (91:15-16)

Get It

- 16. In what ways is God like a fortress, a shadow, and a bird?
- 17. What characteristics does God have in common with a fortress, a shadow, and a bird?
- 18. What words or images would you use to describe the Lord's protection in your life?
- 19. When have you experienced the protection of the Lord?
- 20. How should we respond when God's delivers or protects us from danger?
- 21. What are your worst fears?
- 22. How do you typically deal with your fears?
- * 23. How does the psalm writer encourage us to trust the Lord with our fears?
- 24. What does this passage teach us about prayer?
- 25. How do you think you could improve your prayer habits?
- * 26. How has your attitude toward the dangers of life changed in light of what you have learned about God's character?
- 27. What dangers do you expect to face in the next few weeks?

Apply It

- * 28. What simple action can you take each day to entrust the Lord with your fears?
- 29. How could you encourage another friend who is struggling with fear?
- 30. With what sort of prayer might you celebrate God's care and protection?

Psalm 92 - Psalm 92:1-15

Topics: Blessing, Character, Consequences, Death, Effectiveness, Enemies, Evil, Faithfulness, Foolishness, Greatness, Health, Holy, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Love, Music, Praise, Prayer, Punishment, Purity, Righteousness, Sin, Spiritual Growth, Thinking, Understanding, Wisdom, Work, Worship

Open It

1. Why are advertisements so misleading?
- * 2. What are some examples of relatively harmless, short-lived pleasures (such as ice cream)?
3. What value is there in the cliché, “No pain, no gain”?

Explore It

4. How does the psalm introduce its topic? (92:1-3)
5. What does this passage celebrate? (92:1-15)
6. What is the theme of the psalm writer’s testimony? (92:1-15)
- * 7. What motivated the psalm writer to offer this song of praise to God? (92:4-5, 10-11)
8. How does this psalm describe the foolishness and destiny of the wicked? (92:6-9)
9. What do fools fail to understand? (92:6-9)
- * 10. How are the pleasures of evil misleading? (92:7)
11. What had the Lord done for the psalm writer? (92:10-11)
12. What imagery is used to describe the prosperity of the righteous? (92:12-14)
13. Why are the righteous compared to a tree? (92:12-14)
14. What kind of future can the righteous expect? (92:12-15)
15. Under what circumstances do the righteous flourish? (92:12-15)
- * 16. What are the righteous like? (92:12-15)
17. In what way will the righteous “bear fruit”? (92:14)

Get It

18. What does this psalm teach us about the consequences of sin?
19. What does this passage tell us about the rewards of righteousness?
20. Why are the temptations of the world so misleading?
21. What are the short-term benefits of sin?
22. What are the long-term consequences of sin?
- * 23. Under what conditions can we expect to grow and mature as Christians?
24. What are the benefits of taking time to worship God?
25. How does our attitude affect what kind of nourishment we receive when we go to church?
26. What can you do to take greater advantage of the opportunity to worship God?
27. What steps can we take to “stay fresh and green” in our faith?
28. What kind of “fruit” should a Christian bear?
- * 29. What “pruning” do you need to do in your life?

Apply It

30. What small change could you make to lessen the attraction or pull of a needless temptation in your life?
- * 31. When might you be able to spend some extra time in prayer and meditation this week?
32. What works or deeds of God in your life do you want to record or write down?

Psalm 93 - Psalm 93:1-5

Topics: Character, Conflict, Creation, Encouragement, Future, Holiness, Instructions, Nature, Power, Reliability, Security, Strength, World, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What examples of order and consistency do you see in nature?
- 2. What do you do when you need to do something (open a jar, clean up after a sick child, lift a heavy item) for which you do not have the strength?

Explore It

- * 3. How is the order of creation maintained? (93:1)
- 4. What do we know about the Lord's reign? (93:1-2)
- 5. What caused the people of Israel to trust in the Lord? (93:1-2)
- 6. What is the focus of this hymn? (93:1-5)
- 7. What character traits of the Lord's does this psalm celebrate? (93:1-5)
- 8. What can God's people expect of the future? (93:2, 5)
- 9. How does God demonstrate His power over the world? (93:3-4)
- 10. What imagery is used to describe the threats God's people face? (93:3-4)
- 11. How does this psalm compare God's power to nature? (93:3-5)
- * 12. What conclusion did the psalm writer draw from his meditation on the Lord's character? (93:5)
- 13. What encouragement did the psalm writer offer God's people? (93:5)
- * 14. How did the psalm writer describe the reliability of God's instructions to His people? (93:5)

Get It

- 15. To what concerns of yours does this hymn speak?
- 16. What kind of dangers threaten our security?
- 17. How does God want us to view our fears and vulnerabilities?
- * 18. How does meditating on God's character help us to trust Him?
- 19. What conclusions about God's character can we draw from this psalm?
- 20. What does the organization of nature tell us about God?
- 21. If we did not have the Bible, what could we know about God's character from observing His creation?
- 22. How has God demonstrated His power in your life?
- 23. How does this passage challenge you to view the future?
- 24. What does this psalm say about the reliability of God's instructions?
- * 25. What life directives has the Lord given to us?

Apply It

- 26. In what way could you entrust your life more to God, who is steadfast and unmovable?
- * 27. What picture, poem, or object could you use to remind yourself of God's majesty and strength?

Psalm 94 - Psalm 94:1-23

Topics: Advice, Attitude, Blessing, Consequences, Creation, Death, Deceit, Depend, Discipline, Evil, Fear, Follow, Foolishness, Heart, Help, Instructions, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Knowledge, Law, Oppressed, Pride, Punishment, Rejection, Righteousness, Soul, Teaching, Thinking, Weaknesses, Wisdom

Open It

1. Why do people say, “You can’t judge a book by its cover”?
- * 2. What are some “small crimes” many people commit mainly because they don’t think they’ll ever get caught or punished?

Explore It

3. To what characteristic of God’s did the psalm writer appeal? (94:1-2)
4. What is the focus of the psalm’s introduction? (94:1-3)
5. What was the psalm writer’s purpose in writing this psalm? (94:1-23)
- * 6. What situation motivated the psalm writer to go to the Lord? (94:3-7)
7. What accusations are made against the wicked? (94:4-7)
8. How are the righteous compared to the wicked? (94:4-7, 12-15)
9. Who is affected by the sin of evildoers? (94:5-6)
10. Why do the wicked continue in their sin? (94:7)
11. What warnings does the psalm offer the wicked? (94:8-11)
- * 12. Why did the psalm writer encourage the wicked to reconsider their actions? (94:9-11)
13. Whom does the Lord choose to bless? (94:11-15)
- * 14. What reward is there in faithfully obeying God? (94:12-15)
15. How will justice be restored for the righteous? (94:15)
16. How did the psalm writer demonstrate his dependence on God for justice? (94:16-19)
17. What did the psalm writer believe would have happened had the Lord not saved him? (94:17)
18. How did God meet the psalm writer at the time of his greatest need? (94:18)
19. What words of confidence conclude the psalm? (94:20-23)

Get It

20. How is God’s judgment different from that of a human judge?
21. What’s wrong with the attitude, “It isn’t wrong if you don’t get caught”?
22. In what way do we rely on God’s mercy?
23. What behavior does this psalm advise us to avoid?
24. What instructions does this psalm encourage us to follow?
- * 25. How and why does God discipline His people?
- * 26. In what way do we need to fear God?
27. How has God met you in your greatest need?
28. How does God want to transform our anxieties?
29. What prevents God from saving us from our fears?
30. What does it mean to take refuge in the Lord?
31. What changes on your part would allow the Lord to turn your fears into joy?

Apply It

- * 32. What habit or tendency do you need to change because God sees all you do?
33. What fears or problems do you want to commit to the Lord today?

Psalm 95 - Psalm 95:1-11

Topics: Anger, Caring, Consequences, Creation, Example, God, Greatness, Heart, History, Humility, Instructions, Joy, Judgment, Listening, Nature, Obedience, Power, Praise, Protection, Punishment, Rebellion, Remembering, Rest, Rewards, Salvation, Security, Sensitivity, Thankfulness, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is one lesson you have learned from the past?
- 2. What are some things that people often become so familiar with that they ignore them?

Explore It

- 3. How is the Lord described? (95:1, 3, 6)
- 4. What call did the psalm writer give to God's people? (95:1-5)
- 5. What is the main idea of this psalm? (95:1-11)
- * 6. What reasons did the psalm writer give Israel to praise the Lord? (95:3-5)
- 7. How did God's power and authority extend far beyond the gods of Israel's neighbors? (95:3-5)
- 8. How did the psalm writer advise the righteous to demonstrate their submission to God? (95:6)
- 9. What should motivate God's people to worship Him? (95:6-7)
- * 10. How should God's people acknowledge God's kingship over them? (95:6-11)
- * 11. What advice did this psalm offer to the Israelites? (95:6-11)
- 12. What imagery is used to describe the relationship God wants to have with His people? (95:7)
- 13. How did the psalm writer want Israel to respond differently to God's voice? (95:7-11)
- 14. Why did the psalm writer remind Israel of her rebellion in the past? (95:8-11)
- 15. Why did the Lord expect the Israelites to remain faithful to Him? (95:9)
- 16. Why did God condemn Israel to forty years in the desert? (95:10)
- 17. What were the consequences of the Israelites' rebellion? (95:11)

Get It

- 18. What specific instructions does this psalm give us about worship?
- 19. Why do you think the psalm writer called God's people to bow before the Lord?
- 20. What motivates you to offer praise and thanksgiving to God?
- 21. What lessons have you learned from your struggles in the past?
- 22. What are some of the dangers of dwelling on the past?
- 23. What attitude do you think God wants us to have toward our failures?
- 24. What have been some of the consequences of your failures?
- * 25. How does this passage encourage us to look beyond our failures and learn from them?
- 26. How can we guard against hardening our hearts to the Lord?
- * 27. What steps can we take to keep our minds and hearts sensitive to God?

Apply It

- 28. How do you plan to follow the psalm writer's advice about worshiping God?
- 29. What step could you take in prayer this week to accept God's forgiveness for failures in the past?
- * 30. What can you do to become more sensitive to God's voice?

Psalm 96 - Psalm 96:1-13

Topics: Advice, Blessing, Character, Creation, Earth, Fear, Glory, God, Greatness, Heaven, Holy, Instructions, Joy, Judge, Justice, Praise, Righteousness, Security, Strength, Thankfulness, Truth, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

1. What are some common elements of worship in your church?
- * 2. For you, what can cause church worship services to become stale or boring?
3. How do you think your church could add some creativity or newness to its worship services?

Explore It

4. What does the repetition in this psalm emphasize? (96:1-2, 7-8)
5. What call introduces the psalm? (96:1-3)
6. How far did the psalm writer want the praise of God's people to extend? (96:1-3)
- * 7. What instructions for worship are given in this psalm? (96:1-3, 7-10)
8. What reasons did the psalm writer give to the nations to praise the Lord? (96:1-13)
- * 9. What does this psalm reveal about God's character? (96:1-13)
10. What did the psalm writer encourage God's people to proclaim? (96:2)
11. How does the God of heaven differ from earthly gods? (96:4-5)
12. Why should God's people be motivated to praise God? (96:4-6)
13. Whom did the psalm writer call to worship God? (96:7-9)
14. What does the order of nature reveal? (96:10)
15. How is the judgment of the Lord described? (96:10, 13)
- * 16. How can the nations demonstrate their fear of the Lord? (96:10-13)
17. Why does Israel maintain her hope in God? (96:10-13)
18. What will motivate creation to praise the Lord? (96:11-13)

Get It

19. What do the instructions in this psalm say to the nations today?
20. What reasons does this passage give us to worship the Lord?
21. What should be our motivation in praising God?
22. What about nature inspires you to praise God?
23. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
24. What do we have to offer to God?
- * 25. What kind of worship does God desire?
26. How could you encourage your church leaders to keep your worship services fresh and captivating?
- * 27. How can you declare the Lord's glory to others?

Apply It

28. What is one thing you can do to revive your worship of God or make it more meaningful?
29. What gift of time, money, or service could you give to the Lord this week?
- * 30. Who is one person you could tell about God's goodness?

Psalm 97 - Psalm 97:1-12

Topics: Believers, Character, Creation, Devotion, Earth, Enemies, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Glory, God, Heaven, Idolatry, Image, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Learning, Nature, Obedience, Praise, Righteousness, World, Worship

Open It

- * 1. How do you feel when you are many miles away from “civilization”?
- 2. What is your biggest concern about the environment?

Explore It

- 3. What testimony did the psalm writer offer to the nations? (97:1-6)
- 4. What does this passage celebrate? (97:1-12)
- 5. On what principles is the Lord’s rule established? (97:2)
- * 6. How is the Lord’s glory revealed in nature? (97:2-6)
- 7. How does nature itself reveal God’s character to the world? (97:2-6)
- 8. What is the impact of the imagery used by the psalm writer? (97:2-6)
- * 9. What conclusion did the psalm writer draw from nature? (97:6)
- 10. How does the center verse serve as a contrast to the theme of the psalm? (97:7)
- 11. Why does the city of Zion rejoice? (97:8)
- 12. What declaration did the psalm writer make to God’s people? (97:8-12)
- * 13. What specific instructions did the psalm writer offer? (97:10)
- 14. How does God treat the faithful? (97:10-11)
- 15. What advice concludes the passage? (97:12)

Get It

- 16. What words of advice does this psalm give us?
- * 17. What promises does this psalm offer?
- 18. What role should nature play in our lives?
- 19. What principles have you learned from observing God’s creation?
- 20. What responsibility do we have to care for nature? Why?
- 21. How should we be involved in maintaining or restoring God’s creation?
- 22. What steps could you take to take better care of God’s creation around you?
- * 23. What does this passage say about the kind of worship God desires?
- 24. How do you think you could improve your worship of the Lord?
- 25. What are some modern day “images” or “idols” that many people worship?
- 26. What distracts you from worshipping the Lord?

Apply It

- 27. What is one step you could take to remember God’s place in the world as Lord over all?
- * 28. How could you offer praise to the Lord in a creative and meaningful way this next week?

Psalm 98 - Psalm 98:1-9

Topics: Advice, Call, Character, Commitment, Creation, Devotion, Earth, Equality, Experience, Fairness, Faithfulness, Holy, Instructions, Joy, Judge, Justice, Love, Music, Nature, People, Praise, Righteousness, Salvation, World, Worship

Open It

- * 1. How do you celebrate special days or events in your family?
- 2. What do you like to do when you celebrate some special occasion or happening?

Explore It

- 3. Why does the psalm call God's people to sing "a new song"? (98:1)
- * 4. For what reasons does the Lord deserve praise? (98:1-3)
- 5. What has God done to deserve our praise? (98:1-3)
- 6. What did the psalm writer celebrate? (98:1-9)
- 7. On which character trait of God's did the psalm writer focus? (98:1-9)
- 8. How did the psalm writer progressively extend his call to worship God? (98:1-9)
- * 9. Whom does this psalm call to praise the Lord? (98:1-9)
- 10. Why does this psalm call us to rejoice and be joyful? (98:1-9)
- 11. What characteristics of God's did the psalm writer emphasize? (98:2-3, 9)
- 12. How is God's commitment to His people summed up by the psalm writer? (98:3)
- * 13. What specific instructions does this psalm offer about how to worship God? (98:4-6)
- 14. What imagery is used to describe the whole world's praise to God? (98:7-8)
- 15. What final reason did the psalm writer give God's people to praise Him? (98:9)
- 16. How is God's judgment of the earth described? (98:9)

Get It

- 17. What hope and encouragement can we glean from this psalm?
- 18. What does this passage teach us about the character of God?
- 19. What have you learned about worship from this psalm?
- 20. What has this psalm taught you about joy?
- 21. What kinds of things cause your relationship with the Lord to become stagnant and boring?
- * 22. How can we keep our spiritual lives fresh and exciting?
- 23. How can we guard against getting into a rut in our spiritual journeys?
- * 24. What kind of worship and praise does the Lord want from us?
- 25. How do you think you could praise the Lord?
- * 26. What "new song" or act of praise could you present to the Lord?
- 27. What attributes or works of God's motivate you to praise Him?

Apply It

- 28. How could you creatively remind yourself each day this week about one praiseworthy attribute or blessing of the Lord's?
- * 29. What is one step you could take to add new meaning to your worship of God?

Psalm 99 - Psalm 99:1-9

Topics: Answers, Awe, Call, Character, Equality, Fear, Forgiveness, Holy, Humility, Instructions, Judgment, Justice, Law, Listening, Love, Obedience, Praise, Prayer, Punishment, Representatives, Worship

Open It

- * 1. Who calls on you in times of need?
- 2. What kinds of things have you found prevent people (whether children, co-workers, neighbors, or family members) from understanding you?
- 3. With whom do you sometimes have difficulty communicating? Why?

Explore It

- 4. How should the world respond to God's holy reign? (99:1)
- 5. What motivated the psalm writer to write this hymn of praise? (99:1-9)
- * 6. Why should people praise and honor the Lord? (99:2-3)
- 7. How did God demonstrate His justice in Israel? (99:4)
- 8. How does this psalm describe the quality of God's reign? (99:4-5)
- 9. Why did the psalm writer refer to God's "footstool"? (99:5)
- 10. Who communicated with God? (99:6-7)
- * 11. How did God show Himself to Israel? (99:6-7)
- 12. Whom did the Lord choose to be His representatives? (99:6-7)
- 13. What role did Moses, Aaron, and Samuel play in Israel? (99:6-7)
- 14. What kind of relationship did Moses, Aaron, and Samuel have with the Lord? (99:6-7)
- 15. How did God deal with the sins of the Israelites? (99:8)
- * 16. What does God's treatment of Israel reveal about His character? (99:8-9)
- 17. What concluding instructions did the psalm writer offer God's people? (99:9)
- 18. What should motivate people to praise the Lord? (99:9)

Get It

- 19. What does this psalm tell us about praise?
- 20. What does this psalm teach us about the Lord?
- 21. How does God demonstrate His holiness to us?
- 22. How can we expect to be judged by God?
- * 23. What kind of relationship does God desire to have with us?
- 24. How does God communicate with us?
- * 25. What steps can we take to become more sensitive to God's voice?
- 26. What does it mean to worship the Lord?
- 27. What inhibits our worship of the Lord?
- 28. What can we do about the distractions that prevent us from praising God?
- 29. How should we respond to God's forgiveness?

Apply It

- 30. How can you thank God for His forgiveness?
- 31. What is one concrete way you can celebrate God's holiness this week?
- * 32. What steps could you take this week to open your lines of communication with God?

Psalm 100 - Psalm 100:1-5

Topics: Appreciation, Attitude, Call, Character, Creation, Devotion, Emotions, Faithfulness, Future, Goodness, Instructions, Joy, Knowledge, Love, Motives, Obligation, People, Praise, Preparation, Protection, Reliability, Thankfulness, Worship

Open It

1. When do you feel like shouting for joy or singing?
- * 2. When (in what situations or for what acts) do you expect a thank you or acknowledgment of a favor you've done?

Explore It

- * 3. What attitude is recommended to accompany the praise of God's people? (100:1, 4)
4. Who is called to worship the Lord? (100:1-3)
5. Why is the Lord worthy of praise? (100:1-5)
6. How does the psalm writer describe the relationship God has with His followers? (100:3)
7. What imagery is used to describe God's protection of His people? (100:2)
8. What does this psalm say about Israel's special relationship with the Lord? (100:3, 5)
- * 9. Why should the world acknowledge the Lord through praise? (100:3-5)
10. Where should believers offer their praise to God? (100:4)
11. How should a person enter God's house? (100:4)
12. How does God demonstrate His goodness to the world? (100:5)
- * 13. How does this psalm describe the reliability of God's character? (100:5)

Get It

14. What message comes through most clearly to you in this psalm?
15. What does this psalm advise us to do?
16. What should motivate us to worship God?
- * 17. What is sincere worship?
18. What attitude should we have toward worshiping God?
- * 19. What changes do you feel you could make to improve your attitude toward worship and praising God?
20. What relationship does the Lord want to have with us?
21. How does this psalm challenge you to rely on the Lord?

Apply It

22. What statement of praise could you give to God today?
23. What is one specific step you could take to ensure that your worship of God is sincere and meaningful?
- * 24. How could you prepare yourself to praise and thank God the next time you go to church for worship?

Psalm 101 - Psalm 101:1-8

Topics: Character, Choices, Commitment, Deceit, Evil, Faith, Faithfulness, Friendship, Heart, Influence, Justice, Love, Motives, Peer Pressure, Plans, Praise, Pride, Priorities, Protection, Punishment, Purity, Righteousness, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. In what settings do you feel pressure from others to behave a certain way?
- 2. What are some positive lessons you have learned from watching friends, family members, or acquaintances?

Explore It

- 3. How does the psalm describe the Lord's character? (101:1)
- 4. What does the introduction of the psalm celebrate? (101:1-2)
- 5. What is the focus of this poem? (101:1-8)
- * 6. What promises did David make to the Lord? (101:1-8)
- * 7. How did David plan to remain pure before the Lord? (101:1-8)
- 8. What did David ask of the Lord? (101:2)
- 9. How did David describe the extent of his commitment to God? (101:2-3, 6-8)
- 10. How did David contrast his own attitude to that of the wicked? (101:2-8)
- 11. What attitude did David have toward the wicked? (101:3-8)
- 12. What accusations did David make against the wicked? (101:4-7)
- 13. How could David guard against the influence of the wicked? (101:4-8)
- * 14. Whose company did David want to keep? Why? (101:6)

Get It

- 15. What glimpse does this psalm give into the kind of relationship David had with the Lord?
- 16. What strategy did David have to lead a blameless life?
- 17. What does it mean to lead a blameless life?
- 18. In what specific ways do you think we should follow David's example?
- 19. What steps can we take to strengthen our commitment to God?
- 20. Who has helped you mature in your Christian walk?
- * 21. What attitudes should we have toward unbelievers?
- 22. How do you think your choice of friends affects the way you live?
- 23. Why is peer pressure so powerful?
- 24. How can we prevent ourselves from being negatively influenced by unbelievers?
- 25. How can we ensure that the influence of friends plays a positive role in our lives?
- * 26. What changes does this psalm challenge you to make in the company you keep?

Apply It

- * 27. What steps could you take to strengthen your relationships with the people who have a positive influence on your life?
- 28. What is one change you need to make to reduce the negative influence of people in your life?
- 29. What can you do to find a balance in the friends you keep?

Psalm 102 - Psalm 102:1-28

Topics: Answers, Body, Call, Character, Compassion, Creation, Depend, Despair, Earth, Emotions, Enemies, Example, Faithfulness, Fear, Feelings, Frustration, Future, Glory, Heart, Heaven, Help, Listening, Love, Oppressed, Pain, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Reliability, Salvation, Strength, Worship

Open It

- * 1. How do you feel physically when you are worried or scared? happy?
- 2. Of what do you like to write down, record on tape, or otherwise keep a record?

Explore It

- 3. What initial appeal introduces the psalm? (102:1-2)
- 4. What was the attitude of the psalm writer as he was writing this? (102:1-28)
- 5. What motivated the psalm writer to write this prayer? (102:1-28)
- 6. How did the psalm writer describe his situation? (102:3-11)
- * 7. What affect did the psalm writer's problems have on his emotional attitude and physical strength? (102:3-11)
- 8. What imagery is used to depict the psalm writer's suffering? (102:3-11)
- 9. How was the psalm writer treated by others during this difficult time in his life? (102:8)
- 10. What reason explains the psalm writer's distress? (102:10)
- * 11. Where did the psalm writer obtain his hope for the future? (102:12-17)
- 12. How did the psalm writer overcome his sense of dismay? (102:12-17)
- 13. How is God described in this psalm? (102:12-28)
- 14. How did the psalm writer expect God to treat His people? (102:12-28)
- 15. What specific reason prompted the psalm writer to record this prayer? (102:18)
- 16. What will be the result of God's deliverance of His people? (102:21-22)
- * 17. What does this psalm say about God's reliability? (102:24-28)

Get It

- 18. When have you felt weakened by the stress and pressure of life's problems as was the psalm writer?
- * 19. How can we follow the psalm writer's example when dealing with overwhelming problems in our lives?
- 20. What attitude should we have toward ourselves and the Lord in the middle of our problems?
- 21. When has the Lord shown compassion on you?
- 22. What should be our response to God's deliverance and help?
- * 23. How would it be beneficial to keep a record of God's faithfulness in our lives?
- 24. What promise would you like to claim from this passage?

Apply It

- 25. What specific steps could you take this week to lighten the anxiety you feel over the challenges you face?
- 26. What character traits of God's could you remind yourself of to encourage you to trust in Him?
- * 27. Where could you record or write down the ways that God is faithful to you?

Psalm 103 - Psalm 103:1-22

Topics: Angels, Anger, Blessing, Compassion, Covenant, Desires, Fear, Forgiveness, God's Will, Goodness, Heaven, Humility, Justice, Love, Obedience, Oppressed, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Righteousness, Salvation, Satisfaction, Self-esteem, Sin, Soul, Worship

Open It

1. According to TV and advertisements that you often see, what attitude should we have about ourselves?
2. What are some of the benefits of your job (whether paid or not)?
- * 3. What are some frail or fragile possessions that you have taken steps to protect from damage?

Explore It

4. What call introduces and concludes the hymn? (103:1-2, 20-22)
5. What is the focus of this psalm? (103:1-22)
6. What personal benefits did the psalm writer receive from the Lord? (103:3-5)
7. What imagery did the psalm writer use to emphasize his message? (103:4-5, 11-16)
8. How does the psalm characterize God's reign? (103:6, 19)
9. What mercies did the Lord give to the nation of Israel? (103:7-19)
- * 10. How does the Lord respond to the sinfulness of people? (103:8-10)
11. How is God's love and forgiveness depicted? (103:8-13)
12. How does God demonstrate His compassion for His people? (103:8-18)
13. To whom does the Lord give His blessings? (103:13, 17-18)
- * 14. How are we described in this passage? (103:14-16)
15. What are people like? (103:14-16)
16. What did the psalm writer compare to grass? Why? (103:15-16)
- * 17. What specific instructions conclude the psalm? (103:20-22)

Get It

18. What can we learn from this psalm about God's character?
19. What can we learn from this psalm about people?
20. In what specific ways should we imitate the psalm writer's attitude?
21. What does this passage teach us about ourselves?
22. How is the Christian view of people different from the secular view?
23. What are the benefits of having a good self-image?
- * 24. How can we cultivate an attitude of humility?
25. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
26. How can we know God's will?
27. What can we do to ensure that we are doing God's will?
- * 28. How has God made Himself known to us?
29. How has God demonstrated His compassion to you?
30. What blessings from the Lord have you enjoyed?
31. What can we learn from this psalm about how to praise God?

Apply It

32. What gift of praise can you offer to the Lord today?
- * 33. How can you prevent yourself from having a proud attitude this week?
34. What specific steps could you take to remember God's commands in the Bible?

Psalm 104 - Psalm 104:1-35

Topics: Actions, Character, Creation, Depend, Earth, Fear, Glory, Goodness, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Involvement, Light, Nature, Power, Praise, Satisfaction, Sin, Trust, Vows, Work, Worship

Open It

1. What pet peeves have you heard people voice about nature or the environment?
- * 2. What is the most beautiful scene or landscape in your memory?

Explore It

3. What is the theme of the psalm writer's praise? (104:1-35)
- * 4. What did the psalm writer see as the purpose of creation? (104:1-35)
5. What does this passage reveal about the psalm writer's view of God? (104:1-35)
6. What imagery is used to describe the sky? (104:2-4)
7. How is God involved in the events of the earth? (104:5-9)
8. How is the earth described? (104:10-18)
9. How is the orderliness of earth emphasized? (104:19-23)
10. What did the psalm writer learn from observing the sea? (104:24-26)
- * 11. In what ways does the earth and all life depend on God? (104:27-30)
- * 12. What conclusion did the psalm writer draw from observing and thinking about God's creation? (104:31-35)
13. What vow concludes the psalm? (104:33)

Get It

14. What can we learn from observing creation?
15. What have you learned about God from the psalm writer's meditation on creation?
16. How does our treatment of nature reflect our beliefs about God?
17. What role do you think Christians should take in protecting the environment?
- * 18. What attitude should we have toward God's creation?
19. How should our actions reflect our belief in God as Creator?
- * 20. How does this psalm inspire you to praise God?
21. What does this passage teach us about the relationship God wants to have with us?
22. In what areas of your life do you need to depend more on the Lord?
23. How have you seen God involved in the events of your life?
24. How could you allow the Lord to be more involved in your everyday life?

Apply It

25. What words of praise can you offer the Lord for His creation?
26. When could you take some time to worship God through observing His creation?
- * 27. In what way can you demonstrate respect for God's creation?

Psalm 105 - Psalm 105:1-45

Topics: Blessing, Celebration, Covenant, Faithfulness, Freedom, Glory, Goodness, Hatred, Heart, History, Holiness, Joy, Judgment, Miracles, Obedience, Praise, Promises, Protection, Rebellion, Remembering, Satisfaction, Strength, Thankfulness, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

1. What kinds of pictures do you keep in your photo albums?
- * 2. Why do we save certain pictures or documents?
3. How do you feel when you look at old photo albums or record books of your past?

Explore It

4. What is the focus of the introduction of the psalm? (105:1-4)
- * 5. What specific instructions does this psalm give to God's people? (105:1-4)
6. How should God's people respond to His goodness? (105:1-4)
7. What is the main idea of this passage? (105:1-45)
8. What did the psalm writer tell Israel to remember? (105:5-7)
- * 9. Why was Israel motivated to worship the Lord? (105:5-45)
10. How was Abraham honored by God? (105:8-11)
11. How did the Lord demonstrate His faithfulness to Israel? (105:8-41)
12. What specific blessings did the Lord give to Israel? (105:12-41)
13. How did the Lord use nature to protect and deliver Israel? (105:16, 28-35, 39-41)
14. What specific role did Joseph play in Israel's history? (105:16-22)
15. How were Moses and Aaron involved in bringing God's deliverance to Israel? (105:26-38)
16. Which of the plagues against Egypt did the psalm writer recall? (105:28-36)
17. Why were the Egyptians glad to see the Israelites leave their land? (105:38)
18. What imagery is used to describe the Lord's provision for Israel in the desert? (105:41)
19. What conclusion did the psalm writer draw from his meditation on God's goodness? (105:42-45)
- * 20. What does the Lord expect from His people? (105:42-45)
21. What should motivate people to obey God? (105:42-45)

Get It

22. What specific instructions are given to us in this passage?
23. What does it mean to seek the Lord's face?
- * 24. How should we respond to God's goodness?
25. What are the benefits of keeping a record of God's past goodness?
26. How has God shown His faithfulness to you in the past?
27. What does remembering God's goodness motivate you to do?
- * 28. How do you plan to respond to God's faithfulness to you?
29. What does the Lord expect of us?
30. What motivates you to obey the Lord?
31. What does our obedience reveal about our attitude toward the Lord?
32. What is one change you need to make in your life to obey and honor the Lord better?
33. Why should we tell others about what God has done for us?

Apply It

34. What specific step could you take this week to seek the Lord?
- * 35. How could you keep a record of God's faithfulness to you?
36. Whom could you tell this week about God's goodness to you?

Psalm 106 - Psalm 106:1-48

Topics: Anger, Blessing, Call, Conscience, Covenant, Disobedience, Enemies, Envy, Faithfulness, Forget, Forgiveness, Goodness, Help, History, Holiness, Idolatry, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Kindness, Love, Mercy, Miracles, Power, Praise, Prayer, Promises, Remembering, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin, Testing, Thankfulness, Unbelievers, Unfaithfulness, Vows, Witnessing

Open It

1. How does it feel to have finally “paid your dues” after making a mistake?
2. What’s the first thing you like to do after you return home from an exhausting trip?
- * 3. What beliefs or ideals are widely accepted by our culture but clearly contradict the teaching of Scripture?

Explore It

- * 4. How is God’s character depicted in this psalm? (106:1-4, 8, 40-48)
5. What motivated the author to write this psalm? (106:1-48)
6. What did the psalm writer ask of the Lord? (106:4-5)
7. What did the psalm writer confess? (106:6-39)
8. How is Israel’s history described? (106:6-43)
9. Why did the Lord save Israel from the Egyptians at the Red Sea? (106:8)
10. How did Israel react to the parting of the Red Sea? (106:10-12)
11. How did Israel put the Lord to the test? (106:13-14)
12. What role did Moses play in Israel’s history? (106:16-23)
13. What demonstrated the Israelites’ lack of faith in God? (106:19-21, 28)
14. How was Phinehas viewed by God? Why? (106:30-31)
- * 15. How does this passage summarize Israel’s rebellion? (106:34-39)
16. What temptations drew Israel away from her faith in God? (106:34-39)
17. How did the Lord react to Israel’s sin? (106:40-43)
- * 18. How did God demonstrate His faithfulness to Israel despite her rebellion? (106:44-46)
19. What communal prayer and word of praise conclude the psalm? (106:47-48)

Get It

20. What does this passage reveal to us about God’s character?
21. What can we learn from Israel’s negative example?
22. What role should confession play in our lives?
23. How can we expect the Lord to respond to our confession?
24. What caused Israel’s downfall and rebellion?
- * 25. What temptations from the world around us do you think we need to guard against?
26. How are our consciences dulled by our culture?
27. What are some subtle temptations that can interfere with our spiritual growth?
28. What things divert our attention from the Lord?
29. How has God shown His love and mercy to you?
- * 30. How should we respond to God’s deliverance and help?

Apply It

31. When can you set aside some time this week to spend time in prayer, confession, and praise?
- * 32. What concrete action could you take to prevent the temptations of the world from interfering with your commitment to God?
33. How could you thank the Lord today for His faithfulness to you?

Psalm 107 - Psalm 107:1-43

Topics: Advice, Blessing, Conflict, Depend, Despair, Disobedience, Enemies, Faithfulness, Goodness, Guidance, Help, Instructions, Joy, Love, Mercy, Nature, Needs, Oppressed, Praise, Protection, Rebellion, Sacrifice, Salvation, Satisfaction, Thankfulness, Wisdom, Words, Work

Open It

1. What's one instance of discipline that was particularly effective on you when you were a child?
2. What's one instance of mercy that you remember being shown to you?
- * 3. Why do judges sometimes grant mercy to defendants who have been found guilty of a crime?

Explore It

- * 4. How did the psalm writer want Israel to respond to God's forgiveness and deliverance? (107:1-3, 8-9, 15-16, 21-22, 31-32)
5. What specific reasons did the psalm writer list to inspire the Israelites to offer their thanks to God? (107:1-3, 8-9, 15-16, 21-22, 31-32)
6. What is the focus of the introduction and conclusion of the psalm? (107:1-3, 43)
7. What exhortation does this psalm give to God's people? (107:1-43)
8. On what attributes of God does this psalm focus? (107:1-43)
9. How did God show His mercy to the needy even in His judgment of Israel? (107:3, 6-38, 41)
10. What punishment did Israel receive for her rebellion? (107:10-12)
11. What two major demonstrations of God's deliverance does this psalm celebrate? (107:10-16, 17-22)
- * 12. How did the Lord respond to Israel's cry for relief from His discipline? (107:13-16)
13. What further discipline did Israel endure for her sin? (107:17-18)
14. How did God demonstrate His mercy to the Israelites? (107:19-20)
15. What "wonderful deeds" did the Lord do for Israel through nature? (107:23-30, 33-38)
16. What imagery is used to describe the Lord's destruction and restoration of the land of Israel? (107:33-35)
- * 17. What advice to the wise concludes the poem? (107:43)

Get It

18. What was the main weakness of the Israelites?
19. Why did the Lord show mercy to Israel?
20. How does God's treatment of Israel encourage you to trust in Him?
- * 21. What lessons can we learn from this description of Israel's history?
22. In what way is Israel a good example to us?
23. What does this psalm reveal to us about God's character?
24. When have you experienced God's discipline in your life?
- * 25. How can we guard against the temptation to rebel against the Lord during the good times?
26. When have you experienced God's mercy?
27. How can going through difficult experiences either strengthen or weaken a person's faith in God?
28. How could experiencing good times have a negative impact on a person's spiritual growth?
29. How do you think the Lord wants to be involved in the high and low points of our lives?
30. How should we respond to the Lord's involvement in our lives, whether it be discipline or blessing?
31. What main piece of advice does this psalm give to us?
32. What does it mean to "consider the great love of the Lord"?

Apply It

- * 33. What practical steps can you take to trust in the Lord, even in the good times?
- 34. If you are going through a difficult time in your life, what does this passage encourage you to do?
- 35. How could you thank the Lord today for His forgiveness and mercy?

Psalm 108 - Psalm 108:1-13

Topics: Confidence, Depend, Earth, Enemies, Faithfulness, Glory, Guidance, Heart, Heaven, Help, Love, Praise, Prayer, Rejection, Salvation, Success, Trust, Victory, Vows, War, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. On what sources of help do you rely?
- 2. When was a time you felt helpless?

Explore It

- 3. What commitment did the psalm writer make to the Lord? (108:1-3)
- 4. What attribute of the Lord does the introduction celebrate? (108:1-5)
- 5. What is the theme of the psalm writer's praise? (108:1-13)
- 6. How did the psalm writer plan to make his commitment to the Lord public? (108:3)
- 7. How did the Lord feel toward the Israelites? (108:6)
- * 8. What main request did the psalm writer present to the Lord? (108:6-13)
- 9. What imagery is used by the psalm writer, and what is its effect? (108:7-9)
- 10. Why did the Israelites want the Lord's guidance? (108:10)
- * 11. What motivated Israel to turn to the Lord for help? (108:10-13)
- 12. Why did Israel feel rejected by God? (108:11)
- 13. How did Israel feel about their own strength in battle? (108:12)
- * 14. How did the psalm writer demonstrate his confidence in the Lord? (108:12-13)
- 15. What did the psalm writer expect from God? (108:13)
- 16. What words of confidence conclude the prayer? (108:13)

Get It

- 17. What commitment have you made to the Lord?
- 18. What responsibility do we have to make our commitments to God known to others?
- 19. What are the benefits of telling others about what God has done for you?
- 20. How do you feel when you tell someone about what God has done for you?
- 21. What kinds of things prevent us from sharing our testimony with others?
- 22. What reactions have you received when you have shared your faith?
- 23. What motivates you to turn to God for help?
- 24. What can we learn from Israel's example about the attitude we should have towards our own strength?
- * 25. In what area of your life do you need the Lord's help or guidance?
- * 26. How can we tangibly demonstrate our confidence in God?
- 27. In what area of your life would you like to depend more on the Lord and less on your own strength?

Apply It

- 28. Who is one person you could tell this week about God's faithfulness to you?
- 29. In what small way could you demonstrate your confidence in the Lord?
- * 30. What specific steps could you take in the next few days to seek the Lord's guidance or help?

Psalm 109 - Psalm 109:1-31

Topics: Accusation, Blessing, Character, Children, Confidence, Consequences, Depend, Evil, Family, Fasting, Friendship, Future, Hatred, Injustice, Kindness, Love, Lying, Needs, Opposition, Poor, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Punishment, Remembering, Salvation, Silence, Sin, Trust, Unfairness

Open It

- * 1. How do you think it would feel to be falsely accused?
- 2. How do we protect ourselves against false accusations?
- 3. What would you do if you were charged with a crime you did not commit?

Explore It

- 4. What appeal introduces the poem? (109:1-5)
- 5. What dilemma prompted David to write this prayer? (109:1-31)
- 6. What are the specific details of the dilemma David faced? (109:2-5)
- 7. How did David describe himself? (109:4)
- 8. How is David contrasted with his false accuser? (109:4-5)
- * 9. What did David ask the Lord to do for him? (109:6-15)
- 10. How did David want the punishment of his enemy to extend beyond the enemy's own life? (109:8-15)
- 11. How far did David want his adversary's punishment to extend? (109:15)
- 12. How is the enemy's character depicted? (109:16-20)
- 13. What imagery is used to describe the enemy's character? (109:18-19)
- 14. How did David feel about his predicament? (109:22-24)
- 15. How did David describe his own suffering? (109:22-25)
- * 16. How did David deal with his dilemma? (109:24, 26-31)
- 17. Whom did David want to receive the credit for his deliverance? (109:26-27)
- 18. What concluding petition is presented in this prayer? (109:26-29)
- 19. What did David expect from the Lord? (109:29)
- * 20. What vow did David make to the Lord? (109:30-31)

Get It

- 21. When have you felt overwhelmed by problems?
- * 22. How can we follow David's example in dealing with our fears and disappointments?
- 23. What can we learn from this passage about how to present our requests to God?
- 24. What should be our motivation in seeking the Lord's help?
- * 25. What are your most pressing needs now?
- 26. How could you depend more on the Lord to help you?
- 27. How does this psalm encourage you to change your prayer habits?

Apply It

- * 28. What steps can you take this week to follow David's example in dealing with the challenges you face?
- 29. What steps could you take to demonstrate your confidence in the Lord to provide your needs?
- 30. In what way could you improve your prayer habits this next week?

Psalm 110 - Psalm 110:1-7

Topics: Anger, Character, Confidence, Death, Depend, Enemies, Holiness, Judgment, Justice, Needs, Promises, Protection, Reliability, Trust, Vows, War

Open It

1. How do you think a leader should respond to insubordination?
2. What is one method you have found that helps you resolve conflicts with others?
- * 3. In your opinion what sort of person would make an ideal president?

Explore It

4. What simple instruction does the Lord offer His anointed one? (110:1)
5. What imagery is used to describe the defeat of the enemy? (110:1)
- * 6. What decree from the Lord introduces the poem? (110:1-3)
7. By whose power would the kingdom of God's anointed one be established? (110:1-4)
8. How will the Lord provide for His people? (110:1-5)
9. In what specific ways could this psalm apply to the Messiah? (110:1-7)
10. To whom was David be speaking in this psalm? (110:1-7)
11. What did the psalm writer mean when he said that the Lord would extend the scepter of His chosen one? (110:2)
- * 12. What promises are contained in this psalm, and to whom do they apply? (110:4-7)
13. According to the psalm writer, how will God demonstrate His presence? (110:5-6)
- * 14. What did David predict the Lord's anointed would do with God's help? (110:5-7)

Get It

15. What does this psalm reveal to us about God's authority?
16. Why should we respect God?
17. What does it mean to respect God's authority?
- * 18. What does this psalm reveal to us about God's reliability?
19. How does this passage inspire you to put your trust in the Lord?
- * 20. In what area of your life have you hesitated to rely on God?
21. What changes do you need to make to depend on the Lord for all of your needs?
22. How is this psalm a good example to us of how God cares for those He loves?
23. How have you experienced the protection and provision of the Lord?
24. What can we learn from this passage about God's care for even our smallest needs?
25. How do you think a Christian's methods for solving problems should differ from the techniques of unbelievers?

Apply It

- * 26. What small need would you like to trust the Lord to meet this week?
27. What specific steps could you take this week to demonstrate your confidence in God to meet all of your needs?
28. In what way can you show thankfulness to God at each meal for His provision?

Psalm 111 - Psalm 111:1-10

Topics: Awe, Commitment, Compassion, Covenant, Faithfulness, Fear, Future, Gifts, Glory, Heart, Instructions, Intentions, Justice, People, Power, Praise, Remembering, Righteousness, Understanding, Wisdom, Work, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What do you enjoy most about corporate worship services?
- 2. What do you think or feel whenever you are invited to participate in public praise of the Lord?
- 3. How do you think we could become more comfortable with worshipping God in the presence of others?

Explore It

- 4. What promise opens this passage? (111:1)
- * 5. In whose company did the psalm writer promise to praise the Lord? (111:1)
- 6. How does this psalm combine praise and instruction? (111:1-10)
- 7. What is the theme of the psalm writer's praise? (111:1-10)
- 8. What inspired the psalm writer to extol the Lord? (111:2-4)
- 9. What works of the Lord did the psalm celebrate? (111:2-9)
- 10. How did the psalm writer describe God's character? (111:3-10)
- 11. On whom does God bestow blessings? (111:5)
- 12. In what specific ways does God provide for His people? (111:5-6, 9)
- * 13. How are God's precepts described? (111:7)
- 14. What words of advice conclude this psalm? (111:10)
- * 15. What results can people expect from following the Lord's principles? (111:10)
- 16. What did the psalm writer mean when he spoke of fearing the Lord? (111:10)
- 17. What conclusion did the psalm writer draw from his meditation on God's works? (111:10)

Get It

- 18. What words of advice in this psalm hit home to you?
- * 19. What are the benefits of praising God in the company of others?
- 20. What kinds of feelings, perceptions, or attitudes prevent us from praising God publicly?
- 21. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
- 22. How can you tell when a person fears God?
- 23. What should motivate us to fear the Lord?
- * 24. What do you think are the most important precepts the Lord has given us?
- 25. What specific biblical instructions do you struggle to obey?
- 26. How do you think we can resist the temptation to ignore biblical principles that we don't like?
- 27. What are the advantages of living a life of obedience to the Lord?
- 28. What conclusion do you draw from thinking about God's faithfulness to you?

Apply It

- 29. What small steps could you take this week to obey the Lord in one area that you have struggled with in the past?
- 30. How can you remind yourself of the long-term benefits of obeying the Lord every day?
- * 31. In what way could you praise God with others more often?

Psalm 112 - Psalm 112:1-10

Topics: Advice, Believers, Benefits, Blessing, Challenge, Children, Compassion, Desires, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Generosity, Gifts, Goodness, Heart, Honor, Instructions, Jealousy, Justice, Problems, Purity, Righteousness, Security, Success, Trust, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the advantages of living a clean (moral) life?
- 2. Under what circumstances does it seem useless to try to live righteously?
- 3. What goes through your mind whenever you learn of a particularly evil person having great wealth or living in luxury?

Explore It

- 4. How does the first verse introduce the theme of the passage? (112:1)
- * 5. How is the godly person described? (112:1-9)
- * 6. How does this passage characterize the godly person? (112:1-9)
 - 7. What is the focus of this psalm? (112:1-10)
 - 8. How are the wicked different from the righteous? (112:1-10)
 - 9. What can the descendants of the righteous expect? (112:2)
 - 10. What are some of the benefits the godly person enjoys? (112:2-3)
 - 11. What imagery is used to describe difficult times in life? (112:4)
 - 12. How can the righteous expect even the challenges of life to be different for them? (112:4)
- * 13. Who can expect to receive blessings from the Lord? (112:5)
 - 14. How far will the reputation of the godly extend? (112:6)
 - 15. What attitude does the upright person have toward life? (112:7)
 - 16. Where does the godly person find his or her sense of security? (112:7)
 - 17. What can the righteous expect in the future? (112:8)

Get It

- 18. What does this psalm tell us about the advantages of having faith in God?
- 19. What can we learn from this passage about the rewards of righteousness?
- 20. Why do you think the Lord does not always bless godly people with great wealth?
- 21. Why do you think God sometimes allows sinful people to prosper?
- 22. What benefits have you experienced as a result of your faith in God?
- * 23. How does this psalm inspire you to view life differently?
 - 24. What attitude does the Lord want us to have towards the difficulties of life?
 - 25. How can we maintain a sense of safety and security?
 - 26. In light of this passage, what expectations should we have for the future?
 - 27. What characterizes people whom God chooses to bless?
- * 28. In what specific ways could you change your attitudes or behavior to become more like the godly person described in this passage?

Apply It

- 29. What can you do to remind yourself to be content with what you have?
- 30. What would you list as God's blessings to you?
- * 31. For what benefits of obedience to God do you want to thank God right now?

Psalm 113 - Psalm 113:1-9

Topics: Comparisons, Expectations, Faithfulness, Glory, Heaven, Help, Honor, Humility, Instructions, Motives, Needs, Poor, Power, Praise, Satisfaction, Status, Worship

Open It

1. Who are the lowly people in our society?
- * 2. Who are the needy people in your community?
3. What do you think is effective or ineffective about government programs (such as welfare, unemployment compensation, medicare, etc.) that help people with special needs?

Explore It

4. Whom does the psalm call to praise the Lord? (113:1)
5. What does this hymn celebrate? (113:1-9)
- * 6. What motivated the psalm writer to write this hymn of praise to the Lord? (113:1-9)
7. What imagery is used to describe the extent to which the Lord deserves praise? (113:3)
8. How is the Lord's majesty contrasted to our humility? (113:4-9)
9. How is the Lord described? (113:4-9)
10. What seven verbs did the psalm writer use to celebrate God's worthiness of praise? (113:4-9)
- * 11. Why is the Lord worthy of the praise of His people? (113:5-9)
- * 12. How is God's love demonstrated to His people? (113:6-9)
13. What imagery did the psalm writer use to depict the circumstances of the needy? (113:7)
14. How does God honor the lowly? (113:7-9)
15. How did the psalm writer expect God to meet the needs of the lowly? (113:7-9)
16. What example is used to characterize the needy? (113:9)
17. How does the Lord satisfy the desires of women who want but cannot have children? (113:9)

Get It

18. What does this psalm teach you about how to praise the Lord?
19. Why should we praise the Lord?
20. What are the benefits of meditating on God's holiness and greatness?
21. How has God stooped down to meet our needs?
22. How do you think Christians can be involved in meeting the needs of people around them?
23. How have you experienced the Lord's compassion in your life?
24. What can we learn from the psalm writer's words about depending on God for help?
25. What should we expect from the Lord?
- * 26. In what specific ways do you need the Lord to help you?
27. What should be your response to God's help?
- * 28. How can we offer our worship to the Lord all day long, as the psalm writer advises?

Apply It

29. How do you plan to present your needs to the Lord this week?
30. What offering of praise can you give to God today in anticipation for what He will do for you?
- * 31. How could you creatively remind yourself throughout each day to worship the Lord?
32. What small deed could you do to help a needy person this next week?

Psalm 114 - Psalm 114:1-8

Topics: Advice, Faith, Faithfulness, Fear, God, Goodness, History, Miracles, Nature, Needs, Remembering, Worship

Open It

1. What do you consider to be important elements of a corporate worship service?
- * 2. What are some of the good things that have happened in your church over the years?

Explore It

3. What was established when Israel came out of Egypt? (114:1-2)
4. In what way was Israel's deliverance from Egypt significant? (114:1-2)
5. To what event was the psalm writer referring in mentioning water and hills? (114:1-4)
- * 6. What specific event does this hymn celebrate? (114:1-8)
7. What relationship did the Lord have with Israel? (114:2)
8. Where did God choose to dwell? (114:2)
9. What is personified in this passage? (114:3-4)
10. What is the point of mentioning water and hills? (114:3-4)
11. What question did the psalm writer pose to nature? Why? (114:5-6)
- * 12. What advice did the psalm writer offer? (114:7)
13. What should motivate God's people to fear Him? (114:7-8)
14. What did the Lord do to sustain and refresh the life of Israel? (114:8)
- * 15. What conclusion did the psalm writer draw from his meditation on God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt? (114:7-8)

Get It

16. What is the message of this psalm about God's power?
17. What did the psalm writer learn from remembering God's deliverance in the past?
- * 18. Why is it important to remind ourselves of God's help in the past?
19. How has God shown His help to your church body?
20. In what creative ways can a congregation remind itself of God's faithfulness?
21. In what specific ways has God met your personal needs?
- * 22. What motivates you to respect and honor the Lord?
23. What does this passage teach us about the kind of relationship God wants to have with us?
24. How can we strengthen our relationship with the Lord?

Apply It

- * 25. How could you remind yourself each day this week of what God has done for you?
26. What specific steps could you take this week to strengthen your relationship with the Lord?

Psalm 115 - Psalm 115:1-18

Topics: Beliefs, Blessing, Character, Doubt, Enemies, Faith, Faithfulness, Glory, Heaven, Help, Idolatry, Love, Power, Praise, Protection, Remembering, Trust, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of things do you think prevent people from taking their faith seriously?
- 2. In what ways do you feel encouraged by friends, TV, or other influences to compromise high moral standards?
- 3. What would you say are some of the strongest temptations in our society?

Explore It

- * 4. What did the psalm writer recognize about Israel's achievements? (115:1)
- 5. What does the praise of God's people accomplish? (115:1-18)
- 6. On which attributes of the Lord does this psalm focus? (115:1-18)
- 7. How was Israel taunted by their neighbors? (115:2)
- 8. How did the Israelites answer their enemies? (115:3)
- 9. What does the psalm reveal about God's character? (115:3)
- * 10. What did Israel recognize about the gods of the surrounding nations? (115:4-7)
- 11. How are idols described in the psalm? (115:4-7)
- 12. What is predicted for people who worship idols? (115:8)
- 13. What call did the psalm writer give to Israel? (115:9-11)
- * 14. How did Israel respond to the psalm writer's call? (115:12-13)
- 15. What blessing is offered to Israel? (115:14-15)
- 16. What words of affirmation conclude the psalm? (115:16-18)

Get It

- 17. In what ways should we imitate Israel's example?
- * 18. What attitude should we have toward our own achievements?
- 19. What has this passage taught you about the kind of relationship we should have with God?
- 20. In your own words, what is an idol?
- 21. What are some things in our world today that can become idols (substitutes for God) to people?
- * 22. How can we guard against letting our successes, affections, or loyalties interfere with our commitment to the Lord?
- 23. In what specific ways has the Lord been your "help and shield"?
- 24. What benefits do we experience when we praise the Lord?
- 25. What inspires you to worship the Lord?

Apply It

- 26. What words of praise can you offer to God right now?
- * 27. What concrete action could you take this week to eliminate or control distractions that draw your attention away from the Lord?

Psalm 116 - Psalm 116:1-19

Topics: Answers, Believe, Call, Compassion, Death, Depend, Despair, Faithfulness, Freedom, Goodness, Humility, Love, Mercy, Needs, Protection, Rest, Righteousness, Salvation, Sorrow, Thankfulness, Vows, Worship

Open It

1. When has a friend or family member helped you through a difficult experience?
- * 2. What are some of the ways that we express our gratitude to people who help us?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did the psalm writer depend on the Lord for help? (116:1-2)
4. What is the focus of the psalm writer's praise? (116:1-6)
5. What is the main theme of this psalm? (116:1-19)
6. How did the psalm writer feel about the Lord? Why? (116:1-19)
- * 7. What did the psalm writer reveal about his own faith? (116:7, 10, 13-14)
8. How had the Lord provided for the psalm writer's needs? (116:7-11)
9. From what predicament did the Lord deliver the psalm writer? (116:8-11)
10. What accusation did the psalm writer make against his enemies? (116:11)
- * 11. How did the psalm writer plan to respond to God's goodness? (116:12-14)
12. What did the psalm writer celebrate? (116:13-14)
13. What promise did the psalm writer make to the Lord? (116:13-14, 17-19)
14. What did the psalm writer recognize about the Lord's goodness to him? (116:15-16)
15. What attitude did the psalm writer have toward himself and the Lord? (116:15-16)

Get It

16. What can we learn about thankfulness from the psalm writer's attitudes and actions?
17. How would you like your faith to be like the psalm writer's?
- * 18. How can we cultivate an attitude of service?
19. What should motivate us to depend on the Lord for help?
20. What resulted when the psalm writer recalled God's goodness to him in the past?
21. How have you experienced God's faithfulness?
- * 22. What should be our response to God's deliverance and help?
23. Why did the psalm writer promise to call on God and fulfill his vows to the Lord?
24. What can we learn from this psalm about how to worship the Lord?
25. What offerings can we give to the Lord?

Apply It

26. How could you creatively remind yourself this week to turn to the Lord for help in times of need?
27. What is one step you could take to renew your worship of the Lord?
- * 28. What gift of calling on God or fulfilling a vow can you give to the Lord to thank Him for His faithfulness to you?

Psalm 117 - Psalm 117:1-2

Topics: Call, Character, Faithfulness, God, Instructions, Love, People, Praise, Worship

Open It

- * 1. If you were to write a poem to God, what would it be about?
- 2. What do you think would be the advantages of writing down a prayer?

Explore It

- 3. To whom is the psalm writer speaking? (117:1)
- 4. What does this passage reveal about God's plan throughout history to reveal Himself to us? (117:1-2)
- 5. What is the message of this psalm? (117:1-2)
- * 6. What instructions does this psalm offer to God's people? (117:1-2)
- * 7. How is God characterized in this passage? (117:1-2)
- 8. What motivated the psalm writer to praise the Lord? (117:2)
- * 9. What reason did the psalm writer give to encourage God's people to praise Him? (117:2)
- 10. On which attributes of the Lord does this passage focus? (117:2)
- 11. On whom does the Lord focus His love? (117:2)
- 12. How did the psalm writer describe God's faithfulness? (117:2)

Get It

- 13. How is the message of this psalm important to us today?
- 14. What does this psalm teach us about God's care for us?
- * 15. How should we respond to God's love and faithfulness?
- 16. What reasons do you have to offer your worship to the Lord?
- 17. What should be our motivation in praising God?
- 18. What enhances your worship of the Lord?
- 19. In what creative ways can we give our praise to God?
- * 20. How can we keep our praise and worship fresh and meaningful?

Apply It

- 21. What creative gift of worship could you offer the Lord today?
- * 22. What is one characteristic of God that you could record in a poem, statement of praise, or reminder?

Psalm 118 - Psalm 118:1-29

Topics: Answers, Attitude, Beliefs, Blessing, Challenge, Depend, Despair, Discipline, Enemies, Faithfulness, Fear, Freedom, Help, Humility, Joy, Love, Perspective, Praise, Problems, Punishment, Righteousness, Salvation, Strength, Success, Thankfulness, Trust, Victory, Witnessing, Worry

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of experiences, concerns, or circumstances cause you to worry?
- 2. What do you usually feel like doing when you are under great stress?

Explore It

- 3. What call introduces the poem? (118:1-4)
- 4. What is the theme of this hymn of thanksgiving? (118:1-29)
- 5. On which main character trait of God does this psalm focus? (118:1-29)
- * 6. What instructions did the psalm writer give to Israel? (118:2-4)
- 7. How is the psalm writer's situation described? (118:5, 10-12)
- 8. How did the psalm writer depend on the Lord in his time of need? (118:5-7, 10-13)
- * 9. What attitude did the psalm writer have toward his predicament? (118:5-18)
- 10. What is the focus of the psalm writer's song of thanksgiving? (118:5-21)
- 11. What advice did the psalm writer offer his listeners? (118:8-9)
- * 12. How did the psalm writer respond to God's deliverance? (118:17, 19-21)
- 13. What did the psalm writer believe was the reason for his hardship? (118:18)
- 14. What had the Lord done for the psalm writer and Israel? (118:21-23, 27)
- 15. How did the Israelites respond to the psalm writer's song of praise? (118:22-27)
- 16. How did the psalm writer conclude this hymn? (118:28-29)

Get It

- 17. What can we learn from the psalm writer about how to deal with hardship and adversity?
- * 18. What attitude should we have toward our own difficult circumstances?
- 19. What does a fearful attitude indicate about our relationship with the Lord?
- 20. In what way are Christians well equipped to handle the challenges of life?
- * 21. What does it mean to trust the Lord with our problems?
- 22. What specific instructions does this psalm give to us?
- 23. Why is it better to "take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man"?
- 24. What challenges do you face in the near future?
- 25. How does this passage encourage you to handle the challenges you are facing?
- 26. How can we plan to respond to God's help and deliverance in our lives?

Apply It

- * 27. What practical steps could you take this week to trust the Lord with your needs each day?
- 28. How could you resist the temptation to worry about your problems?
- 29. What offering of praise could you give to the Lord in anticipation of His help?

Psalm 119 - Psalm 119:1-176

Topics: Accountability, Advice, Attitude, Basics of the Faith, Bible, Blessing, Character, Commitment, Convictions, Depend, Desires, Devotion, Discipline, Enthusiasm, Goals, Habits, Inspiration, Instructions, Maturity, Relationships, Respect, Sin, Spiritual Disciplines, Submission, Truth, Value, Words

Open It

1. How do you feel when you receive a long letter from a close friend?
- * 2. What role does communication play in relationships?
3. What causes friendships to deteriorate?

Explore It

4. Who will be blessed by God? (119:1-3)
5. What is the central message of this devotional psalm? (119:1-176)
6. What was the psalmist's motivation in writing this poem? (119:1-176)
- * 7. How is God's Word described in this passage? (119:1-176)
8. How is the psalmist's devotion to God's Word revealed? (119:1-176)
9. What advice does this psalm give to young people? (119:9-16)
- * 10. What attitude did the psalmist want to have toward God's Word? (119:17-24)
11. What did the psalmist ask the Lord to do for him? (119:33-40)
12. How had the psalmist demonstrated his commitment to the Lord? (119:44-64)
- * 13. What role did God's Word play in the psalmist's life? (119:49-64)
14. What attitude did the psalmist have toward the Lord's discipline? (119:65-72)
15. What happens when we read and think about God's Word? (119:97-104)
16. From what did the psalmist want the Lord to deliver him? (119:121-152)
17. What confession concludes this psalm? (119:176)

Get It

18. How has God communicated with us?
19. What can we learn about God's Word from this psalm?
20. What role should God's Word play in our lives?
21. How should we read and study God's Word?
22. How would you like to change the way you read or study God's Word?
- * 23. How can we show our respect for God's written Word?
24. What benefits can we expect from disciplined meditation on God's Word?
25. According to the many clues in this psalm, how can we prevent ourselves from sinning against the Lord?
26. What does it mean to hide God's Word in our heart?
- * 27. What specific instructions from this psalm would you like to apply to your life?

Apply It

28. What verse or passage from this psalm would you want to memorize? Why?
29. How could you improve the quality or quantity of the time you spend reading and thinking about God's Word this week?
- * 30. In what specific ways could you demonstrate your love for God's word in the next few weeks?

Psalms of Ascents - Psalms 120:1-134:3

Topics: Accomplishments, Advice, Answers, Attitude, Blessing, Call, Character, Children, Church, Commitment, Confidence, Consequences, Covenant, Deceit, Depend, Desires, Endurance, Enemies, Faithfulness, Family, Forgiveness, God, Greatness, Hatred, Heaven, Help, Heritage, Home, Hope, Instructions, Joy, Mercy, Ministry, Neighbor, Obedience, Oppressed, Parents, People, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Relationships, Reliability, Rewards, Righteousness, Salvation, Shame, Sin, Success, Unity, Victory, Waiting, Worship, Youth

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the challenges of getting along with your family?
- 2. How have your relationships with others been affected by your faith in God?
- 3. How do you think a Christian family might differ from a family that does not believe in the Lord?

Explore It

- 4. What main request do these psalms present to the Lord? (120:1-134:3)
- * 5. What motivated the psalmists to depend on the Lord for help? (120:1; 121:1-8; 123:1-3; 124:6-8; 126:2-3; 130:1-8; 132:11-18)
- 6. What promises are offered to God's people? (121:3-8; 125:1-5; 128:1-6; 130:7-8; 132:13-18)
- 7. How did Solomon remind us that all of life's blessings come from God and not people's own achievements? (127:1-5)
- 8. What attitude do these psalms tell us to have toward ourselves? (121:1-2; 123:3; 124:1-5; 126:1-3; 127:1; 128:1-4; 130:3, 5)
- * 9. In what specific ways should God's people depend on Him? (121:1-8; 123:1-2; 127:1-2; 130:1, 5-6)
- 10. What attitude should God's people have toward the Lord? (121:5-8; 123:1-3; 124:1-5, 8; 127:1-2; 129:4; 130:4, 7-8; 131:1-2)
- 11. How should God's people view a place of worship? (122:1, 4; 132:1-5, 7, 13-14; 134:1-2)
- * 12. What did David realize about his own abilities in comparison to the Lord's power? (124:1-8)
- 13. What do these psalms say about relationships? (127:1-5; 128:3-4; 133:1-3)

Get It

- * 14. What should motivate us to depend on the Lord for help in times of need?
- 15. What promises from these psalms would you like to claim for yourself?
- 16. What attitude should we have toward ourselves?
- 17. How can we cultivate a humble attitude?
- 18. In light of these psalms, what attitude should we have toward church?
- 19. How do you think you could improve your attitude toward worshiping God?
- * 20. In what specific ways do you need to depend more on the Lord and less on yourself?
- 21. What have you learned from these passages about interpersonal relationships?
- 22. How should we treat our family members and friends?
- 23. What good things, experiences, people, or successes has God granted to you?
- 24. How can we thank the Lord for His goodness to us?

Apply It

- 25. How could you demonstrate your thankfulness to the Lord today for the friendships you have?
- 26. What could you do this week to demonstrate your respect for church and for the worship of God?
- * 27. In what specific area of your life could you depend more on the Lord and less on confidence in your own abilities?

Psalm 135 - Psalm 135:1-21

Topics: Church, Commitment, Compassion, Creation, Devotion, Earth, Enemies, Fear, Goodness, Heaven, Idolatry, Ministry, Miracles, Nature, Possessions, Praise, Protection, Trust, Value, Worship

Open It

1. What are the top priorities in your life right now?
- * 2. What kinds of things can divert our attention from the important things in life?

Explore It

3. Whom did the psalmist call to praise? (135:1-2)
4. What is the central topic of this psalm? (135:1-21)
- * 5. On which of the Lord's characteristics did the psalmist focus his praise? (135:1-21)
6. What main reason did Israel have for praising God? (135:3-4)
- * 7. How is the God of Israel compared to other gods? (135:5-18)
8. Where in creation does God have His way? (135:6)
9. How does the Lord exert His power? (135:6-7)
10. How is the Lord's triumph over Egypt and foreign kings celebrated? (135:8-12)
11. What did the psalmist want the Lord to do for Israel? (135:14)
12. How are foreign gods depicted? (135:15-18)
- * 13. What will be the result of trusting in other gods? (135:18)
14. Who is called to praise the Lord in the psalm's conclusion? (135:19-20)
15. What call concludes the psalm? (135:19-21)

Get It

16. What reasons do we have to offer our praise to God?
17. How have you seen God's hand at work in creation?
18. How have you experienced God's power at work in your own life?
- * 19. What should be our response to God's work in nature and in our own lives?
20. What are some of the things people worship today other than the true God?
21. How do you think some Christians lose their faith?
- * 22. How can we guard against allowing our priorities to be displaced by worldly concerns?
23. How does recalling God's faithfulness to us inspire us to remain true to Him?

Apply It

24. What praise offering can you give to God today?
- * 25. What is one step you could take this week to strengthen your commitment to the Lord?
26. How could you remind yourself of God's greatness and power over technology and other modern idols?

Psalm 136 - Psalm 136:1-26

Topics: Appreciation, Creation, Enemies, Freedom, Gifts, God, Goodness, Guidance, Heaven, Honor, Love, Miracles, Nature, Power, Reliability, Salvation, Strength, Thankfulness, Worship

Open It

1. How do you feel when someone compliments you?
- * 2. How do you feel when you give a compliment to someone else?
3. Why do you think it is important to say thank you?

Explore It

- * 4. What does this psalm reveal about God's character? (136:1, 4-5, 12, 23-24)
5. What call introduces and concludes this psalm? (136:1-3, 26)
6. What is the emphasis of the psalm's refrain? (136:1-26)
- * 7. What is the focus of this praise psalm? (136:1-26)
- * 8. Why should God's people offer Him thanks? (136:1-26)
9. What does the psalm reveal about God's interest in creation? (136:4-9)
10. What specific event in Israel's history did the psalmist recall? (136:10-15)
11. How was the nation of Israel delivered from Egypt? (136:10-15)
12. How did the Lord help Israel conquer her enemies? (136:17-22)
13. What benefits did Israel enjoy from the Lord's destruction of her enemies? (136:21-22)
14. How do the four concluding verses review the basic themes of the psalm? (136:23-25)

Get It

15. In what specific ways should we follow this psalmist's example?
- * 16. What are the benefits of reflecting on God's great deeds for His people in the past?
17. What does this passage teach us about God's character?
18. How does this psalm inspire you to worship the Lord?
- * 19. Why should we be motivated to offer thanks to God?
20. How have you seen the Lord's hand at work in your life?
21. What should be our response to God's help in our lives?

Apply It

- * 22. What creative gift of thanksgiving could you give to the Lord today?
23. How could you remind yourself each day this next week of God's deeds for you?
24. Whom could you tell about what God has done for you?

Psalm 137 - Psalm 137:1-9

Topics: Challenge, Commitment, Consequences, Despair, Devotion, Enemies, Faithfulness, Forget, Hope, Mourning, Oppressed, Prayer, Problems, Punishment, Remembering, Sorrow, War

Open It

- * 1. How has your relationship with the Lord helped you through a difficult time in the past?
- 2. Why does a child react so strongly to losing a blanket, toy, or other special item?
- 3. How does your relationship with God usually change when you are going through hard times?

Explore It

- * 4. While in captivity, to what memory did the psalm writer cling? (137:1)
- 5. What did the psalm writer remember about his exile? (137:1-3)
- 6. What caused the psalm writer to mourn? (137:1-3)
- 7. How did the psalm writer's captors torment him? (137:1-3)
- * 8. What motivated the psalm writer to write this passage? (137:1-9)
- 9. Why did the Israelites refuse to sing their worship songs? (137:3-4)
- 10. What commitment did the psalm writer make? (137:4-6)
- * 11. How did the psalm writer demonstrate his commitment to Jerusalem? (137:4-6)
- 12. What attitude did the psalm writer have toward Jerusalem? (137:6)
- 13. What did the psalm writer want the Lord to do for Israel? (137:7-9)
- 14. Why did the psalm writer believe his enemies deserved the Lord's punishment? (137:7-9)
- 15. What did the psalm writer expect to happen to Babylon in the future? (137:8)

Get It

- 16. What challenges did the psalm writer face?
- 17. What can we learn about sadness and mourning from the psalm writer's example?
- 18. How did the psalm writer get through his difficult circumstances?
- 19. What kind of relationship does God want to have with us in the good and bad times?
- 20. How would you like your commitment to the Lord to be like the psalm writer's devotion to Jerusalem?
- 21. Why is it difficult to remain faithful to one's beliefs in difficult times?
- * 22. How can we mourn or experience grief in a way that reflects God's hand in our lives?
- 23. What difficulties are you facing in the near future?
- * 24. How does this psalm encourage you to handle the challenges you face?

Apply It

- * 25. What specific steps could you take this week to strengthen your commitment to the Lord, even if you are going through a difficult experience?
- 26. How could you encourage or help a person who is struggling with a problem this week?

Psalm 138 - Psalm 138:1-8

Topics: Anger, Answers, Call, Courage, Enemies, Faithfulness, Glory, Heart, Holy, Humility, Love, Name, Praise, Pride, Problems, Protection, Purpose, Salvation, Strength, Words, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What characteristics do you look for in a friend?
- 2. What character traits would you like to cultivate in your own personality?
- 3. Which of the Lord's characteristics do you appreciate most? Why?

Explore It

- 4. How did David worship the Lord? (138:1-2)
- * 5. What motivated David to write this song to God? (138:1-3)
- 6. What is the main topic in this song? (138:1-8)
- 7. How had the Lord met David's needs? (138:2-3, 7)
- 8. Whom did David want to join him in praise to God? (138:4-5)
- * 9. What reason did David give others to worship the Lord? (138:4-5)
- 10. What two things display God's glory? (138:4-5)
- 11. What testimony is given to God's faithfulness? (138:6-8)
- 12. How is God's love described? (138:6-8)
- 13. How does the Lord judge? (138:6)
- * 14. How does the Lord demonstrate His care for those He loves? (138:7)
- 15. What hope did David place in the Lord? (138:8)
- 16. What prayer concludes the psalm? (138:8)

Get It

- 17. What can we learn about praise from this song?
- 18. In what ways could we follow David's example in praising God?
- 19. What does this passage tell us about what God wants to do for us?
- * 20. How has God's faithfulness to you given you courage and a sense of security?
- 21. How have you found God's words and ways to be reliable?
- * 22. Why should we want to tell others about what God has done for us?
- 23. What attitude does this psalm warn us to avoid?
- 24. How can we cultivate a humble attitude?
- 25. Why should we put our hope in the Lord?
- 26. How can you depend more on God in times of trouble?

Apply It

- 27. What song of praise could you offer to God today?
- 28. What steps could you take this week to guard against the sin of pride?
- * 29. Whom could you tell about God's reliability and faithfulness?

Psalm 139 - Psalm 139:1-24

Topics: Creation, Earth, Enemies, Guidance, Hatred, Heaven, Help, Holy Spirit, Knowledge, Praise, Protection, Testing, Thinking, Trust, Value, Work, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is something about you or your personality that is totally unique?
- 2. What makes life worth living?
- 3. Why do you think the conflicting views on abortion matter so much to people?

Explore It

- * 4. How did David describe God's knowledge of him? (139:1-6)
- 5. What main prayer request is presented to the Lord in this psalm? (139:1-24)
- * 6. What attitude did David have toward himself and the Lord? Why? (139:1-24)
- 7. What "knowledge" did David feel was too lofty for him to understand? (139:6)
- 8. What rhetorical question did David pose to the Lord? (139:7)
- 9. What did David reveal about our ability to escape God's scrutiny? (139:7-12)
- * 10. How does this passage depict God's omnipresence? (139:8-12)
- 11. Why did God know David so well? (139:13-15)
- 12. What caused David to offer his praise to the Lord? (139:14)
- 13. What does this psalm reveal about God's care for His people throughout their lives? (139:15-16)
- 14. Whom did David view as his enemies? (139:19-22)
- 15. What set David apart from God's adversaries? (139:19-22)
- 16. How did David demonstrate his loyalty to the Lord? (139:21-22)
- 17. Why did David want the Lord to examine his heart? (139:23-24)

Get It

- 18. What does this psalm teach us about God's character?
- 19. What does this passage teach us about human life?
- 20. What can we learn about ourselves from this passage?
- * 21. In light of this passage, what attitude should we have toward ourselves? toward the Lord?
- 22. How does this psalm motivate you to praise the Lord?
- 23. How have you experienced God's care for you?
- 24. Why does the Lord test us?
- 25. When has the Lord tested you?
- 26. What attitude should we have to the Lord's discipline in our lives?
- 27. How can we demonstrate our loyalty to God?
- * 28. In what area of your life do you desire God's leading?

Apply It

- 29. What gift of praise could you give to the Lord today?
- * 30. How do you plan to seek the Lord's guidance this next week?
- 31. How could you thank God for His creation?
- 32. How could you remind yourself each day this week of God's presence with you?

Psalm 140 - Psalm 140:1-13

Topics: Call, Consequences, Deceit, Depend, Desires, Dishonesty, Enemies, Evil, Heart, Justice, Lying, Mercy, Motives, Needs, Plans, Pride, Problems, Protection, Punishment, Righteousness, Strength, Success, Unfairness

Open It

1. How do you feel when someone who is dishonest or unfair succeeds?
- * 2. When have you ever failed or lost what you wanted as a result of being honest?

Explore It

3. How are David's enemies described? (140:1-5)
- * 4. How does this psalm describe the Lord? (140:1-13)
5. What is this psalm's central theme? (140:1-13)
6. Why did David need God's deliverance? (140:1-13)
7. What main weapon did David's adversaries use against him? (140:3)
8. What danger did David face? (140:4-5)
9. How did David deal with his fears? (140:6-7)
- * 10. What did David want the Lord to do for him? (140:6-8)
11. Why did David want the Lord to make the plans of the wicked fail? (140:8)
12. What strategy did David want God to use against his adversaries? (140:9-11)
- * 13. How did David demonstrate his confidence in the Lord? (140:12-13)
14. What did David believe about God's character? (140:12-13)

Get It

15. What can we learn from David's example about how to deal with our fears?
16. What problems or disappointments threaten to discourage you?
- * 17. How can you use what you have learned from this psalm to deal with your fears?
18. In what specific way do you need the Lord's help?
19. How can we demonstrate our confidence in the Lord?
20. What prevents you from completely trusting God with your problems?
- * 21. How does this passage encourage you to put your trust in God?
22. What attitude does this psalm warn us to avoid?
23. As Christians, how should we view the unfairness we see around us?
24. When are you tempted to allow pride to interfere with your relationship with God?
25. How can we guard against the sin of pride?

Apply It

26. How do you plan to present your needs to the Lord this week?
- * 27. What practical steps could you take each day to trust the Lord with your feelings and circumstances?
28. How could you encourage a friend who is struggling with disappointment or a difficult problem?

Psalm 141 - Psalm 141:1-10

Topics: Accountability, Advice, Attitude, Death, Depend, Desires, Discipline, Evil, Guidance, Heart, Influence, Peer Pressure, Prayer, Protection, Purity, Responsibility, Righteousness, Words

Open It

1. How have you experienced the influence of peer pressure?
- * 2. When has the rebuke of a friend had a positive impact on you?
3. What impact can discipline have on us?

Explore It

4. What initial appeal is presented to the Lord in the introduction? (141:1-2)
5. What was David's main concern? (141:1-10)
6. What imagery is used to describe David's prayer? (141:2)
- * 7. How did David want the Lord to protect him? (141:3-4)
8. In what specific way did David want to remain pure before God? (141:3-4)
9. What imagery describes the temptation to associate with the wicked? (141:4)
10. Why did David describe the strike of a righteous man as a "kindness"? (141:5)
- * 11. How did David view the discipline of the righteous? (141:5)
12. What was the theme of David's prayers? (141:5-6)
13. How is the destiny of the wicked described? (141:6-7)
- * 14. How did David voice his trust in the Lord? (141:8)
15. What plea for deliverance is presented to God? (141:8-10)

Get It

16. In what specific ways would you like your desires to match David's?
- * 17. Why is David a good example for us to follow today?
18. On what temptation does this psalm focus?
19. What did David realize about the power of peer pressure?
20. What kinds of temptations do we face today?
21. What temptation threatens to overwhelm you?
22. How did the psalm writer want the Lord to protect him from temptation?
- * 23. How should we view the advice or discipline of other mature believers?
24. What responsibility do you think we have to hold each other accountable?

Apply It

- * 25. What practical steps could you take this week to withstand negative peer pressure?
26. In what one area of your life do you need to be held accountable?
27. Who is a close friend who could hold you accountable this week?

Psalm 142 - Psalm 142:1-7

Topics: Call, Complaining, Depend, Despair, Enemies, Fear, Freedom, Goodness, Mercy, Needs, Praise, Prayer, Problems, Protection, Righteousness, Strength, Worry

Open It

- * 1. How do people usually deal with overwhelming problems?
- 2. What successful techniques have you found to deal with stressful or scary situations?
- 3. When was the last time you had a narrow escape?

Explore It

- 4. What is the main theme of this prayer? (142:1-7)
- 5. Why did David need the Lord's help? (142:1-7)
- 6. How did the psalm writer demonstrate his faith and confidence in God? (142:1-7)
- * 7. What predicament did the psalm writer face? (142:1-7)
- 8. How did David feel about his situation? (142:3-6)
- 9. What motivated David to depend on God? (142:4-5)
- 10. Why did David refer to the Lord as his "portion"? (142:5)
- 11. What did David present to the Lord? (142:5-7)
- * 12. How did David feel about his own ability to save himself? (142:6)
- 13. What sort of language did David use to describe his situation? (142:7)
- 14. What did David expect from the Lord? (142:7)
- * 15. How did David promise to respond to God's deliverance? (142:7)
- 16. How did David predict others would respond to God's help? (142:7)

Get It

- 17. In what specific ways should we imitate David's example in this psalm?
- 18. How was David's attitude honoring to God?
- * 19. What does this passage teach you about relying on the Lord in times of need?
- 20. When have you felt overwhelmed by your circumstances?
- 21. When has the Lord been a "refuge" for you?
- 22. In what way has the Lord been a "refuge" for you?
- * 23. In what specific areas of your life could you depend more on the Lord?
- 24. What should we expect from the Lord?
- 25. How should we respond to God's help and deliverance?
- 26. In what practical ways can we demonstrate our confidence in the Lord?

Apply It

- * 27. What practical steps can you take this week to rely on God to help you deal with the challenges you face?
- 28. If you feel overwhelmed by your circumstances, how can you use what you have learned from this psalm to better deal with your situation?
- 29. How do you plan to praise the Lord this week for His goodness to you?

Psalm 143 - Psalm 143:1-12

Topics: Answers, Attitude, Call, Character, Darkness, Depend, Despair, Enemies, Faithfulness, God's Will, Guidance, Heart, Holy Spirit, Hope, Humility, Judgment, Leadership, Love, Mercy, Name, Prayer, Problems, Protection, Remembering, Righteousness, Soul, Teaching, Trust, Work

Open It

1. Who was the best teacher you ever had, and why?
- * 2. In your opinion what makes a good teacher?

Explore It

3. To which of the Lord's character traits did David appeal? (143:1, 11)
4. What is the focus of this prayer? (143:1-12)
- * 5. What appeal did the psalm writer present to the Lord? (143:1-12)
6. What did David admit about his own character? (143:2)
- * 7. What attitude did David have toward himself? (143:2, 12)
8. On what did David want the Lord to focus His attention? (143:3)
9. What imagery is used to emphasize the psalm writer's dire need? (143:3)
10. How did David describe his predicament? (143:3-4)
11. How did David feel about his situation? (143:4)
- * 12. What strategy did David use to combat his own fears? (143:5-6)
13. What kind of language is used to describe David's longing for the Lord? (143:6)
14. What kind of future did the psalm writer expect without the Lord's help? (143:7)
15. How did David show his trust in God? (143:8-9)
16. What did David want the Lord to do for him? (143:8-12)
17. What was David's motivation in asking for God's deliverance? (143:11)

Get It

18. What can we learn from David's example about how to deal with our fears and problems?
- * 19. What strategies should we use to combat feelings of doubt or discouragement?
20. How does remembering God's faithfulness in the past encourage you to trust Him today?
21. How does God teach us the lessons He wants us to learn?
- * 22. Practically speaking, how can we demonstrate our trust in the Lord?
23. What attitude does God want us to have toward ourselves?
24. How can we cultivate a servant attitude?
25. What does this passage teach us about God?
26. How does God's Spirit lead us?
27. In what area of your life do you need God's guidance?

Apply It

28. In what practical ways could you sensitize yourself to God's Spirit?
- * 29. What do you want to remember the next time you feel hopeless or depressed?
30. How could you remind yourself this week to call on God whenever you have a need?

Psalm 144 - Psalm 144:1-15

Topics: Attitude, Blessing, Caring, Character, Confidence, Contentment, Deceit, Depend, Enemies, Faithfulness, God, Health, Heaven, Love, Lying, Needs, Possessions, Praise, Promises, Protection, Self-Esteem, Strength, Trust, Victory, War, Youth

Open It

1. Why do you think many people struggle with low self-esteem?
- * 2. In your view what's most difficult about maintaining a healthy self-image?

Explore It

3. What gifts from God does David celebrate in the introduction? (144:1-2)
4. What is the theme of this prayer? (144:1-15)
5. How is the Lord characterized in this psalm? (144:1-15)
- * 6. What did the psalm writer recognize about his own status? (144:3-4)
7. What imagery is used to depict our insignificance? (144:4)
8. How did David want the Lord to deliver him? (144:5-8)
9. How are David's enemies described? (144:8, 11)
- * 10. What vow did the psalm writer make to the Lord? (144:9-10)
11. What inspired David to offer his praise to God? (144:10)
12. What will be the result of God's deliverance? (144:12-15)
13. What blessings did the psalm writer expect from God? (144:12-15)
14. What imagery did the psalm writer use to celebrate God's blessings? (144:12-14)
- * 15. To whom does the Lord give His blessings? (144:15)

Get It

16. How is the view of people portrayed in this psalm different from the world's view?
17. What does this passage reveal to us about the character of God?
18. What attitude did the psalm writer exemplify?
19. How do you need the Lord to heal or strengthen your self-image?
20. What role should God play in our everyday lives?
- * 21. How can we follow David's example in responding to God's goodness?
22. What inspires you to offer your praise to God?
23. What blessings can we expect from the Lord?
24. What gifts from God do you enjoy now?
- * 25. In what area of your life do you need God's help?
26. What kinds of things prevent God from working in our lives?

Apply It

27. What motivates you to give your praise to God today?
28. What steps could you begin to take to open up the areas of your life that you have held back from the Lord?
- * 29. In what specific ways could you allow God more freedom to work through you each day this week?

Psalms of Praise - Psalms 145:1-150:6

Topics: Awe, Beliefs, Blessing, Call, Celebration, Character, Compassion, Desires, Earth, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Freedom, Glory, Greatness, Healing, Heaven, Holiness, Hope, Humility, Joy, Knowledge, Love, Name, Nature, Oppressed, Power, Praise, Protection, Punishment, Responsibility, Revenge, Righteousness, Salvation, Satisfaction, Soul, Strength, Testimony, Trust, Truth, Understanding, Words, Work, Worship

Open It

1. What kinds of things do you usually talk about with your friends?
- * 2. Why are spiritual issues sometimes difficult to talk about with others?
3. How do you feel when you tell someone about what God has done for you?

Explore It

4. How do these psalms characterize the Lord? (145:1-150:6)
5. What is the overarching theme of these six psalms? (145:1-150:6)
- * 6. What should motivate God's people to praise the Lord? (145:1-150:6)
7. What practical advice is offered about how to worship God? (145:4-7, 10-12; 146:1-2; 147:1; 149:1-3, 5-6; 150:1-6)
- * 8. What responsibility do God's people have to tell others of God's goodness? (145:4-7, 11-12; 147:1; 148:1-5, 13-14; 149:1-3, 6; 150:1-6)
9. How does the Lord meet the needs of His people? (145:13-20; 146:7-9; 147:2-4, 6, 8, 13-14; 149:4)
10. What specific words of instruction are given to God's followers? (146:3; 147:1, 7, 12; 148:7-14; 149:1-3, 5-9; 150:1-6)
11. How does God demonstrate His love for the needy? (146:7-9; 147:2-3, 6)
- * 12. What does God desire from His people? (147:10-11)
13. Whom do the psalm writers call to praise God? (148:1-5, 7-13; 149:2, 5)
14. How is Psalm 150 a fitting conclusion to the book of Psalms? (150:1-6)

Get It

15. How has the Lord demonstrated His love for you?
16. What responsibility do we have to tell others about what God has done for us?
17. What sometimes prevents you from sharing your faith with others?
- * 18. How do you think you could make it easier for yourself to share with others what God means to you?
19. What should motivate us to offer our praise to God?
20. What lessons can we learn from these psalms about how to praise the Lord?
21. How do these passages encourage you to improve your worship of God?
- * 22. What are some practical tips on worship from these psalms that you would like to try?
23. Practically speaking, how can you put your hope in the Lord?

Apply It

24. What specific steps could you take this week to add some creativity and enthusiasm to your worship of the Lord?
25. What concrete action could you take to motivate yourself to tell others about God's love for them?
- * 26. Who is one person you could tell this week about your faith in God?

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Prologue and Warnings - Proverbs 1:1-33

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Convictions, Danger, Death, Direction, Experience, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Life, Life-style, Morality, Righteousness, Sin, Temptation, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. Who is the wisest person you know?
- 2. What makes a person foolish or wise?
- 3. Who is someone you feared growing up?

Explore It

- 4. Who wrote this section of Proverbs? (1:1)
- 5. Why did Solomon write Proverbs? (1:1-7)
- 6. What three types of individuals are mentioned by Solomon? (1:1-7)
- * 7. Where does wisdom come from? (1:7)
- * 8. About what sort of enticements did Solomon warn us? (1:8-19)
- 9. What happens to those who pursue ill-gotten gain? (1:19)
- 10. How did Solomon describe wisdom? (1:20-21)
- 11. How did Solomon describe the simple person, the mocker, and the fool? (1:22)
- * 12. How does wisdom treat those who reject her? (1:24-27)
- 13. What is the result of not accepting wisdom? (1:28-32)
- 14. What is the result of accepting wisdom? (1:33)

Get It

- * 15. How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of knowledge?
- * 16. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
- 17. What type of knowledge and discipline do fools despise?
- 18. What are the benefits of living wisely?
- 19. What are the consequences of living foolishly?
- 20. How does your life-style reflect your acceptance or rejection of wisdom?
- 21. Why and how do people reject wisdom?
- 22. When and why have you been tempted to pursue ill-gotten gain?
- 23. Why do you agree or disagree with the principle that both the wise and the fool reap what they sow?

Apply It

- * 24. What is one thing you can do this week to seek wisdom?
- 25. What negative influence (person or thing) can you remove from your life this week?
- 26. What change in your life-style can you make to avoid being enticed by evil?

Moral Benefits of Wisdom - Proverbs 2:1-22

Topics: Adultery, Character, Choices, Consequences, Convictions, Danger, Death, Direction, Experience, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Life, Life-style, Lust, Morality, Righteousness, Sin, Temptation, Weaknesses, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. Why do people engage in habits that they know will hurt them?
- 2. What bad habit have you successfully broken?
- 3. What is something you have diligently pursued in life?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Solomon encourage us to do? Why? (2:1-5)
- 5. What is the theme of this chapter? (2:1-22)
- 6. What are some of the benefits of wisdom? (2:1-22)
- 7. How should we look for wisdom? (2:4)
- 8. What happens to the person who accepts these words? (2:5)
- 9. What does the Lord give? (2:6)
- * 10. What does the Lord do for the upright? (2:7-8)
- 11. What did Solomon say the reader would understand? (2:9-11)
- 12. From what can wisdom save us? (2:12, 16)
- 13. How did Solomon describe wicked people? (2:12-15)
- 14. How did Solomon describe the adulteress? (2:16-17)
- 15. About whom did Solomon warn us? (2:16-17)
- * 16. What results from being seduced by an adulteress? (2:18-19)
- 17. What will happen to the upright and to the wicked? (2:20-22)

Get It

- 18. How does wisdom benefit a person's life?
- 19. Why is it hard to pursue and to accept wisdom?
- 20. When has the Lord given you wisdom?
- 21. What does it mean to understand what is right and just?
- 22. In what way has wisdom been a shield in your life?
- 23. Why are the ways of the wicked and the path of the adulteress so enticing?
- 24. How does wisdom save a person from the wicked and the adulteress?
- * 25. Why do people pursue sin when they know it will destroy them?
- * 26. In what way is wisdom like hidden treasure?
- 27. What is it about sin that makes it so tempting?
- 28. When are you the most tempted by sin?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you do today to accept wisdom and to apply your heart to understanding?
- 30. What tempting situation will you plan to avoid this week?
- 31. What is one way you can make wisdom your shield?

Further Benefits of Wisdom - Proverbs 3:1-35

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Convictions, Direction, Evil, Experience, Faithfulness, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Health, Heart, Honor, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Life, Life-style, Love, Morality, Priorities, Righteousness, Sin, Temptation, Trust, Understanding, Weaknesses, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. What is one thing or person you can rely on?
- * 2. What makes someone successful in life?
3. What is your most valuable possession?

Explore It

- * 4. What should we do and not do? Why? (3:1-2)
- * 5. What benefits of wisdom did Solomon mention? (3:1-35)
 6. What should we do with love and faithfulness? Why? (3:3-4)
 7. How should we trust in the Lord? (3:5-6)
 8. What is the result of fearing the Lord and shunning evil? (3:7-8)
 9. What is the relationship between wisdom and personal health? (3:8, 24)
 10. What is the result of honoring the Lord with your wealth? (3:9-10)
 11. Whom does the Lord discipline? (3:11-12)
- * 12. How did Solomon describe wisdom and its benefits? (3:13-18)
 13. What role did wisdom play in creation? (3:19-20)
 14. What did Solomon say about sound judgment and discernment? (3:21-23)
 15. Why should we not be afraid? (3:24-26)
 16. What can help a person overcome fear? (3:25-26)
 17. How should we treat our neighbors? (3:27-30)
 18. Why shouldn't we envy a violent person? (3:31-32)
 19. What does God do to the wicked, the righteous, the mocker, the humble, the wise, and the fool? (3:33-35)

Get It

- * 20. What do we need to do to receive the benefits of wisdom?
- * 21. What is the relationship between wisdom and personal success?
 22. How can we write love and faithfulness on our heart?
 23. What does it mean to trust the Lord with all your heart?
 24. What does it mean to shun evil?
 25. What "firstfruits" do you need to give to God?
 26. How can we pursue wisdom in our life?
 27. How should we treat our neighbor?
 28. Why would someone envy a violent person?

Apply It

- * 29. What one thing can you do today to give wisdom its proper place in your life?
30. In what one area of your life in which you have not been trusting the Lord will you begin to trust Him this week?
31. How can you honor the Lord with your wealth this week?

Wisdom Is Supreme - Proverbs 4:1-27

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Convictions, Direction, Evil, Experience, God, Guidance, Health, Heart, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Life, Life-style, Love, Morality, Priorities, Righteousness, Sin, Temptation, Understanding, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. How did peer pressure influence you when you were a teenager?
2. To what sort of things do people look for protection in life?
- * 3. What's one of the best pieces of advice your parents ever gave you?
4. In your opinion what is the most important thing parents can teach their children?

Explore It

- * 5. Why should the reader listen to Solomon? (4:1-2)
6. What is one of the central messages of these verses? (4:1-27)
- * 7. What did Solomon's father say would happen if he kept his commandments? (4:3-4)
8. What will wisdom do for the person who does not forsake it? (4:5-6)
9. Why did Solomon say to get wisdom? (4:7)
10. Whom does wisdom exalt? (4:8)
11. Why did Solomon tell his reader to accept what he said? (4:10-12)
- * 12. What is the value of listening to instruction? (4:13)
13. Why did Solomon warn us to avoid the path of the wicked? (4:14-15)
14. What did Solomon say about the wicked? (4:16-17)
15. How do the path of the righteous and the way of the wicked differ? (4:18-19)
16. What did Solomon tell us to do with his words? (4:20-21)
17. How do Solomon's words help the people who find them? (4:22)
18. Why should we guard our hearts? (4:23)
19. What did Solomon say about perversity and corrupt talk? (4:24)
20. How should we proceed in life? (4:25-27)

Get It

21. How does a person get wisdom?
22. How do wisdom and understanding bring life and health to a person?
23. In what way is wisdom supreme?
- * 24. What can we learn from our parents?
25. If wisdom is so good, why do we need encouragement to seek it and to hang on to it?
- * 26. Why is it difficult to listen to instruction?
27. What does it take to learn from others, including our elders?
28. How is the heart the wellspring of life?
29. When and why is it hard to keep your eyes straight ahead, to keep your feet on ways that are firm, and to keep your foot from evil?
30. What is it about evil that makes it so tempting?

Apply It

- * 31. What is one thing you can do this week to get wisdom?
32. What will you do today to avoid following the way of the wicked?
33. What tempting situation will you purposefully avoid this week?
34. What is something you can do to guard your heart today?

Warning against Adultery - Proverbs 5:1-23

Topics: Adultery, Character, Choices, Consequences, Convictions, Direction, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Faithfulness, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Husbands, Life, Life-style, Love, Lust, Marriage, Morality, Righteousness, Sex, Sin, Temptation, Understanding, Weaknesses, Wisdom, Wives

Open It

- * 1. In what way have you found society encourages or discourages personal discipline?
- 2. What makes a good marriage work?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Solomon tell the reader to listen to his words? (5:1-2)
- * 4. What is this chapter about? (5:1-23)
- 5. What did Solomon say about the lips and speech of an adulteress? (5:3-4)
- * 6. Where do the steps of an adulteress lead? (5:5)
- 7. What thought does an adulteress give to the long-term consequences of her way of life? (5:6)
- 8. What did Solomon encourage us to do? (5:7-8)
- 9. Why should a person keep away from the adulteress? (5:9-10)
- * 10. What happens to the person who does not stay away from the adulteress? (5:11-14)
- 11. How should a person satisfy his or her thirst? (5:15)
- 12. Where should a person seek sexual fulfillment? (5:15-20)
- 13. What did Solomon say about intimacy in marriage? (5:16-17)
- 14. What is one of the reasons a person should stay faithful to his or her spouse? (5:21)
- 15. What sort of damage can the evil deeds and sin of a wicked person do? (5:22)
- 16. What did Solomon say was the downfall of a wicked man? (5:23)

Get It

- 17. What has God provided for us in the marriage relationship?
- 18. Why do you think people fall into sexual sin?
- 19. What makes sexual sin so tempting?
- * 20. How can adultery destroy a person's life?
- 21. How do people show they hate discipline?
- 22. Why is it difficult to live a disciplined life and resist sin?
- 23. Why might someone be tempted to satisfy his or her longings outside his or her marriage relationship?
- 24. What does it mean to be captivated by your spouse's love?
- * 25. What can we do to avoid being enticed by adultery?
- 26. How does the fact that your ways are in full view of the Lord make you feel?
- 27. How can a wicked person's evil deeds and sin ensnare him or her?

Apply It

- * 28. What steps can you take to guard against sexual temptation?
- 29. What can you do today to renew your love relationship with your spouse?
- 30. What is one thing you can do to affirm the marriage relationship?

Warnings against Folly and Adultery - Proverbs 6:1-35

Topics: Adultery, Character, Choices, Commitment, Consequences, Convictions, Evil, Experience, Faithfulness, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Immorality, Impulsiveness, Instructions, Justice, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Lust, Marriage, Morality, Righteousness, Sex, Sin, Temptation, Understanding, Weaknesses, Wisdom

Open It

1. When was the last time you committed yourself to doing something without really thinking about it?
2. What do you think makes it hard to live a chaste life-style in our society?
- * 3. What do you think makes it hard to live a disciplined life-style in our society?

Explore It

4. What title would you give to this chapter? (6:1-35)
5. What sort of commitment does this chapter warn us about? (6:1-3)
6. What should the person do who has put up security for his or her neighbor? (6:3-5)
- * 7. What should we observe, and why? (6:6-8)
- * 8. What happens to sluggards? (6:9-11)
9. What happens to scoundrels and villains? (6:12-15)
10. What is detestable to the Lord? (6:17-19)
11. What should we do with our parents' commands and teachings? (6:20-22)
12. What results when we listen to our parents' instruction? (6:20-22)
- * 13. How did Solomon describe these commands and teachings? (6:23)
14. Who needs to watch out for the immoral woman? (6:24-29)
15. What is dangerous about lust? (6:24-29)
16. How did Solomon distinguish stealing and adultery? (6:30-35)

Get It

17. Why is putting up security for your neighbor a harmful thing to do?
18. When and why are you tempted to make unwise commitments?
19. How can we avoid making unwise commitments?
20. What does it mean to be lazy?
- * 21. What can we learn from the ant?
22. What is the problem with being lazy?
- * 23. What is the difference between laziness and leisure?
24. How can the teachings of parents guard and protect their children?
25. Why do people think that they can "play with fire" (sin) and "not be burned" (get away with it)?
26. Why is adultery worse than stealing?

Apply It

- * 27. In what one area of your life will you make an effort to be more disciplined this week?
28. What is one step you can take to deal with the inevitable temptation to lust?

Warnings against the Adulteress - Proverbs 7:1-27

Topics: Adultery, Character, Choices, Consequences, Convictions, Direction, Evil, Experience, Faithfulness, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Immorality, Instructions, Life, Life-style, Love, Lust, Morality, Priorities, Righteousness, Sex, Sin, Temptation, Understanding, Weaknesses, Wisdom

Open It

1. What makes sex such a powerful advertising tool?
2. What does our society's obsession with sex tell you about our society?
- * 3. Why do you think people cheat on their husband or wife?

Explore It

4. What did Solomon urge us to do with his advice? (7:1-5)
5. Why should we take Solomon's advice? (7:1-5)
6. What is this chapter about? (7:1-27)
- * 7. Whom did Solomon see outside his window? (7:6-7)
8. Where was the person Solomon saw outside his window going? (7:8)
9. Who came out to meet the youth lacking judgment? (7:10)
- * 10. How did Solomon describe the woman who came out to meet the youth? (7:10-12)
11. What did the adulterous woman do? (7:13)
12. What did the adulterous woman say? (7:14-20)
13. What did the adulteress invite the youth to do? (7:18)
14. How did the adulterous woman entice the young man to come to her? (7:19-20)
15. What did the adulterous woman do to the youth? (7:21)
16. How did Solomon describe the youth's conduct? (7:22-23)
- * 17. Why did Solomon tell young men to avoid the adulteress? (7:24-27)

Get It

18. What does it mean to lack judgment?
- * 19. What is so enticing about sexual sin?
20. How can we guard against being seduced by sexual sin?
- * 21. How is each person to blame in an immoral relationship?
22. Why does sexual sin have such tremendous power to destroy?
23. Why do you think Solomon spent so much time warning us against adultery?

Apply It

- * 24. What specific steps can you take to guard against temptations to sexual sin?
25. Starting today, what situations or people do you need to be more careful to avoid?

Wisdom's Call - Proverbs 8:1-36

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Convictions, Creation, Direction, Experience, Faithfulness, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Life, Life-style, Priorities, Righteousness, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, World

Open It

- * 1. Who or what sorts of things compete for people's attention and loyalty these days?
- 2. What one possession do you value more than any other?

Explore It

- 3. How was wisdom depicted by Solomon? (8:1-3)
- 4. How is wisdom described in these verses? (8:1-36)
- 5. To whom does wisdom cry out? (8:4-5)
- 6. Why does wisdom say people should listen to her? (8:6-9)
- * 7. To what are wisdom, instruction, and knowledge compared? (8:10-11)
- 8. With whom does wisdom dwell, and what does she possess? (8:12, 14, 18)
- 9. What does it mean to fear the Lord? (8:13)
- * 10. Who uses wisdom? (8:15-16)
- * 11. Whom does wisdom love? (8:17)
- 12. What did wisdom say about her origin and her role in creation? (8:22-31)
- 13. What did wisdom say would be the result of finding or not finding her? (8:32-36)

Get It

- 14. Why do you think wisdom was depicted as being out in the streets of the city?
- 15. If wisdom went walking through your neighborhood, how do you think people would respond?
- * 16. In what way is wisdom like precious metals and stones?
- * 17. How is wisdom better than precious metals and stones?
- 18. How is hating evil fearing the Lord?
- 19. What types of things do people today value more than wisdom?
- 20. How does having wisdom benefit your life?
- 21. Why is it important that wisdom was God's first work of creation?
- 22. What is the role of wisdom in the universe?
- 23. How is wisdom's role in your life demonstrated in your life-style?
- 24. How has the world responded to wisdom's invitation?
- 25. How have you answered wisdom's invitation?
- 26. What does it mean to find wisdom?

Apply It

- 27. What is one way in which you can increase wisdom's role in your life?
- * 28. What is something that you have mistakenly valued more than wisdom that you want to restore to its proper place?

Invitations of Wisdom and Folly - Proverbs 9:1-18

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Convictions, Direction, Experience, Faithfulness, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Life, Life-style, Morality, Priorities, Righteousness, Simplicity, Sin, Temptation, Understanding, Weaknesses, Wisdom

Open It

1. Who are some famous rivals that you know about (for example, Elliot Ness and Al Capone)?
2. Why do people sometimes say, “Ignorance is bliss”?
3. Why do you think some people fall prey to false or deceptive sales tactics?
- * 4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being naive?

Explore It

5. How did Wisdom build her house? (9:1)
6. What two characteristics are portrayed as rivals? (9:1-18)
7. What three types of people are described in this chapter? (9:1-18)
8. For what did Wisdom prepare? (9:2-5)
9. For whom did Wisdom prepare? (9:2-5)
10. What did Wisdom encourage the simple to do? (9:6)
11. What are the consequences of correcting a mocker? (9:7-8)
12. What are the consequences of instructing a wise or righteous person? (9:7-8)
13. What is the beginning of wisdom? (9:10)
14. What are the consequences of being wise? of being a mocker? (9:12)
- * 15. How did Solomon depict Folly? (9:13-15)
- * 16. What invitation did Folly issue, and to whom did she issue it? (9:16)
17. What did Folly say about water and food? (9:17)
- * 18. What did Solomon say about Folly’s guests? (9:18)

Get It

19. How are Wisdom and Folly different?
20. What do Wisdom and Folly offer their listeners?
- * 21. In what way is it dangerous to be naive?
22. What is true or false about the statement “ignorance is bliss”?
23. What do you find attractive about the invitations of Wisdom and Folly?
- * 24. How can we be careful to avoid Folly’s enticements?
25. Why would stolen water be sweet or food eaten in secret be delicious?
26. Why are forbidden things sometimes appealing?
27. In what ways are the mocker, the simple, and the wise person alike? different?
28. In what way are you like the mocker, the simple, and the wise person?
29. How should we adjust our advice to the person receiving it?

Apply It

30. What is one step you can take today to pursue wisdom rather than folly?
31. What steps can you take this week to eliminate foolish behavior from your life?
- * 32. Who is one person to whom you will turn to help you be more discerning and less naive?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 10:1-32

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Direction, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Fear, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Hatred, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Love, Priorities, Righteousness, Sin, Temptation, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

- * 1. Who was the last person to say something encouraging to you?
- 2. Why do you agree or disagree with the statement that the tongue can do as much harm as a gun?
- 3. Who is a popular television or movie character you would characterize as being really wicked or evil?

Explore It

- 4. Who wrote these proverbs? (10:1)
- 5. How would you describe these proverbs? (10:1-32)
- 6. By what common themes are the proverbs in this chapter linked together? (10:1-32)
- 7. What two types of people are compared and contrasted in these verses? (10:1-32)
- 8. How did Solomon characterize the wise person? (10:1-32)
- 9. How did Solomon describe the wicked person? (10:1-32)
- 10. From what does righteousness deliver a person? (10:2)
- 11. What are the rewards of diligence? laziness? (10:4-5)
- 12. How did Solomon compare the memory of the righteous and the wicked? (10:7)
- * 13. What did Solomon say about the mouth of the righteous and the wicked? (10:11, 13, 14)
- * 14. How are hatred and love different? (10:12)
- 15. How do the wages of the righteous differ from the income of the wicked? (10:16)
- * 16. What did Solomon say about the tongue, the lips, and words? (10:18-21, 31-32)
- 17. What can the fear of the Lord do? (10:27)
- 18. What is the way of the Lord for the righteous and the wicked? (10:29)

Get It

- 19. In what way is it true that the way of the wise leads to life and success while the way of the wicked leads to death and destruction?
- 20. When is it difficult to be diligent and easy to be lazy?
- * 21. What does it mean to use our lips, mouth, tongue, and words wisely?
- 22. Why is it difficult for people to hold their tongue?
- 23. When might words be more beneficial or more harmful than physical actions?
- * 24. How can you nourish another person with your words?
- 25. How is God your refuge?

Apply It

- * 26. Who is someone you will nourish with a kind word today?
- 27. What is one way that you can adjust your life-style in order to live more wisely?
- 28. In what area of your life will you strive to be more diligent this week?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 11:1-31

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Foolishness, God, Gossip, Guidance, Humility, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Life, Life-style, Pride, Priorities, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. Who is someone famous you would describe as being a proud person?
- * 2. Who is someone you would describe as being a righteous person?
3. About what do people usually like to gossip?

Explore It

4. What common themes are discussed in this chapter? (11:1-31)
5. What types of people are discussed in this chapter? (11:1-31)
6. What goes with pride and humility? (11:2)
- * 7. How did Solomon describe the upright, or blameless, person? (11:3-6)
- * 8. How did Solomon contrast the life of the righteous person with the life of the wicked person? (11:7-11)
9. What kind of person holds his or her tongue? (11:12)
10. What does gossip do? (11:13)
11. What kind of person can keep a secret? (11:13)
12. What is the result of too few or too many advisers? (11:14)
13. What does the wicked earn and the righteous reap? (11:18)
- * 14. About what fact did Solomon say we can be sure? (11:21)
15. How did Solomon describe a woman with no discretion? (11:22)
16. What is the result of being generous? of being stingy? (11:24-25)
17. What is the result of trusting in money? (11:28)
18. What results from being righteous? (11:30)

Get It

19. What is the fundamental distinction between the upright, or blameless, person and the wicked person?
20. In what way is it true that pride brings disgrace while humility brings wisdom?
21. Why do you agree or disagree that pride generally results in disgrace while humility generally results in wisdom?
- * 22. In what way do righteous people and wicked people generally get what they deserve?
23. Why does righteous living result in a better life?
24. Why are people tempted to trust in riches?
25. In what other things besides God are you tempted to trust?
26. When do you tend to be generous, and when do you tend to be stingy?
27. Why is it hard to be generous?
- * 28. In what area of life do you want to be a more righteous person?
29. Concerning what do you want to be more humble?

Apply It

30. What steps will you take this week to become a more giving, generous person?
- * 31. What can you do to cultivate a righteous attitude and character this week?
32. In what specific area of your life will you trust God rather than riches or talent?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 12:1-28

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Direction, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Foolishness, Friendship, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Priorities, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Temptation, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. Why do people gamble and play the lottery?
2. In what way is prudence encouraged or discouraged in our society?
- * 3. What do you think of people who work hard?

Explore It

- * 4. What does the person who loves discipline also love? (12:1)
5. How would you summarize the proverbs in this chapter? (12:1-28)
6. What is a firm foundation for life? a shaky foundation? (12:3)
7. How did Solomon distinguish a wife of noble character from a disgraceful one? (12:4)
8. What's the difference between the words of the righteous and the words of the wicked? (12:5-6)
9. For what is a person praised? (12:8)
10. What did Solomon say about the person who chases fantasies? (12:11)
11. What is the result of sinful talk? (12:13)
12. To what does a wise man listen? (12:15)
13. What did Solomon say about reckless words and the tongue of the wise? (12:18)
14. In what sort of person does the Lord delight? (12:22)
15. What did Solomon say the prudent man did with his knowledge in contrast to what the fool does with his folly? (12:23)
- * 16. How do the diligent and the lazy person differ? (12:24, 27)
- * 17. What kind of worker is a righteous person? (12:27)
18. What is one significant reward of being righteous? (12:28)

Get It

19. How can a person find life?
20. How do the things with which you are rewarded in life reflect the kind of person you are?
21. What does it mean to love discipline?
22. How is it that words can have power to harm people?
23. How can we use words to help people?
24. When have you praised someone according to his or her wisdom?
25. What sort of fantasies do people chase?
26. How does sinful talk trap a person?
27. Why does God delight in people who are truthful?
28. In what way is it prudent to keep your knowledge to yourself?
- * 29. How is your life characterized by diligence or laziness?
- * 30. In what areas do you need to work harder or more diligently?

Apply It

31. What foolish fantasy that you waste time pursuing will you stop chasing this week?
32. What is one step you will take to use words to heal and encourage others today?
- * 33. What work will you do this week that you have been putting off?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 13:1-25

Topics: Character, Children, Choices, Consequences, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Foolishness, Friendship, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Integrity, Justice, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Money, Parents, Priorities, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. What is something you crave?
2. Why do you think parents should or should not spank their children?
- * 3. When was the last time someone asked you to get involved in some sort of get-rich-quick scheme?

Explore It

4. What does a wise child do? (13:1)
5. What do the unfaithful crave? (13:2)
6. What does the person who guards his or her lips also guard? (13:3)
7. Whom does righteousness guard? (13:6)
- * 8. How should we and should we not use money? (13:7)
- * 9. What advantage does a person have who is poor? (13:8)
10. What does pride breed? (13:10)
- * 11. How should a person accumulate wealth? (13:11)
12. How did Solomon describe the teachings of a wise person? (13:14)
13. How does a prudent person act? (13:16)
14. What is the result of ignoring discipline? (13:18)
15. What happens to those who spend time with wise people? (13:20)
16. What reward do righteous people receive? (13:21)
17. What does a good person leave for his or her grandchildren? (13:22)
18. What is the person who loves his or her child careful to do? (13:24)

Get It

19. What does it mean to have a craving for violence?
20. What should a person do to guard his or her lips?
21. Why is guarding one's own lips so difficult to do?
22. In what way does righteousness guard a person of integrity?
- * 23. How is Solomon's advice about accumulating wealth like or unlike any financial advice you have been given?
- * 24. Why are people tempted by get-rich-quick schemes?
25. How do wise teachings turn a person from death?
26. In what way do you ignore discipline in your life?
27. Why is it easy to ignore discipline?
28. Why does a good person leave an inheritance to his or her grandchildren?
29. In what way does a parent who does not discipline his or her child hate the child?
30. Why would a person who loves his or her child use discipline?
31. What is the value and purpose of disciplining children?
32. Of what do parents need to be careful in using discipline to correct children?

Apply It

33. What is one specific step you will take this week to guard what you say?
- * 34. What do you want to change about the way you handle money?
35. As a parent, what can you do to make your correction of your children more loving, consistent, or

purposeful?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 14:1-35

Topics: Character, Children, Choices, Consequences, Death, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Money, Priorities, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. When do you tend to act without thinking?
- * 2. What sort of “philosophies of life” are generally represented in television commercials?
3. Why are we tempted to believe the promises in television commercials even when we know they are either untrue or exaggerations?

Explore It

4. What themes did Solomon develop throughout the proverbs in this chapter? (14:1-35)
5. How did Solomon illustrate the differences between the wise person and the foolish person? (14:1-35)
6. On what general areas of life do these verses touch? (14:1-35)
7. How does the fool’s talk contrast with that of the wise? (14:3)
- * 8. What is the difference between a truthful witness and a false witness? (14:5, 25)
9. What does the mocker seek but not find? (14:6)
10. What is the wisdom of the prudent? (14:8)
11. Where is goodwill found? (14:9)
12. What does each heart know? (14:10)
- * 13. Where does the way that seems right lead? (14:12)
14. What are the rewards of the good person and the faithless? (14:14)
- * 15. To what does the prudent person give thought? (14:15)
16. What does the wise person do? (14:16)
17. What does a quick-tempered person do? (14:17)
18. How should a person treat those in need? (14:21, 31)
19. What do those who plan what is good find? (14:22)
20. What are the results of hard work? mere talk? (14:23)
21. What did Solomon say about the fear of the Lord? (14:26-27)
22. What do a heart at peace and envy do? (14:30)

Get It

23. How might a person’s speech protect him or her?
24. When have loose lips gotten you into trouble?
25. Why would a mocker be unable to find wisdom?
- * 26. What does it mean to give thought to one’s steps?
27. Why is it that many people seem to live their life without giving much thought to what they are doing with their life?
- * 28. How can we reflect on our steps in life?
29. Why is it hard to understand genuinely another person’s heartache?
30. How might the way that leads to death seem like the right way to some people?
31. What are some of the “wrong ways” in life or “false philosophies” that people you know are following?
32. When is it hard for you to exercise prudence?
33. What sort of relationship do these verses suggest there is between mental and physical health?

Apply It

34. What is one way in which you can alter your speech so that your words will protect you this week?
35. What is one thing you can change about your life-style in order to establish better mental and physical health?
- * 36. When this week can you take some time to reflect on the path you are following in life?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 15:1-33

Topics: Advice, Answers, Character, Choices, Consequences, Correction, Discipline, Experience, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Happiness, Heart, Humility, Ignorance, Instructions, Integrity, Justice, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Love, Money, Patience, Priorities, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. When is it better to have a little in life rather than a lot?
2. What is something that makes you happy or brings you a lot of joy?
- * 3. From whom is it difficult for you to take criticism? Why?

Explore It

- * 4. How do gentle answers and harsh words differ? (15:1)
5. What did Solomon say about the speech of the wise and of the fool? (15:2, 4, 7)
6. What did Solomon say about the eyes of the Lord? (15:3)
- * 7. What do we know about the person who hates and resists correction? (15:10, 12)
8. What did Solomon say about the heart? (15:13-15)
9. When is it better to have a little than a lot? (15:16-17)
- * 10. How do the hot-tempered person and the patient person differ? (15:18)
11. What kind of course does a wise person keep? (15:21)
12. What does the heart of the righteous do with his or her answers? (15:28)
13. What does the person who ignores wisdom do to himself or herself? (15:32)
14. What comes before honor? (15:33)

Get It

15. Why is it easier to speak harshly rather than gently?
16. How does the reality that the eyes of the Lord are everywhere affect our life?
- * 17. What type of person hates and resists correction?
18. How can a person cultivate a happy and cheerful heart?
19. When have you found that having less where there is love is better than having a lot where there is conflict?
20. What does it mean to weigh one's answers?
21. What kind of person ignores discipline?
22. When have you ignored discipline?
- * 23. Why must humility come before honor?
24. How can a person cultivate humility?

Apply It

25. What one thing can you do today to cultivate humility in your life?
26. How can you focus on enjoying what you have, no matter how little?
- * 27. What can you do this week to become more open to correction in your life?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 16:1-33

Topics: Character, Choices, Commitment, Consequences, Experience, Foolishness, Friendship, God, Gossip, Guidance, Instructions, Life, Life-style, Motives, Plans, Pride, Priorities, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Sovereignty, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. What are some plans you have made?
2. How important do you think a person's motives are?
- * 3. On what sort of news do you and your friends like to keep up?

Explore It

4. What topics are discussed in this chapter? (16:1-33)
5. How is God described? (16:1-33)
6. What is said about God's sovereignty? (16:1-33)
- * 7. What is said in these proverbs about speech? (16:1-33)
8. What does the Lord consider? (16:2)
9. What happens to the person who commits to the Lord what he or she does? (16:3)
10. What does the Lord work out for His own ends? (16:4)
11. Who determines a person's steps? (16:9)
12. What did Solomon say about kings? (16:12-15)
13. What is better than gold and silver? (16:16)
14. What does pride precede? (16:18)
- * 15. What is so good about pleasant words? (16:24)
- * 16. What does gossip do? (16:28)

Get It

17. What is the difference between being proud and having self-confidence?
18. How do our plans and choices in life interact with God's plans and choices?
19. Why should people make plans if God is sovereign?
20. What did Solomon mean by, "the Lord works out everything for his own ends—even the wicked for a day of disaster"?
21. Why are motives so important to God?
22. Why do you think a person can have or cannot have pure motives for doing something?
23. How does a person commit himself or herself to the Lord?
24. In what way does the person who commits himself or herself to the Lord succeed?
- * 25. When has gossip come between you and a good friend?
- * 26. What should we do whenever we find ourselves in the middle of a conversation laced with gossip?
27. How are wisdom and instruction more valuable than gold and silver?
28. How can a person demonstrate commitment to the Lord?

Apply It

29. What can you do this week to purify your motives?
- * 30. In what situations do you want to remember to restrain gossip about others this week?
31. What pleasant words can you speak today?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 17:1-28

Topics: Arguments, Character, Children, Choices, Consequences, Discernment, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Foolishness, Friendship, Goals, God, Guidance, Heart, Life, Life-style, Love, Parents, Plans, Priorities, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Testing, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

- * 1. When was the last time you got into a really big argument with someone?
- 2. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Why?

Explore It

- 3. When is dry crust better than feasting? (17:1)
- 4. What themes are developed in this chapter? (17:1-28)
- 5. What does this chapter say about fathers and sons? (17:1-28)
- 6. What does the Lord test? (17:3)
- 7. What did Solomon say about children and parents? (17:6)
- 8. What did Solomon say about bribes? (17:8, 23)
- * 9. How can friends build or tear down their friendship? (17:9)
- * 10. What happens to the person who pays back evil for good? (17:13)
- * 11. What does a friend always do? (17:17)
 - 12. What do we know about a person who loves quarrels? (17:19)
 - 13. What is the good of a cheerful attitude? (17:22)
 - 14. What dries up the bones? (17:22)
 - 15. What distinguishes the aspirations of the discerning person from those of the fool? (17:24)
 - 16. How does a person of knowledge use words? (17:27)
 - 17. What is the benefit of holding one's tongue—even for the fool? (17:28)

Get It

- 18. How and why does God test us?
- 19. If God were to test your heart, what would He find?
- 20. In what way are children a crown to older people?
- 21. In what way are parents the pride of their children?
- * 22. Why might it be easier to repeat a matter rather than to cover over it?
- 23. What is the appeal of quarreling?
- 24. How is a cheerful heart good medicine?
- 25. How can we know if our dreams and aspirations in life are realistic or foolish?
- 26. What is the relationship between mental attitude and good health?
- * 27. When is it hard to use words with restraint?

Apply It

- 28. What is one specific step you can take this week to purify your heart?
- 29. What offense can you forgive?
- * 30. What is a step you can take to help you use words with proper restraint?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 18:1-24

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Death, Experience, Foolishness, Friendship, God, Gossip, Humility, Life, Life-style, Listening, Money, Pride, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Wives, Words

Open It

1. When have you written or been tempted to write a “letter to the editor”?
- * 2. What sorts of gossip did students in your school like to pass when you were younger?

Explore It

3. What main topics are explored in these verses? (18:1-24)
4. What sort of themes are developed in this chapter? (18:1-24)
- * 5. In what does a fool delight? (18:2)
6. What did Solomon say about wisdom? (18:4)
- * 7. How does a fool’s words affect his or her life? (18:6-7)
8. To what did Solomon compare gossip? (18:8)
9. What is the value in God’s name? (18:10)
10. What do pride and humility precede? (18:12)
- * 11. What is the value of listening? (18:13, 15, 17)
12. What power does the tongue possess? (18:21)
13. What did Solomon say about the person who finds a wife? (18:22)
14. What’s the difference between a person’s closest friends and his or her larger group of friends? (18:24)

Get It

- * 15. Why do people like to share their opinions?
16. How can a person’s words get him or her into trouble?
17. How is the tongue like a weapon?
18. Why do people enjoy spreading and hearing gossip?
19. How has the name of the Lord been like a strong tower in your life?
20. Why would someone speak before he or she has gotten all the facts?
- * 21. What can we do to put a rein on our tongue?
22. How could the tongue “kill” someone?
23. How could the tongue be used to give life?
24. Why might it be good to find a wife?
25. Why is it better to have a few close friends than several companions?
26. What does it mean to be a loyal friend?
27. Who are your closest friends?

Apply It

28. In what situations do you want to be more careful about listening before you speak?
- * 29. How can you use your tongue to help or encourage someone today?
30. How can you be loyal and trustworthy to your closest friends?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 19:1-29

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Discipline, Foolishness, Forgiveness, Friendship, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Love, Money, Priorities, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Wives, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What have you been especially zealous about at one time in your life?
- 2. When do you think parents should or should not bail their children out of trouble?

Explore It

- 3. What do these proverbs say about wealth and poverty? (19:1-29)
- 4. What do these proverbs say about wisdom? (19:1-29)
- * 5. Why do we need knowledge? (19:2)
- * 6. What's the danger of haste? (19:2)
- 7. What does wealth bring? (19:4)
- 8. What is the fate of a false witness? (19:5, 9)
- * 9. What happens to the person who gets wisdom and understanding? (19:8)
- 10. What uncommon act brings a person "glory"? (19:11)
- 11. What affects family relationships? (19:13-14)
- 12. What is the problem with laziness? (19:15, 24)
- 13. What is the value of listening to and obeying instructions? (19:16, 20, 27)
- 14. Why should we be careful about how we help a person with a short temper? (19:19)
- 15. What do we really want? (19:22)
- 16. To what does the fear of the Lord lead? (19:23)

Get It

- 17. Why are people lazy?
- 18. What are the benefits of wisdom?
- * 19. What is zeal without knowledge?
- 20. What is dangerous about zeal without knowledge?
- * 21. In what area of life do you need to temper your zeal with greater knowledge?
- 22. Why do people resist listening to and obeying instructions?
- 23. How should we guard our own life?
- 24. When would it be unwise to bail someone out?
- 25. Why is it so hard to overlook an offense?
- 26. How does the fear of the Lord lead to life?
- 27. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
- 28. In what way does every person desire unfailing love?

Apply It

- 29. What is one thing you can do to gain some wisdom?
- * 30. What emotionally-charged subject can you learn more about this week?
- 31. How can you be a more prudent or loving wife or husband?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 20:1-30

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Discipline, Experience, Foolishness, God, Gossip, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Motives, Perspective, Priorities, Punishment, Purpose, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Vows, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. When have you made a commitment or purchase you later regretted?
- * 2. How have you found it easier to understand other people than to understand yourself?

Explore It

3. What is one hazard in drinking? (20:1)
4. What topics do these proverbs discuss, and how are they related to one another? (20:1-30)
5. What is it an honor to avoid? (20:3)
6. What are the consequences of being a sluggard? (20:4)
- * 7. What did Solomon say concerning the purposes of a person's heart? (20:5)
8. What kind of life does a righteous person lead? (20:7)
9. By what is even a child known? (20:11)
10. What should we not love? Why? (20:13)
11. What is in rare supply? (20:15)
12. How should we make plans? (20:18)
13. What kind of person should we avoid? (20:19)
- * 14. How does God affect our life? (20:24)
15. How should we be careful about vows? (20:25)
- * 16. What does the Lord search? (20:27)
17. How do love and faithfulness help? (20:28)
18. What is the glory of young men and old men? (20:29)

Get It

19. How is wine a mocker and beer a brawler?
20. What sort of things should we do to avoid strife?
- * 21. Why is it hard to understand the deep purposes that motivate our thoughts and actions?
- * 22. How is a person of understanding able to draw out the deep purposes of a person's heart?
23. What does it mean to live a blameless life?
24. By what actions are you known?
25. When is sleep a good thing, and when is it a bad thing?
26. Why is it important to get advice when making important decisions?
27. From what kind of people should we seek advice?
28. Under what circumstances do you talk more than you should?

Apply It

29. Beginning today, what simple plan can you make to avoid making rash decisions?
30. In what specific situation or relationship will you strive to avoid strife this week?
- * 31. What action can you take to gain a better understanding of the purposes that motivate and guide your life?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 21:1-31

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Desires, Discipline, Evil, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Justice, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Love, Money, Priorities, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. When have you learned from another person's punishment?
2. What is a notable rationalization you've heard?
- * 3. What sort of things do you crave?

Explore It

4. What themes run through the proverbs in this chapter? (21:1-31)
5. How are the righteous and the wicked compared in this chapter? (21:1-31)
- * 6. What seems right to people? (21:2)
7. What does the Lord weigh? (21:2)
8. What is better than sacrifice? (21:3)
9. What's wrong with a fortune made by a lying tongue? (21:6)
10. What did Solomon say about marriage? (21:9, 19)
11. According to Solomon, how can punishment benefit a person? (21:11)
12. What happens to a person who is insensitive to the poor? (21:13)
13. How does the execution of justice impact the righteous as well as evildoers? (21:15)
- * 14. What's wrong with loving pleasure and wine? (21:17)
15. What promise is there for the person who pursues righteousness and love? (21:21)
16. How should we manage our words? (21:23)
- * 17. What did Solomon say about cravings? (21:25-26)
18. How can some sacrifices not please God? (21:27)
19. How are our plans affected by God's will? (21:30-31)

Get It

20. When do people often rationalize sinful behavior?
21. Why are motives sometimes more important than actions?
22. Why is sacrifice secondary to doing what is right and just?
23. In what way are riches fleeting?
24. What is the purpose of punishment?
- * 25. What is the purpose of pleasure?
- * 26. How should we enjoy pleasure?
27. How should we pursue righteousness and love?
28. When is it hard for you to guard what you say?
29. How are lazy people destroyed by their cravings?
30. What are some steps we can take to keep our cravings under control?

Apply It

31. When can you take time this week to reexamine your motives?
32. In what way can you pursue righteousness and love?
- * 33. Concerning what cravings do you want to ask for God's help?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 22:1-29

Topics: Application, Character, Children, Choices, Consequences, Discipline, Excuses, Foolishness, Friendship, Generosity, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Money, Name, Parents, Priorities, Punishment, Reputation, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. When you were a child, what excuses did you use for not doing something you were supposed to do (such as your homework)?
2. What do people do to develop a good or bad reputation?
- * 3. What is the best thing your parents or guardians taught you?

Explore It

4. What is the value of a good name? (22:1)
5. What types of people did Solomon write about in this chapter? (22:1-29)
6. What do the rich and the poor have in common? (22:2)
7. What brings wealth and honor in life? (22:4)
- * 8. What is the result of training a child properly? (22:6)
9. What happens to generous people? (22:9)
10. How does a sluggard use his or her mouth? (22:13)
- * 11. How do children become wise? (22:15)
12. Why did Solomon want the reader to listen to what he taught? (22:17-21)
13. Who wrote the proverbs in the second half of this chapter? (22:17-29)
14. What counsel do the wise have concerning friends? (22:24-25)
- * 15. Why should we strive to learn and develop skills? (22:29)

Get It

16. What should we do in pursuit of a good reputation in the community?
17. How should the fact that Lord is Maker of both the rich and the poor impact our life?
18. How do humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life?
- * 19. What is the purpose and goal of parenting?
- * 20. In what ways are parents responsible or not responsible for the way their children turn out?
21. What does it mean to be a good parent?
22. What is the difference between a valid reason and an excuse?
23. What is the purpose and goal of discipline?
24. Why is it hard to live our life after what the Bible teaches?
25. Why should we be careful about the kind of people with whom we associate and make friends?

Apply It

26. What is one concrete step you can take this week to cultivate a good reputation in your neighborhood or community?
- * 27. How can you take greater responsibility for something your parents taught you?
28. In what way can you be generous to another person today?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 23:1-35

Topics: Character, Children, Choices, Consequences, Discipline, Drinking, Evil, Foolishness, Friendship, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Life, Life-style, Money, Parents, Possessions, Priorities, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Selfishness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. What methods of punishment (for example, spanking or time out) did your parents use when you were growing up?
- * 2. What foods do you (sometimes) crave?
3. Why do you think most people drink alcoholic beverages?

Explore It

- * 4. What is deceptive? (23:1-3)
5. What themes are developed in these sayings of the wise? (23:1-35)
6. How did the author characterize riches? (23:4-5)
- * 7. What did the author say about the food of the stingy person? (23:6-8)
8. Why should we not withhold discipline from children? (23:13-14)
9. What did the author encourage the reader to do? (23:17-18)
10. What advice did the author have for our associations with people? (23:19-21)
11. How should we treat our parents? Why? (23:22-25)
12. How did the author warn men about prostitutes? (23:26-28)
- * 13. What was the author's advice concerning alcohol? Why? (23:29-35)

Get It

- * 14. How can food be deceptive?
- * 15. In what way should we be careful about the way we enjoy delicacies or comforts in life, including food?
16. If riches are fleeting, why do people strive so hard to acquire them?
17. How would you describe your attitude toward the acquisition and importance of wealth?
18. How is being stingy with respect to your possessions as bad as wearing yourself out pursuing riches?
19. Why would a parent withhold discipline from his or her child?
20. How could disciplining a child save him or her from death?
21. When and why have you been envious of a sinner?
22. How would you describe the author's attitude toward alcohol?
23. Why should we be wary of alcohol?
24. How would you describe your attitude toward wine and alcohol in general?
25. What precautions or "survival tactics" should we practice with regard to alcohol?

Apply It

- * 26. In what way can you change your behavior to honor God with your eating habits?
27. How can you be generous rather than stingy with your possessions today?
28. What do you want to change or improve about the way you discipline your children?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 24:1-34

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Death, Discipline, Enemies, Envy, Evil, Experience, Foolishness, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Knowledge, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Money, Parents, Priorities, Procrastination, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. What gives you hope for the future?
2. What sort of people are envied in our society?
- * 3. How responsible do you think most poor people are for their poverty?

Explore It

4. Whom did the author say not to envy? (24:1-2)
5. What common themes link the proverbs in this chapter together? (24:1-34)
6. What characters are discussed in these verses? (24:1-34)
7. How is a household built, established, and furnished? (24:3-4)
8. What does the wise person have? (24:5-6)
9. What happens to a person who plots evil? (24:8-9)
- * 10. What does a person's response to hardship reveal? (24:10)
11. Whom did the author encourage his reader to rescue and hold back? (24:11)
- * 12. According to what will each person be repaid? (24:12)
13. What is sweet to the soul? (24:13-14)
14. What should we not do when an enemy falls? (24:17-18)
15. Why should we not envy wicked people? (24:19-20)
16. Whom should we fear? (24:21-22)
17. What did the author say was not good? (24:23-25)
18. What is an honest answer like? (24:26)
19. What should we not do to our neighbor? (24:28-29)
- * 20. What did the author learn from observing the field of the sluggard? (24:30-34)

Get It

21. When have you envied an evil person's life-style, wealth, possessions, privileges?
22. How can we build, establish, and furnish our families with God's wisdom?
23. Why might someone hold back from helping a person who is in danger?
24. How can we feed our soul with God's wisdom?
25. Why is it tempting to gloat when someone you dislike fails?
26. What type of people are you tempted to be partial toward?
- * 27. Why do we put off doing difficult or unpleasant tasks even when they are important?
28. In what areas of responsibility do you tend to be lazy?
- * 29. What lessons can we learn from the life of the sluggard?

Apply It

30. What can you do this week to build, establish, or furnish your family with wisdom, understanding, or knowledge?
- * 31. In what one area of your life in which you tend to be lazy do you want to make a concerted effort to be more diligent?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 25:1-28

Topics: Arguments, Balance, Character, Choices, Consequences, Criticism, Discipline, Foolishness, Friendship, God, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Leadership, Life, Life-style, Patience, Priorities, Reputation, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. What style or method of persuasion has the most effect on you?
2. In what areas of life do you think people often lack self-control?
- * 3. In what ways have you been criticized lately?
4. In what way is it harder to lose a bad reputation than to earn a good reputation?

Explore It

5. What character traits are discussed in this chapter? (25:1-28)
6. What relationships are explored in these proverbs? (25:1-28)
7. How should a king's throne be established? (25:4-5)
8. What should a person do in the king's presence? (25:6-7)
9. What did Solomon caution us to avoid? (25:7-8)
10. How can haste hurt us? (25:7-8)
- * 11. What should we not betray? Why? (25:9-10)
- * 12. What did Solomon say about words? (25:11)
- * 13. To what did Solomon compare a piece of advice to which someone listens? (25:12)
14. What kind of boasting is bad? (25:14)
15. Through what can a ruler be persuaded? (25:15)
16. In what two areas of life should we practice moderation? (25:16-17)
17. When should we temper our enthusiasm or excitement? (25:20)
18. How did Solomon counsel us to treat enemies? (25:21-22)
19. In what ways should a righteous person resist others? (25:26)
20. What value is there in self-control? (25:28)

Get It

21. When is it harmful to be hasty?
22. Why would a person be tempted to exalt himself or herself in the presence of an important person?
23. In what ways do people exalt themselves or try to improve their standing with important people?
24. Why is it hard to lose a bad reputation?
25. How can we respond to constructive criticism from wise people?
- * 26. What is difficult about giving advice or constructive criticism?
- * 27. Why would gentle persuasion be better than harsh argumentation when trying to persuade someone?
28. Why would someone wise like Solomon encourage moderation?
29. Why is too much of a good thing sometimes bad?
30. How is meeting your enemy's needs like heaping burning coals on his or her head?
31. In what area of your life do you need more self-control?

Apply It

32. In what area of your life in which you lack self-control will you make a concerted effort this week to exercise more discipline?
- * 33. How can you adjust your style of persuasion or criticism so that it is more gentle, effective, or appropriate?

34. In what positive ways do you want to respond to any criticism you might receive this week?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 26:1-28

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Deceit, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Flattery, Foolishness, God, Gossip, Guidance, Ignorance, Instructions, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Priorities, Punishment, Quarrels, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. What characters that you're aware of from television, movies, or novels exemplify foolishness, laziness, and wickedness?
- * 2. What is the funniest practical joke you ever played on someone?
3. How would you describe flattery?

Explore It

4. What three types of people did Solomon discuss in these proverbs? (26:1-28)
5. How should we answer fools? (26:4-5)
6. How did Solomon describe the fool? (26:6-11)
7. What does a fool repeat? (26:11)
8. What's wrong with the person who thinks of himself or herself as wise? (26:12)
9. How did Solomon describe the sluggard? (26:13-16)
10. What caution should we observe about other people's quarrels? (26:17)
- * 11. What did Solomon say about practical jokes? (26:18-19)
- * 12. How do gossip and quarrels work? (26:20-22)
- * 13. Why should we be suspicious of a wicked person's speech? (26:23-26)
14. What kind of damage can lying and flattery do? (26:28)

Get It

15. How can we help someone who is a fool?
16. What is the danger in trusting a fool to do something?
17. In what way is it worse to be wise in your own eyes than to be a fool?
18. Why might a person be tempted to get involved in someone else's quarrel?
19. What should we do when we are concerned about other people's quarrels?
- * 20. Why is it dangerous to deceive someone else in fun?
- * 21. In what ways do we need to restrain our jokes and fun so that they are respectful of others?
22. Why do people enjoy gossip?
23. When have you been misled by the deceptive words of an evil person?
24. What is the danger of flattery?

Apply It

25. What can you do to avoid spreading or listening to gossip this week?
26. What quarrelsome situations do you want to avoid at work? at home? at church?
- * 27. What can you do to remind yourself to respect others in your fun and jokes?
28. In what one specific area of your life can you exercise greater discipline?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 27:1-27

Topics: Character, Choices, Consequences, Discipline, Emotions, Encouragement, Experience, Foolishness, Friendship, God, Guidance, Heart, Jealousy, Life, Life-style, Money, Praise, Priorities, Relationships, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

- * 1. Why is it helpful to have good friends?
- 2. What do you think is the most powerful emotion? Why?
- 3. Of what do you like to take good care? Why?

Explore It

- 4. Why shouldn't we boast about tomorrow? (27:1)
- 5. What is more powerful than anger and fury? (27:4)
- * 6. What is better than hidden love? (27:5)
- * 7. How are friends and enemies different? (27:6)
- 8. What does Solomon's statement about hunger illustrate about gratitude? (27:7)
- 9. From what does the pleasantness of one's friend spring? (27:9)
- * 10. In what way should we be loyal? (27:10)
- 11. How do the prudent and the simple respond differently to danger? (27:12)
- 12. What effect do people have on one another? (27:17)
- 13. What does a person's heart reflect? (27:19)
- 14. By what is a person tested? (27:21)
- 15. What limit is there in removing folly from a fool? (27:22)
- 16. Why did Solomon counsel us to give careful attention to our finances? (27:24)

Get It

- 17. About what sorts of things do people boast?
- * 18. Why is jealousy such a powerful emotion?
- 19. About what do you get jealous?
- 20. When has a friend's earnest counsel been helpful to you?
- * 21. How can friends "sharpen" one another?
- 22. How do you generally respond when someone gives you a compliment?
- 23. How should the fact that riches are transitory affect our life-style?

Apply It

- * 24. What friend will you encourage with kind words or helpful counsel today?
- 25. In what specific way can you arrange your life-style to reflect the fact that money and things are transitory?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 28:1-28

Topics: Character, Confession, Consequences, Desires, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Flattery, Foolishness, God, Justice, Life, Life-style, Money, Poor, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

- * 1. What do you usually do when a street person or beggar asks you for money?
- 2. What sort of fantasies or desires do television commercials encourage people to pursue?

Explore It

- 3. How did Solomon contrast the wicked and the righteous? (28:1)
- 4. What types of individuals did Solomon discuss in this chapter? (28:1-28)
- 5. What topics are dealt with in these proverbs? (28:1-28)
- 6. What can we learn about a person from how he or she speaks about the wicked? (28:4)
- 7. Who understands justice? (28:5)
- * 8. What type of person is better than a rich person? (28:6)
- * 9. What kind of poor person has the advantage over rich people? (28:11)
- 10. What are the consequences of concealing one's sins? of confessing them? (28:13)
- 11. What did Solomon say about the person who fears the Lord and about the person who hardens his or her heart? (28:14)
- 12. How do blameless people and perverse people differ? (28:18)
- 13. What promise applies to the person who chases fantasies? (28:19)
- 14. Who gains a lot of favor with others? (28:23)
- 15. Why is it bad to trust in yourself? (28:26)
- * 16. What should be our response to the needs of poor people? (28:27)

Get It

- 17. How do we forsake the law by our behavior?
- * 18. Why do you think it is better to be poor and blameless than rich and perverse?
- 19. When are you tempted to conceal rather than to confess your sins?
- 20. How does a person's heart become hardened?
- 21. What sort of fantasies do people often chase?
- 22. What kind of person is willing to rebuke someone honestly?
- 23. What kind of person uses flattering words?
- 24. What does it mean to trust in one's self?
- * 25. Why would you be tempted to close your eyes to the problem of poverty?

Apply It

- 26. What fantasy that you have foolishly chased will you put behind you?
- 27. What is one part of your life-style that you can change in an effort to live a blameless life?
- * 28. What is one thing you can do this week to help someone in need?

Proverbs of Solomon - Proverbs 29:1-27

Topics: Anger, Character, Children, Choices, Consequences, Correction, Discipline, Evil, Experience, Flattery, God, Instructions, Integrity, Justice, Laziness, Life, Life-style, Parents, Priorities, Punishment, Rewards, Righteousness, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. About what sort of issues do you tend to be stubborn?
- * 2. What gets you mad?
3. Why do you think crime is increasing in our society?

Explore It

- * 4. What fate awaits the person who is stubborn, or stiff-necked? (29:1)
5. What characters did Solomon talk about in these proverbs? (29:1-27)
6. How did Solomon distinguish between the wicked, the wise, and the foolish? (29:1-27)
7. What damage does a flatterer do? (29:5)
8. By what is an evil person snared? (29:6)
9. About what do righteous people care? (29:7)
- * 10. How do the fool and the wise person deal with anger? (29:11)
11. What imparts wisdom? (29:15)
- * 12. When do people cast off restraint? (29:18)
13. What did Solomon say about the person who speaks in haste? (29:20)
14. What did Solomon say about fear? (29:25)
15. From where do we get justice? (29:26)

Get It

16. Why will people be stubborn even when they know they are wrong?
17. How can flattery hurt a person being flattered?
18. How can a person be ensnared in his or her own evil?
19. Why are the poor generally denied justice?
- * 20. How do you vent your anger and frustration?
- * 21. What is the right way to deal with anger?
22. What is the relationship between correction and wisdom?
23. Why do people cast off restraint when they are ignorant of God's Word?
24. When do we usually speak without thinking?
25. How can we be responsible and not hasty with our words?

Apply It

26. In what specific area of your life do you need to be more flexible and less stubborn?
- * 27. How can you better manage the way in which you deal with or express anger?

Sayings of Agur - Proverbs 30:1-33

Topics: Anger, Creation, Experience, God, Life, Life-style, Nature, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What is something you enjoy or find fascinating about creation?
- 2. What have you learned by watching animals or some other part of creation?

Explore It

- 3. Who wrote the proverbs in this chapter? (30:1)
- 4. In what form were the proverbs in this chapter presented? (30:1)
- 5. How did the speaker describe himself, and what sort of questions did he ask? (30:2-4)
- 6. What did the speaker say about God's words? (30:5-6)
- 7. What two things did the speaker ask of the Lord? Why? (30:7-9)
- 8. What sort of people did the speaker describe? (30:11-14)
- * 9. What four things are never satisfied? (30:15-16)
- 10. What four things did the speaker not understand? (30:18-19)
- 11. Under what four things can the earth not bear up? (30:21-23)
- * 12. What four things are wise though small? (30:24-28)
- * 13. What four things move with stately bearing? (30:29-31)
- 14. What produces strife? (30:33)

Get It

- * 15. What characteristics of God are implied by the speaker's questions and observations?
- 16. Why is it important to you that God's words are flawless?
- 17. What is the danger of having too much or too little in life?
- 18. Which do you think presents the greater danger, having too much or having too little? Why?
- * 19. What do you find significant about the author's list of observations from nature?
- 20. What lessons can we draw from the author's observations?

Apply It

- * 21. When can you take the opportunity this week to go outside and observe God's creation?
- 22. Whether you have little or a lot, what is one thing you can do today to show your dependence on God and to honor Him with your life-style?

Sayings of King Lemuel and Epilogue - Proverbs 31:1-31

Topics: Appearance, Beauty, Character, Children, Discipline, Drinking, Example, God, Life, Life-style, Poor, Priorities, Righteousness, Wisdom, Wives, Words, Work

Open It

1. Why do you think physical beauty is so important to people?
2. Why do you think people should or should not drink alcoholic beverages?
- * 3. What is the role of a wife?
4. What makes a good marriage work?

Explore It

5. Who wrote the proverbs in this chapter, and what form do they take? (31:1)
6. On what did the author caution his readers not to waste strength? (31:2-3)
7. What should kings avoid? Why? (31:4-5)
8. To whom did the author say to give beer and wine? Why? (31:6-7)
9. On whose behalf should we speak up? (31:8-9)
10. What is a noble wife worth? (31:10)
11. What type of person do the last two-thirds of this chapter concern? (31:10-31)
- * 12. In what tasks does the noble wife engage? (31:13-27)
13. How does the noble wife respond to the poor? (31:20)
14. What did the author say about the noble wife's speech? (31:26)
- * 15. How does the noble wife's family respond to her? (31:28)
16. What is deceptive and fleeting? (31:30)
- * 17. What does the noble wife deserve? (31:31)

Get It

18. What do you think is the appropriate use of wine and beer?
19. What are the dangers associated with alcoholic beverages?
20. How would you describe a wife of noble character?
- * 21. How is the noble wife of this chapter different from or similar to the popular ideal today?
- * 22. What can we do to encourage wives and mothers in their God-given responsibilities?
23. How is charm deceptive?
24. Why is it important to keep in mind the fact that physical beauty is fleeting?

Apply It

25. How can you recognize the importance of inner beauty?
26. What is one God-given role or responsibility (whether that of a wife or something else) you can devote to God's service?
- * 27. How can you show appreciation to your mother or wife for her hard work and wisdom?

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Everything Is Meaningless - Ecclesiastes 1:1-18

Topics: Accomplishments, Confusion, Culture, Despair, Discouragement, Experience, Hopelessness, Insecurity, Knowledge, Learning, Life, Purpose, Reading, Satisfaction, Understanding, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What would you say is the purpose of life?
- 2. What is one thing that makes life worth living?
- 3. What sort of mindless activities do you enjoy? Why?

Explore It

- 4. Who wrote this chapter? (1:1)
- 5. What are some of the themes in these verses? (1:1-18)
- * 6. What sweeping statement did Solomon make about life? (1:2)
- 7. What question did Solomon ask? (1:3)
- 8. How did Solomon illustrate his statement that the earth remains the same? (1:4-7)
- 9. What's new? (1:8-10)
- 10. Who will be forgotten? (1:11)
- 11. To what did Solomon devote himself? (1:12-13)
- * 12. What conclusion did Solomon reach about everything he had seen and done? (1:13-14)
- 13. To what had Solomon committed himself? (1:16-17)
- * 14. What conclusion did Solomon reach concerning wisdom and folly? (1:17-18)

Get It

- 15. Why was Solomon so dissatisfied with life?
- 16. When have you found the pursuit of knowledge to be burdensome?
- 17. When have you felt as if you were just chasing after the wind?
- * 18. To what sort of meaningless activities do people commit their life?
- * 19. What about life do you find meaningless?
- 20. In what way does increased wisdom and knowledge bring increased sorrow and grief?
- 21. If we cannot find meaning in the pursuit of knowledge, in what can we find meaning and satisfaction in life?

Apply It

- * 22. When can you take time this week to rethink your purpose and direction in life?
- 23. What is one meaningless activity you need either to totally eliminate from your life or reduce the amount of time you spend doing?

Pleasure, Wisdom, Folly, Toil - Ecclesiastes 2:1-26

Topics: Abundance, Accomplishments, Achievements, Death, Desires, Discouragement, Foolishness, Frustration, God, Greatness, Life, Pleasure, Purpose, Relationships, Wealth, Wisdom, Work

Open It

1. Why do you think the entertainment industry (movies, television, etc.) is such a booming business?
- * 2. What priority do you think a person should give to leisure and fun?
3. What is something about work that you find satisfying?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Solomon say about his pursuit of pleasure? (2:1-2)
5. What sort of activities did Solomon find meaningless? (2:1-26)
- * 6. How did Solomon try to cheer himself? (2:3)
7. What projects did Solomon undertake? (2:4-8)
- * 8. In what way did Solomon indulge himself? (2:10)
9. What conclusion did Solomon reach when he considered all he had achieved? (2:11)
10. To what did Solomon turn his thoughts? (2:12)
11. What conclusion did Solomon reach about wisdom and folly? (2:12-14)
12. What did Solomon say would be the fate of the fool and the wise person? (2:15-16)
13. Why did Solomon hate life and all the things for which he had worked? (2:17-21)
14. According to Solomon, what does a person get for all his or her strivings? (2:22-23)
15. In what did Solomon say a person should find satisfaction? Why? (2:24)
16. What do we require to find enjoyment? (2:24-25)
17. What does God give? (2:26)

Get It

- * 18. When does pleasure become meaningless or even harmful?
19. With what sort of activities do people try to fill their life?
- * 20. What sorts of distractions do you pursue to give your life meaning or significance?
21. To what extent are the fates of the fool and the wise the same?
22. Why did Solomon conclude that a person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his or her work?
23. Why is it so hard to find satisfaction in our relationship with God?
24. How should we please God with our life?

Apply It

25. In what way can you seek to please God with your life today?
26. What is one thing you can do to find satisfaction in your work this week?
- * 27. How do you need to reprioritize your commitment to pleasure in light of its unimportance?

A Time for Everything - Ecclesiastes 3:1-22

Topics: Culture, Death, Desires, Eternal Life, God, Judgment, Life, Life-Style, Purpose, Satisfaction, Timing, Work

Open It

- * 1. Why do you believe or disbelieve the idea that, deep down inside, most people believe in God?
- 2. For what other reasons than to make a living do people work?
- 3. What sort of things make you happy?

Explore It

- 4. For what sort of activities is there a time? (3:1-8)
- 5. What topics did Solomon explore in these verses? (3:1-22)
- 6. What has God set in the hearts of people? (3:11)
- 7. What can we not understand? (3:11)
- 8. What's the best way we can spend our days while alive? (3:12)
- 9. What is described as a gift from God? (3:13)
- 10. What did Solomon say about everything God does? (3:14)
- * 11. What will God call into account? (3:15)
- * 12. What did Solomon see in the place of judgment and the place of justice? (3:16)
- * 13. Whom will God bring to judgment? (3:17)
- 14. Why does God test us? (3:18)
- 15. What fate awaits both people and animals? (3:19-21)
- 16. What should we enjoy? Why? (3:22)

Get It

- 17. What did Solomon mean by his statement that "there is a time for everything"?
- 18. When is it hard to be sensitive to the appropriateness of the timing of our activities?
- 19. Why is it important to be sensitive to the timing of our activities?
- 20. How is the fact that God has placed eternity in our heart manifested in our society?
- 21. How do people in our society wrongly seek to fill their longing for God?
- 22. In what way is finding satisfaction in eating, drinking, and working a gift from God?
- * 23. How should the fact that God will bring judgment to both the righteous and the wicked affect the way we live?
- * 24. In what way are the fate of animals and people similar and dissimilar?

Apply It

- 25. In what one way can you seek to be more sensitive to the timing of the things you do this week?
- 26. What is one way you can enjoy your work or what God has given you?
- * 27. Who can help you remember your accountability to God? How?

Oppression, Toil, Friendlessness, Advancement - Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

Topics: Achievements, Death, Despair, Envy, Evil, Friendship, Life, Motives, Oppressed, Purpose, Satisfaction, Society, Work

Open It

1. What do you think motivates most successful people to achieve?
2. What sort of qualities do you look for in a friend?
- * 3. What type of person do you think is most content with his or her job?

Explore It

4. What did Solomon see taking place under the sun? (4:1)
5. What did Solomon say about oppression? (4:1-3)
6. What is the theme of this chapter? (4:1-16)
- * 7. How would you describe Solomon's mood? (4:1-16)
8. Whom did Solomon declare to be happiest of all? (4:2-3)
- * 9. Why do people work to achieve? (4:4)
10. From what do all achievements spring? (4:4)
- * 11. What did Solomon say about toil? (4:4-6)
12. What did Solomon think of tranquillity? (4:6)
13. What meaningless thing did Solomon see "under the sun"? (4:7-8)
14. What did Solomon say about friendlessness? (4:7-12)
15. Why are two better than one? (4:9-12)
16. What did Solomon say about young people? (4:13)
17. What did Solomon say about advancement? (4:13-16)
18. What did Solomon conclude was meaningless? (4:13-16)

Get It

19. How is the oppression taking place in our society like or unlike the oppression that took place during Solomon's day?
20. In what sense might it be better to be dead than alive?
21. How does evil make life seem meaningless?
- * 22. In what way do achievements spring from envy?
- * 23. What can we do to be content and not envious?
24. What makes work meaningful or meaningless?
25. Why are friends and friendship important?
26. If advancement is meaningless, why do so many people strive hard to achieve it?

Apply It

27. What is one specific thing you can do to improve the quality of your friendships?
28. What is something you can do this week to make your work more meaningful?
- * 29. What do you want to remember the next time you feel envious of someone else?

Awe of God; Riches - Ecclesiastes 5:1-20

Topics: Awe, Contentment, Death, God, Happiness, Life-style, Money, Oppressed, Possessions, Purpose, Vows, Wealth, Words, Work, Worship

Open It

1. What does it mean to be happy?
2. What best helps you worship God?
- * 3. What is your most treasured possession?
4. Why do most people want more money than they already have?

Explore It

5. How should a person go to the house of God? (5:1)
6. How did Solomon encourage us to conduct ourselves in the house of God? (5:2-3)
7. What did Solomon say about vows made to God? (5:4-6)
8. Why should we stand in awe of God? (5:7)
9. What should not surprise us? (5:8-9)
- * 10. What unflattering truths hold for the person who loves money? (5:10-12)
- * 11. What grievous evil did Solomon notice? (5:13-17)
 12. What is good and proper for a person to do? (5:18)
- * 13. What sort of experience did Solomon describe as a gift from God? (5:19)
 14. What happens to the person who has wealth and possessions? (5:20)

Get It

15. Why is it important to approach God with the right attitude?
16. Why do people make rash vows to God?
17. Why is it hard to keep the promises we make to God?
18. What does it mean to stand in awe of God?
19. Why is money unable to bring happiness or contentment?
- * 20. If we cannot take anything with us when we die, why do we work so hard to acquire things?
 21. How should we go about finding satisfaction in our work?
 22. What does it mean to accept one's lot in life?
- * 23. What is the connection between accepting one's lot in life and finding happiness?
 24. Why is it so hard for us to accept our lot in life?

Apply It

25. What vow that you have made to God do you need to fulfill?
- * 26. What is one thing you will change about your life-style to reflect the unimportance of money and things?
27. What can you do this week to accept and better appreciate the things that God has given to you?

Solomon's Counsel - Ecclesiastes 6:1-12

Topics: Children, Death, Desires, Despair, Evil, Folly, God, Honor, Life, Life-style, Money, Possessions, Purpose, Satisfaction, Wealth, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. What is something that gives you a real sense of satisfaction in life?
- * 2. Why do you think most people are satisfied or dissatisfied with their life?

Explore It

- * 3. What evil did Solomon notice? (6:1-2)
4. What is the main topic of these verses? (6:1-12)
5. From this chapter how would you describe Solomon's outlook on life? (6:1-12)
- * 6. What shocking statement did Solomon make about children? (6:3)
- * 7. In what context did Solomon consider a stillborn child better off than a living person? (6:5-6)
8. What is true about the fate of all people, including the stillborn? (6:6)
9. What is never satisfied? (6:7)
10. What question did Solomon ponder concerning the wise person and the fool? (6:8)
11. What did Solomon consider to be better than the roving of the appetite? (6:9)
12. What conclusions did Solomon reach about people? (6:10)
13. What did Solomon conclude about words? (6:11)
14. With what question does this chapter conclude? (6:12)

Get It

15. Why is it meaningless to have wealth but be unable to enjoy it?
- * 16. Why might the person who earned the wealth be unable to enjoy it, while someone who did not earn is able to enjoy it?
- * 17. How should a person enjoy his or her possessions?
18. When might someone feel as if death was preferable to life?
19. Why is it impossible to satisfy human appetites?
20. How might the abundance of words result in less meaning?
21. What impact does the brevity of life have on you?

Apply It

22. What is something you want to change about your life-style in light of the brevity of life?
- * 23. How can you better enjoy the things that God has given you?

Wisdom - Ecclesiastes 7:1-8:1

Topics: Death, Evil, Folly, God, Happiness, Knowledge, Life, Life-style, Mourning, Plans, Righteousness, Sorrow, Sovereignty, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. When do you find yourself wishing for the “good old days”?
- 2. What do you find difficult about being at a funeral? a party?
- 3. How do you usually feel after a party? a funeral?
- 4. Concerning what issues do your coworkers tend to take extreme rather than moderate positions?

Explore It

- 5. Why is it better to go to a house of mourning than to a feast? (7:2)
- 6. Why is sorrow better than laughter? (7:3)
- 7. Why should we be patient and not easily provoked? (7:9)
- * 8. Why did Solomon counsel against comparing today with some wonderful past? (7:10)
- 9. To what did Solomon compare wisdom? (7:11-12)
- 10. What is the advantage of knowledge? (7:12)
- * 11. What should we do when times are bad? (7:13-14)
- 12. What two things had Solomon seen during his meaningless life? (7:15)
- 13. What counsel about living did Solomon give? (7:16-18)
- 14. How much consideration should we give to the words of others? (7:21-22)
- 15. What did Solomon discover when he sought out wisdom? (7:23-26)
- 16. What did Solomon find while he was still searching? (7:27-29)
- * 17. What effect does wisdom have on a person? (8:1)

Get It

- 18. How is a sad face good for the heart?
- 19. In what way is wisdom a shelter?
- * 20. In what way is today very much like yesterday?
- * 21. How should the fact that God has made both the good times and the bad times affect the way we view and live our life?
- 22. How do you feel when you see good people suffering and bad people prospering? Why?
- 23. Why do people tend toward extremes rather than balance?
- 24. Why do people choose to go in search of their own schemes rather than follow God’s plan?
- 25. What sort of schemes are people in our society pursuing?

Apply It

- 26. In what area of your life will you strive to achieve more balance this week?
- * 27. What do you want to remember the next time you start to idealize the past?
- 28. What is one specific step you can take to pursue wisdom?

Obey the King - Ecclesiastes 8:2-17

Topics: Death, Evil, Fear, Future, God, Government, Justice, Law, Life, Punishment, Reverence, Timing

Open It

1. When do you find it difficult to obey the law?
- * 2. Why do you find it easy or difficult to take time out for fun or leisure?
3. What do you think is unfair?
4. What is one way you think the government could more effectively deter crime?

Explore It

5. Why did Solomon say to obey the king's command? (8:2)
6. What would happen to the person who obeyed the king's command? (8:5)
7. For what did Solomon say there is a proper time and procedure? (8:6)
8. What does no one know? (8:7)
9. Over what does no one have power? (8:8)
10. What happens when a criminal sentence is not quickly executed? (8:11)
- * 11. What did Solomon conclude about people who are God-fearing? (8:12)
12. What did Solomon conclude about people who do not fear God? (8:13)
- * 13. What did Solomon conclude was meaningless? (8:14)
- * 14. What did Solomon commend? Why? (8:15)
15. In what way are we limited? (8:16-17)

Get It

16. What lesson about the punishment of crime does Solomon impart?
17. Why should we obey our elected leaders and the laws they make?
18. How can we encourage our elected leaders to pass and enforce just laws?
19. What is the proper procedure for challenging an unjust law?
20. What does it mean to fear God?
21. Why are people who fear God better off than people who do not?
22. Why do the righteous sometimes get what the wicked deserve and vice versa?
23. In what respect is it impossible to fully understand life and God?
- * 24. Why did Solomon commend the enjoyment of life?
- * 25. How can we enjoy life as a gift from God?

Apply It

- * 26. What is one specific thing you will do this week to help you enjoy life more?
27. What can you do to cultivate a healthy reverence for God?
28. What is one thing you can do to uphold good and just laws?

A Common Destiny for All - Ecclesiastes 9:1-12

Topics: Death, Evil, God, Husbands, Life, Purpose, Sovereignty, Wives, Work

Open It

1. What is something that makes life worth living to you?
2. Why would you or wouldn't you want to know the day you are going to die?
- * 3. What do you like doing with your spouse?

Explore It

4. What did Solomon conclude about the righteous and the wise and all that they do? (9:1)
5. Who shares a common destiny? (9:2)
6. What is the evil in everything that takes place? (9:3)
7. How did Solomon describe human nature? (9:3)
8. Who has hope? (9:4)
9. Why do the living have hope? (9:5-6)
- * 10. What did Solomon tell his readers to do? (9:7-8)
- * 11. What did Solomon say about marriage? (9:9)
 12. What is our lot in life? (9:9)
 13. How should we work? (9:10)
 14. Why should we do all we do with all our might? (9:10)
 15. What did Solomon observe about people? (9:11)
- * 16. Why should we use our time well? (9:12)

Get It

17. In what way do all people share a common destiny?
18. What sort of hope do we have concerning life after death?
- * 19. How should we enjoy our life in light of the seeming meaninglessness of life?
20. To what extent does chance affect what happens in life?
21. What impact should the fact that we do not know when we will die have on the way we live our life?
- * 22. In enjoying life as a gift from God, why should we place a priority on our families?

Apply It

23. What is something you can do this week to enjoy life?
- * 24. When can you take time this week to plan a special activity, event, or treat with your spouse?
25. What is something you can change about your job or the way you approach it to make it more enjoyable?

Wisdom Better than Folly - Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20

Topics: Criticism, Evil, Foolishness, Government, Laziness, Money, Quiet, Strength, Wisdom

Open It

1. Where have you seen incompetent people end up in positions of responsibility?
2. When have you wished for more money?
3. In what ways has someone else's laziness affected you?
- * 4. In what way has the advice of an obscure but wise person ever helped you?

Explore It

- * 5. What did Solomon see that impressed him? (9:13-16)
- * 6. What was ironic about the man who saved the city? (9:13-18)
- * 7. What was ironic about the way the city was saved? (9:13-18)
8. What themes are explored in these verses? (9:13-10:20)
9. To what did Solomon compare the quiet words of the wise? (9:17)
10. What is the value of wisdom? (9:18)
11. What does a little folly outweigh? (10:1)
12. What evil arising from the error of a ruler did Solomon see? (10:5-7)
13. Against what sort of injuries did Solomon warn? (10:8-9)
14. How did Solomon compare and contrast the words of the wise with the words of the fool? (10:12-14)
15. What consequences of laziness did Solomon describe? (10:18)
16. What did Solomon say about a feast, wine, and money? (10:19)
17. Why did Solomon counsel against reviling the king and cursing the rich, even in private? (10:20)

Get It

18. How is wisdom better than folly?
- * 19. In what way is wisdom more powerful than strength?
- * 20. How can just a little folly be so dangerous?
21. How do incompetent people end up in important positions?
22. In what self-destructive behaviors do people in our society engage?
23. What are the negative consequences of laziness?
24. In what way is money the answer for everything?
25. What are some problems or situations for which money is not the answer?
26. Why is it important to guard our tongue even when it doesn't appear to be necessary?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one step you can take this week to cultivate wisdom over brute strength in your life?
28. Concerning what self-destructive or foolish behavior will you seek someone's advice?

How to Live While Young - Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:8

Topics: Age, Death, Future, God, Life, Opportunities, Risk, Youth

Open It

1. Why do people want to know the future?
2. Of what opportunities have you failed to take advantage? Why?
3. What sort of risks are you afraid of taking?
- * 4. What is the worst thing to you about getting old?

Explore It

5. What central theme did Solomon develop in these verses? (11:1-12:8)
6. What conclusions did Solomon draw about life? (11:1-12:8)
7. What did Solomon tell his readers to do? (11:1)
8. What sort of person did Solomon criticize? (11:4)
9. What is beyond our understanding? (11:5)
10. Why did Solomon tell his readers to keep busy? (11:6)
11. What do we need to keep in mind? Why? (11:8)
- * 12. What advice did Solomon have for the young? (11:9)
- * 13. When should we take pains to remember our Creator? (12:1)
- * 14. How did Solomon describe old age? (12:2-5)
15. How did Solomon symbolize death? (12:6-7)
16. What did Solomon conclude is meaningless? (12:8)

Get It

17. How do the uncertainties of the future make you feel?
18. How should we live in light of the uncertainties of the future?
19. What prevents you from taking calculated risks in life?
20. Why is it important to establish a relationship with God when we are young?
- * 21. In what way is it easy to forget our Creator?
- * 22. What can we do to keep our accountability to God in mind?
23. Why is it easier to enjoy life when we are young than when we become old?
24. How does the reality of aging affect you?
25. How should we live our life in light of the reality of death?
26. In what sense is life meaningless?
27. How should we respond to the seemingly meaningless aspects of life?

Apply It

28. What first step can you take to pursue an opportunity that you have put off?
- * 29. What is something you can do this week to remind yourself of God's place in your life?
30. Whether young or old what is something you will do today to enjoy the life God has given you?

The Conclusion of the Matter - Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

Topics: Evil, Fear, God, Judgment, Knowledge, Learning, Obedience, Purpose, Wisdom

Open It

1. About what do you like to keep learning more and more?
- * 2. Who has helped you become wiser or more mature?
3. What motivates you to keep God's commands?

Explore It

4. How did Solomon conclude this book? (12:9-14)
5. How did Solomon describe the Teacher? (12:9)
- * 6. What did the Teacher do with his knowledge? (12:9)
7. For what did the Teacher search? (12:10)
8. How did Solomon describe what the Teacher wrote? (12:10)
- * 9. How did Solomon describe the words of the wise? (12:11)
10. About what did Solomon warn his reader? (12:12)
11. What did Solomon say about books and study? (12:12)
12. What is a person's whole duty? (12:13)
- * 13. Why did Solomon tell his reader to fear God and keep His commandments? (12:14)

Get It

14. With what mood would you say Solomon concluded this book?
15. How are wise sayings like goads?
16. When have you been weary from studying?
17. How important is learning and studying in comparison to other pursuits?
18. What is the relationship between fearing God and keeping his commandments?
19. How does the fact that God is going to judge every deed motivate you?
20. What opportunities do you have to teach others?
- * 21. How can we learn from each other?
- * 22. What opportunities do you have to learn from others?
23. In what ways can you be a teacher or advisor to at least one other Christian?
24. In what ways can you gain from others' wisdom and insight?

Apply It

25. What can you do always to be conscious of God's commands?
26. What is one piece of advice you would give to a younger or less mature Christian?
- * 27. What can you do this week to learn from another Christian who is older or wiser?

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The Power of Love - Song 8:5-14	8

The Wedding Day - Song 1:1-2:7

Topics: Affections, Affirmation, Appearance, Approval, Beauty, Body, Character, Desires, Encouragement, Friendship, Love, Partnerships, Pleasure, Praise, Purity, Relationships, Sex

Open It

- * 1. Why do you agree or disagree with the saying that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder”?
- 2. What is your favorite part of the wedding ceremony? Why?
- 3. How is love generally depicted in television programs, movies, and romance novels?
- 4. Why do you think people read romance novels or watch romantic movies?

Explore It

- 5. Who are the three speakers in these verses? (1:1-2:7)
- * 6. What is the relationship between the Lover and the Beloved? (1:1-2:7)
- * 7. How did the Beloved describe her Lover? (1:1-4, 16)
- 8. Where did the Beloved want her Lover to take her? (1:4)
- 9. How did the Beloved describe herself? (1:5-7)
- * 10. How did the Lover describe his Beloved? (1:9-11, 15)
- 11. To what did the Lover compare his Beloved? (2:2)
- 12. To what did the Beloved compare her Lover? (2:3)
- 13. Where did the Lover take his Beloved? (2:4)
- 14. What did the Beloved ask her Lover to do? (2:5)
- 15. What did the Beloved tell the Daughters of Jerusalem they should do? (2:7)

Get It

- 16. What stage in the Lover and Beloved’s relationship is described in these verses?
- 17. How is romantic love depicted in these verses?
- 18. What types of words did the Lover and the Beloved use in speaking to each other?
- 19. How might the Beloved’s description of herself be an indication that others may not have found her as attractive as did her Lover?
- * 20. Why did the Lover and the Beloved praise each other’s physical attractiveness?
- 21. Why is it important to compliment a person’s physical appearance?
- * 22. How do you think the compliments given by the Lover and the Beloved made the other person feel about himself or herself and about their relationship?
- 23. How important is mutual physical attraction in a relationship?
- 24. Besides physical attractiveness, what other characteristics did the Lover and the Beloved praise?
- 25. What qualities besides physical attractiveness should a potential marriage partner possess?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you make the person you are in a relationship with feel loved and accepted today?
- 27. What one thing can you do this week to add a bit of romance to your relationship?

Memories of Courtship - Song 2:8-3:5

Topics: Affections, Desires, Devotion, Feelings, Friendship, Love, Patience, Pleasure, Problems, Purity, Relationships

Open It

1. What is the strangest dream you have ever had?
2. What were (or are, as the case may be) the essential elements of courtship when you were dating?
- * 3. What is the funniest thing that ever happened to you on a date?

Explore It

- * 4. What sort of relationship did the Lover and the Beloved have? (2:8-3:5)
5. How did the Beloved describe her Lover? (2:8-9)
- * 6. What did the Lover say to his Beloved? (2:10-13)
 7. What time of year was it? (2:11-13)
 8. How did the Lover describe his Beloved's voice and face? (2:14)
- * 9. What did the Lover ask his Beloved to catch? Why? (2:15)
 10. How did the Beloved describe her relationship with her Lover? (2:16)
 11. When did the Beloved say she looked for but could not find her Lover? (3:1)
 12. What did the Beloved dream? (3:1-4)
 13. Where did the Beloved say she would go to look for her Lover? (3:2)
 14. What did the Beloved ask the watchmen? (3:3)
 15. What did the Beloved do when she found her Lover? (3:4)
 16. What charge did the Beloved give to the Daughters of Jerusalem? (3:5)

Get It

17. How would you describe the Lover and the Beloved's relationship?
18. Why do you think the Beloved described her Lover as a gazelle?
19. What might the coming of spring symbolize?
- * 20. What do you think the little foxes represented in the Beloved and the Lover's relationship?
- * 21. What kind of problems crop up in a relationship sooner or later?
 22. When does romantic love tend to fade from a relationship? Why?
 23. Why do you think the Beloved took her Lover to her mother's house?
 24. Why do you think the Beloved told the Daughters of Jerusalem not to arouse love "until it so desires"?
25. In what way do people arouse love before it desires?

Apply It

26. With what relationship will you ask God to help you be patient this week?
- * 27. What can you do this week to resolve a conflict in your relationship with your spouse or a friend?

Memories of Engagement - Song 3:6-5:1

Topics: Appearance, Beauty, Body, Celebration, Commitment, Desires, Friendship, Husbands, Love, Marriage, Partnerships, Pleasure, Praise, Purity, Relationships, Self-esteem, Sex, Wives

Open It

1. What do you consider to be the essential elements of a wedding ceremony?
2. In what situations would you normally expect someone to feel jealous?
- * 3. Who was your first crush, and what did you think of him or her?

Explore It

- * 4. What events take place in these verses? (3:6-5:1)
5. What question did the Beloved ask? (3:6)
6. Who came up from the desert with Solomon? (3:7-8)
7. How did the Beloved describe Solomon's carriage? (3:9-10)
8. What did the Beloved tell the Daughters of Zion to do? (3:11)
9. When did Solomon's mother crown him? (3:11)
- * 10. How did Solomon describe his Beloved? (4:1-7)
11. How did Solomon and his bride treat each other? (4:1-5:1)
12. Where did Solomon ask his bride to go? (4:8)
13. What did Solomon say his bride had stolen? (4:9)
14. How did Solomon describe his bride's love and lips? (4:10-11)
15. To what did Solomon compare his bride? (4:12-15)
- * 16. What did the Beloved invite her Lover to do? (4:16)
17. What did the Lover say he had done? (5:1)

Get It

18. How does this ancient near eastern wedding compare to weddings that you have attended?
- * 19. What type of terms did Solomon use to tell his bride that she was beautiful?
20. If Solomon had been describing his bride today, what metaphors do you think he would have chosen?
21. What is significant about the bridegroom's focus on his bride's beauty?
22. How can a person build up his or her spouse's self-esteem?
23. What does it mean to have one's heart stolen by another person?
24. For what is Solomon praising his bride in 4:12-15, and why is this important?
25. What is the significance of the bride's invitation to Solomon to come into his garden?
26. Why should sex be enjoyed only in the context of marriage?
27. What do these verses suggest about the need for premarital sexual purity?
- * 28. What do these verses suggest about the purpose and place of sexual love?

Apply It

- * 29. What is one thing you can do to honor God's design for sexual union in marriage?
30. What can you do to build up your spouse's self-esteem this week?

A Troubling Dream - Song 5:2-6:3

Topics: Appearance, Arguments, Emotions, Friendship, Husbands, Love, Marriage, Praise, Quarrels, Relationships, Separation, Wives

Open It

1. How have your relationships with best friends or your spouse changed as time has passed?
2. What do you think causes feelings of love to fade in a relationship?
- * 3. What couple do you know with a successful marriage, and what do you most admire about their relationship?

Explore It

- * 4. What stage in the couple's relationship is described in these verses? (5:2-6:3)
5. What did the Beloved say she was doing? (5:2)
6. With what terms did the Lover address his Beloved? (5:2)
7. What events took place in the Beloved's dream? (5:2-8)
8. How did the Beloved respond to her husband's request to open the door? (5:3)
9. What happened once the Beloved opened the door? (5:6)
10. What did the Beloved say the watchmen did? (5:7)
- * 11. How did the Beloved describe her attitude toward her husband? (5:8)
- * 12. How did the Beloved describe her Lover? (5:10-16)
13. What question did the Friends ask the Beloved? (6:1)
14. Where did the Beloved say her Lover had gone? (6:2-3)

Get It

15. What clues are there in these verses that time has lapsed since the wedding?
- * 16. In what ways had this marriage relationship changed or stayed the same since the wedding?
17. Why might the initial excitement that accompanies marriage begin to fade?
- * 18. What is significant about the Beloved's description of her Lover?
19. What makes a successful relationship last?
20. How can a couple keep the flame of love alive in their marriage?

Apply It

- * 21. If you are married, what is one thing you can do today to show your spouse that you love him or her?
22. What lesson from these verses do you especially want to remember?
23. What fractured relationship do you want to work on mending?
24. What friends with a fractured relationship will you pray for today?

Praising the Bride's Beauty - Song 6:4-7:9

Topics: Acceptance, Affections, Beauty, Body, Friendship, Husbands, Love, Marriage, Pleasure, Praise, Quarrels, Reconciliation, Relationships, Wives

Open It

- * 1. Why is it hard to say you're sorry?
- 2. What is your favorite love story?

Explore It

- * 3. How would you describe the events of these verses? (6:4-7:9)
- * 4. How did the Lover describe his wife? (6:4-9)
 - 5. Why did the Lover tell his Beloved to turn her eyes from him? (6:5)
 - 6. Where did the Lover go? (6:11)
- * 7. How did the Lover describe his reconciliation with his Beloved? (6:11-13)
 - 8. What did the Lover say about his Beloved's feet and legs? (7:1)
 - 9. What did the Lover say about his Beloved's navel and waist? (7:2)
 - 10. How did the Lover describe his Beloved's breasts? (7:3, 7)
 - 11. What did the Lover say about his Beloved's neck, eyes, and nose? (7:4)
 - 12. How did the Lover describe his Beloved's head and hair? (7:5)
 - 13. What did the Lover find pleasing? (7:6)
 - 14. What did the Lover say he would climb? (7:8-9)

Get It

- * 15. Judging from the events of these verses (and the events that led up to them, 6:1-3), what are some essential elements in the process of reconciliation?
- 16. What does this story say about reconciliation?
- * 17. Why is it sometimes hard to reconcile your differences with someone you love?
 - 18. In what way do you find the somewhat sensual nature of these verses surprising, refreshing, or offensive?
 - 19. How is the Lover's praise of his wife's beauty important to the reconciliation process?
 - 20. How might the Beloved's breasts be like clusters, her breath like apples, and her mouth like wine?
 - 21. How have these verses impacted your view of marriage?
 - 22. How have these verses impacted your view of human sexuality?

Apply It

- * 23. What conflict in your relationship with your spouse will you work to resolve this week?
- 24. What broken relationship will you mend this week?

The Bride's Tender Appeal - Song 7:10-8:4

Topics: Acceptance, Affections, Affirmation, Caring, Desires, Emotions, Feelings, Friendship, Husbands, Love, Marriage, Relationships, Security, Sex, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What makes a person feel secure in a relationship?
- 2. What makes a person feel insecure in a relationship?
- 3. When do you think it is OK for a woman to take the initiative in a relationship?

Explore It

- * 4. To whom did the Beloved say she belonged? (7:10)
- 5. Where did the Beloved want to go to spend the night? (7:11)
- 6. Why did the Beloved want to go to the vineyards? (7:12)
- 7. What did the Beloved say that the mandrakes sent out? (7:13)
- 8. What had the Beloved stored up for her Lover? (7:13)
- 9. Whom did the Beloved wish her Lover was like? Why? (8:1)
- * 10. Where did the Beloved say she would take her Lover? (8:2)
- * 11. What did the Beloved say about her Lover's arms? (8:3)
- 12. What charge did the Beloved give to the Daughters of Jerusalem? (8:4)

Get It

- 13. How would you describe this relationship between husband and wife?
- * 14. In what way do married people belong to one another?
- 15. What does the fact that the Beloved felt comfortable with taking the initiative suggest about the couple's relationship?
- 16. During what season did these events take place?
- 17. Why might the Beloved wish her Lover were like a brother to her so that she could kiss him outside without being despised by others?
- * 18. What feeling about their relationship might the Beloved's description of her Lover's arms suggest?

Apply It

- 19. What can you do this week to deepen your relationship with your spouse?
- * 20. How can you make your spouse feel loved, accepted, and secure this week?

The Power of Love - Song 8:5-14

Topics: Acceptance, Affections, Desires, Emotions, Feelings, Friendship, Husbands, Love, Marriage, Relationships, Security, Sex, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What do you consider to be the most powerful emotion? Why?
- 2. Why does sex sell?
- 3. Who has most helped or inspired you to stay true to God's plan for marriage?

Explore It

- 4. What question did the Friends ask? (8:5)
- 5. What events happened under the apple tree? (8:5)
- * 6. What did the Beloved ask the Lover to do? (8:6)
- * 7. How did the Beloved describe love? (8:6-7)
- 8. What question did the Friends ask about their sister? (8:8-9)
- 9. Who helped the Beloved prepare for the day of her marriage? (8:8-9)
- 10. What had the Beloved become like to Solomon? (8:10)
- 11. What did the Beloved say that Solomon had? (8:11)
- 12. What did the Beloved say she had? (8:12)
- 13. What did the Lover say he wanted to hear? (8:13)
- * 14. What did the Beloved invite her Lover to do? (8:14)

Get It

- * 15. In what way is love strong and unyielding?
- 16. How is love like a blazing fire?
- 17. In what way is love unquenchable?
- 18. How does the Beloved reflect upon her childhood and her courtship?
- 19. What do the words of the Lover and Beloved in 8:13-14 recall about their relationship?
- * 20. What do the verses and this book say about physical love between a husband and his wife?
- 21. In what ways do we take love for granted?
- 22. How can we keep the passion and commitment in our marriage?

Apply It

- 23. What can you do this week to rekindle the flame of romantic love in your marriage?
- * 24. What commitment will you make to honor love and sex within marriage and not to abuse it?

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A Rebellious Nation - Isaiah 1:1-31

Topics: Burdens, Children, Comparisons, Evil, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Guilt, Hardheartedness, Hatred, Hypocrisy, Ignorance, Justice, Law, Mercy, Obedience, Pleasure, Prayer, Prophecy, Punishment, Purity, Rebellion, Repentance, Restoration, Revenge, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Shame, Sickness, Sin, Understanding

Open It

- * 1. How do you answer people who say that it is hypocrisy within the church that keeps them from believing?
- 2. What sort of circumstances might make parents unsympathetic to their children's requests?

Explore It

- * 3. During the reigns of which kings did Isaiah see visions from God concerning Judah and Jerusalem? (1:1)
- 4. What uncomplimentary images did God use to describe His people? (1:2-3)
- 5. What had Israel done to God by this stage in their history? (1:4)
- 6. How had God attempted, but failed, to get through to Israel? (1:5-8)
- 7. What prevented Israel from becoming just like Sodom and Gomorrah? (1:9)
- * 8. How did God feel about the many religious celebrations going on in Judah? (1:10-14)
- 9. How did God promise to react to the prayers of the people of Judah? (1:15)
- 10. What behaviors did God expect of His own people? (1:15-17)
- 11. What wonderful offer did God make to His people? (1:18)
- * 12. Under what conditions would God's people receive God's blessing, and under what conditions would they lose it? (1:19-20)
- 13. What contrasts did Isaiah use to give a "before and after" picture of God's people? (1:21-23)
- 14. What did God promise to do for Israel for their own good? (1:24-26)
- 15. How did God intend to treat the repentant and the unrepentant differently? (1:27-28)
- 16. How did God predict that Israel would come to feel about her current behavior? (1:29-31)

Get It

- 17. Why do you suppose Isaiah's ministry lasted through a succession of several kings in Judah?
- 18. How would Isaiah's listeners have felt about being compared to Sodom and Gomorrah?
- * 19. How could God have no pleasure in sacrifices and worship practices He had instituted?
- 20. What are some religious activities that fail to please God?
- * 21. Who are our modern-day oppressed, fatherless, and widows?
- 22. What does God want us to do with the shame we feel about sins we commit every day?
- 23. What is meaningful to you about the image of a piece of cloth, once dyed deep red, becoming white again?
- 24. What does it mean to "go through the motions" with regard to Christian faith?
- 25. In what ways have you "gone through the motions" of being a Christian?

Apply It

- * 26. In what practical way can you make God's concern for the helpless more a part of your daily life?
- 27. To what can you pay special attention in the coming weeks to make your worship alive and vital?

Judgment - Isaiah 2:1-5:30

Topics: Abandon, Anger, Authority, Darkness, Death, Deceit, Drinking, Evil, Fear, Follow, Forgiveness, Goodness, Greed, Guilt, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Humility, Idolatry, Judgment, Justice, Law, Leadership, Light, Love, Mourning, Oppressed, Peace, Pride, Protection, Rejection, Respect, Righteousness, Running, Sin, Teaching, Trust, Understanding, War, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What pictures come to your mind when you think of a perfect world?
- 2. Why do you think some people are so concerned with their appearance?

Explore It

- 3. In Isaiah's vision, what is the status of Jerusalem and the mountain of the Lord in the last days? (2:1-3)
- 4. What will be the status of international relations in the last days? (2:4)
- 5. During Isaiah's day, why had the Lord abandoned His people? (2:6-9)
- 6. What images did Isaiah use to describe arrogant men faced with God's judgment? (2:10-21)
- * 7. What caution did Isaiah preach to God's people before it was too late? (2:22)
- 8. When God judges Israel, according to Isaiah's prediction, what will be taken away from them? (3:1-5)
- 9. What attitudes brought God's judgment on Israel? (3:8-11)
- * 10. When God sits in judgment in Isaiah's vision, what does He hold against the elders and leaders? (3:13-15)
- 11. What did God determine to do about pride and vanity in His people? (3:16-24)
- 12. What images of renewal did Isaiah use to characterize the Branch of the Lord (remnant of Israel)? (4:2-6)
- * 13. How did Isaiah use a parable about a vineyard to illustrate the sin and ingratitude of Israel? (5:1-7)
- 14. What kinds of suffering did Isaiah predict as a result of Israel's sin? (5:8-15)
- 15. What would become apparent about the character of God through His judgments? (5:16)
- 16. To what sorts of people did Isaiah preach woe? (5:18-25)
- 17. How did Isaiah characterize the might of the nations God uses to execute His judgments? (5:26-30)

Get It

- 18. What is some of the best news in Isaiah's prophecies about the future of Israel?
- 19. Why did sins of the leaders against fellow Israelites anger God?
- 20. What would have to change in order for people to feel that they no longer needed weapons?
- * 21. Why do we tend to put our trust in people rather than in God?
- 22. How would you describe a life that is bearing bad fruit?
- 23. Which of God's judgments from Isaiah's time could also be pronounced against our society?
- 24. How can we avoid becoming arrogant people?
- * 25. How can we tell if our own lives are having good effects on ourselves and others?

Apply It

- * 26. When can you spend time asking God to show you the quality of your life?
- 27. What should you do the next time you develop a concern for your appearance or status?

Isaiah's Commission - Isaiah 6:1-13

Topics: Ambassadors, Atonement, Awe, Blindness, Fear, Forgiveness, Glory, Guilt, Hardheartedness, Healing, Heart, Holiness, Hope, Renewal, Repentance, Sin, Understanding

Open It

1. If you were a powerful executive and could design your own office, what would your office be like?
- * 2. What are some of the reasons people volunteer at church?
3. When have you tried hard to communicate something important to an unresponsive audience?

Explore It

4. When was Isaiah granted his vision of the Lord? (6:1)
5. How did Isaiah describe the awe-inspiring sights around God's throne? (6:1-4)
- * 6. How did Isaiah see himself once he had been exposed to God's glory? (6:5)
- * 7. What provision was made for Isaiah's guilt in the presence of a holy God? (6:6-7)
- * 8. How did Isaiah respond to God's call? (6:8)
9. In what unusual way did God state the message Isaiah was to take to Israel? (6:9-10)
10. What did God want Isaiah to do? (6:9-10)
11. What did Isaiah ask God about his commission? (6:11)
12. What was sobering about God's response to Isaiah's question? (6:11-13)
13. What was hopeful about God's response to Isaiah's question? (6:11-13)

Get It

14. What can we learn about the nature of God from the vision Isaiah had before His throne?
15. What are some of the sins that would lead to a feeling of "unclean lips"?
- * 16. Why is it almost impossible, or intolerable, for a human being to stand before a holy God?
17. What could have motivated Isaiah to volunteer to be God's messenger?
18. How can we follow Isaiah's example of availability to God?
- * 19. What attitudes can make a heart so calloused that it cannot accept God's healing?
20. How can we keep our spiritual senses attuned to God's voice?

Apply It

- * 21. What can you do today to make yourself ready to be God's messenger to others?
22. With whom could you be accountable to revere the holiness of God in your daily life?

The Sign of Immanuel - Isaiah 7:1-25

Topics: Anger, Courage, Enemies, Faith, Fear, Help, Humiliation, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Miracles, Obedience, Patience, Testing, War, Worry

Open It

- * 1. To whom do people tend to turn when they face difficult circumstances?
- 2. What is one of the most frightening pieces of news you've ever received?

Explore It

- 3. What two nations united against Judah during the kingship of Ahaz? (7:1)
- 4. How was the morale of Judah affected when they heard about the alliance of Aram and Israel? (7:2)
- * 5. What word of encouragement did God send via Isaiah and his son? (7:3-9)
- 6. What did God mean when He said, "the head of Damascus is only Rezin" and "the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son"? (7:8-9)
- * 7. What did God invite Ahaz to do in order to reassure himself? (7:10-11)
- 8. How did Ahaz respond to the invitation to ask God for a sign? (7:12)
- 9. How did God react to Ahaz's refusal to ask for a sign? (7:13)
- * 10. What sign was promised by God, even though Ahaz had not asked? (7:14-15)
- 11. What was Isaiah's specific prediction regarding Ahaz's enemies? (7:16)
- 12. What country would be used by God to punish both Judah and its enemies? (7:17-20)
- 13. In what concrete ways would Judah lose its status as a land of rich, productive agriculture? (7:21-25)

Get It

- 14. What are some of your first instincts when you are overwhelmed by fear?
- * 15. What makes it hard or easy to accept a promise that seems to contradict the facts you see before you?
- 16. What are some examples of how God accommodates our fears and weaknesses?
- 17. In what ways can you, and can you not, be harmed by another human being?
- * 18. What can we learn about God from the fact that He gave a sign that wasn't even requested?

Apply It

- * 19. What fear do you need to surrender to God in order not to be controlled by it?
- 20. For what recent act of concern and faithfulness can you thank God today?

Assyria, the Lord's Instrument - Isaiah 8:1-22

Topics: Bitterness, Children, Darkness, Fear, Hiding, Holiness, Instructions, Law, Occult, Plans, Punishment, Rejection, Trust, War, Witnessing

Open It

1. Whom do you know whose name was chosen by his or her parents because of its meaning?
- * 2. When have you had the experience of disagreeing with almost everyone around you as to the best course of action?

Explore It

3. What message of warning did God tell Isaiah to write as a large public sign? (8:1)
4. What two men did God call upon to support Isaiah in his prophecy? (8:2)
5. What did God tell Isaiah to name his son? (8:3)
6. To what imminent event in the history of Samaria and Damascus was Isaiah's son's name meant to refer? (8:4)
7. In what other nation was Judah more likely to put its trust than in God Himself? (8:5-6)
8. What metaphor did the Lord use to describe how Assyria would punish Judah? (8:7-8)
9. How did Isaiah express his confidence that Judah would not be completely destroyed by the invaders? (8:9-10)
- * 10. What did God expressly direct Isaiah not to do? (8:11)
11. About what sorts of facts was the reasoning of the people reversed? (8:12)
- * 12. How did God want His people to respond to Him? (8:13)
13. What images are given to illustrate a variety of people's responses to God? (8:14-15)
14. What and whom did Isaiah know to be completely reliable, despite what others might say or believe? (8:16-17)
15. What action did Isaiah take concerning what God said? (8:16-17)
- * 16. How did Isaiah see himself and his family? (8:18)
17. What did Isaiah have to say to those who recommended seeking guidance through the occult? (8:19-20)
18. How did Isaiah predict that the mediums and their followers would react to the circumstances they had incorrectly predicted? (8:21-22)

Get It

19. How was Isaiah's family drawn into his ministry as a prophet?
20. What would enable you to stand firm against the majority opinion?
- * 21. How can fear of people or circumstances actually work against our faith?
22. What different sources of advice and guidance do people consult in our society?
- * 23. Under what circumstances might we stumble and fall over our perception of who God is?
24. Who would you consider a symbol of faithfulness for Christians today? Why?
25. How have you seen people who don't worship God blame or curse God when they encounter hardship?

Apply It

26. How can you guard against the temptation to seek guidance from sources that counter God's wisdom?
- * 27. What current fears do you want to place under God now through prayer?

To Us a Child Is Born - Isaiah 9:1-10:4

Topics: Accountability, Anger, Burdens, Darkness, Death, Enemies, Evil, Good News, Government, Honor, Humility, Injustice, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Leadership, Light, Messiah, Oppressed, Peace, Pride, Punishment, Repentance, Righteousness, Self-righteousness, Wealth, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What positive associations do you have with light?
- 2. What are some of the injustices in our society that you have noticed and care about?

Explore It

- 3. Although he had been preaching God's judgment (particularly on the kingdom of Israel), what total reversal did Isaiah foresee in the future? (9:1)
- * 4. What contrasting images did Isaiah use to set the scene of his prophecy? (9:2)
- 5. To what situations did Isaiah compare the joy that will be Israel's? (9:3)
- 6. What did Isaiah predict God would do for Israel, causing her to rejoice? (9:4-5)
- * 7. How does Isaiah describe the Ruler who will be provided by God for His people? (9:6-7)
- 8. When God judged Israel, what erroneous thinking prevailed among the people? (9:8-10)
- 9. What foreign powers did God use to ensure that Israel would not quickly be rebuilt? (9:11-12)
- 10. What refrain did Isaiah use to emphasize the seriousness of God's wrath? (9:12)
- * 11. What choice did the people make about their response to the God-provoked suffering? (9:13)
- 12. How did Isaiah portray the cross-section of society that would come under God's judgment? (9:14-17)
- 13. How did Isaiah portray the depths to which Israel would sink when God abandoned them to their own devices? (9:18-21)
- 14. What sins of the powerful did God single out in His list of judgments? (10:1-2)
- 15. What rhetorical question did God ask the oppressors of His people? (10:3)

Get It

- 16. What attributes of God are apparent in this passage?
- * 17. How is God's promise of the coming child an answer to His anger over our sin?
- 18. How does God intend for us to respond when He corrects or disciplines us?
- 19. How would you explain the Light that came into your darkness?
- * 20. Why might it be dangerous to downplay the seriousness of our situation whenever we encounter hardship?
- 21. How much of the injustice Isaiah condemned in his time do you see in our own time?

Apply It

- 22. What specific injustice in your area of influence can you challenge in the name of God? How?
- * 23. What person do you know who is still "walking in darkness" for whom God would have you pray?

God's Judgment on Assyria - Isaiah 10:5-19

Topics: Accountability, Anger, Comparisons, God's Will, Heart, Help, Idolatry, Injustice, Intentions, Judgment, Justice, Oppressed, Power, Pride, Punishment, Purpose, Rebellion, Sickness, Slavery, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. How have you seen power affect people?
- * 2. How do you feel when someone else takes credit for something you actually did?

Explore It

3. Against what nation did Isaiah declare God's judgment? (10:5)
- * 4. For what purpose did God use Assyria? (10:5-6)
5. How did the king of Assyria overstep the purpose for which God raised him up? (10:7)
6. How did the king of Assyria see himself in relation to all other nations and their gods? (10:8-11)
- * 7. What did God promise to do with the king of Assyria after He had used him to His own ends? (10:12)
- * 8. How did the king of Assyria flatter himself about his accomplishments? (10:13-14)
9. What was the king of Assyria's boast? (10:13-14)
10. To what inanimate tools did God compare Assyria? (10:15)
11. What calamities would be part of God's judgment against Assyria? (10:16-19)
12. How is figurative language used to describe God? (10:17)

Get It

13. What would have happened if the Assyrians had feared God?
- * 14. What attitude should we have if we find ourselves in positions of authority where we discipline others?
15. In what current international crises might God be using secular rulers for His own purposes?
- * 16. What makes people want to take credit for things they didn't actually do themselves?
17. What options are open to you if someone unjustly takes credit for some of your accomplishments?
18. What are the inherent dangers in considering God just one of many "gods" in this world?
19. Why might we experience a sense of exhilaration at the downfall of someone who has abused his or her powers?

Apply It

- * 20. How would you summarize a recent accomplishment, giving proper credit to God and to yourself?
21. What steps could you take to make sure that the purposes you have set for yourself in the immediate future are in line with God's will?
22. What do you want to remember the next time an enemy comes to ruin or embarrassment?

The Remnant of Israel - Isaiah 10:20-34

Topics: Anger, Burdens, Comparisons, Faith, Fear, Freedom, Judgment, People, Punishment, Repentance, Restoration, Righteousness, Salvation, Trust

Open It

1. What is one of the heaviest objects you've ever carried for a significant distance?
- * 2. How is your understanding of the word "soon" different from the way a child would think of it?

Explore It

- * 3. What would characterize the few people God would spare from His judgment? (10:20)
4. At their lowest point, on whom did the Israelites come to rely? (10:20)
5. What word picture did Isaiah use to illustrate how few the survivors of God's judgment would be? (10:21-22)
6. Who was going to punish the Israelites for their sins? (10:23)
7. Why did God instruct the people of Judah not to be afraid of the Assyrians? (10:24-25)
- * 8. What is the best news that Isaiah offers the people about the Assyrian invasion? (10:25)
9. How did Isaiah predict that the fall of Assyria would compare to other enemies He had judged? (10:26)
10. If Israel is likened to a yoked ox, what did Isaiah say would happen to it? (10:27)
11. How did Isaiah describe the forward march of the invading Assyrians? (10:28-32)
- * 12. Just when the Assyrians thought they had their world trembling in terror, what would God do to them? (10:33-34)

Get It

- * 13. How do the expressions in this section of Isaiah's prophecy emphasize the awfulness of God's judgment?
14. How would you express the hope for the people of Israel contained in this prophecy in your own words?
15. Why was the remnant of Israel going to be so small?
16. What factors prevent the judgments of even our best courts from being completely righteous?
17. What details come to mind in an image of a forest clear-cut by loggers or destroyed by forest fire?
- * 18. How is your experience of hardship changed if you know that you are very close to a solution?

Apply It

- * 19. What one habit of thought or behavior can you begin to establish over the next month in order to help you rely on the Lord?
20. How can you plan to offer hope this week to a Christian you know is struggling right now?

The Branch from Jesse - Isaiah 11:1-12:6

Topics: Anger, Faithfulness, Fear, Fruit, Glory, Greatness, Holy Spirit, Joy, Judgment, Knowledge, Messiah, Peace, Power, Praise, Restoration, Righteousness, Salvation, Strength, Thankfulness, Trust, Understanding, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What visual image do you associate with the concept of peace?
- 2. If you were a judge in a court of law, what information would you want to have in order to be 100 percent sure of your judgments?
- 3. What anecdotes about family reunions do you like to tell?

Explore It

- 4. Using the image of a tree cut down to a stump, what did Isaiah predict for Judah? (11:1)
- * 5. What qualities did Isaiah ascribe to the Branch of Jesse? (11:2-5)
- 6. What things would characterize the unique One? (11:3-4)
- 7. What unlikely scenarios from nature were used by Isaiah to illustrate God's peace? (11:6-8)
- 8. What image is used to describe the earth? When? (11:9)
- 9. What honors did Isaiah bestow upon the Root of Jesse? (11:10)
- 10. What did God promise to do for His people a second time? (11:11)
- 11. From where will the exiles be gathered? (11:12)
- * 12. What long-standing hostility will be abolished when God reclaims His remnant? (11:13)
- 13. Over what traditional enemies would the reunited Hebrews triumph? (11:14)
- 14. In what miraculous way did God promise to intervene in order for the people to return to their land? (11:15-16)
- 15. What very personal expression of a delivered exile is included in Isaiah's prophecy? (12:1-3)
- * 16. What did Isaiah joyfully command as a means of praise to God? (12:4-6)

Get It

- 17. In what ways do you think Isaiah's description of Messiah impressed the people to whom he was speaking?
- 18. When Messiah sits in judgment, whom will He welcome and whom will He be against?
- 19. What do you think it would be like to live in a world where even the animal kingdom was free of conflict?
- 20. What reversal of treatment gave rise to the song of praise in Isaiah 12?
- * 21. What does it mean to delight in the fear of the Lord?
- * 22. What news about our God is worthy of being proclaimed throughout the world?

Apply It

- * 23. What song can you choose as a particularly appropriate vehicle for your praise to God this week?
- 24. What relationship can you ask God to restore according to His will?

A Prophecy Against Babylon - Isaiah 13:1-14:23

Topics: Anger, Blasphemy, Compassion, Death, Evil, Fear, Glory, Humility, Judgment, Oppressed, Pain, Praise, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Rejection, Remembering, Running, Sin, Slavery, Suffering, War, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. How would you attempt to survive if America were completely ravaged by war and destruction?
- 2. What feelings accompany a surprise victory by the underdog team for which you rooted?

Explore It

- 3. To whom did God reveal the future destruction of Babylon even before it achieved the height of its power? (13:1)
- 4. What are some of the images Isaiah used to illustrate the power of God to be mustered against Babylon? (13:1-5)
- 5. How does the prophecy express the terror that will be felt by the Babylonians? (13:6-8)
- 6. What strange events would signal the day of the Lord (day of judgment)? (13:9-13)
- 7. What would be the primary reason for God's judgment of Babylon? (13:11)
- 8. How did Isaiah describe the helplessness and terror that would pervade Babylon? (13:14-16)
- 9. What nation would be God's instrument against Babylon? (13:17)
- 10. How would the Medes's goals of warfare be distinctly cruel? (13:17-18)
- * 11. What images of desolation contrast with the glory and pride that Babylon experienced at its height? (13:19-22)
- * 12. What pleasant reversals did Isaiah prophesy for the people of Israel? (14:1-2)
- 13. How did Isaiah say the Israelites would be able to taunt their former oppressors? (14:3-8)
- 14. How would the spirits of those in the grave greet the spirits of the Babylonians? (14:9-11)
- * 15. How did Isaiah describe Babylon's opinion of itself before its fall? (14:12-15)
- 16. What would be hard for other nations to comprehend about the total destruction of Babylon? (14:16-17)
- 17. What ultimate indignities did God have in store for an arrogant nation? (14:18-23)

Get It

- 18. For what purpose do you think God revealed events in the distant future to the Israelites of Isaiah's day?
- 19. Although God intended to use Babylon to punish Israel, what did He know about the heart of this people?
- * 20. Why was it important for God's people to realize that God saw the haughtiness and cruelty of the Babylonians?
- 21. In what way is it easier to endure persecution if you have an assurance that the tables will eventually be turned?
- * 22. How is it both wise and unwise to fear the cruelty of which powerful people are capable?

Apply It

- * 23. What promise of God can fortify your faith as you think about a difficulty you face this week?
- 24. What is one way you could warn someone in authority about God's standards regarding the use and abuse of power?

Prophecies Against the Nations - Isaiah 14:24-21:17

Topics: Advice, Answers, Blessing, Death, Discipline, Escape, Faithfulness, Fear, Foolishness, Fruit, Gifts, Glory, Good News, Grief, Healing, Heart, Idolatry, Intentions, Joy, Justice, Love, Mourning, Occult, Oppressed, Pain, Plans, Poor, Power, Prayer, Pride, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Quiet, Remembering, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Shame, Sickness, Strength, Suffering, Trust, Vows, Wealth, Wisdom, Worship

Open It

1. What do you consider to be three good sources of advice? Why?
- * 2. When have you sought the help or endorsement of someone powerful or famous, and why did you want it?

Explore It

3. Where did God promise to break the power of Assyria, Israel's oppressors? (14:24-27)
4. In the year of King Ahaz's death, what message did Isaiah have for Israel's perpetual enemies, the Philistines? (14:28-32)
5. How does Isaiah describe the fate of Moab in the wake of God's judgment? (15:1-9)
6. What did Isaiah predict the Moabites would seek from Sela, "across the desert"? (16:1-4)
- * 7. Where would a throne of love and righteous judgment for all nations be established? (16:4-5)
8. What sin on the part of the Moabites brought all the destruction and mourning for their former abundance? (16:6-11)
9. Where did God know that the Moabites would seek help when they began to feel His wrath? (16:12)
10. How soon after he prophesied the fall of Moab did Isaiah say it would happen? (16:13-14)
11. With what foreign power had the northern kingdom of Israel allied itself, leading to God's judgment on them both? (17:1-8)
12. What had Israel forgotten, which would put an end to their fruitfulness? (17:10-11)
- * 13. How did Isaiah compare the "raging" of peoples and nations to the wrath of God? (17:12-14)
14. What kingdom would attempt to mount an alliance against Assyria, God's instrument of judgment? (18:1-7)
15. How did God instruct Judah to respond to the request to join the alliance with Cush against Assyria? (18:4-5)
16. In what ways does Isaiah describe the coming humiliation of Egypt? (19:1-10)
17. What help would Egypt be able to find in her wise men and leaders? (19:11-16)
18. What former slave nation did God intend to use to punish Egypt? (19:17)
- * 19. What amazing change did Isaiah prophesy in the relationship between Egypt and Jehovah God? (19:18-22)
20. How did Isaiah state God would describe even former enemy nations? (19:23-25)
21. What unusual command did God give to Isaiah as a sign to the people? (20:1-5)
22. What did God want His people to know ahead of time about the reliability of Egypt as an ally against Assyria? (20:6)
23. Against what major power did God post Isaiah as a lookout for its destruction? (21:1-10)
24. What future did Isaiah prophesy for Edom and the border territories? (21:11-17)

Get It

25. At the same time he was prophesying the punishment of Israel and Judah, what effect do you imagine was created when Isaiah also foretold the destruction of all the major powers around them?
- * 26. In the midst of all the judgment, what evidences of compassion and reconciliation with former enemies are contained in these chapters?

27. Why is it difficult for us to imagine the utter defeat of nations which, at this time, are prosperous and powerful?
- * 28. In what ways are you tempted to turn to a powerful but worldly “ally” when you are in trouble?
29. What is sometimes frustrating about the timing of God’s punishment of those who mistreat His people?

Apply It

30. What can you do the next time your instinct is to secure a powerful human ally?
- * 31. What small step can you take today to begin to prepare your heart to receive a former enemy as a brother or sister?

A Prophecy about Jerusalem - Isaiah 22:1-25

Topics: Authority, Death, Glory, Grief, Honor, Joy, Judgment, Mourning, Prophecy, Protection, Punishment, Running

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the most pressing worries in your life today?
- 2. Where do people in our society turn when they are in need of help?

Explore It

- 3. What labels, used by Isaiah, showed God's disapproval of Jerusalem's morality? (22:1-2)
- 4. What humiliating experience did Isaiah predict for Jerusalem and its leaders? (22:3)
- 5. What was Isaiah's emotional response to God's revelation about the future of Jerusalem? (22:4)
- 6. How did Isaiah describe the magnitude of the military threat against Jerusalem? (22:5-8)
- * 7. How did the people of Jerusalem respond to the threat against them? (22:9-11)
- 8. How did Isaiah portray the people's neglect of God during their time of need? (22:11)
- * 9. Rather than repentance, what attitude prevailed in Jerusalem on the eve of its destruction? (22:12-13)
- * 10. How did God emphasize the sinful attitudes of the people of Jerusalem? (22:14)
- 11. How did God intend to deal with Shebna, the evil palace steward? (22:17-19)
- 12. What attitude toward the people would characterize God's replacement for Shebna, the steward? (22:20-21)
- 13. Despite all of the honor bestowed by God, what would eventually become of the replacement steward? (22:22-25)

Get It

- 14. What should be our first response when confronted with threats or problems?
- 15. In what sense was the attack against Jerusalem by an alliance of enemies a test of its people?
- * 16. What events in your life or the world around you tend to inspire fatalism?
- 17. How would you respond to someone who believes that righteousness doesn't matter?
- * 18. Under what sorts of circumstances are you most likely to worry about "covering your bases"?
- 19. What is God's concern for leaders who use their position primarily for their own gain?

Apply It

- 20. What reminder would help you seek God's help first whenever you are confronted with difficulties?
- * 21. What passage of Scripture can you memorize to counteract a temptation to doubt God's involvement in your life?

A Prophecy about Tyre - Isaiah 23:1-18

Topics: Abundance, Forget, Glory, Greed, Grief, Humility, Leadership, Mourning, Plans, Pride, Punishment, Remembering, Shame, Silence, Wealth

Open It

1. In your opinion what might be the biggest advantages of being wealthy?
- * 2. How do you think sharing is valued in our society?

Explore It

3. What was the “glory” of the kingdom of Tyre, which Isaiah predicted would become useless to them? (23:1)
4. What were some of the wares that were traded by the ships of Tyre? (23:2-3)
5. Why would Egypt be in anguish over the absence of the “sons and daughters of the sea” (ships of Tyre and Sidon)? (23:4-5)
- * 6. What were some of the titles given to the kingdom of Tyre at its height? (23:6-8)
- * 7. Why did Isaiah say the Lord planned to destroy Tyre? (23:9)
8. Why would the former seafaring kingdom of Tyre need to turn to agriculture? (23:10-11)
9. How did God say that the people of Tyre would be acting at the time He judged them? (23:12)
10. What kingdom did Isaiah say that Tyre and Sidon should fear? (23:13-14)
11. How long did Isaiah predict that Tyre would be devastated? (23:15)
12. What would God do for the kingdom of Tyre after seventy years? (23:16-17)
- * 13. What would be different about the attitudes and purposes of Tyre before and after God’s judgment? (23:18)

Get It

14. Why might Israel and Judah have been tempted to see Tyre as a source of help against other enemies?
15. What parallels do you see in modern society concerning Tyre’s abuse of its material wealth?
- * 16. What does God intend for us to do when we have opportunities to enrich ourselves through making money?
- * 17. Why would God target the very possessions or activities that cause a nation to prosper?
18. Under what circumstances is it possible for us to use wealth to do good in God’s sight?

Apply It

- * 19. When can you prayerfully write out the reasons you make money and acquire things?
20. What creative way can you think of to glorify God this month out of your material resources?

The Lord's Devastation of the Earth - Isaiah 24:1-23

Topics: Bitterness, Covenant, Disobedience, Equality, Fear, Glory, Guilt, Joy, Law, Power, Praise, Punishment, Rebellion, Righteousness, Running, Shame, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. What sorts of circumstances can bring a sudden hush over a rowdy celebration?
- 2. What example of serious environmental damage have you witnessed?

Explore It

- * 3. How did Isaiah announce the extent of God's judgment of the whole earth? (24:1)
- 4. Who would be affected by the devastation God announced? (24:1-3)
- 5. By what method of repetition did Isaiah emphasize the point that no one will be spared from God's judgment? (24:2)
- 6. Who is responsible for turning the earth itself into a wasteland? (24:3-6)
- 7. How will the day of God's judgment reverse the experience of those who were inclined to continuous partying? (24:7-9)
- 8. What images did Isaiah use to portray the physical and spiritual emptiness in the wake of God's judgment? (24:10-13)
- 9. What will be the response of God's faithful people to the arrival of God's justice? (24:14-16)
- * 10. How did Isaiah illustrate God's inescapable judgment? (24:17-18)
- 11. What expressions indicate that the whole earth will feel the force of God's judgment? (24:18-20)
- * 12. What are the various powers that will be judged by God? (24:21-23)

Get It

- * 13. How does Isaiah underscore the omnipotence of God over everything—material and spiritual?
- 14. Why will the whole earth ultimately be judged by God?
- 15. How does God view our attempts to gain position and status over one another?
- * 16. Why do the people of God respond with joy and praise when they see the judgments of God?
- 17. How has the sinfulness of humankind affected the physical earth?
- 18. How can people avoid the punishment of God?

Apply It

- * 19. When can you pray this week for God to illumine some dark areas of disobedience in your life and help you to have a repentant heart?
- 20. In what concrete way can you counteract the waste and ruin of the physical earth this week?

Songs of Praise to the Lord - Isaiah 25:1-27:13

Topics: Accomplishments, Anger, Atonement, Blindness, Compassion, Death, Desires, Discipline, Enemies, Evil, Faith, Faithfulness, Fruit, Glory, Good News, Grace, Guilt, Heart, Honor, Humiliation, Idolatry, Joy, Judgment, Law, Learning, Life, Name, Oppressed, Peace, Plans, Poor, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Protection, Punishment, Resurrection, Salvation, Shame, Silence, Sin, Strength, Trust, Waiting, War, Worship, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What are the qualities of a person you trust implicitly?
- 2. What is the most elaborate meal or banquet you've ever attended?

Explore It

- * 3. What aspect of God's character is the primary reason for Isaiah's song of praise? (25:1)
- 4. How had God followed through on His plans for the fortresses of people? (25:2)
- 5. How will God's treatment of the ruthless and the needy differ? (25:3-5)
- 6. What honor will God prepare for all of the faithful people? (25:6)
- * 7. What great burdens of human life will ultimately be lifted by God? (25:7-9)
- 8. How will God treat the rebellious of the world (Moab)? (25:10-12)
- 9. What will God do for His people, which will give rise to praises? (26:1-6)
- * 10. What characterizes the relationship between God and His people? (26:7-9)
- 11. What prevents the wicked from experiencing God's favor? (26:10-11)
- 12. How will God's people look back on His activity in the world when it has been completed? (26:12-15)
- 13. How are God's people humbled by His discipline? (26:16-18)
- 14. What images did Isaiah use to portray the resurrection of the dead? (26:19)
- 15. What did Isaiah instruct God's people to do while God judges the world? (26:20-21)
- 16. To what huge creature did Isaiah compare God's defeat of evil? (27:1)
- 17. What is Isaiah's image for God's nurturing care of His people? (27:2-6)
- 18. To what end did God strike and contend with Israel? (27:7-11)
- 19. What is God's promise of restoration for His people? (27:12-13)

Get It

- * 20. What sort of enemies do we face against which we have no natural, human defense?
- 21. What does God want the poor to know about their oppressors?
- 22. What attitudes and habits depict a righteous person?
- 23. Why did Israel in Isaiah's day stand in need of God's discipline?
- 24. What is one indication in this section of Isaiah that God's salvation was not only for the descendants of Abraham?
- * 25. How is your understanding of evil influenced by Isaiah's characterization of the righteous wrath of God?

Apply It

- * 26. What specific enemies, immediate and long-term, do you want to ask God to defeat on your behalf?
- 27. With whom will you ask God to give you the courage to share something of the goodness of God?

Woes - Isaiah 28:1-31:9

Topics: Abundance, Anger, Awe, Beauty, Blessing, Compassion, Covenant, Darkness, Death, Decisions, Drinking, Enemies, Evil, Fear, Grace, Healing, Heart, Help, Hiding, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Honor, Humility, Hypocrisy, Idolatry, Instructions, Joy, Justice, Listening, Lying, Mourning, Name, Plans, Poor, Power, Pride, Prophecy, Protection, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Repentance, Rest, Right, Righteousness, Rules, Salvation, Shame, Sin, Strength, Stubbornness, Teaching, Trust, Understanding, Waiting, Wisdom, Words, Worship

Open It

1. What rules or laws in our society tend to be flaunted by a large number of people?
2. When have you depended on someone only to discover that he or she has let you down?
- * 3. What are some examples of lessons that you have had to learn the hard way?

Explore It

4. How did God illustrate the pride of Ephraim? (28:1-4)
5. What images did God give for the relationship He wanted with His people? (28:5-6)
6. How did God see the religious leaders who led the people astray? (28:7-8)
7. What were the people saying about Isaiah and his harsh teachings? (28:9-10)
8. How did Isaiah say that the people would be taught if they didn't listen to him? (28:11-13)
9. Why did the rulers of Jerusalem think they had exempted themselves from the coming destruction? (28:14-15)
10. What did God reveal as the true source of security for His people? (28:16)
11. What would the people of Israel discover about their supposed refuge? (28:17-20)
12. How did Isaiah use the imagery of a farmer to communicate that God will not totally destroy? (28:23-29)
13. According to Isaiah, what would become of Ariel (Jerusalem), the "Lion of God"? (29:1-4)
14. What are the various word pictures used to describe God's punishment of the enemies of Jerusalem? (29:5-8)
15. In what different ways did Isaiah express the fact that God's ways had been revealed but the people didn't understand them? (29:9-12)
- * 16. Why did Isaiah condemn the worship of the people of his day? (29:10-14)
17. What sorts of hidden deeds did God promise to bring into the open and address with His justice? (29:15-21)
- * 18. What new relationship would God bring about between Himself and His people? (29:22-24)
19. What did God predict about the alliance with which Judah sought to protect itself from Assyria? (30:1-5)
20. At the same time they sent gifts to buy the favor of Egypt, what did the people say to the prophets (such as Isaiah) who were telling them the truth? (30:6-11)
21. How did God respond to the variety of disobedience Judah practiced? (30:12-17)
- * 22. In the middle of their rebellion, what was God holding out to the people? (30:18)
23. What did Isaiah prophesy about the ultimate reconciliation between God and His people? (30:19-26)
24. How did Isaiah describe the way God would rescue His people from their enemies? (30:27-33)
25. What did Isaiah insist would be the outcome of reliance on Egypt? (31:1-3)
26. To what wild animal did Isaiah compare the Lord's vengeance against Israel's enemies? (31:4-9)

Get It

27. How do you respond when a younger person talks back to you?
28. Why do people often feel there is security to be gained outside of God?
29. What is the biggest obstacle to human relationships with God?
- * 30. Why do you think people bother to go through the forms of worship if they don't mean them?

- * 31. How can you tell if someone is sincere when he or she speaks of loving God?
- 32. What injustice has been done to you which will have to wait for God's vengeance?
- 33. Of what instances are you aware in which Christians have asked not to be told God's perspective on their actions?

Apply It

- * 34. What steps can you take to make sure that your worship is heartfelt, not just an act?
- 35. What is one practical way you could place your sense of security in God?

Distress and Help in Jerusalem - Isaiah 32:1-35:10

Topics: Anger, Beauty, Blessing, Blindness, Complacency, Confidence, Courage, Death, Earth, Evil, Fear, Foolishness, Forgiveness, Fruit, Glory, Grace, Healing, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Injustice, Integrity, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Knowledge, Lying, Mourning, Peace, Poor, Power, Praise, Protection, Respect, Rest, Revenge, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Security, Shame, Sin, Sorrow, Strength, Understanding, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What dramatic difference between “before” and “after” have you observed due to a natural disaster?
- 2. What examples can you cite of a fool being called noble or a scoundrel being highly respected?
- 3. What circumstances tend to cause people to become complacent or lazy?

Explore It

- * 4. What would characterize the reign of the king that Isaiah foretold? (32:1-4)
- 5. In God’s eyes, what are the differences between the foolish and the noble? (32:5-8)
- 6. What warning did Isaiah have for the women of Jerusalem who had become complacent? (32:9-13)
- 7. How long did Isaiah predict the punishment would continue? (32:14-20)
- 8. What judgment did God declare for His destroyer, Assyria? (33:1)
- 9. What prayer did Isaiah utter for God’s faithful? (33:2)
- * 10. What does the “key” of the fear of the Lord unlock for the believer? (33:5-6)
- 11. What sad state did Isaiah predict for both the land and the people in the face of God’s judgment? (33:7-9)
- 12. How did Isaiah predict that the experiences of the sinner and the righteous person would differ? (33:10-19)
- 13. What are some of the physical and spiritual characteristics of the Jerusalem of the future? (33:17-24)
- 14. What are some of the roles that will be taken on by the Lord as Messiah-King? (33:21-22)
- 15. What sobering news did Isaiah announce to all people and nations? (34:1-2)
- 16. What are some of the images Isaiah used to describe the extent of the slaughter to come? (34:3-7)
- 17. On whose behalf did the Lord plan retribution? (34:8)
- 18. What are some of the ways Isaiah chose to express the desolation that would follow God’s judgments? (34:9-15)
- 19. What physical transformations of the land provide pictures of God’s redemptive work? (35:1-2)
- 20. What message did Isaiah have for believers who might have begun to falter in their hope? (35:3-4)
- 21. What are some of the miraculous signs which will be common in the Kingdom of God? (35:5-7)
- * 22. What did Isaiah tell us about the “highway” in the Kingdom of God? (35:8-10)

Get It

- * 23. What are the different effects of God’s wrath and God’s grace?
- * 24. What is God’s ultimate solution for the sin that separates us from Him?
- 25. Why did Isaiah say that the nations who carried out God’s punishment against His people should not feel secure in their own power?
- 26. What examples can be found in Isaiah’s prophecies of the earth itself benefiting or suffering because of our sin?
- 27. What value is there in Isaiah’s prophecies containing great words of hope and encouragement?

Apply It

- * 28. With what promise of God can you encourage a believer who is becoming weak or fearful due to difficult circumstances?
- 29. What Scripture can you study and perhaps commit to memory to help you avoid becoming a “fool” by God’s definition?

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem - Isaiah 36:1-22

Topics: Answers, Bargaining, Confidence, Deceit, Delegation, Enemies, Listening, Mourning, Peace, Questions, Salvation, Silence, Trust, Words, Worship

Open It

- * 1. When have you seen high or low morale determine the outcome of a challenging situation?
- 2. When have you been persuaded that it is fruitless to fight against some group of people, trend, or opposing opinion?

Explore It

- 3. What enemy moved against Judah during King Hezekiah's reign? (36:1)
- 4. Who did Hezekiah send to meet the field commander of the king of Assyria? (36:2-3)
- * 5. What sources of help did the king of Assyria belittle for their supposed inability to help Judah sustain a rebellion? (36:4-7)
- 6. How did the field commander taunt Judah's representatives about their helplessness? (36:8-9)
- * 7. What final blow did the field commander deal to the morale of the people of Judah? (36:10)
- 8. Why did the officials from Jerusalem ask the Assyrian field commander to speak to them in Aramaic? (36:11)
- 9. Why did the commander refuse to change languages for communication purposes? (36:12)
- 10. What message did the commander address directly to the people on the wall of the city? (36:13-15)
- 11. For what reasons did the Assyrian urge the people of Jerusalem to surrender? (36:16-17)
- * 12. Why was the Assyrian field commander convinced that God could not help the people of Jerusalem? (36:18-20)
- 13. Why didn't the people on the wall of Jerusalem reply to the Assyrian when he spoke to them? (36:21)
- 14. With what attitude did Hezekiah's delegation bring him the news of the encounter with the Assyrian? (36:22)

Get It

- * 15. What was the Assyrian field commander's purpose in approaching the city ahead of the army?
- 16. Why was humility and mourning an appropriate response on the part of the leaders of Judah?
- 17. What falsehood stands out among the Assyrian's true assessments of the predicament of Jerusalem?
- 18. Why would it be useful for an enemy to undermine your confidence in your leaders?
- 19. In what ways have other people, or you yourself, belittled or mocked you for your faith in God?
- * 20. How can Christians stand firm even when they are aware of their own weakness and the strength of an enemy?

Apply It

- * 21. What options are open to you in the coming week to deepen your understanding of the character of God so that you will not be shaken by the lies of the Enemy?
- 22. What criticisms of your "weakness" of faith, or doubts of your own, do you need to dismiss or ignore as a symptom of unbelief?

Hezekiah's Prayer and Sennacherib's Fall - Isaiah 37:1-38

Topics: Anger, Answers, Blasphemy, Confidence, Death, Fear, God's Will, Idolatry, Insults, Listening, Mourning, Murder, Plans, Prayer, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Repentance, Strength, Words, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What experience have you or someone you know had with going to court to have a decision overturned (court order, traffic ticket, etc.)?
- 2. Why do you think children tend to ridicule not only one another but also one another's parents?

Explore It

- 3. What was the attitude of Hezekiah and his ministers when confronted with the superior might of the invading Assyrians? (37:1-2)
- 4. What was the primary reason that Hezekiah thought God might intervene on behalf of the helpless people of Jerusalem? (37:3-4)
- 5. According to the prophet Isaiah, how did God view the words of the Assyrian field commander? (37:5-7)
- 6. What further threat did Hezekiah receive from the king of Assyria before he saw a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy? (37:9-13)
- 7. Why did Sennacherib believe he was invincible? (37:11-13)
- * 8. Of what attributes of God did Hezekiah remind himself as he began his prayer to God? (37:14-16)
- 9. Why did Hezekiah know that the track record of the gods of other nations had no bearing on what would happen to Jerusalem? (37:19)
- 10. Why did Hezekiah believe that the rescue of Jerusalem would serve God's ultimate purposes? (37:20)
- 11. Through whom did God reveal to Hezekiah His judgment against Assyria? (37:21)
- * 12. What attitude on the part of Assyria amounted to blasphemy against God? (37:23-25)
- 13. What images did Isaiah use to foretell the future of Assyria in contrast to its present position? (37:26-27)
- 14. How did God plan to emphasize His power over Assyria? (37:28-29)
- 15. What would be accomplished by the "zeal of the Lord Almighty"? (37:32)
- 16. How far did Isaiah predict that the king of Assyria would get in his assault on the city of Jerusalem? (37:33-35)
- * 17. What sudden and miraculous event caused the Assyrians to withdraw from Jerusalem? (37:36-37)
- 18. What event brought to completion the personal prophecy concerning Sennacherib? (37:38)

Get It

- 19. Why do you think Hezekiah and his officials came to God with repentance before they presented their requests?
- * 20. What is the first thing you might expect God to do with regard to pagan challenges to His Lordship?
- 21. What perspective does a believer have with respect to the awesome powers of this world?
- 22. Why might God have withheld the specifics of how He would deliver Judah, although He revealed that He would save them?
- 23. Why was it impossible for the people of Jerusalem to take the glory for the retreat of the Assyrians?
- * 24. What is the best attitude you can have to deal with the threats of your enemies?

Apply It

- * 25. In what new way might you pray about a situation in which you've been awaiting God's help?

26. What “enemy” can you seek to see through God’s eyes this coming week?

Hezekiah's Illness - Isaiah 38:1-39:8

Topics: Children, Consequences, Death, Delegation, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Gifts, Goodness, Grace, Health, Humility, Instructions, Judgment, Life, Love, Mourning, Parents, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Prophecy, Questions, Remembering, Salvation, Security, Sickness, Sin, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel to learn that the bad news you are hearing applies to others but not to you?
- 2. What would you do if you learned that you had exactly three months to live?
- 3. What philosophies have you heard concerning the timing of our deaths as human beings?

Explore It

- 4. What message did God send via Isaiah to the good king Hezekiah when he became gravely ill? (38:1)
- * 5. What was Hezekiah's reaction to the prophecy about his imminent death? (38:2-3)
- 6. To what did Hezekiah appeal in asking for more time on this earth? (38:3)
- 7. What two specific promises did God make in answer to Hezekiah's prayers? (38:4-5)
- 8. How did God contradict natural laws in order to give Hezekiah a sign? (38:7-8)
- 9. What were some of the images used by Hezekiah in his song to describe his anguish upon learning that he would soon die? (38:9-14)
- 10. How did Hezekiah acknowledge God as the source of his healing? (38:15-16)
- * 11. How did Hezekiah view his physical and mental suffering after he was delivered? (38:17)
- 12. What did Hezekiah see as the duty of those to whom God gives the gift of life? (38:18-19)
- 13. What details did Isaiah add about how God brought about Hezekiah's healing and why God gave a sign that these events would happen? (38:21-22)
- 14. What king sent envoys to Hezekiah after hearing of his illness and recovery? (39:1)
- 15. What was the nature of the tour that Hezekiah gave the Babylonian envoys? (39:2)
- 16. What two questions did Isaiah have for Hezekiah concerning the foreign visitors? (39:3-4)
- * 17. What did Isaiah prophesy about the future of Judah when he learned about the visitors from Babylon? (39:5-7)
- 18. How did Hezekiah react to Isaiah's sobering prophecy? (39:8)

Get It

- 19. How else might Hezekiah have reacted when Isaiah told him he would die from his current illness?
- 20. What positive events resulted from the potential tragedy of Hezekiah?
- * 21. Why is, or is not, death the worst thing that can happen to us?
- 22. In general, what might make a person want to keep living?
- 23. In general, why would a person actually desire to die?
- 24. What do you think motivated Hezekiah to show the Babylonians all of his treasure?
- 25. How did Hezekiah's reaction to the second prophecy differ from his reaction to the first?
- 26. What is good or bad about being resigned to God's will?

Apply It

- * 27. From what bad news in your life might you ask the Holy Spirit to help you learn?
- 28. Upon what trial can you look back and see that God had your best interests in mind, even in allowing you to go through it?

Comfort for God's People - Isaiah 40:1-31

Topics: Atonement, Comparisons, Compassion, Complaining, Craftsmanship, Creation, Equality, Gentleness, Glory, Good News, Greatness, Hiding, Hope, Idolatry, Image, Judgment, Knowledge, Light, Name, Poor, Power, Punishment, Renewal, Restoration, Rewards, Right, Sacrifice, Sin, Sovereignty, Strength, Teaching, Understanding

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the various ways people comfort themselves about life's difficulties?
- 2. What is one of the most comforting messages you've ever received from a fellow Christian?
- 3. What changes take place in your view of everyday sights when you have seen them from high above (airplane, tall building, etc.)?

Explore It

- 4. In contrast to the previous announcements of God's judgment, how did Isaiah begin God's message? (40:1)
- * 5. What good news did Isaiah have for Jerusalem concerning the sufferings that went before? (40:2)
- 6. What did Isaiah instruct the people to do, even while they were in the wilderness? (40:3)
- 7. How did Isaiah use the surrounding land to illustrate the change that Isaiah envisioned when God would intervene on behalf of His people? (40:4)
- * 8. How did Isaiah contrast the mortality of human life with the Word of God? (40:6-8)
- 9. With what exclamations of joy did Isaiah announce God's arrival? (40:9-10)
- 10. In contrast to the picture of God approaching in great power, how else did Isaiah portray the relationship of God to His chosen people? (40:11)
- 11. What aspects of the created world did Isaiah use to illustrate God's greatness? (40:12)
- 12. What questions were the only adequate way for Isaiah to hint at the wisdom of God? (40:13-14)
- 13. How did the power of even the most feared nations of Isaiah's time compare to the power of God? (40:15-17)
- 14. What observations did Isaiah make about the idols commissioned by the rich and by the poor? (40:18-20)
- 15. With what questions did Isaiah introduce his thoughts about the transcendence of God? (40:21-24)
- 16. What wonder of nature did the Holy One use as an example of His power? (40:25-26)
- 17. How did God respond to Judah's assertion that He had forgotten them? (40:27-28)
- * 18. What were God's special promises to the weak and weary? (40:29-31)

Get It

- 19. How does Isaiah's message of comfort apply to us today?
- * 20. In what sense can it be comforting to meditate on the overwhelming greatness of God?
- * 21. What sorts of circumstances cause contemporary people to become weak and weary?
- 22. In what sense can God's powerful wrath actually be an encouragement to the downtrodden?
- 23. Which of Isaiah's portrayals of God's power over nature speaks most clearly to you? Why?
- 24. Why is it important for us to remember that God is infinitely higher than we imagine ourselves to be?
- 25. What examples have you encountered of the gentle, loving care of God for His people?

Apply It

- * 26. What Christian within your acquaintance could you encourage with a word about God's comfort the next time you see him or her?
- 27. Which attribute of God will be your focus of meditation and praise this coming week?

The Helper of Israel - Isaiah 41:1-29

Topics: Accomplishments, Advice, Anger, Answers, Arguments, Call, Confusion, Craftsmanship, Creation, Death, Enemies, Evil, Fear, Future, Gifts, Goodness, Good News, Help, Idolatry, Judgment, Poor, Prophecy, Punishment, Redemption, Rejection, Right, Righteousness, Serving, Shame, Silence, Strength, Understanding, War, Weaknesses

Open It

1. What is one situation in which you have felt completely powerless?
2. What examples do you know of how essential water can be to the life of a community?
- * 3. What experience did you have as a child of having someone step in to protect you?

Explore It

4. What challenge did Isaiah issue on behalf of God to all the nations of the earth? (41:1)
5. How did Isaiah describe the wrath of God's tool of righteousness? (41:2-3)
- * 6. Who did Isaiah say would take responsibility for the judgment being wrought against the nations? (41:3-4)
7. Where do the pagan nations turn for help in the face of God's judgment? (41:5-7)
- * 8. What relationship had God initiated with Israel? (41:8-9)
9. What words of comfort and strength did God announce to His people through Isaiah? (41:10)
10. What, according to the prophecy, would become of Israel's enemies? (41:11-12)
11. How did Isaiah contrast God's view of the people of Israel with His own power? (41:13-14)
12. How did God intend to use His people against their enemies? (41:15-16)
13. What images concerning water did Isaiah use to illustrate what God would do for His people? (41:17-20)
- * 14. What challenges did God lay before the idols of Israel's enemies? (41:21-24)
15. Where were the origins of the nation God would use against His enemies? (41:25)
16. Why did all of the idols prove totally inadequate in the face of God's wrath? (41:26-29)

Get It

17. What responses might you expect among the downtrodden people of Israel and Judah who heard God's strong words against their enemies?
18. What idols in our day seem as ludicrous as the images of wood and stone in Isaiah's day?
19. How did the virtues of the people figure, or not figure, into God's decision to save them?
- * 20. What are the implications in our lives of being chosen by God?
- * 21. What are some of the differences in serving a living God versus a man-made idol?
22. What is an appropriate response for someone who has been rescued from mortal danger?
23. Why is weakness in human terms not necessarily a cause for despair for the believer?

Apply It

- * 24. What idols in the world around you can you ask God to protect you from worshiping?
25. What weakness that you confront daily can remind you to rely on God as your source of strength?

The Servant of the Lord - Isaiah 42:1-25

Topics: Anger, Blindness, Commitment, Covenant, Creation, Darkness, Discouragement, Disobedience, Earth, Enemies, Faithfulness, Freedom, Gentleness, Glory, Greatness, Hiding, Holy Spirit, Hope, Idolatry, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Law, Life, Light, Name, People, Praise, Promises, Righteousness, Serving, Shame, Sin, Strength, Victory, War, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. For what different reasons might one person hold another person's hand?
- 2. What interpretations do we tend to put on another person's silence?

Explore It

- 3. How does God introduce His Servant? (42:1)
- * 4. What did God say would distinguish His Servant? (42:1)
- 5. How is the gentleness of God's Servant described by Isaiah? (42:2-3)
- 6. What attitude would characterize God's Servant? (42:4)
- 7. How is the glory of God described by Isaiah? (42:5)
- 8. What did God promise to accomplish through His Servant? (42:6-7)
- 9. What kinds of compromise are impossible given who God is? (42:8)
- 10. What was Israel learning through Isaiah's prophecy that they could have learned no other way? (42:9)
- * 11. Who, according to Isaiah, will sing the "new song" of praise to God? (42:10-12)
- 12. How is God described in relation to His enemies? (42:13)
- 13. What wonders will take place when God no longer holds Himself back? (42:14-16)
- * 14. How will God take pity on our blindness? (42:16)
- 15. What will become of those who worship idols? (42:17)
- 16. Why did God call Israel blind and deaf? (42:19-20)
- 17. How did the people compare to the laws God had given them? (42:21-22)
- 18. What response did God want, and what response did He get, when He turned Israel over to her enemies? (42:23-25)

Get It

- 19. According to this passage, what mission will the Messiah not give up until it is completed?
- * 20. What characteristics of God's Servant, the Messiah, are reassuring to those who falter in their faith?
- 21. What makes people blind and deaf to God's Word?
- 22. Who might Isaiah's hearers have been surprised to learn that they were intended to bless?
- 23. How did Isaiah make it clear that God's salvation plan reached even those outside of the Jews to whom he was speaking?
- * 24. How do you imagine God is able to take hold of our hand?
- 25. What sort of people does God promise not to forsake?
- 26. How could God's ultimate intention in disciplining His people with war and flames actually be for their good?

Apply It

- * 27. To whom can you express some of the tenderness and care you have received from Jesus? How?
- 28. When can you take time to praise God for His love and kindness?

Israel's Only Savior - Isaiah 43:1-28

Topics: Arguments, Believe, Blindness, Creation, Fear, Forget, Forgiveness, Glory, History, Honor, Knowledge, Love, Miracles, Name, New Life, People, Praise, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Redemption, Restoration, Revelation, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin, Testing, Truth, Understanding, Witnessing

Open It

1. What techniques do you use within yourself to deal with fearful situations?
- * 2. How have you felt about the finished product of a project you have labored over?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did the Lord tell Israel not to be afraid? (43:1)
4. Through what sorts of trials did Isaiah say God's people would pass unscathed? (43:2)
5. What valuable price was God willing to pay for Israel's ransom? (43:4)
6. How did God promise to address the exile and scattering of Israel? (43:5-7)
7. What could God's people witness about Him that other peoples could not claim about their gods? (43:8-10)
- * 8. What is impossible for human beings apart from God? (43:11-13)
9. What did God promise to do with a proud, conquering nation? (43:14-15)
10. What past deeds of God were related by Isaiah to illustrate his point? (43:16-18)
11. What forsaken land and its animal inhabitants would recognize God's activity among His chosen people? (43:19-21)
- * 12. What did God hold Israel accountable for failing to do in response to His goodness to them? (43:22-24)
13. What did Israel do in relation to God that they should not have done? (43:24)
14. What did God promise to do with sin? (43:25)
15. What punishment did God assign to Israel? (43:27-28)

Get It

16. What are some of the ways that we can know God loves us?
17. How do many people respond to the belief that there is only one means to salvation?
- * 18. For what different reasons do you think people fail to express gratitude to God?
19. Why do you think God's people sometimes fail to perceive His provision for them?
20. Why was God continually reminding Israel of how He delivered them from Egypt?
- * 21. What attitudes lead us to neglect worship and prayer?
22. What is sometimes difficult about remembering that God has forgiven and forgotten our past sins?
23. What is the penalty of unforgiven sin?

Apply It

- * 24. In what practical ways can you remind yourself to pray this coming week, knowing that God is eager to answer?
25. How can you use God's promise in Isaiah 43:2 to help you have the faith and courage to endure your own difficult circumstances?

Israel the Chosen - Isaiah 44:1-23

Topics: Blessing, Blindness, Children, Craftsmanship, Creation, Fear, Foolishness, Forget, Forgiveness, Glory, Growth, Help, Holy Spirit, Idolatry, Knowledge, Listening, Lying, Praise, Prayer, Promises, Prophecy, Redemption, Remembering, Repentance, Salvation, Security, Shame, Sin, Sovereignty, Understanding, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. When have you desperately wanted to be able to “start over again” in a conversation or relationship with another person?
- 2. How do you explain the fact that people with children often have a strong desire for their children to have a better life than they have had themselves?

Explore It

- 3. Having just announced His judgment on Israel’s pride, how did God, through Isaiah, comfort His people? (44:1-2)
- 4. What images from nature illustrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on humankind? (44:3-4)
- * 5. In the bright future prophesied by Isaiah, how will people feel about being identified as the people of God? (44:5)
- * 6. How does God compare with other gods that people worship? (44:6)
- 7. What challenge from the living God are the idols unable to answer? (44:7)
- 8. What is the role of God’s people in relation to the sovereignty of God? (44:8)
- 9. Despite how they might initially be received, what will be brought to light about those who manufacture idols? (44:9-11)
- 10. What is a telltale sign that the blacksmith who fashions an idol is no different from anyone else? (44:12)
- 11. Where does the carpenter get the model and the materials for making false gods? (44:13-14)
- 12. What is particularly ironic to God about the fact that people use wood for idol-making? (44:15-19)
- * 13. What is the state of the soul of the person who makes his or her own idol and then worships it? (44:20)
- 14. What did God do on Israel’s behalf (even though they didn’t deserve it) that Isaiah said should motivate Israel to return to God? (44:21-22)
- 15. What did Isaiah envision as appropriate praise for what God had done for Israel? (44:23)

Get It

- 16. How would you explain our dependence on God for both mortal and eternal life?
- 17. What do we need in order to flourish spiritually?
- 18. Why are we sometimes hesitant to let others know that we belong to God?
- * 19. In what respects is God in a totally different category from the images and things that people worship?
- * 20. Referring to this passage, about what great truth are believers called to tell others?

Apply It

- 21. How can you and your Christian friends encourage one another to let unbelievers know about the unique saving power of God?
- * 22. How can you identify and renounce the idols (false gods) that you might be tempted to make for yourself?

Jerusalem to Be Inhabited - Isaiah 44:24-45:25

Topics: Anger, Creation, Darkness, Earth, Foolishness, Hiding, Honor, Ignorance, Integrity, Name, Power, Prophecy, Quarrels, Questions, Redemption, Repentance, Restoration, Righteousness, Salvation, Secret, Shame, Sovereignty, Strength, Swearing, Wealth, Wisdom, Words, Work, Worship

Open It

1. What are some of the ways that political rulers demonstrate their power and influence?
- * 2. When was the last time you were unexpectedly able to provide a surprising solution to a problem?

Explore It

- * 3. How did God describe Himself with regard to the smallest and largest things? (44:24)
4. How does God reveal truth and falsehood through people? (44:25-26)
5. How does Isaiah illustrate God's sovereignty over nature and humankind? (44:27-28)
6. Whom did God "anoint" to subdue nations? (45:1)
7. How does Isaiah's prophecy portray the power that God would give to Cyrus? (45:2)
- * 8. For whose sake did God choose to honor a pagan king who didn't honor Him? (45:4)
9. How would the supremacy of Cyrus ultimately give glory to God? (45:5-7)
10. What imagery is used to communicate the generosity of God's righteousness and salvation? (45:8)
11. To what does Isaiah liken the foolishness of questioning God? (45:9-10)
12. How did God make it clear that Cyrus was merely a tool in His hands? (45:11-13)
13. What of the might and wealth of nations in Isaiah's time would revert to Cyrus of Persia? (45:14)
- * 14. How did God's purposes exceed even what Israel was praying for? (45:15-17)
15. Why did God create the earth and tell people to seek Him? (45:18-19)
16. In Isaiah's day, to what gods did people pray? (45:20-21)
17. How will the future be different for people who turn to Him versus people who rage against Him? (45:22-25)

Get It

18. What is surprising to you about the way God was going to use the pagan king, Cyrus of Persia?
- * 19. What do some of the illustrations in this passage reveal about the scope of God's power?
20. What is amazing to you about the fact that, in the end, all of the people of the earth will recognize the sovereignty of God?
21. Why do you think one of God's central messages to us is that He is the only source of salvation?
22. How does God go about exposing people who falsely claim to speak for Him?
23. Through what different sources was God able both to bless and discipline His people?
24. Why do you think human beings are sometimes tempted to argue with God?
25. Why do you find it hard or easy to remember that God is Lord of all circumstances?
- * 26. What does it mean to you to be found righteous in the Lord?

Apply It

- * 27. Knowing that the powers of this earth are at God's disposal, how can you pray specifically for one of the troubled spots in the world today?
28. What prayer can you commit to pray each day for the next two weeks for someone you know who is angry at God?

Gods of Babylon - Isaiah 46:1-13

Topics: Answers, Burdens, Comparisons, Equality, Idolatry, Listening, Plans, Purpose, Rebellion, Remembering, Righteousness, Salvation, Slavery, Stubbornness, Worship

Open It

- * 1. When do you recall being carried around as a child?
- 2. Why do you think we tend to compare ourselves with other people?

Explore It

- 3. What observations does Isaiah make about Bel and Nebo, the gods of the conquering Babylonians? (46:1-2)
- 4. In what ways does the text use the word “burden”? (46:1-2)
- * 5. In contrast to gods that must be carried, what relationship did Jehovah have with Israel? (46:3-4)
- * 6. What do we know about the process of setting up an idol which is totally unlike God? (46:5-7)
- 7. Who did Isaiah intend to take these words about the uniqueness of God to heart? (46:8)
- * 8. In what respects does God show Himself to be totally different from idols? (46:9-10)
- 9. How was the threat from the east part of God’s purpose? (46:11)
- 10. What assurance is given concerning God’s words and plans? (46:11)
- 11. What heart attitude was God addressing through this prophecy of Isaiah? (46:12)
- 12. What does God say about His righteousness? (46:13)

Get It

- 13. What do you think makes people worship something of their own creation?
- * 14. What does it mean to be carried by God?
- 15. How long has God’s purpose for humankind been established?
- * 16. How does God compare to the things that our contemporary world worships?
- 17. What difference can it make to our faith that God’s righteousness is near?
- 18. How can we resist the temptation to give time and energy to gods of our own design?

Apply It

- * 19. In what current difficulty could you be strengthened by reminding yourself that God will carry you?
- 20. For what person or persons will you pray this week that they will realize that God’s salvation is near?

The Fall of Babylon - Isaiah 47:1-15

Topics: Advice, Anger, Burdens, Darkness, Evil, Holiness, Knowledge, Mercy, Mourning, Name, Occult, Poor, Punishment, Redemption, Revenge, Secret, Security, Shame, Silence, Success, Trust, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What experience have you had that you thought, or wished, would go on forever?
- 2. As a child, how did you feel about the person who would put a bully in his place?

Explore It

- 3. In Isaiah's prophecy, what happens to the wealthy and refined "Virgin Daughter of Babylon"? (47:1-3)
- * 4. Who is, and will be, the redeemer of Israel? (47:4)
- 5. What ultimate fate did God predict for the Babylonian empire? (47:5)
- 6. How did Babylon treat God's people when He "gave them into your hand"? (47:8)
- * 7. From what calamities did Babylon consider herself exempt? (47:8)
- 8. What would the sorceries and spells of Babylon be unable to prevent? (47:9)
- * 9. What mistaken impressions did Babylon have about her accountability? (47:10)
- 10. What did Isaiah predict would happen to Babylon unexpectedly? (47:11)
- 11. What comprised Babylon's religion? (47:12)
- 12. Of what were the gods and priests of Babylon completely incapable? (47:13-15)

Get It

- * 13. How would you respond to a prophecy about the fall of a nation that had not even risen to greatness?
- 14. Why do some consider themselves immune from certain troubles?
- 15. Why might it be unwise to show no mercy whenever we are in a position of superior strength?
- 16. What superstitious rituals are popularly thought to ward off harm?
- 17. What sorts of deeds do people do when they think no one is watching?
- * 18. How can the possession of a lot of knowledge be misleading?
- 19. What sorts of calamities cannot be avoided by human wisdom or wealth?

Apply It

- * 20. What steps can you take to discover whether there are any hardships to which you consider yourself immune?
- 21. What can serve as a concrete reminder for you this coming week that God sees everything you do?

Stubborn Israel - Isaiah 48:1-22

Topics: Anger, Call, Children, Creation, Delay, Depend, Direction, Evil, Glory, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Hypocrisy, Idolatry, Joy, Listening, Name, New Covenant, Peace, Praise, Prophecy, Purpose, Rebellion, Redemption, Righteousness, Running, Sovereignty, Stubbornness, Success, Swearing, Teaching, Testing, Truth, Understanding

Open It

1. What are the various possible motivations for us to do the right thing?
- * 2. Who is the best teacher you have known?

Explore It

- * 3. What inconsistencies did God see in the people of Judah? (48:1-2)
4. Why did God give plenty of notice but then act suddenly with respect to Judah? (48:3-5)
5. What did God ask Judah to admit? (48:6)
6. How did God characterize what He planned to do “from now on”? (48:6)
7. What was God preventing by doing something completely new? (48:7)
8. What negative characteristics did God see in Judah? (48:8)
- * 9. What was God’s reason for delaying His wrath against Judah? (48:9)
10. For whose sake did God test Judah with afflictions? (48:10-11)
11. What did God announce about His own nature in this prophecy of Isaiah? (48:12-13)
12. What did Isaiah prophesy that God’s “chosen ally” would accomplish? (48:14-15)
13. What did God announce, and invite people to hear, from a posture of nearness? (48:16)
- * 14. What did God pledge to do for His people? (48:17)
15. If Israel had heeded God’s Word from the beginning, what blessings would have been theirs? (48:18-19)
16. What joyful announcement did Isaiah predict for the people who would be taken captive by Babylon? (48:20-21)
17. What truth did God pronounce concerning the wicked? (48:22)

Get It

18. Why did the people of Judah and Jerusalem take it for granted that they had the Lord’s favor?
- * 19. When we are completely undeserving of God’s mercy, why might He act in our behalf anyway?
20. When we face problems and hardships, what are the wisest conclusions we can make about God’s purposes?
21. What did God plan to do when He was finished with Babylon and the time came to judge that nation?
22. What does God mean when He says He is “the first and the last”?
- * 23. Why do you think God is interested in providing guidance and direction for our lives?
24. What great blessings accompany those who obey God’s commands?
25. Of what blessings do evil people deprive themselves?

Apply It

- * 26. In what area of need will you claim God’s promise to direct you this coming week?
27. How can you respond the next time you hear about how individual believers or the church has failed God?

The Servant of the Lord - Isaiah 49:1-26

Topics: Abundance, Answers, Call, Children, Comfort, Comparisons, Compassion, Covenant, Creation, Darkness, Earth, Faithfulness, Forget, Forsake, Freedom, Glory, Guidance, Heaven, Help, Hiding, Holiness, Honor, Humility, Joy, Knowledge, Light, Listening, Name, Opposition, Oppressed, People, Power, Protection, Purpose, Redemption, Rejection, Restoration, Rewards, Salvation, Security, Serving, Strength, Witnessing, Work, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What do people do to remember loved ones who are far away?
- 2. When have your efforts to be kind to another person been misunderstood?

Explore It

- 3. When did God place His call on His Servant, the Messiah? (49:1)
- 4. To what implement of hunting or war was Messiah compared? (49:2)
- * 5. What did God promise to show through His Servant? (49:3)
- 6. Although His work might have seemed to be in vain, what would vindicate Messiah? (49:4)
- * 7. What was God's greater purpose in sending Messiah, besides bringing Israel back to Himself? (49:5-6)
- 8. How would Messiah be regarded initially by the people of Israel? (49:7)
- 9. What promise did God make concerning the honor that His Servant deserved? (49:7)
- 10. How did God intend to use the Messiah, in His own time? (49:8-9)
- 11. How does Isaiah's prophecy describe the calling out of the people of God? (49:9-12)
- 12. Compared to the response God expected, how did the people of God express their situation? (49:13-14)
- * 13. With what images did God illustrate the depth of His love? (49:15-16)
- 14. What was God's promise to the land with regard to the people exiled from it? (49:17-18)
- 15. What happy circumstance would surprise the people who saw the desolation of God's judgment? (49:19-21)
- 16. How did God promise that the Gentiles, who once oppressed Israel, would treat them in the future? (49:22)
- 17. What would the people of God know when the powerful of other nations served them? (49:23)
- 18. What seemed impossible to Israel and Judah when Isaiah was prophesying? (49:24)
- 19. What would be understood as a result of God's dealings with Israel's oppressors? (49:25-26)

Get It

- * 20. What are some evidences from this prophetic passage that God understands how we feel in the middle of our troubles?
- 21. In what way is this passage a message of restoration?
- 22. How does God intend to reverse the roles of the oppressed and the oppressor?
- 23. What factors (implied in this passage) might have made it difficult for the people of Isaiah's day to have hope for the future?
- 24. What would be most difficult for God's people to imagine when their land was largely deserted and their people in exile?
- * 25. How did the prophet Isaiah reveal that God is Lord of the whole earth?
- 26. To what extent did Isaiah say that God's compassion and comfort would be dependent on the deeds or attitudes of people?

Apply It

- 27. How can you refresh the attitude of your thanks and praise to God this week for including you in His plan of salvation?

* 28. In what particular area of insecurity can you remind yourself of God's great love for you?

Israel's Sin and Salvation - Isaiah 50:1-51:16

Topics: Abundance, Accountability, Accusation, Blessing, Call, Comfort, Compassion, Creation, Death, Determination, Earth, Fear, Forget, Freedom, Heaven, Help, History, Hope, Instructions, Joy, Justice, Law, Light, Listening, Miracles, Name, Obedience, Oppressed, People, Protection, Punishment, Rebellion, Right, Righteousness, Salvation, Sorrow, Sovereignty, Strength, Submission, Teaching, Thankfulness, Trust, Waiting, Words

Open It

- * 1. What is the appeal of the many so-called self-help techniques?
- 2. What does a person need in order to endure unfair treatment patiently or gracefully?

Explore It

- 3. What sorts of evidence did God challenge Israel to produce to prove that He was the cause of their defeat and captivity? (50:1)
- * 4. What response did Israel give when God came to them and called them? (50:2)
- 5. What were the rhetorical questions to which Israel would have to have answered no? (50:2)
- 6. What examples from nature did God use to illustrate the extent of His power? (50:2-3)
- 7. What characterized the tongue (therefore the words) of God's Chosen One? (50:4)
- 8. What did God's Messiah refuse to do, unlike the people of Israel? (50:5)
- 9. In obeying God, what suffering would the Messiah have to endure? (50:6)
- * 10. How was the Sovereign Lord a powerful source of determination and confidence? (50:7-8)
- 11. How did the power of Messiah's accusers compare with the power of God on His side? (50:9)
- * 12. What does God want us to do whenever when we find ourselves "walking in the dark" (unsure of what to do next)? (50:10)
- 13. What will become of those who insist on lighting their own way? (50:11)
- 14. How should it boost our faith to look back at the lives of believers how came before us? (51:1-2)
- 15. How did Isaiah depict the new Jerusalem to come? (51:3)
- 16. What good gifts did God promise to His people? (51:4-6)
- 17. How should the people of God respond to threats and insults? (51:7-8)
- 18. What great deeds did Isaiah mention when calling upon the Lord for help? (51:9-10)
- 19. What qualities will characterize God's people at Christ's coming? (51:11)
- 20. How were the fears of Israel turned upside down when Isaiah confronted them? (51:12-13)
- 21. If God can command the sea, what can He do for the fearful prisoner? (51:14-15)
- 22. Who is the God who acts in our lives? (51:16)

Get It

- 23. What are some of the indications of God's tenderness in this prophecy of Isaiah?
- 24. What specific benefit can we find in the words of Jesus, the Messiah?
- 25. How is God's Servant, the Messiah, significantly different from the rest of humankind in His responsiveness to God?
- 26. What is unique in your mind about the concept of a suffering Messiah?
- * 27. Even when He rebukes us, what will God do for us if we ask Him?
- * 28. When we encounter dark places in our lives, how does God's provision compare with our own attempts to light our way?
- 29. Who are some of the models, past and present, for believers to follow?
- 30. For what transformations of the earth do we hope?
- 31. What do believers have available to them when they confront enemies?

Apply It

- * 32. What constructive way can you find to deal with a "dark" circumstance or confusing problem in

your life?

33. In what current perplexing circumstance can you ask God for wisdom?

The Cup of the Lord's Wrath - Isaiah 51:17-52:12

Topics: Anger, Beauty, Blasphemy, Comfort, Freedom, Good News, Guidance, Holiness, Joy, Leadership, Oppressed, Peace, Punishment, Purity, Redemption, Salvation, Serving, Sovereignty, Strength, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. What is the best news you have received recently?
- 2. What, for you, are meaningful symbols of hope?

Explore It

- * 3. How did Isaiah describe the plight of God's people because of their disobedience? (51:17-20)
- 4. What great reversal between Israel and her enemies was prophesied by Isaiah? (51:21-23)
- 5. To what did Isaiah call the city of Jerusalem? (52:1-2)
- 6. How did Isaiah communicate the fact that God did not "benefit" from the punishment His people? (52:3-5)
- * 7. How did Isaiah say the news of God's deliverance would be greeted in Israel? (52:6-9)
- 8. How does God regard those who communicate His Good News? (52:7)
- 9. What promise did God make to the watchmen who awaited His deliverance? (52:8)
- * 10. Who will know about the salvation of the Lord when He comforts His people? (52:10)
- 11. What did God require from His servants who were to leave Persia? (52:11)
- 12. What did God promise to His people who would be allowed to leave Persia? (52:12)

Get It

- * 13. What happens when there is no godly leadership for God's people?
- 14. What can we learn about God by knowing that He did not "sell" His people for gain?
- * 15. What does God inspire in us when He helps us?
- 16. In what way is the person blessed who proclaims God's Good News?
- 17. Why is it not necessary for God's people to be afraid?

Apply It

- 18. For which leaders of God's Church will you commit yourself to pray throughout the coming week?
- * 19. How can you regain your hope when God's enemies scoff at you and other believers?

Suffering and Glory of the Servant - Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Topics: Appearance, Beauty, Believe, Death, Disobedience, God's Will, Greatness, Healing, Hiding, Innocence, Judgment, Knowledge, Light, Oppressed, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Punishment, Redemption, Rejection, Revelation, Righteousness, Satisfaction, Silence, Sin, Sorrow, Soul, Strength, Suffering, Understanding, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of human suffering are particularly abhorrent and difficult for you to watch?
- 2. What personal experience can you relate about the suffering of the innocent?

Explore It

- 3. How did God, through Isaiah's prophecy, characterize the actions of the coming Servant? (52:13)
- 4. What opposite reactions would people have to the Messiah before and after His suffering? (52:14-15)
- * 5. What was unbelievable about the message of God's chosen deliverance? (53:1-3)
- 6. What did Isaiah prophesy about the attractiveness of God's Servant? (53:2-3)
- 7. What would actually be happening when people were assuming that God was punishing Jesus? (53:4)
- * 8. What would the wounds of the Messiah accomplish for all believers? (53:5)
- 9. In what way did Isaiah illustrate people's sinfulness? (53:6)
- 10. What has God done with the sin of each human being? (53:6)
- * 11. How did Isaiah say that the Messiah would respond to mistreatment and suffering? (53:7)
- 12. What earthly heritage would remain for the Messiah? (53:8)
- 13. In what way would the Messiah's death not fit the deeds of His life? (53:9)
- 14. What was God's will in relation to the life of His Son? (53:10)
- 15. What "satisfaction" did God promise would follow the suffering of the Messiah? (53:11)
- 16. Why did Isaiah say that the Messiah would be exalted and "divide the spoils"? (53:12)

Get It

- 17. Why do you think some people tend to despise those who suffer?
- 18. How important is it to be attractive in order to be held in high regard?
- 19. What are the different ways in which a person might attract a following?
- 20. How is the imagery in God's prophecy of the mission of the Messiah full of meaning?
- 21. Why was it necessary for a righteous servant to be the bearer of sins?
- * 22. What great spiritual treasures were gained for us by the death of Jesus Christ?
- * 23. What sufferings of Jesus (such as those described in Luke 23:1-56) were foretold in Isaiah 53?

Apply It

- * 24. What one goal for your relationship with God can you work on in the coming weeks by contemplating His sacrifice for you?
- 25. How can you plan to answer the next person who questions you about Jesus' humiliation and suffering?

The Future Glory of Zion - Isaiah 54:1-17

Topics: Abandon, Accusation, Anger, Call, Children, Compassion, Covenant, Earth, Fear, Forget, History, Husbands, Joy, Kindness, Love, Name, Peace, Punishment, Redemption, Rejection, Restoration, Righteousness, Security, Shame, Swearing, Teaching, Victory, Youth

Open It

1. What is the longest “minute” you’ve ever experienced?
- * 2. How do you think philosophies of child rearing and discipline have changed since you were a child?

Explore It

- * 3. What great misfortune for women of Isaiah’s day did he compare with Israel’s desolation? (54:1)
4. What did Isaiah predict for Israel in terms of numbers and prosperity? (54:2-3)
5. What did God promise concerning the shame that Israel brought on herself? (54:4)
6. What human relationship did Isaiah compare to the relationship between God and His chosen people? (54:5)
7. What comparison did God use to express His treatment of Israel? (54:6-8)
- * 8. What was the duration of God’s displeasure relative to His compassion? (54:8)
9. To what period in history did God compare the day that Isaiah prophesied? (54:9)
- * 10. What covenant did God proclaim to be unshakable? (54:10)
11. What visual picture did Isaiah paint of the city of Jerusalem before and after God’s salvation? (54:11-12)
12. What blessings would characterize the children of those who experienced God’s grace? (54:13)
13. From what curses would Jerusalem be delivered in the day Isaiah foresaw? (54:14-15)
14. What did Isaiah reveal about the “destroyer,” whether it be the destroyer of Israel or of Israel’s enemies? (54:16-17)
15. How did God plan to vindicate His people? (54:17)

Get It

- * 16. Although Israel brought shame on herself, what did God propose to do about it?
17. With the hindsight of today, why do you suppose God contrasted a “moment” of suffering with an “everlasting” kindness?
18. In what sense is it reassuring to know that God is sovereign over those who attack us?
- * 19. How does God view the “sins of our youth” once we have repented of them?
20. How has the compassionate nature of God been revealed to you in the past?

Apply It

21. The next time you are under attack, how can you remember God’s faithfulness and control of all the circumstances?
- * 22. How can you be alert to the ways God is teaching you in the coming week?

Invitation to the Thirsty - Isaiah 55:1-13

Topics: Abundance, Accomplishments, Comparisons, Covenant, Earth, Evil, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Greatness, Heaven, Invitation, Joy, Leadership, Life, Listening, Love, Mercy, Money, Peace, Poor, Promises, Purpose, Repentance, Satisfaction, Soul, Thinking, Witnessing, Words

Open It

- * 1. What was the most elaborate dinner or reception you've ever attended?
- 2. What experience comes to your mind when you think about joyful singing?

Explore It

- 3. Whom does God invite to come eat and drink in abundance? (55:1)
- * 4. What does God ask in return for the abundant provisions He makes? (55:1)
- 5. What question does God pose with regard to money and labor? (55:2)
- 6. Why does God invite us to listen and to come to Him? (55:3)
- 7. What covenant does God offer? (55:3-4)
- 8. What honor does God promise to bestow on Israel? (55:5)
- 9. What advice does this prophecy offer with respect to seeking God? (55:6)
- * 10. If the evil person turns to God, what will God do for him or her? (55:7)
- * 11. How does God contrast His thoughts and ways with ours? (55:8-9)
- 12. How is the message of God's Word like snow and rain? (55:10-11)
- 13. What is the effect of God's Word? (55:11)
- 14. How does Isaiah describe the overwhelming joy of God's ransomed people? (55:12)
- 15. What change in the nature of the vegetation will be like the accomplishment of God's purpose? (55:13)

Get It

- 16. What is appealing about God's invitation through Isaiah?
- 17. How do you explain the nations' response to the people in whom God has worked?
- 18. When is the time to call on the Lord?
- * 19. When is it helpful to remind ourselves that God's ways are not our ways?
- * 20. Why is it good for believers to think about what life will be like when God's purposes are accomplished?
- 21. What does it mean to you to be spiritually thirsty?

Apply It

- 22. How can you remind yourself of the sure effectiveness of God's Word this coming week?
- 23. When will you take time to notice nature returning praise to God?
- * 24. Concerning what particular problem will you pray for God's perspective?

Salvation for the Contrite - Isaiah 56:1-57:21

Topics: Acceptance, Adoption, Adultery, Ambassadors, Anger, Blessing, Blindness, Call, Children, Comfort, Complaining, Covenant, Death, Drinking, Evil, Fear, Greed, Guidance, Healing, Help, Holiness, Hopelessness, Humility, Idolatry, Joy, Justice, Knowledge, Love, Lust, Lying, Mourning, Name, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Punishment, Rebellion, Remembering, Renewal, Rest, Right, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Serving, Silence, Sin, Spiritual Rebirth, Strength, Understanding, Worship

Open It

1. What experience have you had with helping a foreigner adjust to American life?
- * 2. How does it feel when someone you love is clinging to a destructive habit or way of life?

Explore It

3. Why does God encourage us to maintain justice and do what is right? (56:1)
4. What two examples illustrate what God means by “doing what is right”? (56:2)
- * 5. What does God declare about the availability of His kingdom? (56:3)
6. What characterizes the eunuchs in Isaiah’s illustration? (56:4-6)
7. What characterizes the foreigners about whom Isaiah spoke? (56:6-7)
8. What was unique about the house of God as opposed to the temples of pagan gods? (56:7)
9. How did Isaiah characterize Israel’s watchmen? (56:10-12)
10. What did Isaiah say that people failed to understand when the righteous were perishing? (57:1-2)
11. What sins did God hold against Israel that prevented Him from relenting from His anger? (57:3-6)
12. Where did Israel seek help instead of turning to the Lord? (57:7-9)
13. What did Israel refuse to say in spite of her weariness with the pursuit of sin? (57:10)
14. How had Israel come to fear other gods more than the Lord? (57:11)
15. To what powerless source of help would God abandon Israel? (57:12-13)
16. How did God say the people who turned to Him would be rewarded? (57:13)
- * 17. What does God tell us about Himself through Isaiah the prophet? (57:15-16)
- * 18. In spite of their stubbornness, what decision did God make with respect to His people ? (57:17-19)
19. What truth did God reveal concerning the wicked? (57:20-21)

Get It

20. How do God’s commandments demonstrate His love and concern for us?
- * 21. What is the good news for God-fearing people outside the hereditary line of Israel?
22. How did the sins of Israel’s “blind watchmen” affect the people of Israel?
23. What do you think is one reason why God might allow the death of a righteous person?
24. What is communicated in the names God calls the people of Israel who turned to idolatrous practices?
25. What is God able to do that our own pointless remedies cannot?
- * 26. What is unique about where God chooses to “live”?
27. What undeserved action of God has changed your mourning into praise?

Apply It

- * 28. What praise can you offer to God for His inclusion of all the nations in His plan of salvation?
29. In what area of your life can you put aside your own solutions and ask God to show you His answer?

Fasting, Sin, Confession, and Redemption - Isaiah 58:1-59:21

Topics: Arguments, Armor, Blindness, Burdens, Children, Covenant, Darkness, Evil, Fasting, Glory, Guidance, Guilt, Healing, Help, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Honor, Humility, Hypocrisy, Injustice, Integrity, Joy, Justice, Law, Light, Lying, Murder, Needs, Oppressed, Peace, Poor, Power, Prophecy, Quarrels, Rebellion, Repentance, Restoration, Revenge, Right, Righteousness, Salvation, Satisfaction, Separation, Sin, Strength, Truth, Words, Worship

Open It

1. How would you characterize someone you have known who exhibits inner peace?
2. If you had a choice, would you rather renovate an old house or build a new one? Why?
- * 3. What are some habits or rituals you go through every morning to get ready for the day?

Explore It

4. What was the outward appearance of rebellious Israel? (58:2)
5. Why did the people of Israel think they deserved God's attention? (58:3)
6. What fault in the fasting of God's people prevented God from answering their prayers? (58:3-5)
7. What kind of fast did God want His people to practice? (58:6)
- * 8. What blessings were promised to the righteous who had compassion on the poor? (58:7-8)
9. What kinds of activities characterized the people God would guide and bless? (58:9-11)
10. What did God promise to empower His people to do? (58:12)
11. What did the people need to do in order to experience God's joy? (58:13-14)
- * 12. What was the cause of Israel's separation from God? (59:1-2)
13. What specific sins did God charge against His people? (59:3-4)
14. How were the people of Israel compared to spiders and snakes? (59:5-6)
15. What prevented God's sinful people from knowing His peace? (59:7-8)
16. To what did Isaiah liken the people in their separation from God? (59:9-11)
17. What confession did Isaiah make on behalf of Israel? (59:12-13)
18. What, according to Isaiah, was missing from God's people? (59:14-15)
- * 19. What did God do when he found no righteousness among His people? (59:16-17)
20. What did Isaiah predict God would do would inspire fear of the Lord? (59:18-19)
21. To whom did God promise to come? (59:20)
22. What is the nature of God's covenant? (59:21)

Get It

23. Why might the promise that they would rebuild Jerusalem be more precious to the people of Israel than if He told them they would create a new city?
- * 24. How does God view religious observances that have no basis in daily behavior?
25. How do we benefit when we minister to others?
26. What might constitute "doing as you please" on the Sabbath, and why would God oppose it?
27. What is the greatest and most lasting source of joy for the Christian?
- * 28. How does sin separate us from God?
29. Why do you think that people who rebel against God have no peace?
30. What does it mean to you to "spend yourselves in behalf of the poor"?
31. What situations have you known in which moral people ("whoever shuns evil") are persecuted?
32. What do you find especially meaningful about each of the gifts God has given in His covenant with His people?

Apply It

33. In what new and concrete way can you honor each Sabbath of the coming month?
34. What human relationship or spiritual discipline would you like to rebuild with God's help?

* 35. What can you do for needy people that will illustrate the sincerity of your fasting or other religious observances?

The Glory of Zion - Isaiah 60:1-22

Topics: Abundance, Acceptance, Anger, Blessing, Compassion, Darkness, Glory, Hatred, Holiness, Honor, Joy, Light, Peace, Praise, Pride, Promises, Redemption, Reputation, Restoration, Righteousness, Salvation, Serving, Sorrow, Timing, Victory, Weaknesses, Wealth, Worship

Open It

- * 1. When have you had to cope with a circumstance that left you suddenly in total darkness?
- 2. What are some of the things people say and do to honor one another?

Explore It

- * 3. How does Isaiah's prophecy contrast the spiritual condition of the earth with that of God's redeemed people? (60:1-3)
- 4. What emotions will accompany the restoration and blessing of God's people? (60:4-6)
- 5. In this prophecy, what nations and their resources are being brought as tribute to God? (60:6-9)
- 6. How did Isaiah say that the roles would be reversed with the foreign kings who had formerly oppressed Israel? (60:10)
- 7. When His anger was past, what did God bestow on His people? (60:10)
- 8. What indications of abundance and honor are predicted for Israel? (60:11)
- 9. What did Isaiah say would happen to nations that refused to serve Israel? (60:12)
- 10. How will God's temple reflect His new relationship with His people? (60:13)
- 11. How will Israel's former oppressors refer to Jerusalem? (60:14)
- 12. What great contrast is made concerning Israel's current and future status? (60:15)
- * 13. When God's people received honor from other nations, what would His people know about God? (60:16)
- 14. With what illustrations did Isaiah show that God would replace the ordinary things with the best? (60:17)
- 15. What former conditions would be replaced with Salvation and Praise? (60:18)
- * 16. What will be the light in the City of God? (60:19-20)
- 17. What did Isaiah say would characterize God's people? (60:21)
- 18. What is God's perspective on the timing for accomplishing His purposes? (60:22)

Get It

- 19. What would it take for "little Israel" to attain all the power and wealth described in Isaiah's prophecy?
- * 20. What attribute of God's character allowed Him to reverse the fortunes of Israel?
- 21. In what sense would you say thick darkness covers our world today?
- * 22. Why is it appropriate to portray God's glory in terms of light?
- 23. Why do people bring gifts to rich and powerful rulers?
- 24. Why is it encouraging for you to know that God can and does honor those who are despised in the world?
- 25. To what extent would the prophecy of "no violence, ruin, or destruction" be good news for today?
- 26. What difference does it make to you to know that you were "planted" by God?

Apply It

- * 27. In what way could you serve as light to your darkened world in the next few days?
- 28. For whom do you need to ask God to give you His compassion?

The Year of the Lord's Favor - Isaiah 61:1-11

Topics: Beauty, Blessing, Children, Comfort, Covenant, Darkness, Despair, Faithfulness, Freedom, Good News, Glory, Grief, Growth, Holy Spirit, Joy, Justice, Ministry, Mourning, Poor, Praise, Renewal, Restoration, Revenge, Rewards, Righteousness, Salvation, Shame, Sin, Wealth

Open It

1. What is your favorite “rags to riches” story?
- * 2. What are some of the reasons we call people blessed or fortunate?

Explore It

- * 3. What are the purposes for which God's Anointed was sent into the world? (61:1-3)
4. What adornments did Isaiah say God's people would receive in exchange for “ashes,” “mourning,” and “a spirit of despair”? (61:3)
5. Why did God “plant” His people with great honor? (61:3)
6. What promise did God make concerning the cities that had been destroyed by invaders? (61:4)
7. How would the work force of Israel reflect its power and status? (61:5)
- * 8. Besides riches, what honor did Isaiah say God would bestow on all His people? (61:6)
9. How is the joy of God's redeemed people contrasted with their present condition? (61:7)
10. What does God love? (61:8)
11. What does God hate? (61:8)
- * 12. What will the whole world understand about God's people? (61:9)
13. How did Isaiah illustrate the honor and intimacy with which God will relate to His people? (61:10)
14. What did Isaiah portray as sprouting like seeds out of soil? (61:11)

Get It

- * 15. How would you characterize the sorts of people for whom the Messiah came?
16. How do you see the qualities of the Messiah listed in Isaiah 61 illustrated in the life of Jesus?
17. Why is blessing His people an effective way for God to display His splendor?
18. What would it signal about your status with the giver if you were to inherit a “double portion” in his or her will?
- * 19. Why is it important to God that all nations acknowledge Him?

Apply It

- * 20. In light of God's attitudes and purposes, how do you plan to react to those around you this week who are grieving or despairing?
21. What creative idea could you suggest to leaders in your Sunday School or church for giving special thanks to God for His generous blessings?

Zion's New Name - Isaiah 62:1-12

Topics: Abandon, Enemies, Glory, Holiness, Joy, Marriage, Name, Persistence, Power, Praise, Preparation, Redemption, Rest, Rewards, Righteousness, Salvation, Silence, Swearing, Work

Open It

1. What is it like to visit a building, town, or city that has been abandoned for a long time?
- * 2. Why is it significant when someone changes his or her name?

Explore It

3. For what great event was Isaiah watching and praying on behalf of Israel? (62:1)
- * 4. When God exalted His people, what did Isaiah expect the Lord to give them? (62:2)
5. To what symbol of kingship did Isaiah compare Israel in the day of the Lord's favor? (62:3)
- * 6. How did Isaiah predict that a change of name would reflect a change of status for Israel? (62:4)
7. What status and emotions went along with marriage for a young woman of Isaiah's time? (62:5)
8. Who did Isaiah feel should have no rest until Jerusalem was restored and established? (62:6-7)
9. What did God swear that He would never allow to happen again? (62:8)
10. What will peace and prosperity allow God's people to do with their crops? (62:9)
- * 11. What is the call of the prophet to the people as they wait for the Day of the Lord? (62:10)
12. What names did Isaiah prophesy would be used in reference to God's people in Jerusalem? (62:12)

Get It

13. How did Isaiah express the importance of praying continually?
- * 14. Why do you think God will give His people a new name?
15. What does it mean to watch for the coming of Christ?
- * 16. What does it mean to "prepare the way of the Lord"?
17. What are the differences between a deserted city and a sought after city?

Apply It

- * 18. In what concrete way (no matter how small) can you "prepare the way of the Lord" in your family or community this week?
19. What circumstance in your life calls for persevering prayer at this time?

God's Day of Vengeance and Redemption - Isaiah 63:1-6

Topics: Alone, Anger, Death, Glory, Greatness, Help, Praise, Punishment, Questions, Redemption, Revenge, Righteousness, Salvation, Strength

Open It

1. Who comes to your mind when you think of a fearsome military leader?
- * 2. What difficult task have you had to do alone because you couldn't find anyone willing to help?

Explore It

3. How does Isaiah describe the figure seen approaching Jerusalem? (63:1)
- * 4. In Isaiah's vision, how does the Lord announce Himself? (63:1)
5. What question does the prophet ask of the approaching ruler? (63:2)
6. What did the stains on God's garments resemble? (63:2)
- * 7. What is the source of the red stain on the Lord's garments? (63:3)
8. What is clear about what the Lord has done to His enemies in the vision? (63:3)
9. What was the timing involved in the Lord's wrath? (63:4)
10. Who fought with the Lord to accomplish His purposes? (63:5)
11. What strength did the Lord draw upon to execute judgment? (63:5)
- * 12. What motivated the Lord to "trample" the nations and pour out their blood? (63:6)

Get It

- * 13. Why would God want His people to know about His terrible wrath against unbelievers?
- * 14. What would be both fearsome and encouraging to Israel about the red-robed figure?
15. What vivid images arise from the idea of God "trampling" the nations?
16. What is the redemption to which the Lord refers in the prophecy?
17. How is God's overwhelming power emphasized in Isaiah's vision?
18. How can the knowledge that God is serious about judging the world encourage us to live faithfully for Him?
19. What difference does it make to you that God is going to judge the world?

Apply It

20. How can you include the concept of God's justice the next time you tell someone about Him?
- * 21. How can you encourage someone you know who is currently overwhelmed or discouraged by injustice in the world?

Praise and Prayer - Isaiah 63:7-64:12

Topics: Angels, Anger, Awe, Call, Compassion, Enemies, Expectations, Fear, Glory, Grief, Guidance, Heart, Heaven, Hiding, History, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Kindness, Love, Mercy, Miracles, Name, Parents, People, Power, Praise, Prayer, Punishment, Questions, Rebellion, Redemption, Remembering, Rest, Right, Righteousness, Salvation, Silence, Sin, Sovereignty, Waiting, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. When have you had the experience of suffering emotionally because someone you loved was suffering?
- 2. Why do you think you are nostalgic about certain periods of time in your past?

Explore It

- 3. What did Isaiah tell about God's relationship to Israel? (63:7)
- * 4. What did God want from the people He chose to bless? (63:8)
- * 5. How did God respond to the distress of His people? (63:9)
- 6. How did God's people respond to His love and mercy? (63:10)
- 7. After Israel rebelled, how did God relate to them? (63:10)
- 8. To what era in their past did the people of Israel look with nostalgia? (63:11-14)
- 9. In contrast to the time of Moses when God's interventions were abundant, what were the people of Isaiah's day asking? (63:15)
- 10. Who did Isaiah acknowledge as even more important to the identity of Israel than their forefathers Abraham and Isaac? (63:16)
- 11. What was the current plight of God's people as described by Isaiah? (63:17-19)
- 12. For what did Isaiah and the people of his day long? (64:1-4)
- 13. After acknowledging what God could do, how did Isaiah take responsibility on behalf of Israel for their own plight? (64:5)
- * 14. How did Isaiah view the "righteous" deeds of the people, which they might have used to argue that they deserved God's favor? (64:6-7)
- 15. What craftsman's image did Isaiah use to express Israel's dependence on God? (63:8)
- 16. On what basis did Isaiah ask God to relent from His anger? (64:9-12)

Get It

- * 17. Why is God's own nature, rather than our own, our best appeal to Him for forgiveness and restoration?
- 18. How is it possible for us to grieve the Holy Spirit?
- 19. Why is it good for believers to rehearse the instances of God's faithfulness in the past?
- 20. What situations in your life or the world around you do you wish God would affect with miraculous power?
- 21. Why is it a privilege to be called by the Name of God?
- 22. What characterizes the people on whose behalf God acts?
- * 23. Why are our righteous acts ineffectual for reconciling us to God?

Apply It

- * 24. What visual reminder could you place where you will see it often to remind you to trust in God's righteousness and not your own?
- 25. What acts of kindness in your history can form the basis for thanksgiving and testimony this coming week?

Judgment and Salvation - Isaiah 65:1-16

Topics: Abundance, Blessing, Call, Children, Choices, Death, Disobedience, Evil, Forget, Forsake, Holiness, Idolatry, Invitation, Joy, Listening, Name, Punishment, Rest, Revelation, Sacrifice, Self-centeredness, Self-righteousness, Shame, Silence, Sin, Sorrow, Stubbornness, Swearing, Truth

Open It

1. When was the last time something good came to you that you weren't expecting?
- * 2. How does it feel to encounter people who think they are too good to associate with you?

Explore It

3. To whom did God say that He had revealed Himself? (65:1)
4. What characterized the people to whom God reached out? (65:2)
5. By what activities did Israel provoke God? (65:3-4)
- * 6. How did Israel evaluate their own morality in comparison to others? (65:5)
7. What did God promise He would do because of the people's sin? (65:6-7)
- * 8. How did God portray the fact that there was a remnant of faithful people even in an unfaithful nation? (65:8)
9. What did God promise to do on behalf of those who remained faithful? (65:9-10)
- * 10. What did God say He would do to those who forsook Him and consulted other gods? (65:11-12)
11. Why did God hold the people responsible for their disobedience? (65:12)
12. How did God contrast the future of His servants with that of the disobedient in Israel? (65:13-14)
13. How did the names of the obedient and disobedient reflect their standing with God? (65:15)
14. Who would be the source of all blessings and all promises when God redeemed His remnant? (65:16)

Get It

15. Why do you suppose Israel was not seeking God or asking for Him?
16. Why would God respond with such fury to the hypocritical idolaters?
17. In what way was God being just by not destroying the whole nation?
18. What is desirable about a religion that has prescribed rituals a person can observe in order to feel superior to others?
- * 19. Why is Christianity not a religion in which we can measure our righteousness and compare it to others?
- * 20. What is challenging about being willing to remain faithful and wait to see God reward His servants and punish the wicked?

Apply It

21. What spiritual habits can you begin to cultivate this month which will help you to remain faithful to God and wait for His reward?
- * 22. How can you avoid the temptations that may come your way in the coming weeks to feel superior to other Christians whom you don't like?

New Heavens and a New Earth - Isaiah 65:17-25

Topics: Age, Answers, Blessing, Call, Children, Creation, Earth, Gladness, Heaven, Heritage, Holiness, Joy, Peace, People, Pleasure, Remembering, Rewards, Satisfaction, Work

Open It

- * 1. What, in your opinion, enables a person to reach old age in contentment?
- 2. What was the most unforgettable weeping you've ever heard?
- 3. How long would you like to live?

Explore It

- * 4. What did God, speaking through Isaiah, promise to create? (65:17)
- * 5. What will happen to the memory of the past? (65:17-18)
 - 6. When God rejoices over Jerusalem, what will be eliminated from it forever? (65:19)
 - 7. How will premature death be redefined when God redeems His people? (65:20)
- * 8. In contrast to invasion and exile in Isaiah's time, what security will be enjoyed by the people God blesses? (65:21-23)
 - 9. How will the nature of child-bearing and work be different in the new earth? (65:23)
 - 10. When does God promise to hear and answer His people? (65:24)
 - 11. How will the relationships within the natural world reflect the peace of God's presence? (65:25)
 - 12. What will be totally absent from God's holy mountain? (65:25)

Get It

- * 13. How does this prophecy of Isaiah reinforce the idea that the blessings we receive are not dependent on us?
- * 14. What are some examples of sin's taint on our present world, necessitating the creation of a new earth?
 - 15. In what sense is violence an illustration of sin's far-reaching effects?
 - 16. How can a premature death indicate the sinfulness of this world?
 - 17. What sorts of experiences in life would we rather not remember?
 - 18. When has God provided for you before you even asked?

Apply It

- * 19. What promise can encourage you the next time you feel that you've worked or labored in vain?
- 20. In what concrete way can you bring God's peace to those around you in the next few days?

Judgment and Hope - Isaiah 66:1-24

Topics: Abundance, Actions, Anger, Answers, Call, Choices, Comfort, Creation, Death, Disobedience, Earth, Evil, Fear, Glory, Hate, Heritage, Honor, Humility, Idolatry, Joy, Judgment, Listening, Love, Murder, Name, Pain, Peace, Punishment, Purity, Rebellion, Sacrifice, Satisfaction, Shame, Soul, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What are some positive and negative images of the humble person?
- 2. What, for you, best illustrates fruitfulness and flourishing?

Explore It

- 3. Why is humankind presumptuous to think of building a house for God? (66:1-2)
- * 4. What kind of person does God esteem? (66:2)
- 5. How does God view the sacrifices made by arrogant people who “have chosen their own ways”? (66:3)
- * 6. What will happen to the person who chooses evil and ignores God’s voice? (66:4)
- 7. What does God have in store for those who exclude the humble worshiper? (66:5-6)
- 8. What image did God use to make the point that just because they didn’t see the immediate restoration of Jerusalem didn’t mean it wouldn’t happen? (66:7-11)
- 9. To what does God compare the tender care, nourishment, and comfort He will give His people? (66:12-13)
- 10. How will the reward of the wicked differ from the reward of the faithful? (66:14-16)
- 11. What is the ultimate punishment for not respecting God? (66:16)
- 12. What will become of people who worship false gods when God’s glory is revealed? (66:17-18)
- * 13. What inspiring imagery did Isaiah use to predict how the message of God’s glory would spread throughout the earth? (66:19-21)
- 14. How long will the new creation last? (66:22)
- 15. How does this prophecy express the promise of eternal life? (66:22-23)
- 16. What will become of the unrighteous and disobedient? (66:24)

Get It

- * 17. What does it mean to be humble and contrite in spirit?
- 18. Why does God hate hypocritical “religiosity”?
- 19. Why should we be hesitant to exclude people from the church of God based on our own standards?
- 20. What is meaningful to you in the parallel Isaiah draws between God and the mother of a young child?
- * 21. Who will see the glory of the Lord, and who will be subject to His judgment?

Apply It

- * 22. Who could you encourage with the truth that God’s purposes will be accomplished, no matter how long we feel we have to wait?
- 23. What practical steps can you take toward proclaiming God’s glory to others?

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The Call of Jeremiah - Jeremiah 1:1-19

Topics: Children, Creation, Evil, Fear, Forsake, Idolatry, Inadequacy, Instructions, Judgment, Preparation, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Words, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What does it feel like to bring news that you know will be unpopular?
- 2. When have you been chosen for a task for which you felt totally unqualified?

Explore It

- 3. How is Jeremiah identified at the beginning of the book bearing his name? (1:1)
- 4. How long did Jeremiah serve as a prophet to Judah? (1:2-3)
- * 5. How did God announce to Jeremiah that he was chosen as a prophet? (1:5)
- 6. What was Jeremiah's assessment of his own abilities in relation to God's call? (1:6)
- 7. How did God respond to Jeremiah's reservations? (1:7)
- 8. What promise did God make to Jeremiah from the outset of his ministry? (1:8)
- 9. By what action did God transform Jeremiah into His mouthpiece? (1:9)
- * 10. How did God describe Jeremiah's mission as prophet? (1:10)
- 11. By what symbol did God show Jeremiah that He was watching both Jeremiah and the people of Judah? (1:11-12)
- 12. What did the boiling pot tilting away from the north symbolize? (1:13-15)
- 13. What sins had caused God to execute judgment on Judah by means of the peoples from the north? (1:16)
- * 14. What consequences did God promise if Jeremiah did not say what He commanded? (1:17)
- 15. Although He predicted that the people would oppose Jeremiah, what did God promise His prophet? (1:19)

Get It

- * 16. What difference can it make to know that God knew us and set us apart even before our birth?
- 17. What reservations do you have about your ability to serve God according to His call?
- 18. When we tell people about Christ, whose words do we speak?
- 19. How did God make it clear to Jeremiah that there was nothing to fear?
- 20. Why do you think God sent Jeremiah to Judah, knowing that they would fight against him?
- * 21. What is the source of our strength to preach God's Word?

Apply It

- 22. When can you make a list of the ways you have seen God work in your life throughout your life?
- * 23. What regular practice of prayer, meditation, or Bible study can you use to enhance your fear of the Lord and put your fear of people into perspective?

Israel Forsakes God - Jeremiah 2:1-3:5

Topics: Accusation, Anger, Awe, Backslide, Bitterness, Challenge, Change, Children, Correction, Darkness, Devotion, Divorce, Evil, Faults, Follow, Forget, Forsake, Freedom, Fruit, Gifts, Glory, Guilt, Help, Holiness, Humiliation, Idolatry, Injustice, Innocence, Instructions, Judgment, Knowledge, Law, Love, Marriage, People, Poor, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Rebellion, Rejection, Remembering, Salvation, Self-righteousness, Serving, Shame, Sin, Slavery, Trust, Unfaithfulness

Open It

1. What is one of the more outrageous excuses or rationalizations you've heard recently?
- * 2. How would people be likely to view the heir to a large fortune who refused it and insisted on striking out on his or her own?

Explore It

- * 3. What did God, through Jeremiah, remind Judah about her history with God? (2:1-3)
4. What acts had God performed on behalf of His people only to be answered by disobedience? (2:6-7)
- * 5. What two sins did God say His people had committed? (2:13)
6. How was Israel being humiliated because of her disobedience? (2:14-16)
7. Why were terrible things happening to God's people? (2:17)
- * 8. What attitude did the people of Judah fail to have toward the Lord? (2:19)
9. What two pictures from the practice of farming did Jeremiah use to illustrate Judah's rebellion? (2:20-21)
10. To what animal behavior did God compare the behavior of Judah? (2:23-24)
11. To what did Jeremiah compare the disgrace of Israel? (2:26)
12. How did Israel respond to God's correction? (2:29-30)
13. To what did God compare Israel's abandonment of God? (2:31-32)
14. Besides spiritual prostitution, of what sin did God find Judah guilty? (2:33-34)
15. What behavior on the part of Israel made it unthinkable that God would return to her? (3:1-3)
16. How did Judah's talk contrast with her behavior? (3:4-5)

Get It

17. What should a history lesson on God's dealings with His people inspire in us?
- * 18. How is it possible for people to have no awe of God?
19. What options do men and women have once they are stained by sin?
- * 20. What was ironic about the way Judah cried out to God, or even blamed God, when they were in trouble?
21. Why does violence toward the powerless tend to follow when people abandon respect for God?
22. Why are people inclined to call upon God without changing their sinful ways?

Apply It

23. What meditation would help revive your awe of God in the coming week?
- * 24. To whom could you tell about God's love and provision in your life?

Unfaithful Israel - Jeremiah 3:6-4:4

Topics: Adultery, Anger, Backslide, Blessing, Children, Confession, Disobedience, Evil, Fear, Forget, Gifts, Glory, Guilt, Heart, Honor, Hypocrisy, Idolatry, Immorality, Instructions, Justice, Knowledge, Mercy, Parents, Questions, Rebellion, Reconciliation, Remembering, Repentance, Restoration, Righteousness, Running, Salvation, Shame, Stubbornness, Truth, Understanding, Unfaithfulness, Youth

Open It

- * 1. Why is it often difficult for us to admit that we're wrong?
- 2. What have you learned from other people's mistakes?
- 3. What is one thing you have learned from experience?

Explore It

- 4. What did God tell Jeremiah that Israel had done, with Judah looking on? (3:6-7)
- 5. Despite witnessing God's "divorcing" Israel, what did Judah go ahead and do? (3:8-9)
- 6. What was the nature of Judah's "return" to God? (3:10)
- 7. How did Israel and Judah compare in God's estimation? (3:11)
- * 8. What did God promise to Israel if they would acknowledge their guilt before Him? (3:12-13)
- 9. Whom did God promise to choose and bring to Jerusalem? (3:14)
- 10. What kind of leaders did God intend to give to His faithful remnant? (3:15)
- 11. What striking differences did God predict between the day of His salvation and Jeremiah's day? (3:17-18)
- * 12. What kind of relationship did God originally intend to have with Israel and Judah? (3:19)
- 13. To what did God compare Israel's unfaithfulness? (3:20)
- 14. What "cry" did Jeremiah foresee from the people of Israel? (3:21)
- 15. In Jeremiah's vision, what do the people come to confess and acknowledge about themselves? (3:22-25)
- * 16. What did God require of Israel in order to bless them and, through them, all the nations? (4:1-2)
- 17. What did Jeremiah say the people could do to avert God's wrath? (4:3-4)

Get It

- * 18. What kind of loyalty does God want from us?
- 19. How does God want us to repent of our sin?
- 20. How does God view sin when people are duly warned and choose to sin anyway?
- 21. Why do you suppose God chose an analogy from marriage to portray Israel's wanderings?
- * 22. What did it mean for God to predict a day when the ark of the covenant would never enter people's minds?
- 23. What spiritual "disease" did God offer to cure if His people would come to Him?

Apply It

- * 24. In what practical way can you evaluate your loyalty to the Lord this week?
- 25. What is one step you can take to seek out new areas of your life that God may want to change?

Disaster from the North - Jeremiah 4:5-31

Topics: Actions, Anger, Bitterness, Children, Courage, Darkness, Deceit, Decisions, Earth, Evil, Fear, Foolishness, Heart, Heaven, Judgment, Knowledge, Light, Mourning, Peace, People, Power, Punishment, Rebellion, Repentance, Running, Understanding

Open It

- * 1. What plans have you made in case you receive warning of violent weather coming your way?
- 2. What was an effective punishment when you were a child? Why?

Explore It

- 3. What did Jeremiah predict that Judah would need to do in the near future? (4:5-6)
- 4. To what wild animal did Jeremiah compare the attack by the people from the north? (4:7)
- * 5. What was the appropriate response of Judah to God's anger? (4:8)
- 6. Who did Jeremiah predict would lose courage when the Lord's judgment came? (4:9)
- 7. What deception was current in Jerusalem because people took God's goodness for granted and believed the false prophets? (4:10)
- 8. What would the people learn about the purpose of God's judgment when it was already descending on them? (4:11-12)
- 9. Even as the invading army was announced, what could Jerusalem do to be saved? (4:13-17)
- 10. What brought the terrible judgment of God on Judah? (4:18)
- * 11. How did Jeremiah feel about knowing the fate of his people? (4:19-21)
- * 12. How did God evaluate the moral fiber of His own people? (4:22)
- 13. How complete was the destruction foreseen by Jeremiah? (4:23-26)
- 14. Though God promised a fearsome judgment, what element of hope did He give Jeremiah? (4:27)
- 15. How do we know that God was not judging on a whim? (4:28)
- 16. Though Judah "adorned herself" to win the favor of powerful nations, how did God say she would end up? (4:30-31)

Get It

- 17. Why might people in your city or town listen to or ignore a prophecy like Jeremiah's?
- * 18. How do you demonstrate your concern for the certain doom of those who do not repent and turn to Christ?
- 19. Why would you want to know or not know about an instance of judgment from God?
- 20. How would you respond to a message of destruction from God?
- * 21. What are some of the fruitless ways that people seek to evade the judgment of God?
- 22. What would be a concrete and appropriate way to express grief over the fate of wicked people?

Apply It

- * 23. What step can you take this week to avoid becoming foolish as the people of Judah were?
- 24. What can you do to warn a believer or friend who is foolishly ignoring God's warnings?

Not One Is Upright - Jeremiah 5:1-31

Topics: Adultery, Authority, Backslide, Correction, Creation, Deceit, Enemies, Fear, Foolishness, Forgiveness, Forsake, Goodness, Honesty, Hypocrisy, Idolatry, Ignorance, Judgment, Knowledge, Law, Leadership, Lust, Lying, Needs, People, Poor, Power, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Repentance, Revenge, Security, Sin, Slavery, Stubbornness, Swearing, Truth, Unfaithfulness, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. Why do you expect more or less of your leaders than of the average citizen?
- 2. In your mind, where does a national ruler get the authority to rule?

Explore It

- * 3. On what condition did God say He would forgive the city of Jerusalem? (5:1)
- 4. What words on the part of the Israelites did God discern as a lie? (5:2)
- 5. How did Jeremiah report that the people responded to the Lord's rebuke? (5:3)
- 6. How did Jeremiah try to give the leaders the benefit of the doubt? (5:4-5)
- 7. Why did Jeremiah predict vicious attacks by wild animals? (5:6)
- 8. What sins provoked God to punish Israel? (5:7-9)
- * 9. What limitation did God place on the destruction of Israel and Judah? (5:10-11)
- 10. How did the people deceive themselves about God and His prophets? (5:12-13)
- 11. What did God say Jeremiah's words would be to the people of Israel and Judah? (5:14)
- 12. How did God specify the manner in which He would punish Israel? (5:15-17)
- 13. In what way did Israel's punishment fit the offense? (5:18-19)
- 14. What was wrong with the people's perspective? (5:20-22)
- 15. Why did the harvests fail in Judah? (5:23-25)
- * 16. What were the characteristics of the wicked people condemned by Jeremiah? (5:26-29)
- 17. What was the shocking condition of the people of Israel during Jeremiah's time? (5:30-31)

Get It

- * 18. Why do you think it would make a difference to God to find one honest person in a sin-filled city?
- 19. What result did God hope to see from the punishment He inflicted on the people?
- 20. Even without the words of the prophets, why do we have ample reason to respect God?
- 21. Why is a willful offense worse than ignorant breaking of a law?
- 22. How can the Word of God be a blessing to some and a curse to others?
- * 23. How have you experienced the lack of respect for God in our society today?
- 24. To what extent does God care about how people acquire wealth?
- 25. Why is it significant that lack of concern for the poor and powerless is often mentioned among the sins God judges?
- 26. What is the proper source of authority for those who minister to or hold authority over God's people?

Apply It

- * 27. In what way can you visibly show respect for God in the coming week?
- 28. What is one way you can submit your sources of income and use of money to the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit?

Jerusalem Under Siege - Jeremiah 6:1-30

Topics: Anger, Beauty, Deceit, Disobedience, Enemies, Family, Fear, Greed, Hardheartedness, Law, Listening, Lying, Peace, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Rest, Running, Sacrifice, Shame, Sickness, Soul, Testing, War, Wisdom

Open It

1. What positive or negative associations do you have with the word “tradition”?
- * 2. How do we use predictions about the future in our everyday lives?

Explore It

3. What warning did Jeremiah issue to the people of Jerusalem? (6:1-3)
4. What plans did Jeremiah envision being made by invaders? (6:4-5)
- * 5. What did Jeremiah say would happen if the people didn’t heed his warning? (6:6-8)
6. When Babylon finished “gleaning” the vine of Israel, how many would be left? (6:9)
- * 7. What kind of response did Jeremiah get to his prophecies? (6:10)
8. What did Jeremiah predict would happen when God judged the world? (6:11-12)
9. How had the prophets and priests sinned against God? (6:13-15)
- * 10. For what did God recommend that the people ask? (6:16)
11. What did God’s appointed watchmen tell the people? (6:17)
12. What did God call the rest of the earth to observe about Israel? (6:18-19)
13. How did God view the sacrifices and expensive incense offered by Israel and Judah? (6:20)
14. What did God say would cause many people to stumble? (6:21)
15. How did Jeremiah describe the invading army of Babylon? (6:22-23)
16. How did Jeremiah predict that people would react to the invaders? (6:24-26)
17. How did Israel respond to God’s refining? (6:27-30)

Get It

18. Why do you think Jeremiah kept on talking about the level of devastation that Israel’s enemies would bring?
- * 19. When have you received a “we will not listen” response to a message about God, as did Jeremiah?
20. Who do you know to whom the Word of the Lord is offensive?
- * 21. Why are some people offended by what the Bible says?
22. By Jeremiah’s day, how long had God been revealing His path to righteousness and blessing?
23. What sometimes motivates people in leadership to deceive the people they lead?
24. Why do you think people sometimes put more emphasis on expense and appearance in religious observances than on sincerity of heart?
25. When have you experienced God’s refining in your life?
26. How should we respond when God seeks to refine us?

Apply It

- * 27. To whom do you need to communicate God’s Word, even if he or she finds it (the message, not you) offensive?
28. Where can you read in the Bible this week to remember God’s will and commands?

False Religion Worthless - Jeremiah 7:1-8:3

Topics: Abandon, Adultery, Anger, Call, Complacency, Correction, Deceit, Dishonesty, Disobedience, Evil, Hypocrisy, Idolatry, Instructions, Judgment, Justice, Law, Listening, Mourning, Murder, Name, Oppressed, Prayer, Prophecy, Rejection, Repentance, Sacrifice, Shame, Stubbornness, Trust, Words, Worship

Open It

1. What circumstances tend to lull people into complacency?
- * 2. When can you say that who you are (your race, nationality, family, etc.) or who you know (influential friends) have helped you get ahead?

Explore It

3. In what specific place did God tell Jeremiah to deliver his prophecy? (7:1-2)
4. What did the people need to do in order to continue to live in their land in peace? (7:2-3)
5. What had the people been taking for granted as a sign of their permanent standing with God? (7:4)
6. What specific changes was God looking for in the behavior of the people of Israel? (7:5-7)
- * 7. How was Israel demonstrating double-mindedness in relation to God? (7:9-10)
8. What did God say about the attitude the people had developed toward the temple? (7:11)
9. How did the former worship place at Shiloh provide an example for Jerusalem in Jeremiah's day? (7:12-15)
10. Why did God tell Jeremiah not even to pray for the people? (7:16-18)
- * 11. Who suffered the greatest harm from the evil deeds of Israel? (7:19)
- * 12. How long had God been trying to communicate that He was more interested in the attitude of the heart than in empty actions? (7:21-26)
13. By what symbolic action was Jeremiah to demonstrate God's rejection of the people? (7:28-29)
14. What was going on at Topheth that was detestable to God? (7:30-31)
15. What event did Jeremiah predict for Topheth in the future? (7:32-34)
16. What horrible things did Jeremiah say would happen under the "sun and the moon and all the stars of heaven" which the people had made into gods? (8:1-2)
17. What curse would all the survivors of the invasion have in common? (8:3)

Get It

18. Why was the gate of the temple a particularly appropriate place for Jeremiah to speak what God had revealed to him?
- * 19. What ways do we have of changing outwardly but not inwardly?
20. What messages in the church and the world around us might lull us into a false sense of security with respect to a righteous God?
21. Who gets hurt the most when we turn away from God?
22. Why can there be no exemptions from God's righteous standards?
- * 23. Why would it be difficult to deliver a message you had been warned in advance would be poorly received?
24. How do modern day people "look to the sun, moon and stars"?
25. How do you think God views our modern fascination with astrology?
26. How can a place become detestable to God?

Apply It

27. How can you explain the problem with astrology to someone who consults horoscopes?
- * 28. How could you strengthen your resolve this coming week to share God's Word when you need to, regardless of how it may be received?

Sin and Punishment - Jeremiah 8:4-9:26

Topics: Adultery, Anger, Children, Death, Deceit, Disobedience, Earth, Enemies, Evil, Fear, Forsake, Greed, Grief, Healing, Heart, Hope, Hopelessness, Idolatry, Instructions, Justice, Kindness, Knowledge, Law, Listening, Lying, Mourning, Peace, People, Punishment, Questions, Rejection, Repentance, Revenge, Right, Righteousness, Running, Self-righteousness, Salvation, Shame, Sin, Stubbornness, Teaching, Testing, Truth, Understanding, Unfaithfulness, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What is one of the more obnoxious boasts you have ever heard?
- 2. How does it feel to be deceived by a close friend?

Explore It

- 3. In what ways did Israel's stubbornness seem "unnatural" to God? (8:4-7)
- 4. Who was guilty of greed, deceit, and minimizing Israel's predicament? (8:10-11)
- * 5. What attitude did God expect but fail to find in the people of Israel? (8:12)
- 6. What did God determine to take away from Israel? (8:13)
- 7. What was the cry of the people in the face of God's judgment? (8:14-16)
- 8. To what did God compare His instruments of judgment? (8:17)
- * 9. What was the cry of Jeremiah's heart as he contemplated the judgments he was announcing? (8:18-21)
- 10. What was God's answer to Jeremiah's pleading? (8:19)
- 11. What was Jeremiah's fervent wish for Israel? (8:22)
- 12. In spite of his sadness for them, why did Jeremiah want to separate himself from his people? (9:1-2)
- 13. What warning did Jeremiah receive from God concerning the people among whom he lived? (9:4-6)
- 14. What was it about the words of the people that displeased God? (9:7-9)
- 15. What did God reveal to Jeremiah about the desolation of the land? (9:10-16)
- 16. What were some of the illustrations of grief and destruction given in Jeremiah's prophecy? (9:17-22)
- * 17. What is the only boast that has legitimacy with God? (9:23-24)

Get It

- 18. In what ways does the plant and animal world reflect God's orderliness more than does human society?
- 19. What should we remember about our possessions when we are tempted to become bitter about what we have lost?
- * 20. What does it mean to you to find healing in God?
- * 21. Why is it important for us to grieve for the suffering of wicked people?
- 22. Why is it important for our words to match our plans and actions?
- 23. How have you experienced the contrast between wisdom, strength, and riches and the knowledge of the Lord?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you demonstrate God's available healing to someone else this coming week?
- 25. In the coming month, how will you pursue the knowledge of the Lord?

God and Idols - Jeremiah 10:1-25

Topics: Anger, Comparisons, Correction, Craftsmanship, Direction, Earth, Endurance, Enemies, Fear, Foolishness, Goodness, Greatness, Heaven, Help, Idolatry, Judgment, Justice, Knowledge, Learning, Life, Listening, Name, Power, Shame, Sickness, Sovereignty, Teaching, Understanding, Wisdom

Open It

1. What customs have either strong positive or strong negative associations for you?
- * 2. Why do you think you respond positively or negatively to correction by an authority? a peer?

Explore It

- * 3. Why were the customs regarding the making of idols called worthless? (10:3-5)
- * 4. What surpassing qualities of God did Jeremiah praise? (10:6-7)
 5. How did Jeremiah compare the idols of his day to the living God? (10:8-10)
 6. What future did God predict for the false gods that fascinated the people of Israel? (10:11)
 7. What examples of God's power did Jeremiah list in order to make his case? (10:12-13)
 8. How did Jeremiah describe the people who made and worshiped idols? (10:14-15)
 9. In what ways did Jeremiah say God was far superior to the gods of the other nations? (10:16)
 10. What command did Jeremiah pass along to the people of Israel? (10:17)
 11. Why did God command the people to prepare to leave their land? (10:18)
 12. How did Jeremiah describe the suffering of Israel in very personal terms? (10:19-20)
 13. How did Jeremiah evaluate the leaders ("shepherds") of Israel? (10:21)
 14. From which direction did Jeremiah say the invaders would come? (10:22)
- * 15. What great truth is revealed to us through Jeremiah? (10:23)
16. What was Jeremiah's prayer for himself in light of God's justice? (10:24)

Get It

17. Why might we receive pressure to worship false gods?
- * 18. What instances do you see today of people worshiping things God has made or things they have made themselves?
19. When have you ever been urged to worship or serve something other than God?
20. In Jeremiah's day, who was partly at fault for Israel's being scattered?
21. What important lesson did Jeremiah learn about his own life and the life of each human being?
22. Why did Israel have to endure so much suffering?
- * 23. Why is it desirable for us to experience God's correction but to avoid His anger?

Apply It

24. How can you improve upon your leadership in the family, at work, or in the church?
- * 25. How can you remind yourself in the coming week that your life is not your own?

Jeremiah Prophecies Destruction - Jeremiah 11:1-13:27

Topics: Adultery, Anger, Beauty, Bitterness, Commitment, Compassion, Covenant, Darkness, Death, Enemies, Evil, Family, Follow, Forget, Forsake, Fruit, Glory, God, Goodness, Hatred, Heart, Help, Honor, Idolatry, Instructions, Judgment, Justice, Law, Learning, Life, Light, Listening, Lust, Mercy, Mind, Name, Neighbor, Obedience, Pain, People, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Revelation, Revenge, Righteousness, Safety, Shame, Sin, Stubbornness, Swearing, Testing, Trust, Words

Open It

1. What is an issue of fairness that has direct impact on your life?
- * 2. If you knew that someone was trying to kill you, what would you do?

Explore It

3. Of what important era in their history did God want Jeremiah to remind Israel? (11:1-5)
4. Why was God punishing His people? (11:9-11)
5. What did God say the people would discover when they sought help from the gods they had been worshiping? (11:12-13)
- * 6. How did Jeremiah find out about the plot on his life, and where did he turn for help? (11:18-20)
7. What did the Lord promise to do to the people of Anathoth who had threatened Jeremiah? (11:21-23)
8. What questions did Jeremiah pose to God concerning His justice? (12:1-4)
9. What did God reveal that He intended to do to His unfaithful people? (12:7-13)
10. How would the response of the nations to God's judgment on Israel affect those nations? (12:14-17)
11. What physical demonstration did God require of Isaiah as a lesson to the people? (13:1-7)
- * 12. How was Israel like Jeremiah's belt? (13:8-11)
13. How did Jeremiah know that God was not going to change His mind about punishing Israel? (13:12-14)
14. If Israel refused to listen to God, what would happen to them and to Jeremiah? (13:15-17)
15. What future did God predict for all Judah? (13:18-19)
- * 16. What had it become impossible for Israel to do in her hardheartedness? (13:20-23)
17. What sins caused God to declare the destruction of Jerusalem? (13:24-27)

Get It

18. What has God promised to us, and what does this require of us as believers?
19. What idols (false gods) are worshiped in society today that pose a temptation even to believers?
20. Why do people try to silence people who speak for God or those who remind us of God's commands?
- * 21. Where do you see instances around you of wicked people seeming to prosper?
- * 22. Why is it sometimes tempting to give up living God's way if you see no immediate results?
23. Why is it unwise to claim to be "religious" if God does not reside in your heart?
24. What determines whether a person is useful to God?
25. If we cannot change our natural tendency toward sin, what hope is there for us?
26. Why are people who do not trust in God for their righteousness destined to shame?

Apply It

- * 27. What do you want to remember the next time you see an unrighteous person prosper or get undeserved rewards?
28. In what area of your life do you need to be on guard against pride standing in the way of God's blessing?

Drought, Famine, Sword - Jeremiah 14:1-15:21

Topics: Acceptance, Alone, Anger, Backslide, Change, Compassion, Covenant, Death, Despair, Enemies, Evil, Fasting, Fear, Forsake, Goodness, Guilt, Hatred, Healing, Heart, Hope, Humiliation, Idolatry, Joy, Judgment, Listening, Lying, Mourning, Name, Pain, Peace, People, Prayer, Prophecy, Punishment, Rejection, Remembering, Repentance, Restoration, Salvation, Serving, Sin, Suffering, Wealth, Words

Open It

- * 1. What is the biggest lie you have ever believed for a period of time?
- 2. When have you pleaded for mercy on behalf of someone else?

Explore It

- 3. What desperate situation did Jeremiah foresee for Jerusalem? (14:1-6)
- 4. On what basis did Jeremiah plead for God's intervention? (14:7-9)
- * 5. Why did God say He would not be dissuaded from punishing Israel? (14:10-12)
- 6. How did God reply when Jeremiah told Him that the prophets were giving the people the impression that they were safe? (14:13-16)
- 7. With what dismaying word did God send Jeremiah to the people of Israel? (14:17-18)
- 8. What great men of faith did God maintain could not convince Him to rescue Israel from judgment? (15:1-3)
- 9. What king of Judah was particularly responsible for leading the people so far astray? (15:4)
- 10. What attitude had set God firmly against the people of Israel? (15:5-9)
- * 11. How was Jeremiah treated because of the message he brought from God? (15:10)
- * 12. What promise did God make to His servant Jeremiah? (15:11)
- 13. How did God describe the ruthlessness of the enemy He sent against Israel? (15:12-14)
- 14. How did Jeremiah plead his own case with God? (15:15-18)
- 15. Of what did Jeremiah need to repent in order to continue as God's spokesman? (15:19-21)
- 16. How did God predict that Jeremiah would continue to be received by the people? (15:20-21)
- 17. What promise did God make to Jeremiah even as He asked him to take an unpopular course? (15:20-21)

Get It

- * 18. How did God handle the dilemma of His people in need of punishment and His own name in need of vindication?
- 19. Why was God so unresponsive to Jeremiah's pleading on behalf of the people?
- * 20. Why do false prophets often receive more honor from their audience than faithful prophets?
- 21. Why did God not accept Jeremiah's repentant attitude on behalf of the people?
- 22. How is it fair or unfair that even God's faithful servants will experience suffering?
- 23. When can, or cannot, an appeal to the honor of God's name persuade Him to act?
- 24. When can the worthiness of God's people cease to be a legitimate defense against God's discipline?

Apply It

- 25. How can you prepare yourself to discern the lying words of people who falsely claim to represent the truth?
- * 26. What steps could you take to prepare yourself to deliver or defend God's Word, regardless of how it is received?

Day of Disaster - Jeremiah 16:1-17:27

Topics: Anger, Blessing, Celebration, Children, Comfort, Comparisons, Confidence, Death, Deceit, Despair, Discipline, Disobedience, Evil, Fear, Foolishness, Forsake, Fruit, Healing, Heart, Holiness, Hope, Idolatry, Injustice, Joy, Judgment, Knowledge, Law, Life, Listening, Love, Marriage, Mourning, Name, Obedience, Openness, People, Power, Praise, Questions, Remembering, Restoration, Revenge, Rewards, Running, Sacrifice, Salvation, Serving, Shame, Sin, Slavery, Strength, Stubbornness, Teaching, Trust, Understanding, Wealth, Worry, Worship

Open It

1. For what have you relied on someone else who then turned out to be unreliable?
2. Under what circumstances does participation in routine activities not make sense?
3. What have you discovered about the importance of rest to your life?
- * 4. What do you most like to do for relaxation?

Explore It

5. What routine practices did God forbid for Jeremiah as a sign to the people? (16:1-9)
6. How did Jeremiah's boycott of marriages and funerals convey his prediction about Israel's future? (16:5-9)
7. How was Jeremiah to answer the question "What wrong have we done"? (16:10-13)
8. What great event in Israel's past did God say would be exceeded by His eventual deliverance? (16:14-15)
9. What was Israel going to lose because of their sin? (17:3-4)
10. What is the outcome of trusting in people? (17:5-6)
11. What is promised to the person who trusts God? (17:7-8)
12. What was Jeremiah's, and God's, perspective on the human heart? (17:9)
13. What did God say would become of the person who used unjust means to gain riches? (17:11)
14. What were the people saying to Jeremiah? (17:15)
15. How did Jeremiah ask God to prove him right? (17:14-18)
16. Where did God tell Jeremiah to deliver his message about obedience? (17:19)
- * 17. What was God's original command to His people concerning the Sabbath? (17:20-22)
- * 18. How did God promise to bless Jeremiah's generation if they would observe the Sabbath laws? (17:24-26)
- * 19. How did God intend to act toward Israel if they disobeyed as their ancestors had? (17:27)

Get It

20. In your experience, what do we lose when we disobey God?
21. Who is the most trustworthy person you have known, and why do you consider that person trustworthy?
22. In what way is it good news, bad news, or both that God is always watching us?
23. When have you been guilty of downplaying or disregarding God's commands?
24. How have you personally witnessed that the human heart is "deceitful above all things"?
25. In what ways do people fool themselves?
26. How has God proven Himself trustworthy in your life?
- * 27. In what sense is respect for the Sabbath also respect for God?
28. What does it mean to honor the Sabbath?
- * 29. How can we use days of rest to restore our well-being?

Apply It

- * 30. How can you observe the Sabbath this week in a way that will help you rest, as God intended?
31. What action can you take this week to evaluate the spiritual condition of your heart?

At the Potter's House - Jeremiah 18:1-19:15

Topics: Accusation, Anger, Blessing, Death, Disobedience, Enemies, Evil, Forget, Forgiveness, Forsake, Goodness, Idolatry, Instructions, Law, Listening, Lost, Murder, Questions, Plans, Punishment, Remembering, Repentance, Sacrifice, Sin, Stubbornness, Teaching, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. What is the most arrogant statement you've ever heard?
- * 2. What are some things that, when broken, are impossible to repair?

Explore It

3. Where did God send Jeremiah to receive a message from Him? (18:1-2)
4. What was the potter doing as Jeremiah watched? (18:3-4)
- * 5. How did God liken His power over the nations to the decisions of the potter? (18:5-10)
6. What unthinkable deed had Judah done against God? (18:13-15)
7. Where did the people of Judah begin to walk when they left God's ways and began to worship idols? (18:15)
8. What did God say He would do because Israel worshiped idols? (18:16-17)
9. What was being said about Jeremiah by the people who resisted his message? (18:18)
10. Of which past deeds did Jeremiah remind God? (18:19-20)
11. How did Jeremiah ask God to deal with his enemies? (18:21-23)
12. Where did God instruct Jeremiah to take the elders and deliver a prophecy? (19:1-2)
- * 13. What practices (carried out in the Valley of Ben Hinnom) would bring God's judgment on the people? (19:3-5)
14. Why would the name of the valley where Jeremiah stood be changed? (19:6-9)
15. What was the meaning of the symbolic action the Lord told Jeremiah to carry out? (19:10-12)
16. Whose houses would become defiled like the city dump? (19:13)
- * 17. What message did Jeremiah take to all the people in the temple because of the reaction of the elders to whom he had delivered the prophecy? (19:14-15)

Get It

18. What is significant to you about the image of God as a potter?
19. Why did the people think Jeremiah was expendable?
- * 20. Even after God has pronounced a judgment, what might make Him relent or reconsider, either for good or ill?
21. What comes to mind when you think of the image of God turning His back instead of showing His face?
22. What are some ways in which you have avoided the unpleasant in the past?
- * 23. What do you think will become of people who abuse or neglect children, unless they repent?

Apply It

- * 24. What is a practical way in which you can demonstrate God's concern for a child in need in the coming weeks?
25. What God-fearing person in a position of leadership could use your encouragement today?

Jeremiah and Pashhur - Jeremiah 20:1-18

Topics: Children, Consequences, Death, Enemies, Evil, Failure, Fear, Friendship, Good News, Heart, Humiliation, Insults, Lying, Mind, Mourning, Power, Praise, Prophecy, Punishment, Revenge, Righteousness, Salvation, Shame, Slavery, Sorrow, Trust, War, Wealth

Open It

1. What kinds of crises might make a person wish he or she had never been born?
- * 2. When was the last time you were bitterly disappointed?
3. When have you felt as if everyone were just waiting for you to make a mistake?

Explore It

4. How did the chief officer respond to Jeremiah's prophecy in the temple? (20:1-2)
5. What unlikely person had Jeremiah beaten? Why? (20:1-2)
6. What future did Jeremiah foretell for Pashhur and all of Judah? (20:3-6)
- * 7. What was Jeremiah's complaint to the Lord? (20:7-8)
8. Why was Jeremiah upset with God? (20:7-10)
9. What would happen if Jeremiah tried to stop speaking the word of the Lord? (20:9)
10. What did Jeremiah hear the people saying about him? (20:10)
- * 11. From where did Jeremiah derive consolation for his disappointments? (20:11-13)
12. What did Jeremiah believe about God's ability to set things straight? (20:11-13)
- * 13. What was the basis for Jeremiah's song of praise to God? (20:13)
14. How had Jeremiah come to feel about life and his presumably joyful entry into it? (20:14-18)

Get It

15. Why do some people try to silence those who speak God's Word?
16. How could Jeremiah be so confident that his enemies wouldn't have the final word?
17. Why is it encouraging to know that no human being can keep the Word of God from going forth?
18. What would motivate even Jeremiah's friends to try to silence him?
- * 19. What value is there in the fact that the Bible records Jeremiah's (and other servants' of God) discouragement?
- * 20. What should we do whenever we feel disappointed?

Apply It

21. What servant of God do you know who is in a period of despair and in need of your words of comfort?
- * 22. What injustice is weighing on you which you can turn over to God?

God Rejects Zedekiah's Request - Jeremiah 21:1-14

Topics: Anger, Complacency, Death, Enemies, Evil, Justice, Life, Mercy, Miracles, Opposition, Oppressed, People, Prophecy, Questions, Security, Submission, War

Open It

1. What would you do if forced to choose between immediate death and life without any possessions or freedom?
2. What do you think is the worst thing for a human being to lose?
- * 3. What, for you, represents security?

Explore It

4. Why did King Zedekiah send messengers to Jeremiah? (21:1-2)
- * 5. What did the king hope God would do for Judah, as He had done in the past? (21:2)
6. What was God's answer concerning the outward enemy facing Jerusalem? (21:3-4)
7. Rather than intervening to save Judah, what did God promise to do? (21:5-7)
8. What, specifically, did Jeremiah say would become of the king who ruled in Jerusalem? (21:7)
9. What choice was God offering to the people of Jerusalem? (21:8)
- * 10. Why did God say that surrender would be a preferable option to staying in the city of Jerusalem? (21:9-10)
11. What did God require from the descendants of David? Why? (21:11-12)
- * 12. Where were the people of Jerusalem placing their confidence for the city's security? (21:13)
13. To what did God compare the wrath deserved by the people of Judah? (21:14)

Get It

14. Why was Jeremiah a logical go-between when the people sought God's help against an enemy?
15. If the choice were yours, would you choose God's anger or that of a human enemy? Why?
- * 16. Why don't more people choose life when they realize the spiritual choice before them?
- * 17. In what are the people around you trusting for their security?
18. What does it mean to find our security in God?

Apply It

19. The next time you are faced with only undesirable choices, how will you remember that one of them might actually be God's provision for you?
- * 20. In what area of your life do you need to let God be your primary source of security?

Judgment Against Evil Kings - Jeremiah 22:1-30

Topics: Answers, Arrogance, Covenant, Death, Dishonesty, Enemies, Evil, Fear, Forsake, Greed, Heart, Idolatry, Injustice, Instructions, Justice, Knowledge, Law, Listening, Mourning, Obedience, Oppressed, Pain, People, Poor, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Rejection, Right, Security, Shame, Swearing, Youth

Open It

1. In your opinion what are some of the best ways to teach children responsibility?
- * 2. What do you consider the marks of greatness in a national leader?

Explore It

3. Where was Jeremiah told to proclaim God's message? (22:1)
- * 4. What principles of good government did God list as conditions for His blessing on Judah? (22:3-4)
5. What consequences were promised if the king did not obey God? (22:5)
6. Although Judah and Jerusalem had been special in God's sight, what did He swear to do to them? (22:6-7)
7. What reason would be given for the disgrace and destruction of Judah? (22:8-9)
8. What arrogant and selfish behavior on the part of the king angered God? (22:13-14)
9. How did God feel about the notion that displays of wealth indicated greatness in a ruler? (22:15)
- * 10. How was Josiah different from Jehoiakim, his son? (22:15-16)
- * 11. How did God judge Jehoiakim's heart? (22:17)
12. What did God say would become of Jehoiakim's "greatness" at the end of his life? (22:18-19)
13. Before God allowed Judah's enemies to crush them, what had He done to try to save them? (22:20-21)
14. When did Jehoiakim's rebellion against God begin? (22:21)
15. What was going to become of the king and his splendid buildings? (22:22-23)
16. To what did God compare Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin? (22:28)
17. Why didn't it matter whether Jehoiachin continued David's line by having children? (22:29-30)

Get It

18. In what sense can our godliness be measured by our treatment of fellow human beings?
19. Why is God so concerned about the poor and powerless?
- * 20. How do human indicators of greatness differ from God's?
- * 21. What circumstances do we sometimes think would entitle us to God's favor?
22. What conclusion can we draw from the case of Josiah and Jehoiakim about the certainty of godly people having godly children?
23. In what way do you need to copy the example of your parents more consciously?

Apply It

- * 24. In what areas of your life can you act on the opportunity to do what is just and right for your fellow human beings?
25. What is one step you can take this week to learn from or copy something good that your parents did right?

The Righteous Branch - Jeremiah 23:1-40

Topics: Adultery, Anger, Answers, Benefits, Caring, Darkness, Earth, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Forget, Forsake, Fruit, Heart, Heaven, Hiding, History, Holiness, Hope, Injustice, Justice, Leadership, Listening, Lying, Mind, Opposition, Peace, Questions, People, Prophecy, Punishment, Responsibility, Repentance, Restoration, Right, Righteousness, Salvation, Security, Shame, Stubbornness, Understanding, Wisdom, Words

Open It

- * 1. What are your expectations of the persons who teach or care for your children?
- 2. When have you had the experience of your words being misquoted, distorted, or taken out of context? What resulted?

Explore It

- 3. What technique did God use to describe the relationship between His people, Israel, and their leaders? (23:1)
- * 4. What did God promise to do for His “flock” after He delivered them from evil rulers? (23:3-4)
- 5. What were the characteristics of the King God promised to raise up? (23:5-6)
- 6. What great event, foretold by Jeremiah, would take precedence over the historical importance of the Exodus out of Egypt? (23:7-8)
- 7. What did God promise to do with people who claimed to be His prophets or priests but were in fact godless and wicked? (23:11-12)
- 8. What different, but equally abhorrent, deeds were done by the prophets in Israel and Judah? (23:13-14)
- 9. Where were the false prophets getting the “visions” they reported? (23:16)
- 10. What lie did the false prophets tell those who rejected God’s ways? (23:17)
- * 11. What would have characterized the message of the prophets if they had truly heard from God? (23:21-22)
- * 12. What questions did God ask of those who underestimated His power? (23:23-24)
- 13. Where did the “dreams” of the false prophets come from, and what were they designed to accomplish? (23:25-27)
- 14. How does God’s Holy Word contrast with the contrived dreams of faithless people? (23:28-29)
- 15. What kind of prophet does God oppose? (23:30-32)
- 16. Why were the people of Israel forbidden to use the word “oracle”? (23:33-36)
- 17. What would become of those who insisted on claiming to speak God’s Word even after they were warned of His judgment on their lies? (23:37-40)

Get It

- 18. What truths about God are implied in the rhetorical questions He asks in 23:23-24?
- 19. Why are false prophets such a dangerous attraction for the people of God?
- * 20. Who are the unbelieving “prophets” (that is, people who falsely claim to have special insights into the truth) of our day?
- 21. Why can someone’s claim of a dream or vision be hard to refute?
- * 22. How can we distinguish between someone who falsely speaks in the name of God and someone who is speaking the truth about God?
- 23. What sobering truths should we take into consideration before we claim to speak for God?

Apply It

- * 24. What is one thing you can do to avoid being naive or misled by others who misrepresent the facts?
- 25. What pleasant statements or predictions have you heard recently that you need to examine in the

light of God's Word?

Two Baskets of Figs - Jeremiah 24:1-10

Topics: Answers, Caring, Gifts, Goodness, Heart, People, Punishment, Questions, Repentance, Restoration

Open It

- * 1. When has some ostensibly “bad” news turned out to be good news in disguise?
- 2. Why do you think many people find it difficult to make a sincere apology?

Explore It

- 3. Which of the inhabitants of Judah were taken into exile in Babylon? (24:1)
- 4. What historic event coincided with Jeremiah’s word from the Lord? (24:1)
- 5. What was the vision with which the Lord instructed Jeremiah? (24:2)
- 6. How great was the contrast between the two batches of figs? (24:3)
- * 7. How did God look upon the people who went into captivity in Babylon? (24:5)
- 8. What was God’s intention with regard to the exiles from Judah? (24:6)
- * 9. What gift did God promise to the exiles? (24:7)
- * 10. How were Zedekiah and the survivors like poor figs? (24:8-10)
- 11. How would the rest of the world come to view Zedekiah? (24:9)
- 12. What did God intend to send against Judah? (24:10)
- 13. How long would God’s opposition to the exiles from Judah last? (24:10)

Get It

- * 14. How is this passage a demonstration of both God’s mercy and His righteous judgment?
- 15. How is God Himself involved in producing a people fit to worship and serve Him?
- 16. What was the key inward difference between the exiles and the people who fled to Egypt or remained in the land?
- * 17. How does a person develop a heart to know God?
- 18. When has God’s discipline in your life brought renewal to your spiritual condition?

Apply It

- * 19. How can you prepare yourself to see God’s goodness in your next trying circumstance?
- 20. How can you thank God for allowing you to know Him?

Seventy Years of Captivity - Jeremiah 25:1-38

Topics: Anger, Drinking, Earth, Enemies, Escape, Evil, Grief, Guilt, Idolatry, Instructions, Judgment, Leadership, Listening, Mourning, People, Prophecy, Punishment, Repentance, Restoration, Revenge, Serving, Slavery, War, Words, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What are your thoughts whenever you meet someone with a “holier-than-thou” attitude?
- 2. What are five situations that, in your opinion, must make God very angry?

Explore It

- 3. When did Jeremiah’s next message fall in relation to the kings of Judah and Babylon? (25:1)
- * 4. How long had Jeremiah been speaking the word of God to the people of Judah and Jerusalem? (25:2-3)
- 5. How did the people of Judah respond to God’s servants? (25:4)
- * 6. What was the message of the prophets? (25:5-6)
- * 7. How did the people bring God’s judgment on themselves? (25:7)
- 8. Whom did God specify as His instrument of judgment, and how long would Judah remain in captivity? (25:8-11)
- 9. How would Babylon eventually pay for her guilt before God? (25:12-14)
- 10. What was the cup that God ordered Jeremiah to deliver to many nations? (25:15-16)
- 11. What nations were named in Jeremiah’s prophecy as being in line to be judged by God? (25:17-26)
- 12. What was God’s answer to any nation that refused the cup from Jeremiah? (25:27-29)
- 13. What images did Jeremiah use to convey the coming of God’s great wrath? (25:30-31)
- 14. How did Jeremiah describe the magnitude of the destruction he foresaw? (25:32-33)
- 15. What would become of all the leaders who did not fear God? (25:34-38)

Get It

- * 16. Why did it anger God that the people worshiped things they had created?
- 17. What could the people of Judah have done to avert God’s punishment?
- * 18. Why was it significant that Jeremiah’s prophecy of judgment included the most powerful nations on earth?
- 19. Why did God refer to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as his servant?
- 20. How bad do conditions have to be in order to prevent people from burying and mourning their dead?
- 21. What was God saying about the supposed “exemption” of the leaders when He used many of the same words to describe their plight as He had used with the sheep?
- 22. In what ways do people who love and serve God need to acknowledge their own inherent sinfulness?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you avoid making gods out of your own accomplishments?
- 24. How can you avoid becoming complacent about your own sinfulness and need for God?

Jeremiah Threatened with Death - Jeremiah 26:1-24

Topics: Anger, Death, Evil, Guilt, History, Instructions, Law, Leadership, Listening, Murder, Name, Obedience, People, Plans, Prophecy, Punishment, Repentance, Truth, Words, Worship

Open It

1. How would you describe the dynamics of an angry crowd?
- * 2. If you could create an agenda for the leaders of our country, what would it include?

Explore It

3. During whose reign did Jeremiah receive this particular communication from God? (26:1)
4. What was Jeremiah instructed to do in the courtyard of the temple? (26:2)
5. What had God resolved to do if the people repented? (26:3)
- * 6. What did God promise to do in the event that Judah did not repent? (26:4-6)
7. Toward what conclusion about Jeremiah and his message did the priests and prophets incite the people? (26:7-9)
8. What did the secular officials do when they heard about the conflict between Jeremiah and the religious officials? (26:10)
- * 9. What charge did the religious officials bring against Jeremiah? (26:11)
10. On what authority did Jeremiah defend his message to the people? (26:12)
11. What call from God did Jeremiah reiterate even as he defended himself? (26:13)
12. What did Jeremiah warn the rulers even as he put himself at their mercy? (26:14-15)
- * 13. On what grounds did the secular officials persuade the people that Jeremiah did not deserve to be punished? (26:16)
14. What example from Israel's past was raised by some of the elders? (26:17-19)
15. What lesson did the wise rulers seek to apply to the present situation involving Jeremiah? (26:19)
16. What had happened to Uriah the prophet when he tried to warn the same king and people? (26:20-23)
17. What influential person helped save Jeremiah from being murdered? (26:24)

Get It

18. Why do you think Jeremiah would not back down even when his life was threatened?
19. Why do you think the religious leaders were so invested in the preservation of Jerusalem and the temple?
- * 20. In what sense does God leave our future up to us?
- * 21. Why is it difficult for us to respond to correction with openness and humility?
22. How does this story illustrate the important role that leaders have in influencing nations for good or evil?
23. Why do people try to negate God's judgments by attacking His representatives?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you improve your response to a spiritual warning you recently received from the Bible, a sermon, a book, or a person?
25. What study or pursuit could help you to stand firm in speaking God's Word, even when it is poorly received?

Judah to Serve Nebuchadnezzar - Jeremiah 27:1-28:17

Topics: Choices, Death, Discernment, Earth, Gifts, Instructions, Life, Listening, Lying, Occult, Peace, People, Power, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Rebellion, Restoration, Serving, Submission, Truth, War

Open It

1. What example of two completely contradictory predictions have you heard, and how did the matter turn out?
2. What types of possessions tend to give people a sense of security?
3. Why do you think some people find it difficult to obey their boss or civil authorities?

Explore It

4. What visual demonstration was Jeremiah ordered to give? (27:2)
5. What nations, besides Judah, were told that they would be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar? (27:3-6)
6. How long did God say that certain nations would be subject to Babylon? (27:7)
7. What did God warn certain nations not to do? (27:8)
8. Who was advising the kings to resist the Babylonians? (27:9)
9. How would the nations that submitted to Babylon fare better than those who resisted? (27:10-11)
- * 10. What did Jeremiah say would happen to Judah if the people and their king believed the false prophets rather than Jeremiah? (27:12-15)
11. What lie were the prophets of Judah telling the people about the temple treasure? (27:16)
- * 12. What reasoning did Jeremiah use to convince the people to serve the king of Babylon? (27:17)
13. What test did Jeremiah set up to prove to the people that the false prophets were wrong? (27:18)
14. What timetable did Hananiah give for the return of both the sacred articles and the king? (28:3-4)
15. What was Jeremiah's initial reply to the idea of a quick deliverance? (28:5-6)
- * 16. How did Jeremiah say that Hananiah's prophecy of "peace" would be proven right or wrong? (28:7-9)
17. What symbolic action did Hananiah take, supposedly to demonstrate the truth of his prophecy? (28:10-11)
18. How did God Himself contradict Hananiah's prophecy? (28:12-14)
19. What personal message of judgment did God send to Hananiah? (28:15-16)

Get It

20. Which prophet do you think was more popular, Jeremiah or Hananiah, and why?
- * 21. What were some very practical reasons for the nations Babylon attacked to submit rather than resist?
22. How hard or easy do you think it would be for people of our day to believe that God was behind the rise and fall of great powers?
23. How might a person prepare for a "less than ideal" situation which, nevertheless, is God's will for him or her?
24. Why is it important not to claim God's endorsement or to claim His inspiration lightly?
- * 25. In what practical ways should our respect for God translate into submission to the laws and authorities He has put over us?

Apply It

26. What will be your plan to discern the truth the next time you get conflicting advice from Christians you respect?
- * 27. What can you do to show proper respect for the authorities God has put over you at work? in your community?

A Letter to the Exiles - Jeremiah 29:1-32

Topics: Adultery, Blessing, Call, Children, Craftsmanship, Death, Deceit, Encouragement, Future, Goodness, Grace, Heart, Hope, Instructions, Knowledge, Listening, Lying, Marriage, Peace, Plans, Prayer, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Restoration, Trust, Words

Open It

- * 1. How do you respond when someone who is supposed to speak for you expresses an opinion or idea that is not your own?
- 2. What kinds of things would you do differently if you moved to a new community but only expected to stay for a year?

Explore It

- 3. To whom did Jeremiah, living in Jerusalem, send a letter? (29:1-2)
- 4. Who was able to carry a letter to the exiles? (29:3)
- 5. What specific commands did God give the exiles regarding how they should settle down? (29:4-6)
- * 6. How did God want the Israelites to think about and react to the foreign country in which they lived? (29:7)
- * 7. By whom were the exiles in danger of being deceived? (29:8-9)
- 8. After what period of time did God promise to bring the people back to the land? (29:10)
- * 9. What was the nature of God's plans for Israel? (29:11)
- 10. Why would Judah's seeking for God be fruitful after this period of exile? (29:12-13)
- 11. How would the people of Israel be "reconstituted" after seventy years of exile? (29:14)
- 12. What did Jeremiah's letter inform the exiles about God's judgment of those who remained behind? (29:15-19)
- 13. What did God have in store for two specific false prophets who were telling the exiles they would soon be home? (29:20-21)
- 14. What deeds of the false prophets had not escaped God's all-seeing eye? (29:22-23)
- 15. What did Shemaiah's letter to Zephaniah the priest in Jerusalem contain? (29:24-28)
- 16. How did Jeremiah learn about the letter encouraging his imprisonment? (29:29)
- 17. What was God's judgment on Shemaiah for his treachery against Jeremiah? (29:31-32)

Get It

- * 18. Why was it important for the exiles to know that God planned to prosper them and not to harm them?
- 19. What kind of prophet (false or true) told the people what they wanted to hear while requiring nothing of them in return?
- * 20. What emotional reaction would most people have if asked to pray for the prosperity of their captors?
- 21. How do you think God would have us pray for our country?
- 22. Why does God want us to seek Him with our whole heart?
- 23. What does it mean to you to seek God with your whole heart?
- 24. Why is back-stabbing a risky way of trying to get rid of your enemies?
- 25. How should we react whenever someone promises us something for nothing in spiritual matters?

Apply It

- 26. How can you maintain a healthy skepticism toward people who promise too much for God?
- * 27. How does God's promise of a hope for the future enable you to persevere through the current difficulties in your life?

Restoration of Israel - Jeremiah 30:1-31:40

Topics: Abundance, Accountability, Anger, Blessing, Children, Comfort, Compassion, Covenant, Creation, Death, Devotion, Discipline, Enemies, Evil, Fear, Forgiveness, Freedom, Fruit, Future, Guidance, Guilt, Healing, Health, Heart, Honor, Hope, Humiliation, Husbands, Joy, Justice, Knowledge, Leadership, Love, Mourning, New Covenant, Oppressed, Pain, Peace, People, Persecution, Pleasure, Power, Praise, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Purpose, Questions, Rejection, Remembering, Repentance, Rest, Restoration, Rewards, Righteousness, Salvation, Satisfaction, Security, Serving, Shame, Sin, Slavery, Sorrow, Teaching, Thanksgiving, Understanding, Unfaithfulness, Words, Work, Youth

Open It

- * 1. What thoughts and feelings would go through your mind if you were told you had an incurable illness?
- 2. What are the different ways that groups of people celebrate and demonstrate collective joy?

Explore It

- 3. What did God instruct Jeremiah to do with the words that had been revealed to him? (30:1-2)
- 4. What good news summarized God's plans for the defeated and divided nation? (30:3)
- 5. What was the picture of judgment painted by Jeremiah? (30:4-7)
- 6. What did Jeremiah predict that Israel would receive instead of its enslavement to foreign nations? (30:8-9)
- 7. What two blessings did God say Israel once had and would have again? (30:10)
- 8. What would characterize God's discipline of His own people? (30:11)
- * 9. What was God's metaphor for the sinful condition of His people? (30:12-13)
- 10. How would the future look different for God's people and for their enemies? (30:16-17)
- 11. What miraculous event would be the occasion for great rejoicing? (30:18-20)
- 12. What relationship did God intend to reestablish with all twelve tribes of Israel? (31:1-2)
- 13. How did God plan to demonstrate the constancy of His love? (31:3-6)
- 14. What picture did Jeremiah paint of the future return of the exiles? (31:7-8)
- 15. What attitude did Jeremiah predict for Israel as they returned to the land God had given them? (31:9)
- * 16. Why did God say He would provide streams of water and a level path? (31:9)
- 17. What two key actions did God promise to take on behalf of Israel, allowing them to return to the land? (31:10-11)
- 18. What causes for rejoicing would the people of Israel have when God fulfilled His promise? (31:10-14)
- 19. What hope for the future did Jeremiah hold out in order to encourage the mourners? (31:16-17)
- 20. What hypothetical "conversation" did Jeremiah record between the repentant Ephraim (symbolic of the northern kingdom) and God? (31:18-20)
- 21. What would become of the fatalistic proverb that reflected the people's sense of helplessness and doom? (31:29-30)
- * 22. What was the new covenant described by Jeremiah? (31:31-34)
- 23. How did God illustrate the certainty of His preservation of the descendants of Israel? (31:35-37)

Get It

- 24. Why was it important for prophecies to be recorded for the future, not just spoken in the present?
- 25. How is God's justice balanced with His mercy in the messages of Jeremiah?
- * 26. Given the fact that our sinfulness is incurable, how can we be made right with God?
- 27. How attainable do peace and security seem in our day?
- 28. What kind of devotion does God look for in a leader?
- * 29. What sort of behaviors does God model for earthly fathers to imitate?
- 30. In what sorts of circumstances does it help to know that God is a God of compassion?

31. How would you characterize the people around you with regard to fatalistic outlook?

Apply It

- * 32. Knowing that you can never cure yourself of your sin, how can you express your gratitude to God for His forgiveness?
- 33. How can you remind yourself of the source of your peace and security each day?
- 34. How can you imitate God in your role as father, mother, friend, sibling, etc. in a specific situation this week?

Jeremiah Buys a Field - Jeremiah 32:1-44

Topics: Anger, Children, Covenant, Discipline, Enemies, Escape, Evil, Goodness, Heart, History, Idolatry, Instructions, Joy, Listening, Love, Obedience, People, Possessions, Power, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Responsibility, Restoration, Rewards, Sacrifice, Sin, Success, Teaching, Witnessing, Youth

Open It

- * 1. When have you had the opportunity to deliver a well-deserved “I told you so”?
- 2. What do you think would happen to the crime rate if people believed the world would end tomorrow? Why?

Explore It

- 3. How long had the kings of Judah and Babylon been reigning when Jeremiah received this word from God? (32:1)
- 4. Where was Jeremiah, and who had put him there? (32:2-3)
- 5. What were the specifics of Jeremiah’s prophecies about the outcome of the siege? (32:3-5)
- 6. What happened to Jeremiah while he was in the courtyard, just as God had told him? (32:6-8)
- 7. What course of action did Jeremiah take? Why? (32:8-12)
- 8. What did God say after Jeremiah hid the deed to his newly purchased property in a clay jar? (32:13-15)
- * 9. What truths did Jeremiah proclaim about God’s nature? (32:17)
- 10. How did Jeremiah summarize God’s role and Israel’s role in their relationship throughout history? (32:18-23)
- * 11. Why was Jeremiah left to marvel over what he had just done? (32:24-25)
- 12. What was God’s reply to Jeremiah’s doubts? (32:26-27)
- 13. What had the people of Judah and Jerusalem done to deserve the punishment that was about to befall them? (32:28-35)
- 14. What glimpse into the immediate future was Jeremiah giving the people as God instructed? (32:36)
- * 15. What glimpse into the more distant future did God give to Jeremiah? (32:37-44)

Get It

- 16. How did Jeremiah’s seemingly irrational actions concerning a piece of property serve to illustrate what God was revealing?
- * 17. What different reactions are we likely to get when we communicate God’s ways to our world?
- 18. What should we do when obedience to God’s clear directives seems confusing, illogical, or even contradictory?
- 19. How does the unbelieving world view our hope in the triumph of Jesus Christ over sin and death?
- * 20. What might have happened if Jeremiah had been so caught up in appearances that he was afraid to look inconsistent to the people around him?
- 21. What element in this story illustrates the maxim that actions speak louder than words?
- 22. What kinds of purchases would you be likely and unlikely to make if you knew the world would end tomorrow?

Apply It

- 23. In what area of your life could it be helpful to ponder the truth that nothing is too hard for God?
- * 24. What steps can you take to evaluate how your concern for appearances is affecting your obedience to God?

Promise of Restoration - Jeremiah 33:1-26

Topics: Abundance, Anger, Answers, Awe, Call, Compassion, Covenant, Creation, Death, Earth, Evil, Fear, Forgiveness, Goodness, Grace, Healing, Health, Hiding, Honor, Joy, Justice, Knowledge, Law, Name, Peace, Praise, Promises, Rebellion, Rejection, Restoration, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Security, Sin, War

Open It

1. How do you feel when you have misplaced something you value highly, and then you find it?
- * 2. What laws of nature are commonly used by writers, speakers, or other communicators to illustrate a point?

Explore It

3. Where was Jeremiah when God spoke to him? (33:1)
4. How did God identify Himself to Jeremiah? (33:2)
- * 5. On what basis did God assert His authority to speak? (33:2)
6. What invitation did God issue to Jeremiah? (33:3)
7. What outcome did Jeremiah predict in the current war in which Babylon was besieging Jerusalem? (33:4-5)
8. How did God promise to reverse His actions in the more distant future? (33:6-7)
9. How would God satisfy His own righteousness with regard to the sin and rebellion of Judah? (33:8)
10. How did God predict that the rest of the world would react to a restored Judah? (33:9)
11. How did Jeremiah contrast the sights, sounds, and moods in Jerusalem before and after God's merciful intervention? (33:10-11)
12. What common sight of everyday life in Jeremiah's time would serve as a sign of God's restoration? (33:12-13)
13. What promise did God make that should have given great hope to Jeremiah's hearers? (33:14-16)
14. What promise did God make to David and reiterate to Jeremiah? (33:17-18)
- * 15. What did God offer as the guarantee of His promises? (33:19-22)
16. What conclusions were foreign nations drawing about God's people as they were being punished? (33:23-24)
- * 17. How did God assure His people that He would indeed have compassion on them? (33:23-26)

Get It

18. What may have been helpful about the fact that God revealed the near and distant future to Jeremiah at the same time?
19. What difference does it make that some of the prophecies about the Messiah were given to an imprisoned prophet in a besieged city?
- * 20. How does God's Lordship over Creation help us understand His power over human affairs?
- * 21. What is an example of a "great and unsearchable thing" that has been revealed to us by God?
22. Why is God concerned when people misunderstand His nature?

Apply It

- * 23. What example of God's faithfulness in nature can inspire your understanding of His constant love for you?
24. What unanswered question of your heart will you call out to God?

Judgment Arrives - Jeremiah 34:1-35:19

Topics: Call, Covenant, Death, Dishonesty, Disobedience, Drinking, Enemies, Escape, Faithfulness, Family, Freedom, Honor, Idolatry, Instructions, Invitation, Learning, Listening, Mourning, Name, Obedience, Peace, People, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Repentance, Serving, Sin, Slavery, Traditions, War, Words

Open It

- * 1. Whom do you admire for his or her faithfulness and integrity, and how does this person demonstrate those qualities?
- 2. What do you think motivates people to go back on their word?

Explore It

- 3. What good news and bad news did Jeremiah have for king Zedekiah during the siege of Jerusalem? (34:1-5)
- 4. At the time of this prophecy, what cities had not yet fallen to the king of Babylon? (34:6-7)
- * 5. What agreement did king Zedekiah make with the people of Jerusalem? (34:8-9)
- 6. How did the people respond to Zedekiah's suggestion about abolishing the slavery of fellow Jews? (34:10)
- 7. After they had agreed to free the slaves, what did the people do? (34:11)
- 8. What was God's plan for dealing with the issues of Israelites as slaves? (34:12-14)
- 9. What solemn agreement was initiated by Jeremiah's countrymen? (34:15)
- * 10. What action by the leadership of Judah profaned God's name? (34:16)
- 11. What was God's sarcastic expression for the punishment He decreed? (34:17)
- 12. How did God turn the ceremony used for solemnizing an agreement into a picture of the punishment due those who broke the agreement? (34:18-20)
- 13. What specific prophecy destroyed the hope that Nebuchadnezzar had withdrawn from Jerusalem for good? (34:21-22)
- 14. What invitation did God tell Jeremiah to issue to the Recabite family? (35:1-2)
- 15. Where did Jeremiah meet with the Recabites? (35:3-5)
- 16. How did the Recabites respond to Jeremiah's invitation? (35:6)
- 17. What instruction of their ancestor had the Recabites been obeying to the letter? (35:7-10)
- 18. Why had the Recabites come to Jerusalem? (35:11)
- * 19. How did Jeremiah use the example of the Recabites' obedience to call the people of Jerusalem to account? (35:12-16)
- 20. How did the people's response to God's call through His prophets seal their doom? (35:17)
- 21. What was God's promise to the Recabites because of their integrity and wholehearted obedience? (35:18-19)

Get It

- 22. What might Zedekiah have hoped would happen if the people repented of making slaves?
- 23. In what sense did it profane the name of God when His people broke their agreement with Him?
- 24. Why were the people of Jerusalem unwise to break a covenant they had made with God?
- 25. Why did God honor the obedience of the Recabites?
- 26. How are the examples in these chapters insightful lessons about the value of keeping your word?
- 27. What promises do contemporary people tend to take lightly?
- * 28. What sorts of consequences follow in the wake of a broken promise?
- * 29. What is gained by fulfilling the terms of a promise even if it hurts or requires sacrifice?

Apply It

- * 30. What promise do you need to keep, even if it is costly to you?

31. How could you advise a fellow Christian before he or she enters into a binding promise or agreement?

Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah's Scroll - Jeremiah 36:1-32

Topics: Anger, Answers, Disobedience, Fasting, Fear, Forgiveness, Hiding, Leadership, Listening, Mourning, Obedience, People, Plans, Prayer, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Repentance, Sin, Words

Open It

- * 1. What is your most vivid memory of being sent to do something risky, and how did it feel at the time?
- 2. When has a routine duty suddenly required courage on your part?
- 3. For what reasons might you be willing to defy the governing authorities?

Explore It

- 4. Who was king of Judah when Jeremiah wrote down this prophecy from God? (36:1)
- * 5. What was God's purpose in having Jeremiah record His judgments against Judah? (36:2-3)
- 6. Who helped Jeremiah record God's message and deliver it to the people? (36:4-7)
- 7. Why had many Jews gathered in Jerusalem at the time Baruch read the scroll in the temple? (36:8-10)
- 8. Who reported the gist of the prophecy to the officials gathered in the secretary's room? (36:11-13)
- 9. What did the other officials ask when they heard what was happening in the temple? (36:14-15)
- 10. What did the shaken officials feel they must do about the prophecy? (36:16)
- 11. What questions did the officials ask of Baruch? (36:17-18)
- 12. What orders did the officials give Baruch for himself and Jeremiah? (36:19)
- * 13. How did the king respond in action and attitude as the scroll was being read aloud? (36:20-24)
- 14. What did the king's officials respond to what the king did with the scroll? (36:25)
- 15. What was the king's first action after he had burned the scroll? (36:26)
- 16. What was God's response to king Jehoiakim through His servant Jeremiah? (36:27-31)
- * 17. How did Jeremiah and Baruch faithfully demonstrate that God's plans would not be stopped by the king? (36:32)

Get It

- 18. How is God's long-suffering nature portrayed in the story of Jeremiah's scroll?
- 19. What character traits were exhibited by Baruch in this story?
- * 20. Why were the officials afraid when they heard Baruch's message?
- 21. What are the indications within the story that the officials had a good idea of how the king would react to the scroll?
- 22. When might a routine duty suddenly require courage to do the right thing?
- 23. How does a public pronouncement of a written document add weight to a message someone wants to deliver?
- * 24. What is our responsibility when a decision with moral consequences lies in the hands of someone above us in the chain of command?

Apply It

- * 25. How will you respond to those in immediate authority over you who resolutely oppose God?
- 26. How can God's offer of yet one more chance remind you to seek God's forgiveness for repeated offenses you've had trouble conquering?

Jeremiah in Prison - Jeremiah 37:1-38:28

Topics: Abandon, Accusation, Advice, Anger, Answers, Choices, Conversation, Death, Deceit, Discouragement, Escape, Fear, Freedom, Friendship, Goodness, Instructions, Leadership, Life, Listening, Mercy, Murder, Obedience, Opposition, Prayer, Prophecy, Questions, Swearing, Trust, Words

Open It

- * 1. What story of a dramatic rescue has stayed in your mind? Why?
- 2. How have you coped with news that wasn't what you wanted to hear?

Explore It

- 3. How did Zedekiah become king of Judah? (37:1)
- 4. What request did Zedekiah make of Jeremiah? (37:2-3)
- 5. What is revealed about the city of Jerusalem at the beginning of this story? (37:5)
- * 6. Despite the fact that the situation seemed to be looking up, what bad news did Jeremiah tell the king? (37:6-8)
- 7. Why was Jeremiah put in prison? (37:11-15)
- * 8. What question did the king ask Jeremiah in secret? (37:17)
- 9. How did Jeremiah answer the king? (37:17)
- 10. On what basis did Jeremiah plead his case with King Zedekiah? (37:18-20)
- 11. Where did the king order that Jeremiah be held instead of the dungeon in Jonathan's house? (37:21)
- 12. What did some of the officials find out that Jeremiah was telling the people? (38:1-3)
- 13. What punishment did the officials propose to the king? (38:4)
- 14. How did the king respond to the officials' demand? (38:5)
- 15. Where was Jeremiah's place of imprisonment? (38:6)
- 16. Who appealed to the king on behalf of Jeremiah? (38:7-9)
- 17. What happened in response to Ebed-Melech's appeal? (38:7-13)
- 18. Where did Jeremiah stay after his rescue? (38:11-13)
- 19. Why was Jeremiah hesitant to answer the king's request to give him a straightforward answer? (38:14-15)
- 20. After Zedekiah had sworn not to harm him, what did Jeremiah reveal about God's plans? (38:16-18)
- 21. Why was Zedekiah afraid to obey God and surrender to the Babylonians? (38:19)
- * 22. What specifics did Jeremiah tell the king about what would happen if he did, or didn't, obey God? (38:20-23)
- 23. Because it was dangerous for them to have talked, what did Zedekiah tell Jeremiah to say when he was questioned about his conversation with the king? (38:24-26)
- 24. Where was Jeremiah when the city of Jerusalem was captured? (38:28)

Get It

- 25. Where were the people of Jerusalem looking for help against the Babylonian siege?
- 26. Why was Jeremiah so unpopular with the officials of Jerusalem and the temple?
- 27. How was Jeremiah taking action on his own prophecy about the future when he was apprehended by his enemies?
- * 28. When has obedience to God required you to make a decision you knew would be unpopular with others?
- 29. What contributes to a climate in which God-respecting people are harassed, mocked, ridiculed, or even harmed?
- * 30. What are people acknowledging when they turn to God in times of confusion or trouble?

Apply It

31. How might you be able to plead the case of a helpless person in the weeks to come?
- * 32. What step can you take this week toward developing the faith to obey God even when His will is not necessarily what you want?

The Fall of Jerusalem - Jeremiah 39:1-40:6

Topics: Choices, Disobedience, Favoritism, Fear, Freedom, Gifts, History, Home, Life, Murder, People, Poor, Punishment, Running, Salvation, Sin, Trust, War

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite story, true or fictional, of a total reversal of fortunes?
- 2. What do you think of the idea that the captain should go down with the ship? Why?

Explore It

- 3. What happened to Jerusalem? (39:1-3)
- 4. What did the king of Judah and his soldiers do when the Babylonians entered the city? (39:4)
- * 5. What happened to Zedekiah and his troops because they decided to flee? (39:5-7)
- 6. What was left of the kingdom of Judah when the Babylonians finally left? (39:8-10)
- 7. What happened to the prophet Jeremiah when the Babylonians took the city? (39:11-14)
- * 8. What words of comfort did Jeremiah have on the eve of the Babylonian victory for the man who had rescued him from the cistern? (39:15-18)
- 9. Where was Jeremiah when the Babylonian commander of the guard came looking for him in order to carry out the king's instructions? (40:1-2)
- * 10. What did Nebuzaradan understand about what had just transpired in Judah? (40:2-3)
- 11. What choices were given to Jeremiah about where he would live? (40:4-5)
- 12. Where did Jeremiah choose to stay after he was freed by the Babylonians? (40:6)

Get It

- 13. Although Zedekiah had been installed as a puppet king for the Babylonians, why did he run in fear when they finally took the city?
- 14. Why would the Babylonians have left a few poor people and given them property?
- * 15. What can we learn about Jeremiah's character and motives from the fact that he chose to stay with his people rather than receive honor in Babylon?
- * 16. What is revealed about God's character through His concern for Ebed-Melech?
- 17. How would you respond to the self-imposed suffering of someone who had ignored your previous warnings about the consequences of a specific behavior?

Apply It

- 18. What immediate action can you take this week concerning a warning from God's Word?
- * 19. What person of faith could you study in the coming weeks in order to learn how to take a stand for God's righteousness while maintaining compassion for sinners?

The Flight to Egypt - Jeremiah 40:7-45:5

Topics: Abundance, Anger, Answers, Believe, Compassion, Death, Deceit, Desires, Disobedience, Enemies, Escape, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, Forget, Fruit, Grief, Guidance, Humility, Husbands, Idolatry, Instructions, Law, Leadership, Life, Listening, Lying, Murder, Name, Obedience, Pain, People, Plans, Prayer, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Questions, Remembering, Rest, Restoration, Salvation, Serving, Sin, Sorrow, Stubbornness, Suffering, Swearing, Vows, War, Worship

Open It

- * 1. Whom do you know who has been too trusting and suffered because he or she refused to believe ill of another person?
- 2. What traditional superstitions were you taught as you were growing up?

Explore It

- 3. How did the governor appointed by the Babylonians reassure the small fighting force that remained in the land after the Babylonians withdrew? (40:7-10)
- 4. How did the remnant of people in the land of Judah grow and begin to prosper? (40:11-12)
- 5. What warning did some of the commanders give to Gedaliah, the appointed governor? (40:13-14)
- 6. How did Johanan propose to solve the threat against Gedaliah, which he perceived as potentially disastrous to the whole remnant? (40:15)
- 7. How did Gedaliah respond to Johanan's desire to protect him? (40:16)
- 8. What devious plan was carried out by Ishmael and his followers? (41:1-3)
- 9. What evil deeds did Ishmael add to his murder of Gedaliah? (41:4-10)
- 10. What transpired when Johanan caught up to Ishmael? (41:11-15)
- 11. What did Johanan assume the remaining faithful people would have to do since Gedaliah had been murdered? (41:16-18)
- 12. What request did Johanan and the people with him make of the prophet Jeremiah? (42:1-3)
- * 13. What promises did Jeremiah and the people make to one another? (42:4-6)
- 14. What positive commands and reassuring words did Jeremiah bring from God? (42:7-12)
- 15. What warning did God have for the people in anticipation of their intended disobedience? (42:13-18)
- 16. Of what fatal mistake did Jeremiah accuse the remnant of Judah? (42:19-22)
- * 17. How did Johanan and the other leaders rationalize their disobedience? (43:1-3)
- 18. Who were the people who entered Egypt, some of them against their will? (43:4-7)
- 19. When he was at Tahpanhes with the others, what symbolic action did God tell Jeremiah to take, and what was the meaning? (43:8-13)
- 20. For what sin did God, through Jeremiah, remind the people that He had punished Judah and Jerusalem? (44:1-6)
- 21. Why was Jeremiah amazed that the remnant had not learned a lesson from all that had happened before? (44:7-10)
- 22. What did God say He would do to all those determined to go to Egypt for protection? (44:11-14)
- * 23. What superstitious belief did the people cite as they defied Jeremiah openly? (44:15-19)
- 24. How did Jeremiah proceed to correct their thinking about the real cause of their misfortune? (44:20-23)
- 25. With what vow did God answer the people's vow to continue worshipping the "Queen of Heaven"? (44:24-28)
- 26. What did God promise to do to the pharaoh of Egypt, whom the Israelites considered an ally against Babylon? (44:29-30)
- 27. Why was the scribe, Baruch, feeling sorry for himself? (45:1-3)
- 28. How did God respond to Baruch's self-pity? (45:4-5)

Get It

- 29. What mistake on the part of a well-meaning governor kept the remnant of poor people and fugitive soldiers from prospering after the Babylonian conquest?
- * 30. How did reliance on their own wisdom and preconceptions about God's answer get Johanan and his fellow leaders into trouble?
- 31. What (other than fear of the Babylonians) led the people to ignore God and His prophet, Jeremiah?
- 32. Why did Jeremiah call the disobedience of the people who insisted on fleeing to Egypt a fatal mistake?
- 33. Why do people swear oaths that they don't really intend to keep?
- 34. Why are some people willing to attribute their misfortune to God's indifference or powerlessness rather than to their own sins?
- 35. When have you felt discouraged because of how long you have endured hardship in doing the right thing?
- * 36. What blessings will follow if we allow God's loving-kindness to be our reward for faithfulness?

Apply It

- 37. In what area of your life do you need to pray for God's perspective on human evil?
- * 38. What initial steps can you take to refocus on the eternal rather than the earthly rewards when you face discouragement in serving the Lord?

Prophecies about Foreign Nations - Jeremiah 46:1-51:64

Topics: Abandon, Alone, Arrogance, Challenge, Complacency, Confidence, Courage, Covenant, Creation, Death, Deceit, Discipline, Discouragement, Drinking, Enemies, Escape, Evil, Fear, Forgiveness, Forsake, Glory, Grief, Guilt, Healing, Heart, Help, Holiness, Hope, Idolatry, Insults, Joy, Judgment, Justice, Lost, Mercy, Mourning, Name, Opportunities, Opposition, Oppressed, Pain, Peace, Plans, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Purpose, Questions, Remembering, Rest, Restoration, Revenge, Running, Sacrifice, Salvation, Security, Shame, Silence, Sin, Strength, Swearing, Trust, Unfaithfulness, War, Wealth, Wisdom, Words, Youth

Open It

- * 1. What, in your mind, is a good example of a situation in which justice was served?
- 2. In what strategic defense or weapon would you have the most confidence during a personal attack?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Jeremiah say that the mighty warriors of Egypt would cower before Nebuchadnezzar? (46:13-17)
- 4. Despite the judgment coming on Egypt, what did God promise them eventually? (46:25-26)
- 5. What promises did God make to Israel with honesty, justice, and hope? (46:27-28)
- 6. To what terrifying natural disaster did God compare the Egyptian conquest of Philistia? (47:2-5)
- 7. Where did the people of Moab misplace their trust, sending themselves and their idols into captivity? (48:6-9)
- 8. In the context of judging the nations, what curse did Jeremiah pronounce on the lax or merciful? (48:10)
- 9. Why would it be particularly appropriate when Moab became an object of scorn and ridicule? (48:26-27)
- 10. What brought about Moab's destruction as a nation? (48:42)
- 11. What was the source of Ammon's false sense of security? (49:4)
- 12. What did God promise to the Ammonites when their punishment was complete? (49:6)
- 13. How did God say He would treat the helpless, even within the borders of His enemy, Edom? (49:11)
- 14. Why did Edom think its location made it invincible? (49:15-16)
- 15. How would Damascus along with Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor also fall under God's judgment? (49:23-33)
- 16. What would eventually happen to the nation of Elam after it was defeated and taken into exile? (49:37-39)
- * 17. With their enemies facing God's wrath, what did Jeremiah predict Israel and Judah would do? (50:4-5)
- 18. What attitude of the Babylonians in relation to God's people convinced God to leave them desolate? (50:11-13)
- 19. Since the Babylonians had exiled many of the peoples they conquered from their own land, what would happen when God punished them? (50:16)
- * 20. When Babylon was made accountable to God, what would become of Israel's guilt? (50:20)
- 21. What did Jeremiah tell us about Israel's Redeemer? (50:34)
- 22. To what historic event did God compare the coming destruction of Babylon? (50:39-40)
- 23. What were the Babylonians failing to take into account about God's relationship to Israel? (51:5)
- 24. What nation was to become God's instrument of justice against Babylon? (51:11-14)
- * 25. How did Jeremiah contrast the God of Israel with the idols of the other nations? (51:17-19)
- 26. What religious disgrace of the people of Israel would be remedied by God Himself? (51:51-53)
- 27. What message about Babylon was Seraiah to deliver to the exiles in Babylon? (51:59-64)

Get It

- 28. Why was it important for the Jews exiled in Babylon to know that Babylon's great power would soon fall?
- 29. Why was it important that each instrument of God's wrath not be lax?
- * 30. In what ways does modern society practice some of the same evil and rebellious attitudes that brought on God's punishments for these nations?
- * 31. What will become of those who rejoice when one of God's servants stumbles morally?
- 32. How does our worship become acceptable to God?

Apply It

- 33. In what situation can you demonstrate a new attitude toward a Christian who has stumbled?
- * 34. Through what difficult circumstance will you ask God to give you perspective, patience, and (eventually) freedom?

The Fall of Jerusalem - Jeremiah 52:1-34

Topics: Anger, Craftsmanship, Death, Evil, Freedom, Honor, Judgment, Kindness, Leadership, Poor, Punishment, Rebellion, Running, War, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. When property of yours is stolen, how do you feel when you discover the loss?
- 2. What, in your mind, constitute the national treasures of your country?

Explore It

- 3. How did God view Zedekiah, king of Judah? (52:1-3)
- 4. Why did Nebuchadnezzar lay siege to the city of Jerusalem? (52:3-5)
- 5. What was the condition of Jerusalem after almost two years? (52:6)
- 6. What did Judah's army do when the Babylonians broke through the city wall? (52:7-9)
- * 7. What was Zedekiah's punishment for rebelling against Babylon? (52:9-11)
- 8. What happened to the buildings of Jerusalem and the rest of the population? (52:12-15)
- 9. What did the captain of the guard want those left behind to do? (52:16)
- * 10. What were some of the valuable articles that the Babylonians took out of the temple? (52:17-19)
- 11. What were the notable features of the lavish worship objects that the Babylonians destroyed? (52:20-23)
- 12. What became of the leaders who remained in the city of Jerusalem after the siege? (52:24-27)
- 13. How many Jews in all were removed from Jerusalem by the Babylonians? (52:28-30)
- * 14. What happened to the first king of Judah, who obeyed God and surrendered to the Babylonians? (52:31-34)

Get It

- * 15. How does the book of Jeremiah make it clear that even the last of the kings of Judah and his subjects suffered for their own sins?
- 16. What made Zedekiah's punishment much worse than that of the first king of Judah, Jehoiachin, who had surrendered to Babylon?
- * 17. How did Jehoiachin, living in Babylon, receive his reward for obeying God's unusual directive to surrender to the enemy?
- 18. What was the wisdom of leaving behind some of the poorest people in a conquered land?
- 19. In your opinion, why was the looting of the temple significant enough to record in detail?
- 20. What was the material and human condition of the city of Jerusalem by the end of this story?

Apply It

- * 21. What biblical lesson in disobedience can you make into your personal object lesson to inspire you to obey God?
- 22. What acquaintance of yours going through a difficult time could you encourage with the truth that God will judge the wicked?

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Jeremiah Mourns for Jerusalem - Lamentations 1:1-22

Topics: Abandon, Despair, Enemies, God, Help, Judgment, Mourning, People, Punishment, Rebellion, Righteousness, Sin, Society, Sorrow

Open It

1. How do you handle rejection?
- * 2. What city would you least like to visit? Why?
3. What do you do when you know you need help?

Explore It

- * 4. How did the writer describe the city? (1:1-2)
5. What happened to Judah? (1:3)
6. What did the empty roads to Zion depict? (1:4-6)
7. What did Jerusalem recall? (1:7)
- * 8. How had the city become ruined? (1:8-11)
9. Who punished Jerusalem? (1:12)
10. How had the daughter of Judah suffered? (1:13-16)
11. Why were Zion's pleas for help ignored? (1:17-19)
- * 12. What price did Zion pay for her rebellion? (1:18-19)
13. How did devastated Jerusalem describe her condition? (1:20-22)
14. What was Zion's prayer for her enemies? (1:21-22)

Get It

15. What do you consider to be the worst change in your community during the past year?
- * 16. From your point of view, how much leadership, respect, and authority is given to God by our nation?
17. How do you think God deals with the sins of our society?
- * 18. If God were to lament publicly over our society, what do you think He would say?
19. What social sins most trouble you?
20. How has suffering and humiliation moved you to action?
21. When have you felt ignored by God?
22. When have you felt in desperate need of God's help?
23. What do you need to safeguard most in your relationship with God?

Apply It

- * 24. When could you spend five minutes every day this week praying for the needs of a big city?
25. What action can you take to challenge a sinful social policy or practice in your community?

God's Anger at Sin - Lamentations 2:1-22

Topics: Anger, Children, Death, Despair, Enemies, God, Leadership, Mourning, People, Prayer, Prophecy, Shame, Sin, Sorrow, Suffering, War

Open It

1. If a close friend turned against you, what would you do?
2. How do you respond to graphic scenes of starving children?
- * 3. When have you had to plead on behalf of something or someone?

Explore It

4. What did the Lord do to the Daughter of Zion? (2:1-2)
5. What happened to Judah's strength and power? (2:3)
6. What had the Lord become like to the Israelites? (2:4-5)
7. In His anger, what did the Lord allow to happen? (2:6-7)
8. What became of the city? (2:8-9)
9. How did the destruction of the city affect the elders and young women? (2:10)
- * 10. How did the author respond to the harrowing scenes of destruction? (2:11)
11. What happened to the children because of the consequences of war? (2:11-12)
- * 12. How deep was the trouble that had overtaken God's people? (2:13)
13. How had the false prophets misled the people? (2:14)
14. How did Israel's enemies respond to her ruin? (2:15-16)
15. What was the fearless message of the true prophets? (2:17)
- * 16. What was the suffering city told to do? (2:18-22)

Get It

17. When have you felt the Lord's silence or anger against you?
18. How do you respond when you are treated harshly by those closest to you?
- * 19. God's people had sinned and He punished them for it; how does God deal with our sin today?
20. Why do you think God allows suffering?
21. What popular false teachings are set forth today by religious leaders?
22. In what ways have Christians today become complacent about sin?
23. How should Christians respond to the horrors of famine?
- * 24. What does it mean to you to cry to the Lord from the depths of your heart?

Apply It

25. What can you give to help provide food for a hungry child?
- * 26. When can you spend some time in prayer for an individual or group of people going through intense suffering?

God's Anger Is Satisfied - Lamentations 4:1-22

Topics: Anger, Children, Consequences, Enemies, Future, God, Hope, Leadership, People, Punishment, Sin, Suffering

Open It

1. What once-treasured possession of yours has lost its value and significance over the years?
- * 2. If you could restore something important from history that is now in ruins, what would you want restored? Why?

Explore It

3. What was scattered throughout the streets? (4:1)
- * 4. What contrasts did the writer make between Jerusalem in her glory and Jerusalem in her shame? (4:1-12)
5. How did the children fare in the siege of Jerusalem? (4:2-4)
6. What happened to the wealthy? (4:5)
7. How did Zion's punishment compare with that of Sodom? (4:6)
8. How were the arrogant and self-confident brought down? (4:7-12)
- * 9. What were the reasons for the siege? (4:13-20)
10. How were the prophets and priests punished? (4:14-16)
11. Why were the people disappointed in their ally? (4:17)
12. What was Judah powerless to avert? (4:18-20)
13. What did the future hold for Edom? (4:21)
- * 14. What was Zion's hope? (4:22)

Get It

- * 15. What have you lost that was once precious to you?
- * 16. How would you compare your walk with the Lord today to your spiritual life five years ago?
17. What role does godly discipline play in the life of your church?
18. In what ways do we disregard the consequences of sin?
19. Who are some of today's false prophets?
20. What false securities have kept you from relying on the Lord?
21. How would you describe your hunger for God?
22. How is the Lord a hope and comfort to you in times of trouble?

Apply It

23. What can you do to restore a relationship in need of renewal?
- * 24. What is one thing you can do to renew your hope in the Lord?

Jeremiah Pleads for Restoration - Lamentations 5:1-22

Topics: Anger, Faithfulness, Forget, Forsake, God, Mercy, Mourning, People, Punishment, Renewal, Restoration, Sin, Suffering

Open It

1. If you could help a group of people defeated by war and suffering, what group would you help and how would you help them?
- * 2. If you had the ability to change one thing about your past in order to improve your present circumstances, what change would you make?

Explore It

- * 3. What did the people ask the Lord to do? (5:1)
4. What was the predicament of God's people? (5:2-18)
5. What were the Jews compelled to do? (5:4-6)
- * 6. What consequences were other generations forced to bear? (5:7-10)
7. How did the poet describe the shamefulness of sin? (5:11-18)
8. What was the attitude of God's people? (5:15)
9. Why did the Jews face such awful retribution? (5:16)
10. What had become of the Davidic dynasty? (5:17-18)
11. How did the writer describe God's throne? (5:19)
- * 12. What were the longings of God's people? (5:20-22)

Get It

13. When you face trouble, at what point do you turn to the Lord for help?
- * 14. What is easy or difficult about facing the consequences of our sin?
- * 15. What previous sins committed by others in your family still affect you now?
16. When was the last time you felt sorrow for sins?
17. What is the value of a penitent attitude?
18. What is your attitude toward the Lord when He disciplines you?
19. Why would God forsake His people?
20. In what ways do you need to be restored to the Lord?
21. What words would you use to describe God's faithfulness?

Apply It

22. When can you spend some time this week examining your life for sin and seeking God's forgiveness?
- * 23. What "family sin" or tendency do you want to focus on changing, and what would be one step you could take toward change?

Hope in the Midst of Affliction - Lamentations 3:1-66

Topics: Anger, Compassion, Enemies, Faithfulness, God, Hope, Judgment, Justice, Love, Mercy, People, Perseverance, Prayer, Punishment, Repentance, Suffering

Open It

1. If you were to portray pain and suffering through poetry, music, or painting, which one medium would you choose? Why?
- * 2. What gives you hope when you are troubled?

Explore It

3. How did the writer identify with the sufferings of the people of Judah? (3:1-18)
4. To whom were the sufferings of the people directly attributed? (3:1-18)
- * 5. What did the poet recall? (3:19-21)
- * 6. In the middle of lamenting the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, what profound assurance did the writer express? (3:22-24)
7. What virtues were affirmed by the author? (3:25-27)
- * 8. How was God's mercy revealed in suffering? (3:28-33)
9. What was intolerable to the Lord? (3:34-36)
10. How did the writer describe the nature of God's knowledge? (3:37-38)
11. What did the writer say about sin and suffering? (3:39)
12. In identifying with God's people, what did the poet urge them to do? (3:40-42)
13. How did the writer describe the sorrows of sin? (3:43-54)
14. What was the prayer of the penitent sinner? (3:55-66)
15. How did the prayer include both comfort and cursing? (3:55-66)

Get It

16. What valuable lessons have you learned through personal suffering?
17. How have you been affected by God's hand of discipline?
18. What do you know about the mercies of God in the middle of difficulty?
- * 19. Why does relying on God give you hope?
- * 20. What message of hope can we offer to people who are in despair?
21. If the author of Lamentations wrote a letter to your congregation, what specific call to repentance would be given?

Apply It

- * 22. To whom could you write a supportive letter (or make a phone call) to provide a word of encouragement and hope?
23. When can you spend some time in prayer to thank the Lord for His faithfulness and acts of mercy in your life?

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The Living Creatures and the Glory of the Lord - Ezekiel 1:1-28

Topics: Angels, Appearance, Awe, Glory, God, Holy Spirit, Light

Open It

- * 1. What experience can you say has left you awestruck?
- 2. What is your favorite mythical creature? Why?

Explore It

- 3. How old was Ezekiel and where was he living when he saw visions of God? (1:1)
- * 4. How long had the people of Judah been in exile in Babylonia when Ezekiel had his vision? (1:2-3)
- 5. To what natural occurrence did Ezekiel liken what he saw coming toward him? (1:4)
- * 6. What were the human and nonhuman features of the living beings Ezekiel described? (1:5-11)
- 7. How were the creatures positioned in relation to one another? (1:9-11)
- 8. What was remarkable about the way the creatures moved? (1:12)
- 9. To what did Ezekiel compare the light, or brightness, coming from the creatures? (1:13-14)
- 10. What unique characteristics did Ezekiel notice in the wheels that accompanied the creatures? (1:15-18)
- 11. Why would it not be accurate to say that the “wheels” were vehicles used by the creatures? (1:19-21)
- 12. How did Ezekiel describe the sound of the wings of the four creatures? (1: 24)
- 13. How did Ezekiel describe the person who spoke from the “expanse” above the creatures? (1:25-28)
- 14. What did Ezekiel realize he was seeing? (1:28)
- * 15. How did Ezekiel respond when he saw the “likeness of the glory of the Lord”? (1:28)

Get It

- * 16. What is notable about the fact that God was still speaking to His people through prophets although they were in a foreign land?
- 17. Why do you suppose Ezekiel thought it important to record his visions in such detail?
- 18. How would you respond to an opportunity to peer into the throne room of God from this side of the grave?
- * 19. What spiritual benefit can we glean from other people’s visions of the glory of God?
- 20. What sorts of emotions would move a person to lie prostrate on the ground?
- 21. Why are you glad that you worship a God who is not the product of human hands?

Apply It

- 22. What hymn or song based on Ezekiel’s vision could you commit to memory this week as a tool of worship?
- * 23. In what secular association in your life (school, work, or community) can you be available and listening for what God might want to say to or through you?

Ezekiel's Call and Warning to Israel - Ezekiel 2:1-3:27

Topics: Accountability, Anger, Awe, Bitterness, Death, Evil, Fear, Glory, God's Will, Heart, Holy Spirit, Instructions, Listening, Mourning, Perseverance, Prophecy, Rebellion, Righteousness, Salvation, Silence, Sin, Stubbornness, Words

Open It

1. What task have you had to perform even though it seemed unlikely to produce results?
- * 2. What were some of the ways you manifested youthful rebellion?
3. How would you describe the longest period you have ever maintained silence?

Explore It

- * 4. What mission did God assign to the prophet Ezekiel? (2:3-5)
5. What images did God use to describe the reception Ezekiel was likely to get for his message? (2:6)
- * 6. What warning did God give Ezekiel concerning his own behavior? (2:8)
7. What did God command Ezekiel to do with the scroll He presented to him? (2:8-9; 3:1-2)
8. How did the scroll taste to Ezekiel when he ate it? (3:3)
9. Who did God know would have been more receptive to His word than His own people? (3:5-7)
- * 10. What did God promise to do for Ezekiel in the face of the stubbornness of the Jews? (3:8-9)
11. Where were the Jews to whom Ezekiel carried God's message? (3:10-11)
12. What was Ezekiel's experience of the glory of God when God had finished speaking to him? (3:12-13)
13. How did Ezekiel describe his state of mind after being commissioned by God? (3:14-15)
14. What was Ezekiel's role in relation to Israel? (3:17)
15. How did God explain Ezekiel's accountability for speaking God's Word to a wicked man? (3:18-19)
16. Under what circumstances would Ezekiel be accountable for the death of a righteous person? (3:20-21)
17. What experience did Ezekiel have again after his seven days of mourning? (3:22-23)
18. How did God establish when Ezekiel was to speak or remain silent? (3:24-27)

Get It

19. In what ways could your church share God's characterization of Israel as "obstinate" and "hardened"?
20. How does your concern for the reactions of others affect your desire to do what God wants?
21. What is most difficult about confronting someone about his or her faults?
22. Why do you suppose the scroll containing God's words of "lament and mourning and woe" tasted good to Ezekiel?
- * 23. What is the Christian's responsibility with regard to unbelievers or believers who fall into sin?
24. Why was it appropriate for Ezekiel to follow the traditional actions of mourning?
- * 25. Why is it important that God emphasizes the responsibility of individual choice?

Apply It

26. What nagging area of rebellion can you ask God to change in you this week?
- * 27. For what rebellious or unbelieving friend or neighbor can you begin to pray, looking for an opportunity to warn him or her of God's righteous judgment and tell him or her of God's mercy?

Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized - Ezekiel 4:1-5:17

Topics: Death, Despair, Idolatry, Law, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Sin, Suffering

Open It

1. What sorts of predictions do we count on in our everyday decisions and actions?
- * 2. Why do you think illustrations or dramatizations are useful in getting a verbal message across to an audience?

Explore It

3. What model did God instruct Ezekiel to build in order to illustrate his first message? (4:1-3)
4. What was the duration of God's punishment of Israel as predicted by Ezekiel's symbolic action? (4:4-5)
5. How long did Ezekiel lie on his right side to illustrate the punishment of Judah? (4:6-8)
6. What were Ezekiel's cooking and eating habits supposed to illustrate about what would happen in Jerusalem? (4:9-13)
7. How did God respond when Ezekiel didn't want to defile himself in order to illustrate the extent of the famine? (4:15)
- * 8. According to God, why would Israel and Judah suffer so much? (4:17)
9. What was Ezekiel to do with each third of the hair he shaved from his own head? (5:1-4)
10. How had Jerusalem repaid the favor that God had shown? (5:5-7)
11. How did Jerusalem compare to the pagan nations around her? (5:7)
12. How was God's coming punishment to compare with those of the past and the future? (5:9)
13. To what depths did God predict that people would descend when He punished them? (5:10)
- * 14. What sin prompted God to destroy each third of the people of Jerusalem in the manner predicted by Ezekiel? (5:11-12)
- * 15. What did God say the people would know after He vented His wrath? (5:13)
16. How would other nations respond to the people once favored by God? (5:14-15)
17. What various forms of suffering and destruction did God predict for His people? (5:16-17)

Get It

18. How do you think Ezekiel might have been viewed in his own time?
- * 19. In what different ways might people have responded to Ezekiel's dramatized prophecies?
20. What are some of the worst aspects of a prolonged siege?
- * 21. What qualities does a person need in order to do unpopular things in the name of God?
22. Why might people assume that God's favor toward a person or a nation is irrevocable?

Apply It

- * 23. What step of obedience might you ask God to give you the courage to carry through?
24. What spiritual word of warning do you need to take seriously this coming week?

A Prophecy against the Mountains of Israel - Ezekiel 6:1-14

Topics: Adultery, Anger, Death, Escape, Idolatry, Lust, Prophecy, Punishment, Sovereignty

Open It

- * 1. What is it about calamity that can heighten our fear of God?
- 2. What is your closest experience of war in your lifetime?

Explore It

- 3. Against what geographical feature did Ezekiel prophesy (figuratively)? (6:1-3)
- 4. What did God promise that Israel would see at all the sites of pagan worship? (6:4-6)
- 5. What knowledge would come out of the devastation to be visited on Israel? (6:7)
- 6. What would happen to those who escaped death by the sword? (6:8)
- * 7. What would become apparent to the exiles about God and about themselves? (6:9)
- 8. By carrying through on His Word, what was God proving about His threats? (6:10)
- 9. What attitude and emotion did God command Ezekiel to demonstrate? (6:11)
- * 10. How was God going to express His wrath against Israel? (6:12)
- * 11. Where would the greatest concentration of the dead be found when God judged Israel? (6:13)
- 12. What was the primary purpose of God's wrath and judgment? (6:14)

Get It

- * 13. Why did God feel such hatred for the "high places" to be found in Israel?
- 14. What message would be communicated by a smashed altar?
- * 15. Why is it important for God's people to "know that I am the Lord"?
- 16. What are the modern-day idols (false gods) that divert us from worshiping of the one true and living God?
- 17. How often do you find yourself grieving and mourning over personal or societal sin?

Apply It

- * 18. What would be an appropriate way for you to express to God your grief over sin in your life?
- 19. What has God done lately that gives rise to praise and lets you know that He is Lord?

The End Has Come - Ezekiel 7:1-27

Topics: Accountability, Anger, Death, Despair, Escape, Grieving, Idolatry, Judgment, Law, Lost, Mercy, People, Pride, Punishment, Shame, Sin, Sovereignty, Timing, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What is one of the most helpless feelings you've ever experienced?
- 2. What is one thing you'd love to have that money can't buy?

Explore It

- 3. What was the first two-word message that God told Ezekiel to proclaim? (7:1-3)
- 4. What did God resolve that He would not do this time, as He had so often in the past? (7:4)
- * 5. What different words did God use to describe what was about to happen to Israel? (7:5-7)
- 6. What was God poised to "repay"? (7:8-9)
- 7. What would the people know about the origin of the disaster from the sheer magnitude of the disaster? (7:9)
- 8. What human vices did God say would run rampant, causing much misery? (7:10-11)
- 9. In what resource had the people come to trust, which would now fail them? (7:12-13)
- 10. What other potential defense would be stopped by God's wrath? (7:14)
- 11. What did Ezekiel say about the possibility of escaping from the coming wrath of God? (7:15-16)
- * 12. What were some of the dramatic evidences of helplessness in Ezekiel's prophecy? (7:17-19)
- 13. What was God going to allow to happen to the riches and edifices in which Israel took pride? (7:20-22)
- 14. For what crimes against their fellow humans did God hold Israel accountable? (7:23)
- * 15. What did Ezekiel predict that the people would do to try to avert God's wrath? (7:24-27)
- 16. What lesson did God realize Israel would learn from the disaster that was about to come upon them? (7:27)

Get It

- 17. If you were going to dramatize this chapter in a contemporary setting, where would your "Ezekiel" be speaking and whom would he be addressing?
- * 18. How hard or easy do you think it was for Ezekiel's listeners to visualize a time when the temple would be desecrated and they would view their gold as "unclean"?
- 19. What was the most important thing that God wanted to get across to His people through the coming disasters?
- 20. What is your first reaction when you hear of someone predicting economic or social collapse, or even the "end of the world"?
- 21. What evidences do you see that people today are trusting in affluence, military might, and cultural accomplishments?
- * 22. Why do you think people will look to God in times of calamity but scoff at Him in times of prosperity?

Apply It

- * 23. When can you set aside an hour to ask God to help you take an honest inventory of the things and people in whom you put your trust?
- 24. What friend or acquaintance should you encourage to fear God while there is still time to experience His mercy?

Idolatry in the Temple - Ezekiel 8:1-18

Topics: Anger, Darkness, Earth, Evil, Glory, Heaven, Idolatry, Jealousy, Leadership, Listening, Mercy, Mourning, Prophecy, Worship

Open It

- * 1. The last time you had reason, or thought you had reason, to feel jealousy over a close relationship, how did it feel?
- 2. What feelings would rise up in you if you were to see a pagan rite being observed in your church building?

Explore It

- 3. Where was Ezekiel when the vision from God came to him? (8:1)
- 4. How did Ezekiel describe the figure who appeared before him? (8:2)
- * 5. Where was Ezekiel transported in his vision? (8:3)
- 6. What was the first thing that the man called to Ezekiel's attention? (8:5)
- * 7. What would soon be the effect of the detestable things that were being done in the temple? (8:6)
- 8. What did Ezekiel observe in an inner room after digging through a wall? (8:7-10)
- 9. What were the elders of Israel doing in the inner room with the pictures on the walls? (8:11)
- * 10. Why weren't the elders afraid of introducing idol worship into the temple? (8:12)
- 11. What was going on at the entrance to the north gate? (8:14)
- 12. What did the man repeat after each situation he showed to Ezekiel? (8:15)
- 13. What were twenty-five men doing in the inner court of the temple? (8:16)
- 14. Besides the practices in the temple, what sin did God hold against Jerusalem? (8:17)
- 15. What did God promise to do to Jerusalem because of its great sin? (8:18)

Get It

- 16. Why would Ezekiel and the elders of Judah with him not have been aware of everything that was going on in the temple?
- 17. Why do we associate brightness and fire with the holiness of God?
- 18. Why would Ezekiel call the pagan gods "idols of jealousy"?
- 19. What was the effect of showing Ezekiel one abomination at a time, each worse than the previous one?
- * 20. Why does God refuse to share His house with other gods?
- 21. Why is it impossible for us to do anything that the Lord does not see?
- * 22. What important aspects of the character of God were either unknown to or ignored by the people of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's time?
- 23. Why is it unwise to presume upon the pity of the Lord for sinners?

Apply It

- * 24. In what area of your life can you ask God to show you how you may have divided loyalties?
- 25. If you are in any kind of leadership as a Christian, how can you prevent yourself from leading others into unrighteousness?

Idolaters Killed - Ezekiel 9:1-11

Topics: Call, Complacency, Death, Glory, Grieving, Judgment, Mercy, Punishment

Open It

- * 1. What sorts of wrongs particularly stir your sense of outrage and make you long for justice?
- 2. When the decision is up to you, do you lean more toward justice or mercy for people who do wrong? Why?

Explore It

- 3. As Ezekiel watched, whom did God summon before Him? (9:1-2)
- 4. What occurrence must have emphasized God's power and holiness for Ezekiel? (9:3)
- * 5. What instruction did the Lord give to the man with the writing kit? (9:4)
- * 6. What characteristics was God looking for in the people who would receive the mark? (9:4)
- * 7. What orders were given to the six men with deadly weapons? (9:5)
- 8. Which people were to be spared from the general slaughter in Jerusalem? (9:6)
- 9. What did God command to be done to the temple? (9:7)
- 10. What emotion did Ezekiel express when he was alone before the Lord? (9:8)
- 11. Why was God driven to such extreme action against Jerusalem? (9:9-10)
- 12. What did the man with the writing kit report back to God? (9:11)

Get It

- * 13. Ultimately, from where does justice and judgment for sin come, regardless of how it is carried out?
- 14. Why was it necessary for God to defile the temple as well as punish the idolaters?
- * 15. Why does it matter to God whether we are grieved by the sin around us, even though we might be unable to change it on our own?
- 16. In what way is it appropriate to feel sorrow or elation when a wicked person "gets what he deserves"?
- 17. Why do you suppose injustice and bloodshed in particular are evils that God must punish?

Apply It

- * 18. What is a concrete way in which you can show God that you are grieved by sin?
- 19. What Christian brother or sister, surrounded by evil, needs your prayers right now?

The Glory Departs from the Temple - Ezekiel 10:1-22

Topics: Abandon, Angels, Appearance, Glory, Instructions, Judgment, Punishment

Open It

1. How would you describe a specific experience of being awestruck?
- * 2. What, in your mind, is spiritual emptiness or dryness, and how do you feel when you experience it?

Explore It

3. How did Ezekiel attempt to describe what he saw in the presence of God? (10:1)
- * 4. What did God command his servant to do with the coals he was to take from between the wheels of the cherubim? (10:2)
- * 5. As Ezekiel watched, what movement took place first with the cloud that represented God's glory? (10:3-4)
6. How far did the radiance and sound of God's glory extend? (10:4-5)
7. How did one of the cherubim assist the man in white with the coals? (10:6-7)
8. What new detail did Ezekiel learn about the cherubim as he watched? (10:8)
9. What did Ezekiel notice about the wheels of the cherubim? (10:9-11)
10. What unique feature virtually covered the cherubim? (10:12)
11. What did the four faces of the cherubim look like to Ezekiel? (10:14)
12. How were the wheels related to the creatures Ezekiel called cherubim? (10:15-17)
- * 13. What specific movements of the glory of the Lord did Ezekiel witness? (10:18-19)
14. Where had Ezekiel seen the living creatures before? (10:20-22)
15. What features of the cherubim especially stood out in Ezekiel's mind? (10:21-22)

Get It

16. What do you think motivated Ezekiel to describe everything he saw in such detail?
17. Why was it valuable to Israel that the presence of the Lord inhabited the temple?
- * 18. How do you suppose it felt for a faithful servant of God to watch the glory depart from the temple?
- * 19. How would you characterize the idol worshipers' awareness of the glory of the Lord and His departure?
20. Why do people sometimes take the presence of God for granted?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you take advantage of your status as a child of God to cultivate and enjoy the presence of God?
22. For what nation or nationality do you feel moved to pray for renewal?

Judgment on Israel's Leaders - Ezekiel 11:1-25

Topics: Advice, Complacency, Consequences, Death, Disobedience, Evil, Fear, Glory, Judgment, Law, Leadership, Murder, Obedience, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Self-righteousness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. Why is there such a strong temptation for leaders to consider themselves “above the law”?
- 2. What would be difficult about being exiled from your homeland?

Explore It

- 3. What did God show Ezekiel at the east gate of the temple? (11:1)
- 4. What did God tell Ezekiel about the leaders of Jerusalem? (11:2)
- * 5. What was the attitude of the twenty-five leaders of Jerusalem toward their plight and their future? (11:3)
- 6. What did the Spirit command Ezekiel to do in relation to the twenty-five leaders? (11:4)
- 7. What was God's accusation against the leaders of Jerusalem? (11:5-6)
- * 8. What did God predict would happen to the leaders of Jerusalem who felt they were safe? (11:7-10)
- 9. In what sense did the leaders of Israel fail to understand the nature of God? (11:11-12)
- 10. What happened to one of the leaders even as Ezekiel was prophesying? (11:13)
- 11. What attitude did the people of Jerusalem hold toward Ezekiel and the other exiles? (11:15)
- 12. What ray of hope did God offer to the exiles? (11:16)
- 13. What did God promise about the future of the exiled Israelites? (11:17)
- * 14. What internal difference did Ezekiel foresee in the Jews who would return to the land? (11:18-20)
- 15. How did God determine the punishment for those who insisted on idolatry? (11:21)
- 16. When the glory departed from Jerusalem, where did Ezekiel go? (11:22-25)

Get It

- 17. Why would the leaders who were left in Jerusalem after many were exiled to Babylon assume that they were “safe”?
- * 18. If the meat in the cooking pot represents a position of privilege, why did Jerusalem's leaders view themselves in this way?
- 19. How do you explain Ezekiel's reaction when God struck down one of the leaders before his eyes?
- 20. What evidence do you see that many of the people of our world do not know that God is the Lord?
- 21. Why would it not be effective for God to return the exiles to Jerusalem with their heart unchanged?
- * 22. What are the characteristics of a “heart of flesh” as opposed to a “heart of stone”?

Apply It

- * 23. In what area of your life can you pray that God will soften your heart to His will and His ways?
- 24. In what area can you pray that your nation will acknowledge the lordship of God Almighty before He has to demonstrate it in a devastating way?

The Exile Symbolized - Ezekiel 12:1-28

Topics: Complacency, Delay, Despair, Doubt, Fear, Future, Instructions, Listening, Obedience, People, Punishment, Questions, Rebellion, Slavery, Understanding, Witnessing

Open It

1. When have you discovered—too late—that you were wrong to assume that you or your belongings were safe?
- * 2. What is your favorite (stage, television, movie) drama, and why do you find it compelling?

Explore It

3. What was God's description of the rebelliousness of Israel? (12:1-2)
4. What did God command Ezekiel to do in order to "act out" the prophecy he was giving? (12:3-6)
5. How did Ezekiel report that he responded to God's command? (12:7)
6. How did God tell Ezekiel to interpret his actions to make them clear to the people? (12:8-11)
7. According to the prophecy, what would happen to the prince of Jerusalem? (12:12-14)
- * 8. What point did God wish to make by scattering the inhabitants of Jerusalem? (12:15)
- * 9. For what purpose did God intend to spare a few people from "sword, famine and plague"? (12:16)
10. What was the symbolic meaning of the way God told Ezekiel to eat his food? (12:17-20)
11. What proverb was heard frequently in the city of Jerusalem at the time? (12:22)
- * 12. How did God promise to respond to the false proverb that was common in Jerusalem? (12:22-25)
13. How did God tell Ezekiel to respond to the common wisdom that Ezekiel's prophecies were about a time in the distant future? (12:26-28)

Get It

14. Why do you think God wanted Ezekiel to "act out" his prophecies?
15. What was revealed about the Israelites in exile when they didn't understand Ezekiel's actions?
- * 16. Why does God bother to speak to human beings when He knows we are rebellious?
- * 17. Why is it dangerous to fail to take God's Word seriously, even when we don't see the immediate fulfillment or importance of it?
18. About which commands of God do you tend to think, "That doesn't mean me," or "That doesn't mean now"?
19. What is God's part in enabling us to know His will, and what does He leave up to us?

Apply It

- * 20. How can you be sure that you have "eyes to see" and "ears to hear" whenever you read or hear God's Word?
21. In what concrete way can you "act out" God's message through your relationships this week?

False Prophets Condemned - Ezekiel 13:1-23

Topics: Anger, Death, Deceit, Discouragement, Foolishness, Freedom, Judgment, Listening, Lying, Occult, Opposition, Peace, Power, Prophecy, Righteousness, Salvation, Suffering

Open It

1. For what different reasons do people listen to fortune-tellers and psychics?
- * 2. When have you refused to face reality in a specific situation?

Explore It

3. To whom did God tell Ezekiel to prophesy? (13:1-2)
- * 4. Where did the false prophets get the message they were preaching? (13:2)
5. What had the prophets of Israel actually seen? (13:3)
6. To what animal did Ezekiel compare the false prophets? (13:4)
- * 7. What had the false prophets not done that God expected of His prophets? (13:5)
8. What verbal “signature” did the prophets use to give their words more weight? (13:6-7)
9. What attitude did God take toward the false prophets? (13:8)
10. In what way did the Lord promise to silence the false prophets? (13:9)
11. With what pleasing message were Israel’s prophets leading the people astray? (13:10)
12. What did God predict about the flimsy wall covered with whitewash? (13:11-12)
13. What imagery did God use to portray the fate of the false prophets and their lies? (13:13-16)
14. What practices did God condemn in the prophetesses of Israel? (13:17-19)
15. What did God promise to do for the people who had been ensnared by the prophetesses? (13:20-21)
- * 16. How did the false prophets have justice completely reversed? (13:22)
17. What would God prove by delivering His people from the false prophets? (13:23)

Get It

18. Why is it a temptation for human beings to pass off their own ideas as God’s?
19. What do you suppose the false prophets were telling the people of Jerusalem about their relationship with Babylon and their hope for the future?
- * 20. Why should we be wary of any Christian teacher who makes us feel complacent and self-satisfied?
- * 21. What forms of “flimsy, whitewashed walls” do you see being offered today for material or spiritual security?
22. If the prophets were at fault for leading the people astray, for what weakness of character did God hold the people responsible?
23. Why do we prefer to deliver good and flattering news rather than painful and difficult news?

Apply It

- * 24. What false security offered to you by the world should you renounce before God in order to remain faithful to Him?
25. How can you be sure that, when you speak the Word of the Lord, you are accurate to His intent?

Idolaters Condemned - Ezekiel 14:1-11

Topics: Answers, Deceit, Evil, Example, Guidance, Guilt, Heart, Idolatry, Leadership, Opposition, People, Prophecy, Punishment, Repentance, Separation, Sin, Temptation

Open It

- * 1. In what areas of life do you tend to consider all your options before making a commitment?
- 2. What feelings would go along with finding out that a friend or spouse had been unfaithful?

Explore It

- 3. Who had come to visit and inquire of Ezekiel the prophet? (14:1)
- 4. What did God reveal to Ezekiel about the elders who came to him? (14:3)
- * 5. What message was Ezekiel instructed to give the elders about their duplicity? (14:4)
- * 6. What did God hope to accomplish by answering the elders Himself? (14:5)
- 7. What did God call the people to do immediately? (14:6)
- 8. What promise did God reiterate about people who tried to seek Him without giving up their idols? (14:7-8)
- 9. How would God treat any prophet who would presume to answer a double-minded seeker? (14:9-10)
- * 10. What did God desire from His people? (14:11)

Get It

- * 11. When can we inquire of God and receive an answer?
- * 12. What did the elders fail to take into account when they consulted God in the presence of Ezekiel?
- 13. Where does all idolatry actually take place?
- 14. What would it mean for an Israelite to be cut off from God's people?
- 15. What are some examples of "wicked stumbling blocks" you see in society?
- 16. What sort of things can become idols of the heart?

Apply It

- * 17. What are some practical ways to discover whether you have set up any idols in your heart?
- 18. What common object can you imagine to remind you that God sees into every corner of your heart and mind?

Judgment Inescapable - Ezekiel 14:12-23

Topics: Actions, Anger, Children, Danger, Death, Judgment, Punishment, Righteousness, Salvation, Sickness, Sin, Suffering, Unfaithfulness, War

Open It

- * 1. Whom do you consider to be exemplary, godly people?
- 2. What are the different responses that people can make to extreme hardship and suffering?

Explore It

- 3. What was the cause of God's judgment in the first example given to Ezekiel? (14:12-13)
- 4. What form did God's judgment take in the first hypothetical example? (14:13)
- * 5. What three great servants of God are used for Ezekiel's examples of faithfulness? (14:14)
- * 6. In a circumstance that required God's judgment, how many could be saved by exemplary men of faith? (14:14)
- 7. What was the second example of judgment that God gave to Ezekiel? (14:15)
- 8. What family members could Noah, Daniel, or Job save from God's judgment by their own righteousness? (14:16)
- 9. What was a third example of a means of punishment God might use against unfaithfulness? (14:17)
- 10. What expression in this word from God illustrates the certainty of it? (14:18)
- 11. What was the fourth calamity that God might use to execute justice? (14:19)
- 12. If Noah, Daniel, and Job were present in God's hypothetical country, who would be saved by his or her righteousness? (14:20)
- * 13. How did God portray the prospects for Jerusalem in comparison to the examples He had given? (14:21)
- 14. When the exiled Jews encountered the survivors of Jerusalem, what would they know about the justice of God's punishment of Jerusalem? (14:22-23)

Get It

- 15. What would move God to judge a nation and destroy it?
- 16. Why do you think God had Ezekiel repeat the same refrain with a variety of calamities that might be visited on a nation?
- 17. What sorts of calamities might God use as His instrument of judgment?
- * 18. Why does God give us the stories of great men and women of faith?
- * 19. Why is it unwise to trust in another person, even a righteous person, for your own salvation?

Apply It

- * 20. How can you discern whether the righteous people you know are serving as proper examples of faith, or whether you are counting on their goodness to spill over onto you regardless of your effort?
- 21. What biblical hero or heroine can serve as your model for faith and life this coming week?

Unfaithful Jerusalem - Ezekiel 15:1-17:24

Topics: Adultery, Anger, Atonement, Beauty, Children, Comparisons, Complacency, Escape, Evil, Gifts, Greed, Growth, Humiliation, Husbands, Idolatry, Jealousy, Judgment, Leadership, Life, Lust, Perfect, Pride, Promises, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Remembering, Revenge, Righteousness, Running, Sacrifice, Salvation, Shame, Sin, Trust, Unfaithfulness, Value, Weaknesses, Wealth, Wives, Youth

Open It

1. What is one of your favorite love stories? Why?
- * 2. In what ways are you most like one or both of your parents?

Explore It

3. Why did God vow to treat the remnant of His people in Jerusalem like a vine thrown into the fire? (15:6-8)
4. What reception did the allegorical Jerusalem get at the time of her birth? (16:3-5)
5. Into what relationship did God enter with the woman when she was grown? (16:8)
6. How are God's blessings to His people described in the allegory Ezekiel told? (16:9-14)
- * 7. How did Jerusalem respond to God's love and her good fortune? (16:15-19)
8. With what nations did Jerusalem prostitute herself? (16:23-29)
- * 9. What punishment does God detail for Jerusalem's unfaithfulness? (16:35-43)
10. How would God reverse the fortunes of the Jews and the Canaanites in order to humble them? (16:53-58)
11. What did God promise to do for Israel in the final analysis? (16:59-63)
12. What is described in the parable told by Ezekiel? (17:1-6)
13. How did the vine respond to the appearance of another eagle? (17:7-8)
14. What fate did God predict for the "unfaithful" vine? (17:9-10)
15. How did God explain the allegory of the two eagles and the vine? (17:11-15)
- * 16. What did God say would happen to the king who turned to Egypt for help? (17:16-21)
17. After all of this destruction, what did God intend to do with a "shoot"? (17:22-24)

Get It

18. How can some woods be useful even after they are burned?
19. According to the parable of the barren woman, what chance did Jerusalem have to thrive apart from God's grace and favor?
20. What were the allegorical equivalents of some of the blessings enjoyed by Jerusalem as God's people?
- * 21. In what ways is idolatry portrayed in the parable of the woman?
22. What do you think is the greatest condemnation in the parable of the woman?
23. How do you imagine it felt to Jews to be compared unfavorably to Sodom?
- * 24. What will likely happen if we seek earthly recourse for the bad circumstances God has allowed to happen to us?
25. How can we be certain that God will carry through on His words?

Apply It

26. How many ways can you list that God has blessed you as He blessed Israel?
- * 27. How can you guard against the temptation to seek earthly allies rather than turning to God?

The Soul Who Sins Will Die - Ezekiel 18:1-32

Topics: Accountability, Adultery, Change, Children, Death, Evil, Fairness, Generosity, Greed, Guilt, Heart, Idolatry, Injustice, Judgment, Justice, Law, Life, Parents, Punishment, Questions, Remembering, Repentance, Right, Righteousness, Salvation, Sin, Unfaithfulness

Open It

- * 1. Why do we like to have a ready excuse for our failings should they come to light?
- 2. What examples do you know of parents of poor character who have had children of excellent character?

Explore It

- 3. What parable was current in Israel that God wanted to correct? (18:1-3)
- * 4. Whose sin did God say has the power to condemn a person to death? (18:4)
- 5. From what sinful activities does God's "righteous man" abstain? (18:5-8)
- 6. What positive activities are part of the righteous person's life? (18:5-9)
- 7. What will happen to the "violent son" of a righteous person who commits the sins his or her father avoided? (18:10-13)
- 8. In Ezekiel's story, how does the violent son's son respond to what he sees in his father? (18:14-17)
- 9. How would God judge the son who did not follow the evil practices of his father? (18:17)
- 10. Whose actions are the final determiner of every soul's fate? (18:19-20)
- 11. How does God feel about a wicked person who repents? (18:21-23)
- * 12. What happens to a righteous person's good deeds if he or she later turns to sin? (18:24)
- 13. By what logic does God explain His justice through Ezekiel? (18:25-29)
- * 14. What does God call each person to do in light of His coming judgment? (18:30)
- 15. What new things does a repentant person possess? (18:31)
- 16. What does God desire for each soul He has created? (18:32)

Get It

- 17. What can we infer about why the Jews of Ezekiel's day felt they were suffering?
- 18. How would it affect our motivation to live a righteous life if we could indeed be punished for our parents' misdeeds?
- 19. What excuse is eliminated if we know that God does not punish us for our parents' sins?
- * 20. What is the difference between suffering because of the mistakes of our forebears and paying for them?
- * 21. Why is God more concerned with the way we live today than with our previous mistakes or accomplishments?
- 22. Based on God's attitudes, how should we feel about the misfortunes of nonbelievers?

Apply It

- 23. What fruits of righteousness can you cultivate this coming week?
- * 24. How can you help young people to take responsibility for their own soul, regardless of where their parents stand with God?

Judgment and Restoration for Israel - Ezekiel 19:1-20:44

Topics: Acceptance, Anger, Beauty, Blasphemy, Children, Covenant, Evil, Expectations, Fear, Fruit, Gifts, Grace, Honor, Idolatry, Image, Judgment, Law, Leadership, Life, Listening, Mourning, Obedience, Parents, Punishment, Purity, Rebellion, Rejection, Rest, Sacrifice, Serving, Strength, Swearing, Unfaithfulness

Open It

- * 1. What do you think determines whether a person will learn from his or her mistakes?
- 2. When would a fresh start have been very timely for you? Why?

Explore It

- 3. What picture did Ezekiel use to portray Judah's princes in his lament? (19:1-9)
- 4. How did Ezekiel use the image of a vine to sketch a "before and after" picture of Judah? (19:10-14)
- 5. What was God's reaction to the elders' request? (20:2-3)
- 6. What was the first instance of His love and favor with which God confronted the elders of Israel? (20:4-7)
- * 7. How did Israel respond when God delivered them out of Egypt? (20:8)
- 8. How did God bless Israel in spite of their unfaithfulness? (20:9-12)
- 9. Even after they had been delivered from Egypt, how did Israel treat God and His law? (20:13)
- * 10. What was God's concern for His name? (20:14)
- 11. What punishment did the generation of the Exodus suffer for their sin? (20:15-16)
- 12. How did God show His pity to the elder generation and offer a new start to the younger generation? (20:17-20)
- 13. What was to be the punishment for the second generation's rebellion? (20:23)
- 14. To what pagan practice did God "give them over"? (20:25-26)
- 15. Once they had taken possession of the Promised Land, how did Israel continue to rebel against God? (20:27-29)
- * 16. What practices of the current generation led God to swear that He would not allow their elders to inquire of Him? (20:30-31)
- 17. Why did God say that they would never worship "wood and stone" as they seemed to desire? (20:32-38)
- 18. What would be different about the Israel that God would gather from their exile in the future? (20:39-42)
- 19. What would Israel realize about God and about themselves when He accomplished His final deliverance? (20:43-44)

Get It

- 20. What events in the recent history of Judah were portrayed in Ezekiel's lament of the lioness?
- 21. According to the lament of the vine, what was left of Israel following God's judgment?
- * 22. Why did the elders who came to Ezekiel need a history lesson?
- 23. How often did Israel get everything she deserved in terms of punishment?
- 24. Why did God not allow Israel to go her own way in the long run, serving gods of wood and stone?
- * 25. Like Israel, what do we need in order to assess rightly our condition before God and to obey Him?

Apply It

- * 26. When in the next week or two can you take an hour for a historical overview of your life and God's working in it?
- 27. What spiritual issues should you always take care of before you come to God asking for favors or insight?

Babylon, God's Sword of Judgment - Ezekiel 20:45-21:32

Topics: Anger, Death, Doubt, Evil, Fear, Grief, Guidance, Guilt, Heart, Idolatry, Judgment, Lying, Mourning, Opposition, Prophecy, Punishment, Purity, Questions, Rebellion, Restoration, Sin, Testing, War

Open It

1. Do you consider yourself a pessimist or an optimist? Why?
- * 2. From what calamities that confront other people do you consider yourself basically immune?

Explore It

3. Where did God tell Ezekiel to direct his prophecy? (20:45-46)
4. What image of natural disaster did God use to illustrate what was about to happen to Judah? (20:46-48)
- * 5. What did Ezekiel tell God that the people were likely to say about his prophecy? (20:49)
6. What new image did God use to describe the destruction to come? (21:3)
7. Which of the people were to be "cut off" from the land of Judah and Jerusalem? (21:3-4)
8. What did God intend for the people to understand through the immensity of disaster? (21:5)
9. What sign was Ezekiel to give through his behavior? (21:6-7)
- * 10. How would the scepter of Judah (symbol of nationhood) stand up to the sharpened sword of God's judgment? (21:8-10)
11. What emotion was Ezekiel portraying by wailing and beating his breast? (21:11-12)
12. According to the prophecy, what was going to become of the scepter of Judah? (21:13-17)
13. What did God reveal in advance that the king of Babylon would decide to do, guided by pagan divination? (21:18-22)
14. Since the people felt they were safe, how would they respond to the approach of the army of Babylon? (21:23)
- * 15. Why were the people of Jerusalem going to be taken captive? (21:24)
16. What did Ezekiel say it would take to restore the throne of Judah? (21:27)
17. How would the Ammonites be judged for their insulting delight in the destruction of Judah? (21:28-32)

Get It

- * 18. Why did the prophecies contain images of total destruction?
19. With what reasoning did the people who heard Ezekiel tend to minimize or explain away his words?
20. What nation was represented in the prophecy as the sharpened sword?
21. Why did God conquer Israel's enemies, even when Israel was in need of discipline?
22. What gloomy predictions do you tend to minimize? Why?
- * 23. What can you deduce about Ezekiel's popularity among the exiles from the messages that he delivered?
24. How would you describe God's wrath, once kindled?

Apply It

25. In what relationships do you need to ask God to strengthen you to be unpopular (if necessary) for His sake?
- * 26. How can you reduce the security you feel in your circumstances and increase your dependence upon God?

Jerusalem's Sins - Ezekiel 22:1-31

Topics: Anger, Consequences, Death, Deceit, Dishonesty, Guilt, Holiness, Idolatry, Immorality, Injustice, Judgment, Lying, Murder, Oppressed, Parents, Power, Purity

Open It

- * 1. In your opinion what are the conditions that contribute to the moral decline of a nation?
- 2. How would you describe the way you feel about the suffering of the innocent versus the suffering of the guilty?

Explore It

- * 3. What, according to Ezekiel, had made Jerusalem guilty and defiled? (22:1-4)
- 4. What consequences had Jerusalem brought upon herself by her sin? (22:4-5)
- 5. What accusation did Ezekiel bring against the princes of Israel? (22:6)
- 6. What direct contradictions of God's laws were taking place in Jerusalem? (22:7-12)
- 7. What was the chief thing Israel had "forgotten"? (22:12)
- 8. What did God predict about the courage and strength of Judah in the face of His judgments? (22:13-16)
- 9. What image did God use to illustrate how He would purify Israel? (22:17-22)
- * 10. What particular sins did God hold against the civil and religious leaders of the people? (22:23-29)
- * 11. Before He decreed the destruction of Jerusalem, for whom did God look? (22:30)
- 12. Whom did God hold responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem? (22:31)

Get It

- * 13. What are the potential benefits and potential dangers of the presence of believers in morally dark places?
- 14. Why would someone claim that God had said something He didn't say?
- * 15. If God had found a person to "stand in the gap," what do you think that person would have done about the rampant sin of the people?
- 16. How do Christians sometimes rationalize behavior contrary to God's commands?
- 17. Why is injustice to our fellow human beings contrary to proper worship of the living God?

Apply It

- * 18. How might you be a light in a morally dark place not far from you?
- 19. How can you speak up for oppressed groups who might not be able to speak for themselves?

Two Adulterous Sisters - Ezekiel 23:1-49

Topics: Adultery, Anger, Consequences, Hatred, Idolatry, Immorality, Lust, Preparation, Punishment, Remembering, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Shame, Sin, Sorrow

Open It

- * 1. In what ways are you and your siblings alike or different?
- 2. In your opinion how difficult is it to change patterns of behavior that are developed during your youth?

Explore It

- * 3. Who was represented by the two sisters in Ezekiel's parable? (23:1-4)
- 4. Where were the two sisters first guilty of unfaithfulness and prostitution? (23:3)
- 5. After what nation's warriors did the first sister, representing Samaria, lust? (23:5-8)
- 6. What other sin followed along with "prostitution"? (23:7)
- 7. To what judgment did God hand over Oholah, the first sister? (23:9-10)
- 8. How did the one woman behave when she saw what happened to her sister? (23:11-13)
- * 9. In what way did Oholibah (Judah) go farther than Oholah in her sin? (23:14-21)
- 10. What did God promise would happen to Oholibah? (23:22-24)
- 11. Whose standards of punishment would be applied against Judah? (23:24-26)
- 12. What words are used to describe what would be Judah's condition after she was judged? (23:28-34)
- 13. What attitude toward God compelled Him to allow Judah's suffering? (23:35)
- 14. What sins did the Lord list that He held against Israel and Judah? (23:36-41)
- 15. To whom did even the children of prostitutes belong? (23:37)
- * 16. How would the two sisters be treated by evil men and righteous men, respectively? (23:42-45)
- 17. How did God intend to put an end to the prostitution of His people? (23:46-48)

Get It

- * 18. How might the people of Judah have felt about being told they were worse than Israel, which had already suffered God's judgment?
- 19. When have you wanted something that, once attained, ultimately disappointed you?
- 20. How can we expect to be treated by others if we treat ourselves with contempt?
- * 21. Why, once we have given into one sin, does it become easier to go on to something worse?
- 22. How does God feel about little ones, regardless of the circumstances of their conception or birth?
- 23. In what sense was the Babylonian invasion and exile an instance of God's people bearing the consequences of their own actions?

Apply It

- 24. What negative pattern from your childhood or youth do you need to "unlearn" with God's help?
- * 25. When you feel the lure of power, wealth, or inordinate pleasure, how can you counteract it and remain faithful to God?

The Cooking Pot and Ezekiel's Wife - Ezekiel 24:1-27

Topics: Actions, Affections, Anger, Children, Glory, Grief, Guilt, History, Immorality, Joy, Mourning, Murder, Pride, Purity, Revenge, Silence, Sin, Suffering, Timing, War

Open It

- * 1. What was it that dirtied the most difficult pot or pan you've ever had to scrub clean?
- 2. What do you consider the most difficult aspect of the death of a loved one?

Explore It

- * 3. Of what cataclysmic event did God inform Ezekiel on the very day it was taking place far away? (24:1-2)
- 4. What procedures of a normal sacrificial meal did God detail at the beginning of the cooking pot prophecy? (24:3-5)
- 5. What did God call the city of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's day? (24:6)
- 6. According to the prophecy, what was wrong with the "cooking pot" of Judah? (24:6-8)
- 7. Why did God intend to take the "cooking" far beyond the point where it would give pleasure to the people? (24:9-12)
- * 8. What would be necessary in order for Judah to be "clean" once again? (24:13)
- 9. What would be the basis of God's judgment against Judah? (24:14)
- 10. What unusual command did the Lord give Ezekiel along with a disturbing prediction? (24:15-17)
- 11. What did Ezekiel do when his wife died as God had predicted? (24:18)
- 12. What question did the exiles ask Ezekiel about his unusual behavior? (24:19)
- 13. What intention did God declare to the exiles? (24:20-21)
- 14. What attitude had the exiles had toward the city of Jerusalem and its leaders who remained there? (24:21)
- 15. What did God predict that the exiles would do in response to the news about Jerusalem? (24:22-24)
- * 16. When would Ezekiel be released from the command to remain silent except when he had a word from the Lord? (24:25-27)

Get It

- 17. What might the people have thought when Ezekiel named an exact day for the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem?
- 18. How did Ezekiel's prophecy put a different slant on the assumption of the people left in Jerusalem that they were somehow favored over the exiles?
- * 19. What did God mean when He said that the cooking pot had "frustrated all efforts" to cleanse it?
- 20. What are some examples from your experience of God's efforts to purify an individual short of destroying him or her?
- 21. When Ezekiel took some sort of unusual action (or inaction), what had the people come to know about the significance of it?
- * 22. Which of your relationships would be the most difficult for you to disrupt in order to be obedient to God?
- 23. Why was the arrival of a fugitive from Jerusalem to confirm the news of its downfall going to be a turning point in Ezekiel's ministry?

Apply It

- 24. What relationships do you want to subjugate to God's commands with a prayer now?
- * 25. In what practical way could you cooperate with God's efforts to cleanse your life in the coming days?

Prophecies against the Nations - Ezekiel 25:1-26:21

Topics: Anger, Blasphemy, Death, Enemies, Fear, Guilt, Joy, Opposition, Power, Prophecy, Punishment, Revenge, War, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. When have you experienced a setback and known that someone who disliked you was glad to see it?
- 2. What violent people of whom you're aware have met a violent end in recent years?

Explore It

- 3. What was the first foreign nation against which Ezekiel was instructed to prophesy? (25:1-2)
- 4. What attitude did God hold against the people of Ammon? (25:3)
- 5. To what group did Ezekiel prophesy that Ammon would fall victim? (25:4-5)
- * 6. How did Ezekiel describe the reaction of the Ammonites to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of God? (25:6)
- * 7. What point did God desire to make by the destruction of Ammon? (25:7)
- 8. What blasphemy was uttered by Moab and Seir? (25:8)
- 9. Who was God's instrument to punish Moab? (25:9-11)
- 10. What was the source of Edom's guilt before God? (25:12)
- 11. What people did God intend to use to express His vengeance against Edom? (25:14)
- 12. How did God feel about the long-standing hostility of the Philistines against Judah? (25:15-17)
- * 13. What bad news about Jerusalem did the people of Tyre assume to be good news for them? (26:1-2)
- 14. What sorts of destruction did God decree for Tyre? (26:3-6)
- 15. What king is named as the final destroyer of Tyre? (26:7-11)
- 16. What specific components of the wealth of Tyre were slated for destruction? (26:12-13)
- 17. How lasting was the judgment against Tyre? (26:14)
- 18. What reaction of foreign princes would underline the extent of the destruction in Tyre? (26:15-18)
- 19. In what way was the end of the kingdom of Tyre going to be the worst of those described? (26:19-21)

Get It

- * 20. How did God defend His name and the distinctiveness of His people even as He punished Israel?
- * 21. Ultimately, which of the peoples of the earth are uniquely accountable to the Lord?
- 22. Why are violent people more likely than peace-loving people to meet a violent end?
- 23. How would you describe the ways in which God is expressing His wrath toward His enemies in modern society?
- 24. Why does it matter to God what conclusions unbelievers draw about His nature from His interactions with His people?
- 25. What do you think is God's opinion of human arrogance?
- 26. Why do you suppose we can be "horrified" by extreme human misfortune, even if the sufferers deserve punishment?
- 27. What would be a godly reaction to the downfall of a wicked person?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you ask God to prepare your heart for the next time you hear of the downfall of a fellow Christian?
- 29. What can be your response if you feel that the name of God is being maligned?

Prophecies against Tyre and Sidon - Ezekiel 27:1-28:26

Topics: Beauty, Dishonesty, Enemies, Fear, Glory, Greatness, Grief, Heart, Holiness, Mourning, Neighbor, Pain, Perfect, Possessions, Pride, Punishment, Reputation, Revenge, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

Open It

1. For what era in the past do you feel nostalgic? Why?
- * 2. What do you consider the most beautiful city you have ever visited?
3. What do you consider to be an ideal relationship with your neighbors?

Explore It

- * 4. For what city outside of Israel did God instruct Ezekiel to “take up a lament”? (27:1-2)
- * 5. With what riches and skills was Tyre generously endowed? (27:3-9)
6. From what countries did some of Tyre’s soldiers hail? (27:10-11)
7. What were some of the exotic products that were traded through Tyre? (27:12-24)
8. What disaster did Ezekiel predict would bring an end to Tyre? (27:25-36)
9. To whom was Ezekiel instructed to speak God’s Word? (28:1-2)
10. What chain of events brought the ruler of Tyre to his current estimation of himself? (28:2-5)
- * 11. What judgment did God declare for the ruler who thought of himself as a god? (28:6-10)
12. What were some of the glories of Tyre for which people would mourn? (28:11-14)
13. What “before” and “after” pictures are presented of the character of the king of Tyre? (28:15-19)
14. What other trading kingdom besides Tyre was to come under God’s judgment? (28:20-24)
15. What reversal of fortunes would eventually take place between Israel and her neighbors? (28:25-26)

Get It

16. How would you characterize a person with the description Ezekiel gives of Tyre’s former “model” state?
17. What do you suppose is meant by the title of “guardian cherub” used to describe Tyre?
- * 18. In what ways can God’s punishment of an individual or society influence the attitudes and actions of those who observe?
- * 19. What choice do we have about how we view our prosperity?
20. In what way does pride separate us from God?

Apply It

- * 21. What test can you devise to determine whether the good gifts God has given you are being used to His glory?
22. What blessing might become a temptation to seek security outside of God alone?

Prophecies against Egypt - Ezekiel 29:1-32:32

Topics: Abandon, Anger, Beauty, Covenant, Darkness, Death, Envy, Evil, Fear, Greatness, Hell, History, Idolatry, Judgment, Mourning, Opposition, Power, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Rejection, Shame, Sin, Slavery, Sovereignty, Strength, Suffering, War, Weaknesses, Wealth, Youth

Open It

- * 1. What is one of the most grandiose and self-important statements you've heard anyone make?
- 2. What are the various traumatic events of life that we can buy insurance to try to soften?

Explore It

- * 3. What attitude or belief on the part of Pharaoh king of Egypt brought him under God's judgment? (29:3)
- 4. What figure of speech is used to describe the power and extent of God's judgment on Egypt? (29:4-5)
- 5. How had Egypt hurt God's people Israel most recently? (29:6-7)
- 6. Over what crucial resource did God want to demonstrate that He had power? (29:10)
- 7. How long was the devastation of the land going to last? (29:11-12)
- 8. Following the initial punishment, what would be the fate of the kingdom of Egypt? (29:13-15)
- * 9. What false promise of assistance did God want to eliminate for Israel? (29:16)
- * 10. About what foreign war did God inform Ezekiel because of its bearing on Egypt? (29:17-20)
- 11. What did Ezekiel prophesy about the greatness and wealth of Egypt? (30:1-4)
- 12. What great cities, along with their idols, were doomed to destruction? (30:13-19)
- 13. In the third word to Ezekiel concerning Egypt, what physical image was used to illustrate how unreliable she was to become as an ally for Israel? (30:20-26)
- 14. What formerly great nation is described as a comparison for Egypt? (31:1-9)
- 15. Why was Assyria judged like a huge tree that is cut down and abandoned? (31:10-13)
- 16. According to the allegory, how did the smaller nations fare who had allied themselves with Assyria? (31:15-17)
- 17. To what powerful animals did Ezekiel liken Egypt in his lament? (32:1-8)
- 18. What reaction to Egypt's downfall was predicted for other peoples and nations? (32:9-10)
- 19. What was the consistent complaint against the nations God had already consigned to "the pit"? (32:22-30)

Get It

- 20. Why would it be a temptation for Israel to be drawn to Egypt as a source of protection?
- 21. Why would Pharaoh want to claim that he owned (indeed had made) the Nile River?
- * 22. In what ways do we tend to take credit for things that only God can do?
- 23. What do Ezekiel's prophecies make clear about the rise of Babylon as a conquering power?
- 24. How might the exiled Jews, who hoped to be rescued by Egypt, have responded to Ezekiel's lament for Egypt?
- 25. How does God feel about great civilizations that are brought low by pride?
- * 26. Why didn't God want His people to rely on Egypt as their salvation from the Babylonian threat?
- 27. How should God's sweeping judgments of nations in the Old Testament shape our responses to Him today?

Apply It

- * 28. In what great person, idea, tradition, etc., might you be placing too much of your hope, rather than relying solely on the Lord?
- 29. For what accomplishment or role do you want to give God credit and glory today?

Ezekiel and the Fall of Jerusalem - Ezekiel 33:1-33

Topics: Accountability, Adultery, Danger, Death, Deceit, Disobedience, Escape, Evil, Hypocrisy, Justice, Life, Pleasure, Pride, Prophecy, Remembering, Repentance, Righteousness, Salvation, Silence, Sin, Trust

Open It

1. How much interest do you sense in the people around you in talking about God, heaven, and hell?
- * 2. The last time you were one of the only Christians in a social, academic, or work setting, what expectations did people have of you because of that role?

Explore It

3. In the event of a threat to a city, what is the responsibility of the watchman and the people? (33:1-6)
4. What title and picture of his duties did God give to Ezekiel? (33:7-9)
- * 5. What result did God want from the warnings given by His “watchman”? (33:10-11)
- * 6. How did God say He would judge a righteous person who turns and does evil? (33:12-13)
7. What concrete steps might a wicked person take to demonstrate true repentance? (33:14-16)
8. What “argument” did God have with the exiles regarding justice? (33:17-20)
9. At what point in his exile did Ezekiel receive confirmation of the fall of Jerusalem? (33:21)
10. What restriction on the prophet was lifted at about the time of the fall of Jerusalem? (33:22)
11. What assumption was made by those who were left in Judah after the first deportation from Jerusalem? (33:23-24)
12. Why did God say that the remaining Jews did not deserve to possess the land? (33:25-26)
13. What judgment did God pronounce on the remnant who had stayed in Jerusalem? (33:27-29)
14. What did God inform Ezekiel that the people were saying about him? (33:30)
- * 15. What was the difference between what the people heard and what they did? (33:31-32)
16. What did God say would vindicate Ezekiel in the eyes of his fellow exiles? (33:33)

Get It

- * 17. In what sense are Christians appointed “watchmen” for our world?
- * 18. Why does God focus on the current condition of our heart rather than on the good or evil we have done in the past?
19. Who does God say is in control of each individual’s choice of spiritual life or death?
20. What does God expect of every person who hears His Word?
21. What indications do you see that our society likes to hear religious thoughts but does not want to put them into practice?
22. In what way is God more interested in what we do in our daily life than in what we say we believe?
23. What conflicting emotions do you imagine Ezekiel felt when the fall of Jerusalem, which he had predicted for so long, finally took place?

Apply It

- * 24. What creative way could you find to “sound the trumpet” of God’s coming judgment to nonbelievers around you who might not otherwise listen?
25. What steps could you take to help insure that you don’t just hear God’s Word, but you also put it into practice?

Shepherds and Sheep - Ezekiel 34:1-31

Topics: Abundance, Accountability, Blessing, Caring, Covenant, Darkness, Fear, Greed, Healing, Judgment, Justice, Leadership, Opposition, Peace, Prophecy, Relationships, Responsibility, Rest, Safety, Salvation, Security, Selfishness

Open It

- * 1. What have you noticed about the changes in people's lives when they add the responsibility of a child?
- 2. Why do you think it is common for powerful politicians to live a substantially more comfortable life than the people they govern?

Explore It

- * 3. Why was God angry with the "shepherds" of Israel? (34:1-2)
- 4. What comforts and privileges were the rulers taking for themselves? (34:3)
- 5. What needs of the common people were being overlooked by their leaders? (34:4)
- 6. In what condition did God find "His sheep" at this point in Israel's history? (34:5-6)
- * 7. What did God promise to do on behalf of the helpless sheep? (34:7-10)
- * 8. How does God describe His care for the flock (that is, His people)? (34:11-16)
- 9. Why did God find it necessary to judge some of the sheep? (34:17-19)
- 10. How would the weak and strong sheep fare under God's one shepherd? (34:20-24)
- 11. What are the various forms of deliverance and blessing promised to God's people? (34:25-29)
- 12. What undeniable conclusion would Israel draw from God's activity on their behalf? (34:30)
- 13. How did God describe His relationship to Israel? (34:31)

Get It

- 14. What responsibilities go along with the privileges of leadership?
- 15. How do you think church leaders should demonstrate concern for the problems of the less fortunate in the community of faith?
- * 16. How does God view selfishness and inconsiderateness among His people?
- * 17. Why do you think God emphasizes that He will take ultimate responsibility for the weak and helpless?
- 18. What will become of selfish and irresponsible leaders?
- 19. What is appealing about the kind of care God gives His sheep?

Apply It

- * 20. Which practical needs in your immediate circle of influence might God want to use you to meet?
- 21. What safeguard would you suggest to help Christian leaders remember the least of God's sheep?

Prophecies to Edom and the Mountains of Israel - Ezekiel 35:1-36:38

Topics: Anger, Blessing, Death, Enemies, Evil, Fruit, Hatred, Heart, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Idolatry, Jealousy, Judgment, Law, Name, Obedience, Opposition, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Purity, Relationships, Restoration, Selfishness, Shame, Sin, Slavery, Suffering

Open It

1. What examples do you know of people who took advantage of someone else's misfortune?
- * 2. With what kinds of suffering do you find it difficult to empathize?

Explore It

3. What did God promise to do to Mount Seir (Edom)? (35:1-4)
- * 4. What had the Edomites done to anger God? (35:5-6)
5. What unrighteous attitudes formed the basis for God's judgment of Edom? (35:11)
- * 6. How did God intend to vindicate His name by turning the tables on Edom? (35:14-15)
7. How did God, through Ezekiel, show that He understood all that had happened to Israel at the hands of their enemies? (36:1-5)
8. What did God promise to do to Israel's enemies in answer to their scorn? (36:6-7)
9. What changes did Ezekiel predict in the land of Israel? (36:8-12)
10. What did God's people do while they were dwelling in the land to defile it and reap God's judgment? (36:16-19)
11. How was God's name slandered by the very judgment He visited on His people? (36:20-21)
12. For whose sake did God act to restore Israel and punish her enemies? (36:22-23)
13. What did God intend to prove to the other nations who had witnessed Israel's punishment? (36:23)
- * 14. Once God had gathered His people, what internal changes did He promise them? (36:24-28)
15. What calamities did God intend to reverse for Israel? (36:29-30)
16. How would God's people feel about their past rebellion after He restored them? (36:31)
17. What message would the surrounding nations get from God's restoration of Israel? (36:33-36)

Get It

18. What is good and bad about being "opportunistic"?
- * 19. Why is it wrong to scorn those who suffer, even if they suffer for their own sins?
20. Why might the pagan nations have assumed that God didn't hear their slander?
21. By scattering the people of Israel in exile in other countries, how did God jeopardize His good name?
22. What was God's biggest reason for the dramatic reversal between the mountains (strength) of Israel and of Seir?
- * 23. What does God know that we need (in addition to His material blessings) in order to serve Him faithfully?

Apply It

- * 24. What group of suffering people can you ask God to help you view from His perspective?
25. The next time you become aware of some conflict or disarray among God's people that damages God's name, what can you do to be God's instrument of healing and wholeness?

Dry Bones, New Life - Ezekiel 37:1-28

Topics: Backslide, Covenant, Death, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Hopelessness, Idolatry, Knowledge, Law, Life, Obedience, Peace, Power, Prophecy, Questions, Salvation, Sin, Sovereignty, Unity

Open It

- * 1. When have you been separated from your loved ones for an extended period of time?
- 2. What is one of the most hopeless circumstances in which you've ever found yourself?

Explore It

- 3. What strange sight was Ezekiel shown in a vision? (37:1-2)
- 4. What question did the Lord ask of Ezekiel, and how did he answer? (37:3)
- 5. What did God promise to do with the dry bones? (37:4-6)
- 6. What happened as Ezekiel began to prophesy to the bones, as God had commanded? (37:7-8)
- 7. How did the restored bodies begin to breathe again? (37:9-10)
- 8. What saying of the people had given rise to the image of "dry bones"? (37:11)
- * 9. What did God explain to Ezekiel about the meaning of the vision of the valley of dry bones? (37:11-12)
- * 10. What would God's people know and receive when God acted in their behalf? (37:13-14)
- 11. What visual demonstration did God tell Ezekiel to do with two sticks? (37:15-17)
- * 12. What good news was contained in Ezekiel's symbolic action with two sticks? (37:18-22)
- 13. What sins would God cleanse in order to make Israel His people again? (37:23)
- 14. According to the prophecy, how was Israel's relationship to God and God's treatment of them going to change? (37:24-28)

Get It

- 15. What images come to mind about a nation of people symbolized by dry bones?
- * 16. What did Ezekiel have to know about God in order to see potential in the dry bones?
- 17. What are some key features of the reign of "David" (the Messiah)?
- * 18. Why is it desirable to have Jehovah God dwell (live) with us?
- 19. In what areas of your community do you see the need for reunification among individuals or groups?

Apply It

- * 20. What habits can you cultivate that will make you more likely to see hopeless situations from God's perspective?
- 21. What division between people or nations can you make a matter of earnest prayer this week?

A Prophecy against Gog - Ezekiel 38:1-39:29

Topics: Anger, Compassion, Death, Employment, Enemies, Evil, Fear, Glory, Greatness, Greed, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Intentions, Judgment, Opposition, Peace, Promises, Prophecy, Protection, Punishment, Revenge, Sacrifice, Shame, Sin, Unfaithfulness, War, Wealth, Zeal

Open It

1. What character, historical or fictional, is the personification of evil in your mind?
- * 2. What is your favorite story of the triumph of an underdog?

Explore It

3. To whom was Ezekiel told to address his next prophecy? (38:1-3)
4. What gathering of the enemies of Israel would be accomplished by God “pulling them together”? (38:4-6)
5. What great invasion would be plotted by Gog? (38:7-9)
6. For what purpose would the various nations arrive at an evil scheme? (38:10-13)
7. Why was God going to allow a great assault on Israel? (38:14-16)
- * 8. For what response would God be poised when Gog threatened Israel? (38:18-23)
9. What did God intend to do to the homeland of the aggressors while they fell in battle on the mountains of Israel? (39:1-6)
- * 10. What is God prepared to defend in the great battle of the nations? (39:7-8)
11. After God’s intervention in their behalf, what unusual provisions would Israel have for years to come? (39:9-10)
12. How does Ezekiel describe the magnitude of the death and destruction wrought against the forces of Gog? (39:11-16)
13. What gory “sacrifice” would the birds and wild beasts have set before them? (39:17-20)
14. In this demonstration of His glory, what would the nations see and what would Israel understand? (39:21-22)
15. Why did God want the rest of the nations to be clear on His reasons for turning against Israel in the past? (39:23-24)
- * 16. What are the various ways in which God will show compassion on His people in the future? (39:25-29)

Get It

17. Where should the people of God turn for help in times of trouble?
18. Of what nations of the earth is God the Lord?
19. In what way is God the Lord of every nation on earth?
20. What comfort can God’s people take in knowing how God will use evil for His purposes?
- * 21. How should we react if the enemies of God rise up to challenge blessings that He has given to us?
22. Why would the land need to be cleansed after the great battle in which Gog is defeated?
- * 23. In your opinion, of all the blessings promised to God’s people in this prophecy, which is the greatest? Why?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you tell at least one other person this week of the Lord’s gracious blessings in your life?
25. What frightening evil power in your life or in your world can remind you throughout the week to praise God for His omnipotence?

The Architecture of the New Temple - Ezekiel 40:1-42:20

Topics: Details, Holiness, Listening, Prophecy, Separation, Temple, Vision

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the more impressive examples of architecture that you have seen?
- 2. How difficult would it be for you to find your way around your home blindfolded?

Explore It

- 3. What was the specific time of Ezekiel's vision of the temple? (40:1)
- 4. Whom did Ezekiel meet when God transported him to Jerusalem in a vision? (40:2-3)
- 5. What instructions did the man have for Ezekiel before they set out on their exploration? (40:4)
- 6. What was impressive about the wall that surrounded the temple Ezekiel saw? (40:5)
- * 7. What are some examples of how detailed Ezekiel's description of the east gate area becomes? (40:6-16)
- 8. What did the man do each time he stopped at the outer court, the north gate, and the south gate? (40:17-27)
- * 9. What sorts of rooms did Ezekiel see before he actually came into the temple? (40:28-47)
- 10. What was at the center of the temple structure? (40:48-41:15)
- * 11. How were the internal parts of the temple decorated? (41:16-26)
- 12. What important activity was to take place in the side rooms around the temple? (42:1-13)
- 13. What specific regulations were given with regard to the priests' garments inside and outside the temple? (42:14)
- 14. How was the whole temple area kept distinct from the "common" parts of the city? (42:15-20)

Get It

- * 15. Why do you think the exiles to whom Ezekiel spoke might have "eaten up" every detail of his description of the temple?
- 16. What point did the temple buildings and worship practices make by separating the holy from the common?
- 17. In what respect was Ezekiel a "servant" of the exiled people of Israel?
- * 18. If someone could bring you a blueprint of heaven, what details would you want it to include?
- 19. How would you describe heaven to someone unfamiliar with the Bible?

Apply It

- 20. How could you express your gratitude for the care that has gone into the planning and maintenance of your place of worship?
- * 21. How can the prospect of a new heaven and a new earth inspire you in a specific problem you are presently facing?

The Glory Returns to the Temple - Ezekiel 43:1-27

Topics: Acceptance, Anger, Atonement, Dedication, Faithfulness, Glory, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Home, Idolatry, Law, Name, Plans, Purity, Sacrifice, Separation, Shame, Sin

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of places do you find most conducive to worship? Why?
- 2. What do you think is the deepest, commonest human desire?
- 3. Judging from your own observations, what does our society consider holy?

Explore It

- 4. What did the man of bronze show to Ezekiel after he had toured the whole restored temple area? (43:1-2)
- * 5. How did Ezekiel describe the return of the glory of God to the temple? (43:3-4)
- 6. Where was Ezekiel transported after his initial vision of the glory of God approaching from the east? (43:5)
- 7. What did the voice from within the temple say? (43:6-7)
- 8. How had Israel angered God and brought on their own destruction? (43:8-9)
- * 9. What response did God hope to produce in the people when Ezekiel related his vision of the temple? (43:10-11)
- 10. How was Ezekiel instructed to preserve the details and dimensions of the temple God showed him? (43:11)
- 11. How much ground was to be dedicated as holy ground? (43:12)
- 12. How was the altar in the new temple to be constructed? (43:13-17)
- 13. What specific instructions were given for a week-long dedication of the altar? (43:18-26)
- * 14. How did God promise to respond after the eighth day of sacrifices and offerings? (43:27)

Get It

- 15. Why was the return of the Lord's presence (described in Ezekiel 43) critical to the overall restoration of God's people?
- * 16. What emotions do you suppose Ezekiel experienced as he watched the glory of the Lord return to the temple?
- 17. When does a beautiful worship space help us worship, and when is it a distraction?
- 18. Why were Ezekiel's previous visions helpful to him when God showed him other things?
- 19. How could the temple in its symmetry, beauty, and greatness cause the people to be ashamed of their sins?
- * 20. How can the beauty and perfection of the heavenly worship, communicated to us in the Bible, be an encouragement to us in our present trials?

Apply It

- 21. Knowing that you are accepted by God, how can you reach out this week in His name to a person who may not feel acceptable?
- * 22. Where can you go for a brief retreat to remember God's greatness and glory compared to your difficulties?

Rules Concerning the Temple and Worship - Ezekiel 44:1-46:24

Topics: Awe, Blessing, Consequences, Covenant, Death, Details, Devotion, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Fear, Gifts, Glory, Heritage, Holiness, Idolatry, Justice, Law, Listening, Marriage, Possessions, Purity, Rebellion, Responsibility, Sacrifice, Separation, Serving, Shame, Sin, Sovereignty, Unfaithfulness, Work

Open It

- * 1. Would you prefer a world where faithfulness and hard work are rewarded or a world where good fortune is dispensed at random? Why?
- 2. Why do you think society dictates that we dress up for certain occasions and not others?

Explore It

- 3. What special instructions did the guide in Ezekiel's vision have for the east gate to the sanctuary? (44:1-3)
- 4. How did Ezekiel react when he saw the glory of the Lord? (44:4)
- * 5. To what instructions did God tell Ezekiel to pay particular attention, in order to correct God's people? (44:5-6)
- 6. What practice would God not tolerate in the restored temple? (44:7-9)
- 7. Why were the Levites to be limited only to certain duties within the temple? (44:10-14)
- 8. What group did God designate to serve as priests in the inner court? (44:15-16)
- 9. What were some ways in which the priests were expected to maintain a greater degree of purity in their life than were the common people? (44:17-27)
- 10. What provisions did God make for the sustenance of the priests? (44:28-31)
- * 11. How did God redraw the map of Jerusalem to provide for the temple, the priests, and the prince in an equitable way? (45:1-8)
- * 12. What abuses of power by prior rulers did God want to eliminate in the restored kingdom? (45:9-12)
- 13. What sorts of offerings did God specify for special days on the Jewish calendar? (45:13-25)
- 14. How was the opening and closing of certain gates to be a part of the temple ceremonies? (46:1-12)
- 15. What were the required daily offerings? (46:13-15)
- 16. How did God's laws on inheritance insure separateness for His people and justice among them? (46:16-18)
- 17. What practical provision was made in the temple since most of the sacrifices were followed by feasts? (46:19-24)

Get It

- * 18. What indications do you see in these three chapters of God's expectations of those in leadership?
- 19. Where in these chapters do you see God's concern for the "little person"?
- 20. How does God's concern for accurate units of measure demonstrate His concern about our life?
- 21. Why is it significant that the land set aside for worship was to be at the center of the restored city?
- 22. Why do you think that purity is so often stressed in situations where human beings approach God?
- 23. How did the temple rituals help the people understand what was important in life?
- 24. How was everyday life brought into the worship of God in the temple?
- 25. For whom do you think the feasts were designed primarily?
- * 26. How should believers conduct themselves with regard to some of the questionable practices of commerce or society?

Apply It

- * 27. What "weights and measures" or "rules and regulations" of daily life should you resolve before God to observe with greater faithfulness?

28. How can you give worship more of a central place in your life?

The Temple and the Land - Ezekiel 47:1-48:35

Topics: Abundance, Divisions, Equality, Fairness, Faithfulness, Gifts, Healing, Holiness, Life, Name, Rewards, Swearing

Open It

1. What sorts of conflicts have you seen, or would expect to see, surrounding the division of an inheritance?
- * 2. What particular recollections, positive or negative, do you have regarding rivers?

Explore It

3. At the end of his tour of the restored temple of God, what did Ezekiel see coming out of the temple? (47:1-2)
4. What happened to the stream of water as it got farther away from the temple? (47:3-6)
- * 5. What good effects did the river in Ezekiel's vision have along its route? (47:7-12)
6. What were God's instructions for the division of the land among the tribes? (47:13-21)
7. How did God instruct His people to regard aliens who had settled among them for legal purposes? (47:22-23)
8. How specific were God's instructions about which tribe was to receive which piece of land? (48:1-7, 23-29)
- * 9. For what purposes did God set aside the "special gift" of land at the center of the country? (48:8-22)
10. What different groups were specifically provided for within the special sector of land? (48:8-22)
11. How were the gates of the city of Jerusalem to be named? (48:30-34)
- * 12. How did the name of the city reflect its reason for being? (48:35)

Get It

- * 13. What do you think the river that flowed out of the temple in Ezekiel's vision might represent?
14. How does this passage show us that God's blessings are not for a single ethnic group only?
- * 15. Why is it important for us to set aside portions of the blessings God gives to us?
16. What conclusions can we draw from the characterization of the new Israel about the fairness and holiness of God?
17. What do you think is the greatest privilege of any nation, city, or individual?

Apply It

- * 18. How can you set aside something from the material blessings God has given you in order to honor and thank Him?
19. What source of help, inspiration, and power from God is available to prosper your daily life, and how can you take advantage of it?

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Daniel's Training in Babylon - Daniel 1:1-21

Topics: Abilities, Accomplishments, Beliefs, Character, Circumstances, Courage, Culture, Dedication, Follow-through, God, Health, Loyalty, Testing, Wisdom

Open It

1. How many glasses of water do you usually drink each day?
2. What are your favorite healthy foods?
- * 3. If you wanted to adopt a healthier eating plan for yourself, what foods would you give up or cut back on and what foods would you eat more often?

Explore It

4. When did Nebuchadnezzar go to Jerusalem? (1:1)
5. When the king came to Jerusalem, what happened? (1:1-2)
6. What were the characteristics of the captives? (1:3-4)
- * 7. What did the king order Ashpenaz to do? (1:3-5)
8. What new names did the chief court official give four of the men? (1:7)
- * 9. What was Daniel's resolve? (1:8)
10. How did the chief official respond to Daniel's request? (1:9-10)
11. What did Daniel say to the guard? (1:11-13)
12. What did the guard do about Daniel's request? (1:14)
- * 13. What was the result of the test? (1:15-16)
14. What did God give to the four men? (1:17)
15. In evaluating the four men at the end of their training, what did Nebuchadnezzar conclude concerning them? (1:18-20)
16. How long did Daniel remain in the king's court? (1:21)

Get It

- * 17. When have you taken a Christian stand in a non-Christian setting?
18. How do you think Daniel felt as he became steeped in Babylonian culture?
19. In what ways did Daniel's commitment to God clash with the Babylonian culture?
20. In what ways do your Christian beliefs clash with the culture around you?
21. In what ways do your Christian beliefs affect your view of people of other cultures?
22. If you were a missionary overseas, what strengths and abilities would you bring to your calling?
23. How can food and drink affect your spiritual life?
24. How did Daniel demonstrate both flexibility and strength in an unfamiliar setting?
- * 25. What sacrifices have you made that reflect your dedication to the Lord?
26. How would a non-Christian acquaintance describe you?

Apply It

- * 27. Starting this week, what is one change you can make in your personal habits to show commitment to the Lord?
28. In what setting do you want to remember to stand up for your Christian convictions?
29. What can you do this week to develop a God-given talent or strength for the sake of God's kingdom?

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream - Daniel 2:1-49

Topics: Anger, Courage, Decisions, Expectations, God, Honor, Interpretation, Power, Praise, Prayer, Rewards, Thankfulness, Trust, Wisdom, World

Open It

- * 1. What has been your happiest dream or your strangest nightmare?
- 2. If you knew that our nation would come under the control of another world power within a week, what would you do?

Explore It

- 3. What did Nebuchadnezzar do about his troubling dreams? (2:1-6)
- 4. What did the king expect from his wise men? (2:8-9)
- 5. Why was the task assigned by the king too difficult for the astrologers to do? (2:10-11)
- * 6. What did the king decree? (2:12-13)
- 7. What was Daniel's course of action in the face of the king's order? (2:14-16)
- * 8. What did Daniel and his friends ask of God in the midst of a desperate situation? (2:17-18)
- * 9. How did Daniel respond to answered prayer? (2:19-23)
- 10. What transpired between Daniel and Arioch? (2:24-25)
- 11. What did Daniel say in response to the king's question? (2:26-30)
- 12. What was the king's dream? (2:31-35)
- 13. What was the interpretation of the dream? (2:36-45)
- 14. What did the king do in response to Daniel's interpretation? (2:46-49)

Get It

- 15. How do you usually deal with unreasonable or demanding people?
- 16. When you become angry, how do you handle it?
- 17. What significance do your dreams have in the way you live your daily life?
- * 18. How can we demonstrate in our life the importance of prayer?
- * 19. When you clearly recognize God's hand in your life, how do you need to respond to Him?
- 20. How does this passage show God's involvement in the political process?
- 21. Why is it better to be wise than powerful?
- 22. How do you think Daniel felt when he was heaped with honors by the king?
- 23. How do you accept compliments and recognition?

Apply It

- * 24. How can your prayer life include an appropriate measure of praise and thanksgiving?
- 25. How can you trust God with an unreasonable or difficult person in your life?

The Image of Gold and the Fiery Furnace - Daniel 3:1-30

Topics: Authority, Awe, Choices, Courage, Emotions, Endurance, God, Idolatry, Image, Integrity, Judgment, People, Persecution, Position, Power, Praise, Punishment, Rewards, Suffering, Trust, Victory

Open It

1. If an artist were to sculpt a representation of you, what special instructions would you give him or her?
2. What spectacular fireworks display stands out in your memory?
- * 3. If a fire were to start in your home, what would be your plan of action?

Explore It

4. What did King Nebuchadnezzar make? (3:1)
5. Whom did he invite to the dedication ceremony? (3:2-3)
- * 6. What were the people commanded to do? (3:4-5)
7. What warning did the herald give? (3:6)
8. What happened when the music began? (3:7)
9. Why did the astrologers complain to the king about the Jews? (3:12)
10. What did the king do about the complaint? (3:13-15)
- * 11. How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego respond to the king? (3:16-18)
12. What did the king order his men to do? (3:19-21)
13. What happened to the king's soldiers? (3:22)
14. What happened to the three men? (3:23)
15. Why was the king amazed? (3:24-25)
16. What did the crowd observe when the men came out of the fire? (3:26-27)
- * 17. How did the king respond to God's deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? (3:28-30)

Get It

18. How are we tempted to glorify national symbols?
- * 19. If someone in authority over you told you to do something wrong, how would you respond?
20. How do you distinguish God's authority from those in authority around you?
21. If you had a great deal of power over others, how might you be tempted to abuse it?
22. What would make you confident or afraid if your safety were threatened because of your faith in God?
23. If God chose not to rescue you from intense personal suffering, how would this affect your faith?
- * 24. In what area of your life is it most difficult for you to stand by your Christian beliefs?
25. How has hardship strengthened your walk with the Lord?

Apply It

- * 26. What are you willing to risk in order to obey God's clear commands?
27. How can you help someone in your community of faith who is going through difficult circumstances?

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Tree - Daniel 4:1-37

Topics: Fear, God, Greatness, Honor, Insight, Interpretation, Miracles, People, Power, Praise, Prayer, Pride, Rewards, Sin, Warning

Open It

- * 1. What is a dream that you vividly remember?
- 2. What would you say if someone asked you to describe your accomplishments?
- 3. What does the term “temporary insanity” mean to you?

Explore It

- 4. What were King Nebuchadnezzar's opening comments in his public decree? (4:1-3)
- 5. Why did the king request a visit from the wise men? (4:4-6)
- 6. What did the wise men fail to do? (4:7)
- 7. Why did the king think that Daniel would be able to help him? (4:8-9)
- 8. What were the visions that the king related to Daniel? (4:10-18)
- 9. How did Daniel respond to the king's dream? (4:19)
- * 10. What was the meaning of the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream? (4:20-26)
- 11. How did Daniel conclude his exhortation? (4:27)
- * 12. What happened to the king twelve months after the dream? (4:28-33)
- * 13. What happened at the end of the king's illness? (4:34-37)

Get It

- 14. When was the last time you talked about your faith with an unbelieving neighbor or coworker?
- 15. How has God most recently revealed Himself to you?
- 16. If you had to share some bad news with a friend, how would you do it?
- 17. What unique image or symbol, like King Nebuchadnezzar's tree, has great importance to you in your walk with God?
- 18. If someone in your family was diagnosed with a mental illness, how would you pray for him or her?
- 19. In what ways can our view of ourselves hinder our spiritual growth?
- * 20. When have you ignored what you felt was a warning from God about specific sinful behavior?
- 21. What recent insight about God has given your faith a boost?
- 22. How is God blessing you right now?
- * 23. What particular area of your life do you need to start giving over to God's power and control?

Apply It

- 24. To whom will you turn the next time you need wisdom from someone who knows and loves God?
- 25. What first step can you take to help someone you know who is in deep mental distress?
- * 26. With what prayer do you want to submit every area of your life to God?

The Writing on the Wall - Daniel 5:1-31

Topics: Accomplishments, Advice, Death, Discernment, Fear, God, Insight, Interpretation, Judgment, People, Pleasure, Pride, Rewards, Wisdom

Open It

1. What would constitute a perfect party for you?
- * 2. What kinds of puzzles or riddles do you like to solve?
3. What are three of your best qualities?

Explore It

4. What did King Belshazzar do? (5:1)
- * 5. While drinking wine, what orders did Belshazzar give? (5:2-3)
6. To whom did the king and his court give praise? (5:4)
7. What happened while the people were feasting? (5:5)
8. How did the king react to the handwriting on the wall? (5:6-7)
9. What happened when the wise men came to the king? (5:8-9)
10. What was the queen's counsel to Belshazzar? (5:10-12)
11. When Daniel was brought before the king, what did Belshazzar say to him? (5:13-16)
12. How did Daniel respond to the king's words? (5:17)
- * 13. In his reply to the king, what did Daniel say about God and His dealings with Nebuchadnezzar? (5:18-21)
14. How did Daniel confront Belshazzar's pride? (5:22-24)
- * 15. What did Daniel say about the judgment of God? (5:25-28)
16. How did the king reward Daniel for his words? (5:29)
17. How was Daniel's revelation fulfilled? (5:30)
18. Who became the new ruler of Babylon? (5:31)

Get It

19. Why was Belshazzar proud?
20. What makes people proud nowadays?
21. What can we do to keep pride from clouding our perspective and respect for God?
22. How do you make festive and celebratory events part of your life?
23. What makes you fearful and anxious?
24. If you were struggling with a difficult personal problem, whose counsel would you seek? Why?
25. When someone asks for your opinion or advice, how honest are you in sharing what you think?
26. What strengths and gifts do you have that can be used to help God's people?
27. When a leader in the church confronts us about sin in our life, how should we respond?
- * 28. How does God and His judgment affect you?
- * 29. How have you benefited from the lessons learned by others' life experiences?

Apply It

- * 30. How can you begin this week to act on a piece of good advice you have recently been given?
31. What concrete action can you take to deal with an area of chronic sin in your life?
32. What do you want to remember the next time you are rebuked or criticized?

Daniel in the Den of Lions - Daniel 6:1-28

Topics: Accomplishments, Accusation, Angels, Courage, God, Jealousy, Judgment, Law, Leadership, People, Praise, Prayer, Protection, Punishment, Rewards

Open It

1. Under what conditions would you consider stepping into a lion's cage?
2. What makes you envious of others?
- * 3. What would you do if your right to pray in any public setting was legally taken away?

Explore It

4. How did Darius rule his kingdom? (6:1-2)
5. Why did Daniel's colleagues plot against him? (6:3-4)
6. How did the administrators and satraps plan to discredit Daniel? (6:5)
7. When the leaders went to the king, what did they say? (6:6-8)
- * 8. How did Daniel respond to the king's decree? (6:9-10)
9. Who found Daniel praying to God? (6:11)
10. Why was Daniel prosecuted? (6:12-15)
11. What was the king's hope for Daniel? (6:16)
- * 12. How was Daniel punished? (6:16-17)
- * 13. What happened during the night? (6:19-22)
14. What did Daniel say to the king? (6:21-22)
15. Why did God protect Daniel? (6:23)
16. What happened to Daniel's accusers and their families? (6:24)
17. What was the king's pronouncement? (6:25-28)

Get It

- * 18. If you were attending a public event at which you felt that your Christian values were being compromised, what would you do?
19. How do you forgive someone who has betrayed you?
20. When have you chosen to submit to God's authority over you rather than obeying the laws of the land?
- * 21. What qualities in Daniel do you most admire?
22. How do you feel toward God when innocent people are hurt or destroyed?
23. When have you seen the Lord do something surprising or miraculous?
24. How is the Lord your lifeline in difficult circumstances?
25. If you consistently show trust in the Lord, how do you think He will reward you?

Apply It

26. What steps can you take to trust God to resolve whatever difficult circumstances you face?
27. How do you need God's wisdom and help in forgiving someone who has betrayed you?
- * 28. What can you do to become a stronger, more courageous Christian?

Daniel's Dream of Four Beasts - Daniel 7:1-28

Topics: Authority, Fear, Glory, God, Heaven, Interpretation, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Obedience, Oppressed, People, Persecution, Power, Sovereignty

Open It

- * 1. If you were to draw an imaginary ferocious animal, what would it look like?
- 2. What is your favorite nation or country (from the present or the past)? your least favorite? Why?
- 3. What sort of monsters did you imagine when you were a child?

Explore It

- 4. When was Daniel's vision revealed to him? (7:1)
- * 5. What was the substance of Daniel's vision? (7:2-3)
- 6. What did three of the beasts look like? (7:4-6)
- 7. How was the fourth beast different from the rest? (7:7-8)
- 8. How did Daniel describe the scene with the thrones? (7:9-10)
- 9. As Daniel watched, what happened to the fourth beast? (7:11)
- 10. What had become of the other three beasts? (7:12)
- 11. What occurred when the "son of man" was before the Ancient of Days? (7:13-14)
- 12. How did Daniel respond to his dream? (7:15)
- 13. Who explained the vision to Daniel? (7:16)
- * 14. What did the four beasts represent? (7:17-18)
- * 15. What was the true meaning of the fourth beast? (7:19-27)
- 16. How was Daniel affected by all that was revealed to him? (7:28)

Get It

- 17. God revealed Himself to Daniel through dreams and visions. How does God usually speak to us today?
- 18. What are some of the negative, ungodly forces in our society today?
- * 19. How are some troubled nations dishonoring God?
- * 20. How does Daniel's vision portray God's control in the affairs of the world?
- 21. To whom does God hand over the dominion of the world?
- 22. In what ways are some Christians persecuted in our country?
- 23. When have you felt defeated as a Christian?
- 24. What does it mean to you to be part of the kingdom of God?
- 25. How does the Lord come to your rescue when you are down?

Apply It

- * 26. How can the nations of the world become a part of your daily prayer life?
- 27. What steps can you take to hand over your fears to the Lord?

Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat - Daniel 8:1-27

Topics: Angels, Confusion, Earth, Fear, Future, Heaven, Interpretation, Intimidation, People, Power, Prophecy, Rebellion, Sacrifice, Truth, War

Open It

1. Of all the current, violent world affairs, which one troubles you most?
2. What recurring dream have you had?
- * 3. If you had the ability to see into the future, what would you not want to know about?

Explore It

4. When and where did Daniel's vision occur? (8:1-2)
5. What was the description of the ram in Daniel's dream? (8:3-4)
- * 6. What did the goat do to the ram? (8:5-7)
7. What happened to the goat at the height of his power? (8:8)
8. How did the little horn grow in importance? (8:9-12)
9. What did the angel—the "holy one"—reveal? (8:13-14)
10. What was Gabriel sent to do? (8:16)
11. How did Daniel respond to the heavenly messenger? (8:17)
- * 12. When would the events of the vision take place? (8:17-19)
13. Who was represented in the fight between the two-horned ram and the goat? (8:20-22)
- * 14. How did Gabriel describe the role of the little horn? (8:23-25)
15. What was Daniel told to do? (8:26)
16. How was Daniel affected by the interpretation of the vision? (8:27)

Get It

17. What atrocities are part of our culture's history?
18. In what ways does our society disregard God?
- * 19. Why do you think God sometimes allows ruthless national leaders to prosper?
- * 20. How have power and arrogance crept into the Christian church?
21. When God clearly reveals His truth to you, how do you feel?
22. When has God seemed inscrutable to you?
23. God enabled Daniel to prophesy. What special gift has God given you so you can serve Him?
24. When has spiritual truth been hard for you to bear?

Apply It

25. When you next feel powerless or inadequate, how can you entrust yourself to the Lord?
- * 26. In your prayers today, what specific national sins do you want to ask God to correct?

Daniel's Prayer - Daniel 9:1-27

Topics: Angels, Confession, Consequences, Disobedience, God, Interpretation, Judgment, Mercy, People, Prayer, Punishment, Restoration, Sin, Timing

Open It

- * 1. When is it most difficult for you to own up to wrongdoing?
- 2. If God would grant you one request, what would it be?

Explore It

- 3. What did Daniel come to understand in the first year of the reign of Darius? (9:1-2)
- 4. What did Daniel's study of the Scripture lead him to do? (9:3)
- 5. What was the nature of Daniel's confession? (9:4-6)
- 6. How did Daniel expect that God in His righteousness would punish an unfaithful Israel? (9:7-11)
- 7. Because of her rebellion and disobedience, what did Israel experience? (9:11-14)
- * 8. What was the substance of Daniel's petition? (9:15-19)
- 9. Who came to Daniel while he was praying? (9:20-21)
- * 10. What was Gabriel's purpose in visiting Daniel? (9:22)
- 11. Why did Daniel receive such a prompt answer to his prayer? (9:23)
- * 12. What did God decree for Israel? (9:24-27)

Get It

- 13. How is your spiritual life affected by momentous world events?
- 14. Why did Daniel confess his sins?
- * 15. Why is confession of sin important?
- 16. When should we confess our sins to God?
- 17. In what ways do you feel implicated when sin is uncovered in the life of your church?
- 18. In your experience, what are the benefits of obedience to God?
- 19. On what basis do you make requests of the Lord?
- 20. When has God given an especially quick answer to your prayers?
- 21. When have you been confused by the Lord's response to your prayers?
- 22. When has the passage of time played an important part in an answer to your prayers?
- * 23. How can you become more confessional in your everyday life with the Lord?

Apply It

- * 24. When can you take some time this week to confess sin and thank God for His forgiveness?
- 25. For what needs in your church and community do you want to pray this week?
- 26. In what specific ways do you need God's grace and mercy in your life right now?

Daniel's Vision of a Man - Daniel 10:1-12:13

Topics: Affirmation, Angels, Character, Conflict, Courage, Encouragement, Enemies, Faith, Fear, God, Grief, History, Interpretation, Judgment, Justice, Knowledge, Peace, People, Persecution, Power, Prayer, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Reputation, Rewards, Sin, Strength, War, Wisdom, World

Open It

- * 1. When have you been intimidated or frightened by an encounter with another person?
- 2. What period of history interests you most?
- 3. Which do you prefer: the process of working on a project or actually completing the task?

Explore It

- 4. What was the occasion of Daniel's final vision? (10:1-3)
- * 5. Who visited Daniel as the prophet was standing by the Tigris River? (10:4-11)
- 6. What did the heavenly being explain to Daniel? (10:12-14)
- 7. What was the significance of Daniel's strengthening? (10:15-11:1)
- 8. What details were given concerning Israel's history under Persia? (11:2)
- 9. What was the importance of the emergence of "a mighty king"? (11:3-4)
- 10. What would take place between the king of the South and the king of the North? (11:5-20)
- 11. What was revealed about the "contemptible person"? (11:21-35)
- 12. How would the evil king meet his demise? (11:36-45)
- * 13. What would be the destiny of Daniel's people (the Jewish nation)? (12:1-3)
- 14. Why was Daniel told to "seal the words of the scroll"? (12:4)
- 15. How did the man clothed in linen respond to the angel's question? (12:5-7)
- * 16. How did the angel respond to Daniel's concern? (12:8-13)

Get It

- 17. When have you been afraid of God?
- 18. How does bad news affect your prayer life?
- 19. What does the strength of the Lord mean to you personally?
- * 20. How have you most recently been encouraged in your spiritual life?
- 21. Why should we pray for the political leaders of the world?
- 22. Why is it particularly important to pray for Christians who are involved in political leadership?
- 23. If you were suddenly elevated to a social position of great power, what personal pitfalls would you be careful to avoid?
- 24. If Daniel were given a vision of our society, what major weaknesses and strengths might he identify?
- 25. If you were faced with persecution because of your faith, how would you count on the Lord to protect you?
- * 26. What rewards are promised to the faithful and the wise?

Apply It

- * 27. This week how will you persevere in your faith when you face opposition?
- 28. For what group of people that suffers under an inhumane political system can you pray?
- 29. In what area of your life do you need to start seeking the Lord for wisdom?

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Hosea's Wayward Wife - Hosea 1:1-3:5

Topics: Acceptance, Adultery, Blessing, Children, Consequences, God, Husbands, Judgment, Life-style, Love, Loyalty, Marriage, Name, Obedience, Peace, People, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Reconciliation, Relationships, Repentance, Restoration, Sin, Unfaithfulness, Wives

Open It

1. If someone were to select a spouse for you, whom would you trust to make the best choice?
2. What do you like about your name?
- * 3. What qualities do you cherish about the person who loves you most?

Explore It

4. Who was Hosea? (1:1)
5. When did the Lord speak to the prophet? (1:1)
6. What did the Lord instruct Hosea to do? (1:2-2:1)
- * 7. What was the symbolism of Hosea's family? (1:2-2:1)
8. How did Hosea feel about Gomer? (2:2-13)
9. What did God say to Israel through Hosea's words? (2:2-13)
10. What did the Lord plan to do to win Israel back to himself? (2:14-15)
11. By what name would renewed Israel acknowledge her Lord? (2:16)
12. What would God prohibit? (2:17)
13. What would accompany Israel's return to the land? (2:18)
14. What would mark the new relationship between the Lord and Israel? (2:19-23)
- * 15. What commands did the Lord give Hosea? (3:1)
16. How did Hosea respond to the Lord? (3:2-3)
17. What did Gomer's lengthy probation portray? (3:4)
- * 18. What would happen after Israel's period of isolation? (3:5)

Get It

19. What do you expect from God when you "betray" Him repeatedly?
- * 20. How do you tend to deal with a loved one who has wronged you in some way?
21. How should Christians deal with people in the church who commit adultery?
- * 22. How is God's faithfulness to us an example of the way we should treat others?
23. What are the "idols" in your life from which you should turn away?
24. What bruised or broken family relationship of yours needs the healing touch of the Lord?
25. What does this passage say to you about the consequences of sin?
26. In what ways do you think people's attitudes toward morality have changed over the past ten years?
27. How would you describe the influence of the church on the morals of our society?
28. How can you intervene in someone else's life to be a force of renewal?

Apply It

29. What step can you take each day to help maintain your faithfulness to the Lord?
30. What loyalties, things, or relationships do you need to hand over to God?
- * 31. How can you show love and acceptance to someone in your church in desperate need of forgiveness or affirmation?

Israel's Sinfulness - Hosea 4:1-5:15

Topics: Accountability, Accusation, Adultery, Anger, Conflict, Consequences, Discipline, Disobedience, God, Guilt, Judgment, People, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Repentance, Sin, Society, War

Open It

1. If you were treated unjustly by someone in your community, how would you want to respond?
2. How do you usually handle feelings of guilt?
- * 3. If you were to write your local newspaper about a thorny social problem, what would you write about and how would you like the issue resolved?

Explore It

- * 4. What charge did God bring against Israel? (4:1-2)
5. What would result from Israel's sin? (4:3)
6. How were the priests implicated in God's indictment? (4:4-11)
7. How had God's people sinned? (4:11-14)
8. What warning did God give Judah? (4:15)
9. What had hindered God from shepherding Israel? (4:16-19)
10. To whom was God's pronouncement of guilt addressed? (5:1-5)
- * 11. What would God withdraw because of Israel's unfaithfulness? (5:6-7)
12. Why would the sound of battle be heard among God's people? (5:8-9)
13. What was God's charge against Judah? (5:10)
14. How had the process of judgment against Israel already started? (5:11-14)
- * 15. What was the ultimate purpose of the Lord's judgment on His people? (5:15)

Get It

16. How should a Christian handle criticism or unsolicited advice from others?
17. What commands from God are difficult for you to obey?
18. When have you experienced God's hand of discipline in your life?
- * 19. How is our society like rebellious Israel?
20. How would you describe the spiritual health of your church community?
- * 21. In what way might the Christian church be partly responsible for the breakdown of morality in our culture?
22. In what ways do you hold yourself accountable to other Christians?
23. How has suffering helped your walk with the Lord?

Apply It

- * 24. This week what can you do in your community to show the love and righteousness of the Lord?
25. For what Christian leaders in your community can you pray?
26. In what practical way can you be involved in the spiritual restoration of Christians you know who have turned away from the Lord?

Israel's Punishment - Hosea 6:1-10:15

Topics: Accusation, Actions, Adultery, Anger, Covenant, Deceit, God, Heart, Idolatry, Judgment, Love, People, Possessions, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Rejection, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Sin, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. What are some childhood friendships that went sour by the time you were an adult, and what drove you apart?
- 2. If a close friend betrayed you, how would you tend to respond (for example, tell others about it, keep it close to your heart, deny that it happened, write down your feelings, etc.)?
- 3. When do you usually like to say what you think and show your feelings, and when do you prefer to keep your thoughts and emotions to yourself?

Explore It

- * 4. How would a penitent Israel respond to the Lord? (6:1-3)
- 5. What was the Lord's answer to Israel? (6:4-11)
- 6. What did God want from His people? (6:6)
- 7. What were Israel's crimes against the Lord? (6:11-7:16)
- 8. What had happened to Israel's kings? (7:6-7)
- 9. To whom had Israel turned for help? (7:8-9, 11, 16)
- * 10. How did God's people show that they had forgotten Him? (8:1-14)
- 11. How was Israel's hostility punished? (9:1-9)
- 12. What were the consequences of Israel's idolatry? (9:10-17)
- 13. What was at the heart of affluent Israel's religion? (10:1-8)
- 14. How severe was God's judgment against His people? (10:9-15)
- * 15. Why did God hold out the possibility of repentance and blessing? (10:12)

Get It

- 16. Why did Israel deserve God's judgment?
- 17. How often do we need to confess our sins to the Lord?
- * 18. Why is God's mercy and grace important?
- 19. Why is God's mercy and grace important to you personally?
- 20. In what ways do we always struggle against sin in our life?
- 21. What does God want us to learn from Israel's negative example of disobeying to the point of needing to be punished?
- 22. In your view, how does the church today compare with faithless Israel?
- 23. What are some of the "idols" you encounter in your own experience?
- 24. What "idols" do you need to give up in order to serve the Lord?
- * 25. How would you describe your walk with the Lord in the past few weeks?
- 26. What is your heartfelt attitude toward your ministry and service in the church?
- 27. How have you ultimately benefited from the Lord's discipline and judgment in a specific instance?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you work on improving your closeness and devotion to the Lord this week?
- 29. What can you do each day this week to remind yourself of God's hold on your life?
- 30. For what act of grace or mercy do you want to thank God?

God's Love for Israel - Hosea 11:1-14:9

Topics: Anger, Compassion, Consequences, Disobedience, Forgiveness, God, History, Idolatry, Judgment, Justice, Love, Loyalty, People, Possessions, Power, Prophecy, Punishment, Relationships, Renewal, Repentance, Restoration, Righteousness, Sin, Unfaithfulness, Wisdom

Open It

1. What is one good way to express angry feelings?
2. What do you value most in a friendship?
- * 3. Would you prefer to be known as “loving” or “just”? Why?

Explore It

4. How did God express His love for Israel? (11:1-4)
5. Why did the nation not deserve mercy? (11:5-7)
- * 6. How did God show that He was torn between love and justice? (11:8-11)
7. What did God say in chastising His prodigal people? (11:12-13:16)
8. What lessons from history did God mention? (12:3-6, 12-13)
9. What fierce doom did Israel face? (13:1-16)
10. How could Israel avoid the fire of judgment? (14:1-3)
- * 11. What was the promise of restoration? (14:4-6)
12. How would the Lord protect and prosper His people? (14:7-8)
13. What was Hosea's concluding word of wisdom? (14:9)
- * 14. What final challenge did Hosea leave the people? (14:9)

Get It

15. In what ways did Hosea show compassion and loyalty?
16. What lessons do you find in the prophet's message?
- * 17. How has God shown fatherly love to you?
18. In what variety of ways have you responded to God's love?
19. How have past events affected your present walk with the Lord?
20. When has godly discipline been a blessing in your life?
21. What place does the Lord have in the life, ministries, and focus of your church?
22. What does facing the Lord's anger mean to you?
- * 23. Why is justice an important part of being a Christian?
24. What do you desire most from the Lord?
25. What good things happen in your life when you consistently walk in the ways of the Lord?

Apply It

26. How can you show compassion and loyalty to a troubled friend or family member this week?
- * 27. What gifts, talents, abilities, or resources can you use to show Christian love and justice toward others?

The Day of the Locusts, the Day of the Lord - Joel 1:1-3:21

Topics: Blessing, Darkness, Fasting, Forgiveness, Future, God, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Jealousy, Judgment, Mourning, Nature, People, Prayer, Restoration, Sin, Suffering, War

Open It

- * 1. If you lived in an area known for natural disasters—earthquakes, brush fires, flooding, or the like—how would this knowledge affect you?
- 2. When have you most enjoyed the world of nature?

Explore It

- 3. Who was Joel? (1:1)
- 4. What was the prophet's opening appeal? (1:2-4)
- 5. What was the nature of Joel's call to mourn? (1:5-13)
- 6. What specific instructions were to be given to all the people? (1:14)
- * 7. Why was the locust plague meaningful? (1:15-20)
- * 8. What was significant about the coming Day of the Lord? (2:1-11)
- * 9. What was the nation's only hope against utter destruction? (2:12-14)
- 10. Why were the people told to congregate? (2:15-17)
- 11. In response to real repentance, what did God promise to do immediately? (2:18-27)
- 12. What future deliverance would God provide? (2:28-32)
- 13. How would God judge the nations? (3:1-16)
- 14. How would Israel respond to God's incredible display of power? (3:17)
- 15. What would mark Israel's ultimate restoration? (3:18-21)

Get It

- 16. When natural disasters strike people and places throughout the world, what bothers you most?
- 17. If a family in your community lost all their belongings to a house fire, what would you do?
- 18. If you were unexpectedly faced with economic hardship, to whom would you turn for help?
- 19. How does your church band together to fight spiritual battles?
- * 20. If Joel were to preach an ominous sermon about the impending Day of the Lord, how would your congregation likely respond to his words?
- * 21. In terms of Joel's imagery, how would you describe the spiritual condition of your church: about due for an invasion of locusts? prepared to fast, mourn, and wear sackcloth? ready for a ripe harvest and an outpouring of the Lord's Spirit?
- 22. When is it appropriate to fast and mourn?
- 23. What is true repentance?
- 24. How have God's blessings healed wounds in your life?

Apply It

- 25. How can you provide emergency assistance to a family or group facing unexpected personal loss and hardship?
- * 26. When can you take time to fast and pray for your church?
- 27. What is one creative way you can acknowledge your dependence on the Lord this week?

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Announcement of Judgment - Amos 1:1-2:16

Topics: Anger, Forsake, God, History, Idolatry, Injustice, Judgment, Law, Oppressed, People, Prophecy, Punishment, Sex, Sin, Slavery

Open It

1. What line of work would you like to be doing three years from now?
- * 2. If you had the opportunity to work in the criminal justice system, in what position would you be most effective?

Explore It

3. When did Amos, the shepherd, reveal his visions? (1:1)
4. What was the theme of Amos's message? (1:2)
5. What was the pronouncement of doom against Damascus? (1:3-5)
6. What would become of the Philistines because of their enslavement of entire communities? (1:6-8)
7. How would Tyre be punished for her sins? (1:9-10)
8. What was the judgment against Edom? (1:11-12)
9. How would God deal with the terrible cruelty of Ammon? (1:13-15)
10. How would God deal with Moab? (2:1-3)
11. What was the ruling against Judah? (2:4-5)
- * 12. How had Israel sinned? (2:6-8)
- * 13. How would God deal with Israel's sins? (2:6-16)
14. How had God dealt with His people in the past? (2:9-12)
- * 15. Who would be affected by God's severe punishment? (2:13-16)

Get It

16. What advantage was there in God choosing Amos, a shepherd and a farmer, to deliver such a harsh prophetic message to His people?
17. How do you think Amos felt about presenting God's message to the northern kingdom of Israel?
18. When have you felt unqualified for ministry that you have been called to do?
- * 19. If you were to speak out against social injustice, what would compel people to listen to you?
20. How might a wealthy Christian church today compare with affluent Israel in Amos's day?
- * 21. What types of social and religious corruption do you see in Christian circles?
22. How has the church grown hard and callous in their dealings with others?
23. What level of responsibility do you feel toward the homeless and needy?
24. In what ways do we turn a deaf ear to God's Word?

Apply It

- * 25. Starting today, what practical steps can you take toward letting the Holy Spirit soften your heart toward the Lord and bring renewal to your spiritual life?
26. How can you help a child or an adult this week caught in an unfortunate set of circumstances?

Reasons for Judgment - Amos 3:1-6:14

Topics: Accusation, Comfortable, Compromise, Desires, Family, God, Greed, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Idolatry, Injustice, Judgment, Materialism, Mourning, Oppressed, People, Poor, Possessions, Pride, Prophecy, Sacrifice, Sin, Society, Sovereignty, Suffering, Wealth

Open It

1. What one family relationship would you consider very unique and rewarding?
- * 2. If suddenly you inherited a lot of money, what would you do with it?
3. When do you feel most content and secure?

Explore It

4. Why did God speak out against Israel? (3:1-2)
5. Why was Israel's punishment inevitable? (3:3-8)
- * 6. What were the injustices of Israel? (3:9-10)
7. What catastrophes did Amos unfold? (3:11-15)
8. Why did Amos speak against Samaria's upper-class women? (4:1-3)
9. How were the Israelites guilty of religious hypocrisy? (4:4-5)
10. What was Israel's persistent attitude toward God? (4:6-13)
11. What lament did Amos summon the people to hear? (5:1-3, 16-20, 27)
12. How was repentance possible? (5:4-6, 14-15, 23-24)
- * 13. What were the Israelites accused of? (5:7, 10-13, 21-22, 25-26)
14. What was Amos's portrayal of God? (5:8-9)
- * 15. What did Amos say to those who enjoyed affluence and comfortable living? (6:1-7)
16. How did Amos describe the complete devastation of Israel? (6:8-14)

Get It

17. How do family members help make you feel exceptional?
18. If your behavior were troubling to others, which family member would do the best job of discussing it with you?
- * 19. In what ways do you think you need to be less attached to money, things, material comforts, and status?
- * 20. What is the prevailing attitude in your church toward money, possessions, and status?
21. How does your church treat the poor and needy?
22. If Amos visited your congregation, what examples of religious hypocrisy might he point out?
23. Why, like Israel, does the church today need to seek the Lord?
24. What is wrong with being a complacent Christian?
25. How might your sense of security and well-being be off base?
26. In what ways should we fear the Lord's judgment?

Apply It

27. What is one step you can take to become a more obedient, humble, and dependent child of God?
- * 28. How can you share some of your resources with those who are needy or oppressed?

Visions of Judgment - Amos 7:1-9:15

Topics: Accusation, Conflict, Conversation, Death, Forgiveness, God, Mourning, Peace, People, Prophecy, Punishment, Renewal, Repentance, Restoration, Silence, Sin, War

Open It

1. What interesting experience or anecdote can you tell about one or more of the following: insects, fire, a plumb line?
2. If you had to tell a friend some bad news, how would you choose to do it?
- * 3. If you were in the business of fixing things, what kinds of things would you be interested in repairing or restoring?

Explore It

- * 4. What three visions did the Lord reveal to Amos? (7:1-9)
5. What were the meanings of the visions to Amos? (7:1-9)
6. Why did Amos appeal to the Lord? (7:1-9)
7. How did Amaziah oppose Amos? (7:10-13)
8. How did Amos defend his call to prophesy? (7:14-15)
9. What word did the Lord have for the priest? (7:16-17)
10. What was the horror of Amos's fourth vision? (8:1-3)
11. Why would there be unprecedented mourning in the land? (8:4-10)
12. What would characterize God's silence toward Israel? (8:11-14)
- * 13. What did Amos see in his fifth and final vision? (9:1-10)
- * 14. How did Amos describe the restoration after judgment? (9:11-15)

Get It

15. Who, in your view, speaks out for the Lord in our society?
16. From your perspective, which group or nation today needs an extra measure of the Lord's mercy and grace?
17. What does the term "Sovereign Lord" mean?
18. When have you felt that God was giving you the silent treatment?
19. How do you see your church being affected by hearing God's Word?
20. If God judged the church today, what practices, characteristics, or teachings would He get rid of?
- * 21. How can you pray for your community?
- * 22. In what ways does your church need renewal?

Apply It

- * 23. When can you meet with a group of Christians to pray for forgiveness of sins and an outpouring of God's grace and mercy on your church community?
24. In what areas of your life do you want to ask the Holy Spirit to refresh or restore you?
25. With whom can you pray for a renewal of commitment to God? When?

Edom and Israel - Obadiah 1:1-21

Topics: Consequences, Disobedience, Family, God, Greed, Hardheartedness, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Pride, Punishment, Restoration, Security, Sin, War

Open It

1. If you were to live in a remote, mountainous region, in what geographical location would you want to live?
- * 2. On which of your material possessions do you most depend?

Explore It

3. What message did the Lord give Obadiah? (1:1)
- * 4. What would happen to Edom's pride? (1:2-4)
- * 5. How would Edom's wealth be destroyed? (1:5-7)
6. What would become of Edom's people? (1:8-9)
7. What bad attitudes did Edom have? (1:10-12)
- * 8. Why did God condemn Edom? (1:10-14)
9. How had Edom shown aggressiveness? (1:13-14)
10. How would God judge all rebellious nations? (1:15-16)
11. How would Israel be delivered? (1:17-21)
12. What would be restored to God's people? (1:19-20)
13. What would the Lord establish? (1:21)

Get It

14. The Edomites and the Israelites shared an old, negative family history. How do longtime family problems affect the spiritual health of the Christian church?
- * 15. How does your church show pride and overconfidence?
16. What happens when Christians reject God's Word and grace?
17. If we treat others poorly, how should we expect God to treat us?
- * 18. Based on God's dealings with the Edomites, how can we expect Him to judge nations today that rebel against Him, dominate others, or trust in their own strength and possessions?
19. In your experience, how have you reaped what you have sown?
20. Why does our trust in the Lord ensure His blessings on our life?

Apply It

- * 21. In all your activities and interactions this week, how can you show more trust in the Lord and less reliance on yourself and your possessions?
22. What concrete steps can you take to show consistent love and concern for someone (a family member perhaps) whom you have ignored or treated carelessly in the past?

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Jonah Forsakes His Mission - Jonah 1:1-2:10

Topics: Awe, Creation, Danger, Disobedience, Escape, God, Help, Idolatry, Instructions, Peace, Prayer, Sacrifice, Salvation, Thankfulness

Open It

1. What is your idea of the perfect “get away from all your troubles” location?
2. What good or bad thoughts do you associate with fish?
- * 3. When have you been rescued from a difficult situation?

Explore It

4. What did God tell Jonah to do? (1:1-2)
- * 5. How did Jonah respond to God? (1:3)
6. What happened at sea? (1:4-5)
7. What was Jonah’s condition as the storm raged? (1:5-6)
8. What did the sailors do? (1:7)
9. How did Jonah respond to the sailors’ barrage of questions? (1:8-9)
10. What made the men terrified? (1:10)
11. How did the sailors appeal to Jonah? (1:11)
12. Why did Jonah tell the sailors to throw him into the sea? (1:12)
13. What happened following Jonah’s penitent admission? (1:13-16)
14. What miraculous provision did God make for Jonah? (1:17)
- * 15. Once inside the fish, how did Jonah respond to God’s rescue? (2:1-9)
16. What was Jonah’s attitude toward God? (2:7-9)
- * 17. How did God finally deliver Jonah? (2:10)

Get It

18. When have you not wanted to obey God?
19. When has God called you to serve Him in ways that were unattractive or unpleasant to you?
20. What rebellious attitudes have you ever had toward the Lord?
21. What opportunities do you have to tell others about faith in Christ?
22. What are your feelings toward the unbelievers around you?
- * 23. How has God pursued you when you have tried to avoid Him?
- * 24. When have bad circumstances turned out for your good?
25. How do you feel when you know that you are being obedient to the Lord’s call?

Apply It

26. What can you do to respond with obedience to God the next time you must do something good but unpleasant?
27. How can you share the gospel with others at work? among your family? among your neighbors?
- * 28. How do you want to thank the Lord right now for all the remarkable ways He has delivered you?

Jonah Fulfills His Mission - Jonah 3:1-4:11

Topics: Anger, Attitude, Believe, Compassion, Consequences, Fasting, Forgiveness, God, Instructions, Judging Others, Love, Obedience, People, Prayer, Protection, Questions, Repentance, Resentment

Open It

1. If you were offered a trip to the city of your choice anywhere in the world, what city would you choose? Why?
- * 2. When things don't go your way, how do you tend to respond?
3. What most easily moves you to compassion?

Explore It

4. What did God command Jonah to do? (3:1-2)
5. How did Jonah respond to God's instructions? (3:3)
6. What did Jonah tell the Ninevites? (3:4)
7. How did the people respond to Jonah's message? (3:5)
8. What did the king do? (3:6)
9. What did the king decree? (3:7-9)
10. What action did God take? (3:10)
- * 11. How did Jonah respond to God's goodness to the Ninevites? (4:1)
- * 12. What was the attitude of Jonah's prayer? (4:2-3)
13. What did God say to Jonah? (4:4)
14. What did the distraught prophet do? (4:5)
15. How did God deal with Jonah? (4:6-11)
- * 16. What did God want Jonah to understand? (4:9-11)

Get It

17. When have you experienced a surprising, undeserved measure of God's mercy in your life?
18. Why do you think that fasting might be a useful part of repentance?
19. In your view, which culture, nation, or special interest group is undeserving of God's mercy?
- * 20. God was very gracious to Jonah, a pouting, reactive type. How does God deal with your prickly side?
21. How does the story of Jonah affect your view of cross-cultural ministry?
- * 22. Jonah wanted Nineveh, Israel's enemy, destroyed. When have you wanted revenge rather than restoration in a relationship?
23. What hard lesson have you had to learn from God?

Apply It

- * 24. What is one way you can extend God's love and mercy toward others, particularly those who don't deserve it?
25. How can you express thanks to the Lord this week for all the love and mercy He has given to you and others?

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The Trial of the Capitals - Micah 1:1-2:13

Topics: Deceit, God, Greed, Injustice, Judgment, Justice, Mourning, Pain, People, Plans, Promises, Prophecy, Salvation, Sickness, Sin, War

Open It

1. What one infectious disease would you most like to avoid having? Why?
2. How can people tell if you are sad?
- * 3. If you inherited valuable land, what would you do with it?

Explore It

4. Who received the word of the Lord? (1:1)
5. When did Micah prophesy? (1:1)
6. What was the message for Samaria and Judah? (1:2-7)
7. What was Micah's lament? (1:8-9)
8. What did the prophet say to those who lived along the route of the invading army? (1:10-16)
- * 9. What were the sins of the people? (2:1-5)
- * 10. How would the Lord punish Judah? (2:3-5)
- * 11. What were the sins of the false prophets? (2:6-11)
12. What did Micah predict for the nation? (2:12-13)
13. Who would lead God's people? (2:13)

Get It

14. How is our sin like an infectious disease?
15. In what ways does our government refuse to acknowledge God's rule over society?
16. Why would you be fearful of experiencing God's judgment?
17. How do you handle times of grief and mourning?
- * 18. In what ways have Christians perpetuated social injustice?
- * 19. What does God's standard of justice require of us?
20. What is the Lord's attitude toward pride?
21. When have you found it difficult or challenging to maintain your integrity?

Apply It

22. How can specific concerns for our government and society become a regular part of your daily prayers?
- * 23. How can you become a more effective Christian witness in matters of social justice?

The Trial of the Leaders - Micah 3:1-5:15

Topics: Enemies, God, Holy Spirit, Injustice, Judgment, Justice, Leadership, Mercy, Pain, Peace, People, Power, Protection, Punishment, Restoration, Sickness, Silence, Sin

Open It

1. What volunteer social service project would best suit your talents and interests?
2. What is your idea of a peaceful setting?
- * 3. Who, in your view, is one of the greatest leaders of our time?

Explore It

- * 4. How did the unjust leaders treat the people? (3:1-3)
- * 5. How would the Lord deal with the leaders? (3:4)
6. What was the judgment on the false prophets? (3:5-7)
7. What was the judgment on Jerusalem? (3:9-12)
8. How did Micah describe the characteristics of the kingdom? (4:1-8)
9. What did the prophet predict would happen to Israel? (4:9-10)
10. Who would go against God's people? (4:11-13)
11. What happened to the ruler of Israel? (5:1)
12. What were the ruler's origins? (5:2)
- * 13. What was the work of Israel's ruler? (5:3-15)

Get It

14. What examples of injustice and exploitation do you see around you?
15. How can Christians become involved in bringing justice to their community?
- * 16. How would you characterize the leadership of your church?
- * 17. If Micah were here today, how might he evaluate the church on matters of helping the disadvantaged and suffering people?
18. What is your view of the Christian's role in bringing about peace in society?
19. How can Christians have hope in persecution?
20. How would you describe the strength and power of the Lord?

Apply It

- * 21. This week what initiative can you take to do acts of mercy and justice on behalf of those in need?
22. What is one way your life-style could become more peacemaking?
23. How can you renew your hope in the Lord today?

The Trial of the People - Micah 6:1-7:20

Topics: Accountability, Accusation, Anger, Compassion, Confidence, Discouragement, Enemies, Family, Goodness, Guilt, History, Hope, Humility, Idolatry, Judging Others, Judgment, Justice, Mercy, People, Praise, Prayer, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Salvation, Sin

Open It

- * 1. If you had to take part in a public debate, what position would you like to defend?
- 2. When have you worked hard on a project and, in spite of all your efforts, not seen satisfying results?
- 3. When faced with difficult circumstances, on whom can you most depend for help?

Explore It

- * 4. What was God's indictment against Israel? (6:1-5)
- 5. How did Israel propose to make up for its sins? (6:6-8)
- * 6. What did God desire from His people? (6:8)
- 7. What were some of the sins in which Israel was involved? (6:9-12)
- 8. Since Israel did not meet God's requirements, what was God compelled to do? (6:9-16)
- 9. What was the nature of God's punishment? (6:13-16)
- 10. What was Micah's lament? (7:1-6)
- 11. Where did Micah's hope and confidence lie? (7:7-13)
- 12. What was Micah's prayer? (7:14)
- 13. What did the Lord promise to show to His people? (7:15-17)
- * 14. In conclusion, what did Micah affirm about God? (7:18-20)

Get It

- 15. How do the sins of the church today compare with the injustice of God's people during the time of Micah?
- * 16. What does it mean to act justly? love mercy? walk humbly with God?
- 17. In what way does God want us to be a force for good against evil in the world?
- * 18. If all Christians were spiritual people who always obeyed God faithfully and acted justly, how might our society be different?
- 19. What is the difference between punishment for sin and the consequences of sin?
- 20. When have you, like Micah, felt depressed by all the troubles around you?
- 21. If God delights to show mercy, why does He also judge, punish, and avenge sin?
- 22. In what way are you dissatisfied with your Christian testimony?
- 23. What gives you hope in the Lord?
- 24. How does your confidence in the Lord compare with Micah's affirmations about God?

Apply It

- * 25. What steps can you take to act justly, show mercy, or be humble toward your coworkers? your family? your neighbors?
- 26. What statement of praise or confidence in God do you want to make to your fellow believers?

Nineveh - Nahum 1:1-3:19

Topics: Anger, Character, Death, Discipline, God, Greatness, Guilt, Idolatry, Oppressed, People, Power, Pride, Promises, Prophecy, Protection, Punishment, Sin, Strength, War

Open It

- * 1. When you are troubled, what are some of the most comforting words a friend can say to you?
- 2. If you suddenly had to flee your flooded home, what possessions would you have difficulty leaving behind?
- 3. When have you been enraged with someone else?

Explore It

- 4. Who was the author of the oracle? (1:1)
- * 5. How did Nahum describe the ways of the Lord? (1:2-8)
- 6. What would Nineveh receive from the Lord? (1:2-6,8)
- 7. What had Nineveh done against the Lord? (1:9-11)
- * 8. How would Judah's affliction end? (1:12-15)
- 9. How was Nineveh attacked? (2:1-6)
- 10. How did Nahum characterize Nineveh's immediate future? (2:7-13)
- * 11. Why did God judge Nineveh? (3:1-7)
- 12. How had Nineveh treated Thebes? (3:8-11)
- 13. Why were Nineveh's defense efforts useless? (3:12-19)
- 14. What was the ultimate destiny of Nineveh? (3:19)
- 15. How would people respond to Nineveh's destruction? (3:19)

Get It

- 16. Why is it appropriate for the Lord to express jealousy in His relationship with us?
- 17. When do you perceive God as threatening?
- 18. How does God view nations that seek recognition by aggressive and oppressive means?
- 19. When you think of God's judgment, what comes to mind?
- 20. When have you experienced God's support and power in the face of enemy oppression or attack?
- * 21. How has God cared for you?
- 22. How do the sins of our nation compare with Nineveh's pride, cruelty, selfishness, and lies?
- 23. What makes us safe in the Lord?
- 24. How can you be sure that God will protect and comfort you in the face of hardship?
- * 25. The name Nahum means comfort. How can Christians be a comfort to others in troubling circumstances?

Apply It

- * 26. To whom can you be a comfort or help? How?
- 27. What can you do to warn an individual or group that is in danger of God's judgment?

Habakkuk's Complaints and Prayer - Habakkuk 1:1-3:19

Topics: Answers, Awe, Complaining, Faith, Faithfulness, Glory, God, Holiness, Idolatry, Judgment, Messiah, Patience, People, Praise, Prayer, Questions, Righteousness, Words, Worship

Open It

1. If you could talk with one prominent person, whom would you choose and what would you discuss?
2. What about life has sometimes perplexed or frustrated you?
- * 3. When someone says nice things about you, how do you tend to respond?

Explore It

4. What did Habakkuk receive? (1:1)
5. About what was the prophet distressed? (1:2-4)
6. How did God answer Habakkuk's complaint? (1:5-11)
7. Why was the prophet perplexed and bewildered? (1:12-17)
8. What did the prophet do in anticipation of God's response? (2:1)
9. What did God tell Habakkuk to do? (2:2)
10. What was God's answer? (2:3-20)
11. To whom were the "woes" addressed? (2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19)
12. For what did Habakkuk ask God? (3:1-2)
- * 13. In his prayer, how did Habakkuk describe the person of God? (3:1-3)
- * 14. What did the prophet say about God's power? (3:4-7)
15. How did Habakkuk describe God's actions? (3:8-15)
16. How did Habakkuk react to his awesome encounter with God? (3:16)
- * 17. On what note of faith did the prophet conclude his song of praise? (3:17-19)

Get It

18. When people suffer because of violence and injustice, how do you feel?
19. God used the ungodly Babylonians to punish Israel. How does God speak to Christians through the actions of pagans nowadays?
20. When have you been perplexed about why God allowed something to happen?
21. When has God given you an answer to prayer that surprised you?
22. What sins of this nation are deplorable to you?
23. What "woes" might Habakkuk pronounce on our culture today?
- * 24. If your earthly sources of satisfaction and security were stripped away, how would you continue to hope in the Lord?
- * 25. What prayer of rejoicing and praise can you offer to God, your Savior?

Apply It

26. When can you take time this week to be open and honest with the Lord about some of your deepest concerns or frustrations?
- * 27. How can you start expressing your faith and hope in the Lord in refreshing, creative ways (such as in songs, poetry, or art)?

Days of Wrath and Hope - Zephaniah 1:1-3:20

Topics: Future, God, Humility, Idolatry, Insults, Joy, Mourning, People, Promises, Prophecy, Protection, Punishment, Rebellion, Restoration, Salvation, Sin, Sorrow, Sovereignty, War

Open It

1. In what way do you tend to be a pessimist or an optimist?
- * 2. What future event are you either dreading or anticipating?
3. What in your life brings you the most joy?

Explore It

4. Who was Zephaniah? (1:1)
5. What was prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem? (1:2-18)
6. Who were the objects of judgment? (1:4-13)
7. What was the description of judgment? (1:14-18)
8. What did the prophet summon the people to do? (2:1-3)
9. What were the judgments on neighboring nations? (2:4-15)
- * 10. What did Zephaniah say about Jerusalem's doom? (3:1-7)
11. What universal judgment did the prophet foretell? (3:8)
- * 12. How would the nations be renewed? (3:9-10)
13. What future blessings for God's people did Zephaniah describe? (3:11-20)
- * 14. How would God remove sorrow from His people? (3:18-20)

Get It

15. How does God bring judgment on rebellious nations today?
16. What sin patterns are prevalent among Christians in our culture?
17. How do we practice Israel's crimes of idolatry, violence, and fraud today?
18. What significance does "the day of the Lord" have for us?
- * 19. When have you experienced restoration and rejoicing after a period of rebellion?
20. When has the Lord brought you out of sorrow and into joy?
21. In what way are you blessed right now?
22. In what way might you be a blessing to others?
23. How can looking forward to future blessings in Christ provide hope and enthusiasm for our spiritual journey with Him?
- * 24. In your life as a Christian, what do you look forward to most?

Apply It

25. In what areas of your life do you want to be more sensitive to God's desires for you and less resistant of what He wants?
26. What sad memories do you want to let go of in order to experience the joy of the Lord?
- * 27. How can you remind yourself (or others) this week of the future hope that God has planned for His people?

Rebuilding the Temple - Haggai 1:1-2:23

Topics: Blessing, Confidence, Courage, Discipline, Future, God, History, Materialism, Messiah, Poor, Priorities, Procrastination, Prophecy, Punishment, Purity

Open It

1. If you could have a house restored and money was no object, what kind of house would you want to restore?
2. When do you procrastinate?
- * 3. When do you tend to own up to your mistakes, and when do you find it easier to make excuses for yourself?

Explore It

4. What points did Haggai cover in the introduction to the book? (1:1)
- * 5. What excuse did the people make for not rebuilding the temple? (1:2)
- * 6. Why did the Lord rebuke the people of Judah? (1:3-6)
7. What did the Lord challenge the people to do? (1:7-8)
8. What had led to the people's impoverishment? (1:9-11)
- * 9. How did the people react to the prophetic message? (1:12-15)
10. What did Haggai say when he announced his second prophetic message? (2:1-2)
11. How did the Lord promise to help His people? (2:3-5)
12. What was God's assurance concerning the temple? (2:6-9)
13. How was Haggai's third message introduced? (2:10)
14. What contrast was made between God's punishment up to that point and His future blessing? (2:11-19)
15. How did the prophet introduce his final message? (2:20)
16. What did God command Haggai to tell Zerubbabel? (2:21-22)
17. What final promise did God make? (2:23)

Get It

18. What effect might a luxurious life-style have on your spirituality?
19. How do you handle tough experiences?
20. What excuses do you make for not doing the will of God?
- * 21. If a respected church leader reprimanded you for your lack of commitment to ministry, how would you respond?
22. What motivates you to do the work of the kingdom?
23. Why do you need the Lord to give you courage to do His work?
- * 24. How has God's discipline influenced your life?
25. How has spiritual discipline changed the life of your church?
26. On what future blessings of the Lord do you depend?

Apply It

27. What steps do you need to take to stop procrastinating and get involved in ministry for the Lord?
- * 28. What do you want to remember the next time you are rightly confronted with a need to change?

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Zechariah's Night Visions - Zechariah 1:1-6:8

Topics: Accusation, Angels, Anger, Blessing, God, Holy Spirit, Judgment, Leadership, Messiah, Oppressed, People, Power, Promises, Prophecy, Repentance, Restoration, Satan, Vision

Open It

1. If you were asked to help in a historic preservation project, what type of project would interest you and what role would you like to play?
- * 2. What would you consider to be a successful assignment or undertaking of yours that grew out of an insignificant beginning?

Explore It

3. When did the Lord speak to the prophet Zechariah? (1:1)
- * 4. What word from the Lord did Zechariah bring to Israel in his call to repentance? (1:1-6)
5. What did the horsemen report in the first vision? (1:7-11)
6. What was the Lord's response in the first vision? (1:14-17)
7. How did the Lord explain the vision of the four horns and four craftsmen? (1:18-21)
8. How did the Lord respond in Zechariah's night vision of the surveyor? (2:1-13)
- * 9. What did God show the prophet in the vision of Joshua the high priest? (3:1-10)
- * 10. What was the explanation given concerning the golden lampstand and the two olive trees? (4:1-14)
11. How did God explain the significance of the flying scroll? (5:1-4)
12. What was described in the vision of the woman in the measuring basket? (5:5-11)
13. How did Zechariah describe the vision of the four chariots? (6:1-8)

Get It

14. In what ways do you need to be restored and comforted?
15. How have you benefited in important ways from past mistakes?
16. What spiritual "remodeling" or "rebuilding" needs to take place in your church body?
17. How does the Lord's charge to Joshua (3:7) apply to church leaders today?
- * 18. From what small beginnings in the life of your church do you expect God to accomplish great things?
- * 19. What ministry project are you involved in that you would like to see completed?
20. How does God warn His people today?
21. How is the Lord bringing peace to your life?

Apply It

22. What do you need to do to complete an unfinished ministry project?
- * 23. What small steps can you take to be obedient to the Lord in new ways this week?

Zechariah's Words of Encouragement - Zechariah 6:9-8:23

Topics: Advice, Anger, Answers, Blessing, Compassion, Disobedience, Faith, Fasting, God, Goodness, Heart, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Justice, Mercy, Messiah, Neighbor, Obedience, Peace, People, Promises, Prophecy, Questions, Rewards, Righteousness, Truth, Zeal

Open It

1. What was the best award you ever received?
2. When have you ever rejected good advice?
- * 3. What is the best part of restoring a broken relationship?

Explore It

4. What was Joshua's role in the symbolic crowning? (6:9-13)
5. What important points were mentioned in the prophetic message? (6:14-15)
6. What question was raised by the Bethelites? (7:1-3)
7. What message of rebuke followed the question about fasting? (7:4-7)
8. What was the nature of the second message from the Lord? (7:8-14)
- * 9. In His message of restoration, how did God describe Jerusalem? (8:1-8)
10. What did God say to the people who heard His words? (8:9-13)
- * 11. How did God affirm His promise of blessing? (8:14-17)
- * 12. What message of rejoicing did Zechariah bring to God's people? (8:18-23)

Get It

13. How can we expect God to reward us for the quality of our Christian life?
14. In what ways are we the temple of God?
15. What traditions are an important part of your church worship?
16. How does your church practice justice and mercy?
17. How can you show compassion to the needy?
18. In what crucial areas do you see the church turning a deaf ear to God's Word?
19. What kind of relationship does the Lord want to have with us?
- * 20. What can you expect from God when you are spiritually renewed?
- * 21. How do you celebrate God's goodness to you?

Apply It

- * 22. What small step can you take this week to develop a closer walk with the Lord?
23. In your work, worship, and witness this week, how can you show justice and mercy to those around you?

Messages after Completing the Temple - Zechariah 9:1-14:21

Topics: Anger, Compassion, Covenant, Creation, Divisions, Gentleness, God, Holiness, Idolatry, Judgment, Messiah, Mourning, Oppressed, Peace, People, Possessions, Prophecy, Protection, Punishment, Rebellion, Restoration, Righteousness, Salvation, Security, Shame, Sin, Sovereignty, War, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What qualities do you admire in a leader?
- 2. If you needed someone to take care of you, who would be the best person for the job?
- 3. What preparations are you now making for the future?

Explore It

- 4. What were the judgments on nations surrounding Israel? (9:1-8)
- * 5. How did Zechariah describe the coming and role of the Messiah? (9:9-13)
- 6. How would Israel be empowered over her enemies? (9:14-17)
- * 7. How would the Messiah bless His people? (10:1-12)
- 8. Why was there such sadness across the land? (11:1-3)
- 9. What role did the prophet play in the life of Israel? (11:4-14)
- 10. How did Israel reject the Shepherd-Messiah? (11:4-14)
- 11. What were the consequences of rejecting the true Shepherd? (11:15-17)
- 12. How did the prophet describe Israel's physical deliverance? (12:1-9)
- 13. How would Israel's spiritual deliverance be accomplished? (12:10-13:6)
- 14. What would become of God's people? (13:7-9)
- 15. What would be Jerusalem's destiny? (14:1-3)
- * 16. What would characterize the coming and reign of the Lord? (14:4-21)

Get It

- * 17. What sorts of things can a person do that would characterize him or her as both gentle and righteous?
- 18. How can a Christian promote peace at home, in church, and within the community?
- 19. How does your church celebrate the hope of the Lord's return?
- 20. What are some of the sad results of poor or false leading?
- * 21. How is the Lord's care and leading evident in your church?
- 22. How are repentance and mourning part of the fabric of your church life?
- 23. How are you preparing for the coming of the Lord?

Apply It

- 24. In what ways can you be a peacemaker?
- * 25. What lurking leadership skills can you work on developing for the sake of God's kingdom?
- 26. What is one thing you can do to be ready for Christ's return?

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The Sinful Priests - Malachi 1:1-2:9

Topics: Anger, Covenant, Disobedience, God, Honor, Humiliation, Law, Leadership, Love, Name, People, Prophecy, Punishment, Respect, Sacrifice, Teaching, Truth

Open It

1. What unique relationship do you treasure?
2. When you are displeased about something, how do you express yourself?
- * 3. When have you felt taken for granted or treated with disrespect?

Explore It

4. To whom was the word of the Lord given? (1:1)
5. What did God claim for Israel? (1:2)
6. What was the judgment of Edom? (1:3-5)
- * 7. What was God's complaint against Israel? (1:6-14)
8. How were the priests implicated in contemptible worship practices? (1:8-10)
9. What worship would honor the Lord Almighty? (1:11)
10. What was the attitude of the priests in Malachi's day? (1:12-13)
11. How were the people cheating the Lord? (1:14)
- * 12. What was the warning to the priests? (2:1-4)
13. What covenant were the priests expected to keep? (2:5-9)
- * 14. How had the priests failed in keeping and applying the law? (2:5-9)

Get It

15. What is unique about your relationship with the Lord?
16. When have you doubted God's love for you?
- * 17. Israel was guilty of giving God leftovers. In what way do we sometimes give God leftovers in our worship? in our finances? in our time?
- * 18. How does God deal with you when you give Him less than your best?
19. How are your church leaders like or unlike the priests in Malachi's day?
20. In your view, what areas might be temptations for your church to be unfaithful to God?
21. When have you been misled by false teaching?
22. When, if ever, do you feel you have passed along inaccurate biblical teaching?
23. What does it mean to follow in the Lord's ways?

Apply It

24. What attitudes or actions can you change to show honor to the Lord?
- * 25. What would it take for you to start giving God your best in your worship, your finances, and your time?

The Sinful People - Malachi 2:10-3:15

Topics: Blessing, Covenant, Divorce, Evil, Faithfulness, God, Judgment, Justice, Listening, Marriage, Name, Oppressed, People, Prayer, Prophecy, Sin, Tithing, Unfaithfulness, Words

Open It

- * 1. How would your closest friend describe the kind of friend you are?
- 2. In conversations do you tend to be a talker or a listener?
- 3. When do you feel most thankful for your blessings?

Explore It

- * 4. How had God's people broken faith with Him? (2:10-12)
- 5. What was the consequence of Israel's sin? (2:12)
- * 6. What was additional evidence of a broken covenant? (2:13-16)
- 7. What was God's view of divorce? (2:16)
- 8. What charge did God give His people? (2:16)
- 9. How had Israel wearied God? (2:17)
- 10. How were the people oblivious to their sin? (2:17)
- 11. What warning did God give? (3:1-5)
- 12. What was the basis for hope in God? (3:6)
- * 13. What did God require of Israel? (3:7-12)
- 14. How had Israel sinned against God in the past? (3:7)
- 15. What was the nature of the curse on the nation? (3:9)
- 16. What did God promise? (3:10-12)
- 17. How had Israel challenged God? (3:13-15)

Get It

- * 18. What is the extent of the price we pay, and possibly cause others to pay, when we knowingly disobey God?
- 19. Why is it wrong for a Christian to marry an unbeliever?
- 20. When have you clearly sensed that your fellowship with God was disrupted because of your sin?
- 21. How would the prophet speak to the issue of divorce among Christians in our culture today?
- * 22. In what ways do we try to rationalize our sins?
- 23. How have you been guilty of robbing God?
- 24. For what blessings from God are you most thankful?

Apply It

- 25. What personal unconfessed sin or negative attitude toward the Lord or others would you be willing to confront with a responsible Christian friend or small group?
- * 26. Starting this week, when can you set aside a few minutes in prayer with another believer, asking the Lord to help you become more faithful, obedient, and trustworthy in each of your relationships?

The Faithful Few - Malachi 3:16-4:6

Topics: Blessing, Compassion, Covenant, Evil, Faithfulness, Fear, God, History, Judgment, Law, Listening, People, Promises, Righteousness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. To whom are you most loyal?
- 2. What upcoming event are you eagerly anticipating?
- 3. What social events do you usually dread or not enjoy?

Explore It

- 4. How did the Lord respond to those who feared Him? (3:16)
- * 5. What assurance was given to those who were faithful to the Lord? (3:16)
- 6. Why did the people of Malachi's time need to repent? (3:16-4:6)
- * 7. What promise did God give to His people? (3:17)
- 8. What distinction did God make? (3:18)
- 9. What will happen to the wicked in the day of the Lord? (4:1)
- * 10. What would the day of the Lord hold for God's remnant? (4:2)
- 11. What will the righteous do to the wicked? (4:3)
- 12. Why did the prophet tell the people to recall the law of Moses? (4:4)
- 13. What did God promise through Malachi? (4:5-6)
- 14. What major theme of the prophets did Malachi's last words reflect? (4:6)

Get It

- 15. In what ways do we deserve the Lord's judgment?
- * 16. How submissive to the Lord are you?
- 17. How careful are you about the quality of your walk with the Lord?
- 18. How do you feel like the Lord's "treasured possession"?
- 19. In what ways are you disobedient to the Lord?
- 20. How are freedom and joy part of your spiritual experience?
- * 21. To what blessings and promises of the Lord do you look forward?

Apply It

- * 22. What can you do this week to demonstrate unswerving loyalty to the Lord?
- 23. Starting today, how can you encourage one other Christian to remain faithful to the Lord?

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The Genealogy of Jesus - Matthew 1:1-17

Topics: Family, Heritage, History, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Name, Sovereignty

Open It

- * 1. Why do you think genealogical research is such a growing and popular hobby?
- 2. If you have ever researched your family tree, what can you tell the group about your heritage or about any especially interesting or famous ancestors?

Explore It

- * 3. Whose genealogy is Matthew tracing? (1:1)
- * 4. What prominent ancestors of Christ are mentioned? (1:1)
 - 5. Who is listed first in the various sections? (1:2, 6, 12)
 - 6. What significant women were ancestors of Christ? (1:5-6, 16)
 - 7. Who is the only person in the record who is listed with his title? (1:6)
 - 8. How does Solomon figure into the genealogy? (1:6)
 - 9. The genealogical record is divided into what three periods? (1:17)
 - 10. What span of time does the genealogical record cover? (1:17)
- * 11. What important event and three people are used as a basis for marking the generations? (1:17)
- 12. How many generations are cited in all? (1:17)

Get It

- 13. Why do you think the Bible includes long genealogical lists like this?
- 14. Why do you think Matthew traces Christ's ancestors back only to Abraham and not all the way back to Adam?
- 15. If God works sovereignly and graciously even when we sin and make poor choices, why should we make the effort to live righteously? (1:6)
- 16. Why do you think God waited so many generations to send Christ?
- * 17. How do ancestors and family histories affect who we are?
- 18. How might this passage encourage those who suffer from a dubious family history?
- * 19. What can you do to minimize your family's past mistakes and maximize your family's potential in the future?
- 20. How important is family heritage to you?

Apply It

- * 21. What actions do you need to take (or choices do you need to make) this week so that your descendants look back on your life as something to live up to and not something to live down?
- 22. How can you encourage a friend who is struggling in relationships with parents and/or children?

The Birth of Jesus Christ - Matthew 1:18-25

Topics: Abortion, Adoption, Angels, Commitment, Courage, Embarrassment, Gossip, Holy Spirit, Miracles, Name, Obedience, Trust

Open It

1. What are the tabloid headlines this week?
- * 2. Why is our society so drawn to gossip and scandal?
3. How do people typically react when facing embarrassing situations?

Explore It

- * 4. What happened to Mary while she and Joseph were engaged? (1:18)
5. What do you think Joseph initially thought upon hearing this news about his bride-to-be? (1:18-19)
- * 6. What positive character qualities did Joseph possess? (1:19)
7. How did Joseph plan to handle this delicate situation? (1:19)
8. How was Joseph's ancestry significant? (1:20)
- * 9. Why did Joseph change his plans to divorce Mary? (1:20)
10. If Joseph wasn't the actual father of Christ, who was? (1:18, 20)
11. What did the angel command Joseph to name the child and why? (1:21)
12. What significant mission in life would Mary's child have? (1:21)
13. Why is Mary's virginal conception of Christ significant? (1:22-23)
14. What does Immanuel mean? (1:23)
15. How did Joseph respond to the angelic message? (1:24)

Get It

- * 16. How might you have responded in Mary's situation?
17. What would have been your reaction had you been in Joseph's situation?
18. How do you think a typical church might have handled Mary's pre-marriage pregnancy?
19. How do you imagine the "grapevine" treated the Mary-Joseph situation?
20. How does it feel to be the victim of unsubstantiated rumors and gossip?
21. How does it feel to know that you are innocent and yet have people attacking your character and whispering behind your back?
- * 22. How does our desire for approval or acceptance keep us from doing the right thing?

Apply It

23. What difficult, hard-to-swallow command of God do you need to obey today?
- * 24. How will you respond the next time someone begins to tell you a juicy bit of gossip?

The Visit of the Magi - Matthew 2:1-12

Topics: Deceit, Ego, Gifts, Guidance, Motives, Prophecy, Sacrifice, Worship

Open It

1. Why do we give gifts at Christmas?
- * 2. If you could give any gift to anyone, what would you give, to whom, and why?
3. What prompts people to make great sacrifices for others?

Explore It

4. Where was Jesus born? (2:1)
5. During whose reign was Jesus born? (2:1)
- * 6. Who came to visit the young Jesus? (2:1)
7. What external and internal factors prompted the Magi to search for Jesus? (2:2)
8. What title did the Magi give to Jesus? (2:2)
9. How did King Herod react to the visit of the Magi? (2:3-4)
- * 10. Why was a powerful king disturbed by the presence of a helpless baby? (2:3-6)
11. Why is it significant that Christ was born in Bethlehem? (2:5-6)
12. What were King Herod's instructions to the Magi? (2:8)
13. How were the Magi led to Christ? (2:9-10)
- * 14. What was the Magi's reaction when they realized they had found the Christ? (2:10)
15. Where was Jesus when the Magi found Him? (2:11)
16. How did the Magi react upon seeing Jesus? (2:11)
17. What gifts did the Magi bring to Jesus? (2:11)
18. Why didn't the Magi report back to Herod as he had requested? (2:12)

Get It

19. How would you define worship?
- * 20. What sort of activities does worship involve?
- * 21. What are some various "presents" we might give to Christ?
22. How does it feel to have a rival—to feel as though you are being overlooked or replaced?
23. How can a competitive, prideful, or insecure spirit alter a person's behavior?
24. Why are many people reluctant to donate money to religious causes?
25. What are some specific ways Christians can serve as "stars" and lead others to Christ?

Apply It

26. What starlike, shining deed can you do today to point a non-Christian friend to Christ?
27. What sacrifice do you need to make for Christ this week?
- * 28. What gift of time, effort, or money would demonstrate your love for Jesus this week?

The Escape to Egypt - Matthew 2:13-18

Topics: Anger, Ego, Escape, Government, Guidance, Jealousy, Mourning, Murder, Obedience, Prophecy

Open It

- * 1. What are the pros and cons of fierce competition and rivalry?
- 2. Why does the death of a child seem especially tragic?
- 3. What was your most frightening brush with death?

Explore It

- 4. What happened after the Magi left the home of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus? (2:13)
- 5. How did God communicate with Joseph? (2:13)
- * 6. Where did the angel tell Joseph to go? Why? (2:13)
- 7. How long was Joseph to keep his family in hiding? (2:13)
- * 8. Why was it necessary for Joseph to take his family and flee? (2:13)
- 9. How did Joseph respond to the warning he received? (2:13)
- 10. What event allowed Joseph to depart from Egypt with his family? (2:15)
- 11. Why was the “escape to Egypt” significant in the life of Christ? (2:15)
- 12. What was King Herod’s emotional state when he realized the Magi had tricked him? (2:16)
- * 13. What orders did King Herod give in an attempt to eliminate his competition? (2:16)
- 14. Who prophesied the horrible episode of infanticide in Bethlehem? When? (2:17)
- 15. What was the response to Herod’s mass execution of children? (2:18)

Get It

- 16. How might our lives be different if Herod’s death plot against Christ had succeeded?
- 17. What happens when people try to thwart God’s plan?
- 18. Why is it important to listen to God?
- 19. Why is it important to obey God immediately?
- 20. What are some wise ways to handle anger?
- * 21. What is it about competition that makes us feel so threatened?
- * 22. What is the best response to “rivals” or “opponents”?
- 23. How can Christians serve those who are the victims of senseless violence?

Apply It

- * 24. In what area of your life do you need to trust God more instead of being driven by competition?
- 25. What action could you take today to minister to someone who is in mourning?

The Return to Nazareth - Matthew 2:19-23

Topics: Family, Fear, God's Will, Guidance, Listening, Moving, Obedience, Prophecy, Security, Sovereignty

Open It

1. To what sources do people often look for guidance?
- * 2. What do you like most and least about your hometown?
3. Why is it so difficult to move to another place?

Explore It

4. What happened when Herod died? (2:19)
5. In what manner did God communicate with Joseph? (2:19)
- * 6. Where were Joseph, Mary, and Jesus at the time? (2:19)
- * 7. What did the angel tell Joseph to do? (2:20)
- * 8. What was the reason behind the angel's command? (2:20)
9. How did Joseph respond to the angel's instructions? (2:21)
10. Who was reigning in Herod's place when Joseph, Mary, and Jesus left Egypt? (2:22)
11. Why was it significant to Joseph that Archelaus was ruling in Judah? (2:22)
12. What was Joseph's emotional response when he heard about Archelaus? (2:22)
13. What did Joseph do when he heard the news of Archelaus's reign? (2:22)
14. To what town did Joseph, Mary, and Jesus go? Why? (2:23)
15. Why was it significant that Jesus' family settled in Nazareth? (2:23)

Get It

16. What modern-day forces threaten the institution of the family?
- * 17. How has your hometown influenced who you are?
- * 18. Why might God lead you to live in a certain area?
19. How is your present location affecting your children?
20. How can families reduce the stress and upheaval caused by a move or relocation?
21. Which would you choose: a high-paying job in a big city that required long hours, or a lower-paying job in a smaller town that enabled you to spend more time with your family? Why?

Apply It

- * 22. What specific act of kindness can you do this week for a new family in your neighborhood?
23. As you look back over your life and see how God has guided you, how can you show your appreciation?

John the Baptist Prepares the Way - Matthew 3:1-12

Topics: Confession, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Repentance, Zeal

Open It

1. What phrases, words, or images spring to mind when you hear the term “preacher”?
- * 2. What preacher has influenced you most?
3. Why are many people uncomfortable with “fire and brimstone”-type preaching?

Explore It

4. What famous preacher is described in this passage? (3:1)
5. Where was John the Baptist’s “sanctuary” or “pulpit”? (3:1)
- * 6. What was John’s message? (3:2)
7. Why was John’s ministry significant? (3:3)
8. What did John look like? (3:4)
9. What kind of unusual diet did John follow? (3:4)
- * 10. How did people receive John’s message? (3:5)
11. Besides strong preaching, what went on at John’s “desert revival meetings”? (3:6)
12. Where did John perform his baptisms? Who came? (3:5-6)
13. What kinds of religious leaders came to listen to John? (3:7)
- * 14. What harsh name did John call the religious leaders? Why? (3:7-10)
15. What was John’s message to the local “men of the cloth”? (3:7-10)
16. What was the purpose of John’s water baptism? (3:11)
17. How did John compare himself to the one who would come after him? (3:11)
18. How did John describe the type of baptism Jesus would bring? (3:11)
19. With what images did John describe Jesus? (3:12)

Get It

20. Why is it that coming from a religious family doesn’t guarantee spiritual security?
- * 21. What does it mean to repent?
22. Why do you think John lived such an eccentric life?
23. Why was John the Baptist so harsh with the religious leaders of his day?
- * 24. What is the significance of the images “winnowing fork,” “gathering His wheat,” and “burning up the chaff”?
25. What was John trying to communicate by using the word “fire” three times in this passage?
26. What is the difference between God’s discipline and God’s punishment?
27. What kind of “fruit” or character do repentant people produce?

Apply It

28. What could you do this week to encourage your pastor or preacher?
- * 29. What first step could you take toward obeying God better today?
30. What particular sin(s) do you need to repent of today?

The Baptism of Jesus - Matthew 3:13-17

Topics: God, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Humility, Jesus Christ, Obedience

Open It

1. What are some initiation rites or affiliation procedures that organizations make new members go through?
2. Why are transfers of power in some governments fragile?
- * 3. How would you feel if the world's leading, most renowned expert in your field publicly solicited your help?

Explore It

4. Where did Jesus come from? Why? (3:13)
5. Why did Jesus leave Galilee and travel to the Jordan River? (3:13)
- * 6. How did John react to Jesus' request? (3:14)
7. What exactly did John say to Jesus? (3:14)
- * 8. How did Jesus respond to John's reluctance? (3:15)
- * 9. Why was it important for John to comply with Jesus' request? (3:15)
10. What change took place in heaven after the baptism of Jesus? (3:16)
11. How did the Spirit of God play a role in the baptism of Jesus? (3:16)
12. What was the Spirit's appearance? (3:16)
13. What kind of voice was heard at the baptism of Jesus? (3:17)
14. What was the relationship between Jesus and the Father? (3:17)
15. What did God the Father say about Jesus? (3:17)

Get It

- * 16. Why do you think John felt awkward about baptizing Jesus?
17. In what ways are many Christians concerned about "proper" behavior and striving for righteousness?
18. What does this passage show about God's triune nature?
19. What do we tell the world by being baptized?
20. If God spoke in an audible voice about you today, what might He say?
21. What pleases God?
- * 22. How are you able to please God?

Apply It

- * 23. What could you do today for Christ out of obedience and respect for Him?
24. What needs to change this week in order for you to see the Spirit of God work in and through your life?

The Temptation of Jesus - Matthew 4:1-11

Topics: Angels, Bible, Deceit, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Obedience, Satan, Temptation, Victory

Open It

- * 1. What are some common food cravings?
- 2. Why are some temptations harder to resist than others?
- 3. Why do different people struggle with different types of temptations?

Explore It

- 4. Who led Jesus into the wilderness? Why? (4:1)
- 5. Where was Jesus led? By whom? (4:1)
- 6. For what purpose was Jesus led into the desert? (4:1)
- 7. What made Jesus weak at this time? (4:2)
- 8. What three names are given to Jesus' adversary in the desert? (4:3, 5, 10)
- 9. What was the first temptation presented to Jesus? (4:3)
- * 10. How did Jesus respond to the first temptation? (4:4)
- 11. Where did the devil take Jesus for the second temptation? (4:5)
- 12. What tempting offer was made to Christ at the highest point of the temple? (4:6)
- * 13. How did Jesus answer the second temptation? (4:7)
- 14. To what final destination did Satan take Christ? (4:8)
- 15. What did the devil show Jesus from a very high mountain? (4:8)
- 16. What did the devil promise Jesus in exchange for worship? (4:9)
- * 17. How did Jesus react to the third temptation? (4:10)
- 18. What happened after Jesus had resisted Satan three times? (4:11)
- 19. Who came and ministered to Jesus when all was said and done? (4:11)

Get It

- 20. How would you define temptation?
- 21. Besides physical appetite, what are some other sins of the flesh?
- 22. What would have been appealing to Christ about the devil's second temptation?
- 23. What would have been appealing to Christ about the offer of all the kingdoms of the world?
- 24. How can memorizing Scripture help us combat temptation?
- * 25. What role does the Word of God play in resisting temptation?
- 26. What happens when a Christian consistently resists temptation?
- 27. What situations make us especially vulnerable to temptation?
- 28. In what ways can we make temptation more difficult to resist?
- * 29. What can we do to make temptation more manageable?
- 30. What temptations are inevitable for most people?
- 31. What temptations are inevitable for you?

Apply It

- 32. In what specific area of your life is temptation the strongest these days?
- * 33. What steps can you take this week to resist the temptations you are facing now?

Jesus Begins to Preach - Matthew 4:12-17

Topics: Darkness, Evangelism, Heaven, Light, Mission, Moving, Persecution, Prophecy, Repentance

Open It

1. What is the best sermon you have ever heard preached?
2. If you could stand up and preach one sermon to your church, what would you like to say?
- * 3. What do you remember about your first job?

Explore It

4. What happened to John the Baptist? (4:12)
5. What did Jesus do when He heard the news about John? (4:12)
6. Where in Galilee had Jesus been living? (4:13)
7. What is revealed here about the geography of Jesus' new home? (4:13)
8. Where in Galilee did Jesus relocate? (4:13-14) Why?
- * 9. What happened where Jesus relocated? (4:13-16)
- * 10. Why was Christ's move significant? (4:14)
11. Who foretold that Jesus would live in Capernaum? (4:14)
12. In what spiritual state were the inhabitants of this region before Jesus moved there? (4:16)
13. How is Jesus' arrival in Capernaum described? (4:16)
- * 14. What did Jesus do in His new hometown? (4:17)
15. What was Christ's message from that time on? (4:17)

Get It

16. How do you react when you hear that Christians in other countries are being persecuted for their faith?
17. Why do you think so many of God's people become bold (instead of fearful) during times of persecution?
18. What would you do if you learned your pastor was in jail for preaching?
19. In what ways have you been ridiculed or hassled for your belief in Christ?
20. How would you respond if you sensed God was leading you to pack up your family and move to an unevangelized area to be a missionary?
- * 21. In what ways are your neighbors like the people of Zebulun and Naphtali?
- * 22. How can you help your neighbors come to see the light of Christ?

Apply It

- * 23. To what places and people do you need to go this week as a light for Christ?
24. In what way can you encourage a missionary today, this week, or this month?

The Calling of the First Disciples - Matthew 4:18-22

Topics: Commitment, Evangelism, Excuses, Giving Up, Leadership, Obedience, Submission, Witnessing

Open It

1. If you could pass on some skill or knowledge to an apprentice, what would you want to pass on?
- * 2. What kind of leader do you prefer to follow?
3. What are some examples of well-functioning teams?

Explore It

4. Where did these particular events take place? (4:18)
5. Who did Jesus see as He walked by? (4:18)
6. What nickname did one of Jesus' new disciples have? (4:18)
- * 7. What were Simon and Andrew doing when Jesus approached them? (4:18)
8. What did these brothers do for a living? (4:18)
- * 9. What exactly did Jesus say to Simon and Andrew? (4:19)
10. What was Simon and Andrew's response to Jesus' words? (4:20)
11. How long did Simon and Andrew deliberate over Jesus' offer? (4:20)
12. Whom did Jesus see next? (4:21)
13. Who was Zebedee? (4:21)
14. In what activity were James and John involved? (4:21)
- * 15. What did Jesus do when He saw the two brothers, James and John? (4:21)
16. How did James and John react to Jesus' challenge? (4:22)

Get It

17. What does it mean to be a "fisher of men"?
18. How risky was it for Peter, Andrew, James, and John to drop everything (jobs and families) to go with Jesus?
19. What thoughts do you think were racing through their minds as they headed off down the beach with Jesus?
20. How do you think you might have responded had you been fishing with these men and heard Jesus direct this challenge to you?
21. What are some reasons people make career changes?
22. How do you think Jesus calls people into the ministry today?
23. What do you think Jesus saw in these men?
24. Why did Jesus handpick blue-collar fishermen to be the leaders of the Christian church?
25. For what would you be willing to leave your family and go far away?
- * 26. What possessions, goals, dreams, or relationships are keeping you from following Jesus wholeheartedly today?
27. What does it mean for us to follow Jesus?
- * 28. What does it mean for you to follow Jesus?

Apply It

- * 29. In what area of your life will you follow Jesus more consciously this week?
30. What can you do or stop doing today in order to become a more expert "fisher of men"?

Jesus Heals the Sick - Matthew 4:23-25

Topics: Good News, Handicapped, Health, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Pain, Sickness, Sorrow

Open It

1. How do you feel about doctors and hospitals?
- * 2. If you could find the cure to any one disease, what illness would it be and why?

Explore It

3. Where did the incidents in this passage take place? (4:23)
- * 4. What did Jesus do at the synagogues of this region? (4:23)
5. About what did Jesus preach? (4:23)
6. What activities was Jesus involved in during this ministry tour? (4:23)
7. How would you describe the publicity surrounding Jesus' ministry in Galilee? (4:24)
- * 8. How did the masses react to the news of what Jesus was doing? (4:24)
9. What kind of physically and spiritually ill people sought out Jesus? (4:24)
- * 10. What did Jesus do for the suffering individuals who came to Him? (4:24)
11. Jesus' audience grew to include people from what surrounding regions and cities? (4:25)
12. How are the crowds described? (4:25)
13. What did the people do after hearing Jesus and experiencing His healing touch? (4:25)

Get It

- * 14. What assorted reactions do people have to life-threatening illnesses?
15. Which is worse in your opinion and why: to be physically ill, or to be spiritually sick?
- * 16. How might God use sickness, pain, or difficulty to bring about good in a person's life?
17. In times of sickness, why do we often pray or seek spiritual help only as a last resort?
18. Why do people want to be healed of their illnesses?
19. Why is it significant that Jesus was able to heal all the ailments people brought to Him?

Apply It

- * 20. What can you do today to encourage someone who is ill?
21. What realistic step can you take this week to share the good news of Christ with a non-Christian friend?

The Beatitudes - Matthew 5:1-12

Topics: Blessing, Character, Comfortable, Endurance, Enemies, Greatness, Heaven, Humility, Mercy, Mourning, Persecution, Purity, Rewards, Righteousness

Open It

- * 1. What are some ways people typically try to find happiness or fulfillment in life?
- 2. What person (living or dead) do you respect most? Why?

Explore It

- 3. What was the setting for this sermon? (5:1)
- 4. Who was Jesus addressing? (5:1-2)
- 5. According to Jesus, what is the reward for those who are poor in spirit? (5:3)
- 6. Why are those who mourn blessed? (5:4)
- 7. What is the reward for those who are meek? (5:5)
- 8. What can those who hunger and thirst for righteousness expect? (5:6)
- 9. What does God promise to those who are merciful? (5:7)
- 10. According to this passage, who will see God? (5:8)
- 11. Why are peacemakers blessed? (5:9)
- * 12. What does the future hold for those who are persecuted because of righteousness? (5:10)
- * 13. What unexpected command is given to Christians who are insulted, hassled, and lied about? (5:11-12)
- * 14. What people in history have endured nasty persecution? (5:12)

Get It

- 15. How does it pay in the present to walk with God?
- 16. What do you think it means to be poor in spirit?
- 17. What does it mean to be meek?
- 18. How would a person behave if he or she were hungering and thirsting after righteousness?
- 19. What are some examples of showing mercy?
- 20. How does society's list of admirable virtues compare and contrast with these kingdom virtues?
- 21. How (if at all) does the promise of future blessing affect us in the present?
- * 22. Which of these promises means the most to you today? Why?
- * 23. What is the most common type of persecution that you face?
- 24. What peacemaking responses work well at diffusing hostility?

Apply It

- 25. What realistic steps can you take this week to make you hungrier and thirstier for righteousness?
- * 26. What can you do this week to encourage a friend who is under fire due to his or her stand for the Lord?

Salt and Light - Matthew 5:13-16

Topics: Abortion, Culture, Darkness, Evil, Immorality, Influence, Involvement, Light, Morality, Reputation, Righteousness

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite spice?
- 2. What is it about darkness that frightens people?
- 3. Why do people commit crimes and evil acts under cover of darkness?
- 4. What are the top five moral problems our country is facing?

Explore It

- 5. To what valuable substance did Jesus compare His disciples? (5:13)
- 6. What is an essential characteristic of salt? (5:13)
- 7. How did Jesus imply that a Christian's positive influence can wane or disappear? (5:13)
- 8. What happens to salt that loses its flavor? (5:13)
- 9. To what did Jesus compare His followers? (5:14)
- * 10. How are we like light? (5:14)
- 11. What are improper and proper uses for a lamp? (5:15)
- 12. What use of a lamp teaches us about living? How? (5:15)
- * 13. According to Jesus, how exactly are Christians to be like lamps? (5:16)
- 14. What kind of behavior should other people see Christians exhibiting? (5:16)
- * 15. If believers live as they are supposed to live, how will others respond toward God? (5:16)

Get It

- 16. What did Jesus mean when He called His followers salt?
- 17. What sort of effect does salt have on food?
- 18. How do salty things affect us?
- 19. How can a Christian lose his or her saltiness?
- 20. What does it mean to "let your light shine"?
- 21. How might a believer hide his or her light?
- 22. What is the effect of bright light in a dark place?
- 23. What does light reveal?
- * 24. What specific behaviors mark the life-style of a salty, shining Christian?
- * 25. In light of your gifts, abilities, and interests, what specific problem in our world can you counteract as a representative of Christ?

Apply It

- * 26. What phone calls or letters would you be willing to make or write this week in order to be salt and light in a decaying, dark world?
- 27. To whom in your neighborhood, family, or workplace can you be salt and light this week?
- 28. How can you be salt and light to the people God has placed in your life?

The Fulfillment of the Law - Matthew 5:17-20

Topics: Authority, Bible, Consistency, Criticism, Freedom, Heaven, Law, Legalism, Obedience, Rationalizing, Teaching

Open It

- * 1. What is the worst rule or law you've ever been aware of?
- 2. When in your life did you feel closest to God?

Explore It

- 3. What rumor was apparently being spread about Jesus and His view of the Old Testament? (5:17)
- * 4. What did Jesus say was His goal with regard to the Law and the Prophets? (5:17)
- 5. How much of the Law did Jesus say would be fulfilled or accomplished? (5:18)
- 6. According to Jesus, what cataclysmic event would have to happen before God's Word could be invalidated in even a tiny way? (5:18)
- 7. What two things result in one being called least in the kingdom of heaven? (5:19)
- 8. What happens if a person lives a good life and breaks only minor commandments of God? (5:19)
- * 9. What warning was given to those who would encourage others to disregard the Word of God? (5:19)
- * 10. Who is considered great in the kingdom of heaven? (5:19)
- 11. To what groups of religious leaders did Jesus make reference? (5:20)
- 12. What degree of righteousness is necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven? (5:20)

Get It

- 13. How trustworthy are the words of Scripture?
- 14. Why did Jesus talk about the righteousness of the Pharisees in this context?
- 15. In discussing sin, why did Jesus make a point of saying, "one of the least of these commandments"?
- * 16. What are some ways we occasionally encourage each other to bend or break God's rules?
- 17. What level of reverence and submission do you think most people have toward the Bible?
- * 18. What does it mean to "practice" the commandments of God?
- 19. What are some ways to teach others about the righteousness of God?
- 20. What good can we do to be acceptable to God?
- 21. Why is it difficult for us to practice what we preach?
- 22. What ideals are most difficult for you to uphold?

Apply It

- 23. When and how this week can you consult the Bible for guidance on how to live?
- 24. What should you do in the near future about someone who tends to "drag you down"?
- * 25. What command of God will you commit to memory this week?

Murder - Matthew 5:21-26

Topics: Anger, Bitterness, Conflict, Enemies, Forgiveness, Hatred, Hell, Judgment, Murder, Punishment, Quarrels, Reconciliation

Open It

- * 1. When do you tend to get angry?
- 2. Why do people murder each other over trivial matters—a parking space, a cigarette lighter, a crude remark?
- 3. If you were given full governmental authority and resources, how would you go about reducing the amount of violent crime in this country?

Explore It

- 4. What age-old prohibition was Jesus addressing in this context? (5:21)
- 5. What was the penalty for violators of this law? (5:21)
- 6. How did Jesus explain the meaning of the law against murder? (5:22)
- 7. According to Jesus, what kind of name-calling made one answerable to the Sanhedrin? (5:22)
- 8. What kind of angry name-calling puts one in eternal danger? (5:22)
- 9. How did Jesus describe hell? (5:23)
- * 10. What sort of realization did Jesus say should interrupt our worship? (5:23)
- 11. If a person becomes aware of a relational problem, how quickly should he or she act? (5:24)
- * 12. What should be a believer's goal in strained or shattered relationships? (5:24)
- * 13. When is it best to settle disputes? (5:25)
- 14. Where is it best to settle disputes? (5:25)
- 15. What bad consequences can occur if a dispute escalates into a full-blown court battle? (5:25-26)

Get It

- * 16. Why did Jesus zero in on the emotions behind our violent actions?
- 17. What modern-day equivalents to "Raca" do we level at others?
- 18. What attitudes and emotions tend to lead to name-calling?
- 19. Which of our religious activities would be closely akin to "offering your gifts at the altar"?
- 20. According to Jesus, how do problems in our relationships with others affect our relationship with God?
- * 21. Why is it necessary to get things right with people before we come to worship God?
- 22. Why is it preferable for Christians to quietly resolve their differences rather than battle over them publicly?
- 23. How might Christians be encouraged to reconcile with each other before coming to a Communion service?

Apply It

- * 24. What relational conflict do you need to straighten out today?
- 25. How can you help yourself remember this week to keep your anger under control?

Adultery - Matthew 5:27-30

Topics: Adultery, Commitment, Hardheartedness, Husbands, Immorality, Loyalty, Lust, Purity, Thinking, Vows, Wives

Open It

1. How is marriage commonly portrayed in the media?
- * 2. What evidence have you seen that sexual standards have declined over the last ten years?
3. What are some danger signs that a marriage is in trouble?

Explore It

4. What commandment was Jesus interpreting? (5:27)
5. How did Jesus explain the meaning of adultery? (5:28)
- * 6. How does adultery start? (5:28)
- * 7. When does looking at someone become inappropriate? (5:28)
8. What did Jesus suggest we do with a sinning eye? Why? (5:29)
9. Why did Jesus make this radical statement about eyes? (5:29)
10. Where does sin ultimately lead if it is not dealt with? (5:29-30)
11. What did Jesus recommend for a sinning hand? Why? (5:30)
12. What was the rationale behind this graphic comment about hands? (5:30)
- * 13. Why are our moral choices important? (5:30)

Get It

14. Why is adultery common in our society?
15. Why are people willing to commit adultery?
16. Why are people willing to harbor lust in their hearts?
17. What are the devastating effects of adultery?
- * 18. What does it mean to gouge out a habit for lust or to cut off a sinful practice?
19. How does pornography feed the problem of adultery?
20. What is wrong with the argument, "It's OK to look as long as you don't touch"?
21. How might you respond to the popular claim that sexual fantasies are healthy and should be encouraged?
22. What would you say to a friend in a bad marriage who was contemplating an affair?
23. What does it mean to dress modestly?
- * 24. What changes do you need to make in your reading or viewing habits to avoid temptations to lust?

Apply It

25. What three steps can you take this week to insulate your marriage against affairs?
- * 26. In what situations is it important for you to dress modestly this week?

Divorce - Matthew 5:31-32

Topics: Adultery, Commitment, Divorce, Faithfulness, Marriage, Remarriage, Unfaithfulness

Open It

- * 1. What commitments do adults commonly make?
- 2. What commitments do adults sometimes break?
- 3. What causes people to break their commitments?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did Jesus need to say this about marriage and divorce? (5:31-32)
- * 5. What is the best way to think about marriage and divorce? (5:31-32)
- 6. Who is guilty of adultery? (5:31-32)
- 7. What does God want us to do when we feel tempted to divorce a partner? (5:31-32)
- 8. According to Jesus, what is the only acceptable reason for divorce? (5:32)
- 9. When can a person divorce his or her partner? (5:32)
- 10. When can a person not divorce his or her partner? (5:32)
- 11. How can adultery affect a marriage commitment? (5:32)
- 12. Why did Jesus give an exception to His “no divorce” command? (5:32)
- * 13. What conditions are placed on divorce? (5:32)
- 14. In what way does a person who divorces a partner “cause” the other to commit adultery? (5:32)

Get It

- 15. In what way can adultery damage a marriage?
- * 16. Why is it important to try to hold a marriage together?
- 17. In what ways can divorce hurt people?
- 18. Why do people get divorced?
- 19. Why do people commit adultery?
- 20. What enables people to stay faithful to their partners?
- 21. What can people do to strengthen their marriage?
- * 22. In what ways can people show respect for marriage?
- 23. What causes people to get divorced?
- 24. For what reasons do people get divorced?
- 25. On what or whom can a Christian depend to help him or her solve marriage problems?
- 26. What can a person do when his or her marriage is in trouble?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do this week to strengthen your marriage or the marriage of a friend?
- 28. How can you show respect for marriage this week?
- 29. What can you do today or tomorrow to lessen the likelihood of ever getting divorced?

Oaths - Matthew 5:33-37

Topics: Character, Conversation, Faithfulness, Follow-through, Integrity, Swearing, Truth, Vows, Words

Open It

- * 1. Persons in what occupations (for example, ministers, insurance agents, lawyers, car salesmen, and politicians) are often distrusted for what they say?
- 2. How do you determine if someone is telling the truth?

Explore It

- 3. What ancient teaching did Jesus bring up? (5:33)
- 4. What oaths did Jesus' audience consider especially important to keep? (5:33)
- * 5. How did Jesus update the ancient proverb about oaths? (5:34)
- 6. What exceptions did Jesus permit in vow making? (5:34)
- 7. Why was it inappropriate to swear by heaven? (5:34)
- 8. Why was it inappropriate to swear by earth? (5:35)
- 9. According to Jesus, why shouldn't people swear by Jerusalem? (5:35)
- 10. Why not swear by one's own head? (5:36)
- * 11. How should believers respond to questions? (5:37)
- * 12. What's wrong with swearing oaths? (5:37)

Get It

- 13. How much does swearing on a Bible guarantee that a legal witness will tell the truth?
- 14. Why do we swear?
- * 15. In what situations do people typically swear?
- 16. What are some ways that our society takes the name of God lightly or frivolously?
- 17. What statements of assurance ("Trust me," "Would I lie to you?" "I really mean it this time," etc.) do you hear most often?
- 18. How does lying in the name of God affect the reputation of God?
- * 19. How should we respond when people try to get us to make promises or extra assurances?
- 20. What does it imply when people don't take you at your word?

Apply It

- * 21. What steps can you take this week to become known as a person who keeps his or her word?
- 22. What unfulfilled promise have you made in the last week that you need to carry out today?

An Eye for an Eye - Matthew 5:38-42

Topics: Bitterness, Enemies, Gentleness, Humility, Oppressed, Persecution, Revenge, Strength, Unfairness

Open It

1. Why are movies about vengeance or vigilante justice so popular?
- * 2. What is appealing about revenge?

Explore It

- * 3. To what familiar saying was Jesus referring in this context? (5:38)
4. What did the ancients require if a person put out someone else's eye? (5:38)
5. What was the judgment for knocking out another's tooth? (5:38)
- * 6. How did Jesus say we should respond to people who do us evil? (5:39)
- * 7. What should we do to protect our rights and possessions? (5:39)
8. What should be the Christian's response to physical violence? (5:39)
9. What should a person do if someone else sues him or her? (5:40)
10. What should a person do if someone else forces him or her to "go one mile"? (5:41)
11. How should followers of Christ deal with those who ask them for things? (5:42)
12. What is the proper response to a request to borrow something? (5:42)

Get It

13. What are the drawbacks to an "eye for eye" mentality?
- * 14. Where do we draw the line between our rights and our responsibility to be forgiving and patient?
15. What is the rationale behind Jesus' idea that love overcomes evil?
- * 16. How can doing good change a bad situation?
17. How should we respond to violent attacks?
18. When are we responsible to stop an evil person from committing violent acts?
19. What advice would you give to the little kid who is constantly being bullied at school?
20. What do you think would happen if Christians followed these principles to the letter?
21. What items would you find difficult to loan out or give away?
22. In what ways have you been seeking vengeance or an opportunity to pay someone back for a wrong done to you?
23. What grudge or personal vendetta do you need to lay aside?

Apply It

24. What prayer will help you forgive some wrong you've had difficulty letting go of?
- * 25. What act of kindness or reconciliation could you perform by next weekend to help "bury the hatchet"?

Love for Enemies - Matthew 5:43-48

Topics: Bitterness, Enemies, God, Hatred, Neighbor, Oppressed, Perfect, Persecution, Prayer, Righteousness

Open It

1. What TV character is most despicable to you? Why?
- * 2. What underlying emotions and attitudes create cliques or cause divisions between groups of people?
3. What character quality more than any other says to the world, “This person is a Christian”?

Explore It

4. What ancient rule of life did Jesus challenge here? (5:43)
- * 5. How did Jesus say we ought to treat our enemies? (5:44)
6. What did Jesus say we ought to do for those who persecute us? (5:44)
7. Why did Jesus suggest modifying this universally accepted law? (5:45)
- * 8. How does God treat evil and good people in the same way? (5:45)
9. How does God treat righteous and unrighteous people equally? (5:45)
10. What type of people did Jesus cite as loving those who love them? (5:46)
11. What does God think of us when we love those who love us? (5:46)
12. Why is friendliness to friends and relatives not considered exceptional behavior? (5:47)
13. What kinds of people are mentioned as greeting only their brothers? (5:47)
14. What exceptional standard did Christ give us? (5:48)
- * 15. Who has set an example for us? How? (5:48)

Get It

- * 16. If our holy God is able to exhibit grace and mercy to everyone, why is it difficult for us to be like Him?
17. What does it mean for us to be perfect?
18. How is it possible for us to love our enemies?
- * 19. What would have to happen in your heart in order for you to be able to pray for an enemy?
20. What might praying for your enemy change?
21. In what ways does a loving spirit demonstrate that we are God’s people?

Apply It

22. What are some specific ways you can show love today to someone whom you dislike?
- * 23. For which of your “enemies” will you pray every day this week?

Giving to the Needy - Matthew 6:1-4

Topics: Ego, Generosity, Hypocrisy, Money, Motives, Poor, Pride, Rewards, Tithing

Open It

- * 1. What would you do if you discovered that a long-lost relative had left you a million dollars?
- 2. Who are the needy people in our world?
- 3. What is your favorite charity?
- 4. How do you feel when a wealthy individual gives a large sum of money with the stipulation that a building be named after him or her?

Explore It

- 5. What kind of acts was Jesus discussing? (6:1)
- * 6. What specific motives did Jesus warn against? (6:1)
- 7. What happens to the person who operates with impure motives? (6:1)
- 8. Who can judge whether a person's actions are pure? (6:1)
- 9. How did some individuals in Jesus' day publicize their generosity? (6:2)
- 10. What name did Jesus give to insincere individuals? Why? (6:2)
- 11. Where did people advertise their "acts of righteousness"? (6:2)
- 12. What deep-seated desire prompted some people to give? (6:2)
- 13. What future reward can showy givers expect? (6:2)
- * 14. What style of giving did Jesus command us to adopt? (6:3-4)
- 15. Who notices when we give according to Jesus' guidelines? (6:4)
- * 16. What happens to those who give as Jesus told us to give? (6:4)

Get It

- 17. What motivates people to give money to churches or Christian ministries?
- 18. Why are many people more apt to give money to an organization than to a needy individual?
- 19. Why do most Christian organizations have their highest income at the end of the year?
- 20. How much are your giving habits affected by the knowledge that charitable contributions are tax-deductible?
- * 21. What are some specific ways Christians could be more secretive in their giving?
- 22. Why do we value the recognition people give us?
- * 23. What is difficult about giving secretly?
- 24. How do some churches encourage showy giving?
- 25. Why is it difficult for us to do a good deed and keep quiet about it?

Apply It

- 26. What anonymous gift can you give today?
- * 27. What steps could you take to ensure that your giving is not done for show?

Prayer - Matthew 6:5-15

Topics: Bitterness, Depend, Ego, Forgiveness, God, Humility, Hypocrisy, Motives, Prayer, Self-righteousness

Open It

1. What images or thoughts spring to mind when you hear the word “prayer”?
- * 2. What role did prayer play in your family’s life when you were growing up?

Explore It

3. According to Jesus, what wrong motivation prompts some individuals to pray? (6:5)
- * 4. What name did Jesus call people who pray for show? Why? (6:5)
5. Where do hypocrites prefer to do their praying? (6:5)
6. What type of reward will religious showmanship bring? (6:5)
- * 7. How did Jesus command His followers to pray? (6:6)
8. Where did Jesus suggest we talk to God? (6:6)
- * 9. What type of reward will humility in prayer bring? (6:6)
10. What did Jesus have to say about repetitive or long, windy prayers? (6:7)
11. What insights or facts about God are revealed in this passage? (6:6, 8, 9)
12. To whom did Jesus tell us to pray? (6:9)
13. What should be our attitude toward God? (6:9)
14. What should be our attitude toward God’s kingdom and will? (6:10)
15. What should be our attitude toward life’s necessities? (6:11)
16. What should be our attitude toward those who have wronged us? (6:12)
17. What should be our attitude toward temptation? (6:13)
18. Why is it crucial for us to forgive those who wrong us? (6:14-15)

Get It

19. What common or overused phrases do you hear frequently repeated in people’s prayers?
20. If God knows what we need before we ask, why should we pray?
- * 21. If Jesus commands us to pray in secret, what is the value of public prayer?
22. Why do many Christians feel uncomfortable praying out loud?
- * 23. When you pray in front of a group, how can you concentrate fully on what you are saying to God rather than how your prayers sound to others?
24. Why do we often use special language or words for talking to God?
25. What sins or offenses by others do we find especially difficult to forgive?

Apply It

- * 26. What changes do you need to make in your prayer life?
27. What strained relationship will you seek to repair this week by forgiving an offense?

Fasting - Matthew 6:16-18

Topics: Commitment, Dedication, Discipline, Giving Up, Humility, Hypocrisy, Motives, Preparation, Spiritual Disciplines

Open It

- * 1. What is your all-time favorite meal?
- 2. What is the hungriest you have ever been in your life?

Explore It

- 3. What mood did certain individuals in Jesus' day assume when they fasted? (6:16)
- * 4. What facial expressions did some people wear? Why? (6:16)
- 5. Why did some people take on gloomy expressions when they fasted? (6:16)
- * 6. What harsh name did Jesus give to people who made a public show of their fasting? Why? (6:16)
- 7. According to Jesus, what rewards await people who show off their fasting? (6:16)
- 8. What repeated phrase in this passage suggests that fasting is not an option? (6:16, 17)
- 9. How should a person conceal the fact of his or her fasting? (6:17)
- * 10. Who should know about an individual's fasts? Why? (6:18)
- 11. Who alone can see what people do in secret? How? (6:18)
- 12. Why are believers to be secretive about fasting? (6:18)

Get It

- 13. What is the modern day equivalent of putting "oil on your head"?
- 14. How do God's rewards differ from the recognition we receive from others?
- 15. What are some good reasons for fasting?
- 16. Why do you believe this spiritual discipline is seldom discussed in Christian circles?
- 17. What spiritual benefits might we receive from fasting?
- * 18. Why is it tempting to show others that you are fasting?
- * 19. What is the advantage of keeping your spiritual disciplines secret?
- 20. For what need in your own life or in the life of a loved one would you be willing to skip a meal in order to devote yourself to prayer?

Apply It

- 21. For what reason could you fast this week?
- * 22. What steps can you take to devote your spiritual disciplines to God alone?
- 23. What specific steps could you take this week in order to gain a better understanding of fasting?

Treasures in Heaven - Matthew 6:19-24

Topics: Darkness, Desires, Earth, Generosity, Heaven, Money, Perspective, Priorities, Resources, Rewards, Submission, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. If you were stranded on a desert island and could have only three possessions with you, what would you choose and why?
- 2. What valuable possessions do you have that cannot be replaced?
- 3. What are some things you'd never give up, no matter how much money you were offered for them?

Explore It

- * 4. Where did Jesus urge His followers not to “store up treasures”? Why? (6:19)
- 5. Why did Jesus discourage stockpiling things? (6:19)
- 6. What can happen to a person's material possessions? (6:19)
- * 7. Where did Jesus encourage us to invest our wealth? Why? (6:20)
- 8. Why is heaven a better place to “bank” than earth? (6:20)
- 9. What does the location of a person's treasure say about that person? (6:21)
- 10. What is described as the “lamp of the body”? How is this so? (6:22)
- 11. What is the result of “good eyes”? (6:22)
- 12. When will people's lives be full of darkness? (6:23)
- * 13. What did Jesus say about serving two masters? (6:24)
- 14. Why did Jesus say we cannot serve two masters? (6:24)
- 15. What two masters did Jesus mention in this context? Why? (6:24)

Get It

- 16. How have you felt whenever you have lost a valued possession?
- * 17. How can we “store up . . . treasures in heaven”?
- 18. How can we determine where our treasure is (and thus where our hearts are)?
- 19. What sort of things do you think about most?
- 20. Where does your mind naturally gravitate to in those moments just before you go to bed?
- 21. How clear is your spiritual vision right now?
- 22. What masters most often fight for your allegiance?
- 23. In what ways do you serve money?
- * 24. In what ways can you master your money?

Apply It

- * 25. How could you make an investment in eternity today?
- 26. What committed Christian friends could help you evaluate your use of money in the next month?

Do Not Worry - Matthew 6:25-34

Topics: Contentment, Creation, Faithfulness, Future, God, Materialism, Needs, Peace, Prayer, Trust, Worry

Open It

- * 1. What are your top three worries?
- 2. What is your favorite kind of food?
- 3. How would you describe your tastes in fashion?

Explore It

- 4. What three worries did Jesus discourage among His followers? Why? (6:25)
- 5. Why is food a trivial matter? (6:26)
- 6. According to Jesus, how do clothes stack up as a subject of great concern? (6:26)
- * 7. What creatures did Jesus use to illustrate God's reliability as a provider? Why? (6:26)
- 8. Why are God's creatures consistently "fed and clothed"? (6:26)
- * 9. Why should we take great comfort from the way the animal and plant kingdoms operate? (6:26)
- 10. What benefits does worry bring? (6:27)
- 11. What fact from nature did Jesus use to illustrate the folly of worrying over clothes? (6:28)
- 12. How did Solomon's wardrobe measure up to the beauty of nature? (6:29)
- * 13. What comfort can followers of Christ find in the beauty of nature? (6:30)
- 14. Who is consumed by concern over food, water, and clothing? (6:32)
- 15. What priorities should we have in life? (6:33)
- 16. What does God do for His children when they keep the right perspective, refuse to worry, and trust Him? (6:33)
- 17. Why is it silly to fret over the future? (6:34)

Get It

- 18. Why do some of us worry about clothes more than others?
- 19. How do you think God feels about our society's preoccupation with food?
- * 20. If God is really in control of the universe, why do we worry so much about so many things?
- 21. How do you think worry is affecting you emotionally, physically, and spiritually?
- 22. How would you answer someone who interprets this passage to mean that God promises to give His children everything their hearts desire?
- 23. In light of this passage, what would be some good principles on food and clothing for us to follow?
- 24. What is the difference between planning for the future and worrying about the future?
- 25. What worries do you struggle to keep under control?
- * 26. What can help you entrust your worries to God?

Apply It

- * 27. What worry will you entrust to God today?
- 28. What steps can you take today to change your priorities from worldly ones to kingdom ones?

Judging Others - Matthew 7:1-6

Topics: Church, Criticism, Faults, Hypocrisy, Judgment, Mercy, Opinions, Pride, Relationships, Wisdom, Words

Open It

- * 1. What are your pet peeves (at work, home, or in your community)?
- 2. What kinds of things do people criticize you for most commonly?
- 3. How do you tend to respond when someone calls you on the carpet or corrects you?
- 4. What would your friends say is your biggest fault?

Explore It

- 5. What happens to those who are judgmental or critical? (7:1)
- 6. In what way will we be judged? (7:2)
- * 7. By what measure will we be judged? (7:2)
- 8. What kind of faults do we notice in others? (7:3)
- 9. How did Jesus illustrate the foolishness of the way we find fault with others? (7:3)
- 10. What figure of speech did Jesus use to illustrate how blind we are to the shortcomings in our own lives? (7:4)
- * 11. What did Jesus call those who ignore their own imperfections and focus on the flaws of others? Why? (7:5)
- 12. When is it good to confront others with their faults? (7:5)
- * 13. Why is it necessary to deal with one's own sins first? (7:5)
- 14. What are we not to do with sacred things? Why? (7:6)
- 15. What may happen if we disregard Jesus' warning? (7:6)

Get It

- * 16. When, if ever, should we criticize or judge someone else?
- 17. What sacred or valuable things should we withhold from people who have no concern for God?
- 18. Why is it that the traits of others that irritate us most are often the very faults that are present in our own lives?
- 19. What happened the last time you criticized someone else or judged another's actions?
- 20. What causes us to become critical, judgmental people?
- * 21. How can we become more merciful and nonjudgmental?
- 22. What faults block your spiritual vision?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you begin this week to get in the habit of examining your own life before you start criticizing others?
- 24. What fault of your own can you focus attention on this week?

Ask, Seek, Knock - Matthew 7:7-12

Topics: Children, Endurance, Evil, Generosity, Gifts, God, Goodness, Humanness, Kindness, Law, Persistence, Prayer, Promises

Open It

- * 1. What sort of letters did you write to Santa Claus as a kid?
- 2. What is the best answer to prayer you ever received?
- 3. If you could make up one rule that everyone in the world had to live by, what would it be and why?

Explore It

- 4. What did Jesus say will happen if we bring our requests to Him? (7:7)
- 5. What happens when we seek in Christ's name? (7:7)
- * 6. According to Jesus, what is the result for those who "knock" on God's door? (7:7)
- 7. How do loving parents respond to a child's request for bread? (7:9)
- 8. How do loving parents respond to a child's request for fish? (7:10)
- * 9. What is true about the character of even the best human parent? (7:11)
- * 10. How can we be encouraged by the sight of godless parents doing good things for their children? (7:11)
- 11. What is the likelihood of God giving His praying children what they need? (7:11)
- 12. How are we to treat others? (7:12)
- 13. In what specific situations are we to follow the Golden Rule? (7:12)
- 14. Why is the command to treat others as you want to be treated so significant? (7:12)

Get It

- * 15. What do you tend to pray about?
- * 16. For what are you reluctant to pray?
- 17. How do you react when your child comes to you with a legitimate need?
- 18. What motivates you to want to provide for your children?
- 19. In spite of their imperfection, how would you rate your parents as providers?
- 20. If earthly parents generally attempt to care for their children, what can you conclude about God?
- 21. How would the world be different if we all lived by the Golden Rule?
- 22. When is it hardest for you to treat others with kindness and respect?

Apply It

- * 23. What request will you bring to God every day this week?
- 24. To what relationship do you most need to apply the Golden Rule this week?

The Narrow and Wide Gates - Matthew 7:13-14

Topics: Eternal Life, Evangelism, Grace, Guidance, Heaven, Hell, Lost, Pride, Rebellion, Unbelievers, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. Why are most people apt to believe in heaven but quick to dismiss the reality of hell?
- 2. If you were setting the standards for who gets into heaven, what requirements would you establish?
- 3. What do you think heaven will be like?

Explore It

- * 4. What command did Jesus give His followers in this passage? (7:13)
- 5. What exactly are we called to enter? Why? (7:13)
- 6. How did Jesus describe the gate to the kingdom of God? Why? (7:13)
- * 7. In what way did Jesus describe the gate that leads to destruction? (7:13)
- 8. What was said about the road that leads to destruction? (7:13)
- 9. How many people are said to travel the path to destruction? (7:13)
- 10. What kind of gate leads to life? (7:14)
- 11. The small gate is attached to what kind of road? (7:14)
- 12. Where does the narrow road lead? (7:14)
- * 13. How many people find and follow the narrow road? Why? (7:14)

Get It

- 14. What is encouraging about Christ's words?
- 15. What broad roads did you travel before you met Christ?
- 16. How did you find Christ?
- 17. What was your entry through the narrow gate like?
- * 18. What wide gates and broad roads are some of your acquaintances following?
- 19. How should we fit or not fit into the world?
- 20. How might you respond to the charge that Christians are narrow-minded and arrogant?
- * 21. In what sense is it narrow-minded to believe in Christ?
- 22. Why do many people prefer the broad way that leads to destruction?
- 23. Why is it difficult to stay on the narrow road?

Apply It

- 24. What can you do this week to point someone toward the small gate?
- 25. How can you show God your appreciation for His mercy and grace in leading you to the path of eternal life?
- * 26. What action can you take this week to help you stay on the narrow path?

A Tree and Its Fruit - Matthew 7:15-23

Topics: Deceit, Discernment, Evil, Fruit, Heaven, Hypocrisy, Rejection, Religion, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What do you know about vegetable gardening?
- 2. What kind of inner alarm (if any) alerts you to the fact that a person is a phony?
- 3. What is your favorite fruit?

Explore It

- 4. Against whom did Jesus warn us? Why? (7:15)
- 5. What do false prophets look like on the outside? (7:15)
- 6. What are false prophets like inwardly? (7:15)
- 7. How did Christ say we could recognize false prophets? (7:16, 20)
- * 8. What does nature reveal about a tree and its fruit? (7:16)
- 9. What kind of fruit do good trees bear? Why? (7:17-18)
- 10. What type of produce grows on bad trees? Why? (7:17-18)
- * 11. What happens to trees that fail to produce good fruit? (7:18)
- * 12. Who will enter the kingdom of heaven? (7:21)
- 13. How will some people try to talk their way into heaven? (7:22)
- 14. What credentials or accomplishments will some people claim? (7:22)
- 15. How will Jesus respond to these impostors? (7:23)
- 16. What is necessary for entry into heaven? (7:23)

Get It

- 17. Why do we continue to sin if we have Christ in our heart and the Holy Spirit in our lives?
- * 18. What does this passage tell us about the importance of doing good works?
- 19. How do good works and salvation fit together?
- * 20. How can people be “religious” yet not follow Christ?
- 21. What kind of good works have you been producing lately?
- 22. What evidence in your life points to your relationship with Jesus?

Apply It

- 23. What spiritual disciplines can you use to cultivate your soul this week?
- * 24. In what area of your life can you place more emphasis on doing good works each day this week?

The Wise and Foolish Builders - Matthew 7:24-29

Topics: Attitude, Disobedience, Effort, Foundation, Hardheartedness, Obedience, Quality, Responsibility, Security, Stubbornness

Open It

1. What is the secret to building great sand castles?
2. What is it like to ride out a violent thunderstorm, hurricane, or tornado?
- * 3. How do you feel when you offer sound advice and it is rejected?

Explore It

4. Who did Jesus say is wise? (7:24)
5. Besides hearing the words of Christ, what else must a person do in order to be considered wise? (7:24)
6. Jesus compared wise living to building a house on what kind of foundation? (7:24)
- * 7. What sets fools apart from wise people? (7:24, 26)
8. In Jesus' analogy, what strong forces of nature pounded on the wise person's house? (7:25)
9. What was the effect of the wind and rain on the house? (7:25)
10. Why wasn't the house part of a "disaster area"? (7:25)
- * 11. What kind of people did Jesus talk about in contrast to the wise person? (7:26)
- * 12. What individuals are like a man who builds a house on sand? (7:26)
13. According to Jesus, foolish living is like building a house on what kind of foundation? (7:26)
14. In Jesus' analogy, what happened when the wind and water crashed against the fool's house? (7:27)
15. How did the crowd respond to Jesus' teaching? (7:28)
16. Why did the crowd react with amazement to Jesus' teaching? (7:29)

Get It

- * 17. Why is it difficult to apply God's truth to our lives?
- * 18. How does obedience to God bring security to our lives?
19. What foundation are you building your life on?
20. How can you build your life on Christ?
21. What are some sandy foundations you have seen people base their lives on?
22. How do you feel when you see people (friends or family members) ignoring God and making bad decisions?
23. What is the most amazing thing to you about all that Jesus ever said?

Apply It

24. What can you do today to encourage someone to listen to the voice of Jesus and obey what he or she hears?
- * 25. What neglected command of Christ will you begin obeying this week?

The Man With Leprosy - Matthew 8:1-4

Topics: Alone, Attitude, Compassion, Healing, Help, Hopelessness, Humility, Love, Miracles, Sensitivity, Shame, Sickness, Sovereignty

Open It

1. How do you think you would react if you were disabled in an automobile accident?
- * 2. Why are people afraid of AIDS?
3. What illnesses are people often afraid of?

Explore It

4. Where did Jesus go after He finished the Sermon on the Mount? (8:1)
- * 5. What happened when Jesus came down from the mountain? (8:1)
6. What was Jesus' audience like? (8:1)
7. What was distinctive about the man who came and blocked Jesus' path? (8:2)
8. What did the kneeling man say to Christ? (8:2)
- * 9. What daring deed did Christ do for the man with leprosy? (8:3)
10. What compassionate words did Christ say? (8:3)
11. What happened when Christ finished speaking? (8:3)
12. How long did this healing process take? (8:3)
13. What strange instructions did Jesus give the man whom He healed? (8:4)
- * 14. For what reasons did Jesus want the man to show his healed body to the priests? (8:4)

Get It

15. If you had an incurable disease, where would you turn for support?
- * 16. How does this story about Christ encourage you?
- * 17. How does the example of Christ challenge you?
18. Why do you think Christ told the healed man to "show but not tell"?
19. How is Christ's healing of this man with leprosy similar to the manner in which He forgives us?
20. What is the benefit of personal testimony about God's deeds?
21. Who are often treated like modern-day lepers?
22. How can we follow Christ's example in our behavior toward modern-day lepers?
23. What sort of attitude must we have when we come to God for help?
24. What story of God's acts on your behalf could you use as a testimony to others?

Apply It

- * 25. What sick or suffering person can you visit or talk to this week?
26. Whom could you encourage this week with a testimony of something God has done for you?

The Faith of the Centurion - Matthew 8:5-13

Topics: Authority, Confidence, Faith, Healing, Humility, Initiative, Instructions, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Miracles, Trust, Unbelievers

Open It

1. Who is the most amazing person you've ever met?
- * 2. For whom would you not hesitate to give blood or otherwise help recover from a severe illness?
3. What did your mother do for you when you got sick as a child?

Explore It

4. Where did the incident described in this passage take place? (8:5)
- * 5. Who approached Jesus and asked for help? (8:5)
6. What did the centurion tell Jesus? (8:6)
7. What did Jesus promise the soldier? (8:7)
8. What humble, surprising suggestion did the man make? (8:8)
9. What rationale did the centurion have for making his request? (8:9)
10. What effect did the soldier's words have on Jesus? (8:10)
11. According to Jesus, how many Israelites had as much faith as the centurion? (8:10)
12. What insight did Jesus give about the guest list of the kingdom of heaven? (8:11)
13. What eternal destiny did Jesus suggest awaited many in His audience? (8:12)
- * 14. What instructions did Jesus give the centurion? (8:13)
- * 15. What happened to the centurion's servant? (8:13)

Get It

- * 16. How should you respond when friends or relatives have needs?
- * 17. How does Jesus' ready willingness to help the centurion's servant encourage you?
18. What keeps you from having the faith that God can do anything?
19. How can we have greater faith in God?
20. Why are we so often filled with doubt?
21. What assurance do you have that you will be at the great heavenly feast Jesus mentioned in this passage?

Apply It

- * 22. For what person who is sick or in trouble can you intercede today?
23. What can you do every day this week to build your faith in God?
24. For what promise of Jesus will you trust God and expect Him to work this week?

Jesus Heals Many - Matthew 8:14-17

Topics: Compassion, Demons, Despair, Family, Healing, Hospitality, Occult, Sensitivity, Serving, Thankfulness, Victory

Open It

- * 1. What kind of patient are you (squeamish, brave, stoic, etc.)?
- 2. For what disease do you wish there were a cure right now?
- 3. What is the most amazing story of physical healing you have ever heard?

Explore It

- 4. What kind of building was Jesus in when the incidents of this passage took place? (8:14)
- 5. Who owned the building? (8:14)
- 6. Who was bedridden and sick with a fever? (8:14)
- 7. What does the identity of the sick woman reveal about Peter's personal life? (8:14)
- 8. What did Jesus do to the sick woman? (8:15)
- 9. What happened when Jesus touched the woman's hand? (8:15)
- 10. What did the woman immediately begin to do? (8:15)
- * 11. What kinds of people were brought to Jesus that evening? (8:16)
- * 12. What did Jesus do for the people who were brought to Him? (8:16)
- * 13. What procedure or technique did Jesus use to help the people who were brought to Him? (8:16)
- 14. How were these events significant in Jewish history? (8:17)

Get It

- 15. How patient are you with sick family members?
- 16. How would you handle living with an ill in-law?
- 17. How do we typically show appreciation for all the ways God has blessed our lives?
- 18. How would you rate yourself as a servant?
- * 19. What are some ways we can assist those who are ill?
- * 20. What ill or suffering people do you know?
- 21. How can you help those with needs?

Apply It

- * 22. What will you do for someone who is sick or hurting this month?
- 23. Who in your family can you touch today with the love of Christ?
- 24. In what ways can you help a hurting family member this week?

The Cost of Following Jesus - Matthew 8:18-22

Topics: Abandon, Barriers, Commitment, Compromise, Expectations, Family, Invitation, Popularity, Procrastination, Rationalizing, Temptation, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What excuses do people give for neglecting common responsibilities?
- 2. What are the pros and cons of travelling all the time—always living out of a suitcase?
- 3. Why do only a few people follow Christ for a lifetime?

Explore It

- 4. What observation prompted Jesus to cross to the other side of the lake? (8:18)
- 5. What orders did Jesus give? (8:18)
- 6. What did the teacher of the law call Jesus? (8:19)
- 7. What did the teacher of the law claim he would do? (8:19)
- * 8. Who approached Jesus? (8:19-20)
- 9. What did Jesus tell the teacher of the law he would have to do without? (8:20)
- * 10. What animals did Jesus say were more secure than He? Why? (8:20)
- 11. Who offered to follow Jesus? (8:21)
- 12. What did one of Jesus' disciples request? (8:21)
- * 13. What command did Jesus give to the disciple that offered to follow Him under certain conditions? (8:22)
- 14. How did Jesus handle the disciple's request? (8:22)

Get It

- 15. Why do we value popularity?
- 16. What are some places you would not want to go under any conditions?
- 17. Why do we value home ownership?
- 18. What are the pros and cons of putting down roots and getting settled into a community?
- * 19. In what ways might a family (parents, siblings, or children) get in the way of following Jesus?
- * 20. In what ways can our love for Christ cost us?

Apply It

- 21. How can you model commitment to Christ for your children this week?
- * 22. What can you do this week to encourage a Christian who has made sacrifices to follow Christ?

Jesus Calms the Storm - Matthew 8:23-27

Topics: Believe, Faith, Fear, God's Will, Help, Jesus Christ, Learning, Miracles, Nature, Security, Sovereignty, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What is your scariest "bad weather story"?
- 2. When was the last time you were speechless?
- 3. Why is it difficult for parents to watch their children go through hard times?
- 4. What kind of sleeper are you?

Explore It

- 5. What did Jesus do with His disciples? (8:23)
- 6. Who accompanied Jesus in the boat? (8:23)
- * 7. What surprise did the boaters encounter in this scene? (8:24)
- 8. How severe was the weather? (8:24)
- 9. What was Jesus doing during the storm? (8:24)
- 10. What did the disciples do? (8:25)
- 11. What did the disciples say? (8:25)
- * 12. How did Jesus reply to the disciples' expression of fear? (8:26)
- 13. What did Jesus do when the disciples expressed fear? (8:26)
- 14. What was nature's response to the command of Jesus? (8:26)
- * 15. How did the disciples react to this astonishing sequence of events? (8:27)
- 16. What excellent question did the disciples raise? (8:27)

Get It

- 17. Why do you think most people—even nonreligious folks—turn to God when things really fall apart?
- * 18. What nerve-wracking situations have you faced lately?
- 19. How do you typically react when circumstances get out of control?
- 20. Why is it necessary for us to go through scary times in life?
- * 21. Why do we panic about the storms swirling around us when the God of the universe lives inside us?
- 22. How does it make you feel to remember that you have a Savior who is greater than anything this world can throw at you?
- 23. What amazing acts has God done for you?

Apply It

- 24. How can you strengthen your faith in God today?
- * 25. This week, what specific ways can you demonstrate your belief that Jesus will see you through the storms in your life?
- 26. For what amazing acts do you need to thank God today?

The Healing of Two Demon-possessed Men - Matthew 8:28-34

Topics: Blindness, Compassion, Demons, Evidence, Hardheartedness, Healing, Miracles, Occult, Oppressed, Priorities, Rejection, Satan, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What is your favorite farm animal?
2. What effect (if any) do you think violent horror movies have on people?
- * 3. Why are Satan and the occult increasingly popular topics among young people?

Explore It

4. Where did Jesus and the disciples come ashore? (8:28)
5. Who met Christ and his men? (8:28)
6. What was the spiritual state of the two individuals Jesus met? (8:28)
7. Where did the strangers live? (8:28)
8. What kind of behavior did the Gadarene men exhibit? (8:28)
- * 9. What did the two Gadarene men shout at Jesus? (8:29)
10. What was nearby? (8:30)
11. Who spoke to Jesus about the nearby herd of pigs? Why? (8:30)
12. What request was made of Jesus? Why? (8:31)
13. How did Jesus respond to the request that he cast the demons into the herd of pigs? (8:32)
- * 14. What happened as soon as Jesus spoke? (8:32)
15. How did news of this event reach town? (8:33)
- * 16. How did the townspeople react to what happened? (8:34)

Get It

17. How do you think you'd react if you encountered a demon-possessed person?
- * 18. How does Christ's power over Satan encourage and comfort you?
19. What do you think this passage says about the relative worth of a human soul compared to the value of an animal?
20. Why do so many people want nothing to do with Christ?
21. In what areas of your life is Jesus working?
22. What areas of your life do you want Jesus to leave alone?
23. If Jesus is powerful enough to drive out demons, why don't we see much evidence of His power in our lives?
- * 24. How can we show confidence in Christ's power?

Apply It

- * 25. What individuals in your town are in the grip of Satan and need your prayers today and every day this week?
26. Into what specific area(s) of your life do you need to invite Jesus to work today?

Jesus Heals a Paralytic - Matthew 9:1-8

Topics: Authority, Blindness, Faith, Forgiveness, Friendship, Healing, Hypocrisy, Miracles, Power, Praise, Questions, Religion, Worship

Open It

1. What qualities do you look for in a friend?
2. Why do most people take their physical health for granted?
- * 3. What people did God use to bring you to Jesus?

Explore It

4. What means of transportation did Jesus use to get to His own town? (9:1)
5. What was Jesus' destination? (9:1)
- * 6. Upon His arrival, whom did Jesus encounter? (9:2)
7. What attribute did the men exhibit in coming to Christ? (9:2)
8. What unexpected comment did Jesus make to the disabled person among them? (9:2)
9. Who observed the exchange between the paralytic and Jesus? (9:3)
- * 10. What did the teachers of the law think about Jesus' declaration? (9:3)
11. What supernatural ability did Jesus use? (9:4)
- * 12. What did Jesus say about the teachers' opinions? (9:4-6)
13. What was Jesus' argument for His authority to forgive sins? (9:5-6)
14. What did Jesus do to prove His authority to forgive sins? (9:6)
15. What happened to the paralytic? (9:7)
16. What did the paralytic do? (9:7)
17. What was the crowd's reaction to this event? (9:8)

Get It

18. How can we see a person's faith?
19. What do you think it would be like to be a paraplegic or quadriplegic?
20. How does it make you feel to realize that Jesus knows your every thought?
- * 21. What experiences led up to you meeting Christ and having your sins forgiven?
22. What emotions did you feel when you realized your sins were forgiven?
- * 23. How do you typically react when someone else becomes a Christian?

Apply It

24. What can you do for a hurting friend this week?
- * 25. How can you show your appreciation to God today for His saving work in your life?

The Calling of Matthew - Matthew 9:9-13

Topics: Ambassadors, Backslide, Compassion, Darkness, Discernment, Effort, Evangelism, Foolishness, Good News, Involvement, Limitations, Lost, Obedience, Obligation, Purpose, Risk, Unbelievers, Witnessing

Open It

1. If you were starting your own business, what qualities would you look for in prospective employees?
- * 2. What past misdeeds would disqualify someone from: your job? elected office? the Supreme Court? the ministry?
3. What qualities make for a great leader?

Explore It

4. Who did Jesus see sitting at a tax collector's booth? (9:9)
5. What was Matthew's job? (9:9)
6. What did Jesus tell Matthew to do? (9:9)
7. How did Matthew respond to Jesus' statement? (9:9)
8. Where did Jesus and Matthew go? Why? (9:10)
- * 9. What kind of people joined Jesus and His new follower for dinner? (9:10)
10. What did the Pharisees think of Jesus' attendance at Matthew's social function? (9:11)
11. Who reported the Pharisees' comments to Jesus? (9:12)
12. What was Jesus' response to the Pharisees? (9:12)
- * 13. What did Jesus tell His listeners they needed to learn? (9:13)
- * 14. What did Jesus say He had come to earth to do? (9:13)

Get It

15. What, in your opinion, are some respectable jobs, and what are some questionable careers for believers to pursue?
16. How do you think you might react if several gang members or street people attended your church this Sunday?
17. What do you think people would say if you associated with a "wild crowd" in order to be a witness for Christ?
18. Why should we not follow this example of Christ if we are weak in our faith?
- * 19. What dangers do we face when we befriend non-Christians?
- * 20. What will happen if we never reach out to those outside the church?
21. What surprises you about Jesus' actions in this passage?
22. What individuals need your encouragement and support as they seek to minister to those who don't know Christ?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you cultivate a relationship with a non-Christian friend this week?
24. What can you do to remind yourself to view others as they can be, instead of seeing only their faults?

Jesus Questioned About Fasting - Matthew 9:14-17

Topics: Celebration, Change, Fasting, Freedom, Grace, Jesus Christ, Judging Others, Law, Legalism, Mourning, New Covenant, Simplicity, Traditions

Open It

1. What makes a party successful?
- * 2. What are some traditions or customs from the past that you feel we ought to revive?
3. Why do we feel uncomfortable with change?

Explore It

4. Who approached Jesus after the dinner party at Matthew's house? (9:14)
5. What topic were John's disciples interested in discussing with Christ? (9:14)
- * 6. What did John's disciples want to know? (9:14)
- * 7. How did Jesus explain the fact that His disciples did not fast? (9:15)
8. What imagery did Jesus use as an illustration? (9:15)
9. To what did Jesus compare Himself? (9:15)
10. What did Jesus suggest would happen? (9:15)
11. What sewing illustration did Jesus use? (9:16)
- * 12. Using an illustration from the world of wine making, Jesus talked about the need to do what? (9:17)
13. What did Jesus say would happen if new wine was poured into old wineskins? (9:17)

Get It

- * 14. Why is it that wonderful spiritual traditions can turn into dull, lifeless rituals?
15. What are some reasons you might consider fasting?
16. In what ways are you guilty of being legalistic?
17. What legalistic habits or practices do you need to get rid of?
18. How can we Christians do a better job of demonstrating the joy of Christ to the world?
- * 19. Why is it wrong for us to measure our performance as Christians by a list of dos and don'ts?
20. How would you explain this passage to a friend?

Apply It

- * 21. Throughout this week, how can you embrace God's grace and acceptance in Christ?
22. What specific steps can you take today to experience the joy that comes from appreciating Christ's saving work?

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman - Matthew 9:18-26

Topics: Death, Doubt, Faith, Healing, Hope, Miracles, Patience, Resurrection, Trust, Unbelievers, Waiting

Open It

1. What epitaph would you like on your tombstone?
- * 2. What punishment should be meted out to those who prey on weak or defenseless individuals?
3. What do you think about people who claim to have died and then come back to life?

Explore It

4. Who approached Jesus? (9:18)
5. What did the man do? (9:18)
6. With what startling situation and request did the man present Jesus? (9:18)
7. How did Jesus react? (9:19)
8. Who accompanied Jesus? (9:19)
- * 9. While Jesus and the others made their way to the man's house, who touched Jesus' cloak? (9:20)
10. From what kind of ailment did the woman suffer? (9:20)
- * 11. What was the woman's reasoning for touching Jesus' cloak? (9:21)
12. What happened as the woman made contact with Jesus? (9:22)
13. What did Jesus do for the woman? (9:22)
- * 14. Why was the woman healed? (9:22)
15. Upon arriving at the ruler's house, what did Jesus say to the crowd? (9:24)
16. What was the crowd's response to Jesus' unexpected statement? (9:24)
17. What did Christ do after He put the crowd outside? (9:25)
18. What happened after Christ left? (9:26)

Get It

19. What personal encouragement and comfort do you find in Christ's ability to heal the sick and raise the dead?
- * 20. How is your faith challenged by the people in this story?
21. What are some ways we "laugh at Jesus" in our beliefs and behavior?
22. How do you think a twelve-year illness would affect your faith in God?
23. What does this passage teach you about Jesus' sensitivity to the needs of a lonely, hurting individual?
- * 24. What impossible situation are you facing?
25. How can we follow Jesus' example?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you trust God today to work in the impossible situation you are facing?
27. What act of kindness can you show this week to someone who is ill or grieving?

Jesus Heals the Blind and Mute - Matthew 9:27-34

Topics: Awe, Blasphemy, Demons, Disobedience, Faith, Healing, Jealousy, Miracles, Opposition, Persistence, Rejection, Unbelievers, Worship

Open It

- * 1. Which of your senses would be the hardest to do without?
- 2. On what recent occasion were you so excited about something that you could not resist telling everyone?

Explore It

- 3. Who was following Jesus? (9:27)
- 4. What were the men calling Jesus? (9:27)
- 5. What were the men asking Christ to do? (9:27)
- * 6. What question did Jesus ask the men who were following Him? (9:28)
- * 7. How did the men respond to Jesus' question? (9:28)
- * 8. What did Jesus do to grant the men's request? (9:29)
- 9. What did Jesus say to the men? (9:30)
- 10. What was the effect of Jesus' actions on the men? (9:30)
- 11. What stern warning did Jesus give the men? (9:30)
- 12. How well did the men heed Jesus' command? (9:31)
- 13. Who was brought to Jesus for healing after the two blind men were healed? (9:32)
- 14. What happened to the demon-possessed man? (9:33)
- 15. What was the reaction of the onlookers when the demon was driven out? (9:33)
- 16. How did the Pharisees explain what happened? (9:34)

Get It

- 17. How would you have handled the command not to tell anyone that you had been miraculously healed of blindness?
- * 18. How can we be more persistent in asking God to help us or bless us?
- 19. How can you be involved in spreading the news of Christ around the region in which you live?
- 20. What commands of God are difficult for you to obey?
- 21. Of what ailments would you like God to heal you?
- * 22. In what area of your life do you need to have more faith in God?

Apply It

- * 23. What is the first step you need to take in obeying one command that you have found difficult to obey?
- 24. How might you demonstrate the love of Christ this week to someone who is disabled?

The Workers Are Few - Matthew 9:35-38

Topics: Ambassadors, Compassion, Evangelism, Healing, Lost, Miracles, Mission, Prayer, Priorities, Timing, Witnessing, World

Open It

1. In what situations do you tend to feel compassion?
2. What missionaries do you know personally?
- * 3. What do you pray about on a regular basis?

Explore It

4. Where did Jesus go? To do what? (9:35)
5. Where did Jesus teach? (9:35)
6. What did Jesus preach about? (9:35)
7. What kinds of disease and sickness did Jesus heal? (9:35)
- * 8. What emotion did Jesus feel when He saw the crowds of people around Him? (9:36)
9. Why did Jesus feel as He did? (9:36)
- * 10. What helpless animals were the people compared to? (9:36)
11. In what terms did Jesus describe the situation He and His disciples were observing? (9:37)
12. How did Jesus describe the number of people helping others come to Him? (9:37)
13. Who did Jesus tell His disciples to discuss the lack of workers with? (9:37)
- * 14. For whom did Jesus tell His disciples to pray? (9:37)

Get It

15. For what non-Christians do you feel compassion?
16. How would you describe the spiritual and moral state of the majority of the people in your town or on your campus?
- * 17. Who are the non-Christians in your life?
- * 18. What can you do to help people see their need for Christ?
19. What skills, gifts, abilities, or talents can you use to help others come to Christ?
20. What barriers stand in the way of people you know listening to the gospel?
21. What can you do to overcome your friends' and neighbors' objections or reservations about following Jesus?

Apply It

- * 22. For what non-Christians will you pray regularly from now on?
23. What missionaries can you pray for this week?
24. How can you make a difference today in the life of someone who is "harassed and helpless"?

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve - Matthew 10:1-42

Topics: Ambassadors, Approval, Challenge, Commitment, Confidence, Convictions, Danger, Depend, Discouragement, Endurance, Enemies, Faithfulness, Fear, Fruit, God's Will, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Instructions, Last Days, Persecution, Persistence, Problems, Purpose, Rejection, Results, Rewards, Risk, Sacrifice, Serving, Stress, Suffering, Unbelievers, Victory, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. How might a parent feel sending his or her child off to school for the first time?
- 2. What activity or responsibility absolutely terrifies you?
- 3. Why do you think certain people are antagonistic to the gospel?

Explore It

- 4. What kind of authority did Jesus give His twelve disciples? (10:1)
- 5. What were the names of the twelve men with Jesus? (10:2-4)
- 6. To what audience did Jesus command these men to go? (10:5-6)
- 7. What last-minute ministry instructions did Jesus give His disciples? (10:7-10)
- 8. What sort of accommodations were the disciples to seek in their travels? (10:11-13)
- 9. How were the disciples supposed to respond to those who rejected them? (10:14-15)
- 10. To what kind of animal did Jesus compare His disciples? (10:16)
- * 11. What warnings of danger or hardship did Christ give His disciples? (10:17-23)
- * 12. Why did Jesus predict trouble for the disciples? (10:24-25)
- * 13. What kinds of things did Jesus say to bolster His disciples' courage? (10:26-31)
- 14. Why did Christ tell His disciples that it was important for them to take a stand for Him? (10:32-33)
- 15. What surprising comments did Jesus make about the goal of His ministry? (10:34-36)
- 16. What radical requirements did Christ make of those who would follow Him? (10:37-38)
- 17. What did Jesus promise those who obeyed Him fully? (10:39-42)

Get It

- * 18. Where specifically do you think Jesus wants you to minister?
- 19. What things act as security blankets in your life and keep you from stepping out in faith?
- 20. How can you be shrewd and innocent in your dealings with non-Christians?
- * 21. How do you react when someone makes jokes about your faith or when people treat you harshly?
- 22. How has Jesus created division in your family?
- 23. In what ways have you been putting human relationships before your relationship with Christ?
- 24. What do you think it means to lose your life for Christ's sake?

Apply It

- 25. In what specific situations do you need to rely more on the Holy Spirit to give you the right words to say?
- * 26. What promises from this chapter can you meditate on this week to make you a more effective minister for Christ?
- 27. What are three or four concrete ways you can be more bold in standing up for Christ this week?

Jesus and John the Baptist - Matthew 11:1-19

Topics: Assumptions, Beliefs, Circumstances, Confusion, Doubt, Feelings, Greatness, Hope, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Maturity, Miracles, Surprises, Trust, World, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What causes people to second-guess themselves?
- 2. Other than Jesus Christ, who, in your opinion, was the greatest person who ever lived? Why?
- 3. Of everything you know about Christ, what surprises you most?

Explore It

- 4. What did Jesus do while His disciples were out on their mission trip? (11:1)
- * 5. What message or question did John the Baptist send to Christ from prison? (11:2-3)
- * 6. What instructions did Jesus give to John's messenger? (11:4)
- * 7. What kind of proof did Jesus offer to establish His claim to be the Messiah? (11:5)
- 8. What things did Jesus say John the Baptist was not? (11:7)
- 9. How did Jesus identify John? (11:9-10)
- 10. What high compliment did Jesus pay John? (11:11)
- 11. Why was John's life and ministry significant? (11:10)
- 12. What did Jesus claim about the kingdom of heaven? (11:12)
- 13. Whose prophetic role did Jesus say John was fulfilling? (11:14)
- 14. How did Jesus compare His generation to children? (11:16-17)
- 15. What criticism did John the Baptist receive? Why? (11:18)
- 16. What frequent charge was leveled at Jesus? Why? (11:19)

Get It

- 17. If you faithfully lived for God and were thrown in jail, how do you think you might react?
- * 18. Based on this passage, how do you think Jesus reacts when we have moments of weakness and doubts about our faith?
- * 19. How do you personally handle doubts when they come?
- 20. Why do you believe that Jesus is God's Son and the Savior of the world?
- 21. What have you seen and heard about Jesus that you could tell others?
- 22. If Jesus were physically here today and began talking about you at a press conference, what kinds of remarks would he make?
- 23. In what ways is the work of God advancing in your life or in your circle of influence?

Apply It

- 24. What words of comfort could you share this week with a Christian who happens to be dealing with doubt?
- * 25. What specific actions can you take today to strengthen a weak area of faith?
- 26. What immature attitude or action do you need to change today in order to develop more fully in your faith?

Woe on Unrepentant Cities - Matthew 11:20-24

Topics: Denial, Judgment, Miracles, Pride, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Repentance, Sin, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What are the pros and cons of living in a big city?
- * 2. What city would you most like to visit? Why?
3. What is your favorite city in the world? Why?
4. How effective do you feel large evangelistic crusades are?

Explore It

5. After His praise of John, what did Jesus begin to do? (11:20)
6. Who was Jesus condemning? (11:20)
- * 7. Why was Jesus denouncing the cities in which He performed most of His miracles? (11:20)
8. What two cities did Jesus condemn first? Why? (11:21)
- * 9. How did Jesus say Korazin and Bethsaida were different from Tyre and Sidon? (11:21)
10. What did Jesus say would happen on the day of judgment? (11:22)
11. What city did Jesus single out for comparison with Sodom? (11:23)
12. What did Jesus predict for Capernaum? (11:23)
13. Why did Capernaum have a bleak future? (11:23)
- * 14. To what ancient, evil city did Jesus compare Capernaum? Why? (11:23-24)
15. What city did Jesus say would face the sterner judgment than Sodom? Why? (11:24)

Get It

- * 16. How do you think God views our country's evil bent—especially in light of all the ways He has blessed us?
17. As people who have experienced the goodness of God, how should we be living?
18. In what ways are you treating the mercies of God or his blessings in your life as no big deal?
19. Why is it dangerous for us to know the truth about God and yet continue to sin?
- * 20. What would Jesus say if He came and preached in our city today?
21. Why do you think we sometimes become indifferent toward God?

Apply It

22. What specific sin do you need to repent of today?
- * 23. What are three things you could do this week to be a brighter light for Christ in your city or town?
24. In light of the certain judgment of God, what step could you take this week to reach a lost neighbor or friend?

Rest for the Weary - Matthew 11:25-30

Topics: Balance, Burdens, Commitment, Effort, Foolishness, God, Growth, Help, Humility, Legalism, Listening, Obedience, Partnerships, Rest, Submission, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. If you had one week of vacation in which to recharge your physical and emotional batteries, where would you go to rest, relax, and get rejuvenated?
- 2. What sorts of activities absolutely drain the life out of you?
- 3. Why are many Christians frazzled and burned out?

Explore It

- 4. After pronouncing woe on several unrepentant cities, what did Jesus do? (11:25)
- 5. When did Jesus pray? (11:25)
- 6. How did Jesus address God? (11:25)
- 7. Why did Jesus say He was praising God? (11:25)
- 8. What did Jesus say God had entrusted or committed to Him? (11:27)
- 9. Who alone did Jesus say knew Him? (11:27)
- 10. Besides himself, who did Jesus say could know God? (11:27)
- 11. Who claimed to reveal God to the world? (11:27)
- 12. What general invitation did Christ make at this time? (11:28)
- * 13. What kind of people was Jesus addressing? (11:28)
- * 14. What promise did Jesus make to those who would accept His offer? (11:28)
- 15. What farming imagery did Jesus use to encourage people to come to Him? (11:29)
- 16. How did Jesus describe Himself? (11:29)
- * 17. How is walking with Christ described? (11:30)

Get It

- 18. In your eyes, what about Christ seems so obvious that everyone ought to be able to see it?
- 19. Why do you think God hides certain truths from “the wise”?
- * 20. In what ways do you feel weary and burdened right now?
- 21. What aspects of the Christian life do you find especially taxing or burdensome?
- * 22. What is it like to experience the promised “rest” of Christ?
- 23. How would you describe your walk with Christ right now?

Apply It

- 24. What are two specific ways you can work with Christ tomorrow instead of going in your own direction?
- 25. Besides praying, what are some ways you can get to know your Father in heaven more intimately this week?
- * 26. What burdens will you entrust to Christ today?

Lord of the Sabbath - Matthew 12:1-14

Topics: Bitterness, Blindness, Complaining, Criticism, Envy, Hatred, Healing, Hypocrisy, Judging Others, Legalism, Mercy, Rejection, Religion, Sacrifice, Stubbornness

Open It

- * 1. What do you like to do on your day off?
- 2. What are some ways laws or rules are twisted to hurt the very people they were designed to help?
- 3. What makes certain people in authority behave insensitively or rudely to the very people they ought to be serving?

Explore It

- 4. Where were Jesus and His disciples when they were eating? (12:1)
- 5. What difference did the day of the week make? (12:1)
- 6. What activity were the disciples involved in? (12:1)
- * 7. How did the Pharisees react when they saw the disciples eating? (12:2)
- 8. What biblical precedent did Jesus cite to justify the actions of His followers? (12:3-4)
- 9. What, according to Jesus, did the law say about priests and the temple and the Sabbath? (12:5)
- 10. Over what honored religious symbol did Jesus claim superiority? (12:6)
- * 11. What did Jesus accuse the Pharisees of failing to understand? (12:7)
- * 12. What did Jesus claim about Himself? (12:8)
- 13. Where did Jesus go after clashing with the Pharisees? (12:9)
- 14. What miracle did Jesus perform in the synagogue? (12:10, 13)
- 15. How did Jesus justify His actions? (12:11-12)
- 16. What was the response of the Pharisees? (12:14)

Get It

- 17. What kinds of lawful behavior are Christians often quick to condemn in others?
- * 18. What are some ways we trample over the feelings of others in our quest to be righteous?
- * 19. How do you need to be more compassionate and merciful in your relationships with others?
- 20. How do you use God to justify wrong attitudes such as snobbery, jealousy, prejudice, or selfishness?
- 21. Why are we unwilling to bend rules for others but quick to rationalize when the rules adversely affect us?
- 22. How do you think you would react if an undesirable person (a homeless person or drunk, for example) staggered into your church on Sunday and interrupted your worship service?
- 23. What are some man-made symbols or traditions (like the Pharisee's views on the Law, the temple, and the Sabbath) that we value more than people?

Apply It

- 24. In what specific ways can you show mercy and compassion to a hurting person today?
- * 25. What legalistic rules that keep you from loving people do you need to ignore?
- 26. Without being showy, how can you demonstrate today to a non-Christian friend the freedom that you have in Christ?

God's Chosen Servant - Matthew 12:15-21

Topics: Enemies, Expectations, Healing, Holy Spirit, Humility, Intimidation, Justice, Messiah, Ministry, Miracles, Prophecy, Rejection, Serving, Victory

Open It

- * 1. What kind of person (character, skills, knowledge) would make for a great national leader?
- 2. How would you define justice?
- 3. In what ways is our society unjust?
- 4. Why do we often get disappointed?

Explore It

- 5. How did Jesus respond to the hostility of the Pharisees? (12:15)
- 6. Who accompanied Jesus? (12:15)
- 7. What did Jesus do for the people who followed Him? (12:15)
- 8. What did Jesus instruct the people He helped to do? (12:16)
- 9. Who had foretold this event? (12:17)
- * 10. In the prophetic passage quoted here, how did God identify the Messiah? (12:18)
- 11. What message did the prophecy say Christ would preach? (12:18)
- 12. How was the personality of Christ described by Isaiah? (12:19)
- 13. How did Isaiah predict people would respond to this coming servant of God? (12:19)
- * 14. According to Isaiah, what type of ministry would the Messiah have? (12:20)
- * 15. According to the prophet Isaiah, how would the nations ultimately respond to Christ? (12:21)

Get It

- 16. If you were in charge of scripting the first and second comings of Christ, how would you have arranged them differently?
- * 17. If God were to describe your life and influence right now, what might he say?
- 18. What changes, events, and experiences in your life do you attribute to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit?
- 19. In what ways do you seek to bring justice or fairness to your relationships?
- 20. How demanding are you?
- * 21. What is the danger in our being quiet, humble, and submissive?

Apply It

- 22. What are three practical ways you can serve God this week?
- * 23. What specific areas of your life do you need to surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit today?
- 24. Over the next few days, how can you bring God's justice and love to someone who is oppressed?

Jesus and Beelzebub - Matthew 12:22-37

Topics: Bitterness, Blasphemy, Demons, Denial, Enemies, Evil, Fruit, Hatred, Healing, Holy Spirit, Insults, Jealousy, Judging Others, Legalism, Messiah, Opposition, Rejection, Satan, Sickness, Stubbornness, Unbelievers, Words

Open It

1. Why are people prone to criticize those who are popular or successful?
- * 2. Why do you think our mouth frequently gets us in trouble?
3. How would you be affected if someone followed you around and taped all your conversations?
4. How much demonic activity do you think goes on today?

Explore It

5. What kind of man did Jesus heal? (12:22)
6. How did the onlookers respond? (12:23)
7. What kind of reaction did the Pharisees have to the miracle Christ did? (12:24)
8. How did Jesus show the Pharisee's argument to be illogical? (12:25-26)
9. What did Jesus say to show the significance of His ability to drive out demons? (12:28)
10. What rationale did Jesus give for casting out demons? (12:29)
11. What criteria did Jesus give for determining who supported and opposed Him? (12:30)
12. What did Jesus discuss with the Pharisees? (12:31-32)
- * 13. What did Jesus say a tree's "fruit" reveals? (12:33)
14. What harsh name did Jesus call the Pharisees? Why? (12:34)
- * 15. What did Jesus claim a person's words reveal? (12:34-35)
- * 16. What will every single person do on the day of judgment? (12:36-37)

Get It

17. What is it that convinced you that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world?
- * 18. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus knows every thought you have?
19. What are some ways you see Satan at work in the world today?
20. How do you see the kingdom of God overcoming the evil one?
21. What evidence could others cite that you are in fact a follower of Jesus Christ?
- * 22. What sins of the tongue are you currently struggling with that indicate a deeper problem in your heart?

Apply It

23. When and how can you best bring your unconfessed sins to God?
- * 24. What are some specific steps you can take this week to avoid sinning in your speech?
25. What can you begin doing today to develop a pure heart so that your life produces good fruit?

The Sign of Jonah - Matthew 12:38-45

Topics: Arguments, Believers, Blindness, Demons, Denial, Evidence, Foolishness, Hardheartedness, Holy Spirit, Rationalizing, Rejection, Stubbornness, Unbelievers, Wisdom

Open It

1. What are some common uses for signs?
- * 2. Why do some people say they want to see proof that God exists before they will believe in Him?
3. In your opinion, what is the strongest evidence for God?

Explore It

4. Who approached Jesus and demanded a sign? (12:38)
- * 5. What did a hostile group of people ask Jesus to do? (12:38)
- * 6. What kind of people did Jesus say asked for additional miraculous signs? (12:39)
7. How did Jesus respond to the request for a sign? (12:39)
- * 8. To what proof from history did Jesus point? (12:39-40)
9. How did Jesus compare Himself to Jonah? (12:40)
10. Who did Jesus say would one day stand and judge His generation? Why? (12:41)
11. Why will the “men of Nineveh” be in a position to judge? (12:41)
12. To what example from history did Jesus point as evidence for His identity? (12:42)
13. How did “the Queen of the South” respond to Solomon? (12:42)
14. How did Jesus compare Himself to Solomon? (12:43)
15. What example did Jesus use to show the importance of ridding one’s life of evil attitudes and filling one’s life with love for God? (12:43-45)
16. What did Jesus warn would happen to those who refused to open themselves up to the Lord? (12:45)

Get It

- * 17. What acts of God do you feel would strengthen your faith?
- * 18. What evidence of God is there in your life that could point others to Christ?
19. What areas of your life need cleansing?
20. What specific areas of your life need the filling of the Holy Spirit?
21. Why is it sometimes hard to believe in God without hard evidence?
22. What are some subtle ways Satan gains a foothold in the lives of Christians?
23. Why do you think certain “religious” people are sometimes skeptical about God?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you demonstrate the reality of God in your life today?
25. In what areas of your life do you need the Spirit of God to fill you this week?
26. In what area has God already revealed to you that you need to obey Him more faithfully?

Jesus' Mother and Brothers - Matthew 12:46-50

Topics: Affections, Body, Conflict, Family, Feelings, God's Will, Home, Involvement, Obedience, Pressure, Priorities, Purpose, Unity

Open It

- * 1. What is your fondest family memory?
- 2. If you had to belong to a family other than your own, what family would you choose to join? Why?
- 3. What is ideal Christian fellowship or community to you?

Explore It

- 4. What was Christ doing when His mother and brothers came to speak to Him? (12:46)
- 5. Who was in the crowd? (12:38-46)
- * 6. Who came to find Jesus? Why? (12:46)
- 7. Why did Jesus' family want to see Him? (12:46)
- 8. How did Jesus find out about His visitors? (12:47)
- * 9. What two rhetorical questions did Jesus pose when He heard about His family's arrival? (12:48)
- 10. How did Jesus answer His own questions? (12:49)
- 11. What makes a person a member of Jesus' family? (12:50)
- * 12. Who can become a member of Jesus' family? (12:50)
- 13. How did Jesus refer to God? (12:50)

Get It

- 14. In what ways (if any) are you closer to certain Christian friends than you are to your own family members?
- * 15. What circumstances led you to want to become a member of God's family?
- * 16. What special bonds does the family of God have that earthly families do not?
- 17. What are the dangers if we neglect our families?
- 18. What are the risks if we become obsessed with our families?
- 19. How are we sometimes guilty of neglecting our blood relatives?
- 20. In what ways is it possible to idolize the family?

Apply It

- * 21. What could you do today to strengthen the bonds you have with another Christian brother or sister?
- 22. To what family member could you communicate your love and concern this week?
- 23. What steps can you take this week to ensure that your family ties do not hinder God's will for you?

The Parable of the Sower - Matthew 13:1-23

Topics: Bible, Blessing, Compromise, Evangelism, Evidence, Fruit, Growth, Heart, Impulsiveness, Joy, Listening, New Life, Productivity, Prophecy, Timing, Witnessing, World

Open It

- * 1. When was the last time you “tuned out” a speaker?
- 2. What are some spiritual cliches or religious catch-phrases that people often use?
- 3. What misconceptions do non-Christians have about Christianity?

Explore It

- 4. Where was Jesus when the crowds came? (13:1-2)
- 5. Why did Jesus get on a boat to speak? (13:2)
- 6. What kind of stories did Jesus use to teach the crowds? (13:3)
- 7. The first story that Jesus told His audience was about what? (13:3)
- 8. Into what various places did the seed fall? (13:4-5)
- 9. Which seed ended up sprouting and bearing fruit? Why? (13:8)
- 10. To whom did Jesus direct His story about the four soils? (13:9)
- 11. How did the disciples respond to the Parable of the Four Soils? (13:10)
- 12. How did Jesus defend His use of parables? (13:11-13)
- 13. Why was the majority’s inability or unwillingness to understand Christ’s message significant? (13:14-15)
- 14. Why did Jesus say the disciples were blessed? (13:16-17)
- * 15. Whom did Jesus liken to seed along the path? Why? (13:19)
- * 16. According to Christ, who is like the seed sown on rocky soil? Why? (13:20-21)
- * 17. What kind of people were compared to seed sown among the thorns? Why? (13:22)
- 18. Of whom is the fruitful seed a picture? How? (13:23)

Get It

- 19. How do stories and illustrations help us to understand more clearly the message of the Bible?
- 20. How involved are you in “sowing the seed” of God’s Word?
- 21. What kind of soil would you say you are at this point in your life?
- * 22. What are some thorns that tend to choke out your Christian faith?
- * 23. What circumstances have a tendency to scorch your faith and cause it to wither?
- 24. How long did it take for you to understand the gospel of Christ?
- 25. How could you listen more faithfully and intently to the voice of God?

Apply It

- * 26. What one action could you do this week to improve the way you listen to God’s Word?
- 27. How could you become a more effective sower of God’s Word over the next month?
- 28. How can you show gratitude to God today for opening your eyes to the truth of the gospel?

The Parable of the Weeds - Matthew 13:24-30

Topics: Appearance, Danger, Enemies, Fruit, Hell, Image, Judging Others, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Life-style, Lost, Majority, People, Punishment, Satan, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What kind of gardening have you done?
2. What is your least favorite type of yard work? Why?
- * 3. Why do people dislike weeds?

Explore It

4. What did Jesus use to communicate His point? (13:24)
5. What was Jesus talking about in this passage? (13:24)
6. To what did Jesus compare His topic? (13:24)
7. In the Parable of the Weeds, what happened while the farmer slept? (13:25)
8. What appeared in the farmer's field besides the wheat he had planted? (13:26)
9. How did the owner's servants react when they found weeds in the field? (13:27)
10. How did the owner reply to his servants? (13:28)
- * 11. What did the servants volunteer to do for the owner of the field? (13:28)
- * 12. On what grounds did the owner turn down the servant's suggestion? (13:29)
- * 13. What plan of action did the owner choose? (13:30)

Get It

14. How would you respond if you tried to get a Bible study going and a group of non-Christians showed up to give you a hard time?
15. What are some ways Christians blend in with non-Christians?
16. What do you think about Christians who try to isolate themselves completely from non-Christians?
17. What opportunities do you have by living among all different kinds of people?
- * 18. In what ways does Satan try to mess up God's plan and your part in that plan?
19. What dangers lie in trying to label people as either "weeds" or "wheat" (non-Christians or Christians)?
20. Whose responsibility is it to label the weeds and deal with them?
- * 21. Under what circumstances are you to live for Christ?

Apply It

- * 22. In what ways do you need to alter your life-style (either attitude or action) today in order to be more like wheat and less like a weed?
23. Whom do you need to judge and label less today?
24. For what non-Christian coworkers, neighbors, and friends will you pray this week?

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast - Matthew 13:31-35

Topics: Expectations, Growth, Influence, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Power, Prophecy, Quality, Results, Simplicity, Success, Surprises

Open It

- * 1. What small or seemingly insignificant possession is worth a great deal to you? Why?
- 2. What are some big or important events that start out very small?
- 3. What ingredients make for great storytelling?
- 4. What is one fairytale you remember from childhood that you still enjoy today?

Explore It

- 5. What did Jesus tell the crowd? (13:31)
- 6. In the Parable of the Mustard Seed, what did the man do with the seed? (13:31)
- * 7. To what kind of seed did Christ compare the kingdom of heaven? Why? (13:31-32)
- * 8. How does the mustard seed compare to others in size? (13:32)
- * 9. What is a mustard seed like when it is fully grown? (13:32)
- 10. Besides bearing fruit, how is a mustard plant useful? (13:32)
- 11. In the Parable of the Yeast, to what did Christ liken the kingdom of heaven? (13:33)
- 12. How does yeast work? (13:33)
- 13. In addition to parables, how else did Jesus get His point across to the crowd? (13:34)
- 14. Why was Jesus' use of parables significant? (13:35)

Get It

- 15. In what small or seemingly insignificant ways has God worked in your life?
- * 16. How can a Christian be a positive presence among his or her non-Christian friends and relatives?
- 17. What are some ways God might use a person to spread the gospel in a place where there is little Christian influence?
- 18. What are some little things we can do to make a big impact for Christ?
- * 19. What does this passage say to those who don't feel talented, gifted, or brilliant?
- 20. In what ways has your Christian life grown to bless others (like the mustard seed becoming a big tree)?

Apply It

- * 21. What is one way you could quietly help the gospel permeate your family, workplace, or circle of friends?
- 22. What illustrations, examples, or stories can you share with someone today to help him or her understand your faith in Christ?
- 23. What prayer can you begin praying this week to cause the gospel to spread?

The Parable of the Weeds Explained - Matthew 13:36-43

Topics: Angels, Enemies, Future, Grief, Hell, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Listening, Lost, Majority, Mourning, Punishment, Righteousness, Satan, Sin, Unbelievers, World

Open It

1. What school subject or subjects did you find difficult? Why?
- * 2. What are your beliefs about the future of the world?
3. Why are many people eager to believe in heaven but reluctant to believe in hell?

Explore It

4. Where did Jesus go upon leaving His audience? (13:36)
5. Who came to Jesus for further discussion? Why? (13:36)
6. What specific story did Jesus' audience want explained to them? (13:36)
- * 7. In the Parable of the Weeds, whom did the sower represent? How? (13:37)
- * 8. What did the field represent? In what way? (13:38)
- * 9. What groups of people are illustrated by good seed and weeds? (13:38)
10. Whom does the enemy who sowed the bad seed represent? (13:39)
11. What future event is symbolized by the harvest? (13:39)
12. Whom do the harvesters represent? (13:39)
13. The burning of the weeds symbolizes what future event? (13:40-42)
14. What will happen to those who are thrown "into the fiery furnace"? (13:42)
15. What is the future for the righteous? (13:43)

Get It

16. How do you study the Bible in order to understand better what Christ has said?
17. If we seldom pick up the Bible or spend time praying, what do our actions say about us?
- * 18. If you had to guess, what would you estimate to be the ratio of "wheat" to "weeds" in your office, town, neighborhood, or school?
- * 19. How do these kinds of passages (threats of judgment for unbelievers) make you feel?
20. In which category (wheat or weed) would your associates place you? Why?
21. What does this passage say to you about the prospect of the world getting better and better?

Apply It

- * 22. In what ways can you "shine like the sun" in your contacts with unbelievers?
23. What passage of Scripture do you need to ask God about and study this week?
24. How could you minister to someone today with a quote or insight from the Bible?

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl - Matthew 13:44-46

Topics: Celebration, Commitment, Dedication, Desires, Joy, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Perspective, Priorities, Satisfaction, Value, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What two or three expensive items do you wish you could afford?
- 2. What are some good ways to determine what our priorities really are?
- 3. What is the difference between value and price?
- 4. How is the value of something determined?

Explore It

- * 5. What is like treasure hidden in a field? How? (13:44)
- 6. What is the kingdom of heaven like? Why? (13:44)
- 7. Where was treasure hidden? (13:44)
- 8. What happened when the man uncovered the hidden treasure? (13:44)
- * 9. How did the man feel when he discovered the treasure? (13:44)
- 10. How badly did the man want the treasure? (13:44)
- 11. To what did Christ compare the kingdom of heaven? Why? (13:45)
- 12. What did the man in the parable find? (13:46)
- 13. How valuable was the pearl? (13:47)
- * 14. How did the man who found the pearl react to its discovery? (13:47)

Get It

- * 15. If the gospel is true and heaven is our destiny, why are we often “ho-hum” about Christ and the Christian life?
- * 16. How can we recover the joy and excitement that we had when we first met Christ?
- 17. What sacrifices are you willing to make in order to fully embrace Christ and his kingdom?
- 18. When, if ever, has your faith cost you something?
- 19. What relationships, possessions, or personal ambitions are you reluctant to give up for Christ?
- 20. What would you say to a someone who says that you can be a good Christian without completely “selling all” to follow Christ?
- 21. Other than buried treasure or a precious pearl, what illustrations could you use to explain to a friend the value of knowing Christ?

Apply It

- 22. What items do you need to “sell off” this week in order to follow Christ and His kingdom?
- 23. With what person will you try to share the wealth you have in Christ today or tomorrow?
- * 24. What first step will you take today to recover the joy of knowing Christ?

The Parable of the Net - Matthew 13:47-52

Topics: Angels, Evil, Future, Grief, Hell, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Mourning, Punishment, Righteousness, Surprises, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite “fish story”?
- 2. When someone says the word “angel,” what kind of images come to mind?
- 3. What one question would you like to ask God about heaven?

Explore It

- * 4. To what did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven? (13:47)
- * 5. How was the net used, and what was the result? (13:47)
 - 6. In the Parable of the Net, what did the fishermen do with the full net? (13:48)
 - 7. What happened to the good fish? (13:48)
 - 8. What happened to the bad fish? (13:48)
- * 9. Why did Jesus use this analogy? (13:49)
 - 10. What group did the fishermen in the story represent? (13:49)
 - 11. Jesus interpreted His parable to say that wicked people can expect what kind of eternal destiny? (13:50)
 - 12. What question did Jesus ask His disciples when He finished teaching? (13:51)
 - 13. How did the disciples answer Jesus’ question? (13:51)
 - 14. To what did Jesus compare those in His audience who knew about the Old Testament law and the kingdom of heaven to come? (13:52)

Get It

- 15. What do you think it would have been like to hear Jesus teach about heaven?
- 16. Since Jesus is in the fishing business, what can you do to help him catch men and women?
- 17. Why are we often reluctant to talk about hell?
- 18. What could you say to a friend who expressed doubts about hell?
- * 19. How would it alter the way we live if we kept in mind the fact that God will judge us?
- * 20. How can we live more often with the wonder of heaven in mind?
- 21. What new insight into God’s kingdom do you have as a result of studying this passage?

Apply It

- 22. What reminders can you use today to help you pray for non-Christian friends and relatives?
- 23. In what way can you remind yourself of heaven this week?
- * 24. How can you show your gratitude to God today for making you a “good fish”?

A Prophet Without Honor - Matthew 13:53-58

Topics: Acceptance, Accusation, Change, Conversation, Criticism, Doubt, Faithfulness, Family, Forgiveness, Habits, History, Honor, Image, New Life, Perseverance, Reputation, Surprises

Open It

- * 1. What do you like best and least about your hometown?
- 2. What would your family say you were like as a little kid?
- 3. How would your high school or college friends react if they heard you were in a serious Bible study?
- 4. What former classmate has surprised you since you graduated from high school? Why?

Explore It

- 5. What did Jesus do when He finished telling His parables? (13:53)
- 6. Where did Jesus go? (13:54)
- * 7. What did Jesus do in His hometown? (13:54)
- 8. Where exactly did Jesus preach? (13:54)
- 9. What was the public response to Jesus' message? (13:54)
- 10. What kinds of questions were the folks in Nazareth asking? (13:55)
- 11. What family ties did the townspeople of Nazareth recognize Jesus as having? (13:55)
- * 12. How did the people feel about "one of their own" saying wise things and doing amazing miracles? (13:57)
- 13. How did Jesus explain their reaction to Him? (13:57)
- * 14. What did Jesus not do in Nazareth—at least in any great amount? Why? (13:58)
- 15. What caused Jesus to refrain from doing miracles in Nazareth? (13:58)

Get It

- 16. How would you react if a guy from your neighborhood started doing miracles and claiming to be God?
- 17. What are some ways we limit the work of Christ by our unbelief?
- 18. Why are we more often impressed by people we don't know than by people we do know?
- 19. Why do we have a tendency to downplay the accomplishments of people we are close to?
- * 20. How did your family react when you placed your trust in Christ?
- * 21. In what ways do you struggle to live down your past?

Apply It

- 22. What are three things you need to trust Christ for in the coming week?
- 23. How can you strengthen your faith in Jesus during this time so that He can work in and through you?
- * 24. What family members or old friends will you commit to visit or call in the next month to tell them about the change Christ is making in you?

John the Baptist Beheaded - Matthew 14:1-12

Topics: Adultery, Bitterness, Consequences, Correction, Danger, Deceit, Discipline, Embarrassment, Foolishness, Impulsiveness, Injustice, Motives, Obedience, Peer Pressure, Pride, Responsibility, Sin, Stubbornness, Toleration

Open It

1. What, in your opinion, would be the preferred way to die?
- * 2. What do you remember from your junior high and high school dances?
3. What makes peer pressure difficult to resist?
4. How does peer pressure become more sophisticated as we get older?

Explore It

5. What powerful political figure heard about all the things Christ was doing? (14:1)
6. What explanation did Herod have for the miracles Christ was doing? (14:2)
7. What had Herod done to John the Baptist? (14:3)
- * 8. Why did Herod put John in prison? (14:3)
9. For what reason had John been rebuking Herod? (14:4)
10. How did Herod react to John's reprimand? (14:5)
- * 11. Why didn't Herod act on his wishes? (14:5)
12. What happened on Herod's birthday? (14:6-7)
13. What promise did Herod make to the daughter of Herodias? (14:7)
14. Who was behind the plot to murder John? (14:8)
15. How did Herod feel when he realized he'd been tricked? (14:9)
- * 16. Why did Herod carry out the execution of John? (14:9)
17. What happened in the aftermath of John's execution? (14:12)

Get It

- * 18. What situations make you most susceptible to peer pressure?
19. In what ways do you promise more than you can (or should) deliver?
20. Why do people hate to be corrected?
21. What grandiose promises have you made and later regretted?
- * 22. What should you do if you make a promise that pressures you to compromise or to do the wrong thing?
23. What does a person's reaction to correction tell you about him or her?
24. In what ways have you sensed danger or risk just by living for Christ?
25. What impulsive words have later come back to haunt you?
26. How would you react if your pastor or a spiritual mentor was brutally murdered?
27. What correction have you recently received from an older and more mature Christian?

Apply It

- * 28. What can you do to strengthen yourself against peer pressure this week?
29. What reminder can help you refrain from making foolish promises in coming weeks?
30. What can you do this week to respond to some correction you recently received?

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand - Matthew 14:13-21

Topics: Compassion, Confidence, Delegation, Gifts, Help, Learning, Limitations, Ministry, Miracles, Quiet, Selfishness, Thankfulness, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite restaurant in all the world? Why?
- 2. What food do you never seem to tire of?
- 3. Where do you go when you want to be alone?

Explore It

- 4. How did Jesus respond to the death of John the Baptist? (14:13)
- 5. Who came looking for Jesus? Why? (14:13)
- 6. Who met Jesus at the shore? (14:14)
- 7. What did Jesus do for the people that came to see Him? (14:14)
- 8. What happened when it started getting dark? (14:15)
- * 9. What did the disciples want Jesus to tell the crowds? Why? (14:15)
- * 10. How did Jesus respond to the disciples' suggestion? (14:16)
- 11. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do for the crowds? (14:16)
- 12. How did the disciples react to Jesus' unusual request? (14:17)
- 13. After having the crowd sit on the grass, what did Jesus do? (14:19)
- 14. How much food did Jesus begin with? (14:19)
- 15. How was the food distributed? (14:19)
- 16. How much food was available to each person? (14:20)
- 17. How much food was left over? (14:20)
- * 18. How large a crowd was fed? (14:21)

Get It

- 19. Why is it important for us to spend regular time alone with God?
- 20. What thoughts typically run through your mind when you see a big crowd of people?
- 21. Why is it harder to be kind at certain times than at others?
- 22. Why should we pray before meals?
- 23. What is it about food that breaks down barriers between people and gives us opportunities to talk with them?
- * 24. How would you have felt in the disciples' shoes?
- * 25. What does this passage tell you about God?

Apply It

- * 26. What gift, ability, or resource (no matter how insignificant) will you give to God today so that he can bless it and multiply it?
- 27. To what quiet place will you go this week for a couple of hours to get away from your busyness, review your priorities, and let God renew your spirit?
- 28. How can you minister to someone in need today?

Jesus Walks on the Water - Matthew 14:22-36

Topics: Believe, Challenge, Courage, Depend, Faith, Fear, Healing, Help, Miracles, Perspective, Protection, Security, Strength, Trust, Victory

Open It

- * 1. What is the most frightening experience you've ever had?
- 2. What is the most worshipful experience you have ever had?
- 3. Of all of Christ's miracles, which one would you most like to have witnessed? Why?

Explore It

- 4. After feeding the crowd of five thousand people, what instructions did Jesus give His disciples? (14:22)
- 5. Where did Jesus go after He dismissed the crowd? Why? (14:23)
- 6. What did Jesus do on the mountain? (14:23)
- 7. Where were the disciples when evening came? (14:24)
- * 8. What conditions were the disciples encountering? (14:24)
- * 9. What miracle did Christ perform? (14:25)
- * 10. How did the disciples react to what they saw? (14:26)
- 11. How did Jesus try to calm the disciples' fears? (14:27)
- 12. What did Peter ask Jesus to do? (14:28)
- 13. How did Jesus respond to Peter's request? (14:29)
- 14. What happened to Peter as he made his way toward Jesus? (14:29-30)
- 15. What did Jesus do and say when Peter got in trouble? (14:31)
- 16. What was the consensus reaction to this amazing sequence of events? (14:33)
- 17. What happened when Jesus and His disciples arrived at their destination? (14:35-36)

Get It

- 18. Why do you think Jesus spent time alone praying?
- 19. How is your devotional life right now?
- 20. What causes you to doubt and waver in your faith?
- * 21. What situations cause you the most fear in life?
- 22. How would you rate your faith on a scale from one to five (one being weak, five being strong)? Why?
- 23. What events or experiences have led you to trust in Jesus?
- * 24. What does this passage teach you to do?

Apply It

- 25. What specific step could you take this week to improve your devotional life?
- * 26. In what practical way can you demonstrate faith as you go through the coming week?
- 27. What step of trust do you need to take today?
- 28. What will help you remember to keep your eyes on Jesus and off your fears?

Clean and Unclean - Matthew 15:1-20

Topics: Appearance, Deceit, Disobedience, Hypocrisy, Interpretation, Law, Legalism, New Covenant, Pride, Purity, Rebellion, Religion, Self-righteousness, Stubbornness, Teaching, Thinking, Traditions, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What traditions have special meaning to you?
- 2. Why do people value tradition?
- 3. If you had to rank the five worst sins, what would your list include?

Explore It

- 4. Who came from Jerusalem to see Christ? Why? (15:1)
- 5. What complaint did the Pharisees and teachers of the law level against Jesus? (15:2)
- 6. What did the Pharisees and teachers of the law value more than the Word of God? (15:2)
- 7. What did Jesus cite as examples of the Pharisees' disobedience? (15:4)
- 8. How did the Pharisees get around the requirements of the Law? (15:5)
- * 9. What was wrong with the Pharisees? (15:7-9)
- 10. What Scripture did Jesus apply to the Pharisees? (15:8-9)
- * 11. How did Jesus shift the emphasis away from external issues like unclean and clean foods? (15:10-11)
- 12. How did the Pharisees like Jesus' statements? (15:12)
- 13. What advice did Jesus give to followers of the Pharisees? (15:14)
- 14. Why did Jesus explain His statements to His disciples? (15:15)
- * 15. How did Jesus redefine "unclean"? (15:17-20)

Get It

- * 16. How is it possible for us to be "religious" and yet be far from God?
- 17. In what ways are we sometimes like the Pharisees?
- * 18. What are some ways we "go through the motions" of the Christian life?
- 19. Why do we sometimes use loopholes or rationalizations to avoid doing the right thing?
- 20. What matters more: how people behave or their motives and attitudes?
- 21. In what way do Christians get bogged down in unnecessary rules?
- 22. What advice would you give a Christian friend who is far away from God?
- 23. In what ways have you allowed man-made rules to obscure the spirit of the law (and the work of the Holy Spirit in your life)?

Apply It

- 24. What is one step you can take to develop a pure heart this week?
- 25. How can you nurture your love for God through your actions at work and at home over the next few days?
- * 26. This week, what could help you keep your focus on Christ rather than mere outward conformity to rules?

The Faith of the Canaanite Woman - Matthew 15:21-28

Topics: Answers, Believe, Caring, Compassion, Delay, Demons, Determination, Faith, Healing, Help, Insensitivity, Perseverance, Persistence, Results, Testing, Victory

Open It

- * 1. What is it like to be on the outside of a group looking in?
- 2. What behavior on the part of others absolutely drives you up the wall?
- 3. What is your greatest success (in the sense of pursuing a goal for a long time and finally reaching it through persistence and determination)?
- 4. What is the most desperate feeling and/or situation you have ever experienced?

Explore It

- 5. To what place did Jesus withdraw? When? (15:21)
- 6. Who approached Jesus when he reached Gentile territory? (15:22)
- 7. What frantic request did the Canaanite woman make of Jesus? (15:22)
- 8. What was Jesus' response to the Canaanite woman's request? (15:23)
- 9. What did the disciples urge Jesus to do? (15:23)
- 10. How did Jesus answer His disciples? (15:24)
- 11. How did the discussion between Christ and His disciples deter the woman in need of help? (15:25)
- * 12. What reason did Jesus give for being reluctant to help the woman? (15:26)
- * 13. What quick and insightful reply did the woman make to Christ? (15:27)
- * 14. How did Jesus praise the woman? (15:28)
- 15. What happened in the end? (15:28)

Get It

- 16. In what ways do you tend to be insensitive to those who are different?
- 17. Why do you think Christ responded to this woman as he did?
- 18. What kinds of lessons do we learn from waiting?
- * 19. How does our persistence in prayer show God's character?
- * 20. How persistent are you in your prayers to God?
- 21. What would Jesus say about your faith today?

Apply It

- * 22. What long-term, unanswered prayer request do you need to continue bringing before God on a regular basis?
- 23. What encouraging principle from this passage can you share today with a Christian brother or sister?
- 24. What individual in need of help do you need to assist today?

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand - Matthew 15:29-39

Topics: Compassion, Delegation, Healing, Instructions, Miracles, Obedience, Praise, Resources, Serving, Submission, Worship

Open It

1. At what kind of restaurants do you like to eat?
2. What is your favorite food?
- * 3. What recent news regarding hunger or poverty have you heard?

Explore It

4. When Jesus left the region of Tyre and Sidon, where did He go? (15:29)
5. At what specific place did Jesus set up His “doctor’s office”? (15:29)
6. How many people came to Jesus? Why? (15:30)
7. What are some of the diseases and ailments that Jesus cured? (15:30)
8. How did the healings affect all those who watched? (15:31)
- * 9. What note of concern did Jesus share with His disciples after He healed the people? (15:32)
10. How did the disciples respond to Jesus’ desire? (15:33)
- * 11. Where did Jesus turn to feed the crowd? (15:34)
12. How did the disciples’ resources at that moment compare with the food at their disposal the last time they fed a hungry crowd (see Matthew 14:13-21)? (15:34)
13. What instructions did Jesus give the crowd? (15:35)
14. What procedures did Jesus follow in feeding this large crowd? (15:36)
- * 15. How much food was left over? (15:37)
16. How many people participated in this all-you-can-eat meal? (15:38)
17. Where did Jesus then go? (15:39)

Get It

18. Why do you think the disciples failed to remember the previous instance of Christ feeding a large crowd?
19. How do you think you would have responded if you had been with Jesus on this occasion?
20. How can we remember God’s past actions?
- * 21. What feelings do you have toward the less fortunate?
- * 22. Why do you think God works through us when he could get things done better and faster by doing miracles?
23. How can we develop love for Christ so we avoid taking his blessings for granted?
24. What small thing or resource can you offer to God?
25. What experience from the past reminds you of God’s work in your life?

Apply It

26. What can you do today to feed someone spiritually?
- * 27. How does God want you to meet the physical needs of someone in your life?
28. For what specific blessings do you need to express your gratitude to God today?

The Demand for a Sign - Matthew 16:1-4

Topics: Answers, Attitude, Barriers, Discernment, Disobedience, Ego, Expectations, Humility, Knowledge, Learning, Pride, Rationalizing, Respect, Satisfaction, Understanding, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What are some examples of signs?
- 2. What is your favorite season of the year? Why?
- 3. What positive signs give you reason to be optimistic about the days ahead?
- 4. What negative signs tell you that the world is getting worse?

Explore It

- * 5. Who approached Jesus? (16:1)
- 6. What were the people who approached Jesus really doing? (16:1)
- * 7. What request did the people make of Jesus? (16:1)
- 8. Jesus answered the Pharisees and Sadducees by talking about what? (16:2)
- 9. What did a red sky at night mean in this context? (16:2)
- 10. What did a red sunrise indicate in this context? (16:3)
- * 11. Why did Jesus chastise the Pharisees and Sadducees? (16:3-4)
- 12. What kind of generation did Jesus say looks for a sign? (16:4)
- 13. What single sign did Jesus offer? (16:4)
- 14. What did Jesus do after speaking with the Pharisees and Sadducees? (16:4)

Get It

- 15. What signs do we already have of Jesus' power?
- 16. Why do you think these religious leaders sought a miraculous sign?
- 17. What are some ways we try to put God to the test?
- * 18. What demands or performance requirements do we sometimes place on God?
- 19. Why would many of your non-Christian friends still not believe in Jesus even if they saw Him do a miracle?
- 20. How would you answer someone who said, "I'll believe in God when I see Him do a miracle right before my eyes"?
- * 21. What signs or proofs of God's power does our generation already have?

Apply It

- * 22. What are some ways you could use nature or the Bible to share the truth of Christ with a friend?
- 23. In what way can you show your faith in Christ this week?
- 24. What has God done in your life that you can use as a sign to others?

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees - Matthew 16:5-12

Topics: Beliefs, Blindness, Danger, Deceit, Discernment, Evil, Faith, Heresy, Ignorance, Influence, Listening, Purity, Separation, Truth, Understanding

Open It

1. What dates or events do you have a hard time remembering?
- * 2. How has a simple case of misunderstanding recently created problems for you?
3. What philosophies or widely believed ideas do you feel are dangerous?

Explore It

4. Where were Jesus and His disciples traveling? (16:5)
5. What did the disciples forget to pack? (16:5)
6. What warning did Jesus issue to His followers? (16:6)
- * 7. Whom did Jesus mention in His warning? (16:6)
- * 8. How did the disciples misunderstand Jesus' comments? (16:7)
9. What did Jesus say the disciples lacked? (16:8)
10. What did Jesus' disciples fail to understand? (16:9)
11. What did Jesus' disciples forget? (16:9)
12. What recent incidents did Jesus cite to make His point? (16:9-10)
13. How did Jesus clarify His remarks about yeast? (16:11)
- * 14. What was Jesus encouraging His disciples to avoid? Why? (16:11-12)
15. What happened when Jesus explained His words? (16:12)

Get It

- * 16. What truths about God do you have a hard time understanding?
17. What spiritual lessons and truths do you have a tendency to forget?
18. How can one wrong idea get us into trouble?
19. What are some ways we get so caught up in the mundane details of life that we miss the bigger-than-life lessons God wants to teach us?
20. What forgotten experiences or neglected truths do you need to reflect upon more?
- * 21. How can we judge whether the spiritual teaching we receive is healthy or dangerous?

Apply It

- * 22. What can you do today to become more sensitive to what God is trying to teach you through His Word?
23. What nonjudgmental and nonthreatening step can you take this week to warn a friend who is being led astray by unsound teaching?
24. What small evil do you need to root out of your life this week before it spreads and causes much trouble?

Peter's Confession of Christ - Matthew 16:13-20

Topics: Assumptions, Beliefs, Blindness, Church, Confusion, Discernment, Ignorance, Insight, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Leadership, Messiah, Opinions, Trust, Words

Open It

- * 1. If you could ask any person any question, whom would you ask, and what would you want to know?
- 2. In what ways do you consider yourself blessed?
- 3. How would you describe an ideal church?

Explore It

- 4. In what region did the events of this passage take place? (16:13)
- 5. What broad, impersonal question did Jesus ask His disciples? (16:13)
- 6. What different answers did Christ get to His question? (16:14)
- * 7. What pointed personal question did Christ ask His followers? (16:15)
- 8. Who spoke up in answer to Christ's question? (16:16)
- * 9. What answer did Peter give? (16:16)
- 10. Why was Peter blessed? (16:17)
- * 11. In what way is coming to faith and understanding the gospel a supernatural event? (16:17)
- 12. What kind of leadership role did Jesus predict for Peter? (16:18)
- 13. What did Jesus promise about the Church? (16:18)
- 14. What authority did Jesus promise to Peter? (16:19)
- 15. Against what did Jesus warn His disciples at the conclusion of this discussion? (16:20)

Get It

- * 16. What are some common views of Jesus among our generation?
- 17. Who do you say Jesus is?
- 18. What happened the first time you spoke publicly about your faith in Christ?
- * 19. What difference does it make what we believe about Jesus?
- 20. What forces try to hinder God's work today?
- 21. Why should churches not be discouraged in their efforts to carry out God's work?

Apply It

- 22. What part in the building of Christ's Church do you have now?
- * 23. What can you do or say to help a friend overcome an erroneous idea about Jesus this week?
- 24. What are three ways you could make a public statement of your faith in Christ?

Jesus Predicts His Death - Matthew 16:21-28

Topics: Affections, Angels, Basics of the Faith, Commitment, Courage, Dedication, Devotion, Enemies, God's Will, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Last Days, Loyalty, Opposition, Perspective, Priorities, Resurrection, Sacrifice, Second Coming, Sin, Submission, Victory

Open It

- * 1. What are some ways people try to “find themselves”?
- 2. What is the most surprised you have ever been?
- 3. What is the best reward you’ve ever received?

Explore It

- 4. What did Christ begin telling His disciples would eventually happen to Him? (16:21)
- 5. How did Christ say He would suffer? (16:21)
- 6. Who did Christ say would oppose Him and make Him suffer? (16:21)
- 7. What did Christ say would happen after He was killed? (16:21)
- 8. How did Peter react to the news that Jesus would suffer and die? (16:22)
- 9. How did Jesus characterize Peter's objections? (16:23)
- * 10. What is required of the one who would follow Jesus? (16:24)
- * 11. What two ways can a person lose his or her life? (16:25)
- * 12. A person's soul is more valuable than what? How? (16:26)
- 13. What did Jesus say would happen after His death and resurrection? (16:27)
- 14. What will happen after Christ returns? (16:27)
- 15. What did Jesus promise His disciples? (16:28)

Get It

- 16. How would you live differently if you knew exactly when and how you were going to die?
- 17. How does it make you feel to realize that Jesus willingly died for your sins?
- 18. If a person's soul is worth more than the whole world, how ought that affect the way we spend our time?
- 19. What would change in your life if you denied yourself for Christ's sake?
- * 20. What does it mean to you to “take up your cross” and follow Jesus?
- * 21. In what situations do you find it difficult to follow Christ?
- 22. How should eternal rewards motivate us to live for Christ?

Apply It

- 23. What do you need to do this week to center your thoughts on the things of God?
- 24. What is one way you can deny yourself today for Christ's sake?
- * 25. What change in your weekly schedule could you make to better reflect what God considers important?

The Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1-13

Topics: Appearance, Devotion, Experience, Glory, God, Heaven, Holiness, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Listening, Power, Words, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is the most spectacular event you have ever witnessed?
- 2. What is the most embarrassing thing you've ever done or said?
- 3. If you received an all-expense-paid trip for four to Europe, who would you take with you?

Explore It

- 4. How much time elapsed between Christ's prediction of his death and the Transfiguration? (17:1)
- 5. Which three disciples were with Christ on the mountain? (17:1)
- * 6. Where did Christ and his three disciples go? (17:1)
- * 7. What happened to Christ on the mountain? (17:2)
- 8. Who else appeared and began talking to Jesus? (17:3)
- 9. What did Peter volunteer to do? (17:4)
- 10. What do you think prompted Peter to say he would build shelters? (17:4)
- 11. What happened while Peter was speaking? (17:5)
- * 12. How did the disciples react when God spoke out of the cloud? (17:6)
- 13. Who calmed down the disciples? (17:7)
- 14. What did Jesus say to the disciples as they departed? (17:9)
- 15. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? (17:10)
- 16. How did Jesus answer the disciples? (17:11-12)
- 17. What did the disciples learn about John the Baptist? (17:13)

Get It

- 18. How would you have reacted if you had been with Christ for the Transfiguration?
- 19. What does this passage tell you about the relationship between Jesus and God the Father?
- * 20. What memories or insights do you think Peter, James, and John took home with them from this incident?
- * 21. In what way is it difficult for us to worship God?
- 22. How might seeing Christ in all His glory prompt us to obey Him more completely?
- 23. In what ways does God reveal Himself to us today?

Apply It

- 24. How can you make an effort to listen to Jesus this week?
- 25. What could you do today to give Christ the glory He deserves?
- * 26. What could you do over the next three months to become more adept and more faithful in worshiping God?

The Healing of a Boy With a Demon - Matthew 17:14-23

Topics: Abilities, Atonement, Authority, Death, Demons, Faith, Fasting, Grief, Healing, Miracles, Power, Prayer, Resurrection, Sin, Spiritual Disciplines, Trust

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel to have a problem you can't solve?
- 2. Where is the line between being obsessed with death and never coming to grips with your mortality?
- 3. Why do some people seem to have greater faith than others?

Explore It

- 4. When Jesus returned with Peter, James, and John from the scene of the Transfiguration, what did he find? (17:14)
- 5. Who approached Jesus? How? (17:14)
- 6. What did the man who approached Jesus say? (17:15)
- * 7. How did the man describe his child's situation? (17:15)
- * 8. Who had already been unable to help the man's son? (17:16)
- * 9. What reply did Jesus give when the man said Jesus' disciples had been unable to help? (17:17)
- 10. How did Jesus resolve the problem presented to Him? (17:17-18)
- 11. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? When? (17:19)
- 12. How did Jesus answer his disciples' question? (17:20)
- 13. What did Jesus say is the answer to the impossible? (17:20)
- 14. What spiritual disciplines did Jesus recommend for confronting serious obstacles? (17:21)
- 15. What sober subject did Jesus again bring up when the disciples came together in Galilee? (17:22-23)

Get It

- 16. How do you imagine the nine disciples felt as they attempted to cast the demon out of this man's boy?
- 17. How do you think the disciples felt later when Jesus rebuked them?
- * 18. Why do you think Jesus was upset by His disciples' lack of faith?
- 19. What do you see as the purpose for fasting?
- * 20. In what areas of your life do you find it difficult to believe and trust in God?
- 21. If we truly believe in heaven and that we'll see our fellow Christians again in eternity, why do we grieve when a Christian dies?

Apply It

- * 22. What impossible task can you assault with your faith this week?
- 23. What spiritual discipline will you practice this week?
- 24. How can you help someone who is hurting today?

The Temple Tax - Matthew 17:24-27

Topics: Citizenship, Government, Influence, Integrity, Miracles, Obedience, Obligation, Reputation, Responsibility, Submission

Open It

- * 1. How would you go about reforming the tax laws in this country?
- 2. Why is it tempting to cheat on our taxes?
- 3. How involved should Christians be in government?

Explore It

- 4. When did Jesus and His disciples speak with the tax collectors? (17:24)
- 5. Whom did Jesus and His disciples encounter upon their arrival in Capernaum? (17:24)
- 6. What question did the tax collectors ask Peter? (17:24)
- * 7. How did Peter respond to the tax collectors' questions? (17:25)
- 8. Who spoke to Peter first when Peter entered the house? Why? (17:25)
- 9. What tax question did Jesus ask Peter? (17:25)
- 10. How did Peter answer Jesus? (17:26)
- * 11. What did Jesus say about the obligation to pay taxes? (17:26)
- * 12. Why did Jesus agree to pay the temple tax? (17:27)
- 13. What unusual directions did Jesus give Peter for coming up with the money to pay the temple tax? (17:27)

Get It

- 14. In what ways do Christians not fit in or belong in our culture?
- * 15. Why should we pay taxes?
- 16. How do God's laws and human laws fit together?
- 17. In what ways (if any) are Christians "above the law"?
- 18. How do non-Christians react when Christians act as if they don't have to comply with worldly laws?
- * 19. What are the pros and cons of churches being exempt from taxes?
- 20. How is it possible for us to both serve Christ and obey the government?

Apply It

- 21. How does your behavior need to change this week so you can better represent Christ as his ambassador in the world?
- * 22. What changes do you need to make the next time you do your taxes to make sure you pay all that you owe?
- 23. What areas of your life do you need to place under the control of the Holy Spirit today?

The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven - Matthew 18:1-9

Topics: Children, Evil, Example, Greatness, Humility, Influence, Purity, Responsibility, Simplicity, Sin, World

Open It

1. Who is the greatest person you know?
2. Why is our culture so competitive—obsessed with the best and the greatest?
3. What is your favorite childhood memory?
- * 4. What do you miss most about being a little kid?
5. What advice would you give to a thousand third graders?

Explore It

- * 6. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? (18:1)
- * 7. What did Christ do to illustrate His answer to the disciples' question? (18:2)
8. What did Jesus say one had to be like in order to enter the kingdom of heaven? (18:3)
9. How did Jesus finally answer the question that had been put to Him? (18:4)
- * 10. What quality makes for true greatness? (18:4)
11. Why did Jesus say a person's treatment of children was significant? (18:5)
12. What advice did Jesus give to those who would cause a young follower of Christ to sin? (18:6)
13. What "woes" did Jesus pronounce in this situation? (18:7)
14. What comment did Jesus make that suggests the inevitability of sin in this world? (18:7)
15. What radical figures of speech did Christ use to show the severity of sin? How? (18:8-9)
16. What are the consequences of sin? (18:8-9)

Get It

- * 17. What is it about children that Christ wants us to emulate?
18. What charming qualities do children possess?
19. How does age and maturity cause us to lose our innocence and sense of humility?
20. What danger is there for us if we influence children in a negative way?
21. In what ways are you still like a child (in a good sense)?
- * 22. What prevents us from being more childlike in our faith?
23. In what ways can you be more childlike?

Apply It

- * 24. What can you do today to humble yourself?
25. To what children in your life will you demonstrate the love and acceptance of Christ this week?
26. What habits or actions do you need to abolish this week because of their negative influence on children?

The Parable of the Lost Sheep - Matthew 18:10-14

Topics: Angels, Celebration, Effort, Eternal Life, Evangelism, God's Will, Grace, Help, Initiative, Kindness, Patience, Reconciliation, Restoration

Open It

1. How does it feel to be lost and have no idea where you are?
- * 2. To what lengths would you go to recover: a lost piece of jewelry? a missing pocketbook or wallet? an important misplaced document? a winning lottery ticket? your missing child?
3. What do you believe about angels?

Explore It

4. How does God protect children? (18:10)
5. Who is especially important to God? Why? (18:10)
6. What command about children did Jesus give the disciples? (18:10)
7. What kind of guardians did Jesus suggest children have? (18:10)
8. To whom do angels have constant access? (18:10)
9. What kind of pastoral imagery did Jesus use to illustrate His point about the value of a soul? (18:12)
- * 10. How did Jesus say the owner of one hundred sheep would react if just one of his sheep wandered off? (18:12)
- * 11. According to Jesus, how would the owner of a lost sheep react upon finding his lost sheep? (18:13)
- * 12. How did Jesus compare sheep to the way God views lost children? (18:14)
13. How did Jesus describe God? Why? (18:14)

Get It

14. How would you convince a skeptic that children have guardian angels?
- * 15. Why is it important for us to teach our children about God from the time they are very little?
16. Why do you think children are more receptive than adults to spiritual truth?
- * 17. How does it change your image of God to see Him described as a caring shepherd who searches frantically for one lost individual?
18. How does it change your image of God to see Him described as a compassionate Father who doesn't want to see even one person lost?
19. What does God's concern for each and every individual say to you about the way you treat certain people?
20. How do you feel knowing that God is more concerned about finding a lost person than punishing him or her?

Apply It

21. What "lost sheep" can you search for and try to round up this week by demonstrating the love and acceptance of Christ?
22. To whom do you need to show more sensitivity and attentiveness this week?
- * 23. How can you become a better role model for a young person today?

A Brother Who Sins Against You - Matthew 18:15-20

Topics: Accusation, Authority, Church, Compassion, Consequences, Correction, Disagreements, Friendship, Humility, Instructions, Judging Others, Mercy, Pain, Prayer, Quarrels, Reconciliation, Stubbornness, Unity

Open It

- * 1. What are some typical approaches people adopt in conflicts or disagreements?
- 2. What is the greatest “miracle answer to prayer” you’ve ever experienced?
- 3. What societal forces work to divide families, friendships, and churches?
- 4. What is it like to be in the middle of a church split?

Explore It

- 5. What situation was Jesus addressing in this context? (18:15)
- * 6. What did Jesus set forth as the first step in resolving conflict? (18:15)
- 7. What positive consequences can result from resolving conflict? (18:15)
- * 8. What should we do if a person will not listen to correction and does not want to work things out? (18:16)
- 9. What Old Testament principle is in view here? (18:16)
- 10. What did Jesus say to do if a person doing wrong won’t listen to correction? (18:17)
- * 11. What extreme measures should be used if a wrongdoer turns a deaf ear to all pleas to reconcile? (18:17)
- 12. How can Christians and/or churches be certain they have authority to exercise discipline? (18:18)
- 13. What assurance did Jesus give His disciples about answered prayer? (18:19)
- 14. What special promise did Jesus make to groups that gather in His name? (18:20)

Get It

- * 15. Why is it best to resolve conflicts in private?
- 16. What attitudes can eliminate or help reduce friction in disagreements?
- 17. How can a third party help resolve a conflict?
- * 18. When should we air our grievances in public?
- 19. How can gossip cause our conflicts to escalate?
- 20. How can your church play a role in difficult or very serious quarrels?
- 21. If Christ is with us always (Matthew 28:20), in what unique way is He with us when we gather in His name?
- 22. Why is praying in a group a good idea?

Apply It

- 23. What biblical principles can you practice today so as to avoid conflicts with others?
- * 24. To what relationships or in what specific ways do you need to apply today’s passage?
- 25. What seemingly hopeless situation will you begin praying for today?

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant - Matthew 18:21-35

Topics: Application, Attitude, Bitterness, Confession, Courage, Feelings, Forgiveness, Grace, Mercy, Obedience, Obligation, Procrastination, Rationalizing, Reconciliation, Risk, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What makes forgiveness difficult?
- 2. What acts of mercy have you seen or heard about recently?
- 3. What are some situations others have faced that you would find difficult to forgive?

Explore It

- 4. What question did Peter ask Jesus? (18:21)
- 5. What surprising answer did Jesus give Peter? (18:22)
- 6. How did Jesus illustrate His answer to Peter's question? (18:23)
- 7. To what did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven? (18:23)
- 8. In the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, what did the king want to do? (18:23)
- 9. How was the king prepared to get the large amount of money owed him by a particular servant? (18:24-25)
- 10. What did the indebted servant do? (18:26)
- 11. How did the king graciously respond to the indebted servant's desperate plea? (18:27)
- 12. What did the servant go do after his debt was cancelled? (18:28)
- 13. How did the second servant respond to the demand for payment? (18:29)
- 14. What effect did the second servant's pleas have on the first servant? (18:30)
- * 15. Who watched with dismay as the first servant refused to have mercy on the second? Why? (18:31)
- 16. How did the onlookers respond when they saw the first servant throw the second in jail? (18:31)
- * 17. How did the king react to the news he heard? (18:32-34)
- * 18. How did Jesus apply this parable to His followers? (18:35)

Get It

- 19. How likely are we to forgive someone once, twice, or even three times?
- 20. How likely are people to forgive someone beyond three times?
- 21. How are we to interpret Jesus' answer, "seventy-seven times"?
- 22. Why is an unforgiving spirit so deadly?
- * 23. In what ways has God shown mercy in forgiving our sins?
- * 24. If God is so willing to forgive us, why are we sometimes unwilling to forgive others?
- 25. How do we sometimes forgive with strings attached?
- 26. What should we do if we don't feel like forgiving others?
- 27. How is it possible for us to forget the wrongs others have done to us?

Apply It

- 28. What individual(s) do you need to "release from their debts" today?
- * 29. What are some practical ways you can show mercy today to someone who has wronged you?

Divorce - Matthew 19:1-12

Topics: Blessing, Celebration, Compromise, Conflict, Culture, Ego, Example, Forgiveness, God's Will, Hardheartedness, Marriage, Obligation, Protection, Purity, Unity, World

Open It

- * 1. Whose marriage do you most admire? Why?
- 2. What ingredients make for a happy marriage?
- 3. What factors tend to undermine a marriage and make a couple more susceptible to divorce?

Explore It

- 4. Where did Jesus go after telling the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant? (19:1)
- 5. Who accompanied Jesus? (19:2)
- 6. Who approached Jesus with the motive of testing Him? (19:3)
- 7. What trick question did the Pharisees ask Jesus? (19:3)
- * 8. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' question? (19:4-6)
- 9. What did Jesus quote? Why? (19:4-5)
- 10. What did Jesus say is God's ideal for marriage? (19:6)
- 11. What follow-up question did Jesus' enemies ask? (19:7)
- * 12. How did Jesus respond to the second question about divorce? (19:8)
- 13. Jesus allowed for divorce under what condition? (19:9)
- * 14. What did the disciples think about Jesus' view of marriage and divorce? (19:10)
- 15. What did Jesus teach about those who never marry? (19:11-12)

Get It

- 16. What are the most devastating consequences of divorce?
- * 17. Which would be worse: to be unhappily married or never to be married?
- 18. What is the ideal even in a marriage that was stained by adultery?
- 19. How does the previous passage (Matthew 18:21-35) have application in this one?
- * 20. What do you think churches can and should do to build stronger marriages and to reduce the divorce rate among their members?
- 21. In what ways is singleness a great advantage?
- 22. How would you feel if you never married?

Apply It

- * 23. What habits can you develop, beginning today, that will make you a better marriage partner?
- 24. How can you communicate to your children the sanctity and sacredness of the marriage relationship?
- 25. What specific service can you (and will you) render to God in the coming year because of the freedom your singleness permits?

The Little Children and Jesus - Matthew 19:13-15

Topics: Blessing, Children, Complaining, Correction, Criticism, Eternal Life, Insight, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Ministry, Perspective, Plans, Schedule, Understanding

Open It

1. What are some ways people abuse positions of authority?
2. Where do we draw the line between being productive and being rushed, or between being dedicated and being driven?
3. What are the most exciting and the most frightening aspects of parenthood?
- * 4. What would you do differently if you could live your childhood over again?

Explore It

5. What people were being brought to Jesus? Why? (19:13)
- * 6. Why were children being brought to Jesus? (19:13)
7. To whom did some parents bring their children? Why? (19:13)
8. How did the disciples react to the fact that children were being brought to Jesus? (19:13)
9. On whom did the disciples vent their displeasure? (19:13)
- * 10. How did Jesus correct the disciples? (19:14)
11. Why did Jesus command the disciples to allow the children to come to Him? (19:14)
12. According to Jesus, what kind of people will possess the kingdom of heaven? (19:14)
- * 13. What did Jesus do for the little children? (19:15)
14. What did Jesus do after He spent time with the children? (19:15)

Get It

- * 15. Why do you think the disciples got irritated about the children being brought to Jesus?
16. What are some ways you get so caught up in your schedule or “to do” list that you are insensitive or even rude to the people around you?
17. What is the purpose behind the church practice of “baby dedication”?
18. What are some ways we might hinder children from coming to Christ?
- * 19. What did Jesus mean by saying that “the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”?
20. What are the advantages to trusting in Christ at an early age?
21. How early can a child truly comprehend the gospel?

Apply It

22. What are some specific ways you could bless a child today?
- * 23. How can you become more childlike in your faith over the next month?

The Rich Young Man - Matthew 19:16-30

Topics: Confusion, Ego, Eternal Life, Generosity, Judgment, Law, Legalism, Materialism, Miracles, Perfect, Perspective, Possessions, Questions, Rewards, Righteousness, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What would you do (buy, spend, give, save) if you suddenly received a million dollars?
- 2. Which is more dangerous and why: being very rich or being very poor?
- 3. What does a individual's checkbook reveal about him or her?

Explore It

- 4. What question was asked of Jesus at the beginning of this story? (19:16)
- 5. How did Jesus respond to the man's question? (19:17-19)
- 6. What astonishing claim did the young man make? (19:20)
- 7. What further assignment did Jesus give the man who came to Him? (19:21)
- 8. How did the man react to Jesus' demands? (19:22)
- * 9. What amazing statement did Jesus make to His disciples about riches and the kingdom of God? (19:23-24)
- * 10. How did the disciples respond when they heard how hard it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven? (19:25)
- 11. How did Christ explain His statement about rich people and heaven? (19:25)
- 12. When he applied the truth about riches to the disciples, Peter asked what question? (19:27)
- 13. What insights into the future did Christ give in His promise? (19:28)
- * 14. What did Jesus promise the twelve disciples? (19:28-29)
- 15. What further promise did Jesus make to Christians through the ages who make sacrifices for Him? (19:29)
- 16. How are spiritual values different from worldly values? (19:30)

Get It

- 17. Why do many poor people have a great love for God and many rich people have no interest in God?
- 18. Why do many poor people long to be rich?
- 19. What would you say to the person who claims, "See, this passage teaches that eternal life is something we receive in exchange for the good things we do"?
- 20. What point do you think Jesus was making with this rich man?
- 21. Why can't moral, decent, good people make it to heaven on their own merit?
- * 22. Why is it that we often do not become more generous as our wealth increases?
- * 23. If we truly believe that God will one day reward his children in heaven, why are we reluctant to make sacrifices for God?

Apply It

- * 24. What sacrifice are you willing to make for Christ this week, in the knowledge that you will be rewarded in heaven?
- 25. What promise from this passage do you want to claim (or even memorize) today?
- 26. How can you decrease your spending over the next month in order to increase the amount of money you can give to the work of God?

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard - Matthew 20:1-16

Topics: Appreciation, Benefits, Blessing, Character, Complaining, Contentment, Criticism, Employment, Generosity, Good News, Justice, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Perspective, Resentment, Salvation, Thankfulness, Unfairness

Open It

1. What do you think of deathbed or death-row conversions?
2. What is the most generous thing anyone has ever done for you?
- * 3. Who is the best employer you ever had? Why?

Explore It

4. To what situation did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven? (20:1)
5. Who was the central character in this parable? (20:1)
6. What did the landowner go out and do? (20:1)
7. What wages were agreed upon by the landowner and his hired hands? (20:2)
8. In the parable, what happened at about 9:00 a.m.? (20:3)
9. What wage was agreed upon between the landowner and his workers? (20:4)
10. How many additional times did the landowner go out and hire workers? (20:5-6)
11. What explanation did the last group of workers give when asked why they were standing around doing nothing? (20:7)
12. What happened to the last group of workers? (20:7)
13. What did the landowner tell his foreman at the end of the day? (20:8)
14. What wages did the workers hired at the eleventh hour receive? (20:9)
- * 15. What did the landowner pay to the men who worked all day? (20:10)
- * 16. How did the workers respond to the landowner's system of payment? (20:11-12)
- * 17. What rationale did the landowner give for his actions? (20:13-15)

Get It

18. In what ways does God's grace seem unfair?
19. How do our cultural values resist the idea of grace?
20. Why is it dangerous to compare your own situation with someone else's?
21. How would you answer the argument that God isn't fair in the way He forgives?
22. How does it make you feel to know that heaven will include ex-murderers, former child molesters, and people who put their trust in Christ only minutes before death?
- * 23. What would happen if God gave each of us what we deserve?
- * 24. How can focusing on God's grace in our lives keep us from becoming jealous of others?

Apply It

25. What can you do today to help someone who needs God's grace begin to understand the love of God?
- * 26. In what way can you say thank you to God every day this week for his amazing grace in your life?
27. In what way could you help a new Christian get oriented to life in the Master's kingdom sometime in the next month?

Jesus Again Predicts His Death - Matthew 20:17-19

Topics: Barriers, Danger, Death, Determination, Enemies, Evil, Future, Giving Up, Mission, Murder, Opposition, Preparation, Rejection, Resurrection, Sacrifice, Suffering, Victory

Open It

1. What funeral/burial arrangements do you want for yourself?
2. Why are some people unshakable in their pursuit of goals, while others are easily deterred?
- * 3. When do you feel safe enough to confide in a person?

Explore It

- * 4. Who was traveling with Jesus at this time? (20:17)
- * 5. Where was Christ going when He spoke of His death for the third time? Why? (20:17-18)
6. How can you tell that the disciples weren't sure what lay ahead? (20:17-18)
7. What title did Jesus use to refer to Himself? (20:18)
8. To whom did Jesus say He would be betrayed? (20:18)
- * 9. What did Jesus say the chief priests and teachers of the law would ultimately do? (20:18)
10. Who did Jesus say would kill Him? (20:19)
11. What pain and shame did Jesus predict for Himself before the actual crucifixion? (20:19)
12. What did Jesus say would happen three days after His death? (20:19)
13. When would Jesus be raised from the dead? (20:19)

Get It

14. How would you respond to someone who talked about their own death several times?
- * 15. Why is the death of Christ significant to us?
- * 16. Why is Christ's death significant to you?
17. If Christ knew suffering and death awaited him in Jerusalem, why was He determined to go there?
18. What goals in life are you committed to pursuing no matter what?
19. Why would people who saw Christ's deeds and heard his words still reject Him?
20. About what other future events has God given us some warning or glimpse?

Apply It

21. What can you do this week to come to a greater appreciation for the death of Christ?
- * 22. What can you do to say thank you to Christ for suffering for you?

A Mother's Request - Matthew 20:20-28

Topics: Ambition, Anger, Atonement, Authority, Divisions, Ego, Fairness, God, Honor, Jealousy, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Leadership, Motives, Position, Pride, Privilege, Rewards, Serving

Open It

1. What is it inside us that recoils at the idea of serving others?
2. Why do some parents try so hard to plan and run their children's lives?
- * 3. What are the pluses and minuses of ambition?

Explore It

- * 4. Who came to Jesus? Why? (20:20)
5. What favor did James and John's mother ask Jesus? (20:21)
6. How did Jesus respond to the request that James and John get special treatment? (20:22)
- * 7. What curious question did Jesus ask James and John? (20:22)
8. How did James and John answer Jesus' cryptic question? (20:22)
9. What did Jesus promise James and John? (20:23)
10. What did Jesus refuse to promise James and John? (20:23)
11. According to Jesus, who will decide the positions of honor and authority in the kingdom of God? (20:23)
- * 12. What was the reaction of the other disciples to this whole dialogue? (20:24)
13. Whose leadership style did Jesus condemn? (20:25)
14. How did Jesus define leadership? (20:26-27)
15. What did Jesus say was His mission in life? (20:28)

Get It

- * 16. When does honorable ambition become dishonorable?
- * 17. Who among the people in your church do you think will receive the greatest rewards in heaven?
18. How does our culture follow the "Gentile pattern of leadership"?
19. How can jealousy and pride destroy the unity of a group of people?
20. On what basis should honors, awards, and rewards be given?
21. What do you think about people who use connections to try to get favors?
22. In what ways might you have to suffer for the sake of Christ?
23. What opportunities do you have to serve others as Christ taught?
24. In what ways do you need to back off and let your children lead their own lives and make their own decisions?

Apply It

- * 25. What three acts can you do today in service to others?
26. What is one specific way you could build unity among your circle of Christian friends this week?

Two Blind Men Receive Sight - Matthew 20:29-34

Topics: Call, Compassion, Embarrassment, Handicapped, Healing, Messiah, Miracles, Peer Pressure, Persistence, Prayer, Reputation, Submission, Zeal

Open It

1. Which is more humiliating: being with someone who makes a scene, or losing control yourself and causing a scene?
- * 2. What one miracle do you wish God would do for you?
3. What makes some people quiet and others loud?

Explore It

4. Where did the incident in this passage take place? (20:29)
5. Who was with Jesus? When? (20:29)
6. Who was following Jesus? When? (20:29)
7. Who happened to be sitting by the roadside when Jesus passed by? (20:30)
- * 8. What did the people sitting by the roadside do when they heard Jesus was nearby? (20:30)
- * 9. What was the crowd's reaction to the scene that developed? (20:31)
- * 10. How did the crowd's words affect the two blind men? (20:31)
11. What did Jesus do in the midst of all the commotion? (20:32)
12. What did Jesus ask the two blind men? (20:32)
13. What request did the blind men make of Jesus? (20:33)
14. Why did Jesus grant the request made of Him? (20:34)
15. How did the men who were healed show their gratitude? (20:34)

Get It

16. Why would people discourage two blind men from seeking help from God?
17. In what ways does the fear of embarrassment prevent us from following Christ?
18. In what ways are we spiritually blind?
- * 19. In what ways have people tried to discourage you from seeking Jesus or praying in a certain way?
- * 20. How does it test our faith to hear others doubt God?
21. To what area of your life does this passage apply most clearly?
22. How would you define compassion?
23. How are you doing in the area of showing compassion?
24. What means has God given you for showing compassion in concrete gestures of kindness?
25. After all that Christ has done for us, in what ways can we show our gratitude?

Apply It

26. What person in your life needs your compassion today?
27. How can you show love and kindness to a hurting individual?
- * 28. What step of trust in God do you need to take today regardless of how foolish others might think it to be?

The Triumphal Entry - Matthew 21:1-11

Topics: Acceptance, Approval, Celebration, Glory, Messiah, Obedience, Peer Pressure, People, Praise, Prophecy, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What do you like best and least about parades?
- 2. How would you define worship?
- 3. Why do many Christians cheer like crazy at sporting events on Saturday and sheepishly sing praise songs to the Lord the next morning?

Explore It

- 4. To where was Jesus traveling? With whom? (21:1)
- 5. Through what village were Jesus and His disciples passing? (21:1)
- 6. How were the disciples instructed to answer anyone who might object to their actions? (21:2)
- 7. Jesus sent two of His disciples to find and return with what? Why? (21:2-3)
- 8. Why was this incident significant? (21:4-5)
- 9. How did the two disciples respond to Jesus' instructions? (21:6)
- 10. When the men returned with the donkey and colt, what did Jesus do? (21:7)
- * 11. What did the gathered crowd place on the road? Why? (21:8)
- 12. What size crowd participated in welcoming Jesus? (21:8)
- * 13. What did the crowds shout as Jesus entered Jerusalem? (21:9)
- * 14. How did this "parade" affect those living in Jerusalem? (21:10)
- 15. What did the crowd accompanying Jesus say about Him to those in the city? (21:11)

Get It

- 16. If you had lived in Jerusalem during that time, do you think you would have been a follower of Christ or one of the people who looked skeptically at all His activities?
- 17. How much do you think "the crowds" today understand Jesus' purpose and mission?
- * 18. In what ways do we simplistically "cheer" Jesus?
- 19. Why did Jesus request a donkey instead of a big white stallion or a chariot?
- 20. How would you answer if a friend asked, "Who is Jesus?"
- 21. How might we be able to change our city or campus or country if we honored Christ as King over all?
- * 22. How should worship play a role in your daily life?

Apply It

- 23. How can you honor Jesus as King this week?
- * 24. What special gift (time, money, possessions, effort, etc.) of worship can you present to Jesus today?
- 25. What does the Lord "need" from you (see Matthew 21:3) today to accomplish His plan in your life?

Jesus at the Temple - Matthew 21:12-17

Topics: Accusation, Authority, Conflict, Ego, Evil, Handicapped, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Jealousy, Messiah, Miracles, Popularity, Praise, Pride, Religion, Traditions, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. Why does the church have a reputation for being “money hungry”?
- 2. What convictions of yours are so strong that you sometimes feel you’d like to do something radical to express your views?
- 3. What gets you really angry?
- 4. When do you tend to lose your temper?

Explore It

- * 5. After entering Jerusalem, where did Jesus go? What happened there? (21:12)
- 6. What did Jesus do in the temple area? (21:12)
- 7. What sort of goods were being sold in the temple courts? (21:12)
- * 8. What did Jesus quote to those in the temple? (21:13)
- * 9. Jesus accused the merchants of turning the temple into what? Why? (21:13)
- 10. What kinds of handicaps and infirmities did Jesus heal while at the temple? (21:14)
- 11. What were the children in the temple area shouting? (21:15)
- 12. How did the chief priests and teachers of the law feel when they heard the children shout praise to Jesus? (21:15)
- 13. What did the religious leaders ask Jesus? (21:16)
- 14. How did Jesus answer the religious leaders? (21:16)
- 15. What did Jesus do when He left the temple? (21:17)

Get It

- * 16. How do you think God would like to alter some of the practices churches and ministries use to raise money?
- * 17. How do you think God would like to alter some of the ways you use money?
- 18. What is the most appropriate way for churches to fund their activities?
- 19. Why is it easy to become jealous when others get recognized, praised, or rewarded?
- 20. Why do people often honor their money above God?
- 21. In what situations is your behavior altered or stymied by what others might think?
- 22. Why do children sometimes have the ability to see more clearly than adults?
- 23. In what areas do you have the prerogative to stand up for the righteousness and holiness of God?

Apply It

- * 24. What change in your giving do you need to make this month?
- 25. What hymn of praise would help you praise and worship God this week?
- 26. What impure habits or practices are taking place in your temple (i.e. your body) that you need to drive out this week?

The Fig Tree Withers - Matthew 21:18-22

Topics: Appearance, Confusion, Deceit, Dishonesty, Faith, Fruit, Hypocrisy, Integrity, Lying, Miracles, Power, Prayer, Sin

Open It

1. What is the worst case of false advertising you've ever seen?
2. Why do you think there are so many religious hypocrites?
- * 3. When in your life were you the most disappointed?

Explore It

4. Where was Jesus going? When? (21:18)
5. What was Jesus feeling? When? (21:18)
- * 6. What caught Jesus' attention? Why? (21:19)
7. What did Jesus discover when he made a closer inspection of the fig tree? (21:19)
8. What did Jesus do to the fig tree? (21:19)
9. What happened immediately after Jesus cursed the fig tree? (21:19)
10. How did the withered fig tree incident affect the disciples? (21:20)
- * 11. What did the disciples ask Jesus? (21:20)
12. What did Jesus cite as the necessary ingredient to doing "impossible" things? (21:21)
13. What even more amazing feat than causing a fig tree to wither did Jesus claim was possible? (21:21)
- * 14. What attitude did Jesus encourage us to have in prayer? (21:22)

Get It

15. How is religious legalism like a barren fig tree?
16. What types of "fruit" should appear in our lives as we grow as Christians?
17. What fruit has your life borne in the last couple of months?
18. What are some ways Christians can look good to others from a distance and yet still be fruitless?
- * 19. Why is the invitation to pray at the end of this passage not a blank check to ask for anything?
- * 20. What requirements must our prayers meet?
21. In what ways might you be giving others a false idea of what the Christian life is all about?

Apply It

- * 22. What prayer of faith do you need to begin praying on a regular basis this week?
23. What change in your life today would enable you to become more fruitful?

The Authority of Jesus Questioned - Matthew 21:23-27

Topics: Authority, Challenge, Conversation, Danger, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Jealousy, Knowledge, Motives, Questions, Reputation, Resentment, Testing, Unbelievers, Wisdom

Open It

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word “authority”?
- * 2. Why are people so resistant to authority?
3. What do you like or dislike about debates (either presidential debates or TV shows where guests bat around a controversial topic)?

Explore It

4. Where was Jesus when the incidents of this passage occurred? (21:23)
5. What was Jesus doing when He was interrupted? (21:23)
- * 6. Who interrupted Jesus? Why? (21:23)
7. What questions did the chief priests and the elders ask Jesus? (21:23)
- * 8. What deal did Jesus make with his accuser? (21:24)
9. Jesus’ question dealt with what subject? (21:24)
10. What were the only two possible answers the religious leaders could give? (21:25-26)
11. What was the drawback to claiming that John’s ministry was divinely inspired? (21:25)
12. What was the risk of claiming that John had no divine authority? (21:26)
- * 13. How did the religious leaders finally respond to Jesus? (21:27)
14. What reply did Jesus give to the chief priests and elders? (21:27)

Get It

15. What do you think is behind many people’s “confrontations” with Jesus?
16. Why do we feel threatened when someone challenges our beliefs or actions as Christians?
17. How do we typically feel when our motives are exposed as selfish?
- * 18. How can religious traditions, rules, and habits sometimes blind us to the truth?
19. What are some ways we outright defy what Jesus has said?
- * 20. In what ways do we try to rationalize our way out of submitting to Christ’s authority?
21. How does pride keep us from acknowledging our mistakes?

Apply It

- * 22. In what area of your life do you need to submit to Jesus’ authority today?
23. How can you humble yourself before God today?

The Parable of the Two Sons - Matthew 21:28-32

Topics: Believe, Blessing, Change, Children, Eternal Life, Humility, Impulsiveness, Lying, Obedience, Perspective, Procrastination, Repentance, Sincerity, Stubbornness, Trust, Words

Open It

1. As you recall all the TV families you've ever seen, which character would make the best child? Why?
- * 2. What is the best illustration you've ever seen of the old saying, "Actions speak louder than words"?
3. In what ways can knowledge be dangerous?

Explore It

- * 4. Who are the main characters in this parable? (21:28)
5. In the Parable of the Two Sons, what did the man say to his first son? (21:28)
6. How did the first son respond to his father's words? (21:29)
- * 7. What happened to the first son later? (21:29)
8. What did the man say to his second son? (21:30)
9. How did the second son respond to his father's words? (21:30)
- * 10. What did the second son actually do? (21:30)
11. What question did Jesus ask His audience at the end of the parable? (21:31)
12. Who did Jesus claim would be in heaven before the religious leaders in His audience? (21:31)
13. According to Jesus, who came to show the Jews the way of righteousness? (21:32)
14. How did the religious leaders respond to John's message? (21:32)

Get It

15. If the Jewish religious leaders were trained in the Law and familiar with the Old Testament, why did they oppose Jesus?
- * 16. Why doesn't religious knowledge or information guarantee that we'll be godly?
17. If Jesus really is the King of kings and Lord of lords, why do we often drag our feet doing what He has told us to do?
18. What does it mean to repent?
19. If, as Jesus claimed, many "unrighteous" people will enter the kingdom of God, and many "righteous" people won't, what does that say to you about God's system of justice?
- * 20. When is it too late to do the right thing?

Apply It

21. What step can you take this week toward correcting a mistake?
- * 22. What command of Christ that you have been neglecting do you need to obey today?
23. What promise that you made to Christ can you keep today?

The Parable of the Tenants - Matthew 21:33-46

Topics: Attitude, Blessing, Deceit, Enemies, Evil, Hardheartedness, Hatred, Intimidation, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Murder, Popularity, Prophecy, Punishment, Rejection, Sin, Submission, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. In what way does each of these hurt: being told an uncomfortable truth, and being told a lie?
- 2. What was your favorite bedtime story as a child?
- 3. What attitudes in others make you want to be mean instead of nice?

Explore It

- 4. How did the landowner in this parable prepare his vineyard? (21:33)
- 5. What did the landowner do at harvest time? (21:34)
- 6. How did the tenants of the vineyard treat the landowner's servants? (21:35)
- 7. What did the landowner do after his servants were attacked? (21:36)
- 8. How did the landowner's alternative plan work? (21:36)
- * 9. What solution did the landowner finally decide on? (21:37)
- * 10. How did the tenants react to the landowner's choice? (21:38-39)
- * 11. What end did Jesus predict for the wicked tenants of the parable? (21:40-41)
- 12. What did Jesus quote to the religious leaders? (21:42)
- 13. How did Jesus personalize or apply this parable and Scripture to the nation of Israel? (21:43-44)
- 14. What did the religious leaders realize when they heard Jesus' parable? (21:45)
- 15. What did the chief priests and elders try to do? (21:46)
- 16. Why didn't the chief priests and elders carry out their plan at that moment? (21:46)

Get It

- 17. What does the vineyard in this parable represent?
- * 18. Who do the tenants of the parable symbolize?
- * 19. Of whom are the servants and the son representative?
- 20. How would you feel if you were extremely kind and giving to someone for a long time and that person repeatedly scorned your kindness?
- 21. Why does Christ's kindness often fail to impress people?
- 22. Does God's Word soften your heart like wax or harden your heart like clay?
- 23. What are some ways we react when God's Word convicts us or tells us to take demanding, difficult, or risky steps?
- 24. In what area of your life do you tend to resist God's authority?

Apply It

- 25. What is one practical step you can take to submit to God and obey His Word this week?
- * 26. Today or tomorrow, how can you show God your appreciation for His goodness toward you?

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet - Matthew 22:1-14

Topics: Ambassadors, Apathy, Attitude, Celebration, Evil, Excuses, Grace, Hardheartedness, Hell, Indifference, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Marriage, Murder, Opposition, Punishment, Rejection, Sorrow, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What do you like or dislike about weddings?
- 2. What tips might you give to someone planning a big wedding?
- 3. What is your funniest wedding story?
- 4. How do you tend to react when long-awaited plans fail to materialize?

Explore It

- 5. What preparations were being made in this parable? (22:2)
- 6. What did the king send his servants to do? (22:3)
- * 7. How did people respond to the king's invitation? (22:3)
- 8. Upon hearing that no one would come to the wedding, what did the king do? (22:4)
- * 9. How did the invited guests react to the king's second appeal? (22:5)
- 10. To what shocking acts did some of the people who were invited resort? (22:6)
- 11. How did the king deal with the lawbreakers? (22:7)
- 12. The king went to a "Plan B" that included what changes? (22:8-9)
- 13. How did the king's alternative plan work out? (22:10)
- 14. What did the king say when he spotted an improperly dressed wedding guest? (22:11)
- 15. What did the king order his servants to do with the man who was improperly dressed? (22:11-13)
- * 16. Why did the king throw out the unwelcome wedding guest? (22:13-14)

Get It

- 17. What keeps people from accepting Jesus' offer of eternal life?
- 18. The wedding clothes in the parable that were needed for admittance to the banquet are meant to symbolize what quality that is necessary for entry into the kingdom of heaven?
- 19. What events led to your acceptance of Jesus' offer of forgiveness and heaven?
- 20. For what reason are there impostors in the church?
- 21. Why would a non-Christian want to be around Christians?
- 22. How does God demonstrate His patience to unbelievers?
- * 23. What will happen to those who either reject Christ or try to enter His kingdom on their own terms?
- * 24. In what area(s) of your life have you been putting off a response to what God has asked you to do?

Apply It

- * 25. What response should you give to God this week?
- 26. To what individuals this week can you extend Jesus' offer of forgiveness and eternal life?

Paying Taxes to Caesar - Matthew 22:15-22

Topics: Accusation, Challenge, Composure, Dishonesty, Embarrassment, Flattery, Frustration, Government, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Insight, Integrity, Motives, Obligation, Questions, Rejection, Responsibility, Testing, Unbelievers, Wisdom

Open It

1. What could governments do to make their citizens less opposed to paying taxes?
2. What qualities mark a person of integrity?
- * 3. What individuals would you like to see pictured on our money?

Explore It

4. What group sought to trap Jesus? How? (22:15)
5. What two groups were sent to Jesus? Why? (22:16)
6. How did the Pharisees address Jesus? (22:16)
7. How did the Pharisees describe Jesus' character? (22:16)
8. How did the Pharisees describe Jesus' manner of teaching? (22:16)
9. After all the flattery, what question did the Pharisees' disciples and the Herodians finally ask Jesus? (22:17)
10. How did Jesus respond to all the false adulation He received in this incident? (22:18)
- * 11. What did Jesus say to the men who questioned Him? (22:18)
12. What object did Jesus use to illustrate His answer? How? (22:19-20)
- * 13. How did Jesus answer the question without getting Himself in political hot water? (22:21)
- * 14. How did Jesus' opponents respond to Jesus' words? (22:22)

Get It

15. In what situations are you guilty of flattery?
16. Why do we resort to flattery?
17. How does it make you feel to realize that Jesus can see right into your heart and tell when your motives are insincere?
- * 18. What do you think Jesus called us to do when He said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and give to God what is God's"?
- * 19. How can you be careful and wise in what you say to unbelievers?
20. What responsibilities do you have to the government?

Apply It

- * 21. What neglected civic responsibilities do you need to begin fulfilling today?
22. What might be the first step in better living up to your obligations as a citizen of God's kingdom?

Marriage at the Resurrection - Matthew 22:23-33

Topics: Angels, Assumptions, Beliefs, Bible, Blindness, Children, Confusion, Death, Eternal Life, Future, God, Heaven, Ignorance, Law, Motives, Power, Resurrection, Testing, Traditions, Zeal

Open It

1. What topics often spark arguments among people?
- * 2. What ideals do many people have about marriage?
3. What are some secrets to a long and healthy marriage?

Explore It

- * 4. What group confronted or opposed Jesus? How? (22:23)
- * 5. What distinctive belief did the Sadducees hold? (22:23)
 6. To what authority did the Sadducees appeal in asking their question? (22:24)
 7. To what kind of law did the Sadducees defer? (22:24)
 8. What rare, unlikely scenario did the Sadducees describe for Jesus? (22:25-27)
 9. What question did the Sadducees finally put to Jesus? (22:28)
- * 10. What two important facts did Jesus charge the Sadducees with not knowing? (22:29)
 11. What did Jesus say about the institution of marriage in eternity? (22:30)
 12. What did Jesus say about angels and marriage? (22:30)
 13. How did Jesus prove that people will be raised from the dead? (22:31-32)
 14. How did the crowd react to this exchange? (22:33)

Get It

15. What makes you think the Sadducees were not really interested in knowing the truth?
16. What do you think their purpose was in confronting Jesus?
17. How does it make you feel to realize that marriage as we know it will not exist in eternity?
18. In what ways do all these groups questioning Jesus remind you of today's talk-show circuit?
19. How well do you know the Scriptures and the power of God?
- * 20. In what ways can our doctrinal beliefs blind us to the truth?
 21. How do you typically respond when you are attacked because of your faith?
- * 22. What questions asked by unbelievers do you have the most difficult time answering?

Apply It

- * 23. What area of Bible doctrine will you read about and study this week?
 24. To whom do you need to apologize for arguing about your faith or for browbeating with the Bible?
25. What needs to change in your life today to reflect the fact that you serve a living God?

The Greatest Commandment - Matthew 22:34-40

Topics: Answers, Attitude, Blindness, Challenge, Commitment, Devotion, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Law, Legalism, Listening, Love, Motives, Rationalizing, Rejection, Sin, Stubbornness, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What is the best advice your mother or father ever gave you?
2. If you could give a four-sentence speech on worldwide television, what would you say in order to have the greatest possible impact?
- * 3. If you had to summarize this past week, how would you describe it?

Explore It

4. Who heard that the Sadducees had been embarrassed by Jesus? How did they respond? (22:34)
5. What did the Pharisees do? Why? (22:34)
6. What sort of person was selected to address Jesus? (22:35)
7. What was the Pharisee's purpose in asking Jesus a question? (22:35)
- * 8. What specific question did the man ask Jesus? (22:36)
- * 9. How did Jesus answer the Pharisee's question? (22:37)
10. What kind of love did Jesus describe? (22:37)
- * 11. What important footnote did Jesus add to His answer? (22:39)
12. What kind of love for one's neighbor did Jesus require? (22:39)
13. How important did Jesus say these two principles were? (22:40)

Get It

14. How do you feel when people ask you a question which you're pretty sure they already know the answer to?
15. In what ways do we sometimes try to sidestep our responsibility to obey God?
16. How do you think some of the Pharisees who opposed Christ feel now—knowing that they were face to face with the Truth and they rejected Him?
17. How do we measure the magnitude of our love for Jesus?
- * 18. What does it mean to "love your neighbor as yourself"?
19. How often do you argue just for the sake of arguing?
20. Why do you think we like to debate what the Bible means, yet often resist changing our lives based on what it says?
- * 21. How can we keep our focus on what really matters?
22. What does God want you to do more than anything else in your job, family, church, and neighborhood?

Apply It

23. What can you do today to love Christ with all your heart, soul, and mind?
- * 24. What loving act will you plan to do soon for a neighbor in need?

Whose Son Is the Christ? - Matthew 22:41-46

Topics: Answers, Blindness, Conversation, Embarrassment, Enemies, Giving Up, Hardheartedness, Holy Spirit, Law, Legalism, Messiah, Opposition, Questions, Rejection

Open It

1. What is the most ingenious trick or prank you have ever played on anyone?
- * 2. If you could ask anyone any question at all, what would you want to know?
3. What is satisfying about “stumping the expert” or seeing a pro make a mistake?

Explore It

4. In what setting did this conversation take place? (22:41)
- * 5. What religious group had gathered? Why? (22:41)
6. Who did the interrogation of Jesus? When? (22:41)
- * 7. What questions did Jesus ask? (22:42)
8. What important fact did the Pharisees admit about Christ? (22:42)
- * 9. How did Jesus enlighten the Pharisees? (22:43-44)
10. According to Jesus, under what special condition did David write? (22:43)
11. What was important about the way David referred to Christ? (22:43-44)
12. What final question did Jesus use to make His point? (22:45)
13. What happened after Jesus silenced the Pharisees? (22:46)

Get It

- * 14. What objections to Jesus’ identity do people raise today?
- * 15. What are good ways to respond to people who doubt Jesus’ identity?
16. How would you answer a friend who says, “Prove to me that Jesus is God”?
17. In telling people about Christ today, what are some of the more important details to include?
18. Why is the question, “Who is Jesus?” far more significant than any other issue?
19. To what issues do you tend to get sidetracked when you try to witness for Christ?
20. What emotions or thoughts prompt people to stop talking about their relationship with God?

Apply It

21. What area(s) of your life do you need to surrender to the lordship of Christ today?
- * 22. What can you do (or stop doing) this week to become more effective in introducing your non-Christian friends to Christ?

Seven Woes - Matthew 23:1-39

Topics: Appearance, Barriers, Blindness, Confusion, Criticism, Danger, Dishonesty, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Intimidation, Legalism, Opposition, Priorities, Punishment, Rejection, Sin, Stubbornness, Tithing, Traditions, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What topic(s) or situations really get you upset?
- 2. What is the worst name or label that someone could pin on you?
- 3. Why do some people object to “organized religion”?

Explore It

- 4. To whom was Jesus speaking? (23:1)
- 5. About whom was Jesus speaking? (23:2)
- * 6. Of what did Jesus accuse the religious leaders? (23:3)
- 7. What motivation did Jesus say governed the behavior of the Pharisees? (23:5-7)
- * 8. What eternal destiny did Jesus pronounce on religious hypocrites? (23:13)
- 9. What are some of the names Jesus used to describe the respected, powerful, national leaders of Israel—the Pharisees? (23:13, 15-16, 27, 33)
- 10. What did Jesus say about the Pharisees’ evangelism? (23:15)
- 11. What kind of picky man-made traditions did Jesus accuse the religious leaders of following blindly? (23:16-22)
- * 12. What evidence of twisted priorities among the religious elite did Jesus give? (23:23-26)
- 13. What analogies did Jesus use to show that Israel’s religious leaders were more interested in external credentials than internal character? (23:25-28)
- 14. How did Jesus argue that the Pharisees had failed to learn the lessons of Israel’s history? (23:29-36)
- 15. Because of her awful leadership, how did Jesus lament over Jerusalem? (23:37)

Get It

- * 16. How can a spiritual leader affect his or her followers?
- 17. What kinds of nitpicky rules and regulations tend to blind us to more serious sins?
- 18. In what ways do people sometimes fake the Christian life?
- * 19. What are some of the dangers of having a “checklist” of dos and don’ts that go beyond God’s written Word?
- 20. What temptations are faced by those in positions of spiritual authority?
- 21. Which feeling best describes how you view non-Christians: sadness or anger?
- 22. In what area(s) have you been failing to practice what you preach?
- 23. How would you reach out to someone who has become embittered by religious hypocrites or empty religion?

Apply It

- 24. What attitudes or “matters of the heart” do you need to confess to God today so that your inside looks as good as your outside?
- 25. What could you do to help a young Christian grow stronger this week?
- * 26. What older, more mature Christian can you spend time with this week to seek advice and wisdom?

Signs of the End of the Age - Matthew 24:1-35

Topics: Angels, Awe, Backslide, Believers, Blasphemy, Confusion, Courage, Culture, Danger, Darkness, Death, Deceit, Earth, Endurance, Eternal Life, Evangelism, Evil, Experience, Faithfulness, Future, Good News, Hatred, Heaven, Hell, Idolatry, Insecurity, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Last Days, Majority, Miracles, Mourning, Nature, Occult, Pain, Persecution, Perseverance, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Religion, Rewards, Satan, Second Coming, Sovereignty, Victory, World, Worship

Open It

1. What is the most beautiful building or structure you've ever seen?
2. What is the popular press saying about the immediate and long-range future of planet Earth?
3. Why are people interested in the future?
- * 4. Why do many people consult psychics, palm readers, horoscopes, and other so-called sources of guidance?

Explore It

5. When did the disciples approach Jesus with their question? (24:1)
6. What topic of conversation did the disciples raise with Jesus? When? (24:1)
7. What prophetic statement did Jesus make in reference to the temple? (24:2)
8. As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, what questions did the disciples pose? (24:3)
9. What wide-scale calamities did Jesus predict would occur near the end of the world? (24:6-8)
10. What various events did Jesus say would happen to believers in the end times? (24:9-13)
11. What did Jesus say about the moral state of the world in the end? (24:12)
12. To what extent will the gospel be preached in the last days? (24:14)
13. According to Jesus, what will the final days on earth be like? (24:15-22)
- * 14. What important warning about spiritual deception did Jesus issue? (24:23-26)
- * 15. How will true believers recognize Jesus' return? (24:27-30)
- * 16. What heavenly signs and aberrations will accompany the return of Christ? (24:29)
17. What part did Jesus say the angels of God would play in His return? (24:31)

Get It

18. What are some ways the world tries to desecrate or profane the holy things of God?
19. How does talk of the end times motivate us to live a holy life?
20. In what ways can we become sidetracked by discussion of the end times?
- * 21. How is it helpful that Jesus didn't give us a specific time or date for His return?
- * 22. What are some current examples of false prophets deceiving people?
23. What signs do you see that we may be close to the beginning of the end?
24. How could you use this passage to talk to a nonbeliever about Jesus Christ?
25. In what specific ways does this passage encourage you to pray?

Apply It

26. For what Christians around the world who are suffering because of their faith can you pray?
- * 27. What step can you take this week to guard yourself from false teaching?
28. What is one thing you can do in the next month to spread the gospel to your part of God's world?

The Day and Hour Unknown - Matthew 24:36-51

Topics: Blindness, Celebration, Delay, Eternal Life, Expectations, Hell, Hypocrisy, Ignorance, Judgment, Last Days, Mercy, Preparation, Second Coming, Sin, Surprises, Waiting

Open It

- * 1. What is the most surprised you've ever been in your life?
- 2. What are some ways people show their unbelief in God?
- 3. With what mysteries are people intrigued today?

Explore It

- 4. Who knows when the end times will come? (24:36)
- 5. When did Jesus say these end time events would occur? (24:36)
- 6. Who did Jesus say knows the day and hour of the end? (24:36)
- 7. To what did Jesus compare the end of the world? (24:37)
- 8. How will most people react when the end comes? (24:38-41)
- 9. What illustrations did Jesus use to show the suddenness of His return? (24:40-41)
- 10. What warning did Jesus give His disciples? (24:42)
- * 11. To what did Jesus liken His coming? Why? (24:43-44)
- * 12. What qualities did Jesus say His servants will need to be ready for His coming? (24:45-47)
- * 13. What did Jesus warn would happen to those who doubt His coming? (24:48-51)

Get It

- 14. What would you do if you hired a house sitter/caretaker to watch your home and children, left for a week-long vacation, and then returned a day early only to find that your caretaker had neglected your kids, destroyed your property, and ignored all your other instructions?
- 15. What does it mean for us to be watchful?
- 16. How can you tell when you are being watchful?
- 17. What difference does it make whether we believe in the imminent return of Christ?
- 18. Even if we claim to believe in Christ, what are some ways we live as though we were atheists?
- 19. How might a non-Christian look at your life and accuse you of not believing in the imminent return of Jesus Christ?
- * 20. How would you react if you knew a thief would try to burglarize your home or apartment tonight?
- * 21. How can we have a sense of expectation about the return of Christ?
- 22. How do you know that hell is a horrible place?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you use your time today to honor the Lord's imminent return?
- 24. What steps can you take today to be a better steward of the gifts and information God has entrusted to you?

The Parable of the Ten Virgins - Matthew 25:1-13

Topics: Celebration, Delay, Eternal Life, Expectations, Future, Hell, Judgment, Last Days, Marriage, Mercy, Preparation, Second Coming, Sin, Surprises, Waiting

Open It

1. What is the most elaborate or important social function you have ever been invited to?
2. When was a time you were late to an important event, and why were you delayed?
- * 3. How do you react when you are made to wait?

Explore It

4. To what did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven in this parable? (25:1)
5. How were the ten women described? (25:1-2)
6. Why were some of the virgins described as “foolish”? (25:3)
7. What made some of the virgins “wise”? (25:4)
8. What happened to the bridegroom? (25:5)
9. What happened at midnight? (25:6-7)
10. What did the foolish virgins ask of the others? (25:8)
- * 11. How did the wise virgins respond when asked to help the ones who weren’t prepared? (25:9)
12. When did the bridegroom arrive and the wedding banquet begin? (25:10)
13. What did the foolish virgins discover and do when they returned? (25:11)
- * 14. How did the bridegroom respond when some virgins wanted to come to the wedding late? (25:12)
- * 15. With what warning did Jesus conclude this parable? Why? (25:13)

Get It

- * 16. In what ways do you tend to count on more mature Christians or try to ride their coattails?
- * 17. What responsibility does each Christian have before God?
18. Why is continual preparation for Christ’s return better than “last minute cramming”?
19. Why do we tend to think (and act like) we have all the time in the world to get ready for Christ’s return?
20. What does this passage say about the need for individual readiness?
21. What are the possible consequences of putting off thinking about Christ and spiritual growth until later?

Apply It

- * 22. What spiritual preparation do you need to make today in order to “keep watch”?
23. How can you change your attitude this week in order to reflect your belief in the imminent return of Christ?
24. What Christian should you lovingly warn about the imminent return of Christ?

The Parable of the Talents - Matthew 25:14-30

Topics: Accomplishments, Accountability, Approval, Discernment, Effectiveness, Excuses, Generosity, Ignorance, Judgment, Laziness, Management, Opportunities, Possessions, Productivity, Resources, Rewards, Serving, Success

Open It

1. What are some typical images people have of God?
2. What are your five best traits or greatest attributes?
- * 3. What would you do for God if you knew you could not fail at it?

Explore It

4. To what did Jesus liken the kingdom of God in this parable? (25:14)
5. What did the man in the parable give to his servants? (25:15)
6. What did the servant who received five talents do with his money? (25:16)
7. What kind of return on his investment did the servant with two talents get? (25:17)
8. What did the third servant do with the one talent his master gave him? (25:18)
- * 9. How did the master react to the report of the first servant? (25:20-21)
- * 10. What was the response to the report of the second servant? (25:22-23)
11. What excuse did the third servant give for not investing his talent? (25:24-25)
- * 12. How did the master respond to the third servant's explanation? (25:26-27)
13. What orders did the master give about the third servant's one talent? (25:28-29)
14. What judgment was handed down to the "wicked, lazy" servant? (25:30)

Get It

- * 15. With what talents or resources has God entrusted you?
16. What gifts or talents has God given your church?
17. Besides money or material possessions, what are some resources God has placed in our care?
18. What thoughts or attitudes cause us to be lazy in carrying out our Christian responsibilities?
19. What are the risks of investing our gifts for God's service?
20. What are the rewards of investing our gifts for God's service?
- * 21. In what ways can you be a "good and faithful" servant?
22. Where are you able to invest your gifts?
23. What people can benefit most from the gifts and abilities you have?
24. What discourages you from investing your talents?
25. What encourages you to serve God with your talents?
26. How would you grade yourself in your Christian stewardship over the last year?

Apply It

- * 27. What resource do you need to commit to Christ's use at this time in your life?
28. How can you invest your talents in serving God this week?
29. What reminder can you use to hold yourself accountable for the way you manage your God-given resources?

The Sheep and the Goats - Matthew 25:31-46

Topics: Angels, Blessing, Consequences, Demons, Eternal Life, Heaven, Hell, Judgment, Mercy, Messiah, Punishment, Righteousness, Satan, Second Coming, Self-righteousness, Separation

Open It

1. What are some ways we label or categorize others?
2. Why is the belief in heaven and hell waning, while the belief in reincarnation becomes more popular?
- * 3. What are some common examples of separating clean from dirty, fresh from spoiled, or good from bad?

Explore It

4. How did Jesus describe His Second Coming? (25:31)
5. Where will all the nations be at Christ's return? (25:32)
6. According to Jesus, how will the people of the earth be divided? (25:32-33)
7. How will Jesus divide humanity? (25:33)
- * 8. What will Jesus say to those on His right? (25:34-36)
9. Why will the group on Jesus' right be blessed? (25:35)
- * 10. How will the "sheep" respond to Jesus' words on that day? (25:37-39)
- * 11. What criterion will Christ use to judge people? (25:40)
12. What will Jesus say to the "goats" on His left? (25:41)
13. Why will the goats be judged? (25:42)
14. What will cause the goats to be judged? (25:42-43)
15. What defense will those on Christ's left use to justify themselves? (25:44)
16. What will hell be like? (25:46)

Get It

- * 17. How do people usually determine whether they will be nice to somebody?
- * 18. How would your behavior change if you treated each person in your life as if he or she were Jesus?
19. In what way does this parable motivate you to tell your friends about Christ?
20. How would you counter the idea that this passage teaches salvation by good works?
21. What change does true faith make in a person's life?
22. In what specific ways has your faith in Christ changed you?
23. Who are the needy people around you?
24. What resources do you have available to you for serving the needs of others?

Apply It

- * 25. What act of kindness or mercy toward the needy can you do today?
26. In what practical, realistic way can you begin today to treat each person you meet as though he or she were Jesus Himself?
27. Without being overbearing or pushy, how can you serve your non-Christian friends this week?

The Plot Against Jesus - Matthew 26:1-5

Topics: Conversation, Death, Determination, Enemies, Fear, Future, Hardheartedness, Hatred, Motives, Murder, Opposition, Plans, Rejection, Resentment, Revenge, Sin, Sovereignty

Open It

1. What famous assassinations can you recall?
- * 2. What is your theory about the assassination of John F. Kennedy?
3. Why do “good people” get caught up in bad situations?

Explore It

4. To whom was Jesus talking? When? (26:1)
5. How close was the Feast of the Passover? (26:2)
6. What did Jesus say would happen at the Feast of the Passover? (26:2)
7. Who presided over the gathering of chief priests and elders? (26:3)
8. Where did the chief priests and elders assemble? Why? (26:3-4)
- * 9. What group got together in secret? Why? (26:3-4)
10. What did the chief priests and elders gather to do? (26:4)
11. What was the chief priests’ and elders’ ultimate desire concerning Jesus? (26:4)
- * 12. Whom did the religious leaders plan to arrest? Why? (26:4-5)
- * 13. When did the religious leaders not want to carry out their plan? (26:5)
14. Why were the religious leaders reluctant to act during the feast? (26:5)

Get It

- * 15. Why would devout religious leaders plot to murder someone like Jesus?
16. Historically, what other evil deeds have been done in God’s name?
17. How can we avoid justifying evil acts with the belief that we are serving God?
- * 18. When might a Christian be tempted to take matters into his or her own hands instead of trusting God?
19. What kinds of opposition do Christians face today?
20. How should we respond to opposition to our faith?
21. In what ways do these incidents tell us that God is sovereignly in control of all events?
22. How can we show our trust in God when events turn against us?

Apply It

- * 23. What uncertain situation will you entrust to God today?
24. What can you do today to show your thankfulness for Christ’s voluntary sacrifice?

Jesus Anointed at Bethany - Matthew 26:6-13

Topics: Actions, Devotion, Embarrassment, Example, Faith, Generosity, Kindness, Love, Praise, Preparation, Rationalizing, Sacrifice, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is the most colossal waste of money you have ever witnessed?
- 2. What is the most valuable possession you own?
- 3. In what situations might it be wiser to be extravagant than frugal?

Explore It

- 4. In what kind of place was Jesus when this scene opened? (26:6)
- 5. Where was Jesus staying? (26:6)
- 6. The woman who came to see Christ had what with her? Why? (26:7)
- * 7. What did the woman do with her perfume? (26:7)
- * 8. How did the disciples react to the sacrifice they witnessed? (26:8)
- 9. What did the disciples claim would have been a better use for the perfume? (26:9)
- * 10. How did Jesus respond to the disciples' indignation and muttering? (26:10)
- 11. What did Jesus call the woman's act? Why? (26:10-11)
- 12. Why did Jesus say the woman did the right thing? (26:11)
- 13. How did Jesus describe this anointing? (26:12)
- 14. What recognition did Jesus promise for the woman? (26:13)

Get It

- 15. What evidence is there that among Jesus' followers, only Mary understood that Jesus would soon be dead?
- 16. How might Jesus' statement about the poor (verse 11) be used as a justification to do nothing to help them?
- 17. For what reasons do you think the disciples criticized Mary?
- 18. When are we most likely to bad-mouth the efforts of other believers?
- 19. What frequently happens when Christians become concerned about pleasing everyone around them?
- * 20. What prompts us to sacrifice our time and goods for God?
- 21. How can we increase our love for Jesus so that we will be willing to sacrifice for Him?
- 22. What are the dangers in making a generous public gift?
- * 23. What attitudes would make you more generous?

Apply It

- * 24. What act of costly service can you give to Christ this week?
- 25. What attitudes that keep you from being more generous do you need to renounce and repent of today?
- 26. How can you begin to view the good works of others in a positive light rather than in a critical fashion?

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus - Matthew 26:14-16

Topics: Abandon, Character, Convictions, Deceit, Friendship, Hatred, Lost, Plans, Rebellion, Rejection, Separation, Sin, Timing

Open It

1. What does it mean to be committed to something or someone?
2. What images does the word “betrayal” bring to mind?
- * 3. What does it take to build a lasting friendship?

Explore It

4. Who is the central character in this passage? (26:14)
5. To what elite group did Judas belong? (26:14)
6. How did the meeting between Judas and the priests get started? (26:14)
- * 7. With what group did Judas meet? Why? (26:14-15)
8. What offer did Judas make to the chief priests? (26:15)
9. How did Judas refer to Jesus? (26:15)
10. How did the chief priests show they were interested in Judas’s offer? (26:15)
- * 11. What did Judas get for betraying Jesus? (26:15)
12. What did Judas do once he struck a deal with the chief priests? (26:16)
- * 13. How did Judas spend his last days with Jesus? (26:16)

Get It

14. What motives or feelings would prompt someone to betray a man like Jesus?
15. In what ways does our behavior betray whether we truly love and serve Jesus?
16. If Jesus knew everything, why do you think He picked as one of His disciples a man who would eventually betray Him?
17. How does it make you feel to realize that Judas apparently was at one time a very devoted follower of Jesus?
18. In what ways are we vulnerable to the temptations that snagged Judas?
19. For what temporary thrills or situations have you “sold out” Jesus at one time or another?
- * 20. How can we avoid making Judas’s mistake?
- * 21. In what ways can you rely on more mature Christians to keep you accountable so that you do not drift in your commitment to Jesus?

Apply It

22. To whom can you turn this week for accountability in your walk with God?
- * 23. In what area of life this week can you make your deeds more closely match your stated loyalty to Jesus?

The Lord's Supper - Matthew 26:17-30

Topics: Atonement, Celebration, Covenant, Despair, Example, Feelings, Future, Habits, Important, Instructions, Love, New Covenant, Preparation, Sacrifice, Traditions, Victory, Worship

Open It

1. In what ways does sharing a meal bind people together?
2. What names, dates, or events do you have a hard time remembering?
3. If you were dying, what would you want for a last meal?
- * 4. How do you hope people will remember you after you are gone?

Explore It

5. What was going on during the time of the incidents described in this passage? (26:17)
6. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? (26:17)
7. What instructions did Jesus give His followers? (26:18)
8. What was the response of the disciples to Jesus' instructions? (26:19)
9. What did Jesus and His disciples do that evening? (26:20)
10. What shocking statement did Jesus utter during His meal with the disciples? (26:21)
11. How did the disciples react to Jesus' announcement? (26:22)
12. How did Jesus identify the one who would betray Him? (26:23)
13. What sobering statement did Jesus make about His betrayer? (26:24)
14. How did Judas respond to the words of Christ? (26:25)
- * 15. What did Jesus say about the bread on the table? (26:26)
- * 16. What remarks did Jesus make about the wine they were drinking? (26:27-28)
- * 17. When did Jesus say He would eat with His disciples again? (26:29)
18. What did the group do after they finished eating? (26:30)

Get It

19. In what ways might Christ be uncomfortable to eat a meal in your home?
20. When we respond to Christ's commands, do you think we tend to fulfill them completely, or only so far as we feel like it?
21. How does it make you feel to realize that Christ's body was battered and broken because of your sin?
- * 22. How do you feel when you remember that Jesus shed His blood on the cross for you?
23. What do you imagine it would have been like to have been one of the participants at that first Lord's Supper, to have heard those men sing a hymn, to have looked Christ in the eyes?
24. Why do you think Judas asked if he was the one who would betray Jesus?
- * 25. What does Communion or the Eucharist mean to you personally?

Apply It

- * 26. What do you want to change about the way you participate in the Lord's Supper the next time it is celebrated at church?
27. What do you need to do today (or stop doing) to be a fully obedient servant of Jesus Christ?
28. How can you encourage a friend this week with the message of this passage?

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial - Matthew 26:31-35

Topics: Abandon, Commitment, Courage, Danger, Determination, Embarrassment, Endurance, Failure, Foolishness, Impulsiveness, Loyalty, Peer Pressure, Persecution, Promises, Rejection, Vows, Weaknesses, Words

Open It

- * 1. Why is it dangerous to begin a sentence with the words, "I would never . . ."?
 - 2. Why is it possible for a mature believer in Christ to sin?
 - 3. What do you think about the expression, "Talk is cheap"?

Explore It

- * 4. What prediction about His followers did Jesus make on the Mount of Olives? (26:31)
 - 5. To what did Jesus compare Himself and His disciples? (26:31)
 - 6. What was significant about Jesus' statement and His situation? (26:31)
 - 7. What did Christ predict about Himself? (26:32)
 - 8. Where did Jesus say He would go? When? (26:32)
- * 9. How did Peter respond to Jesus' statement that all the disciples would abandon Him? (26:33)
 - 10. What prediction did Jesus make about Peter? (26:34)
 - 11. What did Peter have to say when Jesus said Peter would disown Him? (26:35)
- * 12. How did the rest of the disciples react to these depressing comments by Christ? (26:35)

Get It

- 13. How committed do you think the disciples were to Jesus?
- 14. How is the commitment of many Christians today much like that of the eleven disciples with Jesus in the garden?
- * 15. What is admirable about a promise never to abandon Christ?
- * 16. What is foolish about a vow never to abandon Christ?
 - 17. What situations might tempt you to be quiet or low-key about your relationship with Jesus Christ?
 - 18. If wide-scale persecution of Christians broke out in this country, as it has in so many others, how do you think many Christians would respond? Why?
 - 19. What do you learn about God from the fact that Jesus did not yell at His disciples or disown them even though He knew they would abandon Him?
 - 20. Why is human willpower inadequate to keep us from sinning?
 - 21. What vow have you made to God that you need to fulfill?

Apply It

- 22. In what particular situation(s) this week do you need to make it clear—for the first time—that you are a follower of Jesus Christ?
- 23. How can you encourage a Christian brother or sister who has recently denied Christ and is feeling discouraged?
- * 24. What first step in fulfilling your vow to God do you need to take this week?

Gethsemane - Matthew 26:36-46

Topics: Backslide, Carelessness, Comfortable, Compromise, Danger, Desires, Endurance, Friendship, God's Will, Help, Inadequacy, Intentions, Loyalty, Perseverance, Prayer, Selfishness, Sleep

Open It

- * 1. In what particular situations is it hardest for you to stay awake?
- 2. How do you react emotionally and physically when you are facing extreme stress?
- 3. What friends do you turn to when your world is turned upside down?

Explore It

- 4. Who was Jesus with? When? (26:36)
- * 5. Where did Jesus and His companions go together? Why? (26:36)
- 6. What did Jesus tell the disciples? (26:36)
- 7. With which disciples did Jesus choose to pray? (26:37)
- 8. What was Jesus' state of mind at the time? (26:37)
- 9. What kind of pain did Jesus confess to His friends? (26:38)
- 10. When Jesus went on a bit further and fell to the ground, what did He do? (26:39)
- 11. What scene greeted Jesus when He returned from praying? (26:40)
- 12. What kind of warning did Jesus give Peter? (26:40-41)
- 13. What did Jesus do after speaking with Peter? (26:42)
- 14. What were the disciples doing while Jesus was praying the second time? (26:43)
- * 15. How did Jesus react when He found His disciples sleeping a second time? (26:44)
- * 16. When Jesus finished praying, what did He say to His disciples? (26:45)
- 17. What event happened after Jesus prayed? (26:46)

Get It

- * 18. Why would it have been very advantageous for the disciples to have stayed awake and prayed?
- 19. What clues from the passage suggest that Christ was grieving about what lay ahead for Him?
- * 20. What is amazing about Christ's attitude?
- 21. What kind of help would friends get from you if they called you in the middle of the night?
- 22. What generally wins out as you face decisions in life—your feelings or your commitments?
- 23. What is the most agonizing situation you have ever faced?
- 24. How might a faithful prayer life keep you strong in the faith?
- 25. What are the barriers to your prayers?
- 26. How can you improve your prayer life?

Apply It

- 27. What changes do you need to make in your schedule this week so that you become more regular in prayer?
- * 28. How can you be a better friend today to someone who is going through a difficult situation?
- 29. In what area of your life do you need to say to God, "Your will be done"?

Jesus Arrested - Matthew 26:47-56

Topics: Challenge, Danger, Darkness, Enemies, Evil, Failure, Friendship, God's Will, Impulsiveness, Jesus Christ, Motives, Prophecy, Protection, Rejection, Sacrifice, Sin, Sovereignty

Open It

1. What is the fastest you have ever run in your life?
- * 2. What is one time your beliefs or convictions were tested?
3. What types of situations tend to make your heart sink?
4. What prompts some people to rescue others in trouble, while others are interested only in helping themselves?

Explore It

5. What happened just as Jesus finished praying in the garden of Gethsemane? (26:47)
6. Who accompanied Judas? (26:47)
7. What kind of crowd accompanied Judas? (26:47)
8. How did Judas greet Jesus? (26:49)
9. What was significant about the signal Judas used to point out Jesus? (26:48)
10. What command did Jesus give Judas? (26:50)
11. What did the men in the crowd do when Jesus spoke? (26:50)
- * 12. What did one of Jesus' disciples do in an attempt to protect his master? (26:51)
13. What did Jesus tell the disciple who attacked? (26:52)
14. What truthful "boast" did Jesus make? (26:53)
- * 15. Why didn't Jesus take advantage of His disciple's brave attack? (26:54)
16. What did Jesus say to the crowd? (26:55)
- * 17. What happened when it became obvious that Jesus would be arrested? (26:56)

Get It

18. What do you think the disciples were feeling as they saw the armed mob approaching?
19. Why do you think this mob came at night to arrest Jesus?
20. What is especially awful about the way Judas betrayed Jesus?
21. What do you think would have been your reaction had you been in the garden that night?
22. Whose trust have you violated recently?
- * 23. When are we tempted to take matters into our own hands out of "devotion" to God?
24. How has your faith been tested recently?
- * 25. How can we stand firm when our faith is tested?
26. How do you tend to react in frightening situations?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do today to ensure that you will stand strong the next time your faith is tested?
28. In what specific situations this week do you need to trust God instead of resorting to human wisdom and tactics?

Before the Sanhedrin - Matthew 26:57-68

Topics: Accusation, Blasphemy, Challenge, Deceit, Enemies, Evil, Hatred, Humiliation, Insults, Jesus Christ, Lying, Messiah, Rejection, Second Coming, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. What is the most famous “miscarriage of justice” you have ever witnessed or heard about?
- 2. When in your life have you ended up suffering because you tried to help someone else?
- 3. In what ways are lies and gossip damaging?

Explore It

- * 4. After being arrested, where was Jesus taken? (26:57)
- 5. Who was assembled where Jesus was taken? Why? (26:57, 59)
- 6. Who had followed Jesus at a distance? Where was he? (26:58)
- 7. What did Peter do in an attempt to observe the proceedings against Jesus? (26:58)
- 8. What were the chief priests and Sanhedrin hoping to find? (26:59)
- * 9. Who came forward to testify at this “trial”? (26:60)
- * 10. What did one witness claim to have heard Jesus say? (26:61)
- 11. When the high priest first began questioning Jesus, how did Jesus respond? (26:62-63)
- 12. What question did the high priest finally ask Jesus about His identity? (26:63)
- 13. How did Jesus answer the high priest? (26:64)
- 14. What prophetic statement did Jesus make in His defense? (26:64)
- 15. How did Jesus’ claim affect the high priest? (26:65-66)
- 16. What emotional and physical abuse did Christ endure at the hands of these spiritual leaders? (26:67-68)

Get It

- * 17. How is it possible for an innocent person to be accused and convicted of a crime?
- * 18. When have you been harmed by false accusers spreading malicious lies?
- 19. How can we respond when attacked for no just reason?
- 20. What is it like to be ganged up on?
- 21. Why do you think Christ didn’t argue with his accusers and make some sort of defense?
- 22. In what situations are we tempted to water down or soft-pedal the truth?
- 23. What is it that sometimes causes groups of people to become vicious and cruel?
- 24. What do you think about Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God?

Apply It

- 25. In what group situations might you be able to act as a calming and peacemaking voice this week?
- * 26. In what situation this week do you need to tell the truth, even if it may cost you?
- 27. To what friend(s) in trouble can you show support by your physical presence?

Peter Disowns Jesus - Matthew 26:69-75

Topics: Accusation, Backslide, Compromise, Conversation, Denial, Depression, Embarrassment, Fear, Forsake, Grief, Loyalty, Peer Pressure, Pressure, Risk, Sorrow, Swearing, Trust, Words

Open It

- * 1. What does loyalty mean to you?
- 2. What are some of your greatest fears?
- 3. What examples could you cite to prove the old adage, “There is strength in numbers”?

Explore It

- 4. Where was Peter? (26:69)
- * 5. Who approached Peter? Why? (26:69)
- 6. What did the servant girl say to Peter? Why? (26:69)
- * 7. How did Peter respond to the servant girl’s question? (26:70)
- 8. What did Peter do after his exchange with the servant girl? (26:71)
- 9. When another girl approached Peter, what did she say? (26:71)
- 10. How did Peter handle the second girl’s claim? (26:72)
- 11. Why did a third group of folks insist that Peter had to be a follower of Christ? (26:73)
- 12. What extreme reaction did Peter have to the allegation that he was a follower of Jesus? (26:74)
- * 13. What happened when Peter denied knowing Christ? (26:74-75)
- 14. What memory did the cock’s crow trigger in Peter’s mind? (26:75)
- 15. How did Peter react when he realized what he had done? (26:75)

Get It

- 16. What do you think Peter was hoping to accomplish by hanging around the trial of Jesus?
- 17. What happened through a couple of young girls to scare Peter into silence?
- 18. How would you have felt in Peter’s place?
- * 19. When do you find you are most tempted to downplay or even deny your Christian beliefs?
- * 20. When has your faith in Jesus cost you something?
- 21. Why do some Christians seem to be able to stand up for Christ with no problem, while others stumble often?
- 22. If you were accused of being a close follower of Jesus Christ and were put on trial, would witnesses be able to come forward to present evidence against you?
- 23. How can close friendships with committed believers keep you from falling away from Christ?

Apply It

- * 24. To what person should you demonstrate your loyalty this week? How?
- 25. Whom might you be able to engage in a conversation about Jesus Christ this week?
- 26. In what settings do you need to acknowledge Christ more consistently by your actions (or nonactions)?

Judas Hangs Himself - Matthew 27:1-10

Topics: Actions, Change, Despair, Feelings, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Pain, Prophecy, Religion, Repentance, Shame, Sin, Sorrow, Soul

Open It

1. Over what kinds of situations or mistakes do people decide to kill themselves?
- * 2. What are some ways people try to deal with guilt?
3. Who is the most compassionate and caring friend you know?
4. What are inappropriate sources of income for churches and ministries?

Explore It

5. When did the religious leaders decide to put Jesus to death? (27:1)
6. What did the religious leaders do with Christ? (27:2)
7. Where did the religious leaders take Jesus? (27:2)
8. Why was it significant that Jesus was taken to Pilate? (27:2)
- * 9. How did Judas feel when he saw that Jesus had been condemned to die? (27:3)
- * 10. What action did Judas take in an attempt to undo his crime? (27:3)
11. What did Judas say to the religious leaders? (27:4)
- * 12. How did the religious leaders act when they heard Judas express second thoughts? (27:4)
13. What did Judas do when the leaders rejected his offer to return the money? (27:5)
14. What did the leaders do with the bounty they had paid Judas? (27:6-8)
15. Why was Judas's suicide significant? (27:9-10)

Get It

16. Why do you think the chief priests were so insensitive to Judas's remorse?
17. In what situations do we sometimes offer token compassion or ignore altogether those who are hurting?
- * 18. What would you say to someone who was feeling extremely guilty and depressed?
- * 19. How can we avoid (or break out of) a downward spiral of sin, guilt, depression, more sin, greater guilt, deeper depression, etc.?
20. How does sin, if allowed to go unchecked, cause us to lose all sense of rightness and kindness?
21. What practical steps can we take when confronted with wrongdoing?

Apply It

- * 22. What big decision do you need to pray about this week so that you do not end up making a choice you will later regret?
23. What can you do today or tomorrow to encourage a friend who is feeling especially low because of a bad or sinful choice?

Jesus Before Pilate - Matthew 27:11-26

Topics: Accusation, Answers, Authority, Blindness, Conscience, Death, Evil, Favoritism, Foolishness, God's Will, Government, Hardheartedness, Intimidation, Jesus Christ, Pressure, Rebellion, Rejection, Silence, Sin, Unbelievers, World

Open It

- * 1. What is the most ingenious or creative excuse you have heard someone give in an attempt to avoid responsibility?
- 2. What is your opinion of politicians?
- 3. What governmental customs or laws do you like best and least?
- 4. How much stock do you put in dreams?

Explore It

- 5. What title and position did Pilate have? (27:11)
- 6. What question did Pilate ask Jesus? (27:11)
- 7. How did Jesus answer the Roman authority? (27:11)
- 8. How did Jesus answer the Jews when they made accusations against Him? (27:12)
- 9. What did Pilate think of Christ's silence? (27:13-14)
- 10. What custom did the governor follow at this particular time of year? (27:15)
- 11. Who was in prison at the time? (27:16)
- 12. What choice did Pilate put before the crowd? (27:17-18)
- 13. What message did Pilate's wife send him? (27:19)
- 14. How did the religious leaders influence the crowd? (27:20)
- 15. What choice did the crowd make? (27:21)
- * 16. What did the crowd ask Pilate to do to Christ? (27:22)
- * 17. How did Pilate attempt to evade any responsibility in the condemnation of Jesus? (27:24)
- 18. What ironic statement did the crowd make about Jesus' blood? (27:25)
- * 19. What happened to the two prisoners—Barabbas and Jesus? (27:26)

Get It

- 20. How would you rate Pilate's performance?
- 21. Why is it difficult not to defend yourself when people are saying mean and untrue things about you?
- 22. What attitudes, emotions, or perspective must a person have in order to stay calm while being attacked?
- 23. In what way is not defending an innocent person the same as condemning him or her?
- 24. When might you be called upon to defend someone who is innocent?
- 25. What risks are there in defending an innocent person?
- 26. In what relationships do you need to trust more in the power and sufficiency of Christ?
- 27. In what situations do you need to quit arguing and defending yourself?
- * 28. What decisions have you been putting off for fear of the responsibility?
- * 29. What helps you face your responsibilities?

Apply It

- 30. How can you prepare yourself for the next time you have an opportunity to defend an innocent person?
- * 31. What decision do you need to make today and then take responsibility for?

The Soldiers Mock Jesus - Matthew 27:27-31

Topics: Accusation, Authority, Blasphemy, Blindness, Evil, Government, Hardheartedness, Hatred, Intimidation, Jesus Christ, Pain, Persecution, Rejection, Sin, Unbelievers, World

Open It

- * 1. What effect do you think violence in the media has on our society?
- 2. Which is worse, physical or emotional pain? Why?
- 3. What are the most common ways Christians are mocked?

Explore It

- * 4. Who took charge of the flogging and crucifixion of Jesus? (27:26-27)
- 5. How many people were involved in torturing Jesus? (27:27)
- * 6. Where did the guards take Jesus? Why? (27:27-28)
- * 7. Once they had Jesus inside, what did the guards do? (27:27-31)
- 8. What did the guards make Jesus wear? (27:28-29)
- 9. What did the soldiers put on Jesus' head? Why? (27:29)
- 10. In what way did these soldiers mock Jesus? (27:29)
- 11. With what did the soldiers ridicule Christ? (27:29)
- 12. What types of emotional and physical abuse did the guards inflict on Christ? (27:30)
- 13. After mocking Jesus, what did the soldiers do? (27:31)

Get It

- 14. Why did Christ put up with torture when He could have destroyed all His attackers?
- 15. What do you think the soldiers were thinking as they mocked, taunted, and assaulted Jesus?
- 16. What would you do if you came upon a group of friends who were abusing (either verbally or physically) some helpless individual?
- 17. What can we do to curb the abusive mentality of others?
- 18. Why do people pick on helpless individuals?
- 19. In what ways does evil become easier to justify when many people are doing it?
- * 20. What evils have become legitimized by consensus in our society today?
- * 21. What can Christians do to resist the tendency for evil to spread once it becomes common?
- 22. What sorts of opposition should we expect to face when resisting popular evils?

Apply It

- 23. Whom can you encourage this week who has been facing persecution?
- 24. What can you do or say to speak out against an evil that is being accepted as normal?
- * 25. In what way can you be a peacemaker this week at home, at work, or among your neighbors?

The Crucifixion - Matthew 27:32-44

Topics: Atonement, Bitterness, Blasphemy, Blindness, Criticism, Death, Endurance, Foolishness, Hatred, Humiliation, Jesus Christ, Pain, Rejection, Sacrifice, Sin, Strength, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What do you think would be the most horrible way to die?
2. Where do you stand in the ongoing debate over capital punishment?
3. How accurate is the old saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me"?
- * 4. What is the weakest and most exhausted you've ever been?

Explore It

5. When did these events take place? (27:32)
6. Whom did Jesus and his executioners meet as they were making their way to the site of the crucifixion? (27:32)
7. What was Simon forced to do? For whom? (27:32)
8. Where did the group take Jesus? (27:33)
9. What is the meaning of "Golgotha"? (27:33)
10. What was offered to Jesus? (27:34)
11. After nailing Jesus to the cross, what did the soldiers do? (27:35-36)
12. What did the soldiers place above Jesus' head? (27:37)
13. Who was executed that day? (27:38)
- * 14. What did onlookers shout at Jesus? (27:39-40)
- * 15. What was the behavior of the religious leaders like as they watched Jesus die? (27:41-43)
- * 16. How did the robbers act toward Jesus? (27:44)

Get It

17. In a passage where many people are anonymous, why do you think Simon of Cyrene is mentioned by name?
- * 18. Why does it hurt to be mocked and laughed at and scorned?
19. In what way were the soldiers showing mercy by offering Jesus wine?
20. What are some ways we attempt to numb ourselves to the reality of the harsh world around us?
- * 21. How does it make you feel to realize that Jesus underwent horrible abuse for you?
22. How is it possible to love the very people who are the most cruel and vicious to us?
23. When are you sometimes insulted?
24. When is it worth undergoing unjustified abuse?

Apply It

25. What "cross" (burden, problem, difficulty, grief) can you unselfishly agree to bear for someone else today?
- * 26. In what way can you show your gratitude to Jesus today in light of all He suffered for you?
27. What steps can you take this week to help you overlook insults and verbal taunts?

The Death of Jesus - Matthew 27:45-56

Topics: Atonement, Believe, Blindness, Darkness, Death, Devotion, God, Grief, Hopelessness, Loneliness, Mediator, Miracles, Mourning, Pain, Questions, Sacrifice, Separation, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What is it like to be separated from someone you love?
- 2. When in your life did you ever feel abandoned?

Explore It

- 3. What happened from the sixth to the ninth hour (from 12 noon until 3 p.m.)? (27:45)
- * 4. What did Jesus cry out at the ninth hour? Why? (27:46)
- * 5. What did Jesus' last words mean? (27:46)
- 6. What did some of the bystanders think Christ had yelled? (27:47)
- 7. What did one man in particular try to do for Jesus? (27:48)
- 8. How did the rest in the crowd respond to the gesture of kindness toward Jesus? (27:49)
- 9. What happened the next time Jesus cried out in a loud voice? (27:50)
- 10. What supernatural event took place inside the temple when Jesus died? (27:51)
- 11. How were things in Jerusalem at that time? (27:51)
- 12. How did the death of Jesus affect activity in some of the area's cemeteries? (27:52-53)
- * 13. How did a Roman centurion react to the way Jesus died? (27:54)
- 14. Who else was in the crowd watching the crucifixion? (27:55)
- 15. Who in the crowd was most prominent at Jesus' death? (27:56)

Get It

- * 16. What did it mean that the sky turned black as Jesus hung on the cross?
- 17. How would you explain to an inquiring friend the significance of the veil in the temple tearing in two as Jesus died?
- 18. Why does it often take drastic measures or life-threatening upheavals to bring people to their senses and persuade them to follow Christ?
- 19. What situations or events did God use to convince you that Jesus is the Son of God?
- 20. Why are the women followers of Jesus mentioned, and not the male disciples?
- * 21. What did Jesus accomplish for you with His death?

Apply It

- * 22. What steps can you take this week to allow the profound truth of this passage to sink in?
- 23. In the near future, with whom can you share the good news of Christ's payment for sin on the cross?

The Burial of Jesus - Matthew 27:57-61

Topics: Actions, Commitment, Courage, Danger, Fear, Generosity, Integrity, Ministry, Peer Pressure, Reputation, Strength, Witnessing

Open It

1. What do you think about fair-weather friends who depart at the first sign of trouble?
2. What would your coworkers say if they found out that you were in this Bible study?
- * 3. Where do you want to be buried? Why?

Explore It

4. Who came to the execution site? When? (27:57)
5. What was true about Joseph of Arimathea? (27:57)
6. What did Joseph think about Jesus and His message? (27:57)
- * 7. What kind of help did Jesus receive at His death? (27:57-58)
8. How did Joseph ask for the body of Jesus? (27:58)
9. How did Pilate respond to Joseph's request? (27:58)
- * 10. What did Joseph do with Jesus' body? (27:59-60)
11. Where did Joseph put Jesus' body? (27:60)
12. How did Joseph seal the tomb? (27:60)
- * 13. Who watched Joseph bury Jesus? (27:61)

Get It

14. Where were Jesus' disciples when all these events were going on?
15. As a respected Jewish religious leader (see Mark 15:42-43 and John 19:38), what risk was Joseph taking in coming forward to bury Jesus?
- * 16. In what ways are you a secret disciple of Christ, afraid to publicly follow him?
17. How might your reputation suffer if you let it be known that your top desire in life is to love and serve Jesus Christ?
18. When, if ever, is it inappropriate to use your power and position to support Christ and his work?
- * 19. What brand-new possessions would you be willing to part with for the sake of Christ?

Apply It

- * 20. What gift (of time, money, effort, possession, etc.) can you give this week out of love and devotion to God?
21. In what setting today, tomorrow, or over the next week do you need to let it be known—maybe for the very first time—that you are a follower of Jesus Christ?

The Guard at the Tomb - Matthew 27:62-66

Topics: Authority, Bitterness, Blindness, Deceit, Determination, Effectiveness, Expectations, Hatred, Insecurity, Lost, Opposition, Plans, Power, Protection, Strength, Waiting

Open It

- * 1. If you could have five personal bodyguards (any people on earth) whom would you choose and then where would you go?
- 2. Where do you feel the safest or most secure and why?
- 3. When in your life have you been “taken for a ride”?

Explore It

- 4. When did the chief priests go to Pilate? (27:62)
- * 5. Who went to Pilate the day after Christ was buried? Why? (27:62-63)
- 6. What words of Jesus did the chief priests remember and report to Pilate? (27:63)
- 7. What did the religious leaders call Jesus? (27:63)
- 8. What did the religious leaders want Pilate to do? (27:64)
- * 9. For how long did the religious leaders want help from Pilate? Why? (27:64)
- 10. What were the Jewish leaders afraid would happen if Pilate refused their request? (27:64)
- 11. What were the chief priests afraid would happen if Jesus’ body disappeared? (27:64)
- 12. What command did Pilate give? (27:65)
- * 13. What did the religious leaders do to secure the tomb where Jesus was buried? (27:65-66)

Get It

- 14. Knowing the attitudes and the actions of the Jews, what is ironic about them calling Jesus a “deceiver” guilty of “deception”?
- 15. What man-made precautions are giving you a false sense of security that everything in your life is under control?
- 16. In what ways do we trust in our own plans instead of in God?
- * 17. In what areas of life are we prone to try to cover up the truth?
- * 18. Why are we sometimes afraid to admit the truth?
- 19. What claim or promise of Christ do you need to take more seriously?

Apply It

- * 20. What truth do you need to face today?
- 21. What foolish, fleshly attempts to control God and your own life do you need to repent of today?

The Resurrection - Matthew 28:1-10

Topics: Angels, Basics of the Faith, Believe, Celebration, Evangelism, Feelings, Gentleness, Good News, Gospel, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Power, Praise, Prophecy, Resurrection, Salvation, Success, Victory, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. In your opinion, what is the most significant event in history?
- 2. If you could go back in time and witness any historical event, which one would you choose? Why?
- 3. What is the most awesome display of power you have ever seen?

Explore It

- 4. When did the events of this passage occur? (28:1)
- 5. Who went to Jesus' tomb? (28:1)
- 6. What significant events took place that morning? (28:2)
- 7. Where did the angel go, and what did he do? (28:2)
- 8. What did the angel look like? (28:3)
- 9. What effect did the angel have on the guards at the tomb of Jesus? (28:4)
- * 10. What amazing news did the angel announce to the women at the tomb? (28:5-6)
- 11. What invitation did the angel give the women? (28:6)
- * 12. What command did the angel give Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary"? (28:7)
- 13. How did the women feel as they left the tomb? (28:8)
- * 14. What kind of meeting took place as the women were going to tell the disciples about Jesus? (28:9)
- 15. How did the women respond when Jesus met them? (28:9)
- 16. What words of challenge and comfort did the women receive? (28:10)

Get It

- 17. If you can mentally place yourself at the tomb of Christ on that first "Easter morning," what emotions would you be feeling?
- * 18. Why is the Resurrection important to us as Christians?
- * 19. What attitude should we have in light of the fact of Jesus' resurrection?
- 20. How might you answer a skeptic who argued that Jesus didn't really rise from the dead?
- 21. Why should we be interested and motivated to tell others about this amazing historical fact?
- 22. How does Jesus' warm, loving attitude—even toward the disciples who deserted him—give you comfort?

Apply It

- * 23. When and where could you spend a few minutes meditating on the truth of this passage over the next week?
- 24. In what practical and realistic ways can you become more effective this week in spreading the good news about Christ?

The Guards' Report - Matthew 28:11-15

Topics: Answers, Blindness, Deceit, Details, Embarrassment, Excuses, Government, Interpretation, Lying, Motives, Plans, Rejection, Religion, Words

Open It

- * 1. How much of what goes on in the world (in government, in business, on the street, in families) is hidden or covered up?
- 2. When you hear two wildly different versions of the same event, how do you determine which one is true?
- 3. What bit of news or information do you remember more than any other?
- 4. As a child, what elaborate cover-ups did you devise in order to hide your misbehavior?

Explore It

- 5. While the women were going out to spread the good news, what did the guards from the tomb do? (28:11)
- 6. What groups met to discuss the “emergency” of Jesus’ missing body? (28:12)
- 7. What did the meeting of religious leaders produce? (28:12)
- * 8. What did the chief priests give the soldiers? Why? (28:12-13)
- 9. Whom did the chief priests bribe? Why? (28:12-13)
- 10. Whom did the chief priests and elders use? Why? (28:12-13)
- 11. What did the religious leaders tell the soldiers to say? (28:13)
- * 12. How did the religious leaders reassure the guards that they would not get in trouble with the Roman government? (28:14)
- 13. What did the soldiers think about the plot? (28:15)
- * 14. To what degree was the story made up by Jesus’ enemies spread and believed? (28:15)

Get It

- 15. How do you think the soldiers felt as they made their way back to headquarters?
- 16. To what do you account the Jewish leaders’ stubborn unwillingness to acknowledge the Resurrection?
- 17. If you had been living at the time, how might you have “poked holes” in the “official account” of the Resurrection?
- 18. What are some other man-made explanations for the Resurrection?
- * 19. How does money or the promise of wealth alter our ability to think clearly and reason purely?
- * 20. Why are we willing to go to great lengths to cover up unpleasant truths?
- 21. In what area(s) of your life have you been covering up the truth and living a lie?

Apply It

- 22. What can you do this week to prepare for discussions with those who don’t believe Jesus rose from the dead?
- * 23. What first step do you need to take today to live with more integrity, no matter how much it costs you?

The Great Commission - Matthew 28:16-20

Topics: Authority, Believe, Call, Challenge, Evangelism, God's Will, Good News, Gospel, Help, Jesus Christ, Ministry, Plans, Purpose, Salvation, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is the most exciting news you have received in the last month?
- 2. What images spring to mind when you hear the words “missionary” or “evangelism”?
- 3. What is the loneliest time you have ever experienced?

Explore It

- 4. Who went to Galilee? When? (28:16)
- 5. Where did the disciples gather? Why? (28:16)
- 6. Why did the disciples assemble on the specific mountain they chose? (28:16)
- 7. Who appeared to the disciples? When? (28:16-17)
- 8. What responses did Jesus' appearance elicit? (28:17)
- 9. What did Jesus say about Himself? (28:18)
- 10. Where did Jesus tell His disciples to go? (28:19)
- * 11. What did Jesus tell His disciples to make? (28:19)
- * 12. What activities were the disciples to be involved in? (28:19-20)
- * 13. With what words of comfort did Jesus leave His disciples? (28:20)

Get It

- 14. What insight into the triune nature of God do you find in this passage?
- 15. Why do you think some of the disciples doubted when they saw Christ?
- 16. What causes Christians to doubt God today?
- 17. How do you think you might have reacted to the appearance of the risen Christ?
- 18. What does it mean to us that Jesus has “all authority”?
- 19. Over what does Jesus have all authority?
- 20. Over whom does Jesus have all authority?
- * 21. What does it mean to “make disciples”?
- * 22. What role do you have in making disciples?
- 23. How can knowing that Jesus is always with us make a difference in our daily lives?
- 24. What specific teaching of Christ do you need to obey more consistently?

Apply It

- 25. What older and wiser Christian can you approach in the next couple of days to ask for help in spiritual learning, training, and growing?
- * 26. What step can you take this week in the process of making disciples?

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John the Baptist Prepares the Way - Mark 1:1-8

Topics: Gospel, Humility, Preparation, Prophecy, Repentance, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. How would you prepare for a home visit from your boss or another important person?
- 2. Why is it important to prepare for the coming of an influential person?
- 3. What attitudes do most ordinary people have about “very important persons”?

Explore It

- 4. What do Mark’s first words tell us about his Gospel? (1:1)
- 5. Who was John the Baptist? (1:2-3)
- * 6. Who sent the messenger? Why? (1:2-3)
- 7. How was Isaiah’s prophecy fulfilled? (1:4)
- * 8. What were the two aspects of John’s ministry? (1:4)
- 9. What reasons to be baptized did John give the people? (1:4)
- 10. What had to happen before John could baptize a person? (1:5)
- 11. When John said, “After me will come one more powerful than I,” to whom was he referring? (1:7)
- 12. What was John’s attitude toward Jesus? (1:7)
- * 13. What was the theme of John’s message? (1:7-8)
- 14. How did Jesus’ baptism differ from John’s? (1:8)

Get It

- 15. What is your reaction to the fact that Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled?
- 16. In what ways can we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us?
- 17. How can Jesus’ gift of the Holy Spirit make a difference in our lives?
- * 18. What does the message of Jesus offer to people?
- 19. What usually prevents us from being Christ’s witnesses?
- 20. How can a person’s witness reflect humility and respect for Jesus?
- 21. How can we ensure that our lives focus attention on Christ, and not on ourselves?
- * 22. In what ways can you prepare others for Christ?

Apply It

- * 23. What step could you take this week toward becoming a better witness for Christ?
- 24. With whom can you share God’s promise of forgiveness of sins? How?
- 25. How can you encourage other Christians to be witnesses for Christ?

The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus - Mark 1:9-13

Topics: Affirmation, Angels, Approval, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Satan, Temptation, Testing

Open It

1. How do people typically show approval of others?
2. When was a time you were affirmed by others?
3. What is one form of recognition you received growing up, whether at school, at home, or from friends?
- * 4. What does the word “temptation” bring to mind?

Explore It

5. Who baptized Jesus? Why? (1:9)
6. Why was this event significant? (1:9)
7. What does Jesus’ baptism tell us about His character? (1:10)
8. What happened after Jesus was baptized? (1:10)
9. How were the three persons of the Trinity present in this event? (1:10-11)
10. To whom was the voice from heaven speaking? (1:11)
11. What did the voice from heaven say about Jesus? (1:11)
- * 12. What happened right after Jesus’ baptism? (1:12)
13. Who sent Jesus into the desert for forty days? Why? (1:12-13)
- * 14. What happened to Jesus in the desert? (1:13)
15. Under what conditions was Jesus tempted? (1:13)
- * 16. What role did angels play in this event? (1:13)

Get It

17. How should we respond to Jesus’ example of baptism?
18. In what ways can we imitate Jesus’ attitude of humility and submission?
19. What implications does Jesus’ experience of temptation have for the temptations we face?
20. What difference does it make to you that the Holy Spirit allows you to be tempted?
21. What might God be trying to teach you through tempting situations?
22. How does it affect you to know that Satan is a force behind temptation?
- * 23. What temptations are difficult for you to resist?
- * 24. How can we depend more on the power of God to help us resist temptation?

Apply It

- * 25. What concrete steps can you take this week to resist temptation?
26. How can you remind yourself that Jesus understands the temptations you experience, and that He can help you resist them?

The Calling of the First Disciples - Mark 1:14-20

Topics: Believe, Family, Follow, Giving Up, Good News, Gospel, Invitation, Obedience, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. What kind of invitations do you enjoy receiving? Why?
- 2. For what kinds of relationships are people willing to sacrifice their own needs?
- 3. When are you most willing to set aside your own needs for another person's needs?

Explore It

- 4. Why did Jesus go to Galilee? (1:14)
- 5. What did Jesus do in Galilee? (1:14)
- 6. How were the two parts of Jesus' message connected? (1:15)
- * 7. How did Jesus want people to respond to the fact that the kingdom of God was near? (1:15)
- * 8. What did Jesus tell the people they must do besides believe His good news? (1:15)
- 9. Whom did Jesus call to be His followers? (1:16, 19)
- * 10. How did Jesus get people to follow Him? (1:17)
- 11. What does it mean to be "fishers of men"? (1:17)
- 12. How did Simon and Andrew respond to Jesus' call? (1:17)
- 13. What sacrifice did James and John make to follow Jesus? (1:20)

Get It

- * 14. What does Christ expect us to give up to follow Him?
- 15. What are you willing to give up in order to follow Christ?
- 16. What does it mean for a person to sacrifice personal achievements, friends, or even family for the sake of Christ?
- 17. What does Jesus ask all of us to do?
- * 18. What can you learn from the disciples' response to Jesus' call?
- 19. How can you obey Christ's commands more faithfully?
- 20. What prevents you from following Jesus wholeheartedly?
- 21. What action is necessary to eliminate these hindrances from your life with Christ?

Apply It

- 22. What specific attitude or action should you give up now as an act of following Christ?
- * 23. How can you follow Jesus this week?

Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit - Mark 1:21-28

Topics: Demons, Healing, Miracles, Serving, Sickness

Open It

1. What makes a person a good teacher?
- * 2. What are some examples of power and authority?
3. What words describe people who have authority?
4. Why do we often feel small around people of power and authority?

Explore It

5. What do Jesus' actions tell us about his beliefs regarding the Sabbath? (1:21)
- * 6. Why were the people amazed at Jesus' teaching? (1:22)
7. What kinds of teachers were the people accustomed to that caused them to be amazed by Jesus' teaching? (1:22)
8. Why did the man in the synagogue cry out to Jesus? (1:23-24)
9. What did the evil spirit say to Jesus? (1:24)
- * 10. What do the evil spirit's words tell us about Christ? (1:24)
11. How did Jesus respond to the man possessed by the evil spirit? (1:25-26)
12. How did the evil spirit respond to Jesus' command to leave the man? (1:26)
13. What occurred in the synagogue after Jesus cast out the demon? (1:27)
14. Why did the people describe Jesus' teaching as "new"? (1:27)
15. Why were the people so excited about Jesus? (1:27)
- * 16. Why did the news about Jesus spread so quickly over the region? (1:27-28)

Get It

17. How does Jesus' teaching differ from the teaching we are used to today?
18. Why should we share the news of Jesus' power and authority with other people?
- * 19. What does this story tell us about evil spirits and Jesus' power?
20. According to Jesus, how should Christians respond to people controlled by sin?
21. What authority does Jesus have over other areas of life?
22. What makes us fearful of claiming Jesus' power over Satan's footholds in our lives?
23. What is wrong with doubting Jesus' power?
24. How can we show confidence in Christ's power over illness?
25. How can we allow Jesus' power and authority to work in our lives?
26. What specific areas of your life need the transforming power of Jesus?
- * 27. What area of your life do you need to place under Jesus' power and authority?

Apply It

- * 28. What is one way you can show submission to Christ's authority in your life throughout this week?
29. What personal need or problem will you ask Jesus, through prayer, to heal this week?
30. What could you do this week for someone who is sick or discouraged?

Jesus Heals Many - Mark 1:29-34

Topics: Authority, Demons, Healing, Miracles, Power, Teaching

Open It

1. Why is it sometimes difficult to help people who are sick?
- * 2. What happens to your attitude when you get sick with a bad cold or the flu?

Explore It

- * 3. What did Jesus do with His companions after teaching in the synagogue? (1:29)
4. What problem did Jesus encounter in this situation? (1:30)
5. Why did the men tell Jesus about Simon's mother-in-law? (1:30)
- * 6. How did Jesus respond to the problem He was faced with? (1:31)
7. Why did Jesus use personal contact to heal the woman of her fever? (1:31)
8. What was the woman's immediate response to Jesus healing her? (1:31)
9. What do the actions of the woman tell us about her? (1:31)
10. When did the crowds of people come to Jesus? (1:32)
11. How might Jesus have felt at this time, considering he had spent the day at the synagogue teaching and healing? (1:32)
12. What attracted people to Jesus in this setting? (1:32)
- * 13. What was Jesus' response to the crowds of sick and demon-possessed people? (1:34)
14. Why did Jesus not allow the demons to speak? (1:34)

Get It

15. How do you feel about serving your family at home after a long, hard day?
- * 16. What does this story tell us our attitude should be toward helping people?
17. Why should we follow the disciples' example of bringing our problems to Jesus?
18. What can we expect Jesus' response will be to our problems?
19. Why is personal contact important in serving the needs of people?
20. Following the example of the woman in the story, what should we do when others serve or help us?
- * 21. What excuses do we use to neglect serving other people?
22. What difference should it make in our lives that Jesus has the power to heal the sick and deliver the demon-possessed?

Apply It

23. What specific area of your life do you need to turn over to Jesus for His healing touch?
- * 24. What concrete step can you take to serve or help someone else this week?

Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place - Mark 1:35-39

Topics: Alone, Demons, Ministry, Prayer, Preparation, Purpose, Sacrifice, Solitude

Open It

- * 1. What do you like or dislike about being alone?
- 2. What does our society think of loners?
- 3. What is most difficult to you about praying?

Explore It

- 4. What did Jesus do? When? (1:35)
- 5. How did Jesus begin this particular day? (1:35)
- 6. When did Jesus go out to pray? (1:35)
- * 7. Where did Jesus go, and why did he go there? (1:35)
- 8. What did Jesus consider important? (1:35-39)
- 9. What did Simon and his companions do when Jesus went to pray alone? (1:36-37)
- * 10. Why wasn't Jesus able to pray alone? (1:37)
- * 11. What did Jesus plan to do after He was finished praying? (1:38)
- 12. What attitude did Jesus have toward the people who demanded his time? (1:38)
- 13. Which of Jesus' tasks did He consider most important: preaching, healing, or casting out demons? (1:38)
- 14. What motivated Jesus to go to the nearby village? (1:38)

Get It

- 15. In light of this passage, how do you think Jesus knew His life purpose so clearly?
- 16. Why do you think Jesus had to spend so much time in prayer if He was the Son of God?
- * 17. How should we follow Christ's example of praying?
- 18. What is the benefit of getting up before dawn to spend time with the Lord in prayer?
- * 19. What area of need does Jesus' example of prayer reveal to you?
- 20. What should be your response to other believers who are committed to prayer?
- 21. How do you think you would have responded if you had been the one to find Jesus praying?
- 22. What can you learn about your own responsibility to serve from Jesus' attitude toward the people who demanded His time?
- 23. How can you order the parts of your life to reflect the priorities Jesus had?
- 24. What one area of your spiritual life do you think the Lord wants you to develop or concentrate on the most right now?
- 25. What role do you think solitude should have in the Christian life?

Apply It

- 26. Following Jesus' example, what can you do this week to spend more quality time with the Lord in prayer?
- * 27. When and where can you pray on a regular basis this week?
- 28. What can you do to increase your consistency in prayer over the next month?

A Man With Leprosy - Mark 1:40-45

Topics: Compassion, Disobedience, Faith, Healing, Sacrifice, Sickness

Open It

- * 1. What childhood memories do you have of a peer being ridiculed or rejected?
- 2. Who are some of the “untouchables” in our society?
- 3. What are some illnesses that people often fear getting?

Explore It

- * 4. What do the man’s words to Jesus tell us about his attitude or spiritual condition? (1:40)
- 5. What evidence do we see that the sick man in this story was desperate? (1:40)
- * 6. Why did Jesus heal the man who came to Him? (1:41)
- 7. How did Jesus heal the leper in this story? (1:41)
- 8. What do Jesus’ specific actions in this episode tell us about His character? (1:41)
- * 9. What happened to the leper? (1:42)
- 10. What specific instructions did Jesus give to the leper after He had healed him? (1:44)
- 11. Why did Jesus want the leper to go to a priest? (1:44)
- 12. Why did Jesus urge the leper to tell no one he was cured? (1:45)
- 13. How did the leper respond to all that had happened to him? (1:45)
- 14. What was the result of the leper’s actions? (1:45)

Get It

- * 15. Who are the outcasts or untouchables in today’s world?
- * 16. In what ways can Christians serve or help people who have great need?
- 17. When has the Lord ever healed you either physically or emotionally?
- 18. How have you responded to the Lord’s healing in your life?
- 19. How would you react if you saw another person miraculously healed by the Lord?
- 20. Looking at the leper’s example, what attitude do you think is crucial to receive healing from the Lord?
- 21. Why do you think God sometimes heals people miraculously yet at other times chooses not to?
- 22. What does this passage tell you about Christ and His attitude toward our pain and suffering?
- 23. When have you ever done the opposite of what you knew Jesus would have wanted you to do?
- 24. How can disobedience cost us?
- 25. What is one area of your life in which you need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing from God?

Apply It

- * 26. To what person in your church or community could you reach out this week? How?
- 27. What concrete action can you take this week to trust Jesus with your areas of need?

Jesus Heals a Paralytic - Mark 2:1-12

Topics: Authority, Blasphemy, Faith, Forgiveness, Friendship, God, Healing, Miracles, Sickness, Sin

Open It

1. What would you think of a person who claimed to be something he or she was not?
- * 2. What do you think would be most difficult about being paralyzed?

Explore It

3. Where did the events of this story take place? (2:1-2)
4. What exactly was Jesus doing when the events of this story took place? (2:2)
- * 5. What dilemma did the paralytic man and his friends face? (2:2-4)
6. What do the details of the story tell you about the paralytic man, his friends, and Jesus' reputation? (2:3-4)
7. How did the paralytic man's friends solve the dilemma that they faced? (2:4)
8. How did the paralytic man's friends get Jesus' attention? (2:4-5)
9. How did Jesus evaluate the faith of the paralytic man and his friends? (2:5)
- * 10. What motivated Jesus to respond to the paralytic man's plight? (2:5)
11. Why did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of blasphemy? (2:6-7)
12. How did Jesus respond to the thoughts of the Pharisees? (2:8-9)
13. How did Jesus show that He had authority to forgive sins? (2:9)
14. What did Jesus mean by "Son of Man"? (2:10)
- * 15. Why did Jesus heal the paralytic man? (2:10-12)
16. Until now, Jesus had been preaching but not performing miracles; why did He heal this particular man? (2:10-12)

Get It

17. Why do you think Jesus chose to forgive the man's sins before healing him physically?
18. Which is it easier for us to do—forgive others or care for them when they're sick?
19. How is God's viewpoint different from ours regarding the forgiveness of sins?
- * 20. What connection is there between a person's faith and God's working in his or her life?
21. What does God require or not require to forgive us of our sins?
22. How would you compare Jesus' response in this story to the Pharisees' attitudes?
23. What does this story tell you is the difference between true spirituality and counterfeit spirituality?
24. What is one paralysis in your life from which you want Jesus to release you?
- * 25. What problems, needs, or weaknesses in your life are there that God can use?

Apply It

- * 26. What specific steps can you take this week to show faith in Christ?
27. What broken area of your life will you ask God to heal?
28. Following the example of the paralytic man's friends, how could you go out of your way to help another believer who is experiencing pain or suffering?

The Calling of Levi - Mark 2:13-17

Topics: Call, Evangelism, Follow, Judging Others, Legalism, Ministry

Open It

- * 1. What feelings or attitudes do most people have about the Internal Revenue Service?
- 2. When do you remember playing “follow the leader” as a kid?
- 3. Who are some controversial leaders that you know of? Why are they controversial?

Explore It

- 4. In what setting did the events of this story take place? (2:13)
- * 5. What was Levi’s status among his neighbors? (2:14)
- 6. What did Jesus want when He spoke to Levi? (2:14)
- 7. What was Levi’s response to Jesus’ words? (2:14)
- 8. What did Levi stand to lose by leaving his work to follow Jesus? (2:14)
- * 9. Why is it significant that Jesus went to Levi’s house for dinner? (2:14-15)
- 10. Who were the other dinner guests at Levi’s house when Jesus had dinner with him? (2:15)
- 11. How did the Pharisees respond to Jesus’ actions? (2:16)
- 12. What was Jesus’ response to the Pharisees? (2:17)
- * 13. What was it about Jesus’ life-style and attitude that made the Pharisees so uncomfortable? (2:15-17)

Get It

- * 14. Why do you think Jesus chose to ask Levi to be one of His followers?
- 15. Who would be the equivalent of a tax collector in our society?
- 16. What do you think Jesus’ disciples thought when He went to Levi’s house?
- 17. What do you think bystanders and other strangers thought of Jesus at this point?
- 18. Why do you think that people of ill repute were so attracted to Jesus?
- 19. How do churches tend to treat people like tax collectors?
- 20. Judging from this passage, how does God want to relate to us?
- 21. How should we view ourselves if we decide to respond to Christ’s call?
- * 22. How should we treat the outcasts of our society?
- 23. How do you personally need to respond to Jesus’ call on your life?
- 24. What can you learn from Levi’s example in this story?
- 25. What does this passage teach you about the best way to tell others about Christ?
- 26. When have you ever acted the same way that the Pharisees did in this story?
- 27. How can you follow Jesus’ example of associating with people of low reputation?

Apply It

- * 28. In what specific way can you honor or recognize a person of “lower status” this week?
- 29. What can you do to listen to Christ as He calls you?

Jesus Questioned About Fasting - Mark 2:18-22

Topics: Celebration, Fasting, Legalism, Obedience, Questions, Spiritual Disciplines

Open It

1. What do you like most and least about weddings?
- * 2. What is the longest amount of time you ever went without food? When?
3. If Jesus came to evaluate your church, how do you think He might want to change it?

Explore It

- * 4. What dilemma puzzled the people who came to Jesus? (2:18)
5. Why did the people come to Jesus? (2:18)
6. What did John's disciples and the Pharisees have in common? (2:18)
7. Looking at Jesus and the Pharisees in this story, how were their attitudes different? (2:18-22)
8. How did Jesus respond to the question that was put to Him? (2:19)
9. To whom was Jesus referring when He spoke of the "guests" and the "bridegroom"? (2:19)
10. Why did Jesus suddenly start speaking about a wedding feast? (2:19-20)
- * 11. How did Jesus' story of the wedding feast answer the people's question about why His disciples did not fast? (2:19-20)
- * 12. Why did Jesus tell two short stories? (2:21-22)
13. What do the old garment and the old wineskins stand for? (2:21-22)
14. What do the patch of the unshrunk cloth and the new wine stand for? (2:21-22)
15. What are "new wineskins," and why are they needed? (2:22)

Get It

- * 16. How were Jesus' and the Pharisees' views of piety different?
17. Why do you think Jesus used a wedding feast to illustrate following Him?
18. What new insights into what it means to be a Christian does this story give you?
19. What does this passage teach you about the role fasting should play in your own spiritual life?
- * 20. How do you need to change your attitudes or actions regarding the spiritual disciplines such as fasting and praying?
21. When has your attitude ever been similar to that of the Pharisees in this story?
22. How can we guard against mere rule-keeping when it comes to spiritual disciplines such as fasting?
23. What difference could the message of this passage make in the procedures and beliefs of your local church?

Apply It

- * 24. What steps can you take this week to practice a spiritual discipline (fasting, prayer, Bible study, meditation, solitude, simplicity, etc.)?
25. Where and how could you learn more about fasting and prayer over the next few weeks?

Lord of the Sabbath - Mark 2:23-3:6

Topics: Healing, Hypocrisy, Judging Others, Law, Legalism, Obedience, Rest

Open It

- * 1. How do you prefer to use your weekends?
- 2. What do you understand to be the difference between “the letter of the law” and “the spirit of the law”?

Explore It

- 3. What is the setting of the story, and why is it significant? (2:23)
- * 4. What did the disciples do that outraged the Pharisees? (2:24)
- 5. Why did the Pharisees confront Jesus about the actions of His disciples? (2:24)
- * 6. What was Jesus’ response to the Pharisees’ charges? (2:25-27)
- * 7. According to Jesus, why were the disciples of both David and Jesus justified in breaking the Sabbath? (2:25-27)
- 8. Why did Jesus say He was “Lord even of the Sabbath”? (2:28)
- 9. What happened after the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees? (3:1)
- 10. Why were some of the Pharisees watching Jesus so closely? (3:2)
- 11. What was notable about the way Jesus performed this miracle? (3:3)
- 12. To whom did Jesus address a provocative question about “the Sabbath”? (3:4)
- 13. What was it about the Pharisees that so distressed Jesus? (3:5)
- 14. What significance do you see in the fact that the Pharisees were willing to plot with their enemies, the Herodians, to kill Jesus? (3:6)
- 15. What do Jesus’ actions in this story tell you about His concerns? (2:23-3:6)

Get It

- 16. Why do you think Jesus healed the man publicly?
- 17. How was Jesus’ spirituality different from that of the Pharisees?
- 18. Where have you seen rules-only spirituality in the church today?
- 19. In what areas do you think your church might be following the “letter of the law” rather than the “spirit of the law”?
- 20. How should we respond to suggestions that it only matters how closely we keep the letter of the law?
- * 21. When have you ever experienced a time when the requirements of your Christian faith seemed to conflict with a human need?
- * 22. What should we do when a requirement of the faith seems to conflict with a human need?
- 23. In what areas of your faith do you tend to be too beholden to rules or traditions?
- 24. What are your responsibilities on the Sabbath?
- 25. What is Jesus’ attitude toward the Sabbath?
- 26. In what ways can we copy Jesus’ example in how He used the Sabbath?
- 27. What difference does it make that “the Sabbath was made for man”?

Apply It

- * 28. In what settings are you able to “do good and save life”? How?
- 29. What can you do this week to reflect God’s design for the Sabbath?
- 30. What can you use as a reminder to guard against a concern only for the letter of the law?

Crowds Follow Jesus - Mark 3:7-12

Topics: Demons, Follow, God, Healing, Ministry, Miracles, Sickness

Open It

1. What is a story of miraculous healing that you have heard?
- * 2. What is it like to be lost in a huge crowd (such as in a store, airport, or stadium)?
3. How is it possible to feel lost or lonely in a massive crowd of people?

Explore It

4. What is the setting of this story? (3:7)
- * 5. Why did Jesus want to leave? (3:7)
6. Why did such large crowds follow Jesus? (3:7-8)
7. Where did the crowds come from? (3:7-8)
8. What was unusual about the crowds that came to see Jesus? (3:7-8)
- * 9. Why were the crowds so interested in following Jesus? (3:7-12)
10. What do the details of this story tell us about Jesus' popularity? (3:7-12)
- * 11. What do the details of this story tell us about Jesus' priorities? (3:7-12)
12. What did Jesus tell His disciples to get? Why? (3:9)
13. What had been happening among the crowd that day? (3:10)
14. How were the crowds approaching Jesus with their needs? (3:10)
15. How did the evil spirits respond to Jesus when they saw Him? Why? (3:11)
16. What warning did Jesus issue? (3:12)

Get It

17. For what reasons do you follow Jesus?
18. How can you personally be involved in letting other people know what it is like to follow Jesus?
19. What do you learn from this passage about Jesus' attitude toward His ministry?
- * 20. What area of your life (physical, emotional, or spiritual) needs to be healed by Jesus?
21. What difference should it make in our lives that even evil spirits fall down and recognize Jesus for who He really is?
22. What can we learn from this passage about resisting the devil?
- * 23. How would it make a difference in your spiritual life if you had more confidence in Christ's power and authority?
24. How can we show confidence in Christ's power and authority?
25. What attitude or tendency hinders you from following Jesus?

Apply It

26. What physical, emotional, or other hurt will you ask God to heal?
- * 27. What need can you bring to Jesus? How could you do so?
28. What concrete action can you take this week in imitation of Jesus' priority of helping people?

The Appointing of the Twelve Apostles - Mark 3:13-19

Topics: Authority, Call, Choices, Demons, Evangelism, Follow, Leadership, Ministry, Teamwork, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. By what criteria do you choose your friends?
- 2. What qualities do you think are important in a friend?
- 3. What qualities do you think are important for a person who is a leader in the church?

Explore It

- * 4. What is the setting of this story? (3:13)
- 5. How did the apostles respond to Jesus' call? (3:13)
- 6. Why did Jesus choose His disciples? (3:14)
- 7. What did Jesus want His apostles to do with their time? (3:14-15)
- * 8. What did Jesus expect of the men He designated apostles? (3:14-15)
- 9. Who would send out the apostles and give them authority to drive out demons? (3:14-15)
- 10. What sort of declaration was Jesus making to His enemies by choosing and commissioning the Twelve? (3:14-15)
- 11. What did Jesus do with some of His followers and not others? (3:16-19)
- 12. What unusual men did Jesus choose? (3:16-19)
- * 13. What was unusual about some of the men Jesus chose? (3:16-19)

Get It

- 14. What criteria do you think Jesus used to choose His apostles?
- 15. Why do you think Jesus wanted the apostles to spend time with Him?
- 16. What can we learn from Jesus' example of choosing apostles to be with Him and to help Him?
- 17. What does the fact that Jesus chose as apostles both Simon the Zealot, a political extremist, and Matthew the tax collector, a traitor working for the occupying government, tell us about the kingdom of God?
- 18. How has the call of Jesus Christ in your life changed your attitude toward people with whom you previously would not have associated?
- 19. Why do you think Jesus assigned new names to some of the apostles and not to all of them?
- 20. What do you think the men themselves thought about their opportunity to be one of Christ's disciples?
- 21. What attitudes or actions do you feel still need to be changed in your life to more fully obey Christ's call to follow Him?
- * 22. What difference does it make to you that Jesus chose imperfect people to share in His ministry?
- 23. What specific role do you think God has given you to fill in this world?
- 24. How can we determine how best to serve God with our particular gifts and abilities?
- 25. What do you think the leadership of your church could learn from the way Jesus chose His twelve followers?
- 26. How can you personally become more involved in teaching and helping others serve Jesus?
- * 27. From what other more mature believers can you learn?

Apply It

- * 28. What would be your first step toward learning from a more mature believer in your church?
- 29. In what ways can you depend on others to carry the weight of God's work at this time in your life?
- 30. What specific steps can you take this week to help one other person use in God's service a skill that God has given him or her?

Jesus and Beelzebub - Mark 3:20-30

Topics: Blasphemy, Church, Demons, Divisions, Forgiveness, Holy Spirit, Sacrifice, Satan, Sin, Unity

Open It

- * 1. In your experience, when has faithfulness to a cause or person led to conflict with others?
- 2. In what situations or settings can unity be important?

Explore It

- 3. What was the problem at the onset of this story? (3:20)
- 4. Who tried to solve Jesus' dilemma? Why? (3:21)
- * 5. What did Jesus' family think of Him? (3:21)
- 6. Where had Jesus' detractors come from? (3:21-22)
- * 7. Besides Jesus' own family, who else found fault with Him? (3:22)
- 8. How did the teachers of the law try to explain Jesus' behavior? (3:22)
- * 9. How did Jesus refute His opponents' accusation that He was possessed by the devil? (3:23-27)
- 10. What does Jesus' speech about a "kingdom divided" tell us about the kingdom of God? (3:24-26)
- 11. Who was the "strong man" of whom Jesus spoke? (3:27)
- 12. Who was the "robber"? (3:27)
- 13. What was the "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" of which Jesus spoke? (3:29-30)
- 14. Why is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit uniquely worthy of divine judgment? (3:29-30)

Get It

- 15. Why do you think Jesus' family thought He was "out of his mind"?
- 16. In light of this passage, what do we fight against?
- 17. Why do you think Jesus chose to speak to His audience in parables?
- 18. What difference does it make in your life to know that Jesus has authority over all the evil powers of this world?
- 19. What is the true significance of Jesus' ministry of casting out demons?
- * 20. Why is unity among Christians so important?
- 21. In what ways can we strengthen the unity of the church?
- * 22. In what ways can you strengthen your local fellowship or church?
- 23. What can a believer do to guard against disunity in the church?
- 24. What can we do to avoid committing the "unforgivable sin"?
- 25. When, if ever, have you been thought of as "out of your mind" by other people because of your efforts to live a Christian life?
- 26. How should Christians respond to conflict with other people, both non-Christians and believers, in light of Jesus' example?
- 27. What has following Jesus cost you?

Apply It

- 28. What can you do over the next few days to restore a relationship that strains your unity with other Christians?
- * 29. What is one step you can take this week to strengthen the unity of your local church?

Jesus' Mother and Brothers - Mark 3:31-35

Topics: Family, God's Will, Loyalty, Obedience, Parents, Relationships, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. What is one of your favorite childhood memories of your mother?
- 2. With whom do you feel a kindred spirit? Why?
- 3. What did you and your siblings fight about when you were in elementary school?

Explore It

- 4. What was the setting of this story? (3:31-32)
- * 5. Who wanted to see Jesus? Why? (3:31-32)
- 6. Why did Jesus' mother and brothers go to a particular house? (3:31-32)
- 7. How did Jesus' family summon Him? (3:31-32)
- 8. Who told Jesus of His family's request? (3:32)
- * 9. What rhetorical question did Jesus ask? Why? (3:33)
- * 10. How did Jesus respond to the request by His mother and brothers? (3:33-34)
- 11. Whom did Jesus designate as His "family"? (3:34)
- 12. What unique name is given to "whoever does God's will"? (3:35)
- 13. When did Jesus' mother and brothers get to see Him? (3:33-35)

Get It

- 14. How do you think Jesus' mother and brothers responded to His actions in this story?
- 15. What feelings do you think Jesus had toward His family?
- 16. How do you interpret Jesus' actions toward His family?
- 17. What does this account tell you about Jesus' priorities?
- * 18. In what way does doing God's will make a person Christ's brother or sister?
- 19. How has your commitment to Christ affected your relationship with your family?
- * 20. Why is it important for us to place even our families under the rule and place of Christ?
- 21. In light of this passage, how should Christians relate to one another?
- 22. How should you relate to members of your family who are not Christians?
- 23. When has your commitment to Christ caused conflict in your family?
- 24. How do you think God wants you to respond to conflict situations in your family?
- 25. How can a person be sure to be included in the family of God?
- 26. What do Jesus' actions in this episode tell you about what your priorities in life should be?

Apply It

- * 27. What could you do or say to help your family understand your faith in Christ?
- 28. In what areas of your work should your behavior reflect a greater kinship with Christ? How?
- 29. What can you do each day to cultivate a kindred spirit with Christ?

The Parable of the Sower - Mark 4:1-20

Topics: Desires, Gospel, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Perseverance, Spiritual Growth, Teaching, Wealth, Witnessing, Worry

Open It

1. What illustration would you use to explain your job?
2. What three words would you use to describe your spiritual life?
- * 3. What do you do to keep your house plants alive?

Explore It

4. Where does this story take place? (4:1)
5. How did Jesus start to teach the crowds? (4:2)
6. When did Jesus use parables instead of saying directly what He meant? (4:2)
- * 7. What are the four scenes described in this parable? (4:3-10)
8. How did those closest to Jesus respond to the parable He told? (4:10)
9. In what way did Jesus limit His explanation of the parable? (4:11-12)
10. What problem did this exchange bring up? (4:13)
- * 11. To what was Jesus referring when He said, "The farmer sows the word"? (4:14)
12. What did Jesus want us to understand about God from this parable? (4:14-20)
- * 13. What are some obstacles that prevent people from accepting the gospel or hanging on to their faith? (4:15-19)
14. What happens to those who hear the truth about Christ and accept it? (4:20)

Get It

15. Why do you think Jesus considered Isaiah's words relevant to His preaching about the kingdom of God?
16. Knowing that most of the men in the crowd were farmers and Jesus used an illustration from farming, why did many in the audience not understand His message?
17. Why do you think Jesus explained the "secret" only to his disciples and not to the crowds in general?
18. When and where do we need to listen carefully?
19. To what area of your life does this parable speak?
20. What kind of soil do you think represents you?
21. How will you respond to the coming of the kingdom of God?
22. What can you do—and not do—to make the message "take root" when you teach or tell others about Christ?
23. How does Satan "take away the word" before it has a chance to take root?
- * 24. What troubles or persecutions cause believers to fall away?
25. What do you think your church can do to help people be better hearers?
26. What can we do to make sure the messages of God's Word take root and grow in us?
- * 27. How can you make sure that the worries of life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the other desires of the world will not choke the life out of your Christian walk?
28. What is the first step in obeying what we already know to be God's will?
29. What can you do to increase your fruit as a Christian?

Apply It

30. What is one step you can take to guard against the desires of the world that threaten your devotion to Christ?
- * 31. In what area of your life do you need to start listening to God?
32. What is one biblical truth that you want to cultivate in your life each day this week?

A Lamp on a Stand - Mark 4:21-25

Topics: Accountability, Fairness, Listening, Obedience, Responsibility, Truth

Open It

1. What kinds of lights do you have in your home?
- * 2. What is one thing you feel you can do well?
3. How do most of your coworkers measure wealth?

Explore It

4. With what observation did Jesus open His illustration? (4:21)
5. What did Jesus say would be ridiculous? Why? (4:21)
6. Whom or what does the lamp in this parable represent? (4:21)
7. What did Jesus mean by saying, “whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed”? (4:22)
8. What will happen to what is secret and hidden? (4:22)
9. Who did Jesus want this message to reach? (4:23)
- * 10. Why did Jesus warn us to “consider carefully” what we hear? (4:24)
11. How did Jesus end His parable? (4:24-25)
12. Who will be given more? Why? (4:24-25)
13. Who will have things taken from them? Why? (4:24-25)
- * 14. What will happen to those who use or put into practice what God has measured out to them? (4:24-25)
- * 15. What will happen to those who neglect or misuse the truth God has already revealed to them? (4:24-25)

Get It

16. What is the meaning of this parable?
17. When have you ever tried to hide or conceal what you know God “meant to be brought out into the open”?
18. When Jesus said that those who have been given more, what exactly did He mean?
19. How would you rewrite this parable to fit our modern-day culture, yet get the same message across?
20. How do you think the people listening to Jesus’ teaching responded to this parable?
21. How can we consider more carefully what we hear?
22. How would you describe the “measure” that has been given to you?
- * 23. What responsibility do you have before God in light of the truth or knowledge God has already revealed to you?
- * 24. In what ways do you think God expects more or less of you than others?
25. In light of this passage, how can Christians expect to grow spiritually?
26. Why do you think some believers remain immature Christians for a long time?
27. What does this passage teach us about being examples?
28. What does this passage teach us about telling others about Christ?

Apply It

- * 29. What is one specific word of Jesus (a promise, truth, or command) that you can consciously remind yourself of throughout this next week?
30. What is involved in fulfilling the areas of responsibility you have?

The Parable of the Growing Seed - Mark 4:26-29

Topics: Gospel, Growth, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Power, Productivity

Open It

1. What short phrase or cliché would you use to describe this country?
2. What experiences have you had with growing plants from seeds?
- * 3. What does it take for plants to grow, and where do you get the things you need?

Explore It

4. What did Jesus want the people to understand about the kingdom of God? (4:26)
5. What role did the man in the parable play? (4:26-27)
- * 6. What do the man and the seed in the parable represent? (4:26-29)
7. What does this parable reveal about Jesus' concerns? (4:26-29)
8. How did the seed in the parable sprout and grow? (4:27)
9. What was the growth process like for the seed? (4:28)
10. How did the seed grow? (4:28)
- * 11. How did the man get the seed to grow? (4:28)
12. At what point did the man get involved in the plant's growth after he planted it? (4:29)
- * 13. To what does the phrase "the harvest is come" refer? (4:29)

Get It

14. Why do you think Jesus told parables to explain the kingdom of God to the crowds of people?
15. The Jews of Jesus' day expected God's kingdom to come physically and politically. How does this compare with the description Jesus gave in this parable?
16. What encouragement can believers glean from this parable regarding their own spiritual growth?
- * 17. How does this parable help you better understand what the kingdom of God is like?
18. How does it make you feel to know that the message of Christ contains a mysterious power in itself?
- * 19. How does the message of this parable help believers evangelize and teach?
20. What should our response be to the fact that one day "the harvest will come"?
21. What have you learned about your own spiritual walk with the Lord from this parable?
22. What can you do in your life, and in the lives of others, to create conditions where the Word of God will grow?

Apply It

- * 23. What specific steps can you take to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to change others when you tell them about Christ?
24. What is one way you can spread God's Word this week to help God's kingdom grow?

The Parable of the Mustard Seed - Mark 4:30-34

Topics: Example, Greatness, Growth, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Productivity, Teaching, Understanding

Open It

1. If Jesus Christ had been sent to earth during our generation, how do you think He would have chosen to tell us His message?
- * 2. What are some examples of something small that grows into something big?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus use to explain the kingdom of God? (4:30)
4. In what ways is this parable different from the previous one Jesus told? (4:30-31)
- * 5. How is the kingdom of God like a mustard seed? (4:32)
6. What is the kingdom of God like? (4:31)
7. What does the mustard seed represent in this parable? (4:31)
8. What do you think this parable meant to Jesus' original audience? (4:31)
9. How could the beginning of the kingdom of God be compared to such a small, insignificant seed? (4:31)
- * 10. What promise is given in this parable? (4:31-32)
- * 11. Why did Jesus use the smallest seed known to the Galilean farmers in His audience as the example in this parable? (4:31-32)
12. How did Jesus teach the crowds? (4:33-34)
13. How did Jesus teach His disciples? (4:33-34)
14. How did Jesus' approach to teaching the crowds differ from the way He taught His disciples? (4:33-34)
15. What did Jesus do for His disciples to ensure that they learned from His parables? (4:34)
16. How did Jesus make sure His disciples understood His teaching? (4:34)

Get It

17. How might this parable have encouraged Christians being persecuted by the Roman state?
18. Why do you think Jesus spoke only in parables to the crowds at this point in His ministry?
- * 19. What does this parable tell us about trying to persuade others to believe in Christ?
20. How can you apply the principle of this parable to your situation in life right now?
21. In what ways does this parable encourage you to persist in your faith?
22. Why do you think God chose to introduce His kingdom through a controversial man with a handful of obscure followers?
23. To what extent do you think you should model your style of evangelism after Jesus' example?
- * 24. What does this parable teach you about sharing the message of Christ with your non-Christian friends?
25. What difference can it make in your everyday life that Jesus' kingdom will prevail over the sin and corruption of this world?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you get involved this week in spreading the Good News and participating in the growth of the kingdom of God?
27. What word or message from the Bible can you share with someone else? How?
28. Who is one person with whom you could share the promise of the kingdom of God?

Jesus Calms the Storm - Mark 4:35-41

Topics: Doubt, Faith, Fear, Miracles, Nature, Obedience, Power, Trust

Open It

1. What do you usually feel like doing after a long, hard day of work?
2. When was the last time you felt out of control?
- * 3. How do you tend to handle stress—thrive, panic, seek out distractions, procrastinate, etc.?

Explore It

4. When did the events of this story take place? (4:35)
- * 5. Where did Jesus and His disciples go? How? (4:35-36)
6. Why did the disciples take Jesus along “just as He was”? (4:36)
7. What emergency situation arose? (4:37)
- * 8. Why were the disciples surprised with Jesus? (4:37-38)
9. What was Jesus doing during a violent storm? (4:38)
10. How was Jesus coping with the storm that threatened Him and His men? (4:38)
11. What is significant about the disciples’ questioning Jesus by asking, “Don’t you care if we drown?” (4:38)
12. How would you compare Jesus’ behavior during this crisis with that of His disciples? (4:38)
13. How did Jesus solve the dilemma He and His disciples were facing? (4:39)
- * 14. Why did Jesus rebuke His disciples? (4:40)
15. What was the answer to the rhetorical question that the disciples asked? (4:41)
16. What did the disciples learn about Jesus from this event? (4:39-41)

Get It

17. How do you think Jesus felt after long days of teaching the people, responding to His opponents, and healing the sick?
18. Where do you think Jesus found the strength to maintain such an exhausting level of ministry?
19. When have you ever felt as the disciples did—distressed at events out of control?
20. What have been some of the “storms” in your personal life?
- * 21. What “storms” or difficulties are you going through right now?
22. How has God helped you handle your fears and frustrations during difficult times?
23. In what specific ways has God shown His care and love for you?
24. What difference does it make to you that Jesus has authority over all the powers and forces of our world?
25. In what area of your life is your faith lacking?
- * 26. How can you trust more completely in the power and authority of Jesus?
27. What miraculous work would you like Jesus to do in your life? How could you ask Him?
28. In what specific area of your life do you need more faith in God?

Apply It

- * 29. How can you trust God this upcoming week with situations that get out of control or seem hopeless?
30. What do you want to remember the next time your life seems out of control?
31. When could you pray regularly this week for the needs in your life?

The Healing of a Demon-possessed Man - Mark 5:1-20

Topics: Demons, Doubt, Fear, Healing, Miracles, Power, Witnessing

Open It

1. When was the last time you had such wonderful news that you could not wait to tell someone about it?
2. What do people today think of the devil and demons?
- * 3. What makes people resistant to talking about God or religion?

Explore It

4. Where did the events of this story take place? (5:1)
5. To what Gentile (non-Jewish) area did Jesus and His disciples go? How? (5:1)
6. Who went out to meet Jesus? (5:2)
7. What was the man's life like before he met Jesus? (5:3-5)
8. How had the townspeople coped with the demon-possessed man Jesus met? (5:4)
- * 9. Why was the man Jesus met chained up? (5:4-5)
10. How did the demon-possessed man react to Jesus? (5:6-7)
11. Why were the demons so terrified of Jesus? (5:7)
12. How did Jesus treat the man He met? (5:8-20)
- * 13. What did Jesus do to help the demon-possessed man? (5:8-20)
14. What do Jesus' actions tell us about His character? (5:8-20)
15. What did the demons beg of Jesus? (5:10)
16. What happened when the demons asked to go into the pigs? (5:11-13)
17. How did news of this event spread? (5:14-16)
18. What was the man's life like after Jesus ordered the demons out of him? (5:15-20)
19. What did the Gerasene people think of Jesus' gracious action on the man's behalf? (5:17)
20. Where did the man whom Jesus had helped want to go? (5:18)
- * 21. What request did Jesus deny? Why? (5:18-19)
22. How did the man respond to Jesus' instructions? (5:19-20)

Get It

23. The Gerasene people opposed Jesus even though He helped them; why do people sometimes oppose Christians today?
24. What are some ways that Satan tries to keep Christians from sharing the message of Christ with others?
25. Over what areas of our lives does Jesus have power and authority?
26. What are some concrete ways we can turn over control of our lives to Christ?
27. What does God want to deliver us from?
28. If you had been in the same situation as the Gerasene people, how would you have reacted to Jesus' healing of the demon-possessed man?
- * 29. When and where do you tend to receive opposition to talking about God or religion?
- * 30. What can we do to overcome resistance to the message of Christ?
31. What sometimes causes us to oppose what God wants?
32. What does Jesus' treatment of the man in this story tell us about his care for people?
33. How does the man's actions after Jesus delivered him from demon-possession serve as an example to us?
34. When has the Lord delivered you from a sickness or difficulty in your life? How did you react?
35. How can we show gratitude to God for what He has given us?
36. With whom do you think you should share the good news of Jesus?

Apply It

- * 37. What can you do this week to bring the message of Christ to a friend or coworker?
- 38. What is one area of your life that you can ask God to heal?
- 39. How can you say thank you to God for the way He has worked in your life?

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman - Mark 5:21-43

Topics: Believe, Death, Faith, Fear, Healing, Miracles, Sickness, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. How did your mother take care of you when you were sick?
- 2. When has the Lord ever healed you or someone you knew?
- 3. What are some common fears people have?

Explore It

- * 4. Who was Jairus, and why did he want to see Jesus? (5:22-23)
- 5. Who wanted to see Jesus? Why? (5:22-23)
- 6. What was Jairus' attitude toward Jesus? (5:23)
- 7. How would you compare the faith of Jairus with the faith of the woman in the story? (5:23, 28)
- 8. What did Jesus do for Jairus? (5:24)
- 9. What was the plight of the woman in this story? (5:25-26)
- 10. How was the bleeding woman healed? (5:25-29)
- 11. Why did the woman touch Jesus' clothing? (5:27-28)
- 12. What happened when the woman touched Jesus' cloak? (5:29)
- 13. What was Jesus' immediate response to the woman's action? (5:30-32)
- 14. Why did Jesus suddenly stop walking? (5:30-32)
- 15. Why could the disciples not understand Jesus' action? (5:31)
- 16. Why did the woman fall down? (5:33)
- 17. Of what was the woman afraid? (5:33)
- 18. How did Jesus' reply give the woman comfort and reassurance? (5:34)
- 19. What happened while Jesus was still speaking to the woman? (5:35)
- * 20. Whom did Jesus tell not to be afraid and to "just believe"? Why? (5:35-36)
- 21. Who were the only people who went with Jesus to Jairus' home? Why? (5:37-38)
- 22. What did Jesus mean when He said, "The child is not dead but asleep"? (5:39)
- 23. How did people react when Jesus expressed confidence that the dead girl would be all right? (5:40)
- * 24. Who witnessed the girl being raised from the dead by Jesus? (5:40-42)
- 25. What were Jesus' final instructions? (5:43)

Get It

- 26. What connection is there between a person's faith and whether God heals him or her of a sickness?
- 27. How does Jesus' treatment of the sick woman and Jairus offer comfort to us today?
- 28. Why do you think the bleeding woman was afraid to admit she was the one who had touched Jesus?
- 29. When have you ever felt afraid of God, like the woman who touched Jesus?
- 30. In what way is it good for a person to be afraid of God?
- 31. In what way do we need to feel that God is approachable?
- * 32. In what situations do you need God's help?
- 33. What does this passage tell us about Jesus' character?
- 34. In what situation in your life do you need to heed Jesus' words, "Don't be afraid, just believe"?
- 35. Why do you think Jesus urged people not to spread the news of the girl's healing?
- 36. How do you hope God will work in the situations that cause you fear?
- * 37. What attitude or action do you need to change in your own life in light of the fact that Jesus is willing to respond miraculously to our needs?

Apply It

- 38. What is one fear that you can ask the Lord to help you face this week?
- * 39. With what concrete action can you show your faith in the Lord this week?

A Prophet Without Honor - Mark 6:1-6

Topics: Doubt, Faith, Family, Home, Honor, Miracles, Rejection, Unbelievers

Open It

1. Do you think it's easier to talk about your faith with a stranger, a family member, or a close friend? Why?
2. What does the cliché "Familiarity breeds contempt" mean?
- * 3. What is one piece of advice your parents gave you that you ignored growing up?

Explore It

4. Who went to his hometown? With whom? (6:1)
5. What did Jesus do when He returned to His hometown? (6:2)
6. Why were the people of Nazareth amazed by Jesus? (6:2)
- * 7. Why did the people of Nazareth react negatively to Jesus' visit? (6:2-3)
8. Why did the people of Nazareth talk among themselves about Jesus' family background? (6:3)
- * 9. What did Jesus say to the people who scoffed at Him? (6:4)
10. What did Jesus do in Nazareth? (6:5)
- * 11. What prevented Jesus from doing more than a few miracles in Nazareth? (6:5-6)
12. At what was Jesus amazed? Why? (6:6)
13. How did the response to Jesus in Nazareth compare to the response in the other regions Jesus had visited? (6:6)

Get It

14. How have your family or close friends responded to your faith?
15. What does this story tell us is one cost of following Christ?
16. What can we learn from this story about the cost of following Christ?
17. What can we do to prevent ourselves from having the same lack of faith that the people in Nazareth had?
18. In what ways do you think we prevent Jesus from working miraculously in our own lives?
19. In what area of your life would you like the Lord to give you more faith?
20. How could your local church step out in faith, believing that the Lord rewards those who trust Him?
- * 21. What prevents us from listening to the people we know well?
- * 22. How can we make ourselves more open to the insights of parents, siblings, or others who are close to us?

Apply It

23. In what way could you share the message of Christ with a family member or friend this week?
24. With what specific step could you turn over one area of your life to the Lord as an act of faith in Him?
- * 25. In what matter could you seek the counsel of a family member or close friend? When?

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve - Mark 6:7-13

Topics: Authority, Demons, Faith, Healing, Ministry, Money, Repentance, Sacrifice, Teamwork

Open It

- * 1. In what ways have you ever had to depend on others for some of your needs?
- 2. What does society tell us about depending on others?
- 3. When have you been able to give support to another person who was having problems?

Explore It

- * 4. What task did Jesus give the disciples? (6:7)
- 5. What do Jesus' actions tell us about His attitude toward His men? (6:7)
- 6. How did Jesus send out the disciples? (6:7)
- * 7. How did Jesus equip the disciples for their job? (6:7-11)
- 8. What specific instructions did Jesus give the Twelve? (6:8-11)
- * 9. How did Jesus want His men to travel? (6:8-11)
- 10. Who was to provide the food and money for the disciples? (6:8)
- 11. What was the central focus of the mission of the Twelve? (6:7, 13)
- 12. What were the disciples to do if anyone would not welcome them? Why? (6:11)
- 13. What did Jesus mean by saying, "... as a testimony against them"? (6:11)
- 14. What does this episode tell us about why Jesus came to earth? (6:12-13)

Get It

- 15. How do you think the disciples felt about Jesus sending them on their assigned task?
- 16. Why do you think Jesus told His men to pack lightly?
- 17. How can you know whether God is directing you to do a specific task?
- 18. How do you feel when you receive a challenging opportunity like the one Jesus gave the disciples?
- * 19. How has God equipped you for serving Him?
- * 20. How can you apply Jesus' advice to your Christian witness at work?
- 21. How should you react to people who do not respond to the message of Christ?
- 22. What does this passage teach about our responsibility to those who minister full-time?
- 23. In what ways have you fallen short of what Jesus teaches in this passage?
- 24. What can you do to ensure your life is reflecting the same message that Jesus taught when He was on the earth?
- 25. How can you equip yourself for Christian service?

Apply It

- 26. What can you do this week to show support for someone who ministers full-time?
- * 27. To whom can you take the message of Christ this week? How?

John the Baptist Beheaded - Mark 6:14-29

Topics: Doubt, Holiness, Lust, Murder, Persecution, Power, Sacrifice, Sin

Open It

- * 1. Who do your friends and acquaintances think Jesus is?
- 2. What do most people believe about miracles and the supernatural?
- 3. In what sense do you think it is or is not harder to believe in miracles today than it was in New Testament times?

Explore It

- 4. How did Herod hear about Jesus' miracles? (6:14)
- 5. What were people saying about Jesus? Why? (6:14-16)
- * 6. What do Herod's actions throughout this episode say about the way sin operates in a person's life? (6:14-29)
- 7. What was it about Jesus that kept most people from believing that He was the Messiah? (6:14-16)
- 8. What did Herod think of Jesus? (6:16)
- * 9. Why had Herod arrested and imprisoned John the Baptist? (6:17-18)
- 10. What had John told Herod that caused Herodias to hold a grudge against John? (6:18-19)
- 11. How was John's condemnation of Herod's adulterous marriage related to the central message of John's preaching? (6:18)
- 12. Why did Herod fear and protect John? (6:20)
- 13. What did Mark mean when he wrote, "Finally the opportune time came"? (6:21)
- * 14. What happened at the party described in this passage? (6:21-28)
- 15. What caused Herod to offer Herodias's daughter almost anything she wanted? (6:22-23)
- 16. Why did Herod make a foolish promise? (6:22-23)
- 17. What resulted from Herod's foolish promise? (6:24-25)
- 18. How did Herod respond to the girl's request? (6:26-28)
- 19. What became of John? (6:29)

Get It

- 20. What false ideas about Jesus do people entertain today?
- 21. How should we as Christians respond to others who malign the name of Christ?
- 22. When has it been difficult for you to confront someone about sin, as it was for John to confront Herod?
- 23. What responsibility do Christians have to confront non-believers with their sin and to tell them of the remedy that Christ offers?
- * 24. What can we learn from Herod's negative example about preventing sin from "snowballing" or getting out of control?
- * 25. How do you think Christians can keep one another accountable?
- 26. How can you guard against holding a grudge against another person?
- 27. Herod knew John to be a righteous and holy man; how do you think people view you?
- 28. How can we guard against making foolish promises?
- 29. What do you need to change in your life to have a stronger witness for Christ?

Apply It

- 30. Whom do you need to confront sometime soon? How can you?
- * 31. What concrete action can you take to prevent a certain area of sin in your personal life from controlling you? When?

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand - Mark 6:30-44

Topics: Compassion, Doubt, Faith, Miracles, Quiet, Rest, Teaching, Thankfulness

Open It

1. What was a time when you had to do something that you thought was impossible? What happened?
- * 2. What is your idea of a feast?

Explore It

3. What did the apostles do upon returning from their trip? (6:30)
4. Why did Jesus want to go away with the disciples to a quiet place? (6:31-32)
5. What prevented Jesus and His disciples from getting some rest and relaxation? (6:33)
6. How did Jesus respond to the crowds of people waiting to see Him? (6:34)
7. What does Jesus' reaction to the crowds tell you about His character and mission? (6:34)
8. What problem did the disciples notice? (6:35-36)
- * 9. What problem did the disciples bring to Jesus? Why? (6:35-36)
10. What solution did the disciples suggest to the problem they faced? (6:36)
- * 11. What did Jesus think of the disciples' suggestion? (6:37)
- * 12. What did the disciples think of Jesus' solution? (6:37)
13. What does the disciples' reaction to Jesus tell us about them? (6:37)
14. What unique plan did Jesus come up with? (6:38-41)
15. How much food did Jesus provide? (6:42-44)
16. What did Jesus' disciples do with the leftovers? (6:43)
17. How many people did this event directly affect? (6:44)

Get It

- * 18. What do you think Jesus wanted to teach His disciples through this miracle?
- * 19. What do you think Jesus' disciples learned through this experience?
20. Why do you think Jesus provided much more than enough food for the people, then had the surplus carefully collected?
21. Why do you think God tells us to do things that seem to be impossible?
22. What do you think Jesus wants to teach you through this miracle?
23. When have you felt it necessary to take some time to be alone with the Lord?
24. When is it good to take time out to rest? Why?
25. What can we learn and apply to our own lives from Jesus' attitude toward helping people?
26. How can we expand our expectations of what God can do through us?
27. What is one "impossible situation" that you are now facing?
28. In what way can we show faith in God in the "impossible situations" of our everyday lives?
29. For what person in your life do you need to have compassion?
30. How do you think you should react when God tells you to do something that you are sure is beyond your ability?
31. What does this story teach us about being caretakers of what God has given us?
32. What is one possession or ability that you need to give to the Lord so that He can use it for His glory?
33. In what area of your life do you need to have more faith in God?

Apply It

34. In what specific way can you show compassion to another person this next week?
35. How can you show your willingness to give what you have back to God?

* 36. What can you do this week to increase your confidence in God?

Jesus Walks on the Water - Mark 6:45-56

Topics: Courage, Faith, Fear, Healing, Miracles, Nature, Prayer, Sickness

Open It

1. When is the last time you remember being in a terrible storm?
- * 2. What is one lesson you had to learn the hard way?

Explore It

3. When did Jesus make His disciples go on ahead of Him? (6:45)
4. How did Jesus and the disciples get separated? (6:45-47)
5. What did Jesus do while He was alone? (6:46)
6. What problem were the disciples having? (6:48)
7. How did Jesus respond to the disciples' needs? (6:48)
8. How did the disciples react when they saw Jesus walk on the water? (6:49)
- * 9. When did the disciples cry out? Why? (6:49-50)
10. What difference did it make that the disciples' hearts were hardened? (6:49-52)
- * 11. Why were the disciples "completely amazed"? (6:51-52)
12. What is significant about the wind dying down? (6:51)
- * 13. What had the disciples failed to understand? (6:52)
14. Where did Jesus and His disciples finally land? (6:53)
15. What did Jesus do after He and the disciples had crossed over the lake? (6:54-56)
16. How did the crowds respond to Jesus when He came to their villages? (6:56)
17. What difference did it make that the crowds welcomed Jesus? (6:56)
18. What does the fact that "all who touched Jesus were healed" tell us about the people's attitude? (6:56)

Get It

19. Why do you think Jesus, who was the Son of God, spent time in prayer?
20. Why do you think Jesus chose to walk on the water to get to the disciples' boat?
21. How do you think you would have reacted if you had been with the disciples that night?
- * 22. What did the disciples have to learn the hard way?
23. When has God done something for you that was completely amazing to you? What was it?
24. How did you respond the last time you sensed God's work in your life?
25. Why do you think we are sometimes so surprised by God's goodness to us?
26. How can we follow Jesus' example of prayer?
27. How should you follow Jesus' example in this story of taking time out for prayer?
28. When have you been terrified, as the disciples were in this story?
29. How can Christ calm our fears or help us when we are afraid?
30. What difference does it make that Jesus has the power to control the forces of nature?
31. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
- * 32. What does this story tell us about human nature?
33. What can we learn from Jesus' commitment to help people and teach them?
34. In light of this story, how can you increase your faith in Jesus?

Apply It

35. How can you discipline yourself this week to spend time in undistracted prayer each day?
36. What specific fear or anxiety do you need to turn over to the Lord and entrust to Him?
- * 37. How can you make yourself sensitive to the lessons God wants to teach you this week?

Clean and Unclean - Mark 7:1-23

Topics: Attitude, Evil, Heart, Honor, Hypocrisy, Integrity, Parents, Rules, Teaching

Open It

1. What are some of the traditions in your church?
2. When did you first learn to wash your hands before eating?
- * 3. What are some of your favorite traditions?

Explore It

4. Who was gathered around Jesus? (7:1)
5. What did the Pharisees and teachers of the law notice? (7:1-2)
6. How were the practices of Jesus' disciples different from those of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law? (7:2-4)
- * 7. What were the Pharisees and teachers of the law concerned about? Why? (7:2-5)
8. Why were the Pharisees and teachers of the law concerned about what Jesus' disciples were doing? (7:3-4)
9. What did the Pharisees ask Jesus? (7:5)
10. How did Jesus avoid answering the Pharisees' question directly? (7:6)
- * 11. What were the Pharisees doing wrong? (7:6-8)
12. Of what did Jesus accuse the Pharisees? (7:6-13)
13. How were the Pharisees being hypocritical in this instance? (7:9)
14. What example did Jesus give to prove His accusations against the Pharisees? (7:10-12)
15. How did Jesus use the Law of Moses? (7:10-19)
- * 16. How did Jesus place tradition in proper perspective? (7:10-19)
17. How did the Pharisees' use of "unclean" differ from Jesus'? (7:14-23)
18. How did Jesus explain the parable to His disciples? (7:18-23)
19. What actually makes a person "unclean"? (7:20-23)

Get It

- * 20. What's wrong with "holding on to the traditions of men"?
- * 21. What did Jesus want His audience to do?
22. In what ways are Christians today hypocritical?
23. What church traditions either can or do stand in the way of non-believers becoming interested in Christianity?
24. What traditions do you hold on to that can go against the commands of God?
25. What can we do to place traditions—especially religious traditions—in proper perspective?
26. In what ways do you think it is possible to worship the Lord in vain?
27. From the list of "unclean" things that come from within a person's heart (greed, deceit, envy, etc.), which attitude or action do you need to work on eliminating from your life?
28. How can we be sure we are "clean" in God's sight?
29. What can we do to work toward being clean in God's sight?
30. What practices in your local church do you think might be distracting people's attention from the central concerns of the faith?
31. How can you guard against practicing the type of tradition-bound, external religion that Jesus condemned?

Apply It

- * 32. What can you do to honor the commands of God above your traditions?
33. What is one practice that you can eliminate or modify to help you focus on the teaching of Jesus?

34. What is one step you can take to guard against hypocrisy?

The Faith of a Syrophenician Woman - Mark 7:24-30

Topics: Courage, Demons, Faith, Gospel, Humility, Priorities, Rationalizing

Open It

- * 1. When was a time when you felt like an outsider?
- 2. Why do you think some Christians lose or give up their faith in God?

Explore It

- 3. What did Jesus try to keep secret? How? (7:24)
- 4. Why did a certain woman want to see Jesus? (7:25)
- 5. What did the woman do when she saw Jesus? Why? (7:25)
- * 6. Who came to see Jesus? Why? (7:25-26)
- 7. What was this woman's background? (7:26)
- 8. What did the woman in the story want from Jesus? (7:26)
- 9. How did Jesus respond to this woman? (7:27)
- 10. To whom was Jesus referring when He spoke of children? (7:27)
- 11. What did this woman call Jesus? (7:28)
- 12. How did the woman appeal Jesus' decision not to help her? (7:28)
- 13. What made the woman so persistent? (7:28)
- * 14. Why was Jesus impressed with the woman? (7:28-29)
- * 15. What happened to the woman and her daughter? (7:30)

Get It

- * 16. What was exemplary about the woman who came to see Jesus?
- 17. Why do you think Mark included this episode in his Gospel?
- 18. Why would you or wouldn't you have gone to see Jesus if you had been in the same situation as this woman?
- 19. What have you "begged" Jesus to do for you in the past? How did He answer?
- 20. How would you compare your level of faith with that of the woman in this story?
- 21. In what ways has Jesus rewarded you for your faith?
- 22. What difference does it make in your life that Jesus has the power and authority over all the evil forces of the world?
- * 23. What about the woman's attitude can we apply to our prayer life?
- 24. No two of Jesus' healings were exactly alike; how should our witness for Christ be tailored to each situation and person?
- 25. How can you be personal and sensitive in the way you meet the needs of those around you?

Apply It

- 26. What is one area of your life that you will commit to the Lord in faith today?
- * 27. What concrete step can you take to show your faith in the Lord and your dependence on His power?

The Healing of a Deaf and Mute Man - Mark 7:31-37

Topics: Faith, Healing, Instructions, Mercy, Miracles, Thankfulness, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. What do you think it would be like to be deaf or unable to speak?
- 2. What attitudes does our society have toward disabled people?
- 3. How do most ordinary folks treat people who have disabilities?

Explore It

- 4. Where did the events of this story take place? (7:31)
- * 5. Who was brought to Jesus? Why? (7:32)
- 6. What attitude did the people have toward Jesus? (7:32)
- 7. What did Jesus do for the man who was deaf and could hardly speak? (7:33-36)
- 8. What method did Jesus use to heal the man who came to Him? (7:33-36)
- * 9. What did Jesus do so that the man would know it was Jesus who helped him? (7:33-36)
- 10. What happened to the deaf man? (7:35)
- 11. How was the deaf man's life changed because of Jesus? (7:35-37)
- * 12. What command of Jesus got the opposite effect He intended? (7:36)
- 13. How did the people react to Jesus and His miraculous power? (7:36-37)
- 14. What difference did this miracle make in the lives of the people who witnessed it? (7:36-37)
- 15. Why couldn't the people stop talking about Jesus? (7:37)

Get It

- 16. Whom do you know who has experienced the healing of Jesus in his or her life?
- 17. How do people respond to Jesus' miraculous work in their lives?
- 18. What can you learn from the people's attitude toward Jesus in this story?
- 19. In what area of your life do you need God's healing power?
- 20. How can you increase your faith in God?
- * 21. How has God helped you in a way that met your personal, unique needs, as He did for the man in this story?
- * 22. How can we tailor the way we reach out to each person?
- 23. What difference does it make in your everyday life that Jesus has all power and authority over the world?
- 24. Whom could you tell about the goodness of God in your life?

Apply It

- 25. What is one area of your life that you can commit to the Lord and trust Him to work through?
- 26. What can you do this next week to show your thanks to God for His work in your life?
- 27. How can you trust God with your needs?
- * 28. What can you do to reach out to someone in need this week?

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand - Mark 8:1-13

Topics: Abundance, Doubt, Faith, Ministry, Miracles, Needs, Questions, Teaching, Thankfulness

Open It

1. When was a time someone showed compassion to you?
2. Why is it sometimes difficult to accept help or sympathy from others?
- * 3. How does it make you feel to receive support or help from others?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did Jesus call the disciples to Him? (8:1-3)
5. How did Jesus feel toward the crowd of people that had gathered? (8:2)
6. How long had the crowd in this story been gathered? Why? (8:2)
7. Why couldn't Jesus just send the people to their homes for food? (8:3)
8. What did Jesus' disciples think of the crowd's dilemma? (8:4)
- * 9. How did Jesus involve His disciples in this problem? (8:5-8)
10. What did Jesus do with the seven loaves and few small fish that the disciples had found? (8:6)
- * 11. How much food went uneaten? (8:8)
12. What did Jesus do after He had fed the crowd? (8:9-10)
13. Who came to see Jesus? Why? (8:11)
14. How did the Pharisees plan to "test" Jesus? (8:11)
15. Why did Jesus "sigh deeply"? (8:12)
16. What announcement did Jesus make to the generation of His day? (8:12)
17. What did Jesus think of His visitors? (8:12-13)

Get It

- * 18. What can we learn from Jesus' attitude and actions toward the crowds that followed Him?
- * 19. How can you become a more compassionate person?
20. When have you consciously trusted the Lord for food or another essential of life?
21. What did it feel like to have to trust the Lord to supply your basic needs?
22. In what ways has God provided for the needs of you and your family?
23. How does God's work in the past encourage you to trust Him with your future?
24. How can you show your thankfulness to God for the way He takes care of you?
25. When was a time you tried to test the Lord as the Pharisees did? What happened?
26. What kinds of people today have the same attitude the Pharisees did?
27. Why do people demand signs from God?
28. Why does God refuse to give us signs or proof of His existence and presence?

Apply It

- * 29. To whom can you show compassion? How and when?
30. In what one area of your life will you ask God to work miraculously this week?
31. How can you trust God this week to supply your needs?
32. For what difficult problem will you depend on God? How?

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod - Mark 8:14-21

Topics: Criticism, Evil, Forget, Heart, Miracles, Remembering

Open It

1. When was a time you misunderstood what someone said or did? What resulted?
2. What is one negative example from which you have learned?
- * 3. In what ways do many adults grow hardened as they get older?

Explore It

4. What had the disciples forgotten on their trip? (8:14)
5. When did Jesus start talking about the Pharisees? (8:15)
- * 6. What did Jesus warn His disciples against? (8:15)
7. How did the disciples misunderstand Jesus' warning? (8:16)
8. What was Christ's explanation for why the disciples could not understand what He meant? (8:17-18)
- * 9. Why couldn't the disciples understand what Jesus said? (8:17-18)
10. What would have enabled the disciples to understand Jesus better? (8:17-18)
- * 11. Why was Jesus amazed at His disciples? (8:17-21)
12. Why did Jesus remind the disciples about the miracles of feeding the crowds? (8:19)
13. How did Jesus try to get through to His disciples? (8:18-20)
14. Of what miracles did Jesus remind the disciples? Why? (8:19-20)

Get It

15. What did Jesus want His disciples to learn from the Pharisees and Herod?
16. When have you ever misunderstood what the Bible said about a certain topic or idea?
- * 17. What passages or ideas from the Bible have you struggled to understand?
- * 18. How can we guard against misinterpreting or ignoring the Scriptures?
19. When has your heart been "hardened" to God's message?
20. When has your heart been "hardened" to the voice of the Holy Spirit?
21. How can you be more sensitive to God's will for you?
22. If Jesus had been speaking directly to us, what negative example might He have warned us to learn from?
23. If Jesus had been speaking to you personally, what negative example might He have warned you to watch out for?
24. How can you separate yourself from the corruption of the world and yet still be an effective witness for Christ?

Apply It

25. What miracles of Christ, negative examples, or object lessons can you use as reminders of Christ's proper place in your life?
- * 26. What is one step you can take to soften your heart toward God this week?
27. What is one specific command of Christ's that you want to apply to your life this week?
28. What can you do to steer clear of the evil and corruption in your workplace, community, or home life?

The Healing of a Blind Man at Bethsaida - Mark 8:22-26

Topics: Blindness, Guidance, Healing, Prayer, Restoration, Separation

Open It

- * 1. When have you experienced a time when God answered a prayer only partially?
- 2. Why do you think God would not answer prayer as we hope?
- 3. How do you respond when God answers your prayers completely?

Explore It

- 4. Where did the events of this story take place? (8:22)
- * 5. What did the people do about the blind man's condition? (8:22)
- 6. Where did Jesus perform this miracle? (8:23)
- 7. How did Jesus get the blind man out of the village? (8:23)
- * 8. How did Jesus heal the blind man? (8:23-25)
- 9. How did Jesus treat the blind man differently from the many other people He had healed? (8:23-26)
- 10. What do we learn about Jesus' character from the way He treated the blind man? (8:23-26)
- 11. What is unique about this healing compared to every other healing Mark recorded in his Gospel? (8:23-26)
- 12. What did the blind man see after the first touch from Jesus? (8:24)
- 13. What occurred after Jesus touched the blind man a second time? (8:25)
- * 14. What did Jesus urge the man to do after he was healed? (8:26)

Get It

- 15. Why do you think Jesus returned to Bethsaida?
- 16. Why do you think the people begged Jesus to heal the blind man?
- 17. What connection do you think there is between this gradual healing and the disciples' slowness to understand who Jesus was?
- 18. Why do you think Jesus healed people in so many unique ways?
- 19. What difference does it make to you that God views us all as unique individuals and treats us according to our own needs?
- 20. How should Jesus' actions and attitudes in this story affect the way you represent Christ to others?
- 21. When has your "sight" been clouded by circumstances in your life?
- 22. How has God opened your eyes in a difficult situation?
- * 23. Whom do you know who has been changed by Jesus but now needs a "second touch" in his or her life?
- * 24. How could you help a person you know who needs a "second touch" from Jesus?
- 25. What have you learned from this passage about Jesus' attitude toward people?
- 26. How can you show thanks to the Lord for His personal interest in you as an individual?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do this week for someone in need?
- 28. What is one area of your life in which you can pray for God's healing?
- 29. How do you want to respond the next time the Lord answers prayer in an unexpected way?

Peter's Confession of Christ - Mark 8:27-30

Topics: Beliefs, Choices, Confession, Convictions, Faith, Jesus Christ, Peer Pressure

Open It

1. Where do you tend to experience the pressure of a larger group?
- * 2. When have you ever succumbed to group pressure when you knew you should not have?

Explore It

3. Where did this episode take place? (8:27)
- * 4. What did Jesus ask His disciples? (8:27)
- * 5. What did people theorize about Jesus? (8:27-28)
6. How did the disciples respond to Jesus' question? (8:28)
7. How had people connected Jesus with Elijah, John the Baptist, and other prophets? (8:28)
8. How did Jesus make this discussion personal? (8:29)
- * 9. How did the disciples answer Jesus' question? (8:29)
10. Who did Peter say Jesus was? (8:29)
11. Who spoke for the whole group of disciples? (8:29)
12. What was Peter's declaration of faith? (8:29)
13. What warning did Jesus give His disciples? (8:30)

Get It

14. Why do you think Jesus asked about His identity at this particular point?
15. Why would people think that Jesus was John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the other prophets?
16. Why do you think Jesus asked the two questions in the order He did?
17. Why would Jesus warn the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah?
- * 18. Who do you say Jesus is?
19. How do your beliefs go against the flow of the majority in our world?
20. What is it like to stand up against the views of the crowd?
21. How does the knowledge that one day everyone will know that Christ is Lord affect your attitude about the pressure you feel from the world?
- * 22. Why is it important for a Christian not to hide his or her faith in Christ?
23. How can we stand up for what is right in the face of pressure from others to compromise?
24. What can we learn from Peter's example?
25. How do your beliefs in Jesus Christ affect your everyday life?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you state your faith in Christ's Lordship?
27. Whom should you tell this week about your faith in Christ?
28. What specific area of your life do you need to submit to the Lordship of Christ? How?

Jesus Predicts His Death - Mark 8:31-9:1

Topics: Denial, Disagreements, Eternal Life, Gospel, Preparation, Rewards, Sacrifice, Second Coming, Suffering, Temptation

Open It

- * 1. In what ways has your life been different from what you expected?
- 2. How do unrealistic expectations block people from following Christ?

EXPLORE

- 3. Who referred to Himself as the “Son of Man”? (8:31)
- 4. What did Jesus teach the disciples? (8:31)
- 5. How did Jesus speak about what would happen to Him? (8:32)
- 6. Why did Peter rebuke Jesus? (8:32)
- 7. How was what Jesus predicted different from what Peter expected? (8:32)
- 8. What surprised Peter? (8:32)
- * 9. Who rebuked whom? Why? (8:32-33)
- 10. What did Jesus say to Peter in response to his rebuke? (8:33)
- 11. Why did Jesus rebuke Peter? (8:33)
- 12. Why did Jesus speak harshly with Peter? (8:33)
- * 13. In what way did Peter have in mind the “things of man” as opposed to the “things of God”? (8:33)
- 14. What was wrong with Peter’s thinking? (8:33)
- 15. What did Jesus do after rebuking Peter? (8:34)
- * 16. What did Jesus want His disciples to do? (8:34-35)
- 17. Why did Jesus say, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”? (8:34-38)
- 18. How did Jesus refer to the people to whom He was speaking? (8:38)
- 19. How will Jesus come back to earth? (8:38)
- 20. What promise was given to Jesus’ audience? (9:1)

Get It

- 21. When have you ever doubted the words of Jesus?
- 22. In what ways has Christ rebuked you in the past?
- * 23. Why does Christ ask us to “deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow” Him?
- 24. What does it mean to deny yourself?
- 25. What does it mean to take up your cross?
- 26. What does it mean to follow Christ?
- 27. In what way can a person both save his life and lose it at the same time?
- 28. What did Jesus mean when He said, “Some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power”? (9:1)
- 29. How do you usually respond to the Lord’s correction or discipline in your life?
- * 30. How can we make sure we “have in mind the things of God”?
- 31. What do you think Christ wants you to give up for the sake of the gospel?
- 32. What does it mean to be ashamed of Christ?
- 33. In what ways does Satan tempt us to do the opposite of what Christ wants for us?

Apply It

- * 34. What attitude or practice do you need to change in obedience to Christ?
- 35. What specific steps can you take to listen closely to Christ this week?

The Transfiguration - Mark 9:2-13

Topics: Holiness, Obedience, Prophecy, Representatives, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

1. When were you last speechless?
- * 2. How do people react when they watch fireworks? Why?

Explore It

3. Where did Jesus take Peter, James, and John? (9:2)
4. Whom did Jesus take with Him to the mountain? (9:2)
- * 5. What happened to Jesus on the mountain? (9:3)
6. Who appeared with Jesus in the transfiguration? (9:4)
7. What was significant about the people who appeared to Jesus? (9:4)
8. How did Peter respond to the transfiguration of Jesus? (9:5)
9. Why did Peter want to put up three shelters? (9:5)
10. Why were the disciples frightened when they saw Jesus? (9:6)
11. How did God appear to Jesus and the others? (9:7)
- * 12. What did God say to the disciples? (9:7)
- * 13. What did God want the disciples to do? (9:7)
14. What did the disciples see after the cloud vanished? (9:7-8)
15. What orders did Jesus give the disciples? (9:9)
16. How did Peter, James, and John respond to Jesus' order? (9:10)
17. What caught the "elite three" off guard and became the topic of discussion as they headed down the mountain? (9:10)
18. Why did the disciples ask Jesus about Elijah? (9:11)
19. About whom was Jesus speaking when He said, "Elijah has come"? (9:12-13)

Get It

20. Why do you think Jesus chose only three of His disciples to witness His transfiguration?
21. How do you think this account would encourage an audience of Christians being harassed and threatened?
22. What encouragement does this passage give you?
- * 23. How do you think you would have reacted if Jesus had chosen you to witness His transfiguration?
24. When has a spiritual experience caused you to be speechless or frightened?
- * 25. What is implied by God's command that we listen to Jesus?
26. What can we learn from this account about the relationship between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ?

Apply It

27. What specific word or command of Jesus can you obey more carefully this week? How?
- * 28. What can you do over the next week to become more sensitive to God's voice (whether from His Word or His Spirit)?

The Healing of a Boy With an Evil Spirit - Mark 9:14-32

Topics: Believe, Demons, Discipline, Doubt, Faith, Healing, Prayer, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. When was the last time you felt inadequate to do a job you had to do?
- 2. In what situation have you done something that you thought was impossible?

Explore It

- 3. What was the setting of the events in this story? (9:14)
- 4. How did the people react when they saw Jesus? (9:15)
- 5. What did Jesus ask the crowd and the teachers of the law? (9:16)
- 6. What were the people arguing about? (9:17)
- 7. What had the evil spirit done to the boy it possessed? (9:17-18)
- * 8. Why were the disciples unable to cast the demon out of the boy? (9:19)
- * 9. How did Jesus feel at this point? (9:19)
- 10. What was the evil spirit's response to Jesus? (9:20)
- 11. What was the boy's life like before Jesus healed him? (9:21-22)
- * 12. How were prayer and faith related in this situation? (9:22-23)
- 13. What problem did the father need to overcome? (9:24)
- 14. When did Jesus cast the demon out? (9:25-26)
- 15. How did Jesus treat the demon-possessed boy? (9:24-27)
- 16. What necessary step had the disciples failed to take in this situation? (9:28-29)
- 17. Why did Jesus want to avoid the crowds of people? (9:30-31)
- 18. What news did Jesus repeat privately to the disciples? (9:31)
- 19. What frightened the disciples? (9:31-32)

Get It

- 20. How do you think Jesus felt about His disciples in this situation?
- 21. How should we pray when we feel inadequate?
- 22. In what ways do you think we are an "unbelieving generation" like the people of Jesus' day?
- 23. What difference does it make that "everything is possible for him who believes"?
- 24. In what area of your life do you struggle with doubt?
- 25. What can we learn from the father's example in this story?
- 26. How has God helped you overcome your unbelief in the past?
- * 27. In what areas of life do you think we fail to see success because we do not pray?
- * 28. How can you become more dedicated to prayer?

Apply It

- * 29. About what in your life will you pray every day this week? When?
- 30. What concrete action can you take today to show a commitment to prayer?

Who Is the Greatest? - Mark 9:33-37

Topics: Arguments, Greatness, Humility, Pride, Sacrifice, Serving, Status

Open It

1. What makes a person look prestigious or “respectable” in our society?
- * 2. Whom do you consider to be a great person? Why?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus ask the disciples when they got to Capernaum? (9:33)
4. Why did the disciples suddenly stop talking? (9:33-34)
- * 5. How did Jesus get His disciples’ attention? (9:33-34)
6. What does the disciples’ argument tell you about their understanding of who Jesus was and why He had come? (9:33-34)
7. Why were the disciples embarrassed to answer Jesus’ question? (9:34)
- * 8. How did Jesus explain what it means to be great? (9:35)
9. What kind of person tries to be a servant? (9:35)
- * 10. How did Jesus illustrate His point? (9:36)
11. What did Jesus say about children? (9:37)
12. How is it possible to welcome God? (9:37)

Get It

- * 13. What does it mean to be a servant of all?
14. What does it mean to welcome someone in Jesus’ name?
15. What does it mean to be great in God’s eyes?
16. How can a person become great in God’s eyes?
17. Why do you think Jesus used a child to illustrate His point?
18. How can you welcome someone in Jesus’ name?
19. What sorts of issues cause ill will among Christians today?
20. How do we strive to be the “greatest”?
- * 21. How can you become a “servant of all” in your everyday actions and attitudes?
22. What does this passage tell us about Jesus’ attitude toward children and other weaker members of society?
23. How should we treat people of “lower status”?
24. What attitude change do you want to make in light of the principles you discovered in this passage?

Apply It

- * 25. What is one concrete way you can serve another person this week?
26. In what specific situation can you consciously choose to be a servant for Christ’s sake sometime this next week?

Whoever Is Not Against Us Is for Us - Mark 9:38-41

Topics: Arguments, Believers, Demons, Divisions, Jealousy, Judging Others, Ministry, Miracles, Pride, Rewards, Unity

Open It

- * 1. What do people argue about in your family?
- 2. What happens to a team of workers when members become jealous and use power plays against each other?
- 3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of church denominations?

Explore It

- 4. Who told Jesus about the dilemma facing the disciples? (9:38)
- 5. How did John refer to Jesus and how was that significant? (9:38)
- * 6. What issue concerned the disciples? (9:38)
- 7. Why did the disciples try to stop a man from driving out demons? (9:38)
- * 8. What attitudes did the disciples have in this situation? (9:38)
- * 9. How did Jesus respond to the disciples' question? (9:40)
- 10. Why did Jesus not mind others, who were not part of His group of disciples, performing miracles in His name? (9:40)
- 11. What attitude did Jesus want the disciples to have? (9:41)
- 12. How will God treat those who do good in Christ's name? (9:41)
- 13. What principle was Jesus trying to teach the disciples? (9:39-41)

Get It

- 14. What jealousies and power struggles do you see in the church today?
- * 15. Over what issues do we tend to be divided as believers?
- * 16. How does Christ want us to respond to others who minister in His name, even if they do not come from the same group or background as we do?
- 17. How do you think God views the various denominations and separate societies that the Christian church has divided into?
- 18. How can we become more unified as a body of believers?
- 19. How can you ensure that you are serving in the name of Christ and not allowing wrong motives to steal any of the glory that belongs to Christ?
- 20. What ministry do you think God might be leading you to get involved in?
- 21. What do you think we could do as churches and denominations to lay aside our differences and put up a united front to the world?
- 22. What can churches do to support those who are not against them?

Apply It

- 23. What step can you take this week to help another person in Christ's name?
- * 24. What can you do to support someone who does good and is "not against you"?

Causing to Sin - Mark 9:42-50

Topics: Accountability, Believers, Example, Hell, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Peace, Sin, Temptation

Open It

- * 1. What are your favorite seasonings?
- 2. What is pleasant and unpleasant about salt?
- 3. What do you believe are the marks of maturity?

Explore It

- 4. To whom did Jesus refer when He spoke of “little ones”? (9:42)
- 5. What behavior did Jesus condemn? (9:42)
- 6. What figure of speech did Jesus use to show how serious His point was? (9:42-47)
- * 7. What was Jesus’ attitude toward sin? (9:43-47)
- 8. What does this passage teach about the kingdom of God? (9:43-47)
- * 9. Why did Jesus use extreme examples in this context? (9:43-48)
- 10. How did Jesus use figurative language to get His message across? (9:43-48)
- 11. How did Jesus describe hell? (9:48-49)
- 12. What did Jesus mean when He said, “Everyone will be salted with fire”? (9:49)
- * 13. When Jesus talked about “salt,” to what exactly was He referring? (9:50)
- 14. Why is “saltiness” necessary in a Christian’s life? (9:50)
- 15. With what final instruction did Jesus conclude? (9:50)
- 16. How do Jesus’ final words relate to the rest of the passage? (9:50)

Get It

- 17. Who are the “little ones” in our society?
- 18. What do our hands, feet, and eyes represent?
- 19. How can a person’s hand, foot, or eye cause him or her to sin?
- * 20. How do you think a Christian can cause others to sin?
- * 21. In what ways is causing another person to sin worse than sinning yourself?
- 22. What should be our attitude toward sin?
- 23. How do you plan to apply to your life the principles Jesus taught about avoiding sin?
- 24. What specific steps can a Christian take to avoid sin?
- 25. What could a church do as a group to apply these principles?
- 26. How can this passage motivate us to share our faith with unbelievers?
- 27. What do you need to do to add some “salt” to your witness?
- 28. What can we do to create peace among believers?

Apply It

- * 29. What concrete action can you take this week to avoid a sin that you have struggled with in the recent past?
- 30. What can you do this week to make your witness for Christ clearer to the unbelievers around you?

Divorce - Mark 10:1-12

Topics: Adultery, Creation, Law, Marriage, New Covenant, Separation, Teaching

Open It

- * 1. What do you think makes a marriage strong and lasting?
- 2. How do the people you work with view people with struggling or failed marriages?

Explore It

- 3. Where did this episode take place? (10:1)
- 4. What does this passage say about Christ's attitude toward His ministry? (10:1)
- * 5. Why did the Pharisees go to see Jesus? (10:2)
- 6. How did the Pharisees try to trick Jesus? (10:2)
- 7. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' question? (10:3)
- 8. Why do you think Jesus brought Moses into this discussion? (10:3)
- 9. What did Moses allow in the area of divorce? (10:4)
- * 10. How did Jesus explain Moses' instructions? (10:5)
- 11. What do we learn about the Pharisees from Jesus' explanation of Moses' words? (10:5)
- 12. How did Jesus explain the relationship between the Law and the will of God? (10:5-9)
- 13. How did Jesus lend authority to His words? (10:6-9)
- * 14. What was God's original plan for marriage before sin entered the picture? (10:6-9)
- 15. What is the meaning of "they are no longer two, but one"? (10:8)
- 16. What overriding principle did Jesus want us to follow? (10:9)
- 17. Why did this topic come up a second time that day? (10:10)
- 18. What specific instructions did Jesus give regarding divorce? (10:11-12)
- 19. How did Jesus protect women with His instructions? (10:11-12)

Get It

- 20. How do you think the Pharisees expected to trick Jesus?
- 21. What do we learn about human nature from Jesus' answer to the Pharisees' question?
- 22. Why do you think Jesus referred back to the "beginning of creation" in this debate?
- 23. How could a person separate "what God has joined together"?
- 24. Why do you think the disciples asked Jesus about their question privately?
- 25. How should we view people with struggling or failed marriages?
- * 26. How can the church help people with struggling or failed marriages?
- 27. How can the church help its members strengthen and even save their marriages?
- 28. Why do you think so many marriages fail?
- * 29. What can you do to strengthen your own marriage or encourage a couple who is experiencing difficulty in this area?
- 30. What attitude should we have toward marriage?
- 31. How should a Christian's understanding of marriage differ from that of the popular image?
- 32. How can a strong Christian marriage be an effective witness to unbelievers?

Apply It

- 33. What is one specific step you can take this week to show respect for the sanctity of marriage?
- * 34. For what couple can you pray every day this week?

The Little Children and Jesus - Mark 10:13-16

Topics: Assumptions, Blessing, Children, Humility, Inadequacy, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Salvation

Open It

- * 1. What's the best thing about being a child?
- 2. How should children be treated differently from adults?
- 3. In what ways do children think differently than adults?

Explore It

- 4. Why were people bringing their children to Jesus? (10:13)
- 5. How did the disciples react to this situation? (10:13)
- * 6. How was Jesus different from the disciples? (10:13-16)
- 7. What about Jesus surprised the disciples in this situation? (10:13-16)
- 8. How did Jesus respond to the disciples sending the children away? (10:14)
- 9. What do Jesus' actions tell us about His attitude toward children? (10:14)
- * 10. What did Jesus want His disciples to do? (10:14)
- 11. Why did Jesus want the children to come to Him? (10:14)
- 12. What unique connection do children have to the kingdom of God? (10:14)
- 13. What can we learn from children about the kingdom of God? (10:15)
- 14. How did Jesus want people to respond to Him? (10:15)
- * 15. How did Jesus treat the children He met? (10:16)

Get It

- 16. What does it mean that "the kingdom of God belongs to such as" little children?
- 17. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God like a little child?
- * 18. What about the behavior of children does God want us to copy?
- * 19. How can we have the same attitude toward God that children had toward Jesus?
- 20. How should we treat children?
- 21. How do you think your church needs to change the way it treats children?
- 22. How can we receive the kingdom of God "like a little child"?
- 23. What does Jesus' display of emotion in this account tell you about Him?
- 24. In what specific ways do you need to change your attitude toward God?

Apply It

- 25. What concrete steps can you take this week to imitate Christ's love and compassion for children?
- * 26. In what concrete way can you depend on God in your day-to-day affairs?

The Rich Young Man - Mark 10:17-31

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Eternal Life, Gospel, Heaven, Impossible, Obedience, Possessions, Rejection, Rewards, Sacrifice, Salvation, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being wealthy?
- 2. Why do you think most people want to be rich?

Explore It

- 3. What was the attitude of the wealthy man as he came to Jesus? (10:17)
- * 4. What did the man want Jesus to explain to him? (10:17)
- 5. Why did Jesus say to the man, “No one is good, except God alone”? (10:18)
- * 6. How did Jesus explain the way to inherit eternal life? (10:19-21)
- 7. How did the rich man respond to Jesus? (10:20)
- 8. What does the rich man’s answer to Jesus tell us about his spiritual state? (10:20)
- 9. What attitude did Jesus have toward the rich man? (10:21)
- 10. What was difficult about the instruction that Jesus gave the young man? (10:21-22)
- 11. In what way would selling all of his earthly possessions give the wealthy man “treasure in heaven”? (10:21)
- * 12. Why could the man not obey Christ’s instructions? (10:22)
- 13. What did Jesus mean when He said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”? (10:24-25)
- 14. When the disciples were astonished and dismayed at Jesus’ words, how did He encourage them? (10:26-27)
- 15. How did Peter respond to this situation? (10:28)
- 16. With what promise did Jesus conclude His teaching in this passage? (10:29-31)

Get It

- 17. Why do you think Jesus demanded such a tall order from this man?
- * 18. In what way can money stop us from doing what God wants?
- 19. How can wealth interfere with a person’s Christian faith?
- 20. What have you ever sacrificed for the sake of following Christ?
- 21. What interferes with your walk with the Lord?
- * 22. How do you think God wants you to use the material wealth He has given you?
- 23. How can we prevent ourselves from allowing wealth to interfere with our Christianity?
- 24. What can you learn about Jesus from His actions in this story?
- 25. What can we learn through the negative example of the rich young man in this episode?
- 26. What makes it difficult for a rich person to be saved?
- 27. What makes it difficult for anyone, rich or poor, to enter the kingdom of God?
- 28. What can you give to the poor? How?
- * 29. What practical steps can we take to insure that we place value on eternal things and not merely on material things?

Apply It

- * 30. What can you sell or give away in the near future to reflect a concern for God’s kingdom over things?
- 31. What is one distraction you can set aside from your routine this week to help you concentrate more on devotion to Christ?

Jesus Again Predicts His Death - Mark 10:32-34

Topics: Death, Emotions, Fear, Leadership, Promises, Prophecy, Resurrection, Suffering

Open It

1. Why do we avoid talking about death in everyday conversation?
- * 2. What attitudes do people in our society have about dying?
3. When have you had to deal with the death of someone close to you?

Explore It

4. Where does this story take place? (10:32)
5. What emotions were displayed by the disciples? (10:32)
- * 6. Why was there such a range of strong emotions on this trip? (10:32)
- * 7. What important news did Jesus tell the Twelve once again about what would happen to Him? (10:32-33)
8. What did Jesus say about the “Son of Man”? (10:33)
9. How did Jesus refer to Himself? (10:33)
10. When Jesus predicted His death and resurrection this third time, what else did He say would happen? (10:33-34)
- * 11. How did Jesus say He would die? (10:33-34)
12. How would Jesus be treated at the time of His death? (10:33-34)
13. Who was going to torture and kill Jesus? (10:33-34)

Get It

14. Why do you think Jesus was “leading the way”?
15. Why do you think Jesus told His disciples that He would be mocked and tortured?
16. How do you think the disciples responded to what Jesus told them?
17. What prevented some followers of Jesus from understanding that He was predicting His death and resurrection?
18. What do Jesus’ actions in this account tell us about the relationship He wants to have with us?
19. What does this passage tell us about Jesus?
20. What can we learn from the disciples in this event?
- * 21. When has God ever led you down a road which you felt uncomfortable or frightened about?
22. How have you experienced God’s leading in times of uncertainty?
- * 23. How can you trust God more fully to lead you through difficult circumstances in the future?
24. What difference does it make to you that Jesus correctly predicted everything that happened to Him?
25. Why did Christ willingly go to Jerusalem when He knew the pain and humiliation He would experience there?

Apply It

- * 26. What is one difficult situation that you need Jesus to lead you through this upcoming week?
27. How can you place your trust in Christ each day rather than in your own abilities?

The Request of James and John - Mark 10:35-45

Topics: Authority, Greed, Heaven, Jealousy, Power, Sacrifice, Serving, Status, Suffering

Open It

1. What issues do people often argue about?
- * 2. In what way does society pressure us to seek status and power?

Explore It

3. What was the relationship between James, John, and Jesus? (10:35)
4. With what attitude did James and John confront Jesus? (10:35)
- * 5. What did James and John want from Jesus? (10:37)
6. What did James and John's request reflect about their character? (10:37)
- * 7. How did Jesus answer James and John's request? (10:38-40)
8. What were the "baptism" and "cup" of which Jesus spoke? (10:38-39)
9. What figure of speech did Jesus use in speaking with James and John? (10:38-39)
- * 10. How did Jesus explain to James and John the impossibility of granting what they had requested? (10:39-40)
11. Who will grant the seats to Christ's right and left in glory? (10:40)
- * 12. How did the other disciples react to James and John's request? (10:41)
13. What did Jesus warn all His disciples about? (10:42-43)
14. What value did Jesus place on serving? (10:42-45)
15. What value did Jesus place on status? (10:42-45)
16. How did Jesus advise the disciples regarding greatness? (10:43-44)
17. What did Jesus mean when He said He "did not come to be served, but to serve"? (10:45)

Get It

18. Why was Jesus unwilling to do what James and John asked for?
19. Why were the other disciples angry at James and John?
20. What sort of unreasonable requests do we sometimes make of God? Why do we?
21. In what way does God protect us from our foolish requests?
- * 22. In what ways do we vie for power and authority?
23. How does Jesus want us to handle power and authority?
24. How do Jesus' words to James and John change your attitude about power and authority?
25. How can you adopt Christ's example as your own?
- * 26. How can you become a servant of others?
27. How do you need to change your attitude or actions in light of Jesus' words about serving?
28. Jesus, the Son of God, left us a perfect example of humility and service to others. What does this imply for us?
29. How should you respond to Jesus' giving His life as a ransom for you?

Apply It

- * 30. What specific act of service could you do this week for someone else?
31. What steps can you take to guard yourself against an attitude of selfishness or greed?

Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight - Mark 10:46-52

Topics: Blindness, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Persistence, Prayer

Open It

- * 1. When has persistence paid off for you?
- 2. In what circumstances might it not be good to be persistent?

Explore It

- 3. Where did the events of this story take place? (10:46)
- 4. Where was the blind man sitting when Jesus passed by? (10:46)
- 5. What was significant about the way the blind man addressed Jesus? (10:47-48)
- * 6. Why did the people rebuke the blind man? (10:48)
- * 7. How did the blind man respond to the criticism from the crowd? (10:48)
- 8. What do the blind man's actions tell you about his character and his attitude toward Jesus? (10:48)
- * 9. How did the crowds of people treat Bartimaeus after they found out Jesus had called for him? (10:49)
- 10. How did Bartimaeus react when Jesus called him? (10:50)
- 11. How did Jesus help Bartimaeus? (10:51)
- 12. How did Bartimaeus respond to Jesus' question? (10:51)
- 13. How did the blind man's actions reveal to Jesus that he had faith? (10:52)
- 14. What did Bartimaeus do after Jesus had healed him? (10:52)

Get It

- 15. What do you think motivated the blind man to call out for Jesus?
- 16. Why do you think Jesus singled out Bartimaeus for healing among the many needy people He must have encountered along the way?
- * 17. When have you persistently prayed for one particular request? What happened?
- 18. What role does persistence play in prayer?
- * 19. What does it mean to be persistent in prayer?
- 20. What specifically can you learn from Bartimaeus's example?
- 21. What connection is there between a person's faith and whether God answers their prayer?
- 22. What does this passage tell you about Jesus' attitude toward hurting people?
- 23. How does Jesus' actions in this account encourage you to get more involved in helping others?

Apply It

- * 24. What is one request that you will commit yourself to pray for regularly this week?
- 25. How is it possible for a Christian to increase his or her faith?

The Triumphal Entry - Mark 11:1-11

Topics: Blessing, Humility, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Obedience, Praise

Open It

1. What is enjoyable about watching parades?
2. What would you like or dislike about actually participating in a big parade?
- * 3. What kinds of events or occasions do we celebrate with parades?

Explore It

4. Where did the events of this story take place? (11:1)
5. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do? (11:2)
- * 6. What did Jesus ask the disciples to do? (11:2-3)
- * 7. How did the disciples' experience match with what Jesus said? (11:4-7)
8. What did the people in the village do when the disciples asked to take their colt? (11:6)
9. What did Jesus do with the colt? (11:7)
10. How did Jesus enter Jerusalem? (11:7-11)
- * 11. Why did the people spread cloaks and branches on the road for Jesus? (11:8-10)
12. What was the atmosphere of the crowd when Jesus rode into Jerusalem? (11:8-10)
13. What did the people shout when Jesus entered the city? (11:9)
14. What does the reaction of the crowd tell us about how they interpreted Jesus' entry into Jerusalem? (11:9-10)
15. Why do you think Jesus went to the temple first but then went out to Bethany with His disciples? (11:11)
16. Why didn't Jesus stay in Jerusalem? (11:11)

Get It

- * 17. What do you think the disciples thought about what Jesus asked them to do?
18. Why do you think the people in the village let the disciples take their colt?
19. What did Jesus communicate to the crowds by riding a donkey into Jerusalem?
20. Why do you think Jesus went to the temple first but then went out to Bethany with His disciples?
- * 21. When has God told you to do something that you thought was unusual or difficult to justify?
22. How should we imitate the disciples' example?
23. Why do you think God does not always reveal His intentions or long-range plans for us when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances?
24. What should we do when we do not understand what God is trying to accomplish in us and through us?
25. What can we learn from the attitudes of the people who followed Jesus into Jerusalem?
26. How can we express our praise to the Lord?

Apply It

27. What could you do this week to celebrate what Jesus has done for you?
- * 28. How should you react the next time a situation arises that you don't understand?

Jesus Clears the Temple - Mark 11:12-19

Topics: Anger, Dishonesty, Emotions, Fruit, Money, Prayer, Worship

Open It

- * 1. If you could change one thing about your church, what would it be?
- 2. How well do you think your church fulfills its purpose?
- 3. Over what are you most likely to lose your temper?

Explore It

- 4. Where did the events of this story take place? (11:12)
- 5. Where did Jesus go? Why? (11:12-13)
- * 6. Why did the fig tree have no fruit? (11:13)
- * 7. What did Jesus do to the fig tree? Why? (11:13-14)
- 8. How did this event differ from every other miracle Jesus performed? (11:13-14)
- * 9. What do both the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple tell us about Jesus' attitude toward the people of Israel? (11:13-17)
- 10. What happened when Jesus entered the temple area in Jerusalem? (11:15-18)
- 11. Whose authority was Jesus challenging when He drove the money changers from the temple area? (11:17)
- 12. What was Jesus saying about His own authority? (11:17)
- 13. Why was Jesus so upset about the "marketplace" atmosphere in the temple? (11:17)
- 14. How did the crowds and the religious leaders react to Jesus' actions in the temple? (11:18)

Get It

- 15. Why do you think Jesus cursed the fig tree?
- 16. How do you think the disciples reacted to hearing Jesus curse a fig tree?
- * 17. The fig tree had leaves but no fruit; what is one area of your life that looks good, but isn't producing what God wants?
- * 18. How can you grow and become more productive in one of your weak areas?
- 19. What difference does it make to you that Jesus showed anger?
- 20. What practices in the church today do you think hinder non-Christians from coming to Christ?
- 21. Where is God's temple today?
- 22. How should we treat God's temple?
- 23. How do you need to change your attitudes or actions when worshiping?

Apply It

- * 24. What specific steps can you take this week to concentrate on a weak area of your spiritual life, aiming to bear fruit for the Lord?
- 25. How can you show respect for God's temple?

The Withered Fig Tree - Mark 11:20-26

Topics: Answers, Doubt, Faith, Forgiveness, Prayer, Relationships, Resentment

Open It

1. Why do people hold grudges?
- * 2. Why is it easy to hold grudges?
3. How do you think holding a grudge would affect your relationship with your best friend?

Explore It

4. What happened when the disciples saw the fig tree withered along the road? (11:20)
5. How did Peter react to what he saw? (11:21)
- * 6. How did Jesus use a seemingly insignificant event as an opportunity to teach the disciples? (11:22)
- * 7. On what do answers to prayer depend? (11:22-25)
8. What truth did Jesus illustrate with the withered fig tree? (11:23-24)
9. What elements did Jesus single out of this object lesson regarding a strong prayer life? (11:23-25)
10. What promise did Jesus offer about receiving answers to prayers? (11:24)
11. How can a person be sure God has forgiven his or her sins? (11:24)
12. What can stand in the way of God's forgiveness? (11:25)
- * 13. How can holding a grudge affect the way God answers prayer? (11:25)
14. How is some unanswered prayer accounted for? (11:25)

Get It

15. Why does Jesus tie God's forgiveness of us with our forgiveness of others?
16. What does this passage say about the relationship between faith and forgiveness?
17. What should we be willing to do to resolve conflicts between ourselves and others?
- * 18. Why is it necessary to forgive others for what they have done?
- * 19. When is it difficult for you to forgive others?
20. What will happen if you refuse to forgive others?
21. In what ways has this passage challenged you to reexamine your faith and your prayer life?
22. When have you experienced frustrations or doubts in your prayer life?
23. How can God be both sovereign and bound to grant every prayer request we lay before Him?
24. For what other reasons besides grudges do our prayers go unanswered?

Apply It

25. What is one specific request that you want to commit yourself to pray for regularly this week?
- * 26. What can you do today to let go of a grudge or feeling of offense?

The Authority of Jesus Questioned - Mark 11:27-33

Topics: Authority, Conflict, Doubt, Fear, Heaven, Power, Questions

Open It

- * 1. Who are some authorities or experts who influence public opinion (such as media, politicians, religious leaders, etc.)?
- 2. What are some examples of authority?
- 3. In what ways should a Christian's values differ from those of "the experts"?

Explore It

- 4. Where did the events of this story take place? (11:27)
- * 5. Who confronted Jesus? Why? (11:27-28)
- 6. What were "these things" to which the religious leaders referred? (11:28)
- 7. How did the religious leaders challenge Jesus' authority? (11:28)
- 8. What do Jesus' actions tell you about His attitude toward the religious leaders of His day? (11:28-33)
- * 9. How did Jesus answer the challenge put to Him? (11:29-33)
- 10. What condition did Jesus place on answering the challenge put to Him? (11:29)
- 11. How did Jesus challenge his accusers to stand up for the truth? (11:30-32)
- 12. How did Jesus expose his accusers' true motives? (11:30-32)
- 13. Why was Jesus' question so difficult for the religious leaders to answer? (11:29-32)
- 14. How did the religious leaders respond to Jesus' question? (11:33)
- * 15. How did Jesus silence His critics? (11:33)

Get It

- 16. What were the priorities of the chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders who confronted Jesus?
- 17. What do you think prompted the religious leaders to question Jesus about His authority?
- 18. Why do you think Jesus decided not to answer the religious leaders directly, but instead posed another question in response?
- 19. By whose authority did Jesus clear the temple?
- 20. Why do you think Jesus did not want to reveal to the religious leaders the source of His authority?
- * 21. In what ways do human authorities challenge God's authority?
- * 22. How can we ensure that we follow God's authority rather than the "authorities" who challenge His Word?
- 23. When have you ever questioned God's authority in your life?
- 24. What does this passage tell us about Jesus' attitude toward people who reject His authority?
- 25. What could you learn from Jesus' example in this episode about dealing with people who try to trick or discredit Christians?
- 26. When is it most difficult to submit to God's authority?
- 27. How can we find the strength to rely completely on God's authoritative Word rather than trust in our own abilities?
- 28. What does God do for us when we completely turn over to Him the areas of our lives that we have tried to manage on our own?

Apply It

- * 29. What specific steps can you take this week to obey God's authority in one area of your life?
- 30. How should you respond the next time someone challenges you for doing what God has told you to do?

The Parable of the Tenants - Mark 12:1-12

Topics: Criticism, Dishonesty, Greed, Mediator, Murder, Possessions, Prophecy, Punishment

Open It

- * 1. When have you ever been cheated out of something that was rightfully yours?
- 2. What was your reaction to a time when you were cheated?

Explore It

- 3. How did Jesus get across His point in this situation? (12:1)
- 4. To whom was Jesus speaking? (12:1)
- 5. Why did the man in the parable plant a vineyard? (12:1)
- 6. What happened to the man's vineyard while he was away on a journey? (12:1)
- * 7. Whom do the farmer, servants, and son in the parable represent? (12:1-6)
- * 8. Why did the owner of the vineyard send so many servants to the tenants looking after the vineyard? (12:2-5)
- 9. Who was the last person the owner sent to his vineyard? (12:6)
- 10. How did the tenants want to cheat the son? (12:7)
- * 11. How did the tenants treat the owner's son? Why? (12:7-8)
- 12. What would be the response of the vineyard owner when he discovered how the tenants treated his son? (12:9)
- 13. What is the significance in Jesus saying that He will fulfill Psalm 118:22-23? (12:10-11)
- 14. How did the religious leaders respond to the parable Jesus told? (12:12)

Get It

- 15. What is the meaning of this parable?
- 16. Who are God's messengers?
- 17. How has God delivered His message to us today?
- * 18. In what ways is it possible to mistreat the messengers or message God has sent us?
- 19. How does God want us to treat His message?
- 20. When have you ever been mistreated because of your faith in Christ?
- * 21. How can we show respect for the message God has given us?
- 22. How does Jesus' example encourage you to respond when you are faced with difficult circumstances?
- 23. How can you be a better steward of the spiritual responsibility God has given you?
- 24. What can we expect the Lord to do if we try to rob Him of what is rightfully His?
- 25. How does this passage encourage you to use your gifts and abilities for the Lord's glory?

Apply It

- 26. What is one area of your life that you are holding back from the Lord for fear that He may ask too much of you?
- 27. What step can you take this week to commit yourself completely to the Lord?
- * 28. What can you do every day this week out of respect for God's Word?

Paying Taxes to Caesar - Mark 12:13-17

Topics: Authority, Deceit, Government, Hypocrisy, Money, Peer Pressure, Truth

Open It

- * 1. What does it mean to you to be patriotic?
- 2. What feelings do you have about your home country?
- 3. What do you believe is fair or unfair about having to pay taxes?

Explore It

- 4. Who sent the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus? (12:13)
- 5. Who made a special trip to see Jesus? Why? (12:13)
- 6. What were the Pharisees and Herodians trying to accomplish with their visit to Jesus? (12:13)
- * 7. How did the religious leaders try to trick Jesus? (12:13-15)
- 8. How did the religious leaders flatter Jesus? (12:14)
- 9. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees and Herodians? (12:15)
- 10. In what way were the religious leaders guilty of hypocrisy? (12:15)
- * 11. What did Jesus ask the religious leaders to bring Him? Why? (12:15-17)
- * 12. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's"? (12:17)
- 13. How did the religious leaders react to Jesus' words? (12:17)
- 14. How successful were the religious leaders in trapping Jesus? (12:17)

Get It

- 15. Why do you think the religious leaders complimented Jesus on His integrity and commitment to the truth before they asked their trick question?
- 16. Why do you think the religious leaders were so amazed at Jesus?
- 17. What does this passage reveal about Jesus' attitude toward hypocritical behavior?
- 18. In what way do we flatter people?
- 19. What is good or bad about flattery?
- 20. What does it take to speak the truth and avoid using flattery with people?
- 21. What does this story teach about being patriotic to your country?
- 22. What should we do when a civil law goes against God's law?
- 23. Whom do you know who has felt a clash between a civil law and God's law? What happened?
- 24. What did Jesus want the Pharisees and Herodians to do?
- * 25. What values was Jesus communicating with His answer to the Pharisees' question?
- * 26. What belongs to God that we should give back to Him?
- 27. What do you think you have held back from the Lord (such as an ability, a possession, or block of time)?
- 28. What is one thing or area of your life that you have withheld from the Lord but want to give back to Him?
- 29. Which is more difficult for you, letting go of what won't last or giving your life to God? Why?
- 30. Whom do you know who is not swayed by others?
- 31. What can you do to become more like Christ?

Apply It

- * 32. What is a prayer you can use to give to God what belongs to Him?
- 33. In what ways can you stand up for the truth in your place of work this week?

Marriage at the Resurrection - Mark 12:18-27

Topics: Angels, Death, Disagreements, Faith, Life, Marriage, Power, Questions, Resurrection

Open It

- * 1. What misconceptions do people often have about God?
- 2. How could a person's misunderstanding of God's character influence his or her attitude toward Christianity?
- 3. What is one thing you have learned about God that you did not understand when you were a child?

Explore It

- * 4. Who were the Sadducees, and what did they want from Jesus? (12:18)
- 5. What unique belief did the Sadducees have? (12:18)
- 6. How did the Sadducees address Jesus? (12:19)
- 7. What instruction of Moses did the Sadducees cite to support their theology about the Resurrection? (12:19)
- 8. What complicated scenario did the Sadducees develop to get Jesus' opinion about the Resurrection? (12:20-23)
- 9. What was the basic principle underlying the Sadducees' question? (12:23)
- 10. How did Jesus respond to the Sadducees' question? (12:24-27)
- * 11. In what way were the Sadducees "in error"? (12:24-27)
- * 12. What was wrong with the Sadducees' viewpoint? (12:24-27)
- 13. How will life in heaven differ from life on earth? (12:25)
- 14. What did God say to Moses "in the account of the bush"? (12:26)
- 15. How is God's description of His own character relevant to this discussion with the Sadducees? (12:26)
- 16. How did Jesus lend authority to His response to the Sadducees? (12:26)
- 17. What did Jesus mean when He referred to God as "not the God of the dead, but of the living"? (12:27)
- 18. How did Jesus show the Sadducees that the dead are raised? (12:26-27)

Get It

- 19. Why did Jesus refer to the book of Moses in His response to the Sadducees?
- 20. How do you think the Sadducees reacted to Jesus' stern rebuke in this passage?
- * 21. In what ways do you think Christians today misinterpret what the Scriptures actually say?
- * 22. How can we guard against reading into Scripture what we want it to say?
- 23. What specifically can you do to prevent yourself from being as "badly mistaken" about what Jesus taught as the Sadducees were?
- 24. Over what issues do religious leaders disagree today?
- 25. How can we know who is right when we hear conflicting opinions about God or theology?
- 26. Do you think you "know the Scriptures" and "the power of God" in your life, and if not, what can you do to mature in these areas of your Christian walk?
- 27. What can you learn from the Sadducees' negative example in this episode?
- 28. What difference does it make to you that God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living"?
- 29. How could you benefit from the insight of another believer?

Apply It

- * 30. What concrete action would you be willing to take this week to get to know the Scriptures better?
- 31. How could you make a conscious effort to learn from those who are more informed about the

Scriptures and wiser than you?

32. How can you learn more about the Scriptures this week?

The Greatest Commandment - Mark 12:28-34

Topics: Commitment, Devotion, God, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Love, Neighbor, Priorities, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. What do you remember about your very first next-door neighbor?
- 2. What responsibility do you feel toward your neighbors?
- 3. In what ways do you think Christians should treat their neighbors differently from the way non-Christians do?

Explore It

- 4. Why did the teacher of the law come over to speak to Jesus? (12:28)
- * 5. What significant question did the teacher of the law pose to Jesus? (12:28)
- * 6. How did Jesus respond to the man's question? (12:29-31)
- 7. How did Jesus use Scripture in answering the question put to Him? (12:29-31)
- 8. What did Jesus say was the second most important commandment? (12:31)
- 9. How did the teacher of the law respond to Jesus' answer? (12:32)
- * 10. How did the man speaking with Jesus show that He understood God's heart? (12:32-34)
- 11. What does God value more highly than sacrifices and offerings? (12:33)
- 12. How did Jesus evaluate the teacher's response to Him? (12:34)
- 13. What did Jesus mean when He said to the teacher, "You are not far from the kingdom of God"? (12-34)
- 14. How did the surrounding crowd react to this conversation? (12:34)

Get It

- 15. What do you think motivated the teacher of the law to question Jesus?
- 16. Why do you think Jesus quoted Scripture to answer the question instead of replying with His own words?
- 17. How familiar do you think this passage Jesus quoted was to the teacher of the law?
- 18. Why do you think the teacher added a note about offerings and sacrifices to what Jesus had said?
- 19. Why do you think other people were too scared to ask Jesus questions after this conversation?
- 20. What does Jesus' treatment of this teacher of the law tell you about His own character and view of people?
- * 21. What do "offerings and sacrifices" have to do with the greatest commandment?
- * 22. What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?
- 23. What do you think it means to "love your neighbor as yourself"?
- 24. How can we practice the greatest commandment in everyday life?
- 25. What modern-day religious practices would be like the burnt offerings and sacrifices to which the teacher of the law referred?
- 26. Why is wholehearted love for the Lord more important than outward actions that Christians practice today?
- 27. How does a person's love for God manifest itself in everyday life?

Apply It

- 28. What specific steps can you take this week to deepen your relationship with the Lord and demonstrate your love for Him?
- * 29. Who is one neighbor to whom you can show your love in a practical way this week? How?

Whose Son Is the Christ? - Mark 12:35-40

Topics: Authority, Holy Spirit, Honor, Jesus Christ, Pride, Punishment, Self-centeredness, Self-righteousness, Status, Teaching

Open It

1. How would you describe a good teacher?
2. What good teachers (whether school teachers, Sunday School teachers, pastors, parents, or others) have influenced you? How?
- * 3. If you wanted to be noticed for being an especially good worker at your job, how would you go about doing it?

Explore It

4. Where was Jesus teaching? (12:35)
5. What question did Jesus ask of His audience? (12:35)
6. What was significant about the passage Jesus quoted? (12:36)
7. In what way was the Holy Spirit involved in this account? (12:36)
8. What did Jesus point out from one of David's psalms? (12:36-37)
9. To whom was David referring in the Scripture Jesus quoted? (12:36)
10. What point was Jesus making by quoting David's words? (12:36)
11. How did the crowd respond to Jesus' teaching? (12:37)
12. How are the two parts of Jesus' teaching in this passage related? (12:35-40)
13. About whom did Jesus warn the crowds? (12:38)
- * 14. Why did Jesus condemn the teachers of the law? (12:38-39)
- * 15. What did the teachers of the law betray about themselves through their actions? (12:38-39)
16. How did the teachers of the law "devour widow's houses"? (12:40)
17. For what did Jesus condemn the teachers of the law? (12:40)
- * 18. What did Jesus say would happen to the teachers of the law? (12:40)

Get It

19. What difference does it make to you to know that the biblical writers were "speaking by the Holy Spirit" when they wrote the Scriptures?
20. What can you learn about the power and authority of the Messiah from Jesus' teaching in this passage?
- * 21. What do Christians do that is like the actions of the teachers of the law described in this passage (such as walking around in flowing robes, being greeted in the marketplace, having the most important seats at the synagogues and places of honor at banquets)?
22. How do we let pride and self-seeking attitudes interfere with our Christian witness?
23. What is one specific way that you have let pride into your life?
- * 24. What can we do to avoid being showy about our faith?
25. Who are the less fortunate people in our society who are vulnerable to exploitation, as were the widows in New Testament times?
26. What can churches do to guard against taking advantage of vulnerable people?
27. What specifically has the Lord convicted you of through Jesus' teaching in this passage?

Apply It

- * 28. What step can you take this week to pray, go to church, and do other spiritual devotions only out of a desire to please God?
29. What small act of kindness could you show to a less fortunate believer in your church this week?

The Widow's Offering - Mark 12:41-44

Topics: Attitude, Generosity, Gifts, Giving Up, Money, Motives, Poor, Sacrifice, Tithing, Wealth

Open It

1. In what ways are outward appearances misleading?
2. When was the last time you found out the true identity of an impostor or person who pretended to be something he or she was not?
- * 3. What does it mean to be poor?

Explore It

4. Where did the events of this story take place? (12:41)
5. Where did Jesus sit? (12:41)
6. What did Jesus see from where He sat near the temple? (12:41)
7. What did the "rich people" do at the temple treasury? (12:41)
8. What do the "rich people's" actions tell us about their motivation for giving? (12:41)
- * 9. What did the "poor widow" give to the treasury? (12:42)
- * 10. Why did Jesus call His disciples when He saw the widow put in her offering? (12:43)
- * 11. How did Jesus compare the actions of the wealthy people to the actions of the poor woman? (12:43-44)
12. Why did the large amounts of money given by the rich people not impress Jesus? (12:44)
13. Why was the widow's gift so significant in Jesus' eyes? (12:44)

Get It

14. Why do you think Jesus purposely sat near the temple treasury?
15. What central principle did Jesus focus on in this story?
- * 16. How does God evaluate a person's giving?
17. What place does a person's motivation and attitude have in their giving to the Lord, according to Jesus' teaching in this passage?
18. How does Jesus evaluate your giving?
- * 19. In what ways can we give to God?
20. Why do you think God wants us to give sacrificially?
21. What has been your attitude toward giving your money to the Lord?
22. When have you ever simply given out of your wealth instead of giving sacrificially to the Lord?
23. How do you need to change your attitude about giving?
24. What else does God want from us besides our material wealth?
25. What attitude should we have about giving of ourselves to the Lord?

Apply It

26. What specific steps are you willing to take this week to give sacrificially to the Lord, of either your material wealth or your abilities and time?
- * 27. How can you ensure that your attitude and motivation is right when you give to the Lord this week?

Signs of the End of the Age - Mark 13:1-31

Topics: Family, Future, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Last Days, Persecution, Perseverance, Prophecy, Second Coming, War, Worry

Open It

1. What have you read or been taught about the Second Coming of Christ?
- * 2. Where do you see yourself ten years from now?
3. What do you find confusing or difficult to understand about what the Bible says about the future?

Explore It

4. How did Jesus use the conversation of His disciples as an opportunity to teach? (13:1-2)
5. What did Jesus mean when He said the temple stones will be “thrown down”? (13:2)
- * 6. What did Jesus’ disciples ask Him privately on the Mount of Olives? (13:3-4)
- * 7. How did Jesus respond to His disciples’ question? (13:5-8)
8. What was Jesus’ main reason for telling His disciples what signs would precede the end of the age? (13:5)
9. How do we know Jesus was talking about a time still to come and not merely the fall of Jerusalem that took place in A.D. 70? (13:6-30)
10. Why did Jesus tell His disciples not to be alarmed when they would hear of wars? (13:7)
11. What must happen before Christ returns? (13:10)
12. How did Jesus tell His followers to act when they were arrested for their faith? (13:11)
13. What did Jesus tell His followers to do to be assured of eternal life? (13:12-13)
14. Where will “the elect” be during the “days of distress”? (12:19-20)
- * 15. What will be the greatest temptation during the “days of distress”? (13:21-23)
16. What do Christ’s words “if that were possible” mean? (13:22)
17. What events will happen right before the Second Coming of Christ? (13:24-25)
18. What will Christ’s return be like? (13:26-27)
19. What did Jesus want us to learn from the blossoming of a fig tree? (13:28-29)
20. What did Jesus say we could count on happening? (13:29-30)

Get It

21. Why do you think Jesus told His disciples not to worry about what to say whenever they were arrested for their faith?
22. Why do you think Jesus has told us “everything ahead of time” about His return and the end times?
- * 23. What signs from this passage do you think have already been fulfilled?
24. What can we do to make Christ’s return closer?
25. How can we be involved in spreading the gospel to all nations?
26. How can a person be sure he or she is saved and will inherit eternal life?
27. How can we be on our guard against false Christs and false prophets who perform signs and miracles to deceive us?
28. How does the promise of the Holy Spirit’s active presence encourage you to follow Christ through difficult times?
- * 29. What can we do to avoid being deceived by false teachings about God or spiritual matters?

Apply It

- * 30. What can you read or do this week to strengthen your hold on the truth about Christ?
31. What concrete action can you take to become more actively involved in telling others about Christ?

The Day and Hour Unknown - Mark 13:32-37

Topics: Angels, Ignorance, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Perseverance, Tasks, Waiting

Open It

1. What is it like to wait for a guest who has not told you exactly when he or she will arrive?
- * 2. Why is it so difficult to wait patiently for an exciting event (such as an upcoming party, vacation, or Christmas)?
3. How would you act differently if the exact time of an exciting upcoming event was unknown to you?

Explore It

4. To what “day” was Christ referring? (13:32)
5. Why didn’t Christ tell us the exact time when He would return to earth? (13:32)
6. In what way did Jesus live by faith and obedience to the Father? (13:32)
- * 7. What will Jesus’ return be like? How? (13:34)
8. What example did Jesus use to explain what His return to earth will be like? (13:34)
9. Who are the servants to which Christ referred? (13:34)
- * 10. What should the “servants” do to occupy their time while they wait for the owner’s return? (13:34)
11. Who is the “owner of the house” in Jesus’ story? (13:34-35)
12. What conclusion did Jesus draw from the fact that the day of His return is secret? (13:35)
13. What might happen if the “owner of the house” returned suddenly and the servants were not watching carefully? (13:36)
- * 14. What did Jesus want us to do? (13:37)

Get It

15. Why do you think Jesus felt that being on guard was such an important point to emphasize to His disciples?
16. How does this passage emphasize the fact that even Jesus had to live by faith and obedience to the Father?
17. How can we follow Christ’s example of living in complete faith and obedience to the Father?
18. How does Jesus’ teaching in this passage relate to the previous section?
19. What task do you think God has given you until His return?
20. How do you think the disciples would have responded if Jesus had told them He would not return for at least another 2,000 years?
21. How might a detailed outline of future events be a hindrance, instead of a help, to our faith in God?
22. In light of Jesus’ words, how should we respond to those who try to set dates for the Second Coming of Christ?
23. How should we occupy our time as we wait for Christ to return?
- * 24. What tends to distract us from living for Christ?
- * 25. In what way do we need to be on guard until Christ returns?
26. Against what do we need to watch out?
27. What practical effect should the warnings of Jesus regarding His return have in your life?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you “keep watch” in your day-to-day activities at work?
29. What distractions might you be able to set aside from your life? How?
30. What is one pursuit you want to add to your routine in light of this passage?

Jesus Anointed at Bethany - Mark 14:1-11

Topics: Beauty, Criticism, Devotion, Giving Up, Gospel, Judging Others, Love, Money, Poor, Preparation, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. When have you ever been criticized for doing something good?
- 2. What do you think motivates parents to sacrifice for their children?
- 3. What is one sacrifice you made for someone else?

Explore It

- 4. When and where did the events of this story take place? (14:1-3)
- 5. Why did the Jewish leaders not want to arrest Jesus during the Feast of Unleavened Bread? (14:2)
- 6. What attitude did many of the common people have toward Jesus? (14:2)
- * 7. What amazing thing did a woman do while Jesus was visiting Bethany? Where? (14:3)
- * 8. What reaction did the woman's actions get? Why? (14:4-5)
- 9. What caused some people with Jesus to become indignant? (14:4-5)
- 10. What does this incident tell us about some people's understanding of who Jesus was and why He had come? (14:4-6)
- * 11. Whom did Jesus rebuke? Why? (14:6)
- 12. How did Jesus evaluate the behavior of the woman who poured out the perfume? (14:6)
- 13. What did Jesus predict? (14:9)
- 14. What did Judas do? (14:10-11)
- 15. How did Judas betray Jesus? (14:10-11)
- 16. How did the chief priests react to Judas's visit? Why? (14:10-11)

Get It

- * 17. Why do you think the woman sacrificed so much perfume?
- 18. How would you have reacted if you had witnessed the woman pouring out a full year's wages' worth of perfume on someone's head?
- 19. In what way can a person betray Jesus?
- 20. What do you think might motivate a person to give up on Jesus, as Judas did?
- 21. When are Christians tempted to give up on their faith?
- 22. For what reasons do people reject Christ?
- * 23. What can we learn about values from the woman in this story?
- 24. How can we demonstrate our devotion to Christ?
- 25. How should we deal with the criticism and scorn of unbelievers?
- 26. How should you respond when others rebuke or harshly criticize your actions?
- 27. How does Jesus want us to treat the poor?
- 28. What tends to distract you from being fully devoted to Christ?
- 29. What kinds of sacrifices can a person make for God?
- 30. What sacrifice do you think God wants you to make for the sake of the gospel?

Apply It

- * 31. What is one way you can show your devotion to Christ above all other things, people, or ambitions in your life? When?
- 32. What is one step you could take this week toward helping the poor in a practical way?

The Lord's Supper - Mark 14:12-26

Topics: Deceit, Emotions, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Lord's Supper, Preparation, Prophecy, Remembering, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. What is one ceremony or observance that is important to you?
- 2. How does your church celebrate the Lord's Supper?

Explore It

- 3. When did the events of this story take place? (14:12)
- 4. What did Jesus' disciples ask Him? (14:12)
- 5. How did Jesus make the arrangements for the Passover meal? (14:13)
- 6. Whom did Jesus send to make the arrangements for the Passover meal? (14:13)
- 7. What specific instructions did Jesus give the disciples He sent out? (14:13-15)
- 8. How did Jesus' predictions compare to what the disciples actually found when they got into the city? (14:16)
- 9. What was the reaction of the disciples to Jesus' prediction of His betrayal? (14:19)
- 10. How did Jesus specify who would betray Him? (14:20-21)
- * 11. The central emphasis of the Passover meal was traditionally the sacrificial lamb; where did Jesus place His emphasis? (14:22-24)
- * 12. What important announcement did Jesus make? (14:25)
- * 13. How did Jesus and the disciples conclude their Passover meal? (14:26)

Get It

- 14. Why do you think Jesus made arrangements for the Passover meal in such a secretive manner?
- 15. Why do you think Jesus told His disciples that one of them would betray Him?
- 16. How does the fulfillment of Jesus' predictions in this account encourage you to trust Him?
- 17. When have you had opportunity to trust God with your future?
- 18. Why do you think God seldom chooses to reveal the future to us?
- 19. What does the account of Judas's betrayal of Jesus tell us about God's sovereignty?
- 20. What does the account of Judas's betrayal of Jesus tell us about our accountability to God?
- 21. What causes Christians to betray or reject Christ after following Him for a while?
- * 22. What can we learn about the practice of Communion through this passage?
- * 23. Why is Communion or the Lord's Supper important?
- 24. How does God want us to use the Lord's Supper?
- 25. How does the old covenant God made with Israel compare or differ with the new covenant He has made through the blood of Jesus Christ?
- 26. What difference should it make in your everyday life that Jesus sacrificed His body and blood for your eternal salvation?

Apply It

- * 27. What are two or three steps you can take to prepare for the next time you celebrate the Lord's Supper?
- 28. What do you want to remember the next time you take the Lord's Supper?
- 29. How can you say thank you to Jesus each day this week for the suffering He endured for you?
- 30. How can you trust Christ with the circumstances you do not yet understand?

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial - Mark 14:27-31

Topics: Death, Denial, Determination, Faith, Fear, Forsake, Prophecy, Rejection

Open It

1. What is one fact about the future you wish you knew?
2. What is one part of your past you wish you could do over?
- * 3. What is one institution, person, or organization to which you have felt loyal over the years? Why?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Jesus reveal to His disciples? (14:27)
5. How would Jesus' prediction fulfill Scripture? (14:27)
6. What did Jesus quote? Why? (14:27)
7. To what "shepherd" and "sheep" did Jesus refer? Why? (14:27)
8. What information did Jesus give the disciples? (14:28)
- * 9. How did Peter respond to Christ's words? (14:29)
10. What was Peter's state of mind when Jesus predicted that the disciples would betray Him? (14:29)
- * 11. What did Jesus say about Peter's loyalty? (14:30)
12. What was the reaction when Jesus said that Peter would disown Him? (14:31)
13. What did Peter claim? (14:31)
14. What do the disciples' reactions tell us about them? (14:31)

Get It

15. What does the verse that Jesus quoted mean: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered"?
16. Why do you think Jesus sometimes chose to reveal to His disciples what would happen in the future and at other times left them in the dark?
17. Why do you think Jesus told Peter that he was not as faithful a friend as he assumed?
18. What is the benefit in knowing we are vulnerable to failure?
19. Why do you think Peter boasted of his loyalty to Christ?
20. In what ways do Christians declare their loyalty to Christ?
21. Why do some Christians fall away from following Christ?
- * 22. What specific area of your life most tests your loyalty to Christ?
23. What can we do to strengthen our commitment to Christ?
- * 24. What exactly can we do to stay committed to Jesus in the face of testing or suffering?
25. What role does accountability play in helping Christians remain loyal to Christ?
26. How should you react if another believer falls away from his or her faith?
27. What difference does it make that all of Jesus' predictions about the future came true?
28. What can we learn from this passage about Jesus' character and attitude?

Apply It

29. In what way can you show your dependence on God for the strength to follow Christ?
- * 30. What can you do over the next week to renew and strengthen your faith in Christ?

Gethsemane - Mark 14:32-42

Topics: Depression, Despair, Giving Up, Pain, Prayer, Solitude, Sorrow

Open It

- * 1. How have your friends helped you through difficult times in your life?
- 2. What is it like to have a friend let you down when you really need support?
- 3. Who has been a faithful friend to you during difficult times in your life?

Explore It

- 4. Where did the events of this story take place? (14:32)
- 5. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do? (14:32)
- 6. Who did Jesus take with him to pray? (14:33)
- * 7. What emotions was Jesus feeling? (14:33-34)
- 8. What do Jesus' actions at this time tell us about His character? (14:33-34)
- 9. Why was Jesus so distressed and troubled? (14:33-34)
- 10. What did Jesus do in response to His deep sorrow? (14:35-36)
- 11. What "hour" did Jesus pray to "pass from Him"? (14:35-36)
- 12. What does Jesus' prayer tell us about His relationship to God the Father? (14:36)
- * 13. What distressed Jesus when He returned to His disciples? (14:37)
- 14. What did Jesus find when He returned to the disciples who were keeping watch? (14:37)
- 15. How did Jesus instruct the disciples to prevent themselves from falling into temptation? (14:38)
- * 16. Why did the disciples have so much trouble praying with Jesus? (14:38)
- 17. How did Jesus explain the difference between the spirit and the body? (14:38)
- 18. What caused the disciples to be speechless when Christ returned to them the second time? (14:40)
- 19. When did Jesus stop praying? (14:41-42)
- 20. What caused Jesus to stop praying? (14:41-42)

Explore It

- 21. Why do you think Jesus chose three disciples to pray with Him?
- 22. What does the fact that God did not grant Jesus' request teach us about prayer?
- 23. If Mark's readers were Roman Christians undergoing persecution, what would this section of his Gospel say to them?
- 24. How does this passage encourage you to react when you feel distressed or troubled?
- 25. What about Christ's humanity can we learn from this event in His life?
- 26. What difference does it make that Jesus experienced such despair and pain firsthand?
- 27. What can we learn about prayer from Jesus' example?
- 28. When do you need to pray?
- * 29. Why didn't the disciples watch and pray with Jesus as He asked them to?
- 30. What was the difference between the disciples' intentions and their actions?
- * 31. What stops us from helping people in need?
- 32. What human weaknesses make it hard for us to do what God wants?
- 33. How should you pray when you must face a difficult or painful task?
- 34. How can we trust God with our extremely difficult circumstances?
- 35. What does it mean to "watch and pray"?
- 36. How can we prevent ourselves from falling into temptation?

Apply It

- 37. Who is someone you can ask to help you overcome a weakness?
- 38. What needs of others will you commit yourself to pray for during this next week?

* 39. How can you support a friend or relative facing a difficult task this week?

Jesus Arrested - Mark 14:43-52

Topics: Armor, Fear, Friendship, Hypocrisy, Persecution, Rebellion

Open It

1. When have you ever been blamed for something you did not do?
- * 2. What is one friendship you once had that went sour?
3. What does it feel like to be wrongly accused?

Explore It

4. Who was Judas? (14:43-44)
5. Who accompanied Judas to Gethsemane? Why? (14:43-44)
6. How did the religious leaders treat Jesus? (14:43-46)
7. Why did the religious leaders bring a large, armed force to arrest Jesus? (14:43-48)
8. What signal had Judas prearranged with the armed leaders to identify Jesus? (14:44)
9. How did Judas greet Jesus? Why? (14:44-45)
10. In what way were Judas's actions contradictory? (14:44-45)
11. How did one of Jesus' disciples (we know from John 18:10 that it was Peter) react to the arrest of Jesus? (14:47)
- * 12. How did Jesus respond to the sight of the armed men? (14:48-49)
13. How was Jesus' response to this situation different from that of His followers? (14:48-50)
14. What had to happen? (14:49)
- * 15. Who fled the scene? When? (14:50-52)
- * 16. What is significant about the fact that all of Jesus' followers deserted Him? (14:50-52)

Get It

17. What do we know about Judas from this passage?
18. What kind of person was Judas?
19. In what way was Judas hypocritical?
20. In what way is Judas a negative example to all of us?
21. In what ways are we like Judas in the way we treat Jesus?
22. What do Peter's actions tell us about his character and his understanding of Jesus?
23. How do you think Jesus must have felt about the fact that His disciples deserted him?
- * 24. Why did Jesus' disciples desert Him?
25. When are you most tempted to compromise your commitment to Christ?
- * 26. How can we prepare for times when our dedication to Christ is tested?
27. How can we guard against saying one thing and doing another?
28. How does Jesus' perseverance in this situation encourage you to endure your difficult circumstances?
29. What can we learn about Jesus' character from His actions?
30. When have you ever felt that all of your friends deserted you?
31. What difference does it make to you that Jesus was deserted by all of His friends?
32. How can you lean on Jesus when you go through very distressing and frightening experiences?

Apply It

- * 33. What can you do now to prepare for times when your dedication to Christ is tested at work, at home, or around neighbors?
34. What friend can you support through a difficult situation? How?

Before the Sanhedrin - Mark 14:53-65

Topics: Blasphemy, Confession, Death, Evidence, Fear, Messiah, Persecution, Punishment, Silence, Testing, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. When was the last time you were misunderstood or misinterpreted?
- 2. What do you think is good or bad about capital punishment?

Explore It

- 3. Before whom did Jesus have to stand trial? (14:53)
- 4. Who followed Jesus as He was being led away? How? (14:54)
- * 5. What did the men of the Sanhedrin want to do to Jesus? Why? (14:55)
- 6. Why did the Sanhedrin have such a difficult time convicting Jesus? (14:55-59)
- * 7. What testimony did some witnesses bring against Jesus? (14:57-58)
- 8. How did the high priest try to get Jesus to answer the questions put to Him? (14:60)
- * 9. What was Jesus' response to all the accusations against Him? (14:61)
- 10. How did Jesus use silence during all the testimony against Him? (14:61)
- 11. What did the high priest finally do in an attempt to speed up the trial? (14:61)
- 12. When did Jesus choose to speak? (14:62)
- 13. What did Jesus tell the Sanhedrin? (14:62)
- 14. Why did the high priest respond with such shock to Jesus' testimony? (14:63-64)
- 15. What did the Sanhedrin consider blasphemy? (14:64)
- 16. To what punishment did the Sanhedrin sentence Jesus? Why? (14:64)
- 17. How did the people in the courtroom abuse Jesus after He was sentenced to death? (14:65)

Get It

- 18. Why do you think Peter followed Jesus "at a distance"?
- 19. What emotions do you think Peter felt as he was following Jesus?
- 20. When have you ever felt that circumstances had gone beyond your control?
- 21. What should we do when circumstances are beyond our control?
- * 22. How do you think Jesus felt during His trial? Why?
- 23. Why do you think Jesus chose to remain silent throughout the initial testimony against Him?
- 24. What can we learn about dealing with stress and fear from Jesus' example?
- * 25. What can we learn about dealing with false accusations from Jesus' example?
- 26. What difference does it make to you that Jesus will one day return?
- 27. What do we learn about Jesus from this trial?
- 28. How can we live our lives blamelessly as Jesus did?

Apply It

- * 29. How do you want to react the next time you are falsely accused or tricked?
- 30. What specific steps can you take this week to entrust your circumstances to God?

Peter Disowns Jesus - Mark 14:66-72

Topics: Deceit, Dishonesty, Embarrassment, Fear, Jesus Christ, Rejection, Relationships, Sorrow, Witnessing

Open It

1. What subjects do most people try to avoid in polite company? Why?
- * 2. What is one fact about you that most people don't know?

Explore It

3. Where did the events of this story take place? (14:66)
4. What was Peter doing at this critical time? (14:66)
5. How do we know Peter was concerned for Jesus? (14:66)
6. What was the servant girl's opinion of Jesus? (14:66-69)
- * 7. How did Peter's denial of Christ happen? (14:66-72)
8. Who confronted Peter about his association with Jesus? (14:67)
9. How did Peter respond to the servant girl's questioning? (14:68, 70)
10. Why did Peter move "out into the entryway"? (14:68)
11. Who else besides the servant girl confronted Peter? Why? (14:70)
- * 12. Who in the courtyard was curious and insistent about finding out who Jesus' followers were? (14:66-70)
13. How did Peter respond to the third question about whether he was a follower of Christ? (14:71)
14. Why did Peter cry? (14:72)
15. What reminded Peter of Jesus' words to Him earlier? (14:72)
- * 16. How did Peter react when he realized what he had done? (14:72)

Get It

17. What does this story tell us about Peter?
18. Why do you think Peter denied knowing Christ?
19. What does this story tell us about human nature?
20. What does this story tell you about you?
21. What different kinds of reactions have you received when you have told others about your faith in Christ?
22. Why are Christians sometimes afraid to identify themselves as believers in Christ?
23. Why are Christians sometimes afraid to tell non-Christian friends about Christ?
- * 24. In what sorts of situations are you sometimes uncomfortable or fearful about identifying with Christ or Christianity?
25. What can we learn about the cost of being Christ's disciple from this passage?
26. How do other people's attitudes toward Christ affect your willingness to talk about your Christian faith?
- * 27. How can you affirm your faith in Christ in situations where others may be indifferent or hostile to it?

Apply It

- * 28. In what situation or context will you consciously identify with Christ publicly this week? How?
29. What person do you need to tell of your faith in Christ? When can you?

Jesus Before Pilate - Mark 15:1-15

Topics: Compromise, Envy, Injustice, Judgment, Leadership, Peer Pressure, Reputation

Open It

1. In what situations have you felt the power of a group?
2. When have you ever been influenced by the opinions of a group?
- * 3. What sort of reputation did you have in high school?

Explore It

4. When did the members of the Sanhedrin decide what to do with Jesus? (15:1)
5. What did all the religious leaders decide to do with Jesus? (15:1)
6. What did the Sanhedrin do with Jesus after deciding He was guilty? (15:1)
7. About what did Pilate question Jesus? (15:2)
8. How did Jesus respond to the Sanhedrin and Pilate? (15:2)
- * 9. What prompted Pilate to goad Jesus about defending Himself? (15:3-4)
10. What amazed Pilate? (15:3-5)
- * 11. How did Jesus react to the accusations raised against Him by the chief priests? (15:5)
12. What did Pilate think of Jesus? (15:5)
13. Who was Barabbas and what role did he play in this situation? (15:6-8)
14. What did the crowd ask Pilate to do for them? (15:8, 13)
15. Why did Pilate try to have Jesus released instead of Barabbas? How? (15:9-10)
16. Why did Pilate's attempt to release Jesus fail? (15:11-15)
17. What reason did the crowd give Pilate to crucify Jesus? (15:14)
18. How did the crowd influence Pilate's decision? (15:15)
- * 19. What finally happened to Jesus? Why? (15:15)

Get It

20. Of those involved in trying and sentencing Jesus, who do you think bore the greater responsibility: the religious leaders or Pilate? Why?
21. Why do you think the Sanhedrin handed Jesus over to Pilate?
22. How did Jesus' enemies use lies and false accusations against Him?
23. How did Jesus' enemies manipulate public opinion against Him?
24. Why was Pilate amazed by Jesus' behavior?
25. Why do you think Pilate did what the crowd wanted?
26. When have you ever done something because the crowd pressured you to do it?
27. Why is group pressure so powerful?
28. What is difficult about standing up to the crowd?
29. Where do you often feel pressured by others to go against your Christian beliefs?
30. How can we remember to respond properly when pressured by the crowd?
31. Why didn't Jesus defend Himself?
- * 32. When is it unimportant to defend ourselves or our actions?
33. What is difficult about being unpopular or disliked by a group?
34. Why is it so difficult to trust God with our reputation?
- * 35. In what way can you entrust your reputation to God?

Apply It

- * 36. What reminder can you use this week to entrust your reputation to God each day?
37. What is one step you can take this week to strengthen your conviction against pressure from coworkers, friends, or family?

The Soldiers Mock Jesus - Mark 15:16-20

Topics: Criticism, Endurance, Humiliation, Pain, Persecution, Sacrifice, Suffering

Open It

1. How have your friends encouraged you during difficult times in your life?
- * 2. What kids do you remember being mocked or put down when you were in elementary school?
3. What do you think it would be like to go through a painful experience without the support of your friends or family?

Explore It

4. Where did the soldiers take Jesus after His trial with Pilate? (15:16)
5. Who was present there in the palace? (15:16)
6. Once Jesus had been tried, convicted, and sentenced, who mocked and struck Him? (15:16-20)
7. What kind of suffering did Jesus undergo even before being crucified? (15:16-20)
- * 8. What did the soldiers do to Jesus? (15:17-20)
9. Why did the soldiers put a purple robe and a crown on Jesus? (15:17)
- * 10. What did the soldiers say in mockery of Jesus? (15:18)
- * 11. Why did the soldiers fall on their knees before Jesus? (15:19)
12. How did the soldiers hurt Jesus? (15:17-20)
13. What do the soldiers' actions tell us about their understanding of who Jesus really was? (15:17-20)

Get It

14. What do you think the soldiers had heard about Jesus?
15. How do you think the soldiers' actions affected Jesus emotionally?
- * 16. What difference does it make that Jesus endured harsh ridicule and pain for our sake?
17. When have you been ridiculed for being a Christian?
18. How does it feel to be mocked by others?
- * 19. How should we respond when others mock our faith?
20. How can we show our appreciation to Jesus for enduring such humiliation for us?
21. What can we learn from Jesus about how to deal with pain and suffering?
22. Why does God allow us to suffer?
23. For what Christians who are suffering for their faith can you pray?

Apply It

- * 24. What should be your response if you are criticized for your faith this week?
25. What could you say or do to encourage another believer who is suffering for his or her faith?

The Crucifixion - Mark 15:21-32

Topics: Atonement, Endurance, Giving Up, Insults, Jesus Christ, Pain, Sacrifice, Salvation, Suffering, Temptation

Open It

1. What is one of your favorite symbols? Why?
- * 2. What do people mean when they say that someone “did not die in vain”?
3. When you see a cross in or on a church building, what usually comes to mind?

Explore It

4. Who was Simon of Cyrene? (15:21)
5. What role did Simon of Cyrene play in Jesus’ life? (15:21)
- * 6. Why did Jesus not carry the cross Himself? (15:21)
7. What did the soldiers offer Jesus once they reached the place where He would be crucified? (15:23)
8. What offer of help did Jesus refuse? (15:23)
9. What did the soldiers do with Jesus’ clothes? (15:24)
10. What was significant about the notice that was placed on the cross above Jesus? (15:26)
11. Who was crucified with Jesus? (15:27)
- * 12. How did the people insult Jesus when He was on the cross? (15:29-30)
13. What did the teachers of the law say about Jesus while He was dying? How? (15:31-32)
- * 14. What challenge did Jesus ignore? (15:31-32)

Get It

15. Why do you think Jesus refused to accept a drink that could deaden His pain?
- * 16. What kind of suffering did Jesus endure for us?
17. What emotions do you think Jesus felt as He was led away and crucified?
18. Simon’s encounter with Jesus was very unusual; how did you first “encounter Christ”?
19. When have you ever experienced apparently “random” events in your life, that upon later reflection showed God’s sovereign will being worked out in you?
20. How can you thank the Lord for the hidden ways He works in your life?
21. Jesus was closely identified with criminals during His death; what significance does this have to you?
22. How would your life be different if Jesus had taken up the challenge of the religious leaders and come down off the cross?
23. What emotions do you feel when you think about the crucifixion of Christ?
24. Why is this tragic story about Christ called “good news”?
25. What has Christ’s sacrifice accomplished for you?
26. What did Jesus do for every person with His death on the cross?
- * 27. What did Jesus do for you with His death on the cross?

Apply It

- * 28. What is one way you can say thank you to Jesus for paying for your sins?
29. With what one person can you share the good news of Christ’s sacrifice? How?

The Death of Jesus - Mark 15:33-41

Topics: Believe, Death, Forsake, Jesus Christ, Loneliness, Miracles, Reconciliation, Sacrifice, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. At what time in your life have you felt most lonely?
- 2. What is your first recollection of dealing with the death of a pet or grandparent?

Explore It

- 3. What unusual occurrence took place as Jesus was dying? (15:33)
- * 4. What did Jesus say “at the ninth hour”? (15:34)
- 5. What do Jesus’ words at the ninth hour reveal about how He was feeling right before He died? (15:34)
- * 6. What did Jesus mean when He said that God had “forsaken” Him? (15:34)
- * 7. How did the bystanders misunderstand what Jesus was going through? (15:35)
- 8. What offer of help did Jesus receive? (15:36)
- 9. What does the fact that Jesus twice cried out in a loud voice tell us about the way He died? (15:34, 37)
- 10. What happened right after Jesus’ death? (15:38)
- 11. How did the centurion react to Jesus’ crucifixion and death? (15:39)
- 12. What caused the centurion to believe in Jesus? (15:39)
- 13. Who watched Christ’s crucifixion from a distance? Why? (15:40-41)

Get It

- 14. What do you think motivated one man to offer Jesus a drink of wine vinegar?
- 15. What does it mean that the curtain of the temple tore?
- 16. What did the tearing of the temple curtain symbolize?
- 17. What difference does Jesus’ death make in your life?
- 18. What did Jesus’ words on the cross mean?
- * 19. What kind of isolation did Jesus experience in His death on the cross?
- 20. How can we draw encouragement from the loneliness Jesus endured?
- * 21. In what way can following Christ or doing what God wants be a lonely experience?
- 22. How does it make you feel to know that Christ endured such intense suffering for your salvation?
- 23. What significance is there for you in the fact that a Roman soldier recognized the great truth that even the religious leaders could not see?
- 24. How has your study of this passage changed your perception of Jesus?
- 25. In what way is every person indebted to Christ?

Apply It

- 26. What can you do as a reminder of what Christ did for you?
- * 27. When might you have to face loneliness as a part of following Christ this week?

The Burial of Jesus - Mark 15:42-47

Topics: Body, Courage, Humanness, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Love, Respect, Risk, Status

Open It

1. How might you comfort a person grieving over the death of a loved one?
2. What is most comforting to you when you are feeling upset?
- * 3. Who is the most courageous person you know?

Explore It

4. When did the events described in this passage take place? (15:42)
- * 5. Who was Joseph? (15:43)
6. What kind of person took it upon himself to bury Jesus' body? (15:43)
7. What was significant about the fact that Joseph asked for Jesus' body? (15:43)
8. What kind of man was Joseph of Arimathea? (15:43)
9. What was courageous about what Joseph did? (15:43)
- * 10. What risks did Joseph take in approaching Pilate? (15:43)
- * 11. What do Joseph's actions tell us about his own understanding of Jesus? (15:43-46)
12. What took Pilate by surprise? (15:44)
13. How did Pilate respond to Joseph's request? (15:45)
14. What did Joseph do to Jesus' body? (15:46)
15. Who witnessed Jesus' burial? (15:47)

Get It

16. Why do you think Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus had died?
17. Why do you think Mark mentioned that two women saw where Jesus was buried?
18. What was exemplary about Joseph?
19. What was courageous about what Joseph did?
- * 20. What did Joseph risk in burying Jesus' body?
21. What do you risk in being a follower of Christ?
- * 22. In what situations might doing the right thing require courage?
23. How did Joseph's position and status conflict with his actions?
24. In what way does being a Christian go against what people expect of you?
25. How can we follow Joseph's example?

Apply It

- * 26. What step of courage can you take in serving God this week?
27. What person or reminder can help you draw courage to do what God wants?

The Resurrection - Mark 16:1-20

Topics: Believe, Criticism, Doubt, Faith, Fear, Gospel, Heaven, Joy, Life, Miracles, Resurrection, Witnessing

Open It

1. What is the most extraordinary event you have ever witnessed?
2. What does the saying mean, “Truth is stranger than fiction”?
- * 3. What is one piece of news you heard today?
4. From whom do you like to hear regularly?

Explore It

5. Why did the women go to Jesus’ tomb? (16:1)
6. What question was at the back of the women’s minds as they traveled to the tomb? (16:2)
- * 7. What did the women see when they got to the tomb? (16:4)
8. Who was the “young man” in the tomb? (16:5)
9. How did the women react to the man dressed in white? (16:6, 8)
- * 10. What did the angel tell the women to do? (16:6-7)
11. To whom did the angel want the women to tell his message? (16:7)
- * 12. Why did the women flee from the tomb and not tell anyone what they had witnessed? (16:8)
13. To whom did the resurrected Jesus appear first? (16:9)
14. How did Jesus’ disciples respond each time someone told them that He had risen from the dead? (16:11-12)
15. Why did Jesus rebuke the disciples when He first saw them? (16:14)
16. What instructions did Jesus give to His followers? (16:15-18)
17. What happened to Jesus after He was taken up into heaven? (16:19)
18. What did the disciples do after Jesus had left earth to return to heaven? (16:20)

Get It

19. Why do you think the resurrected Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene?
20. What would you have thought and felt if you had entered Jesus’ empty tomb?
21. What can we learn from this passage about the importance of baptism?
22. What is at stake when a person first hears about Christ?
23. What difference has the ascended Lord made in your life this past year?
24. In what ways has your view of Jesus Christ changed as a result of studying this part of Mark’s Gospel?
- * 25. What is the responsibility of every Christian in fulfilling Christ’s command to tell others about Him?
- * 26. What do you see as your personal role in helping spread the news about Christ?
27. How does the Lord “confirm His word” through Christians today?
28. What causes us to have a lack of faith in God or a “stubborn refusal to believe”?
29. What does it mean to have faith in God?
30. How do you celebrate Easter?

Apply It

31. What is one concrete step of faith you can take this week in your life at work, among your family, or in your personal life?
- * 32. What can you do this week to obey Christ’s command to “preach the good news to all creation”?
33. How can you honor the resurrected Christ next Easter?

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Introduction - Luke 1:1-4

Topics: Answers, Assurance, Authority, Believe, Bible, Christianity, Confidence, Evidence, Instructions, Learning, Reliability

Open It

1. How would a biographer prepare for writing about someone's life?
- * 2. What period in history do you wish you could visit? Why?
3. How would you prepare to serve as a character witness in court for your best friend?

Explore It

4. What clues about the relationship between Luke and Theophilus can be found in this introduction? (1:1-3)
5. How had Luke received his evidence for the "things fulfilled among us"? (1:2)
- * 6. On what kind of people did Luke rely for his information? (1:2)
7. How did Luke rely on eyewitnesses in writing his Gospel? (1:2)
8. Who were the "servants of the word"? (1:2)
- * 9. What credentials did Luke use to back up the trustworthiness of what he wrote? (1:3)
10. How did Luke describe his approach to historical research? (1:3)
11. What reasons did Luke give for deciding to write his Gospel? (1:3-4)
- * 12. What did Luke hope would be the result of this Gospel in the life of Theophilus? (1:4)
13. What does the phrase "know the certainty of the things you have been taught" mean? (1:4)

Get It

14. What characteristics of the time in which Luke lived might make him a better observer, listener, and witness than people today are?
15. On what evidence would you rely to be certain of the things you were taught?
- * 16. In what ways can we identify with Theophilus?
- * 17. Why is Luke's assurance of accuracy important?
18. If you got a personal letter tomorrow that began just like this introduction, with your name in the place of Theophilus, how would you treat the letter?
19. Are you a person who needs to be taught or a person who needs to be more certain of what you have already been taught?
20. Why would an accurate account of Jesus' life be a powerful evangelistic tool?

Apply It

21. How do you personally plan to approach this study of the Gospel of Luke?
22. What question about the life of Christ would you like answered by a study of this Gospel?
- * 23. What difference would you like there to be in your relationship with Christ as a result of reading Luke?

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold - Luke 1:5-25

Topics: Age, Angels, Answers, Children, Consistency, Family, Greatness, Impossible, Miracles, Parents, Patience, Prayer, Promises, Purpose, Surprises, Value

Open It

1. What significant events happened the year you were born?
- * 2. What experiences of complete surprise have you recently had?
3. At this point in your life, what do you consider your most important responsibilities?

Explore It

4. Who were Zechariah and Elizabeth? (1:5-7)
5. What characteristics did Zechariah and Elizabeth have in common? (1:5-7)
6. How well did Zechariah and Elizabeth handle the frustration of childlessness? (1:6, 13, 25)
7. How were Zechariah and Elizabeth “upright in the sight of God”? (1:6)
8. For what duty was Zechariah chosen by lot? (1:8-10)
- * 9. What experience gripped Zechariah with fear? (1:11-12)
10. What facts can we note about angels from the information in this passage? (1:11-12, 19)
11. What promises did Gabriel make concerning the child who would be born to this elderly couple? (1:13-17)
12. What instructions did Gabriel give Zechariah about his and Elizabeth’s role as parents? (1:14-16)
13. How did Gabriel describe the main purpose of John’s life? (1:16-17)
14. What conclusions can we draw about Zechariah from his answer to the angel’s announcement? (1:18)
- * 15. Why was Zechariah rendered unable to speak until the day of the prophecy’s fulfillment? (1:19-20)
- * 16. How did Elizabeth react to Zechariah’s news? (1:25)
17. How many miracles are referred to in this passage? (1:9, 11, 20, 24)

Get It

18. What can we learn from Zechariah and Elizabeth that would help us handle long-term disappointments?
- * 19. How did God demonstrate in the lives of these two people that He is sovereign?
20. Why were Zechariah and Elizabeth entrusted with the knowledge of God’s purpose for the life of their son?
- * 21. When have you doubted the reality of God’s wonderful provision for you?
22. What do you think Zechariah or Elizabeth felt during those extraordinary days?
23. What could God do in a person’s life today that would have as big an impact as the angel’s visit to Zechariah?
24. In what way is the birth of a child a sign of God’s blessing?
25. In what ways does God want to use us today?
26. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being low, 10 being high), how would you rate your level of expectation that God could do something amazing through your life?

Apply It

- * 27. What long-term frustration can you identify in your life that needs to be entrusted to God?
28. How can you strengthen your realization that God is in control of the events of your life?

The Birth of Jesus Foretold - Luke 1:26-38

Topics: Angels, Attitude, Faith, Greatness, Holy Spirit, Honor, Humility, Impossible, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Obedience, Serving, Trust

Open It

1. When was an occasion that you received an unexpected honor?
- * 2. How do you tend to react when you receive unexpected good news?

Explore It

3. Who greeted Mary? Why? (1:26-28)
4. How did Mary learn of her role in Jesus' birth? (1:26-28)
5. How did Mary feel when the angel appeared to her? (1:29-30)
- * 6. How did Gabriel describe the child that would be born to Mary? (1:31-33)
7. What title would Jesus have? (1:32)
8. What Old Testament personalities were part of Jesus' royal line? (1:32-33)
9. Why wasn't Mary struck dumb by the angel as Zechariah was? (1:34)
- * 10. How did Mary's response to the angel differ from Zechariah's? (1:34, 38)
11. Why did Gabriel mention Elizabeth's pregnancy to Mary? (1:36-37)
12. What kind of attitude was apparent in Mary's response to the angel's visit? (1:38)
- * 13. What did Mary's final statement to Gabriel show about her relationship with God? (1:38)

Get It

- * 14. What do Mary's responses to Gabriel tell us about the kind of people through whom God works?
15. In what different ways do people respond to the story of Christ's birth?
16. What difference does it make whether or not a person believes that the child born to Mary was really the Son of God?
- * 17. How has the fact that "with God, nothing is impossible" taken root in your life?
18. In what ways would you say Mary's responses to Gabriel summarize what our relationship with God ought to be like?

Apply It

- * 19. What "impossibilities" in your life do you want to thank God for this week?
20. What can you do to maintain a servant's attitude as you live from day to day?
21. In what ways can you develop the kind of humble spirit that Mary had?

Mary Visits Elizabeth - Luke 1:39-45

Topics: Advice, Affirmation, Age, Appreciation, Blessing, Children, Culture, Encouragement, Holy Spirit, Honor, Joy, Maturity, Relationships, Respect, Wisdom

Open It

1. What was the first trip you can remember taking by yourself?
- * 2. What relative do you look forward to visiting the most?
3. What benefits have you derived from personal relationships with older people?

Explore It

4. To where did Mary hurry? (1:39)
- * 5. What two remarkable things happened as soon as Mary called her greeting to Elizabeth? (1:41)
6. What was the significance of the baby leaping at the sound of Mary's voice? (1:41, 44)
7. How did Elizabeth respond to the baby's leaping inside her? (1:42-45)
8. In what way was Mary blessed? (1:42)
- * 9. Why did Elizabeth describe herself as "favored"? (1:43)
10. In what significant way did Elizabeth address Mary? (1:43)
11. Why did Elizabeth's baby leap in her womb? (1:44)
- * 12. Who was blessed? (1:45)
13. What general spiritual principle did Elizabeth express? (1:45)

Get It

14. In what ways could we describe both Mary and Elizabeth as "blessed" women?
15. How did Elizabeth indicate that she knew what her and Mary's pregnancies meant?
16. How would you describe the mood in Zechariah's home during the time Mary visited?
- * 17. Judging from Elizabeth's experience, what is it like to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
18. How does it feel to be genuinely complimented by someone older than you?
- * 19. What significance do you think it had for Mary that Elizabeth knew the importance of Mary's baby?

Apply It

- * 20. What older Christian could you contact or visit this week to express appreciation for the help he or she has been to you?
21. For what work of God do you want to celebrate or praise Him?

Mary's Song - Luke 1:46-56

Topics: Appreciation, Assurance, Attitude, Awe, Benefits, Blessing, Confidence, Devotion, Enthusiasm, Faith, God, Humility, Joy, Justice, Mercy, Poor, Praise, Promises, Reliability, Sovereignty, Worship

Open It

1. What songs are you most likely to be caught singing in the shower?
2. Which church hymns are your favorites? Why?
- * 3. If you had the skill and opportunity, how would you tell the world about a life-changing experience: write a poem, sing a song, publish a novel, or make a movie? Why?

Explore It

4. What were the two parts of Mary's song? (1:46-55)
- * 5. What attributes of God are extolled in the first part of Mary's song? (1:46-49)
6. What different titles for God did Mary mention in her song? (1:46-47, 49)
7. What specific actions did Mary say God had done for her? (1:46-49)
- * 8. How did Mary describe herself in her song? (1:47-48)
9. What reasons did Mary give for believing that all generations would call her "blessed"? (1:48)
10. What characteristics of God did Mary sing about in the second part of her hymn? (1:50-56)
- * 11. According to Mary's song, what kinds of people are given special treatment by God? (1:50-55)
12. What happens to people who fear God? (1:50)
13. What happens to the proud? (1:51)
14. To whom was God merciful? (1:54-55)

Get It

- * 15. What words best describe Mary's attitude?
- * 16. What reasons can we give for calling Mary a woman blessed by God?
17. What evidence do we have today that God is still keeping His promises?
18. How can we illustrate God's "bringing down rulers and lifting up the humble" today?
19. What different methods have you used to tell others your experiences with God?
20. What actions of God which Mary mentioned have you observed or experienced?
21. How does God show mercy to us today?

Apply It

- * 22. In what way can you glorify the Lord and rejoice in your Savior this week?
23. What person close to you still needs to hear you express your faith?

The Birth of John the Baptist - Luke 1:57-66

Topics: Answers, Appreciation, Awe, Celebration, Children, Choices, Culture, Curiosity, Delay, Desires, Expectations, Family, Joy, Obedience, Parents, Persistence, Promises, Silence, Traditions

Open It

- * 1. What is the significance, meaning, or story behind your name?
- 2. How do parents often choose names for their children?
- 3. If you lost your speech for a year, what would be your first words when you were finally able to talk again?

Explore It

- 4. What two groups celebrated the birth of Zechariah and Elizabeth's baby? (1:58)
- 5. Why did the relatives and neighbors think that God had shown Elizabeth great mercy? (1:58)
- 6. When did Elizabeth's relatives come to visit her child? Why? (1:59)
- * 7. What was the relatives' response when Elizabeth told them the child wouldn't be called Zechariah? (1:61)
- 8. Why did the relatives have to make signs to Zechariah about what he wanted to call the child? (1:62)
- * 9. Why was Zechariah's voice restored? (1:63-64)
- * 10. How did Zechariah react when his voice was restored? (1:64)
- 11. What was the effect of all these events on the people in the region in which Zechariah and Elizabeth lived? (1:65-66)
- 12. What was special about Elizabeth's child? (1:66)
- 13. What was the question on everybody's lips who heard about the birth of John? (1:66)

Get It

- 14. In what ways do Zechariah and Elizabeth serve as models to us?
- 15. In what ways should we hold to the course God determines for us over the counsel of friends or relatives?
- * 16. How significant is it for us to celebrate with others?
- * 17. How do you tend to react when someone you know has cause to celebrate?
- 18. In what ways has God's favor on you caused people to talk?
- 19. What qualities of Zechariah do you want to build in your own life?

Apply It

- * 20. With what person can you celebrate a happy or joyous event this week? How?
- 21. What can you do to remind yourself that the Lord's hand is with you each day?

Zechariah's Song - Luke 1:67-80

Topics: Appreciation, Benefits, Covenant, Expectations, Heritage, History, Mercy, Messiah, Mission, Praise, Promises, Prophecy, Salvation, Tasks

Open It

1. What is it like to be around someone whose first child has just been born?
- * 2. What are the most important things parents ought to tell their children while they are growing up?
3. What compliment will you never forget?

Explore It

4. What are the parts of Zechariah's song? (1:68-79)
5. Who is described in the first part of Zechariah's song? (1:68-75)
6. Who is the subject of the second part of Zechariah's song? (1:76-79)
7. Who was the source of inspiration for Zechariah's song? (1:67)
8. How does Zechariah speak about God in his song? (1:68-75)
- * 9. For whom and from what was the salvation that Zechariah described? (1:69-71, 77)
10. How did Zechariah describe the "covenant" with God? (1:72)
11. What two results did Zechariah say were guaranteed by God's oath? (1:74)
- * 12. What title did Zechariah say would be given to his son? (1:76)
- * 13. For whom was John supposed to prepare a way? How? (1:76)
14. How did Zechariah predict his son's purpose in life? (1:76-77)
15. What basic facts did Luke include about John's childhood? (1:80)

Get It

16. What are the themes in Zechariah's song?
17. What does it mean to be strong in spirit?
18. In what way do we need to have the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of our sins?
- * 19. How important is it for children to hear from their parents what God's place ought to be in their lives?
- * 20. What can parents learn from Zechariah about passing on faith to their children?
21. How might you describe God's ongoing work in the world today?

Apply It

- * 22. What idea from Zechariah's song would you most like to communicate to your family this week?
23. What would it take for you to be more like Zechariah in your faithfulness to God?

The Birth of Jesus - Luke 2:1-7

Topics: Celebration, Children, Circumstances, Citizenship, Government, History, Jesus Christ, Parents, Prophecy, Schedule, Simplicity, Timing

Open It

1. What feelings do you get when you have to fill out income tax forms?
2. What nationalities or cultures make up the ancestry of your family?
- * 3. When you think about uncomfortable travel, what personal experiences do you recall?

Explore It

4. Who decreed that a census be taken of the entire Roman world? (2:1)
5. What historical facts did Luke provide that allow us to approximate the date of Christ's birth? (2:1-2)
6. What did the Roman census require of everyone? (2:3)
- * 7. What was the purpose of Joseph and Mary's trip to Bethlehem? (2:1-4)
8. What reason did Luke give for Joseph having to travel to Bethlehem for the census? (2:4)
9. What did Luke say about Bethlehem which indicates it was a famous place? (2:4)
10. What was Joseph and Mary's marital status at the time of Jesus' birth? (2:5)
- * 11. Why was travel especially difficult for Mary? (2:5)
12. What details about the birth of Jesus do we know or can we infer from Luke's description? (2:5-7)
- * 13. What were the conditions in Bethlehem the night Jesus was born? (2:7)

Get It

14. How well have Christmas carols captured the significance of the birth Luke described?
- * 15. How are people like the town of Bethlehem on the night of Christ's birth?
16. What can we learn about responding to unexpected difficulties from the examples of Mary and Joseph?
- * 17. In what ways did God manage the events of history to get Joseph and Mary where He wanted them at the appropriate time?
18. In what way was Christ's birth a simple event?
19. How do you celebrate Christ's birth?

Apply It

20. In what ways can you praise God this week for Jesus' arrival into the world?
21. What is one aspect of Christmas that you want to emphasize more next Christmas?
- * 22. How can you honor Jesus with your Christmas celebrations?

The Shepherds and the Angels - Luke 2:8-20

Topics: Actions, Ambassadors, Angels, Awe, Follow-through, Good News, Instructions, Messiah, Obedience, Praise, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. What is the most unique birth announcement you've ever seen?
- 2. What do you imagine angels look like?
- 3. If you could sleep out under the stars anywhere in the world, where would you put down your pillow?

Explore It

- 4. At what time and place did the angels appear to the shepherds? (2:8)
- 5. How many angels did the shepherds see at first? (2:9)
- 6. How did the shepherds react when they saw the angel? (2:9)
- 7. To whom did the angel address his good news? (2:10)
- * 8. What message did the angel tell the shepherds? (2:10, 12)
- 9. Who did the angel say the newborn child really was? (2:11)
- * 10. By what symbol or sign were the shepherds supposed to identify the Christ child? (2:12)
- 11. How many angels did the shepherds hear praising God? (2:13)
- * 12. What was the immediate reaction of the shepherds after the angels left? (2:15)
- 13. After finding the Christ child, what did the shepherds do? (2:17-20)
- 14. What kind of reactions did the shepherds get when they told others what had happened that night? (2:18)
- 15. How did Mary respond to the shepherds' visit? (2:19)

Get It

- 16. If you had been with the shepherds on the night Christ was born, what would you have done after the angels left?
- 17. In what ways did the shepherds obey God that night?
- * 18. What should be our response when we discover what God wants us to do?
- 19. What does it mean that Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart"?
- 20. Of what significance is it that the shepherds went back to their flocks?
- * 21. What is the responsibility of those who "discover" the good news about Jesus?
- 22. Who needs to be told about the birth and life of Christ?

Apply It

- 23. In what ways can you renew your enthusiasm for the message of Jesus' birth?
- * 24. How can you glorify and praise God with other Christians this week?

Jesus Presented in the Temple - Luke 2:21-40

Topics: Actions, Affirmation, Age, Celebration, Devotion, Expectations, Faithfulness, Holy Spirit, Praise, Prophecy, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What ceremony, ritual, or tradition in your church do you enjoy the most?
- 2. Who is one of your most interesting elderly friends?
- 3. What wisdom have you gained from your grandparents or elderly relatives?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple? When? (2:22-23)
- 5. How old was Jesus the first time Mary and Joseph took Him to the temple? (2:22-23)
- 6. Who was Simeon? (2:25-27)
- 7. How did Luke describe the man named Simeon? (2:25-32)
- 8. What did Simeon do with the Christ child? (2:28-32)
- * 9. What special significance did Christ's arrival have for Simeon? (2:26-29)
- 10. How did Simeon's prophecy point out that Christ would be the Savior for the world? (2:32)
- 11. What did Joseph and Mary do after they heard what Simeon had to say? (2:33)
- 12. To whom did Simeon address his second statement about Jesus? (2:34-35)
- 13. What did Simeon say to Mary? (2:34-35)
- 14. Who was Anna? (2:36-38)
- 15. How did Luke describe the woman named Anna? (2:36-38)
- * 16. What was Anna's response to finding Mary, Joseph, and the Christ child in the temple? (2:38)
- 17. What were Jesus' childhood years like? (2:40)
- 18. How did Luke summarize Jesus' childhood years? (2:40)
- 19. What character qualities were apparent in Jesus during His childhood? (2:40)

Get It

- * 20. In what ways can we see God working behind the scenes in the events of Christ's childhood?
- 21. What of Simeon's prophecy is still true today?
- 22. What did Simeon's warning to Mary mean?
- * 23. In what ways are Simeon and Anna examples to us?
- 24. Using Christ's childhood as an example, what character qualities should parents seek to develop in their children?
- 25. In what different ways did Anna and Simeon each receive the Christ child?
- 26. What roles can other Christians have in our life of faith?
- 27. How important is it to introduce our children to faith in God as early and consistently as possible?
- 28. If you could step back in time and stand next to Simeon, what would you want to say about the Christ child?

Apply It

- * 29. How could you express your thanks to God this week for becoming a human being to provide a way of salvation?
- 30. What action could you take this week to show your desire to be faithful to God?

The Boy Jesus at the Temple - Luke 2:41-52

Topics: Children, Church, Example, Family, Growth, Habits, Learning, Maturity, Obedience, Parents, Questions, Training, Youth

Open It

- * 1. When have you accidentally left someone behind during a trip or activity?
- 2. If you had to get lost, would you rather it be in a city or a wilderness? Why?
- 3. What do you find most characteristic of young adolescents?

Explore It

- 4. Why did Jesus' parents go to Jerusalem every year? (2:41)
- * 5. How did Jesus get left behind in Jerusalem? (2:43-44)
- * 6. Why did three days pass before Mary and Joseph found Jesus? (2:46)
- 7. What was Jesus doing during the three days that He was on His own? (2:46)
- 8. What were the effects of Jesus' questions and answers on the teachers in Jerusalem? (2:46-47)
- * 9. How did Mary respond when she and Joseph finally found Jesus? (2:48)
- 10. What was Jesus' response to His parents' frantic arrival? (2:49)
- 11. How did Jesus answer His parents' concern for Him? (2:49)
- 12. After replying to His parents, what did Jesus do? (2:51)
- 13. What do we learn about Mary through this incident? (2:41, 48, 50-51)
- 14. What happened to Jesus as He grew? (2:52)

Get It

- 15. What would you have wanted to ask Jesus had you been around during those three days in the temple?
- * 16. What kind of pattern or model were Mary and Joseph setting for Jesus by their family traditions?
- 17. How often do children carry on the habits and beliefs that really are significant to their parents?
- 18. What happens when parents try to pass on to their children beliefs or habits which they do not have themselves?
- * 19. How does this story illustrate the tension Jesus may have felt between obedience to His Father and obedience to His earthly parents?
- 20. In what way should we strive to grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and others?
- 21. How did Jesus demonstrate His uniqueness as the Son of God?

Apply It

- * 22. Of the four ways in which Jesus grew (in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God, in favor with man), which one needs the most work in your life?
- 23. What difference might it make to you this week if you prepared for church as if it were a visit to your Father's house?

John the Baptist Prepares the Way - Luke 3:1-20

Topics: Accountability, Actions, Appearance, Authority, Choices, Curiosity, Employment, Humility, Obedience, Repentance, Serving, Work

Open It

1. When have you participated in a meaningful outdoor worship service?
2. If you could make a certain style of clothes or hair popular again, which would it be?
- * 3. What well-known public person would you most readily describe as a great speaker?

Explore It

4. What different rulers did Luke mention in giving a historical setting to John the Baptist's ministry? (3:1-2)
- * 5. What was John's basic message? (3:3)
6. Where did John the Baptist carry out his ministry? (3:3)
7. What Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptist? (3:4)
8. How sensitive was John's welcome of the crowds who came to hear him? (3:7-8)
9. What responses did John expect from his listeners? Why? (3:8-9)
- * 10. What attitude did John warn the people not to have? Why? (3:8-9)
11. How did people react to John's message? (3:10)
12. What advice did John give those in the crowd who wanted to respond to his message? (3:11)
13. What practical examples of repentance did John use to help people who asked for direction? (3:11-14)
14. In what way was John becoming famous? (3:15)
- * 15. What title were the people beginning to give John? (3:15)
16. What was John's response to those who thought he might be the Messiah? (3:16)
17. How did John explain his phrase, "Produce fruit in keeping with righteousness"? (3:8, 11-14)
18. How did John describe Jesus? (3:16-18)
19. What finally got John thrown into prison? (3:19-20)

Get It

20. What is repentance?
21. When John explained repentance to people, how did it relate to the work they did in life?
- * 22. When we are confronted with a call to repent, why do we tend to accept or reject the invitation strongly?
23. What connection is there between repentance and forgiveness?
24. In what ways could John the Baptist's directions to his listeners help someone today who reaches the point of repentance?
25. How did John apply the principle that while God is at work changing people, He often does not change their work or their place in life?
- * 26. In what ways does John's life teach us about humility?
27. How should your relationship with God make your work habits differ from those around you?

Apply It

- * 28. In what areas of your life do you need to show the fruits of repentance this week?
29. At work this week, what action can you take because of agreement with God's priorities?

The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus - Luke 3:21-38

Topics: Affirmation, Call, God, Holy Spirit, Life, Ministry, Prayer, Submission

Open It

1. From what period of history would you most like to meet one of your ancestors?
2. What mental image comes to mind when you hear the word “baptism”?
- * 3. Of all the things a person could hear God say to them, what would be one of the most meaningful?

Explore It

4. Who baptized Jesus? (3:21)
- * 5. How were Jesus, the dove, and the voice all related in Jesus’ baptism? (3:21-22)
6. To whom did the voice from heaven speak during Jesus’ baptism? (3:22)
- * 7. What did the voice from heaven actually say about Jesus? (3:22)
- * 8. What was Jesus doing when the Holy Spirit descended on Him? (3:22)
9. When did Jesus start His ministry? (3:23)
10. How old was Jesus when He started His ministry? (3:23)
11. Whose ancestors did Luke list? Why? (3:23)
12. In what way could Joseph’s ancestors be called Jesus’ genealogy, even though Joseph was not Jesus’ father? (3:23)
13. Which of the names in the genealogy are the most famous? (3:23-38)
14. How far back in time did Luke trace the genealogy of Jesus? (3:23-38)

Get It

15. What about Luke’s description of Jesus’ baptism leads us to think of God in terms of three persons—the Trinity?
16. Since Jesus was sinless, what made His baptism necessary?
17. How does Jesus’ baptism demonstrate His willingness to identify with our human condition?
18. What does it mean that God publicly claimed Jesus as His Son?
- * 19. In what ways were the events during Jesus’ baptism a commissioning ceremony for Him?
- * 20. What does it mean for someone to call his or her way of life a ministry?
21. How are repentance, baptism, forgiveness, prayer, the Holy Spirit’s presence, and God’s blessing all important in the life of a Christian?

Apply It

- * 22. In what kinds of ways can you be a minister of God to others this week?
23. To whom can you express support for his or her public ministry this week?

The Temptation of Jesus - Luke 4:1-13

Topics: Alone, Answers, Application, Bible, Character, Choices, Convictions, Desires, Evil, Isolation, Jesus Christ, Power, Satan, Suffering, Temptation, Testing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. In what ways have you experienced being very hungry or thirsty?
- 2. If you were stranded with only one canteen of water in the desert, in the jungle, or on a deserted island, what would you do? Why?
- 3. Why do people laugh when they hear someone say, "I can resist anything except temptation"?

Explore It

- 4. How did Jesus end up alone in the desert? (4:1)
- 5. For how long was Jesus tempted by the devil? (4:2)
- * 6. After forty days of fasting and facing temptations, how did Jesus feel? (4:2)
- 7. How did the devil challenge Jesus to prove He was the Son of God? (4:3, 9-10)
- * 8. How did Jesus reply when the devil urged Him to turn a stone into bread? (4:4)
- * 9. Where did Jesus get the answers He gave the devil? (4:4, 8, 12)
- 10. For his second temptation where did the devil take Jesus and what did he show Him? (4:5)
- 11. By what right did the devil claim to be able to offer Jesus the kingdoms of the world? (4:6)
- 12. What did the devil offer Jesus in exchange for His worship? (4:6-7)
- 13. What was Jesus' reply to the devil's offer of power and authority? (4:8)
- 14. Where did the devil take Jesus in Jerusalem? (4:9)
- 15. What did the devil dare Jesus to prove by jumping off the temple roof? (4:9-11)
- 16. Why wasn't the devil successful in enticing Jesus to jump off the temple? (4:12)
- 17. What did the devil do after Jesus' third resistance to his temptations? (4:13)

Get It

- 18. How did Jesus and the devil use the Bible differently?
- 19. In what areas of life can we expect to be tempted?
- * 20. What physical needs or desires make us vulnerable to temptation?
- 21. How might we be tempted to worship the devil in exchange for power or position?
- 22. In what situations are you sometimes tempted to put the Lord to the test?
- 23. What did Jesus use repeatedly in resisting the devil's temptations?
- 24. How did Jesus resist temptation?
- * 25. How can a person become skillful at using the Bible as Jesus did?
- 26. Since the Bible can be misused, how can we learn to use the Bible the right way?
- 27. What did Jesus prove in the way he resisted the devil's temptations?
- 28. What is the difference between testing God and claiming His promises?

Apply It

- * 29. How can you prepare for tempting situations at work?
- 30. What frequent temptation can you fight this week by memorizing Scripture?
- 31. What passage of Scripture would be most helpful to memorize this week?

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth - Luke 4:14-30

Topics: Acceptance, Achievements, Anger, Bible, Church, Example, Expectations, Hardheartedness, Home, Miracles, Opposition, People, Prophecy, Rejection, Shame, Truth, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What are some of the best things that happen when a person comes back home after being away at school or in the service?
- 2. What special place in your life do you dream about visiting again?
- 3. What does the old saying mean, "You can never go home again"?

Explore It

- 4. What was Jesus' reputation at this point in His life? (4:14-15)
- 5. Where was Jesus teaching? (4:15)
- * 6. What was Jesus' hometown? (4:16)
- 7. What did Jesus customarily do on the Sabbath? (4:16)
- 8. What happened once Jesus entered the synagogue? (4:16-30)
- 9. What did Jesus do when He was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah? (4:17-20)
- 10. How familiar was Jesus with Isaiah's words? (4:17-20)
- 11. What five activities show that the Spirit of the Lord is on a person? (4:18-19)
- * 12. How did the audience respond to Jesus' reading? (4:20)
- 13. How did Jesus apply the passage He read from Isaiah? (4:21)
- 14. What difficulty were the people having in accepting Jesus' words? (4:22)
- * 15. What were the main points of Jesus' words to the people in His hometown? (4:23-27)
- 16. Why were the people angry with what Jesus said? (4:23-29)
- 17. How did the people express their anger at Jesus' message? (4:28-30)

Get It

- 18. How did Jesus' experience in His hometown illustrate the fickleness of a crowd?
- 19. In what different ways can we see the Spirit of God on Jesus throughout these events?
- 20. How did Jesus demonstrate the importance of worship?
- 21. During this incident, in what ways did Jesus demonstrate the importance of knowing the Scriptures?
- * 22. What kind of reception should we expect when we speak the truth?
- 23. How did Jesus' message illustrate the fact that God does not favor one culture over another?
- 24. What did Jesus know firsthand about rejection?
- * 25. To what extent will people go to avoid hearing the truth about themselves?
- 26. Why do we sometimes try to avoid facing the truth about ourselves?

Apply It

- * 27. In what way could you renew your commitment to worship with other Christians?
- 28. How could you improve your present habit of Bible reading?

Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit - Luke 4:31-37

Topics: Authority, Awe, Demons, Evil, Healing, Miracles, Power, Restoration, Teaching

Open It

1. In your own experience, exactly how fast does news travel?
- * 2. What is your most compelling personal reason for believing in the existence of evil?
3. What teachers have you known or heard whose speaking style made an unforgettable impression on you?

Explore It

4. Where was Capernaum? (4:31)
5. What was Jesus doing in the synagogue? (4:31)
6. Why were people amazed at Jesus? (4:32)
- * 7. In what setting did Jesus drive out the demon from the man in Capernaum? (4:33)
8. How did the demon-possessed man react to Jesus' presence? (4:33-34)
9. With what expressions did the demon-possessed man identify Jesus? (4:34)
- * 10. How did Jesus respond to the evil spirit's presence? (4:35)
11. To whom did Jesus speak when the man cried out against him? (4:35)
12. What happened to the man who was demon-possessed? (4:35)
- * 13. How was Jesus' reputation affected by the healing of the demon-possessed man? (4:36)
14. How did Jesus demonstrate the power of His teaching and actions? (4:32, 35-36)

Get It

- * 15. What does it mean for a message to have authority?
16. What did Jesus usually do when He arrived in a new town?
17. How important is it that Jesus regularly taught in the synagogues everywhere He went?
18. What significance is there in the fact that an evil spirit was able to pick Jesus out of a crowd as someone to be feared?
- * 19. What does this incident tell us about good and evil?
20. What comfort or confidence can we gain from Jesus' power to expel the evil spirit from the man?
21. What is Jesus' attitude toward evil?
22. How would you describe your present confidence in the power of God?

Apply It

- * 23. What area of worldly or evil influence in your life needs to experience the power of Jesus more directly?
24. In what way can you meet with Christ personally this week?

Jesus Heals Many - Luke 4:38-44

Topics: Actions, Compassion, Demons, Healing, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Miracles, People, Purpose, Sickness, Solitude, Teaching

Open It

- * 1. What is the most ill you have ever been?
- 2. When have you found yourself overwhelmed with the needs of a person or group of people?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Jesus heal Simon's mother-in-law? (4:38)
- 4. What problem was Simon's mother-in-law experiencing? (4:38)
- 5. Whom did Jesus meet in Simon's home and what did he do for her? (4:38-39)
- * 6. How did Jesus heal Simon's mother-in-law's fever? (4:39)
- 7. How did Luke describe the evening of this particular day? (4:40-41)
- * 8. What kinds of healing did Jesus perform that day? (4:40-41)
- 9. What did the demons shout about Jesus as they were expelled? (4:41)
- * 10. Beside exorcising them, how did Jesus treat the demons? (4:41)
- 11. How did Jesus begin the next day? (4:42)
- 12. When the crowd found Jesus the next day, what did they try to convince Him to do? (4:42)
- 13. How did Jesus respond to the people's wish that He stay in Capernaum? (4:43)
- 14. What did Jesus say was His mission? (4:43)
- 15. What did Jesus say He was trying to communicate to people? (4:43)

Get It

- * 16. In what ways did Jesus demonstrate compassion in the way He treated people?
- * 17. What did Jesus accomplish by healing so many people?
- 18. What experiences have you had with the unexpected healing of people in response to prayer?
- 19. How did Jesus balance the constant exposure to the needs of others in his life?
- 20. What is the benefit of solitude?
- 21. How important is it to have regular times of solitude?
- 22. What can a person accomplish in solitude that can't be accomplished with other people around?
- 23. What kind of demands did people place on Jesus?
- 24. What kind of demands do people place on you?
- 25. How did Jesus present Himself as someone worth following?

Apply It

- * 26. In what ways can you thank God this week for healing your life or the life of someone you know?
- 27. When can you take time for solitude this week?

The Calling of the First Disciples - Luke 5:1-11

Topics: Awe, Call, Commitment, Decisions, Evangelism, Failure, Faithfulness, Ministry, Miracles, Mission, Obedience, Persistence, Submission, Surprises, Tasks, Timing, Trust, Witnessing

Open It

1. What is your favorite “fish story”?
2. What qualities does your favorite leader possess?
- * 3. When have you participated in a project at which everyone worked very hard, only to experience failure?

Explore It

4. In what setting did Jesus find Himself? (5:1)
5. Why were the people crowding around Jesus? (5:1)
6. What were the owners of the boats doing nearby? (5:2)
7. What did Jesus use to create a little space between Himself and the crowd? (5:2-3)
8. Whose boat did Jesus choose for His podium? (5:3)
9. What did Jesus suggest to Simon following His message? (5:4)
- * 10. How did Simon reply to Jesus’ instructions to cast their nets again? (5:4-5)
11. What happened when Simon lowered his nets into the water? (5:6)
12. When Simon saw their nets were tearing from the weight of fish in them, what did he do? (5:7)
- * 13. How did Simon react when he realized Jesus had just done a miracle for them? (5:8-9)
14. Who were Simon’s partners? (5:10)
- * 15. How did Jesus speak to the men’s fears? (5:10)
16. How did Simon and the others respond to Jesus’ invitation? (5:11)

Get It

- * 17. How did Jesus test Simon?
18. In what way did Jesus test Simon’s faith?
19. What does God expect us to do when obeying Him does not yield any immediate benefit?
20. In what way is Simon’s reaction to Jesus’ miracle an example for us to follow?
- * 21. What do we have to “leave behind” in order to follow Christ today?
22. How does a person go about being a fisher of men?

Apply It

- * 23. What areas in your own life can you identify as places where God is requiring long-term obedience from you, in spite of failures?
24. What do you need to leave behind today in following Christ?

The Man With Leprosy - Luke 5:12-16

Topics: Acceptance, Actions, Alone, Attitude, Believe, Compassion, Expectations, Mercy, Needs, Prayer, Restoration, Sacrifice, Sickness, Solitude, Thankfulness

Open It

1. If you could see one obvious miracle performed before your eyes, what would you want to see?
- * 2. When was a time you were treated as an outcast or reject by other kids when you were growing up?
3. When have you helped someone that no one else was willing to help?

Explore It

- * 4. What did the leprous man do when he saw Jesus? (5:12)
5. How did the man present his request for help to Jesus? (5:12)
- * 6. In what way did the man's words to Jesus show belief in Christ? (5:12)
7. What did Jesus say to the sick man? (5:13)
- * 8. How did Jesus treat the sick man? (5:13)
9. Did Jesus respond to the man's request? (5:13)
10. What was the result of Jesus' first words to the man? (5:13)
11. What were Jesus' orders to the man after he had been healed? (5:14)
12. To whom was the healed man supposed to show himself? Why? (5:14)
13. Why was the man to report to the priest? (5:14)
14. Besides showing the priest that he was healed, what else did Jesus tell the man to do? (5:14)
15. In spite of Jesus' request that the man not tell anyone, what resulted from this healing? (5:15)
16. What was Jesus' response to His popularity? (5:16)

Get It

17. How did the sick man regard Jesus?
18. In what ways do the words and actions of the sick man provide a pattern for the way we ought to approach Christ with our needs?
- * 19. Being affected with a disease that made him an outcast, what must it have been like for the man to have been touched by Jesus?
20. What are some of the ways in which Jesus still manages to touch people who are sick and in need today?
- * 21. How important is it for us to imitate the private life of Jesus?
22. How well do your present prayer habits match the man's willingness to approach Jesus?

Apply It

- * 23. What person or people in your life could most benefit from a caring touch from you in Christ's name?
24. What times in the next week can you set aside to listen to God and tell Him your needs?

Jesus Heals a Paralytic - Luke 5:17-26

Topics: Authority, Barriers, Believers, Commitment, Determination, Effort, Faith, Forgiveness, Healing, Mercy, Miracles, Sickness, Teamwork, Thinking

Open It

1. When was a time you went out of your way to help a friend?
2. In what ways have you seen that “a friend in need is a friend indeed”?
- * 3. Whom would you describe as having a great deal of faith in God?

Explore It

4. How did Luke describe the crowd that was listening to Jesus? (5:17)
5. Who came to see Jesus, and why did they come? (5:18)
6. Why were the men initially unable to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus? (5:19)
- * 7. What did the team of men do when they could not find a way through the crowded house? (5:19)
8. What did Jesus acknowledge as the paralytic man was lowered through the roof? (5:20)
9. What were Jesus’ first words to the paralytic man? (5:20)
10. Why did the Pharisees and teachers think that Jesus’ words to the paralytic man were blasphemous? (5:21)
- * 11. What did Jesus show by responding to what the Pharisees were thinking? (5:22)
12. What challenging question did Jesus pose to the Pharisees? (5:23)
13. How did Jesus answer His own question? (5:24)
14. What did Jesus prove by healing the paralytic man? (5:24)
- * 15. How did the paralytic man respond to Jesus’ invitation to “get up, take your mat and go home”? (5:25)
16. What was the response of the crowd to what happened that day? (5:26)

Get It

- * 17. In what ways did the paralytic and his friends demonstrate faith in Christ?
18. Why is it easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven” than to say to a paralyzed person, “You are healed”?
19. In what ways is sin a paralysis?
- * 20. How is forgiveness a kind of healing?
21. From whom do we need forgiveness?
22. What was Jesus proving about Himself whenever He healed diseases and forgave sinners?
23. How does this incident illustrate the conditions under which forgiveness is given?

Apply It

- * 24. Who is one friend you could help by a gesture of faith today?
25. At what time each day this week can you place the needs of your friends before Christ?

The Calling of Levi - Luke 5:27-32

Topics: Acceptance, Actions, Call, Change, Decisions, Follow, Invitation, Mission, Repentance, Reputation, Unbelievers

Open It

1. How do you feel about the Internal Revenue Service?
- * 2. What jobs do you think present the greatest temptation to do wrong? Why?
3. What is the most important consideration in finding and enjoying a career?

Explore It

- * 4. What was Levi's profession? (5:27)
5. What did Jesus say to Levi? (5:27)
- * 6. What actions did Levi take upon hearing Jesus' invitation to follow Him? (5:28)
7. What did Levi leave behind when he followed Jesus? (5:28)
- * 8. What was Levi's first action as a new follower of Jesus? (5:29)
9. Whom did Levi invite to his "new career party"? (5:29)
10. In accepting Levi's hospitality, what was Jesus accused of doing? (5:30)
11. What groups made a point of condemning Christ's choice of companions? (5:30)
12. How did the Pharisees and others express their disapproval of Jesus' presence at Levi's banquet? (5:30)
13. What was the point of the Pharisees' question to Jesus' disciples? (5:30)
14. To what occupation did Jesus liken His ministry? (5:31)
15. Why did Jesus come? (5:32)
16. What reason did Jesus give for His coming? (5:32)

Get It

17. What did Jesus mean by saying that He came to call sinners to repentance and not to call the righteous?
- * 18. What reasons could Jesus have had for calling Levi, a deserter to the Roman government, to follow Him?
19. Why do you think Levi followed Jesus without knowing much about Him?
20. How can we follow Christ today?
- * 21. What do people find most difficult to leave behind when they follow Jesus?
22. Why was Jesus comfortable at a party attended almost entirely by people whom others had rejected?
23. Who are "the righteous" that don't need Jesus?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you reach out in the days ahead to one person whom others neglect or ignore?
25. What can you do to follow Christ's example more consciously this week?

Jesus Questioned About Fasting - Luke 5:33-39

Topics: Actions, Change, Criticism, Differences, Fasting, Habits, Legalism, Peer Pressure, Religion, Rules, Traditions

Open It

1. What person do you know who is not receptive to new ideas or ways of doing things?
- * 2. In what areas of your life do you often resist change?
3. What is one memorable wedding celebration you recall?

Explore It

4. Who asked Jesus about fasting? (5:33)
5. With what other groups were Jesus' disciples compared? By whom? (5:33)
6. What were Jesus' disciples failing to do, according to those questioning Jesus? (5:33)
7. How did Jesus identify Himself in His answer to the Pharisees? (5:34)
8. What did Jesus say would cause His disciples to fast? (5:34)
9. What was the point of Jesus' illustration about new and old garments? (5:36)
10. What happens when a patch meant for an old garment is taken from a new garment? (5:36)
- * 11. How did Jesus' two illustrations address the challenge that had been put Jesus? (5:36-39)
- * 12. Which did Jesus say was better, the old or the new? (5:36-39)
13. What was the point of Jesus' illustration about new and old wineskins? (5:37)
14. What happens when new wine is poured into old wineskins? (5:37-38)
- * 15. Why doesn't someone want new wine after drinking old wine? (5:39)

Get It

16. What are some of the most common religious habits that people compare?
17. What kinds of dangers are created when people compare their religious customs and habits with those of other people?
- * 18. In what way does following Christ require us to replace old habits with new ones?
- * 19. Why do we resist the changes God asks of us?
20. How can a person decide when differences between groups are unimportant and when they are crucial?

Apply It

21. How can you show respect for the way other Christians honor God?
- * 22. What can you do this week to become more open to changing as God directs?

Lord of the Sabbath - Luke 6:1-11

Topics: Accusation, Church, Compassion, Habits, Hardheartedness, Healing, Hypocrisy, Legalism, Needs, Traditions

Open It

1. What was Sunday like around your house when you were growing up?
- * 2. What is your idea of a truly restful day?
3. What does the word “Sabbath” mean to you?

Explore It

4. What were the disciples doing that irritated the Pharisees? (6:1-2)
- * 5. What were the disciples accused of doing when they picked the grain? (6:2)
6. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees’ accusation? (6:3-5)
- * 7. What historical example did Jesus use to justify what His disciples were doing on the Sabbath? (6:3-5)
8. What claim did Jesus make about Himself? (6:5)
9. What did Jesus’ identity as Lord of the Sabbath have to do with the disciples eating grain on the Sabbath? (6:5)
10. In what setting did Jesus heal the man with a shriveled hand? (6:6-8)
11. Why were the teachers of the law watching Jesus closely? (6:7)
12. Why were the Pharisees and teachers angry at Jesus? (6:7, 11)
13. What difference did it make that Jesus was being watched? (6:7-10)
- * 14. How did Jesus heal the man’s hand? (6:9-10)
15. What did Jesus ask the crowd? (6:9-10) Why?
16. How did the Pharisees and teachers respond to the miracle Jesus did? (6:11)

Get It

17. How did Luke use these two Sabbath incidents to illustrate the tension that was growing between Jesus and the religious leaders?
18. What harmful “religious” tendencies was Jesus resisting by His actions and words during these incidents?
- * 19. Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath?
20. In these incidents, whose actions were really “Sabbath-keeping”?
- * 21. Why is it important for us to take time off from work to rest?
- * 22. How well were the Pharisees honoring the Sabbath while they discussed plans to retaliate against Jesus?
23. When is it easiest to apply a spiritual discipline unthinkingly?
24. How can we guard against misapplying spiritual disciplines?

Apply It

- * 25. What could you do to make next Sunday a day of service to God?
26. What spiritual disciplines (such as fasting, prayer, Bible study, or church activities) should you reexamine this week?

The Twelve Apostles - Luke 6:12-16

Topics: Alone, Call, Choices, Decisions, Invitation, Prayer, Spiritual Disciplines

Open It

1. How competitive was your high school or college when it came to academics?
- * 2. In neighborhood or school games, when were you usually chosen?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus do before choosing the twelve apostles? (6:12)
4. How much time did Jesus spend in prayer before He chose His apostles? (6:12)
- * 5. What details did Luke give us about Jesus' prayer vigil? (6:12)
- * 6. From what larger group did Jesus name His twelve apostles? (6:13)
7. For which apostles are we given more information than simply their names? (6:14-16)
8. How many apostles shared the same first names? (6:14-16)
- * 9. What personal facts can you recall about some of the apostles? (6:14-16)
10. What significance is there in the order of the apostles' names? (6:14-16)
11. How many of the apostles had already been introduced by Luke earlier in his Gospel? (6:14-16)
12. What does the description of Judas Iscariot actually say about him? (6:16)

Get It

- * 13. What significance can be drawn from the fact that Jesus singled out some of His disciples to be apostles?
14. What is the difference between disciples and apostles?
- * 15. Why do you think Jesus prayed before choosing the apostles?
16. What purposes could Jesus have had in spending the night in prayer?
17. What kinds of decisions or events might cause someone to spend extended time in prayer?
18. What could spending extended time in prayer accomplish that could not be accomplished in a shorter time of prayer?
19. Why are extended times of prayer important?

Apply It

- * 20. What do you want to keep in mind from this passage to help you in making choices in the future?
21. When in the near future could you pray about God's plan for your life?

Blessings and Woes - Luke 6:17-26

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Believers, Blessing, Challenge, Comparisons, Consequences, Encouragement, Future, Insults, Joy, Opposition, Persecution, Poor, Suffering, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What is the largest crowd that you have ever been a part of?
- 2. What significant worship experiences have you had in a large group?
- 3. Who is your favorite public speaker?

Explore It

- 4. What different groups made up the crowd to which Jesus gave this sermon? (6:17)
- * 5. What effect did Jesus' presence have on the crowd? (6:18-19)
- * 6. Why did the crowd gather? (6:18-19)
 - 7. Besides Jesus' message, what else was going on that day? (6:18-19)
 - 8. To whom did Jesus specifically direct His message? (6:20)
 - 9. What four groups did Jesus single out for receiving a blessing? (6:20-22)
 - 10. How did the promised blessings vary to fit the character of each group? (6:20-22)
 - 11. What blessings did Jesus promise then and which ones did He promise for the future? (6:20-23)
- * 12. What response to hardship did Jesus encourage His disciples to have? (6:23)
 - 13. Who were the disciples to think of as examples during times of suffering? (6:23)
 - 14. What times and places did Jesus give for the blessings He promised? (6:23)
 - 15. What four groups did Jesus single out for woes? (6:24-26)
 - 16. How did the woes vary to fit each group? (6:24-26)

Get It

- * 17. What contemporary groups resemble the ones Jesus spoke to in this sermon?
- 18. For what different reasons are people interested in Jesus Christ in our times?
- 19. To what conditions other than material poverty could Jesus have been referring when He said, "Blessed are you who are poor"?
- * 20. What effect do you think Jesus' words had on the crowd?
 - 21. If you had been a rich and famous person in Jesus' day, how would you have reacted to His sermon?
 - 22. In what specific areas of life do Jesus' promised blessings and woes touch you?
 - 23. In what way are these words of Jesus comforting?
 - 24. In what way are these words of Jesus challenging?

Apply It

- 25. What is one way you can store up rewards in heaven this week?
- 26. In what way can you nurture the qualities that Jesus described as blessed?
- * 27. Whom can you encourage with Jesus' words this week?

Love for Enemies - Luke 6:27-36

Topics: Actions, Blessing, Choices, Differences, Direction, Enemies, Forgiveness, Instructions, Insults, Love, Mercy, Opposition, Relationships, Revenge, Unfairness

Open It

1. Why do people often call revenge “sweet”?
2. If you took a public opinion poll on the meaning of the Golden Rule, what would you expect to hear?
- * 3. Who have been some of your enemies through the years?

Explore It

4. How many positive responses to mistreatment did Jesus command? (6:27-31)
- * 5. What different kinds of mistreatment did Jesus refer to in His commands? (6:28-30)
6. Which statement best summarizes what Jesus said about responding to enemies? (6:31)
7. How did Jesus explain the difference between His followers and those He called “sinners”? (6:32-34)
- * 8. About what three positive actions did Jesus ask, “What credit is that to you?” (6:32-34)
9. What was Jesus’ basic argument in backing up His command to love others unconditionally? (6:32-35)
- * 10. What results will those who practice loving their enemies obtain? (6:35)
11. What title did Jesus give to those who love their enemies? (6:35)
12. Who are we imitating when we love our enemies? (6:36)

Get It

13. According to this passage, what are the observable differences between “sinners” and “saints”?
- * 14. What does it mean to “bless those who curse you”?
15. Why was Jesus so critical of conditional love?
16. Why is treating others as you wish to be treated called the Golden Rule?
17. Which of Jesus commands do you think goes most against human nature?
18. What does it take for a person to live the way Jesus described here?
19. When is forgiveness most difficult to give?
20. How did Jesus in this sermon say His followers were to be distinctly different from the ordinary pattern?
- * 21. What is realistic or unrealistic about the kind of love Jesus wants us to show?

Apply It

22. To what enemy in your life can you show a gesture of love?
- * 23. How can you remember to do good to someone who is unkind to you this week?

Judging Others - Luke 6:37-42

Topics: Acceptance, Accusation, Benefits, Consequences, Criticism, Forgiveness, Gifts, Help, Judging Others, Learning, Promises, Relationships, Teaching

Open It

1. From what teacher or wise person have you learned the most so far?
- * 2. How does the expression “What goes around, comes around” apply in personal relationships?
3. When have you criticized someone for an action that you also were guilty of?

Explore It

4. What specific promises did Jesus make? (6:37-38)
5. How much did Jesus want His disciples to give? Why? (6:38)
- * 6. What does God give to those who give? (6:38)
7. How did Jesus summarize the importance of extending grace, mercy, and help to others? (6:38)
8. What will God give to each person? (6:38)
- * 9. What reason did Jesus give for discouraging the blind from attempting to lead others who were also blind? (6:39)
10. How do a student and his or her teacher relate? (6:40)
- * 11. What is the main point of the parable of the plank and the speck of sawdust? (6:41-42)
12. What is a person who fails to see his or her own shortcomings? (6:42)
13. What is required of a person before he or she can teach or instruct someone else? (6:42)

Get It

14. What does it mean to give “a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over”?
15. When is it easy to judge others?
16. Why is it important not to judge or condemn others?
17. What do judging, condemning, forgiving, and giving have in common?
- * 18. To what kind of giving did Jesus refer when He said, “Give, and it will be given to you”?
- * 19. What kind of blindness did Jesus have in mind when He spoke of the blind leading the blind?
20. How is a well-trained student like his teacher?
21. What bothersome circumstances could Jesus have had in mind as He told the parable of the sawdust and plank?
22. What shortcomings in ourselves do we tend to overlook?
23. Who is most qualified to point out shortcomings in others?

Apply It

- * 24. In what relationship in your life do you want to show more grace, mercy, and giving? How?
25. In what ways can you be a more diligent student of your heavenly Teacher this week?

A Tree and Its Fruit - Luke 6:43-45

Topics: Application, Change, Character, Consistency, Evil, Expectations, Fruit, Goodness, Heart

Open It

1. What experiences have you had with growing and harvesting fruit?
2. If you could own a fruit orchard, what kinds of fruit would you prefer to grow?
- * 3. How have you been fooled by someone whose words were contrary to his or her actions?

Explore It

4. What determines the quality of a fruit? (6:43)
- * 5. What specific statements did Jesus make about fruit before applying the same truths to people? (6:43-44)
6. In what different but related ways is the word “good” used in these verses? (6:43, 45)
7. What do the tree and fruit symbolize in these words of Jesus? (6:43, 45)
8. What did Jesus say about what people expected when collecting fruit? (6:44)
9. What do “thornbushes” and “briers” represent? (6:44)
- * 10. What did Jesus describe as the source of good and evil things? (6:45)
11. How did Jesus describe the role of the human heart? (6:45)
- * 12. How do people ultimately know about the state of our hearts? (6:45)
13. What did Jesus mean by His final statement, “For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks”? (6:45)

Get It

14. How can a person change his or her heart?
- * 15. What is it about a person that actually has to change in order for good behavior to be produced?
- * 16. When was the last time someone helped you examine how your life reflects or doesn’t reflect the presence of Christ?
17. What role has Christ played in your life in determining what kind of fruit you produce?
18. How would you describe the things you have been storing up in your heart lately?

Apply It

19. How can you cultivate the love for God that is in your heart?
- * 20. What mature believer could you talk with this week to help you store up good things in your heart?

The Wise and Foolish Builders - Luke 6:46-49

Topics: Accomplishments, Actions, Believers, Benefits, Comparisons, Consequences, Differences, Foundation, Life, Listening, Obedience, Security, Stress, Suffering, Wisdom, Words

Open It

1. What do you think is the single most important decision when it comes to building a house?
- * 2. If you could build a house anywhere in the world, where would you want to build it?
3. Who do you know who has lost their home through a natural disaster?

Explore It

4. What inconsistency did Jesus call to His followers' attention? (6:46)
- * 5. What three things did Jesus say the wise person did that are similar to building well? (6:47)
6. To whom does the wise person go? (6:47)
7. What did Jesus say His two house building examples were meant to illustrate? (6:47, 49)
8. How would you characterize the wise and foolish person's relationship to Jesus? (6:47, 49)
9. How many differences can you find between the two people Jesus described in His story? (6:47-49)
- * 10. What characteristics does the well-built house have? (6:48)
11. What event did Jesus describe as happening to both houses? (6:48-49)
12. How are the final results different for the wise and foolish builders? (6:48-49)
- * 13. What does the foolish person do right and wrong in relation to Christ's words? (6:49)

Get It

14. Why was Jesus concerned that people would not do what He said?
15. What could the various parts of Christ's story (the house, the rock, the sand, the foundation, and storm) represent in a person's life?
- * 16. What specific actions was Jesus challenging His disciples to take?
17. What specific action was Jesus challenging the crowd to avoid?
18. What kind of life does Jesus want His followers to have?
19. What common experiences do we all have whether we obey Jesus or not?
20. How has knowing Jesus Christ made a difference during the storms in your life?
- * 21. At what point in the building process is your life now?

Apply It

- * 22. What can you do to be ready for the next storm that hits your life?
23. Which of Jesus' words in this passage do you need to heed this week?

The Faith of the Centurion - Luke 7:1-10

Topics: Affirmation, Answers, Appreciation, Attitude, Authority, Character, Confidence, Delegation, Faith, Healing, Humility, Leadership, Prayer, Representatives, Reputation, Trust

Open It

1. When you hear the word “authority,” who first comes to mind?
- * 2. When have you been amazed by someone else’s faith?
3. From whom have you learned the greatest part of your understanding of faith?

Explore It

4. In what town did Jesus heal the centurion’s servant? (7:1-2)
5. What did the centurion ask Jesus to do? (7:3)
6. Whom did the centurion send to present his request to Jesus? (7:3)
7. What reason did the elders give Jesus to honor their request on behalf of the centurion? (7:3)
8. What kind of reputation did the centurion have among the people of Capernaum? (7:3)
- * 9. What different character qualities were demonstrated by the centurion? (7:3-8)
- * 10. What message did the centurion send when he discovered Jesus was actually coming to his house? (7:6-8)
11. What was the centurion’s perception of Jesus? (7:6-7)
12. How did the centurion understand the concept of authority? (7:6-8)
13. If your knowledge were limited to this passage, what would you know about centurions? (7:8)
- * 14. How did Jesus react to the centurion’s words? (7:9)
15. To whom did Jesus remark on the uniqueness of the centurion’s faith? (7:9)
16. What happened to the centurion’s servant? (7:10)

Get It

- * 17. What characteristics of the centurion’s attitude and request would be helpful to remember when we ask God for help?
18. What do people usually mean when they refer to Jesus Christ as Lord?
- * 19. Why is it difficult for us to be as dependent on God as the centurion was?
20. The centurion presented his request to Jesus through friends; how much is this like asking friends to pray for us?
21. Why is it important to be encouraged about the quality of our faith, even as Jesus affirmed the faith of the centurion?
22. What are some of the ways in which Jesus is Lord of your life?
23. What happens when we depend on God?

Apply It

- * 24. How could you affirm the faith of someone who has been an example to you?
25. How can you strengthen your friendships with other Christians this week?

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son - Luke 7:11-17

Topics: Awe, Compassion, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Praise, Resurrection

Open It

- * 1. What different reactions do people have to the death of a friend?
- 2. How does our culture generally treat the elderly?
- 3. What do most people think about miracles today?

Explore It

- 4. Who went with Jesus to Nain? (7:11)
- 5. What pairs of opposites can you find in the passage? (7:11-17)
- * 6. What can we learn about mourning in Jesus' day? (7:12)
- 7. What kind of person died? (7:12, 14)
- * 8. What was Jesus' reaction to the people He encountered? (7:13-15)
- 9. What commands did Jesus give? (7:13-14)
- * 10. How did the mother and her son react to Jesus? (7:14-15)
- 11. How did the crowd react to Jesus? (7:16)
- 12. Who did the people think Jesus was? (7:16)
- 13. What was the result of the miracle? (7:17)

Get It

- 14. How do you respond to another person's grief?
- 15. What can we learn from the example of the crowd from the town through their words and actions?
- * 16. What picture of Jesus do you take from this passage?
- * 17. How much do you expect God to work miracles in your life?
- 18. In what ways can you spread the news about Jesus?

Apply It

- * 19. What people in pain might you reach out to this week?
- 20. How can you nurture your expectancy about Jesus' power?
- 21. With whom can you share your expectation of what God can do today?

Jesus and John the Baptist - Luke 7:18-35

Topics: Expectations, Faith, Healing, Legalism, Messiah, Prophecy, Waiting

Open It

1. What do you do while you're waiting in a line?
- * 2. What's the longest length of time you've waited for an answer from God?
3. In your opinion, what causes most people to doubt?

Explore It

4. How did John react to the reports about Jesus? (7:18-19)
- * 5. For what two questions did John want answers? (7:19)
6. What was Jesus doing when John's disciples arrived? (7:21)
- * 7. How did Jesus answer the visitors' questions? (7:21-22)
8. According to Jesus, what was John's role? (7:24-27)
9. How did Jesus describe greatness? (7:28)
10. Why did the people react in different ways to the words of Jesus? (7:29-30)
- * 11. What did the people's reactions say about their relationship with God? (7:29-30)
12. To what did Jesus compare the people of His day? (7:31-32)
13. How did people characterize John the Baptist? (7:33)
14. How did the description of John the Baptist compare with their characterization of Jesus? (7:34)
15. What did Jesus conclude about the people of His day? (7:35)

Get It

16. In what ways can you relate to John the Baptist in this passage?
- * 17. Why didn't Jesus condemn John's doubts?
18. How is it possible, in the words of verse 23, to "fall away on account of" Jesus?
19. Why do the appearances of God's servants affect how they are received?
20. How can a person be more aware of the message than of the messenger?
21. What is your response to Jesus' claim that the least in God's kingdom is greater than John the Baptist?
- * 22. How can a person cultivate the wisdom and expectant response described by Jesus?

Apply It

- * 23. What can you do this week to be on guard against faltering faith?
24. Of what messengers of Jesus do you need to be more wary today?
25. What opportunities might you have in the next few days to express your beliefs, as well as your doubts?

Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman - Luke 7:36-50

Topics: Forgiveness, Hospitality, Judging Others, Love, Salvation, Sin, Thankfulness

Open It

1. In what ways have you been thanked recently?
- * 2. What limits do most people place on hospitality?
3. In our culture, what sorts of behavior are considered the most shocking?

Explore It

4. Who invited Jesus to dinner? (7:36)
5. What did one woman do when she heard where Jesus was to dine? (7:37-38)
- * 6. What did the Pharisee say about what the woman did? (7:39)
7. How did Jesus respond to Simon the Pharisee's harsh thoughts? (7:40-43)
8. What did Jesus know about the woman's motivation? (7:41-42)
- * 9. What did Jesus think of Simon's hospitality? (7:44-46)
10. What contrasting treatment did Jesus mention? (7:44-46)
11. What was the result of the woman's kindness? (7:47-48)
- * 12. How did the other guests react to Jesus' forgiveness of the woman? (7:49)
13. What did Jesus say to the disapproving guests? (7:50)
14. Why, according to Jesus, was the woman saved? (7:50)
15. What was Jesus' double blessing on the woman? (7:50)

Get It

16. With what character in the story do you most identify?
17. Which of the woman's actions do you find most compelling?
- * 18. When have you ever felt like Simon or the other guests when confronted with a person of questionable morals?
19. What did Jesus receive from people who had sinned?
20. What were the limits of Jesus' compassion in this story?
- * 21. What are the limits of Jesus' compassion toward us?
22. Why was it necessary for the guests to ask about Jesus' identity?
23. If you were the woman described in this story, how would the words and touch of Jesus make you feel?

Apply It

24. What can you do to foster your own thankfulness to God this week?
- * 25. What people do you want to view more with Jesus' eyes?

The Parable of the Sower - Luke 8:1-15

Topics: Good News, Growth, Perseverance, Satan, Testing, Worry

Open It

1. If you were a plant, what would you be?
2. What are some things that distinguish one kind of plant from another?
- * 3. In what areas of your life have you had to persevere?

Explore It

4. Where did Jesus bring His message? (8:1)
5. What women do we meet in this passage? (8:2-3)
6. What facts about the women who followed Jesus do we learn? (8:2-3)
7. What did the various “supporting characters” do in this story? (8:1-4)
8. What method did Jesus choose to use in communicating His message? (8:4)
- * 9. What happened to each group of seeds? (8:5-8)
10. How did Jesus conclude His parable? (8:8)
11. How much of the parable did the people understand? (8:9-10)
12. How much of the parable did the disciples understand? (8:9-10)
13. What did the seed represent? (8:11)
14. What was the seed on the path like? (8:12)
- * 15. Why couldn’t those who received the Word with joy stay faithful? (8:13)
16. What choked those who were represented by the seed among the thorns? (8:14)
- * 17. How did the seed scattered on good soil fare? (8:15)

Get It

18. Why do you think Luke took the time to mention the women in Jesus’ following?
19. What obstacles have prevented acquaintances of yours from receiving the Word?
- * 20. Why is perseverance necessary for all who receive the Word?
- * 21. What kind of soil do you most resemble right now?
22. Which of life’s worries has choked your growth as a Christian recently?
23. What can we do to improve our receptivity to the Word of God?

Apply It

- * 24. What will most help you be responsive to God in your study of the Bible?
25. With whom can you share the truth about what Jesus means to you, that your faith may bear fruit?

A Lamp on a Stand - Luke 8:16-18

Topics: Abundance, Hiding, Listening, Openness, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. What are the features of your favorite kind of lamp?
- 2. What kinds of things do people try to hide?

Explore It

- * 3. In what places would it be absurd to put a lamp? (8:16)
- 4. According to Jesus, what is not done with a lamp? (8:16)
- * 5. What is done with a lamp? (8:16)
- 6. What contrasts do we see in this passage? (8:16-18)
- 7. Why would someone put a light on a stand? (8:16)
- 8. How much can ultimately be hidden? (8:17)
- 9. What will happen to those things that are hidden? (8:17)
- 10. What are we to consider carefully? (8:18)
- 11. What did Jesus say our response should be to what we hear? (8:18)
- * 12. What did Jesus say about what God entrusts to us? (8:18)

Get It

- * 13. What does the lamp stand for?
- * 14. What sorts of things would God have us bring “out into the open”?
- 15. How good a listener do you think you are, in the sense of this passage?
- 16. What have you been given by God?
- 17. When have you tried to hide your Christian identity from other people?

Apply It

- * 18. What are some symbols you can use to show others your Christian identity?
- 19. What step can you take to be a better listener to this and other parables?

Jesus' Mother and Brothers - Luke 8:19-21

Topics: Bible, Family, Listening, Obedience

Open It

- * 1. What is it like to be kept from seeing someone you know?
- 2. How does it feel when someone you know acts as if your relationship is unimportant?

Explore It

- * 3. Who came to see Jesus? (8:19)
- * 4. What kept Jesus' family from seeing Him? (8:19)
 - 5. How can we infer that Jesus' family was anxious to see Him? (8:19-20)
 - 6. Where did Jesus' mother and brothers wait for Him? (8:20)
 - 7. How did Jesus hear of His family's arrival? (8:20)
 - 8. How did Jesus respond to His family's desire to see Him? (8:21)
- * 9. What did Jesus consider more important than family? (8:21)
 - 10. With what is "hearing" closely associated? (8:21)
 - 11. How did Jesus identify those who heard God's Word and put it into practice?
 - 12. What two things constituted family ties to Jesus? (8:21)

Get It

- * 13. In what way was Jesus hard on His mother and brothers?
 - 14. In what ways can we feel too comfortable about our relationship with Jesus?
- * 15. In what ways do we put family ahead of the needs of other people?
 - 16. When have you heard God's Word but failed to put it into practice?
 - 17. In what areas do you need to put God's Word into practice more diligently?

Apply It

- 18. What practical change in your daily routine would help you listen to God's Word better?
- * 19. With whom can you share your concerns about putting Scripture into practice so that he or she can pray for you?

Jesus Calms a Storm - Luke 8:22-25

Topics: Danger, Doubt, Faith, Fear, Obedience

Open It

- * 1. What is it like to fear for your physical safety?
- 2. How do you react to someone else's utter calm when all you feel is panic?

Explore It

- 3. Whom did Jesus ask to accompany Him? (8:22)
- 4. Where did Jesus and His disciples go? How? (8:22)
- 5. What happened after Jesus and His disciples set sail? (8:23)
- * 6. How did Jesus react to the growing storm? (8:23)
- * 7. What did the disciples think of the turn of events? (8:24)
- 8. How and how quickly did the situation change? (8:24)
- 9. After the storm was calmed, what did Jesus ask the disciples? (8:25)
- * 10. What emotions overwhelmed the disciples? (8:25)
- 11. What did the disciples realize about Jesus' identity? (8:25)
- 12. What did the disciples see of Jesus' manner? (8:25)

Get It

- 13. What is faith?
- * 14. If you had been in the boat that day, would you have been more like Jesus or like the disciples? Why?
- 15. Would you have been reassured or angered by Jesus' calmness?
- * 16. How would you respond if Jesus asked you, "Where is your faith?"
- 17. Why do you suppose the disciples asked each other who Jesus was, rather than asking Jesus?
- 18. How should the knowledge of Jesus' supreme authority affect our faith?

Apply It

- 19. What can you do today to build up your faith in Jesus for the next time you feel overwhelmed?
- * 20. In what way can you show your assurance in God's ability to rescue His people?

The Healing of a Demon-possessed Man - Luke 8:26-39

Topics: Demons, Evil, Grace, Miracles, New Life, Thankfulness

Open It

- * 1. What situations or people do you consider hopeless?
- 2. What people do others try to avoid when they encounter them on the street?

Explore It

- 3. Where did Jesus and His disciples go? By what means? (8:26)
- 4. What was the first thing to greet Jesus and His disciples upon their arrival? (8:27)
- * 5. What had the demon-possessed man's life been like until he met Jesus? (8:27, 29)
- * 6. How did the demon-possessed man react to Jesus? (8:28)
- 7. Of what was the man afraid? (8:28)
- 8. Why was the man called Legion? (8:30)
- 9. What did the demons choose over life in the Abyss? (8:31-32)
- 10. What resulted from the demons' choice? (8:33)
- 11. How did those tending the pigs react to what happened? (8:34)
- 12. Who else heard what happened, and what did they find at the region of the Gerasenes? (8:35)
- * 13. What emotion gripped all but the man who had been possessed by demons? (8:34-37)
- 14. What did the man want to do? (8:38)
- 15. Why did Jesus say no to the man's request to go with Him? (8:38-39)
- 16. What was the result of the man's obedience? (8:39)

Get It

- * 17. If you had been one of the disciples, what would have been your first reaction to the demon-possessed man?
- 18. What does this story say about Jesus' concern for an individual's life?
- 19. To what extent do you believe demons are active today?
- 20. Why do the words "fear" and "afraid" come up so much?
- * 21. In what ways do people today ask Jesus to leave them alone?
- 22. What would have happened if Jesus had given in to the man's request to go with Him?
- 23. What situations or forces have at times left you not in your right mind?

Apply It

- * 24. What can you do this week to be more aware of Jesus' ability to help you with your most serious problems?
- 25. Whom can you tell today how much God has done for you?

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman - Luke 8:40-56

Topics: Beliefs, Death, Fear, Healing, Kindness, Miracles, New Life, Power, Resurrection

Open It

1. What do your coworkers think about miraculous healing?
2. How much have television evangelists and disreputable faith healers harmed people's opinions of Jesus?
- * 3. How far would you go to bring physical healing to someone you love?

Explore It

4. What kind of reception did Jesus get when He returned? (8:40)
5. Who was Jairus? (8:41-42)
- * 6. What did Jairus want Jesus to do? (8:41-42)
7. What role do crowds play in this passage? (8:40, 42, 45, 47, 52-53)
- * 8. What do we know about the sick woman? (8:43-44)
9. How did Jesus know that someone had been healed? (8:45-46)
10. What was the woman's reaction to being discovered? (8:47)
11. To what did Jesus attribute the woman's healing? (8:48)
12. What happened to Jairus's daughter while Jesus was traveling? (8:49)
- * 13. What commands did Jesus give before the girl was given new life? (8:50, 52, 54)
14. How did Luke describe the sequence of events inside Jairus's house? (8:53-56)
15. What did Jesus tell the girl's parents? (8:55-56)

Get It

16. What is similar about the two healings?
17. What is different about the two healings?
- * 18. What emotional effect can long-term pain have on someone?
19. How must Jesus' words have sounded to the woman?
20. In what ways do you imagine the woman's life changed from that day on?
21. How did Jesus' manner and words stand in sharp contrast to the mood outside and inside Jairus's house?
- * 22. How did Jesus show His care for the whole person in both situations?
23. What can we learn from the boldness of both the woman and Jairus?

Apply It

- * 24. For what people with long-term pain or other physical problems can you start to pray regularly?
25. How should you be bold in the way you approach God?

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve - Luke 9:1-9

Topics: Discipline, Evangelism, Gospel, Healing, Mission, Obedience, Poor

Open It

1. How much preparation and packing do you usually do before a trip?
- * 2. How willing are most people to “pull up stakes” and move to unfamiliar surroundings?
3. How much are the people you know willing to believe in miracles?

Explore It

- * 4. What happened after Jesus had called the twelve disciples together? (9:1-2)
5. What authority was granted to the Twelve? (9:1-2)
- * 6. How did Jesus instruct the Twelve to proceed? (9:3-5)
7. What were the disciples to do if a town would not welcome them? (9:6)
- * 8. What was the disciples’ response to Jesus’ instructions? (9:6)
9. Who became aware of Jesus and the Twelve? (9:7)
10. What did Herod think of Jesus’ healing and preaching? (9:7)
11. What were the various explanations of Jesus? (9:7-8)
12. What resurrection images did Luke mention? (9:7-8)
13. What basic question did Herod have about Jesus? (9:9)
14. What did Herod want to do? Why? (9:9)

Get It

15. How foreign to your thinking do Jesus’ instructions to the Twelve seem?
16. How strange might Jesus’ instructions have seemed to the Twelve?
- * 17. Why do you suppose Jesus sent the Twelve out with so few provisions?
- * 18. What sort of callings do we receive from God?
19. Who is preaching and healing under Jesus’ authority in our day?
20. What do people in power usually think of Jesus? Why?
21. What callings from God are you aware of in your life?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you prepare yourself this week for the future God has in mind for you?
23. How can you better take advantage of God’s power and authority in your life?

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand - Luke 9:10-17

Topics: Faith, Healing, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Miracles, Responsibility

Open It

1. In what situations do you really want to be alone?
- * 2. How do people react when given an overwhelming responsibility?

Explore It

3. From where had the apostles returned? (9:10)
4. What was the first thing the disciples did? (9:10)
5. What did Jesus decide to do after the apostles had returned? (9:10)
6. How did Jesus' plans change? (9:11)
- * 7. What did the apostles want to do with the crowd? (9:12)
8. What did Jesus propose to do with the crowd? (9:13)
- * 9. What were the choices for feeding the crowds? (9:13)
10. In what order of events did Jesus go about feeding the people? (9:16)
11. How did the disciples help Jesus? (9:16)
- * 12. What were the results of Jesus' miracle? (9:17)

Get It

- * 13. If you had been an apostle, how would you have reacted to the crowd's overwhelming need?
14. What is surprising (and not surprising) to you about Jesus' response to the people's hunger?
15. What can we learn about Jesus' rapport with people from this account?
16. What can we learn about the abundance of God's provision from this passage?
17. What can we assume about the apostles' attitudes at the end of the story?
- * 18. With what projects can your church or community group be involved to help people in need?

Apply It

- * 19. What people in need living in your community can you take steps to help this month?
20. What can you do to increase your faith in God's miraculous powers?

Peter's Confession of Christ - Luke 9:18-27

Topics: Beliefs, Confession, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Prophecy, Sacrifice, Shame, Suffering, Witnessing

Open It

1. What are some of the roles you fill at home, work, and in your community?
- * 2. When have you made a sacrifice for the sake of someone else?
3. In what do you take the most pride? Why?

Explore It

4. What was Jesus doing when He was alone with His disciples? (9:18)
5. What was Jesus' series of questions? (9:18, 20)
6. Who did the crowd think Jesus was? (9:19)
7. Who spoke up when Jesus brought up the question of His identity? (9:20)
8. What was Jesus' reaction to the statement by Peter? (9:21)
9. What kind of future did Jesus predict for Himself? (9:22)
10. How often is our allegiance to Christ demanded? (9:23)
- * 11. What are the conditions for discipleship with Jesus? (9:23)
- * 12. What kind of commitment does discipleship require? (9:24-25)
13. What did Jesus say would happen to anyone who is ashamed of Him and His words? (9:26)
- * 14. With what prediction did Jesus conclude His admonition to the disciples? (9:27)

Get It

15. How would you answer Jesus today if He asked, "Who do crowds say I am?"
16. In what situations would you be uncomfortable stating plainly that Jesus is the Christ of God?
17. Why do you suppose that Jesus strictly warned His disciples not to tell anyone about His heavenly identity?
18. In what ways do we behave as if we are not to tell anybody who Jesus is?
- * 19. What celebrities recently seem to have "gained the whole world" yet lost or forfeited their very selves?
- * 20. In what ways can you lose your life for Jesus?
21. What might it feel like to have the Son of Man ashamed of us?

Apply It

22. What situations this week might call for you to speak out about Jesus' identity?
23. How can you pray this week to help you talk about Jesus with others?
- * 24. With whom can you pray this week for the purpose of denying yourself and following Jesus?

The Transfiguration - Luke 9:28-36

Topics: Faith, Fear, Glory, Listening, Prayer, Prophecy

Open It

- * 1. What special events in your life do wish could have lasted forever?
- 2. When you're deeply involved in something, what does it take to get you to listen to something else?

Explore It

- 3. Who went with Jesus up a mountain? (9:28)
- 4. Why did Jesus and His disciples go up the mountain? (9:28)
- * 5. What happened to Jesus while He was praying? (9:29)
- 6. Who suddenly appeared, and what did they do? (9:30-31)
- 7. How did Moses and Elijah describe Jesus' departure? (9:31)
- 8. How were Peter, John, and James feeling at this point? (9:32)
- 9. What did Peter and his companions see? (9:32)
- * 10. How did Peter react to the amazing scene? (9:33)
- 11. Why were the disciples suddenly afraid? (9:34)
- 12. What did the voice from the cloud say about Jesus? (9:35)
- 13. What happened to Moses and Elijah? (9:36)
- * 14. How did the disciples handle their experience? (9:36)

Get It

- 15. If you had been with Peter, James, and John, how might you have felt?
- 16. What does "bring to fulfillment" imply about Jesus' departure? (9:31)
- * 17. In describing Peter's suggestion about the shelters, why did Luke say, "He did not know what he was saying"?
- 18. What would have happened if it were possible to stay on the mountain with Moses and Elijah?
- 19. What does the timing of the voice from the cloud say to you?
- 20. What might God want to say to us about Jesus today?
- * 21. Why do you think the disciples told no one what they had seen that day?

Apply It

- 22. What book or passage of the Bible could you read to help you better understand your relationship to Jesus?
- 23. What can you do in your private devotions to help you listen to God's Son?
- * 24. With what person or people could you share what you have learned from this passage?

The Healing of a Boy With an Evil Spirit - Luke 9:37-45

Topics: Believe, Children, Demons, Evil, Fear, Healing, Listening, Miracles, Parents, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What is it like to feel that you're not in control of your body?
2. What do people today think about demon possession?
- * 3. What are typical first reactions to things we don't understand?

Explore It

4. What did Jesus and His disciples encounter when they came down from the mountain? (9:37)
5. Why did the man ask Jesus to look at his son? (9:38)
6. What had been happening to the boy? (9:39)
- * 7. What had the father tried to no avail? (9:40)
- * 8. To what did Jesus attribute the disciples' failure to heal the boy? (9:41)
9. What happened to the boy while he was being brought to Jesus? (9:42)
10. What three things did Jesus do? (9:42)
11. What was the crowd's reactions to what they saw? (9:43)
12. How did Jesus respond to the people's admiration? (9:43-44)
13. What did Jesus predict about Himself? (9:44)
- * 14. How much did the disciples understand of what Jesus told them? (9:45)
15. What was the disciples' overriding emotion at the time? (9:45)

Get It

16. What must life have been like for the father and son Jesus met?
- * 17. What is the connection in this story between belief and healing?
18. What is the connection between belief and healing in our lives today?
19. How would you contrast the people's belief in God's working through the disciples and through Jesus?
20. What similarities to this story do you see in the way people approach belief today?
21. Why would Jesus speak to His disciples about being betrayed instead of preaching to the crowd about the miracle they had just seen?
- * 22. What could have kept understanding hidden from the disciples?
23. What clouds our understanding of Jesus?
24. What can we do when we are confused or uncertain about God?

Apply It

25. What area of unbelief do you want to talk with God about this week?
- * 26. For those aspects of Jesus that you still don't understand, what is one step you can take to learn more?

Who Will Be the Greatest? - Luke 9:46-50

Topics: Ambition, Arguments, Children, Demons, Envy, Favoritism, Greatness, Humility, Self-righteousness, Teamwork

Open It

- * 1. What does greatness mean to you?
- 2. What do you like and dislike most about children?

Explore It

- 3. How did an argument start among the disciples? (9:46)
- * 4. About what did the disciples argue? (9:46)
- 5. How did Jesus find out what was happening? (9:47)
- * 6. What did Jesus use to reply to the disciples' ambition? (9:47)
- 7. What connections between the child and God did Jesus make? (9:48)
- * 8. What reason did Jesus give for connecting children with God? (9:48)
- 9. How did John change the subject? (9:49)
- 10. Why had the disciples tried to stop the man? (9:49)
- 11. What did Jesus think of the disciples' gallantry? (9:50)
- 12. What reason did Jesus give for not stopping the man who was driving out demons? (9:50)

Get It

- * 13. What effect must the example of a child have had on the disciples?
- 14. What opportunities do we have to welcome children (and thereby welcome Jesus and God the Father)?
- * 15. What different ambitions and motivations can we see in churches and other religious organizations today?
- 16. What reaction was John probably expecting to his efforts to stop the man from driving out demons?
- 17. What kind of teamwork might Jesus be looking for today among His followers?
- 18. How can we be more cooperative with each other?

Apply It

- * 19. What is one step you can take to subject your ambitions to the ambitions of Jesus?
- 20. How can you foster a spirit of teamwork in your church or religious group in the weeks ahead?

Samaritan Opposition - Luke 9:51-56

Topics: Goals, Opposition, Rejection

Open It

1. What kinds of things happen when a big project, such as a political campaign or a special event, nears its completion?
2. What are some examples of prejudice that you have seen?
- * 3. When something or someone for whom you've worked very hard is rejected, how do you typically react?

Explore It

4. What significant event was looming on the horizon? (9:51)
5. Where was Jesus going? (9:51)
6. In what manner did Jesus set out for His journey? (9:51)
7. What preparations did Jesus make? Why? (9:51-52)
8. What were the messengers supposed to do? (9:52)
- * 9. Why didn't the Samaritans welcome Jesus? (9:53)
10. Where did Jesus and His disciples go? Why? (9:53-56)
11. What did James and John think of Samaritan hospitality? (9:54)
- * 12. What did James and John want to bring down on the Samaritans? Why? (9:54)
- * 13. What did Jesus think of His disciples' suggestion? (9:55)
14. What did Jesus do about the Samaritans' rejection? (9:56)

Get It

15. What possible connection might there have been between welcoming Jesus and His going to Jerusalem?
- * 16. How do you handle it when someone rejects you because of prejudice or for petty reasons?
- * 17. If you had been a disciple, what would you have suggested been done to the villagers?
18. When have you resolutely faced up to a situation that you knew was going to be difficult or even dangerous?
19. In what ways do we get sidetracked by retaliation?

Apply It

20. What steps can you take over the next few days to keep your God-inspired goals in mind?
- * 21. What do you want to remember the next time you feel a desire to retaliate or get even?

The Cost of Following Jesus - Luke 9:57-62

Topics: Devotion, Faithfulness, Follow, Home, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Loyalty, Relationships

Open It

1. About what sorts of things do you get enthusiastic?
- * 2. When working on a group project, what excuses do people use to postpone or avoid fulfilling their obligations?

Explore It

3. Where were Jesus and His disciples when this story began? (9:57)
4. To what lengths did the first man say he would follow Jesus? (9:57)
5. What was Jesus' reply to the first man's statement of devotion? (9:58)
6. In what way were foxes and birds of the air more secure than Jesus? (9:58)
- * 7. What did the second man want to do before following Jesus? (9:59)
8. What was the second man to do instead of burying his father? (9:60)
9. How did Jesus respond to the obligations of family life? (9:60, 62)
- * 10. What did the third person want to do before following Jesus? (9:61)
- * 11. Who is not fit for the kingdom of God? (9:62)
12. What imagery did Jesus evoke to examine the person's loyalties? (9:62)

Get It

- * 13. Given Jesus' replies to the three would-be followers, what do you suppose their conflicting loyalties were?
14. What did Jesus want the three men to do?
15. With which of these men do you most easily identify?
16. Why did Jesus encourage the one man to place such little value on family responsibilities?
17. What loyalties conflict with our allegiance to God?
- * 18. From this account, how would you summarize the costs of following Jesus?
19. What are the costs of following Jesus?
20. Why are there costs in following Jesus?

Apply It

- * 21. What would help you this week to remember your loyalty to Christ?
22. With whom in your circle of family or friends can you reaffirm your desire to follow Jesus?

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-two - Luke 10:1-24

Topics: Children, Demons, Evangelism, Joy, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Mission

Open It

1. How would you treat the representatives of a famous person?
- * 2. What difficult project have you worked on recently?
3. How do you feel when you complete a difficult task?

Explore It

4. In what manner were the seventy-two followers sent out? (10:1)
5. According to Jesus, why were His followers to pray for more workers? (10:2)
6. To what did Jesus liken His followers? (10:3)
7. What instructions did Jesus give the seventy-two concerning their departure? (10:4)
- * 8. What were Jesus' followers to do about accommodations? (10:5-8)
9. What were the seventy-two sent out to do? (10:9)
- * 10. To what could unbelieving towns look forward? (10:10-15)
11. What did the disciples report upon their return? (10:17)
- * 12. What authority did Jesus give His disciples? (10:18-19)
13. Why were the seventy-two to rejoice? (10:20)
14. What was the Father's pleasure? (10:21-22)
15. Who was envious of the disciples? Why? (10:23-24)

Get It

16. What was life like for the seventy-two disciples?
17. Which of the jobs done by the seventy-two do we see in action today?
- * 18. What instructions has Jesus given you?
- * 19. When have you been rejected as a representative of Christ?
20. What are the trappings of being "wise and learned"?
21. What are the benefits of being like "little children"?
22. What can we see and hear about God that the disciples, prophets, and kings could not?

Apply It

23. This week, how can you observe children to help you understand more of God's revelation?
- * 24. When can you set aside time to pray regularly to learn your place among those whom God has sent out?
25. Whom else can you encourage in your church or fellowship group to join you in prayer and service?

The Parable of the Good Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37

Topics: Eternal Life, Kindness, Law, Love, Mercy, Neighbor, Testing

Open It

1. What are the greatest inconveniences in your life?
- * 2. When has someone gone out of his or her way to help you?
3. What do you think motivates most people to do good?

Explore It

4. What did the legal expert ask Jesus? (10:25)
5. Why did the legal expert ask a question about eternal life? (10:25)
6. How did Jesus turn the question back on the legal expert? (10:26)
7. How did the legal expert summarize the demands of the Law? (10:27)
8. What did the expert ask about loving one's neighbor? (10:29)
9. What did the legal expert want to do? (10:29)
10. How did Jesus reply to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" (10:30-35)
- * 11. What did the priest and the Levite do to help the man who was robbed and beaten? (10:31-32)
- * 12. What was the Samaritan's response to what he saw? (10:33-35)
13. Why did the Samaritan help the beaten man? (10:33)
14. What relationship did Jesus use to characterize the Samaritan's behavior? (10:36)
- * 15. How did the legal expert define the neighbor in the parable? (10:37)
16. What did Jesus command the expert to do in response to the parable? (10:37)

Get It

17. What different motivations do people have for asking questions about God and of God?
18. How effective is this parable in communicating love for one's neighbor?
- * 19. What natural inclinations make it easier for you to act like the priest and the Levite than like the Samaritan?
- * 20. How practical was the Samaritan's approach to the man in need?
21. How does it feel when someone has mercy on you?
22. In what ways can we as individuals and as groups of Christians be more like the Samaritan?

Apply It

- * 23. What step can you take to help meet someone else's physical needs?
24. What people who have helped you in times of need do you want to thank this week?

At the Home of Martha and Mary - Luke 10:38-42

Topics: Choices, Family, Hospitality, Jealousy, Listening, Preparation

Open It

- * 1. What is your home like shortly before guests arrive?
- 2. What do you enjoy about formal or informal dinners? Why?
- 3. What is involved in clean-up at your house?

Explore It

- 4. What did Martha do for Jesus and His disciples? (10:38)
- 5. Who was Mary? (10:39)
- 6. Where was Mary while Jesus was talking? (10:39)
- * 7. What did Mary do while Martha attended to household preparations? (10:39-40)
- 8. How much could Martha concentrate on Jesus' words while preparing for her guests? (10:40)
- 9. Of what did Martha accuse Jesus? (10:40)
- * 10. Of what did Martha accuse her sister? (10:40)
- 11. What did Martha want Jesus to do? (10:40)
- 12. How did Jesus try to calm down Martha? (10:41)
- * 13. What did Jesus think of the sisters' choices? (10:41-42)

Get It

- 14. How would you describe the "Marys" (male and female) that you know?
- 15. To what extent do you resemble the hurried, frantic personality of Martha?
- * 16. If you had been Martha in this situation, how would you have reacted to your sister's choice?
- 17. What did Jesus mean when He said that "only one thing is needed"?
- * 18. Why did Jesus favor Mary's choice?
- 19. In what way do you identify with Mary's choice in your relationship to Jesus?

Apply It

- 20. What events or opportunities are coming up in which you can focus on being a student of Christ?
- * 21. What steps can you take this week to help a friend with domestic tasks so that he or she can have more time to pray or read the Bible?

Jesus' Teaching on Prayer - Luke 11:1-13

Topics: Children, Friendship, Generosity, Holy Spirit, Needs, Persistence, Prayer

Open It

1. What are children like when they want a certain toy?
- * 2. How do you react to someone's relentless requests for something?

Explore It

3. What was Jesus doing when one of His disciples approached Him? (11:1)
- * 4. What was the disciple's request? (11:1)
5. Who had taught his disciples to pray? (11:1)
6. What topics did Jesus' prayer cover? (11:2-4)
7. With what is God's forgiveness of us linked? (11:4)
- * 8. Why did the person in need go to the friend at midnight? (11:5-8)
9. Whom does the friend in the house represent? (11:5-8)
- * 10. Why did the friend eventually grant the man's request? (11:8)
11. What cause-and-effect connection did Jesus use to follow up on the parable? (11:9-10)
12. How do most parents respond to their children's requests? (11:11-12)
13. Why do parents grant their children's requests? (11:13)
14. How is God the Father like and unlike human fathers? (11:13)
15. What does God give to us? (11:13)

Get It

16. Why did the disciples need to be taught how to pray?
17. Why do we need to learn how to pray?
18. What opinions have you heard on how God responds to our prayers?
- * 19. How can we ask, seek, and knock when we approach our heavenly Father?
- * 20. What kinds of things do we—individually and collectively—usually ask for?
21. How might this passage change your expectations of prayer?

Apply It

- * 22. Whom can you call today or tomorrow and offer to pray on his or her behalf?
23. When can you plan for an extended period of prayer in the next few months?

Jesus and Beelzebub - Luke 11:14-28

Topics: Blessing, Demons, Evil, Family, Judging Others, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Satan, Testing

Open It

1. In what groups or situations have you seen a great deal of chaos?
- * 2. How do you feel when good works are attributed to bad motives?

Explore It

3. What sort of demon did Jesus drive out? (11:14)
- * 4. By whose power did some think Jesus could drive out demons? (11:15)
5. What did some people say about Jesus' work? (11:16)
- * 6. How did Jesus react to criticism? (11:17-20)
7. How was the question of Jesus' authority turned back on those who questioned Him? (11:19-20)
8. In Jesus' illustration, what does an attacker take in addition to a person's possessions? (11:21-22)
- * 9. If a person is not with Jesus, what is his status? (11:23)
10. Where does an evil spirit go when it is exorcised from a person? (11:24)
11. What happens to a person if an evil spirit is cast out of him or her and replaced with nothing? (11:25-26)
12. What is the final condition of the person who does not replace evil with good? (11:26)
13. What did a woman from the crowd call out? (11:27)
14. Who is blessed, according to one of the people in the crowd? (11:27)
15. To whom was the woman in the crowd referring? (11:27)
16. Who is blessed, according to Jesus? (11:28)

Get It

17. How do we see the various attitudes toward Jesus and His followers demonstrated today?
- * 18. Why was it impossible for Jesus to be working under Satan's power?
19. What might Jesus think of those who don't let their religion affect their lives beyond "religious activities"?
- * 20. When evil leaves our lives, what must replace it?
21. How surprising to you is Jesus' reply to the woman in the crowd?
22. How might one have expected Jesus to answer the woman's blessing?
23. What does it mean to be blessed?

Apply It

- * 24. What action can you take today to fill a void in your life with something good and holy?
25. What can you do this week to improve your responsiveness to the Word of God?

The Sign of Jonah - Luke 11:29-32

Topics: Comparisons, Example, Judgment, Miracles, Repentance, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What do you think characterizes your generation?
- 2. What do people mean by the phrase, “It’s a sign of the times”?

Explore It

- 3. What had happened to Jesus’ following as this story opens? (11:29)
- * 4. What did Jesus think of the generation in which He lived? (11:29)
- * 5. What did Jesus’ generation want? (11:30)
- 6. Who was to be a sign to Jesus’ generation? (11:30)
- 7. With what group of people was Jesus’ generation compared? (11:30)
- * 8. What made the Queen of the South fit for judging the people of Jesus’ generation? (11:31)
- 9. How did Jesus use Solomon’s reputation to describe Himself? (11:31)
- 10. Who was to condemn Jesus’ generation? (11:31-32)
- 11. What had the men of Nineveh done? (11:32)
- 12. How did Jesus use Jonah’s reputation to describe Himself? (11:32)

Get It

- 13. How do you think Jesus was feeling at this point?
- 14. Why did Jesus use the examples of the Queen of the South and the Ninevites?
- 15. For what signs from God have you looked?
- * 16. What would Jesus say about your diligence in seeking wisdom and willingness to repent?
- * 17. In what ways would Jesus consider your generation a wicked one?
- 18. What does God want us to do about living in a “wicked generation”?

Apply It

- * 19. What can you do to be sensitive to the signs God has already given you in the Bible?
- 20. Whom can you ask to join you this week in praying for wisdom and repentance?

The Lamp of the Body - Luke 11:33-36

Topics: Body, Darkness, Light, Morality, Witnessing

Open It

1. How do you react to a power failure, especially at night?
2. How does your favorite lamp in your home make you feel?
- * 3. How good or bad is your eyesight?

Explore It

4. What is not done with a lamp? (11:33)
5. What is done with a lamp? (11:33)
6. Who benefits from the proper handling of a lamp? (11:33)
7. To what did Jesus compare the human eye? (11:34)
8. What is the “lamp of your body”? (11:34)
- * 9. What happens when the eyes are good? (11:34)
- * 10. What happens when the eyes are bad? (11:34)
11. What did Jesus counsel His listeners to do? (11:35)
- * 12. What is the result of having the whole body full of light? (11:36)
13. To what did Jesus compare having a whole body full of light? (11:36)

Get It

14. What kinds of lamps are there, and what are their purposes?
- * 15. Why did Jesus choose the illustration of light and darkness?
16. What does it feel like to be “full of light”?
17. What does it feel like to be “full of darkness”?
- * 18. What kinds of things can you do to make your life a lamp to yourself and to others?
19. What things, people, or situations tend to fill you with darkness?

Apply It

- * 20. To whom can you be a lamp this week, sharing what Jesus means to you? How?
21. What is one step you need to take to keep old habits or tempting situations from darkening your life?

Six Woes - Luke 11:37-54

Topics: Criticism, Enemies, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Judging Others, Justice, Law, Opposition, Prophecy

Open It

- * 1. How important are appearances in our culture?
- 2. In what way do many people show that they care more about how they look to others than about what they're really like inside?

Explore It

- 3. What did the Pharisee do when Jesus finished speaking? (11:37)
- * 4. What surprised Jesus' host? (11:38)
- * 5. According to Jesus, what did the Pharisee emphasize and overlook? (11:39-40)
- 6. How could the Pharisees have made everything clean for themselves? (11:41)
- * 7. What did the Pharisees neglect in favor of tithing herbs? (11:42)
- 8. Why did Jesus say "woe" six times? (11:42-52)
- 9. Who else besides the Pharisees was offended by Jesus' strong words? (11:45)
- 10. What did the Pharisees' forefathers do? (11:47)
- 11. Why were Jesus' listeners held responsible for the prophets' fates? (11:48-51)
- 12. To what did Jesus liken knowledge? (11:52)
- 13. What did the Pharisees and teachers of the law do when Jesus left? (11:53)
- 14. What motivated the Pharisees and teachers of the law to ask questions? (11:54)

Get It

- 15. How would you describe the Pharisees?
- * 16. Who today imitates the Pharisees' attitudes and actions?
- 17. Who today tries to change other people on the outside without helping them change on the inside?
- 18. In what ways do Christians try to change the way people act outwardly rather than how they respond to God?
- 19. What trade-offs do we make in emphasizing appearance over substance?
- 20. Of what "woes" might Jesus warn us?
- 21. In what way do we hinder others from coming to God?
- * 22. How can we be sure that we are emphasizing justice and the love of God instead of our own lists of things others ought to do?
- 23. Why was it fair for Jesus to condemn His contemporaries for their forefathers' sins?
- 24. To whom else might Jesus want you to give "the key of knowledge"?
- 25. How can we be sure that we are asking questions to gain knowledge rather than to catch someone in his or her words?

Apply It

- 26. What person can you ask to spend some time this week helping you weed out hypocrisy?
- * 27. Whom can you encourage to learn from God's Word this week? How?

Warnings and Encouragements - Luke 12:1-12

Topics: Authority, Blasphemy, Caring, Darkness, Encouragement, Holy Spirit, Hypocrisy, Light

Open It

- * 1. What individuals or groups are most feared in our society?
- 2. In what situations have you had to stand before someone with considerable authority over you?

Explore It

- 3. What was the crowd like? (12:1)
- 4. Against what did Jesus warn His disciples? (12:1)
- 5. What contrasts did Jesus use to prepare the disciples for the future? (12:2-3)
- * 6. What did Jesus say His disciples should and should not fear? (12:4-5)
- 7. What proofs of God's care did Jesus offer to His disciples? (12:6-7)
- * 8. How was the disciples' loyalty to Jesus linked to Jesus' loyalty to them? (12:8-9)
- 9. What was to happen to those who speak against the Son of Man? (12:10)
- 10. What sin could not be forgiven? (12:10)
- * 11. How much were the disciples to prepare for their encounters with religious and political authorities? (12:11)
- 12. How were the disciples to know what to say? (12:12)

Get It

- 13. How might Jesus' words about the troubles to come have made His disciples feel?
- * 14. How does the possibility of persecution make you feel?
- 15. What does the imagery about the sparrows and hairs say to us?
- 16. Why are we important to God?
- * 17. What situations tempt people not to acknowledge Jesus before others?
- 18. What is it about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit that makes it unforgivable?
- 19. Before what sorts of religious and political authorities are believers brought today?
- 20. Of what benefit is it to rehearse what you will say in difficult circumstances?

Apply It

- 21. How can you remind yourself of your importance to God every day this week?
- 22. How can you pray for those who suffer for their relationship with God?
- * 23. What step can you take this week to prepare for persecution?

The Parable of the Rich Fool - Luke 12:13-21

Topics: Abundance, Complacency, Foolishness, Judgment, Possessions, Preparation

Open It

1. Over what did you and your siblings fight when you were growing up?
- * 2. How did your family regard possessions while you were growing up?
3. What measures of a person does our society value?

Explore It

4. What did the person in the crowd want Jesus to do? (12:13)
- * 5. Against what did Jesus warn the crowd? Why? (12:13-15)
6. How did Jesus respond to the request from the crowd? (12:14)
7. From what did Jesus distinguish a person's life? (12:15)
8. What teaching device did Jesus use? (12:16)
9. What was the rich man's dilemma in the parable? (12:16-17)
10. What did the man decide to do about his bumper crop? (12:18)
- * 11. How did the rich man view his possessions and good fortune? (12:19)
12. How did God intervene in the rich man's life? (12:20)
- * 13. What would become of the man's abundance? (12:20)
14. What kinds of abundance did Jesus mention? (12:21)
15. To whom did Jesus apply His teaching about greed? (12:21)

Get It

16. What signs of greed can show up in a person's life?
17. On what basis would you like your life to be judged?
18. With what parts of the parable can you identify?
- * 19. What parts of the parable make you uncomfortable?
20. In what ways do we act as if we will live for many, many years?
21. Why is it difficult for us to accept the fact that our life and things are temporary?
- * 22. How is it possible to be rich toward God?

Apply It

- * 23. What is one step you can take this week to become less dependent on your possessions?
24. With which of your possessions do you want to be more generous? How can you?

Do Not Worry - Luke 12:22-34

Topics: Body, Fear, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Possessions, Priorities, Worry

Open It

- * 1. About what do people you know tend to worry?
- 2. What do most people want for their children?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Jesus start talking about worry? (12:22)
- * 4. About what are we not to worry? (12:22)
- 5. What is more important than food or clothes? (12:23)
- * 6. What are we to learn from birds? (12:24)
- * 7. What does worrying accomplish? (12:25-26)
- 8. What do flowers teach us? (12:27-28)
- 9. What does worry about clothes indicate about us? (12:28)
- 10. On what basis are we not to worry? (12:30)
- 11. What does God want us to seek? (12:31)
- 12. How did Jesus continue with the Father-child analogy? (12:32)
- 13. What are we to do with our possessions? (12:33)
- 14. Where can treasure be found? (12:33)
- 15. What goes with treasure in heaven? (12:34)

Get It

- 16. Why do we worry about food and clothes?
- * 17. What situations bring out the worrier in you?
- 18. What has worrying done for you?
- 19. How do the images of God's provision for birds and nature affect you?
- * 20. When have you seen the truth that God knows your needs and meets them?
- 21. How can a person seek God's kingdom?
- 22. What is the connection between seeking God's kingdom and the Father giving us the kingdom?
- 23. How can we store up treasure in heaven?
- 24. How big is your treasure in heaven?

Apply It

- * 25. When can you pray today to hand over your worries to God?
- 26. What step can you take this week to share your earthly treasures with others?
- 27. What can you do to encourage your church to help meet the needs of homeless people?

Watchfulness - Luke 12:35-48

Topics: Patience, Preparation, Second Coming, Waiting

Open It

1. What sort of preparations have you been involved in making?
- * 2. What is it like to wait for someone without knowing when he or she is coming?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do? (12:35)
4. According to Jesus, what are the two traits of the one who is ready? (12:35)
- * 5. What did the men in the story do when their master returned? (12:36)
6. What happened to the servants who were watching properly? (12:37)
- * 7. How long should the servants have been willing to wait? (12:38)
- * 8. When do important things often happen? (12:39-40)
9. What did Peter ask Jesus? (12:41)
10. How did Jesus reply to Peter's question? (12:42)
11. What distinguished the faithful and wise manager? (12:42-44)
12. How did some servants handle responsibilities in their masters' absence? (12:45)
13. What happened to the foolish servants? (12:46)
14. What was to be the fate of the servants who knew what to do but wouldn't do it? (12:47)
15. What happened to the servants who acted out of ignorance? (12:48)
16. What is expected of those who have been given and entrusted with much? (12:48)

Get It

17. How are "watching" and "waiting" used throughout this passage?
18. What does watchfulness involve?
19. For what are we to be watchful?
20. Why is watchfulness not a passive activity?
21. What does this passage say about Jesus' return?
- * 22. How should we act while waiting for Jesus to return?
23. What do we learn of God's fairness here?
24. What has God given us?
25. What has God given you?
26. How much have we, individually and collectively, been given and entrusted with?
27. What responsibilities or duties may be demanded of us?
28. How should we use what God has given us?
- * 29. What can you do for God in your areas of responsibility?
30. How can we use wisely what God gives each of us?

Apply It

31. What is one area of need in your church or among other Christians that you can serve?
32. How can you get ready for Christ's return?
- * 33. What steps can you take toward fulfilling your God-given responsibilities this week?

Not Peace but Division - Luke 12:49-53

Topics: Children, Conflict, Disagreements, Divisions, Family, Peace, War

Open It

1. What in your view makes it hard for families to fit the image of perfect domestic harmony?
2. What do families typically fight about?
- * 3. What causes family members to turn against each other?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Jesus come to bring? (12:49)
5. For what did Jesus wish? (12:49)
6. For what was Jesus waiting? (12:50)
7. How did Jesus feel about the baptism He would undergo? (12:50)
8. Until when would Jesus be distressed about His baptism? (12:50)
- * 9. What, evidently, did most people think Jesus was bringing? (12:51)
10. In what way did Jesus indicate that division would affect everyone until He returned? (12:51)
11. What did Jesus bring? (12:51)
- * 12. Where would the division that Jesus brings be noticed? (12:52-53)
13. What relationships would suffer division because of Christ? (12:52-53)

Get It

14. Why did Jesus wish that the “fire . . . were already kindled”?
15. What did Jesus mean by baptism?
- * 16. In what way did Jesus bring division?
17. How common is the view that Jesus came to bring peace on earth?
18. How is division the opposite of peace?
19. How would you describe a divided family?
20. Over what issues are any of your relatives divided?
- * 21. Over what issues should we be willing to divide?

Apply It

- * 22. What can you do to prepare for clashes over your beliefs?
23. From what other Christian can you draw encouragement and strength in standing for Jesus? How?

Interpreting the Times - Luke 12:54-59

Topics: Arguments, Hypocrisy, Interpretation, Judgment, Reconciliation

Open It

- * 1. What various interpretations have been offered to explain the dramatic world events of the last few years?
- 2. How have you seen arguments get out of control?

Explore It

- 3. To whom was Jesus talking? (12:54)
- 4. What did a cloud in the west mean to Jesus' audience? (12:54)
- 5. What did the south wind indicate to Jesus' audience? (12:55)
- * 6. What name did Jesus call the crowd? (12:56)
- * 7. What didn't the crowd know how to interpret? (12:56)
- 8. About what was Jesus exasperated? (12:56)
- * 9. What did Jesus want His audience to do? (12:57)
- 10. Where did Jesus recommend the people patch up differences with others? (12:58)
- 11. What could be the consequences if people did not settle their differences? (12:58-59)
- 12. When would a person thrown in jail be able to get out? (12:59)

Get It

- * 13. What accounted for the crowd's inability to interpret the signs of Jesus' time?
- 14. How does God communicate with us today?
- 15. To what "signs" does God want us to pay attention?
- * 16. When has God given you a sign that you should do something?
- 17. When have you had a dispute with another person that had to be settled by a third party?
- 18. Why does Jesus want us to judge for ourselves what is right?
- 19. How is the "out of court" settlement better than a judge's decision?

Apply It

- * 20. What spiritual discipline can you work on to help you listen to God's Word?
- 21. What relationship can you work to reconcile this week?

Repent or Perish - Luke 13:1-9

Topics: Fruit, Repentance, Sacrifice, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. What connection do many people make between how bad they are and how much they suffer?
- 2. When was a time you felt that God was letting you suffer because you had sinned?
- 3. What have been some of your frustrating experiences with gardening?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Jesus hear about a group of Galileans? (13:1)
- * 5. What explanation for the tragedy did Jesus propose? (13:2)
- 6. How did Jesus reply to His own question? (13:3)
- 7. What was the story involving the tower of Siloam? (13:4)
- * 8. What were Jesus' listeners to learn from the two stories? (13:3-5)
- 9. In the parable, what did the man seek from his fig tree? (13:6)
- 10. Where was the fig tree? (13:6)
- 11. What did the man say to the person who took care of the vineyard? (13:7)
- 12. Why did the man want the fig tree chopped down? (13:7)
- 13. What did the vineyard tender suggest? (13:8-9)

Get It

- 14. What does it mean to "bear fruit"?
- * 15. Why do we often assume that people suffer because they are uniquely bad?
- 16. What people or groups of people do we sometimes blame for their suffering?
- 17. What's wrong with saying that people suffer because of how sinful they are?
- * 18. What can we do to keep from judging people by their circumstances?
- 19. What did Jesus mean by His warning, "But unless you repent, you too will all perish"?
- 20. Why did Jesus tell the fig tree parable after discussing the two tragic incidents?
- 21. Whom do the fig tree, the man, and the vineyard tender represent?
- 22. What second chances have you been given?
- 23. What can we learn from this parable?
- 24. What does God want us to do?

Apply It

- 25. What godly characteristic do you want to focus your attention on this week? How?
- * 26. How can you show acceptance to one or two people who have been falsely judged as unrighteous for their circumstances?
- 27. What can you do to comfort, help, or encourage someone who is suffering this week?
- 28. What step of repentance would communicate to God your gratitude for second chances?

A Crippled Woman Healed on the Sabbath - Luke 13:10-17

Topics: Demons, Healing, Hypocrisy, Judging Others, Miracles, Opposition, Praise, Satan

Open It

1. When has someone criticized you for doing something good?
- * 2. What rules about Sunday have you heard?

Explore It

3. When was Jesus teaching in one of the synagogues? (13:10)
- * 4. Whom did Jesus see in the synagogue? (13:11)
5. What did Jesus do when He saw the crippled woman? (13:12)
6. What led to the crippled woman's healing? (13:12-13)
7. How did the woman respond to what Jesus had done? (13:13)
- * 8. Why was the synagogue ruler indignant? (13:14)
9. What rule did the synagogue ruler announce to the crowd? (13:14)
10. What did Jesus think of the religious leaders? (13:15)
- * 11. What example did Jesus give to justify His healing of the woman? (13:15-16)
12. What had caused the woman's malady? (13:16)
13. How did different people react to what had happened? (13:17)

Get It

- * 14. How did the Jewish leader view the Sabbath?
15. What must it have taken for the crippled woman to go to the synagogue?
16. What do you think the crippled woman expected?
17. What do you think Jesus' touch meant to the woman He healed?
- * 18. What restrictions do we foolishly put on God's work?
19. What good deeds do we sometimes restrict because of traditions or rules about Sunday?
20. What opportunities to free others from physical or emotional pain do you know about?

Apply It

- * 21. When can you evaluate your use of Sundays to make sure you allow for doing good?
22. What self-imposed rule or tradition do you need to modify to allow for God's work?
23. How can you help or comfort a person in pain this week?

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast - Luke 13:18-21

Topics: Beliefs, Believe, Faith, Growth, Kingdom of God/Heaven

Open It

- * 1. What is it like to plant something and watch it grow?
- 2. What happened the last time you goofed up following a recipe?

Explore It

- 3. To what did Jesus liken the kingdom of God? (13:18-20)
- * 4. How did the mustard seed start out? (13:19)
- 5. Where was the mustard seed planted? (13:19)
- * 6. What transformation did the mustard seed make? (13:19)
- * 7. From what can we infer that the tree became a substantial plant? (13:19)
- 8. What creatures came to live in the mustard tree's branches? (13:19)
- 9. What contrast would Jesus' listeners have noticed in the first parable? (13:19)
- 10. What did the woman add to the flour? (13:21)
- 11. What did the woman do with the yeast? (13:21)
- 12. What did the yeast do once added to the dough? (13:21)

Get It

- 13. What do a mustard seed and yeast have in common?
- 14. What does the mustard seed represent?
- 15. What does the yeast and dough represent?
- * 16. What makes a mustard seed a good illustration of God's kingdom?
- 17. What makes yeast a good illustration of God's kingdom?
- 18. In what way does each Christian make a small contribution to God's kingdom?
- * 19. What do these two parables tell us about God's kingdom?

Apply It

- * 20. What contribution to God's kingdom can you make this week?
- 21. What can you do in the next day or two to nurture your faith?

The Narrow Door - Luke 13:22-30

Topics: Believe, Faith, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Salvation, Teaching

Open It

- * 1. In what areas of life do you tend to procrastinate?
- 2. How does it feel to miss a good opportunity?
- 3. What is it like when an important person whom you know acts as if you are a stranger?

Explore It

- 4. What was Jesus doing on His way to Jerusalem? (13:22)
- 5. What did someone ask Jesus? (13:23)
- * 6. According to Jesus, what is worth every effort to accomplish? (13:24)
- * 7. What happens once the door is shut? (13:25)
- 8. How will the owner of the house respond to those who want to go in after the door is shut? (13:25)
- 9. How will those left outside try to appeal to the owner? (13:26)
- * 10. How successful will attempts to enter the house be after the door is shut? (13:27)
- 11. What will those who cannot enter hear? (13:28)
- 12. What will those who cannot enter see? (13:28)
- 13. What will take place in the kingdom of God? (13:29)
- 14. How will the usual order be turned around? (13:30)

Get It

- 15. Why did someone ask how many would be saved?
- * 16. What does the narrow door represent?
- * 17. In what sense is the way to God narrow?
- 18. How does a person “enter through the narrow door”?
- 19. Who is the “owner of the house,” and why will he refuse entry to people?
- 20. When will it be too late for people to come to God?
- 21. Why do people put off coming to God?
- 22. When are you tempted to put off responding to God’s commands?
- 23. What do you think the feast in the kingdom of God will be like?
- 24. What was Jesus saying about human relationships when He said that the first will be last?
- 25. In what way is the first last and the last first?
- 26. How would the owner of the house respond to you?
- 27. Who is someone you want to introduce to Jesus before the door of opportunity closes?

Apply It

- 28. What can you do this week toward introducing someone to Jesus? How?
- * 29. What can you do to keep your beliefs and responses to God faithful to His Word?

Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem - Luke 13:31-35

Topics: Blessing, Caring, Compassion, Murder, Prophecy, Sorrow

Open It

- * 1. What sort of goals do you make on a well-planned day?
- 2. What are some hopes or expectations you have for a close relative (such as a child, a spouse, or a sibling)?
- 3. With what images of Jesus are most people familiar?

Explore It

- * 4. Who came to Jesus? Why? (13:31)
- * 5. How was Jesus in danger? (13:31)
- 6. What did Jesus call Herod? (13:32)
- 7. What message did Jesus have for Herod? (13:32)
- * 8. What were Jesus' goals? (13:32-33)
- 9. Why did Jesus have to go to Jerusalem? (13:33)
- 10. What had Jerusalem done to deserve Jesus' condemnation? (13:34)
- 11. To what did Jesus compare His concern for Jerusalem? (13:34)
- 12. How did Jesus want to show His compassion for Jerusalem? (13:34)
- 13. What sad words did Jesus have for Jerusalem? (13:35)
- 14. When would Jerusalem see Jesus again? (13:35)

Get It

- * 15. What prompted the Pharisees to warn Jesus of Herod's intentions?
- * 16. How was Jesus driven by His mission?
- 17. What does this passage tell us about God?
- 18. How does God show His care for us?
- 19. What is meaningful to you about the image of God as a mother hen?
- 20. What can we learn from Jesus' clear sense of Himself and His future?

Apply It

- * 21. What step can you take this week to get a clearer sense of God's goals for you?
- 22. What is one small way this week you can show compassion for your unbelieving friends?

Jesus at a Pharisee's House - Luke 14:1-14

Topics: Handicapped, Healing, Honor, Humility, Invitation, Judging Others, Law, Miracles, Poor, Resurrection, Righteousness, Self-righteousness

Open It

- * 1. When have you attended a very formal dinner?
- 2. How does it feel to give a gift to someone who doesn't expect it?

Explore It

- 3. Where did Jesus go to eat? (14:1)
- 4. Who else was present at the meal besides Jesus? (14:2-3)
- 5. Who asked the first question? (14:3)
- 6. What was the Pharisees' and legal experts' reply to Jesus' question? (14:4)
- 7. What happened to the man with dropsy? (14:4)
- 8. Under what circumstance did the religious and legal experts allow work on the Sabbath? (14:5-6)
- 9. Why did Jesus tell a parable? (14:6-7)
- * 10. How did most people seat themselves at a wedding feast? (14:8)
- 11. What did Jesus command? (14:10)
- 12. How did Jesus communicate the value of humility? (14:11)
- * 13. Whom was the host not to invite to a luncheon or dinner? (14:12)
- 14. Whom did Jesus want people to invite to dinner? (14:13)
- * 15. In what way would the host be repaid? (14:14)

Get It

- * 16. How was the meal at the Pharisee's a setup to trap Jesus?
- 17. What caused the religious and legal experts to be speechless?
- * 18. What does the wedding feast in the parable represent?
- 19. How important is position and title in your circles? Why?
- 20. What benefits could you realize by consistently making humble choices?
- 21. Why is it a blessing to invite those who cannot repay?

Apply It

- * 22. What steps can you take to lessen the importance of position, title, or other status symbols in your life?
- 23. What is something special you can do this week for someone who is unable to repay you in kind?

The Parable of the Great Banquet - Luke 14:15-24

Topics: Anger, Excuses, Handicapped, Invitation, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Preparation, Serving

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of excuses do you most resent others using?
- 2. How does it feel when you plan a big event and it is poorly attended?

Explore It

- 3. What was one person prompted to say when Jesus spoke of repayment for kindness to others? (14:15)
- 4. What did Jesus use to reply to the blessing He heard? (14:16)
- 5. What did the man in the parable do? (14:16)
- 6. How did the man let his guests know that the time for the banquet had arrived? (14:17)
- 7. How did the guests respond to the invitation? (14:18)
- * 8. What excuses did people make? (14:18-20)
- * 9. How did the master find out about the excuses? (14:21)
- 10. What was the master's reaction to the excuses people made? (14:21)
- 11. Whom did the master invite to the banquet to replace the original invitees? (14:21)
- 12. What happened when all the other people came to the master's banquet? (14:22)
- 13. How did the master ensure that the banquet hall would be full? (14:23)
- * 14. What was to become of the original guests? (14:24)

Get It

- 15. Why was the master justified in his anger at the guests who made excuses?
- * 16. What was wrong with the guests' excuses?
- 17. How did the character of the banquet change, given the "new" guest list?
- * 18. How is the kingdom of God like this banquet?
- 19. In what ways do you identify with the different guests?
- 20. How does our responsibility to God correspond to the servant's role?

Apply It

- 21. What is one way you can thank God this week for inviting you into His presence?
- * 22. Whom can you invite to the kingdom banquet? How?

The Cost of Being a Disciple - Luke 14:25-35

Topics: Affections, Discipline, Family, Foundation, Listening, Risk

Open It

- * 1. How have you counted the costs recently before tackling a project at home or at work?
- 2. How much do people take into account the potential reaction of others when planning something?
- 3. In what way can a project fail before it starts?

Explore It

- 4. Who was traveling with Jesus? (14:25)
- 5. What natural affections did Jesus denounce in favor of following Him? (14:26)
- 6. What does it take to be Jesus' disciple? (14:27)
- 7. What should a person consider before building a tower? (14:28)
- * 8. What consequences result from not counting the cost before building? (14:29-30)
- * 9. How did a king determine his odds in a war? (14:31)
 - 10. What would be the logical step if a king discovered his manpower was insufficient? (14:32)
 - 11. When would a king send a delegation to another king? (14:32)
- * 12. How did Jesus use the examples of building a tower and preparing for war? (14:33)
 - 13. What can be done with salt that has lost its saltiness? (14:34-35)
 - 14. What phrase did Jesus use to compel the crowd to consider His words? (14:35)

Get It

- 15. What does it mean to "hate" your parents, wife, children, siblings, and your own life?
- * 16. How might the crowds have reacted to Jesus' terms of discipleship?
 - 17. How do most people react to Jesus' terms of discipleship?
 - 18. How possible do these conditions of discipleship seem to you now?
- * 19. What costs do we need to count in responding to Jesus?
 - 20. What costs of following Jesus seem especially high to you?
 - 21. Why is it worth paying the price to follow Jesus?
 - 22. What are the properties of salt?
 - 23. How are we like salt?
 - 24. What is a person like who has lost his or her "saltiness"?

Apply It

- * 25. What relationships or other loyalties do you need to pray about to strengthen your loyalty to Jesus?
- 26. In what area of your life can you have a deliberate effect for Christ this week? How?

The Parable of the Lost Sheep - Luke 15:1-7

Topics: Hypocrisy, Reconciliation, Repentance, Restoration, Sin

Open It

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word “sinner”?
- * 2. As a child, when was a time you got lost from your family or a group?

Explore It

3. Who had gathered to hear Jesus? (15:1)
4. What were the Pharisees and teachers of the law doing? (15:2)
5. Why were the Pharisees and teachers of the law grumbling? (15:2)
6. What did Jesus do instead of directly rebuking the religious leaders? (15:3)
- * 7. What does a conscientious shepherd do when one of the flock is lost? (15:4)
8. How does a shepherd bring a lost sheep home? (15:5)
- * 9. What happens when a shepherd returns to his home and flock after finding a lost sheep? (15:6)
- * 10. How does heaven react when a sinner repents? (15:7)
11. What causes God to rejoice most? (15:7)
12. What kind of people do not need to repent? (15:7)

Get It

13. Why did the religious leaders miss the point of what Jesus’ ministry was about?
- * 14. Why did Jesus choose a parable about sheep to make His point?
15. How might the one sheep have gotten lost?
- * 16. In what ways do we go astray?
17. How does the picture of “rejoicing in heaven” over repentance make you feel?
18. In what situations are you most tempted to stray from God?

Apply It

- * 19. What can you do this week to help a fellow believer who may be straying from God’s ways?
20. What practical step can you take to avoid tempting situations?

The Parable of the Lost Coin - Luke 15:8-10

Topics: Caring, Joy, Repentance, Sin

Open It

1. What things of value have you lost or misplaced recently?
- * 2. What emotions do you feel when you find a valuable item that was lost?

Explore It

3. In the parable, what did the woman possess? (15:8)
- * 4. How do we know that the woman lost something valuable? (15:8)
5. What steps did the woman take to find her lost coin? (15:8)
- * 6. What did the woman do when she finally found the lost coin? (15:9)
7. Whom did the woman call together to share the news? (15:9)
- * 8. What emotions are obvious from the woman's statement to her friends? (15:9)
9. What did the woman say to her friends? (15:9)
10. Where is there rejoicing? (15:10)
11. What causes angels to rejoice before God? (15:10)
12. How many repenting sinners does it take to cause heavenly rejoicing? (15:10)

Get It

- * 13. What value did the woman place on each coin?
14. Whom do the friends and neighbors represent?
15. Why did the woman look so hard for the lost coin?
16. What can we learn about God from this parable?
17. What does God consider important?
18. What is a "sinner who repents"?
19. Why does God care so much about repentant sinners?
- * 20. How is a repentant sinner like a found coin?
21. In what ways does God's value of people differ from ours?

Apply It

22. When can you thank God this week for His patience and persistence in restoring you to Him?
How?
- * 23. With whom do you want to share the news of God's persistent love? How can you?

The Parable of the Lost Son - Luke 15:11-32

Topics: Bitterness, Celebration, Compassion, Family, Forgiveness, Greed, Jealousy, Judging Others, Love, Salvation, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. In what way did you and your siblings compete with each other?
- 2. How do you feel when other people get rewards greater than they deserve?
- 3. How do you normally react when you feel you have been treated unfairly?

Explore It

- 4. What did the younger son ask his father to do? (15:12-13)
- 5. What did the younger son do after arriving in the distant country? (15:13)
- 6. How did the younger son live once he was out on his own? (15:13-20)
- 7. Why did the younger son have to hire himself out for work? (15:14-15)
- 8. What made the younger son decide to return home? (15:17-19)
- * 9. How did the father respond to the younger son's return home? (15:20)
- * 10. Why did the father call for a celebration? (15:22-24)
 - 11. What was wrong with the older brother's reaction to his brother's return? (15:25-32)
 - 12. How did the older son respond to his brother's return and the celebration afterward? (15:28)
- * 13. What complaints did the older brother bring to his father? (15:29-30)
- 14. Why did the father want the older brother to be happy? (15:31-32)

Get It

- 15. What does the forgiving love of the father in this story represent?
- 16. How have you been like the prodigal son in this story?
- 17. When have you been like the older brother?
- 18. From whom do we tend to withhold mercy?
- 19. What people do you tend to think don't deserve God's mercy?
- 20. How have you personally experienced the forgiving love of the Father?
- * 21. What causes us to harbor resentment when mercy is shown to someone else?
- 22. What should we do when a vile person wants to be forgiven?
- 23. How should we react when a person comes to know Christ?
- * 24. How can you show compassion for those who have not believed in Christ?
- 25. What could you do to thank God for His amazing love for you?
- 26. What responsibility do you have to your unbelieving friends?
- 27. What does this parable reveal to you about the Lord's love?

Apply It

- 28. How can you guard yourself against feeling resentment when God shows mercy to people you think don't deserve it?
- 29. How can you show acceptance to someone who doesn't seem to deserve it? When?
- * 30. To what "undeserving" person can you extend God's love and forgiveness this week? How?

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager - Luke 16:1-15

Topics: Devotion, Dishonesty, Eternal Life, God, Heart, Loyalty, Money, Resources, Serving, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. How is a shrewd businessperson viewed in our society today?
- 2. In what ways does our culture pressure us to love money?
- 3. How can the love of money hurt a person?

Explore It

- 4. How did the rich man respond to the manager who was “wasting his possessions”? (16:1-2)
- 5. Why was the manager scared to lose his job? (16:3)
- * 6. What plan did the manager devise to secure his future? (16:4-7)
- * 7. How did the rich master react to the dishonest dealings of the manager? (16:8)
- 8. Who are the “people of light” to whom Jesus referred? (16:8)
- * 9. How does Jesus want us to use money? (16:9)
- 10. What main principle should govern the way we use our resources? (16:10-12)
- 11. Why is it impossible to serve two masters? (16:13)
- 12. Why were the Pharisees upset with Jesus’ teaching? (16:14)
- 13. How did the Pharisees “justify” themselves? (16:15)
- 14. How does God judge people? (16:15)
- 15. What does God think of the things that we typically value? (16:15)

Get It

- 16. What did Jesus mean when He said, “Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves”?
- * 17. Why is it so difficult to keep a proper perspective on money?
- * 18. How do you think God wants you to change the way you handle your resources?
- 19. How can we be sure that we will be “welcomed into eternal dwellings”?
- 20. How can you become more trustworthy in handling the money and things that God has given you?
- 21. How do you need to change your attitude toward your wealth?
- 22. What can you do to demonstrate your devotion to the Lord?

Apply It

- * 23. What can you do during this next week to become a better steward of the resources God has given you?
- 24. During the next few weeks, what is one way you can use money to serve others and show them the love of God?
- 25. During the next few weeks, what is one way you can live more simply?

Additional Teachings - Luke 16:16-18

Topics: Adultery, Good News, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Law, Prophecy, Teaching

Open It

- * 1. What attitudes does our culture have toward divorce?
- 2. How does our society view adultery?
- 3. What messages do the media communicate to us about the issues of adultery and divorce?

Explore It

- 4. What two eras did John the Baptist's ministry divide? (16:16)
- 5. What changed after the ministry of John the Baptist? (16:16)
- 6. What was being preached? (16:16)
- 7. Who was "forcing his way" into the kingdom of God? (16:16)
- 8. What is easier than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law? (16:17)
- 9. Why did Jesus emphasize the importance of the Law? (16:17)
- * 10. What relation does the section on divorce have to the previous verses about the Law? (16:18)
- * 11. What two conditions constitute adultery? (16:18)
- * 12. How does Jesus view divorce? (16:18)
- 13. How has Jesus' life changed the importance of the Law? (16:16-18)

Get It

- 14. What responsibility do you have to obey God's Law?
- 15. What difference does it make that Jesus' ministry was a perfect fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets?
- 16. How are people's responses to the good news different today than in Jesus' time?
- * 17. What should be our attitude toward divorce?
- * 18. How do you think Jesus would want you to treat Christians who are divorced?
- 19. In what ways has our obedience to the commands of Christ resembled the hypocrisy of the Pharisees?
- 20. What attitude should we have toward God's Law today?
- 21. If you have been hypocritical in your strict adherence to the letter of the law, what can you do to increase your commitment to the spirit of the law?

Apply It

- 22. What can you do this week to renew your obedience to the commands of Jesus in your everyday life?
- * 23. What could you do to help a person who is experiencing marriage difficulties?

The Rich Man and Lazarus - Luke 16:19-31

Topics: Angels, Death, Eternal Life, Heaven, Hell, Judgment, Punishment, Suffering, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What do you imagine heaven and hell will be like?
- 2. What do your friends and coworkers imagine heaven and hell will be like?

Explore It

- 3. How did Jesus describe the rich man in the story? (16:19)
- 4. What does the story tell us about Lazarus? (16:20)
- 5. What role did angels play in this story? (16:22)
- 6. Where did the angels take Lazarus? (16:22)
- 7. What difference did the rich man's wealth make in his eternal destiny? (16:22-23)
- * 8. What does this parable reveal about heaven and hell? (16:22-31)
- * 9. What did the rich man see from his place in hell? (16:23)
- 10. How did Abraham respond to the request of the rich man? (16:25)
- * 11. What was the other reason why Lazarus could not help the rich man? (16:26)
- 12. Why did the rich man want Lazarus to go to his father's house on earth? (16:27-28)
- 13. Why did Abraham say that Moses and the Prophets should be enough for the rich man's brothers? (16:29, 31)
- 14. What did the rich man think was necessary to convince his brothers to believe? (16:30)

Get It

- 15. If Christians believe in the reality of hell, what do you think stops them from sharing their faith with others?
- 16. What do you think prevents people from accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- 17. How does this story affect your understanding of the afterlife?
- 18. What have you learned from this parable about the eternal value of material possessions?
- * 19. What things do you think have eternal value?
- * 20. What could you do to be less concerned with earthly things and more devoted to things that have eternal significance?
- 21. How would this Scripture passage encourage Christians who are sick, poor, or disadvantaged?
- 22. How can we gain confidence in our eternal security?
- 23. Why does God not always provide miracles to help people believe in Him?
- 24. How has this parable changed your attitude toward witnessing to unbelievers?

Apply It

- 25. In the next few days, how can you demonstrate your thankfulness to the Lord for His provision of eternal life?
- * 26. How many people like Lazarus do you know who could benefit from your compassion today?

Sin, Faith, Duty - Luke 17:1-10

Topics: Dedication, Faith, Forgiveness, Humility, Repentance, Serving, Sin, Temptation

Open It

1. How do you feel after you have done something good for another person?
2. What expectations do we usually have when we help someone?
- * 3. What makes it difficult to forgive a person who has wronged you?

Explore It

4. What did Jesus say about people who tempt others to sin? (17:1)
5. Who are the “little ones” Jesus cares so much about? (17:2)
- * 6. What advice did Jesus give His disciples about how to react when others sin against them? (17:3-4)
7. According to Jesus, how often were His disciples to forgive those who sinned? (17:4)
- * 8. What principle of forgiveness was Jesus promoting? (17:4)
9. What did the disciples ask Jesus to do? (17:5)
- * 10. Why did the disciples think more faith would help them forgive in the way that Jesus instructed? (17:5)
11. How much faith is needed to do great things? (17:6)
12. Why was Jesus’ example of the mustard seed so startling? (17:6)
13. Why did Jesus tell the story of the servant and the master? (17:7-9)
14. In the parable, whom do the master and the servant represent? (17:7-9)
15. What attitude should we have in working for the Lord? (17:10)

Get It

16. How can we guard against tempting others to sin?
17. What should you do if you discover that you have encouraged another believer to sin?
- * 18. When have you found it difficult to forgive someone?
- * 19. What can you do to increase your faith so that you will be able to forgive in the way Christ requires?
20. What is our “duty” as Christians?
21. Why is a spirit of humility important for a Christian’s witness?
22. What attitudes and actions indicate a spirit of humility?

Apply It

23. What relationship can you work toward healing this week? How?
- * 24. To what person do you need to demonstrate forgiveness?
25. What “duty” would the Lord urge you to fulfill this next week?

Ten Healed of Leprosy - Luke 17:11-19

Topics: Criticism, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Praise, Thankfulness

Open It

1. For what are you most thankful?
- * 2. How would you react if you were suddenly healed of a disease or sickness?

Explore It

3. Where did the events of this story take place? (17:11)
4. Who met Jesus as He entered the village? (17:12)
- * 5. What did the ten men want from Jesus? (17:13)
6. How did the men refer to Jesus? (17:13)
7. How did Jesus respond to the ten men? (17:14)
- * 8. What happened to the men as they went to show themselves to the priest? (17:14)
9. What did one of the ten do that the others did not? (17:15)
- * 10. How did one man express his thankfulness to Jesus? (17:15-16)
11. What difference did it make that the man who thanked Jesus was a Samaritan? (17:16,18)
12. How did Jesus respond to the one man who returned? (17:17-19)
13. What did Jesus tell the man about his faith? (17:19)

Get It

14. What does this story say about the importance of thanking Jesus?
15. What difference does faith make in your life?
- * 16. How does Jesus want you to respond to the work He performs in your life?
17. What prevents us from praising the Lord for His blessings?
18. When have you ever failed to thank the Lord for something He did for you?
19. When is it difficult to say thank you to God?
20. How can you remind yourself to thank God throughout each day?
21. Why does God desire our praise?
- * 22. What should we do when we need physical or spiritual healing from the Lord?
23. Why is faith necessary for spiritual healing?

Apply It

- * 24. About what will you praise the Lord more faithfully this week that you have neglected to notice in the past?
25. Who is one person you could tell today about the great things God has done for you?

The Coming of the Kingdom of God - Luke 17:20-37

Topics: Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Life, Prophecy, Second Coming, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. What would you do if you were told you only had a few months left to live?
- 2. Why does the topic of death often make us feel uneasy?

Explore It

- 3. Who prompted Jesus to begin to talk about the kingdom of God? (17:20)
- 4. What prompted Jesus to say, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation”? (17:20-21)
- 5. Where is the kingdom of God? (17:21)
- 6. What did Jesus tell His disciples they would long to see? (17:22)
- * 7. How did Jesus describe what the days of the Son of Man will be like? (17:24-30)
- 8. What do the days of Noah and Lot have in common with the days of the Son of Man? (17:26-29)
- * 9. What warning did Jesus give to those present on the day of the Son of Man? (17:31)
- * 10. What will happen to the person who attempts to keep his life? (17:33)
- 11. What “phenomenon” will affect people on the day of the Son of Man? (17:34-35)
- 12. What would gather where there is a dead body? (17:37)

Get It

- * 13. How would you describe your readiness for Christ’s Second Coming?
- 14. For what reason did Jesus warn, “Remember Lot’s wife”?
- 15. What should we remember about Lot’s wife?
- 16. How can you follow Jesus’ instruction to “Remember Lot’s wife”?
- * 17. What can you do to guard yourself against clinging too closely to your earthly life?
- 18. How does Jesus want us to view our earthly lives?
- 19. Practically speaking, how could Jesus’ teaching about losing your life make a difference in your daily routine?

Apply It

- * 20. What people could you pray for this week who are still trying to keep their own life?
- 21. This week, what is one way you can loosen your attachment to this life?
- 22. How can you reaffirm your commitment to follow Jesus whatever the cost?

The Parable of the Persistent Widow - Luke 18:1-8

Topics: Faith, Faithfulness, Justice, Perseverance, Prayer

Open It

1. In what circumstances is persistence beneficial?
- * 2. When was a time your persistence paid off?

Explore It

3. What was Jesus' purpose in telling His disciples this parable? (18:1)
4. How did Jesus describe the judge in the story? (18:2)
5. Why was the woman in the story especially helpless? (18:3)
- * 6. What did the woman need from the judge? (18:3)
- * 7. Why did the judge finally give in to the woman's request? (18:4-5)
8. Why should we take note of how the unjust judge responded to persistence? (18:6)
- * 9. How will God's actions differ from those of the unjust judge? (18:7)
10. What can Christians expect from God? (18:7)
11. What promise does this parable offer to Christians? (18:8)
12. What did Jesus ask about? (18:8)
13. To what kind of faith did Jesus refer at the end of this passage? (18:8)

Get It

- * 14. Why do people stop praying?
- * 15. What does it mean to be persistent in our prayers?
16. How should we respond when we do not see our prayers answered?
17. How can we be sure we are praying for things that are within the will of God?
18. What can Christians do to increase their trust in God's desire to answer prayer?
19. What does this parable teach you about what your prayer life should be like?
20. How do your prayer habits need to change?
21. What justice do you need to see administered in your life or the lives of others?
22. How can you guard against the temptation to give up praying when you do not see immediate results?

Apply It

23. What changes in your daily routine can you make that will enable you to pray more persistently?
- * 24. For what need or concern will you commit to praying persistently?
25. What fellow believer could you ask to hold you accountable for praying more persistently?

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector - Luke 18:9-14

Topics: Confidence, Fasting, Forgiveness, Humility, Mercy, Prayer, Pride, Righteousness

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel to be in the presence of someone markedly better than you at what you do best?
- 2. What feelings or attitudes do you have toward proud people?
- 3. How does our society regard the quality of humility?

Explore It

- 4. To whom did Jesus tell this parable? (18:9)
- 5. Why did Jesus tell this parable? (18:9)
- 6. Who were the two men described in the story? (18:10)
- 7. What did the Pharisee do? (18:11)
- * 8. What motivated the Pharisee to pray? (18:11)
- 9. How did the Pharisee pray? (18:11-12)
- 10. Why was the Pharisee confident in his own righteousness? (18:11-12)
- 11. Why did the tax collector stand at a distance? (18:13)
- 12. What does the tax collector's posture reveal about his own attitude? (18:13)
- 13. What prompted the tax collector to pray? (18:13)
- 14. How did the tax collector pray? (18:13)
- * 15. What difference did it make how these men prayed? (18:14)
- 16. What does it mean that one man was justified and the other wasn't? (18:14)
- 17. What principle did Jesus stress? (18:14)

Get It

- 18. What reputations did Pharisees and tax collectors have in Bible times?
- 19. What kind of people were Pharisees and tax collectors?
- 20. Who would be examples of "Pharisees" and "tax collectors" in our society today?
- 21. How do we judge people according to outward appearances?
- 22. How important are outward appearances in our culture today?
- * 23. How do you approach God in your prayers?
- 24. What does this parable teach us about our prayer habits?
- 25. What enables us to be confident before God?
- 26. In whose righteousness should we have confidence?
- 27. In what circumstance have you wrongly exalted yourself?
- * 28. Why does God honor the prayers of a humble person?

Apply It

- * 29. What specific steps can you take this week to cultivate a spirit of humility?
- 30. In what area of your life do you want to combat a tendency to exalt yourself instead of Christ?

The Little Children and Jesus - Luke 18:15-17

Topics: Children, Disagreements, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven

Open It

- * 1. When you were a child, who made you feel most accepted? How?
- 2. What does it feel like to be rejected by others?
- 3. In general, how does our society treat children?

Explore It

- 4. Why were people bringing babies to Jesus? (18:15)
- * 5. How did the disciples respond to what the parents were doing? (18:15)
- 6. What was it about Jesus that motivated parents to bring their children to Him? (18:15-16)
- 7. Why did the disciples rebuke those who were bringing their babies to Jesus? (18:15)
- 8. How did Jesus react to His disciples' attitudes? (18:16)
- * 9. How did Jesus treat the children? (18:16)
- 10. What did Jesus say about the children? (18:16)
- * 11. Why should we receive the kingdom of God like a child? (18:17)
- 12. What will happen to those who do not receive the kingdom "like a little child"? (18:17)

Get It

- 13. What can we learn from this passage about the character of Jesus?
- 14. How can you imitate the qualities Jesus showed in this story?
- 15. What can we learn from the negative example of the disciples?
- * 16. What childlike qualities do we need to enter the kingdom of God?
- 17. What can you do to cultivate your trust and dependence on the Lord?
- 18. What does this passage reveal about how we need to change?
- * 19. What hinders us from having the childlike qualities that God wants us to have?
- 20. How can you combat the tendency to depend on yourself rather than God?

Apply It

- * 21. What is one childlike quality that you want to cultivate this week? How?
- 22. What is one way you can show love and compassion toward children?

The Rich Ruler - Luke 18:18-30

Topics: Eternal Life, Family, Greed, Home, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Law, Money, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. What is the best example of “materialism” that you can think of?
- 2. In what ways would your life change if you lost all you had, including your job?
- 3. What do you think of “the American dream”?

Explore It

- 4. What did the ruler ask Jesus? (18:18)
- 5. What does the wording of the ruler’s question reveal about his attitude? (18:18)
- 6. How did Jesus respond to the ruler’s question? (18:19)
- 7. Of what did Jesus remind the ruler? (18:20)
- 8. What does the ruler’s response to Jesus reveal about his character? (18:21)
- * 9. What did the ruler lack? (18:22)
- 10. Why did Jesus advise this man to sell all he had, especially when He did not require this of others? (18:22)
- * 11. How did the ruler respond to Jesus’ instructions? (18:23)
- 12. How did the man’s wealth interfere with his eternal salvation? (18:23)
- * 13. What was the rich man’s problem? (18:24-25)
- 14. How did Jesus’ listeners respond to Jesus’ harsh words? (18:26)
- 15. What did Jesus reveal about how a person can inherit eternal life? (18:27)
- 16. What did Jesus teach about sacrifice? (18:29-30)

Get It

- 17. What prevents people today from following Christ?
- 18. Why did Jesus tell the rich man that “no one is good—except God alone”?
- 19. How did the rich man’s money hurt him?
- 20. How can money interfere with our commitments?
- * 21. How do you need to change your attitude toward money or your financial practices?
- * 22. What specific sacrifice do you think Jesus would ask of you if you asked Him, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”
- 23. How might a person leave “home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God”?
- 24. What person you know has left “home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God”? How?
- 25. What rewards could someone who left home for the kingdom of God expect?
- 26. What difference does it make to you to know that you will receive great eternal rewards for the sacrifices you make for Christ during this lifetime?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one sacrifice God is calling you to make?
- 28. How can you remind yourself of the benefits of following Christ each day?

Jesus Again Predicts His Death - Luke 18:31-34

Topics: Death, Future, Ignorance, Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Resurrection, Sacrifice, Suffering, Understanding

Open It

1. What expectations do you have of your friends?
2. What sacrifices would you be willing to make for a friend?
- * 3. When have you ever had to suffer for a friend?

Explore It

4. To whom was Jesus speaking? (18:31)
- * 5. Where were the disciples and Jesus planning to go? (18:31)
6. To whom was Jesus referring when He spoke of the "Son of Man"? (18:31)
7. What did Jesus reveal to the disciples about the future? (18:31-32)
8. Why did Jesus take the Twelve aside from the crowds to tell them about certain events? (18:31)
9. How did Jesus describe what would happen? (18:32)
- * 10. To whom would the Son of Man be handed over? (18:32)
11. How would the Gentiles treat the Son of Man? (18:32)
- * 12. What did Jesus predict would happen after the Son of Man was killed by the Gentiles? (18:33)
13. Why did Jesus reveal details of the future to His disciples? (18:31-33)
14. How did the disciples respond to Jesus' prediction of the future? (18:34)
15. What prevented the disciples from understanding what Jesus explained to them? (18:34)

Get It

16. What can we learn from this passage about the character of Christ?
17. What does this passage reveal about the relationship between Jesus and His disciples?
18. How important is it to you to know that Jesus predicted everything that would happen to Him?
- * 19. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus was willing to suffer a great deal just for you?
- * 20. How should you respond to Jesus' willingness to sacrifice for you?
21. Why do we sometimes not understand the clear voice of God?
22. What prevents us from listening to the Lord?
23. What could we do to become more sensitive to the leading of God in our lives?

Apply It

- * 24. In what way could you imitate in your personal relationships the Lord's willingness to suffer for you?
25. What do you need to do in the next few days to be more sensitive to the Lord's instructions?

A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight - Luke 18:35-43

Topics: Blindness, Faith, Healing, Jesus Christ, Mercy, Miracles, Persistence, Praise

Open It

1. Why do you think peer pressure is so powerful?
2. What does it feel like to be criticized by other people?
- * 3. In what circumstances does the criticism of others not matter to you?

Explore It

4. Where did this event take place? (18:35)
5. What was the man by the roadside doing? (18:35)
6. How did the blind man know that something unusual was happening? (18:36)
7. How did the blind man know who Jesus was? (18:37-38)
8. How did the blind man respond to the situation? (18:38)
- * 9. How did the crowd respond to the blind man's actions? (18:39)
- * 10. What did the blind man do in response to the criticism of the crowd? (18:39)
11. How did Jesus respond to the blind man? (18:40)
12. If Jesus could see that the man was blind, why did He ask the man what he wanted? (18:41)
13. Why did Jesus heal the blind man? (18:42)
14. What role did the blind man's faith play in his healing? (18:42)
- * 15. How did the blind man and the crowds respond to the miracle Jesus performed? (18:43)

Get It

16. What can we learn from this passage about persistence in prayer?
- * 17. What can we learn from the blind man in this account?
18. How is faith involved in Jesus' miracles?
19. In what settings do you experience group pressure?
20. How should you respond to group pressure?
- * 21. In what situations should you not be concerned about the criticism of others?
22. In what way do we all need healing from the Lord?
23. Why do you think God heals some people and not others?
24. How should you respond to the Lord's healing touch in your life or in the life of another believer?

Apply It

25. For what do you want to praise God today?
- * 26. What can you do this week to respond more appropriately to the criticism of others?
27. What steps can you take to be persistent in your prayers this week?

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector - Luke 19:1-10

Topics: Dishonesty, Gossip, Judging Others, Repentance, Salvation, Wealth

Open It

1. How has gossip affected you in the past?
2. Why do people pay attention to tabloids?
3. Why do you think people pay attention to gossip and rumors?
- * 4. Who are the despised and disrespected people in our society today?

Explore It

5. Where did the events of this story take place? (19:1)
- * 6. How did Luke describe Zacchaeus? (19:2)
7. What problem did Zacchaeus have? (19:3)
8. How did Zacchaeus solve his problem? (19:4)
9. What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus? (19:5)
10. How did Zacchaeus respond to Jesus' request? (19:6)
11. What do Zacchaeus' actions reveal about his character? (19:6, 8)
- * 12. Why did the crowds begin to mutter and gossip among themselves? (19:7)
13. What reputation did Zacchaeus have in Jericho? (19:7)
14. What changes did Zacchaeus make in his life in response to Jesus' interest in him? (19:8)
- * 15. How had salvation come to Zacchaeus' house? (19:9)
16. How is the concluding verse of this passage significant? (19:10)

Get It

17. How does a person's reputation affect our opinion of them?
- * 18. If we want to share our faith with someone, how much attention should we pay to their status and reputation?
19. What's wrong with gossiping?
20. What responsibility do we have to help people of bad reputation?
21. What do the actions of Zacchaeus reveal about the power of God to change hearts?
- * 22. How can we guard against the temptation to judge others?

Apply It

23. In what settings will you most need to guard yourself from the temptation to gossip this week?
- * 24. With what person of bad reputation or low status could you share your company and God's love?

The Parable of the Ten Minas - Luke 19:11-27

Topics: Accountability, Expectations, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Leadership, Money, Punishment, Resources, Responsibility, Rewards, Serving

Open It

1. What does the word “stewardship” bring to mind?
2. How would you describe a responsible person?
3. Who is the most responsible person you know?
- * 4. In what areas of your own life would you say you are the most responsible?

Explore It

5. For what reason did Jesus choose to tell this parable? (19:11)
6. What false expectations did Jesus’ followers have? (19:11)
7. In the parable, why did the man of noble birth go to a distant country? (19:12)
8. Whom do the king, the servants, and the subjects represent in this parable? (19:12-27)
9. For what reason did the man call together ten of his servants? (19:13)
- * 10. What did the man want his servants to do with the money he gave them? (19:13)
11. How did the people react to their new king? (19:14)
12. After his return, why did the king send for his servants? (19:15)
- * 13. What did the first two servants do with the money the king entrusted to them? (19:16-18)
14. How did the king respond to the first two servants? (19:17-19)
15. What did the third servant think of the king? (19:20-21)
16. How did the third servant’s feelings for his king affect his actions? (19:20-21)
17. How did the king treat the third servant? (19:22-24)
- * 18. What principle summarizes the parable? (19:26)
19. Why did the king punish so severely those who did not want him to be king? (19:27)

Get It

20. What does this parable teach us about stewardship?
- * 21. What responsibilities and gifts has Jesus given you?
22. What can you do to develop and use the abilities God has already given you?
23. How do you need to change your attitude toward your talents?
- * 24. What can we learn from this parable about neglecting to obey the truth that we already know?
25. Why is it dangerous to neglect the truth we know about God?
26. How can you be a better steward of what God has already given you?
27. What can you expect from the Lord if you use your resources for His glory?

Apply It

- * 28. What can you do to remind yourself of the responsibilities that God has entrusted to you?
29. How can you use your spiritual gifts and abilities for the Lord in the next few days?

The Triumphal Entry - Luke 19:28-44

Topics: Compassion, Criticism, Joy, Miracles, Praise, Prophecy

Open It

1. When have you seen a famous person?
2. Whom do you look up to the most? Why?
- * 3. How do people commonly show admiration for famous people?

Explore It

4. Where did the events of this story take place? (19:28-29)
5. Where did Jesus send two of His disciples? (19:30)
6. What specific instructions did Jesus give two of His disciples? (19:30-31)
7. What happened to the disciples who went ahead into the village? (19:32-34)
8. Why did Jesus choose to ride into the city on a colt? (19:35)
- * 9. How did people react to Jesus' entrance into the city? (19:36-37)
10. Why did all of the disciples begin to praise God? (19:37)
- * 11. In what way were the words of the disciples' praises significant? (19:38)
12. Why were the Pharisees in the crowd upset? (19:39)
- * 13. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' rebuke? (19:40)
14. How did Jesus react when He saw the city of Jerusalem? (19:41)
15. In what way did the people of Jerusalem miss a golden opportunity? (19:44)

Get It

- * 16. What does this passage teach us about Jesus' regard for celebrity status?
17. What can we learn from the example of the disciples in this account?
- * 18. What has the Lord done for you recently that causes you to praise Him?
19. When do we tend to neglect to praise the Lord as He deserves?
20. What can we learn from Jesus' words about and feelings toward Jerusalem in this passage?
21. What responsibility do we have toward non-Christians?

Apply It

22. How can you imitate Christ's compassion for unsaved people this week?
- * 23. How can you voice your praise to the Lord today for all that He has done for you?

Jesus at the Temple - Luke 19:45-48

Topics: Anger, Church, Dishonesty, Judgment, Popularity, Prayer

Open It

- * 1. When was a time you felt justified in being angry?
- 2. What makes you really angry?

Explore It

- 3. Where did the events of this story take place? (19:45)
- * 4. What did Jesus do in the temple area? (19:45)
- 5. Who was plotting to kill Jesus? (19:45-47)
- 6. What attitude did Jesus have toward the merchants in the temple area? (19:46)
- 7. Why did Jesus quote Scripture? (19:46)
- * 8. What did Jesus accuse the merchants of doing? (19:46)
- 9. How had the temple area been misused? (19:46)
- * 10. What was the real purpose of the temple? (19:46)
- 11. Why did the religious leaders want to kill Jesus? (19:47)
- 12. Why were the religious leaders unable to carry out their plot? (19:48)
- 13. How did the people respond to Jesus' teaching in the temple? (19:48)

Get It

- * 14. What can we learn about God from this passage?
- 15. In what way is a church like the temple of Jesus' day?
- 16. In what way can a church be made a "den of robbers"?
- * 17. How can we guard against misusing the church for our own purposes?
- 18. What made people hang on Jesus' words?
- 19. What ungodly practices make you angry?
- 20. How should we respond to abuses of God's Word or His church?
- 21. When might anger lead someone to sin?

Apply It

- * 22. What can you do to prepare for a worshipful experience in church next week?
- 23. In what ways would your daily prayer life be helped by "hanging on the words" of Jesus this week?

The Authority of Jesus Questioned - Luke 20:1-8

Topics: Authority, Deceit, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Questions, Wisdom

Open It

1. How do you react to other people's hypocrisy?
- * 2. When has someone questioned authority that you rightfully possessed?

Explore It

3. Where did the events of this story take place? (20:1)
4. What was Jesus doing in the temple courts? (20:1)
5. Who approached Jesus while He was preaching in the temple? (20:1)
- * 6. What question did the religious leaders ask Jesus? (20:2)
7. How was Jesus put to the test? (20:2)
- * 8. In what way were the actions of the religious leaders hypocritical? (20:2-7)
9. Why did Jesus answer the religious leaders' question with another question? (20:3)
10. What was it about Jesus' question that stumped the religious leaders? (20:5-6)
11. How did the crowds' beliefs affect the religious leaders' willingness to answer Jesus' question? (20:6)
- * 12. How did the leaders respond to Jesus' question? (20:7)
13. In what way did Jesus demonstrate His wisdom? (20:8)

Get It

14. What motivated the religious leaders to ask their question?
- * 15. By whose authority was Jesus able to teach, preach, and perform miracles?
16. Why didn't Jesus answer the religious leaders' question?
17. What is wrong with the advice, "Do what I say, not what I do"?
18. How can we guard against hypocrisy?
19. When has fear of others kept you from speaking honestly about Christ?
- * 20. When have you questioned God's authority in a particular area in your life?
21. What traits did the religious leaders possess that followers of Jesus should not possess?

Apply It

22. In what settings do you need to put forth extra effort to be completely honest and forthright in all your dealings with people?
- * 23. In the next few days, how can you rely on Jesus' authority and wisdom?

The Parable of the Tenants - Luke 20:9-19

Topics: Criticism, Enemies, Hardheartedness, Jesus Christ, Mediator, Peer Pressure, Prophecy, Punishment, Unfairness

Open It

- * 1. Why do you think stories often communicate better than lectures?
- 2. How has peer pressure ever affected your actions?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did Jesus choose to tell the people a parable in this situation? (20:9, 19)
- 4. What are the main points of the parable Jesus told? (20:9-16)
- 5. Whom does the man who planted the vineyard represent? (20:9)
- 6. Whom do the servants the owner sent to the vineyard represent? (20:10-12)
- 7. How were the servants treated? (20:10-12)
- 8. Whom do the tenants in the story represent? (20:10, 19)
- 9. Why did the owner send his son to the vineyard? (20:13)
- 10. What is the inheritance to which the tenants referred? (20:14)
- 11. How will the owner of the vineyard respond to the terrible actions of the tenants? (20:16)
- * 12. How did the people listening to Jesus respond to the parable? (20:16)
- 13. What is the meaning of the Scripture that Jesus quoted? (20:17-18)
- * 14. How did the religious leaders react to Jesus' teaching? (20:19)
- 15. How did the mood of the people affect the actions of the religious leaders? (20:19)

Get It

- 16. In what ways can the threat of criticism affect our decisions?
- * 17. What does this parable tell us about the fate that awaits those who reject Jesus as the Messiah?
- 18. How does this passage motivate you to share your faith with unbelievers?
- 19. Who are the servants of Christ?
- * 20. In what ways have people not treated the servants of Christ properly?
- 21. How does God want us to treat those who serve Him and spread the message of Christ?
- 22. What will God do to people who mistreat His servants?
- 23. How can we avoid letting the crowd make our decisions for us?

Apply It

- * 24. What people could you reach this week with the news of God's mercy? How?
- 25. Over the next few days, what can you do to support or encourage a person devoted to telling others about Christ?

Paying Taxes to Caesar - Luke 20:20-26

Topics: Deceit, Dishonesty, Government, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Money, Questions, Silence, Truth, Wisdom

Open It

1. What is the general attitude in our country toward government?
- * 2. When was the last time someone tried to deceive you?
3. What do your friends and coworkers think about having to pay taxes?

Explore It

4. Who sent the spies? (20:19-20)
- * 5. Why did the religious leaders send spies? (20:20)
6. Why did the religious leaders want to hand Jesus over to the governor? (20:20)
7. What did the spies do to trap Jesus? (20:21)
8. How did the spies demonstrate hypocrisy? (20:21)
- * 9. In what way was the question the spies asked a trick question? (20:22)
10. What did Jesus think of the spies? (20:23)
- * 11. How did Jesus respond to the spies' question? (20:24)
12. How was Jesus' response a show of His wisdom? (20:24-25)
13. Why were the spies astonished by Jesus' answer? (20:26)

Get It

14. How might you have responded to the spies' question?
- * 15. When have you been asked difficult or misleading questions by people hostile to Christianity?
16. How did the spies use flattery?
17. Why do we like to be flattered?
18. Why do we flatter others?
19. In what way do we need to guard against flattery?
- * 20. What does this passage reveal about Jesus' wisdom?
21. What belongs to the government that we should give to it?
22. How would you define your responsibility to the government?
23. When should a Christian go against the demands of the government?
24. What responsibility do you think we have to obey the laws of the government?
25. Jesus taught us to "give to God what is God's"; what importance does this statement have for you?
26. What belongs to God that we should give to Him?
27. What have you held back from the Lord that you are now willing to commit to Him?

Apply It

- * 28. What preparations can you make for the tough questions that you will encounter as a follower of Christ?
29. In what situations this week do you want to make a conscious effort to avoid flattery?
30. What obligations to the government do you need to fulfill?
31. How can you obey more fully this week Christ's command to "give to God what is God's"?

The Resurrection and Marriage - Luke 20:27-40

Topics: Angels, Children, Death, Life, Marriage, Questions, Resurrection, Wisdom

Open It

1. What do you imagine happens to us after death?
2. Why do you think there is so much confusion and controversy about the afterlife in our world today?
- * 3. How have your beliefs in the afterlife changed over the years?

Explore It

4. How did Luke describe the Sadducees? (20:27)
5. Why did the Sadducees approach Jesus? (20:27)
- * 6. What was the main point of the lengthy story the Sadducees told Jesus? (20:28-33)
7. What controversial question did the Sadducees want Jesus to answer? (20:33)
8. How did Jesus respond to the Sadducees' question? (20:34-35)
9. What is the "age" to which Jesus referred? (20:35)
10. Who is "considered worthy"? (20:35)
- * 11. In the age to come, what did Jesus promise to those who take part in the resurrection of the dead? (20:36)
12. Who is like the angels? (20:36)
13. For what reason did Jesus refer to Moses? (20:37)
14. How did Jesus describe God? (20:37-38)
- * 15. Why did Jesus describe God as "the God of the living"? (20:38)
16. Why did people stop asking Jesus questions? (20:40)

Get It

17. How can we guard against misinterpreting Scripture, as the Sadducees did in Jesus' day?
18. In what ways can academic or speculative questions hinder our seeking after God?
19. Why should we believe in the resurrection of the dead?
- * 20. What makes belief in the resurrection an important Christian belief?
21. How should we respond to the death of a loved one who was a Christian?
22. Why do you think there will be no marriage in heaven?
- * 23. How should the promise of eternal life affect your everyday actions?

Apply It

- * 24. Whom can you encourage with the truth of the resurrection? How?
25. What younger or less knowledgeable Christian could you instruct this week? How?
26. What can you do this week to prepare for people's tough religious questions?

Whose Son Is the Christ? - Luke 20:41-47

Topics: Advice, Doctrine, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Pride, Punishment

Open It

- * 1. What importance do the people with whom you work place on status and power?
- 2. What are people willing to do to gain recognition and respect?
- 3. What are some of the trappings of high status?

Explore It

- 4. What dilemma did Jesus set before His listeners? (20:41)
- 5. What was Jesus revealing to His listeners about His own identity? (20:41-44)
- 6. For what reason does Jesus quote the words of David to His listeners? (20:42-43)
- 7. How does David refer to the Christ? (20:44)
- 8. Why could Jesus' opponents not answer His question? (20:44)
- 9. What did the teachers of the law seek? (20:45-46)
- 10. About what did Jesus warn His disciples? (20:45-47)
- * 11. Of what were the teachers of the law guilty? (20:46-47)
- 12. What point was Jesus trying to make about such religious behavior? (20:46-47)
- 13. How did Jesus criticize the teachers of the law? (20:47)
- * 14. What did Jesus mean when He said, "They devour widows' houses"? (20:47)
- * 15. How did Jesus say proud people would be treated for their actions? (20:47)

Get It

- 16. For whose sake did Jesus pose the difficult question regarding the Son of David?
- 17. Why is pride such a dangerous sin?
- * 18. How do proud Christians hinder the work of God?
- 19. How can you prevent yourself from doing things for show?
- 20. Why do we seek out positions of honor and importance?
- * 21. Why is it so difficult to give up positions of honor and importance?
- 22. How is seeking the honor and respect of people related to the exploitation of the poor and defenseless?

Apply It

- * 23. In what areas of your life do you need to battle a pride that prevents you from drawing closer to God?
- 24. In what ways could you be an advocate this week for those who are mistreated by powerful persons?

The Widow's Offering - Luke 21:1-4

Topics: Gifts, Money, Poor, Possessions, Sacrifice, Tithing, Wealth

Open It

1. To what charities or special causes do you like giving?
- * 2. When have you given sacrificially to a special cause?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus notice? (21:1)
4. What were the rich people doing? (21:1)
- * 5. How did Luke describe the woman Jesus saw? (21:2)
6. What did the woman do that Jesus noticed? (21:2)
7. How were the motives of the rich different from those of the woman? (21:1-2)
8. How did Jesus use this situation as an opportunity to teach His followers? (21:3)
- * 9. How did the woman “put in more than all the others” when her gift was much smaller than the gifts of the rich? (21:3)
10. What was lacking in the gifts the rich people gave? (21:4)
11. What had the poor widow actually sacrificed? (21:4)
- * 12. What principle of giving did Jesus communicate? (21:4)

Get It

13. How important is a person's attitude toward giving?
14. What is wrong with judging people by their outward appearances?
- * 15. How does God judge our gifts?
- * 16. Why do you think the widow gave all that she had to live on?
17. Why did Jesus draw attention to a seemingly unremarkable event?
18. Why is giving out of our wealth a relatively easy thing to do?
19. In what ways do you need to give sacrificially?

Apply It

- * 20. What sacrifice of money could you make in God's service?
21. What besides money can you give sacrificially to others this week? How?

Signs of the End of the Age - Luke 21:5-38

Topics: Death, Expectations, Last Days, Persecution, Prayer, Prophecy, Punishment, Second Coming, War, Wisdom, Worry

Open It

1. What do you think of people who make predictions about the future?
- * 2. What do you already know about your future?

Explore It

3. What did the disciples say about the temple that prompted a prophecy from Jesus? (21:5)
4. How did the disciples respond to Jesus' prediction concerning the temple? (21:7)
5. What did Jesus say could deceive Christians in the last days? (21:8)
- * 6. What signs of the end of the age did Jesus tell us to expect? (21:9-13)
7. Why did Jesus advise His followers not to worry about what will happen to them? (21:14)
- * 8. What promises did Jesus give to His disciples? (21:18-19)
9. What will be the result of "standing firm" in the last days? (21:19)
10. Why will the "time of punishment" be necessary? (21:22)
11. What signs will usher in the end of the age? (21:23-26)
- * 12. What should be the response of Christians to the many signs of the end? (21:28)
13. For what purpose did Jesus tell the parable of the fig tree? (21:29-31)
14. What final advice did Jesus give? (21:34-36)

Get It

15. How can a Christian avoid being deceived by the events Jesus describes?
- * 16. Why did Jesus reveal to us these prophecies about the last days?
17. What distinguishes Jesus' view of the future from the predictions of modern-day seers and astrologers?
18. Why would the wisdom Jesus provides be so necessary during persecution?
19. Which of the signs that Jesus detailed do you believe have been fulfilled or are being fulfilled today?
- * 20. What does this passage teach us about the trustworthiness of Jesus' promises?
21. Why should we not allow our hearts to be weighed down with the anxieties of life?

Apply It

22. What Christian can you meet with this week to pray for preparedness for the times to come?
- * 23. What can you do now to get ready for Christ's return?
24. Who is one unbeliever you can tell about the saving grace of the gospel? How?

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus - Luke 22:1-6

Topics: Bargaining, Deceit, Dishonesty, Forsake, Greed, Hypocrisy, Money, Opposition

Open It

1. What are the necessary elements of a friendship?
- * 2. In your experience, what destroys friendships?
3. The last time you had to mend a broken friendship, how did you do it?

Explore It

4. What event were the people anticipating? (22:1)
5. Why was this event important? (22:1)
6. What was the plan of the chief priests and teachers of the law? (22:2)
7. Why were the religious leaders afraid of the people? (22:2)
- * 8. What motivated Judas to approach the religious leaders who wanted to get rid of Jesus? (22:3)
9. In what way is Satan's role in this story significant? (22:3)
- * 10. What did Judas and the religious leaders discuss? (22:4)
11. How did the leaders respond to Judas's willingness to betray Jesus? (22:4)
- * 12. What did Judas get in return for betraying Jesus? (22:5-6)
13. How was Judas's plan deceitful? (22:6)
14. Why was it important for Judas to hand Jesus over "when no crowd was present"? (22:6)

Get It

15. What does this passage teach us about human weakness?
- * 16. How did greed influence Judas's decisions?
17. When has greed or materialism negatively influenced your decisions?
18. How can we guard against greed?
19. What can we learn from the hypocritical actions of Judas?
- * 20. How have your own selfish desires interfered with your relationship with others and your relationship with Jesus?
21. What can you do to be a more faithful, loyal friend?
22. In what areas of life are you most vulnerable to temptation?
23. How can you protect yourself from the temptations of Satan?

Apply It

24. What evidence of selfishness and greed do you see in your own life that could be remedied with the Lord's help?
- * 25. How could you demonstrate today your own faithfulness and loyalty to a friend?

The Last Supper - Luke 22:7-38

Topics: Disagreements, Faith, Fellowship, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Lord's Supper, Prophecy, Remembering, Sacrifice, Serving, Suffering, Thankfulness

Open It

- * 1. In what ways do you observe or celebrate important past events in your life?
- 2. What do you think it is important to remember about the past?
- 3. Why is it important to remember the past?

Explore It

- 4. What was significant about the day of Unleavened Bread? (22:7)
- 5. What instructions did Jesus give to Peter and John? (22:8-13)
- * 6. Why did Jesus eagerly desire to eat the Passover with His disciples? (22:15-16)
- 7. What did Jesus mean when He said, "I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God"? (22:16)
- * 8. What did Jesus instruct His disciples to do in remembrance of Him? (22:17-20)
- * 9. What did the cup represent? (22:20)
- 10. Why did a dispute arise among the disciples? (22:23-24)
- 11. What principle did Jesus promote in response to the disciples' disagreement? (22:25-27)
- 12. What did Jesus tell Simon about his future? (22:31-32)
- 13. How did Simon respond to Jesus' prediction? (22:33)
- 14. How did Jesus warn His disciples of the difficult time ahead? (22:35-37)
- 15. In what way did the disciples take Jesus' instructions too literally? (22:38)

Get It

- 16. What joyful moments have you experienced in a Communion fellowship?
- * 17. Why is Communion important for Christians to observe?
- * 18. Why do you believe Jesus chose the elements of bread and wine to represent His body and the new covenant?
- 19. Why is it so tempting to seek greatness and recognition?
- 20. How can we follow Christ's example of servanthood?
- 21. What opportunities for service has the Lord already provided for you?
- 22. What responsibility do we have to pray for the perseverance of other Christians?

Apply It

- * 23. How will you prepare for Communion next time so that you will appreciate more the provision Jesus made for you?
- 24. How can you serve others this week with an attitude of humility?

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives - Luke 22:39-46

Topics: Angels, Expectations, Habits, Prayer, Sorrow, Submission, Temptation

Open It

1. How have your friends helped you through difficult times in your life?
- * 2. When have you agreed to do something that you didn't look forward to doing?

Explore It

3. What does this passage reveal about Jesus' habits? (22:39)
4. For what purpose did Jesus go to the Mount of Olives? (22:39)
5. What instructions did Jesus give to His disciples? (22:40)
6. Why did Jesus withdraw from His followers? (22:41)
- * 7. What does Jesus' prayer reveal about His own character and His relationship with the Father? (22:42)
8. What did Jesus want to avoid if possible? (22:42)
9. What was Jesus referring to when He said, "Take this cup from me"? (22:42)
- * 10. How was Jesus strengthened at this difficult time? (22:43)
11. How did Jesus confront His own anguish and dread? (22:44)
- * 12. What does this passage tell us about Jesus' physical and emotional condition shortly before His death? (22:44)
13. What did Jesus find when He returned to the disciples? (22:45)
14. Why were the disciples so exhausted? (22:45)
15. For what reason did Jesus advise His disciples to pray? (22:46)

Get It

16. What can we learn from Jesus' example of dealing with difficult circumstances in life?
- * 17. How do you think God wants you to respond to painful, even overwhelming, events in your life?
- * 18. What role should prayer play in times of trouble?
19. What can we learn from the disciplines Jesus developed while He was on earth?
20. How can you guard against falling into temptation?
21. What does Jesus teach us through His own example of submission to the Father?
22. For what situation in your life right now do you need to say to God, "Not my will, but yours be done"?

Apply It

23. In the next few weeks, what might you do to develop better habits of prayer and spiritual discipline?
- * 24. What particular area of your own life do you want to consciously submit to the Father's will?

Jesus Arrested - Luke 22:47-53

Topics: Conflict, Darkness, Deceit, Enemies, Evil, Healing, Hypocrisy, Testing

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel to be let down by a friend?
- 2. What would you describe as a low point in your life?
- 3. What polite insincerities do people often use?

Explore It

- 4. Who was leading the crowd that approached Jesus? Why? (22:47-48)
- 5. Why did Judas approach Jesus? (22:47-48)
- 6. What actions of Judas were hypocritical and insincere? (22:47-48)
- 7. How did Jesus respond to Judas's greeting? (22:48)
- 8. Why did Jesus reveal His identity to His opponents? (22:48)
- * 9. How did Jesus' followers respond to Jesus' arrest? (22:49)
- 10. What motivated one of Jesus' followers to attack one of the servants? (22:50)
- 11. How did Jesus react when one of His disciples tried to protect Him? (22:50-51)
- * 12. How did Jesus show compassion even to His captors? (22:51)
- * 13. What emotions did Jesus show during this difficult time? (22:51-53)
- 14. What did Jesus say to the religious leaders who had come for Him? (22:52-53)
- 15. What did Jesus mean when He said, "This is your hour—when darkness reigns"? (22:53)
- 16. In what way did Jesus submit to the Father's will in this situation? (22:53)

Get It

- 17. In what way is Judas a negative example to all of us?
- 18. When are you most tempted to be insincere in your actions or words?
- 19. What is the best way to keep yourself from turning away from your faith during difficult times?
- 20. What does Jesus teach you through His own demonstration of obedience to the Father's will?
- 21. In what areas of your life are you struggling to trust fully in God's will and plan?
- 22. What does submission to God's will entail?
- 23. In what ways are you tempted to rely on yourself when faced with danger, as the disciples were?
- * 24. What principles for dealing with difficult and stressful circumstances do you see in Jesus' example?
- * 25. How can you respond when you face stressful and difficult circumstances?
- 26. How do you think God wants you to treat your enemies?

Apply It

- 27. In what situations do you want to be more sincere and forthright?
- 28. In what areas of your life do you need to rely more consistently on the strength of the Lord?
- * 29. In what way could you prepare yourself now for future uncertainties?

Peter Disowns Jesus - Luke 22:54-62

Topics: Denial, Embarrassment, Forsake, Friendship, Peer Pressure, Repentance, Sorrow, Testing, Weaknesses

Open It

1. How does peer pressure affect our decisions?
- * 2. In what circumstances have you felt pressured into going along with the opinions of your friends?
3. When do you feel uncomfortable succumbing to group pressure?

Explore It

4. Where did the events of this story take place? (22:54)
5. What had happened to Jesus? (22:54)
- * 6. For what reason did Peter follow Jesus “at a distance”? (22:54)
- * 7. What do the actions of Peter in this story reveal about his personal character? (22:54-62)
8. Of what did the servant girl accuse Peter? (22:56)
9. How did Peter respond to the servant girl? (22:57)
10. How many times was Peter accused of knowing Jesus? (22:56-59)
11. How did Peter respond to the second and third accusations put to him? (22:58-60)
12. Why did the third person suspect Peter was a follower of Jesus? (22:59)
13. What happened when Peter denied Jesus the third time? (22:60-61)
14. What caused Peter to remember Jesus’ earlier prediction? (22:60-61)
15. What did Jesus do the third time Peter denied knowing Him? (22:61)
- * 16. Why was Peter so upset and bitter about his actions? (22:61-62)
17. How did Peter respond to the realization that he had denied his Lord? (22:62)

Get It

18. What would make Peter deny that he knew Jesus, when earlier he said he was willing to die for Him?
- * 19. When have you ever done something because of peer pressure, then later regretted it?
20. In what circumstances are other people able to influence us to act in ways we know we should not?
21. How was Peter’s denial of Christ different from Judas’s betrayal of Jesus?
- * 22. What can we do to stand against the pressure of others to do things we know are wrong?
23. How should we respond when we fail to obey Christ?
24. What can we learn about repentance from Peter’s example in this story?
25. How would you define true repentance?
26. What methods does God use to make us aware of ways we need to change?
27. In what ways has the Lord made you aware of a sin in your life?
28. How should we respond to the convicting voice of God?

Apply It

- * 29. What could you do this week to strengthen your stand for Christ in the face of pressure from others?
30. In the future, how could you encourage another believer who has done something wrong but shows a willingness to repent?

The Guards Mock Jesus - Luke 22:63-65

Topics: Insults, Persecution, Prophecy, Shame, Suffering, Toleration

Open It

1. What emotions do most people have when insulted by others?
2. How do we guard ourselves against criticism from other people?
- * 3. What bullies do you remember from elementary school?

Explore It

4. In light of what had happened before this point, what was Jesus probably feeling? (22:63)
5. Who had control of this situation? (22:63)
6. How was Jesus treated by His guards? (22:63-64)
- * 7. In what way did the guards mock Jesus? (22:63-64)
8. Why was Jesus blindfolded? (22:64)
9. What prompted the guards to mock Jesus as they did? (22:64)
10. How did news of Jesus' reputation influence the guards' actions? (22:64)
- * 11. What was the guards' purpose in demanding that Jesus prophesy for them? (22:64)
12. What was so demeaning about the guards' treatment of Jesus? (22:64)
- * 13. What did Luke imply about Jesus' actions by not mentioning any details about how He responded to the guards? (22:63-65)
14. In what way are the details of Christ's humiliation significant to the overall story? (22:63-65)

Get It

15. How are the details of Jesus' mockery relevant to us today?
16. What does this passage tell us about Jesus' character and His response to persecution?
- * 17. How does Jesus want us to react to criticism, insults, or scorn?
18. In what way could you benefit by suffering for your faith?
19. What steps could you take to prepare yourself for being persecuted for your faith?
20. Why do you think God spares some believers from persecution but not others?
- * 21. How could you show your support for other Christians who suffer persecution for the sake of Christ?

Apply It

- * 22. How could you encourage a Christian who is in some way suffering for his or her faith? When?
23. How can you look past the criticism or scorn people use against you for your beliefs?
24. What is one way you can say thank you to Jesus for enduring humiliation for your sake?

Jesus Before Pilate and Herod - Luke 22:66-23:25

Topics: Accusation, Answers, Blasphemy, Evidence, God, Injustice, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Pressure, Punishment, Rationalizing, Testing, Unfairness, Witnessing

Open It

1. What constitutes a fair trial in our legal system today?
2. What are some common ways people try to bend the rules?
- * 3. Why might a person try to influence the process of justice deceitfully?

Explore It

4. When did the events of this story take place? (22:66)
5. Who was first to question Jesus? (22:66)
6. How did Jesus respond to the question about His identity? (22:67-70)
7. Where was Jesus taken? (23:1)
- * 8. Of what was Jesus accused? (23:2)
9. How did Jesus respond to Pilate's question about His identity? (23:3)
- * 10. Of what did Pilate find Jesus guilty? (23:4)
11. How was Jesus treated throughout His trial? (23:5, 9-11)
12. For what reason did Pilate send Jesus to Herod? (23:5-7)
13. Why was Herod pleased to see Jesus? (23:8-9)
14. How did Pilate explain what he decided to do with Jesus? (23:13-16)
15. How did the crowds respond to Pilate's ruling? (23:18)
- * 16. In what way did popular pressure influence Pilate's decisions? (23:20-25)
17. What finally happened to Jesus at the conclusion of His trial? (23:25)

Get It

18. Why were the people, priests, and rulers so determined to put Jesus to death?
- * 19. What can we learn from studying Jesus' response to His accusers?
20. In what ways do you feel you have been mistreated because of your faith in Jesus Christ?
- * 21. How should Christians respond to unfair treatment?
22. How does Jesus' response to Pilate and Herod demonstrate for us how we should endure unjust use of authority?
23. What difference does it make that Jesus underwent humiliation and unfair treatment?

Apply It

24. In what way can you renew your resolve to serve Jesus, no matter what the cost?
- * 25. What do you want to remember the next time you receive unfair treatment or criticism?

The Crucifixion - Luke 23:26-43

Topics: Despair, Forgiveness, Future, God's Will, Insults, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Mourning, Prophecy, Salvation, Submission

Open It

1. When have you had to endure teasing or abuse?
- * 2. How were you dependent on your parents when you were young?

Explore It

3. Why did the soldiers seize Simon of Cyrene? (23:26)
4. What do the soldiers' actions reveal about Jesus' condition? (23:26)
5. Why did such a large crowd gather? (23:27)
6. How did many of the women respond to Jesus' impending death? (23:27)
7. How did Jesus treat the women mourning for Him? (23:28-31)
8. Why did Jesus tell the women to weep for themselves? (23:28-31)
9. What did Jesus mean when He said, "If men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (23:31)
10. What do Jesus' words on the cross reveal about His character? (23:34)
11. How was Jesus treated by others while He was hanging on the cross? (23:35-39)
- * 12. What did the first criminal demand of Jesus? (23:39)
- * 13. What request did the second criminal on the cross make of Jesus? (23:42)
- * 14. How did Jesus respond to the criminal's plea? (23:43)

Get It

15. What can you learn from the actions of the repentant criminal?
16. Why didn't both criminals plead for mercy from Jesus?
17. What prevents many people from turning to Jesus?
18. What do Jesus' words to the repentant criminal reveal about conversion?
- * 19. In what way are we all like the criminals on the cross?
- * 20. For what do we need to approach Jesus?
21. For what are we dependent on God?
22. How does Jesus' response to His approaching death set an example for all Christians?
23. What does this passage teach you about forgiveness?
24. How should we imitate Christ's example of forgiveness?
25. Why did Jesus choose not to save Himself from His suffering on the cross?
26. Toward what people do you need to follow Christ's example of forgiveness?

Apply It

27. With what prayer could you say thank you to Jesus this week for His gift of salvation?
- * 28. How can you place a new area of your life in Christ's hands?

Jesus' Death - Luke 23:44-49

Topics: Darkness, Death, Mourning, Praise, Righteousness, Sorrow

Open It

1. What experiences have caused you to be amazed?
2. What is the most you've ever sacrificed for someone else?
- * 3. Who are some people you considered unapproachable at one point or another in your life? Why?

Explore It

4. When did the events of this story take place? (23:44)
5. What unusual natural occurrence took place and what did it signify? (23:44-45)
- * 6. What happened to the curtain in the temple? (23:45)
- * 7. What did the tearing of the temple curtain signify? (23:45)
8. Why did Jesus call out from the cross? (23:46)
9. What was significant about Jesus' words on the cross? (23:46)
10. What occurred after Jesus called out to the Father? (23:46)
- * 11. How did the centurion in charge of the crucifixion react to Jesus' death? (23:47)
12. What motivated the centurion to praise God? (23:47)
13. Why did the centurion call Jesus a righteous man, and in what way was this declaration significant? (23:47)
14. How did the witnesses to Christ's crucifixion react to His death? (23:48)
15. Why did those people who knew Jesus watch from a distance? (23:49)

Get It

16. Why did Jesus need to die on the cross?
17. What difference did Christ's death make in our relationship with God the Father?
- * 18. How did Christ open the path between us and God?
19. What does it mean to approach God?
- * 20. How are we able to approach God?
21. What do Jesus' actions teach us about submission to God's will?
22. Why was the centurion's reaction to Jesus' death so remarkable?
23. What does this passage teach us about how we should respond to death?
24. From what has Jesus' death on the cross saved you?

Apply It

- * 25. In what ways can you approach God each day this week, to honor the path to the Father He opened for you?
26. With what younger Christian can you share today your thankfulness for Christ's great sacrifice?

Jesus' Burial - Luke 23:50-56

Topics: Body, Devotion, Faith, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Loyalty, Obedience, Respect

Open It

1. What Christians have you known who have served God faithfully without fanfare?
2. How much of a risk-taker are you?
- * 3. What's the biggest risk you've ever taken?

Explore It

4. Who was Joseph? (23:50)
- * 5. How did Luke describe Joseph's character? (23:50)
6. How did Joseph feel about Jesus' trial and punishment? (23:51)
7. What did Luke mean by describing Joseph as a man who was "waiting for the kingdom of God"? (23:51)
8. What kind of man was Joseph? (23:51)
9. What did Joseph ask of Pilate? (23:52)
- * 10. Why was it courageous for Joseph to approach Pilate for Jesus' body? (23:52)
- * 11. How did Joseph prepare Jesus' body? (23:53)
12. Who followed Joseph? (23:55)
13. What do the actions of the women reveal about their faith? (23:55-56)
14. Why did the women not take their prepared spices and perfumes directly to Jesus' tomb? (23:56)

Get It

15. How can we be known as people who are "waiting for the kingdom of God"?
- * 16. What was courageous about what Joseph did?
17. What sort of risks did Joseph take?
- * 18. What can we learn from Joseph's example?
19. What risks are involved in serving Christ today?
20. What risks are involved in serving Christ in your situation?
21. In what ways can we show our respect for Jesus Christ today?
22. When is it difficult to demonstrate openly our loyalty to Jesus?
23. What should we do if we feel nervous about sharing our faith because of the threat of criticism from others?
24. Why do you think Luke mentioned that the women saw the tomb and the burial of Christ's body?
25. What example do the women in this story set for us?
26. What do the women in the story teach us about obedience?

Apply It

- * 27. What risks might you have to take in serving Christ this week?
28. What spiritual disciplines can you work on that will help you become a "good and upright" person?

The Resurrection - Luke 24:1-12

Topics: Angels, Believe, Evangelism, Fear, Good News, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Remembering, Resurrection, Witnessing

Open It

1. How do you react to good news from home?
- * 2. When was a time you told a true story that other people found hard to believe?

Explore It

3. Why did the women go to Jesus' tomb? (24:1)
4. What did the women find once they arrived at the tomb? (24:2)
- * 5. What happened while the women were wondering what had happened to Jesus' body? (24:4)
6. Who were the two men who appeared to the women? (24:4)
7. How did the women respond to the angels? (24:5)
8. What did the angels tell the women about Jesus? (24:5-7)
9. Of what words of Jesus were the women reminded? (24:7)
- * 10. What did the women do after the men had told them that Jesus had risen from the dead as He had predicted? (24:9)
11. How did the apostles react to the women's testimony? (24:11)
12. Why did the apostles not believe the women? (24:11)
13. In what way were Peter's actions different from the other apostles? (24:12)
- * 14. How did Peter respond to the sight of the empty tomb? (24:12)

Get It

15. Why is Jesus' resurrection central to the Christian faith?
16. If the gospel is such good news, why are Christians sometimes reluctant to tell others about Christ?
17. What would be different if Jesus had not risen from the dead?
- * 18. Why did the disciples express disbelief even though Jesus had told them clearly that He would rise from the dead?
19. What does this passage teach us about witnessing and evangelism?
20. What does this account teach you about the people to whom God reveals His good news?
21. How does this story encourage you to share your faith with others?
- * 22. What should you do if others reject you or your testimony when you share your faith?
23. Why do people sometimes not believe the truth of the gospel?
24. What responsibility do we have to witness to others, even if they continue to reject the gospel?

Apply It

- * 25. How can you reaffirm your faith in God's promises this week?
26. How can you prepare yourself for your next encounter with someone who criticizes you or does not accept your testimony?

On the Road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-35

Topics: Angels, Believe, Confusion, Expectations, Foolishness, Hardheartedness, Ignorance, Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. When have you ever suddenly understood a truth that had earlier confused you?
- 2. What is it like to have an event turn out differently than you had expected?

Explore It

- 3. Who was going to Emmaus? (24:13)
- 4. What were the two men discussing along the way? (24:14)
- 5. Who appeared to the men on the way to Emmaus? (24:15)
- 6. What did Jesus ask the two men? (24:17)
- 7. What emotions did the two men display? (24:17)
- 8. Why did Cleopas think that Jesus must have been a visitor to Jerusalem? (24:18)
- * 9. How did the two men describe Jesus and what had happened? (24:19-24)
- 10. How had the events of the last few days crushed the expectations of the two men talking with Jesus? (24:21)
- * 11. Why did Jesus explain the Scriptures to the men? (24:25-27)
- 12. When did the men finally recognize Jesus? (24:31)
- * 13. What did the men recall after they reflected on their conversation with Jesus? (24:32)
- 14. How did these men respond to their encounter with Jesus? (24:33-35)

Get It

- * 15. How are your expectations of the Christian life sometimes changed by life's trials?
- 16. What did you think your life would be like after you became a Christian?
- 17. When have you been guilty of unbelief?
- 18. Why are we so often "slow of heart to believe"?
- 19. What do you think prevents people from believing in Jesus?
- * 20. What great truths has God taught you that you failed to understand at first?
- 21. In what ways has God clearly spoken to you?
- 22. What can you learn about witnessing from the example of the two men in this account?

Apply It

- 23. What could you do this week to make yourself more sensitive to the Lord's leading in your life?
- * 24. What could you do in the future to prevent yourself from failing to recognize God's voice?

Jesus Appears to the Disciples - Luke 24:36-49

Topics: Believe, Doubt, Fear, Holy Spirit, Instructions, Joy, Promises, Prophecy, Resurrection, Understanding, Witnessing

Open It

1. When have you ever been really surprised?
2. What do you like or dislike about surprises?
- * 3. With what subjects did you have the most difficulty in school? Why?
4. When have you ever been entrusted with a significant responsibility?

Explore It

5. How did Jesus approach the disciples? (24:36)
- * 6. Why were the disciples frightened? (24:37)
7. How did Jesus try to calm and reassure the disciples? (24:38-39)
8. What evidence did Jesus give to prove He was not a ghost? (24:39)
- * 9. How did the disciples react to the evidence and convincing words of Jesus? (24:41)
10. What did the disciples' actions reveal about their understanding of what Jesus had told them earlier about His death and resurrection? (24:41)
11. What emotions did the disciples display? (24:41)
12. What was significant about Jesus' eating a piece of fish? (24:43)
- * 13. When did the disciples finally understand the Scriptures? (24:44-45)
14. How were the disciples finally able to understand the prophecies about Christ in Scripture? (24:44-45)
15. What did Jesus explain would be the result of His resurrection? (24:47)
16. What instructions did Jesus give to His disciples? (24:48)
17. What was Jesus going to send the apostles? (24:48)
18. What was the "power from on high" to which Jesus referred? (24:48)

Get It

19. Why did Jesus consider it important to teach the disciples from the Old Testament?
- * 20. What does this passage teach us about God's role in our understanding of the gospel?
21. According to this passage, how can we expect to understand the Scriptures?
- * 22. What causes us to disbelieve the Scriptures?
23. What proof did you need to be convinced of the truth of the gospel?
24. In what ways have you experienced the power Jesus promised us?
25. What responsibility do we have to share our faith with others?

Apply It

26. How can you become a more regular student of the Scriptures?
- * 27. What could you do this week to settle the doubts about salvation that your non-Christian friends have?

The Ascension - Luke 24:50-53

Topics: Believers, Blessing, Heaven, Jesus Christ, Joy, Praise, Worship

Open It

1. Why do engaged couples often seek their parents' blessing?
- * 2. Whose "blessing" would you value above all? Why?
3. In what ways do you feel you have been blessed?

Explore It

4. Where did Jesus lead His disciples? (24:50)
5. What did Jesus do for His disciples? (24:50)
- * 6. Why did Jesus bless His disciples at this point? (24:50)
7. What happened while Jesus was blessing His disciples? (24:51)
8. How did the disciples know that Jesus was taken up into heaven? (24:51)
9. How was this time with Jesus significant for the disciples? (24:51)
- * 10. What was the response of the disciples to Jesus' ascension into heaven? (24:52)
11. Why were the disciples so joyful? (24:52)
- * 12. What is significant about the fact that Jesus' followers worshipped Him? (24:52)
13. Why did the disciples return to Jerusalem? (24:52)
14. What did Jesus' followers do after He left them? (24:52-53)

Get It

15. What do you find inspiring about the actions of Jesus' followers in this account?
- * 16. How can we experience joy in Christ?
17. Why is Jesus worthy of our worship?
18. Why is it appropriate and important for Christians to praise and worship Jesus?
- * 19. What blessings from the Lord have you experienced recently?
20. What does this passage teach us about the mission of the church?

Apply It

21. How can you worship and praise the Lord today?
22. How can you honor Jesus for all He came and did for you?
- * 23. When could you set aside time this week to think about the many blessings the Lord has given you?

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The Word Became Flesh - John 1:1-18

Topics: Believe, Believers, Creation, Darkness, Glory, Grace, Jesus Christ, Law, Spiritual Rebirth

Open It

1. What are some of the slang expressions you used growing up?
- * 2. In what ways are words different from visual images?

Explore It

3. Who is the Word? (1:1)
- * 4. What is the relationship between the Word and God? (1:1-2)
5. What was the Word's role in creation? (1:3)
6. How is the "life" the light of men? (1:4)
7. What was John's role in relation to the light? (1:6)
8. How did the light give light to every person? (1:9)
9. Why didn't the world recognize the light? (1:10)
- * 10. What is the benefit of receiving or believing in the Word? (1:12)
- * 11. How and why did the Word make His dwelling among us? (1:14)
12. Whose glory did the Word reveal? (1:14)
13. What did God give us through Moses? (1:17)
14. What did God give us through Jesus? (1:18)
15. Why is it significant that no one has seen God but "God the One and Only"? (1:18)

Get It

16. Why did the Word become flesh and live among us?
- * 17. How does a person receive the Word?
18. What happens when we receive or believe in the Word?
19. In what way can you receive or welcome Christ into your life?
- * 20. What insights can you gain from seeing Jesus as God's Word?
21. How should being a child of God affect our lives?
22. In what way is John an example for us to follow?
23. How did Jesus reveal God's glory to us?

Apply It

24. What do you need to do to be certain of your relationship with God?
- * 25. What will you do this week to better enjoy your status as a child of God?
26. How should the reality that God became a man affect your life today?

John the Baptist Denies Being the Christ - John 1:19-28

Topics: Attitude, Believers, Humility, Integrity, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Witnessing

Open It

1. Why do people enjoy boasting about themselves and their accomplishments?
2. Why is it hard to be humble?
- * 3. What are the characteristics of a humble person?

Explore It

4. What did the Jews want to know? (1:19)
5. Who did the Jews think John was? (1:20-21)
- * 6. What did John say about who he was? (1:20-22)
7. In what way was John a “voice of one calling in the desert”? (1:23)
8. What does the phrase “make straight the way for the Lord” mean? (1:23)
- * 9. How did John “make straight the way for the Lord”? (1:23)
10. Why did the Pharisees care that John was baptizing people? (1:24)
11. What did John say he was not worthy to do? (1:27)
- * 12. Who did John say was coming after him? (12:27)
13. Where did these events take place? (1:28)

Get It

- * 14. In what ways can you honor Christ with your accomplishments?
15. How can we point others to Christ?
16. In what situations is it difficult for you to be humble?
- * 17. If you had been John how would you have felt about your role?
18. In what ways is your life like John’s?
19. What special or unique means has God given you to share His Word?

Apply It

20. In what way can you be a voice for Jesus?
- * 21. What are some areas in which you struggle to be humble at this time in your life?
22. In what specific ways can you point others to Christ this week?

Jesus the Lamb of God - John 1:29-34

Topics: Forgiveness, History, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Name, Security, Sin, World

Open It

1. What function do initiation rites serve in a club or society?
- * 2. What can you infer about someone from his or her title (such as Doctor, Professor, or Prince)?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did John call Jesus the Lamb of God? (1:29)
4. What are the sins of the world? (1:29)
5. What does Jesus do with the sins of the world? (1:29)
- * 6. What did John mean that Jesus surpassed him because He was before him? (1:30)
7. How was Jesus before John? (1:30)
8. Why did John say he didn't know who Jesus was? (1:31)
9. What reason did John give for baptizing Jesus? (1:31)
10. Why did John come to baptize people? (1:31)
11. What creature represented the Spirit of God? (1:32)
12. Why did the Spirit come down upon Jesus? (1:33)
13. With what did John baptize? (1:31, 33)
14. With what will Jesus baptize? (1:33)
- * 15. What title did John ascribe to the person he baptized? (1:34)

Get It

16. What sin of yours has Jesus taken away?
- * 17. How do we receive the forgiveness that Christ bought for us?
18. In what way do you share Jesus' identity as a child of God?
19. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your life?
- * 20. How does Jesus baptize us?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you honor Jesus' Sonship with your life this week?
22. What steps can you take to appreciate better who Jesus is?
23. In what way can you reveal Christ to others this week?

Jesus' First Disciples - John 1:35-42

Topics: Follow, Humility, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Name, Priorities, Witnessing

Open It

1. What gets you excited or enthusiastic?
- * 2. How would you feel if a good friend abandoned your friendship in favor of someone else?
3. What nicknames have you had over the years?

Explore It

4. Who besides Jesus had disciples? (1:35)
5. What did John say when he saw Jesus? (1:36)
6. How did John identify Jesus for his disciples? (1:37)
- * 7. What did John's disciples do when John identified Jesus? (1:37)
8. What did Jesus ask John's disciples? (1:38)
9. What did John's disciples call Jesus? (1:38)
10. What did John's disciples ask Jesus? (1:38)
- * 11. What was the first thing Andrew did after he had followed Jesus? (1:40)
12. Who was Andrew's brother? (1:40)
- * 13. What did Andrew tell his brother about Jesus? (1:41)
14. What nickname did Jesus give to Simon? (1:42)
15. What words did the author interpret for us? (1:37, 41, 42)

Get It

- * 16. What does it mean to follow Jesus?
17. What hinders us from following Jesus?
- * 18. What must we leave to follow Jesus?
19. To what friends and relatives could you introduce Jesus?
20. How can we spend time with Jesus to get to know Him better?

Apply It

21. Whom do you want to introduce to Jesus this week?
22. How could you introduce Christ to a friend or relative?
- * 23. What change in your daily routine would enable you to follow Jesus better?

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael - John 1:43-51

Topics: Angels, Believe, Follow, God, Goodness, Heaven, Jesus Christ, Name, Surprises

Open It

1. How do people feel when they find something that's been missing for a for long time?
2. What famous people would you like to meet? Why?
- * 3. About what things are people today skeptical?

Explore It

4. How did Jesus and Philip meet? (1:43)
5. What did Jesus say to Philip? (1:43)
- * 6. How did Philip respond to Jesus' invitation? (1:44-46)
7. What did Philip do after he followed Jesus? (1:45)
8. What did Philip tell Nathanael about Jesus? (1:45)
- * 9. Why was Nathanael skeptical that Philip had found the Messiah? (1:46)
10. How did Nathanael respond to the fact that Jesus was from Nazareth? (1:46)
11. What did Jesus say when he saw Nathanael? (1:47)
- * 12. What convinced Nathanael that Jesus was the Son of God? (1:47-50)
13. What was Nathanael's response to Jesus' greeting? (1:48)
14. Why was Nathanael surprised? (1:48)
15. Why did Nathanael call Jesus the Son of God and the King of Israel? (1:48-49)
16. What were the greater things to which Jesus referred? (1:50)
17. What did Jesus tell Nathanael he would see? (1:51)
18. Who is the Son of Man? (1:51)

Get It

19. What about Christ stirs skepticism today?
- * 20. What stereotypes about Christ prevent people from trusting Him today?
21. What convinced you that Jesus was the Son of God?
- * 22. What makes Jesus qualified to rule our lives?
23. How is Jesus the King of your life?
24. What do you have in common with Jesus?
25. How can Jesus' identity as the Son of God inspire your confidence in Him?

Apply It

26. How will you show your trust in the God who knows all about you this week?
- * 27. How would you share your faith with a skeptical person this week?
28. In what way will you recognize Jesus as the ruler of your life today?

Jesus Changes Water to Wine - John 2:1-11

Topics: Assurance, Change, Confidence, Faith, Glory, Jesus Christ, Miracles, New Life, Spiritual Rebirth

Open It

1. Why are people interested in miraculous or supernatural events?
- * 2. What makes an event miraculous or supernatural?
3. What supernatural or miraculous events have you witnessed?

Explore It

4. Where did the wedding take place? (2:1)
5. Who was at the wedding? (2:1-2)
6. What did Jesus' mother say to Him? (2:3)
- * 7. What was Jesus' response to His mother? (2:4)
8. How did Jesus' mother respond to His reply? (2:5)
9. What were the water jars used for? (2:6)
10. What did Jesus tell the servants to do? (2:7)
11. To whom did the servants take the water? (2:8)
12. What happened to the water? (2:9)
- * 13. What was the banquet master's response? (2:10)
- * 14. Why did Jesus perform this miracle? (2:11)
15. How did Jesus' disciples respond to this miracle? (2:11)

Get It

16. How have you had faith in Jesus' power this week?
- * 17. What is something you would like Jesus to change in your life?
- * 18. What recent miracle has Jesus done in your life?
19. How does Jesus reveal His glory to us today?
20. In what ways has Jesus transformed you into a new person?
21. How has Jesus given you a new life?
22. What things has Jesus done that have caused you to have faith in Him?

Apply It

- * 23. What is one specific habit or characteristic you will ask God to change in your life this week?
24. How will you enjoy today the new life Jesus has given you?

Jesus Clears the Temple - John 2:12-25

Topics: Attitude, Authority, Believe, Church, Compromise, Faith, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Money, Resurrection, Zeal

Open It

1. How do you feel after a much-needed bath or shower?
- * 2. Why do we put off necessary cleaning (such as the bedroom, car, or garage)?

Explore It

3. With whom did Jesus go to Capernaum? (2:12)
4. What time was it when Jesus went to Jerusalem? (2:13)
- * 5. What did Jesus find in the temple courts? (2:14)
6. What did Jesus do in the temple courts? (2:15)
- * 7. How did Jesus respond to those who were selling doves? (2:16)
- * 8. What did Jesus' disciples remember? (2:17)
9. What did the Jews demand from Jesus? (2:18)
10. How did Jesus respond to the demand from the Jews? (2:19)
11. What temple did the Jews think Jesus was talking about? (2:20)
12. What temple was Jesus talking about? (2:21)
13. When did the disciples remember what Jesus had said? (2:22)
14. How did the people respond to Jesus' miracles? (2:23)
15. What was Jesus' response to those who believed in Him? (2:24-25)

Get It

- * 16. How has Jesus cleansed our lives?
17. What does Jesus still need to clear out of our lives?
18. What do we demand from Jesus?
- * 19. How do we attempt to use the church to our own advantage?
20. In what ways do people accuse the church or believers of being corrupt or hypocritical?
21. What sign has Jesus given us to believe in?
22. Why is it sometimes hard to recognize how God is working in our lives?

Apply It

- * 23. What will you ask Jesus to clear out of your life this week?
24. What demanding attitude do you need to change today?

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus - John 3:1-21

Topics: Assurance, Basics of the Faith, Believe, Darkness, Eternal Life, Faith, Gifts, God, Gospel, Heaven, Humility, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Love, New Life, Salvation, Unbelievers, Understanding, World

Open It

- * 1. When have you felt like you wanted to start life all over again?
- 2. Why do people like to get new things (such as clothes, cars, or gadgets)?
- 3. What is the best gift you have ever received?

Explore It

- 4. To what group did Nicodemus belong? (3:1)
- 5. At what time did Nicodemus visit Jesus? (3:2)
- 6. Why did Nicodemus believe Jesus was from God? (3:2)
- 7. What is the qualification for seeing the kingdom of God? (3:3)
- 8. What did Nicodemus think Jesus meant when He said that a person must be born again? (3:4)
- * 9. What is required to enter the kingdom of God? (3:5-6)
- 10. How did Jesus compare the wind to the Spirit? (3:8)
- 11. Why should Nicodemus have understood what Jesus said? (3:10)
- 12. About what category of things did Jesus say He was talking? (3:12)
- 13. Who did Jesus say had gone to heaven? (3:13)
- 14. How did Jesus compare Moses' snake with the Son of Man? (3:14)
- * 15. What is the result of believing in the Son of Man? (3:15, 18)
- 16. How did God demonstrate His love for the world? (3:16)
- * 17. Why did God send His Son into the world? (3:17)
- 18. How does the person who lives by truth respond to the light? (3:19-21)

Get It

- 19. When would you say you were born again?
- * 20. How would you describe what it means to be born again to someone?
- 21. What were some of the circumstances that led you to Jesus?
- 22. What were some of the things that caused you to believe that Jesus is the Son of God?
- 23. Why are spiritual truths often hard to understand?
- 24. What are a few spiritual truths that you struggle to understand?
- * 25. How does God's gift of His Son affect our lives?
- 26. How can a person live by the light?

Apply It

- 27. How will you change your daily routine to better appreciate and enjoy God's gift of His Son?
- * 28. For what specific spiritual truths will you seek answers this week?

John the Baptist's Testimony About Jesus - John 3:22-36

Topics: Assurance, Believe, Character, Earth, Eternal Life, Example, Faith, Gifts, God, Gospel, Heaven, Jealousy, Jesus Christ, Joy, Popularity, Rejection, Unbelievers

Open It

1. How would you feel if a friend received more recognition than you for something you both did?
- * 2. What makes someone's testimony about an event seem either credible or incredible?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus do with His disciples in the Judean countryside? (3:22)
4. What was John doing at Aenon? (3:23)
5. What eventually happened to John? (3:24)
6. What took place between John's disciples and some Jews? (3:25)
7. What news did John receive? (3:26)
8. What did John say a person can receive? (3:27)
- * 9. Who did John say he was, as well as who he wasn't? (3:28)
10. How did John describe his feelings about Jesus becoming more important than him? (3:29)
11. What did John say about his future status? (3:30)
- * 12. What did John say about Jesus' future status? (3:30)
13. Who is above all? (3:31)
14. What did Jesus come to say? (3:32)
- * 15. What did the people do who accepted Jesus' testimony? (3:33)
16. What did the person whom God sent do? (3:34)
17. What has the Father done for the Son? (3:35)
18. What is the result of either believing or rejecting the Son? (3:36)

Get It

19. In what way do people only receive what is given to them from God?
- * 20. Why is it sometimes hard to give God credit?
21. How are we like John?
22. What are some areas in which you struggle with being humble?
- * 23. How can we certify that God is truthful in our lives?
24. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus?
25. How does a person reject the Son?
26. What are the consequences of rejecting the Son?

Apply It

- * 27. How can you give Jesus the place of prominence He deserves in your life today?
28. What can you do this week to show that God is truthful in your life?
29. In what area of your life will you ask God to help you to be more humble?

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman - John 4:1-26

Topics: Evangelism, Gifts, God, Good News, Immorality, Jesus Christ, Judging Others, Marriage, Messiah, Morality, New Life, Prejudice, Salvation, Satisfaction, Spiritual Rebirth, Status, Traditions, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

- * 1. How do people satisfy their hungers and thirsts in life?
- 2. Why are the messages in TV commercials so appealing and persuasive?
- 3. In what ways are people you know prejudiced?

Explore It

- 4. What had the Pharisees heard about Jesus? (4:1)
- 5. What did Jesus do when he heard what the Pharisees were saying about Him? (4:3)
- 6. Through what place did Jesus have to travel? (4:4-5)
- * 7. Why did Jesus sit down by Jacob's well? (4:6)
- 8. What did Jesus say to the Samaritan woman? (4:7)
- 9. Where were Jesus' disciples? (4:8)
- 10. Why was the Samaritan woman surprised that Jesus spoke to her? (4:9)
- 11. How did Jesus answer the Samaritan woman's question? (4:10)
- 12. What did the Samaritan woman think Jesus was talking about? (4:11-12,15)
- * 13. What did Jesus say would be the result of drinking the water He offered? (4:13-14)
- 14. Whom did Jesus tell the Samaritan woman to go and get? (4:15)
- 15. How did Jesus respond to the Samaritan woman's answer to His request? (4:17-18)
- 16. How did the Samaritan woman respond to Jesus' statements about her situation? (4:19-20)
- * 17. How did Jesus say people would worship God? (4:21-23)
- 18. What kind of worshipers does God seek? (4:23)
- 19. What did Jesus say about God? (4:24)
- 20. Who did Jesus say He was? (4:25-26)

Get It

- 21. What groups of people do you feel uncomfortable being around? Why?
- 22. How might a person feel put off by another's background, nationality, or race?
- 23. How can prejudice affect a Christian's witness?
- * 24. How have you responded to Jesus' invitation to receive His living water?
- 25. How is Jesus' gift of salvation different from what the world offers?
- * 26. How is the world's need for salvation and eternal life like thirst?
- 27. In what other ways besides thirst might you describe eternal life?
- 28. How can we worship God in spirit and in truth?

Apply It

- * 29. How can you encourage others to quench their spiritual thirst this week?
- 30. What are some prejudices you will ask God to help you overcome?

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus - John 4:27-38

Topics: Discipline, Eternal Life, Evangelism, Jesus Christ, Judging Others, Messiah, Prejudice, Tasks, Witnessing, Work

Open It

- * 1. What must a farmer do in order to enjoy an abundant harvest?
- 2. When have you ever been so consumed with a task that you forgot to eat?

Explore It

- 3. How did the disciples respond when they saw Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman? (4:27)
- 4. What did the Samaritan woman do after she had spoken to Jesus? (4:28)
- 5. What did the Samaritan woman tell the townspeople? (4:29)
- 6. How did the townspeople respond to what the Samaritan woman said? (4:30)
- 7. What did the disciples urge Jesus to do? (4:31)
- * 8. What did Jesus tell the disciples? (4:32)
- 9. How did the disciples respond to what Jesus told them about food? (4:33)
- * 10. What did Jesus say was His food? (4:34)
- 11. What did Jesus say about the fields? (4:35)
- * 12. What kind of crop did Jesus say “the reaper” was harvesting? (4:36)
- 13. What did Jesus send the disciples to do? (4:38)

Get It

- 14. What barriers keep us from talking to other people about Christ?
- 15. How does spending time talking to Jesus affect your life?
- * 16. What tasks in life tend to consume your attention?
- 17. What are some of the sayings of Jesus that surprise you?
- 18. In what way has God surprised you by what He’s done in your life?
- 19. What unique work has God given you to do?
- * 20. How would you describe today the fields Jesus described to His disciples?
- 21. What role can you play in the reaping and harvesting of lives for Christ?

Apply It

- 22. What obstacle will you ask God to remove so you can help bring someone to Christ?
- * 23. In what way can you be involved in reaping and harvesting for God’s kingdom today?

Many Samaritans Believe - John 4:39-42

Topics: Beliefs, Believe, Convictions, Evangelism, Evidence, Faith, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Salvation, Witnessing

Open It

1. What people have had the biggest influence on your life?
- * 2. What are some things that we have believed based on someone else's testimony?
3. What are some things that we can trust in because of our own personal experience?

Explore It

- * 4. What impact did the Samaritan woman's testimony have on the townspeople? (4:39)
5. What did the woman tell the Samaritan people Jesus told her? (4:39)
6. What did the Samaritans urge Jesus to do? (4:40)
7. What did Jesus do in response to the Samaritan's request? (4:40)
- * 8. What did Jesus rely on to convince more people to believe in Him? (4:41)
9. What impact did Jesus' words have on the Samaritan people? (4:41)
10. Why did the Samaritan people originally believe in Jesus? (4:42)
11. What new basis did the Samaritans have for their belief in Jesus? (4:42)
12. What difference did hearing Jesus for themselves make to the Samaritans? (4:42)
- * 13. What did the Samaritan people believe about Jesus? (4:42)

Get It

14. What impact does your testimony have on other people?
- * 15. What impact have other people's testimonies had on your life?
16. Who do most people think Jesus is and what is the basis for their belief?
17. Who do you think Jesus is? Why?
- * 18. What led you to believe in Jesus?
19. What people were influential in leading you to believe in Jesus?
20. How has believing in Jesus changed your life?

Apply It

21. Whom can you tell about Jesus? When?
- * 22. In what ways could you be a better testimony for Jesus today?
23. What can you do to help clear up other people's misconceptions about who Jesus is?

Jesus Heals the Official's Son - John 4:43-54

Topics: Attitude, Believe, Convictions, Courage, Determination, Faith, Healing, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Motives, Sickness, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What are some things that people believe in that they either haven't seen or can't see?
- 2. What celebrity would you gladly welcome as a guest in your home? Why?

Explore It

- 3. Where did Jesus go after He left Samaria? (4:43)
- 4. What did Jesus say about prophets? (4:44)
- 5. Why did the Galileans welcome Jesus? (4:45)
- 6. What had Jesus done in Cana? (4:46)
- 7. What did the royal official ask Jesus to do? (4:47)
- * 8. What did Jesus say about miraculous signs? (4:48)
- 9. How did the royal official respond to Jesus' comment about miraculous signs? (4:49)
- * 10. What did Jesus say in response to the royal official's renewed request? (4:50)
- 11. What was the royal official's response to what Jesus said? (4:50)
- 12. When did the royal official's son get better? (4:51-53)
- * 13. What impact did Jesus' healing have on the royal official's household? (4:53)
- 14. How many miracles had Jesus performed? (4:54)

Get It

- 15. For what reasons are people interested in Jesus today?
- 16. In what ways are we typically more interested in what Jesus can do for us than what we can do for Jesus?
- 17. What miracles have you asked Jesus to do in your life?
- * 18. When do we usually find ourselves asking God to help us?
- 19. Why is it sometimes hard to take Jesus at His word?
- 20. What are some things God has told us in His Word that are hard for you to believe?
- 21. How have you exercised believing—sight unseen—faith in Jesus?
- 22. What miraculous signs are people looking for today?
- 23. In what ways are we demanding of God in our relationship with Him?
- * 24. What impact would a miraculous event have in your life?
- 25. What are some miracles God has worked in your life?

Apply It

- * 26. What is something specific you can thank God for doing in your life?
- 27. How do you need to trust in God this week to handle a situation you can't control or work out on your own?

The Healing at the Pool - John 5:1-15

Topics: Attitude, Church, Depend, Healing, Jesus Christ, Law, Legalism, Miracles, New Life, Religion, Sin, Trust

Open It

- * 1. Why might someone prefer rules and regulations to freedom?
- 2. In what way are relationships more important than rules and regulations?

Explore It

- 3. For what event did Jesus go to Jerusalem? (5:1)
- 4. Who came to the pool near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem? (5:2-3)
- 5. How long had the one invalid man been at the pool? (5:5)
- * 6. What did Jesus ask the invalid man? (5:6)
- 7. How did the invalid man respond to Jesus' question? (5:7)
- 8. What did Jesus command the invalid man to do? (5:8)
- 9. What happened to the invalid man after Jesus spoke to him? (5:9)
- 10. On what day of the week did this miracle take place? (5:9)
- * 11. What did the Jews say to the healed man? Why? (5:10)
- 12. How did the healed man respond to the Jews' question? (5:11)
- 13. What did the Jews ask the healed man? (5:12)
- 14. Why didn't the man know who healed him? (5:13)
- * 15. What did Jesus tell the man he had healed on their second encounter? (5:14)
- 16. What did the healed man do after he spoke with Jesus a second time? (5:15)

Get It

- 17. In what way do you think life is unfair?
- 18. When have you felt as if life has dealt you a bad hand?
- 19. When have you felt that God was waiting too long to do something you'd trusted Him to do?
- 20. When do we tend to get impatient with God's timing in our lives?
- 21. On what in life, other than God, do we sometimes depend?
- 22. Why do we attempt to take matters into our own hands, rather than trust God to work them out?
- * 23. When has someone tried to squelch your freedom in Christ with religious rules or regulations?
- * 24. Why do some people care more about keeping certain "religious" rules than they do about developing a meaningful relationship with Jesus?
- 25. What rules tend to interfere with your enjoyment of your relationship with Christ?
- 26. In what way has Jesus made you well?

Apply It

- 27. What is something you need to trust God with today?
- 28. Who is someone you can encourage to enjoy his or her relationship with Christ this week?
- * 29. What "religious" rule that hinders your relationship with Christ will you make secondary to that relationship this week?

Life Through the Son - John 5:16-30

Topics: Assurance, Believe, Enemies, Eternal Life, Faith, God, Jesus Christ, Judgment, New Life, Parents, Persecution, Salvation, Security

Open It

1. What different groups of people have suffered persecution throughout history?
- * 2. What are some of the positive aspects of your relationship with your parents?

Explore It

3. Why did the Jews persecute Jesus? (5:16)
4. Whose work did Jesus do? (5:17)
5. Why did certain Jews want to kill Jesus? (5:18)
- * 6. What did Jesus say that the Son could do? (5:19)
7. What did Jesus tell the Jews that He would show them? (5:20)
8. What did Jesus say He was able to do? (5:21)
9. To whom did God entrust all judgment? (5:22)
- * 10. Why did God entrust judgment to Christ? (5:23)
11. How did Jesus say a person can gain eternal life? (5:24)
12. What time did Jesus say had already come? (5:25)
- * 13. What did Jesus say the Father has in Himself that He has granted to the Son? (5:26)
14. What time did Jesus say was coming? (5:28-29)
15. Whom did Jesus say He desires to please? (5:30)

Get It

16. In what way does the world persecute Christians today?
17. How have you been persecuted as a believer?
18. When have you experienced pressure not to practice or share your faith in Christ?
19. Why does the world persecute Christians?
- * 20. How can we honor the Son and the Father with our lives?
21. How can we know for sure that we have eternal life?
- * 22. Why should we feel secure in our relationship with God?
23. How should we prepare ourselves for Jesus' judgment?
24. In what way are we like Jesus with respect to our relationship with God the Father?
25. In what way is Jesus an example for us to follow?

Apply It

- * 26. What steps can you take this week to enjoy more fully your relationship with your Heavenly Father?
27. What can you do today to bring honor to God?
28. How will you allow Jesus' example in this passage of Scripture to influence your life this week?

Testimonies About Jesus - John 5:31-47

Topics: Assurance, Authority, Believe, Bible, Church, Eternal Life, God, Jesus Christ, Legalism, Life, Light, Popularity, Praise

Open It

1. What motivates people to want to be famous, rich, successful, or powerful?
- * 2. What makes someone's testimony valid or invalid?
3. How can the details sometimes prevent us from seeing the big picture?

Explore It

- * 4. Whose testimony did Jesus say was valid? (5:31-32)
5. What did Jesus say John did? (5:33)
6. Why did Jesus mention John's testimony? (5:34)
7. What did Jesus say John was? (5:35)
- * 8. What did Jesus say testified to the fact that the Father had sent Him? (5:36)
9. Who else did Jesus say testified about Him? (5:37)
- * 10. Why did the Jews study the Scriptures? (5:39)
11. What was the result of all the Jews' study of the Scriptures? (5:40)
12. What did Jesus' audience not have in their hearts? (5:42)
13. Whose praise did the Jews neglect to seek? (5:43-44)
14. Who was the Jews' accuser? (5:45)
15. About whom did Moses write? (5:46)
16. What effect should Moses' writings have had on the Jews? (5:46-47)

Get It

- * 17. How is your life like a lamp pointing others to Jesus?
18. Why do you believe in Jesus?
19. On what authority can we rest our belief in Jesus?
- * 20. How could someone study the Scriptures and still not believe in Jesus?
21. From whom do you seek praise and recognition?
22. In what do you find your significance and security in life?
23. In what way might the church sometimes prevent people from seeing and believing in Jesus?
24. What should we do to gain the praise of God?

Apply It

- * 25. Starting today, how can you seek greater recognition for God's ways?
26. How can you make your study of Scripture more Christ-centered this week?
27. What step can you take to become a brighter lamp pointing to Jesus?

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand - John 6:1-15

Topics: Appreciation, Expectations, Faith, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Motives, Needs, Testing, Thankfulness

Open It

- * 1. What is the most difficult situation in which you have ever found yourself?
- 2. In what exciting events have you recently participated? What made them exciting?

Explore It

- 3. Where did Jesus go? (6:1)
- 4. Why did the crowd of people follow Jesus? (6:2)
- 5. Where did Jesus and His disciples go? (6:3)
- 6. What Jewish feast was near? (6:4)
- * 7. What question did Jesus ask Philip? (6:5)
- 8. Why did Jesus ask Philip a question? (6:6)
- 9. How did Philip respond to Jesus' question? (6:7)
- 10. Who was Andrew? (6:8)
- 11. What role did Andrew play in feeding the five thousand? (6:8-9)
- 12. What solution did Andrew propose to Jesus' question? (6:8-9)
- * 13. What miracle did Jesus perform? (6:10-11)
- 14. How much bread was left over? (6:12-13)
- * 15. How did the crowd of people respond to Jesus' miracle? (6:14)
- 16. What did the crowd of people intend to do? (6:15)
- 17. What was Jesus' reaction to the crowd's intention? (6:15)

Get It

- 18. For what reasons do people follow Jesus today?
- 19. What makes you want to follow Jesus?
- 20. What is your typical reaction to situations that seem to present no readily available solution?
- * 21. With what situations in life do you have a difficult time trusting God?
- 22. What does God provide for us on a daily basis?
- 23. In what ways do people attempt to use Jesus or His name inappropriately?
- 24. What misconceptions have you had about Jesus or His role in your life?
- * 25. How and when has God miraculously provided for your needs?
- 26. How can we trust God with our needs?

Apply It

- 27. What things do you need to thank God for providing?
- * 28. What tough situation do you need to trust God to work out in your life this week?

Jesus Walks on the Water - John 6:16-24

Topics: Circumstances, Fear, Insecurity, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Nature, People, Power, Sovereignty

Open It

- * 1. What is the most frightening situation you have ever experienced?
- 2. What is something you feared as a child?
- 3. What is something you have diligently pursued in life?

Explore It

- 4. Where did Jesus' disciples go? (6:16)
- 5. Who hadn't joined the disciples yet? (6:17)
- 6. What happened to the water? (6:18)
- * 7. What miraculous feat did Jesus perform? (6:19)
- * 8. How did the disciples react to what they saw? (6:19)
- 9. What did Jesus do to calm His disciples' fear? (6:20)
- * 10. What miraculous event took place once Jesus entered the boat? (6:21)
- 11. Where was the crowd? (6:22)
- 12. What did the crowd realize? (6:22)
- 13. What did the crowd do when they realized that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there? (6:24)

Get It

- 14. When and why have you ever been afraid for your life or personal safety?
- * 15. When do you feel alone and in need of God's presence?
- 16. When do you tend to leave Jesus behind and out of the picture in your life?
- * 17. What fears has Jesus calmed in your life?
- 18. Under what circumstances are you often unwilling to allow Jesus to enter your problems or troubling situations?
- 19. What circumstances or events have caused you to search for Jesus?

Apply It

- * 20. How will you depend on God the next time a threatening situation confronts you?
- 21. What specific fears do you need to ask God to calm in your life?

Jesus the Bread of Life - John 6:25-59

Topics: Acceptance, Assurance, Attitude, Believe, Depend, Eternal Life, Faith, God, Gospel, Heaven, Insecurity, Jesus Christ, Lord's Supper, Love, New Life, Promises, Salvation, Security, Self-esteem, Value

Open It

1. What kind of bread do you like most?
- * 2. How do people attempt to satisfy their need to feel secure and significant in life?
3. What needs do you spend the majority of your time trying to satisfy?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did the crowd seek Jesus? (6:26)
5. What did Jesus say the Son of Man would give to these people? (6:27)
6. What did Jesus say was the work of God? (6:28-29)
7. What did the crowd ask Jesus to do? (6:30-31)
8. Who did Jesus say was the true bread of life? (6:32-33)
- * 9. What did Jesus say would be the result of coming to Him? (6:35)
10. What did Jesus say He would never do to those who came to Him? (6:37)
11. Why did Jesus come down from heaven? (6:38)
12. What did Jesus say is the Father's will? (6:39-40)
13. Why did the Jews begin to grumble? (6:41-42)
14. Who did Jesus say could come to Him? (6:43-44)
15. What did Jesus say would be the result of believing? (6:47)
- * 16. What contrast does Jesus make between manna and the bread of life? (6:48-51, 58)
17. What did Jesus say about His flesh and His blood? (6:53-57)

Get It

- * 18. What things do we seek from Jesus?
19. In what ways do you have a demanding attitude toward God?
20. When and why did you come to Jesus?
- * 21. In what way has Jesus satisfied your hunger and thirst for acceptance and meaning in life?
22. In what ways do you still feel empty?
23. What situations cause you to feel insecure?
24. When do you feel secure in your relationship with God? Why?
25. How has the Christian life turned out to be different from what you expected?
26. In what way is Jesus an example for us to follow?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do today to rely on God, rather than on things or people, to satisfy your needs?
28. What demanding attitudes do you need to ask God to help you change?

Many Disciples Desert Jesus - John 6:60-71

Topics: Abandon, Believe, Confusion, Decisions, Doubt, Eternal Life, Hardheartedness, Jesus Christ, People, Questions, Rejection, Satan, Security, Understanding

Open It

- * 1. What is something that you enthusiastically started but were later tempted to quit?
- 2. For what causes have people willingly suffered and even died?

Explore It

- * 3. How did many of Jesus' disciples respond to His teaching? (6:60)
- 4. What did Jesus ask the grumbling disciples? (6:31)
- 5. What kind of words did Jesus speak to His audience? (6:63)
- * 6. What did Jesus know? (6:64)
- 7. Who did Jesus say could come to Him? (6:65)
- 8. What did many of Jesus' disciples do after Jesus spoke these words? (6:66)
- 9. What question did Jesus ask His twelve disciples? (6:67)
- * 10. What was Peter's reply to Jesus' question? (6:68-69)
- 11. What did Jesus say about His disciples? (6:70)
- 12. Whom did Jesus call a devil? (6:71)

Get It

- * 13. What teachings of Jesus have you found difficult to understand or accept?
- 14. What makes some of Jesus' teachings difficult to understand and follow?
- 15. What might cause someone to stop following Jesus?
- 16. When have you ever felt like turning away from following Jesus?
- * 17. What has kept you from turning away from Christ?
- 18. What makes you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

Apply It

- * 19. What difficult teaching of Jesus will you ask God to help you understand and apply to your life?
- 20. What struggling Christian could use your encouragement this week as he or she continues to follow Jesus?

Jesus Goes to the Feast of Tabernacles - John 7:1-13

Topics: Believe, Compromise, Doubt, Evil, Faith, Family, Fear, Friendship, God's Will, Jesus Christ, Mission, Timing, Truth, Unbelievers, World

Open It

1. Who are some of today's most controversial personalities?
- * 2. What dynamic figure from history do you admire? Why?

Explore It

3. Why did Jesus stay away from Judea? (7:1)
4. What feast was near? (7:2)
- * 5. What did Jesus' brothers tell Him to do? (7:3-4)
6. Why did Jesus' brothers tell Him to do this? (7:5)
7. How did Jesus respond to His brothers' words? (7:6-8)
- * 8. Why did Jesus say the world hated Him? (7:7)
9. What did Jesus do when His brothers had left? (7:9)
10. What were the Jews doing at the feast? (7:11)
- * 11. What were people at the feast saying about Jesus? (7:12)
12. Why didn't the people speak publicly about Jesus? (7:13)

Get It

13. What sort of things are people today saying about Jesus?
14. How would you feel if either a family member or friend doubted you or your abilities?
- * 15. How have you been punished or put down for speaking the truth?
16. How would you feel if you knew that someone hated you?
17. What would you do if you knew that someone hated you?
- * 18. In what different ways do people react to unwelcome truth?
19. When have you been afraid to openly share your beliefs about Jesus?
20. In what way is the world today evil?

Apply It

21. How will you encourage either a family member or friend today?
- * 22. In what area of your life do you need to ask God to help you boldly speak the truth?

Jesus Teaches at the Feast - John 7:14-24

Topics: Appearance, Assumptions, Demons, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Judging Others, Law, Legalism, Traditions, Truth, Unbelievers

Open It

1. When have you gotten so caught up with rules and regulations that you missed entirely the joy of living?
- * 2. When have you judged someone or something on appearance alone only to find out later that you were wrong?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus do halfway through the Feast? (7:14)
4. How did the Jews respond to Jesus' teaching? (7:15)
5. From where did Jesus' teaching come? (7:16)
- * 6. How did Jesus say someone could discover whether or not His teaching came from God? (7:17)
7. What quality did Jesus say a person of truth possesses? (7:18)
8. What questions did Jesus ask the Jews? (7:19)
- * 9. What did the crowd accuse Jesus of being? (7:20)
10. Why did Jesus say the Jews were astonished? (7:21)
11. Why did Jesus comment on circumcision? (7:22-23)
12. What evidence did Jesus use to show that the Jews also believed in doing good on the Sabbath? (7:22-23)
13. How did Jesus compare His healing with circumcision? (7:23)
- * 14. What did Jesus instruct His audience to do? (7:24)

Get It

- * 15. How do people today respond to the teaching of Jesus?
16. What gives you the confidence to believe that what Jesus taught is true?
17. How can we become men and women of truth?
- * 18. What rules do we force on others while overlooking our own violations?
19. What are the important issues in today's society about which the Church should be concerned?
20. Why do we tend to judge things and people based solely on appearances?

Apply It

21. What hypocritical standard do you need to change in your life this week?
- * 22. How can you put aside a prejudice in order to get to know a person you have misjudged?

Is Jesus the Christ? - John 7:25-44

Topics: Believe, Divisions, Doubt, Faith, God, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Miracles, Rejection, Religion, Satisfaction, Security, Society, Unbelievers, World

Open It

1. In what do people today put their faith?
- * 2. What ideas tend to cause division among the people you know?

Explore It

- * 3. What questions did the people begin asking about Jesus? (7:25-26)
4. Why was it significant that people knew where Jesus was from? (7:27)
5. What did Jesus cry out in the temple court? (7:28-29)
6. What did the people try to do? (7:30)
7. Why were the people unsuccessful in trying to seize Jesus? (7:30)
- * 8. What reason did some of the people give for putting their faith in Jesus? (7:31)
9. What did the Pharisees do when they heard the crowd talking about Jesus? (7:32)
10. How long did Jesus say He would be with His audience? (7:33)
11. What did Jesus say the people would be unable to do? (7:34)
12. How did the Jews respond to what Jesus said? (7:35-36)
13. What invitation did Jesus offer on the last day of the Feast? (7:37)
14. What result did Jesus promise for those who believed in Him? (7:38)
15. Why hadn't the Spirit been given yet? (7:39)
- * 16. What conclusions did the people come to about Jesus? (7:40-41)
17. Why did the people get confused over Jesus' identity? (7:41-42)
18. What effect did Jesus have on these people? (7:43)
19. What did some of the people want to do? (7:44)

Get It

20. What has the world as a whole concluded about Jesus?
21. What can you tell about a person from his or her hometown?
22. How has your background shaped you into the person you are today?
23. When do you feel most refreshed in your relationship with Christ?
- * 24. How has Jesus caused division among groups of people with whom you are associated?
25. How has Jesus satisfied your thirsts and longings in life?
- * 26. In what way do we attempt to satisfy our thirsts and longings in life outside of Christ?

Apply It

- * 27. What specific thirst or longing do you need to trust Christ to satisfy this week?
28. How can you refresh your relationship with God today?

Unbelief of the Jewish Leaders - John 7:45-52

Topics: Acceptance, Authority, Influence, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Motives, Peer Pressure, Prejudice, Society, Status, Unbelievers, World

Open It

1. Why do people join groups, clubs, and associations?
- * 2. To what groups do you belong? Which is your favorite?

Explore It

3. What explanation did the temple guards give for not bringing Jesus to the chief priests and Pharisees? (7:45-46)
- * 4. How can we infer that the temple guard recognized Jesus' authority? (7:46)
5. Of what did the Pharisees accuse the temple guards? (7:47)
6. What groups of people had not believed in Jesus? (7:48)
7. Why did the Pharisees claim there was a curse on the mob of people who believed in Jesus? (7:49)
- * 8. To what group did Nicodemus belong? (7:50)
9. What question did Nicodemus ask? (7:51)
10. What question was Nicodemus asked? (7:52)
- * 11. What claim did the Pharisees make about Galilee? (7:52)

Get It

- * 12. To what groups in your church do you belong?
13. How might your membership in certain groups influence your opinions or beliefs?
14. What religious groups have power and authority in today's society?
- * 15. How might today's religious leaders react to Jesus if He came back today?
16. Why do we tend to judge others before we actually get to know them?
17. How do we sometimes abuse spiritual authority?

Apply It

- * 18. What groups that further the cause of Christ can you support? How?
19. How can you glorify God in the places of authority you hold?

A Woman Caught in Adultery - John 7:53-8:11

Topics: Accusation, Adultery, Failure, Faults, Forgiveness, Hypocrisy, Immorality, Jesus Christ, Judging Others, Legalism, Punishment, Self-righteousness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. What sins do most people think they are incapable of committing?
- 2. What activities or behavior do you consider to be immoral?
- 3. What do you think is the biggest challenge to marriages today?

Explore It

- 4. Where did Jesus go? (8:1)
- 5. What did Jesus sit down to do in the temple courts? (8:2)
- 6. Whom did the Pharisees bring before Jesus? (8:3-4)
- * 7. What did the Law of Moses say should happen to the woman caught in adultery? (8:5)
- 8. Why did the Pharisees bring the woman before Jesus? (8:6)
- 9. How did Jesus answer the Pharisees' question? (8:6-8)
- * 10. Why did Jesus issue a challenge to the Pharisees? (8:7)
- 11. How did the Pharisees respond to Jesus' challenge? (8:9)
- 12. What did Jesus ask the woman? (8:10)
- * 13. What did Jesus tell the woman to do? (8:11)

Get It

- * 14. Which sins do we tend to categorize as "big" sins (those that are worse than all others)?
- 15. Why do we rush to point out other people's sin?
- 16. Which sins do you think God classifies as "big" sins?
- 17. How do we treat people who have fallen into one of the so-called "big" sins?
- * 18. How should we treat people who have sinned?
- 19. About what do you tend to be self-righteous?
- 20. What should we do when we've sinned?

Apply It

- 21. How can you challenge a friend or family member caught in sin to sin no more?
- 22. Away from what bad habit or tendency do you need to take the first step today?
- * 23. What self-righteous attitude will you ask God to change in your prayers this week?

The Validity of Jesus' Testimony - John 8:12-30

Topics: Authority, Believe, Darkness, Eternal Life, Faith, God, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Knowledge, Leadership, Light, People, World

Open It

1. What kind of credentials are valued most by the people you work with?
- * 2. When was a time you were able to verify someone else's testimony?

Explore It

3. Who did Jesus say that He was? (8:12)
4. What did Jesus say would be the result of following Him? (8:12)
5. How did the Pharisees challenge Jesus? (8:13)
- * 6. Why did Jesus say His own testimony was valid? (8:14)
7. Why did Jesus say His decisions were right? (8:15-16)
- * 8. What two witnesses did Jesus claim testified on His behalf? (8:17-18)
9. Why did Jesus say that the Pharisees didn't know His Father? (8:19)
10. Why didn't anyone seize Jesus? (8:20)
11. How did the Jews respond to Jesus' words? (8:21-22)
12. What did Jesus say would be the consequence of not believing in Him? (8:23-24)
13. What question did the Jews ask Jesus? (8:25)
14. How did Jesus answer the Jews' question? (8:25-26)
- * 15. At what point did Jesus say that the people would know who He was? (8:27-28)
16. Whom did Jesus say He pleased? (8:29)
17. How did the people respond to Jesus' words? (8:30)

Get It

18. How do you know God the Father?
19. In what way is Jesus a "light"?
20. How is Jesus the light in your world?
21. How were you in darkness before you believed in Jesus?
- * 22. Why is Jesus' testimony credible to you?
23. Why are people today confused about Jesus' identity?
24. How is Jesus' relationship with God an example for our relationship with God?
25. In what way has God been reliable in your life?
- * 26. What would people say about the validity of your testimony?

Apply It

27. How can you seek to please God with what you do today?
- * 28. In what way can you testify on behalf of Jesus this week?

The Children of Abraham - John 8:31-41

Topics: Believe, Children, Freedom, God, Jesus Christ, New Life, Salvation, Sin, Slavery, Unbelievers, Understanding, Words

Open It

- * 1. To what sort of things do people today become enslaved?
- 2. What does it mean to you to be free? What doesn't it mean?

Explore It

- 3. What did Jesus say to the Jews who had believed in Him? (8:31)
- * 4. What did Jesus say the truth would do for those who knew it? (8:32)
- 5. How did the Jews respond to Jesus' statement about freedom? (8:33)
- * 6. Who did Jesus say is a slave to sin? (8:34)
- 7. How does Jesus distinguish a slave from a son? (8:35)
- * 8. What is the result of being freed by the Son? (8:36)
- 9. What did Jesus say the Jews were ready to do? (8:37)
- 10. Who did the Jews say was their father? (8:39)
- 11. In what way were the Jews mistaken about Abraham? (8:39)
- 12. What did Abraham not do? (8:40)
- 13. What claim did Jesus' accusers make? (8:41)

Get It

- 14. How are you like your mother or father?
- 15. To what sin are you a slave?
- * 16. From what sin have you been set free?
- * 17. How does truth set someone free?
- 18. How has the Son set you free?
- 19. In what way are we like God our Father?
- 20. When do we act like illegitimate children?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you better enjoy your freedom in the Son?
- 22. From what enslaving sin will you ask God to set you free?
- 23. What action will you take in order to act more like a child of God?

The Children of the Devil - John 8:42-47

Topics: Believe, Children, God, Heresy, Jesus Christ, Love, Parents, Satan, Sin, Truth, Understanding, Words

Open It

1. What languages other than English have you learned or would you like to learn?
- * 2. What makes mastering a second language so difficult?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus say the Jews would do if God were their Father? (8:42)
4. Who sent Jesus? (8:42)
- * 5. Why did Jesus say that His language was unclear to His audience? (8:43)
6. What shocking fact did Jesus reveal about His audience? (8:44)
7. What did Jesus say was not in the devil? (8:44)
- * 8. What is the devil's native language? (8:44)
9. Of what did Jesus say the devil was the father? (8:44)
10. Why did Jesus' audience not believe Him? (8:45)
11. What did Jesus ask His audience to prove? (8:46)
- * 12. What did Jesus say that the person who belonged to God heard? (8:47)
13. What reason did Jesus give for these people's lack of hearing? (8:47)

Get It

14. In what way are you like your parents?
15. What points to the fact that you belong to God?
16. How does a person show love for Jesus?
- * 17. What truths do you have a difficult time accepting?
18. How is our love for God reflected in our love for Christ?
- * 19. What does your speech reveal about you?
20. What is your native language: truth, lies, or another language?
21. How can we learn a new language?

Apply It

22. What truth that is difficult for you to face will you ask God to help you confront today?
23. What change in your speech can you make this week to reflect your status as a child of God?

The Claims of Jesus About Himself - John 8:48-59

Topics: Accusation, Authority, Believe, Death, Demons, Glory, God, Hardheartedness, Heresy, Jesus Christ, Motives, Truth, Unbelievers, Understanding, Words

Open It

1. Over what area of your life do you feel you have the least amount of control?
- * 2. How would you respond if you were falsely accused of doing something you hadn't done?

Explore It

- * 3. Of what did the Jews accuse Jesus? (8:48)
4. How did Jesus respond to the accusation against Him? (8:49)
5. What did Jesus say He wasn't seeking? (8:50)
6. What did Jesus say would be the result of keeping His word? (8:51)
7. How did the Jews respond to Jesus' claim? (8:52)
8. What question did the Jews ask Jesus? (8:53)
9. Who glorifies Jesus? (8:54)
- * 10. Whom did Jesus claim to know? (8:55)
11. What made Abraham rejoice? (8:56)
- * 12. Why were the Jews so astonished by what Jesus said? (8:57)
13. Before whom did Jesus claim He had existed? (8:58)
14. What did the Jews attempt to do to Jesus? Why? (8:58-59)

Get It

15. How do you usually respond to things you don't understand or can't explain?
16. How do you respond to situations that you can't control?
- * 17. How do you respond when your authority is being challenged?
18. To what authorities in life do you appeal for truth?
19. Whose glory do you seek?
- * 20. How can you honor God with your life?
21. How does a person keep Jesus' word?
22. How well do you keep Jesus' word?
23. How do you know that you know God?

Apply It

24. What is one way that you can honor God with your life today?
- * 25. How can you seek God's glory rather than your own in your work this week?
26. What do you need to do in order to keep Jesus' word?

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind - John 9:1-12

Topics: Abilities, Circumstances, Glory, God, Healing, Jesus Christ, Light, Miracles, New Life, Parents, Sin, World

Open It

1. What goes through your mind when you see a disabled person?
- * 2. In what way would being blind change your life?

Explore It

3. How long had the man Jesus saw been blind? (9:1)
- * 4. What question did Jesus' disciples ask Him about the blind man's condition? (9:2)
- * 5. Why had this man been born blind? (9:3)
6. What did Jesus say that they should be doing as long as it is day? (9:4)
7. What did Jesus claim to be? (9:5)
8. What did Jesus put on the blind man's eyes? (9:6)
9. What happened to the blind man? (9:7)
10. How did the blind man's neighbors respond to his new condition? (9:9)
11. What question did the blind man's neighbors ask him? (9:10)
- * 12. How did the blind man answer his neighbors' question? (9:11)
13. What did the man's neighbors want to know? (9:12)

Get It

14. How do our sins affect us physically or emotionally?
15. How do our sins affect others?
16. With what condition were you born so that God might be glorified?
17. Through what disability or weakness can you glorify God?
18. What work has God given you to do while you still have time?
- * 19. In what way has God healed you?
- * 20. In what ways are we spiritually blind?
21. From what "blindness" has God healed you?
22. How did your family and friends respond when you put your faith in Christ?

Apply It

- * 23. Through what shortcoming in your life will you ask God to glorify Himself today?
24. For what healing in your life will you praise God today?

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing - John 9:13-34

Topics: Believe, Challenge, Church, Comfortable, Complacency, God, Hardheartedness, Healing, Heresy, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Miracles, Parents, Sin, Status, Traditions, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. Who do you know who has challenged “the establishment” or “the system”?
- 2. About what do you tend to get complacent?

Explore It

- 3. To whom was the blind man taken? (9:13)
- 4. On what day did Jesus heal the blind man? (9:14)
- 5. What did the Pharisees ask the blind man? (9:15)
- 6. Over what were the Pharisees divided? (9:16)
- 7. Who did the blind man think Jesus was? (9:17)
- 8. Why did the Pharisees send for the blind man’s parents? (9:18)
- * 9. How did the blind man’s parents answer the Pharisees’ questions? (9:19-21)
- 10. What did the blind man’s parents fear? (9:22-23)
- 11. What did the Pharisees ask the blind man to do? (9:24)
- * 12. How did the blind man respond to the Pharisees? (9:25)
- 13. What question did the blind man ask the Pharisees? (9:27)
- 14. Whose disciples did the Pharisees claim to be? (9:28)
- 15. What did the blind man say was remarkable? (9:29-30)
- 16. What did the blind man say nobody had ever done? (9:31-32)
- * 17. What convinced the blind man that Jesus was from God? (9:33)
- 18. What did the Pharisees do to the man who was born blind? (9:34)

Get It

- 19. What divides Christian leaders today?
- 20. How would you react to a miraculous healing?
- 21. Why do you believe Jesus is from God?
- 22. When have your parents disappointed you?
- 23. How do you respond when your authority is challenged?
- * 24. What authority have you ever challenged?
- 25. How do people respond when the status quo is disturbed?
- * 26. In what way has Jesus upset the status quo in your life?
- 27. When have you allowed fear to control your behavior?
- 28. In what way are Christians today complacent?
- 29. In what way has Jesus opened your once-blind eyes?

Apply It

- 30. What area of your life about which you have become complacent do you need to allow Jesus to revitalize? How?
- 31. What program in your church about which people have become complacent can you help revitalize?
- * 32. How would you challenge someone this week who disputed the authority of God?

Spiritual Blindness - John 9:35-41

Topics: Acceptance, Believe, Faith, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Religion, Sin, World, Worship

Open It

1. What is one cause or person for which you would risk being disowned by your family and all your friends?
- * 2. What person outside your family has had the biggest impact on your life?

Explore It

3. What had Jesus heard? (9:35)
- * 4. What did Jesus ask the man who had been blind? (9:35)
5. Why did the blind man ask Jesus to identify the Son of Man? (9:36)
- * 6. Who did Jesus claim to be? (9:37)
- * 7. What did the blind man do when Jesus told him who He was? (9:38)
8. According to Jesus, why had He come into the world? (9:39)
9. What people expressed shock at what Jesus said? (9:40)
10. What did the Pharisees ask Jesus? (9:40)
11. What did Jesus mean by saying “but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains”? (9:41)
12. Why did Jesus say that the Pharisees’ guilt would remain? (9:41)

Get It

13. When have you felt unaccepted by other believers?
- * 14. In what circumstances do you usually worship Jesus?
- * 15. In what way are people today spiritually blind?
16. How has Jesus healed you of your spiritual blindness?
17. How has Jesus’ healing of your spiritual blindness changed your life?

Apply It

18. For what do you need to worship Jesus and God today?
- * 19. For what person who is spiritually blind will you pray that God would open his or her eyes?

The Shepherd and His Flock - John 10:1-21

Topics: Eternal Life, Follow, God, Jesus Christ, Life, Listening, Love, New Life, Obedience, Relationships, Sacrifice, Salvation

Open It

- * 1. What person or group did you and your friends “follow” when you were a teenager?
- 2. What qualities do the best friends possess?

Explore It

- 3. Who did Jesus say was a thief and a robber? (10:1)
- 4. What kind of relationship do sheep have with their shepherd? (10:2-4)
- * 5. Why won't sheep follow a stranger? (10:5)
- 6. What effect did Jesus' words have on His audience? (10:6)
- 7. What did Jesus say He was? (10:7)
- 8. To whom did Jesus say the sheep did not listen? (10:8)
- 9. What did Jesus say would be the result of entering through Him? (10:9)
- * 10. How did Jesus contrast His coming with the coming of a thief? (10:10)
- 11. Who did Jesus claim to be? (10:11)
- 12. Why did Jesus say the hired hand would abandon his sheep? (10:12-13)
- 13. What type of relationship did Jesus say He had with His sheep? (10:14)
- * 14. What did Jesus say He did for His sheep? (10:15)
- 15. What did Jesus say He had? (10:16)
- 16. Why did Jesus say the Father loved Him? (10:17-18)
- 17. What effect did Jesus' words have on the Jews who heard Him speak? (10:19-21)

Get It

- 18. In what way is Jesus like a gate?
- 19. How has Jesus been a gate in your life?
- * 20. In what way is Jesus like a shepherd?
- 21. How are we like sheep?
- 22. In what way is Jesus your shepherd?
- 23. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus?
- * 24. How can we better hear the voice of Jesus?
- 25. What tempts people to follow a stranger? Why?
- 26. How has Jesus made your life full?

Apply It

- 27. How can you develop a more intimate relationship with Jesus this week?
- * 28. How can you be more attentive to the voice of Jesus?

The Unbelief of the Jews - John 10:22-42

Topics: Assurance, Believe, Blasphemy, Doubt, Eternal Life, God, Hardheartedness, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Miracles, Rejection, Relationships, Sin, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What truths are hard for you to accept? Why?
- * 2. How did your family typically handle conflict when you were growing up?

Explore It

- * 3. What question did the Jews ask Jesus? (10:22-24)
4. How did Jesus answer the Jews' question? (10:25-26)
5. What did Jesus say His sheep did? (10:27)
6. What did Jesus say He gave to His sheep? (10:28)
7. What did Jesus say that no one could do to His sheep? (10:28-29)
8. With whom did Jesus claim to be one? (10:30)
- * 9. How did the Jews respond to Jesus' claim? (10:31)
10. Why did the Jews want to kill Jesus? (10:33) How?
11. How did Jesus respond to the Jews' accusation of blasphemy? (10:34-36)
12. Under what circumstance did Jesus say that the Jews should believe in Him? (10:37)
- * 13. Why did Jesus say that the Jews should believe in His miracles? (10:38)
14. What did the Jews try to do to Jesus? (10:39)
15. Where did Jesus go after He escaped from the Jews? (10:40)
16. Why did the people across the Jordan believe in Jesus? (10:41-42)

Get It

17. Why do people today fail to realize that Jesus is God?
18. In what way are you Jesus' sheep?
19. What makes you feel secure in your relationship with your friends?
- * 20. What makes you feel secure in your relationship with God?
21. How secure is your relationship with God?
- * 22. Why does Jesus' claim to be God cause people to oppose Him?
23. Who today would find Jesus' claim to be God offensive?
24. In what way is Jesus' relationship with God significant for your relationship with God?
25. Why should people believe in Jesus?

Apply It

26. How will you demonstrate your thankfulness to God today for your secure relationship with Him?
- * 27. What steps will you take to follow your Shepherd closely this week?

The Death of Lazarus - John 11:1-16

Topics: Believe, Challenge, Circumstances, Darkness, Death, Glory, God, God's Will, Jesus Christ, Light, Mission, Mourning, Sickness, Sin

Open It

1. What polite phrases do we use to describe death?
- * 2. When has someone you've known died unexpectedly?

Explore It

3. What was wrong with Lazarus? (11:1)
4. To whom was Lazarus related? (11:2)
5. How did Jesus get word about Lazarus? (11:3)
- * 6. Why did Jesus say Lazarus was sick? (11:4)
7. What did Jesus do when He heard about Lazarus? (11:6)
8. Why did Jesus' disciples respond negatively to Jesus' plan to return to Judea? (11:7-8)
9. How did Jesus answer His disciples' hesitancy about returning to Judea? (11:9-10)
10. What did Jesus say had happened to Lazarus? (11:11)
- * 11. How did the disciples misunderstand Jesus? (11:12)
12. What did Jesus mean when he used the word "sleeping"? (11:13-14)
- * 13. Why did Jesus say that He was glad He wasn't with Lazarus? (11:15)
14. What melancholic suggestion did Thomas make? (11:16)

Get It

15. How would you respond if you heard that a good friend was very sick?
- * 16. When have you thought you had a better plan for your life than the one God was working out?
17. In what way has God used sickness in your life or the life of another to bring someone to Himself?
18. Why would God choose to use sickness to bring someone to Himself?
19. What shortcoming or disability in your life has God chosen to use to draw others to Himself?
- * 20. How would you respond differently from the way Jesus did if you heard that a good friend had died?
21. When have you felt that you had to perform a task regardless of the obstacles in your path?
22. What gave you the confidence to pursue a hard task that others strongly opposed?
23. When have you felt misunderstood by your friends or family?

Apply It

24. To what unfulfilled task that God has given you will you recommit yourself today?
- * 25. What shortcomings or weaknesses in your life will you give to God in prayer, that He may use them to bring glory to Himself?

Jesus Comforts the Sisters - John 11:17-37

Topics: Anger, Believe, Circumstances, Comfortable, Confidence, Death, Delay, Discouragement, Eternal Life, Example, Faith, God, Jesus Christ, Ministry, Mourning, Resurrection, Salvation, Sorrow

Open It

- * 1. What is one of your greatest disappointments in life?
- 2. In what different ways do people respond when a loved one dies?

Explore It

- 3. What did Jesus find when He arrived at Bethany? (11:17)
- 4. What did Mary and Martha do when they heard that Jesus was coming? (11:20)
- * 5. What did Martha say to Jesus about His having come after Lazarus had died? (11:21-22)
- 6. What did Jesus tell Martha Lazarus would do? (11:23)
- 7. How did Martha misunderstand Jesus? (11:24)
- 8. What did Martha and the others learn about Jesus' identity? (11:25)
- * 9. What did Jesus say would happen to those who believed in Him? (11:26)
- 10. What belief did Martha express to Jesus? (11:27)
- 11. What did Martha tell Mary? (11:28)
- 12. What did Mary do after Martha told her Jesus was asking for her? (11:29)
- 13. Where did the Jews think Mary was going? (11:30-31)
- 14. How did Mary respond when she saw Jesus? (11:32)
- 15. What did Mary say to Jesus when He finally arrived? (11:32)
- * 16. How did Jesus respond to the weeping by Mary and the others? (11:33-35)
- 17. What question did some people have about what Jesus could have done? (11:37)

Get It

- 18. When has God's response to your situation in life seemed untimely?
- 19. In what way do we sometimes second-guess God?
- * 20. When do we tend to second-guess God?
- 21. How and when has God disappointed you?
- 22. Why are we sometimes disappointed by God?
- * 23. How should we respond to disappointment?
- 24. When has God given you comfort in the middle of a sad time of life?
- 25. In what way is Jesus' response to Lazarus's death a model for us to follow?

Apply It

- * 26. What attitude of disappointment do you need to confess to God and change to trust in His sovereign control?
- 27. How can you be a comfort to a struggling or hurting believer this week?

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead - John 11:38-44

Topics: Believe, Death, Doubt, Glory, God, God's Will, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Mourning, New Life, Resurrection, Sorrow

Open It

1. What do the people you know fear most in life?
- * 2. What sort of miracle would be the most spectacular to witness?

Explore It

3. How did Jesus feel when He went to Lazarus's tomb? (11:38)
4. In what type of tomb was Lazarus buried? (11:38)
- * 5. What did Jesus tell the others to do? (11:39)
6. How did Martha respond to Jesus' request? (11:39)
- * 7. How did Jesus show Martha the importance of her belief? (11:40)
8. What did Jesus do before He called to Lazarus? (11:41-42)
9. What did Jesus say to the Father? Why? (11:41-42)
- * 10. How did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? (11:43-44)
11. What did Lazarus do when Jesus called to him? (11:44)
12. What did Jesus tell the people to do? (11:44)

Get It

13. When have you been deeply moved?
14. Under what circumstances have you doubted the power of God?
- * 15. When have you had faith in God's ability to work out an impossible situation?
- * 16. What is one miracle God has done in your life?
17. How does God show His glory to us?
18. In what way has God shown His glory to you?
19. In what way has God "raised you from the dead"?
20. If you had been there when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, how do you think you might have responded?

Apply It

- * 21. What specific situation do you need to trust God to work out in your life?
22. For what "miracle" do you want to thank God today?
23. What can you do today so that others might believe in Jesus?

The Plot to Kill Jesus - John 11:45-57

Topics: Ambition, Believe, Christianity, Church, Deceit, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Ministry, Miracles, Motives, Power, Prophecy, Religion, Self-centeredness, Self-righteousness, Unbelievers

Open It

1. Without naming names, who is the most dishonest and self-serving person you've ever known?
- * 2. What examples of selfishness do you see in a typical day?
3. How do you deal with problem people in your life?

Explore It

4. How did many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary respond to Jesus' miracle? (11:45)
5. Who was told about Jesus' miracle? (11:46)
- * 6. What did the Sanhedrin fear? (11:47-48)
7. What did Caiaphas say about Jesus? (11:49-50)
- * 8. How did Caiaphas prophesy? (11:51-52)
9. What did the Jewish leaders of the Sanhedrin plot to do? (11:53)
10. How did Jesus respond to the Sanhedrin's plot? (11:54)
11. Why did many people go to Jerusalem? (11:55)
12. For whom did the people in Jerusalem look? (11:56)
- * 13. What orders had the chief priests and Pharisees given to the people? (11:57)

Get It

- * 14. What motive other than ministry might people have for engaging in Christian service?
15. What personal ambitions might subvert the goal of serving God and others in Christian organizations?
16. When have you intentionally or unintentionally used the church to pursue your own agenda?
- * 17. Why is it so difficult to have pure and selfless motives in life?
18. How do you respond when your goals and your motives conflict with one another?
19. How might Christianity be challenged or threatened by Jesus if He were to come back today?

Apply It

20. How would you tell a self-centered person the gospel message?
- * 21. What self-centered motive will you ask God to help you change?

Jesus Anointed at Bethany - John 12:1-11

Topics: Devotion, Dishonesty, Faith, Honor, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Loyalty, Money, Plans, Poor, Possessions, Preparation, Value, Worship

Open It

- * 1. When have you indulged another person with an expensive gift?
- 2. How do you deal with the tension of helping people in need while enjoying your wealth and possessions?

Explore It

- 3. When did Jesus arrive in Bethany? (12:1)
- * 4. What was done in honor of Jesus in Bethany? (12:2)
- 5. What did Mary do to Jesus? (12:3)
- * 6. How did Judas respond to Mary's act? (12:4-5)
- 7. What motivated Judas's response to Mary's act? (12:6)
- * 8. Why did Jesus say that Mary had anointed Him with perfume? (12:7)
- 9. What did Jesus say about the poor? (12:8)
- 10. Why did the large crowd come to Mary and Martha's home? (12:9)
- 11. What did the chief priests plan to do? (12:10)
- 12. What motive did the chief priests have? (12:11)

Get It

- 13. How do you worship Jesus with your resources?
- * 14. What concern should we have for the poor among us?
- 15. In what way can we help those less fortunate than ourselves?
- 16. Why are there poor people?
- * 17. How do we selfishly use God's resources for our own pleasure?
- 18. When have we masked our own selfishness with the appearance of concern for others?

Apply It

- * 19. How can you worship and honor God with your resources today?
- 20. How can you help someone less fortunate than yourself this week?
- 21. What impure motives do you need to confess to God and ask Him to purify?

The Triumphal Entry - John 12:12-19

Topics: Enthusiasm, Evangelism, Expectations, Glory, Good News, Honor, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Praise, Prophecy, Worship

Open It

- * 1. How do people usually react when they meet a celebrity? Why?
- 2. Who are today's religious celebrities?

Explore It

- 3. What had the crowd heard about Jesus? (12:12)
- * 4. How did the crowd greet Jesus when He arrived in Jerusalem? (12:13)
- 5. What title did the crowd ascribe to Jesus? (12:13)
- 6. What prophetic event took place? (12:14-15)
- 7. What had been written about this event? (12:15)
- 8. When did Jesus' disciples realize the significance of these events? (12:16)
- * 9. What did the crowd that was with Jesus do when He raised Lazarus? (12:17)
- * 10. Why did many of the people go out to meet Jesus? (12:18)
- 11. How did the Pharisees react to this event? (12:19)

Get It

- * 12. What did you hear about Jesus that led you to seek Him?
- 13. How should Jesus be the ruler in our lives?
- 14. When are you reluctant to allow Jesus to take His rightful place as King in your life?
- 15. What area of your life is difficult for you to surrender to Christ's authority?
- 16. How should we honor and worship Jesus as King?
- * 17. How should we spread the Word about Jesus?

Apply It

- 18. What specific area of your life do you need to submit more consistently to the authority of Jesus? How?
- 19. With whom do you need to share the good news about Jesus Christ? How can you?
- * 20. How will you honor and worship Jesus with your life today?

Jesus Predicts His Death - John 12:20-36

Topics: Commitment, Darkness, Death, Discipline, Faith, Follow, Glory, God, Heaven, Honor, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Life, Life-style, Light, Satan, Self-centeredness, Selfishness

Open It

- * 1. Who or what in life encourages you to be self-centered?
- 2. When have you set aside your own needs temporarily to meet the needs of other people?

Explore It

- 3. What did the group of Greeks ask Philip? (12:20-22)
- 4. What did Jesus say had come? (12:23)
- 5. What did Jesus say about a kernel of wheat? (12:24)
- * 6. What did Jesus say about loving and hating life? (12:25)
- 7. What did Jesus say about the person who wants to serve Him? (12:26)
- 8. How did Jesus feel? (12:27)
- 9. What was Jesus' attitude? (12:27)
- * 10. Why didn't Jesus ask the Father to save Him? (12:27)
- 11. What did Jesus ask the Father to do? (12:28)
- 12. How did the crowd react to God's voice? (12:29)
- 13. What time did Jesus say it was? (12:31)
- * 14. What did Jesus say would happen when He was lifted up? (12:32)
- 15. How did the crowd respond to Jesus' words? (12:34)
- 16. In what way was Jesus' audience running out of time? (12:35)
- 17. What did Jesus tell the crowd to do? (12:36)

Get It

- * 18. How do we love our own lives?
- 19. How does Jesus want us to hate our lives?
- 20. When and why is it difficult for you to serve and follow Jesus?
- * 21. What does it mean for us to "walk in the light"?
- 22. What tempts you to wander in the darkness rather than walk in the light?
- 23. What example has Jesus set for us to follow?
- 24. How can a group of people all have the same experience but interpret it differently?

Apply It

- * 25. What is one change you can make in your life to become more attentive to the needs of others over your own?
- 26. To whom can you be helpful today? How?

The Jews Continue in Their Unbelief - John 12:37-50

Topics: Acceptance, Believe, Complacency, Darkness, Eternal Life, Faith, Fear, Follow, God, Hardheartedness, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Life, Light, Love, Miracles, Peer Pressure, Prophecy, Rejection, Salvation, Unbelievers, Words

Open It

- * 1. Why do people seek fame and the acceptance of others?
- 2. Aside from God's, whose love and acceptance have you tried to get?

Explore It

- 3. What effect did Jesus' miracles have on the unbelieving Jews? (12:37)
- 4. What was significant about the response of the Jews to Jesus' ministry? (12:38)
- * 5. Why couldn't the Jews of Jesus' day believe in Him? (12:39-40)
- 6. What did Isaiah say about the Jews of Jesus' day? (12:41)
- * 7. Why didn't the leaders who did believe in Jesus admit their faith? (12:42-43)
- 8. What is true about any person who believes in Christ? (12:44-45)
- 9. Why did Jesus come into the world? (12:46)
- 10. What did Jesus say about the person who hears His words, but does not keep them? (12:47)
- * 11. What did Jesus say would condemn the person who did not accept His words? (12:48)
- 12. What kind of teaching did Jesus give us? (12:49)
- 13. Why are Jesus' words important? (12:50)

Get It

- 14. How can people see the work of Jesus in others' lives and still not believe in Him?
- * 15. What blinds us to spiritual truth?
- 16. When and why have you been afraid to admit your faith in Jesus?
- * 17. What consequences might a Christian face for publicly admitting faith in Jesus?
- 18. Why do we want to pursue the praise and acceptance of other people rather than the praise and acceptance of God?
- 19. Out of what kind of darkness has Jesus taken you?
- 20. How can we accept and keep the words of Jesus?

Apply It

- * 21. To whom do you need to admit your faith in Jesus, regardless of the consequences? When can you?
- 22. In what personal circumstance do you want to seek God's acceptance over the praise and acceptance of others?

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet - John 13:1-17

Topics: Ambition, Attitude, Example, Forgiveness, Glory, Greatness, Help, Honor, Humility, Jesus Christ, Life-style, Love, Ministry, Motives, Pride, Self-centeredness, Serving

Open It

- * 1. What is your idea of great customer service?
- 2. In what way does our society instill in us the desire to be served?
- 3. What do your neighbors consider to be signs of high position or status?

Explore It

- 4. What did Jesus know it was time to do? (13:1)
- 5. What had the devil prompted Judas to do? (13:2)
- 6. What did Jesus know that the Father had done? (13:3)
- 7. What did Jesus do when He got up from His meal with the disciples? (13:4-5)
- 8. Why did Peter express shock? (13:6)
- 9. How did Jesus respond to Peter's amazement? (13:7)
- * 10. What did Peter declare he would never allow? (13:8)
- 11. Why was it important for Jesus to wash the disciples' feet? (13:8)
- 12. What did Peter want Jesus to do? (13:9)
- 13. Why did Peter need only his feet washed? (13:10)
- 14. Why did Jesus qualify His statements? (13:11)
- * 15. What did Jesus tell His disciples they should do? (13:12-15)
- * 16. What is the difference between servants and masters? (13:16)
- 17. How did Jesus say that His disciples would be blessed? (13:17)

Get It

- 18. When and why do you find it difficult to allow others to serve you?
- * 19. When and why is it difficult for you to serve others?
- 20. How has Jesus cleansed us?
- * 21. In what way does Jesus wash our feet today?
- 22. In what way are we to wash the feet of others?
- 23. What example did Jesus set for us to follow?
- 24. In what areas do you struggle with being humble?
- 25. What makes being humble so difficult?
- 26. When and why do you feel in competition with other believers?

Apply It

- 27. Who is someone you can serve today? How?
- * 28. Whose service do you need to accept the next time he or she offers?
- 29. What proud attitude do you still exhibit that could benefit from Jesus' example?

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal - John 13:18-30

Topics: Acceptance, Affections, Character, Choices, Evil, Fellowship, Friendship, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Life-style, Love, Motives, Relationships, Satan

Open It

1. What persons in history or literature are known as traitors?
- * 2. Why is trust important to a friendship?

Explore It

3. What did Jesus say about the person who shared His bread? (13:18)
4. Why did Jesus tell His disciples He would be betrayed? (13:19)
5. What did Jesus say about His disciples? (13:20)
- * 6. Why was Jesus troubled? (13:21)
7. How did Jesus' disciples respond when He said one of them would betray Him? (13:22)
8. What did Peter do? (13:23-24)
- * 9. How did Jesus answer the beloved disciple's question? (13:26)
10. What happened to Judas when he took the bread? (13:27)
11. What did Jesus say to Judas? (13:27)
- * 12. What did the other disciples think Jesus was telling Judas to do? (13:28-29)
13. What did Judas do? (13:30)

Get It

14. Why is it hard to maintain an intimate and growing relationship with another person?
- * 15. How would it feel to be betrayed by a close friend?
16. Whom do you know who has been hurt by betrayal?
- * 17. What can you do to build trust in all your friendships?
18. How do we betray Jesus with our words or by our life-style?
19. Why and how are we tempted to betray Jesus?
20. What are the consequences of betraying Jesus?

Apply It

21. What behavior that betrays your relationship with Jesus will you ask God to help you change?
- * 22. What is the first step you can take toward building trust in one personal relationship this week?

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial - John 13:31-38

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Character, Choices, Denial, Follow, Glory, God, Jesus Christ, Life, Life-style, Love, Loyalty, Sacrifice

Open It

1. What can you learn about a person from the way he or she dresses?
2. How do people reveal their convictions through their life-style?
- * 3. What does it mean to love someone?

Explore It

4. What did Jesus say when Judas had gone? (13:31)
5. What did God do through Jesus? (13:32)
6. How much longer did Jesus say He would be with His disciples? (13:33)
7. Why was Jesus saying farewell? (13:33)
8. What was Jesus giving to His disciples? (13:34)
- * 9. What did Jesus command His disciples to do? (13:34)
- * 10. How did Jesus say people would know His disciples? (13:35)
11. What question did Peter ask Jesus? (13:36)
12. What did Jesus tell Peter? (13:36)
- * 13. What did Peter pledge to do? (13:37)
14. What blunt statement did Jesus make about Peter? (13:38)

Get It

15. How is God glorified by our behavior?
- * 16. What does it mean for you to love people as Jesus has loved them?
17. What kind of love was Jesus talking about?
- * 18. How is love a sign that someone is a disciple of Christ?
19. How do we deny Christ with our words or life-style?
20. When and why are we tempted to deny Jesus?
21. How does our denying Christ affect our relationship with Him as well as our relationships with other Christians?

Apply It

- * 22. Who is someone you need to love as Christ has loved you? How?
23. What can you do to stay loyal to Christ this week with either your words or your life-style?
24. How can you show Christ's love to others at your place of work, at home, or in your neighborhood?
25. What steps can you take to become more loving to others?

Jesus Comforts His Disciples - John 14:1-4

Topics: Assurance, Confidence, Eternal Life, Feelings, God, Heart, Home, Hope, Jesus Christ, Security, Trust, Worry

Open It

1. What is it about your home that makes it feel like home to you?
- * 2. In what way do you sometimes feel that this world is not your home?
3. Who or what is most comforting to you when you are upset?

Explore It

- * 4. How didn't Jesus want His disciples to respond to His departure? (14:1)
5. How did Jesus want His disciples to respond to His departure? (14:1)
6. In what did Jesus want His disciples to trust? (14:1)
7. Where did Jesus say He was going? (14:2)
8. What assurance did Jesus give His disciples that what He said was true? (14:2)
- * 9. What is in God's house? (14:2)
10. What did Jesus say He was going to do in His Father's house? (14:2)
- * 11. What did Jesus tell His disciples that He would do for them? (14:3)
12. What promise did Jesus make? (14:3)
13. What did Jesus' disciples know? (14:4)

Get It

14. What troubles your heart?
15. How do you usually handle worries that trouble you?
16. Why is it sometimes hard to trust God with our problems?
- * 17. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus is preparing a place for you in His Father's house?
18. In what way is Jesus preparing you to be with Him?
- * 19. How are you preparing to be with Jesus?

Apply It

20. What troubles do you need to entrust to God today?
- * 21. What can you do today to prepare yourself for an eternity with Jesus?

Jesus the Way to the Father - John 14:5-14

Topics: Answers, Basics of the Faith, Beliefs, Believe, Evidence, Faith, Fellowship, Glory, God, God's Will, Gospel, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Life, Mediator, Miracles, Name, Truth, Words

Open It

1. What are some widely accepted "truths" that you believe to be false?
- * 2. In what ways do you resemble your parents?

Explore It

3. What did Thomas ask Jesus? (14:5)
- * 4. What did Jesus tell Thomas that He was? (14:6)
5. Whom did Jesus say that His disciples would know if they really knew Him? (14:7)
6. Whom did Philip ask Jesus to show them? (14:8)
- * 7. What did Jesus ask Philip in response to Philip's request to be shown the Father? (14:9)
8. How did Jesus characterize His relationship with the Father? (14:10-11)
- * 9. What evidence did Jesus use to prove that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him? (14:11)
10. What did Jesus say that those who had faith in Him would do? (14:12)
11. Why did Jesus say that anyone who had faith would do greater things? (14:12)
12. Why did Jesus say that He would do whatever His believers asked in His name? (14:13)
13. What did Jesus say that He would do for His followers? (14:14)

Get It

- * 14. In what way is faith in Jesus Christ exclusive or narrow?
15. In what way is Christianity an exclusive belief system?
- * 16. How is Jesus the way, the truth, and the life in your life?
17. How are we related to Jesus Christ and God the Father?
18. What does it mean to know someone?
19. What does it mean to know Jesus and God?
20. What "greater things" are we doing today?
21. What can we ask Jesus to do?
22. What should our motivation be when we make requests of Jesus?
23. How can we bring glory to the Father?

Apply It

24. What can you do this week to deepen your relationship with Christ?
25. What can you do today to bring glory to God?
- * 26. Whom do you need to tell about the way Jesus offers a relationship with God?

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit - John 14:15-31

Topics: Assurance, Encouragement, Faithfulness, Fellowship, Help, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Learning, Love, Obedience, Peace, Relationships, Security, Words, Work, World, Worry

Open It

- * 1. What people, things, or experiences in life bring you comfort and peace of mind?
- 2. How do the people you love (whether close friends, spouse, or family members) know that you love them?
- 3. What relationship in life brings you the most satisfaction? Why?

Explore It

- 4. What did Jesus say His disciples would do if they loved Him? (14:15)
- * 5. What did Jesus say He would ask God to give His disciples? (14:16)
- 6. Why could the world not accept the Spirit of Truth? (14:17)
- 7. What did Jesus promise the disciples? (14:18)
- 8. Why did Jesus tell His disciples that they would live? (14:19)
- 9. How is Jesus related to the Father and to His disciples? (14:20)
- 10. What is the result of obeying Jesus' commands and loving Him? (14:21-23)
- * 11. What did Jesus say the Counselor would do? (14:25-26)
- 12. What did Jesus leave with His disciples? (14:27)
- * 13. Why were the disciples to be glad that Jesus was leaving them? (14:28)
- 14. Why did Jesus tell His disciples about the future? (14:29)
- 15. Why did Jesus say He wouldn't speak much longer? (14:30)
- 16. What did Jesus intend to show the world? (14:31)

Get It

- 17. How can we show Jesus that we love Him?
- 18. What are the commands of Jesus that we should obey?
- * 19. How are we taught by the Holy Spirit?
- 20. When have you been comforted by the Holy Spirit?
- * 21. What is the peace that Jesus has given us?
- 22. How can we experience the peace Jesus has given us?
- 23. What concerns trouble you or cause you to fear?
- 24. How should we deal with the fear in our lives?
- 25. What example has Jesus set for us in His relationship with God?

Apply It

- 26. In what specific way can you show Jesus that you love Him today?
- * 27. What can you do today to experience and enjoy the peace Jesus has given you?
- 28. What troubling problem or fear do you need to turn over to God?

The Vine and the Branches - John 15:1-17

Topics: Failure, Faithfulness, Fellowship, Friendship, Fruit, Glory, God, Jesus Christ, Joy, Love, Relationships, Rewards, Work

Open It

1. What are the marks of a true friendship?
- * 2. What do you do to maintain your friendships?

Explore It

3. How are Jesus and the Father related? (15:1)
4. What is Jesus and who is the Father? (15:1)
5. How does the gardener tend to the branches that bear fruit and the branches that do not? (15:2)
6. What did Jesus say the branches must do in order to bear fruit? (15:4)
7. Who are the branches? (15:5)
8. What did Jesus say would happen to the branches that did not remain in Him? (15:6)
9. What privilege was given to the branches that remained in the vine? (15:7)
10. What would be demonstrated by the disciples' bearing much fruit? (15:8)
- * 11. What did Jesus urge His disciples to do? (15:9)
12. How were Jesus' disciples to remain in His love? (15:10)
13. Why did Jesus talk with His disciples about vines and branches? (15:11)
14. What command did Jesus give His disciples? (15:12)
- * 15. What is the greatest manifestation of love? (15:13)
16. Who did Jesus say were His friends? (15:14)
- * 17. Why did Jesus call His disciples friends? (15:15)
18. Why did Jesus choose His disciples? (15:16)
19. What was Jesus' command? (15:17)

Get It

20. How are we to remain in Jesus? Why?
21. What does it mean to bear fruit as a Christian?
22. How are we to bear fruit?
- * 23. When is it difficult to develop and maintain a personal relationship with Jesus?
24. In what way has God been removing "dead" or useless pieces from your character?
25. In what way is your joy complete?
26. When do you struggle with loving others the way Jesus has loved you?
- * 27. What kind of friend are you to Jesus?
28. Why is it hard to be Jesus' friend?

Apply It

29. What steps can you take to develop a more intimate relationship with Christ?
- * 30. How can you be a better friend to Jesus beginning today?

The World Hates the Disciples - John 15:18-16:4

Topics: Christianity, God, Guilt, Hatred, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Love, Miracles, Obedience, Persecution, Sin, Truth, Unbelievers, Witnessing, World

Open It

- * 1. What are some things that you hate or dislike?
- 2. Why are some non-Christians antagonistic toward Christianity?
- 3. What causes people to hate each other?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Jesus want His disciples to keep in mind? (15:18)
- 5. Whom does the world love? (15:19)
- 6. Why does the world hate Jesus' disciples? (15:19)
- 7. What did Jesus want His disciples to remember? (15:20)
- 8. What difference does it make that the world does not know God? (15:21)
- 9. Why do the people of the world have no excuse for their sin? (15:22)
- 10. What is the significance of hating Jesus? (15:23)
- 11. What has made the world fully accountable for its sin? (15:24)
- * 12. What did the world's hatred fulfill? (15:25)
- 13. What would the Counselor do when He came? (15:26)
- 14. Why did Jesus say that His disciples must testify about Him? (15:27)
- 15. For what reason did Jesus tell the disciples these things? (16:1,4)
- * 16. What was going to happen to the disciples for following Christ? (16:2-3)

Get It

- 17. What is "the world"?
- * 18. If you were one of Jesus' twelve disciples, how would you have responded to His warning about the world's hatred?
- * 19. How does the world today hate the followers of Jesus?
- 20. When have you experienced the hatred of the world?
- 21. How does the world today display its hatred for Jesus and God?
- 22. How has God chosen you out of the world?
- 23. How and when do you still feel a part of the world?
- 24. Who is "the Counselor"?
- 25. How does the Holy Spirit testify about Jesus to the world?
- 26. How are you a testimony for Jesus?

Apply It

- 27. How can you be a testimony for Jesus today? To whom?
- * 28. How should you adjust your expectations of being accepted by non-Christians?

The Work of the Holy Spirit - John 16:5-16

Topics: Believers, Convictions, Doctrine, God, Guidance, Guilt, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Knowledge, Righteousness, Sin, Teaching, Truth, Unbelievers, Wisdom, World

Open It

1. How did you feel the last time you were separated from a friend by a move?
- * 2. In what way can a conscience be both good and frustrating?

Explore It

3. Where did Jesus tell His disciples He was going? (16:5)
4. What hadn't the disciples asked Jesus? (16:5)
5. How did Jesus' disciples feel about His leaving? (16:6)
6. Why was it for His disciples' benefit that Jesus was leaving? (16:7)
- * 7. What would the Counselor do for the world? (16:8)
8. What would the Counselor do for the world when He came? (16:8-11)
- * 9. What did Jesus say about the prince of this world? (16:11)
- * 10. What would the Spirit of truth do for Jesus' disciples when He came? (16:12-14)
11. In what way would the Spirit bring Jesus glory? (16:14-15)
12. When would the disciples see Jesus? (16:16)

Get It

13. Why do most people feel guilty when they commit a sin?
14. If you had been one of Jesus' disciples, how would you have felt about His leaving?
15. How is the Holy Spirit convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment?
16. Of what sins is the world guilty?
- * 17. What role do Christians and the church play in prodding the conscience of the world?
- * 18. How does the Holy Spirit teach believers?
19. About what truth is the Holy Spirit presently teaching you?
20. How has the Holy Spirit used you to bring glory to Jesus Christ?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in reaching people who are dead in their sins?
22. About what spiritual truths will you ask the Holy Spirit to teach you?

The Disciples' Grief Will Turn to Joy - John 16:17-33

Topics: Assurance, Believe, Encouragement, God, Grief, Hope, Jesus Christ, Joy, Love, Mourning, Pain, Peace, Prayer, Questions, Truth, Understanding, Words, World

Open It

1. When might you use a figure of speech to explain something? Why?
2. What painful experiences in your life have resulted in joy?
- * 3. When have you enthusiastically anticipated someone's return or arrival?

Explore It

4. How did the disciples react to Jesus' "in a little while" statement? (16:17-18)
- * 5. What did Jesus tell His disciples would happen to them? (16:19-20)
6. To what did Jesus compare His disciples' response to His departure and return? (16:21-22)
7. What did Jesus tell His disciples they would do when they saw Him again? (16:23)
8. What hadn't the disciples done up until this point? (16:24)
9. What kind of language did Jesus use to speak to His disciples? (16:25)
10. Why did the Father love the disciples? (16:26-27)
- * 11. From where did Jesus come and to where was He going? (16:28)
12. Why did the disciples say that they believed Jesus had come from God? (16:29-30)
13. What did Jesus predict the disciples would do? (16:31-32)
14. What did Jesus want for His disciples? (16:33)
- * 15. Why did Jesus tell the disciples to take heart? (16:33)

Get It

16. How would you have responded to Jesus' words had you been there with His disciples?
- * 17. What grief or sorrow in your life has God turned to joy?
18. For what can we ask the Father?
19. How has God made your joy complete?
- * 20. How does the knowledge of Jesus' return make you joyful?
21. What figures of speech have helped you better understand spiritual truths?
22. What relationship do we have with the Father today?
23. What trouble do we have in the world as followers of Christ?
24. How does the fact that Jesus has overcome the world encourage you?

Apply It

- * 25. In the midst of trouble, on what encouraging truth from this passage will you rely?
26. Because of your restored relationship with the Father, what can you ask Him to give to you in Jesus' name?
27. What grief or sorrow do you need to entrust to God?

Jesus Prays for Himself - John 17:1-5

Topics: Authority, Depend, Eternal Life, Fellowship, Glory, God, Honor, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, People, Prayer, Work

Open It

- * 1. How do people try to bring recognition to themselves?
- 2. What sort of relationship do you have with your parents?
- 3. How would you describe “eternal life” to someone?

Explore It

- 4. What did Jesus do when He had finished speaking to His disciples? (17:1)
- 5. What did Jesus announce to the Father? (17:1)
- * 6. Why did Jesus want the Father to glorify the Son? (17:1)
- * 7. For what purpose did God grant Jesus authority over all people? (17:2)
- 8. Whom were those given eternal life to know? (17:3)
- 9. What is eternal life? (17:3)
- 10. What had Jesus done by completing the work the Father had given him? (17:4)
- * 11. How did Jesus bring God glory on earth? (17:4)
- 12. How did Jesus ask to be glorified? (17:5)
- 13. With what glory did Jesus ask the Father to glorify Him? (17:5)

Get It

- 14. When do we turn to God in prayer?
- 15. About what sort of things do we usually pray?
- * 16. What example with regard to prayer did Jesus give us?
- 17. How can we experience the eternal life of which Jesus spoke?
- 18. What does it mean to know God?
- * 19. How can we bring glory to God?

Apply It

- 20. What do you need to do to prepare for the joy of eternal life?
- * 21. What can you do today to bring God glory?

Jesus Prays for His Disciples - John 17:6-19

Topics: Glory, God, Hatred, Jesus Christ, Joy, Knowledge, Life-style, Obedience, Prayer, Protection, Satan, World

Open It

1. What do you like and dislike about living in this country?
2. What do you think is most challenging for a Christian living in today's society?
- * 3. In what way might you say the world is a dangerous place for a Christian to live?

Explore It

4. What did Jesus tell the Father He had done? (17:6)
5. What did Jesus say His disciples knew? (17:7-8)
- * 6. Why did Jesus pray for His disciples? (17:9)
7. What did Jesus ask His Father to do for His disciples? (17:11)
8. What did Jesus pray His disciples would become? (17:11)
9. Who did Jesus say was lost? (17:12)
10. Why did Jesus say these things while He was still in the world? (17:13)
- * 11. Why did the world hate Jesus' disciples? (17:14)
12. What was Jesus' prayer concerning His disciples? (17:15)
- * 13. What relationship did Jesus' disciples have with the world? (17:16)
14. How would Jesus' disciples be set aside for God's use? (17:17)
15. Where did Jesus send His disciples? (17:18)
16. Why did Jesus set Himself apart for God's use? (17:19)

Get It

- * 17. As believers, what is our relationship to the world?
18. What does your life-style indicate about your relationship to the world?
- * 19. Why is it so easy for us to become closely involved in the world?
20. Why do you think believers are still in the world?
21. When and from what has God protected you?
22. Where would you say you were in the process of being set apart for God's use?
23. How does God's truth sanctify us or make us holy?

Apply It

- * 24. What change in your life-style do you need to make to distinguish your identity from that of the world?
25. What can you do today to set yourself apart to God's use?

Jesus Prays for All Believers - John 17:20-26

Topics: Believers, Creation, Divisions, Doctrine, Example, Fellowship, Glory, God, Jesus Christ, Love, People, Prayer, Unity, World

Open It

- * 1. When have you longed for unity in your family, church, or community?
- 2. With what things or traditions do you identify?
- 3. Why are religious beliefs divisive?

Explore It

- 4. For whom did Jesus pray? (17:20)
- * 5. Why did Jesus want all believers to be one? (17:21)
- 6. What had Jesus given the disciples? (17:22)
- 7. How did Jesus want believers to be unified? (17:22)
- * 8. What did Jesus want the world to know? (17:23)
- 9. Why had the Father given glory to Jesus? (17:24)
- 10. What did Jesus want for those the Father had given Him? (17:24)
- 11. When did the Father love the Son? (17:24)
- 12. What did Jesus say that the world did and did not know? (17:25)
- * 13. Why was Jesus going to continue to make the Father known? (17:26)

Get It

- 14. In what way are all Christians one?
- * 15. How are Christians today divided? Why?
- 16. Why is unity so difficult for Christians to achieve?
- 17. What does the world today know about the Father?
- * 18. How is the Father's relationship with the Son an example for us to follow in our relationships with other Christians?
- 19. What relationship do you have with the Father and the Son?

Apply It

- * 20. What can you do to promote unity among fellow Christians?
- 21. How can you be a testimony of God's love to the world?
- 22. What is one thing you can do this week to strengthen your bond with other Christians?

Jesus Arrested - John 18:1-11

Topics: Awe, Character, Denial, Doubt, Enemies, Fear, Friendship, God's Will, Hardheartedness, Intentions, Jesus Christ, Life-style, Opposition, Protection

Open It

- * 1. Why might a person betray a cause he or she had actively participated in?
- 2. When have you ever felt betrayed by a person or a cause that you believed in?

Explore It

- 3. Where did Jesus and His disciples go when Jesus had finished praying? (18:1)
- * 4. How did Judas know about the place where Jesus and His disciples had gone? (18:2)
- 5. Whom did Judas guide into the grove? (18:3)
- 6. What question did Jesus ask Judas and the others with him? (18:4)
- 7. How did Jesus identify Himself? (18:5)
- * 8. How did people react when Jesus identified Himself? (18:6-7)
- * 9. What did Jesus tell the soldiers and officials to do? (18:8)
- 10. Why did Jesus tell the soldiers to release His disciples? (18:9)
- 11. How did Peter respond to the threat to Jesus? (18:10)
- 12. How did Jesus correct Peter? (18:11)

Get It

- 13. If you had been with Jesus the night He was arrested, how do you think you would have responded?
- * 14. How have you been betrayed by a friend?
- 15. How would you respond if someone betrayed your best friend?
- 16. In what way are you like Peter?
- * 17. How is Jesus' response to His betrayal an example for us to follow?
- 18. How do we betray Jesus with our words and conduct?

Apply It

- * 19. What do you want to remember about Christ the next time someone lets you down?
- 20. What aspect of your life-style should you change so that you don't betray Jesus with either your words or deeds?

Jesus Taken to Annas - John 18:12-14

Topics: Atonement, Authority, Hardheartedness, Humiliation, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Unbelievers

Open It

1. About which modern leaders might it be said that they sacrificed their life for their duty?
- * 2. Who are today's recognized religious authorities?

Explore It

3. What authorities participated in Jesus' arrest? (18:12)
4. Who arrested Jesus? (18:12)
5. What did the soldiers and Jewish officials do to Jesus? (18:12)
6. How was Jesus treated by His captors? (18:12-13)
- * 7. To whom was Jesus taken first? (18:13)
8. What was Annas' relationship to Caiaphas? (18:13)
- * 9. What duty was Caiaphas fulfilling that year? (18:13)
- * 10. About what had Caiaphas advised the Jews? (18:14)
11. Why did Caiaphas think it good that one man die for the people? (18:14)
12. What was ironic about Caiaphas' remarks about Jesus? (18:14)

Get It

13. How do you think Jesus felt when He was arrested?
14. When have you ever felt humiliated for being a Christian?
- * 15. How would you feel if you were falsely arrested? What would you do?
16. What religious authorities do you respect?
- * 17. If Jesus were arrested today, to what religious authority might He be taken?

Apply It

18. Following Jesus' example, how will you respond when you are wrongly mistreated?
- * 19. How should you pray for the religious authorities in your church or denomination this week?

Peter's First Denial - John 18:15-18

Topics: Denial, Disobedience, Doubt, Enemies, Forsake, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Loyalty, Privilege

Open It

1. Who is someone you would say is “well connected with the right people”?
- * 2. Who is someone you would describe as being loyal?
3. When was a time you got caught lying as a child?

Explore It

4. Who followed Jesus? (18:15)
5. How did Peter's companion get into the high priest's courtyard? (18:15)
6. How did the unnamed disciple manage to follow Jesus into the courtyard? (18:15)
7. Why did Peter have to wait outside? (18:16)
8. Where did Peter have to wait? (18:16)
- * 9. How did Peter get into the courtyard? (18:16)
10. What did the girl at the door of the courtyard ask Peter? (18:17)
- * 11. How did Peter reply to the question about his association with Jesus? (18:17)
12. Why was Peter standing around with the servants and officials? (18:18)
- * 13. With whom did Peter warm himself inside the courtyard? (18:18)

Get It

14. What inside connections do you have in the church?
15. How do you use your inside connections in the church and elsewhere?
16. Into what potentially dangerous situations has your faith gotten you?
- * 17. Under what circumstances might you be tempted to deny knowing Jesus?
18. When and why have you denied knowing Jesus by either your words or your life-style?
- * 19. With what enemies of Christ do we sometimes associate?

Apply It

20. How can you use your inside connections to benefit others this week?
- * 21. What can you do to affirm your relationship with Jesus Christ before others?
22. In what areas of your life do you want to express your loyalty to Jesus more openly?

The High Priest Questions Jesus - John 18:19-24

Topics: Authority, Challenge, Church, Consequences, Convictions, Courage, Discipline, Disobedience, Enemies, Hardheartedness, Hatred, Injustice, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Punishment, Self-righteousness, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. Who is someone who has been harassed for speaking the truth?
- 2. When do you think it would be necessary to challenge an established authority?

Explore It

- 3. About what did the high priest question Jesus? (18:19)
- 4. Who questioned Jesus about His teaching? (18:19)
- 5. In what way did Jesus say that He had always spoken? (18:20)
- 6. Where did Jesus say that He had always spoken? (18:20)
- 7. Why did Jesus advise the high priest to ask those who heard Him? (18:21)
- * 8. To whom did Jesus tell the high priest he should ask his questions? (18:21)
- * 9. Why did one of the officials strike Jesus? (18:22)
- * 10. What did Jesus say in response to being hit? (18:23)
 - 11. To whom did Annas send Jesus? (18:24)
 - 12. How was Jesus sent to Caiaphas? (18:24)

Get It

- 13. What thoughts do you think were running through Jesus' mind while He was being interrogated?
- * 14. When have you felt as if you were being interrogated because of your faith?
- 15. Who are the respected authorities in the church today?
- 16. When have you found it necessary to challenge a respected authority or belief?
- 17. What effect do you think Jesus' reply had on the official who hit him?
- * 18. What would the people with whom you talk on a regular basis say about your "teachings"?
- 19. When have you been punished or disciplined for speaking the truth?

Apply It

- * 20. What is one truth you need to speak today regardless of the consequences?
- 21. What can you change about your speech in order to be a more open and consistent follower of Jesus?

Peter's Second and Third Denials - John 18:25-27

Topics: Backslide, Christianity, Circumstances, Commitment, Compromise, Denial, Enemies, Failure, Jesus Christ, Life-style, Peer Pressure, Persecution, Self-centeredness, Temptation

Open It

- * 1. Why are people sometimes tempted to compromise their beliefs, principles, or standards?
- 2. When have you told a lie that caused you pain later?

Explore It

- 3. What was Peter doing? (18:25)
- 4. What question was Peter asked as he tried to keep warm? (18:25)
- * 5. How did Peter respond to the question about his association with Jesus? (18:25)
- * 6. Who challenged Peter's statement? (18:25)
- 7. What did the people around the fire believe to be true about Peter? (18:25-26)
- 8. To whom was one of the high priest's servants related? (18:26)
- 9. Where had the high priest's servant seen Peter? (18:26)
- 10. What did the high priest's servant ask Peter? (18:26)
- 11. How did Peter respond to the question asked by the high priest's servant? (18:26-27)
- * 12. What happened the moment Peter denied knowing Christ a third time? (18:27)

Get It

- 13. What thoughts do you think were running through Peter's mind?
- * 14. Had you been in Peter's shoes, what reasons might you have had for denying that you were a disciple of Christ?
- 15. When have you found yourself in a situation that was hostile to Jesus Christ?
- 16. What self-protective reasons might tempt us to deny that we are followers of Christ?
- * 17. When and where is it hardest for you to openly acknowledge your relationship with Christ?

Apply It

- * 18. Under what circumstances do you need to determine to live openly as a follower of Christ?
- 19. What pressure should you ask God to help you resist?
- 20. What self-centered attitude will you ask God to help you change?

Jesus Before Pilate - John 18:28-40

Topics: Acceptance, Ambition, Consequences, Fear, Jesus Christ, Justice, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Law, Legalism, Obedience, Opposition, Peer Pressure, Position, Priorities, Rationalizing, Rules, Status, Truth

Open It

- * 1. How might a politician rationalize his or her bending of the rules in order to please a group of concerned citizens?
- 2. When have you been tempted to do what works rather than what's right?

Explore It

- 3. Why didn't the Jews who lead Jesus to the Roman governor enter the palace? (18:28)
- 4. How did the Jews introduce Jesus to the governor Pilate? (18:28-30)
- * 5. What did Pilate want the Jews to do with Jesus? (18:31)
- 6. How was prophecy fulfilled by this event? (18:32)
- 7. What question did Pilate ask Jesus? (18:33)
- 8. What question did Jesus ask Pilate in reply? (18:34)
- 9. What did Jesus tell Pilate about His kingdom? (18:36)
- * 10. How did Jesus affirm Pilate? (18:37)
- 11. What last question did Pilate have for Jesus? (18:38)
- * 12. What choice did Pilate present to the Jews? (18:38-39)
- 13. What choice did the Jews make? (18:40)

Get It

- 14. Why is it easier to observe religious traditions than to love other people?
- * 15. When have you felt betrayed or used by people hiding behind religious motives?
- * 16. When, like Jesus, have you been willing to stand your ground regardless of the consequences?
- 17. When, like Pilate, have you been willing to sacrifice your principles in order to do something self-serving?
- 18. How would you answer the question, "What is truth?"
- 19. How is Jesus the King in your life?

Apply It

- * 20. In what settings might you need to stand up for the truth this week regardless of the consequences?
- 21. What is one way you can rearrange your priorities this week in honor of God as King over you?

Jesus Sentenced to be Crucified - John 19:1-16

Topics: Beliefs, Character, Circumstances, Convictions, Fear, Hardheartedness, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Peer Pressure, Power, Self-centeredness, Status, Truth

Open It

- * 1. What pressure tactics do special interest groups use on politicians?
- 2. In what ways do people sometimes compromise what's important in order to advance their career or status?

Explore It

- 3. What did Pilate and the soldiers do to Jesus? (19:1-3)
- 4. To what conclusion had Pilate come concerning Jesus? (19:4-5)
- 5. How did the Jews react when Pilate presented Jesus to them? (19:6)
- 6. What did Pilate want the Jews to do with Jesus? (19:6)
- * 7. Why did the Jews insist that Jesus had to die? (19:7)
- 8. How did Pilate respond to the Jews' demands? (19:8-9)
- 9. What authority did Pilate claim to have? (19:10)
- 10. What authority did Pilate really have? (19:11)
- 11. What did Pilate try to do for Jesus? (19:12)
- * 12. How did the Jews pressure Pilate to give in to their demand to crucify Jesus? (19:12)
- * 13. How did Pilate respond to the Jews' pressure tactics? (19:13-16)
- 14. Whom did the crowd claim as their king? (19:15)

Get It

- 15. What would you have done had you been in Pilate's situation?
- * 16. What position or possession might you be tempted to preserve at the expense of doing the right thing?
- * 17. When and why might we allow the pressures of the moment to compromise our beliefs or standards?
- 18. Who or what are the "kings" that people worship today?
- 19. What person or thing often competes with God for rule of your life?

Apply It

- 20. How can you make Jesus the King of your life?
- * 21. What pressure to compromise your principles will you determine to resist this week?
- 22. How can you use your status or position of power to do right and help others?

The Crucifixion - John 19:17-27

Topics: Atonement, Believers, Caring, Enemies, Family, Humiliation, Jesus Christ, Love, Sacrifice, Suffering, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What sort of sacrifices did your parents make for you?
- 2. What to you is the most humiliating situation you can imagine?

Explore It

- 3. To where was Jesus forced to take His own cross? (19:17)
- * 4. What did the soldiers do to Jesus? (19:18)
- 5. Who was crucified with Jesus? (19:18)
- 6. What notice did Pilate have fastened to Jesus' cross? (19:19)
- * 7. How did the chief priests want Pilate to change the sign over Jesus' head? (19:21)
- 8. What did Pilate tell the chief priests? (19:22)
- * 9. What happened to Jesus' clothes? (19:23-24)
- 10. Why were Jesus' clothes divided among the soldiers? (19:24)
- 11. Who stood near the cross of Jesus? (19:25)
- 12. What did Jesus say to His mother and the disciple with her? (19:26-27)

Get It

- 13. Why do you think Pilate had the notice placed on the cross?
- * 14. If you had been a member of Jesus' family or one of His disciples, how do you think you would have reacted to His crucifixion?
- 15. How was Jesus humiliated?
- 16. What sort of humiliation did Jesus suffer?
- * 17. What humiliation have you suffered for being a Christian?
- 18. How can we sacrifice our wants and desires so that others might benefit?
- 19. In what way has God's family become your family?
- 20. To what degree are we responsible for caring for the needs of other believers?

Apply It

- * 21. What want or desire can you sacrifice so that someone else might benefit? How?
- 22. How can you care for another Christian's needs this week?

The Death of Jesus - John 19:28-37

Topics: Atonement, Beliefs, Believe, Bible, Body, Death, Faith, Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Sacrifice

Open It

1. What is one important event you have witnessed?
2. What is your idea of “expensive”?
- * 3. What is one project of yours that is still unfinished?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Jesus know during His last moments on the cross? (19:28)
5. What did Jesus ask for during His last minutes of life? (19:28)
6. What was Jesus given to drink? (19:29)
- * 7. What did Jesus do once He had received the drink? (19:30)
8. Why didn't the Jews want the bodies of those crucified left on the cross? (19:31)
9. What did the soldiers do to the men who had been crucified with Jesus? (19:32)
10. What did the soldiers discover when they came to Jesus? (19:33)
11. What did the soldiers do to Jesus? (19:34)
12. Why did John record the details of Jesus' death? (19:35)
- * 13. What was fulfilled by the circumstances of Jesus' death? (19:36-37)

Get It

14. How important are the historical eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to your faith in Him?
- * 15. What did Jesus mean when He said, “It is finished”?
16. How does this account of Jesus' crucifixion make you feel?
17. What does Jesus' death mean to us?
- * 18. What is significant about Jesus' death on the cross?
19. What price did Jesus pay for our sins?
20. How was Jesus able to endure the suffering of the Cross?
21. What significance does the fulfillment of Scripture in the Gospels have for your belief in Jesus today?
22. Whose testimony persuaded you to believe in Jesus?
23. How has your testimony influenced others to believe in Jesus?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you thank Jesus today for His sacrifice on the cross?
25. How can you use the testimony of Christ's crucifixion in telling others about Christ?

The Burial of Jesus - John 19:38-42

Topics: Believe, Christianity, Courage, Death, Faith, Fear, Jesus Christ, Loyalty, Peer Pressure, Sorrow, Traditions

Open It

1. What is one misdeed or truth that you kept secret when you were growing up?
- * 2. What is one fact about you that most of your friends don't know?
3. In what way do some Christians try to keep their faith hidden or secret? Why?

Explore It

4. How did Joseph ask Pilate for Jesus' body? (19:38)
5. Who went to get Jesus' body? (19:38)
- * 6. Why did Joseph go to see Pilate? (19:38)
- * 7. Why was Joseph a secret disciple? (19:38)
- * 8. What was significant about the person who went with Joseph to take away Jesus' body? (19:39)
9. How did Joseph and Nicodemus prepare Jesus' body for burial? (19:40)
10. Where was the tomb in which Jesus was buried? (19:41)
11. In what kind of tomb was Jesus buried? (19:41)
12. Why did Joseph and Nicodemus put Jesus in the particular tomb they chose? (19:42)
13. What holiday affected the preparations for Jesus' burial? How? (19:42)
14. How did the "Day of Preparation" affect the way in which Jesus was buried? (19:42)

Get It

- * 15. When and why have you been a secret disciple of Jesus?
16. When have you recently revealed your faith in Christ either by your words or actions?
- * 17. When have you taken a stand that you were previously afraid to take?
18. When have you been willing to go out of your way to serve Jesus?
19. When are you most tempted to do only what is convenient?

Apply It

- * 20. To whom do you want to reveal openly that you are a disciple of Jesus?
21. How can you serve Christ this week regardless of the inconvenience you expect it to involve?

The Empty Tomb - John 20:1-9

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Believe, Death, Doctrine, Doubt, Expectations, Fear, Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Resurrection, Running, Sorrow, Surprises, Understanding

Open It

1. What is one dark moment of your life that ended happily?
- * 2. Why do people visit the grave sites of close friends and family members?
3. About what sort of news would you get excited right now?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Mary Magdalene discover when she went to Jesus' tomb? (20:1)
5. What did Mary Magdalene tell Peter? When? (20:2)
6. Who responded to the news Mary brought? (20:3)
- * 7. How did Peter respond to what Mary told him? (20:3)
8. Who examined Jesus' tomb? (20:4-5)
9. What did John discover when he arrived at the tomb? (20:4-5)
10. What did Peter discover when he arrived at the tomb? (20:6-7)
11. What did John do after he looked in the tomb? (20:8)
- * 12. How did John respond to what he found in the tomb? (20:8)
13. What did Peter and John not understand even after they visited Jesus' empty tomb? (20:9)

Get It

14. Why do you think Mary went to the tomb?
- * 15. If you had been either Mary, Peter, or John, what thoughts would have run through your mind when you discovered the empty tomb?
16. When have you made an exciting, unexpected discovery?
17. How do you usually respond to life's unexpected events?
- * 18. What motivates us to share our surprises (both pleasant and unpleasant) with other people?
19. When has a positive happening in your life appeared at first to be a confusing, unfortunate, or tragic event?

Apply It

20. What truths of the gospel do you want to investigate more closely over the next few weeks? How can you?
- * 21. Whom do you need to tell about the empty tomb of Christ? How?
22. How can you celebrate the resurrection of Christ next Easter?

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene - John 20:10-18

Topics: Affections, Angels, Death, Devotion, Discouragement, Emotions, Encouragement, God, Jesus Christ, Joy, Love, Relationships, Resurrection, Surprises

Open It

1. How has someone recently surprised you with what he or she did or said?
- * 2. What is the most exciting news you've heard this week?

Explore It

3. What did Mary and the disciples do after seeing that Jesus' body was gone? (20:10-11)
4. What did Mary see where Jesus' body had been? (20:12)
- * 5. What did the angels ask Mary? (20:13)
6. How did Mary answer the angels' question? (20:13)
7. Who tried to comfort Mary? (20:14-15)
8. What question did Jesus ask Mary? (20:15)
9. How did Mary respond to Jesus' question? (20:15)
- * 10. What happened when Mary realized who was talking to her? (20:16)
11. Why did Jesus tell Mary not to hold on to Him? (20:17)
- * 12. What did Jesus tell Mary to tell His brothers? (20:17)
13. What did Mary do? (20:18)

Get It

14. How would you respond if you met someone you had presumed to be dead?
15. What would you do if you saw an angel?
16. Over what loss have you recently shed tears?
17. How do you think Mary felt when she realized she was talking to Jesus?
18. When is it tempting to hold on to something good rather than share it with others?
- * 19. If you had been one of the disciples who had heard Mary's exciting news, how do you think you would have reacted?
- * 20. When have you been exceptionally thrilled about your relationship with Christ?
21. How can you demonstrate your devotion to Jesus?

Apply It

22. Who is someone you want to tell about the news of Jesus' resurrection? How can you?
- * 23. How can you celebrate your relationship with the living Christ this week?

Jesus Appears to His Disciples - John 20:19-23

Topics: Evidence, Fear, Forgiveness, God, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Joy, Peace, Resurrection, Sin

Open It

1. Where is it dangerous to openly follow Christ today?
2. What hideaways did you have when you were growing up?
- * 3. What friend or relative that you haven't seen for a while would you be overjoyed to see again?

Explore It

4. What day of the week was it when the disciples were together? (20:19)
5. Why did the disciples have the doors locked? (20:19)
6. Who surprised the disciples in their hideaway? (20:19)
- * 7. What did Jesus say to the disciples? When? (20:19)
8. What did Jesus show His disciples? Why? (20:20)
- * 9. How did the disciples respond to seeing Jesus? (20:20)
10. What greeting did Jesus repeat? (20:21)
11. What did Jesus tell His disciples about their future? (20:21)
12. Why did Jesus breathe on His disciples? (20:22)
13. What did Jesus tell the disciples to receive? (20:22)
- * 14. What did Jesus tell His disciples about forgiving sins? (20:23)

Get It

15. When have you been afraid to follow Jesus openly?
- * 16. If you had been in that room with the disciples, how might you have reacted when Jesus appeared?
- * 17. When have you been overjoyed to see someone?
18. To whom has Jesus sent us?
19. To whom has Jesus sent you?
20. Why is it important for us to forgive others?
21. When is it most difficult for you to forgive?
22. What can we do to become forgiving of others?

Apply It

23. Whom do you need to forgive?
24. Whose forgiveness do you need to seek? How can you?
- * 25. With whom do you want to share your joy in Christ?

Jesus Appears to Thomas - John 20:24-31

Topics: Believe, Bible, Christianity, Confession, Doubt, Eternal Life, Evidence, God, Jesus Christ, Life, Miracles, Peace, Resurrection, Salvation

Open It

1. Why do people write books?
- * 2. What book (besides the Bible) have you enjoyed most?
3. When have you doubted a story from a reliable source?

Explore It

4. What disciple was not with the others when Jesus appeared to them? (20:24)
5. What had the other disciples told Thomas? (20:24)
- * 6. What did Thomas say he needed in order to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead? (20:25)
7. How did Jesus restore Thomas's faith? (20:26)
- * 8. What did Jesus say to Thomas? (20:27)
9. What did Thomas say in response to Jesus' words? (20:28)
- * 10. What did Jesus say about seeing and believing? (20:29)
11. What did John leave out of his Gospel? (20:30)
12. Why was the book of John written? (20:31)
13. What results from believing that Jesus is the Son of God? (20:31)

Get It

14. When have you had doubts about your faith in Christ?
15. How should we deal with our doubts about Christianity?
- * 16. Why is it difficult to believe in Christ?
17. In what ways do we need to trust Christ?
18. On what evidence do you rely for your belief that Jesus rose from the dead?
- * 19. What sort of evidence for the truth of Christianity has John given us?

Apply It

20. What doubts concerning your faith in Christ do you want to discuss with a knowledgeable believer?
21. How can you use the Gospel of John to tell others about Jesus?

Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish - John 21:1-14

Topics: Abundance, Devotion, Fellowship, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Needs

Open It

1. What are some of your hobbies or favorite pastimes?
2. Why do people enjoy eating together?
3. What kind of foods do you like to prepare when you have people over for dinner?
- * 4. With whom have you recently shared a meal?

Explore It

5. When did Jesus appear to His disciples? (21:1)
6. What familiar activity did several of Jesus' disciples do together? (21:2-3)
7. Who had gone out to fish? (21:2-3)
8. How successful had Peter and the others been at fishing that night? (21:3)
9. What did Jesus ask His disciples? (21:5)
10. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do? (21:6)
- * 11. What happened when the disciples did what Jesus had told them to do? (21:6)
12. What did Peter do when he realized that it was the Lord who was talking? (21:7)
- * 13. What did Jesus ask His disciples to do once they were on shore? (21:8-10)
14. Why didn't the disciples ask Jesus who He was? (21:12)
- * 15. What did Jesus do with the bread and fish? (21:13)
16. How many times had Jesus appeared to His disciples? (21:14)

Get It

17. Why do you think several of Jesus' disciples went fishing?
18. How has God brought you together with other Christians?
- * 19. When have you been so glad to see someone that you just had to run out to meet that person?
20. Why is it hard for us to see God working in our lives?
21. Through what ordinary events in life have you encountered Jesus?
22. When has God miraculously and abundantly provided for your needs?
- * 23. When do you experience fellowship with Jesus?

Apply It

- * 24. What steps can you take to have fellowship with God today?
25. For what specific need that God has met in your life will you thank Him today?

Jesus Reinstates Peter - John 21:15-25

Topics: Caring, Death, Glory, God, Jesus Christ, Love, Serving, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. Who are some people who have died for their beliefs?
- 2. When did you ever have to restore a broken relationship?
- 3. When have you taken care of another person?

Explore It

- 4. What did Jesus ask Peter three times? (21:15-17)
- 5. What did Jesus tell Peter to do? (21:15-17)
- 6. How did Peter feel after Jesus had asked him the same question three times? (21:17)
- 7. What did Jesus predict about Peter's future? (21:18-19)
- 8. What command did Jesus give to Peter? (21:19)
- * 9. What concern did Peter raise? (21:20-21)
- * 10. With what did Jesus want Peter to concern himself? (21:22)
- 11. How did Jesus want Peter to serve Him? (21:22)
- 12. What rumor spread as the result of Jesus' talk with Peter? (21:23)
- * 13. How did John serve Christ after Jesus left earth? (21:24)
- 14. What did John do with the testimony he had concerning Jesus? (21:24)
- 15. How many of Jesus' deeds did John leave out of his Gospel? (21:25)

Get It

- 16. How should we demonstrate our love for Jesus?
- 17. Who are Jesus' sheep?
- 18. How are we to serve and care for other Christians?
- * 19. How do we each serve God in a unique way?
- * 20. How can you bring glory to God through your life and the unique opportunities God has given you?
- 21. What might cause us to be more concerned about someone else's relationship with Christ than our own?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you focus your attention solely on your service to God this week?
- 23. How can you serve or care for a fellow Christian?

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Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven - Acts 1:1-11

Topics: Angels, Evidence, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. If you could take a trip somewhere far away, where would you go?
- 2. What kind of reading material would you take along on a lengthy trip away from home?

Explore It

- 3. To what “former book” was Luke referring? (1:1)
- 4. Who was Theophilus? (1:1)
- 5. What did Luke write about? (1:1-2)
- 6. After His resurrection, how did Jesus spend His time with the apostles? (1:3-5)
- 7. What specific commands did Jesus give the apostles? (1:4)
- 8. What gift did Jesus promise to the apostles? (1:4-5)
- 9. What did the apostles misunderstand? (1:6)
- 10. How did Jesus answer the apostles’ question? (1:7-8)
- * 11. What task did Jesus assign the apostles? (1:8)
- 12. Who would help the apostles get their job done? (1:8)
- 13. How would the apostles be able to carry out the task Jesus gave them? (1:8)
- 14. After speaking to the apostles, where did Jesus go? (1:9-11)
- 15. How did the apostles react to Jesus’ departure? (1:10)
- * 16. Who were the figures in white? (1:10)
- * 17. How did the men in white encourage the apostles? (1:11)
- 18. How will Jesus’ return be like His ascension? (1:11)

Get It

- 19. After His resurrection, Jesus spent some forty days with His disciples; how do you think they felt about this time with Him?
- 20. What Christian leader do you value spending time with? Why?
- * 21. What is the importance of Jesus’ final promise and command to you?
- 22. When is a time you wanted to move on from a location, job, or difficult relationship but were held back by God’s leading?
- 23. How do we know when the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives?
- * 24. What specific means (abilities, opportunities, relationships) has God given you to carry out the task of being His witness?
- 25. When you talk to a nonbelieving friend about Christ, what proofs of Jesus’ existence can you offer?
- 26. How should the prospect of Christ’s return affect the way you live your Christian life?

Apply It

- 27. When can you include reading the book of Luke in your Bible study this month?
- * 28. What steps can you take to be actively involved in telling others about Christ?
- 29. How can you invite the Holy Spirit to guide you throughout this week?

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas - Acts 1:12-26

Topics: Authority, Church, Consequences, Deceit, Leadership, Prayer, Teamwork

Open It

- * 1. When you were growing up, how did you and your friends choose teams for games of kickball, tag, or other such games?
- 2. If you had to serve on a church committee, which one would you choose? Why?
- 3. When you work together with other people, what kind of role suits you best?
- 4. When working with others as part of a team, do you prefer to give orders or follow orders? Why?

Explore It

- 5. Where did the ascension of Jesus take place? (1:12)
- 6. How did the apostles show that they were following Jesus' orders? (1:12-13)
- 7. How many apostles were still following Christ after His death and resurrection? (1:13)
- 8. Who was present at the meeting of eleven apostles? (1:14)
- 9. What did the group of eleven apostles do when they got together? (1:14)
- 10. Who took the leadership among the early Christians? (1:15)
- * 11. How did Peter take leadership of the early Christians after Jesus' ascension? (1:15-17)
- 12. How did Peter show high regard for the Scriptures? (1:16-17)
- 13. How did Judas betray both Jesus and the other disciples? (1:16-17)
- 14. What happened as a result of Judas's treachery? (1:18-20)
- * 15. What did Peter propose to do about the vacancy left by Judas? (1:21-22)
- 16. Who was named to replace Judas? (1:23)
- 17. What did the apostles do to select the right candidate to succeed Judas? (1:24-26)
- * 18. How did the apostles choose Judas's successor? (1:24-26)
- 19. Who was selected to be the twelfth apostle? (1:26)

Get It

- 20. Recalling that Peter denied Jesus earlier, how do you think the disciples felt about Peter's leadership?
- 21. When have you felt uncomfortable submitting to someone's leadership?
- * 22. How do you make important decisions in your family?
- * 23. Why is prayer important in our decision-making process?
- 24. What approach does your church follow in making important decisions?
- 25. How can you support and encourage your church leaders?
- 26. In what way do you need to be more involved or less involved in church ministries?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one way you can include God in all important decisions you make?
- 28. What can you do in the next few days to show support for your pastor?
- 29. How can you improve your prayer life?

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost - Acts 2:1-13

Topics: Awe, Believers, Church, Holy Spirit, People, Unbelievers, Witnessing

Open It

1. What everyday expressions can you say in another language? How did you learn them?
- * 2. If you could speak another language fluently, which one would you choose? Why?

Explore It

3. What was celebrated on the day of Pentecost? (2:1)
4. What group of people was gathered together? (2:1)
5. Where did a violent wind come from? (2:2)
6. What did the followers of Christ hear and see? (2:2-3)
7. What was the importance of the wind and fire? (2:2-4)
- * 8. When the Holy Spirit filled the believers, what did they do? (2:4)
9. Who was staying in Jerusalem? (2:5)
- * 10. How did the God-fearing Jews visiting Jerusalem react when they heard Christians speaking their languages? (2:6-11)
11. What languages were the Jews from Galilee speaking? (2:9-11)
12. What was the topic of conversation among the crowds? (2:11)
- * 13. Besides being amazed, how did the crowd react to the unusual happening they witnessed? (2:12-13)

Get It

14. If you saw the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, how do you think you would have responded? Why?
15. Why is the coming of the Spirit associated with wind, fire, and different languages?
- * 16. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
17. How does God use us to witness to others?
18. When has God enabled you to do something that you didn't think you could do?
19. How could your church benefit from greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit?
20. What areas of unbelief must you deal with in order to become more open to the movement of God in your life?
- * 21. How can we cultivate sensitivity to the Holy Spirit?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you be more open to seeing, hearing, and feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit in your prayer and Bible reading?
23. What can you do each day to invite the Holy Spirit to use you?
24. What steps can you take this week to be better prepared for God's use?

Peter Addresses the Crowd - Acts 2:14-41

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Believers, Church, Evangelism, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Miracles, People, Power, Prophecy, Repentance, Salvation, Witnessing

Open It

1. If you had to give a twenty-minute speech in front of a large crowd, what topic would you speak on?
2. How would you prefer to give a speech—well prepared ahead of time, or impromptu? Why?
- * 3. How would you feel just before getting up to speak to a large group of people?

Explore It

4. When Peter stood up to speak, who stood up with him? (2:14)
5. Whom did Peter address and what command did he give them? (2:14)
6. What was Peter's defense? (2:15)
7. What were the believers experiencing? (2:16-21)
8. Why did Peter quote from Joel 2? (2:17-21)
- * 9. What did Peter say about Jesus of Nazareth? (2:22-24)
10. How was God in control of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection? (2:22-24)
- * 11. How did Peter explain Christ's work as Messiah? (2:25-35)
12. What testimony of the apostles did Peter give? (2:32)
13. Who sent the Holy Spirit? (2:32-33)
- * 14. How did the hearers respond to Peter's words? (2:37)
15. What did Peter tell his audience to do? (2:38-40)
16. What happened to those who accepted Peter's message? (2:41)
17. What effect did Peter's sermon have? (2:41)
18. How many were added to the fellowship of believers that day? (2:41)

Get It

19. Whose preaching challenges you most? Why?
20. What is your favorite quote from a famous preacher?
21. How did you become a Christian?
- * 22. How were you challenged to become a believer?
- * 23. How can you challenge others to follow Christ?
24. How have you been changed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?
25. What is the significance of baptism to you?
26. In what ways do you need to be more like Peter?

Apply It

27. What could you say to help someone else see God's perspective on an issue of personal concern?
- * 28. How can you prepare your friends and neighbors for the news that Christ can change their lives?

The Fellowship of the Believers - Acts 2:42-47

Topics: Believers, Church, Devotion, Fellowship, Generosity, Growth, Joy, Life-style, Lord's Supper, Miracles, Needs, People, Praise, Salvation

Open It

- * 1. What possessions do you have that you enjoy sharing with others?
- 2. Which of your belongings would you not want to share with anyone else? Why?
- 3. How would you describe your life-style: self-centered, family-centered, or others-centered?

Explore It

- * 4. What were the activities of the early church? (2:42)
- 5. How did the new believers approach what they did? (2:42)
- * 6. What unusual deeds did the apostles do? (2:43)
- * 7. How did people respond to what was going on? (2:43)
- 8. What life-style did the early believers adopt? (2:44-45)
- 9. Why might the early Christians have had "everything in common"? (2:44)
- 10. How were the goods distributed among the early believers? (2:45)
- 11. How often did the believers meet? (2:46)
- 12. Where did the early believers meet? (2:46)
- 13. How did the early Christians meet together? (2:46-47)
- 14. What did the Christians do when they met together in homes? (2:46-47)
- 15. What was the spirit of the believers in all they did? (2:46-47)
- 16. What was the growth of the early church like? (2:47)

Get It

- 17. What were the early believers actually doing when they "broke bread"?
- 18. How do the activities of the early church compare with the activities of your church?
- * 19. How do you think your church should be more like the early church?
- * 20. In what ways should your church be different from the early church? Why?
- 21. The early church was joyful, victorious, and full of praise. How would you describe the spirit of your church?
- 22. When do you most enjoy spending time with other believers?
- 23. Would you describe your church as self-centered or others-centered?
- 24. How is the celebration of Communion meaningful to you?
- 25. What "miracles" have you witnessed in your church fellowship?
- 26. In what ways do you see your church growing?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do to help your church be more like the early church?
- 28. How can your daily prayers help bring about spiritual renewal in your church fellowship?

Peter Heals the Crippled Beggar - Acts 3:1-10

Topics: Actions, Authority, Emotions, Handicapped, Healing, Help, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Money, Needs, People, Poor, Praise

Open It

1. If a stranger were to ask you for a handout, what would you most likely do? Why?
2. How do you feel toward people who are poor, homeless, or obviously needy?
- * 3. What do you remember about a time when you were very sick or hurt?

Explore It

4. Where were Peter and John going? (3:1) When?
5. Why were the apostles going to the temple? (3:1)
6. Who was carried to the temple gate every day? (3:2)
7. How long had the beggar been crippled? (3:2)
- * 8. Why did the crippled man spend every day at the gate called Beautiful? (3:2)
- * 9. What did the beggar do when he saw Peter and John approaching? (3:3)
10. How did the two apostles first respond to the crippled man? (3:4)
- * 11. What did Peter say to the beggar? (3:4-6)
12. In what ways did the crippled man respond to Peter's words? (3:5,7-8)
13. After he was healed, where did the beggar go? (3:8)
14. What did Peter and John do after the miraculous healing? (3:8)
15. What happened when the man responded to his miraculous healing? (3:8-10) Why?
16. How did the people feel about what had happened to the crippled beggar? (3:9-10)

Get It

17. If God were to do a miracle of healing among the people in your church, how do you think most people would respond? Why?
18. When do you meet for prayer at your church?
19. When was the last time God answered a prayer of yours in a delightful way?
20. How did you respond the last time God answered a prayer?
- * 21. What specific attitudes toward the weak and needy need to change before God can effectively use a person to help them?
22. Besides providing financial aid, what can Christians do to help those who are poor or needy?
23. How can your congregation be helpful to people with disabilities?
24. How can your congregation be sensitive to the needs of those who are physically disabled?
- * 25. What do you have to offer to others who are disabled or in need?
26. When have you witnessed God's miraculous healing power at work?
27. How do you need to change so that God can work through you in a powerful way?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you be prepared to help a person in need this week?
29. What crippled area of your life needs Jesus' healing touch?

Peter Speaks to the Onlookers - Acts 3:11-26

Topics: Accusation, Authority, Blessing, Challenge, Change, Faith, Good News, Healing, Ignorance, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Prophecy, Punishment, Renewal, Sin, Witnessing

Open It

1. If you had to be a journalist, lawyer, or preacher, which occupation would you choose? Why?
- * 2. What is good and bad about confronting another person?
3. How effective are you at describing and explaining a sequence of events to someone else?

Explore It

4. Why did a beggar hold on to Peter and John? (3:11)
5. Where were the people in the crowd assembled? Why? (3:11)
6. What did Peter do in response to the gathered crowd? (3:12)
7. How did Peter address the group? (3:12)
8. What disclaimer was implied in Peter's opening words? (3:12)
9. To whom did Peter attribute the power for healing the beggar? (3:13-15)
- * 10. How did Peter set the scene to speak out against the actions of those who crucified Jesus? (3:13-15)
11. Why was the healing of the man best understood against this profile of Jesus? (3:13-16)
12. What is the significance of Jesus' name in the healing of the lame man? (3:16)
13. According to Peter, why did certain Jews mistreat Jesus? (3:17)
14. How did the Jews' ignorance further the plan of God? (3:18)
- * 15. What did Peter tell his audience to do in order to be forgiven of their sins? (3:19)
16. What results would follow if Peter's audience responded to his words? (3:19-21)
17. How did Moses and the prophets predict the coming of Jesus? (3:22-23)
- * 18. How did Peter offer hope to his audience in spite of his warnings? (3:24-26)

Get It

19. When have you felt convicted by strong preaching?
20. By what means does your church encourage others to come to Christ?
- * 21. What does it mean—and not mean—to be bold in encouraging others to believe in Christ?
22. What can you do to be active in telling others about Christ?
- * 23. What can we learn from Peter's example about confronting others with God's message?
24. How can a knowledge of the Old Testament build our faith in Christ?
25. What can we learn from Peter's approach to explaining the truth?
26. What does it mean to repent and turn to God?
27. Why do we need to turn to God?
28. What areas of your life do you need to turn over to God at this time in your life?

Apply It

29. What plan of study can you start to increase your knowledge of God's messages in the Old Testament?
- * 30. How can you be bold in encouraging others to come to Christ?
31. How might you examine your life this week for areas God may want to change?

Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin - Acts 4:1-22

Topics: Authority, Believers, Consequences, Good News, Healing, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Kindness, Law, Name, People, Persecution, Prophecy, Salvation, Sin, Witnessing

Open It

1. How do you tend to respond to criticism?
- * 2. When you are misunderstood, what do you usually do to clear things up?
3. If you had to defend yourself in a court of law, how well do you think you would hold up under cross-examination?

Explore It

4. Why did the religious officials approach Peter and John? (4:1-2) When?
5. What did the officials do to the apostles? (4:3)
6. In spite of opposition, how did the early church fare? (4:4)
7. After a night in jail, whom did Peter and John face the next day? (4:5-7)
8. To what event did the Jewish leaders refer when they questioned the apostles? (4:7)
9. What empowered Peter to speak? (4:8)
10. How did Peter answer the council's question? (4:8-10)
11. How did Peter's reference to Psalm 118:22 relate to the resurrected Lord? (4:11)
12. How did Peter's remarks about salvation relate to the healed man, the audience, and the Old Testament passage referring to Christ in Psalm 118:22? (4:10-12)
- * 13. How did the authorities respond to Peter and John? (4:13-14)
- * 14. After the Sanhedrin consulted together, what action did they take against the apostles? (4:15-17)
- * 15. What was the apostles' reply to the judgment handed down by the council? (4:18-20)
16. Why was the Sanhedrin powerless to take action against Peter and John? (4:21)
17. How old was the man who had been healed? (4:22)
18. What was amazing about the healing that caused this controversy? (4:22)

Get It

19. In our society, when should Christian leaders stand up to political and religious groups?
20. In our society, when should a Christian stand up for his or her faith in Christ?
21. What is the most difficult situation you've faced because of your faith in Christ?
- * 22. What are some of the risks in telling others about Christ?
- * 23. How can we prepare ourselves for the costs we may have to pay for following Christ?
24. How would you handle being put in jail because you took an unpopular stand for Christ?
25. How do you think you might affect unbelievers around you by your Christian testimony?
26. How many new Christians have joined your church fellowship this past year?
27. How can you be prepared to stand up for Christ when your beliefs are challenged?

Apply It

28. For which public leaders will you pray today that God would call them to repentance and salvation?
- * 29. In what way could you strengthen your sense of courage about being a Christian in your place of work, neighborhood, or family?
30. To whom might you be able to tell the Good News this week? How?

The Believers' Prayer - Acts 4:23-31

Topics: Authority, Believers, Bible, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Ministry, Miracles, Persecution, Perseverance, Power, Prayer

Open It

- * 1. After going through a stressful experience, what do you do to unwind?
- 2. When have you felt most supported and encouraged by your church family?
- 3. When you pray, what are some favorite expressions that you like to use?

Explore It

- * 4. Where did Peter and John go after they were released by the Sanhedrin? (4:23)
- * 5. How did the believers respond to the apostles' report? (4:24)
 - 6. In the prayer, how did the believers express their view of the persecution they faced? (4:24-26)
 - 7. How did the believers use the Psalms in their prayer? (4:25-26)
 - 8. How was God's hand in all that was plotted and done against Jesus? (4:27-28)
 - 9. How would God orchestrate the destruction and defeat of Jesus' enemies? (4:28-30)
- * 10. What did the Christians ask God to do? (4:29-30)
 - 11. How would the believers be enabled to carry out God's work? (4:30)
 - 12. What was the effect of the believers' prayer? (4:31)
 - 13. What did the Christians experience and do after they finished praying? (4:31)

Get It

- * 14. Where do you go for help in times of trouble?
 - 15. How could your church benefit from handling crises the way the early church did?
 - 16. When we pray, why is it helpful to recall the way God has acted in the past?
 - 17. How does it build our faith to quote Scripture in our prayers?
 - 18. How does it build our faith to remember past works of God on behalf of His people?
 - 19. When was the last time you were amazed by the power of prayer?
- * 20. How can your faith in God be expressed through the prayers you pray?
 - 21. If your church were more sensitive to the Holy Spirit, what changes might take place?

Apply It

- * 22. What changes can you make in your personal prayer life today?
 - 23. When can you pray for the leaders and ministries of your church?
 - 24. How might you participate in times of prayer with other Christians over the next month?

The Believers Share Their Possessions - Acts 4:32-37

Topics: Believers, Church, Encouragement, Fellowship, Generosity, Jesus Christ, Life-style, Possessions, Power, Resurrection, Teamwork, Toleration, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. If you had a successful yard sale, what would you do with the profits?
- 2. When have you worked with others to raise money for a worthy cause?
- 3. What possessions would you be willing to part with to help a friend in need?

Explore It

- * 4. What attitude did the believers have toward one another? (4:32)
- 5. How did the Christians show their unity? (4:32)
- 6. How effective was the apostles' witness? (4:33)
- 7. What godly quality enhanced the unity and service of the early Christians? (4:33)
- 8. How was the command of Deuteronomy 15:4 exemplified by the members of the early church? (4:34-35)
- * 9. What did some better-off Christians do from time to time? (4:34-35)
- 10. Why were there no needy persons among the members of the early church? (4:34)
- 11. Who dealt with the common fund of the church? (4:35)
- 12. How did the early wealthy believers disburse the money they got from selling their lands or houses? (4:35)
- 13. Who was Joseph? (4:36)
- 14. Who was Barnabas? (4:36)
- * 15. What was exemplary about Barnabas? (4:36-37)
- 16. How was Barnabas' generosity singled out? (4:36-37)
- 17. What did Barnabas do? (4:37)

Get It

- * 18. What is difficult about sharing the things we have?
- 19. How do the members of your church care for each other's physical needs?
- 20. How can you be generous toward your Christian family?
- 21. In what ways can you help your Christian leaders meet practical needs of people in the community?
- * 22. How can we copy Barnabas's example?
- 23. Where does generosity need to become more evident in the life of your church?
- 24. Which member of your congregation stands out as a true "Barnabas" in your view?

Apply It

- 25. What is one change you can make to improve your relationships with others in your church?
- * 26. What can you do to show Christian generosity to someone in need this week?

Ananias and Sapphira - Acts 5:1-11

Topics: Accusation, Church, Consequences, Death, Deceit, Discipline, Fear, God, Holy Spirit, Insight, Money, Punishment, Satan, Sin

Open It

- * 1. When was a time you kept a gift that you had planned to give away?
- 2. If you found out that you had been deceived by someone you trusted, what would you do?
- 3. How do you know when someone is lying to you?

Explore It

- 4. What did Ananias and Sapphira sell? (5:1)
- 5. How did Ananias and Sapphira's transaction compare with Barnabas's? (5:1-2)
- * 6. What did Ananias and Sapphira do with the proceeds from the sale of their property? (5:1-2)
- 7. How did Peter recognize when he was being lied to? (5:3-4)
- 8. To whom did Ananias lie? (5:3-4)
- * 9. What was Ananias's sin? (5:3-4)
- * 10. What was the consequence of Ananias's sin? (5:5)
- 11. After listening to Peter's words, what happened to Ananias? (5:5)
- 12. How did people respond to Ananias's death? (5:5)
- 13. What was done with Ananias's body? (5:6)
- 14. How long after Ananias's death did Sapphira come before Peter? (5:7)
- 15. How did Peter test Sapphira? (5:7-8)
- 16. How did Sapphira respond to Peter? (5:8)
- 17. What rhetorical question did Peter ask Sapphira? (5:9)
- 18. What devastating announcement did Peter make to Sapphira? (5:9)
- 19. How did Sapphira's end compare with that of her husband? (5:10)
- 20. How did the early church respond to these events? (5:11)

Get It

- 21. If there was deception in your church community, how would your church leaders handle it?
- 22. In what ways do we sometimes try to gain undue credit or recognition?
- 23. How could Ananias and Sapphira have acted differently?
- 24. When have you regretted your dealings with other Christians?
- 25. How do your Christian leaders deal with sin in the church?
- 26. How do you handle your own sin?
- 27. When have you been afraid of the Lord?
- 28. In what way is it appropriate to be afraid of God?
- * 29. What do we tend to hold back from the Lord?
- 30. Why do we sometimes hold back in our giving to God?
- * 31. What can we do to trust God to take care of us?
- 32. How can you help yourself be honest with God and with other Christians?

Apply It

- 33. When can you set aside time this week to evaluate your motives for giving?
- * 34. What act of sacrificial giving can you do this week? How?

The Apostles Heal Many - Acts 5:12-16

Topics: Believers, Demons, Faith, Fear, Healing, Miracles, People, Reputation, Sickness

Open It

1. When you're sick, what kind of patient do you tend to be (cranky, nervous, upbeat, distracted, etc.)?
2. If you were ill in the hospital, whose visit would probably be most comforting to you?
3. If you were a physician, what part of the job would you like best?
- * 4. How did your mother take care of you when you were sick as a child?

Explore It

- * 5. What kind of work did the apostles do among the people? (5:12)
6. Where did the believers meet? (5:12)
7. Even though the Christians were highly thought of, why were some people afraid to join them? (5:13)
- * 8. Why did the people seek physical healing from the apostles? (5:13-15)
9. Despite the fear which kept many people away, what happened to the Christian church during this time? (5:14)
10. How did some people reveal both superstition and confidence in the apostles? (5:13-16)
11. Why did some people feel that even Peter's shadow might help them? (5:14-15)
12. From where did the people who gathered around the apostles come? (5:16)
13. Besides the sick, who else was brought to the apostles for healing? (5:16)
- * 14. What happened to all those who came to be made well? (5:16)

Get It

15. How would you describe the reputation of the church in your community?
16. In what ways does your church help or serve those who are ill?
17. If you were ill, how might your church be able to help you?
- * 18. When is it helpful or comforting to visit a sick person in the hospital or at home?
- * 19. How can we reach out to those who are sick or ill?
20. If the sick were brought to your church for healing, what would your church leaders do?
21. How do you think your church could learn from the example of the early Christians in the way they took care of the physical and mental needs of people?

Apply It

22. For whom can you pray today that God would heal his or her pain?
- * 23. What are some of the ways you can serve those who are sick in your church?
24. What practical help can you provide this week for a church member who is ill?

The Apostles Persecuted - Acts 5:17-42

Topics: Angels, God, Good News, Holy Spirit, Jealousy, Jesus Christ, Joy, Leadership, Miracles, Obedience, People, Persecution, Perseverance, Punishment

Open It

1. What was the most fearful experience you ever had?
2. When was the last time you felt intimidated by an individual or group of people?
- * 3. What bullies do you remember from grade school?

Explore It

4. Why were the religious leaders opposed to the apostles? (5:17)
5. What happened when the Christians were put in jail? (5:18-19)
6. What did the angel tell the apostles to do? (5:20)
7. When did the apostles start teaching? (5:21)
8. What did the elders of Israel discover after they met together? (5:21-24)
9. How were the apostles brought before the Sanhedrin? (5:25-27)
10. How had the apostles disobeyed the council? (5:28)
11. Why did the high priest avoid mentioning the name of Jesus? (5:28)
12. What reason did the apostles give for their disobedience? (5:29)
- * 13. What made the Jewish elders furious? (5:29-32)
- * 14. Who intervened on behalf of Peter and the others? How? (5:34-39)
15. How did Gamaliel intervene? (5:34-39)
16. What advice did Gamaliel offer the council? (5:38-39)
17. What effect did Gamaliel's speech have? (5:40)
- * 18. How did the elders deal with the apostles? (5:40)
19. What did the apostles do after they left the Sanhedrin? (5:41-42)

Get It

20. What might make someone jealous of a church leader?
21. If the government told you that you could not pray, show your Bible, or talk about God in public, what would you do?
22. Would you describe your church as courageous, timid, or somewhere in between? Why?
- * 23. What forms of opposition do Christians experience today?
- * 24. For what principles should a Christian stand at all costs?
25. If Peter were your pastor, what do you think your church would be like?
26. If you had to go through the sufferings of the apostles, how would you cope?
27. How is it possible to have joy in the middle of a difficult circumstance?
28. What should we copy from the character and example of Peter?
29. How can you become more like Peter in your witness for Christ?
30. How can you experience God more fully, so that you are set free to rejoice no matter what sufferings you experience?

Apply It

- * 31. What do you want to remember the next time you are challenged or hurt for your faith in Christ?
32. In what situations can you serve as a witness for Christ this week? How?

The Choosing of the Seven - Acts 6:1-7

Topics: Bible, Church, Complaining, Growth, Holy Spirit, Leadership, Ministry, Neglect, Prayer, Responsibility

Open It

1. When working as part of a team, do you prefer to “do the work” or to lead and coordinate others?
- * 2. If you could spend next Saturday morning doing anything you like, what would you do?
3. If you had to spend next Saturday morning leading a Bible study, praying with other Christians, or serving breakfast to a group of widows, which activity would you choose? Why?

Explore It

- * 4. What complaint did the Grecian Jews make? (6:1)
- * 5. What did the apostles—the Twelve—do in response to criticism? (6:2-4)
 6. Why did the Twelve choose prayer and teaching over caring for the poor? (6:2-4)
 7. What did the Twelve tell the other believers to do? (6:3)
- * 8. How did the group respond to the apostles’ proposal? (6:5)
 9. Who was selected to serve the widows? (6:5)
 10. Who chose the seven candidates? (6:5)
 11. How were the men given authority to do their task? (6:6)
 12. What was the effect of the appointment of certain people to serve the widows? (6:7)
 13. How did the church fare after the apostles delegated the serving of food to others? (6:7)

Get It

14. In what ways do the people of your church differ from one another?
15. What different ethnic or cultural groups are there in your church?
16. How can differences among believers cause friction?
17. What benefits and challenges arise from having different kinds of people in your church?
- * 18. How should we deal with tensions arising from differences between church members?
19. What qualities must Christian leaders have to resolve differences between believers?
20. How could your church ensure that no one group of people is neglected?
21. About what do we tend to complain most?
22. What complaints arise in your church most often?
- * 23. How can we learn to channel our complaints into solutions?
24. In what ways can you use your gifts and skills in your church?

Apply It

25. How can you help free your church leaders to focus on their mission of prayer, evangelism, and teaching?
- * 26. What could you do this week to help resolve a conflict between believers?

Stephen Seized - Acts 6:8-15

Topics: Accusation, Blasphemy, Conflict, Grace, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Law, Miracles, Opposition, People, Power, Traditions, Wisdom

Open It

1. Who, in your view, is one of the most outstanding leaders in the world today?
2. Among your coworkers and neighbors, what do you think people consider you—controversial, moderate, liberal, or conservative? Why?
- * 3. When was a time you were falsely accused? What happened?

Explore It

- * 4. Who was Stephen? (6:8)
5. What kind of person was Stephen? (6:8)
6. Besides caring for the needs of the widows, what did Stephen do among the people? (6:8)
7. Who opposed Stephen? (6:9)
8. Why couldn't Stephen's opponents get the better of him? (6:10)
- * 9. What kind of charges did Stephen's enemies make against him? (6:11)
10. How did the people react to the charges against Stephen? (6:12)
- * 11. How did the false witnesses misrepresent Stephen? (6:13-14)
12. Why did certain people consider Stephen dangerous? (6:13-14)
13. When those in the Sanhedrin looked at Stephen, what did they see? (6:15)
14. What did the expression on Stephen's face show about his relationship to God? (6:15)

Get It

- * 15. What does it mean to be "full of God's grace and power"?
16. If Stephen were alive today, how might other religious groups oppose him?
17. What qualities of Stephen would you like to see in your own life?
18. What theological issues do people argue about in your church?
19. What are some good ways to handle disagreements about doctrine?
20. What religious traditions do Christians sometimes value or cling to over biblical truth?
21. What character qualities help a person face conflict or opposition?
- * 22. What should we do when we are falsely accused?
23. In what ways do we need the Holy Spirit's filling so our gifts can be used effectively?

Apply It

24. How can you be open to God's use this week?
- * 25. What can you do to copy Stephen's example whenever you are falsely accused in some way?
26. What do you want to remember the next time you are falsely accused?

Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin - Acts 7:1-53

Topics: Accusation, Covenant, Disobedience, God, History, Holy Spirit, Law, Messiah, People, Punishment, Rejection

Open It

- * 1. What is one time of your life you wish you could do over? Why?
- 2. What is the longest speech or talk you've ever given?
- 3. In what ways are you just like your parents?
- 4. In what ways are you different from your parents?
- 5. If you had to defend in court your views on something you cared about, how do you think people would respond to what you had to say?

Explore It

- 6. What did the high priest ask Stephen? (7:1)
- * 7. Why did Stephen make this speech? (7:1-2)
- 8. What was Stephen's initial response to the leaders? (7:2)
- 9. In his speech to the court, Stephen showed that there was progress and change in God's plan for His people; how was Abraham an example of this change? (7:2-8)
- * 10. As he wove the history of the Jews, how did Stephen show a pattern of opposition to God and His plan for them? (7:2-4, 9, 23-29)
- 11. How did God bless His people outside the land of Israel? (7:2-5, 7-10, 29-34)
- 12. How was the move to Egypt a great change for Jacob's descendants? (7:9-16)
- 13. How did deliverance under Moses mark progress for God's people? (7:17-43)
- 14. Where was the law of Moses given to God's people? (7:38)
- 15. From the tabernacle to the temple, the place of God's presence changed and progressed; how did Stephen show this? (7:44-50)
- 16. How did Stephen show that the temple is not God's true dwelling place? (7:47-50)
- 17. What did Stephen say in direct attack on his audience? (7:51-53)
- * 18. How did Stephen compare the attitude of those in the Sanhedrin with that of God's people down through the centuries? (7:51-53)
- 19. Of what did Stephen accuse his hearers? (7:51-53)
- 20. According to Stephen, in what ways did the people resist the Holy Spirit? (7:52-53)

Get It

- 21. In reviewing your life, how would you like to rewrite history?
- 22. What rituals or traditions hinder change and spiritual progress among believers?
- * 23. Which "spiritual ancestors" from the Bible do you admire most?
- * 24. How can we learn from those who have gone before us?
- 25. In what ways should we be like Stephen?
- 26. How can a group of believers be a "stiff-necked people"?
- 27. What stiff-necked attitudes prevent us from seeing what God wants us to see?
- 28. What kind of opposition to God's message is there today?
- 29. What kind of opposition or pressure on your faith have you felt from friends, coworkers, or unbelieving family members?
- 30. How can we deal with opposition to God's message?

Apply It

- * 31. From what older, more mature believer can you learn? How?
- 32. What can you do this week to know Jesus more fully?
- 33. How can you uncover the attitudes that hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?

34. What can you do this week to learn from the example of other believers in the Old Testament?

The Stoning of Stephen - Acts 7:54-8:1

Topics: Anger, Church, Death, Glory, God, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Prayer

Open It

1. When have you felt uncomfortable in a large crowd of people?
- * 2. How do you respond to reports of violence in the news?
3. How do you tend to deal with anger?

Explore It

4. How did the hearers react to Stephen's accusations? Why? (7:54)
- * 5. Why did the Jewish leaders respond to Stephen as they did? (7:54)
6. Faced with the fury of his persecutors, why wasn't Stephen afraid? (7:55)
7. How did Stephen's heavenly vision prepare him for what was to follow? (7:55)
8. How did God prepare Stephen for his death? (7:55)
9. What did Stephen say that enraged his adversaries? (7:56)
- * 10. Why was Stephen put to death? (7:56-60)
11. Why did Stephen's enemies yell and cover their ears? (7:57)
12. How was Stephen taken out of town? (7:57-58)
13. Where was Stephen stoned to death? (7:58)
14. Why did people lay their clothing at Saul's feet? (7:58)
15. What were Stephen's two last requests before he died? (7:59-60)
16. How did Stephen die? (7:60)
17. Who approved of Stephen's death? (8:1)
- * 18. What change in the church did Stephen's death bring about? (8:1)
19. Who left and who stayed in Jerusalem? (8:1)

Get It

20. Why do Christians sometimes get angry at preachers?
21. When your conscience is pricked, how do you tend to react?
22. If your congregation decided the pastor was a heretic, how would they remove him from office?
- * 23. Faced with the violent mob, Stephen seemed fearless; how was he able to face this danger?
- * 24. What would make it possible for you to be calm and sure in the middle of extreme danger?
25. When should we call on the Lord for help?
26. How can you be more forgiving of others?
27. What hardships has your church faced recently?
28. How does God "scatter" the church to carry His message to others?
29. How has God "scattered" your church?

Apply It

30. In what hostile setting could you be a witness for Christ this week? How?
- * 31. How can Stephen's example help you be prepared to handle rejection?
32. Which former member of your congregation now living elsewhere can you encourage this week? How?

The Church Persecuted and Scattered - Acts 8:2-3

Topics: Church, Courage, Death, Persecution, Zeal

Open It

1. What would you like people to remember most about you after your death?
2. If you could write your own obituary, what would you say about yourself?
3. What is the most important accomplishment of your life so far?
- * 4. When is a time you remember being rejected by childhood peers?

Explore It

5. Who buried Stephen? (8:2)
6. How did the early believers react to Stephen's martyrdom? (8:2)
7. How did Stephen's sympathizers show that they disapproved of the Sanhedrin's condemnation of him? (8:2)
- * 8. How did Stephen's mourners show courage at his burial? (8:2)
9. How did the godly men mourn for Stephen? (8:2)
- * 10. What was happening to the church at this time? (8:2-3)
- * 11. Who began to attack the church? How? (8:3)
12. Who took a leading role in attacking the early church? (8:3)
13. During this period of opposition, what did Saul do? (8:3)
14. How were Saul's actions cruel? (8:3)
15. How did the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the church show that Israel had rejected the Messiah? (8:3)

Get It

16. Why was it dangerous for people in the church to give Stephen a proper burial?
17. Though there was much sadness at Stephen's funeral, why was there also cause for celebration?
18. Why can we experience joy along with grief at a Christian's funeral?
19. How can you show courage in difficult circumstances, just as the "godly men" did in burying Stephen?
- * 20. In what ways are Christians under attack today?
- * 21. How can you respond whenever others attack or reject you for your Christian identity, views, or life-style?
22. How is our Christian experience very different from that of the early church?
23. How can you live each day as if it were your last?
24. How do you need to be more courageous in your identity as a Christian?

Apply It

- * 25. What will most remind you to respond with courage when you are attacked or rejected for your faith in Christ?
26. In what setting (at work, at home, in your neighborhood, etc.) can you show courage in identifying with Christ this week? How?

Philip in Samaria - Acts 8:4-8

Topics: Bible, Joy, Miracles, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. If you could give all your effort to a single occupation and be among the best in the world at it, what occupation would you choose?
- 2. What one talent or gift would you really like to have?
- 3. When was the last time you had a celebration of some kind?

Explore It

- 4. What were the Christians doing who had been scattered throughout Judea and Samaria? (8:4)
- 5. What happened to the Word of God? (8:4)
- 6. Why was the scattering of Christians a step forward for the church? (8:4-8)
- * 7. Who was Philip? (8:5)
- 8. Where did Philip go? (8:5)
- * 9. What did Philip do in Samaria? (8:5)
- * 10. What did the crowds do in response to Philip's teaching and miracles? (8:6)
- 11. What miraculous signs did Philip perform? (8:7)
- 12. How did Philip's work draw attention to his message? (8:6-7)
- 13. Why did the people rejoice? (8:8)

Get It

- * 14. How is your church, through its mission work, scattered throughout the world?
- * 15. How can you help spread the gospel in your community?
- 16. What is a miracle?
- 17. What signs and miracles have you witnessed in your church?
- 18. What makes your congregation joyful?
- 19. How can you help people who are sick or troubled?

Apply It

- * 20. What can you do this week to support or encourage a missionary?
- 21. What is one way you can support your church's ministry?
- 22. For whom can you pray for healing?

Simon the Sorcerer - Acts 8:9-25

Topics: Awe, Follow, Good News, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Leadership, Money, Prejudice, Sin, Witnessing

Open It

1. In what situations would you describe yourself as quiet or outgoing?
2. If you were a magician, whom would you have most fun entertaining?
- * 3. What people of different ethnic groups do you know?

Explore It

4. What was Simon's line of work? (8:9)
5. What did Simon talk about? (8:9)
6. How did the Samaritans react to Simon's sorcery? (8:9-11)
7. When Philip preached about Christ, what did the people do? (8:12)
8. What did Simon do when he heard the gospel? (8:13)
- * 9. Why did Peter and John leave Jerusalem and go to Samaria? (8:14)
- * 10. What did Peter and John do when they arrived in Samaria? (8:15-17)
11. What did Simon want to buy from Peter and John? (8:18-19)
12. How did Peter answer Simon's request? (8:20-23)
13. Why did Peter use strong language with Simon? (8:20)
14. How did Peter imply that Simon was not a Christian? (8:21-23)
15. What was Simon's attitude in response to Peter? (8:24)
- * 16. How did Peter and John's trip to Samaria influence their trip to Jerusalem? (8:25)

Get It

17. How are some religious leaders today like Simon?
18. How are some religious leaders today like Peter and John?
19. When is it most tempting to brag?
20. What are some of the trappings of money?
21. In what way do some people try to "buy" God's favor?
22. What does it mean for your heart to be right before God?
23. Why is it important for us to have our heart right before God?
24. Most Samaritans and Jews didn't get along; why then did early Jewish Christians tell Samaritans about Christ?
- * 25. What ethnic or religious prejudices do you have a hard time shaking?
- * 26. What can help us change our prejudices against people groups?
27. Why did you become a Christian?
28. What motivates you to grow in your relationship with Christ?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you do this week to get to know someone who is from a different ethnic group or culture?
30. Whom can you invite from another culture to visit your church? When?
31. How can you invite the Holy Spirit to help you grow in faith in the coming days?

Philip and the Ethiopian - Acts 8:26-40

Topics: Angels, Bible, Evangelism, Holy Spirit, Important, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Joy, Justice

Open It

1. If you could travel overseas, to which country would you like to go?
- * 2. What reading material do you find difficult to understand?
3. Who is one of the best teachers you ever had?

Explore It

4. What did the angel tell Philip to do? (8:26)
- * 5. Whom did Philip meet on the desert road? (8:27)
6. What was the eunuch's position? (8:27)
7. Why was the eunuch on his way to Jerusalem to worship? (8:27)
8. What was the eunuch doing while he sat in the chariot? (8:28)
- * 9. What was the eunuch's problem? (8:28-34)
10. What did the Holy Spirit tell Philip to do? (8:29)
11. What did Philip ask the eunuch? (8:30)
12. How did the eunuch respond to Philip? (8:31)
13. What was the eunuch reading? (8:32-33)
- * 14. How did Philip present the good news about Jesus? (8:35)
15. What did the eunuch do after he believed in Jesus? (8:36-38)
16. What happened to Philip after he baptized the eunuch? (8:39)
17. How did believing in Christ affect the eunuch? (8:39)
18. What was the eunuch's attitude as he went on his way? (8:39)
19. Where did Philip go to preach? (8:40)

Get It

20. How does the Holy Spirit lead us?
21. When has the Holy Spirit led you to speak to someone?
22. In what ways can your church reach out beyond its neighborhood to others?
- * 23. How does God use us to take the message of Christ to others?
24. What passages of Scripture are difficult for you to understand?
25. Why are some parts of the Bible difficult to understand?
26. Where can we get help understanding the Bible better?
27. When was the last time you explained the Scriptures to someone else?
28. To whom could you turn for help in understanding the Bible better?
- * 29. How can you be involved in telling others about Christ or in helping others do so?
30. What fears prevent us from telling others about Christ?
31. What barriers prevent us from helping others understand the message of Christ?

Apply It

32. What can you do to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading each day?
- * 33. What is one thing you can do this week to overcome fear in witnessing?
34. In your Bible study this week, how can you prepare yourself for opportunities to share what you learn?

Saul's Conversion - Acts 9:1-19

Topics: Blindness, Christianity, Church, Fasting, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Obedience, Prayer, Restoration, Salvation

Open It

1. How would you describe the most intimidating person you know?
- * 2. If you could have a surprise visit from someone, whom would you want to visit you?
3. What was the most unusual experience that ever happened to you when you were growing up?

Explore It

4. What was Saul doing against the Lord's disciples? (9:1-2)
5. What was "the Way"? (9:2)
6. What happened to Saul as he approached Damascus? (9:3-6)
7. Whom did Saul meet? (9:3-6)
8. In persecuting the church, whom was Saul really attacking? (9:5)
9. What did the resurrected Lord Jesus order Saul to do? (9:6)
10. What did Saul's traveling companions experience when Saul met the risen Christ? (9:7)
11. How did Saul get to Damascus after his meeting with the Lord?
(9:8)
12. Who was Ananias? (9:10)
- * 13. What did the Lord instruct Ananias to do? (9:10-12)
- * 14. Why was Ananias reluctant to do as the Lord asked? (9:13-14)
- * 15. How did God persuade Ananias that it was all right to go to Saul? (9:15-16)
16. To what service had Saul been called? (9:15-16)
17. How did Ananias do the Lord's bidding? (9:17)
18. What did Saul do when his vision returned? (9:18-19)

Get It

19. What was your conversion experience like?
20. To what ministry has God called you?
21. In what ways do we sometimes hold back from doing what God wants?
22. Why do we sometimes resist what God asks of us?
23. What happens when we resist doing what God wants?
24. If you were temporarily disabled, how might it benefit your spiritual life?
25. How can fasting help us focus on spiritual needs?
26. What are some of the many ways a person can play a part in leading someone to Christ?
27. What are some ways we can welcome new believers into the body of Christ?
- * 28. What do older, more mature Christians have to offer younger, less mature Christians?
- * 29. How can you be a guide and help to younger Christians in your church?
30. How can you lean on another Christian to help you uncover God's will for your life? Who is this person?

Apply It

31. How can you challenge a friend or neighbor with the message of salvation this week?
- * 32. What is one thing you could do this week to help a younger Christian grow in his or her faith?
33. From what more mature Christian can you seek advice or counsel this week?

Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem - Acts 9:20-31

Topics: Change, Church, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Peace, Persecution, Power, Witnessing

Open It

1. If you could make one significant change in your life this year, what would it be?
- * 2. If you were constantly harassed on your job, what would you most likely do about it?

Explore It

3. After spending some days with the Christians in Damascus, what did Saul do? (9:20-21)
4. What was the focus of Saul's message? (9:20)
5. How did people react to their former enemy? (9:21)
6. Why were the Jews living in Damascus baffled by Saul? (9:22)
- * 7. What did the Jews plan for Saul? Why? (9:23)
- * 8. How did Saul outwit his enemies? (9:24-25)
9. Who mistrusted Saul in Jerusalem? (9:26)
10. Who welcomed Saul in Jerusalem? (9:27)
11. How did Barnabas help the apostles accept Saul? (9:27)
- * 12. What did Saul do while he was with the apostles? (9:28-29)
13. How did Saul follow in Stephen's footsteps? (9:29)
14. As a result of the threat on his life, where was Saul taken by his friends? (9:30)
15. What was the state of the young church at this time? (9:31)

Get It

- * 16. Why do unbelievers sometimes oppose those who tell others about Christ?
17. What is the difference between opposition to our faith and opposition to our personality?
18. How have you changed because of knowing Jesus?
19. Why did the disciples in Jerusalem fear Saul?
20. Why did Saul have a significant testimony to others?
- * 21. In what ways can a new Christian have a unique witness to friends and associates?
22. What fellow Christian has served as an inspirational example to you?
23. How could a person like Barnabas help heal wounds in a church group?
24. If your life were threatened, whom could you count on to protect you?
25. What particular group of people would you feel most comfortable telling about Christ?
26. How does the state of your church compare with that of the early church?

Apply It

- * 27. This week, how can you prepare for discussions about God with your coworkers or non-Christian friends?
28. What can you do to welcome people to your church?
29. Who could you welcome into your place of work, church, or community this week? How?

Aeneas and Dorcas - Acts 9:32-43

Topics: Believers, Death, Goodness, Healing, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Miracles, Poor, Prayer, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. What are some of your most treasured memories of a late friend, relative, or coworker?
- 2. What would you find easy or hard about helping inner-city poor people find jobs?
- 3. What would you find easy or hard about helping paraplegics learn to live with their disabilities?

Explore It

- 4. Where did Peter's mission work take him? (9:32)
- 5. Whom did Peter visit in Lydda? (9:33)
- 6. How was Peter able to cure Aeneas? (9:34)
- 7. What effect did the healing of Aeneas have on the residents of Lydda and Sharon? (9:35)
- 8. What did Tabitha (Dorcas) do in Joppa? (9:36)
- * 9. What happened to Dorcas? (9:37)
- 10. Where was Joppa in relation to Lydda? (9:38)
- 11. Why was Peter summoned by the disciples to Joppa? (9:38)
- 12. Where was Peter taken when he arrived in Joppa? (9:39)
- 13. How was the miracle of raising the woman to life performed? (9:40)
- * 14. What did Peter do when he was alone with the dead woman? (9:40-41)
- 15. After Peter helped Tabitha to her feet, what did he do next? (9:41)
- * 16. How did the miracle of raising Tabitha further the kingdom of God? (9:42)
- 17. With whom did Peter stay in Joppa? (9:43)

Get It

- 18. Why are the signs and wonders of the early church largely absent from the Christian community today?
- * 19. Why do some Christians suffer and die, while others are healed of their sickness?
- 20. In what ways would you like to follow the example of Dorcas?
- 21. When you die, what group of people besides your family will miss you most?
- 22. If Peter were visiting your church, whom would you ask him to help?

Apply It

- 23. What areas of your life need God's healing today?
- 24. How can you help a needy person this week?
- * 25. What can you do to help a widow who needs assistance?

Cornelius Calls for Peter - Acts 10:1-8

Topics: Angels, Generosity, Gifts, God, Instructions, Leadership, Poor, Prayer

Open It

- * 1. What would be appealing or unappealing to you about a career in the armed forces?
- 2. If you were in military service, where would you like to be stationed?
- 3. As an army officer, what would you like or not like about commanding a company of soldiers?

Explore It

- 4. Who was Cornelius? (10:1)
- 5. Where did Cornelius live? (10:1)
- 6. What did Cornelius do for a living? (10:1)
- 7. How did the Roman officer and his family relate to God? (10:2)
- 8. How did Cornelius help those in need? (10:2)
- 9. What did Cornelius experience one afternoon? (10:3)
- 10. How did Cornelius respond to the angel? (10:4)
- * 11. How did the angel affirm the centurion's life-style? (10:4)
- * 12. What did the angel command Cornelius to do? (10:5-6)
- * 13. When the angel left, what did Cornelius do? (10:7-8)
- 14. Who did Cornelius send to Joppa? (10:7-8)

Get It

- * 15. What neighbors and friends remind you of Cornelius?
- 16. Why is it that many kind, "God-fearing" people do not have a personal relationship with Christ?
- * 17. How do you need to be more like Cornelius?
- 18. How do you know when God is speaking to you?
- 19. When do you act on what God tells you to do?
- 20. How can you be more open to God taking command of your life?

Apply It

- * 21. This week, what can you do to imitate the centurion's God-fearing life-style?
- 22. What can you give to someone who is in need?

Peter's Vision - Acts 10:9-23

Topics: Acceptance, Culture, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Hospitality, Instructions, Prayer, Respect

Open It

- * 1. At an ethnic food festival, would you try a variety of international dishes or immediately seek out the hot dog stand? Why?
- 2. If you lived overseas, what about your life-style would you try to maintain, and how would you try to fit in with the nationals?

Explore It

- 3. Where was Peter when the centurion's men approached Joppa? (10:9)
- 4. What was Peter doing? (10:9)
- 5. How did Peter feel? (10:10)
- * 6. What did Peter experience while food was being prepared for him? (10:10-16)
- 7. What did Peter see in a vision? (10:11-12)
- 8. What did the voice instruct Peter to do? (10:13)
- 9. Why did Peter protest against the command to eat? (10:14)
- 10. How were Peter's objections silenced? (10:15)
- 11. Why was this incident repeated three times? (10:16)
- * 12. What happened while Peter was wondering about the vision? (10:17-20)
- * 13. How was Peter prepared for the messengers? (10:19-20)
- 14. What did Peter say to the messengers? (10:21)
- 15. What did the messengers tell Peter? (10:22)
- 16. How did Peter respond to the messengers' request? (10:23)

Get It

- 17. How do you think Peter felt when he was told to kill and eat unclean food?
- * 18. What are some reasons we reject or avoid certain people?
- 19. Peter's dream was unexpected; how does God deal with us in surprising ways?
- 20. How does God give us clear directions through other Christians?
- 21. How did Peter's hospitality to the messengers show that he was beginning to put into practice what he had learned in the vision?
- 22. How should your church treat visitors who are different from the rest of the congregation?
- * 23. How can you show acceptance of those who don't "fit in"?

Apply It

- * 24. What new relationships can you ask God to bring into your life this week?
- 25. How can you become more open-minded toward others?
- 26. Starting today, how can you help another Christian move beyond his or her cultural limits?

Peter at Cornelius' House - Acts 10:24-48

Topics: Acceptance, Forgiveness, God, Good News, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, People, Power, Praise, Prayer, Prejudice, Resurrection, Witnessing

Open It

1. If you could have been born and raised in another culture, in which one would you like to have been raised? Why?
- * 2. If a family from another country moved in next door, how might you welcome them to the neighborhood?
3. When was the first time you faced prejudice?

Explore It

4. Who was with Peter when he arrived in Caesarea? (10:23-24)
5. How had Cornelius prepared for Peter's visit? (10:24-25)
6. How did Peter refuse the centurion's homage? (10:25-26)
7. Who was inside the centurion's house? (10:27)
8. What did Peter say to show that he had learned what God had wanted him to learn? (10:28-29)
9. What did Peter ask? (10:29)
10. How did Cornelius respond? (10:30-33)
- * 11. In what way was Peter's understanding of God changed by his vision? (10:34-35)
- * 12. What was Peter's message to the group? (10:34-43)
13. How was Peter's message interrupted? (10:44-46)
- * 14. Why did Peter suddenly stop talking? (10:44-46)
15. What happened to the non-Jewish believers to show the Jewish believers that God accepted them? (10:44-46)
16. How did the circumcised believers react to what happened? (10:45-46)
17. How did Peter sum up what had happened? (10:47-48)
18. What did Peter command? (10:48)
19. In what ways was fellowship between believing Jews and believing non-Jews improved during Peter's stay in Caesarea? (10:48)

Get It

- * 20. How do cultural and religious barriers hinder growth in our faith?
- * 21. If you had a vision like Peter's, what deep-seated prejudices would you be called on to get rid of?
22. How would Cornelius and his group fare at your church?
23. Why might someone visiting your church for the first time feel unwelcome?
24. What could you and others do to make people of all kinds feel welcome in your church?
25. What cultural and religious barriers hinder growth in your church?
26. How is your pastor like Peter?
27. How could your pastor benefit from an encounter with Cornelius and Peter?
28. How can your church be open to the power of the Holy Spirit in a new way?
29. If someone asked you to tell them about your faith, what would you say?

Apply It

- * 30. What is the first step you could take to show respect for a racial or cultural group that is different from you?
31. How can you be an effective witness for Christ this week among people who are different from you?

Peter Explains His Actions - Acts 11:1-18

Topics: Angels, Believers, Bible, Church, Criticism, God, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Praise, Prayer, Prejudice, Repentance, Salvation

Open It

1. What dream stands out in your memory?
2. What favorite story do you like retelling?
- * 3. What is one family tradition you want to keep at all costs?

Explore It

4. What did the apostles and Christians in Judea hear? (11:1)
5. When Peter went to Jerusalem, who criticized him? (11:2)
6. Who were the “circumcised believers”? (11:2)
7. What did the circumcised Christians say? (11:3)
- * 8. Why did the circumcised believers imply that it was wrong for Peter to eat with Gentiles? (11:3)
- * 9. How did Peter explain his actions? (11:4-17)
10. What did Peter include in his brief explanation? (11:4-17)
11. What additional information did Peter provide concerning the angel’s message to Cornelius? (11:14)
- * 12. How did Peter dispel the idea that the Gentiles were second-class citizens? (11:15-17)
13. On what did Peter’s defense rest? (11:17)
14. How did Peter’s argument prove convincing? (11:18)
15. How did Peter’s step of including non-Jews affect the church? (11:18)

Get It

16. Why do you think Peter told the whole story behind his actions?
17. How was the criticism against Peter helpful to the church?
18. When might it be helpful to be openly critical about church matters?
- * 19. In what ways do we need to be less like the “circumcised believers” in our approach to others?
20. Whom do you find “unacceptable”?
- * 21. How can you be more accepting of those who don’t match your values or life-style?
22. What principle of accepting others do you want to copy from Peter’s example?

Apply It

23. When might you need to take a stand for what is right in your place of work, family, or church this week?
- * 24. How can you open your heart and mind to others whom you tend to dislike?

The Church in Antioch - Acts 11:19-30

Topics: Believe, Believers, Christianity, Church, Encouragement, Faith, Gifts, Good News, Grace, Help, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Ministry, Persecution, Prophecy

Open It

1. What do you like or dislike about traveling?
2. When you have too much to do, whom do you call on for help?
3. If those who know you best were discussing your character, what do you think they would say was one of your strengths?

Explore It

4. What was one of the results of Stephen's martyrdom? (11:19)
5. To whom was the news about Christ being told? (11:19)
6. Who spoke to the Greeks in Antioch about the Lord Jesus? (11:20)
7. What caused the news about Christ to take hold among many who heard it? (11:21)
8. What resulted from the ministry of the Christians? (11:21)
9. How did the church at Jerusalem respond to the increase in numbers of new believers? (11:22)
10. How did Barnabas encourage the Christians at Antioch? (11:23)
11. What was exemplary about Barnabas? (11:24)
12. What happened to the work in Antioch? (11:24)
13. Why did Barnabas go to Tarsus to look for Saul? (25-26)
14. Where were the disciples first called Christians? (11:26)
15. Who was Agabus? (11:27)
16. What did Agabus predict? (11:28)
17. What did the Christians do for the believers in Judea? Why? (11:29-30)
18. To whom did Saul and Barnabas give the gift collected in Antioch? (11:29-30)

Get It

19. How was Stephen's martyrdom good for the church?
20. How can good sometimes come out of tragedies?
21. Why is someone like Barnabas a real asset to a church?
22. If you were more like Barnabas, how might people respond to you differently from the way they do now?
23. Which label are you most comfortable with: disciple, saint, believer, or Christian? Why?
24. Following the example of the early church, how should we help other Christians who face economic hardship?

Apply It

25. How can you do good for someone who needs your help this week?
- * 26. What can you do to enlarge the circle of people to whom you reach out?

Peter's Miraculous Escape From Prison - Acts 12:1-19

Topics: Angels, Assurance, Church, Instructions, Joy, Persecution, Prayer

Open It

1. If you had to write a short story, what is one thing you would do to make it interesting to the reader?
- * 2. What is one dream you remember as having been very vivid?
3. If you told someone about an exciting dream you had, how would you make it come alive to the listener?

Explore It

4. Why was King Herod so cold-hearted toward the church? (12:1-3)
5. Whom did King Herod arrest? (12:1, 3-4)
6. Whom did the king have put to death? (12:2)
7. What did Herod do with Peter? Why? (12:3-4)
- * 8. What did the king plan to do with Peter after the Passover? Why? (12:3-4)
9. What did the church do while Peter was in prison? (12:5)
10. While in jail, why didn't Peter seem to fear for his life? (12:6)
- * 11. What happened on the night before Peter's trial? (12:6-11)
12. Who enabled Peter to escape? (12:7-10)
13. How did Peter escape from prison? (12:7-10)
- * 14. When did Peter know that what he had experienced was real? (12:11)
15. Where did Peter go once he realized what had happened? (12:12)
16. What happened when Peter appeared at Mary's door? (12:13-16)
17. Once inside the house, what did Peter say? (12:17)
18. How did the soldiers react when they discovered Peter was gone? (12:18)
19. What did Herod do? (12:19)

Get It

20. When have you seen a person try to take advantage of Christians, as Herod did?
- * 21. How do you tend to react in trying circumstances?
22. How can a church use prayer when faced with a crisis?
- * 23. What can we learn from the way Peter handled his situation?
24. How can you help and encourage Christians who serve in difficult situations?
25. What can you do to make your prayers for others a part of their ministry?

Apply It

- * 26. What do you want to remember the next time you suffer for your faith?
27. For what missionary can you pray throughout this week?
28. To what other family can you show hospitality this week? How?

Herod's Death - Acts 12:20-25

Topics: Angels, Bible, Death, Flattery, God, Growth, Mission, Partnerships, Peace, Pride, Quarrels

Open It

- * 1. If you were a celebrity, what would you like most and least about your status?
- 2. If your job gave you tremendous power over others, in what ways could it bring out the worst in you?

Explore It

- 3. What was Herod's relationship with the cities of Tyre and Sidon? (12:20)
- 4. Why did the people of Tyre and Sidon want to make peace with Herod? (12:20)
- 5. Whom did the people appoint to make peace with the king? (12:20)
- * 6. On the day of the public assembly, what did Herod do? (12:21)
- * 7. What did the people say to honor Herod? (12:22)
- * 8. How did God judge Herod? (12:23)
- 9. How did the work of God continue, in spite of persecution and opposition? (12:24)
- 10. What did Saul and Barnabas set out to do? (12:25)
- 11. When the apostles completed their mission in Jerusalem, where did they go? (12:25)
- 12. Whom did the apostles take with them to Antioch? (12:25)

Get It

- 13. How could a season of hardship benefit your church?
- * 14. How does the example of Herod serve as a warning to us today?
- 15. In what ways do pride and position affect the way we treat others?
- * 16. How can we guard against pride and conceit?
- 17. What should we do when others credit us with great deeds?
- 18. For what ministries in your church are you thankful?
- 19. Why is it helpful to work with a partner in doing Christian ministry?

Apply It

- 20. How can you be more honest in your relationships with Christian brothers and sisters?
- 21. What church leader can you pray for today?
- * 22. What can you do today as a discipline of humility?

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off - Acts 13:1-3

Topics: Fasting, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Mission, Prayer, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What send-off or farewell stands out in your memory?
- 2. If you were going away on a long trip, what kind of send-off would you prefer?
- 3. If you and a coworker of your choice were transferred to jobs overseas, whom would you want to go along with you?

Explore It

- * 4. Who made up the leadership of the church at Antioch? (13:1)
- 5. What was the leadership like at the church in Antioch? (13:1)
- 6. What was the background of the church leaders at Antioch? (13:1)
- 7. How did the church at Antioch become so cosmopolitan? (13:1)
- 8. Despite their various backgrounds, how did the leaders of the church at Antioch function? (13:2)
- 9. While they were worshiping and fasting, what did the Holy Spirit say to the men? (13:2)
- 10. What did God want the church to do with Barnabas and Saul? (13:2)
- 11. Why did the Holy Spirit tell the leaders to “set apart” Barnabas and Saul? (13:2)
- * 12. What were Barnabas and Saul called to do? (13:2)
- 13. What preceded the departure of the missionaries? (13:3)
- * 14. Why did the church leaders lay hands on Barnabas and Saul? (13:3)
- 15. Where did the missionaries go? (13:3)

Get It

- 16. What variety of people attend your church?
- 17. How diverse is your church leadership?
- * 18. Why should churches pray over and lay hands on missionaries and other ministers?
- * 19. When should church leaders lay hands on members of the congregation?
- 20. How important is worship to the life of a church?
- 21. How can your church best serve missions?
- 22. What can you do to serve missions and missionaries?
- 23. What is the purpose of fasting?
- 24. Why should Christians fast?
- 25. When might a church want to fast as a congregation?
- 26. How can you show support for the leadership of your church?

Apply It

- * 27. What time can you commit to prayer each day for the staff of your church?
- 28. When can you find time this week to write a letter of encouragement to a missionary?

On Cyprus - Acts 13:4-12

Topics: Believe, Bible, Evangelism, Faith, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Opposition, Satan, Teaching

Open It

1. When was the last time you were taken in by a particularly good sales pitch?
2. When you were in elementary school, what tricks did you play on others?
- * 3. Who helped you get settled into your first full-time job? How?

Explore It

- * 4. Who directed Barnabas and Saul on their journey? (13:4)
5. Where did Barnabas and Saul go? (13:4-5)
- * 6. What did the missionaries do in Salamis? (13:5)
- * 7. Who helped Barnabas and Saul? (13:5)
8. Whom did Barnabas and Saul meet at Paphos? (13:6-7)
9. Why did the proconsul send for Barnabas and Saul? (13:7)
10. What did Bar-Jesus (Elymas) do? (13:8)
11. How did Saul (also called Paul) respond to Elymas? (13:9-11)
12. Why did Elymas oppose the Word of God? (13:10)
13. What was the judgment against the sorcerer? (13:11)
14. When Sergius Paulus saw the miracle, what did he do? (13:12)

Get It

15. How often do missionaries speak at your church?
- * 16. When missionaries visit your church, how can you benefit from their teaching and experience?
- * 17. How can we be helpful to missionaries and other Christian workers?
18. What are some ways that people oppose the gospel?
19. How is Paul's aggressive approach to dealing with sin a helpful example for us to follow?
20. Given your background, training, and interests, to what group of people are you best suited to share the news about Christ?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you be helpful to a missionary or Christian worker in your church this week?
22. In what situation do you need the Holy Spirit's guidance this week?

In Pisidian Antioch - Acts 13:13-52

Topics: Believe, Bible, Church, Death, Encouragement, God, History, Holy Spirit, Jealousy, Jesus Christ, Joy, Leadership, People, Persecution, Prophecy, Resurrection, Salvation

Open It

1. What are some of your favorite quotes?
2. Who is one of the best speakers you have ever heard?
3. When have you been moved to action by great preaching?
- * 4. Who is one person who can affect whether you have a good or bad day? How?

Explore It

5. What happened at Perga? (13:13-14)
6. Where did the missionaries go after leaving Perga? (13:14)
7. What did the synagogue rulers say to Paul and Barnabas? (13:14-15)
8. What were Paul and his companions invited to do in the synagogue? (13:14-15)
9. In his initial response to the invitation to speak, what did Paul say? (13:16)
10. In surveying the history of Israel, what key events did Paul mention? (13:17-22)
11. How was the mention of David an easy transition to refer to Jesus (and his forerunner, John) in Paul's message? (13:23-25)
12. To whom was the message of salvation sent? (13:26)
13. How did Paul confirm the fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead? (13:33-37)
14. How is forgiveness of sins possible? (13:38-39)
15. What did Paul say would happen to his hearers if they failed to recognize Jesus as Savior? (13:40-41)
16. How did people respond to the message Paul preached? (13:42-43)
17. What did the people do and say as Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue? (13:42-43)
18. What happened on the Sabbath after Paul first spoke in Perga? (13:44-45)
19. Why did Paul and Barnabas turn their attention to non-Jewish (Gentile) audiences? (13:45-48)
20. How did Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles? (13:46-48)
21. How did the Gentiles respond to the Word of the Lord? (13:48)
- * 22. What happened to Paul and Barnabas while God was causing the church to grow and become strong? (13:49-52)
- * 23. What price did Paul and Barnabas pay for telling people about Christ? (13:50)
- * 24. What effect did the opposition have on Paul and Barnabas? (13:51-52)
25. What gave Paul and Barnabas joy? (13:52)

Get It

26. How should Christians settle their differences?
27. If you had an opportunity to speak to a group of people about Christ, what would you say to challenge them to turn to Him?
28. Paul clearly assumed leadership in Pisidian Antioch; how do you think Barnabas felt when this happened? Why?
29. How would it be hard for you to give up a position of leadership?
30. What is the importance of timing in telling people about Christ?
31. From whom have you kept the gospel?
32. When have you been rejected because of your faith?
33. How should we handle rejection?
- * 34. Why were Paul and Barnabas able to have joy?
- * 35. How can we experience joy during difficult circumstances?

Apply It

- * 36. What verse or principle will help you have joy in whatever circumstances you face?
- 37. In what settings can you be a witness for Christ this week?
- 38. How can you stand strong when your Christian identity leaves you alone or isolated in some way?

In Iconium - Acts 14:1-7

Topics: Believe, Divisions, Effectiveness, Good News, Jesus Christ, Miracles, People, Persecution

Open It

1. What makes a person successful in your line of work?
2. When do you feel best about your work?
- * 3. What are some issues that often cause disagreement among people?

Explore It

4. At Iconium, where did Paul and Barnabas go? (14:1)
5. Where did the apostles begin telling others about Christ? (14:1)
6. Who became believers at Iconium? Why? (14:1)
- * 7. How did unbelievers oppose what Paul and Barnabas were doing? (14:2)
- * 8. How did the apostles respond to the opposition? (14:3)
9. What did the Lord enable Paul and Barnabas to do? Why? (14:3)
- * 10. How was the city divided? (14:4)
11. What did certain people plot against the apostles? (14:5)
12. When Paul and Barnabas discovered the plot against them, what did they do? (14:6)
13. Despite the setback Paul and Barnabas suffered, what did they do in Lystra and Derbe? (14:6-7)

Get It

14. When faced with conflict and opposition, how did the apostles pull together?
15. Which pastoral task do you think your minister enjoys most?
16. When does your pastor speak most effectively?
- * 17. What happens to the church when a congregation divides its loyalties among leaders?
- * 18. How can you and others in your church support your ministerial staff?
19. What should you do when people oppose you for being a Christian?
20. When is it best to run from persecution or leave a situation that threatens your faith?
21. Why is important for us to pray daily for the missionaries we support?

Apply It

22. When you face conflict this week, how can you rely on the Lord for help?
- * 23. How can you support those whom God has called to lead your church?
24. For what missionary will you pray every day this week?

In Lystra and Derbe - Acts 14:8-20

Topics: Blasphemy, Faith, God, Good News, Handicapped, Healing, Idolatry, Instructions, People, Persecution, Witnessing

Open It

1. If you suddenly could have the ability to do something you had never done before, what skill would you like to have?
- * 2. What would you do if you received an expensive gift that you didn't think you deserved?
3. When has someone unexpectedly turned against you?

Explore It

4. What did Paul do for the crippled man in Lystra? (14:8-10)
- * 5. How did the crowd respond to what Paul had done? (14:11-13)
6. Why were the apostles horrified when they discovered what was happening? (14:14)
- * 7. Why did Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes? (14:14)
- * 8. What was the apostles' message to the crowd? (14:15-17)
9. How did Paul tailor his message to the audience? (14:15-17)
10. In spite of the apostles' message, why was it difficult to restrain the crowd? (14:18)
11. Who came from Antioch and Iconium to poison the minds of the people against the missionaries? (14:19)
12. What did the crowd do to Paul? (14:19)
13. Who helped Paul? (14:20)
14. When did Paul return to Lystra? (14:20)
15. After Paul and Barnabas left Lystra, where did they go? (14:20)

Get It

16. Paul knew when someone needed to be healed and what people needed to hear; why was he so perceptive?
17. How can you be sensitive to the needs of others?
- * 18. When have you received credit or recognition you didn't deserve?
- * 19. Why is it important to give glory to God?
20. The early missionaries had a demanding schedule and dangerous life-style; how might you have coped with the pressures they faced?
21. When are you typically in the company of people who are very different from you?
22. In talking about Christ with non-Christians, what can you do to speak their language?
23. Paul paid an enormous price for his testimony; what risks are there for you in living for Christ?

Apply It

24. How can you challenge yourself to serve the Lord completely each day?
- * 25. What can you do to direct people's attention to Christ and away from you?
26. Where can you go to witness to an unbeliever this week?

The Return to Antioch in Syria - Acts 14:21-28

Topics: Church, Encouragement, Faith, Fasting, Good News, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Prayer, Strength, Suffering, Trust

Open It

- * 1. What kind of vacation most appeals to you (trips to other cities, backwoods hiking, visits to the beach, etc.)?
- 2. How busy is your daily schedule?
- 3. What do you do to relax?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Paul and Barnabas do in Derbe? (14:21)
- 5. What was the result of the apostles' evangelism? (14:21)
- * 6. Why did Paul and Barnabas retrace their steps to Antioch? (14:22)
- 7. What kind of warnings did the missionaries give the young converts? (14:22)
- 8. How did the apostles establish leadership in the young churches? (14:23)
- * 9. What encouragement and help did the apostles give the new Christians? (14:22-23)
- 10. Where did the return journey to Antioch take the apostles? (14:24-26)
- 11. On their way to Antioch, where did the apostles preach? (14:25)
- 12. When they returned to Antioch, what did Paul and Barnabas do? (14:27)
- 13. Why was it important that Paul and Barnabas report on their activity to the church at Antioch? (14:26)
- 14. How long did the apostles remain in Antioch? (14:28)

Get It

- 15. Why would you return to a church or community that had made you feel unwelcome before?
- 16. What does the apostles' ability to withstand rejection say about their faith and leadership?
- 17. What would your pastor do if faced with persecution?
- * 18. How does your church disciple new Christians?
- 19. In your church, how does a person become a leader?
- 20. How should missionaries be accountable to the church?
- 21. How has your church been blessed by the work of missionaries?
- * 22. How can you help younger Christians get established in the faith?

Apply It

- 23. In what ways can you benefit from the teaching of your church elders this week?
- * 24. What younger Christian can you encourage this week? How?
- 25. What can you do this week to become a stronger Christian?

The Council at Jerusalem - Acts 15:1-21

Topics: Believers, Bible, Church, Doctrine, God, Grace, Holy Spirit, Judging Others, Judgment, Prophecy, Questions, Teaching

Open It

1. When faced with a problem, do you want someone else to solve it, or do you like to figure out for yourself what you should do? Why?
- * 2. What is most challenging to you about enforcing rules?
3. When you think your opinion is right, how do you tend to express your view?

Explore It

- * 4. Who came to Antioch? Why? (15:1)
5. What were the men from Judea teaching the Christians? (15:1)
6. On what did the men of Judea base their theology? (15:1)
7. How did Paul and Barnabas respond to the teaching problem at Antioch? (15:2)
- * 8. How did the apostles determine to resolve the problem in Antioch? (15:2)
9. What were the apostles' experiences on their way to Jerusalem? (15:3)
10. When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem, how did the church receive them? (15:4)
11. What did the believing Pharisees say? (15:5)
12. How did the church leaders respond to the Pharisees? (15:6)
13. What did Peter say to the party of the Pharisees? (15:7-11)
14. What did Paul and Barnabas add to Peter's testimony? (15:12)
- * 15. How did James summarize his views? (15:13-21)
16. How did James deal with the circumcision question from a biblical standpoint? (15:15-18)
17. What practical judgment did James make? (15:19-21)
18. What did James mean by his concluding statement? (15:21)

Get It

- * 19. What was wise about using a council to deal with the thorny issue of how non-Jews could be saved?
20. How was the problem of this council larger than the issue of circumcision?
- * 21. When dealing with difficult issues, what do we need to include in the decision-making process?
22. Why were Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James the right men to resolve the conflict?
23. How could your church follow the council's approach in dealing with issues that trouble the church?
24. What areas of your faith create conflict within you?
25. What beliefs or practices do Christians add to the gospel?
26. How can we remind ourselves to require of new believers only what God requires?

Apply It

- * 27. Where can you get help resolving an issue about which you are unsure?
28. This week, what change in your schedule can you make to allow enough time for studying God's Word?

The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers - Acts 15:22-35

Topics: Advice, Believers, Blessing, Church, Encouragement, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Obligation, Peace

Open It

- * 1. How often do you write letters to friends?
- 2. What was the most important letter you ever received?
- 3. When was the last time you received a letter from your pastor?

Explore It

- 4. Who went to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas? (15:22)
- 5. Why did the men go to Antioch? (15:23)
- 6. In whose name was the letter to Gentile believers sent? (15:23)
- 7. To whom was the letter addressed? (15:23)
- * 8. What was the letter to Gentile believers about? (15:24-29)
- 9. What was the tone of the letter? (15:24-29)
- 10. How did the letter confirm the findings of the council? (15:24-29)
- 11. How was the letter delivered? (15:30)
- * 12. How did the Christians in Antioch respond to the message from Jerusalem? (15:31)
- 13. How did Judas and Silas help the Christians in Antioch? (15:32)
- * 14. When Judas and Silas left for Jerusalem, what kind of send-off were they given? (15:33)
- 15. What did Paul and Barnabas do in Antioch? (15:35)

Get It

- * 16. What is the best way to solve disagreements among Christians?
- * 17. How would you handle a difficult problem with another Christian?
- 18. What are the lines of division in your church?
- 19. If Paul were to pastor your church for awhile, what thorny problems might he address?
- 20. If you were to design a model for unity among believers of different ethnic backgrounds, what would it look like?
- 21. Why should Christians work toward unity within diversity?

Apply It

- * 22. What difficult relationship should you improve this week for the sake of Christ? How?
- 23. When can you spend time with other Christians who are ethnically different from you?

Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas - Acts 15:36-41

Topics: Church, Disagreements, Jesus Christ, Partnerships, Strength

Open It

- * 1. When you have a sharp disagreement with a friend, how do you usually handle it?
- 2. When have you held a grudge against someone?

Explore It

- 3. What did Paul suggest to Barnabas? (15:36)
- * 4. What did Barnabas want to do? (15:37)
- 5. Why might Barnabas have wanted to take John Mark with him? (15:37)
- * 6. Why didn't Paul want Mark to accompany the apostles on their trip? (15:38)
- 7. Whom did Barnabas take with him when he went to Cyprus? (15:39)
- * 8. What did the apostles do about their difference of opinion? (15:39-40)
- 9. How did both men reach a solution? (15:39-40)
- 10. Whom did Paul select as a traveling companion in ministry? (15:40)
- 11. As a result of the separation between Barnabas and Paul, how many missionary expeditions set out? (15:39-40)
- 12. What did Paul and Silas do on their journey? (15:41)

Get It

- * 13. Why do you think Paul and Barnabas's difference of opinion turned into such a deep division?
- 14. How do you think differences in personality affected the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas?
- 15. When you disagree with someone, why is it important to try to see the issue from the other person's point of view?
- 16. How do you think the apostles' conflict affected their ministry afterward?
- * 17. When should you give up your rights, your position, or your point of view for the sake of peace with another person?
- 18. How can God use the strengths and weaknesses of your personality to get His work done?

Apply It

- * 19. What step can you take toward resolving an old disagreement with another Christian? When?
- 20. Where can you channel your anger or hurt feelings when they become a problem? How?

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas - Acts 16:1-5

Topics: Believers, Church, Culture, Decisions, Faith, Leadership, Mission, Reputation, Strength

Open It

- * 1. As far as you know, what nationalities are included in your family tree?
- 2. What family traditions from the “old country” do you treasure?
- 3. What ethnic values do you want to pass on to future generations of your family?

Explore It

- * 4. Who visited Derbe and then Lystra? (16:1)
- 5. Where was Timothy from? (16:1)
- * 6. What was Timothy’s parentage? (16:1)
- 7. What was Timothy’s reputation? (16:2)
- 8. What reputation did Timothy have among Christians? (16:2)
- 9. Why did Paul want to take Timothy along on the journey? (16:2-3)
- * 10. What did Timothy have to do in order to minister with Paul? (16:3)
- 11. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised? (16:3)
- 12. How is it safe to assume that Timothy was being treated as a Jew rather than a Gentile? (16:3-4)
- 13. What did Paul and his companions do as they traveled from town to town? (16:4)
- 14. What was the effect of the missionaries’ visit? (16:5)

Get It

- 15. How could Timothy’s mixed background help him in ministering to both Jews and Gentiles?
- * 16. How did Timothy’s heritage create a problem?
- 17. What type of pastor could best serve a multiethnic congregation?
- * 18. How might a multiethnic background be both an advantage and a disadvantage?
- 19. How does God use us in spite of our imperfections and weaknesses?

Apply It

- * 20. How do you need to open your heart and home to Christians who are ethnically different from you?
- 21. What missionaries can you support in prayer this week?

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia - Acts 16:6-10

Topics: Bible, God, Gospel, Guidance, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Teamwork

Open It

1. When was the last time you were disappointed?
2. How persistent are you in trying to get things to go your way?
- * 3. If you arranged a long vacation and you were suddenly required to cancel it for business, what would you do?

Explore It

4. Where did the journey westward from Iconium take Paul and his companions? (16:6)
5. Who directed the missionaries away from Asia? (16:6)
6. How were the travelers hindered from entering Bithynia? (16:7)
- * 7. How did God guide the missionaries in their travels? (16:6-7)
8. After leaving Mysia, where did the travelers go next? (16:8)
9. When did Paul experience the vision? (16:9)
10. What did Paul see in his vision? (16:9)
11. How did Paul and his companions interpret this vision? (16:10)
- * 12. What did the missionaries do after they understood what God wanted them to do? (16:10)
- * 13. When did Paul and his companions respond to God's instructions? (16:10)
14. How did the narrator of the story participate in Paul's travels? (16:10)

Get It

- * 15. How do you think Paul, Silas, and Timothy recognized the Holy Spirit's directions as they traveled around Asia Minor?
- * 16. How can we be receptive to the Holy Spirit's guidance?
17. What do you do when the Holy Spirit thwarts your plans?
18. Why do you think God has sometimes spoken to His people through visions and dreams?
19. How does God usually speak to His children?
20. How does God speak to you?
21. What does the example of Paul and his companions teach us about obedience to God?
22. With whom has God led you to share the gospel?

Apply It

23. How can you listen more closely to the Holy Spirit's direction in your life?
- * 24. What is one thing you can do to make yourself responsive to God and His will?

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi - Acts 16:11-15

Topics: Believers, Evangelism, God, Heart, Hospitality, Jesus Christ, Listening

Open It

1. If you had to make a living in sales, what would you most like to sell?
- * 2. What is your idea of hospitality?

Explore It

3. How did Paul and his companions travel from Troas to Philippi? (16:11-12)
4. Where did the travelers stop on their way from Troas to Philippi? (16:11-12)
5. How did Luke describe Philippi? (16:12)
6. Where did Paul and his friends go to pray on the Sabbath? (16:13)
7. Why was there no synagogue at Philippi? (16:13)
8. Whom did the travelers find at the place of prayer? (16:13)
9. Who was Lydia? (16:14)
- * 10. How did Lydia respond to Paul's words? (16:14)
11. Who opened Lydia's heart? (16:14)
- * 12. After Lydia became a believer, what did she and her household do? (16:15)
- * 13. What did Lydia offer Paul and his group after her baptism? (16:15)

Get It

14. How did Paul establish his mission as soon as he and his group arrived in Philippi?
- * 15. Why should we extend hospitality to others?
16. How can we have fellowship with other Christians when we are away from home?
17. What responsibility do you feel to witness to others wherever you happen to be?
- * 18. In what ways is Lydia's example one we should follow?
19. How should we treat Bible teachers?
20. How can you extend hospitality to a missionary?

Apply It

21. In what area of your life do you need to be more open to the Lord's teaching this week?
- * 22. How can you share your home and possessions with those called to the ministry?
23. Following Lydia's example, how can you take the initiative in helping someone else today?

Paul and Silas in Prison - Acts 16:16-40

Topics: Authority, Caring, Church, Demons, Encouragement, God, Good News, Healing, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Justice, Praise, Prayer, Prejudice, Salvation

Open It

- * 1. How would you respond if your neighbor told you she had psychic powers and could tell you about your future?
- 2. If you were caring for someone with a mental disorder, what would you find most difficult about your work?

Explore It

- 3. Where were Paul and his companions going when they met the slave girl? (16:16)
- * 4. What was distinctive about the slave girl that Paul and his companions met? (16:16)
- 5. How did Luke describe the slave girl? (16:16)
- 6. How was the girl exploited? (16:16)
- * 7. How did the demon-possessed girl damage Paul's ministry? (16:17-18)
- 8. How did Paul gain victory over the slave girl's demonic condition? (16:18)
- * 9. Why were the owners of the slave girl angry with Paul and Silas? (16:19)
- 10. What did the girl's owners do with Paul and Silas? Why? (16:19-20)
- 11. What happened to Paul and Silas after several accusations were made against them? (16:20-24)
- 12. What happened while Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns? (16:25-26)
- 13. Why did the jailer turn to God? (16:27-30)
- 14. What were the results of the talk Paul and Silas had with the jailer? (16:31-34)
- 15. Why did the magistrates change their minds about Paul and Silas? (16:35-36)
- 16. Why did Paul respond the way he did to the officers? (16:37)
- 17. What did Paul and Silas do after their release from prison? (16:40)

Get It

- 18. Why were Paul and Silas so poorly treated?
- 19. How might Paul have been helping the cause of the Philippian church when he asserted his rights as a Roman citizen?
- * 20. Why is it often difficult for a Christian leader to deal with someone involved in occult practices?
- * 21. In our society, what are some ways people are in bondage to evil?
- 22. In what ways are some Christians victims of racism?
- 23. Although severely tested and persecuted, Paul and Silas held on to their faith and their joy; how do you think you would hold up under such extraordinary pressure? Why?
- 24. What can a Christian do to be prepared for persecution?
- 25. When in your experience has the Lord provided a happy ending to a bad turn of events?
- 26. When should Christians stand up for justice?
- 27. When should Christians give up their legal rights for the sake of Christ?
- 28. What can we learn from Paul and Silas to help us cope with difficult times ahead?

Apply It

- * 29. What can you pray about this week to put a check on evil in your place of work, neighborhood, or community?
- 30. What songs and prayers of praise can you offer God today?
- 31. How can you encourage someone else in his or her Christian walk this week?

In Thessalonica - Acts 17:1-9

Topics: Bible, Church, Gospel, Jealousy, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Resurrection, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. When is a time you remember being jealous of someone else?
- 2. When was the last time you missed church on Sunday?
- 3. If you were involved in a Bible study group, would you prefer to be the leader or one of the participants? Why?

Explore It

- 4. Why did Paul and his companions stop at Thessalonica? (17:1)
- * 5. What did Paul and his companions do in Thessalonica? (17:1-3)
- 6. What was Paul's mission in the synagogue? (17:2-3)
- 7. What resulted from Paul's teaching? (17:4)
- 8. Why were some Jews jealous? (17:5)
- * 9. How did the Jews act against Paul and Silas? Why? (17:5)
- * 10. How did the plan of the Jews misfire? (17:6)
- 11. What did the crowd do to Jason and some other Christians? (17:6-7)
- 12. What were the accusations against the Christians? (17:6-7)
- 13. How was Jason implicated in the charges? (17:7)
- 14. How did the crowd and city officials react to the accusations? (17:8)
- 15. Why were the Christians required to post bond? (17:9)
- 16. What did the city officials do with the believers? (17:9)

Get It

- * 17. Why were the Jews jealous of Paul and Silas?
- 18. What was Paul's evangelistic style?
- 19. How does your minister present the gospel?
- 20. In what settings are you most effective as a witness for Christ?
- 21. How can you share your faith with others?
- 22. As a missionary, would you be more effective telling others about Christ, or teaching them how to live a Christian life? Why?
- 23. How can rejection, abuse, and other kinds of opposition affect a believer's stand for Christ?
- * 24. How should we cope with opposition to the message of Christ?
- 25. How should Christian brothers and sisters support one another in their work for Christ?

Apply It

- 26. When can you spend more time studying the Scriptures with other Christians?
- * 27. In what setting can you be a verbal witness for Christ this week? How?

In Berea - Acts 17:10-15

Topics: Believe, Believers, Bible, Character, Church, Conflict, God, Gospel, People

Open It

- * 1. What do you typically look over closely before buying?
- 2. How open are you to new ideas?
- 3. If someone offered you a free college course of study, what subject would you study?

Explore It

- 4. When did Paul and Silas leave Thessalonica? (17:10)
- 5. Why did Paul and Silas leave at night? (17:10)
- 6. What town did the missionaries visit? (17:10)
- * 7. On arriving in Berea, where did Paul and Silas go? (17:10)
- 8. How were the Bereans different from the Thessalonians? (17:11)
- * 9. How did the Bereans interact with Paul's message? (17:11)
- * 10. How did the people respond to the gospel? (17:12)
 - 11. Who responded to the gospel? (17:12)
 - 12. What did the Jewish unbelievers from Thessalonica do? (17:13)
 - 13. Why did Paul leave Berea? (17:14)
 - 14. Why did Silas and Timothy remain in Berea? (17:14)
 - 15. Who went with Paul to Athens? (17:15)
 - 16. What instructions did Paul leave for Silas and Timothy? (17:15)

Get It

- 17. How interested is your congregation in Bible study?
- 18. If your church offered daily Bible studies, why might people go or not go to them?
- * 19. What does it mean to welcome the message of Christ?
- * 20. Why is it important to think about what we are taught?
 - 21. How should all Christians interact with what they are taught about the Bible?
 - 22. When might a Christian viewpoint stir up controversy?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you make time to study the Bible every day this week?
- 24. How can you help younger Christians grow in their faith?

In Athens - Acts 17:16-34

Topics: Arguments, Believe, Church, Creation, God, Idolatry, Ignorance, Image, Judgment, People, Religion, Resurrection

Open It

- * 1. When do you tend to be skeptical of the news?
- 2. How many famous statues and sculptures can you name?
- 3. Would you describe yourself as more theoretical than practical, or more practical than theoretical? Why?
- 4. What kinds of discussions do you enjoy?

Explore It

- 5. What distressed Paul about Athens? (17:16)
- 6. Where did Paul present his message to the diverse listeners? (17:17)
- 7. How did the philosophers react to Paul's ideas? (17:18)
- 8. Why did the Council of the Areopagus want to hear what Paul had to say? (17:19-21)
- 9. How did Paul address the intellectual pagans? (17:22-23)
- 10. Why did the Athenians have an altar dedicated to an "unknown god"? (17:23)
- * 11. How did Paul use his knowledge of the Athenians' "unknown god" to present the true God? (17:23)
- * 12. How did Paul describe God to his hearers? (17:24-25)
- 13. Why was Paul's lesson in biblical history a blow to Athenian pride? (17:26)
- 14. Why did God reveal Himself in creation and history? (17:27-28)
- 15. How did Paul use Greek poetry to tell others about Christ? (17:28)
- 16. How did Paul prove that God was not an idol? (17:29)
- 17. What were Paul's concluding remarks? (17:30-31)
- * 18. How did the Greeks respond to Paul? (17:32-34)
- 19. Who among Paul's hearers became believers? (17:34)

Get It

- 20. What made Paul well-suited to presenting the gospel to the Athenians?
- * 21. How did Paul tailor his message to the Athenians?
- 22. What can we learn from Paul's example here?
- * 23. How should we be flexible in our approach to evangelism?
- 24. How should we react when others don't take us or what we say seriously?
- 25. What did Paul emphasize about God that was different from what the Stoics and Epicureans believed?
- 26. What incorrect views of God are held in our society?
- 27. How would you judge Paul's ministry in Athens—as a success or failure? Why?
- 28. How can you deal with attitudes of pride and arrogance that surface in you from time to time?

Apply It

- 29. What will help you persevere in your witness when no one seems to care or listen?
- * 30. What is one thing you can do to make the message of Christ understandable to your non-Christian friends and coworkers?

In Corinth - Acts 18:1-17

Topics: Believe, Bible, Church, Encouragement, God, Hardheartedness, Judgment, Law, Prejudice, Witnessing, Work

Open It

1. What makes you most impatient?
2. How do you express your feelings when you are frustrated?
- * 3. When you are disheartened, what usually encourages you?

Explore It

4. Where did Paul go after leaving Athens? (18:1)
5. With what Jewish couple did Paul meet? (18:2)
6. What did Paul have in common with Aquila and Priscilla? (18:3)
7. What did Paul do every Sabbath in Corinth? (18:4)
- * 8. What did Paul spend his time doing when Silas and Timothy arrived? (18:5)
9. Why was Paul able to stop tentmaking when his friends arrived from Macedonia? (18:5)
- * 10. When the Jews opposed Paul, how did he react? (18:6)
11. In Corinth, why did Paul turn to the Gentiles? (18:6-7)
12. Who believed in the Lord? (18:8)
- * 13. What prompted Paul's vision of the Lord? (18:9-11)
14. Why was Paul brought to court? (18:12-13)
15. What crucial decision did Gallio make? (18:14-16)
16. Why did the crowd attack Sosthenes? (18:17)
17. Why didn't Gallio intervene in the attack against Sosthenes? (18:17)

Get It

18. Why would Paul have welcomed an encouraging word from the Lord?
19. In what ways does your church support full-time missionaries?
20. What difference would it make if missionaries weren't given financial support?
21. What similarities do you see in the pattern of Jewish opposition to the gospel?
22. How should we respond when people reject the gospel?
23. What Christian issues create conflict in our legal system today?
24. How do Christians take for granted their freedom to practice their faith?
- * 25. What encouraging encounters and experiences did Paul have while in Corinth?
26. What means has God given you to be an encouragement to others?
27. How has God brought encouragement to you recently?

Apply It

- * 28. What missionary family can you encourage this week? How?
29. What new member of your congregation can you pray for this week?
30. How can you encourage a Christian friend today?

Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos - Acts 18:18-28

Topics: Believe, Bible, Church, Encouragement, God, Grace, Help, Jesus Christ, Learning, Teaching, Teamwork, Vows, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. What do you like best about getting letters?
- 2. If you were to go on a long trip overseas, what kind of preparations would you need to make to get ready?
- 3. After a lengthy trip abroad, what would be best about returning home?

Explore It

- 4. After Paul's extended stay in Corinth, where did he go next? (18:18)
- 5. What did Paul do before he sailed for Syria? Why? (18:18)
- 6. What did Paul do at Ephesus? (18:19)
- 7. Whom did Paul leave behind in Ephesus? (18:19)
- 8. What promise did Paul make to the Jews? (18:19-21)
- 9. After greeting the church at Caesarea, what places did Paul visit? (18:22-23)
- * 10. Who was Apollos? (18:24)
- * 11. How did Apollos put his gifts and knowledge to good use? (18:24-26)
- 12. How did Apollos serve God with his skills and abilities? (18:24-26)
- 13. How did Priscilla and Aquila help Apollos become a more effective missionary? (18:26)
- * 14. How did Apollos serve God in Achaia? (18:27-28)
- 15. How did God use Apollos in Achaia? (18:27-28)
- 16. What approach did Apollos use in defending the Christian faith? (18:28)

Get It

- 17. Why might Paul have made a vow?
- 18. What kind of vows have you made?
- 19. Why was it okay, theologically and culturally speaking, for Paul to make a vow to the Lord?
- 20. Why is it that Christians today do not often make solemn promises to God?
- 21. How was Paul's trip to Ephesus encouraging for him?
- 22. What might Priscilla and Aquila do to help your church staff?
- * 23. What methods did Apollos use to encourage and teach other Christians?
- * 24. What means has God given us for communicating encouragement to one another?
- 25. How effective would Apollos be in your church evangelism ministry?

Apply It

- 26. Whom can you help grow in the faith this week? How?
- * 27. How can you encourage another Christian through a letter or card?

Paul in Ephesus - Acts 19:1-22

Topics: Believe, Christianity, Church, Demons, Fear, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Miracles, Money, Occult, Opposition, Partnerships, People, Prophecy

Open It

1. What is your idea of an adventure?
2. If you knew that traveling to a remote place would enrich your life, what kinds of hardships would you be willing to endure for the trip?
- * 3. Why do you think some people read horoscopes or consult palm readers?

Explore It

4. While Apollos ministered at Corinth, where did Paul go? (19:1)
5. What did Paul ask the disciples at Ephesus? (19:2)
6. How did the group respond to Paul? (19:2)
7. What was the significance of John's baptism? (19:3-4)
8. Why were the disciples rebaptized? (19:5)
9. How did the Spirit come on the disciples? (19:6)
10. Who received the Holy Spirit? (19:7)
11. How long did Paul speak at the synagogue before confronting trouble? (19:8)
12. Why did Paul stop speaking at the synagogue? (19:9)
13. From his new base of operations, how long did Paul spend spreading the Word of the Lord? (19:10)
- * 14. What extraordinary events happened during this time? (19:11-16)
- * 15. Why did people both fear and praise Jesus? (19:17)
16. How did faith in Christ change the Ephesians? (19:18-19)
- * 17. What practices did the Ephesians give up? (19:18-19)
18. What happened to the spread of Christianity? (19:20)
19. After Ephesus, what was on Paul's itinerary? (19:21-22)

Get It

20. How long did it take you to become a Christian?
21. Who helped you understand God's plan of salvation?
22. When did you realize that the Holy Spirit was at work in your life?
23. How was Paul able to deal with people involved in occult practices?
- * 24. What occult practices are popular today?
25. Why is it important for us to avoid occult practices?
26. What battles might Paul fight if he were a missionary to your community?
- * 27. Why did those who practiced magic burn their books publicly?
28. What is the value of public confession?
29. When should we confess our sins publicly?
30. What do you need to confess and burn in order to be used by God?

Apply It

31. To whom do you want to confess a sin or desire in order to serve God more faithfully?
32. Whom can you invite to church to hear the message of salvation?
- * 33. What is one practical way you can oppose Satan's efforts among the people you know?

The Riot in Ephesus - Acts 19:23-41

Topics: Arguments, Christianity, Confusion, Craftsmanship, Idolatry, Leadership, Money, Motives, People, Prejudice, Worship

Open It

1. Would you more likely go for a creative job with a low salary, or boring work that paid twice as much? Why?
- * 2. If you were given a lot of money to spend at the mall, what would you buy?
3. If you were caught in a crowd, would you like to be at a fun fair, a rally, or in a large department store?

Explore It

4. To whom does “the Way” refer? (19:23)
- * 5. Who was the ringleader against Paul and the Christians? (19:24)
- * 6. On what basis did Artemis make a case against those of the Way? (19:25-27)
7. To what group did the silversmith present his case? (19:24-25)
- * 8. Why did the silversmith’s talk create such an uproar? (19:27-29)
9. Whom did the mob seize? (19:29)
10. Where did the angry crowd take the two men? (19:29)
11. Why did Paul want to appear before the crowd? (19:30)
12. Why wouldn’t the Christians and some officials let Paul appear before the crowd? (19:30-31)
13. What was the mood of the mob? (19:32)
14. Why wouldn’t the people listen to Alexander? (19:33-34)
15. How did the city clerk bring order to the crowd in the Ephesian theater? (19:35-40)
16. What reasons did the city clerk give for dispersing the mob? (19:35-41)

Get It

17. What underlying motive did the silversmith have for his protest?
18. How do Christians sometimes compromise the kingdom of God for money?
19. How can a person make idols out of work, money, or success?
- * 20. In what ways can money become more important to us than it should?
21. In a time of economic recession, why might Christians be tempted to act like the Ephesian mob?
22. How did Demetrius and the city clerk use reasoned arguments to support their twisted versions of the truth?
- * 23. How can we show our trust in God as provider?
24. How must we be on guard against speakers who defy the gospel in subtle ways?
25. What price did Paul and his friends pay for doing what was right?
26. From what types of work should Christians stay away?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one way you can trust God with your money this week?
28. How can you honor the Lord without all the religious and cultural trappings that Christians have placed on Him?

Through Macedonia and Greece - Acts 20:1-6

Topics: Celebration, Encouragement, Fellowship, Money, Partnerships, Plans

Open It

- * 1. If you kept a diary or journal, what kinds of details would you tend to include?
- 2. What might someone learn about you from reading your diary?
- 3. What do you do or take with you to make long road trips more bearable?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did Paul travel so much? (20:1-6)
- 5. What did Paul do after the uproar in Ephesus was over? (20:1)
- 6. Where did Paul go after he left Ephesus? (20:1)
- * 7. What did Paul do while he was in Macedonia? (20:2)
- 8. Where did Paul stay for three months? (20:2-3)
- 9. How was Paul's plan to sail for Syria frustrated? (20:3)
- 10. Where did Paul go in order to avoid his enemies? (20:3)
- 11. Who was appointed to go with Paul? (20:4)
- * 12. Who were Paul's traveling companions on his journey? (20:4-5)
- 13. What was Paul's group's rendezvous point? (20:5)
- 14. At what point did the author of Acts rejoin Paul and his party? (20:5-6)
- 15. Where did Paul's group celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread? (20:6)
- 16. How long did it take to make the trip from Philippi to Troas? (20:6)

Get It

- 17. How could Paul teach and encourage Christians when his own life was in danger?
- 18. When you experience trouble, how does it affect your Christian witness?
- 19. What made Paul effective in dealing with his enemies?
- 20. Why was it important to collect money from the Gentile churches to help the church in Jerusalem?
- 21. How much of a church's budget should be set aside to help the poor?
- * 22. How can you be involved in ministry with other Christians?
- * 23. How could keeping a daily journal of your experiences help you keep track of your walk with the Lord?

Apply It

- 24. What amount of money can you give on a regular basis to help the poor?
- 25. What can you do this week to encourage someone else?
- * 26. Where and when could you write down your thoughts as you reflect on God's Word each day this week?

Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas - Acts 20:7-12

Topics: Believers, Death, Encouragement, Healing, Lord's Supper, Youth

Open It

1. What was the longest talk you ever listened to?
- * 2. When was the last time you had difficulty staying awake?
3. What would you do if someone sitting next to you fell asleep during a worship service?

Explore It

4. When did the Christians meet to break bread? (20:7)
5. At what time of day did the church probably meet? (20:7-8)
6. Who was sitting in a window? (20:9)
- * 7. What made it hard for Eutychus to stay awake? (20:8-9)
- * 8. What happened when Eutychus fell sound asleep? (20:9)
9. What was the boy's condition when he was picked up? (20:9)
- * 10. What did Paul say to the group when he embraced Eutychus? (20:10)
11. How did Paul care for the young man? (20:10)
12. After the interruption to the meeting, what did Paul do? (20:11)
13. After the meal, what did Paul do? (20:11)
14. Why were the people comforted when they took young Eutychus home? (20:12)

Get It

15. What does it mean for Christians to "break bread"?
16. Why do you think Paul talked on and on to the Ephesian Christians?
- * 17. If your worship service lasted longer than usual, what complaints would the pastor probably get?
18. How often do you celebrate Communion at your church?
- * 19. When do you tend to be inattentive or sleepy during a church service?
20. How did Eutychus, whose name means "fortunate," prove true to his name?

Apply It

- * 21. What are some steps you can take to be alert and thoughtful in church each Sunday?
22. How can you keep from being inattentive or careless during prayer and quiet times?

Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders - Acts 20:13-38

Topics: Believers, Church, God, God's Will, Grace, Grief, Holy Spirit, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Leadership, Mission, Pastors, Prayer, Serving, Testing, Work

Open It

1. Who is one person you have trained or taught a skill in the last few years?
2. What is one of the hardest things about leaving home?
- * 3. If you knew that this would be your last day with your loved ones, what would you want to say to them?
4. How do you usually say good-bye?

Explore It

5. What did Paul do when the rest of his party sailed for Assos? (20:13)
6. After meeting at Assos, where did the journey take Paul and his companions? (20:14-15)
7. Why did the group bypass Ephesus? (20:16)
8. At Miletus, for whom did Paul send? (20:17)
9. What was the gist of Paul's talk to the Ephesian elders? (20:18-35)
- * 10. What did Paul say in review of his ministry in Ephesus? (20:18-21)
11. How did the apostle describe the present situation? (20:22-27)
12. Why did Paul expect trouble in Jerusalem? (20:22-23)
13. How did Paul describe his life and mission? (20:24)
- * 14. What made Paul "innocent of the blood of all men"? (20:26-27)
- * 15. What were the future responsibilities of the Ephesian elders? (20:28-35)
16. How did the elders display their deep love for Paul? (20:36-38)
17. How did Paul and the elders say their good-byes? (20:36-38)
18. What saddened the group most? (20:38)

Get It

19. What kind of send-off does your church give someone on his or her way to the mission field?
20. When your church loses a member, how do people tend to grieve over the loss?
- * 21. How does Paul's life and work challenge you?
22. How is your pastor's work in the church like Paul's ministry among the Ephesians?
23. How did the Holy Spirit help Paul?
24. How does the Holy Spirit lead and guide us?
- * 25. Why do mature Christians need to "be on guard" and "watch over" younger believers in their congregation?
26. How would you describe your work for God's kingdom?
27. What does it mean to commit someone else to God?
28. Why did Paul support himself financially?
29. How can we stay blameless in the way we support ourselves and our church's work?

Apply It

30. How can you give to others this week?
31. How can you draw guidance and comfort from the Holy Spirit today?
- * 32. Who is one other believer for whom you can be a "shepherd" or guide this week? How?

On to Jerusalem - Acts 21:1-16

Topics: Advice, Believers, God's Will, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Prayer, Prophecy

Open It

1. About what do you tend to worry?
2. Do you tend to avoid conflict, resolve it as soon as possible, or go looking for it?
- * 3. When was a time you rejected the advice or counsel of virtually everyone who cared about you?

Explore It

4. How did Paul and his companions leave their friends at Miletus? (21:1)
5. Between Cos and Tyre, what stops did the party make? (21:1-3)
- * 6. At Tyre, what did the Christians advise Paul to do? (21:4)
7. What warning did Paul ignore? Why? (21:5-6)
- * 8. Why did Paul ignore the believers' warning? (21:5-6)
9. How was the departure scene at Tyre meaningful? (21:5-6)
10. What did the group do on their one-day stop in Ptolemais? (21:7)
11. Who was Paul's host in Caesarea? (21:8)
12. What role did Philip have in the early church? (21:8)
13. What gift did Philip's four daughters have? (21:9)
14. Who was Agabus? (21:10)
15. Where did Agabus come from? (21:10)
16. How did Agabus dramatize what would happen to Paul in Jerusalem? (21:11)
17. After the people heard the prophecy about Paul, how did they respond? (21:12)
- * 18. What did Paul say to the Christians at Caesarea? (21:13-14)
19. When they realized that Paul would not be dissuaded, what did the believers say to him? (21:14)
20. What did Paul and his companions do on the final stage of their journey? (21:15-16)

Get It

- * 21. How do you think Paul felt about going to Jerusalem?
- * 22. Why did Paul ignore all the warnings against going to Jerusalem?
23. When might doing God's will involve pain, suffering, or risk?
24. How can we build our courage when we are afraid to do what God wants?
25. What support does your church make available to Christians (perhaps missionaries) in dangerous or difficult settings?
26. If you had been one of Paul's traveling companions, how would you have advised him?

Apply It

27. How can you support a Christian brother or sister on the mission field?
- * 28. What decision do you stand by even though some others don't approve of your choice?
29. What fears or misgivings can you hand over to the Holy Spirit?

Paul's Arrival at Jerusalem - Acts 21:17-26

Topics: Believers, Church, Law, Leadership, Obedience, Praise, Rules, Vows, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. What are some ways your life-style or way of life is different from that of your parents?
- 2. If most people in your community shaved their head because it was the fashion, how long (if ever) would it take you to follow suit?

Explore It

- 3. How were Paul and his companions received in Jerusalem? (21:17)
- 4. After a day in Jerusalem, with whom did the missionaries meet? (21:18)
- * 5. What did Paul report? To whom? (21:18-19)
- 6. How did the leaders of the Jerusalem church respond to Paul's report? (21:20)
- * 7. What concern did the church leaders voice? (21:20)
- 8. What false report had gone out concerning Paul? (21:21)
- * 9. What did the leaders of the church suggest that Paul do? Why? (21:22-24)
- 10. Why did the leaders suggest that Paul join in the purification rites of four men and pay for their expenses? (21:22-24)
- 11. What decision of the Jerusalem Council was repeated? (21:25)
- 12. Why did the leaders bring up the Jerusalem decree? (21:25)
- 13. What did Paul and the young men do the next day? (21:26)

Get It

- 14. What was at the heart of the controversy between the Jews and the Gentiles?
- 15. What causes divisions among Christians?
- 16. What divisions do we see in the Christian church today?
- 17. Why did Paul support the Jewish leaders?
- 18. What rules or traditions should you support for the sake of peace?
- * 19. What is the difference between compromising God's will and doing something in order to avoid offending someone?
- * 20. How can we decide when we should stand up for our beliefs and when we should give in for the sake of others?
- 21. When are Christians often tempted to make a rule or tradition as important as God's written Word?

Apply It

- 22. How can you live more by God's grace and less by self-imposed dos and don'ts?
- * 23. In what situations will you need to adjust your behavior for the sake of others? How?

Paul Arrested - Acts 21:27-36

Topics: Assumptions, Confusion, Culture, Enemies, People, Persecution

Open It

- * 1. How does it make you feel when someone is treated unfairly?
- 2. If you were challenged to take part in a peaceful demonstration for a good cause, what would you do?

Explore It

- 3. What happened when Paul went to the temple? (21:27)
- * 4. Who stirred up the crowd and seized Paul? Why? (21:27-29)
- 5. What did the Jews from Ephesus say? (21:28)
- 6. What were the false charges against Paul? (21:28-29)
- 7. How did the city respond to the furor over Paul? (21:30)
- 8. What did the people do to Paul? (21:30-31)
- * 9. Why were the temple gates shut? (21:30-31)
- 10. How did the commander of the Roman troops and his men intervene while Paul was under attack? (21:31-32)
- * 11. How did the commander and his soldiers save Paul's life? (21:32)
- 12. What did the commander do to Paul? (21:33)
- 13. How was Paul arrested? (21:33)
- 14. When the Roman commander asked what Paul had done, why couldn't he get at the truth? (21:33-34)
- 15. Why was Paul taken to the barracks? (21:34)
- 16. Why was Paul carried away by the soldiers? (21:35-36)

Get It

- * 17. Why were the Jews from Asia so angry at Paul?
- 18. What groups in our society infuriate each other?
- 19. Why are people so protective of their ethnic heritage?
- 20. How can Christians help bridge ethnic and racial barriers?
- 21. Why was there so much animosity between Jews and Christians at the time of Paul's arrest?
- * 22. What groups are particularly anti-Christian today?
- 23. What are some ways we can and should defend the truth about our faith?
- 24. Why do crowds of people often behave in unpredictable and unreasonable ways?

Apply It

- * 25. What "false reports" about Christianity can you help dispel? How?
- 26. How can you be a peacemaker this week at work, at home, or in your neighborhood?

Paul Speaks to the Crowd - Acts 21:37-22:21

Topics: Blindness, Christianity, God, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Light, People, Persecution, Salvation, Sin, Witnessing, Zeal

Open It

1. What personal accomplishment has been most satisfying to you?
- * 2. What do you have in common with a friend, a coworker, or a neighbor?
3. If you told your life story to a group of friends, what would surprise them most?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Paul ask as he was about to be taken away? (21:37)
5. Why was the tribune surprised that Paul could speak Greek? (21:38)
6. In establishing his background, what did Paul say? (21:39)
7. What did Paul request? (21:39)
- * 8. What language did the apostle use in speaking to the crowd? (21:40)
- * 9. How did Paul address his audience? (22:1)
10. What made the crowd quiet down? (22:2)
11. What did Paul say about his rearing and training? (22:3)
12. What was Paul like before his conversion? (22:4-5)
13. How was Paul converted to Christ? (22:6-9)
14. How did Paul learn about the nature of his future ministry? (22:10-16)
15. Who was Ananias? (22:12)
16. Why did Paul leave Jerusalem? (22:17-18)
17. What did Paul's reply to the Lord show? (22:19-20)
18. What did the Lord tell Paul to do? (22:21)

Get It

19. Why do you think Paul told his own story instead of preaching a sermon?
20. When is it useful to share your personal experiences with others?
- * 21. How did Paul show respect to his audience?
- * 22. Why is it important to be kind toward and respectful of others?
23. How can we show respect to the people around us?
24. What gave Paul credibility to his audience?
25. How can a Christian gain credibility with non-Christians?
26. What are some things you can do to build credibility with your friends and coworkers?
27. How did Paul rebel against the Lord?
28. When have you rebelled against the Lord?
29. How has the Lord's activity in your life surprised you recently?
30. To what kind of service has God called you?
31. How does God direct us?
32. How might you have to endure hardship for the sake of Christ?
33. How can your nationality be helpful in sharing the message of Christ with others?

Apply It

- * 34. What words, gestures, or practices can you use to show respect in how you speak to others?
35. With whom can you share your personal story of faith this week?

Paul the Roman Citizen - Acts 22:22-29

Topics: Anger, Citizenship, Fear, Law, Protection, Punishment

Open It

- * 1. How do you tend to react under pressure?
- 2. What might make you consider giving up your citizenship?
- 3. If you could become a citizen of another country, which country would you choose?
- 4. What rights does your citizenship give you that people of other countries don't have?

Explore It

- * 5. How did Paul anger the crowd? (22:22)
- * 6. How did the mob express their intense anger? (22:23)
- * 7. Why did the commander order that Paul be taken away and beaten? (22:24)
- 8. Why was the commander confused by what was happening? (22:24)
- 9. To what fact did Paul call the centurion's attention? (22:25)
- 10. What was reported to the commander? (22:26)
- 11. What did the commander ask Paul? (22:27)
- 12. Why did the commander tell Paul that his citizenship had been bought? (22:28)
- 13. How did Paul cap the commander's comment? (22:28)
- 14. Why did the commander become alarmed? (22:29)

Get It

- 15. What was hard for the Jews to accept?
- * 16. What was wrong with the Jewish unwillingness to lead Gentiles to God?
- * 17. What people do we tend to exclude from the message of God's grace?
- 18. How do we sometimes compromise the Christian faith by clinging to cultural or racial biases?
- 19. Why was Paul's Roman citizenship an asset?
- 20. How did Paul show good judgment in the middle of an extremely stressful situation?
- 21. What about you gives you unique opportunities to talk with others about Christ?
- 22. In what ways can we show respect to others even when they treat us disrespectfully?

Apply It

- * 23. For whose salvation will you pray each day this week?
- 24. What do you want to remember the next time you have to deal with a difficult person?

Before the Sanhedrin - Acts 22:30-23:11

Topics: Accusation, Angels, Conflict, Confusion, Conscience, Courage, God, Jesus Christ, Law, Persecution, Resurrection, Witnessing

Open It

1. When was the last time you had to deal with an overbearing person?
2. When you've just about had it, how do you express your anger?
- * 3. When was the last time you said something that caused misunderstanding or conflict?

Explore It

4. Why did the commander order the Sanhedrin to assemble? (22:30)
- * 5. What bold claims did Paul make? (23:1)
- * 6. What order did Ananias give? (23:2)
- * 7. What did Paul say in reaction to the high priest's illegal command? (23:3)
8. How did those standing nearby challenge Paul? (23:4)
9. Why did Paul respond the way he did to the challenge? (23:5)
10. How did Paul disrupt the proceedings? (23:6-9)
11. How did Paul divide his enemies? (23:6-9)
12. Why did the Pharisees side with Paul? (23:9)
13. Why was Paul in extreme danger? (23:10)
14. Where was Paul taken? (23:10)
15. How was Paul comforted and encouraged? When? (23:11)
16. How did the Lord confirm Paul's plans to go to Rome? (23:11)

Get It

- * 17. Why did the high priest react so strongly to Paul's statement about fulfilling his duty to God?
18. When do we tend to get ourselves in trouble with our words?
19. How can our words get us in trouble?
- * 20. In what situations do you need to be careful with what you say?
21. What is every Christian's duty to God?
22. What is your duty to God?
23. Why was it shrewd for Paul to get the Pharisees and Sadducees to fight among themselves?
24. How do the members of your congregation handle disagreements in church business meetings?
25. Why would Paul have needed the Lord's support and comfort?
26. When do you often need the Lord's support?
27. When you feel attacked or discouraged, how can you draw encouragement from the Lord?

Apply It

28. How can you prepare for the next difficult step in your spiritual journey?
29. In what trying situations will you need to show patience and perseverance this week?
- * 30. What reminder can you use to help you be wise with your words this week?

The Plot to Kill Paul - Acts 23:12-22

Topics: Death, Deceit, Leadership, Plans

Open It

1. If your job was to watch others closely and secretly, how well would you do?
- * 2. What kinds of secrets did kids like to keep when you were growing up?
3. How well do you keep secrets?

Explore It

4. Why did the Jews form a conspiracy? (23:12)
- * 5. Who took an oath? Why? (23:12)
6. How many men were involved in the plot against Paul? (23:13)
7. How were the chief priests and elders accomplices in the plot against Paul? (23:14-15)
8. What did the plotters want the Jewish elders to do? (23:15)
- * 9. When Paul's nephew heard about the plot, what did he do? (23:16)
- * 10. How was the young man able to go before the commander? (23:17-18)
11. What did the commander ask Paul's nephew? (23:19)
12. What did the young man tell the commander? (23:20-21)
13. How did the commander respond to the informant? (23:22)

Get It

14. Why would the conspirators risk their own lives to kill Paul?
15. What groups are fervently anti-Christian today?
16. When have Christians been overzealous in rejecting others?
17. What does their complicity in the plot tell you about the chief priests and elders?
18. When have Christian leaders in your community compromised their faith and position?
19. How did Paul's nephew demonstrate courage and honesty?
20. How did Paul's family help him?
21. When might helping someone require courage or sacrifice today?
- * 22. When might exposing a wrong require courage or sacrifice today?
23. What kind of person exposed the plot against Paul?
24. How did God use a young person in this situation?
- * 25. When is it right for you to play the role of informant in correcting a wrong?
26. Why is it important to stand up for the truth?

Apply It

- * 27. In what setting this week will you need to be prepared to stand up for the truth?
28. How can you prepare to face hardships this week?
29. How can you rely on the Holy Spirit to protect you from the attacks of others?
30. What kind of practical support can you give someone facing difficulty right now?

Paul Transferred to Caesarea - Acts 23:23-35

Topics: Accusation, Citizenship, Instructions, Law, Leadership, Protection

Open It

1. If you could select only one form of protection for your home, what kind would you want?
- * 2. What safety precautions do you take when you go out at night?
3. When or where do you feel most safe and protected?

Explore It

4. Why was Paul sent to Caesarea? (23:23)
5. Why was the apostle escorted from Jerusalem at night? (23:23)
- * 6. What orders did the commander give to get Paul away from danger? (23:23-24)
7. How did the commander protect Paul? (23:23-24)
8. To whom did the tribune write a letter? (23:26)
- * 9. Who wrote a letter to whom? Why? (23:25-30)
10. Why did Claudius Lysias send a letter along with Paul? (23:25-30)
11. What did the tribune say in his letter to Governor Felix? (23:25-30)
12. In his letter, how did the commander bend the truth? (23:27)
13. What important fact did Claudius omit from the record? (23:25-30)
14. What important declaration did the commander make concerning Paul? (23:29)
15. Where did the soldiers take Paul the first night? (23:31)
16. Who escorted Paul the rest of the journey? (23:32)
- * 17. When the cavalry and Paul arrived, what did the governor do? (23:33-35)
18. After Felix learned that Paul was from Cilicia, what did the governor determine to do? (23:34-35)

Get It

19. What kind of reputation did Paul have?
20. Why did the commander provide such elaborate protection for Paul?
21. What did Paul's citizenship have to do with the just treatment he received?
22. Why is it that the legal system protects some people but not all?
23. How do you think the conspirators felt once they discovered that Paul was gone from Jerusalem?
24. How protected would you feel in a court of law?
25. What is your attitude toward civil authority?
- * 26. How did God protect Paul?
- * 27. What "human means" does God use to protect His people?
28. How can we show support for the government's civil authority?
29. What injustices in our legal system should Christians challenge? How?

Apply It

- * 30. As a Christian, what is one way you can protect the rights of the poor and weak?
31. How can you show your support for the government's civil authority?

The Trial Before Felix - Acts 24:1-27

Topics: Accusation, Christianity, Conscience, Faith, Flattery, God, Hope, Jesus Christ, Law, Leadership, Name, Resurrection, Rules

Open It

- * 1. What do you admire most about your favorite political figure?
- 2. Why do you think most people do not trust or like public officials?
- 3. If you were sued or taken to court, why might you hire a lawyer rather than defend yourself?

Explore It

- 4. Why did the religious leaders hire Tertullus? (24:1)
- * 5. Who went to Caesarea? Why? (24:1-8)
- 6. Why did Tertullus flatter Felix? (24:2-4)
- 7. What three accusations did Tertullus make against Paul? (24:5-8)
- 8. Who supported Tertullus in his accusations? (24:9)
- 9. Speaking in his own defense, how was Paul's introduction different from the lawyer's? (24:10)
- 10. What points did Paul make in his defense before the governor? (24:11-16)
- 11. What was Paul's objective in visiting Jerusalem? (24:17)
- 12. What did Paul say about the charges brought against him? (24:11-18)
- 13. How did the apostle show that Tertullus did not have any legitimate charges against him? (24:18-21)
- * 14. What did Felix do about Paul's case? (24:22-23)
- 15. How did the governor provide Paul with limited freedom? (24:23)
- 16. How did Paul's speaking affect Felix? (24:24-25)
- 17. What motivated Felix to send for Paul? (24:26)
- * 18. Why did Paul languish in prison for over two years? (24:26-27)
- 19. Before leaving his position as governor, what did Felix do to placate the Jews? (24:27)

Get It

- 20. Why would Felix, known as a mean-spirited and selfish leader, show restraint in dealing with Paul?
- * 21. How was Paul "caught in the system"?
- 22. How did Tertullus show contempt in dealing with the early believers?
- 23. With what terms do people deride Christianity today?
- 24. Paul was obviously misread by the Jewish religious leaders; how are some Christian leaders misunderstood and maligned by other religious leaders today?
- 25. How might you be misunderstood by others when your faith in Christ shows in how you live or act?
- 26. How can we use misunderstanding as an opportunity to explain our faith?
- 27. Why do you think Felix rejected Christ even though he showed interest in Paul's teaching?
- 28. For what reasons do people reject Christ today?
- 29. In what way is the gospel difficult to accept?
- 30. When in the past have you had to wait for justice?
- 31. In what areas of your life do you need to wait for the Lord's timing?

Apply It

- 32. How do you want to be ready for the next time you are misunderstood?
- 33. For what public officials can you pray this week?
- 34. How can you show patience with the changes for which you are still waiting?

The Trial Before Festus - Acts 25:1-12

Topics: Accusation, Fairness, Favoritism, Law, Leadership, Right

Open It

1. How did you and your siblings settle most of your disputes while you were growing up?
- * 2. When was the last time someone did a favor for you? What was it?

Explore It

3. How did the procurator's visit to Jerusalem show that he wanted to rule justly? (25:1)
4. Who appeared before Festus in Jerusalem? (25:2)
- * 5. What did the Jewish leaders want? (25:2)
- * 6. Why did the leaders want Paul transferred from Caesarea to Jerusalem? (25:3)
- * 7. How did Festus reply to the request to transfer Paul? (25:4-5)
8. How did the scene of previous trials repeat itself when Paul was brought before Festus? (25:6-7)
9. What did Paul say to the court? (25:8)
10. Why did Festus ask Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem? (25:9)
11. Why did Paul want nothing to do with standing trial in Jerusalem? (25:10-11)
12. Why did Festus send Paul's case to Caesar? (25:11-12)

Get It

- * 13. Why was opposition to Paul by the Jewish leaders still strong, even though Paul had been under house arrest for two years?
14. Why do we tend to hold on to past grievances?
15. What should we do with old grudges? How?
- * 16. In what way did Paul's enemies try to manipulate circumstances to serve their own ends?
17. What made Festus appear to be a fair ruler?
18. In what way was Paul mistreated?
19. When have you felt mistreated?
20. What does Paul's example of self-defense have to teach us?
21. Why did Paul appeal to Caesar?
22. Why was Paul able to be confident in his appeal to a higher court?
23. How did Paul's innocence help him in this situation?
24. When have you been called on to defend yourself?
25. What was Paul's style in communicating to the court?
26. How do you express yourself when you are on the defensive?
27. How did Paul hold to his civil rights?

Apply It

28. What or whom should you avoid to protect your spiritual well-being?
29. What rights of yours should you stand up for this week? How?
- * 30. What person or situation can you place in God's hands this week as a discipline against turning events to your own ends?

Festus Consults King Agrippa - Acts 25:13-22

Topics: Accusation, Advice, Law, Leadership

Open It

1. When you want sound advice, to whom do you often turn?
- * 2. When you don't feel up to a job you've been asked to do, what do you often feel inside?

Explore It

3. Why did King Agrippa and his sister visit Festus? (25:13)
- * 4. What motivated Festus to bring up Paul's case to King Agrippa? (25:14-21)
5. Why would Agrippa's insight and advice be helpful to Festus? (25:14-21)
6. How did Festus tell the story from a Roman point of view? (25:14-21)
7. How did Festus handle this long-standing case? (25:17)
- * 8. In reviewing the case with Agrippa, what did Festus say was the main charge against Paul? (25:17-19)
9. Why was Festus, in a sense, paralyzed by Paul's case? (25:19)
10. Why did Festus feel incapable of handling Paul's case? (25:19-20)
11. Why had Paul wanted to remain in Roman custody? (25:21)
- * 12. How did Agrippa respond to the governor's story? (25:22)

Get It

13. Why was Paul's case difficult for Festus?
14. How were Roman legal proceedings different from the way the Jews approached the law?
15. Why didn't Festus release Paul when there were no clear charges against him?
16. If you were Paul's lawyer, what would you say to Festus to clear up his misunderstandings about the case?
17. How did God use Paul's arrest and imprisonment?
- * 18. In what way did Paul's arrest help him spread the news about Christ?
- * 19. Why might God allow us to suffer for no apparent reason?

Apply It

- * 20. In what difficult situation do you want to remember that God is sovereignly in control?
21. Over the next few weeks, how can you gather practical wisdom from your Bible study?

Paul Before Agrippa - Acts 25:23-26:32

Topics: Accusation, Advice, Beliefs, Fairness, God, Jesus Christ, Opposition, People, Persecution, Position, Power, Religion, Serving, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. What is one story from your past that you enjoy telling?
- 2. What sorts of ceremonial events have you attended?
- 3. If you could spend an evening with any president, prime minister, or other national leader, whom would you choose?

Explore It

- 4. How did Agrippa and Bernice use the occasion of their meeting with Paul to display their position and power? (25:23)
- 5. Who commanded Paul to be brought in? (25:23)
- 6. How was this meeting a fulfillment of the prophecy in Luke 21:12? (25:23)
- 7. How did Festus open the proceedings? (25:24-26)
- 8. In opening the proceedings, what did Festus say to his royal guests? (25:24-26)
- 9. Why did Festus bring Paul before this group? (25:26-27)
- 10. How had Festus become tangled in a difficulty of his own making? (25:25-27)
- 11. How did Paul begin his address to Agrippa? (26:1-3)
- 12. What did Paul say about his early years in Judaism? (26:4-8)
- 13. What was Paul's obsession before his conversion? (26:9-11)
- * 14. How did Paul describe his conversion and new life? (26:12-18)
- 15. How did Paul fulfill his commission? (26:19-23)
- * 16. How did Paul deal with Festus and Agrippa during his speech? (26:24-29)
- * 17. How did Paul conclude his defense? (26:29)
- 18. What did Agrippa—a man well-trained in Judaism—conclude about Paul? (26:31-32)

Get It

- 19. How are some Christians like Agrippa and Bernice?
- 20. How did Festus use Paul to placate the Jews?
- 21. How did Agrippa's background and experience help Festus deal with Paul?
- 22. When you need the right kind of help, how do you go about getting it?
- 23. Why do you think Festus brought Paul's case before Agrippa and Bernice?
- 24. What was Paul's primary goal in his speech?
- * 25. How did Paul tailor his message to the audience and situation he faced?
- 26. How did Paul take advantage of his wretched, unjust situation?
- 27. What should be our objective when we tell others about the way we came to believe?
- * 28. How can we use stories of our own experience to share the message of Christ?
- 29. How do you think you would have reacted to Paul's testimony if you had been in the audience?

Apply It

- 30. Why is it important to pray for your political leaders?
- * 31. What story of God's working in your life can you rehearse for sharing with others?
- 32. This week, how can you support a minister of the gospel who is in trying circumstances?

Paul Sails for Rome - Acts 27:1-12

Topics: Advice, Danger, Kindness, People

Open It

1. If you had a chance to visit Turkey, Greece, or Italy, which country would you choose? Why?
- * 2. What stops would you want to make on a Mediterranean cruise?
3. On a journey overseas, would you feel safer going by airplane or ship to your destination?

Explore It

4. Who accompanied Paul to Italy? (27:1)
5. Why did Luke use the term “we”? (27:1)
6. Who was in charge of the group? (27:1)
7. When Paul and Luke boarded ship, who joined them? (27:2)
8. How did Paul’s friends support him along the way? (27:3)
9. Why was it difficult for Paul’s ship to sail? (27:4)
10. Where did the group change ships? (27:5-6)
11. On the second ship, where did the journey take Paul and the others? (27:7-8)
12. Why was sailing difficult after the Day of Atonement? (27:9)
- * 13. Why did Paul have the opportunity to offer advice? (27:9-10)
- * 14. How were Paul’s warnings ignored? (27:11)
- * 15. Why did the crew decide to sail on? (27:12)

Get It

16. Who helped make Paul’s difficult journey easier?
17. Why was Paul’s advice ignored even though he had traveled by sea many times?
18. How would you have liked sharing in Paul’s sea adventures?
19. When do you count on the support of Christian friends?
- * 20. How do you feel when your wise counsel is bypassed?
- * 21. What can a person do to make his or her counsel likely to be heard?

Apply It

22. How can you prepare yourself to handle difficult circumstances this week?
23. How could relying on Christian friends help you cope with a tough situation?
- * 24. To whom should you offer sound advice this week? When?

The Storm - Acts 27:13-26

Topics: Courage, Encouragement, Endurance, Faith, Fear, Giving Up, God, Hopelessness

Open It

1. What was the most frightening experience you ever had?
- * 2. If a severe storm was approaching your area, what might you do to get ready for it?
3. How well do you function in a crisis?

Explore It

4. How was the ship's crew deceived by "a gentle south wind"? (27:13)
- * 5. How was the ship forced away from safety? (27:14-15)
- * 6. What did the Northeaster do to the ship? (27:15)
7. How did Cauda provide a break from the storm? (27:16)
- * 8. What efforts did the men on board make to battle the storm? (27:16-19)
9. At what point did those on board ship give up hope? (27:20)
10. When did Paul speak to the others? (27:21)
11. How did Paul reprimand the crew? (27:21)
12. What message from God did Paul give the crew? (27:22-26)
13. How did Paul prepare the crew for bad news? (27:22-26)
14. What did Paul say to encourage everyone on board in spite of the hardships ahead? (27:22-26)

Get It

- * 15. Once they lost control of the ship and their situation, how do you think the men on board felt?
- * 16. What do you do when circumstances get beyond your control?
17. How could Paul offer an upbeat message when life on board seemed hopeless?
18. If you had been on board with Paul, what kind of Christian witness would you have had to offer during the storm?
19. What does this account tell us about God?
20. What does this story tell us about times when our lives are in danger?
21. How can you be joyful in spite of your circumstances?

Apply It

22. When can you encourage someone this week? How?
- * 23. How can you remember—each day this week—to trust in God's sovereign control of your life?

The Shipwreck - Acts 27:27-44

Topics: Encouragement, Escape, God, Leadership, Plans, Stress, Thankfulness

Open It

1. If you had to be stuck on an island somewhere, what island would you choose? Why?
- * 2. What are some responsibilities that adults often try to escape?
3. If you were on a ship that was sinking fast, what one treasured item would you take with you on the lifeboat?

Explore It

4. How long was the ship at the mercy of the storm? (27:27)
5. How did the sailors sense that they were approaching land? (27:27-28)
6. Why did the sailors drop four anchors? (27:29)
- * 7. Who tried to escape? (27:30)
- * 8. How did Paul thwart the sailors' plan to escape? (27:31-32)
9. How did the group resolve their problems of tension and hunger? (27:33, 36)
10. Why did Paul urge those on board to eat? (27:33-34)
11. What did Paul do to give public testimony to his faith? (27:35)
12. How many people were on board the ship? (27:37)
13. What did the men do after they ate? (27:38)
14. What did the crew decide to do when daylight came? (27:39-40)
15. What unexpectedly happened to the ship? (27:41)
- * 16. Why did the centurion save the lives of the prisoners? (27:42-43)
17. How did Paul's predictions prove to be true? (27:44)

Get It

18. How did the sailors show that they knew how to weather a storm?
19. How can we prepare to handle bad times?
- * 20. Why did the sailors try to jump ship?
21. If you had been on board, why would you or wouldn't you have been tempted to leave the ship along with the sailors?
- * 22. How can we know when to get out of a bad situation and when to face it?
23. How did Paul take charge of the situation on board?
24. What qualities in Paul do you admire?
25. Why did the soldiers plan to kill the prisoners?
26. In what ways do you look out for your interests before considering the needs of others?
27. How was God at work in the details of the shipwreck?
28. How can we benefit from frustrations and problems?

Apply It

29. To what "storms" that you are now facing do you need to respond with faith in God?
- * 30. What do you need to request from God to endure the rough passages of life?
31. How can you provide encouragement and practical help to someone who is in the middle of a personal storm?

Ashore on Malta - Acts 28:1-10

Topics: Assumptions, Healing, Help, Kindness, Leadership, Miracles, Prayer, Sickness

Open It

1. How might you show hospitality to a new family in the neighborhood?
- * 2. If you moved to a new neighborhood, how would you want the neighbors to welcome you?

Explore It

3. Where were the people shipwrecked? (28:1)
4. How did the islanders treat Paul and the others? (28:2)
5. What did the islanders do to welcome the victims of the shipwreck? (28:2)
6. What happened to Paul when he was building the fire? (28:3)
7. Seeing that Paul was bitten by the snake, what did the islanders conclude? (28:4)
8. When Paul was unaffected by the snake's bite, how did the people of Malta show their superstition? (28:5-6)
9. What was distinctive about the home Paul and the others were near? (28:7)
10. What was Publius's title? (28:7)
11. What did the governor do for Paul and his companions? (28:7)
- * 12. How did Paul help Publius's father? (28:8)
- * 13. What happened when word of a healing spread? (28:9)
- * 14. What was the effect of what Paul did for Publius's father? (28:10)

Get It

15. Why did the islanders show unusual kindness to the victims of the shipwreck?
16. Even in this terrible mishap, how did God provide for Paul and the crew?
17. When you are in a predicament, whom do you trust to get you out of it? How?
- * 18. What was the nature of Paul's ministry on the island?
- * 19. What effect did Paul's acts of service have on the islanders?
20. How can you help those who are ill?

Apply It

- * 21. What act of service or help can you do for people in your neighborhood this week?
22. What act of kindness can you do for a sick friend, church member, or coworker today?

Arrival at Rome - Acts 28:11-16

Topics: Church, Encouragement, Fellowship, God, Thankfulness

Open It

1. If you could have your way, where would you spend next winter?
- * 2. After a three-month stay overseas, whom would you most look forward to seeing on your return home?
3. When was the last time you were on a boat?

Explore It

4. For how long did the crew stay on Malta? Why? (28:11)
5. When Paul and the others finally set sail, what kind of ship did they use? (28:11)
6. What was the first stop for Paul and the others along their continued journey to Rome? How long did the stop last? (28:12)
7. How long did the group stay at Syracuse? (28:12)
8. What port along the Italian coastline marked the next stop? (28:13)
9. When the group arrived at Puteoli, what did they do? (28:13-14)
- * 10. After the week-long visit with Christians, what was the next destination for Paul and his group? (28:14)
- * 11. What did the Christians at Rome do when they heard of Paul's coming? (28:15)
- * 12. How did Paul feel when he saw his Christian brothers? (28:15)
13. Because Paul was a trusted prisoner, what was he allowed to do in Rome? (28:16)

Get It

14. The mariners believed that the ship's figurehead would bring them good luck; on what things do Christians tend to rely?
15. Why would Paul have been encouraged to find Christians at Puteoli?
16. How does the evangelistic work of your church encourage you?
- * 17. How do you think the Christians of Rome felt when they first saw Paul?
- * 18. What fellow Christian has come to mean a lot to you?
19. How do you greet your pastor when he returns after being away for a while?
20. How were Paul's living conditions in Rome quite different from his housing in Jerusalem?

Apply It

21. For what can you thank God today?
22. How can you affirm a diligent Christian servant this week?

Paul Preaches at Rome Under Guard - Acts 28:17-31

Topics: Believe, Christianity, Convictions, God, Hardheartedness, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Law, Leadership, Prophecy, Salvation

Open It

- * 1. What are some ways in which you have grown callous over the years?
- 2. If you had a career in sales, what do you think you could sell with heartfelt conviction? Why?

Explore It

- 3. With whom did Paul first speak in Rome? (28:17)
- 4. In his presentation to the Jewish leaders, what significant points did Paul make? (28:17-20)
- 5. What did Paul mean by “the hope of Israel”? (28:20)
- 6. What kind of response did Paul get from the leaders? (28:21-22)
- 7. How did the Jewish leaders in Rome show increasing interest in the apostle and his message? (28:23-24)
- 8. What did Paul do all day long while meeting with the Jewish leaders? (28:23)
- * 9. How did the Jews in Rome respond to Paul’s teaching? (28:24-25)
- 10. To whom did Paul ascribe Isaiah’s words? (28:25)
- * 11. How did Paul apply the words of Isaiah to his audience? (28:26-27)
- * 12. What prediction did Paul make about the future? (28:28)
- 13. Though the Jews had turned away from Christ, what group had God promised to tell of His salvation? (28:28)
- 14. What did Paul do for two years in Rome? (28:30-31)

Get It

- 15. Why do you think Paul’s teaching was hard for some followers of Judaism to accept?
- 16. Why do you think the attitude of the Jewish leaders in Rome was less hostile than that of the Jews in Jerusalem?
- 17. What made Paul and the gospel he represented less of a threat to unbelievers than in the past?
- 18. Why do many people dismiss the message of salvation in Christ?
- 19. In what way do we become hardened to God?
- * 20. When have you observed hardheartedness in your own life?
- * 21. When do you need to guard against hardheartedness?

Apply It

- 22. How can you go beyond the boundaries of your neighborhood in telling others about the Lord?
- * 23. What is one way you can maintain sensitivity to the Holy Spirit each day this week?

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Introduction - Romans 1:1-7

Topics: Affirmation, Ambassadors, Call, Witnessing

Open It

1. What are some of the normal ways people begin a letter or a phone call?
2. When have you been startled by the opening paragraph of a letter?
- * 3. If you were writing the initial letter to a pen pal, how would you introduce yourself?

Explore It

- * 4. How did Paul introduce and identify himself to the Romans? (1:1)
5. What special calling on his life did Paul feel? (1:1)
6. In what ways has God revealed His gospel to people? (1:2-4)
7. Who is the focus of God's gospel? (1:2-4)
8. What credentials does Jesus have to confirm His claim as Son of God? (1:3-4)
- * 9. What did Paul and others receive as a calling for their lives? (1:5)
10. Who were the new group of people being exposed to the gospel message? (1:5)
11. What were the Gentiles and all people being called to believe? (1:5)
12. How did Paul describe the people who were receiving this letter? (1:6)
13. To whom was this letter written? (1:7)
- * 14. What kind of greeting did Paul send to his audience? (1:7)

Get It

- * 15. In what way do you feel God has placed a special calling on your life?
16. What purpose for living has God given you?
- * 17. What words do you use to describe yourself to others as a follower of Jesus Christ?
18. How did you feel when you realized God's gospel was meaningful to you?
19. What do most people today believe about God's plan for the world?
20. What do most people today believe about God's plan for their personal salvation?
21. How have your beliefs about Jesus Christ changed during the various stages of your life?
22. In what ways would remembering in prayer each day God's calling on and plan for your life affect your daily walk with Christ?

Apply It

23. With whom could you share God's unfolding plan of salvation for the whole world?
24. How would you explain God's plan of salvation to a friend?
- * 25. To what friend could you explain God's love and your response to His plan of salvation? How?

Paul's Longing to Visit Rome - Romans 1:8-17

Topics: Caring, Confidence, Good News, Salvation, Witnessing

Open It

1. How do you stay in touch with friends or family members who live in another city?
- * 2. What trips to see friends or family members would you like take in the future?
3. How do people feel when circumstances force them to cancel a long-anticipated trip?

Explore It

4. For what was the church at Rome well-known? (1:8)
5. How did Paul describe his commitment to God? (1:9)
- * 6. What kind of concern did Paul have for his audience? (1:9-10)
- * 7. What happened to Paul's plans to visit the church in Rome? (1:10-13)
8. What did Paul want to give the Romans when he visited? (1:11-12)
- * 9. Who would benefit from Paul's visit? (1:12)
10. To whom had God called Paul to communicate the gospel? (1:14-15)
11. How did Paul feel about what others thought about him and his message? (1:16)
12. To whom does God grant salvation? (1:16)
13. How does a person become righteous? (1:17)
14. What does a person's faith accomplish? (1:17)

Get It

- * 15. What are some of the positive reports you would want other people to hear about your faith in God?
- * 16. How does remembering someone in prayer help him or her?
17. In what ways are we helped when we help someone else?
18. When have you learned something from someone whom you initially believed had nothing to teach you?
19. How does Paul's attitude about sharing the gospel compare with the prevailing attitude in your church?
20. For what reasons do Christians sometimes feel ashamed of the gospel?
21. How do people attempt to find salvation outside of faith in Christ alone?
22. For what reasons are you confident that the gospel is true?

Apply It

- * 23. What can you do this week to help a person for whom you are concerned?
24. With whom can you be more honest and forthright about the gospel message you believe?
25. For what "unreachable" person will you begin praying this week?

God's Wrath Against Mankind - Romans 1:18-32

Topics: Evil, Hardheartedness, Homosexuality, Immorality, Self-centeredness, Separation, Sex, Sin, Stubbornness, Thankfulness, Truth, Unbelievers, World

Open It

- * 1. If God were to deliver a “state of the world” speech for all of us to hear, what do you think He would say?
- 2. How do people today distinguish between right and wrong?
- 3. Why do a high percentage of people today say they believe in God?

Explore It

- * 4. What is God's response to the people who ignore and disobey Him? (1:18)
- 5. How does God reveal Himself to people? (1:19-20)
- * 6. What makes all people accountable to God? (1:20)
- 7. What is the primary problem people have in their relationship with God? (1:21)
- 8. What happens to the hearts and minds of people who reject God? (1:21-22)
- 9. When people deny God, what do they often put in His place? (1:21-23)
- * 10. How does God respond to people who ignore and deny Him? (1:24, 26)
- 11. How are attitudes toward sexuality affected when a person denies God? (1:24, 26-27)
- 12. What lie do people naturally believe by denying the truth? (1:25)
- 13. When thoughts of God are pushed out, what evil attitudes and actions replace them? (1:28-31)
- 14. Instead of fearing God, what attitude do people naturally have toward Him? (1:32)

Get It

- 15. What is the real barrier between us and God?
- * 16. How can God hold us responsible for breaking His laws?
- 17. How do people today suppress the truth about God?
- 18. In what ways is our thinking futile and our mind darkened?
- * 19. What examples can you list of how we worship created things rather than the Creator?
- 20. How common in our world are the specific sins listed in the passage?
- 21. What is God's attitude toward promiscuous heterosexual activity and homosexuality?
- 22. How can God be so angry with us and still love us?
- 23. How does God want us to respond to Him?

Apply It

- 24. In what ways can you lessen your dependence on the things you are tempted to “worship” and serve more than God?
- 25. How can you glorify God and give thanks to Him this week?
- * 26. Who among your friends is caught in this trap of rejecting God and needs your prayers of intercession this week?

God's Righteous Judgment - Romans 2:1-16

Topics: Judging Others, Judgment, Repentance, Witnessing

Open It

1. How does a critical review of a movie or concert affect your decision about attending it?
- * 2. On what basis do people often judge other people?
3. What does it take to judge disputes fairly?

Explore It

4. When we judge others, what do we do to ourselves? (2:1)
- * 5. If God is judging others for their sins, what will He do to us? (2:2-3)
6. For what reason is God kind, tolerant, and patient? (2:4)
7. What keeps us from acknowledging and repenting of our sins? (2:4-5)
8. What is God's reaction to our stubbornness? (2:5-6)
- * 9. On what basis will God render His judgments? (2:5-8)
10. What are the qualities of those who gain eternal life? (2:7)
11. What characteristics do condemned people display? (2:8)
12. How can Jews expect to be treated by God? (2:9-11)
13. How can Gentiles expect to be treated by God? (2:9-11)
- * 14. How will those who know God's law be treated compared to those who never heard God's law? (2:12-15)
15. How will God judge people? (2:12-16)
16. When will the Law judge people? (2:16)

Get It

17. In what circumstances do you find yourself passing judgment on other people?
- * 18. When have you ever judged someone else and realized you were guilty of the same offense?
19. When has God's patience, tolerance, and kindness brought you to repentance?
- * 20. How should your anticipation of a coming judgment day affect your daily behavior?
21. How much exposure have you had to God's law during your life?
22. How you have responded to your exposure to God's law?
23. How will God deal with people who have never heard His law?

Apply It

24. What do you need to do today to get ready for judgment day?
- * 25. Whom have you judged in a manner not pleasing to God? How can you seek forgiveness?
26. Who in your life is not ready for their day of judgment before God and needs your prayers this week?

The Jews and the Law - Romans 2:17-29

Topics: Approval, Beliefs, Character, Consistency, Hypocrisy, Self-righteousness

Open It

1. What advertisements do you have trouble believing?
2. How would you judge the character of a person who wanted to date your only daughter?
- * 3. What are some “wrong” reasons a person might have for going to church?

Explore It

4. What special relationship did the Jews have with God? (2:17-18)
5. How did Jews describe themselves in relation to Gentiles? (2:19-20)
- * 6. Of what did Paul accuse the Jews? (2:21-24)
7. Why would the Gentiles blaspheme God’s name because of the Jews? (2:21-24)
8. What was the purpose of circumcision? (2:25-26)
9. What is more important to God than being physically circumcised? (2:26-27)
- * 10. How did Paul redefine what it means to be a Jew? (2:28-29)
11. What is more important than physical circumcision? (2:29)
- * 12. What is more important than knowing God’s written law? (2:29)
13. Whose approval does a true Jew seek? (2:29)

Get It

- * 14. How could a person be very religious and yet be lacking a real relationship with God?
15. What are the most important qualities of an effective teacher?
16. How do our actions show others what we genuinely believe?
17. How does hypocrisy in a religious person affect people who observe that person?
18. How could a person be outwardly a Christian and inwardly something else?
19. What is more important than keeping outward standards of Christian behavior?
- * 20. What makes a person a true Christian?
21. How much does peer pressure from friends and coworkers influence our beliefs and behavior as Christians?

Apply It

22. How can you begin to change some inconsistent behaviors and attitudes in your Christian life this week?
- * 23. In which of your present situations should you be more concerned about pleasing God than pleasing other people?

God's Faithfulness - Romans 3:1-8

Topics: Confession, Judgment, Justice, Law, Self-righteousness, Sin, Unfairness

Open It

- * 1. What could you learn about the character of a person by watching the behavior of his or her children?
- 2. How do you determine if a person is telling the truth?

Explore It

- 3. What is the advantage of being a Jew? (3:1-2)
- 4. How did God show favor toward the Jews? (3:1-2)
- 5. With what have Jews been entrusted? (3:2)
- * 6. How does failure to be true to God reflect on the character of God? (3:3-4)
- 7. When we realize our own sinfulness, what do we learn about the character of God? (3:5)
- 8. What brings out God's righteousness more clearly? (3:5)
- * 9. What was Paul's response to the charge that God is unjust in judging us? (3:5)
- 10. What was Paul's human argument about the fairness of God's judgment of us? (3:5-8)
- * 11. How is God's character affected by the level of our sinfulness? (3:7)
- 12. What false statement or teaching was being attributed to Paul? (3:8)
- 13. Who did Paul say deserves condemnation? (3:8)

Get It

- 14. How can good come out of evil?
- 15. What danger results from defining our goodness in relative terms—such as comparing ourselves to notorious villains like Adolf Hitler or Charles Manson?
- * 16. What religious activities are we tempted to rely on as the basis of our justification before God?
- 17. How do you react when you see a well-known Christian leader exposed for sinful activities?
- 18. How is your faith in God affected by the public sins of Christian leaders?
- 19. In what practical ways can our lives be changed by the belief that God's promises will never change?
- 20. In what ways do we minimize the effects of sin or of disobeying God's law?
- * 21. What excuses do we use to explain away continuing sinful behavior in our lives?
- 22. What would Paul's reaction be to the statement, "You can't appreciate the good until you have experienced the bad"?

Apply It

- 23. What sins in your life do you need to confess to God and repent of this week?
- * 24. What step or action can you take this week to keep you from taking God's grace for granted?
- 25. Which of God's promises do you want to keep in your thoughts this week?

No One Is Righteous - Romans 3:9-20

Topics: Accountability, Basics of the Faith, Deceit, Disobedience, Excuses, Favoritism, God, Judgment, Law, Rebellion, Righteousness, Salvation, Sin

Open It

- * 1. In what ways are all people the same?
- 2. How would baby-sitting a two-year-old for a week influence your opinion about the goodness or badness of humans in general?

Explore It

- 3. How did Paul compare himself to others? (3:9)
- * 4. How are Jews and Gentiles alike? (3:9)
- 5. Who is righteous? (3:10)
- 6. What is our natural tendency toward God? (3:11)
- 7. What is the result of turning away from God? (3:12)
- * 8. What is human nature? (3:12)
- 9. How do our conversations and speech reflect our sinful nature? (3:13-14)
- * 10. What are the characteristics of people who stand condemned before God? (3:13-18)
- 11. What does God's law show us about ourselves? (3:19)
- 12. What is the purpose of having God's law? (3:19-20)
- 13. What reward does a person receive for observing the Law? (3:20)

Get It

- 14. How do you feel when the Bible describes you as standing guilty before God?
- 15. How can Christianity be described as "good news" when it teaches that all people are guilty before God?
- * 16. What reasons would you give for describing people as either basically good or basically evil?
- * 17. How would you explain this passage to a person who believes that he or she is good and not guilty of any serious sins?
- 18. How will God judge His chosen people, the Jews?
- 19. How can we sin with our mouth?
- 20. For what are we accountable to God?
- 21. What misinformation about God's judgment have you believed at one point in your life?

Apply It

- * 22. What "laws" do you need to put aside in your life in favor of the true righteousness God offers?
- 23. With what believer could you meet and spend time in prayer and confession? When?

Righteousness Through Faith - Romans 3:21-31

Topics: Atonement, Faith, Jesus Christ, Justice, Law, Righteousness

Open It

- * 1. What hero do you remember who always seemed to arrive at just the right moment to save the day?
- 2. If you had a message of good news for someone, how would you deliver it?
- 3. When have you escaped a penalty you were sure you were going to have to pay?

Explore It

- 4. What new righteousness has been made known? (3:21)
- 5. What previous indication was there about the existence of the new righteousness? (3:21)
- 6. What is the source of our righteousness? (3:22)
- * 7. How does a person obtain righteousness? (3:22)
- 8. What heritage do you share with every person who has ever lived? (3:23)
- 9. What justifies us in God's sight? (3:24)
- * 10. What is the cost or price of justification with God? (3:24)
- 11. What did God do to provide a means of justification and forgiveness for every person? (3:25)
- * 12. How does providing Christ Jesus as a sacrifice demonstrate the justice of God? (3:25-26)
- 13. On what basis can a person brag about his or her righteousness? (3:27)
- 14. What justifies a person in God's sight? (3:28)
- 15. How will Jews and Gentiles be judged by God? (3:29-30)
- 16. What is the relationship between having faith and observing the Law? (3:29-31)

Get It

- * 17. What makes it difficult for many of us to believe that we can gain God's forgiveness by faith in Christ alone?
- 18. What makes Christianity good news in our world?
- 19. What makes Christianity good news for you personally?
- * 20. Why would God offer His righteousness free to every person?
- 21. What do we need to do to be declared righteous in God's sight?
- 22. What does it mean to believe and put your faith in Jesus Christ?
- 23. Why do some people object to the idea that God has offered forgiveness to every person, even the worst sinners?
- 24. How should our boasting and bragging about our relationship to God be different when we realize it is by faith alone?
- 25. What role, besides judge, is God playing in our lives?

Apply It

- 26. When could you meet with another person to share the good news of God's redemptive plan?
- * 27. In what areas are you still boasting about your own abilities? How can you submit those areas to God's control?

Abraham Justified by Faith - Romans 4:1-25

Topics: Covenant, Faith, New Covenant, Promises, Righteousness, Sin

Open It

1. What are some of the many religious acts and practices people perform in an attempt to please God?
- * 2. How much faith do you put in the promises people make to you?

Explore It

3. What was the main characteristic of Abraham's relationship with God? (4:1-3)
4. How was Abraham righteous before God? (4:3)
5. How did David describe what God does to make a person righteous? (4:6-8)
6. What was the relationship between Abraham's righteousness and his circumcision? (4:9-11)
7. What was the purpose of circumcision in Abraham's life? (4:11)
8. On what basis can both the circumcised and the uncircumcised claim Abraham as their father? (4:11-12)
- * 9. On what basis did Abraham receive the promise of inheriting the world? (4:13)
- * 10. Why would God's promise be worthless if a person had to keep the Law perfectly to receive it? (4:14-15)
11. What does the Law bring to those who live by it? (4:15)
12. What was God's promise to Abraham? (4:18)
13. What facts might have convinced Abraham that God's promise of a son was impossible? (4:19)
14. How was Abraham able to resist the temptation to doubt God's promise? (4:20)
- * 15. What did Abraham believe about God that convinced him God could keep His promise? (4:20-21)
16. How does Abraham's righteousness by faith apply to us? (4:23-24)
17. Whom has God provided as a worthy object of our faith? (4:24-25)

Get It

18. What is righteousness?
19. What is true faith?
20. Why is it impossible to be saved by following God's laws?
21. What customs and religious habits can give people a false sense of righteousness?
22. What causes many people to think that works are more important than faith for pleasing God?
- * 23. What is fair or unfair about the fact that all people, including very wicked people, can inherit God's promises by putting their faith in God?
24. In what ways do people act as if they must earn God's love?
25. What must a person do to have his or her sins completely forgiven?
- * 26. What promise are you waiting for God to fulfill in your life?
27. How does God's relationship with Abraham help you understand His workings in your life?

Apply It

28. How can you pray this week to reaffirm your faith in God and not in works?
- * 29. What promise of God do you need to trust in this week?

Peace and Joy - Romans 5:1-11

Topics: Endurance, Enemies, God, Hope, Joy, Love, Peace

Open It

1. What circumstances can turn two people into enemies?
- * 2. How do most people treat their enemies?
3. What results can difficult circumstances have in a person's life?

Explore It

4. What is the basis for our justification with God? (5:1)
5. What is our relationship with God if we have been justified by faith? (5:1)
6. How does Jesus Christ change a person's standing with God? (5:2)
7. For what reasons can a Christian rejoice? (5:2-3)
8. What good things can result from suffering? (5:3-5)
9. Why does hope not disappoint us? (5:5)
10. How has God demonstrated His love for us? (5:6-8)
11. What comparisons can be made between people giving their lives for others and Christ's death for all people? (5:7-8)
- * 12. What was our relationship to God when Christ came to die for us? (5:8)
13. What aspect of Christ's death justifies a person in God's sight? (5:9)
- * 14. How did God act to remove the barrier between Himself and all people? (5:9-10)
15. If God has demonstrated His love to us through Jesus' death, what can we anticipate concerning our future relationship with God? (5:10)
- * 16. For what reasons can a Christian rejoice? (5:11)

Get It

17. How is peace with God different from peace of mind?
- * 18. What does it mean to be justified?
- * 19. How were we formerly God's enemies?
20. What are the benefits of being justified with God?
21. What is the connection between suffering and hope?
22. How should Christian hope affect a person's attitude toward his or her current circumstances or goals?
23. What is hope?
24. What keeps us from being full of joy and hope in the middle of difficult circumstances?
25. In what ways does suffering produce endurance?
26. How can suffering produce positive rather than negative results?
27. How did Jesus' death affect our security in God's love?

Apply It

28. In what difficult circumstances do you need to stop grumbling and stay focused on joy in Christ?
- * 29. Who in your life needs to hear that through Jesus Christ they are no longer enemies with God?

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ - Romans 5:12-21

Topics: Death, God, Grace, Jesus Christ, Law, Life, Sin

Open It

1. What advantages and experiences have you had that many others in the world have not?
- * 2. In what ways can the decisions of a few leaders change the lives of millions of people?
3. What experiences have you had with death?

Explore It

4. What did Adam introduce into the world and pass on to his descendants? (5:12)
5. What is the root cause of death? (5:12)
6. How did the coming of God's law affect the presence of sin in the world? (5:13)
7. How did the coming of God's law affect our understanding of what sin is? (5:13)
- * 8. What came into the world through Jesus Christ? (5:15)
9. What is God's solution to the inevitable problem of sin and death? (5:16-17)
- * 10. In what ways are the acts of Jesus and Adam similar? (5:18-19)
11. What is the relationship between the amount of sin and grace in the world? (5:20)
12. What effect did God's righteous law have on rebellious people? (5:20)
13. What does sin in this world produce? (5:21)
- * 14. What does grace given by God to this world produce? (5:21)

Get It

15. In what ways are all people the same?
16. What fears or anticipation do you have about death?
17. What effect did Christ's death on the cross have on your life?
18. At what point in your life did you realize you were guilty of sin?
19. At what point in your life did you realize God's love for you?
- * 20. How can God justly judge us for Adam's sin?
21. How can a person have his or her sins forgiven by God?
- * 22. What makes Jesus' action more powerful than Adam's?
23. How can knowing you are forgiven and righteous before God through Jesus Christ affect your attitudes and actions?

Apply It

24. In what ways can you thank God today for the grace He has bestowed on you?
- * 25. What can you do this week for unsaved friends still suffering from the consequences of sin?

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ - Romans 6:1-14

Topics: Change, Consequences, God, Holiness, Jesus Christ, Life-style, New Life, Salvation, Sin, Slavery

Open It

1. What would most people like to change about their lives?
2. What is one thing you'd like to change about your life?
- * 3. What motivates people to make major changes in their lives?

Explore It

4. Why should a forgiven, justified person make a strong effort not to sin? (6:1-2)
5. For what reason would a person not want to live in sin any longer? (6:2)
6. What does baptism symbolize about our relationship to Christ? (6:2-4)
- * 7. What makes it possible for a person to live a new life? (6:4)
8. Before a person is united to Christ, to what is he or she a slave? (6:6)
9. How does being united with Christ through His death change our relationship to sin? (6:7)
10. After Christ died and was raised, why did neither sin nor death have any power over Him? (6:7, 9-10)
- * 11. How will uniting with Christ in His death change the future of our lives? (6:8-10)
- * 12. In a person's new relationship with God, what is his or her relationship to sin supposed to be? (6:11-12)
13. What change in attitude and action toward God happens in a person who follows Christ? (6:11-13)
14. Under whose control does a Christian live? (6:14)
15. How does being under grace change a person? (6:14)

Get It

16. What does this passage tell us about God and Christ?
17. What does this passage tell us about all people and their relationship to God?
18. What kind of changes does God want to make in our lives when we become Christians?
- * 19. Why should a Christian stop sinning even though he or she knows God has forgiven and will forgive those sins?
- * 20. How does God help a person discard old habits and tendencies?
21. How does God give a person a new self?
22. What are the symptoms of a person in slavery to sin?
23. How would you describe the character of someone who is alive to God in Christ?
24. What does it mean to live a new life for God?
25. In what practical sense is sin no longer the master of a Christian even though he or she might still commit specific sins?
26. In what ways is a Christian truly free?

Apply It

27. How can you actively resist the tendency to sin in your everyday life?
- * 28. How can you offer yourself as an instrument of righteousness to God and to others this week?

Slaves to Righteousness - Romans 6:15-23

Topics: Change, Consequences, Eternal Life, Life-style, New Life, Righteousness, Sin, Slavery

Open It

- * 1. What bad habits can control and damage a person's life?
- 2. If you had to forfeit your personal freedom to become a slave, whom would you want to be your master?

Explore It

- 3. Why shouldn't a Christian continue to sin willingly? (6:15-18)
- 4. Who or what determines the things that dominate or control a person? (6:16)
- * 5. How does sin dominate a person's life? (6:16-18)
- * 6. What results follow from being a slave to obedience to God? (6:16, 19, 22)
- * 7. What is the result of being a slave to sin? (6:16, 21, 23)
- 8. With what attitude do believers obey their new master, righteousness? (6:17)
- 9. What change has happened to people who have put their trust in Christ? (6:17-18)
- 10. What is the result of being a slave to righteousness? (6:19, 22)
- 11. What are the wages of sin? (6:23)
- 12. What is the gift of God? (6:23)

Get It

- 13. What attitude should a Christian have toward sin?
- 14. What causes a person to be a slave to sin?
- * 15. What benefits and pleasures do people think they gain from sinful, selfish living?
- 16. Before knowing Christ, when did you feel regret for the selfish things you had done?
- 17. How does sin destroy a person's life?
- * 18. What are the benefits and pleasures of righteous living?
- 19. Why can't a person be his or her own master, enslaved to neither God nor sin?
- 20. In what ways is our relationship to God not like slavery?
- 21. To what degree is each person responsible for his or her sinful or righteous living?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you show your wholehearted obedience to God this week?
- 23. In what areas of your life do you need God's help to loosen the grip of certain sins?

An Illustration From Marriage - Romans 7:1-6

Topics: Change, Growth, Holy Spirit, Law, Marriage, New Life

Open It

1. What were some of the basic rules of behavior you were taught as a child?
- * 2. How do your present values differ from the ones you were taught as a child?

Explore It

3. What illustration did Paul use to explain a Christian's relationship to the written law? (7:1-3)
4. Whom does the husband represent in Paul's illustration? (7:2-3)
5. Whom does the married woman represent in Paul's illustration? (7:2-3)
- * 6. To what did Paul compare the death of a woman's husband? (7:2-5) Why?
7. What is the purpose or goal of a Christian's new life? (7:4)
8. What changes a person's relationship to the Law? (7:4-6)
- * 9. What are the primary differences between the old life under the Law and the new life in the way of the Spirit? (7:4-6)
10. What controls a person before he or she becomes a Christian? (7:5)
- * 11. How is a person released from being bound by the Law? (7:6)
12. How does the Christian's new life compare with the old life? (7:6)

Get It

13. What role should God's written law play in a Christian's life?
14. What keeps a Christian from sinning if the penalties of the Law have been forgiven by God?
15. How can strict adherence to God's law affect a Christian negatively?
- * 16. What does it mean to be a new person in Christ?
17. How can the Spirit help us please God in a way that following the Law couldn't?
18. How do a person's attitudes and outlook on life change when he or she comes to Christ?
19. How can knowing that God loves you unconditionally change your behavior?
- * 20. What is the difference between keeping religious laws and following the Spirit of Christ?

Apply It

- * 21. What old ideas about pleasing God through religious activity do you need to discard this week?
22. What can you do this week to build your living relationship with Christ instead of merely following the rules?

Struggling With Sin - Romans 7:7-25

Topics: Conflict, Death, Discouragement, Law, Sin, Weaknesses

Open It

1. As a child, how did you respond to the commands given to you by your parents?
2. How do you tend to respond to authority?
- * 3. What sort of bad habits are hardest to break?

Explore It

4. What is the purpose of the Law? (7:7-8)
5. What bad effect does knowing the Law have on a person? (7:7-8)
6. When a person has no knowledge of the Law, what becomes of sin? (7:9)
- * 7. How does knowing the Law bring the possibility of death to a person? (7:9-11)
8. How does the Law put a person to death? (7:11)
9. What are the characteristics of the Law and the commandment? (7:12)
10. How does the awareness of the Law produce death in a person? (7:13)
- * 11. What did Paul share about his own attempts to follow the Law? (7:14-16)
- * 12. What did Paul blame for his continuing failure to do good? (7:17-20)
13. How did Paul describe his own struggle to do what was right? (7:21-23)
14. How did Paul describe himself and his situation? (7:24)
15. To whom did Paul turn for rescue from his agonizing situation? (7:24)
16. What division did Paul acknowledge in his own mind and nature? (7:24)

Get It

17. What are some of the various ways people respond to God's law?
18. How can reading and understanding God's law be discouraging to a person?
19. How can a Christian continue to commit sins even though God is his or her master?
- * 20. How have you experienced a struggle with sin similar to what Paul describes?
- * 21. What hope do we have of deliverance from sin here on earth?
22. How can we take hold of the power of Christ to overcome sin?
23. What should we do when we become discouraged and confused in our Christian lives?
24. How can knowing that God has achieved the ultimate victory over sin affect your prayers, thoughts, and attitudes?

Apply It

- * 25. How can you remind yourself each day this week of God's victory over sin?
26. What recent struggle with sin do you need to hand over to God today?

Life Through the Spirit - Romans 8:1-17

Topics: Desires, Holy Spirit, Law, Sin, Spiritual Rebirth, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. If you were released from a three-year captivity as a hostage, what would you do during your first week of freedom?
- 2. What impact can a good father or a bad father have on a person's life?

Explore It

- 3. What is the status of a person who trusts in Jesus Christ? (8:1)
- * 4. How is a person set free from the law of sin and death? (8:2)
- 5. What did God do that the Law was powerless to do? (8:3-5)
- 6. What is the difference between those who live according to their sinful nature and those who live according to the Spirit? (8:5-8)
- * 7. How can a person know if he or she is controlled by the sinful nature or by the Spirit? (8:9)
- 8. What promise is given to people living in the Spirit? (8:11)
- 9. What kind of obligation do Christians have? (8:12-14)
- 10. What happens to the person who lives according to the sinful nature? (8:13)
- * 11. By what means can a person find life? (8:13)
- 12. What is true of people who are led by God's Spirit? (8:14)
- 13. What kind of spirit do God's children have? (8:15)
- 14. What are the benefits of being a child of God? (8:15-17)

Get It

- 15. What feelings of condemnation and rejection may Christians feel?
- * 16. In what ways does knowing Christ set us free?
- 17. How does living for Christ change the desires of our heart?
- 18. What have you seen the Spirit of God do in a person's life?
- * 19. What does unchecked sin and selfishness produce in a person's life?
- 20. How does seeing and experiencing God as a loving Father change your understanding of what it means to live as a Christian?
- 21. What benefits does God give to His children?

Apply It

- 22. What area of your life do you need to turn over to God's mighty power? How will you?
- * 23. What changes have you been resisting in your life that you are now willing to allow your loving heavenly Father to complete?

Future Glory - Romans 8:18-27

Topics: Future, Hope, Prayer, Suffering, Waiting, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. What type of sacrifices do people commonly make for the sake of a future reward?
- 2. What makes it hard for some people to pray?

Explore It

- * 3. How did Paul describe the difference between his present and his future? (8:18)
- 4. What is the world waiting to see? (8:19)
- 5. For what reason has the world been forced to wait? (8:20-21)
- 6. To what human experience did Paul compare his waiting? (8:22-23)
- 7. For what are the children of God waiting? (8:23)
- * 8. What is and is not genuine hope? (8:24-25)
- 9. What causes us to wait patiently? (8:25)
- 10. How does the Spirit help us in our weakness? (8:26)
- 11. For whom does the Spirit intercede? (8:27)
- 12. What is the relationship between God and the Spirit? (8:27)

Get It

- 13. What are some of the sufferings a Christian can experience?
- * 14. What does God promise to us that can make any suffering bearable?
- 15. How does suffering affect our relationship with God?
- 16. What hinders us from being what God intends us to be?
- 17. In what ways do Christians live in glorious freedom?
- 18. What frustrations do Christians feel as they wait for Christ to return?
- 19. What counsel would you give a Christian who has grown weary of waiting for Christ's return?
- * 20. What is real hope?
- 21. In what circumstances do Christians find it hard to pray?
- 22. What do we learn about God's love for us when we realize that the Holy Spirit helps us even when we cannot pray?

Apply It

- * 23. In what circumstances of your life do you need to wait patiently for God to act?
- 24. For what can you ask the Spirit's help this week?

More Than Conquerors - Romans 8:28-39

Topics: Angels, Demons, Love, Persecution, Purpose, Security, Victory, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. How do you explain why bad things happen to nice people?
- 2. What causes people to lose their faith in God?

Explore It

- * 3. How does God work in all the situations and events of a person's life? (8:28)
- 4. For whom does God promise to work all things for good? (8:28)
- 5. Who is our ultimate example? (8:29)
- 6. How does God seek to change His people? (8:29)
- 7. What does God want each person to become? (8:29)
- 8. What has God done to make people what He wants them to be? (8:30)
- 9. What made Paul confident that God takes care of His people? (8:31-32)
- * 10. Why should we feel confident that God is not against us or condemning us? (8:31-34)
- 11. Where is Jesus Christ right now? (8:34)
- * 12. What possible tragedies or hardships are unable to separate us from the love of Christ? (8:35-39)
- 13. What kind of persecutions have God's people often faced? (8:36)
- 14. How are God's people to respond to persecutions and tragedies? (8:37)
- 15. What gives God's people the ability to respond in triumph to persecution? (8:37)

Get It

- 16. How can God produce good results out of bad situations?
- 17. What is God's intention and plan for each Christian?
- 18. In what practical ways can each of us be like Christ?
- 19. How can we be sure God really loves us?
- 20. What can Christians expect God to do for them?
- 21. How important should the opinions of others be to a Christian?
- * 22. How can a person be sure that bad times aren't a signal of God's displeasure with him or her?
- * 23. What gives Christians confidence as they go through hard times?
- 24. In what situations do you need God's conquering power?
- 25. How have you experienced God's never-ending love in your life?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you commit your difficult circumstances to God this week?
- 27. How can you show trust in God to work out your circumstances for good?

God's Sovereign Choice - Romans 9:1-29

Topics: Blessing, Burdens, Justice, Opportunities, Rejection, Sovereignty

Open It

1. When have you felt that you were judged unfairly in a contest?
- * 2. How do you react when someone brags that God is on his or her side?

Explore It

3. What strong emotion was Paul feeling? (9:2)
4. What situation made Paul feel sad and anguished? (9:2-3)
5. How far was Paul willing to go for his fellow Jews? (9:3)
6. What gifts and opportunities had God given to the Jewish people? (9:4-5)
7. How did Paul explain the difference between Jews who believe and Jews who do not believe? (9:6-8)
8. Whom did God bless as the parents of the nation of Israel? (9:7-9)
- * 9. What did Paul say to people who claim to be children of God merely because they are descendants of Abraham? (9:8-9)
10. Who were the children of Isaac and Rebekah? (9:10-13)
11. What decision did God make about Jacob and Esau before they were born? (9:12-13)
- * 12. How did Paul defend the accusation that God is unjust in His treatment of people? (9:14-15)
- * 13. What determines how God bestows favor on people? (9:16)
14. What examples from history did Paul use to demonstrate God's choice of blessing? (9:17-18)
15. What right do we have to question God? (9:19-21)
16. Why does God show great patience with us even though we deserve His wrath? (9:22-24)
17. What did the prophets Isaiah and Hosea tell us about God's patience and justice? (9:25-29)

Get It

18. What burdens do you carry for friends or relatives who do not know Christ?
- * 19. How could a person come from a very religious background and still not have a personal faith in God?
20. In what ways do people depend on a religious heritage for their salvation?
21. What's wrong with depending on a religious background or heritage for favor with God?
22. What sacrifices would you be willing to make to give others a chance to know Christ?
23. Why do we tend to question God's actions toward us or anyone else?
24. According to this passage, why are Jewish people often resistant to the message of peace with God through Jesus Christ?
25. What does this passage teach us about God's character?
26. What implications does Paul's burden for Israel have for our lives today?
- * 27. On what basis does God choose people to inherit His promises?
28. How have you experienced God's mercy and patience in your life?

Apply It

- * 29. What sacrifices or efforts can you make this week to help a friend come to faith in Christ?
30. When can you take time this week to thank God for His acts of mercy and love to you?

Israel's Unbelief - Romans 9:30-10:21

Topics: Desires, Jesus Christ, Law, Righteousness, Salvation, Self-righteousness, Unbelievers, Zeal

Open It

- * 1. When have you known someone who refused to listen to any advice or instruction?
- 2. How carefully do you follow the instruction sheet in a ready-to-assemble product?

Explore It

- 3. By what means have the Gentiles (non-Jews) obtained righteousness? (9:30)
- * 4. What kept Israel from obtaining righteousness? (9:31-32)
- 5. Over what has Israel stumbled? (9:33)
- 6. What was Paul's greatest desire? (10:1)
- 7. What positive trait did Paul recognize in the Israelites? (10:2)
- 8. What had the Israelites done instead of submitting to God's righteousness? (10:3-4)
- 9. What is the relationship between Christ and the Law in a person's pursuit of righteousness? (10:4)
- 10. How did Moses describe righteousness that comes by the Law? (10:5)
- 11. How does righteousness produced by faith come about? (10:6-9)
- 12. What were the simple instructions Paul gave regarding personal salvation? (10:9-10)
- 13. What promise is given to anyone who puts his or her faith in Christ? (10:11)
- * 14. What distinctions did Paul note in the way that Jews and Gentiles obtain their salvation? (10:12-13)
- 15. What does it take to get the message of God to someone? (10:14-15)
- 16. How have the Israelites responded to hearing the message of God? (10:16-18)
- * 17. How did Paul answer the argument that the Jews have not had adequate opportunity to hear God's message? (10:18-21)
- 18. How had the response of the Gentiles to the message of God differed from the response of the Jews? (10:18-21)

Get It

- 19. What makes it hard for Jews to believe Jesus Christ is the Messiah?
- 20. What hinders non-Jews from believing Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of the world?
- * 21. How can a person have great zeal for God or religious activities and yet be misguided?
- 22. What are the similarities and differences between a sports fanatic and a committed Christian?
- 23. How legitimate are claims by people who profess ignorance about Jesus' identity as Savior?
- * 24. What groups of people in our society resemble the unbelieving Jews of Paul's time?
- 25. Why is it essential to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead?
- 26. Why is both believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth important for salvation?

Apply It

- * 27. When could you spend extended time in prayer to bring before God those groups or peoples who have shown little interest in the gospel?
- 28. Who in your circle of friends and family needs to hear about God's plan of salvation? When?

The Remnant of Israel - Romans 11:1-10

Topics: Christianity, God, Hardheartedness, Lost, Rejection, Stubbornness

Open It

1. How would you turn down an invitation to an event that your boss wanted you to attend?
- * 2. What might a person do to get another person to love him or her?
3. When in your experience has a large project been saved by the efforts of a few people?

Explore It

4. What was Paul's background? (11:1)
5. How did Paul answer those who believed that God had rejected the Jews? (11:1-6)
- * 6. How did God answer Elijah's call to destroy Israel? (11:2-4)
- * 7. What has God chosen by grace? (11:5)
8. What caused God's remnant of people to survive? (11:5)
9. How did Paul describe the people in Israel who please God? (11:5-6)
10. Who are the elect? (11:7)
11. What had Israel done to try to obtain righteousness in God's sight? (11:7-9)
- * 12. What prevented Israel from responding to God as the elect had responded? (11:7-9)
13. What results from God's decision to harden people's hearts? (11:9-10)

Get It

14. What commitment has God shown to the Jews?
- * 15. What characteristics separated the remnant of Israel from the rest of Israel?
16. What causes God's people to turn away from Him?
17. What causes people reared in Christian families and church activities to turn away from God?
- * 18. In what ways do you see a remnant at work in your community?
19. By what means other than grace do people try to please God?
20. How is it possible to seek intently for God by doing good deeds, and yet miss Him?
21. What hardens a person's heart against God?
22. What can God do to change the hearts of people who have turned away from Him?

Apply It

23. What can you do this week to avoid the influences in your life that could harden your heart against God?
- * 24. What can you do this week to encourage a Christian who feels outnumbered or overwhelmed?

Ingrafted Branches - Romans 11:11-24

Topics: Attitude, Faith, Grace, Humility, Repentance, Salvation, Spiritual Rebirth

Open It

1. What is your favorite fruit? Why?
- * 2. What success have you had with gardening?

Explore It

3. What hope do the Jews ever have of recovering their relationship with God? (11:11)
4. How have Gentiles been helped by the Jews' rejection of God's salvation plan? (11:11-12)
5. What will be an even greater result than just the response of the Gentiles to God's plan? (11:12)
6. How did Paul hope his own Jewish people would respond when they saw him ministering to the Gentiles? (11:13-14)
7. What did Paul imagine the response of the Jews to God could bring to the world? (11:15)
- * 8. What long illustration did Paul use to describe the situation of the Jews and Gentiles? (11:16-24)
- * 9. To what did Paul liken the Gentiles? (11:17)
 10. Why do we need to be careful not to boast that God has reached out to us? (11:18)
 11. To whom does God show severity and kindness? (11:22)
- * 12. What is promised to Jews who do not persist in unbelief? (11:23)

Get It

- * 13. What lessons can we draw from Paul's analogy of the olive tree?
14. How would the repentance of Israel affect the world?
15. What is significant about the fact that the Jews have stumbled but not fallen?
16. How could the kind of envy Paul described help lead a person to Christ?
17. For what reasons could a Gentile be tempted to feel superior to a Jew?
- * 18. What attitude should we have toward the fact that God has chosen to reach out to us?
19. How could a person miss salvation by trusting in family background or heritage?

Apply It

- * 20. What can you do this week to acknowledge that you depend on God's kindness?
21. What can you do this week to share Christ with a friend who is separated from God?

All Israel Will Be Saved - Romans 11:25-32

Topics: Covenant, Disobedience, God, Hardheartedness, Mercy, Salvation, Sin

Open It

1. What would it take to get you to knowingly break an important promise you made?
- * 2. How can a bad situation bring good results?

Explore It

3. To what mystery did Paul refer? (11:25)
4. How had Israel responded to the message Paul preached? (11:25)
- * 5. When would Israel's period of hardening end? (11:25)
6. What will eventually happen to Israel? (11:26)
- * 7. What promise has God made to Israel? (11:26-27)
8. In what two contrasting ways were the Jews described by Paul? (11:28-29)
9. What did Paul say about God's promises? (11:29)
- * 10. What has been the good result of the disobedience and unbelief of the Jews? (11:30)
11. How is God responding to the unbelief of the Jews? (11:31)
12. For what reason has God allowed all people to be disobedient? (11:32)

Get It

13. What makes God's plan of salvation a mystery?
- * 14. What does this passage reveal about God's character?
15. How will "all Israel" be saved?
- * 16. How does our commitment to God affect His dependability and trustworthiness?
17. When has God shown you mercy despite your disobedience?
18. What promises of God can help us deal with the difficult circumstances of our lives?

Apply It

- * 19. Which of God's promises do you need to focus on and memorize this week?
20. What can you do this week to show God's unique love to someone who has turned away from Him?

Doxology - Romans 11:33-36

Topics: God, Knowledge, Praise, Wisdom, Worship

Open It

1. What was your idea of God when you were a child?
- * 2. How has your idea of God changed as you have grown up?
3. When are you most inclined to praise God?

Explore It

4. How did Paul describe God's judgments? (11:33)
5. What is beyond our understanding? (11:33)
- * 6. How did Paul describe the mind of God? (11:33-34)
7. What force or power is higher or wiser than God? (11:33-34)
8. How did Paul describe God? (11:33-36)
9. Why did Paul praise God? (11:33-36)
- * 10. What does God owe? (11:35)
- * 11. What is God's place in the universe? (11:36)
12. What is from God, through God, and to God? (11:36)
13. How did Paul summarize his doxology? (11:36)

Get It

14. Why do you think Paul concluded his discussion of Israel's salvation with this doxology?
15. How do skeptics and agnostics try to explain God?
- * 16. In what ways do we underestimate God?
17. What limits all human explanations of God?
- * 18. What reasons do we have to worship God?
19. How can God's wisdom help us?
20. How does God hold you and your life together?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you worship and praise God with enthusiasm and devotion this week?
22. What is one way you can reflect God's character to others through your personal life?

Living Sacrifices - Romans 12:1-8

Topics: Body, Commitment, Gifts, God's Will, Humility, Mind, Sacrifice, Self-esteem, Thinking, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What skills or qualities are necessary to play a team sport well?
- 2. What influences have significantly shaped your life?

Explore It

- 3. How do people properly worship God? (12:1)
- 4. What is the most reasonable response to God's great mercy? (12:1-2)
- * 5. How is the Christian to be different from unbelieving people? (12:2)
- 6. How should the mind of a Christian be changed? (12:2)
- 7. What must happen in order for a person to discern and agree with the will of God? (12:2)
- 8. How should Christians think about themselves? (12:3)
- 9. What facts should keep a person from feeling superior or inferior to other Christians? (12:3-6)
- * 10. What did Paul use the human body to illustrate? (12:4-5)
- 11. What makes Christians different from one another? (12:4-6)
- 12. In what way are all Christians alike? (12:4-6)
- 13. What are the gifts of God? (12:6-8)
- * 14. How should each person use his or her gifts? (12:6-8)

Get It

- 15. What right does God have to ask us for a full-life commitment to Him?
- * 16. What makes offering our bodies as living sacrifices an act of worship?
- 17. To what worldly life-styles or values do we typically conform?
- 18. What are the patterns of the world that tempt us to conform?
- 19. How can a Christian renew his or her mind?
- 20. How does understanding God's love raise our self-esteem?
- 21. How does understanding God's love reduce our selfishness and conceit?
- 22. How do people united in Christ act toward each other?
- * 23. How can the gifts God bestows on Christians help others in the church or community?
- 24. What gifts from God do you see in others?
- 25. What gifts from God do you see in your life?

Apply It

- 26. What is one step you can take this week toward eliminating habits that merely conform to the world's pattern?
- * 27. How can you put a spiritual gift to work for others this week?

Love - Romans 12:9-21

Topics: Conflict, Enemies, Forgiveness, Life, Love, Revenge

Open It

1. What might a friend do to you that you would have trouble forgiving?
- * 2. What advice would you give to someone who wanted some practical wisdom on how to get along with others?

Explore It

3. What should we hate? (12:9)
4. What is genuine love like? (12:9, 13, 18-21)
5. What attitudes should we strive to have? (12:9-16)
- * 6. What down-to-earth advice did Paul give? (12:9-21)
- * 7. In what ways ought we to treat others as more important than ourselves? (12:10, 13, 16, 20)
8. What instructions does God want us to observe in our relationships? (12:10, 13-21)
9. How is a Christian to treat enemies? (12:14, 17-21)
- * 10. With whom does God want us to live at peace? (12:18)
11. Why should we not take revenge? (12:19)
12. What is the purpose of showing kindness to an enemy? (12:20)

Get It

13. What can we do to learn to hate evil?
14. How can one hate evil yet not hate the evildoer?
- * 15. How can a Christian learn to love others as God loves them?
16. In what ways is Christian love more than emotion?
17. What does it mean to honor one another?
18. Why should we be joyful when we are suffering?
19. Why is it wrong to repay evil with evil?
- * 20. How does doing good to an enemy overcome evil?

Apply It

- * 21. In what ways can you honor someone above yourself? Who?
22. Whom do you need to love and bless this week even though he or she hurts you?

Submission to the Authorities - Romans 13:1-7

Topics: Authority, God's Will, Government, Law, Submission

Open It

1. What irritates you most about our government?
- * 2. How do you feel when you have to prepare your income tax forms?

Explore It

3. How is the establishment of any government related to God? (13:1)
4. How is a Christian to respond to the laws and leadership of government? (13:1-7)
- * 5. What attitude is a Christian showing toward God when he or she rebels against the government? (13:2)
6. What consequences will those who rebel against the government bring upon themselves? (13:2)
- * 7. What should a Christian do to maintain a good relationship with the government? (13:3-4)
8. For what reason are government officials in power? (13:4)
9. What motivation does the Christian have to submit to the government? (13:5)
10. What are governmental authorities? (13:6)
- * 11. How should a Christian respond to the tax laws and requirements of the government? (13:6-7)
12. In addition to tax revenues, what does a Christian owe to his or her government? (13:7)

Get It

13. How would God want us to act if government leaders were openly persecuting Christians?
14. How do evil, cruel rulers serve God's plan and do good for God's people?
- * 15. Under what circumstances should Christians disobey the clear commands of government authorities?
- * 16. What is the Christian's responsibility for maintaining a good government?
17. What positive support should Christians give to government leaders?

Apply It

18. Which government official could you write or talk to this week and express your concerns?
- * 19. How and when could you set aside time to pray for national, state, and local public officials?

Love, for the Day Is Near - Romans 13:8-14

Topics: Holiness, Last Days, Law, Love, Purity, Sin

Open It

- * 1. What sort of actions communicate love to you?
- 2. What are some of the evil activities tolerated and even promoted by our society?

Explore It

- * 3. In what area of life is a Christian to maintain a continuing debt? (13:8)
- 4. What is the sign that a Christian has fulfilled the Law? (13:8)
- * 5. What one command sums up all the other commands? (13:9)
- 6. What act and attitude is the fulfillment of the Law? (13:10)
- 7. What “hour” had arrived for the Roman Christians? (13:11)
- 8. How did Paul encourage his audience to live godly lives? (13:11-12)
- 9. What specific behaviors does God forbid? (13:12-13)
- 10. What kind of behavior contrasts with what God wants of us? (13:13)
- 11. With what are Christians to clothe themselves? (13:14)
- * 12. What should a Christian be thinking about each day? (13:14)

Get It

- * 13. What does it mean that love is the fulfillment of the Law?
- 14. What specific acts of love can Christians show to friends, family, neighbors, and strangers?
- 15. What are the signs that the present age is nearly over?
- 16. How would you live if you knew the world would end in six months?
- 17. What deeds of darkness practiced in our world today sometimes attract and seduce Christians?
- 18. In what practical ways can a person clothe himself or herself with Jesus Christ instead of pursuing evil desires?
- * 19. What personal relationship do you want to improve by earnestly loving that person as yourself?

Apply It

- * 20. What specific gesture of love or kindness can you use to build a relationship this week?
- 21. When can you take time this week to identify habits or tendencies in your life that hinder your relationship with the Lord?

The Weak and the Strong - Romans 14:1-15:13

Topics: Acceptance, Freedom, Help, Love, Sin, Unity

Open It

1. What do you do when a homeless person asks you for money?
- * 2. When have you refused to eat something that was put before you?

Explore It

3. How should a fellow believer who is weak in the faith be treated? (14:1)
- * 4. What reasons did Paul give for not judging people on disputable matters? (14:1-12)
5. What issues did Paul believe were not worth fighting over? (13:2, 5)
- * 6. What should be the primary motivation for a person's decision to eat meat or celebrate a sacred day? (13:6-8)
7. What will each person do when standing before God's judgment seat? (14:12)
8. What should we do instead of judging fellow Christians? (14:13)
9. What was Paul's personal belief about unclean foods? (14:14)
10. What consideration should a Christian give to the opinions of fellow believers on controversial matters? (14:14-15)
11. When should a Christian defer to another Christian's beliefs? (14:15-16)
12. What is the true focus of the kingdom of God? (14:17-18)
- * 13. What is a Christian's responsibility for building peace among the other believers? (14:19-21)
14. How should concern for other believers affect our personal choices? (14:21)
15. What is the responsibility of a strong Christian toward others? (15:1-2)
16. What is the purpose of Scripture? (15:4)
17. What does God want to give each believer to guide his or her Christian life? (15:5-6)
18. By what standards should a person accept others? (15:7)
19. For what reason was Jesus sent to the Jews? (15:8-12)
20. With what does God want to fill us? (15:13)

Get It

- * 21. What life-style rules and issues do Christians argue about today?
22. What responsibility do you have to be a good example for others?
23. What practice would you be willing to give up if it proved to be a bad influence on others?
- * 24. When Scripture is not explicit on an issue, how should a person decide what is right and wrong?
25. What are some areas of life that we should examine carefully for practices that cause others to sin?
26. How can Christians share a spirit of unity despite having different views on certain practices?
27. How would you distinguish between an activity that is merely permissible and one that is clearly immoral?
28. How can a strong Christian use his or her strength to help other Christians?

Apply It

29. What area of your life can you review this week for practices that may cause difficulty for Christian friends or associates?
- * 30. What can you do this week to spread peace and mutual edification among Christians?

Paul, the Minister to the Gentiles - Romans 15:14-22

Topics: Ambition, Evangelism, Humility, Mission, Pride, Serving, Witnessing

Open It

1. What foreign culture interests you most? Why?
- * 2. What factors influence a person's calling or vocation in life?

Explore It

3. How did Paul describe the Christians at Rome? (15:14)
4. How did Paul understand his own mission? (15:14-16)
- * 5. Why did Paul preach to the Gentiles? (15:16)
6. What was Paul's "priestly duty"? (15:16)
7. What was the focus of Paul's life? (15:17-18)
- * 8. What was the only thing that Paul was willing to speak of? (15:18-19)
9. To what did Paul credit his success in evangelism? (15:18-19)
- * 10. What was Paul's ambition? (15:20)
11. Why did Paul preach the gospel where Christ was not known? (15:20)
12. What had hindered Paul from coming to see the people in the church at Rome? (15:22)

Get It

13. What various tasks does God give to people like us to serve Him?
- * 14. What has God given you to use in serving Him?
15. For what do you want to be known?
16. When is being proud of your work for God a sin?
- * 17. How can you tell if your work for God is motivated by selfish pride or selfless devotion to God?
18. What groups of people have not heard the gospel message?
19. What sections of your community have not had enough opportunities to hear the gospel message?

Apply It

- * 20. At this point in your life, what could you do to determine whether your vocation is in line with God's desires for your life?
21. How can God best use you as a witness, both this week and in the future?

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome - Romans 15:23-33

Topics: Ambition, Generosity, Gifts, Help, Mission, Plans, Serving

Open It

1. How do you react when your travel plans are delayed or canceled?
- * 2. If a friend had \$10,000 to donate to charity and asked you for advice, what worthy causes would you recommend?

Explore It

3. Where was Paul planning to travel? (15:23-24) Why?
4. Why was Paul planning to visit Rome? (15:23-25)
- * 5. How did Paul want the Roman Christians to help him? (15:24, 30-32)
6. What was Paul's immediate destination? (15:25)
- * 7. What was Paul taking to Jerusalem? (15:26)
8. What had the Jews done for the Gentiles? (15:27)
- * 9. How did Paul explain why Gentiles should give financial assistance to Jews in Jerusalem? (15:27)
10. What would Paul bring with him when he visited Rome? (15:29)
11. For what did Paul ask the people to pray? (15:30-32)
12. With what benediction did Paul close his request? (15:33)

Get It

13. What is your greatest ambition?
14. How does your greatest ambition compare with Paul's?
15. How can our plans to serve God be hindered?
16. How should we react when our plans to serve God are hindered?
- * 17. How can we help fellow believers and missionaries?
18. What benefits are realized by helping a missionary?
- * 19. How should we show sensitivity when giving someone a gift?

Apply It

- * 20. What sacrifice can you make this week to help another believer who is struggling with a burden?
21. How could you help and show appreciation to the person who helped you come to faith in Christ?

Personal Greetings - Romans 16:1-27

Topics: Appreciation, Friendship, God, Praise, Serving

Open It

- * 1. What do you do to thank people who help you with a project?
- 2. How valuable is a letter of thanks and appreciation?

Explore It

- 3. What did Paul ask the Roman church to do for Phoebe? (16:1-2)
- * 4. Why did Paul praise Priscilla and Aquila? (16:3-4)
- 5. What risks did Priscilla and Aquila take? (16:3-4)
- 6. What special distinction did Epenetus hold? (16:5)
- 7. For what did Paul commend Mary? (16:6)
- 8. What experiences did Andronicus and Junias share with Paul? (16:7)
- 9. What qualities did Paul recognize in Apelles? (16:10)
- 10. Why did Paul praise Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis? (16:12)
- 11. What greeting did Paul suggest the church share? (16:16)
- 12. What kinds of divisions should the church not allow? (16:17)
- 13. How should the church deal with a person who causes divisions? (16:17)
- 14. What should we do about people who cause division among Christians? (16:17-18)
- * 15. What encouragement did Paul give the people in their struggle with evil in the world? (16:19-20)
- 16. Who actually wrote down this letter for Paul? (16:22)
- 17. With whom had Paul been living? (16:23)
- * 18. What did Paul say about God? (16:25-27)
- 19. What did Paul say about the gospel? (16:25-27)

Get It

- * 20. What is a meaningful compliment a Christian could give to another believer?
- 21. For what would you like to be remembered?
- 22. What opportunities does a Christian have to serve?
- * 23. In what areas of life should Christians take risks for God, as Priscilla and Aquila did?
- 24. What does our level of generosity reveal about our understanding of God?
- 25. What causes division in churches and between Christians today?
- 26. How can we avoid dividing churches unnecessarily?
- 27. How does focusing on the greatness of God increase our ambition to serve Him?

Apply It

- 28. In what specific ways could you be generous to other Christians in need?
- * 29. To what fellow workers in the Lord's service do you want to express your appreciation? How?

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Thanksgiving - 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Topics: Endurance, Faithfulness, Fellowship, Grace, Growth, Holiness, Spiritual Gifts, Thankfulness, Waiting

Open It

1. What are you most thankful for today?
- * 2. When was a time you were especially thankful for someone else? Why?

Explore It

3. How did Paul describe himself? (1:1)
4. What themes did Paul repeat several times? (1:1-9)
5. What specific truths did Paul affirm? (1:1-9)
6. What kind of people were the Corinthian Christians? (1:2)
7. What words of affirmation did Paul have for his readers? (1:2-3)
- * 8. For what traits of the Corinthians did Paul thank God? (1:4-9)
9. In what ways had the Corinthian Christians been “enriched”? Why? (1:5-6)
- * 10. What did the Corinthian Christians have? (1:7)
11. What spiritual gifts did the Corinthians have? (1:7)
12. Why did the Corinthians not lack for any spiritual gift? (1:7)
13. For what period of time were the Corinthians’ spiritual gifts given? (1:7)
14. For what were the Corinthians waiting? (1:7)
15. How would the Corinthians be able to live as God called them? (1:8-9)
16. What words of encouragement did Paul include in his opening? (1:8-9)
17. How are Christians able to live as God has called them? (1:8-9)
- * 18. To what has God called all Christians? (1:9)

Get It

19. For what can you thank God?
20. For what should we thank God?
21. Who is someone for whose faith you are thankful?
22. What does it mean that God has given us grace?
23. How is a person enriched by trusting in Christ?
24. What spiritual gifts has God given you?
25. How can your gifts be used in service to Jesus as we wait for His return?
26. In what ways does God keep a believer strong to the end?
27. What does it mean that God is faithful?
- * 28. In what ways is God faithful to you?
- * 29. How can we say thank you to God for His faithfulness?
30. For what specific reasons do you want to thank God?

Apply It

31. How can you use your spiritual gift at least once this next week?
32. What Christian do you want to affirm?
33. In what part of your daily routine this week can you take time out to thank God?
- * 34. How can you remind yourself to say thank you to God at least once each day this week?

Divisions in the Church - 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Topics: Arguments, Church, Disagreements, Divisions, Follow, Gospel, Power, Quarrels, Unity

Open It

1. Over what matters do families often argue?
2. When was a time you hurt someone because you were forced to take sides?
- * 3. When was a time you helped two people settle a dispute?

Explore It

4. On what basis did Paul appeal to the Corinthian believers? (1:10)
- * 5. Why did Paul ask the Corinthians to agree with one another? (1:10)
6. What kind of action did the Corinthian church need to take? (1:10-17)
- * 7. What specific problem were the Corinthian Christians having? (1:11-12)
8. How was Paul a part of the Corinthians' problems? (1:13-17)
9. How did baptism cause division in the Corinthian church? (1:13-17)
10. What can result from preaching the gospel with "words of human wisdom"? (1:17)
11. What did Christ enable Paul to do? (1:17)
12. What danger is there in dividing a church? (1:17)
- * 13. What danger was Paul trying to avoid? (1:17)
14. What's wrong with preaching the gospel with "words of human wisdom"? (1:17)

Get It

15. How did Paul show his concern for the Corinthians?
16. What difference does local church unity make?
17. What does it mean for Christians to be "perfectly united in mind and thought"?
18. Why is it important for Christians to be united?
19. How should we respond to arguments among Christians today?
20. What church divisions have you known or heard about?
21. What has been the outcome in church splits of which you are aware?
22. How can division among Christians empty Christ's message of its power?
23. What witness does a unified church give to a lost world?
24. What social and cultural forces present the greatest threat to the unity of Christ's church today?
- * 25. How can Christians avoid becoming distracted by petty disagreements?
- * 26. What can your church do to build unity and guard against division?
27. What practices can help us be more united with other Christians?

Apply It

- * 28. What is the first step you could take to heal a damaged relationship with another Christian?
29. How could you help your church leaders build the unity of your congregation?

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God - 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

Topics: Call, Fear, Foolishness, God, God's Will, Gospel, Greatness, Holy Spirit, Ignorance, Knowledge, Learning, Power, Strength, Weaknesses, Wisdom, World

Open It

- * 1. In what way might your life-style seem foolish to some of your friends or relatives?
- 2. In what ways did you depend on your parents' wisdom when you were a child?

Explore It

- 3. To whom is the message of the Cross foolishness? (1:18)
- 4. To whom is the message of the Cross powerful? (1:18)
- 5. How can people hear the message of Christ differently? (1:18)
- 6. What does God's message mean to the person being saved? (1:18)
- 7. How does the message of the Cross contrast with what most people consider wise? (1:18-19)
- 8. How does God get His message across? (1:19-31)
- * 9. How does God's wisdom contrast with the world's wisdom? (1:20)
- 10. How did the demands of the Jews and Greeks contrast with the Corinthians' hope? (1:22-23)
- 11. How do God's attributes compare with ours? (1:25-26)
- 12. What were the Corinthians like before they were called? (1:26-27)
- 13. How does God use the foolish and weak things of the world? (1:27)
- * 14. Why does God express His power and wisdom through "foolish," "weak," and "lowly" means? (1:28-29)
- 15. What has Jesus Christ become for us? (1:30)
- 16. What kind of boasting is good? (1:31)
- * 17. How did Paul's regard for the world's wisdom affect his preaching and testimony? (2:1-5)
- 18. Why was it good that Paul came to Corinth in weakness and fear? (2:3-5)
- 19. On what should our faith rest? (2:5)

Get It

- 20. Why do Christians and non-Christians value the message of Christ so differently?
- * 21. What are some examples of the world's wisdom?
- 22. What common difficulties do people mention when trying to understand the gospel of Christ?
- 23. What are some doctrines of the Christian faith that are difficult for non-Christians to understand?
- 24. When have you heard non-Christians balk at the message of Christ?
- 25. How has God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
- 26. In what ways do God's commands seem like foolishness to the non-Christians you know?
- 27. What difference should it make in your life to know that God chooses the weak and lowly people of the world to do His work?
- * 28. What unbelievers have you known who wanted miraculous signs or airtight philosophical proofs before believing in Christ?
- 29. Why do you think people demand signs, or proof, of God?
- 30. What's wrong with demanding signs, or proof, from God?
- 31. How can you share the truth of the gospel with people who demand signs, or proof, of God?
- 32. How is it encouraging to know that Paul was weak and fearful?
- 33. What does it mean to preach with a "demonstration of the Spirit's power"?
- 34. How can we make sure that our faith rests on God's power and not our own wisdom?
- 35. Whom could you encourage with the knowledge that God's weakness is stronger than our strength?
- 36. What kinds of wisdom do you depend on that could be changed by the light of God's Word?

Apply It

- 37. To what area of your life now could you apply God's "foolishness"? How?
- 38. From whom can you learn more of God's wisdom? How and when?
- * 39. How could you seek out God's wisdom and power this week? Where?
- 40. What can you do this week to witness for Christ in only God's wisdom and not your own craftiness?

Wisdom From the Spirit - 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Topics: Discernment, Foolishness, Holy Spirit, Ignorance, Judgment, Mind, Spiritual Growth, Thinking, Wisdom

Open It

1. To what sources do people most often look for wisdom?
2. What is it like to know a secret and keep it from your friends?
3. For what reasons do we keep secrets from other people?
- * 4. In what ways could you learn about a secret that was hidden from you?

Explore It

5. What kinds of wisdom are there? (2:6)
6. In what way does the world's wisdom fall short? (2:6)
7. Where does the world's wisdom lead? (2:6)
- * 8. How does God's wisdom differ from the wisdom of this age? (2:6-16)
- * 9. What is God's secret wisdom that only the mature will attain? (2:7)
10. How was Jesus' crucifixion related to the world's lack of understanding God's wisdom? (2:8)
11. Why do people often fail to see God's purpose for them? (2:9)
12. Why is it possible to understand God's wisdom only if His Spirit reveals it? (2:9-16)
- * 13. What characteristics will the wisdom that the Spirit teaches us have? (2:13)
14. How are spiritual and unspiritual people different? (2:15-16)
15. Who can make "judgments about all things"? Why? (2:15-16)

Get It

16. In what way are the "rulers of this age" coming to nothing?
- * 17. When in the past has the Spirit enabled you to understand God's wisdom and gifts?
18. Why did God keep His wisdom a secret?
19. In what ways should your actions conform to the teaching of the Spirit who lives in you?
20. How should you respond to the Spirit's revelation about what God has prepared for you?
- * 21. What does it mean to have the mind of Christ?
22. How can you know if you have the mind of Christ?
23. What benefit is there in praying for spiritual discernment?

Apply It

- * 24. What spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible study, meditation on Scripture, etc.) could you practice this week to make you sensitive to the Holy Spirit?
25. How might you approach a person you know who believes strongly in the wisdom of the world?

On Divisions in the Church - 1 Corinthians 3:1-23

Topics: Church, Divisions, Foundation, Growth, Holy Spirit, Quarrels, Testing, Wisdom, World

Open It

1. How have you changed since you were a child?
2. Why is laying a strong foundation important in building a house?
- * 3. What foundational truths did you learn in school?

Explore It

4. Why did Paul call the Corinthians “mere infants”? (3:1-3)
5. What were the Corinthians like? (3:3-5)
6. What traits did the Corinthians have that made them worldly? (3:3-5)
7. How did Paul want his readers to view both Apollos and himself? Why? (3:5-7)
8. What is each Christian worker’s purpose in ministering to others? (3:8)
9. How is the person who plants like the person who waters? (3:8-9)
10. Who were the “fellow workers” who worked together on the Corinthian “field” or “building”? (3:9)
- * 11. What made Paul and Apollos equals under God? (3:9)
12. What is the foundation of the church? (3:11)
- * 13. What is like either gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw? How? (3:12-14)
- * 14. What happens to the person who builds in others’ lives? (3:13-15)
15. What important fact had the Corinthians failed to appreciate? (3:16)
16. Why should we abandon the world’s idea of wisdom? (3:19)
17. Why were the Corinthians to stop boasting about the individual leaders they followed? (3:21-23)

Get It

18. What is our role in God’s work?
19. What does it mean to plant and water God’s Word in others?
20. How do we plant and water God’s Word in others?
21. What is your particular role in God’s work?
22. In what ways are you able to plant and water God’s Word in others?
23. What opportunities do you have to plant and water God’s Word in others?
24. How is Christian teaching and discipleship like building a building?
- * 25. How can a person’s efforts in teaching or discipleship be like gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw?
26. In what ways can Christians be influenced by the wisdom of the world?
27. What does it mean that a Christian is God’s temple?
28. How should our attitudes and actions be influenced by the fact that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit?
29. What are some implications of the fact that God’s Spirit lives in every Christian?
30. How could a person destroy God’s temple?
31. How are Christians who are involved in discipleship similar to builders?
- * 32. In what ways should all Christians point others to Christ alone?
33. What responsibility do Christians not involved in formal leadership have for building up God’s church?
34. What can you do to help build up the church in some way?

Apply It

- * 35. What is one way you can point another person to Christ this week?

36. In whose life do you want to build God's Word? How can you start?

37. What need could you meet in your church over the next month to build up other Christians?

Apostles of Christ - 1 Corinthians 4:1-21

Topics: Conscience, Discipline, Example, Faithfulness, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Motives, Persecution, Pride

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of things do people usually brag about?
- 2. Why would a person boast about a gift he or she had received?
- 3. Who is someone you look up to and try to be like? In what way?

Explore It

- * 4. How did Paul want the Corinthians to regard Christian leaders? (4:1)
- 5. What does this passage teach about the life of an apostle? (4:1-5, 8-16)
- * 6. What attitudes should Christian leaders have? (4:2-4)
- 7. Whom did Paul take pains to avoid judging? Why? (4:3-5)
- 8. Why should we judge “nothing before the appointed time”? (4:5)
- 9. How were the Corinthians going beyond the teaching of Scripture in their behavior and attitudes? (4:6)
- * 10. Why did Paul warn the Corinthians about pride? (4:7-13)
- 11. In what way had Paul become a father to the Corinthians? (4:15)
- 12. Why did Paul send Timothy to the Corinthians? (4:17)
- 13. How is the kingdom of God a “matter of power”? (4:20)

Get It

- 14. How does God want Christians to treat church leaders?
- 15. What qualities should Christian leaders have?
- 16. What did Paul mean when he said that he did not even judge himself?
- 17. Why should we not judge our own service to God or even that of other people?
- 18. How can we be faithful to the trust that God has given us?
- 19. How closely do you think our lives should conform to Paul’s own experience?
- 20. How should we respond to Paul’s instruction to imitate him?
- * 21. What exemplary qualities about Paul should we imitate? How?
- 22. What about Paul’s character do you want to copy?
- 23. What more mature Christian do you want to be like? How?
- * 24. What problems do Christians create when they divide into factions and elevate some leaders over others?
- 25. How can a church’s unity be threatened by personal disputes?
- 26. How can you allow the power of the kingdom to be more active in your life?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one way you could imitate the example or wisdom of a more mature Christian you know?
- 28. How can you remember to avoid a judgmental spirit toward others this week?

Expel the Immoral Brother! - 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Topics: Church, Discipline, Greed, Idolatry, Immorality, Judgment, Pride, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin

Open It

- * 1. For what kinds of things were you disciplined as a child?
- 2. When was a time you had to stop associating with a friend because of his or her bad influence on you?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did the Corinthians tolerate immorality in their church? (5:2)
- 4. What disciplinary action should the Corinthians have taken? (5:2)
- 5. Under what conditions was the Corinthian church to expel their immoral member? Why? (5:4-5)
- * 6. Why was it necessary for the Corinthian church to expel a man from their congregation? (5:5-6)
- 7. To what boasting did Paul refer? (5:6)
- 8. What should Christians be like? How? (5:7)
- 9. Why was it necessary to expel an immoral Christian from his or her church? (5:7-13)
- 10. To what festival did Paul refer? Why? (5:7-8)
- 11. How should we “keep the Festival”? (5:8)
- 12. What kind of distinction do we need to make in dealing with immoral people? (5:9-13)
- 13. For what reasons were the Corinthians to expel a professing Christian? (5:11)
- * 14. Why is it unnecessary for Christians to judge non-Christians? (5:12-13)

Get It

- 15. At what point would you stop associating with a person who continued to do wrong?
- 16. From what harm could a church protect itself by expelling an immoral member?
- 17. What are the pain and problems created by sexual immorality?
- * 18. How should any church react to gross sin practiced by a stubborn member?
- 19. What is difficult and complicated about disciplining a sinning Christian?
- 20. To what extent should people cleanse their lives of sin before joining a church? Why?
- 21. What does it mean to “hand someone over to Satan”?
- 22. How should we treat Christians who are greedy, slanderers, or swindlers?
- * 23. What warnings should careless Christians take to heart?
- 24. How can we expel immoral Christians from our churches and at the same time have Jesus’ love for sinners?

Apply It

- 25. What should you do the next time you learn of a Christian friend who is unwilling to turn away from a particular sin?
- * 26. What habits can you cultivate to prevent yourself from becoming callous to the sins of other people?

Lawsuits Among Believers - 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Topics: Angels, Believers, Disagreements, Immorality, Judgment, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Sin, Unbelievers

Open It

1. For what reasons do people take each other to court?
- * 2. How does a court of law solve and not solve problems between people?
3. What do you think is the best way to settle disputes between strangers?

Explore It

- * 4. Why was Paul disturbed by the practice of Christians bringing their disputes before non-Christians? (6:1-6)
5. Who will judge the world? (6:2)
6. By what authority will Christians judge angels? (6:3)
- * 7. Who is qualified to serve as a judge for disputes among Christians? (6:4)
- * 8. What did the Corinthians need to do when they were wronged by other Christians? (6:7)
9. How were the Corinthian Christians settling disputes with each other? (6:7-8)
10. What did the fact that the Corinthians were suing each other prove about them? (6:7-10)
11. How were the Corinthians deceived in their beliefs? (6:9)
12. Who will not inherit the kingdom of God? (6:9-10)
13. What were some of the Corinthians before they were saved? (6:11)
14. What had changed the Corinthians' standing before God? (6:11)

Get It

- * 15. What should we do whenever we are wronged by other Christians?
16. How do people in your church settle disputes?
17. What could you do differently when settling disputes to better reflect God's priorities?
18. Why is it better to be wronged than to take a fellow Christian to court?
19. What would God say to Christians today who sue one another?
- * 20. What should you do if you feel you have been wronged by another Christian?
21. What should a Christian do if the person he or she accuses is unwilling to submit to the judgment of other believers?
22. What does it mean that God sanctifies His people?
23. What does it mean that God justifies His people?
24. What difference does it make that we have been sanctified and justified by the Spirit of God?
25. How should the knowledge of Jesus' redemptive work motivate you to abandon sin in your life?

Apply It

- * 26. What do you want to remember the next time you are wronged by another Christian?
27. What particular action or attitude can help you forgive others when you are wronged?

Sexual Immorality - 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Topics: Adultery, Body, Desires, Holy Spirit, Immorality, Lust, Marriage, Maturity, Morality, Sex, Sin, Singleness, Slavery, Temptation, Weaknesses

Open It

1. In what ways do Americans typically mistreat their bodies?
- * 2. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges to sexual purity in our society?

Explore It

3. What did Paul mean by saying, "I will not be mastered by anything"? (6:12)
4. Why should we abstain from sex outside of marriage? (6:12-20)
5. What value does God place on our bodies? (6:12-20)
6. What will God destroy? Why? (6:13)
- * 7. For what are our bodies meant? (6:13)
8. What promise is given to Christians because God raised Jesus from the dead? (6:14)
9. What makes our bodies special? (6:15)
10. What's wrong with sex outside of marriage? (6:15-16)
11. Why is it not possible to be one with both Christ and a prostitute? (6:15-17)
- * 12. What does it mean to be one with Christ in spirit? (6:17)
- * 13. How is sexual immorality different from other sins? (6:18)
14. How are Christians' bodies unique? (6:19-20)

Get It

15. How can we distinguish between what is merely permissible and what is beneficial?
16. How should we treat our bodies if they are actually temples of the Holy Spirit?
17. How do advertising and other media encourage wrong attitudes about our bodies?
18. How do friends, coworkers, and other peers encourage wrong attitudes about our bodies?
19. How does sexually uniting with someone outside of marriage affect a person?
- * 20. In what specific ways is it possible for you to honor God with your body?
21. What can a person do to master natural human desires that can lead to sin?
- * 22. What can you do to master areas of your life that could cause you to sin against your body?
23. How can we avoid compromises that lead to sexual sin?

Apply It

- * 24. In what way can you remind yourself this week that you were bought at a price and are God's temple?
25. In what settings or situations should you take precautions against sexual immorality? How?

Marriage - 1 Corinthians 7:1-40

Topics: Body, Freedom, Immorality, Marriage, Ministry, Morality, Prayer, Sex, Sin, Singleness, Slavery, Temptation, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What couple have you met recently that displays the ingredients of a good marriage?
- 2. What to you is good and bad about remaining single?

Explore It

- 3. What guiding principles about marriage does God want us to know? (7:1-40)
- 4. Why should “each man . . . have his own wife”? (7:2)
- 5. What obligations does a Christian wife have toward her husband? (7:3)
- 6. To whom does a Christian’s body belong if he or she is married? (7:4)
- 7. Under what circumstances may married partners deprive each other’s sexual needs? (7:5)
- 8. Why is it important for husbands and wives not to deprive each other’s sexual needs? (7:5)
- 9. What instruction did Paul give to the unmarried and widowed? (7:8-9)
- * 10. To what has God called us? (7:15)
- * 11. What is more important than whether a person is married or single? (7:17-19)
- 12. What is more important than whether a person is a slave or free? (7:20-24)
- 13. What is one advantage in remaining single? (7:28)
- 14. Why did Paul think it best to remain single? (7:28)
- * 15. What perspective can help us serve God well whether married or single? (7:29-31)
- 16. What advantage do unmarried people have in ministry? (7:32-35)

Get It

- * 17. In what sense is it good not to marry?
- 18. In what ways might singleness keep us free from concern?
- 19. What are the advantages of being married?
- * 20. What opportunities do married people have that single people do not?
- 21. What unique concerns do married people have that single people do not?
- 22. What part of God’s instruction on marriage do you find encouraging?
- 23. What circumstance in your life would benefit from God’s perspective on marriage and singleness?
- 24. How should the fact that the time is short affect our priorities and actions?
- 25. What does it mean to live as if not engrossed in the things of the world?
- 26. What does it look like when a married person is engrossed in the things of the world?
- 27. What does it look like when a single person is engrossed in the things of the world?
- 28. How should our life-style be detached from the concerns of the world?

Apply It

- 29. What is one step you can take this week to free yourself from concern about a mortgage, a job, a project, or some other earthly matter?
- * 30. How can you use your unique experiences as a married or single person in service to God?

Food Sacrificed to Idols - 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Topics: Believers, Example, Freedom, Idolatry, Knowledge, Love, Sin, Temptation, Unity

Open It

- * 1. When have you refused to participate in an event that everyone else seemed to be enjoying?
- 2. When have you experienced conflicts with people who wanted to do something you considered bad or improper (such as social drinking or gambling)?

Explore It

- 3. What was troubling the Corinthians? (8:1)
- 4. What's the problem with knowledge? (8:1-2)
- 5. What mistaken assumption does a person who thinks he knows something make? (8:2)
- 6. Why is it more important to be known by God than to know about God? (8:2-3)
- * 7. How did Paul counsel the Corinthians to regard food sacrificed to idols? (8:4-13)
- 8. What importance does God attach to idols? (8:5-6)
- 9. Why were the Corinthian Christians continuing to struggle over the matter of idols? (8:7-8)
- * 10. How could the exercise of a believer's freedom hurt a weaker Christian? (8:9)
- * 11. What overriding principle should govern our freedom? (8:9-13)
- 12. How can a Christian destroy someone? (8:11)
- 13. How did Paul limit his freedom out of sensitivity to the weaker Christians of his day? (8:13)

Get It

- 14. In what way can knowledge puff up a person?
- 15. How can we build up others in a loving way?
- 16. How can a person be sure of the fact that he or she is known by God?
- * 17. What are some customs in our society that weaker Christians often need to avoid?
- * 18. How should we limit our freedom out of sensitivity to weaker Christians?
- 19. What should you do if you know your actions would cause another Christian to violate his or her conscience?
- 20. How can we make our behavior accountable to other Christians?
- 21. What specific things could you do to protect a new Christian's faith in God?

Apply It

- * 22. What is one attitude or action in your life that you need to limit at this point? How?
- 23. What nurture could you give to a new Christian this week to help him or her grow stronger in the faith?

The Rights of an Apostle - 1 Corinthians 9:1-27

Topics: Believers, Discipline, Example, Judgment, Law, Perseverance, Rewards, Right, Sacrifice, Salvation, Serving

Open It

- * 1. What training is necessary for a person in your chosen profession?
- 2. What emotions do athletes usually feel on the day of a big event?
- 3. How can you be disqualified from a game or race?

Explore It

- 4. What proofs did Paul use to show that he was a genuine apostle? (9:1-2)
- * 5. What rights did Paul waive to be an apostle? (9:3-6, 12)
- 6. What case could Paul make for asserting his rights as an apostle? (9:7-11, 13-14)
- 7. What are the rights of those who preach the gospel? (9:12)
- 8. Why was Paul willing to set aside his rights? (9:12)
- 9. Why didn't Paul take full advantage of his rights? (9:12-18)
- 10. What has the Lord commanded for those who preach the gospel? (9:14)
- 11. How did Paul preach? Why? (9:16-17)
- 12. What motivated Paul to preach as he did? (9:16-17)
- * 13. What reward is there in preaching the gospel? (9:18)
- 14. Why did Paul make himself a slave to everyone? (9:19)
- 15. To what extent did Paul go to save people? (9:20-23)
- * 16. Why is it necessary to live with purpose and discipline? (9:25-27)
- 17. Why did Paul lead a disciplined life? (9:27)

Get It

- * 18. What are some of your rights and freedoms as a Christian?
- * 19. Under what circumstances should we take advantage of our rights, and when should we willingly waive them?
- 20. How can we show our love to unbelievers while refusing to participate in activity that is sinful?
- 21. Why is it helpful to adjust our actions for the people around us?
- 22. How does insisting on our rights hinder the gospel of Christ?
- 23. What right have you given up because it may have caused others to stumble?
- 24. What actions could disqualify a person from being rewarded by God for serving Him?
- 25. What should you do to be assured of finishing your life well?
- 26. How can neglecting spiritual disciplines (such as prayer, Bible study, and worship) disqualify a Christian from having an influence on unbelievers?

Apply It

- * 27. What specific rights could you waive for Christ's sake? How?
- 28. When can you make time for prayer, Bible study, and worship this week to help you train for telling others about Christ?

Warnings From Israel's History - 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Topics: Complaining, Example, Faithfulness, History, Idolatry, Ignorance, Immorality, Temptation, Testing

Open It

- * 1. What lessons can we learn from history?
- 2. What is one event in your own extended family history that has influenced your life?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Paul refer to Israel's history? (10:1)
- * 4. How do the Israelites serve as examples to us? (10:1-6)
- 5. How were the ancient Israelites baptized? (10:2)
- 6. What was the Israelites' spiritual food and drink? (10:3)
- 7. Who was the "rock" that accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness? (10:4)
- 8. How was the Israelites' rock in the wilderness significant? (10:4)
- 9. How did God feel about the Israelites in the wilderness? (10:5)
- 10. Why did God record the experiences of the Israelites? (10:6, 11)
- * 11. What evil actions cost many of the Israelites their lives? (10:7-10)
- * 12. Why should we care what happened to the ancient Israelites? (10:11)
- 13. What warning did Paul give the Corinthians? Why? (10:12)
- 14. Why is it important that all the temptations Christians face are common to everyone? (10:13)
- 15. How is God faithful? (10:13)
- 16. How does God help us when we are tempted? (10:13)

Get It

- 17. What have you learned about God from this history of Israel?
- 18. What have you learned about yourself from this history of Israel?
- 19. What does it mean that the Israelites were "baptized into Moses"?
- 20. What warning should we recall when tempted to participate in idolatry, sexual immorality, testing the Lord, or grumbling?
- 21. When have you avoided doing something wrong because you recalled God's commands?
- * 22. How does God help us escape temptation?
- 23. What difference should it make in your daily life that God will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear?
- * 24. How can a person escape when faced with temptation?

Apply It

- 25. What escape route has God provided for a specific temptation you face?
- * 26. What promise or warning do you want to remember to help you stand up under temptation this week?

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper - 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Topics: Demons, History, Idolatry, Jealousy, Lord's Supper, Sacrifice, Thankfulness, Unity

Open It

- * 1. What kind of meals hold special significance for you? Why?
- 2. What does the Lord's Supper mean to you?

Explore It

- * 3. What importance did Paul assign to Communion? (10:14-17)
- 4. What is the cup of thanksgiving? (10:16)
- * 5. How can a Christian participate in the body of Christ? (10:16)
- 6. How can a diverse group of Christians remain unified? (10:17)
- 7. Why did Paul refer to Israel's history? (10:18)
- 8. What did Paul mean when he wrote, "Those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar"? (10:18-22)
- 9. What was Paul's purpose in discussing idol feasts? (10:18-22)
- 10. What should the Corinthians have known about sacrifices made to idols? (10:19-20)
- * 11. Why should we work hard to celebrate the Lord's Supper only out of devotion to Christ? (10:20-21)
- 12. How can a Christian provoke the Lord to jealousy? (10:22)

Get It

- 13. What are today's idols?
- 14. What besides God do people worship today?
- 15. What kinds of activities today are like the pagan temple parties in Corinth?
- 16. How do these words affect your attitude toward the Lord's Supper?
- 17. What can we learn here about the Lord's Supper?
- * 18. Why is the Lord's Supper important?
- * 19. How can you renew your reverence for the Lord when you celebrate Communion?
- 20. What kinds of behavior provoke the Lord to jealousy?
- 21. Why is it important to know that the Lord is a jealous God?

Apply It

- * 22. What do you want to remember the next time you take Communion?
- 23. What can you do to prepare for the next time you celebrate the Lord's Supper?
- 24. How can you encourage others to honor only the Lord when celebrating the Lord's Supper?
- 25. What idols do you need to avoid in your place of work or in your community? How?

The Believer's Freedom - 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

Topics: Believers, Conscience, Example, Freedom, Glory, Sacrifice, Salvation, Thankfulness, Unbelievers

Open It

1. When was a time you were talked into participating in an activity that you later regretted?
- * 2. When have you enjoyed doing something that benefited someone else?

Explore It

3. What are we free to do? How? (10:23)
- * 4. What qualifications go with the adage, "Everything is permissible"? (10:23-24)
5. What is the guiding principle on our freedom? (10:24)
6. How did Paul resolve the dilemma of whether to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols? (10:25-26)
- * 7. What stipulations did Paul place on eating meat served in an unbeliever's home? (10:27-30)
8. What were the Corinthian Christians to do if meat being served to them had been sacrificed to idols? (10:28-29)
9. Under what conditions were the Corinthians not to eat meat offered in sacrifice? (10:28-29)
10. In what areas of life can we glorify God? (10:31)
- * 11. What overriding value governs why we do what we do? (10:33)
12. Whose good should we seek? (10:33)
13. Whose example should all Christians follow? (11:1)

Get It

14. What does it mean for a person's freedom to be judged by another person's conscience?
- * 15. What principles can we learn here about making difficult ethical decisions?
- * 16. What do Christians today sometimes avoid buying or doing for conscience' sake?
17. When is it good for a Christian to avoid buying or doing something because other believers are bothered by its association with sin or evil?
18. How does Christian use of freedom contrast with our society's idea of freedom?
19. What does it mean to eat and drink for the glory of God?
20. How might you avoid a situation that would cause another believer to stumble?
21. What is one way you can follow the example of someone who is following Christ?
22. What can you learn from a fellow Christian who is following Christ?
23. How may seeking the good of other people lead to their salvation?

Apply It

24. What is one setting in which you can seek the good of other Christians over your own rights this week? How?
- * 25. Which of your buying or spending habits should you change because of its associations? How?
26. How could you remember to do every task or activity this week for God's glory?

Propriety in Worship - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Topics: Angels, Appearance, Authority, Fellowship, Image, Worship

Open It

1. How have women's roles changed since you were a kid?
- * 2. When has challenging authority caused you to hurt yourself or others?

Explore It

3. For what did Paul praise the Corinthian church? (11:2)
- * 4. What public worship practices did Paul rebuke? (11:2-16)
- * 5. Who is the head of women, men, and Christ? (11:3)
6. Why were women to have a sign of authority on their head? (11:3-11)
7. Why does it dishonor a man's head to pray or prophesy with his head covered? (11:3-4, 7)
8. Why does it dishonor a woman's head to pray or prophesy with her head uncovered? (11:3, 5-10)
9. How seriously did Paul regard the woman who did not cover her head? (11:6)
10. How are women and men different? (11:7-8)
- * 11. What relationship do men and women have to each other? (11:11-12)
12. How did Paul try to head off criticism about these instructions? (11:16)

Get It

- * 13. What matters most to God about worship in the church?
- * 14. What excesses in worship does God want us to avoid?
15. How is man the image and glory of God?
16. How should women today respond to the command to cover their heads in public worship?
17. In what ways were these instructions a response to problems unique to the Corinthian church?
18. In what ways could this passage be misinterpreted or misapplied?

Apply It

- * 19. What can you do personally to promote a proper spirit of worship in your church?
20. What can you do next Sunday to insure a proper attitude in your worship?

The Lord's Supper - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Topics: Discipline, Disobedience, Divisions, Honor, Judgment, Lord's Supper, Remembering, Respect, Sin, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. For what kinds of occasions does your church sponsor meals?
- 2. How does your church observe the Lord's Supper?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Paul have no praise for the Corinthians here? (11:17)
- 4. Why are there differences among believers? (11:19)
- * 5. What severe problem did Paul address in this passage? (11:20-22)
- 6. What essential truths about the Lord's Supper and Jesus' redemptive work are presented in this passage? (11:23-26)
- 7. Why should Christians celebrate Communion? (11:24)
- 8. What is accomplished by eating the bread and drinking the wine of the Lord's Supper? (11:26)
- * 9. What role does Communion play in the task of evangelism? (11:26)
- 10. What is the result of partaking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner? (11:27)
- * 11. What should a person do before partaking of the Lord's Supper? (11:28)
- 12. What did the illness and death suffered by the Corinthians reveal about God's attitude toward Communion? (11:30)
- 13. Why does the Lord discipline His children? (11:32)
- 14. What additional advice did Paul give to Christians preparing for Communion? (11:33-34)

Get It

- 15. How important is the Lord's Supper in your life?
- 16. Why is the Lord's Supper important?
- 17. How should a person prepare for Communion?
- 18. When is the best time for you to examine yourself before Communion?
- * 19. What additional wisdom have you gained from these instructions on Communion?
- 20. How have you prepared yourself for Communion in the past?
- 21. How is Communion practiced in your church?
- * 22. Why is a spirit of reverence important when partaking of the Lord's Supper?
- 23. Why should we be grateful for the Lord's discipline?
- 24. How have you seen the Lord's discipline benefit you?
- 25. When was a time you benefited from the Lord's discipline?
- 26. What practice in your local fellowship may need to be reexamined in light of this Scripture?

Apply It

- * 27. How do you want to prepare for the next time you take Communion?
- 28. What advice would you give to a new Christian who wants to participate in Communion?

Spiritual Gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Topics: Faith, Healing, Holy Spirit, Idolatry, Ignorance, Knowledge, Prophecy, Serving, Spiritual Gifts, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What is one unique talent or ability you have (whether useful or pointless)?
- 2. How did you find out what your greatest interests were?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did Paul give the Corinthians advice about spiritual gifts? (12:1)
- 4. What was the condition of the Corinthians when they were pagans? (12:2)
- 5. Why can someone speaking by the Spirit of God not say, "Jesus be cursed"? (12:3)
- 6. What is the only way a person can say, "Jesus is Lord"? (12:3)
- * 7. What common element exists in the diversity of gifts, service, and working? (12:4-6)
- 8. Who works through the various gifts Christians have? (12:4-6)
- 9. Who is given the manifestation of the Spirit? (12:7)
- 10. For whose good is the manifestation of the Spirit given? (12:7)
- * 11. What spiritual gifts did Paul describe? (12:8-10)
- 12. Who determines how the gifts are distributed? (12:11)

Get It

- 13. How are we ignorant about spiritual gifts today?
- * 14. What spiritual gifts have you seen used in your local church?
- 15. What happens when Christians do not use their gifts?
- * 16. What person you know would be encouraged by the knowledge that God gives a spiritual gift to every Christian?
- 17. What is your spiritual gift?
- 18. If you do not know what your spiritual gift is, what can you do to find out?
- 19. How can you use your spiritual gift for the good of the people in your church?
- 20. What spiritual gifts have you seen in the lives of other Christians?
- 21. What can you learn from other Christians who faithfully use their spiritual gifts?
- 22. What Christian discouraged by failure can you challenge to use the gifts God has given him or her?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you use your spiritual gift this week for the benefit of others in your church?
- 24. What observation could you share with another Christian to help him or her identify or use a spiritual gift?

One Body, Many Parts - 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Topics: Holy Spirit, Honor, Humility, Spiritual Gifts, Suffering, Unity

Open It

1. When have you felt insignificant in an organization?
- * 2. What functions in the church do you feel are most important? Why?

Explore It

3. In what way are Christians like a human body? (12:12-13)
4. Why should outward appearances or status not matter to us? (12:13)
5. What unifies all Christians? (12:13)
6. What makes Christians unified and dependent on one another? (12:13)
- * 7. What lessons are there in seeing the church as a human body? (12:14-17)
8. Who arranged the parts of the body of Christ? (12:18)
9. Why shouldn't all Christians perform the same function? (12:19)
10. Why should members of the body of Christ not say to each other, "I don't need you"? (12:21-22)
- * 11. Why should the less honorable parts be treated with special attention? (12:23)
12. How has God combined the members of the body of Christ? (12:24-26)
13. Who is part of the body of Christ? (12:27)
14. What functions are necessary in the body? (12:28-29)
- * 15. Who appoints members of the body to their positions? Why is this significant? (12:28-29)
16. What are the greater gifts? (12:31)

Get It

17. How might you compare your place in the body of Christ to a part of the human body?
18. How well do you interact with other members in the body of Christ?
19. When have you felt like an important or insignificant part of the body?
20. What part do you serve in the body of Christ?
- * 21. How are you able to help other Christians?
22. What has God appointed you to be in the body of Christ?
23. Why do people often assume that certain duties in the church are more important?
24. How can you honor the contributions of others in your church?
- * 25. How can you treat the "weaker" members of your fellowship as indispensable?
26. What can you do to suffer with those in the church who suffer and rejoice with those who are honored?
27. What should we do when there is division among Christians in a local church?
28. What do you think are your personal responsibilities in the body of Christ?
29. What difference should it make in your life that you have been given the Holy Spirit?
30. How can you show a desire for the greater gifts?

Apply It

- * 31. What is one way you can show concern and love for another member of your church?
32. What would be the best way to use your unique abilities in the body of Christ this year?

Love - 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Topics: Friendship, Humility, Kindness, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Knowledge, Love, Patience, Perseverance, Relationships, Trust

Open It

1. What to you is an unmistakable demonstration of love?
- * 2. Who is the most loving person you know? Why do you think so?
3. What qualities do you associate with love?

Explore It

4. What makes speaking in tongues, faith, generosity, and even martyrdom worthless? (13:1-3)
5. How could a person use spiritual gifts in a useless manner? (13:1-3)
- * 6. What do we gain if we don't have love? (13:3)
7. Why is love important? (13:3)
- * 8. What qualities does love have? (13:4-8)
9. Why will prophecy, tongues, and knowledge pass away? (13:8-9)
10. How will we be different when we see Christ? (13:10-12)
11. What is our spiritual imperfection like? (13:11)
12. How do adults and children act and reason differently? (13:11)
13. How will our knowledge of God change when we see Christ? (13:12)
- * 14. What is the greatest of all gifts? (13:13)

Get It

15. Why do you think Paul wrote about love to the Corinthians?
16. Why might it be easy to use a spiritual gift without love?
17. How can a person demonstrate love?
18. How should Christians demonstrate love for each other?
- * 19. In what practical ways can you show a love that never fails?
20. How did Jesus exemplify love?
21. Why won't prophecy, knowledge, and tongues be necessary when Jesus returns?
- * 22. When have you received the love described in this passage?
23. What is difficult about loving?
24. What expectations do you have, knowing you will see Jesus face to face one day?

Apply It

25. What will help you to remember to use your gifts in a loving way?
- * 26. How could you show love to a difficult person this week?

Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues - 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Topics: Motives, Praise, Prophecy, Spiritual Gifts, Unbelievers, Understanding, Worship

Open It

1. When have you been confused by a lack of clear instructions?
- * 2. What are some traditions or practices in your family that would seem strange to someone outside your family?

Explore It

3. What did God want the Corinthians to follow? (14:1)
4. What did God want the Corinthians to desire? (14:1)
- * 5. Why were the Corinthians to desire the gift of prophecy more than the gift of tongues? (14:1-5)
6. In what circumstance is speaking in tongues as good as prophesying? (14:5)
7. What must be combined with the gift of tongues to make it useful to others? (14:6)
8. Why did Paul use the example of musical instruments in talking about prophecy? (14:7-8)
9. In which gifts did Paul encourage the Corinthians to excel? (14:12)
- * 10. How should speaking in tongues be like praying and singing? (14:14-16)
11. Why is it crucial that a message in tongues be interpreted? (14:16-17)
12. What priority does God give to speaking in tongues? (14:19)
13. Why did Paul quote from Isaiah in instructing the Corinthians on tongues? (14:21)
14. How does the quotation from Isaiah 28:11-12 clarify the purpose of the spiritual gift of tongues? (14:21-22)
15. What is the problem with speaking in tongues in church? (14:23)
- * 16. Why is it beneficial for unbelievers to hear prophesying in the church? (14:24-25)

Get It

17. How would you summarize God's priorities concerning the spiritual gifts of prophecy and tongues?
- * 18. What practices can every local church use to ensure that spiritual gifts are used to build up people?
19. What can we do to value spiritual gifts as God does?
20. For what reasons should we desire spiritual gifts?
- * 21. How can you guard against desiring spiritual gifts for the wrong motives?
22. What more can your church or fellowship do to attract unbelievers?
23. In what ways does your church attract unbelievers?

Apply It

- * 24. How could you use one spiritual gift this week to help another Christian?
25. What personal action could you take this week to make your worship services more welcoming to visitors?

Orderly Worship - 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

Topics: Church, Conflict, Divisions, Law, Peace, Prayer, Quiet, Submission, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is it like to attend a disorderly meeting or gathering?
- 2. Why is it important to be organized when you have a task to accomplish?

Explore It

- * 3. What contributions were the Corinthians to make when coming together? (14:26)
- 4. How can Christians be involved in worship services? (14:26)
- * 5. What kind of order were the Corinthians to observe when speaking in tongues? (14:27-28)
- 6. How did Paul advise the Corinthians regarding prophesying in church? (14:29-32)
- 7. How is the gift of prophecy beneficial to the church? (14:31)
- 8. What makes order essential to worship? (14:33)
- 9. Why were women not allowed to speak in the Corinthian church? (14:34)
- 10. How were women to act during worship in the Corinthian church? (14:34-35)
- 11. What were Corinthian women to do if they wanted to ask something in church? (14:35)
- 12. What gave Paul the authority to teach the Corinthians? (14:37)
- * 13. What was Paul's conclusion regarding corporate worship? (14:40)

Get It

- * 14. How might a church exhibit disorder in its worship?
- 15. What can Christians do to prepare for worship services?
- 16. How can you improve your preparation for church services?
- 17. When have you neglected to participate properly in worship?
- 18. How could you participate in worship so as to strengthen the church?
- * 19. How can you use your spiritual gift in a fitting and orderly manner?

Apply It

- * 20. What part of your Saturday can you use to help you prepare for the worship service you attend?
- 21. How could you encourage fitting and orderly worship in your church each week?

The Resurrection of Christ - 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Topics: Gospel, Grace, Jesus Christ, Resurrection, Salvation

Open It

- * 1. How do people pass on their beliefs and traditions to others?
- 2. What do you think is important to pass on from one generation to the next?
- 3. What do you want others to remember about you?

Explore It

- 4. How can a Christian avoid believing the gospel in vain? (15:1-2)
- 5. Why is it important to “hold firmly to the word”? (15:2)
- * 6. Why did Paul pass on what he had received? (15:3)
- 7. How did Christ’s life fulfill the Scriptures? (15:3)
- 8. What are the key points of the gospel? (15:3-8)
- 9. To whom did Christ appear after His resurrection? (15:5-8)
- * 10. Why did Paul emphasize the facts of Christ’s resurrection? (15:5-8)
- 11. Why did Paul describe himself as one “abnormally born”? (15:8)
- 12. Why did Paul feel unworthy to be called an apostle? (15:9)
- * 13. For what reason was Paul able to call himself an apostle? (15:10)
- 14. On what did Paul’s apostleship rest? (15:10)

Get It

- 15. How would you describe, in your own words, the importance of the gospel to your life?
- 16. What has God’s grace accomplished in you?
- 17. In what one area of your life have you been stubborn about allowing God’s grace to work?
- 18. What does it mean for you to hold firmly to the gospel?
- * 19. What are the implications of the fact that the truth of the gospel is of first importance to God?
- 20. What difference does it make that Christ’s death and resurrection fulfilled Old Testament prophecy?
- * 21. How does Christ appear or make Himself known to us today?

Apply It

- * 22. What evidence could you use to persuade others this week about the truth of the gospel?
- 23. How could you rely on God’s grace in your efforts to tell your friends about Christ?

The Resurrection of the Dead - 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

Topics: Death, Disagreements, Faith, Hope, Resurrection, Witnessing

Open It

1. What are some beliefs about life after death that others have shared with you?
- * 2. What do people you know believe about the afterlife?
3. What does the promise of eternal life mean to you?

Explore It

- * 4. What were some Corinthians saying that troubled Paul? (15:12)
5. How was the gospel of Christ's death and resurrection relevant to the dispute in Corinth? (15:12-13)
- * 6. If Christ had not in fact been raised, what would be true of Christianity and Christians? (15:14-19)
7. What condition would make a Christian's faith futile? (15:17-18)
8. Why is faith in Christ useless and pitiable if Jesus has not been raised? (15:19)
9. In what way did Christ's resurrection lead the way for us? (15:20)
10. How does the resurrection of the dead come? (15:21)
11. What is "the end"? (15:24-25)
12. When and why will "the end" come? (15:24-25)
13. What will be the last enemy destroyed? (15:26)
- * 14. What will happen when Christ asserts His authority over all? (15:28)
15. What would be true if the dead were not raised? (15:32)
16. What was shameful about the Corinthians? (15:34)

Get It

17. When have you ever doubted any of the truths of the gospel?
18. What can you do when you doubt what the Bible teaches?
- * 19. What hope does Jesus' resurrection provide for your daily life?
20. When is it best to reason logically with people who doubt the gospel?
- * 21. How can you be more effective in sharing the message of salvation with others?
22. When have you ever associated with bad company that could have corrupted your character?
23. Why is it important to avoid people who want to distract you from your commitment to the gospel?
24. What kind of discipline enables a person to face problems?

Apply It

25. How would you counsel a Christian who was falling in with the wrong crowd?
- * 26. How can you incorporate the truth of Christ's resurrection into your witness to others?

The Resurrection Body - 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

Topics: Body, Death, Differences, Earth, Heaven, Last Days, Power, Questions, Resurrection, Victory, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. What feelings have you experienced when a friend or relative passed away?
- 2. Why do you think some people feel angry at God when they lose a loved one?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did Paul discuss the resurrection body? (15:35)
- 4. What analogy did Paul use to explain the body's death and resurrection? (15:36-38)
- 5. How did Paul explain the resurrection body? (15:39-41)
- * 6. How does the body on earth differ from the body in heaven? (15:42-44)
- 7. What example did Paul use to explain natural and spiritual bodies? (15:45-49)
- 8. Why can't flesh and blood inherit the kingdom of God? (15:50)
- 9. What mystery did Paul reveal? (15:51)
- 10. How will all Christians be changed? When? (15:51-52)
- 11. Why must all physical bodies be changed, even those that have not died? (15:50, 53)
- * 12. What will happen after the dead are resurrected? (15:54-55)
- 13. How has God given Christians the victory over death? (15:56-57)
- 14. What difference does it make that we will be resurrected? (15:58)

Get It

- 15. How should Christians regard death?
- * 16. How could this passage encourage a person who has lost a loved one who was a believer?
- 17. How should we regard the future?
- 18. What difference does it make that death has been defeated by Christ?
- 19. How can a Christian grieve for someone's death while still holding on to the hope of resurrection?
- * 20. How should Christ's resurrection and the hope of your own bodily transformation affect your priorities?
- 21. In what area of your Christian life has it been a struggle to stand firm?
- 22. What encouragement can we take from the fact that the work we do for the Lord is not in vain?
- 23. In what specific ways do you need to be committed to the work of the Lord?

Apply It

- * 24. In what ways could you show this week your thankfulness to Christ for His victory over death and sin?
- 25. In the future, what hope could you share with a person who experiences the loss of a loved one?

The Collection for God's People - 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Topics: Church, Generosity, Giving Up, Money, Possessions, Sacrifice, Tithing

Open It

- * 1. Who has been generous to you over the years?
- 2. What do you think of organizations that depend on donations?

Explore It

- 3. For whom was the collection that Paul requested? (16:1)
- 4. Whose example was the Corinthian church to follow? (16:1)
- * 5. Who was to contribute to the collection? (16:2)
- * 6. How were the Corinthians to know how much money to give? (16:2)
- 7. When were the Corinthians to set aside money for their gifts? (16:2)
- * 8. Why did Paul give such specific instructions to the Corinthians? (16:2)
- 9. What specific instructions did Paul give the Corinthians regarding the collection? (16:2-3)
- 10. What did Paul plan to do during his visit to the Corinthian church? (16:3)
- 11. Who was to deliver the gift to Jerusalem? (16:3)
- 12. Why would letters of introduction be important for those delivering the gift? (16:4)

Get It

- 13. What can we learn from the giving practices of the early church?
- 14. What attitudes or actions of the early Christians do you think you should imitate?
- 15. What characteristics of the early church should your church imitate?
- 16. Which of Paul's instructions on giving were meant exclusively for the Corinthian church?
- 17. What principles should govern our giving to the work of the Lord?
- * 18. How should we decide how much to set aside for the church?
- 19. What kind of discernment should we show in our giving?
- 20. In what ways can church leaders be kept accountable in using the money given to the church?
- * 21. How do you think you can be a better steward of the resources God has given you?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you improve your attitude or practices in supporting God's work financially?
- 23. What considerations should you keep in mind when planning your giving?

Personal Requests - 1 Corinthians 16:5-24

Topics: Acceptance, Courage, Love, Ministry, Responsibility, Teamwork, Work

Open It

1. How much contact do you have with people in other countries?
- * 2. Whom would you greet in a letter addressed to all your out-of-town friends?

Explore It

3. What were Paul's plans after going through Macedonia? (16:5-6)
4. What did Paul expect from the Corinthians during his visit with them? (16:6)
5. Why was Paul informing the Corinthian church about his plans? (16:6-9)
- * 6. What opportunity awaited Paul in Ephesus? (16:9)
7. What words did Paul share about Timothy's visit? (16:10-11)
8. What did Paul's words reveal about Timothy? (16:10-11)
9. What were Paul's specific instructions on how to live? (16:13)
10. What service had the household of Stephanas provided? (16:15)
- * 11. How were the Corinthians to treat those who labored for God? (16:16)
- * 12. Why did Paul think some men deserve recognition? (16:18)
13. How did Paul authenticate his letter? (16:21)
14. What closing thoughts did Paul leave with the Corinthians? (16:22-24)

Get It

15. What can we learn from the circumstances of the Corinthian church?
- * 16. If Paul were writing a letter to your church, what would he affirm and what would he challenge?
17. How should we treat church leaders?
18. How can we actually do everything in love?
19. About what should you be on guard in your Christian walk?
20. What does it mean to be submissive to believers who are involved in the work of the Lord?
21. For what reasons should churches from all parts of the world try to work together?
- * 22. How do you think God wants you to support ministers of the gospel?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you show your support to a believer who lives in another part of the world?
24. How can you help the ministry of your local church?

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The God of All Comfort - 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Topics: Compassion, Despair, Endurance, Hope, Prayer, Rest, Sacrifice, Suffering, Testing

Open It

- * 1. How do you normally react to hardship or suffering?
- 2. Why do people sometimes blame God for difficult circumstances?

Explore It

- 3. How did Paul describe God? (1:3)
- 4. Why do you think Paul began his letter by praising God? (1:3)
- 5. What does God do when we are troubled? (1:4)
- * 6. How does God involve Himself in our troubles? (1:4-5)
- 7. What did Paul's distress produce for the Corinthians? (1:6)
- 8. In what way is patient endurance produced in Christians? (1:6)
- 9. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians about the hardships he had endured? (1:8)
- * 10. Why did Paul despair? (1:8)
- 11. How did Paul's confidence in God enable him to rise above his despair? (1:8-10)
- 12. For what reason did Paul endure suffering? (1:9)
- * 13. How did the Corinthians help Paul through his hardships? (1:11)
- 14. What was the gracious favor Paul anticipated? (1:11)

Get It

- 15. How does God want us to help one another in difficult circumstances?
- 16. Who do you know who is experiencing hardship?
- * 17. How can you help other Christians who are suffering?
- 18. When have you ever suffered for the gospel?
- * 19. How have other Christians helped you through difficult circumstances?
- 20. How can you rely more on God instead of yourself in times of hardship?
- 21. What can we do to learn patience and endurance from our hardships?

Apply It

- * 22. How could you remind yourself to pray this week for Christians who are suffering hardship for their faith?
- 23. What can you do this week to show love and concern for a Christian brother or sister who is suffering?

Paul's Change of Plans - 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:4

Topics: Change, Confidence, Criticism, Faith, Love, Plans, Promises, Sincerity

Open It

1. How do you feel when someone postpones or cancels a social engagement that you were looking forward to?
- * 2. How do you go about letting friends know that you cannot keep your appointment with them?

Explore It

- * 3. How did Paul support his claim that he had been sincere with the Corinthians? (1:12)
4. What accusation from the Corinthians was Paul most likely responding to? (1:12-14)
5. Why did Paul say that the Corinthians could boast of him just as he would boast of them? (1:14)
6. Why had Paul planned to visit the Corinthian church? (1:15)
- * 7. Why did Paul change his travel plans? (1:15-16)
8. How did Paul's opponents at Corinth use his change of plans against him? (1:17)
9. What is the chief feature of God's promises? (1:18-22)
10. How did Paul explain how reliable his words were? (1:18-23)
11. What did Paul emphasize to strengthen his self-defense? (1:22)
12. How does God's Spirit act as a deposit? (1:22)
13. What is guaranteed to come? (1:22)
- * 14. Why did Paul decide not to return to Corinth? (1:23)
15. What was Paul's main purpose in working with the Corinthian church? (1:24)
16. What were Paul's visits to Corinth like? (2:1)
17. Why did Paul write about his distress and anguish? (2:4)

Get It

- * 18. In light of Paul's experience, how should you seek to discern God's will for your daily plans?
19. When might it be necessary to question the actions of a Christian leader?
20. When is it wrong to accuse another believer?
21. When have you ever made plans without consulting God?
22. How can we ensure that our lives send out a sincere and consistent message of commitment to Christ?
23. What difference does it make that God puts His Spirit in every Christian's heart?
24. Why do you think Paul's visits to Corinth were painful?
25. In what circumstances might it be necessary to make a "painful visit" to another believer?
- * 26. How can we demonstrate love for other Christians?

Apply It

- * 27. How can you remind yourself to listen to the Holy Spirit's guidance and direction in your daily life?
28. What is one interpersonal conflict that you need to try to work out this week?

Forgiveness for the Sinner - 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Topics: Forgiveness, Grief, Love, Punishment, Restoration, Satan, Sin, Sorrow

Open It

- * 1. When is it most difficult to forgive someone?
- 2. How could a friendship be ruined by an unforgiving spirit?
- 3. What is it like to experience God's forgiveness?

Explore It

- 4. What situation is Paul responding to in this passage? (2:5)
- 5. What did Paul mean when he said that the sinner in the Corinthian church had hurt all of the Corinthians? (2:5)
- * 6. How did the Corinthians finally respond to the person who hurt Paul? (2:6)
- 7. What was the man's reaction to the Corinthian's discipline? (2:7)
- * 8. What advice did Paul give the Corinthians regarding the man who had sinned? (2:7-8)
- 9. How were the Corinthians to reaffirm their love for the man they disciplined? (2:8)
- 10. Why did Paul write to the Corinthians? (2:9)
- * 11. Why was it important that the Corinthians forgive the man whom they disciplined? (2:10-11)
- 12. In what way can Satan outwit us? (2:10-11)
- 13. What danger did Paul want to avoid? (2:11)
- 14. What were the Corinthian Christians not naive about? (2:11)

Get It

- 15. When was a time you learned of a church disciplining a member?
- 16. What results ideally follow from church discipline?
- 17. What is the difference between discipline and punishment?
- * 18. Why do you think many churches neglect to discipline wayward members?
- 19. In what ways are Christians aware of Satan's schemes?
- * 20. How does Satan take advantage of our refusal to forgive each other?
- 21. For whose benefit should we forgive others?
- 22. What does Paul's example tell us about the role older Christians should play in the lives of younger believers?
- 23. When have you ever grieved a fellow Christian?
- 24. What should you do if you feel wronged by another person?

Apply It

- * 25. What is the first step you should take this week to forgive and reaffirm your love for someone who has sinned against you?
- 26. How do you plan to seek forgiveness the next time you wrong someone?

Ministers of the New Covenant - 2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6

Topics: Example, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Knowledge, Ministry, New Covenant, Sincerity, Witnessing

Open It

1. What does the phrase “the letter of the law” mean to you?
- * 2. What mentor or friend of yours lives by the “spirit of the law”?

Explore It

3. Why was Paul willing to leave Troas, despite the opportunities there? (2:12-13)
- * 4. Why was Paul thankful to the Lord? (2:14)
5. How can knowledge of Christ be a fragrance? (2:14)
6. By what method did Paul expect the gospel to be spread? (2:14)
7. In what way are Christians the aroma of Christ? (2:15)
8. Which two groups of people are affected by how Christians live? (2:15)
9. In what way are Christians the smell of death to some and the fragrance of life to others? (2:16)
10. How did some people of Paul’s day misuse the Word of God? (2:17)
11. Who might have needed letters of recommendation? Why? (3:1)
- * 12. In what sense were the Corinthians a record of Paul’s values and concerns? (3:2-3)
13. In what sense were the Corinthians a record of God’s values and concerns? (3:2-3)
- * 14. Where did Paul get his competence? (3:5-6)
15. What’s the difference between the letter and the Spirit? (3:6)

Get It

16. What causes Christians to be legalistic about their faith?
17. What can we learn from Paul’s pastoral concern for the Corinthians?
- * 18. What qualities do you think are essential to a good pastor?
19. When has the Lord opened a door of ministry for you? How did you respond?
20. In what ways are you an aroma of Christ among others?
- * 21. How could you better represent Christ to the unbelievers you know?
22. How do some Christians peddle the Word of God for profit?
23. In what ways has God made you competent?

Apply It

- * 24. When could you talk with your pastor to learn of your church’s concerns and thus be able to pray for these needs more effectively?
25. What about Christ do you want people to “read” in you this week?

The Glory of the New Covenant - 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Topics: Covenant, Freedom, Glory, Holy Spirit, Hope, Ministry, New Covenant

Open It

- * 1. What glorious sights have you seen in nature?
- 2. In what circumstances do people in our society wear veils or coverings?

Explore It

- 3. What ministry brought death? (3:7)
- * 4. Why could the Israelites not look at Moses' face? (3:7)
- 5. What faded away? (3:7, 11)
- * 6. What is the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant? (3:11)
- 7. What hope did Paul have? (3:12)
- 8. Why was Paul bold? (3:12)
- 9. Why did Moses cover his face with a veil? (3:13)
- 10. Why do people fail to understand their need for salvation? (3:14)
- 11. What must people do to have the veil that covers their hearts taken away? (3:16)
- 12. What does the Spirit of the Lord offer believers? (3:17)
- 13. How is it possible for us to reflect the Lord's glory? (3:18)
- * 14. How does the glory of the new covenant differ from that of the old covenant? (3:18)

Get It

- 15. How has this passage added to your understanding of God and salvation?
- * 16. How can the knowledge of the hope you have in Jesus Christ increase your boldness?
- 17. What are some common misconceptions people have about the Holy Spirit's role in the Christian's life?
- 18. How have you experienced the Spirit's freedom in your personal life?
- * 19. In what ways do you see the Lord's glory reflected in your life?
- 20. In what ways do you struggle to allow the Holy Spirit to control your life?
- 21. With whom could you share the message of the new covenant?

Apply It

- * 22. For what people do you want to pray this week, that the veil over their understanding will be removed?
- 23. How can you turn to the Lord each day?

Treasures in Jars of Clay - 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

Topics: Death, Deceit, Endurance, Gospel, Knowledge, Ministry, Power, Renewal, Satan

Open It

1. What are some things or people in which you have a lot of faith?
- * 2. For what reasons do you most often get discouraged?
3. What areas of life are difficult to entrust completely to God?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians not to lose heart? (4:1)
5. What did Paul believe would result from telling the plain truth? (4:2)
6. How did Paul respond to his opponents' accusations? (4:2)
7. Why did Paul's opponents not understand his ministry? (4:3-4)
8. Who is the god of this age? (4:4)
9. What has the god of this age done? (4:4)
10. Whom did Paul preach? Why? (4:5-6)
11. What kind of jars contained Paul's treasure? (4:7)
- * 12. How did Paul contrast his own weakness with God's power? (4:8-9)
13. What did Paul call his sufferings? (4:10)
14. What value did Paul see in his sufferings? (4:10-12)
15. What motivated Paul to preach the gospel in spite of hardship? (4:13-14)
- * 16. How did Paul encourage the Corinthians to carry on despite difficulty? (4:16-18)

Get It

17. How would you define faith?
18. What elements of the Christian faith that we cannot see are central to our life with Christ?
19. What does it mean for us to renew our faith?
20. In what ways do some religious people distort the Word of God?
21. When have you been discouraged or perplexed in your Christian life?
- * 22. What makes it difficult for us to fix our attention and hope on God?
- * 23. How can God help us through difficult times?
24. When have you felt inner peace in spite of trying circumstances?

Apply It

- * 25. What do you want to remember the next time you feel discouraged?
26. How could you encourage another Christian who is confused or bogged down by the cares of life?

Our Heavenly Dwelling - 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Topics: Confidence, Death, Earth, Eternal Life, Faith, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Judgment

Open It

1. What do you imagine heaven will be like?
- * 2. What common cliches do you frequently hear when people talk about heaven?

Explore It

3. To what kind of tent did Paul refer? Why? (5:1)
4. To what can Christians look forward? (5:1)
5. How could Paul feel confident in the face of ill health and death? (5:1-10)
- * 6. Why did Paul long for heaven? (5:2-3)
7. For what purpose has God made us? (5:4-5)
8. How does the Spirit guarantee what is to come? (5:5)
- * 9. What is true as long as we are alive on this earth? (5:6)
10. How is the Christian life lived? (5:7)
11. What future realities motivated Paul to please the Lord in all he said and did? (5:8-10)
- * 12. What should be the believer's goal? (5:9)
13. Who will be judged by Christ? (5:10)
14. Why must we all appear before the judgment seat of Christ? (5:10)
15. What will people receive at the judgment seat of Christ? (5:10)

Get It

16. What's wrong with highly valuing beauty and youth?
17. How can Christ be glorified through the weaknesses of men and women?
18. What does it mean to live by faith and not by sight?
- * 19. How often do you long for the heavenly body promised to believers at the resurrection?
20. What comfort or satisfaction can we derive from knowing that the Holy Spirit guarantees our future in heaven?
21. How does this passage give us hope for believers who have passed away?
- * 22. How should we regard death?

Apply It

- * 23. In what small way can you detach yourself from worldly things?
24. How can you prepare yourself today to face the judgment seat of Christ?

The Ministry of Reconciliation - 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2

Topics: Ambassadors, Forgiveness, Grace, Love, Ministry, New Life, Reconciliation

Open It

- * 1. When have you seen someone change in a significant way?
- 2. What about you is most difficult for your acquaintances to understand or accept?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Paul try to persuade others to follow Christ? (5:11)
- 4. Why was Paul concerned about justifying his ministry to the Christians at Corinth? (5:12)
- 5. How were Paul's opponents building themselves up at his expense? (5:12)
- 6. What motivated Paul? (5:14)
- * 7. Why did Christ die for everyone? (5:15)
- 8. How did Paul change the way he looked at people? (5:16)
- 9. What is true about every person in Christ? (5:17)
- 10. What happened when God sent His Son to earth? (5:18)
- 11. What does God do with our sins when we are reconciled to Him? (5:19)
- * 12. How is a Christian an ambassador? (5:20)
- 13. Why did Paul try to persuade the Corinthians to respond to God's Word? (6:1)
- * 14. Why should we listen carefully to the message about Christ? (6:1-2)

Get It

- 15. How do Christians sometimes take pride in ministries that give them attention and popularity?
- 16. How is it possible for us to be motivated both by the fear of the Lord and Christ's love?
- 17. Why was it necessary for Christ to die in order for us to be reconciled to God?
- 18. In what ways do people today receive the grace of God in vain?
- 19. In what ways are all Christians new creations?
- 20. For what other Christians are you concerned?
- 21. How can you encourage your Christian friends to listen to God's Word?
- 22. How did God make His reconciliation with you?
- 23. How can you personally be involved in the ministry of reconciliation?
- * 24. What difference does it make that Christians are counted as Christ's ambassadors?
- * 25. Where is your ministry of reconciliation?
- 26. To whom are you an ambassador?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one way you can represent Christ to your friends and coworkers this week?
- 28. What Christian friend can you encourage to listen to God's Word? How?

Paul's Hardships - 2 Corinthians 6:3-13

Topics: Affections, Ministry, Patience, Persecution, Perseverance, Serving, Witnessing

Open It

1. What do you consider to be distinctive about members of your family?
- * 2. What images does the word "hardships" bring to mind?

Explore It

3. What is the connection between the credibility of Christianity and the people who call themselves Christians? (6:3)
4. Whose authority did Paul claim? (6:4)
5. What does this passage say about Paul's attitude toward the ministry of sharing the gospel? (6:4)
6. What does this passage say about the cost of being Christ's disciple? (6:4-10)
- * 7. What price did Paul pay for following Christ? (6:4-10)
- * 8. What kind of weapons did Paul use? (6:7)
9. How did the accusations against Paul differ from the reality Paul experienced as an ambassador for Christ? (6:9-10)
- * 10. In what way was Paul poor yet rich? (6:10)
11. To what lengths did Paul go to show his love for the Corinthians? (6:11-13)

Get It

12. How do you think Paul was able to keep an attitude of sincere love for people when so many opposed him?
13. What do you think caused the Corinthians to withhold their full loyalty from Paul?
14. What can we learn from Paul's relationship with the Corinthians that can help us deal with friends who frustrate us?
15. How can you guard against causing other Christians to stumble in their faith?
- * 16. When have you ever suffered for the sake of the gospel?
17. How does God use hardships to strengthen our relationship with Him?
18. What can you learn from Paul's example that will help you endure suffering for the sake of the gospel?
- * 19. How can you rely on the spiritual weapons of the Holy Spirit more in your everyday life?
20. How do Paul's words put a new perspective on wealth and poverty?

Apply It

21. Of the virtues purity, understanding, patience, and kindness, which do you want to ask God to help you practice this week?
- * 22. What can you do this week to help another Christian persevere through hard times?

Do Not Be Yoked with Unbelievers - 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Topics: Fellowship, Friendship, Holiness, Marriage, Partnerships, Purity, Relationships, Separation, Unbelievers, Unity

Open It

1. How do you choose your friends?
- * 2. What sort of partnerships have you been involved in over the years?
3. How would you describe the perfect companion?

Explore It

4. Who were the “unbelievers” Paul described? (6:14)
- * 5. Why is it wrong and dangerous for Christians to be bound together with unbelievers? (6:14-16)
6. How did Paul balance encouragement with warnings in this passage? (6:14-7:1)
7. In what way are Christians unique? (6:16)
- * 8. Why is it important for Christians to be separate from non-Christian influences? (6:16-18)
9. What did Paul warn Christians not to do? (6:16-18)
10. On what condition does the Lord receive people? (6:17)
11. What does God call His people? (6:18)
12. How did Paul sum up his quotation of Isaiah 52:11? (7:1)
- * 13. From what did the Corinthians need to purify themselves? (7:1)
14. Why should we strive to perfect holiness in our lives? (7:1)

Get It

15. Why do you think this passage is so often applied to marriage?
16. In what other areas of life besides marriage do Christians need to be separate from non-Christians?
17. How seriously does your church take God’s command about the relationship Christians should have with unbelievers?
18. What difference does it make that each believer is a temple of the living God?
19. How do you need to purify yourself from things that have contaminated your life?
20. How should Christians balance their involvement with non-Christians?
- * 21. In what kinds of relationships can a Christian become bound too tightly to unbelievers?
22. When have you witnessed the consequences produced when a believer was obliged to an unbeliever?
- * 23. What can a Christian do if he or she is beholden to an unbeliever too much?
24. How can you keep your relationships with non-Christians without tightly binding yourself to them?

Apply It

- * 25. In what relationships do you need to maintain your freedom to follow Christian convictions?
26. What can you do this week to show your reverence for God?

Paul's Joy - 2 Corinthians 7:2-16

Topics: Confidence, Conflict, Devotion, Encouragement, Joy, Obedience, Repentance, Salvation, Sorrow

Open It

1. When has a friend ever disappointed you?
- * 2. What is it like to have a loyal and faithful friend?
3. When was a time you had to confront a friend?

Explore It

4. Why did Paul not condemn the Corinthians? (7:2-3)
5. Why did Paul have to defend himself again to the Corinthians? (7:2-4)
- * 6. Why did Paul have such great confidence in the Corinthian Christians? (7:4)
7. How could Paul be joyful in such difficult circumstances? (7:4)
8. What was Paul's experience in Macedonia? (7:5)
9. What was the nature of the trouble Paul was facing? (7:5)
- * 10. How did God comfort Paul? (7:6-7)
11. What was the cause of the sorrow felt by the Corinthians? (7:8)
12. Why did Paul change his feelings about sending his "tearful letter"? (7:8-9)
13. What qualities were produced by the Corinthians' godly sorrow? (7:11)
14. How did the Corinthians prove themselves to be innocent? (7:11)
15. For what reason did Paul write this letter to the church at Corinth? (7:12)
- * 16. What did Titus do to encourage Paul? (7:13-16)
17. Why did Paul have confidence in the Corinthian Christians? (7:16)

Get It

- * 18. What can we learn from the relationship between Paul and Titus?
19. What could your church learn from the relationship between Titus and the Corinthian church?
20. What relationship is there between adversity and spiritual growth?
- * 21. When have you ever been confronted by a friend regarding a spiritual matter?
22. How should we respond when someone points out a wrong in our lives?
23. How do Paul's warnings and encouraging words in this passage motivate you to behave in a godly manner?
24. What can we learn from this passage about dealing with Christians who have fallen away from the faith?
25. What should we do when a Christian friend turns away from Christ?
26. Why is it not enough just to feel sorry for your sins?

Apply It

27. What do you need to do this week to turn sorrow for sin into godly living?
- * 28. What specific step can you take this week to build up another believer who is discouraged?

Generosity Encouraged - 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Topics: Desires, Encouragement, Equality, Generosity, Giving Up, Money, Poor, Sacrifice, Serving

Open It

1. How do you feel when your pastor preaches about tithing?
- * 2. What is your idea of generosity?
3. What example of generosity have you seen recently?

Explore It

4. What had God given to the Macedonian Christians? (8:1)
- * 5. Out of what circumstances did the Macedonian Christians give? (8:2)
6. What attitude did the Macedonians have in their giving? (8:3-4)
- * 7. What three things did the Macedonian Christians do that impressed Paul? (8:3-5)
8. What surprised Paul about the Macedonians' giving? (8:5)
9. What was it that Titus had begun to do? (8:6)
10. In what area did Paul want the Corinthians to excel? (8:7)
11. Why did Paul avoid commanding the Corinthians to give? (8:8)
12. What example did Christ set for us? (8:9)
13. Why did Paul use the actions of the Macedonian Christians to motivate the Corinthians to give? (8:11)
- * 14. What is it about a gift to the Lord that makes it acceptable? (8:12)
15. What end does God want our charitable giving to achieve? (8:13)
16. What Old Testament example guides our giving? How? (8:15)

Get It

17. What can we learn from Titus' example?
18. How do you feel about the methods Paul used to motivate the Corinthians to participate in the collection?
19. How have your views on giving changed over the years?
- * 20. How can joy lead to generosity, even when a person lives in poverty?
21. How does Christ's example motivate you to give?
22. How can the fact that Christ became poor on your behalf, and was later exalted by God, motivate you to follow His example?
23. How can the example of the Macedonian church challenge those who have little money to give?
24. What prevents people from giving a fair portion of their money to the Lord for His work?
25. How crucial do you think it is for Christians to give their money to the church?
- * 26. How are you challenged by Paul's discussion of generosity?
27. How can you find out how much God wants you to give and what ministries He wants you to support?

Apply It

- * 28. What step can you take this week to review and improve your financial support of the Lord's work?
29. In what ways besides giving money can you be generous to others in the name of Christ this week?

Titus Sent to Corinth - 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5

Topics: Criticism, Example, Generosity, Gifts, Giving Up, Money, Preparation, Sacrifice, Tithing

Open It

- * 1. When is it most difficult to try to please everybody?
- 2. What good qualities do you see in the lives of your own church leaders?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Paul and Titus share the same concern for the Christians at Corinth? (8:16)
- 4. Why was Titus traveling to Corinth? (8:17)
- * 5. Why did Paul send two other Christians along with Titus to Corinth? (8:18-23; 9:3-5)
- * 6. How did Paul instruct the Corinthian church to treat Titus and his fellow worker? (8:23-24)
- 7. Why did Paul explain there was no need for him to write the Corinthians? (9:1)
- 8. How did Paul motivate the Macedonians to join in the collection for the Christians of Jerusalem? (9:2-3)
- 9. How would Paul's boasting have been hollow? (9:3)
- * 10. Why did Paul send Titus to collect the gift from the Corinthian church? (9:3-5)
- 11. What attitude did Paul want the Corinthians to have regarding their gift? (9:5)

Get It

- 12. What motivates you to give to your church or Christian ministries?
- * 13. What should be a Christian's attitude regarding sacrificial giving to the church?
- 14. Why did Paul take pains to do what was right in the eyes of others?
- 15. Why did Paul want to avoid criticism in how the gift was administered?
- 16. In what ways should we try to avoid criticism with the way we carry out our Christian responsibilities?
- 17. When is it appropriate to increase your giving?
- * 18. What can you do to guard against a grudging attitude when you offer your resources to the Lord?
- 19. What was exemplary about the people who worked with Paul (Titus and the others)?
- 20. What was exemplary about the Corinthians?
- 21. What should be our attitude toward those who are full-time Christian workers?
- 22. How can you imitate the qualities of the Christian workers?

Apply It

- * 23. What step can you take this week to foster a willing attitude in your giving?
- 24. What is one setting in which you can strive to avoid criticism for the way you live your Christian life? How?

Sowing Generously - 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Topics: Generosity, Gifts, Giving Up, Grace, Praise, Serving, Thankfulness

Open It

1. What images come to your mind when you hear about a “cheerful giver”?
- * 2. Who is the most generous person you know? Why do you think so?

Explore It

3. Why did Paul begin this passage with a discussion of farming? (9:6)
- * 4. How should we give? Why? (9:7)
- * 5. What promise does God give to believers who do give generously? (9:8)
6. For what reason did Paul quote Scripture here? (9:9)
7. What does God provide? (9:10)
- * 8. What results from the generosity of Christians? (9:11)
9. What was the most important benefit that would arise from the collection for the Jerusalem church? (9:12-14)
10. What did God give the Corinthians? (9:14)
11. For what kind of gift did Paul praise God in his letter? (9:15)

Get It

12. Why does God love a cheerful giver over someone who grudgingly gives large sums of money?
13. What does this passage tell us about motivating people?
14. What does this passage tell us about accountability?
- * 15. What does this passage tell us about the relationship between Christian faith and giving?
- * 16. What could a reluctant giver do to become a more cheerful giver?
17. Why does giving in a grudging manner make any difference if the need is met?
18. How should you react when other Christians give generously to you or your family?
19. What principles of accountability should govern Christian giving?

Apply It

- * 20. What could you do this week to encourage a Christian friend to be a cheerful giver?
21. What is one way you can set an example of giving?
22. How can you remind yourself of God’s generosity the next time you are tempted to hold back from giving cheerfully?

Paul's Defense of His Ministry - 2 Corinthians 10:1-18

Topics: Armor, Confidence, Gentleness, Obedience, Power, Pride, War, Work, World

Open It

1. What is it like to have people talk about you behind your back?
- * 2. When have you ever had to defend your actions to another person?

Explore It

3. What was the source of Paul's authority and influence over others? (10:1)
- * 4. Of what did Paul's opponents accuse him? (10:2)
5. How did the spiritual warfare that Paul fought, and the spiritual weapons that he used, differ from ordinary warfare and weapons? (10:3-4)
6. What did Paul want to demolish? How? (10:4-6)
7. What did Paul take captive? (10:5)
- * 8. How were Paul's opponents generating their misguided ideas? (10:7)
9. Why was Paul not ashamed of boasting about the Corinthians? (10:8)
10. Why would Paul's opponents try to convince the Corinthians that Paul was unimpressive in person? (10:10)
11. How did Paul respond to the accusations against him? (10:11)
- * 12. Why was Paul justified in boasting, whereas his opponents were not? (10:13-16)
13. What would enable Paul to expand the area in which he could preach the gospel? (10:16)
14. In what did Paul's opponents pride themselves? (10:16)
15. Why did Paul endorse boasting in the Lord, but condemn all other forms of boasting? (10:18)

Get It

16. In what way did Jesus exemplify meekness and gentleness?
17. How do Paul's actions and attitudes influence your ideas about ministry?
- * 18. Why do people often look only on the surface of things?
19. How can looking only on the surface mislead us?
20. What surface judgments do you tend to make?
21. How does it feel when a person boasts or tries to take credit for work that someone else did?
22. Why does God want us to boast about Him and not about ourselves?
23. In what circumstances do you think it would be proper for a Christian to boast?
24. What spiritual weapons are available to you?
25. How can you better utilize the spiritual weapons that are available to you?
- * 26. Why did Paul defend the truth?
27. What can we learn from Paul's concerns?

Apply It

28. What is one specific way you can show the meekness and gentleness of Christ in one of your important relationships?
- * 29. In what area of life do you need to defend the truth? How?

Paul and the False Apostles - 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Topics: Deceit, Devotion, Gospel, Jealousy, Money, Purity, Satan, Toleration, Witnessing

Open It

1. When is it difficult to hold to your convictions?
2. When was the first time you remember being jealous?
- * 3. What widely followed practices might a person be criticized for not doing?

Explore It

4. Why did Paul ask the Corinthians to put up with him? (11:1)
5. Of whom was Paul jealous? Why? (11:2)
6. Why was Paul jealous? (11:2)
7. To what biblical event did Paul compare the Corinthians' risk of deception? (11:3)
8. Why did Paul ask the Corinthians to put up with his boasting? (11:4)
- * 9. Why was Paul sarcastic about the "super-apostles"? (11:5)
10. What criticism did Paul's opponents voice against him? (11:6)
11. How did Paul respond to his opponents' criticism? (11:6)
12. Why did Paul "lower himself"? (11:7)
- * 13. How did Paul make sure he was not a burden on the Corinthians? (11:7-9)
14. Why did Paul accept support from the Macedonian Christians while in Corinth, yet refuse to accept money from the Corinthians themselves? (11:8-12)
- * 15. How did Paul's behavior contrast with that of his opponents? (11:12)
16. How did Paul's opponents try to deceive the Corinthians? (11:13-15)

Get It

17. What qualities do you think should characterize a minister of Christ?
18. How does godly jealousy differ from worldly jealousy?
19. Who is one person you are concerned may abandon Christ?
20. Who are false prophets in our society?
- * 21. How do modern-day false prophets try to deceive Christians?
22. How should we respond to those people who claim a spiritual authority that they do not have?
- * 23. What can you do to avoid being deceived in spiritual matters by the world?
24. In what way should we follow Paul's example in matters of financial support and accountability?

Apply It

25. What is one thing you can do this week to help your Christian friends stay loyal to Christ?
- * 26. What is one step you can take this week to guard against the deceit of false prophets and evil pressures?

Paul Boasts About His Sufferings - 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

Topics: Confidence, Foolishness, Persecution, Pressure, Sin, Status, Suffering, Weaknesses, Wisdom, World

Open It

1. What kind of boasting do you dislike hearing?
- * 2. What are some of the playground boasts you remember hearing in grade school?
3. What is the most dramatic testimony you have ever heard?

Explore It

4. Why did Paul write, "Let no one take me for a fool"? (11:16)
5. What sort of boasting characterizes a fool? (11:17)
6. What kind of language did Paul use in this passage? (11:16-21)
7. What did the Corinthians put up with too easily? (11:19-20)
8. In what way did Paul act like a fool? (11:21)
- * 9. What qualifications did Paul have to justify his boasting? (11:22-28)
10. Why did Paul give so many examples of how he endured hardship for Christ? (11:22-28)
11. How did Paul's boasting change after his insistence that he had worked much harder than his opponents? (11:23)
- * 12. Why did Paul boast about his hardships? (11:24-26)
13. What kind of pressure did Paul experience? (11:28)
14. What was Paul's attitude toward Christians who were weak in their faith and led into sin? (11:29)
- * 15. How did Paul qualify his boasting? (11:30)

Get It

16. How do you think Christian pastors today should handle rivalry and competition in the church?
17. How do you feel when a fellow believer sins against you or a friend?
- * 18. What does it mean to boast in the Lord?
19. What should we boast about?
20. What should we avoid boasting about?
- * 21. What are the dangers of boasting?
22. How can our boasting be glorifying to the Lord?
23. Why did Paul criticize the practice of striving for status?
24. What do you think are some of the pressures your pastor feels in leading your congregation?
25. In what specific ways can you be supportive of your church leaders?
26. How should you respond to suffering or hardship that you experience for the sake of Christ?
27. How could you help Christians who are harassed for their faith?
28. How can you guard against leading another believer into sin?

Apply It

29. How could you encourage the leaders in your church who may be enduring hardship?
30. In what ways could you work this week to reduce rivalry and conflict among Christians?
- * 31. What boasts can you have handy for the next time you need to defend your credibility as a representative of Christ's message?

Paul's Vision and His Thorn - 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Topics: Body, Grace, Health, Heaven, Joy, Pain, Power, Pride, Weaknesses

Open It

1. How are powerful people treated in our society?
2. Why are we typically afraid to disclose our weaknesses to each other?

Explore It

3. Who was the man in Christ whom Paul described? (12:2)
4. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians about his vision, despite his misgivings? (12:2-4)
5. Why was Paul reluctant to speak about his vision? (12:3-6)
6. What happened during the revelation Paul described? (12:4)
- * 7. Why did Paul refrain from boasting? (12:6)
8. For what reason might Paul have become conceited? (12:7)
9. What prevented Paul from developing a proud spirit? (12:7)
10. Why did Paul have a "thorn"? (12:7)
11. Who was responsible for giving Paul a "thorn in the flesh"? (12:7)
- * 12. What was Paul's response to his "thorn"? (12:8, 10)
- * 13. What purpose can suffering serve? (12:9)

Get It

- * 14. What are some weaknesses or afflictions that you find difficult to live with?
15. What can we learn from Paul's example about dealing with physical discomfort or hardship?
16. How can you allow the Lord's power to take over where you are weak?
17. How does the Christian perspective on power and weakness differ from that of the world?
18. What weaknesses, handicaps, or problems in your life is God able to use?
19. What does this passage teach us about the problem of evil and God's sovereign will?
20. Why does God choose to heal some people of their sickness or disability and not others?
- * 21. How should you respond if God chooses not to heal you?
22. What difference should it make knowing God has promised you an all-sufficient grace?

Apply It

- * 23. What weakness can you turn over to the Lord through prayer this week?
24. In what area of your life do you want to rely more on God's strength and power, rather than your own?

Paul's Concern for the Corinthians - 2 Corinthians 12:11-21

Topics: Burdens, Expectations, Fear, Humiliation, Humility, Love, Ministry, Miracles, Money, Sacrifice, Sin

Open It

1. In your experience, what issues cause the most disagreement among friends?
2. Who is the best friend you ever had?
- * 3. How can a gesture of goodwill be misunderstood or unappreciated?

Explore It

4. How did Paul maintain humility while defending himself against his opponents at Corinth? (12:11)
5. What tone did Paul use in this passage? (12:11-13)
6. Why should the Corinthians have recognized the apostles? (12:12)
7. What did Paul want from the Corinthians? (12:14)
- * 8. To what did Paul liken his relationship with the Corinthians? (12:14)
9. Why did Paul ask the Corinthians, "If I love you more, will you love me less?" (12:15)
- * 10. How do we know that Paul had a deep affection for the Corinthians? (12:15-18)
11. Why was Paul's conscience clear about the men he had sent to Corinth? (12:17-18)
- * 12. What prompted Paul to write this letter? (12:20-21)
13. In what ways did Paul fear that the Corinthians might cause him to be humbled before God? (12:21)

Get It

14. What role do you think signs, wonders, and miracles should play in Christian evangelism today?
15. What is an example of an experience that taught you a lesson, but which you would not want to go through again?
16. What misgivings might Paul have after visiting your church?
17. How can you maintain a spirit of humility if you have to defend yourself against the accusations of others?
18. What does Paul's relationship with the Corinthians reveal about the type of friendships God wants for you?
19. Why might a local congregation become divided?
20. How should we be accountable to one another? Why?

Apply It

21. What simple act of concern can you show for the people in your church this week?
- * 22. In the future, how can you follow Paul's example in healing divisions between Christians?

Final Warnings - 2 Corinthians 13:1-14

Topics: Authority, Discipline, Example, Faith, Perfect, Power, Prayer, Sin, Testing, Truth, Unity, Weaknesses

Open It

1. How would you prepare for a visit from a friend you haven't seen in a long time?
- * 2. What is one warning you're thankful you received?

Explore It

3. Why did Paul return to Corinth a third time? (13:1-2)
4. How do we know the Corinthians were doubting Paul's authority? (13:3)
5. Why did Paul plan to be firm with the chronic sinners in Corinth? (13:3-4)
- * 6. Why did Paul advise the Corinthians to examine themselves? (13:5)
7. How could the Corinthians "fail the test"? (13:5)
- * 8. What does this passage reveal about Paul's concern for the Corinthians' spiritual welfare and regard for his own reputation? (13:7)
9. How could Paul be glad despite his problems? (13:9)
- * 10. Why did Paul write to the church at Corinth? (13:10)
11. For what purpose had God given authority to Paul? (13:10)
12. What did Paul want the Corinthians to do? (13:11-14)
13. What was Paul's appeal in the conclusion to his letter? (13:11-14)

Get It

14. When should we demand proof that a person's teaching about God is true?
15. How has God demonstrated His power in your life?
16. What difference does it make that God's power lives in you?
- * 17. When is it helpful to examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith?
18. How do you think a person could fail the test of faith?
- * 19. What does it mean to submit to those in authority in the church?
20. What should you do to mend the relationship whenever you are at odds with another Christian?
21. What does it mean to aim for perfection?
22. What goals should Christians set for themselves?

Apply It

- * 23. In what way would it be helpful for you to test your faith? How could you?
24. Who could help you test yourself this week to see whether you are in the faith?
25. What realistic, measurable goal could you set for your own growth toward godliness this week?

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No Other Gospel - Galatians 1:1-10

Topics: Angels, Anger, Approval, Church, Confusion, God, Gospel, Grace, Legalism, Peace

Open It

- * 1. What is your usual way of starting a letter?
- 2. When you have something difficult to share with a loved one, how can jotting down your thoughts help?
- 3. When you want to emphasize an important point to someone, how do you do it?

Explore It

- 4. How did the author of the letter identify himself? (1:1)
- * 5. How did Paul bring up two vital concerns in the beginning of his letter (1:1, 4)
- 6. Who joined Paul in sending the letter? (1:2)
- 7. To whom was the letter sent? (1:2)
- * 8. What traditional form of greeting did the apostle use in his letter? (1:3)
- 9. How did Paul conclude his salutation? (1:4-5)
- * 10. What attitude did Paul express? Why? (1:6-7)
- 11. How were the Galatian Christians being thrown “into confusion”? (1:7)
- 12. What hypothetical case did Paul present to show the purity of the gospel? (1:8-9)
- 13. How did Paul emphasize the importance of representing the gospel accurately? (1:8-9)
- 14. What accusation had been directed at Paul? (1:10)
- 15. How did Paul affirm his purpose to please God? (1:10)

Get It

- * 16. The tone of Paul’s letter is serious and abrupt; why did he write this way?
- 17. Why was it important that Paul establish his credentials?
- 18. Why do some Christians base their identity on things other than Christ?
- * 19. How did Paul assert his authority in this letter?
- 20. Why was it important for the Galatian churches to be reminded that salvation lay in the work of Christ, not in human works?
- 21. How do Christians have a tendency to bypass God’s grace in their daily experience?
- 22. What was at stake in Paul’s warning to the Galatians? (1:8-9)
- 23. How do you need to examine the doctrine of salvation you pass on to others?

Apply It

- 24. How can you prepare to respond the next time you hear a distorted message about Christ?
- 25. As a servant of Christ, what are some ways you can best share the true gospel with the unbelievers you know?
- * 26. What important letter to a struggling believer can you write today?

Paul Called by God - Galatians 1:11-24

Topics: Church, Evangelism, God, Gospel, Grace, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Praise, Religion, Traditions, Truth

Open It

- * 1. What personal accomplishment makes you feel proud?
- 2. If you could teach yourself a new hobby, skill, or line of work, what would you choose?
- 3. What kind of recognition do you want for the work you do?

Explore It

- 4. What gospel did Paul preach? (1:11-12)
- * 5. What did Paul try to establish by bringing up his personal history? (1:13-14)
- 6. Before his conversion, what was Paul's approach to Judaism? (1:14)
- 7. What three things did God do for Saul when he intervened in his life? (1:15-16)
- 8. How did Paul emphasize that his conversion and calling were none of his own doing? (1:15-16)
- * 9. What did Paul do after his conversion? (1:16-17)
- 10. How did Paul form his theology? (1:16-17)
- 11. How long did Paul wait before going to Jerusalem? (1:18)
- 12. How much time did Paul spend with Peter? (1:18)
- 13. While in Jerusalem, which other apostle did Paul meet? (1:19)
- 14. Why did Paul want his readers to know how limited his relationship was to the apostles? (1:18-19)
- 15. What did Paul say to confirm the truth of his testimony? (1:20)
- 16. How was Paul's ministry clearly not under the authority or oversight of the Jerusalem church? (1:21-22)
- * 17. What was reported to the Judean churches about Paul? (1:23-24)

Get It

- 18. Why did the Galatian church have misgivings about Paul and his message?
- 19. Why was it important for Paul to establish the independent nature of his ministry?
- 20. By what criteria did Paul establish his apostleship?
- 21. What kind of support does your pastor receive from members of your congregation?
- 22. What kind of support should a pastor receive from members of the congregation?
- * 23. Paul had a clear and unique sense of his calling; how do you feel about God's imprint on your life?
- 24. Paul knew what God wanted him to do with his life; to what line of service has God called you?
- 25. Why did the Judean churches praise God when they heard the report about Paul?
- * 26. What are your "before and after" conversion pictures like?
- 27. How has God changed you so far?

Apply It

- * 28. What change do you want to make in your life this week to reflect your walk by faith?
- 29. What kind of prayer and Bible study this week would most help you in your witness to others?

Paul Accepted by the Apostles - Galatians 2:1-10

Topics: Approval, Doctrine, Gospel, Grace, Law, Leadership, Partnerships, Poor, Truth

Open It

1. What location do you enjoy visiting?
2. If you could work in a new location among a particular group of people, where and whom would you select?
- * 3. Whose opinion of your work is very important to you?

Explore It

4. On a return trip to Jerusalem, whom did Paul take along? (2:1)
5. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem? (2:2)
- * 6. Why did Paul seize the opportunity to meet with the other apostles? (2:2)
7. What was Paul's motive in bringing Titus along on the Jerusalem trip? (2:3-5)
- * 8. What did the "false brothers" do? (2:4)
9. How did Paul and his partners respond to the Judaizers? (2:5)
10. How did the Jerusalem leaders respond to Paul's message? (2:6)
- * 11. How did James, Peter, and John respond to Paul's mission? (2:7-9)
12. What was the "right hand of fellowship"? (2:9)
13. What was the only thing that the Jewish leaders requested of Paul? (2:10)

Get It

- * 14. Even though Paul asserted his independence from the apostles, how did he also show his solidarity with them?
- * 15. Why was it important for Paul to have the apostles' approval?
16. Why was it important for Paul to stand up for freedom from the Law?
17. In what ways do some Christians try to impose rules on others?
18. What does caring for the poor have to do with telling others about Christ?

Apply It

- * 19. How can you express today your appreciation and respect for older Christians who have helped you in your spiritual walk?
20. What can you do to help a poor person or family this week?

Paul Opposes Peter - Galatians 2:11-21

Topics: Compromise, Death, Doctrine, Faith, God, Gospel, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Law, Life, Opposition, Righteousness

Open It

- * 1. If a colleague of yours were doing something wrong, how would you confront that person?
- 2. How do you tend to take criticism?

Explore It

- 3. When Peter visited Antioch, what did Paul do? (2:11)
- * 4. Why did Paul rebuke Peter? (2:11-13)
- 5. Why did Peter feel free to eat with Gentiles at one time? (2:12)
- 6. Who pressured Peter to stop eating with Gentiles? (2:12) Why?
- 7. How did Peter's behavior influence other Christians? (2:13)
- * 8. What did Paul say in response to Peter's hypocritical behavior? (2:14)
- 9. What did Paul say to those who were Jews by birth? (2:15)
- * 10. How is a person justified before God? (2:16)
- 11. How does a Christian avoid being a lawbreaker? (2:17-19)
- 12. How is the new life characterized by faith and not works? (2:20)
- 13. How does Christ live out His life through Christians? (2:20)
- 14. How had Peter set aside God's grace? (2:21)
- 15. If righteousness were possible by keeping the Law, why would the Cross have been absolutely useless? (2:21)

Get It

- 16. What hypocritical practices have you seen in churches you have visited?
- * 17. Why is it easier for Christians to live by rules and traditions than by faith?
- 18. If Paul hadn't spoken out against Peter's inconsistency, what could have happened among Hebrew and Gentile Christians?
- 19. How did the matter of legalism provide Paul with the opportunity to spell out the doctrine of justification by faith?
- * 20. How could addressing a problem in your congregation provide a real opportunity for spiritual growth?

Apply It

- * 21. How do you plan to confront troubling behavior the next time you see it in your local fellowship?
- 22. In the future, how can you show courage in resisting well-meaning Christians who want to impose their own rules on others?

Faith or Observance of the Law - Galatians 3:1-14

Topics: Believe, Bible, Blessing, Faith, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Law, Miracles, Questions, Righteousness, Suffering

Open It

1. When was the last time you were sarcastic to someone?
2. If you were trying to convince a friend to believe in what you were saying, what tone of voice would you use?
- * 3. If someone close to you displayed a lack of knowledge about a subject you knew well, what would you do about it?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did Paul scold the Galatians? (3:1)
5. What rhetorical question did Paul ask? (3:2)
6. How did Paul expect the Galatians to answer his question? (3:2)
7. Based on Paul's second question to the Christians, how did he think the Galatians felt the Law could help them? (3:3)
8. Why did Paul ask the Galatians if their suffering had been for nothing? (3:4)
9. On what basis did the Holy Spirit perform miracles? (3:5)
- * 10. How did Paul's use of Abraham as an example of faith strike a blow to the champions of the Law? (3:6-8)
11. How did Paul link the past with the present? (3:9)
12. What is the curse of the law? (3:10)
13. How does a person become justified before God? (3:11)
- * 14. Why is combining faith and Law impossible? (3:11-12)
15. How does Christ save people from the curse of the Law? (3:13)
16. Why is Christ's redemptive work effective for both Jews and Gentiles? (3:14)

Get It

- * 17. When has your pastor corrected the congregation?
18. What rules have become very important in your church?
19. How much of your righteousness is self-righteous behavior?
20. If you were to write a two-line summary of the doctrine of justification, what would you say?
- * 21. In your view, what is the biggest difference between Law and faith?
22. What is your relationship to Abraham?
23. What has Christ done for you?

Apply It

24. In what situation can you share the blessings of Christ with someone else this week?
- * 25. How can you help new Christians get a clear understanding of their position in Christ?

The Law and the Promise - Galatians 3:15-25

Topics: Believe, Bible, Covenant, Faith, God, Jesus Christ, Law, Mediator, Promises, Righteousness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. Where do you keep important personal or family documents?
- 2. If you lost all your legal papers, what would you do?
- 3. What is the oldest legal document you possess?

Explore It

- 4. What spiritual truth did Paul explain by using an everyday example? (3:15-16)
- * 5. Through whom were the promises of Abraham fulfilled? (3:16)
- 6. How long after the promises to Abraham was the Law given? (3:17)
- 7. What was the relationship of the Law to the covenant? (3:17)
- * 8. What was the promised inheritance? (3:18)
- 9. What was the purpose of the Law? (3:19)
- 10. How was the Law put into effect? (3:19)
- 11. The Law required a mediator; how was the promise given to humanity without a mediator? (3:20)
- * 12. Why did God give both the Law and promises? (3:21-22)
- 13. How did the Law pave the way for the gospel? (3:22-23)
- 14. What freedom did faith in Christ bring? (3:23-25)
- 15. How did Christ's coming change the role of the Law? (3:24-25)

Get It

- 16. Why did Paul go to such lengths to explain Law and grace?
- 17. When have you perceived God as a harsh disciplinarian?
- 18. How much of your experience as a Christian is based on a set of rules?
- 19. If you had lived in Old Testament times, how would you have benefited from living under the Law?
- * 20. How does faith in Christ set us free from legalism?
- * 21. How has faith in Christ set you free from legalism?
- 22. How does God fulfill His promises in your life?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you help an unbelieving friend understand that being a good, law-abiding person is not enough to get right with God?
- 24. What life-changing promise of God do you want to hold on to this week?
- 25. For what spiritual inheritance can you praise God today?

Sons of God - Galatians 3:26-4:7

Topics: Children, Faith, Family, God, Heart, Heritage, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Law, Promises, Slavery

Open It

1. What would be the advantages of growing up in a multiethnic neighborhood?
- * 2. If you could become part of another family, which family would you choose?

Explore It

- * 3. What was the family status of the Galatian believers? (3:26)
4. How are Christians joined to Christ? (3:27)
5. What new garments did the Galatians put on? (3:27)
6. How does God cut across cultural and human distinctions in the family of faith? (3:28)
- * 7. How were the Galatians heirs of the promise to Abraham? (3:29)
8. How are those who live under the Law immature? (4:1-2)
9. Before the Galatians became Christians, how were they like slaves? (4:3)
10. How did the coming of Jesus perfectly satisfy the requirements of the Law? (4:4-5)
- * 11. How did the believers benefit by becoming part of God's family? (4:5)
12. Whom did God send into the lives of the Galatian Christians? (4:6)
13. How did the Spirit move the believers to address God? (4:6)
14. Since the Galatians were no longer slaves, what had they become? (4:7)

Get It

15. How would you describe your spiritual clothing?
16. What is your favorite way to address God?
17. If you were a Galatian Christian, how would you feel after learning of your position in God's family?
- * 18. As a child of God, do you behave like a slave or more like an heir?
19. In what ways do even Christians discriminate or value some types of people over others?
- * 20. How do many churches hold on to cultural barriers even as they represent Christ?
21. In what ways should churches work to break down barriers between groups?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you take action to step beyond your cultural boundaries in befriending Christians who are different from you?
23. How can you develop more intimacy with and trust in your heavenly Father during the coming days?

Paul's Concern for the Galatians - Galatians 4:8-20

Topics: Children, Choices, God, Gospel, Idolatry, Influence, Jesus Christ, Joy, Legalism, Rejection, Sickness, Slavery, Truth

Open It

1. How have you become estranged from a former friend?
- * 2. In what ways have you switched alliances among your circle of friends during the past few years?
3. Are you more or less joyful than you used to be? Why?

Explore It

4. Before becoming Christians, to what were the Galatians enslaved? (4:8)
- * 5. After they became believers, how did the Galatians turn back to their paganism? (4:9-10)
6. Why did these Christians go back to observing the Mosaic calendar? (4:9-10)
7. How did Paul express his concern for the Galatians? (4:11)
- * 8. Why did Paul tell the Christians to follow his example? (4:12)
9. What had been Paul's experience with the Galatian believers? (4:12-14)
10. How had the Galatians esteemed Paul? (4:15)
11. Why did the believers turn away from Paul? (4:16)
- * 12. What motivated the Judaizers to turn the Galatians against Paul? (4:17)
13. What did Paul say in defense of zealousness? (4:18)
14. How did Paul express his attitude toward the Galatians? (4:19-20)
15. How did Paul want his "dear children" to change? (4:19)
16. Why did Paul want to be with the believers? (4:20)

Get It

17. What are some of the "weak and miserable principles" by which non-Christians live their lives?
- * 18. After experiencing salvation, why do some Christians return to their former bad habits?
19. What bad habits are hard for you to break?
20. How have we allowed cultural practices to affect the way we celebrate Christmas and Easter?
21. How does your pastor show concern for your spiritual growth?
- * 22. When have you turned away from friends because you did not like what they had to say?
23. How can we show concern for Christians who have turned away from the truth?

Apply It

24. What is one step you can take, starting today, to increase the joy in your life?
- * 25. What friendship can you mend this week for the sake of Christ?

Hagar and Sarah - Galatians 4:21-31

Topics: Believers, Bible, Children, Covenant, Freedom, Holy Spirit, Law, Slavery

Open It

- * 1. What is unique about being the firstborn child in a family?
- 2. In your family, how were you and your siblings each treated differently?

Explore It

- 3. Before the Galatians truly gave themselves over to the Law, what did Paul ask them to consider? (4:21)
- 4. Why did Paul appeal to the example of Abraham? (4:22)
- * 5. What was the difference in status between Abraham's two sons? (4:22)
- 6. How were Abraham's sons conceived? (4:23)
- 7. How did Hagar represent the covenant at Mount Sinai? (4:24)
- 8. How did Paul refer to the birth of Abraham's sons? (4:24-27)
- 9. In what way did Hagar typify first-century Jerusalem? (4:25)
- 10. How was Sarah an example of the "Jerusalem that is above"? (4:26-27)
- 11. How did Paul apply an ancient prophecy to Sarah's history? (4:27)
- * 12. How were the Galatians like Isaac (the child of promise)? (4:28)
- 13. How were the Judaizers like Ishmael (the child of slavery)? (4:29)
- 14. Based on his illustration, how did Paul expect the Galatians to deal with the legalists? (4:28-30)
- * 15. How did Paul compare Ishmael's persecution of Isaac to the legalists' opposition to the Christians? (4:29-30)
- 16. How did Paul align himself with the Galatians and Sarah? (4:31)

Get It

- 17. Why was Paul's allegory helpful in explaining Law and grace?
- 18. In your family, do you feel like a child of Hagar or a child of Sarah? Why?
- * 19. In what ways do Christians try to impose extra-biblical standards on one another?
- * 20. Which of your own rules or personal standards are you tempted to require of others?
- 21. How does the new birth in Christ give us freedom?
- 22. What do you have in common with Isaac?
- 23. How should you treat people who try to impose their standards on you?

Apply It

- 24. What can you do this week to encourage other Christians to enjoy their freedom in Christ?
- * 25. What will help you avoid unfairly imposing your own standards on others?
- 26. How can you start drawing on your inheritance in Christ today?

Freedom in Christ - Galatians 5:1-15

Topics: Burdens, Confusion, Disobedience, Freedom, Grace, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Law, Love, Righteousness, Serving, Sin

Open It

- * 1. If you took up running, would you jog for enjoyment or train to compete in races? Why?
- 2. Do you prefer group or individual sports? Why?
- 3. Do you like games with challenging instructions and rules, or games with simple instructions and few rules? Why?

Explore It

- * 4. What challenge did Paul set before the Galatians? (5:1)
- 5. Why did Paul challenge the Christians to be resolute? (5:1)
- 6. What warning did Paul issue to the Galatians? (5:2)
- 7. How would turning to the Law obligate the Galatian Christians? (5:3)
- 8. What consequence would seeking justification by Law bring? (5:4)
- 9. How did Paul contrast legalists and true believers? (5:5)
- 10. How did Paul sum up the significance of circumcision? (5:6)
- 11. What really matters? (5:6)
- * 12. How did Paul describe the Galatians' Christian experience? (5:7)
- 13. How had false teaching affected the Galatian church? (5:8-9)
- 14. Why was Paul optimistic about the Galatians? (5:10)
- 15. How did the Cross mark the end of the Law? (5:11)
- 16. What strong words did Paul have for the Judaizers? (5:12)
- * 17. How were the Galatian Christians to use their freedom? (5:14)
- 18. What were the Galatians called on to guard against? (5:15)

Get It

- * 19. What challenge does this passage set before your church?
- 20. What are the side effects of trying to be saved by keeping the Law?
- 21. What unnecessary rules and regulations do Christians tend to impose on one another?
- 22. What difference will it make if you run the Christian race with your attention on Christ?
- * 23. How do some Christians abuse their freedom in Christ?
- 24. In what ways are you hindered from loving others?
- 25. When have you been guilty of backbiting and gossip?
- 26. Why should you serve the family of God in love?

Apply It

- 27. Who is one neighbor to whom you can show a gesture of love this week?
- * 28. As you run your race for Christ today, how can you free yourself of unnecessary rules and regulations that hinder your progress?
- 29. Whom can you invite to join you in running a good race?

Life by the Spirit - Galatians 5:16-26

Topics: Believers, Conflict, Desires, Discipline, Fruit, Gentleness, Goodness, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Joy, Kindness, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Law, Love, Patience, Peace, Sin

Open It

- * 1. If you could change one personality trait in yourself, what would you change?
- 2. What do you really like about yourself?

Explore It

- 3. What would happen if the Galatians lived by the power of the Holy Spirit? (5:16)
- 4. What is the conflict between the sinful nature and the Spirit? (5:17)
- 5. How were the Galatians affected by the conflict between the sinful nature and the Spirit? (5:17)
- * 6. How could the Galatian Christians lead godly lives? (5:18)
- 7. What is one obvious feature of human nature? (5:19)
- 8. To what sexual sins are we prone? (5:19)
- * 9. What religious sins does the sinful nature produce? (5:20)
- 10. What societal evils come from our sinful nature? (5:20-21)
- 11. In what sense is Paul's list of sins incomplete? (5:21)
- 12. What warning is given to those who live sinful lives? (5:21)
- * 13. What happens to a Christian who is under the control of the Holy Spirit? (5:22-23)
- 14. What is the result of yielding to the Spirit? (5:22-23)
- 15. How do the Christian graces affect all areas of the believer's life? (5:22-23)
- 16. How is a Christian empowered to live by the Spirit? (5:24-25)
- 17. What did Paul tell the Galatian Christians not to do? (5:26)

Get It

- 18. How much should we rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and power in our lives?
- 19. How is your response of faith necessary in order for the Holy Spirit to have victory in you?
- * 20. Why do Christians tend to excuse the behavior of their old nature?
- 21. What acts of the sinful nature tend to entangle you?
- 22. What is the fruit of the Spirit?
- 23. In what sense do love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control grow in a person much the way fruit grows on a tree?
- 24. How can a person cultivate the character qualities of the Holy Spirit in his or her life?
- 25. What can a Christian do to promote the growth of godly character in his or her life?
- * 26. How do you see the character of the Holy Spirit growing in your life?
- 27. Who is kept out of the kingdom of God?
- 28. How does the warning against living a sinful life apply to someone you know?
- 29. In what ways do Christians need to guard against conceit and envy?

Apply It

- * 30. What can you do this week to nurture the character of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- 31. How can you and the Spirit get rid of the dead wood that stifles your growth?
- 32. What do you want to do the next time you encounter conceit or envy in your church?

Doing Good to All - Galatians 6:1-10

Topics: Believers, Burdens, Encouragement, Eternal Life, Holy Spirit, Money, Pastors, Restoration, Rewards, Self-centeredness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. How easily do you share your time and skills with others?
- 2. What's hardest about serving others?
- 3. How do you feel when you aren't thanked for going out of your way to help someone?

Explore It

- 4. What did Paul say about helping a Christian overtaken by sin? (6:1)
- 5. What warning about sin do strong Christians need to heed? (6:1)
- * 6. How should Christians support each other? (6:2)
- 7. What is the law of Christ? (6:2)
- * 8. What is the antidote to self-deception? (6:3-4)
- 9. How is carrying one's own load different from bearing the burdens of others? (6:5)
- 10. What is the responsibility of church members toward their teaching elders? (6:6)
- 11. How did Paul warn against a lack of financial support for the Christian workers in the Galatian churches? (6:7-8)
- 12. How did Paul encourage the Christians to endure in service? (6:9)
- 13. What did Paul say about a Christian's social responsibility? (6:10)
- * 14. What responsibility do believers have toward each other? (6:10)

Get It

- * 15. What is the best approach to helping a Christian brother or sister caught in sin?
- 16. How is your view of yourself in line with God's?
- * 17. What encourages you to keep going in Christian service even when you feel like giving up?
- 18. How would you evaluate your history of tithing?
- 19. How can you help meet the needs of others outside the church?

Apply It

- * 20. How can you help a member of your church this week with a particular burden he or she has?
- 21. This week, what can you do to support someone in missions in a way that will please the Spirit?

Not Circumcision but a New Creation - Galatians 6:11-18

Topics: Believers, Body, Grace, Jesus Christ, Law, Mercy, Peace, Persecution, World

Open It

- * 1. What family traditions are very important to you?
- 2. How willing are you to try new things?

Explore It

- 3. What kind of letters did Paul inscribe? (6:11)
- * 4. Why did certain people want the Galatians circumcised? (6:12-13)
- 5. How did the legalists practice hypocrisy? (6:13)
- 6. Who was being hypocritical? How? (6:13)
- * 7. What did the legalists boast about? (6:13)
- 8. What was Paul's only boast? (6:14)
- 9. How did Paul and the legalists view the cross of Christ differently? (6:14)
- * 10. In terms of salvation, how significant were outward religious symbols? (6:14-15)
- 11. What was the only thing that mattered? (6:14-15)
- 12. What blessing did Paul pronounce on believing Galatians and on believing Jews? (6:16)
- 13. What did Paul want ended? (6:17)
- 14. How did Paul show that he belonged to Christ? (6:17)
- 15. How would you describe the tone of Paul's benediction to the Galatians? (6:18)

Get It

- * 16. What motivates you to observe certain religious traditions in your church?
- 17. How important is it to make a good impression outwardly?
- 18. In what ways should we be "crucified" to the world?
- * 19. How did Paul show his love for the Galatians?
- 20. How do other Christians recognize your love for them?

Apply It

- 21. What sacrifices are you willing to make for the cross of Christ this week?
- * 22. How can you show to the world in the coming weeks that you are becoming a new creation?

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Spiritual Blessings in Christ - Ephesians 1:1-14

Topics: Adoption, Believers, Blessing, Doctrine, Glory, God, God's Will, Gospel, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Praise, Purpose, Salvation

Open It

1. How often do you compliment others?
2. How do you usually respond when someone compliments you?
- * 3. What blessings have you received recently?

Explore It

4. How was Paul made an apostle? (1:1)
5. To whom was the letter addressed? (1:1)
6. What greetings did Paul extend to the believers at Ephesus? (1:2)
- * 7. How has God blessed believers? (1:3)
8. When did God's work of election take place? (1:4)
9. What is the purpose of God's election? (1:4)
10. What did God determine beforehand for those who believe in Christ? (1:5)
11. What is the goal of God's election? (1:6)
12. What is redemption? (1:7)
- * 13. What does the work of Christ do for the believer? (1:7)
14. What has God given the believer? (1:8-10)
15. When will everything be brought together? (1:10)
16. How did God's plan include people of different cultures? (1:11-12)
- * 17. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those called to receive spiritual blessings in Christ? (1:13-14)

Get It

18. What are spiritual blessings?
- * 19. In everyday language, how would you describe the spiritual blessings given to you?
20. How do you picture the persons of the Trinity at work in your life?
21. How should knowing that you were chosen to be in the family of God affect your involvement in evangelism?
22. What has Christ done on our behalf?
23. How have you benefited from the grace of God?
- * 24. For what work of God on your behalf are you most thankful? Why?
25. Why did God do this amazing work for us?

Apply It

- * 26. How can you say thank you to God this week for what He has done for you?
27. What do you need to do differently to live for the praise of God's glory this week?
28. In the days ahead, how can you share with other people those blessings God has given you?

Thanksgiving and Prayer - Ephesians 1:15-23

Topics: Authority, Body, Church, Creation, Faith, God, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Love, Power, Prayer, Thankfulness

Open It

1. How do you celebrate Thanksgiving Day?
- * 2. For what do you thank God on a daily basis?
3. How do you show that you are thankful for those around you?

Explore It

- * 4. What motivated Paul to pray for the Ephesians? (1:15-16)
5. What did Paul ask God to give to the Ephesian Christians? (1:17)
6. What is the purpose of having wisdom and revelation? (1:17)
- * 7. Why did Paul ask that the Ephesians' hearts would continue to be enlightened? (1:18)
8. What kind of help is available to all Christians? (1:19-20)
9. How is God's power at work in all creation? (1:21)
10. How does God's power reach across time? (1:21)
- * 11. What did God place under Christ's control? (1:22)
12. What appointment did God give Christ? (1:22)
13. What is the church's relationship to Christ? (1:22-23)

Get It

- * 14. How did Paul support the Ephesian Christians?
15. How can you encourage growth in other Christians?
- * 16. The Ephesians showed faith in Christ and love for one another; what qualities distinguish your Christian walk?
17. How do you know that Christ's power is sufficient for your life?
18. How does the knowledge of God's authority and control make you secure?
19. When did you last express a prayer of thanks for other saints?

Apply It

20. Since God's power is available to you, what do you need to do to take hold of it this week?
- * 21. What people in need could you remember in your prayers this week?

Made Alive in Christ - Ephesians 2:1-10

Topics: Believers, Craftsmanship, Death, Faith, Gifts, God, Grace, Heaven, Jesus Christ, Life, Love, Mercy, Sin

Open It

- * 1. When have you shown mercy to a person who deserved to be punished?
- 2. What is the best gift you've ever received?

Explore It

- 3. Before conversion, what was the spiritual position of the Ephesians? (2:1)
- * 4. What three characteristics mark the condition of a person without Christ? (2:2-3)
- 5. How are both Jew and Gentile alike? (2:3)
- * 6. Why did God make those who were dead alive with Christ? (2:4-5)
- 7. What describes God's action in making us alive? (2:5)
- 8. What position has God given Christians in Christ by His divine power? (2:6)
- 9. What will God show in the future eternal state? (2:7)
- 10. What is the means of salvation? (2:8)
- 11. Where does salvation come from? (2:8)
- * 12. Why can no one boast in his own salvation? (2:8-9)
- 13. How is the believer God's work of art? (2:10)
- 14. What is the purpose of God's workmanship? (2:10)

Get It

- 15. What were you like before you became a Christian?
- * 16. Why was your position hopeless before becoming a Christian?
- 17. When did you receive the gift of new life?
- 18. How would you describe God's grace to you?
- 19. Why hasn't anyone deserved God's grace, mercy, or riches?
- * 20. How do you see God's creative workmanship operating in your life?

Apply It

- * 21. With whom can you share the news of God's mercy? How?
- 22. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, what good work for the kingdom of God can you do this week?

One in Christ - Ephesians 2:11-22

Topics: Church, Citizenship, God, Good News, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Law, Peace, Reconciliation, Separation

Open It

1. When was a time you felt deprived?
- * 2. What people have you known whose upbringing and family connections provided them with certain advantages?

Explore It

3. What did Paul command the Ephesians to remember? (2:11)
4. Why was being uncircumcised a desperate problem for the Gentiles? (2:11-12)
- * 5. How did Christ's work on the cross transform the condition of the Gentiles? (2:13)
6. Who brought peace to Jewish and Gentile believers? (2:14)
7. Why did Christ end the hostility between Jews and Gentiles? (2:14-16)
8. How did the enmity between Jews and Gentiles come to an end? (2:15-16)
9. What is the result of believing the message of Christ? (2:17-18)
- * 10. In Christ, how did the Gentiles achieve new spiritual and social status? (2:19)
11. On what foundation were the Ephesian believers built? (2:20)
12. How was Christ part of the foundation? (2:20)
13. How was the church described as living and growing? (2:21)
- * 14. How were the Ephesians becoming part of God's dwelling? (2:22)
15. How did God live in the Ephesian Christians? (2:22)

Get It

- * 16. How does the gospel break down religious and social barriers?
17. Why is it that many churches maintain a dividing wall that keeps out other social and ethnic groups?
- * 18. How does your church treat foreigners and aliens?
19. How should churches treat foreigners and aliens?
20. If Paul were speaking to your congregation about reconciliation, would his words be ones of praise or disappointment?
21. In Christ, what is every Christian's relationship to other Christians?
22. What is your role in helping your congregation show unity in Christ?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you show God's love to an "outsider" this week?
24. To what groups or individuals can you extend the peace of Christ this week? How?

Paul the Preacher to the Gentiles - Ephesians 3:1-13

Topics: Church, God, Grace, Holy Spirit, Humility, Insight, Jesus Christ, Power, Purpose, Serving, Suffering

Open It

1. If you found buried treasure in your backyard, what would be your first course of action?
- * 2. Do you like to figure things out for yourself or get help as soon as possible?
3. How good are you at explaining things to others?

Explore It

4. Why did Paul go to prison? (3:1)
5. How familiar was Paul with the company of believers at Ephesus? (3:2)
6. What would the Ephesians have heard about Paul? (3:2-3)
- * 7. To what mystery did Paul refer? (3:2-3)
8. How did Paul receive insight into the mystery of Christ? (3:4-5)
9. Who revealed the mystery of Christ to Paul? (3:5)
10. When was the mystery of Christ disclosed? (3:5)
- * 11. How did Paul reveal the mystery of Christ? (3:6)
12. How was Paul enabled to be a servant? (3:7)
13. What was Paul's attitude to his call? (3:8)
14. What was Paul called to disclose? (3:9)
15. Through what medium was God's wisdom communicated? (3:10)
- * 16. How did God accomplish His plan? (3:11)
17. In light of God's work, how may believers approach Him? (3:11-12)
18. Why were Paul's sufferings the glory of the Ephesians? (3:13)

Get It

- * 19. How do you think Gentile believers responded to Paul's explanation of "the mystery of Christ"?
20. How should we all be involved in evangelism?
21. How can you serve others who need salvation?
22. What helps you to serve the Lord when it is inconvenient, awkward, or painful for you?
23. What gives you confidence and freedom in approaching God?
- * 24. How is sharing the gospel with someone like discovering priceless treasure?

Apply It

25. In the days ahead, what can you do to help outsiders feel welcome in your church?
- * 26. What can you do this week to help others understand the mystery of Christ's provision for sin?
27. What can you do this week to develop a patient spirit so that you will not become discouraged by suffering?

A Prayer for the Ephesians - Ephesians 3:14-21

Topics: Church, Faith, Family, Glory, God, Heart, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Love, Power, Prayer

Open It

1. What is your favorite posture for praying? Why?
- * 2. How often do you pray for those you love?

Explore It

3. When Paul prayed, what posture did he assume? (3:14)
4. To whom is God the Father? (3:14-15)
- * 5. What did Paul request of the Father? (3:16)
6. Through whom would the Ephesians be empowered? (3:16)
- * 7. How would Christ dwell in the believers' hearts? (3:17)
8. Why did Paul want the Ephesians to be rooted and established in love? (3:17-19)
9. What did Paul want the Ephesians to grasp? (3:18)
10. What does the love of Christ surpass? (3:19)
- * 11. How did Paul close his prayer? (3:20-21)
12. How did Paul's doxology serve as a fitting conclusion to the doctrine he had presented in the first three chapters of this letter? (3:20-21)

Get It

13. How would you pray Paul's prayer in your own words?
- * 14. If Paul were your prayer partner, how might he encourage you in your devotional life?
15. What is your understanding of Christ's love for you?
16. In what ways do you need to become firmly rooted in love?
17. How have you allowed God to become too small in your life?
- * 18. How does Paul's doxology encourage you?
19. What is your favorite doxology? Why?
20. How do you usually end your prayers?

Apply It

21. How can you take a new and creative approach to your prayer life?
22. What do you need to do to spread Christ's love to others this week?
- * 23. How could you include Paul's doxology as a part of your personal devotion each day?

Unity in the Body of Christ - Ephesians 4:1-16

Topics: Body, Church, Faith, Gentleness, Gifts, God, Grace, Holy Spirit, Hope, Humility, Jesus Christ, Love, Pastors, Patience, Peace, Serving, Teaching, Unity, Work

Open It

1. What one quality would you like to develop in your character?
- * 2. What keeps sports teams unified?
3. What do you consider yourself good at doing?
4. What skill or talent would you like to master?

Explore It

5. What did Paul urge the Ephesians to do? (4:1)
6. What three virtues foster unity among Christians? (4:2)
- * 7. How should Christians conduct themselves toward each other? Why? (4:2-6)
- * 8. What are the seven elements of Christian unity? (4:4-6)
9. How is Christian unity related to the nature of God? (4:4-6)
- * 10. How are we enabled to live at peace with each other? (4:7)
11. Who gives grace to each believer? (4:7)
12. How did Paul confirm God's giving of gifts? (4:8)
13. What commentary did Paul make on the Old Testament passage he quoted? Why? (4:9-11)
14. With what kind of people does God fill the church? (4:11)
15. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? (4:12-13)
16. What results from gifted believers equipping the church? (4:14-16)

Get It

17. Why did Paul stress the theme of Christian unity to the Ephesians?
- * 18. How do you get along with other Christians?
- * 19. What is God's prescription for unity among believers?
20. How does the Spirit help you maintain the "bond of peace" with others in your church?
21. How have you benefited from the Christian leadership in your church?
22. What is your responsibility to help others in the body of Christ?
23. How unified is your church?

Apply It

- * 24. How do you need to show humility, gentleness, and patience in dealing with a difficult relationship this week?
25. What service can you offer another church member to help build up the body of Christ?
26. To whom do you need to speak the truth lovingly this week?

Living as Children of Light - Ephesians 4:17-5:21

Topics: Anger, Believers, Children, Darkness, Forgiveness, God, Hardheartedness, Help, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Ignorance, Immorality, Jesus Christ, Kindness, Light, Love, Lust, Lying, Nature, Needs, Righteousness, Separation, Sin, Submission, Wisdom

Open It

1. Do you prefer wearing old, comfortable clothing or dressy outfits? Why?
2. How do you feel when you wear a brand-new suit or outfit?
- * 3. What do you do with your worn-out clothing?

Explore It

4. In what way were Ephesian believers instructed not to live as Gentiles? (4:17-19)
5. How did Paul contrast the Ephesian Christians with the Gentiles? (4:20-21)
- * 6. In what way does God want Christians to change? (4:22-24)
7. How should new Christians stop living? (4:22)
8. How should new Christians begin living? (4:23-24)
9. What should we keep in mind concerning lying, anger, and stealing? (4:25-28)
10. How should believers speak to one another? (4:29)
11. How can the Holy Spirit be hurt? (4:29-30)
12. Of what five vices are believers to rid themselves? (4:31)
13. What positive commands did Paul give the Ephesians? (4:32)
- * 14. How are Christians to imitate God? (5:1-2)
- * 15. From what practices should Christians abstain? (5:3-6)
16. Whom do we need to avoid? Why? (5:5-7)
17. Why should Christians not become partners with non-Christians? (5:7-8)
18. How does life in darkness contrast with life in the light? (5:9-20)
19. How should Spirit-controlled believers relate to one another? (5:21)

Get It

- * 20. Since becoming a Christian, what old habits have you discarded?
21. Of what aspects of your old nature do you still need to rid yourself?
22. How do you see the new nature taking hold in your life?
- * 23. What evidence do you see that your life is controlled by the Holy Spirit?
24. What fruit of the light do you see in your life?
25. In what way should you be submissive to other Christians?
26. How would you rate your spiritual wardrobe: basic, adequate, or overflowing?
27. What aspect of your Christian life do you want to practice more consistently?

Apply It

- * 28. What would be the first step for you in changing an old pattern of behavior?
29. What can you do this week to make your Christian living more consistent?
30. How can you relate to others today in new, joyful ways?

Wives and Husbands - Ephesians 5:22-33

Topics: Bible, Body, Church, Family, Holiness, Husbands, Jesus Christ, Love, Marriage, Respect, Submission, Unity, Wives

Open It

1. What husband-and-wife team do you greatly admire?
- * 2. In your view, what one quality or ability sustains a marriage relationship?

Explore It

3. What service should wives render to the Lord? (5:22)
4. What is the relationship of the husband to the wife? (5:23)
5. How is Christ's headship of the church an example to the husband? (5:23)
- * 6. How is the relationship of the church to Christ an example to wives? (5:24)
7. How are husbands commanded to love their wives? (5:25)
8. How did Christ prepare a bride for Himself? (5:26-27)
- * 9. How should husbands love their wives? (5:28-30)
10. How is the bond between husband and wife greater than the bond between parent and child? (5:31)
- * 11. How does the bond between Christ and the church illustrate the love of a husband for his wife? (5:32)
12. In sum, what are the responsibilities of the husband and wife toward each other? (5:33)

Get It

- * 13. How should both husband and wife model themselves on Christ?
- * 14. Why would unselfishness be an essential part of a Christian marriage?
15. What should a Christian wife give her husband?
16. How should a Christian husband care for his wife?
17. How does a healthy Christian marriage relationship honor the Lord?
18. What are some ways local churches can help Christian couples strengthen their marriages?

Apply It

- * 19. What is something you can do to help a Christian couple strengthen their marriage?
20. How can you treat your spouse with more respect and love this week?
21. How can you express your thankfulness to Christ today for making you His bride?

Children and Parents - Ephesians 6:1-4

Topics: Children, Discipline, Discouragement, Honor, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Marriage, Parents, Promises, Training

Open It

1. What are some of the enjoyable aspects of being a parent?
2. How do you treat children differently from the way your parents treated you?
- * 3. If you could change one thing about your parents, what would you change?

Explore It

4. Why is a child's obedience to his or her parents pleasing to the Lord? (6:1)
5. Why should children obey parents? (6:1)
6. How is obedience to parents part of a child's obligation to Christ? (6:1)
- * 7. What does it mean to "honor your father and mother"? (6:2-3)
8. What was promised to Israelite children who obeyed their parents? (6:2-3)
9. How does God's commandment and promise to children hold true today? (6:2-3)
- * 10. What does God want fathers not to do? (6:4)
11. What does God want fathers to do? (6:4)
- * 12. How should children be reared and nourished? (6:4)
13. How is the Lord to be the center of parent-child relationships? (6:4)

Get It

14. Why should parents pay attention to their child's natural bent?
- * 15. Why is it easier for children to obey fair and loving parents than unreasonable and demanding parents?
16. How does rearing children in the "training and instruction of the Lord" provide guidelines for fathers?
- * 17. How does honoring your parents bring you blessing?
18. How do you feel about your ability to be a good parent?
19. How can the Lord support you in your role as a parent?
20. How can a parent avoid exasperating his or her children?

Apply It

- * 21. What can you do to improve or strengthen your relationship with your parents?
22. How can you avoid exasperating your children?
23. How do you need to nurture healthy family relationships this week?

Slaves and Masters - Ephesians 6:5-9

Topics: Favoritism, Heart, Jesus Christ, Obedience, Respect, Rewards, Serving, Sincerity, Slavery, Work

Open It

1. Had you lived long ago and owned slaves, what kind of slave owner would you have been?
- * 2. If you were a slave, what would be the worst part of being someone's property?

Explore It

- * 3. Why did Paul tell slaves to obey their masters "with respect and fear"? (6:5)
4. What did Paul tell slaves to do? (6:5-8)
5. What responsibilities did slaves have to their masters? (6:5-8)
6. How did Paul transform the work of the slave? (6:5-8)
- * 7. How could slaves serve the Lord while working for their masters? (6:5-8)
- * 8. How would slaves benefit from winning the favor of their masters? (6:6)
9. With what attitude should the slave serve his master? (6:7)
10. What reward for Christian service could the slave expect? (6:7-8)
11. What directives did Paul give slave owners? (6:9)
12. Why did Paul warn owners against abusing their slaves? (6:9)
13. How does God view rank or social status? (6:9)

Get It

- * 14. Why did Paul call slaves to obey and not to revolt against the system of slavery?
15. How were Paul's instructions helpful and protective to both slave and slave owner?
16. How did Paul's words to slaves and masters relate to the teaching in the rest of his letter to the Ephesians?
17. How do we enslave certain groups in our society?
18. How does God want us to treat people who are subordinate to us?
19. How does God want us to treat people who are over us?
- * 20. How does God want us to treat all people with whom we work?
21. When should Christians work for social justice?
22. What importance do you attach to rank or social status?
23. What importance should we attach to rank or social status?

Apply It

24. How can you improve your attitude toward someone you work with?
- * 25. How can you remember to serve all people wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord?

The Armor of God - Ephesians 6:10-24

Topics: Armor, Bible, Blessing, Darkness, Encouragement, Evil, God, Holy Spirit, Power, Prayer, Satan, Strength

Open It

1. How do you protect your home from danger?
- * 2. If you were a police officer, what extra precautions would you take to guard against danger?
3. Do you tend to be the trusting type, or are you suspicious of other people? Why?

Explore It

4. What did Paul say to exhort his audience? (6:10)
- * 5. What did Paul tell the believers to put on? (6:11)
6. Why do Christians need to put on God's armor? (6:11-12)
7. What can Christians dressed in the full armor of God expect? (6:13)
8. What mandate does God give all Christians? (6:14)
- * 9. How should Christians be armed for battle? (6:14-17)
- * 10. What last two pieces of armor did Paul tell all Christians to take up? (6:18)
11. Why did Paul ask the Ephesians to pray for him? (6:19-20)
12. Who took Paul's letter to the Christians at Ephesus? (6:21)
13. How would Tychicus help the Ephesians? (6:21-22)
14. With what kind of words did Paul bless his audience? (6:23)
15. What did Paul say in benediction? (6:24)

Get It

16. Why do you think Paul used the detailed description of a Roman soldier's armor to explain spiritual warfare?
17. How would you describe the armor of God in your own words?
18. What is spiritual warfare?
- * 19. How often are you engaged in spiritual warfare?
20. In what way is the Christian life like a battle?
21. Why is the Christian life like a battlefield?
- * 22. What pieces of armor are you missing?
23. How often do you pray in the Spirit?
24. How often do you pray for other Christians?
25. In what ways do you need peace, love, faith, and grace in your life right now?

Apply It

26. How can you lean on the Holy Spirit's help in doing battle for the kingdom of God each day?
- * 27. How can you encourage another Christian in his or her spiritual battles?

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Thanksgiving and Prayer - Philippians 1:1-11

Topics: Believers, Blessing, Glory, God, Gospel, Grace, Jesus Christ, Partnerships, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Righteousness, Serving

Open It

- * 1. What's your usual way of saying hello to your friends?
- 2. In your family, how important are greetings in affirming each other?

Explore It

- 3. Who was the author of the letter to the Philippians? (1:1)
- * 4. How did Paul identify himself and his coworker? (1:1)
- 5. To whom did Paul address this letter? (1:1)
- * 6. How did Paul greet the Philippians? (1:2)
- 7. When Paul thought about the Philippians, what did he do? (1:3)
- 8. How were the Philippians in partnership with Paul? (1:4-5)
- * 9. What was Paul confident about? (1:6)
- 10. How did Paul feel about the Philippian church? (1:7-8)
- 11. What did Paul report that he prayed for? (1:9)
- 12. What two results did Paul seek? (1:10-11)

Get It

- 13. How does your pastor greet church members?
- 14. Why is it a good practice to begin a letter with a Christian blessing?
- * 15. What godly encouragement can you offer other Christians?
- * 16. Paul complimented the church at Philippi; what positive things can you say about your congregation?
- 17. How is Paul's prayer for the Philippians a good prayer for you to copy?

Apply It

- 18. What prayer of thanksgiving can you offer for your church today?
- 19. How can you encourage someone in his or her Christian journey this week?
- * 20. Which Christian brother or sister would be heartened to receive a letter from you this week?

Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel - Philippians 1:12-30

Topics: Believers, Circumstances, Courage, Death, Faith, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Joy, Life, Motives, Prayer, Reputation, Salvation, Suffering

Open It

1. How interested are you in the lives of famous people?
- * 2. How often do you watch TV shows or read articles about celebrities?

Explore It

3. How was Paul's ministry affected by his bondage? (1:12-14)
- * 4. Why was Paul being talked about? (1:13)
5. How did Paul's incarceration affect the testimony of others? (1:14)
6. Why did some people preach Christ out of envy and rivalry? (1:15-17)
7. Why did some people preach Christ in love? (1:15-16)
- * 8. What made Paul rejoice? (1:18)
9. Why did Paul expect to be delivered from his predicament? (1:19)
10. How did Paul expect to be delivered? (1:19-20)
11. What was Paul's main purpose in living? (1:21)
- * 12. What were Paul's convictions about living and dying? (1:22-24)
13. Why did Paul think he would remain alive? (1:24-26)
14. What did Paul want the believers to do? (1:27-30)
15. How did Paul tell the Philippians to face opposition? (1:27-30)
16. How did Paul encourage the Christians at Philippi? (1:29)

Get It

- * 17. How did Paul's notoriety work to his advantage?
18. How would you like the reputation of being a fearless Christian?
19. To what degree do you share Paul's passion for the gospel?
20. For what do you truly live?
21. Whom do you know who is suffering for Christ right now?
22. How is your church different from the Philippian church?
- * 23. What's the toughest thing you've had to experience as a Christian?
24. What are you willing to risk to have the reputation of being a fearless Christian?
25. What about your life-style do you most want to change in your desire to live for Christ?

Apply It

26. What step toward dedicating every area of your life to Christ can you take today?
- * 27. What can you do today to encourage someone who is suffering because of his or her faith?

Imitating Christ's Humility - Philippians 2:1-11

Topics: Believers, Compassion, Confession, Death, Encouragement, Example, Fellowship, God, Holy Spirit, Humility, Jesus Christ, Joy, Love, Name, Obedience, People, Pride, Self-centeredness, Serving, Unity

Open It

1. When was the last time you had a squabble with a family member?
- * 2. How much of a peacemaker are you?

Explore It

- * 3. What four qualities mark unity with Christ? (2:1)
4. How can Christians show their unity in Christ in practical ways? (2:2)
- * 5. What did Paul say about self-centeredness? (2:3-4)
6. What did Paul exhort believers to have? (2:5)
7. What did Christ set aside when He became a man? (2:6-8)
8. How did Jesus limit Himself? (2:6-8)
9. How was Christ fully God and fully man at the same time? (2:6-8)
- * 10. How is Christ the best example of humility and unselfishness for us? (2:6-8)
11. Why did Christ take on the limitations of being human even though He was of the same nature as God? (2:7)
12. How did God exalt Jesus? (2:9)
13. How did Christ win sovereignty over all people and over everything? (2:10)
14. What confession will every person make? (2:11)

Get It

15. How does your life show that you count on Christ?
16. How do petty quarrels hold you back in your Christian walk?
- * 17. How can Christ help you keep peace with others?
18. What hinders unity in your church?
19. What kind of disposition does Christ want us to have?
- * 20. How does Christ's example of humility challenge our natural self-centeredness?

Apply It

- * 21. What practical steps can you take this week to demonstrate humility in your relationships?
22. For the sake of unity in Christ, what petty squabbles should you clear up right away? How?

Shining as Stars - Philippians 2:12-18

Topics: Arguments, Believers, Complaining, God, Jesus Christ, Joy, Obedience, People, Sacrifice, Salvation, Serving, Sin, Witnessing, Work

Open It

1. Would you prefer to explore the universe aboard a spacecraft or looking through a powerful telescope? Why?
2. What do you most enjoy about the nighttime sky?
3. What is the most frequent complaint you hear?
- * 4. Who pointed the way for you in your first job?

Explore It

- * 5. What did the Philippian Christians need to obey? (2:12)
6. What were the Philippian believers to work out? (2:12-13)
7. How would God help the Philippians obey Him? (2:12-13)
8. What instructions did Paul give in relation to everyday Christian living? (2:14-16)
- * 9. Why were the Philippians not shining “like stars” in their world? (2:14-16)
10. Why did the Philippian assembly need to show a united front to unbelievers? (2:14-16)
11. What would enable Paul to boast about the Philippians? (2:14-16)
12. Whose honor was Paul concerned about? (2:16)
- * 13. How did Paul view his own life? (2:17)
14. How did Paul view the faith of the Philippian believers? (2:17)
15. What did Paul want his friends at Philippi to experience? (2:18)

Get It

16. What does it mean “to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”?
17. What do you tend to complain and argue about?
- * 18. What godly qualities make Christians “shine like stars”?
- * 19. How does shining for Christ encourage others to be drawn to Him?
20. What Christian leader has personally invested in your growth as a follower of Christ?
21. How can you help new believers “shine like stars” for God’s kingdom?

Apply It

22. In what situations this week do you need to make a conscious effort not to complain or argue?
- * 23. Before whom do you want to shine in your place of work or neighborhood? In what ways can you do so?
24. What sacrifices can you make for the sake of others today?

Timothy and Epaphroditus - Philippians 2:19-30

Topics: Church, Encouragement, God, Honor, Jesus Christ, Partnerships, Risk, Sacrifice, Sickness

Open It

- * 1. When was the last time you gave a character reference for a friend?
- 2. If close friends were to talk about you behind your back, what would they say?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Paul plan to send Timothy to the Philippians? (2:19)
- * 4. What was Paul's opinion of Timothy? (2:20)
- 5. What was Timothy's relationship with the church at Philippi? (2:20)
- * 6. In Paul's view, why did Timothy stand out? (2:21-22)
- 7. When would Paul send Timothy to the Philippians? (2:23)
- 8. Why was Paul confident that he would revisit the believers at Philippi? (2:24)
- 9. Who was Epaphroditus? (2:25)
- 10. Why did the Philippians send Epaphroditus to Paul? (2:25)
- 11. How did Epaphroditus feel about his friends in Philippi? (2:26)
- 12. What happened to Epaphroditus? (2:26-27)
- 13. How did God spare Paul tremendous sorrow? (2:27)
- 14. How did Paul demonstrate his selflessness? (2:28)
- * 15. How were the Philippians told to welcome home Epaphroditus? (2:29-30)
- 16. Why were the Philippians told to honor their messenger? (2:30)

Get It

- * 17. Among your circle of Christian friends, for whom do you have the highest regard? Why?
- 18. Why could Paul count on Timothy and Epaphroditus?
- 19. What reputation do you have in your church?
- * 20. In what ways have you proved to be a reliable servant of God?
- 21. What risks are you willing to take on behalf of other Christians?
- 22. In what ways can you be God's "courier" to others?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you be a model of humility and service to other Christians this week?
- 24. This week, how can you look out for the interests of the Lord rather than your own interests?

No Confidence in the Flesh - Philippians 3:1-11

Topics: Accomplishments, Believers, Faith, Heresy, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Joy, Reputation, Resurrection, Righteousness, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. If you were to update your resume today, what recent accomplishment would you want to include?
- 2. What do you feel are your most valuable skills and gifts?
- 3. How do you feel when someone is better than you at something you do well?

Explore It

- 4. What did Paul call on believers to do? (3:1)
- 5. Why did Paul repeat essential truths to the Philippians? (3:1)
- 6. What did Paul say about certain false teachers? (3:2)
- 7. Whom did Paul identify as “true”? (3:3)
- * 8. What autobiographical facts did Paul give? (3:4-6)
- 9. In what sense was Paul not boasting, even though he was calling attention to his accomplishments? (3:7-9)
- * 10. Why did Paul view his former accomplishments as “rubbish”? (3:8)
- * 11. What was Paul’s status in Christ? (3:9)
- 12. What longings did Paul admit to the Philippians? (3:10-11)
- 13. What hope did Paul express? (3:11)

Get It

- 14. What sorts of things tend to draw you away from Christ?
- * 15. What do you usually boast about?
- 16. Why do we tend to base our worth as Christians on our performance?
- * 17. Why should our identity and confidence be in the Lord?
- 18. How is the Apostle Paul’s commitment to Christ an example to you?

Apply It

- * 19. What do you need to start counting as rubbish for the sake of Christ?
- 20. When you face struggles this week, how can you remember to rejoice rather than complain?

Pressing on Toward the Goal - Philippians 3:12-4:1

Topics: Believers, Citizenship, Enemies, Example, Goals, God, Heaven, Jesus Christ, Maturity, Power, Shame

Open It

- * 1. How physically fit are you?
- 2. If you lived in ancient times and participated in sports, would you prefer chariot racing or spear throwing? Why?
- 3. How much time do you spend watching or participating in sports?

Explore It

- 4. What was Paul's testimony? (3:12-14)
- * 5. In what ways did Paul's spiritual life resemble the discipline of a runner? (3:12-14)
- 6. What was Paul's view of the past? (3:13)
- * 7. What was Paul's goal? (3:14)
- 8. How did Paul call the Philippians to share his view? (3:15)
- 9. What did Paul hope for the believers who disagreed with him? (3:15)
- 10. What was Paul's plea to the Philippians? (3:16)
- * 11. How did Paul want believers to imitate him? (3:17)
- 12. How did Paul describe God's enemies? (3:18-19)
- 13. Where did the Philippian Christians have their citizenship? (3:20)
- 14. Whom did the Philippian believers eagerly await? (3:20)
- 15. What characterizes citizens of heaven? (3:21)

Get It

- * 16. What kind of race are you running for Christ?
- 17. What prize do you seek?
- * 18. What kind of opposition do you face in your struggle to live as a Christian?
- 19. How can you imitate Paul's life and example?
- 20. How can Christ help you stay on track and reach the goal?

Apply It

- * 21. What spiritual workout or training this week will help you run your Christian marathon?
- 22. In what way can you renew your commitment to press on toward the goal of being like Christ?

Exhortations - Philippians 4:2-9

Topics: Believers, Example, Gentleness, God, Jesus Christ, Joy, Partnerships, Peace, Prayer, Thankfulness, Thinking, Value

Open It

1. How do you tend to respond when things don't go your way?
- * 2. What does it take to live at peace with difficult family members or colleagues?

Explore It

3. How did Paul feel toward the Philippian congregation? (4:1)
4. What did Paul exhort the Philippian believers to do? (4:1)
- * 5. Why did Paul plead with Euodia and Syntyche? (4:2)
6. How had Euodia and Syntyche helped Paul in the past? (4:3)
7. What was Paul's relationship with Clement? (4:3)
8. How could Paul count on his "loyal yokefellow"? (4:3)
9. What did Paul encourage his readers to do? (4:4)
- * 10. How did Paul tell the Philippian Christians to treat others? (4:5)
11. How should an awareness of Christ's imminent return affect a person's attitude? (4:5-7)
12. What did Paul say about anxiety? (4:6-7)
13. What were the Philippians to do instead of worrying? (4:6-7)
- * 14. How can a believer enjoy the peace of God? (4:6-7)
15. What are the qualities of wholesome thoughts? (4:8)
16. What were the Philippians to put into practice? (4:9)
17. How can believers enjoy the presence of the God of peace? (4:9)

Get It

18. How have disagreements between people affected your church?
- * 19. When have you been involved in helping Christians resolve differences?
20. How can you have a peaceful spirit?
- * 21. If you were more thankful, joyful, and gentle, how might your family and friends be affected?
22. What does it take for you to think worthy thoughts?
23. What does it mean to live a righteous life-style?
24. In what areas of your life do you need to follow Paul's example?

Apply It

25. What can you do today to reduce your level of anxiety?
- * 26. How can you be an effective peacemaker this week?

Thanks for Their Gifts - Philippians 4:10-23

Topics: Abundance, Church, Confidence, Contentment, Generosity, Gifts, God, Gospel, Grace, Jesus Christ, Joy, Poor, Sacrifice, Strength

Open It

1. What experiences bring you the most contentment?
- * 2. When was a time you felt contentment in the middle of problems or uncertainty?

Explore It

3. Why was Paul glad? (4:10-13)
- * 4. What lesson had Paul learned about contentment? (4:10-13)
5. Why could Paul handle any kind of circumstance? (4:13)
6. What did the Philippians do about Paul's troubles? (4:14)
7. How did Paul feel toward the Philippian believers? Why? (4:14)
- * 8. How had the Philippians supported Paul in the past? (4:15-16)
9. What did Paul not want? (4:17)
10. What did Paul want for the Philippians? (4:17)
11. What was Paul's current financial situation? (4:18)
12. How did Paul respond to the Philippians' generosity? (4:18-19)
- * 13. How would God reciprocate the believers' generosity? (4:19)
14. To whom did Paul give thanks and praise? (4:20)
15. Who sent final greetings to the Philippians? (4:21-22)
16. To what did Paul give prominence in closing his letter? (4:23)

Get It

- * 17. How could Paul be so flexible in his approach to life's circumstances?
18. How do you handle the unexpected?
19. What can you learn from Paul about being content?
- * 20. The Philippian Christians helped Paul when he needed it; how are you able to help others in trouble?
21. What can you do to be ready for others when they need financial help?
22. What can your church do to help missionaries with financial needs?
23. How will God honor a giving spirit?
24. How can the relationship between Paul and the Philippians help your church in its relationship to those involved in missions?

Apply It

25. This week, what can you do to help a Christian who needs financial support?
26. Whom do you know who needs a note of encouragement from you today?
- * 27. What can you do to develop an attitude of contentment in all circumstances?

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Thanksgiving and Prayer - Colossians 1:1-14

Topics: Church, Faith, Forgiveness, Fruit, God, Gospel, Grace, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Hope, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Knowledge, Love, Partnerships, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Sin, Strength, Thankfulness

Open It

1. How many cards and letters do you usually receive at Christmas?
2. When was the last time you received a letter from a stranger?
- * 3. When was the last time you received a letter that really cheered you up?

Explore It

4. Who wrote the letter to the Colossians? (1:1)
5. Who was with Paul when he wrote this letter? (1:1)
6. How did Paul address the Colossian Christians? (1:2)
7. How did Paul greet his audience? (1:2)
- * 8. Why did Paul offer prayers of thanksgiving for the Colossians? (1:3-4)
9. From what source did the believers' faith and love spring? (1:5)
10. What did Paul stress about the gospel? (1:5-6)
11. Who taught the gospel to the Colossians? (1:7)
12. How did Paul describe Epaphras? (1:7)
13. What did Epaphras tell Paul and Timothy about the Colossians? (1:7-8)
- * 14. What was Paul's primary prayer for these Christians? (1:9)
- * 15. What results did Paul want for the Colossians? (1:10)
16. How could the church at Colosse have spiritual strength? (1:11-12)
17. How does God enable believers to share in His inheritance? (1:12-14)

Get It

18. What do you find appealing about the way Paul started his letter to the Colossians?
- * 19. Why did Paul praise a group of Christians he had never met?
20. How are the results of faith, love, and hope evident in your life?
21. How is the gospel bearing fruit in your church?
- * 22. What can we learn about praying for others from Paul's prayers for the Colossians?
23. If Paul were to write you a personal letter, what might he say to you?

Apply It

24. What is one way you can improve your prayer this week?
25. What missionaries can you pray for on a regular basis over the next month?
- * 26. To whom can you write an encouraging letter sometime during the next week?

The Supremacy of Christ - Colossians 1:15-23

Topics: Believers, Church, Creation, Death, Doctrine, Enemies, Image, Reconciliation

Open It

- * 1. What person comes to mind when you think of greatness?
- 2. Whom do you look up to? Why?
- 3. What qualities stand out in a person you admire?

Explore It

- 4. What is Christ's relationship to God? (1:15)
- * 5. What is Christ's relationship to Creation? (1:15-17)
- 6. How do "all things . . . hold together" under Christ? (1:16-17)
- 7. What is Christ's relationship to the church? (1:18)
- * 8. Why was the resurrection of Jesus significant? (1:18)
- 9. How did Paul explain the deity of Christ? (1:19)
- * 10. What did God achieve through the work of His Son? (1:20)
- 11. How did Christ bring us to God? (1:21-22)
- 12. Why was reconciliation necessary? (1:21-22)
- 13. What is a Christian's position before God? (1:22)
- 14. What is the role of faith in reconciliation with God? (1:23)
- 15. What kind of faith did the Colossians have? (1:23)
- 16. What was Paul's confident expectation? (1:23)

Get It

- * 17. Why did Paul take the time to describe the qualities of Christ?
- * 18. What difference does our understanding about Christ make?
- 19. How would you explain reconciliation (with God) to a non-Christian friend?
- 20. What does the work of Christ on your behalf mean to you?
- 21. In what way are we all under Christ's authority?
- 22. In what way are you under Christ's authority?
- 23. How firm is your faith?
- 24. What can a person do if his or her faith is weak?

Apply It

- * 25. When can you take time this week to meditate on this powerful, compelling description of Christ?
- 26. What truths about Christ do you want to remember when you present the gospel to unbelieving friends?
- 27. How can you strengthen your faith in Christ this week?

Paul's Labor for the Church - Colossians 1:24-2:5

Topics: Body, Church, Encouragement, Glory, God, Hope, Jesus Christ, Joy, Serving, Suffering, Teaching, Unity, Wisdom

Open It

1. When was the last time you had a good physical workout?
- * 2. How do you feel after strenuous physical exercise?

Explore It

3. Why did Paul rejoice? (1:24)
- * 4. What did Paul do for the sake of the church? (1:24)
5. What commission did God give Paul? (1:25)
6. To what mystery did Paul refer? (1:26)
7. To whom had God chosen to make known a mystery? (1:27)
8. How did Paul help believers become spiritually mature? (1:28-29)
- * 9. What kind of effort did Paul expend in preaching and teaching? (1:29)
10. What did Paul want his audience to know? (2:1)
11. What was Paul's stated purpose? (2:2-3)
12. What is hidden in Christ? (2:3)
- * 13. How would a commitment to the full knowledge of Christ protect the Colossians? (2:4)
14. How was Paul unified with the church at Colosse? (2:4)
15. What delighted Paul? (2:5)

Get It

16. Paul had never met the Colossian Christians; how could he have suffered for them?
17. How is suffering an essential part of the Christian life?
- * 18. Why did Paul work so hard for the Colossians?
19. What results did Paul expect from his work for the sake of the gospel?
20. What can you do for the church of Christ?
- * 21. When have you become tired because of your work for the kingdom of God?
22. What makes a church encouraged and united?
23. What "fine-sounding arguments" draw some Christians away from the faith?
24. What can we do to grow in our understanding of Christ?
25. What can you do to grow in your understanding of Christ?

Apply It

- * 26. What kind of "spiritual workout" would increase your stamina for the Christian journey ahead this week?
27. How can you learn more about Christ this week?

Freedom From Human Regulations Through Life With Christ - Colossians 2:6-23

Topics: Angels, Authority, Body, Church, Death, Doctrine, Faith, Freedom, God, Jesus Christ, Judging Others, Legalism, Rules, Worship

Open It

1. What good advice have you never forgotten?
- * 2. In what ways would you characterize yourself as permissive, and in what ways would you characterize yourself as strict?

Explore It

3. How did Paul tell the Colossians to continue in Christ? (2:6-7)
4. What false teaching was Paul concerned about? (2:8)
5. What did Paul affirm about Christ? How? (2:9-10)
- * 6. What did God give the Colossian believers? (2:10)
7. Why do Gentile Christians have no need to conform to Jewish rules and regulations? (2:11-12)
8. How did the Cross cancel the written code? (2:13-14)
9. From what did Christ deliver us? How? (2:15-17)
- * 10. How did Paul encourage the Colossians to practice their freedom in Christ? (2:16)
11. How did Christ fulfill what the Old Testament foreshadowed? (2:17)
12. Whom did Paul accuse of trying to rob believers of their spiritual rewards? (2:18)
- * 13. What were the characteristics of the false teachers? (2:18-19)
14. How did Paul challenge the legalism that had infected the church? (2:20-21)
15. What are the failings of human commands and teachings? (2:20-23)

Get It

- * 16. What “additions” to faith in Christ have you encountered from teachers in your Christian community?
17. How are you affected by popular religious rules floating around today?
18. What does “fullness in Christ” mean to you?
- * 19. Paul’s advice kept the Colossians growing in their faith; what Christian leaders have helped you stay on track spiritually?
20. How deep are the roots of your faith?

Apply It

- * 21. This week, how can you best exercise the freedom you have in Christ?
22. How can you help a Christian friend get rid of his or her false ideas about Christ?

Rules for Holy Living - Colossians 3:1-17

Topics: Actions, Believers, Death, Equality, Glory, God, Heart, Heaven, Holiness, Image, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Love, Peace, Renewal, Security, Sin, Thankfulness

Open It

1. What's the nicest suit or outfit you have ever worn?
- * 2. When you're finished with your old clothes, what do you often do with them?

Explore It

3. Where did Paul tell the Colossians to turn their attention? (3:1)
4. Where did Paul tell the believers to focus their concern? (3:2)
5. What was the Colossians' security? (3:3)
- * 6. Why should believers look forward to Christ's return? (3:4)
7. What must die? (3:5)
8. What evil activities does God seek to eliminate from our lives? (3:5)
9. Why is God's wrath coming? (3:5-6)
- * 10. What had the Colossians taken off? (3:7-9)
11. What had the Colossians put on? (3:10)
12. What distinctions are removed in Christ? (3:11)
13. What virtues does God seek to plant in us? (3:12, 14)
- * 14. How were the Colossian believers called to clothe themselves? (3:12-17)
15. Why did Paul call on the believers to be peaceful and thankful? (3:15-16)
16. What should we do? How? (3:17)
17. What is one principle that ought to guide everything we do? (3:17)

Get It

18. If you consistently set your sights on Christ and heaven, how would your life be different?
- * 19. What old, "earthly" clothing do you need to get rid of?
- * 20. How does wearing "Christ's clothing" affect the way you live your daily life?
21. What Christian virtues are you lacking?
22. What spiritual process is involved in "putting off" and "putting on"?
23. What is involved in replacing old habits with new ones?
24. How should life in Christ affect the way you treat others?
25. How are all your relationships to be built around Christ?
26. Why do we need to be loving toward others?
27. Why is a thankful spirit an important part of holy living?

Apply It

- * 28. Which of God's goals for holy living do you need to apply to your life this week?
29. How can you be more thankful and loving to those who are close to you?

Rules for Christian Households - Colossians 3:18-4:1

Topics: Believers, Children, Discouragement, Fairness, Family, Favoritism, Heaven, Husbands, Jesus Christ, Justice, Love, Obedience, Pleasure, Rewards, Right, Sincerity, Slavery, Submission, Wives, Work

Open It

- * 1. If you were to make up a slogan that describes your family, what would it be?
- 2. Generally speaking, how do you get along with others?

Explore It

- 3. What should wives do? (3:18)
- 4. What should husbands do? (3:19)
- * 5. How should children respond to parents? (3:20)
- * 6. Why does obedience to parents please the Lord? (3:20)
- * 7. Of what do fathers need to be careful? (3:21)
- 8. How can children become discouraged? (3:21)
- 9. What directives did Paul give slaves? (3:22-25)
- 10. How were slaves called on to serve Christ? (3:23-24)
- 11. How would God mete out full justice in the master-slave relationship? (3:25)
- 12. What instructions did Paul give masters? (4:1)
- 13. What insight did Paul give masters? (4:1)

Get It

- * 14. How do God's instructions to families help family members become mature Christians?
- 15. Why should wives submit to their husbands?
- 16. Why does God tell husbands not to be harsh with their wives?
- * 17. Why should Christian parents rear their children in an atmosphere of encouragement?
- 18. How can Christian parents rear their children in an atmosphere of encouragement?
- 19. How can God's instructions to slaves apply today to Christian employees?
- 20. Which of God's principles for Christian households challenge you to change?

Apply It

- * 21. What is one way you can improve the way you treat each member of your family?
- 22. How can you have an attitude of service toward others in your work?

Further Instructions - Colossians 4:2-18

Topics: Believers, Church, Circumstances, Conversation, Encouragement, Grace, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Maturity, Partnerships, Prayer, Serving, Thankfulness, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What's your favorite salty snack?
- 2. If you had to eat all food without salt for a day or two, how would this affect your eating habits?

Explore It

- * 3. What did Paul prescribe for all believers? (4:2)
- 4. What request did Paul make of his readers? (4:3-4)
- 5. What did Paul say about the Christian's public life? (4:5-6)
- * 6. How should believers speak to others? (4:6)
- 7. Who was Tychicus? (4:7)
- 8. Why did Paul send Tychicus to Colosse? (4:7-8)
- 9. Who was Onesimus? (4:9)
- 10. Whose greetings to the Colossians did Paul include in his letter? (4:10-14)
- 11. Which of Paul's partners in ministry were Jews? (4:10-11)
- * 12. What did Epaphras do on behalf of his church at Colosse? (4:12-13)
- 13. What relationship did Luke and Demas have to Paul? (4:14)
- 14. To whom did Paul send greetings? (4:15)
- 15. Where did Paul want his letter read? (4:16)
- 16. What instruction did Paul send Archippus? (4:17)
- 17. How did Paul conclude his letter? (4:18)

Get It

- 18. Why is prayer important?
- 19. How much time do you devote to prayer each day?
- 20. How did Paul set an example for mature interpersonal relationships?
- * 21. In what ways is your conversation "seasoned with salt"?
- 22. How well do you relate to unbelievers?
- * 23. Paul demonstrated the value of teamwork in ministry; how well do you work with other Christians for the kingdom of God?
- 24. Paul spoke highly of his Christian friends; what can you praise about your Christian friends?

Apply It

- * 25. How can you season your speech with God's grace among non-Christians?
- 26. How can you remember to speak well of family members and Christian friends this week?
- 27. What personal relationship can you improve during the next few days? How?

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Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Faith - 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Topics: Change, Commitment, Devotion, Faith, Persecution, Suffering

Open It

1. Who in your opinion are the best role models for young people?
- * 2. What would it take for someone to make a lasting impression on you?
3. What causes a person to really change his or her attitudes and behavior?

Explore It

4. Who wrote this letter? (1:1)
5. To whom was this letter written? (1:1)
- * 6. What did Paul remember about the Thessalonians? (1:2-3)
7. What made Paul believe God had chosen the Thessalonian believers? (1:4-10)
8. How had Paul presented the gospel to this audience? (1:5-6)
9. How had the Thessalonians responded to the gospel message? (1:6-7)
- * 10. For what kind of faith were the Thessalonians known? (1:6)
11. Whom did the Thessalonians imitate? (1:6)
- * 12. How had the Thessalonians' lives been a model for others? (1:7-10)
13. What changes did the Thessalonians make in their lives when they heard the gospel? (1:9)
14. What were the Thessalonians anticipating? (1:10)

Get It

15. How was the Thessalonians' hope visible for others to see?
- * 16. What characteristics in a person would convince you that he or she was a genuine Christian chosen by God?
17. What convinces people Christianity is true?
- * 18. What is the difference between presenting the gospel with power and deep conviction, and presenting the gospel without it?
19. How are the Thessalonians examples for our daily living?
20. What persecution and suffering can Christians expect when they publicly declare their faith?
21. In what ways do we need to imitate Jesus Christ and other Christians we know?
22. In what visible ways have you been changed by turning away from sin and turning toward God?
23. How can actively waiting for Jesus' return affect our daily attitudes and actions?

Apply It

- * 24. How can you be more of a model to other believers this week?
25. In what way can you present the gospel with power and conviction the next time you share it?

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica - 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

Topics: Integrity, Motives, Persecution, Suffering, Teaching, Work

Open It

- * 1. How do you know when someone is using flattery to manipulate you?
- 2. What are the signs of genuine love between a parent and a child?
- 3. What qualities should a Christian leader have?

Explore It

- 4. Under what conditions did Paul share the gospel with the Thessalonians? (2:2)
- 5. What false charges had been made about Paul? (2:3-5)
- * 6. How did Paul answer the charges against him? (2:3-5)
- 7. How were other traveling religious teachers deceiving people? (2:5)
- 8. How did Paul describe his relationship with the Thessalonians? (2:7)
- * 9. What were Paul and his companions delighted to do? Why? (2:8)
- * 10. What did Paul want the Thessalonians to remember about his time with them? (2:9)
- 11. How did Paul describe his work with the Thessalonians? (2:10)
- 12. In what way was Paul like a father to the Thessalonians? (2:11-12)
- 13. How did the Thessalonians receive the Word of God? (2:13)
- 14. How were the Thessalonians like the churches in Judea? (2:14)
- 15. What kind of opposition had Paul faced? (2:15-16)
- 16. What is God's response to people who oppose the preaching of His gospel? (2:16)

Get It

- * 17. How can we judge the success or failure of our work with people?
- 18. What kind of opposition can we expect whenever we speak out for Jesus Christ?
- 19. How do the opinions of others influence how we share our faith?
- * 20. How can a desire for popularity (even among Christians) twist our desire and commitment to serve God?
- 21. Why did Paul work so hard not to be a burden to the Thessalonians?
- 22. What standards of behavior and care should Christians follow as they try to reach out to people?
- 23. What's the difference between accepting a teaching as the Word of God and responding to it?

Apply It

- 24. In what ways can you share your life with others in your efforts to share Christ with them?
- * 25. What can you do this week to make sure that you are trying to please God and not other people?

Paul's Longing to See the Thessalonians - 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5

Topics: Encouragement, Future, Persecution, Rewards, Satan, Separation, Temptation

Open It

1. If you were accused of a crime you didn't commit, how would you respond?
- * 2. How do you encourage a friend who is feeling down and hopeless?

Explore It

3. How did Paul describe his departure and separation from the Thessalonians? (2:17)
4. What stopped Paul from returning to Thessalonica? (2:18)
5. What did Paul say would be his crown or reward at the Second Coming of the Lord? (2:19)
6. Why did Paul consider the Thessalonians his glory and joy? (2:20)
- * 7. Whom did the apostles send to Thessalonica to check up on the church? (3:2)
- * 8. What was Timothy's mission? (3:2)
9. What did Paul say about trials? (3:3)
10. What concern did Paul have for the Thessalonian church? (3:3-5)
11. What did Paul think might undercut the faith of the new believers at Thessalonica? (3:3-5)
- * 12. Why did Paul send someone to check on the Thessalonians? (3:5)

Get It

13. How does Satan hinder or stop our efforts or plans?
- * 14. How can investing your life in someone pay eternal dividends?
15. What personal accomplishments will count for something when we stand in the presence of Christ?
- * 16. What practical things can we do to strengthen and encourage others in their faith?
17. How can opposition discourage and damage the faith of a young believer?
18. How could you help a young believer whose faith has been damaged by opposition or discouragement?

Apply It

19. This week, how could you resist the temptations that hinder your spiritual progress?
- * 20. What younger believer can you help get established in the faith? How?

Timothy's Encouraging Report - 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Topics: Encouragement, Faith, Love, Prayer, Second Coming

Open It

1. If you could make a surprise visit to a dear friend or relative, whom would you select?
- * 2. How can you express love to someone when you can't see or talk to the person?

Explore It

3. What news did Timothy bring to Paul from Thessalonica? (3:6-7)
- * 4. How had Paul's work among the Thessalonians fared during his absence? (3:6-7)
5. How were the Thessalonians an encouragement to Paul? (3:7-9)
6. Why did Paul say, "for now we really live"? (3:8)
7. For what did Paul pray concerning the Thessalonians? (3:10)
8. How did Paul pray? (3:10)
- * 9. When did Paul pray? For whom? (3:10)
10. What was Paul hoping for? (3:11)
11. What did Paul ask the Lord to do? (3:11-13)
- * 12. What did Paul pray would grow and prosper among the Thessalonians? (3:11-13)
13. How should we prepare for Christ's return to earth? (3:13)

Get It

14. How would you define and evaluate the depth of a person's faith?
15. How would you define and evaluate the depth of a person's love?
- * 16. How do you show your concern for Christians in distant places?
17. What are the characteristics of someone who is standing firm in the Lord?
18. In what ways should we imitate Paul's example when assigning credit for bringing someone to Christ?
19. What place did the Thessalonians have in Paul's prayer life?
- * 20. How does a person's love for others increase?
21. How can a person have his or her heart strengthened?

Apply It

22. What preparations can you make this week to get ready for Christ's return?
- * 23. What changes do you need to make to focus your prayer on others?

Living to Please God - 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Topics: Ambition, Faithfulness, Holiness, Immorality, Jobs, Marriage, Purity, Sex

Open It

1. How much do you think people are influenced by what they watch on television?
- * 2. How is sex viewed by many of the people you know and work with?

Explore It

3. What instruction had Paul given to the Thessalonians when he was with them? (4:1)
4. What did Paul urge his audience to do? (4:1)
5. By what authority did Paul give his instructions? (4:2)
6. What are God's desires for our sexuality? (4:3-8)
- * 7. How is the Christian's sexual conduct to be different from that of the non-Christian? (4:4-5)
- * 8. How did Paul characterize the heathen? (4:5)
- * 9. When people ignore or reject God's instructions on sexual behavior, what are they rejecting? (4:8)
10. What command of God were the Thessalonians known for obeying? (4:9-10)
11. What ambition were the Thessalonians to pursue? (4:11-12)
12. What is the result of living a quiet, respected, and responsible life? (4:11-12)

Get It

13. How often do we need to be reminded about God's instructions for our lives?
14. In what way can ambition for fame, success, or wealth hurt a believer?
15. How does God want us to use our bodies?
- * 16. How would you respond to someone who says it is possible to be a good Christian while also being sexually immoral?
17. How do the media influence our attitudes about sex?
18. How can we wrong a person through our sexual behavior?
19. What is a holy life?
- * 20. What would motivate you to live a life that is pure and holy?
21. What influence on people and society can a hardworking, quiet person have?

Apply It

22. In the future, how could you help a Christian caught in sexual sin?
- * 23. What can you do to maintain your purity?
24. When can you spend some time examining your ambitions in light of God's priorities for you?

The Coming of the Lord - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Topics: Assurance, Death, Future, Hope, Jesus Christ, Resurrection, Second Coming

Open It

1. How can the death of a loved one change a person's life?
- * 2. What do you think happens to us when we die?
3. How do you react when you hear predictions about the end of the world?

Explore It

4. What concern was Paul addressing? (4:13-14)
5. How is a Christian's grief over the loss of a loved one different from a non-Christian's grief? (4:13-14)
- * 6. What was the source of Paul's teaching about what happens to those who die? (4:15)
- * 7. What sequence of events will signal the Lord's return? (4:16-17)
8. What effect did Paul believe this teaching about the Lord's return would have on his listeners? (4:18)
- * 9. When will the Lord return? (5:1-2)
10. How will the Lord return? (5:1-3)
11. What contrast is there between believers and non-believers? (5:4-8)
12. What should we do to get ready for the Lord's return? (5:6-8)
13. What roles should faith, hope, and love play in our lives? (5:8)
14. To what does God appoint believers? (5:9-10)
15. For what reason can we be assured of our salvation? (5:9-10)
16. How should a believer use this information to help others? (5:11)

Get It

- * 17. How should a Christian mourn the death of a fellow believer?
18. Who has no hope when they die?
19. What hope do Christians have in death?
20. How can these words help a person who is grieving over loved ones who have died?
21. Why is the date and time of Christ's Second Coming of such interest to many people?
- * 22. What influence should the promise of Christ's Second Coming have on how a person lives day to day?
23. How are faith and love like a breastplate?
24. How is salvation like a helmet?
25. How can talking about God's promises for our future encourage us in our daily lives?

Apply It

26. What can you do to make sure you are ready for Christ's return each day?
- * 27. What hope can you share with someone who is convinced that death is the end of our existence?

Final Instructions - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Topics: Advice, God's Will, Leadership, Prophecy, Quarrels, Respect, Revenge, Thankfulness

Open It

- * 1. What instructions would you give to someone taking care of your home while you were away on a long vacation?
- 2. If you could ask God any three questions about how to live your life, what would you ask?

Explore It

- 3. How does God want us to regard church elders? (5:12-13)
- * 4. How does God want us to treat each other? (5:13-15)
- * 5. What attitudes represent God's will for us? (5:16-18)
 - 6. How should we pray? (5:17)
 - 7. When should we give thanks? (5:18)
 - 8. What is God's will for us? (5:16-18)
 - 9. How should we show respect for the Holy Spirit's presence in us? (5:19-22)
 - 10. What does God want to happen inside us? (5:23)
 - 11. For what reason can we depend on God? (5:24)
- * 12. What kind of affection did Paul have for the Thessalonian Christians? (5:26)
- 13. Who was to hear the contents of this letter? (5:27)

Get It

- 14. How can you show respect for the elders of your church?
- * 15. What can we do to live in peace with everyone in the church?
 - 16. How can the peace among people in the church be damaged?
 - 17. What situations tend to test your patience?
 - 18. What does it mean to pray continually?
 - 19. What happens when you pay back evil to a person who has done wrong to you?
 - 20. Why should we give thanks in all circumstances?
 - 21. What value is there in giving thanks in all circumstances?
- * 22. How can you remain joyful when things go badly?
 - 23. How does prayer relate to a person's joy?
 - 24. How could a person put out the Spirit's fire?
 - 25. How can we tell if God is actually at work in us?
 - 26. How can we help or hinder God's work within us?

Apply It

- * 27. Which of Paul's short, direct commands in this passage do you most need to remember this week?
- 28. With whom do you need to make peace? How can you start?

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Thanksgiving and Prayer - 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Topics: Assurance, Benefits, Faith, Future, Heaven, Hell, Hope, Judgment, Last Days, Perseverance, Rewards, Second Coming

Open It

- * 1. What experiences can destroy a person's desire to live?
- 2. What fictional or real-life person endured difficulties and trials on the way to eventual triumph?

Explore It

- 3. To whom is this letter addressed? (1:1)
- 4. Who wrote this letter? (1:1)
- 5. Why did Paul thank God for the church at Thessalonica? (1:3)
- 6. What was the reputation of the church at Thessalonica? (1:4)
- * 7. What difficulties was the church at Thessalonica experiencing? (1:4)
- * 8. What do persecution and trials prove about God's work in the church and the world? (1:5)
- 9. How will God deal with unbelievers and believers alike? When? (1:6-7)
- 10. When will God reward and punish people? (1:7)
- 11. For what reason will God punish people? (1:8)
- * 12. How did Paul describe the punishment of those who reject Christ? (1:9)
- 13. What will believers experience when they see the Lord Jesus? (1:10)
- 14. What was Paul's prayer for the church at Thessalonica? (1:11-12)

Get It

- 15. What can we do to keep our faith growing?
- 16. What can we do to increase our love for others?
- 17. How can a person go through trials and yet have their faith strengthened?
- * 18. When we are going through difficulties, how do we know God hasn't forgotten us?
- 19. What are some reasons we use to explain why we experience trials and hard times?
- 20. How could trials and hard times be part of God's plan for us?
- 21. How will our view of the trials during our life be different after Jesus returns?
- 22. How does Paul's description of hell compare to your ideas about what hell is like?
- 23. How do we discover God's purpose for our lives?
- * 24. What lessons do you think God is trying to teach you through the trials and difficulties you have experienced recently?

Apply It

- 25. How could your life glorify the name of the Lord Jesus this week?
- * 26. In what trials and difficulties do you need patience and perseverance this week to see God's eventual good results?

The Man of Lawlessness - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Topics: Confusion, Evil, Future, Hell, Hopelessness, Judgment, Last Days, Lost, Miracles, Second Coming

Open It

1. What would make you think that the end of the world was near?
2. If you were convinced the world would end in six months, what would you do until then?
- * 3. What evidence do you see of evil forces active in the world today?

Explore It

4. What subject was Paul addressing? (2:1)
5. What reaction had Paul's previous letter caused among his readers? (2:2)
6. What must happen before the day of the Lord comes? (2:3)
- * 7. What kind of person will the man of lawlessness be? (2:4)
8. What is delaying the coming of the man of lawlessness? (2:6)
- * 9. What will happen to allow the man of lawlessness to be revealed? (2:7)
10. What will happen when the man of lawlessness encounters the Lord Jesus? (2:8)
- * 11. How will Satan's power be evident during the time of the man of lawlessness? (2:9-10)
12. Why will people perish? (2:10-12)
13. What will God do to allow those who delight in wickedness to persist in their ways? (2:11-12)

Get It

14. How should a Christian react to any predictions about Christ's return?
15. How close do you think we are to the end times and the return of Christ? Why?
16. What can a person do to get ready for Christ's return?
- * 17. What gives Christians confidence as they face the end times and the forces of the antichrist?
- * 18. What powers of lawlessness and rebellion are already present in our world?
19. How can you decide if a miracle or a miracle worker is from God or from Satan?
20. What will cause people to turn away from God during the end times?

Apply It

- * 21. How can you strengthen your faith today so that you are ready to face any evil days that will come?
22. What can you say to a loved one or friend this week that will lovingly draw them away from wickedness and unbelief?

Stand Firm - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Topics: God, God's Will, Maturity, Perseverance, Spiritual Growth

Open It

1. What causes many people to give up their plans for self-improvement (diet, exercise, etc.)?
2. What causes some people to lose their religious faith as they grow older?
- * 3. If God could give you an audible word of encouragement, what would help you most?

Explore It

4. For what reasons did Paul encourage people to thank God? (2:13)
5. How did Paul describe God's role in our salvation? (2:13)
6. When did God choose the Thessalonian Christians for salvation? (2:13)
- * 7. What forces work for our salvation? (2:13)
8. Who calls people to salvation? (2:14)
9. For what reason did God call us to salvation? (2:14)
- * 10. What encouragement did Paul give to the church? (2:15)
11. What media did Paul use to send instruction to the church at Thessalonica? (2:15)
12. What impact did Paul want God to have on every believer in the church? (2:16)
- * 13. What did Paul want God to encourage and strengthen in the Thessalonian believers? (2:17)

Get It

14. How does God work in our lives even before we put our trust in Him?
15. How does God use other people to bring us to Him?
16. How has God changed you since you became a Christian?
- * 17. What does it mean to stand firm as a Christian?
18. What teachings should a Christian hold on to as he or she lives for Christ?
- * 19. How does God encourage us?
20. What does God do to strengthen us?
21. What weakens a person's relationship with God?
22. What strengthens a person's relationship with God?

Apply It

23. What can you do this week to remind yourself every day what God has done for you?
24. In what area of your life would taking a firm stand for Christ benefit you this week?
- * 25. When can you make time in your schedule this week to encourage another believer?

Request for Prayer - 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Topics: Growth, Love, Maturity, Prayer, Salvation, Spiritual Growth

Open It

1. How frequently do you stay in touch with a friend who is many miles away?
- * 2. What motivates most people to pray?

Explore It

3. How had the gospel been received by the Thessalonians? (3:1)
4. How did Paul want to see the gospel received? (3:1)
- * 5. What prayer requests did Paul share with the Thessalonians? (3:1-2)
6. What did Paul want? (3:1-2)
7. What type of people were threatening Paul? (3:2)
8. How did Paul describe God? (3:3)
- * 9. What will God do for people who are threatened by the evil one? (3:3)
10. What confidence did Paul have in the Christians at Thessalonica? (3:4)
- * 11. How did Paul remind his readers of the Lord's direction? (3:5)
12. What did Paul want his readers to remember about the Lord? (3:5)

Get It

- * 13. How does prayer change people or circumstances?
14. How could prayer help spread the message of the Lord?
- * 15. How does prayer protect us?
16. How does our belief about God affect the way we pray?
17. How can meditating on God's love change us?
18. How can thinking about Christ's perseverance strengthen our own stand?

Apply It

19. For what kind of growth in your Christian life can you pray this week?
- * 20. For whom will you pray this week that their faith may be strengthened?

Warning Against Idleness - 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

Topics: Character, Consequences, Discipline, Employment, Example, Jobs, Laziness, Work

Open It

- * 1. How does a person learn good work habits?
- 2. When have you been frustrated with a lazy person?
- 3. What kind of help do you think should be given to people who do not work?

Explore It

- 4. Whom should we avoid? (3:6)
- 5. What example had Paul set when he was with the church at Thessalonica? (3:7-8)
- * 6. What work habits did Paul display while he was in Thessalonica? (3:8)
- * 7. Why did Paul work so hard and pay for his food? (3:8-9)
- 8. What rule had Paul given about working and eating? (3:10)
- 9. What reports had Paul heard about some of the believers in Thessalonica? (3:11)
- 10. What had some people in Thessalonica become? (3:11)
- * 11. What was Paul's command to the busybodies in Thessalonica? (3:12)
- 12. What encouragement did Paul give to those he called "brothers"? (3:13)
- 13. How were the Thessalonians to regard anyone who ignored Paul's instructions? (3:14-15)
- 14. What should we do with people who do not obey these instructions? (3:14-15)
- 15. What blessing did Paul invoke on the Thessalonian believers? (3:16)
- 16. What did Paul do to make his final greeting special? (3:17)

Get It

- * 17. How can associating with idle, lazy people influence your work habits?
- 18. What bad habits can you develop by associating with the wrong crowd of friends?
- 19. Why should a Christian stay away from a person who has bad habits or doesn't follow Christ?
- * 20. What example should a Christian set for others at a job or as a student?
- 21. What disciplinary action should be taken toward a Christian who ignores the teachings of the Word of God?
- 22. How should Christians respond to someone who doesn't work or support his or her family?

Apply It

- * 23. What improvements in your work habits can you make this week?
- 24. What can you do this week to be a good influence on your fellow workers or students?
- 25. From what bad influences do you need to distance yourself? How?

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Warning Against False Teachers of the Law - 1 Timothy 1:1-11

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Open It

1. Which would you rather receive from a good friend: a letter, or a phone call? Why?
- * 2. What are some laws that you benefit from directly?

Explore It

3. Who wrote this letter? (1:1)
4. To whom was this letter written? (1:2)
5. Why did Paul want Timothy to stay in Ephesus? (1:3-4)
6. What did Paul say about myths and genealogies? (1:4)
7. What was the goal of the command Paul urged Timothy to enforce? (1:5)
8. In what way had some believers been misguided? (1:6)
- * 9. How did Paul assess those who wanted to be teachers of the law? (1:7)
- * 10. When is the Law good? (1:8)
- * 11. For whom was the Law made? (1:9-11)
12. What did God entrust to Paul? (1:11)

Get It

13. When was the last time you wrote someone a letter of encouragement or received such a letter?
14. With whom do you have a relationship of mutual discipleship?
15. What false doctrines still plague many churches today?
16. What sort of doctrines promote controversy in the church?
17. What goals motivate the leaders you respect in your church?
18. What goals motivate your service in the church?
- * 19. In what way should we use God's law today?
20. What impact does or should God's law have on your life?
- * 21. How should we determine what is and isn't sound doctrine?
22. With what unique task has God entrusted you?

Apply It

23. Who is someone to whom you can write a letter of encouragement this week?
- * 24. What steps can you take to make sure your motives are from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith?

The Lord's Grace to Paul - 1 Timothy 1:12-20

Topics: Atonement, Basics of the Faith, Beliefs, Believers, Blasphemy, Call, Consequences, Disobedience, Doctrine, Example, Failure, Faith, Glory, God, Gospel, Grace, Jesus Christ, Mercy, Obedience, Salvation, Serving, Sin

Open It

- * 1. Who are some people you know whose lives were dramatically changed at some point? How?
- 2. What sort of people try your patience the most?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Paul thank Jesus? (1:12)
- 4. What did Paul say he once was? (1:13)
- * 5. Why was Paul shown mercy? (1:13)
- 6. What was poured out on Paul? (1:14)
- 7. Why did Jesus come into the world? (1:15)
- * 8. How was Paul “the worst”? (1:15)
- 9. Why was Paul shown mercy? (1:16)
- * 10. How does a person receive eternal life? (1:16)
- 11. What qualities did Paul ascribe to God? (1:17)
- 12. Why did Paul give Timothy his instructions? (1:18)
- 13. What did Paul say some have done with their faith? (1:19)
- 14. Why did Paul hand Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan? (1:20)

Get It

- 15. To what service has God appointed you?
- * 16. How and when has God shown you mercy?
- * 17. In what way has God used you as an example so that others might believe?
- 18. How do God's attributes of being eternal, immortal, and invisible encourage you?
- 19. In what way is God the King of your life?
- 20. What does it mean to fight the good fight?
- 21. What do you fight in your life as a Christian?
- 22. How and why do people shipwreck their faith?
- 23. What distractions draw Christians away from their proper course?

Apply It

- 24. What steps can you take today to ensure that your faith is on the proper course and not in danger of being shipwrecked?
- * 25. For what grace and mercy that God has shown you do you want to thank Him today?
- 26. What events or experiences in your life can you use to encourage others to believe?

Instructions on Worship - 1 Timothy 2:1-15

Topics: Appearance, Atonement, Authority, Basics of the Faith, Church, Dignity, Ego, Faith, God, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Life-style, Mediator, Ministry, Peace, Prayer, Salvation, Sex, Sin, Society, Sovereignty, Submission, Teaching, Truth, Words, Work, World

Open It

1. What are some of today's controversial issues?
2. What do you like or dislike about the worship of the church you attend?
- * 3. How would you characterize the worship of the church you attend?
4. What examples show that people in our society are obsessed with their physical appearance?

Explore It

- * 5. What did Paul urge first of all? (2:1-2)
6. What did Paul hope would be the result of the church's prayers? (2:2)
7. What pleases God? (2:2-3)
8. What does God want? (2:4)
9. For whom is Jesus Christ a mediator? (2:5)
10. For whom did Jesus give Himself? Why? (2:6)
11. Why did Paul insist he was not lying? (2:7)
- * 12. What did Paul want people everywhere to do? (2:8)
13. How should women dress? (2:9-10)
14. What instructions did Paul give women? (2:9-12)
15. How did Paul instruct women to learn? (2:11)
- * 16. What didn't Paul permit women to do? (2:11)
17. What explanation did Paul give for not allowing women to teach or have authority over men? (2:12-14)
18. In what way did Paul say that women would be saved? (2:15)

Get It

19. For what authorities or leaders should we pray?
- * 20. What sort of prayers should we make on behalf of our leaders?
21. If God wants all people to be saved, why then aren't all people saved?
22. When have you ever served as a mediator between two people?
23. In what way is Jesus a mediator between us and God?
24. To what task would you say God has appointed you?
25. What does it mean to dress modestly?
- * 26. How does your church understand and apply Paul's restrictions on women?
27. In what way might a woman be saved through childbearing?

Apply It

28. For what national and international leaders can you pray this week?
- * 29. How can you focus your attention on Christian service and worship of God over outward appearance?

Overseers and Deacons - 1 Timothy 3:1-16

Topics: Abilities, Accountability, Administration, Ambition, Anger, Authority, Character, Children, Church, Drinking, Effectiveness, Ego, Family, Gentleness, Greed, Home, Hospitality, Impulsiveness, Initiative, Integrity, Leadership, Management, Marriage, Maturity, Money, Morality, Pastors, People, Power, Pride, Quarrels, Reputation, Respect, Responsibility, Teaching

Open It

- * 1. What were some of the qualifications you had to meet for your job?
- 2. What important qualities should managers possess?

Explore It

- 3. What did Paul say about the person who wants to be an overseer? (3:1)
- * 4. What qualities must an overseer possess? (3:2-7)
- 5. Why is good family management a qualification for being an overseer? (3:4-5)
- * 6. Why shouldn't the overseer be a new convert? (3:6)
- 7. Why must an overseer have a good reputation? (3:7)
- * 8. What qualities must a deacon possess? (3:8-10, 12)
- 9. What is required before someone can serve as a deacon? (3:10)
- 10. What sort of person must the wife of a deacon be? (3:11)
- 11. What do those who serve well gain? (3:13)
- 12. What benefit is there in serving well? (3:13)
- 13. Why did Paul write these instructions? (3:14-15)
- 14. What is said about Jesus in the hymn Paul quoted? (3:16)

Get It

- 15. What role do you desire in your church?
- 16. To what noble tasks have you aspired?
- * 17. Which of the character qualities needed by both overseers and deacons do you think is the most important for a church leader to possess?
- * 18. If you applied the lists of qualifications for these positions to yourself, how would you measure up?
- 19. What is the common ingredient in the lists of qualifications for leaders in the church?
- 20. What hymn or praise chorus that you know centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ?

Apply It

- * 21. What quality from the lists in 1 Timothy 3 do you want to improve in your life? How could you start?
- 22. In what way can you serve in your church?
- 23. What hymn or song could you include in your devotions this week?

Instructions to Timothy - 1 Timothy 4:1-16

Topics: Abandon, Abilities, Believe, Bible, Conscience, Demons, Devotion, Doctrine, Example, Faith, Gifts, God, Holy Spirit, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Last Days, Legalism, Life, Life-style, Love, Ministry, Reading, Salvation, Teaching

Open It

1. Why do you think there is such emphasis on physical fitness in our society?
- * 2. What qualities do you look for in a pastor or minister?

Explore It

3. What did the Spirit say some would do in the later time? (4:1)
4. What did Paul say about the consciences of hypocritical liars? (4:2)
5. What did the liars whom Paul attacked forbid people to do? (4:3)
6. What is true about all that God created? (4:4)
7. Why should anything received with thanksgiving not be rejected? (4:4-5)
- * 8. Under what circumstances would Timothy be a good minister? (4:6)
9. What did Paul instruct Timothy to do? (4:7)
10. How did Paul contrast physical training with godliness? (4:8)
11. What saying is trustworthy? (4:9-10)
12. What should young people strive for? (4:12)
13. What kind of example did Paul want Timothy to set? (4:12)
- * 14. To what was Timothy to devote himself? (4:13)
15. What was Timothy not to neglect? (4:14)
- * 16. What did Paul want others to see? (4:15)
17. What could Timothy do to save himself and his hearers? (4:16)

Get It

18. For what reasons do people today abandon their faith?
19. From what good things have people persuaded you to abstain?
- * 20. How can we be good ministers of Jesus Christ?
21. What does your use of time show about how much you value training for godliness?
22. In what ways can you be an example to other believers?
23. What importance does your church assign to the public reading of Scripture?
24. What gift has God given to you that you should not neglect?
- * 25. How will watching your life and doctrine save you?

Apply It

- * 26. What specific actions can you schedule into your daily routine to nurture your godliness?
27. For what other Christians can you set an example in speech, life-style, love, faith, or purity?
How?
28. How can you keep watch over your life and doctrine this week?

Advice About Widows, Elders and Slaves - 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2

Topics: Caring, Children, Church, Culture, Drinking, Family, Favoritism, God, Gossip, Help, Holiness, Husbands, Jesus Christ, Life-style, Marriage, Ministry, Neglect, Parents, Pastors, Resources, Satan, Serving, Singleness, Teaching, Temptation, World

Open It

1. What groups of people are treated with special favor in our society today?
- * 2. Whose responsibility is it to care for the needy?
3. How much money do you think a pastor should make? Why?
4. What adjectives would you use to describe our society's morality?

Explore It

5. How should believers treat older men, younger men, older women, and younger women? (5:1-2)
6. To whom did Paul tell Timothy to give proper recognition? (5:3)
- * 7. What should the children and grandchildren of a widow do? (5:4)
8. What does the widow who is really in need and left alone do? (5:5)
9. What is true about the widow who lives for pleasure? (5:6)
10. Why did Paul tell Timothy to give these instructions? (5:7)
11. Why is it important to provide for your family? (5:8)
- * 12. When should the church go out of its way to care for widows? (5:9-10)
13. Why should younger widows not be put on the "list of widows"? (5:11)
14. How do younger widows bring judgment upon themselves? (5:12)
15. To what habits may younger widows fall prey? (5:13)
- * 16. What was Paul's advice to younger widows? (5:14)
17. What had some of the younger widows already done? (5:15)
18. Why did Paul encourage Christian women to care for the widows in their families? (5:16)
19. Of what is the elder who directs the affairs of the church worthy? (5:17)
20. Why should elders be paid? (5:18)
21. How should accusations against an elder be handled? (5:19)
22. Why should those who sin be rebuked publicly? (5:20)
23. How did Paul encourage Timothy to keep these instructions? (5:21)
24. What did Paul encourage Timothy to do and not to do? (5:22)
25. Why did Paul encourage Timothy to use a little wine? (5:23)
26. What is the impact of a person's sins and good deeds? (5:24-25)
27. Why should slaves consider their masters worthy of respect? (6:1)
28. How should slaves treat masters who are believers? (6:2)

Get It

29. How should we treat fellow Christians?
- * 30. What plan does your church have for caring for the needs of the widows in your church?
31. What sort of people besides widows are tempted to misuse their idle time?
- * 32. What does it mean to care properly for needy family members?
33. Which of your family members need your active care?
34. Are the pastors in your church properly provided for?
35. How do you think a pastor's salary should be determined? Why?
36. When and how have you learned from the mistakes of others?
37. In what negative ways does favoritism affect how we treat others?
38. How can we keep ourselves pure in a society that does not support God's ideals?
39. In what way might our sins and good deeds precede us and follow us in life?

Apply It

40. In what area of your life do you need to depend on God to help you keep yourself pure?
- * 41. How can you assist your church in the care of widows or others in need?
42. In what specific ways do you need to treat older men, younger men, older women, or younger women?

Love of Money - 1 Timothy 6:3-10

Topics: Attitude, Contentment, Desires, Doctrine, Evil, Faith, Foolishness, Greed, Jesus Christ, Love, Materialism, Money, Quarrels, Teaching, Temptation, Truth, Weaknesses, Words, World

Open It

1. What evidence do you see of a love for money among your friends or coworkers?
- * 2. Why do you think most people are or aren't content with what they have?

Explore It

3. What do false teachers ignore? (6:3)
4. What harsh words did Paul have for those who teach false doctrines? (6:3-4)
5. In what did the false teachers of Paul's day have an unhealthy interest? (6:4)
6. What was the result of the false teachers' unhealthy interests? (6:4-5)
7. What did the false teachers of Paul's day really want? (6:5)
- * 8. What brings us great gain? (6:6)
9. What do we bring into the world? (6:7)
10. What will we take out of the world? (6:7)
- * 11. With what should we be content? (6:8)
12. What often happens to people who want to get rich? (6:9)
13. What is a root of all kinds of evil? (6:10)
- * 14. What price do some people eager for money pay? (6:10)

Get It

15. What controversial false doctrines have been an issue in your church?
- * 16. How could someone think that godliness was a means to financial gain?
17. How do people attempt to use Christianity for their own profit?
- * 18. Why is it hard to be content?
19. What would it take to make you content right now?
20. What get-rich-quick schemes (big or small) have you fallen for?
21. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being very important), how important is money to you?
22. Why do you think that money is important or not very important?
23. How can you guard against placing too much stock in your personal possessions?

Apply It

- * 24. About what situation in life will you ask God to help you be more content each day this week?
25. How can you help a fellow believer keep a proper perspective on money and possessions?

Paul's Charge to Timothy - 1 Timothy 6:11-21

Topics: Caring, Confession, Eternal Life, Faith, Gentleness, God, Heaven, Jesus Christ, Joy, Knowledge, Love, Money, Righteousness, Truth, Words

Open It

- * 1. What well-known people or historical figures are known to you as fighters?
- 2. What sort of goals do people in your profession tend to pursue?
- 3. What goals do TV commercials and print ads encourage us to pursue?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Paul tell Timothy to pursue? (6:11)
- * 5. What was Timothy urged to fight? (6:12)
 - 6. What did Paul tell Timothy to take hold of? (6:12)
 - 7. Before whom did Timothy make a confession? What kind? (6:12-13)
 - 8. When did Jesus make "the good confession"? (6:13)
- * 9. How long was Timothy supposed to keep Paul's command? (6:14-15)
 - 10. When will Christ return? (6:14-15)
 - 11. What titles and attributes did Paul ascribe to God? (6:15-16)
 - 12. Why should those who are rich not be arrogant or put their hope in wealth? (6:17)
 - 13. What command is given to those who are rich? (6:18)
 - 14. Why would someone want to lay up treasure for themselves? (6:19)
 - 15. What was Timothy to guard? (6:20)
 - 16. What was Timothy to turn away from? (6:20)
 - 17. How had some wandered away from the truth? (6:20-21)

Get It

- * 18. In what way is the Christian life a fight?
 - 19. How are we to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness?
- * 20. What does it mean to "fight the good fight"?
 - 21. Before whom have you made a confession of your faith?
 - 22. How do God's attributes influence your worship of Him?
 - 23. Why is it so easy for us to trust in our possessions, accomplishments, or abilities?
 - 24. In what ways do people place their treasure here on earth?
 - 25. How can a person lay up treasure in heaven?
 - 26. How is it possible for someone to wander away from the faith?
 - 27. What actions can you take that will store treasure in heaven for you?

Apply It

- 28. In what way can you pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, or gentleness in your life this week?
- * 29. How can you fight the good fight of faith each day?
 - 30. What preventive measure can you take each day to be sure that you don't wander from the faith?

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Encouragement to Be Faithful - 2 Timothy 1:1-2:13

Topics: Abandon, Backslide, Death, Discipline, Encouragement, Endurance, Example, Faith, Faithfulness, Forsake, Gifts, God, God's Will, Gospel, Grace, Growth, Heritage, Holy Spirit, Influence, Jesus Christ, Love, Neglect, Salvation, Sovereignty, Spiritual Growth, Witnessing

Open It

- * 1. What is characteristic of the people you enjoy being around?
- 2. In what ways have your parents or grandparents significantly shaped your life?

Explore It

- 3. What did Paul do night and day? (1:3)
- 4. Why did Paul long to see Timothy? (1:4)
- 5. Who were Lois and Eunice, and what did Paul say about them? (1:5)
- 6. What was Timothy reminded to do? (1:6)
- 7. What kind of spirit does God give to His people? (1:7)
- 8. In what way did Timothy need courage? (1:8)
- 9. Why has God called us to a holy life? (1:9)
- 10. What did Christ do? (1:10)
- 11. Of what was Paul appointed a herald, an apostle, and a teacher? (1:11)
- 12. Why was Paul not ashamed of the gospel? (1:12)
- * 13. What did Paul tell Timothy to do with his training? (1:13)
- 14. What was Timothy to guard? (1:14)
- 15. Where does the Holy Spirit live? (1:14)
- 16. Who had deserted Paul? (1:16)
- 17. What had Onesiphorus done for Paul? (1:16-17)
- 18. What did Paul want the Lord to grant Onesiphorus? (1:18)
- 19. What did Paul encourage Timothy to do with what he had been taught? (2:2)
- * 20. How was Timothy to endure hardship? (2:3)
- 21. How does a soldier limit himself? Why? (2:4)
- * 22. What must an athlete do in order to win? (2:5)
- 23. What should a hardworking farmer receive? Why? (2:6)
- 24. What was Paul's gospel? (2:8)
- 25. Why was Paul willing to endure anything? (2:10)
- 26. How did Paul encourage Timothy? (2:11-13)
- 27. What "trustworthy saying" did Paul leave with Timothy to encourage him? (2:11-13)

Get It

- 28. For whom do you pray on a regular basis?
- * 29. What family member or friend has had the biggest role in your spiritual growth and development?
- 30. What gift has God given you?
- 31. How is the spirit of power, love, and self-discipline shown in your life?
- 32. When have you ever felt ashamed about something that you believe?
- 33. When and how have you suffered for the gospel?
- 34. What or whose pattern of sound teaching are you following?
- 35. When have you felt abandoned by a friend?
- * 36. When have you been refreshed by another believer?
- 37. What example do the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer set for us?
- 38. How should God's faithfulness affect our commitment to Christ?

Apply It

- 39. How can you refresh another believer today?
- 40. Who is someone for whom you can commit to pray on a regular basis?
- * 41. What person who has had a substantial impact on your spiritual life will you take the time to thank personally this week?

A Workman Approved by God - 2 Timothy 2:14-26

Topics: Approval, Arguments, Confession, Conversation, Demons, Desires, Disagreements, Embarrassment, Evil, Faith, Goals, God, Life-style, Lust, Obedience, Repentance, Satan, Truth, Words, Work

Open It

1. Whose approval did you seek most as a teenager?
2. When was the last time you felt thoroughly embarrassed?
- * 3. What was the last really stupid argument you had with someone?

Explore It

- * 4. What results from quarreling about words? (2:14)
5. How did Paul encourage Timothy to present himself before God? (2:15)
6. Why should we avoid godless chatter? (2:16)
- * 7. What had Hymenaeus and Philetus done? (2:17-18)
8. What must everyone who confesses the name of the Lord do? (2:19)
9. What sort of articles are found in a large house? (2:20)
10. How could someone become an instrument used for noble purposes? (2:21)
11. What was Timothy encouraged to flee? (2:22)
12. What was Timothy encouraged to pursue? (2:22)
- * 13. What produces quarrels? (2:23)
14. What must the Lord's servant do and avoid? (2:24)
15. How should we deal with those who oppose the Lord's servants? Why? (2:25)
16. What did Paul hope would happen to those who opposed the Lord's servant? (2:25-26)

Get It

- * 17. About what sorts of things do we get into senseless arguments with other Christians?
18. What does it mean to be approved by God?
- * 19. How can we please God with our work?
20. What circumstances make you feel ashamed or embarrassed?
21. When are you tempted to engage in godless chatter or stupid arguments?
22. What false doctrines have destroyed the faith of someone you know?
23. How can we cleanse ourselves from insignificant pursuits?
24. What evil desires of youth continually tempt us?
25. How do we usually deal with people who oppose us?
26. How should we deal with people who oppose us?
27. In what way have people in society today been taken captive by the devil?

Apply It

28. What can you do to present yourself as one approved to God?
- * 29. How do you need to change in your daily speech to weed out senseless and godless chatter?
30. What can you do to flee temptation?

Godlessness in the Last Days - 2 Timothy 3:1-9

Topics: Ambition, Culture, Desires, Disobedience, Ego, Evil, Faith, God, Greed, Last Days, Learning, Morality, Parents, Pleasure, Power, Pride, Self-centeredness, Sin, Society, Truth, World

Open It

- * 1. What adjectives would you use to describe the world in which we live today?
- 2. What goals drive the people with whom you work and live?

Explore It

- 3. What did Paul call to our attention? (3:1)
- * 4. What will people be like in the last days? (3:2)
- 5. What will people in the last days lack? (3:3)
- 6. What will people in the last days love instead of God? (3:4)
- * 7. What kind of “godliness” will people have in the last days? (3:5)
- 8. What should we do with the kind of people Paul described? (3:5)
- 9. How do godless people exploit others? (3:6)
- 10. What controls the kind of godless people Paul described? (3:6)
- * 11. What are godless people always doing? (3:7)
- 12. Why do certain people oppose the truth? (3:8)
- 13. To what historical figures were these godless people compared? (3:8)
- 14. Why will godless people not get very far? (3:9)

Get It

- 15. Why do you think we are or are not living in the last days?
- 16. Why are there people like the ones Paul described?
- 17. Why is it so tempting to be a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God?
- 18. How can someone have a form of godliness yet deny its power?
- * 19. What relationship should we have with people who flaunt their ungodly behavior?
- * 20. In what way does our society encourage people to let themselves be controlled by evil desires?
- 21. In what way is the folly of ungodly people clear and apparent to everyone?
- 22. What do you think it means that godless people have depraved minds?

Apply It

- * 23. From what ungodly person or group do you need to encourage other believers to disassociate themselves?
- 24. What specific sinful attitude or behavior will you ask God to help you overcome this week?

Paul's Charge to Timothy - 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Bible, Christianity, Commitment, Correction, Death, Doctrine, Encouragement, Evangelism, Faith, Follow-through, God, Inspiration, Instructions, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Reputation, Rewards, Righteousness, Second Coming, Teaching, Training, Words, Work

Open It

- * 1. If the story of your life were made into a movie, what would the title be?
- 2. If you could be known for only one thing when you died, what would you want it to be?
- 3. Who is someone whose reputation you admire?

Explore It

- * 4. What did Timothy know about Paul? (3:10-11)
- 5. From what did Paul say the Lord rescued him? (3:11)
- 6. What will happen to everyone who wants to live a godly life? (3:12)
- 7. What will evil men and impostors do? (3:13)
- 8. What did Paul encourage Timothy to do? (3:14)
- 9. How long had Timothy known the holy Scriptures? (3:15)
- 10. What are the holy Scriptures able to do? (3:15)
- 11. What is true of all Scripture? (3:16)
- 12. For what is Scripture useful? (3:16)
- 13. For what good work does the Scripture equip the person of God? (3:17)
- 14. Who will Jesus Christ judge? (4:1)
- * 15. For what did Paul want Timothy to be prepared? (4:2)
- 16. What time did Paul say was coming? (4:3)
- 17. What will people one day do with the truth? (4:4)
- 18. What did Paul instruct Timothy to do? (4:5)
- * 19. Why was Paul ready for his impending death? (4:6)
- 20. What had Paul done? (4:7)
- 21. What was in store for Paul? (4:8)
- 22. To whom will God award a crown of righteousness? (4:8)

Get It

- 23. What sort of reputation do you want to have?
- * 24. What sort of reputation do you have at work, at school, and in your neighborhood?
- 25. When and how have you been persecuted for living a godly life?
- 26. What does it mean that the Bible is God-breathed?
- 27. In what sorts of ways should we use the Bible?
- * 28. How equipped are you to do every good work?
- 29. What type of doctrines do people today like to hear?
- 30. In what way are all Christians able to be evangelists?

Apply It

- 31. How can you use the Bible in your own spiritual growth this week?
- * 32. What can you do this week toward discharging all your duties?

Personal Remarks - 2 Timothy 4:9-22

Topics: Abandon, Caring, Compromise, Good News, Heaven, Help, Love, Ministry, Sickness, Strength, Witnessing, World

Open It

1. What person would you like to visit whom you haven't seen in a while?
- * 2. When have you felt abandoned by your friends?
3. For what cause would you be willing to suffer?

Explore It

4. What did Paul want Timothy to do? (4:9)
- * 5. What had Demas done? Why? (4:10)
6. Who was with Paul? (4:11)
7. Why did Paul want Timothy to bring Mark? (4:11)
8. Whom did Paul send to Ephesus? (4:12)
9. What did Paul want Timothy to bring with him? (4:13)
10. Who was Alexander? (4:14)
11. What did Paul say about Alexander? (4:14)
12. How did Paul instruct Timothy to deal with Alexander? (4:15)
- * 13. What happened at Paul's first defense? (4:16)
14. In what way did the Lord deliver Paul? Why? (4:17)
- * 15. Of what was Paul convinced? (4:18)
16. Who was Timothy supposed to greet? (4:19)
17. What did Paul say about Erastus and Trophimus? (4:20)
18. When did Paul want Timothy to come? (4:21)

Get It

19. In what way are you tempted to love the world?
20. Why is it sometimes more tempting to love the world than to love God?
21. What about the world do we naturally tend to love?
- * 22. What keeps some Christians from holding on to their faith?
23. What people today strongly oppose the Christian message? Why?
- * 24. When has the Lord delivered you from a hostile situation?

Apply It

25. To what fellow Christian can you show support this week? How?
26. How can you help a church leader with his or her ministry?
- * 27. What comfort or encouragement can you provide to a person who is battling for the faith in a hostile setting?

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Titus' Task on Crete - Titus 1:1-16

Topics: Children, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Holiness, Leadership, Maturity, Serving

Open It

1. What characteristics do you think are necessary in a good leader?
- * 2. What leader has had the most influence on you? How?

Explore It

3. How is Paul's description of himself at the beginning of this letter significant? (1:1)
4. How did Paul describe the faith that he had? (1:1-2)
5. In light of Paul's reference to Titus, what kind of relationship did these two believers have? (1:4)
6. Why did Paul leave Titus in Crete? (1:5)
- * 7. For what reason was it necessary to appoint elders in the towns? (1:5, 10)
- * 8. What qualifications were necessary to be an elder in Titus's church? (1:6-9)
9. Why is it necessary for an elder to be blameless? (1:7)
- * 10. What is the result of holding firm to the "trustworthy message"? (1:9)
11. How should believers respond to "rebellious people" in the church? (1:10-13)
12. What were the rebellious people doing that Paul so strongly condemned? (1:11)
13. What did Paul tell his audience to pay no attention to? (1:14)
14. How is it possible to learn whether a person truly knows God? (1:16)

Get It

15. What does it mean that, "To the pure, all things are pure"?
16. What does the relationship between Paul and Titus teach us about how we should treat other Christians?
- * 17. Why is it necessary to appoint elders and leaders in the church?
- * 18. Who are the overseers in your church?
19. To what extent should we choose church elders according to the guidelines in this passage?
20. How should the qualifications for a church leader be different from those for a leader outside of the church?
21. Why do you think it is important for leaders' children to believe in the Lord and not be disobedient?
22. What work in the church has God entrusted to you?
23. What area of your character most needs your attention at this time in your life?
24. How can you encourage others?
25. What are rebellious people in the church like?
26. How should we treat rebellious people in the church?
27. What should our motivation be in correcting those who teach things they ought not to teach?
28. What do your actions reveal about your relationship with God?

Apply It

29. What can you do in the next few days to encourage another Christian in his or her faith?
- * 30. How can you show support for your church leaders? When?
31. What is one way you can support true doctrine and sound teaching in your church?

What Must Be Taught to Various Groups - Titus 2:1-15

Topics: Authority, Example, Holiness, Life-style, Righteousness, Teaching, Training

Open It

1. How do parents teach their children their values and beliefs?
- * 2. What religious beliefs were you taught growing up? How?

Explore It

3. What main theme begins this chapter? (2:1)
4. What is important for older men to be taught? (2:2)
- * 5. How can older and younger Christians help each other? (2:2-8)
6. What must older women be taught? Why? (2:3-5)
7. What responsibility do older women have? (2:4)
8. What should younger women be taught? (2:4-5)
9. Why is it important for Christians to live blameless lives? (2:5)
10. What advice did Paul give to younger men? (2:6-8)
11. Who should set an example for others? How? (2:7)
12. What response did Paul hope for? (2:8)
13. How did Paul instruct slaves? Why? (2:9-10)
14. What does the grace of God bring? (2:11)
- * 15. Why should all Christians, whether old or young, be taught? (2:11-14)
16. What motivation do we have to live righteous lives? (2:12-13)
- * 17. How did Paul emphasize the importance of teaching all Christians? (2:15)

Get It

18. What does a person's life-style reveal about his or her beliefs?
19. What should a Christian's life-style be like?
- * 20. What responsibility do Christians have to each other?
21. What role should accountability play among Christians?
22. What can we learn about work from Paul's instructions to slaves?
23. How can you make the gospel of Christ attractive to unbelievers in the way you work?
24. What motivates you to live a godly life?
- * 25. From what older, more mature believer do you want to learn?
26. How can you teach other Christians?
27. What do you have to share with other Christians about what you have learned in your own Christian walk?
28. How can you ensure that what you teach other Christians, even by your own life's example, is in accordance with sound doctrine?

Apply It

29. Of all the advice Paul gives in this passage about how to live a holy life, what is one specific area that you will commit yourself to concentrate on this next week?
30. How can you remind yourself each day that the way you work is a testimony to others?
- * 31. What step can you take in the near future to learn from another more mature Christian?
32. What step can you take in the near future to share what you have learned with a younger believer?

Doing What Is Good - Titus 3:1-15

Topics: Authority, Eternal Life, Holy Spirit, Humility, Mercy, Obedience, Quarrels, Salvation, Spiritual Rebirth

Open It

- * 1. What is the dirtiest job you ever had to do?
- 2. When is it beneficial to argue about an issue?
- 3. In your experience, how can an argument damage a friendship?

Explore It

- 4. How does God want us to respond to authority? (3:1)
- * 5. How does God want us to treat all people? (3:1-2)
- 6. What are we like before we are saved? (3:3)
- * 7. What changes when we believe in Christ? How? (3:3-7)
- 8. What saved Paul from his foolishness? (3:4)
- 9. Why does God save people? (3:4-5)
- 10. What role does the Holy Spirit play in a person's salvation? (3:5)
- 11. What is the result of being justified by faith? (3:7)
- 12. What did Paul tell Titus to stress? Why? (3:8)
- 13. Why is it important to avoid controversies and arguments? (3:9)
- 14. How should we treat a person who divides friends? (3:10-11)
- * 15. Why is it important for us to do what is good? (3:14)

Get It

- 16. In what ways do you need to subject yourself to rulers and authorities?
- * 17. What does it mean to show true humility?
- * 18. How can you show humility in all you do?
- 19. What difference does it make that God saves us out of His great mercy, and not because of anything we do?
- 20. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your life?
- 21. What can you do to devote yourself to doing what is good?
- 22. What can you do to guard yourself against getting involved in useless arguments?

Apply It

- * 23. What is one way you can serve others in your home, place of work, or church this week?
- 24. What can you do this next week to reconcile a damaged relationship?
- 25. How can you say thank you to God in the next few days for His saving grace toward you?

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Thanksgiving and Prayer - Philemon 1:1-7

Topics: Encouragement, Friendship, Prayer, Relationships, Slavery, Thankfulness, Words

Open It

1. Who has prayed for you in the past?
- * 2. What role have someone's words of encouragement played in your life?
3. How much of what is said to you each week at work and home is negative or positive?

Explore It

4. Who wrote this letter? (1:1)
5. To whom was this letter written? (1:1)
6. What do we know about the church from this brief introduction? (1:2)
7. What two godly qualities did Paul desire for his readers? (1:3)
- * 8. What was always a part of Paul's prayers? (1:4)
- * 9. What had Paul heard about the readers of this letter? (1:5)
- * 10. How did Paul pray for his audience? (1:6)
11. What did Paul suggest that Philemon would gain by actively sharing his faith? (1:6)
12. What had Philemon done for Paul? (1:7)
13. What had Philemon done for the other Christians in the region? (1:7)

Get It

14. When are the normal times in a day or week that you pray?
15. What are the subjects or concerns you most often address in your prayers?
16. What are the marks or ingredients of a good prayer?
- * 17. When should we ever tell someone that we are praying for him or her?
18. What is your reaction when someone says he or she is praying for you?
19. How does it help a person to tell him or her that you are praying for them?
- * 20. How can compliments and encouragement influence someone's life?
21. How does it help a person to pray for him or her?
22. What is the difference between what a person should and should not pray for?

Apply It

23. Who are several people for whom you need to pray this week?
- * 24. Who in your life needs a word of compliment or encouragement at this time?
25. Whom could you write or call this week to thank for the joy or encouragement they have given to you during your life?

Paul's Plea for Onesimus - Philemon 1:8-25

Topics: Change, Compassion, Forgiveness, Friendship, Reconciliation, Restitution, Slavery

Open It

- * 1. When you have to ask someone for a favor, how do you go about it?
- 2. How would you welcome back into your home a family member who had run away?
- 3. What does it take to reestablish trust with someone who has made a major mistake?

Explore It

- 4. What type of attitude did Paul project toward Philemon? (1:8-9)
- 5. How did Paul describe himself? (1:9)
- 6. Who is the subject of Paul's appeal to Philemon? (1:10)
- * 7. How did Paul describe his relationship with Onesimus? (1:10-11)
- * 8. Why was Paul sending Onesimus back to Philemon? (1:12-16)
- 9. What was Onesimus's former relationship to Philemon? (1:12-16)
- 10. What was Paul's motivation for sending Onesimus back to Philemon when Paul could have used him as a helper? (1:12-14)
- 11. What happened to Onesimus during the time he had been away from Philemon and with Paul? (1:15-16)
- 12. How did Paul want Philemon to greet Onesimus when he returned? (1:17)
- 13. To what level was Paul willing to be involved in the reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus? (1:18-19)
- 14. Of what debt did Paul remind Philemon? (1:19)
- * 15. What response from Philemon did Paul anticipate? (1:20-21) Why?
- 16. For what future event did Paul hope? (1:22)

Get It

- 17. Why do you think this short letter related to a specific relationship problem is included in the Bible?
- 18. Why do you think was it important to Paul that Onesimus return to his former master?
- 19. What risks did Onesimus take by going back to Philemon?
- 20. How should someone else's new commitment to Christ change our relationship with him or her?
- 21. In what circumstances should Christians return to people they knew before their conversion to rectify past mistakes?
- * 22. What role should we play in helping people be reconciled to others with whom they have had conflicts?
- * 23. What do you think was Philemon's response when Onesimus returned to him? Why?

Apply It

- 24. What broken relationship or promise from your earlier life are you willing to take steps to rectify this week?
- * 25. What can you do this week to help other people settle their disputes or separation?
- 26. Who needs your affirmation this week to help him or her more fully understand the changes God is working in his or her life?

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The Son Superior to Angels - Hebrews 1:1-14

Topics: Angels, Basics of the Faith, Creation, Glory, Heaven, Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What are some restaurants, vacation spots, books, movies, or other areas of interest that you consider the best of their kind?
- 2. What situations might tempt a Christian to turn his or her back on Christ?
- 3. How do you think you might react if you saw an angel?

Explore It

- 4. How did God speak to people in the past? (1:1)
- 5. What was God's means for speaking to mankind in "these last days"? (1:2)
- 6. What unique honors or activities did God the Father delegate to Jesus? (1:2)
- 7. What works did Jesus do that only God could do? (1:2-3, 10)
- * 8. Who is Jesus? (1:2-4)
- 9. What does Jesus show us about the nature of God? (1:3)
- 10. What astonishing feat is attributed to the Word of Christ? (1:3)
- 11. What was Jesus' primary ministry on earth? (1:3)
- 12. What did Jesus do after completing His earthly ministry? (1:3)
- 13. What does Christ's exalted status in heaven say about His similarity to angels? (1:4)
- * 14. How is Jesus distinguished from God? (1:5)
- 15. What is the relationship of Jesus and the angels? (1:6)
- 16. To what extent do the angels honor the Son? (1:6)
- 17. What are angels like? (1:7)
- 18. What name or title applies to Jesus, the Son? (1:8)
- * 19. What is Jesus' nature? (1:10-12)
- 20. What will happen to the enemies of Christ? (1:12)
- 21. What do angels do? (1:14)

Get It

- * 22. What difference does it make to you that Jesus is "heir of all things" and that the Father made the universe through Him?
- 23. Why do you think the author of Hebrews made such a point of Christ's deity to these Hebrew Christians?
- 24. What impact would you suspect these words had on Jewish Christians who were considering returning to Judaism?
- * 25. What are some ways we can honor Christ?
- 26. What difference does it make to you that Jesus sustains everything by His powerful word?
- 27. When, if ever, have you sensed that angels were ministering to you or watching over you?
- 28. What in your life tempts you to back away from your commitment to Christ?

Apply It

- * 29. What steps can you take to remind yourself that Jesus is the Son of God and worth following?
- 30. In what ways can you honor the Son of God as God in your worship this week?
- 31. Who can you tell today about the unique person of Jesus Christ?

Warning to Pay Attention - Hebrews 2:1-4

Topics: Angels, Backslide, Carelessness, Disobedience, Good News, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Law, Legalism, Miracles, New Covenant, Persecution, Religion, Salvation, Traditions

Open It

1. What are some warnings you are glad you heeded?
- * 2. What are some warnings you wish you had heeded?
3. What trouble have you gotten into from not paying attention?
4. How did you feel when you first followed Christ (or when you first realized your need for Christ)?

Explore It

- * 5. What did the writer of Hebrews want his readers to pay attention to? (2:1)
- * 6. What danger awaits Christians who carelessly forget the truth? (2:1)
7. What happened to those who violated the “message spoken by angels” (that is, the Mosaic Law)? (2:2)
8. Who played a major role in delivering the Mosaic Law? (2:2)
- * 9. What are the consequences for those who pay no attention to the gospel? (2:3)
10. Who revealed the message of “great salvation” to the world? How? (2:3)
11. Who confirmed the salvation that Jesus announced? How? (2:3-4)
12. What did God do to validate the gospel message? (2:4)
13. How did God distribute gifts of the Holy Spirit? (2:4)
14. What is the role of each member of the Trinity in delivering the gospel message? (2:3-4)

Get It

15. Why do you think the Hebrew Christians were in greater danger if they ignored “such a great salvation” than those who violated Old Testament law?
16. How do we as modern Christians tend to “drift away” from God?
- * 17. How do we as modern Christians fail to pay careful attention to what God tells us?
18. What advice or counsel would you give to a Christian friend who was drifting spiritually?
19. What kind of attitudes or actions would mark a Christian who is drifting?
- * 20. How can we help ourselves pay closer attention to God’s Word?
21. Why do you think God is stricter on those who have been given more revelation than others?
22. In what specific ways can you pay greater attention to God’s Word?

Apply It

23. What safeguards can you put in place this week to help you stay close to the Lord?
- * 24. What are some ways you can nurture your attention span toward God this week?
25. Who can you ask this week to help you resist the temptations to drift away from Christ?

Jesus Made Like His Brothers - Hebrews 2:5-18

Topics: Angels, Atonement, Creation, Freedom, Grace, Jesus Christ, Mercy, Reconciliation, Salvation, Satan, Suffering, Temptation

Open It

1. What does it mean to be free?
2. How would you describe the ideal brother or sister?
3. What qualities or accomplishments of one of your siblings make you most proud?
- * 4. What is the most helpful act a brother or sister has ever done for you?

Explore It

5. What is our God-given place on earth? (2:6-8)
6. What is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the rest of the universe? (2:8)
- * 7. What is Christ's present heavenly status? (2:9)
8. What actions by Christ led to His current exalted position at the right hand of God? (2:9)
9. What was unique about the death that Christ suffered? (2:9)
10. What is God's ultimate goal for us? (2:10)
11. What does Christ do to qualify a person for membership in the family of God? (2:11)
12. What is the relationship between Christ and those who experience the salvation He gives? (2:11-12)
13. What effect did the death of Christ have on Satan and his power? (2:14)
14. What effect did the death of Christ have on those who were enslaved to the fear of death? (2:15)
- * 15. In what ways is Christ like us? (2:14, 17)
- * 16. What makes Christ especially qualified to help Christians when they are being tempted? (2:18)

Get It

17. In what ways are we "a little lower than the angels"?
- * 18. What difference does it make that Christ "tasted death for everyone"?
- * 19. What is the significance of the fact that no trial or temptation can come upon you that Christ does not perfectly understand?
20. How do the temptations Christ suffered on earth affect the way He represents us before God as high priest?
21. What counsel would you give to a Christian friend who was terrified of death?
22. How can it help you on a daily basis to know that you have a "big brother" like Christ?
23. What are the implications of the fact that Jesus' death and resurrection destroyed Satan and his power?
24. What areas of your life do you need to entrust to your understanding, merciful, and powerful high priest/big brother?

Apply It

25. Knowing that Christ understands your temptations, how can you respond differently today to the difficulties you face?
- * 26. What Christian friend(s) can you encourage today with the message that Christ is our sympathetic high priest? How?

Jesus Greater Than Moses - Hebrews 3:1-6

Topics: Call, Faithfulness, Honor, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Obedience

Open It

- * 1. Who are (or were) some of the heroes of your generation?
- 2. Who would you describe as a dedicated employee at your place of work?
- 3. What assorted titles or designations describe who you are? (For example: postal clerk, husband, dad, baby brother, Sunday School teacher, president of the Rotary Club, and coach of the little league football Eagles.)

Explore It

- 4. How did the author of Hebrews address those reading his letter? (3:1)
- 5. What blessing is promised to those who know Christ? (3:1)
- 6. What command is given to those who want to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ? (3:1)
- * 7. Who is Jesus? (3:1-2)
- 8. How is Jesus like Moses? (3:2)
- * 9. In what ways are Moses and Jesus similar? (3:2, 5-6)
- * 10. Why is Jesus worthy of more honor than Moses? (3:3-6)
- 11. What has Jesus done as God? (3:4)
- 12. How are the people of God or the family of God described in this passage? (3:4-6)
- 13. How do we demonstrate that we are members of God's household? (3:6)
- 14. What qualities are necessary for us to be faithful children of God? (3:6)

Get It

- 15. How ought our identity affect the way we live in our daily lives?
- 16. What do you think faithfulness looks like in the life of a Christian?
- 17. Why is it important for us to fix our thoughts on Jesus, our apostle and high priest?
- 18. What are some of the distractions that keep you from fixing your thoughts on Christ?
- * 19. What great spiritual leaders do we look to today, much as the first century Jewish Christians looked to Moses?
- * 20. In what ways is Christ greater than our greatest spiritual leaders and mentors?
- 21. In what way are we God's house?
- 22. How does biblical hope differ from ordinary hope?
- 23. How would a healthy dose of spiritual courage change the way you live on a daily basis?
- 24. What specific behaviors, habit patterns, or attitudes need to change so that you live up to your heavenly calling?

Apply It

- 25. What can you do over the next twenty-four hours to fix your thoughts on Jesus?
- * 26. What is one concrete way you can give to Jesus the honor that He deserves today?
- 27. What Scriptural promise or biblical truth can you hold on to today to help you remain a faithful part of God's house?

Warning Against Unbelief - Hebrews 3:7-19

Topics: Anger, Deceit, Disobedience, Encouragement, Hardheartedness, Holy Spirit, Judgment, Punishment, Rest, Sin

Open It

1. How do you decide whether you take a particular warning seriously?
2. What are the pros and cons of procrastination?
- * 3. What is the most restful time or place you have ever experienced?
4. Why do you think some people follow Christ for a little while and then turn away from Him?

Explore It

5. Who is identified as the author of Psalm 95:7-11? (3:7)
6. What warning (first issued by the psalmist) is repeated here by the author of Hebrews? (3:7-8)
- * 7. How is Israel's period of wandering in the wilderness described in this passage? (3:8)
- * 8. Why was God angry with the generation of Israelites who came out of Egyptian exile? (3:9)
9. How did the Spirit of God describe the Israelites of the Exodus? (3:10)
10. What were the consequences of the Israelites' stubborn disobedience? (3:11)
- * 11. In light of the disobedience of the Israelites of the Exodus, what command was given to the Jewish Christians of the first century? (3:12)
12. How are those described who turn away from the living God? (3:12)
13. What is the connection between sin and unbelief? (3:12-13)
14. How might a person show that he or she has "come to share in Christ"? (3:14)
15. How long did the disobedient Israelites wander in the wilderness? (3:17)
16. What happened to the generation of Israelites who rebelled against God in the wilderness? (3:17-18)

Get It

17. How do we "hear God's voice" in our daily lives?
- * 18. What does it mean to harden one's heart?
19. How does a person's heart become hard?
20. What can we do to avoid hardening our hearts toward God?
21. How might the encouragement of a fellow Christian affect you today?
22. What are the consequences when Christians fail to encourage each other or hold each other accountable?
23. What circumstances or situations in your life are currently fostering an attitude of unbelief toward God?
- * 24. What can we learn from the Israelites of the Exodus?

Apply It

25. What practical steps can you take this week to soften your heart toward God?
- * 26. What routine can you set up and follow over the next month to help soften your heart toward God?
27. Whom can you encourage today? How?

A Sabbath-Rest for the People of God - Hebrews 4:1-13

Topics: Anger, Deceit, Disobedience, Faith, Gospel, Hardheartedness, Judgment, Punishment, Rest, Sin

Open It

1. What is the most powerful sermon you have ever heard?
- * 2. What situations or circumstances tend to make you feel restless?
3. What different ideas have you heard (from friends, neighbors, or relatives) about how a person is made right with God?
4. What is your favorite Bible verse or story? Why?

Explore It

5. What important promise is the subject of this passage? (4:1)
- * 6. How do we know that not everyone will experience God's rest (that is, His salvation)? (4:1-2)
- * 7. Why didn't the Israelites of the Exodus enter God's rest? (4:2)
8. What must a person do to experience God's rest? (4:3)
9. How long has God been giving us a chance to enter His rest? (4:4)
10. What was the consequence for the Israelites' disobedience? (4:5)
11. Why did some who heard the promise of rest fail to enjoy that promise? (4:6)
12. How did the author show that the rest God promised the Israelites involved more than mere physical rest in the land of Canaan? (4:8)
13. What rest awaited God's people after Joshua and the Israelites had conquered Canaan? (4:8-9)
14. Entering God's rest has what effect on our work? (4:10)
- * 15. How should we seek to learn from the Israelites' negative example? (4:11)
16. What is the Word of God? How? (4:12)
17. What is unique about God? (4:13)
18. What sort of future awaits all of us? (4:13)

Get It

- * 19. What does it mean to enter God's rest?
- * 20. How is enjoying God's salvation a reality in your life?
21. How does disobedience or unbelief keep us from enjoying God's rest?
22. What prevents you from enjoying God's rest (or salvation)?
23. What does God's rest have to do with one trying earn salvation with good works?
24. How does the fact that God sees and knows everything about you (actions, words, thoughts, motives, feelings, and attitudes) motivate you to live a holy life?
25. What has the Word of God revealed about your own thoughts and attitudes of the heart?

Apply It

- * 26. What one area of your life do you need to turn over to God today?
27. What steps can you take this week to learn from the negative examples of others?

Jesus the Great High Priest - Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Topics: Confidence, Faith, Grace, Obedience, Prayer, Sacrifice, Salvation, Submission, Temptation, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. To whom do you often turn when you feel discouraged? Why?
- 2. How do you typically respond to folks who get in trouble—anger? impatience? sympathy? pity? encouragement? disgust?
- 3. If Jesus walked in the room right now, how do you think you might feel?

Explore It

- 4. To what important spiritual leader did the author of Hebrews compare Jesus? (4:14)
- * 5. In what way is Jesus the ultimate high priest? (4:15)
- 6. In what ways was Jesus tempted? (4:15)
- 7. How is Jesus able to sympathize with us? (4:15)
- 8. Because of Jesus' superior high priesthood, how can forgiven sinners approach God? (4:16)
- * 9. How does Christ respond to those who approach Him in faith? (4:15-16) Why?
- * 10. What is the role and primary duty of a high priest? (5:1)
- 11. What makes a good high priest sympathetic to those he represents? (5:2)
- 12. For whom did a high priest offer sacrifices? (5:3)
- 13. Who chose Israel's high priests? (5:4)
- 14. How is Jesus like Melchizedek? (5:6)
- 15. In what priestly activities did Jesus engage while on earth? (5:7)
- 16. What did Jesus' sufferings teach Him? (5:8)
- 17. Who is described in this passage as the "source of eternal salvation"? (5:9)

Get It

- 18. How does it encourage you to have Jesus as your high priest?
- 19. What is the difference between sinning and being tempted?
- 20. How would the need for priests to offer sacrifices for their own sins have applied to Jesus Christ?
- 21. How did suffering to the point of death give Jesus insights into obedience?
- * 22. Why do you think suffering was part of God's will for Jesus as our high priest?
- 23. How does the sympathy and understanding nature of Christ motivate you to turn to Him when temptations arise?
- 24. What does it mean for us to approach God?
- * 25. How can we honor Christ as our high priest?
- 26. What does it mean to you that Jesus has gone through the problems and temptations you face?
- 27. For what specific area of your life do you need to approach Jesus and ask for mercy and grace?

Apply It

- * 28. When will you pray each day this week, approaching God through Christ?
- 29. What steps do you need to take this week to follow the obedient example of Jesus, who did God's will even when it resulted in personal suffering?

Warning Against Falling Away - Hebrews 5:11-6:12

Topics: Backslide, Denial, Holy Spirit, Judgment, Laziness, Maturity, Rejection, Repentance, Righteousness, Salvation, Spiritual Growth, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What are some immature, childlike habits or actions that simply would not be tolerated if seen in an adult?
- 2. What theological truth or biblical concept is most difficult for you to comprehend?
- 3. What is the most disgraceful or damaging thing ever done in God's name?
- 4. What hero did you emulate and imitate as a kid? Why?

Explore It

- * 5. What was wrong with the group of Hebrew believers originally addressed in this passage? (5:11-14)
- * 6. What are the marks of spiritual maturity? (5:11-14)
 - 7. Of what are infant or baby Christians ignorant? (5:13)
 - 8. What is the benefit of "solid food"? (5:14)
 - 9. What challenge did the author give to his readers? (6:1)
- * 10. What fundamental or basic doctrines form the foundation of our faith? (6:1-2)
 - 11. In the end, what enables us to reach spiritual maturity? (6:3)
 - 12. What are maturing, committed Christians like? (6:7)
 - 13. What are those who fall away from the faith like? (6:8)
 - 14. What does it show when Christians help other Christians? (6:10)
 - 15. What danger did the author warn against? (6:12)

Get It

- 16. What is "solid food"?
- 17. How would you describe your present level of spiritual maturity?
- 18. What actions and attitudes would you expect to find in a mature Christian?
- * 19. How have you grown since you first became a Christian?
 - 20. What decisions are you facing that call for extra discernment?
 - 21. Of what does your spiritual diet consist?
 - 22. How does it disgrace Christ when a person lapses back into his or her old way of life?
 - 23. In what way can a Christian become useless to God?
- * 24. What can we do to move forward, or become more mature, in our relationship with Christ a little each day?
 - 25. How can you rely on the goodness of God's Word for discernment in the decisions you must make?

Apply It

- * 26. In what concrete ways can you strengthen your hold on Christ this week?
 - 27. What changes can you make in your daily routine over the next three days to combat laziness and exercise discipline?

The Certainty of God's Promise - Hebrews 6:13-20

Topics: Assurance, Believe, Faith, God, Heaven, Hope, Jesus Christ, Mediator, Promises, Sincerity, Truth, Waiting

Open It

1. How good are you at keeping your promises?
- * 2. What gives you a sense of security?
3. What, if anything, are you willing to die for?
4. What biblical truth gives you the most encouragement and hope?

Explore It

5. Why did God "swear by himself"? (6:13)
- * 6. What promise did God make to Abraham? (6:13-14)
7. How did God guarantee His promise to Abraham? (6:13-14)
8. What do we learn from this passage about God? (6:13, 17-18)
- * 9. How did Abraham respond to God's promise, and what was the result? (6:15)
10. What is the function of oaths? (6:16)
11. How did God confirm His promise? (6:16-17)
- * 12. Why did God confirm His promise with an oath? (6:16-18)?
13. How do we know God won't retract His promise? (6:18)
14. What happens to those who find the hope that Christ offers? (6:18)
15. How is the hope that Christ gives described in this passage? (6:19)
16. Where is the believer's hope anchored? (6:19)
17. How was Christ able to "enter the inner sanctuary behind the curtain"? (6:19-20)
18. What did Christ do on our behalf? (6:20)

Get It

- * 19. How does Abraham's patience in waiting for God's promise encourage you?
20. What does it mean to you personally that God gives every believer an eternal inheritance secure in heaven?
- * 21. How does it help us to know that it is impossible for God to lie?
22. How would you describe to a friend the hope that you have in Jesus Christ?
23. What problems or troubles currently threaten your sense of security?
24. What truths in this passage give you security in your relationship with God?
25. What new insights does this passage give you about the character of God?
26. In what area of your life do you need to follow Abraham's example of patience?

Apply It

27. What step can you take over the coming week to put your sense of security in Christ?
- * 28. To what promise of God do you need to cling at this time in your life?
29. In what way can you express confidence in God's promises this week?

Melchizedek the Priest - Hebrews 7:1-10

Topics: Blessing, Comparisons, Greatness, Heritage, Jesus Christ, Mediator, Peace, Righteousness, Tithing

Open It

1. What does your name mean?
2. Does the meaning of your name fit your personality?
- * 3. What person from history do you most admire? Why?
4. If you could have dinner with any three Bible characters, whom would you choose? Why?

Explore It

- * 5. Who was Melchizedek? (7:1)
6. How was Melchizedek associated with Abraham? (7:1)
7. What did Abraham give to Melchizedek? (7:2)
8. What does the name Melchizedek mean? (7:2)
9. What is significant about the title, “king of Salem”? (7:2)
- * 10. What about the Genesis record of Melchizedek’s life foreshadowed or anticipated the priesthood of Christ? (7:3)
- * 11. How do we know that Melchizedek was “great”? (7:4)
12. How did the Mosaic law ensure that the Levitical priests were provided for? (7:5)
13. Why was it unusual for Melchizedek to receive a tithe from Abraham? (7:6)
14. What did the ancient practice of one person blessing another say about the two parties involved? (7:7)
15. How did the tithe collected by Melchizedek differ from the tithes collected by the Levites? (7:8)
16. How did Levi—the yet-unborn collector of tithes—pay tithes to Melchizedek? (7:9-10)

Get It

- * 17. In what ways is Jesus like Melchizedek?
18. What point is there in seeing that the historical Melchizedek was greater than Abraham and Levi?
- * 19. What does it mean to you that Christ, like Melchizedek, is both a great king and priest?
20. In what ways has Christ blessed you?
21. Why is it important to tithe or give to God?
22. What kind of behavior should the greatness of Christ elicit from us?
23. What does it mean that Christ is a high priest forever?

Apply It

- * 24. Because Jesus is great and worthy of our all, what gift of time, money, or energy will you give to Him this week?
25. What insight from this passage can you meditate upon today to keep you from drifting away from Christ?
26. In what way can you honor Christ this week?

Jesus Like Melchizedek - Hebrews 7:11-28

Topics: Atonement, Blessing, Comparisons, Eternal Life, Greatness, Heritage, Inadequacy, Mediator, Messiah, New Covenant, Perfect, Prayer

Open It

- * 1. When might a person want to be represented by a lawyer? Why?
- 2. What is something that you have replaced or gotten rid of recently?
- 3. What is one regular task or chore that you hate doing?
- 4. How might you react if you found yourself alone in an elevator with the president or the Prince of Wales?

Explore It

- 5. Why did a new priest from the order of Melchizedek come along to replace the order of Aaron? (7:11)
- 6. What does a new priesthood require? (7:12)
- 7. What made Jesus unique as a member of His tribe? (7:13-14)
- 8. From what tribe did Jesus Christ come? (7:13-14) How is this significant?
- 9. What connection did Jesus' tribe have to the Jewish priesthood? (7:14)
- * 10. On what basis did Christ become a priest? (7:15-16)
- 11. Why is the new covenant superior to the old covenant of law? (7:18-19)
- * 12. How is Jesus unique among the priests who represented Israel before God? (7:23-25)
- 13. What does Jesus do for those who come to God through Him? How? (7:25)
- * 14. What is Jesus, our high priest, like? (7:26-27)
- 15. What did the Levitical priests have to do before they offered sacrifices for the sins of the people? (7:27)
- 16. How did Jesus perform His function as high priest when he was on earth? (7:27)

Get It

- * 17. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus is praying for you at this very moment?
- 18. What does this passage say to people who feel the need for a human priest?
- 19. What role does the law of God play in making us right before God or giving us the power to live for God?
- 20. What comfort can we find in Jesus' role as our high priest?
- 21. What could you say to someone who says, "I don't see what Christ accomplished by dying on the cross"?
- 22. How is the resurrection of Christ important?
- * 23. In what way can Christ's priesthood give us confidence to draw near to God?

Apply It

- 24. How can you make a special effort each day this next week to draw near to God?
- 25. For whom will you pray every day this week?
- * 26. How can you honor Christ as your high priest in your prayer throughout the coming week?

The High Priest of a New Covenant - Hebrews 8:1-13

Topics: Change, Comparisons, Forgiveness, Heaven, Inadequacy, Jesus Christ, Limitations, Mediator, Messiah, New Covenant, Sacrifice

Open It

1. What is involved in knowing someone?
2. What is involved in having an intimate relationship with God?
- * 3. What items in your home or office would you consider obsolete? Why?
4. Why is it so difficult to forget the wrongs others do to us?

Explore It

5. Where is Christ right now? (8:1)
6. With what title is God described? (8:1)
7. What is Christ doing presently in heaven? (8:2)
8. What is the “job description” for a high priest? (8:3)
9. How do earthly sanctuaries and tabernacles differ from the heavenly one in which Christ is currently serving? (8:2, 5-6)
10. Why would Jesus not be a priest on earth? (8:4)
11. What do the terms “copy,” “shadow,” and “pattern” indicate about the Levitical priesthood? (8:5)
- * 12. In what ways is the new covenant superior to the old? (8:6)
- * 13. Why did God decide to initiate a new covenant? (8:7-12)
14. How did Israel handle their part in the old covenant? (8:9)
15. How did God say the new covenant would be different from the old one? (8:10)
16. What is God’s response to sin under the new covenant? (8:12)
- * 17. What became of the old covenant when the new was introduced? (8:13)

Get It

18. How does it make you feel to realize that under the new covenant, you can have an intimate relationship with God?
- * 19. How motivated would you be to love and worship God if you had to depend solely on animal sacrifices offered by a stranger?
- * 20. What do we learn about God from the fact that He set aside the old covenant in favor of the new?
21. What three words best describe how you feel knowing that Jesus Christ is in the presence of God representing you before your Creator?
22. How much do biblical principles and God’s truths govern your thoughts and actions?

Apply It

23. In what ways can you show your thanks to God today for the fact that He remembers your sins no more?
- * 24. What can you do this week to get to know God better?
25. How can you use the truths of this passage in coming days to help a friend who is struggling to earn God’s approval?

Worship in the Earthly Tabernacle - Hebrews 9:1-10

Topics: Atonement, Comparisons, Forgiveness, Holy Spirit, Inadequacy, Jesus Christ, Limitations, Mediator, Messiah, New Covenant, Sacrifice

Open It

1. What is the most beautiful church, cathedral, or religious shrine you have visited?
- * 2. If you could show three objects or artifacts that best tell the story of your own spiritual journey, what items would you show? Why?
3. What religious customs do you observe that you really don't understand the meaning or purpose of?

Explore It

4. What aspect of the old and new covenants is compared in this passage? (9:1)
5. What was in the first room of the earthly tabernacle? (9:2)
6. What was the first room called? (9:2)
7. What was behind the second curtain in the tabernacle? (9:3)
8. What two objects were in the room behind the second curtain? (9:4)
9. What was inside in the ark of the covenant? (9:4)
10. What was above the ark? (9:5)
11. During the year, who typically ministered at the tabernacle, and in which part did this ministry take place? (9:6)
- * 12. What three severe restrictions were placed upon entrance to the inner room of the temple? (9:7)
13. For whom was blood offered on the Day of Atonement? (9:7)
- * 14. What truth was the Holy Spirit teaching through the once-a-year offering for sin under the old covenant? (9:8)
- * 15. What symbolic truth did the Mosaic tabernacle teach about sin? (9:9-10)

Get It

16. From Hebrews 9:1-5 and the background information in Exodus, what is your impression of the old covenant's "regulations for worship"?
- * 17. What does the earthly tabernacle and sacrificial system tell us about Christ's once-for-all sacrifice for sin?
18. What do you think went through the high priest's mind on the Day of Atonement as he prepared to enter the Holy of Holies?
19. What is significant about the contents of the ark of the covenant?
20. How can we alter our lives to reflect the fact that God dwells only in holy places?
21. What arbitrary religious rules or traditions make it difficult for you to serve God?
- * 22. How does Christ's sacrifice enable us to have a clear conscience?
23. How can we be sure to approach God as the holy God He is?

Apply It

- * 24. What are some practical steps you can take when you feel touched by a guilty conscience?
25. What do you want to remember the next time you approach God in worship?

The Blood of Christ - Hebrews 9:11-28

Topics: Atonement, Comparisons, Death, Forgiveness, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Inadequacy, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Limitations, Mediator, Messiah, New Covenant, Sacrifice

Open It

1. What are some ways people typically try to deal with their own mortality?
- * 2. What images come to mind when you hear the phrases “blood sacrifice” and “cleansed with blood”?
3. What do you imagine death being like?

Explore It

4. How is the heavenly tabernacle in which Christ serves as high priest described? (9:11)
5. By what means did Christ enter the Most Holy Place? (9:12)
6. How many times did Christ enter the Most Holy Place? (9:12)
7. What ritual cleansing ceremony did a high priest typically complete before he entered the Most Holy Place? (9:13)
8. To what degree was a high priest considered clean? (9:13)
- * 9. How was Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf different from the usual sacrifice for sin on the Day of Atonement? (9:14)
- * 10. What benefits do believers in Christ derive from the sacrifice Christ made on their behalf? (9:14)
11. What is our promised eternal inheritance? (9:15)
- * 12. What must happen in order for sins to be forgiven? (9:22)
13. As a high priest, why did Christ enter heaven instead of an earthly man-made sanctuary? (9:24)
14. How is Christ categorically different from every other high priest? (9:25-26)
15. What fate awaits every person? (9:27)
16. How will Christ’s Second Coming differ from His first advent? (9:28)

Get It

17. In what ways was Christ an unblemished sacrifice?
18. What does it mean that Christ fully and completely satisfied God’s wrath over sin and can make us right with God?
19. Why couldn’t we receive our promised eternal inheritance apart from the death of Christ?
- * 20. Why do you think the author kept emphasizing that Christ’s sacrifice was “once for all”?
21. How would it change the way we live if we kept in mind the fact that we all will be judged?
- * 22. If Christ has done all these fantastic things for us, why are we so prone to stray from Him?
23. What might motivate you to be more consistent in your commitment to Christ?
24. How can the fact of our own mortality (that is, our lives on earth are temporary) motivate us to a holier life-style?

Apply It

- * 25. In what concrete way can you show gratitude for Christ’s sacrifice?
26. With whom do you want to share the good news this week of a Savior who offers forgiveness, freedom from sin, and eternal life? How?

Christ's Sacrifice Once for All - Hebrews 10:1-18

Topics: Atonement, Comparisons, Forgiveness, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Inadequacy, Jesus Christ, Legalism, Limitations, Mediator, Messiah, New Covenant, Perfect, Sacrifice

Open It

- * 1. What is one thing you would buy at a very high price if paying that price meant you never had to pay for it again?
- 2. What jobs would you consider unfulfilling, frustrating, or even futile?
- 3. What are some ways people try to deal with bad habits?

Explore It

- 4. How is the Law compared to the new covenant brought by Christ? (10:1)
- * 5. In what way was the Law of Moses glaringly inadequate? (10:1-2)
- 6. How did the author of Hebrews show that the Law was inadequate? (10:2)
- 7. What function did the annual sacrifices serve? Why? (10:3-4)
- 8. How successful were animal sacrifices under the old covenant? (10:4)
- 9. Why wasn't God pleased with the sacrifices and offerings of the old covenant? (10:5-6)
- 10. What was the attitude of Christ when He came into the world? (10:7)
- 11. What evidence of the futility and emptiness of the old covenant did the author cite? (10:8)
- * 12. If God neither desired nor was pleased with old covenant sacrifices, why did the Israelites make them? (10:8)
- 13. What role does a believer play in earning God's approval? (10:9-14)
- 14. What did Christ's single act of dying accomplish for those who would trust in Him? (10:14)
- 15. How did the new covenant change the way God motivates His people to live for Him? (10:16)
- * 16. What effect did the sacrifice of Christ have on the way God views our sins? (10:17)
- 17. Why are additional sacrifices for sin unnecessary? (10:18)

Get It

- 18. What has Christ done for us?
- 19. How would you contrast the shortcomings of the old covenant with the blessings of the new covenant?
- 20. Why do Christians still feel guilt when God says He forgives and forgets their transgressions?
- * 21. How does being cleansed of sin by Christ change us?
- 22. What do you think prompted or motivated Jesus to make the sacrifice He made?
- * 23. In what sense have we "been made holy" (10:10) while at the same time "are being made holy" (10:14)?
- 24. What insights from this passage can we use to show that being saved from sin requires faith in Christ?

Apply It

- 25. In what specific areas of your life today do you need to follow the example of Christ in saying, "I have come to do your will, O God"?
- * 26. What can you do this week to show trust in Christ's provision for forgiveness?
- 27. When could you speak with a friend or relative who would be encouraged by the truths of this passage?

A Call to Persevere - Hebrews 10:19-39

Topics: Atonement, Backslide, Encouragement, Forgiveness, Hope, Jesus Christ, Joy, Judgment, Love, Mediator, New Covenant, Persecution, Perseverance, Rewards, Salvation, Sincerity

Open It

1. When in your life did you “hang in there” the longest in the face of an extremely difficult situation?
2. Who has encouraged you the most in the last six months?
- * 3. How highly does your boss value perseverance in his or her employees?

Explore It

4. Why did the author say that those under the new covenant could draw near to God? (10:19-22)
5. What has Jesus done for those under the new covenant? (10:20)
6. What privilege comes to those who are part of the “house of God”? (10:22)
7. What must happen before a person can draw near to God? (10:22)
8. What happens to the guilty conscience of those who put their faith in Christ? (10:22)
- * 9. Why are Christians able to persevere in following Christ? (10:23)
10. What kind of behavior should believers in Christ exhibit toward one another? (10:24-25)
11. What will happen to God’s enemies? (10:26-27)
12. Why is rejecting Christ more serious than rejecting the old covenant? (10:28-29)
13. What did the author consider “a dreadful thing”? (10:31)
- * 14. How had the Hebrew Christians responded to persecution at first? (10:32-34)
- * 15. What is promised to those who persevere? (10:35-39)

Get It

16. How does the complete forgiveness and help offered by Christ motivate you to draw near to God?
17. When in your life have you felt the cleanest or most innocent? Why?
- * 18. How could someone best spur you on “toward love and good deeds”?
19. How do you personally feel about going to church or involvement in Christian groups?
- * 20. How does the certainty of God’s judgment challenge you?
21. What is behind the ups and downs in your spiritual journey?

Apply It

- * 22. What is one small project you could complete today to encourage a Christian friend to persevere in his or her faith?
23. What can you do differently in your devotional times this week to “draw near to God”?
24. Since we are called to live by faith (10:38), what is one bold step of trust in God you can take today?

By Faith - Hebrews 11:1-40

Topics: Believers, Circumstances, Danger, Endurance, Faith, Glory, Heroes, Obedience, Promises, Risk, Trust, Waiting

Open It

1. If you were able to listen to your own funeral eulogy (Tom Sawyer style), how would you like to hear yourself described?
- * 2. When you were a child, what are some ways you showed trust in your parents?
3. What do you consider the greatest example of faith you have ever seen? Why?

Explore It

4. What is faith? (11:1)
5. What does faith help us to comprehend about the creation of the world? (11:3)
6. How did Abel demonstrate faith? (11:4)
7. What was unusual about Enoch? (11:5)
- * 8. What role does faith play in approaching and pleasing God? (11:6)
9. What did Noah's faith prompt him to do? (11:7)
10. How did faith affect Abraham's life? (11:8-12)
11. How does faith change a person's focus and perspective? (11:13-16)
12. What ultimate test of faith did God put Abraham through? (11:17-19)
13. What hard choices did Moses make because of his faith? (11:24-28)
14. What "secret" enabled Moses to persevere through rough times? (11:27)
- * 15. What were some of the victories enjoyed by faithful Old Testament believers? (11:32-34)
16. How does this passage disprove the notion that faith always leads to earthly blessing? (11:35-38)
- * 17. What happened to a great many Old Testament saints who exercised faith in God? (11:39)

Get It

18. According to this passage, what is the only way we can please God with our lives?
- * 19. What prompts committed followers of Christ to continue to exercise faith even when He never seems to "come through" for them?
- * 20. Why do you think the author said that "the world was not worthy of" the heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11?
21. How do you think the individuals praised in Hebrews 11 were looked upon by those of their day?
22. Why do you think God sometimes leaves us in the dark about His will?
23. What are some examples from your life of both trusting God and doubting Him?
24. Which characters named in this chapter would you most like and least like to trade places with? Why?
25. In what concrete ways can we demonstrate the truth that we are "aliens and strangers" on earth? (11:13)

Apply It

26. What is one way you can remind yourself to live as an alien and stranger at work and in your community?
- * 27. With what do you need to trust God even though you can't see what the future holds? How can you show this trust?

God Disciplines His Sons - Hebrews 12:1-13

Topics: Barriers, Discipline, Encouragement, Fruit, Holiness, Jesus Christ, Peace, Perseverance, Perspective, Righteousness, Sin, Weaknesses

Open It

1. What is your favorite sporting event? Why?
2. How were you disciplined or corrected as a child?
- * 3. What do you think was good or bad about the way you were disciplined as a child?
4. When did you endure difficult or arduous circumstances only because you knew you would later be rewarded?

Explore It

5. What should motivate followers of Christ to live for Him? (12:1)
6. What kind of athletic imagery did the writer of Hebrews use in this passage? (12:1)
7. What warning is given to those who would run the race of the Christian life? (12:1)
8. What should be the focus of those who would live for Christ? (12:2)
9. How is Jesus described in this passage? (12:2)
10. What is the benefit of remembering what Christ has done? (12:3)
- * 11. What measures does the Lord sometimes take toward those who are His “sons”? Why? (12:5-6)
- * 12. What do we learn about God from the fact that He disciplines us? (12:6-7)
- * 13. What sobering truth can be inferred by those who never experience the discipline of God? (12:8)
14. Why does God discipline His children? (12:9-10)
15. In what sense does discipline have two sides? (12:11)

Get It

16. How well are you running the Christian race?
17. What wrong attitudes or actions tend to stop your spiritual growth?
18. What do you think it means to “fix our eyes” on Jesus? (12:2)
- * 19. What are some specific ways God disciplines us?
20. How can we tell when God is disciplining us?
- * 21. What state might your life be in if God neglected to discipline you when you went astray?
22. How has God’s discipline made positive changes in your life?
23. Why should we not lose heart when the Lord rebukes or corrects us?

Apply It

24. How can you focus your thinking on Christ this week?
25. How could you call on your Christian friends this week to help you persevere as a Christian?
26. What do you want to remember the next time God disciplines you?
27. What step of obedience can you take beginning today to eliminate the need for God to discipline you?

Warning Against Refusing God - Hebrews 12:14-29

Topics: Angels, Bitterness, Celebration, Heaven, Holiness, Immorality, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Mediator, New Covenant, Peace, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What causes bitterness?
2. How do you think you would react if your life were suddenly threatened by a severe earthquake, volcanic eruption, or avalanche?
- * 3. What are some warnings that you have been grateful for? Why?

Explore It

4. To what extent are Christians to try to resolve conflicts? Why? (12:14)
5. In what way should believers pursue holiness? Why? (12:14)
- * 6. Why is holiness important? (12:14)
7. What wrong attitude should we watch out for? (12:15)
- * 8. What kinds of things do Christians need to watch out for? Why? (12:15-17, 25-27)
9. What did Esau do that is described as godless? (12:16)
10. What did Esau's godless behavior cost him? (12:17)
11. In what ways was the old covenant intimidating or frightening? (12:18-21)
12. How is Mount Sinai described—the place where the old covenant was revealed? (12:18)
13. How did the author describe the new covenant? (12:22-24)
14. In what way were God's thunderous pronouncements from Sinai only a foreshadowing of what is to come? (12:26-27)
15. Of what kind of kingdom are Christians a part? (12:28)
16. How should God's promises and glorious kingdom affect believers? (12:28)
- * 17. How should we worship God? Why? (12:28-29)

Get It

18. Why is it difficult to get along with some people?
19. When we have conflicts with one another, why do we typically want the other person to make the first move toward reconciliation?
- * 20. What roadblocks make it difficult for you to pursue holiness?
21. How would you counsel a friend who was extremely bitter?
22. What are some ways wrong values and impulsive actions might bring heartache and grief?
23. What does it mean to live at peace with everyone?
24. What is dangerous about bitterness?
25. How is your view of God different as a result of studying this passage?
26. For which of God's acts on your behalf are you most thankful?
- * 27. What does it mean to worship God with reverence and awe?

Apply It

28. What bitter or unforgiving attitudes do you need to confess today?
- * 29. What practical steps can you take this week to avoid becoming bitter toward someone who has hurt you?
30. What actions do you need to take today so that you can truly say you have made every effort to live in peace with everyone?

Concluding Exhortations - Hebrews 13:1-25

Topics: Angels, Atonement, Challenge, Confidence, Heaven, Holiness, Immorality, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Leadership, Love, Marriage, Materialism, Mediator, Money, New Covenant, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What would you want to say to your loved ones if you could write them a last letter or make a final videotaped message?
2. What images come to mind when you hear the word “authority”?
- * 3. What is one change you’d like to make but don’t think you can right now?
4. How do you think angels are involved in human affairs?

Explore It

5. What kind of love are Christians to demonstrate? (13:1)
6. Why did the author encourage his readers to entertain strangers? (13:2)
7. What kinds of people does God want Christians to try to help? (13:3)
8. Why is sexual purity important? (13:4)
- * 9. What attitude toward money ought Christians to have? Why? (13:5)
- * 10. What fact about God can foster a contented spirit? (13:5)
- * 11. How can we learn to be content? (13:5)
12. How should Christians view their spiritual leaders? (13:7, 17)
13. What attribute or characteristic of Christ is highlighted here? (13:8)
14. What illustrations did the author use to challenge his readers to resist the temptation to go back to Judaism? (13:9-14)
15. What kind of sacrifices should we offer to God? (13:15-16)
16. What are the benefits of obeying one’s spiritual leaders? (13:17)
17. What did the writer pray would happen to his readers? (13:20-21)

Get It

- * 18. Why do you think it is so difficult to be content?
19. What is significant to you about the fact that Jesus never changes?
- * 20. How can we draw contentment from God’s unchanging nature?
21. What Christian leaders do you look up to and consider worth imitating? Why?
22. What does hospitality mean or entail?
23. How are you able to extend hospitality to others?
24. Why do you think praise of God is so important for us to practice?
25. How would you counsel a friend who was struggling in the area of sexual purity?
26. What are some practical steps we can take to avoid temptations to immorality?
27. How do you think you should respond if a Christian leader corrected you in a personal matter?

Apply It

28. What can you do to show love to a person who is in prison or being mistreated?
- * 29. What one action could you take this week to practice contentment with what you have?
30. What Christian friend or friends can you encourage to continue walking with Christ? How?

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Trials and Temptations - James 1:1-18

Topics: Believe, Desires, Doubt, Evil, God, Prayer, Temptation, Wealth

Open It

1. Why would you agree or disagree with the statement, “Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you respond to what happens to you”?
- * 2. How would you respond to someone who tells you that good can come from the trials which you are experiencing?
3. What doubts about God and prayer does the average person usually experience?

Explore It

4. Who wrote this letter? (1:1)
5. To whom was this letter written? (1:1)
- * 6. What attitude did James tell people to exhibit when they are facing trials? (1:2)
- * 7. What is produced when our faith is tested? (1:3-4)
8. What is God’s response when we ask for wisdom? (1:5)
9. What effect does doubt have on a person when he or she prays? (1:6-8)
10. What will eventually happen to the wealth of a rich person? (1:10-11)
- * 11. What reward awaits the person who perseveres under trial? (1:12)
12. From where does temptation come? (1:13-15)
13. How does sin start and end? (1:13-15)
14. From where do all good and perfect gifts come? (1:16-17)
15. How did James describe God’s relationship with the people He created? (1:17-18)

Get It

16. What trials and difficulties have you experienced during your life?
17. Why does God allow people to go through trials and difficulties?
- * 18. What good has ever come out of a difficult situation in your life?
19. How does a person’s relationship with God change as he or she goes through trials and problems?
20. When do you find it hardest to pray?
21. With what doubts have you struggled concerning God and prayer?
22. How can doubting affect a person’s prayer life?
23. How can a person who pursues wealth and riches be disappointed?
24. In what way have material possessions disappointed you once you possessed them?
- * 25. How would you explain to a ten-year-old why a person does something wrong or evil?
26. Why do we often blame God for tempting us when we sin?
27. What can a person do to stop an evil desire from becoming an actual evil act?

Apply It

- * 28. What do you believe God is trying to teach you this week through the trials and situations you are experiencing?
29. In what specific areas do you need to ask God for His wisdom this week?
30. What temptations do you need God’s help to resist this week?

Listening and Doing - James 1:19-27

Topics: Anger, Caring, Compassion, Evil, Forget, Hypocrisy, Law, Listening, Obedience, Religion, Words

Open It

1. Who do you admire as a religious or spiritual role model?
2. How does it affect you when a person is caught doing what he or she tells others not to do?
- * 3. When are you most likely to lose your temper?

Explore It

- * 4. What instruction did James give about the relationship between speaking, listening, and anger? (1:19)
- * 5. What is the relationship between anger and righteous living? (1:20)
- * 6. What should a Christian clean out of his or her life? (1:21)
7. What is the relationship between listening to God's Word and doing it? (1:22)
8. What analogy did James use to describe a person who does not do what the Bible says? (1:23-24)
9. What promise did James give to the person who studies God's Word and practices it? (1:25)
10. What does the Bible give to people? (1:25)
11. How is a person's speech related to the credibility of his or her faith? (1:26)
12. What did James describe as pure religion? (1:27)
13. What is pure religion? (1:27)

Get It

14. What makes it hard for us to be good listeners?
- * 15. How can being quick to speak and quick to anger get you into trouble?
- * 16. How do displays of anger and temper affect the witness of a Christian?
17. What attitudes and habits can inhibit our growth as disciples of Christ?
18. What makes it hard for us to practice what we know to be good?
19. How does our speech reflect our relationship with God?
20. How have you experienced freedom by doing the Word of God?
21. What can we do to help widows and orphans?
22. In what ways can the world pollute us?
23. How can we keep ourselves from being polluted by the world?

Apply It

- * 24. In what situations this week will you need to curb your anger? How can you?
25. What do you need to change in your actions this week to match your talk?
26. Whom will you help this week in obedience to God's Word?

Favoritism Forbidden - James 2:1-13

Topics: Change, Differences, Equality, Favoritism, Judging Others, Poor, Prejudice, Status

Open It

- * 1. How much money would it take to make you consider yourself rich?
- 2. For what reasons might a person think he or she is more important than another person?
- 3. Where do you see prejudice being practiced?

Explore It

- 4. What practical example did James use to illustrate how favoritism was practiced in the church? (2:1-4)
- * 5. What has God promised to the poor of this world? (2:5)
- * 6. What does the church do to the poor person when it shows favoritism toward the rich? (2:6)
- * 7. What do rich people have a history of doing to people in the church? (2:6-7)
- 8. What is the royal law found in Scripture? (2:8)
- 9. What does practicing favoritism do to a person who is trying to keep the law? (2:9)
- 10. What does a person have to do to be considered a lawbreaker? (2:10-11)
- 11. By what standards should a person speak and act? (2:12)
- 12. What promise is made to people who judge without mercy? (2:13)
- 13. Why should we be merciful? (2:13)

Get It

- 14. In what ways have you been a victim of favoritism or prejudice?
- 15. How have you shown favoritism or prejudice toward other people?
- 16. Why do we often treat rich people as more important than poor people?
- 17. How do we use physical appearance, job status, and athletic ability to show favoritism toward people?
- * 18. How can we welcome poor people in our church?
- 19. Why does God have a special concern for poor people?
- * 20. In what practical ways can we show genuine love to people of different races, cultures, and economic standing?
- 21. Why is favoritism or prejudice often overlooked as a sin?
- 22. Why would God condemn us as lawbreakers if our sins are only “minor” ones, such as prejudice?

Apply It

- 23. From whom can you ask forgiveness this week for showing prejudice toward him or her?
- * 24. How can you change the way you look at wealth this week so that you value it as God does?

Faith and Deeds - James 2:14-26

Topics: Actions, Faith, God, Hypocrisy, Righteousness

Open It

- * 1. If you were 100 miles from home with no money, no credit cards, no friends, no transportation, and no place to stay, what would you do to survive and make it home?
- 2. What is the difference between someone who talks about a problem and someone who does something about the problem?

Explore It

- 3. What is the relationship between faith and deeds? (2:14)
- 4. What illustration did James use to explain how real faith affects a person's deeds? (2:15-17)
- 5. How did James describe faith that has no accompanying deeds? (2:17)
- 6. What is wrong with having faith without deeds? (2:18-26)
- 7. What do the demons believe about God? How does it affect them? (2:19)
- * 8. What did Abraham do to show his faith? (2:21-23)
- * 9. What made Abraham righteous? (2:23)
- * 10. How is a person justified before God? (2:24)
- 11. What did Rahab do? (2:25)
- 12. How did Rahab show faith? (2:25)
- 13. How are faith and deeds like the body and the spirit? (2:26)

Get It

- 14. How is being a Christian supposed to change the way we live?
- 15. What can a Christian do to help the people around him or her?
- 16. What is one way to tell if a person has a real, living faith?
- * 17. What is difficult about applying what we hear in church to our everyday lives?
- 18. What are some of the biblical commands which are hard for you to live out?
- 19. If God has forgiven us and promised us eternal life, what motivation do we have to live in obedience to Him today?
- 20. Which is easier for you—talking about your faith with others, or demonstrating love toward them?
- * 21. In what areas of your life do you want to begin acting more like a Christian?

Apply It

- * 22. In what home, work, or neighborhood situations might you be able to show faith in God this week? How?
- 23. How can you show greater faith in God by what you do this week?

Taming the Tongue - James 3:1-12

Topics: Change, Conversation, Teaching, Words

Open It

- * 1. If you could hear a tape recording of everything you said last week, what would you want to edit out?
- 2. How do you react when you hear someone cursing and using abusive language?
- 3. How can a person be hurt by the words of others?
- 4. What can you learn about a person by listening to him or her speak?

Explore It

- 5. What unique responsibility does a teacher bear? (3:1)
- * 6. If a person were never at fault in what he or she said, what would that show about the person? (3:2)
- * 7. What is significant about the way we talk? (3:2)
- 8. What is the purpose of a bit in the mouth of a horse? (3:3)
- 9. What is the purpose of the rudder of a ship? (3:4)
- 10. What damage can a small spark cause to a great forest? (3:4)
- 11. What similarity does a person's tongue have to a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, and a spark of fire? (3:5)
- 12. How did James describe the tongue? (3:6-8)
- 13. What damage do our tongues do to us? (3:6)
- * 14. What is so difficult about taming the tongue? (3:7-8)
- 15. Of what inconsistencies are we capable? (3:9-10)
- 16. In what ways are we inconsistent? (3:9-10)
- 17. What illustrations from nature did James use to condemn cursing? (3:11-12)
- 18. What can a spring or a fruit tree teach us about speech? (3:11-12)

Get It

- 19. What motivates a person to teach others?
- 20. How is a teacher in the church supposed to be different from the average member?
- 21. Why will God judge teachers more strictly than other people?
- * 22. What are the ways we sin with our speech?
- 23. Why are sins of speech often overlooked as not serious?
- 24. How is our speech influenced by others around us?
- 25. What practical advice would you give someone who wanted to control his or her tongue better?
- 26. What weaknesses in our lives does our speech often expose?
- * 27. In what times or places can your tongue be used for good?
- 28. How can you change your daily speech to reflect its importance in your life?

Apply It

- 29. What do you need to remove from your speech habits this week to make your words more pleasing to God?
- * 30. What positive words do your family and coworkers need to hear from your mouth this week?

Two Kinds of Wisdom - James 3:13-18

Topics: Ambition, Bitterness, Envy, Humility, Rewards, Wisdom

Open It

1. What occupations or jobs require lots of knowledge and training?
2. What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?
- * 3. What kinds of jobs or occupations require wisdom or discernment?
4. Where do people often go to get wisdom?

Explore It

- * 5. How can a person demonstrate wisdom and understanding? (3:13)
6. How can we tell when a person is wise? (3:13)
7. What common attitudes do we need to avoid boasting about? (3:14)
- * 8. What is wrong with the “wisdom” of a selfish and bitter person? (3:14-15)
9. How is a person’s character related to his or her ability to discern? (3:14-16)
10. From where does the “wisdom” of a selfish and bitter person come? (3:15)
11. To what do envy and selfish ambition lead? (3:16)
12. What are the qualities of the wisdom that comes from heaven? (3:17)
- * 13. How does a wise person act? (3:17-18)
14. What happens when people “plant seeds of peace”? (3:18)

Get It

15. What is the best way to make a lasting positive impression on others?
16. What is the difference between earthly wisdom and God’s wisdom?
- * 17. What life experiences increase our wisdom?
18. What are the marks of humility in a person?
19. What damage can bitter envy or selfish ambition do to a person?
- * 20. How can we get or experience heavenly wisdom?
21. What are practical ways we can sow seeds of peace during our life?
22. What godly characteristics are present in our speech when we are pursuing God’s wisdom?
23. What kind of bitter envy or selfish ambition do you tend to hold in your heart?

Apply It

24. What can you do this week to plant peace in a relationship or situation which has been troubling you?
- * 25. What can you do this week to seek God’s wisdom?

Submit Yourselves to God - James 4:1-12

Topics: Attitude, Commitment, Forgiveness, Grace, Humility, Pride, Quarrels, Repentance, Submission

Open It

1. If you could ask God for anything, what would it be?
- * 2. What do families and friends commonly fight about?

Explore It

3. What are the battles going on inside a person? (4:1-2)
- * 4. What is the root cause of fights and quarrels between people? (4:1-3)
5. Why don't people have what they want? (4:2)
6. Why doesn't God give some people what they ask for? (4:3)
7. What does friendship with the world do to our relationship with God? (4:4)
8. Whom does God oppose and favor? (4:6)
- * 9. When does God give us grace? (4:6)
- * 10. How did James describe the way we should come to God? (4:7-10)
11. How does the devil react when a person resists him? (4:7)
12. What does God do to us when we have an attitude of humility before Him? (4:10)
13. How are we to speak to one another? (4:11)
14. When we speak against a fellow believer, what attitude are we having toward God and His law? (4:11-12)

Get It

15. What do most people think God wants from them?
16. How has your belief about what God wants from you changed over the years?
17. How does pride show up in our work? home? church? community?
18. Why does God oppose people who are proud?
- * 19. What is the difference between pride and a sense of accomplishment?
20. How can a person tell when he or she has become proud?
- * 21. How can we reduce or remove the pride from our lives?
22. What do we want from God most of the time?
23. Why do we hesitate to give our lives to God?

Apply It

24. What sins of action and attitude do you need to confess to God today?
25. What can you do this week to draw near to God?
26. In what situations do you need to resist the devil this week?
- * 27. What can you do this week to help you bring more humility into your life?

Boasting About Tomorrow - James 4:13-17

Topics: Ambition, Decisions, Future, Goals, Greed, Judgment, Materialism, Plans, Sin

Open It

1. To where in the world would you like to travel?
2. If you could start your own business, what would it be?
- * 3. If you knew you had just three months to live, what are some things you would want to do?

Explore It

4. Whose attention did James want to get? (4:13)
- * 5. What warning did James give to those who make plans for the future? (4:13-14)
6. What could happen to destroy even the best laid plans? (4:14)
7. To what did James compare our lives? (4:14)
- * 8. What is the best way to plan ahead? (4:15)
- * 9. What should we say when we are making plans? (4:15)
10. What outlook toward the future does God want us to change? (4:16)
11. What sinful attitudes often accompany the act of making plans? (4:16)
12. How did James define sin? (4:17)
13. How do we sin? (4:17)

Get It

14. What's wrong with planning out our lives?
- * 15. What responsibility does God want us to take in planning our lives?
16. What is the best use we can make of our lives?
- * 17. How can we make plans for business or living which are pleasing to God?
18. Given how long you think you could live, how can you plan for the future with humility and faith?
19. What would you like to accomplish before you die?
20. What accomplishment from your life do you want to present to God?
21. How can you determine in your daily life what is sinful and what is pleasing to God?

Apply It

22. What aspects of your life plans do you need to present to God in prayer this week?
- * 23. What can you do this week to place your plans for the future in God's hands?
24. In what part of your job or occupation do you need to do the good you know you ought to do this week?

Warning to Rich Oppressors - James 5:1-6

Topics: Compassion, Greed, Injustice, Judgment, Justice, Materialism, Money, Oppressed, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. How much does it take to be considered rich in your community?
- 2. If you won \$1 million, what would you do with it?
- 3. How does money change people?

Explore It

- 4. Whom did James address in this passage? Why? (5:1)
- 5. What warning did James give to rich people? (5:1-3)
- 6. What misfortune lies ahead for the wealthy? (5:1-3)
- * 7. Who should “weep and wail”? Why? (5:1-6)
- 8. What will happen to all the possessions of the wealthy? (5:2-3)
- 9. What attitude does God have toward hoarding wealth? (5:3)
- 10. For what reasons will the rich be punished? (5:4-6)
- 11. Who have been the victims of rich people? (5:4-6)
- * 12. How have rich people hurt others? (5:4-6)
- * 13. What do luxury and self-indulgence have to do with the trouble that lies ahead for rich people? (5:5)

Get It

- 14. How do money and riches affect our relationship with God?
- 15. What does God think about people who are rich?
- 16. What problems are solved by being rich?
- 17. What problems are not solved by being rich?
- 18. How does God want us to handle money?
- * 19. What does it mean to live in “luxury and indulgence”?
- 20. What common business and financial practices are different from God’s standards?
- 21. How should a Christian business owner or employer be different from others who do not follow Christ?
- 22. How does a person’s use of money reflect what is important to him or her?
- * 23. How can we use money to reflect what is important to God?
- 24. What material possessions would you find it difficult to give up to help someone else?
- 25. What do you possess that money cannot buy?

Apply It

- 26. What can you do with your money this week to demonstrate your love for God?
- * 27. What changes can you make in your habitual use of money to please God?
- 28. What plans for the future can you make to reflect God’s concern for the poor?

Patience in Suffering - James 5:7-12

Topics: Attitude, Complaining, Discouragement, Endurance, Giving Up, Judgment, Patience, Perseverance, Suffering, Swearing

Open It

- * 1. What kinds of experiences try your patience?
- 2. What good things in life are worth waiting for?
- 3. How can you tell if a person is telling the truth or making a promise that he she will keep?

Explore It

- 4. What do we need to do as we wait for the Lord's return to earth? (5:7)
- 5. What illustration did James use to describe the kind of patience we need? (5:7)
- 6. When will the Lord's coming occur? (5:8)
- 7. Why should we be patient about Christ's return? (5:8)
- * 8. Why should we avoid judging others or grumbling against them? (5:9)
- * 9. What will happen to Christians who grumble against their fellow believers? (5:9)
- * 10. What people serve as good examples to us? How? (5:10-11)
- 11. In what ways does God help us when we must endure suffering? (5:11)
- 12. What warning did James give concerning swearing? (5:12)
- 13. What is the alternative to swearing? (5:12)

Get It

- * 14. How does God use others to build patience in our lives?
- 15. What makes it hard to wait on God's timing?
- 16. What kind of changes does God want to make in us over an extended period of time?
- 17. How have you suffered as a Christian?
- 18. What blessing or reward came to you for suffering as a Christian?
- 19. How will God reward us if we are patient?
- 20. What does it mean to stand firm as a Christian?
- 21. What lessons from Job's experience can we apply to our lives?
- * 22. For what kinds of reasons do Christians judge each other?
- 23. What causes us to grumble against each other?
- 24. What does God think about Christians fighting among themselves?
- 25. What can a Christian do to be trusted with his word and promises?

Apply It

- 26. With what situation or problem can you ask God for help and patience this week?
- * 27. What steps will you take this week to avoid judging others in your home? workplace? church?
- 28. What promise do you need to keep? How?

The Prayer of Faith - James 5:13-20

Topics: Answers, Backslide, Confession, Correction, Faith, Healing, Instructions, Perseverance, Prayer, Sickness

Open It

1. What are some of the most memorable moments of your life?
- * 2. What are some situations in life when most people pray?

Explore It

3. What should a person do when he or she is in trouble? Why? (5:13, 15)
4. What should a person do when he or she is happy? Why? (5:13, 15)
5. What should a person do when he or she is sick? Why? (5:14-15)
- * 6. Why is prayer important? (5:15)
7. What are the elders of the church to do for someone who is sick? Why? (5:14-15)
8. How can prayer affect a person's health? (5:15)
9. How can a person have his or her sins forgiven? (5:15)
10. Why should we confess our sins to one another? (5:16)
- * 11. What is the effect of a righteous person's prayers? (5:16)
- * 12. Who is a good example of how God answers prayer? How? (5:17-18)
13. What is a Christian's responsibility toward a fellow believer who has wandered away from the truth? (5:19)
14. What is the benefit of helping a person get back into following the truth? (5:20)

Get It

15. How can we use prayer to help someone who is sick?
16. When have you had the opportunity to pray specifically for someone or for a special need?
17. How have you seen prayer bring changes in people or circumstances?
- * 18. What hinders Christians from praying with confidence?
19. What hinders Christians from confessing sins and praying for each other?
20. If we confess our sins to God, why should anyone else have to know about it?
- * 21. What circumstances beyond our control can we affect through prayer?
22. What causes Christians to stumble and fall away from their faith?
23. How could you help someone who has drifted away from his or her relationship with Christ?
24. How have others helped you when you were drifting in your relationship with Christ?

Apply It

- * 25. What situation or person will you pray for in faith this week?
26. What personal needs can you ask others to pray for through the coming week? Whom will you ask?
27. Whom do you know who has been drifting away from the Lord and who needs an encouraging word from you this week?

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Praise to God for a Living Hope - 1 Peter 1:1-12

Topics: Assurance, Believe, Character, Circumstances, Doctrine, Endurance, Faith, God, God's Will, Holy Spirit, Hope, Interpretation, Jesus Christ, Joy, Knowledge, Last Days, Obedience, Power, Prophecy, Resurrection, Salvation, Sovereignty, Spiritual Growth, Suffering

Open It

1. What is something you once searched for very hard?
2. Complete this sentence any way you'd like: I hope that . . .
- * 3. To what do people often turn in times of sorrow or suffering?

Explore It

4. To whom did Peter address his letter? (1:1)
5. How had Peter's readers been chosen? (1:2)
6. For what had Peter's readers been chosen? (1:2)
7. What had God given Peter and his readers? (1:3)
8. Into what kind of inheritance did Peter say his readers had been born? (1:4)
9. By what are believers shielded? For how long? (1:5)
- * 10. What did Peter tell his readers they may have to suffer? (1:6)
- * 11. Why had trials come to Peter's audience? (1:7)
- * 12. What benefit is there in suffering? (1:7)
13. What had Peter's readers done even though they had not seen Jesus? (1:8)
14. What did Peter say was the goal of their faith? (1:9)
15. About what did the prophets speak and for what did they search? (1:10)
16. What did the Spirit of Christ predict? (1:11)
17. Whom did Peter say these prophets were serving? (1:12)
18. What did the angels long to do? (1:12)

Get It

19. When do you feel as if you're a stranger in the world?
20. When did God give you new birth?
- * 21. What trials are you or have you suffered recently?
- * 22. How have the trials you've been through strengthened and refined your faith?
23. How have your trials prepared you for Christ's coming?
24. What fills you with joy in life?
25. What is the goal of your faith?
26. When and for what have you searched for something intently?
27. In what way have the prophets who wrote about Christ served us?
28. When was the last time God used you to serve someone else?
29. How could God use you to serve others in the near future?
30. How do you need to adjust your attitude about the trials in your life?

Apply It

- * 31. What can you do this week to welcome the present trials in your life?
32. How will you rejoice in your salvation today?

Be Holy - 1 Peter 1:13-2:3

Topics: Atonement, Basics of the Faith, Believe, Believers, Bible, Desires, Discipline, Evil, Faith, God, Growth, Holiness, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Life-style, Love, Obedience, Priorities, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin, Truth, Words

Open It

- * 1. What standards or examples do many people use to determine how they should live?
- 2. When was the last time you felt like a stranger?

Explore It

- * 3. What bold challenge did Peter give his readers? (1:13)
- * 4. What pressure must we resist conforming to? (1:14)
- * 5. What does God challenge us to be? Why? (1:15-16)
- 6. Why did Peter tell these believers to live as strangers “in reverent fear”? (1:17)
- 7. With what are believers redeemed from their sins? (1:18-19)
- 8. When was Christ chosen and revealed? Why? (1:20)
- 9. What did these readers believe? (1:21)
- 10. How had these Christians purified themselves? (1:22)
- 11. What did Peter urge his readers to do? (1:22)
- 12. How had these believers been born again? (1:23)
- 13. What lasts forever? (1:25)
- 14. Of what did Peter urge us to rid ourselves? (2:1)
- 15. What should we crave? Why? (2:2)
- 16. What have believers tasted? (2:3)

Get It

- 17. When are we tempted by evil desires? Why?
- * 18. In practical terms, what does it mean to be holy?
- * 19. Why is being holy difficult?
- 20. In what situations do you tend to feel like a stranger?
- 21. What does it mean to live like a stranger in this world?
- 22. How can you love other believers?
- 23. What truth should we obey in order to purify ourselves?
- 24. How can our priorities reflect the fact that our lives are temporary while God’s Word is eternal?
- 25. What things in life do you crave?
- 26. How do we satisfy our spiritual longings?

Apply It

- 27. What sins (such as malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander, etc.) do you need to rid yourself of starting today?
- 28. How will you tangibly show love for another Christian this week?
- * 29. What step can you take right away in order to live a more holy life?

The Living Stone and a Chosen People - 1 Peter 2:4-12

Topics: Believers, Bible, Call, Church, Citizenship, Darkness, Desires, Glory, God, Heritage, Jesus Christ, Life-style, Light, Mercy, Obedience, People, Rejection, Sacrifice, Sin, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What is something that is very precious to you?
2. When have you felt rejected?
- * 3. What is your ethnic heritage and how has it influenced you?

Explore It

4. How did God and people treat the living Stone (Christ) differently? (2:4)
- * 5. In what way are we like living stones? (2:5)
6. What will happen to those who trust in the “Cornerstone”? (2:6)
7. How was Christ treated differently by believers and unbelievers? (2:7)
8. In what way did the “Stone” (Christ) cause some people to stumble? (2:8)
- * 9. What status did Peter ascribe to believers in Christ? (2:9)
- * 10. How does our past compare with our present condition? (2:10)
11. From what did Peter urge his readers to abstain? Why? (2:11)
12. Why is it important for believers to live good lives? (2:12)

Get It

13. How is Christ still being rejected by people today? Why?
14. How is Christ precious to you? Why?
15. How could being disobedient to God cause someone else to stumble?
- * 16. How does being chosen by God for a special task make you feel?
17. What are the implications of believers being a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation?
18. In what way were you in darkness before you became a believer?
19. When have you felt that you were at war with sinful desires?
20. Why is it so hard to abstain from sinful desires?
21. Why do we need encouragement to live good lives among non-Christians?
22. What good deeds in your life do non-Christians see?
23. How can we do good deeds so they are both a witness and a discrete act of service (that is, not merely for show)?
24. What does it mean to live a good life?
- * 25. To what people can your good deeds be a witness?

Apply It

26. From what specific sinful desires will you ask God to help you abstain this week?
27. What good deeds can you use as a witness to your neighbors?
- * 28. How do you need to change your plans for the near future so that you will be an example to the unbelievers with whom you have regular contact?

Submission to Rulers and Masters - 1 Peter 2:13-25

Topics: Atonement, Authority, Citizenship, Endurance, Enemies, Example, Fear, Freedom, God, God's Will, Government, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Life-style, Persecution, Righteousness, Sin, Suffering, Unfairness

Open It

1. Who are some people (famous or ordinary) who have suffered for something in which they believed?
2. How do people in different countries view and treat their leaders differently?
- * 3. What is your general attitude toward people in authority over you (bosses, parents, police, etc.)?

Explore It

4. To whom did Peter urge his readers to submit themselves? Why? (2:13-14)
- * 5. Why does God allow government? (2:14)
- * 6. What effect does obedience to government have on many people? (2:15)
7. What did Peter tell his readers not to do with their freedom? (2:16)
- * 8. What role does respect play in our interactions with authority? (2:17)
9. To whom did Peter encourage his readers to submit? Why? (2:18-19)
10. What commendable act is unique among Christians? (2:19)
11. How did Peter contrast just with unjust suffering? (2:20)
12. To what were the readers of this letter called? (2:21)
13. What did Christ leave us? Why? (2:21)
14. What does Isaiah 53:9 say about Christ? (2:22)
15. How did Christ deal with His suffering? (2:22-23)
16. Why did Christ bear our sins? (2:24)
17. What animal are we like? How? (2:25)

Get It

- * 18. To what authorities or masters should we submit ourselves today?
19. Why is it so difficult to submit to people who have authority over us?
20. How would you paraphrase God's will as Peter described it?
21. When have you suffered under someone's harsh authority?
22. When have you suffered unjustly for Christ's sake?
23. What does it mean to fear God?
24. How might we use our freedom to cover up evil?
25. What example has Christ left for us to follow?
26. What challenges does Christ's example give us?
27. Why is it so hard to suffer in silence without retaliating?
28. In what way are we like sheep?
29. What does it mean to live for righteousness?
30. Of what wounds has Christ healed us?
31. What specific changes do you need to make in your life-style in order to live for righteousness?
- * 32. How can you exercise your freedom in a way that honors God?

Apply It

- * 33. To what authority (person or institution) will you ask God to help you submit today?
34. In what situation can you follow Christ's example of suffering without retaliating?

Wives and Husbands - 1 Peter 3:1-7

Topics: Appearance, Attitude, Beauty, Believe, Doctrine, God, Husbands, Marriage, Obedience, Partnerships, Purity, Self-esteem, Submission, Unbelievers, Wives

Open It

- * 1. What examples would you point to in our society to illustrate our obsession with outward appearance?
- 2. How have the roles of a husband and wife changed in the last 20 years?
- 3. What do you think is good and bad about the changes in male and female roles over the last 20 years?
- 4. What do you remember most vividly about your parents' relationship?

Explore It

- 5. What is the challenge of being a wife? (3:1)
- 6. Why did Peter encourage wives to submit to their husbands? (3:1-2)
- 7. What qualities can a believing wife use to witness to an unbelieving husband? (3:1-2)
- * 8. What kinds of beauty can a woman have? (3:3-4)
- * 9. What is the disadvantage of a woman's outward beauty? (3:3-6)
- * 10. What is the advantage of a woman's inward beauty? (3:4-6)
- 11. How can a godly woman make herself beautiful? (3:5)
- 12. What example did Peter set forth for wives to follow? (3:6)
- 13. What is the challenge of being a husband? (3:7)
- 14. Why should husbands treat their wives with respect? (3:7)

Get It

- 15. How would you reply to the challenge that Peter's instructions are outdated and don't apply in today's world?
- 16. How are the responsibilities of wives and husbands different?
- * 17. Why is it easier to be beautiful on the outside rather than on the inside?
- * 18. How can someone develop inner beauty as Peter described?
- 19. What does it mean to be submissive to another person? What does it not mean?
- 20. How are we heirs to the gracious gift of life?
- 21. How might the way a man treats his wife hinder his prayers?
- 22. Why is the husband-wife relationship so important?
- 23. How do you need to change the way you treat your spouse?
- 24. What are some steps every spouse can take to honor his or her partner?

Apply It

- * 25. What specific steps will you take this week to develop your inner character?
- 26. What can you do today to become a better spouse?

Suffering for Doing Good - 1 Peter 3:8-22

Topics: Answers, Atonement, Beliefs, Believers, Caring, Compassion, Conscience, Doctrine, Evil, Faith, God, God's Will, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Hope, Humility, Jesus Christ, Resurrection, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Salvation, Sin, Suffering, Unbelievers, Words

Open It

- * 1. What childhood fight do you remember most vividly?
- 2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being nerves of steel), how good would you say you are at controlling your temper?

Explore It

- * 3. What incredible challenge did Peter give his readers? (3:8-9)
- * 4. Why did Peter instruct his readers to live at peace with everyone? (3:9)
- * 5. What must a person do who wants to love life? (3:10-11)
- 6. Who does God listen to? (3:12)
- 7. How did Peter use a rhetorical question to explain his point? (3:13)
- 8. What did Peter write about suffering for what is right? (3:14)
- 9. What did Peter instruct his readers to be prepared for? (3:15)
- 10. How were these readers to give the reason for their hope in Christ? (3:15)
- 11. Why are believers to keep a clear conscience? (3:16)
- 12. When is it all right to suffer, and when is it a waste? (3:17)
- 13. What did Peter say about Christ's death? (3:18)
- 14. Through whom and to whom did Christ preach? (3:19-20)
- 15. What do the flood waters from which Noah and his family were saved say to us? (3:21)
- 16. How are we saved? (3:21)
- 17. Where did Christ go after His resurrection? (3:22)

Get It

- 18. When is it hard for Christians to live in harmony with each other? Why?
- * 19. When are you tempted to return evil with evil and insult with insult? Why?
- 20. Why do our words get us into so much trouble?
- * 21. What concrete actions can we use to promote harmony?
- 22. How could suffering for doing right be a blessing?
- 23. How should we set Christ apart as Lord in our hearts?
- 24. How prepared are you to explain your hope in Christ?
- 25. What can you do to be better prepared for discussions about Christ with non-Christian friends?
- 26. Why is it better to suffer for doing good rather than evil?
- 27. How has Christ's death and resurrection changed your life?
- 28. How does Christ's place of authority at God's right hand make you feel about your relationship with Him?

Apply It

- 29. What can you do over the next few days to promote harmony between you and the believers you know?
- * 30. What response could you use when you are mistreated or insulted?
- 31. What step can you take this week to become more prepared to answer questions about your hope and faith in Christ?

Living for God - 1 Peter 4:1-11

Topics: Attitude, Believers, Caring, Desires, Drinking, Faith, Gifts, God, Gospel, Hospitality, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Life-style, Love, Lust, Ministry, Serving, Sex, Sin, Suffering, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. In your opinion, what best distinguishes Christians from non-Christians?
- 2. Imagine that the world is going to end in twenty-four hours and you have been granted one wish for anything you want. What would you wish for? Why?

Explore It

- 3. What did Peter say about the person who has suffered? (4:1-2)
- 4. What benefit can there be in suffering? (4:2)
- 5. What did Peter's readers do in the past? (4:3)
- * 6. What did the pagans think was strange? (4:4)
- 7. To whom did Peter say the pagans would have to give account? (4:5)
- 8. For what reason was the gospel preached? (4:6)
- 9. What did Peter say was near? (4:7)
- * 10. What did Peter instruct his readers to do since the end of all things was near? (4:7)
- 11. What did Peter encourage his readers to do above all? (4:8)
- 12. How did Peter encourage his audience to love each other? (4:8-9)
- 13. How were Peter's readers to use their gifts? (4:10)
- 14. How were these believers to speak and serve? (4:11)
- * 15. What goal did Peter want his audience to reach with all they did? (4:11)

Get It

- * 16. What does it mean to be done with sin?
- 17. With what human desires do we continue to struggle?
- * 18. What about your life-style do unbelievers find strange?
- 19. In what way is the end of all things near?
- 20. How would knowing that the world was going to end this year change the way you think or act?
- 21. How does love cover a multitude of sins?
- 22. Why is it sometimes difficult to love other believers?
- 23. To whom do you find it difficult to offer hospitality? Why?
- 24. In what ways can you offer hospitality?
- 25. What gift has God given you that you could use to serve others?

Apply It

- 26. What human desires with which you continue to struggle will you ask God to help you overcome?
- * 27. In what simple way this week can you let unbelievers see that you live by a unique set of priorities?
- 28. To whom will you offer hospitality sometime this week?

Suffering for Being a Christian - 1 Peter 4:12-19

Topics: Believers, Glory, God, Gospel, Insults, Jesus Christ, Joy, Judgment, Name, Persecution, Second Coming, Shame, Suffering, Unbelievers

Open It

- * 1. What is something for which you were wrongly punished when you were growing up?
- 2. When was the last time you were greatly surprised by something that happened to you?

Explore It

- 3. By what were Peter's readers not to be surprised? (4:12)
- * 4. In what did Peter tell his readers to rejoice? (4:13)
- 5. What would participating in Christ's suffering prepare these believers for? (4:13)
- 6. Under what circumstance did Peter tell these believers they would be blessed? (4:14)
- 7. How did Peter say these believers shouldn't suffer? (4:15)
- * 8. What did Peter urge his readers to do if they suffered as Christians? (4:16)
- 9. For what did Peter say it was time? (4:17)
- 10. What question did Peter ask his readers? (4:17)
- 11. What does the verse Peter quoted say about the righteous and the ungodly? (4:18)
- * 12. What should those who suffer according to God's will do? (4:19)

Get It

- 13. What painful trials have you gone through as a believer?
- * 14. How can participating in Christ's suffering prepare us for His Second Coming?
- 15. When have you been insulted because of the name of Christ?
- 16. How is suffering as a wrongdoer (such as for murder) significantly different from suffering as a Christian?
- 17. When have you ever been ashamed of being a Christian? Why?
- * 18. Why might it be God's will for someone to suffer?
- 19. What sort of judgment do members of God's family face?

Apply It

- * 20. In what difficult circumstance do you need to praise God this week?
- 21. What steps do you need to take so that your suffering is not the result of your own wrongdoing?

To Elders and Young Men - 1 Peter 5:1-14

Topics: Believers, Caring, Church, Example, Fellowship, Glory, God, Greed, Humility, Jesus Christ, Leadership, Money, Pride, Rewards, Satan, Serving, Submission, Suffering, Worry

Open It

1. What does the average person believe about the devil?
- * 2. What people might consider you a leader or example?
3. What motivates people to be leaders in the church?

Explore It

4. To whom did Peter appeal? (5:1)
- * 5. What did Peter instruct elders to do? (5:2)
6. What instructions did Peter give concerning greed? (5:2)
- * 7. How did Peter tell elders not to lead? (5:3)
- * 8. How did Peter tell elders to lead? (5:3)
9. What reward were elders going to receive when the Chief Shepherd appeared? (5:4)
10. What were the young men encouraged to do? (5:5)
11. Why were all the readers encouraged to clothe themselves with humility? (5:5)
12. Why were these believers encouraged to humble themselves? (5:6)
13. What did Peter tell his readers to do with their anxieties? (5:7)
14. What did Peter say the devil was doing? (5:8)
15. How were these believers instructed to respond to the devil? (5:9)
16. To what did Peter say these believers had been called? (5:10)
17. What did Peter assure his readers God would do after they had suffered a little while? (5:10)
18. What did Silas help Peter do? (5:12)
19. Who sent greetings along with Peter? (5:13)
20. How did Peter tell these believers to greet one another? (5:14)

Get It

21. What leadership style do the pastors and elders in your church have?
22. What attitude do the young people in your church have toward the leaders of the church?
23. What leadership positions have you held?
- * 24. How can you be an example to the people in your family?
- * 25. What changes do you need to make in the way you lead?
26. How do you need to change your attitude toward those who are in positions of authority over you?
27. Why do we sometimes find it difficult to be submissive to those in authority over us?
28. Why might we be tempted to “lord it over” the people we are leading?
29. Why is being humble so difficult?
30. What worries tend to plague you?
31. What does it mean to cast your anxieties on the Lord?
32. How can we cast our anxieties on the Lord?
33. What means does the devil use to “devour” people in our society?
34. How should we resist the devil?
35. When have you suffered as a believer?

Apply It

- * 36. In what concrete way this week can you be a better example to the people who look to you for leadership?
37. What worries will you cast upon God today?

38. In what area will you ask God to help you to be more humble this week?

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Making One's Calling and Election Sure - 2 Peter 1:1-11

Topics: Assurance, Call, Character, Desires, Discipline, Eternal Life, Evil, Faith, God, Goodness, Heaven, Jesus Christ, Kindness, Knowledge, Love, Perseverance, Quality, Rewards, Sin, Sovereignty, Spiritual Growth, World

Open It

- * 1. What character qualities do you find most attractive in other people?
- 2. What do people often do to “grow” intellectually, culturally, or in some similar way?
- 3. If you could be better at one thing, what would you want to improve?

Explore It

- 4. Who wrote 2 Peter? (1:1)
- 5. To whom was 2 Peter written? (1:1)
- 6. What did Peter say had been given to his audience? (1:3)
- 7. How do God's people benefit from the promises God has given them? (1:4)
- * 8. What did Peter urge his readers to add to their faith? (1:5-7)
- 9. How did Peter encourage his audience? (1:5-7)
- 10. What would be the result of possessing godly character in increasing measure? (1:8)
- 11. What happens to the person who does not possess godly qualities? (1:9)
- * 12. What did Peter want his audience to be eager to do? Why? (1:10-11)
- * 13. What happens when we pursue the qualities Peter described? (1:11)

Get It

- 14. How equipped do you feel for life and godliness?
- 15. What is the relationship between knowledge of God and Christ and spiritual growth?
- 16. Which of the character qualities that Peter listed do you find the most difficult to practice?
- * 17. Which of the qualities listed by Peter do you consider to be the most important to add to your faith? Why?
- 18. What does it mean to be ineffective and unproductive?
- * 19. How can the qualities Peter mentioned keep us from being ineffective and unproductive?
- 20. Why is it easy to forget what God has done for us?
- 21. How can someone make his or her calling and election sure?
- 22. Which of the qualities listed do you want most to add to your faith?

Apply It

- * 23. How will you add a godly quality to your faith today?
- 24. What steps will you take in order to make your calling and election sure?
- 25. What steps will you take this week to make your faith more effective and productive?

Prophecy of Scripture - 2 Peter 1:12-21

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Bible, Death, Doctrine, Glory, God, Honor, Inspiration, Interpretation, Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Remembering, Truth

Open It

- * 1. If you knew you were about to die and had time to make only one phone call or write one letter, whom would you contact? Why?
- 2. To what interesting event have you been an eyewitness?

Explore It

- 3. In what did Peter say his readers were established? (1:12)
- 4. What did Peter think it was right for him to do? (1:13)
- 5. What did Peter know that he would soon do? (1:14)
- 6. What did Peter want his audience to be able to do after he had died? (1:15)
- 7. What did Peter say he and others had not followed? (1:16)
- * 8. What gave Peter credibility? (1:16)
- 9. What did God say about Jesus? (1:17)
- 10. Who heard the voice of God? Where? (1:18)
- * 11. What did Peter tell his readers that they should do? (1:19)
- 12. What did Peter want his readers to understand? (1:20)
- * 13. What makes prophecy special? (1:21)

Get It

- 14. About what do you need to be constantly reminded?
- * 15. Why do we need to have our memory refreshed about biblical truths?
- 16. Why is it easy for us to forget truths that are important to us?
- 17. In what way are our bodies like tents?
- 18. How important to your faith is it that Peter (and other New Testament writers) were eyewitnesses of the life of Christ?
- 19. Why is it important to know that our faith is grounded in history?
- * 20. How do you need to change your Bible study habits in light of Scripture's importance?
- 21. How do you think the Bible was written?
- 22. How should Peter's statements about the origin of Scripture impact our faith as well as our study of the Bible?
- 23. Why is it important to know about the origin of the Bible?
- 24. What is unique about Scripture?
- 25. How can we be confident that the Bible is the Word of God?

Apply It

- * 26. What portion of Scripture that you have neglected lately will you take the time to study this week?
- 27. How can you read the Bible differently this week in light of its importance?

False Teachers and Their Destruction - 2 Peter 2:1-22

Topics: Abandon, Angels, Backslide, Blasphemy, Choices, Complacency, Desires, Enemies, Faithfulness, Forsake, Freedom, God, Hardheartedness, Hell, Heresy, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Law, Lust, Morality, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Repentance, Righteousness, Sin, Slavery, World

Open It

1. What is your favorite proverb or wise saying (for example, “Haste makes waste”)?
- * 2. What activities or pursuits are popular today?
3. In what ways do people today abuse their freedom?

Explore It

4. What did Peter warn his readers that false prophets would attempt to do? (2:1)
5. What did Peter say would happen when people followed false prophets? (2:2)
6. What did God do to the angels who had sinned? (2:4)
7. Whom did Peter say God protected? (2:5)
8. What did God use as an example of what will happen to the ungodly? (2:6)
- * 9. What effect did living among immoral people have upon Lot? (2:7-8)
10. How did Peter say the Lord would deal with the godly and the unrighteous? (2:9)
11. What kind of people are unafraid to slander celestial beings? (2:10-15)
12. How did God rebuke Balaam? (2:16)
13. What did Peter say was reserved for people who rebel against God? (2:17)
- * 14. How did the evil people of whom Peter wrote affect others? (2:18)
15. What did such sinful men promise? (2:19)
16. To what were sinful people slaves? (2:19)
- * 17. How did Peter say a person could escape the corruption of the world? (2:20)
18. In what way would it have been better for ungodly people to have never heard of God? Why? (2:21)
19. What proverbs did Peter apply to the blatantly ungodly? (2:22)

Get It

- * 20. What effect does living and working among sinful people have upon you?
- * 21. How do you deal with the influence of immoral or rebellious people around you?
22. What false prophets attempt to influence the church today?
23. Why is it important to know how God has dealt with unrighteous people in the past, including angels?
24. When and why have you felt like Lot—distressed by the filthy lives of lawless people?
25. Why and how could someone who has known Christ return to the unrighteousness from which he or she had been rescued?
26. When are you tempted to return to some sinful activity or attitude? Why?
27. What lustful desires entice people today?
28. When and how does slavery sometimes appear to be a promise of freedom?
29. To what sorts of desires can we become unknowingly enslaved?
30. Why might it be important for us to know what Peter wrote about angels?
31. What false teachings do you need to expose as untrue?

Apply It

32. Beginning today, from what sinful desire will you ask God to help you escape?
33. What steps will you take today to ensure that you don’t allow your exercise of freedom to result in your enslavement to sin?

* 34. How will you deal with the effect of living in a sinful world today?

The Day of the Lord - 2 Peter 3:1-18

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Bible, Creation, Doctrine, Earth, Encouragement, God, Growth, Heaven, Holiness, Hope, Inspiration, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Last Days, Life-style, Obedience, Patience, Promises, Repentance, Salvation, Spiritual Growth, Thinking, Unbelievers, World

Open It

1. When was the last time someone wrote you an encouraging letter?
- * 2. With what sort of people do you find it hard to be patient?

Explore It

3. Why did Peter write this letter as well as his first letter? (3:1)
4. What did Peter want these believers (his audience) to recall? (3:2)
5. What did Peter say would occur in the last days? (3:3)
6. What will the “scoffers” say in the last days? (3:4)
7. What will the “scoffers” deliberately forget? (3:5)
8. How was the world once destroyed and how will it be destroyed in the future? (3:6-7)
- * 9. What did Peter tell his readers not to forget? (3:8)
- * 10. Why is the Lord patient? (3:9)
11. How will the day of the Lord appear? (3:10)
12. What reason did Peter give his readers for living holy and godly lives? (3:11-12)
13. What will the day of God bring? (3:12)
14. What reason did Peter give his readers to hope for the future? (3:13)
15. What did Peter urge his readers to make every effort to do? Why? (3:14)
- * 16. What does the Lord’s patience mean? (3:15)
17. What did Peter say about the apostle Paul’s writings? (3:16)
18. Why did Peter instruct his readers to be on their guard? (3:17)
19. What final instruction did Peter leave with his readers? (3:18)

Get It

20. What stimulates you to wholesome thinking?
21. What discourages you from engaging in wholesome thinking?
22. About what biblical truths have you heard people scoff, and why were they scoffing?
23. How does the fact that the earth will one day be destroyed affect your daily life?
24. How should the reality that the earth will one day be destroyed affect the way we live our lives from day to day?
- * 25. How have you personally benefited from God’s patience?
26. When have you thought that God was either not patient enough or too patient with you or someone else?
27. Why is it easy to spend little time looking forward to the new heaven and new earth?
28. How can we guard against falling into error in what we believe?
29. How can we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ?
- * 30. How do you need to alter your life-style in light of the certain future destruction of the earth?

Apply It

31. What specific step will you take this week to grow in Christ?
- * 32. How can you change your routine to reflect your hope for Christ’s return?
33. What will you do this week to stimulate wholesome thinking?
34. To whom can you write a letter of encouragement this week?

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The Word of Life - 1 John 1:1-4

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Doctrine, Eternal Life, Evidence, Faith, Fellowship, God, History, Jesus Christ, Joy, Life, Words

Open It

- * 1. What do you associate with the term “fellowship”?
- 2. How do we know that the events we read about in history books really happened?

Explore It

- 3. What was from the beginning? (1:1)
- 4. What contact did the writer and this community of believers have with the Word of life? (1:1)
- * 5. How did God reveal Himself to us? (1:2)
- 6. What was being proclaimed by this community of believers? (1:2)
- 7. Where had the eternal life been, and to whom had it appeared? (1:2)
- 8. Why were the author and his fellow believers telling others about Christ? (1:3)
- * 9. With whom did this community of believers have fellowship? (1:3)
- * 10. Why was this letter written? (1:4)

Get It

- 11. Why do you think John stressed his and this community of believers’ personal, physical, historical encounter with Jesus?
- 12. How important are firsthand eyewitness testimonies, such as this writer’s, to your belief in Jesus?
- 13. What fellowship do you have with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ?
- 14. What fellowship do you have with other believers?
- 15. How is our fellowship with God related to our fellowship with other believers?
- * 16. What blocks our fellowship with God and others?
- * 17. In what ways can we enhance our fellowship?
- 18. In what way is your joy complete?

Apply It

- 19. What can you do to gain a better appreciation of the historical foundation of your faith in Christ?
- * 20. What specific steps will you take this week in order to deepen your fellowship with other believers?

Walking in the Light - 1 John 1:5-2:14

Topics: Atonement, Children, Confession, Darkness, Denial, Disobedience, Doctrine, Evil, Fellowship, Forgiveness, God, Guilt, Habits, Jesus Christ, Life, Light, Lying, Obedience, Pride, Reconciliation, Sacrifice, Satan, Sin, Truth

Open It

- * 1. Why might it be hard for someone to admit that he or she was wrong about something?
- 2. About what do we tend to deceive ourselves?
- 3. When and why might someone need an attorney?

Explore It

- 4. What message did the writer hear and declare? (1:5)
- * 5. What inconsistency did John address? (1:6)
- 6. What results from “walking in the light”? (1:7)
- * 7. How were some believers apparently deceiving themselves? (1:8)
- 8. What is the result of confessing one’s sins? (1:9)
- 9. In what way can a person make God out to be a liar? (1:10)
- * 10. Why did John write this letter? (2:1)
- 11. For whom is Jesus an atoning sacrifice? (2:2)
- 12. What test did John describe for knowing whether or not a person truly knows God? (2:3-6)
- 13. What did John say he was giving to his readers? (2:7-8)
- 14. How are claiming to be a Christian and loving one’s fellow Christians related? (2:9-11)
- 15. Why did John write to “the dear children”? (2:12-13)
- 16. Why did John write to “the fathers”? (2:13-14)
- 17. Why did John write to “the young men”? (2:13-14)

Get It

- 18. What do you think the terms “light” and “darkness” represent?
- 19. In what way is God similar to light?
- * 20. In what way do we “walk in darkness”?
- * 21. How can we “walk in the light”?
- 22. How does the promise of being purified from all sin make you feel?
- 23. Why would someone claim that he or she was without sin?
- 24. What role does the confession of sins play in your daily life?
- 25. How important is fellowship with other believers to you?
- 26. In what way is Jesus like our attorney?
- 27. How can we get to know God better?
- 28. What does the way in which we treat other believers reveal about us?
- 29. What confidence does Jesus’ atoning death give to us?
- 30. What confidence should our relationship with the Father give us?
- 31. What area of your life do you need to examine in order to see your sins more clearly?
- 32. How do you need to change the way you relate to fellow believers in order to develop a deeper relationship with God?

Apply It

- * 33. What steps will you take this week to walk in the light?
- 34. What will you do to incorporate the confession of sins into your daily routine?

Do Not Love the World - 1 John 2:15-17

Topics: Affections, Culture, Desires, Ego, Eternal Life, God, God's Will, Happiness, Joy, Life-style, Love, Lust, Needs, Obedience, Peer Pressure, Pride, Relationships, Satisfaction, Self-esteem, Sin, World

Open It

- * 1. What makes TV commercials and advertisements so appealing?
- 2. What sort of promises do TV commercials and advertisements make?
- 3. Which of these three most clearly motivates the people you know and live near: (1) the drive to meet their physical needs, (2) the drive to get things, or (3) the drive to succeed?

Explore It

- 4. What restrictions should we place on our affections? (2:15)
- 5. What should believers not love? Why? (2:15)
- 6. What is the result of loving the world? (2:15)
- 7. Why did John tell us not to love the world? (2:15-17)
- 8. What are the things of the world? (2:16)
- 9. How did John categorize the things in the world? (2:16)
- 10. From where do the things in the world come? (2:16)
- 11. From where do the things in the world not come? (2:16)
- * 12. What passes away? (2:17)
- * 13. Who lives forever? (2:17)

Get It

- * 14. How do we love the world and the things in it?
- 15. What things in the world are you tempted to love?
- 16. What would you categorize as “the cravings of sinful man”?
- 17. What would you categorize as “the lust of the eyes”?
- 18. What would you categorize as “the boasting of what he has or does”?
- * 19. Why are the things and values of the world so enticing to us?
- 20. What worldly things or values do we substitute for God?
- 21. What does it mean to do the will of God?
- 22. How can we guard against adopting the values of the world?
- 23. From what worldly thing or value do you need to turn in order to pursue your relationship with God?

Apply It

- * 24. What specific steps will you take in order to find satisfaction in your relationship with God rather than in the things of the world?
- 25. How will you do the will of God today?

Warning Against Antichrists - 1 John 2:18-27

Topics: Believers, Christianity, Church, Denial, Doctrine, Eternal Life, Fellowship, Forsake, God, Heresy, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Last Days, Rejection, Teaching, Truth, Unbelievers

Open It

1. Who are the enemies of the Church today?
2. What do you think is the best defense against cults and other false spiritual teaching?
- * 3. What effect do you think warning labels on cigarettes and alcohol have?

Explore It

4. What time did John say it is? (2:18)
- * 5. Who was coming and who had come at the time John wrote this? (2:18)
6. What did John say about those who had left? (2:19)
7. What did the readers of 1 John have? (2:20)
8. What did the readers of 1 John know? (2:21)
9. How is the antichrist identified? (2:22)
- * 10. In what way is denying (or acknowledging) the Son related to having the Father? (2:23)
- * 11. What did John encourage his readers to do? (2:24)
12. What did the Father promise? (2:25)
13. Why did the author write these things? (2:26)
14. What was the relationship between the anointing these believers received and their need to be taught? (2:27)

Get It

15. What makes you think that we are living in the last hour today?
16. What antichrists are among us today?
17. What truths do we know about Christ?
18. What have we been taught by the anointing of the Holy Spirit?
19. How can we remain in or have fellowship with Jesus Christ?
- * 20. What groups of people are trying to lead believers astray today?
- * 21. How can we protect ourselves against false teachers and antichrists?

Apply It

22. What will you do this week to deepen your fellowship with Jesus Christ?
- * 23. What steps do you need to take to better prepare yourself against antichrists and their false doctrines?
24. Who is someone you can encourage in their relationship with Christ this week?

Children of God - 1 John 2:28-3:10

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Believers, Children, Disobedience, Doctrine, Fellowship, God, Habits, Jesus Christ, Life-style, Obedience, Satan, Second Coming, Sin, Unbelievers, World

Open It

- * 1. In what way(s) are you like your mother or father?
- 2. What was one of the benefits of being the child of your parents as you were growing up?
- 3. How would most people define the term “sin”?

Explore It

- 4. Why did John encourage his readers to continue in Christ? (2:28)
- * 5. What is true about everyone who does what is right? (2:29)
- 6. How has the Father lavished love upon believers? (3:1)
- 7. Why doesn't the world know Christians? (3:1)
- 8. What will happen to the children of God when they see Christ? (3:2)
- 9. What kind of person purifies himself or herself? (3:3)
- 10. What is sin? (3:4)
- 11. Why did Christ appear? (3:5)
- * 12. How is a person who lives in Christ unusual? (3:6)
- 13. What does it mean to do what is right? (3:7)
- 14. What did John say about the person who does what is sinful? (3:8)
- 15. Why did the Son of God appear? (3:8)
- * 16. Why can't the person who is born of God continue to sin? (3:9)
- 17. How are children of God and children of the devil identified? (3:10)

Get It

- 18. What does it mean to continue in Christ?
- 19. How are you preparing yourself for Christ's return?
- 20. What is so great about being a child of God?
- * 21. When have you felt that your non-Christian friends did not really know or understand you?
- * 22. How do you reconcile the fact that Christians do sin with the statements that they cannot sin or keep on sinning?
- 23. How can we know that we are children of God?
- 24. How do you need to change your daily routine so that you may be confident and unashamed before Christ at His Second Coming?

Apply It

- 25. What step will you take today to purify yourself?
- * 26. What area of weakness will you ask God to strengthen this week?

Love One Another - 1 John 3:11-24

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Believers, Caring, Children, Compassion, Death, Disobedience, Eternal Life, Evil, God, Hardheartedness, Hatred, Heart, Holy Spirit, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Life, Life-style, Love, Murder, Obedience, Poor, Prayer, Satan, World

Open It

- * 1. Who is someone (in history or alive today) whose life is an example of what it means to love?
- 2. Who is someone (in history or alive today) whose life is an example of what it means to hate?

Explore It

- 3. What message had the readers of 1 John heard from the beginning? (3:11)
- 4. Why did Cain murder his brother? (3:12)
- 5. About what should believers not be surprised? (3:13)
- 6. How can a person know that he or she has passed from death to life? (3:14)
- 7. What is the result of hating one's brother? (3:15)
- * 8. How do we know what love is? (3:16)
- 9. What question did the author ask his readers? (3:17)
- * 10. How should Christians love? (3:18)
- 11. What is God greater than? (3:20)
- 12. What is the result of not being condemned by one's heart? (3:21-22)
- 13. What is God's command? (3:23)
- * 14. What is the result of obeying God's command? (3:24)
- 15. How do believers know that God lives in them? (3:24)

Get It

- 16. How does the world hate believers today?
- 17. When have you experienced the hatred of the world?
- 18. What does it mean to love one's brother?
- * 19. When do you struggle with loving other Christians?
- * 20. How do you demonstrate your love for fellow believers?
- 21. Why do we struggle with loving other Christians with our material possessions?
- 22. Why is it easier to love with words rather than actions?
- 23. In what way does love result in life, and hate result in death?

Apply It

- * 24. For what fellow Christian whom you have difficulty loving will you do something kind this week?
- 25. How can you use your material possessions to love another believer this week?
- 26. What specific step will you take this week to put your love for another Christian into action?

Test the Spirits - 1 John 4:1-6

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Believers, Christianity, Confession, Demons, Denial, Doctrine, God, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Satan, Testing, Unbelievers, Victory, World

Open It

- * 1. What standard would you use for testing a person's credentials to do your job?
- 2. What makes something either "worldly" or "Christian"?

Explore It

- * 3. What did John instruct his readers to do? (4:1)
- 4. Who did John say had gone into the world? (4:1)
- 5. How is the Spirit of God recognized? (4:2)
- * 6. How can we distinguish truth from error in spiritual matters? (4:2-3)
- 7. What spirit does not acknowledge that Jesus is from God? (4:3)
- 8. Why did the writer say that believers had overcome the spirit of the antichrist? (4:4)
- 9. Where is the spirit of the antichrist from? (4:5)
- 10. From what viewpoint does the spirit of the antichrist speak? (4:5)
- * 11. Who does and does not listen to those who are from God? (4:6)
- 12. How are the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood recognized? (4:6)

Get It

- 13. What spirits should we be testing today?
- 14. What false prophets are in the world today?
- * 15. What segments of our society would you say are influenced or controlled by the spirit of the antichrist?
- 16. What is the significance of acknowledging that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?
- 17. In what way have you overcome the world?
- 18. How does the truth that Christ is greater than the devil make you feel?
- * 19. How can we reflect our confidence in Christ's supremacy over the devil?
- 20. How would you distinguish between seeing from the world's viewpoint and seeing from God's viewpoint?

Apply It

- * 21. What influences in your life (for example, books, movies, music, ideas, etc.) will you "put to the test" this week to see whether they are from God?
- 22. What false prophets do you need to guard yourself against this week?

God's Love and Ours - 1 John 4:7-21

Topics: Atonement, Believers, Caring, Fear, Fellowship, Friendship, God, Hatred, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Love, Lying, Perfect, Sacrifice, Sin, World

Open It

1. Which do you think is a more powerful motivator—love, fear, or hate? Why?
2. What popular figure alive today or from history used hate to motivate people?
3. When have you been motivated by love?

Explore It

4. What were the readers of 1 John encouraged to do? (4:7)
- * 5. What is the relationship between loving and knowing God? (4:7-8)
6. How did God show His love? (4:9)
7. Why did God send His Son? (4:9)
8. What is love? (4:10)
9. Why should Christians love one another? (4:11)
10. What is the result of loving one another? (4:12)
- * 11. How can believers know that they live in God and God lives in them? (4:13)
12. What did John testify concerning? (4:14)
13. What happens when we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God? (4:15)
14. Why is love important? (4:16-17)
15. How is love made complete? (4:17)
16. What does perfect love do? Why? (4:18)
- * 17. Why should we love? (4:19)
18. What is the relationship between loving God and loving one's brother? (4:20-21)

Get It

- * 19. How can we demonstrate our love for God?
20. What example has Jesus set for us to follow?
21. How should God's love motivate you to love others?
22. How do you know that God lives in you?
23. What does it mean to live in God?
24. Why is it be easier to love God than other Christians?
- * 25. When you have difficulty loving other believers, what is it that makes it difficult?
- * 26. How can we demonstrate our love for others?
27. What are you afraid of?
28. How can we overcome our fears?
29. How does love drive out fear?

Apply It

30. Who is someone that you have a difficult time getting along with that you need to ask God to help you love this week?
31. What fear will you ask God to help you overcome?
- * 32. What specific steps will you take this week to demonstrate your love for another believer?

Faith in the Son of God - 1 John 5:1-12

Topics: Basics of the Faith, Believe, Believers, Children, Eternal Life, Faith, Fellowship, God, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Life, Love, Obedience, Truth, Victory, Witnessing, World

Open It

1. What makes a person's testimony seem credible or incredible?
2. How do you demonstrate love for your parents?
- * 3. What do you find burdensome or a drag to do?

Explore It

4. Who is born of God? (5:1)
5. What can be said about the person who loves the Father? (5:1)
6. How can a person know if he or she loves God's people? (5:2)
7. What is love for God? (5:2)
- * 8. What unique quality do God's commands have? Why is this true? (5:3-4)
- * 9. Who overcomes the world? (5:4-5)
- * 10. How can we overcome the world? (5:4-5)
 11. How did Jesus Christ come? (5:6)
 12. Why does the Spirit testify? (5:6)
 13. What three things are in agreement? (5:7-8)
 14. Why is God's testimony greater than man's testimony? (5:9)
 15. Who has made God out to be a liar? (5:10)
 16. What testimony has God given concerning His Son? (5:10-11)
 17. What do we have if we have Christ in us? (5:12)

Get It

18. What does it mean to be born of God?
19. How can we know that we are born of God?
20. How do you know that you are a child of God?
21. What are the commands of God with which you struggle with obeying?
22. In what way should we love the children of God?
- * 23. When have you thought that God's commands were burdensome?
- * 24. What does it mean to overcome the world?
 25. How have you overcome the world?
 26. What is your relationship to the Son?
 27. How can a person receive eternal life?

Apply It

- * 28. How will you demonstrate your love for the Father today?
29. What steps do you need to take in order to be certain you are a child of God?
30. What will you do to celebrate your life in the Son today?

Concluding Remarks - 1 John 5:13-21

Topics: Believe, Believers, Children, Confidence, Death, Disobedience, Eternal Life, Evil, God, God's Will, Jesus Christ, Life, Obedience, Prayer, Satan, Sin, Understanding

Open It

- * 1. What might make someone afraid to ask another person for something?
- 2. What sort of things do people today pin their hopes on?

Explore It

- 3. Why did John write this letter? (5:13)
- 4. What confidence can believers have? (5:14-15)
- * 5. About what type of sin did John say his readers should pray? (5:16)
- 6. What is sin? (5:17)
- 7. What does the person born of God stop doing? (5:18)
- 8. What sort of protection do Christians enjoy? (5:18)
- * 9. Under whose control is the whole world? (5:19)
- * 10. What has the Son of God done, and what has He given? (5:20)
- 11. Who is Jesus Christ? (5:20)
- 12. What was the last instruction John left with his readers? (5:21)

Get It

- 13. How can we be confident that we have eternal life?
- * 14. When is it hard for you to approach God with confidence?
- 15. How can we know whether something is according to God's will?
- 16. In what way can sin lead to death?
- 17. To what sort of death might sin lead?
- 18. In what way has sin led to death in your life?
- 19. What type of sin does not lead to death?
- 20. By what modern "idols" are you tempted?
- * 21. About what issue do you need to approach God more confidently?

Apply It

- 22. What specific step can you take this week to place more confidence in God and less in the idols of this world?
- 23. For what fellow believer who has sinned will you pray today?
- * 24. What matter will you bring before God this week?

From the Elder - 2 John 1:1-13

Topics: Believers, Caring, Children, Deceit, Family, Fellowship, God, Jesus Christ, Love, Obedience, Peace, Rewards, Teaching, Truth, Work

Open It

- * 1. Who is someone to whom you have written recently?
- 2. Why is starting something (an exercise program, for example) relatively easy, while continuing it is usually more difficult?

Explore It

- 3. To whom was this letter addressed? (1:1)
- * 4. Who wrote this letter? Why? (1:1-2)
- 5. What unique characteristic do Christians have? (1:2)
- 6. What did the elder say would be with him in truth and love? (1:3)
- * 7. What gave the elder great joy? (1:4)
- * 8. What command did the writer give to his readers? (1:5)
- 9. What is love? (1:6)
- 10. What did many false teachers of John's day deny? (1:7)
- 11. What did the elder encourage his readers to do? (1:8)
- 12. What is true about someone who does or does not continue in the teaching of Christ? (1:9)
- 13. Who was the reader of this letter not to welcome into his or her house? Why? (1:10-11)
- 14. Why did John not want to write all that he had to say? (1:12)
- 15. Who shared in John's greeting? (1:13)

Get It

- * 16. In what way does truth live in us?
- 17. When has it given you joy to see another believer walking in the truth?
- 18. How should we show our love for one another?
- * 19. What does it mean to continue in the teaching of Christ?
- 20. What does it mean not to welcome a person who does not share in the teaching of Christ?
- 21. How would welcoming someone without correct teaching about Christ be sharing in his or her wickedness?
- 22. How can we avoid false teachers without being cold or inhospitable?
- 23. What sort of people should you deny a welcome into your home?

Apply It

- 24. What specific steps will you take this week to demonstrate your love for other believers?
- * 25. What can you do today to continue in the teaching of Christ?

From the Elder - 3 John 1:1-14

Topics: Ambition, Attitude, Caring, Children, Church, Evil, Faithfulness, God, Gossip, Jesus Christ, Joy, Love, Popularity, Prayer, Reputation, Self-centeredness, Serving, Status, Truth

Open It

1. What gives you the greatest joy in life?
- * 2. What sort of people in your church are well thought of?
3. What famous people are presently the objects of malicious gossip in the tabloids?

Explore It

4. To whom was this letter addressed? (1:1)
5. For what did “the elder” pray? (1:2)
- * 6. What gave the writer of 3 John great joy? (1:3-4)
7. In what was the recipient of this letter faithful? (1:5)
- * 8. What information was circulating among the people in Gaius’s church? (1:6)
9. Why were “the brothers” sent out? (1:7)
10. Why did the elder say that believers ought to show hospitality to Christians who serve God? (1:8)
11. What did Diotrephes love? (1:9)
12. What was Diotrephes doing? (1:9-10)
- * 13. What did the elder encourage Gaius to do? (1:11)
14. What is true about people who do good and people who do evil? (1:11)
15. What was commendable about Demetrius? (1:12)
16. Why is 3 John so short? (1:13-14)
17. What did the writer of 3 John hope to do? (1:14)

Get It

18. What does it mean to love someone in the truth?
- * 19. If other believers were to give a report about you, how would they describe your faithfulness?
20. What about being a believer gives you joy?
21. In what area of life do you struggle to be faithful?
22. How can we show hospitality to other Christians?
23. In what situations do we love to be first, like Diotrephes?
24. What motivates people to gossip?
25. In what areas of your life do you need to do better at “imitating good” rather than evil?
- * 26. What can you do to improve your record of faithfulness?
27. What kind of reputation do you have at your church?

Apply It

- * 28. In what area of your life can you be more faithful this week?
29. To whom can you show hospitality this week?
30. In what way will you imitate good rather than evil today?

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The Sin and Doom of Godless Men - Jude 1:1-16

Topics: Angels, Consequences, Grace, Hell, Homosexuality, Immorality, Judgment, Prophecy, Punishment, Salvation, Second Coming, Sin

Open It

1. Who was someone everyone tried to avoid in grade school? Why?
- * 2. What is something you have learned or taken note of from history?

Explore It

3. How did the author of this letter describe himself? (1:1)
4. Why was Jude initially eager to write this letter? (1:3)
5. What made Jude change the topic of his letter? (1:3-4)
- * 6. What are “godless” people? (1:4)
7. Why did Jude describe certain people as “godless”? (1:4)
8. How do godless people misuse the grace of God? (1:4)
- * 9. Of what historical events did Jude remind his readers? Why? (1:5-7)
- * 10. How do the stories about Israelites, angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah add to Jude’s warning about godless people? (1:8)
11. What sins do godless people commit? (1:8)
12. In what ways are godless people like “unreasoning animals”? (1:10)
13. What destroys godless people? (1:10)
14. How are godless people like clouds, trees, waves, and stars? (1:12-13)
15. What effect does Jude’s figurative language have? (1:12-13)
16. How does Enoch’s prophecy add to the warning about godless people? (1:14)

Get It

17. What effect does the repetition of the word “ungodly” in Jude’s message have on you?
18. How could the grace of God be changed into a license for immorality?
19. How do we ever misuse the knowledge of God’s grace for our own desires?
20. In what ways is it necessary for us to contend for the faith?
- * 21. How does it help us to recall past events (either from the Bible, church history, or our own lives)?
- * 22. What past events are most instructive to you?
23. How should our belief in eternal punishment motivate us?
24. What difference should it make in your life that the Lord will return to judge and convict?
25. How can we prevent ourselves from becoming self-absorbed as the people Jude warned against were?
26. What responsibility do we have to protect our church congregations from godless people?
27. In what ways do you need to guard yourself against the sins of grumbling, finding fault in others, boasting, and flattering others for your own advantage?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you keep past events that teach you to live for God at the front of your thinking this week?
29. What step can you take this week to guard against grumbling, faultfinding, boasting, or using flattery?
30. In what specific ways do you need to contend for your faith this next week?
31. What could you do in the near future to come to a better appreciation for God’s grace?

A Call to Persevere - Jude 1:17-25

Topics: Divisions, Eternal Life, Faith, Fear, Holiness, Last Days, Mercy, Prayer

Open It

1. What is it like to anticipate an exciting, important event?
- * 2. Who is the most difficult coworker or boss you've ever had to work with?

Explore It

3. What did Jude urge his readers to do? (1:17)
4. What will it be like in the last times? (1:18)
- * 5. What are "scoffers" like? (1:18-19)
6. How do those without the Spirit behave? (1:19)
- * 7. How can Christians stand against scoffers? (1:20-23)
8. How did Jude advise Christians to pray? (1:20)
9. What were Jude's readers waiting for? (1:21)
10. How is Jesus' return described? (1:21)
11. How should we treat believers who doubt? (1:22-23)
12. What did Jude tell his readers to do for those who await "the fire"? (1:23)
13. Who is able to keep believers from falling? (1:24-25)
- * 14. How did Jude praise God? (1:24-25)
15. How did Jude conclude this letter? (1:25)

Get It

- * 16. Who are some "scoffers" you must work or associate with?
17. How should you respond to the ungodly people you must work or associate with?
- * 18. How should your life be different from the lives of the non-Christians around you?
19. How can we show mercy to believers who doubt?
20. What does it mean to "show mercy, mixed with fear"?
21. How is it possible to build yourself up in the faith?
22. What often causes division in churches today?
23. How can you show mercy to believers who doubt?
24. What difference does it make that Jesus is able to keep you from falling?
25. How can you voice your praise to God?

Apply It

- * 26. What do you want to remember the next time you must work with a difficult non-Christian?
27. How can you show mercy to a believer you know who doubts his or her faith?
28. What can you do to build up your faith this week?
29. When and how can you voice your praise to God this week?

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Prologue - Revelation 1:1-3

Topics: Angels, Doctrine, Future, Jesus Christ, Last Days, Listening, Obedience, Prophecy

Open It

1. What is the strangest dream you have ever had?
2. How would you describe, in 25 words or less, what angels are and what they do?
- * 3. What outlandish predictions about the future have you heard at one time or another?
4. Why do you think people are often interested in studying the book of Revelation?

Explore It

5. What did John call his writing? (1:1)
6. What is this book about? (1:1)
7. For whose benefit did God intend the book of Revelation? (1:1)
- * 8. What did God want us to learn from the book of Revelation? (1:1)
9. How did God deliver this revelation? (1:1)
10. To whom did God deliver this revelation? (1:1)
11. Why did God give us the book of Revelation? (1:1-3)
12. How much of the revelation he received did John report? (1:2)
13. What sources did John say were the basis of his revelation? (1:2)
- * 14. What is promised to those who take the time to study this revelation? (1:3)
- * 15. What did John urge his readers to do? Why? (1:3)
16. How did John show urgency in what he wrote? (1:3)

Get It

17. How can we benefit from studying this book?
18. What do you understand to be “revelation”?
19. In what way does this “revelation of Jesus Christ” reveal Jesus to us?
20. Why do you think this New Testament author referred to himself as a servant of Christ?
21. What does it mean to “take to heart what is written”?
22. What steps can we take to pay close attention to what we read in Revelation?
- * 23. How does it make you feel to realize that God wants us to know what the future holds?
- * 24. What are some ways God might bless us through a study of Revelation?

Apply It

- * 25. What commitment can you make today that will help you get the most out of your study of Revelation?
26. How can you alter your life-style this week so that you can more honestly say that you are a servant of Jesus Christ?
27. For whom can you pray who needs to know the good news about our great Savior, Jesus Christ?

Greetings and Doxology - Revelation 1:4-8

Topics: Church, Grace, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Love, Peace, Resurrection, Second Coming, Serving, Sovereignty

Open It

1. What do you remember about church from growing up?
2. How did you feel the first time you realized that someone was in love with you?
- * 3. With what typical phrases do you open and close your letters?
4. What is the most moving worship experience you have ever been a part of? Why?

Explore It

5. To whom did John write this letter? (1:4)
6. How did John begin his letter? (1:4)
7. What was unique or very Christian about the way John opened his letter? (1:4)
8. How did John refer to God? (1:4)
9. How did John greet his readers in Christ's name? (1:4)
10. By what threefold description is Jesus presented? (1:5)
- * 11. What is Jesus' attitude toward Christians? (1:5)
12. What does Jesus do on behalf of Christians? (1:5)
13. In what way does Jesus make all believers new? (1:6)
- * 14. What is Jesus' purpose for the church? (1:6)
15. How did John react when he recounted all the things that Jesus had done for Christians? (1:6)
- * 16. What prophecy opens this book? (1:7)
17. By what unique description does God explain Himself in this passage? (1:8)

Get It

18. What does grace mean to you?
19. What does the peace of God look like in our lives?
20. What does the description, "him who is, and who was, and who is to come," tell us about God? (1:4)
21. What does it mean that God is the "Alpha and Omega"?
- * 22. How should we act in light of the fact that we have been freed from our sins?
23. How might you explain to a friend the concept that God is "Almighty"?
- * 24. What changes need to take place in your life to reflect the truth that Jesus may return at any moment?

Apply It

25. With what priestly actions can you serve God this week?
26. What is one way you can show your gratitude to Christ today for all that He has done for you?
- * 27. What can you do now to prepare for Jesus' return?

One Like a Son of Man - Revelation 1:9-20

Topics: Angels, Church, Death, Endurance, Future, Hell, Last Days, Patience, Prophecy, Resurrection, Suffering

Open It

1. What do you think Jesus might have looked like as a man? Why?
2. When was a situation in which you sensed the presence of God? How did it make you feel?
- * 3. What is the most frightened you have ever been?

Explore It

4. In what way was John a companion of his readers? (1:9)
5. Where was John when he received his revelation of Jesus Christ? (1:9)
6. Why was John where he was when he received this revelation? (1:9)
7. What kind of voice did John hear in his vision? (1:10)
8. What did God's voice command John to do? (1:11)
9. When John turned around, what objects did he see? (1:12)
10. Whom did John observe standing behind him? (1:13)
11. How was the person "among the lampstands" dressed? (1:13)
12. What was the appearance of the one "like a son of man"? (1:14-16)
13. What was John's reaction to his supernatural visitor? (1:17)
14. How did John react to seeing Christ in His glory? (1:17)
- * 15. Why did Jesus comfort and reassure John? How? (1:17-18)
16. What did Jesus say about himself as He comforted John? (1:17-18)
- * 17. What did Jesus tell John to do? (1:19)
- * 18. How did Jesus interpret the meaning of the seven stars and golden lampstands? (1:20)

Get It

19. What do you make out of John's reference to "the suffering . . . that [is] ours in Jesus"?
20. In what ways do you suffer for your faith in Christ?
21. Of the more than twenty titles for Christ in Revelation 1, which one means the most to you? Why?
- * 22. What overall impression does this passage give you about Jesus Christ?
23. What does it mean to you that Christ, in all His splendor and majesty, made the effort to calm John when he was frightened?
24. How difficult do you think it was for John to describe what he was seeing?
- * 25. How might you have felt in John's place?

Apply It

- * 26. In what ways can you remind yourself today of the awesome nature and power of Christ?
27. In what situations this week will you need to strive for "patient endurance"? How can you do so?
28. With what friends or family members can you plan to share Christ?
29. What are some specific questions you could ask to lead into a discussion about Christ?

To the Church in Ephesus - Revelation 2:1-7

Topics: Accomplishments, Affections, Angels, Approval, Backslide, Commitment, Correction, Faithfulness, Love, Perseverance, Reconciliation, Repentance

Open It

1. Why does love—even the most fervent and committed love—sometimes grow cold over time?
2. What are some mementos or heirlooms you are especially attached to?
- * 3. What is something you remember loving dearly as a child that you eventually outgrew?

Explore It

4. Who was addressing John with this message? (2:1)
5. What church was the subject of this letter from Jesus? (2:1)
6. How did the speaker in this passage identify Himself? (2:1)
- * 7. Jesus praised the church at Ephesus for what deeds? (2:2-3)
8. What did Christ say about the Ephesian church's "staying power"? (2:3)
9. With what in the Ephesian church was Christ unsatisfied? (2:4)
10. What did Christ command the church at Ephesus to remember? (2:5)
- * 11. How did the church at Ephesus need to change? (2:5)
12. What warning was given to the church if it failed to obey Christ's words? (2:5)
- * 13. What did the church at Ephesus have in its favor? (2:6)
14. Whom else did Jesus want to benefit from this message? (2:7)
15. What final promise was made to "him who overcomes"? (2:7)

Get It

16. If Jesus were to write a letter to your church, what do you think He'd say?
17. If Jesus were to write you a personal letter, for what would He commend you, and in what ways would He correct you?
18. What do your actions say about who or what is most important in your life?
19. What do you think Christ meant when He said, "You have forsaken your first love"?
20. What does it mean to repent?
21. What about our faith are we prone to "outgrow"?
22. At what time in your life did you feel closest to God or the most dedicated to God?
23. How would you assess the health of your relationship with Christ right now?
- * 24. What can cause us to lose our love for God?
- * 25. How can we keep our commitment to Christ from waning over time?
26. Besides knowing all the right answers and doing all the right activities, what do we need for spiritual vitality?

Apply It

27. In what concrete ways can you show today that Jesus Christ is your first love?
- * 28. What is one step you can take this week to build the quality of perseverance in your faith?
29. What can you do or say to encourage a Christian friend to remain loyal to Christ?

To the Church in Smyrna - Revelation 2:8-11

Topics: Accomplishments, Angels, Approval, Commitment, Death, Faithfulness, Fear, Persecution, Perseverance, Poor, Resurrection, Satan, Suffering, Wealth

Open It

1. What were some of your biggest fears as a child?
2. How does talk of death and dying affect you?
3. What are the most valuable things you own—those things that make you feel rich?
- * 4. What is the most hurtful thing anyone has ever done to you because of something you stood for?

Explore It

5. Who was addressing John? (2:8)
6. What church was the subject of this letter from Jesus? (2:8)
7. How did the speaker in this passage identify Himself? (2:8)
8. What kind of contrast did Jesus draw? (2:9)
9. What did Christ say about some so-called Jews in Smyrna? (2:9)
10. What did Jesus say to comfort the Christians in Smyrna? (2:10)
- * 11. What prophetic warning did Christ give to the church in Smyrna? (2:10)
12. How long would the church in Smyrna suffer? (2:10)
- * 13. What challenge did Christ give His audience? (2:10)
- * 14. What reward was promised the Christians at Smyrna if they hung on? (2:10)
15. Who else did Jesus say could benefit from the message to the church at Smyrna? (2:11)
16. What final promise was made to “him who overcomes”? (2:11)

Get It

17. What is significant about the title Christ gave Himself (“the First and the Last, who died and came to life again”)?
18. How can a person in poverty be considered rich?
19. In your view, which is worse—physical or verbal persecution? Why?
20. If you had been in Smyrna about to suffer for your faith, how comforted would you feel with this revelation from Christ?
- * 21. What kinds of persecution do Christians face today?
22. What kinds of persecution do you think would most tempt you to deny Christ?
23. What kinds of persecution have you faced for your faith?
- * 24. How can the eternal promises of God give us courage and strength in the face of attacks on our stand for Christ?

Apply It

25. What are some ways you can express your thanks to God today for the riches you enjoy?
- * 26. What steps can you take today to build your courage against persecution?
27. How can you show faithfulness to Christ in the week ahead?

To the Church in Pergamum - Revelation 2:12-17

Topics: Angels, Church, Commitment, Compromise, Discipline, Faith, Idolatry, Repentance, Satan, Sin, Toleration

Open It

- * 1. What do you consider to be the most evil or sinful place on earth? Why?
- 2. What is the most unusual gift you have ever received?
- 3. What strange philosophy or common misconception (urban myth, old wives' tale, etc.) do you consider most dangerous? Why?

Explore It

- 4. Who was addressing John? (2:12)
- 5. What church was the subject of this letter from Jesus? (2:12)
- 6. How did the speaker in this passage identify Himself? (2:12)
- 7. Where was the church of Pergamum said to be located? (2:13)
- 8. What good deeds had the church at Pergamum done? (2:13)
- * 9. For what did Jesus praise the people of the church at Pergamum? (2:13)
- 10. How did Balaam (of Old Testament times) influence the believers at Pergamum? (2:14)
- 11. What bad influences or teachings had infiltrated the church at Pergamum? (2:14-15)
- * 12. What were the believers at Pergamum doing wrong? (2:14-15)
- * 13. What command did Christ give to this church in light of its dangerous direction? (2:16)
- 14. What stern warning was issued for those who would not obey Christ? (2:17)
- 15. Who else did Jesus say could benefit from the message to the church at Pergamum? (2:17)
- 16. What did Jesus promise to "him who overcomes"? (2:17)
- 17. What would be inscribed on the white stone received by "him who overcomes"? (2:17)

Get It

- 18. What does it mean that Christ has a "sharp, double-edged sword"?
- 19. How does it make you feel to realize that Jesus wields a sword?
- 20. What should it mean to us that Jesus doesn't overlook sin, even if we are doing lots of good deeds?
- * 21. In what ways could it be said that Satan lives in your city?
- 22. How does sin in others affect us?
- 23. What "little" sins do we tend to allow into our life-style and habits?
- 24. What is the best way to deal with Christians (whether real or false) who circulate unbiblical ideas?
- 25. What are some potential problems for churches that discipline members publicly?
- 26. What does repentance have to do with following Christ?
- * 27. How can we resist the influence of the world around us?
- 28. What do you think it means that we will get new names for persevering with Christ?

Apply It

- 29. What can you do today to show that Jesus is present in your life, in your church, and in your town?
- 30. What "little" sins do you need to confess today in order to be spiritually clean?
- * 31. In what way can you include repentance in your daily devotions this week?

To the Church in Thyatira - Revelation 2:18-29

Topics: Angels, Authority, Church, Compromise, Faith, Holy Spirit, Idolatry, Immorality, Love, Perseverance, Repentance, Satan, Serving, Sin, Stubbornness, Suffering, Toleration

Open It

1. What would be good or bad about having the ability to read others' minds? Why?
- * 2. What are the three best habits you have?

Explore It

3. Who was telling John to write down this vision? (2:18)
4. What church was the subject of this letter from Jesus? (2:18)
5. How did the speaker in this passage identify Himself? (2:18)
6. How did Christ address the church at Thyatira? (2:18)
7. What did Christ know about the church at Thyatira? (2:19)
8. For what did Christ praise the church at Thyatira? (2:19)
9. For what did Christ chastise the church at Thyatira? (2:20)
10. How did Christ show patience? (2:21)
11. What judgments did the Son of God pronounce on the one He called Jezebel? (2:22-23)
- * 12. What challenge did Christ give to those who resisted Jezebel's teaching and sinful behavior? (2:24-25)
- * 13. What two gifts were promised to "him who overcomes"? (2:26-28)
14. How did Jesus refer to God? (2:28)
- * 15. In addition to the church at Thyatira, who else was commanded to pay heed to this message? (2:29)

Get It

16. What are some things people make idols (gods) of today?
17. What does it mean that Christ's eyes were "like blazing fire"?
- * 18. What sins do we tend to tolerate in our own lives or in the lives of our Christian friends when we should not?
19. What dangers do we face when we refuse to respond to God or repent of our sins?
20. What value is there in choosing to remain ignorant of certain evil ideas and practices?
- * 21. When we are misled by others, what can we do to correct our mistakes? How?
22. When should we take responsibility for the errors of others in the church? How?
23. What have you been tolerating in your life that you need to reject and change?

Apply It

24. What can you do this week to grow and add to your service for Christ?
- * 25. How can you include repentance and renewal in your devotional life this week?
26. What specific steps can you take this week to monitor what you take into your thoughts?

To the Church in Sardis - Revelation 3:1-6

Topics: Angels, Church, Death, Faith, Holy Spirit, Obedience, Preparation, Repentance, Reputation, Second Coming, Sin, Sleep

Open It

1. What is the absolute dirtiest (we're talking mud and slime here) you've ever gotten? When and how did it happen?
2. What is the difference between character and reputation?
3. Which do you think is worse—wrongfully having a bad reputation, or wrongfully having a good reputation? Why?
- * 4. When are you most prone to being lazy?

Explore It

5. Who instructed John to write down this vision? (3:1)
6. What church was the focus of this letter from Jesus? (3:1)
7. How did the speaker identify Himself? (3:1)
8. What did Christ know about the church at Sardis? (3:1)
9. What was the reputation of the church at Sardis? (3:1)
10. How did the church's true nature match its reputation? (3:1)
- * 11. What did Christ think about the church at Sardis? (3:1-3)
12. What was wrong with the church at Sardis? (3:2)
13. What warnings did Christ issue to the church at Sardis? (3:2)
14. What did Christ urge as the first step to restoration? (3:3)
15. What consequences were promised to those who refused to wake up? (3:3)
- * 16. How do we know that not all the Christians in Sardis were "asleep"? (3:4)
- * 17. What blessings were promised to those who would "overcome"? (3:5)
18. In addition to the church at Sardis, who else was commanded to pay heed to this message? (3:6)

Get It

19. How can a person know if his or her name is in the Book of Life?
20. What do you think is your reputation among your coworkers? Neighbors? People at church?
21. When in your life has your reputation been misleading? How?
22. How can a church appear to be alive and thriving and yet be dead?
23. In what way do we "soil our clothes"?
24. What does it mean to be "dressed in white"?
25. What advice would you give to a young Christian who asked, "How can I keep from sinning?"
- * 26. Why isn't it enough just to know what God wants from us?
27. What does it mean to "overcome" as a Christian?
- * 28. In what specific areas of Christian devotion (Bible reading, evangelism, prayer, etc.) have you been lazy or sleepy over the last month?

Apply It

29. What can you do today to enhance your reputation in the world and in heaven?
- * 30. What can you do to improve your acts of Christian devotion (prayer, Bible reading, etc.)?
31. What temptations that you know you'll be facing in the coming week do you need to prepare for in advance? How?

To the Church in Philadelphia - Revelation 3:7-13

Topics: Angels, Church, Endurance, Faithfulness, Holy Spirit, Obedience, Rewards, Strength, Suffering, Weaknesses

Open It

- * 1. What are some examples of progress we've seen in the last ten years?
- 2. What is the weakest you've ever felt?
- 3. What is a nickname you had (or wish you'd had) as a child?
- 4. What groups would you cite as the biggest present-day enemies of the church?

Explore It

- 5. Who spoke these words and instructed John to write them down? (3:7)
- 6. What church was the focus of this letter from Jesus? (3:7)
- 7. How did the speaker in this passage identify Himself? (3:7)
- 8. What did Christ say about His power? (3:7)
- 9. By what descriptions or names did Jesus call those who claimed to be Jews? (3:9)
- 10. What humbling act did Jesus say He would force the enemies of the church of Philadelphia to perform? (3:9)
- 11. What worldwide event was predicted by Christ? (3:10)
- * 12. Why will the world experience an "hour of trial"? (3:10)
- * 13. What was promised to the church at Philadelphia because of its patient endurance? (3:10)
- * 14. How did Jesus instruct the believers in Philadelphia to prepare for His coming? (3:11)
- 15. What did Jesus promise at the conclusion of this letter? (3:11-12)
- 16. How did Jesus challenge us? (3:11-13)
- 17. What promises were made to "him who overcomes" in Philadelphia? (3:12)
- 18. In addition to the church at Philadelphia, who else was encouraged to heed this message? (3:13)

Get It

- * 19. What do you think about the idea that the world is getting better and better?
- 20. What difference does it make to you that Christ is "holy and true"?
- 21. How can we obey Christ and keep standing up for Him even when we are physically exhausted?
- 22. How might you persuade a friend that Christ is the ultimate power in the universe?
- * 23. What can we do to prepare for Christ's return?
- 24. Why can we rejoice even when we are persecuted by hostile anti-God forces?
- 25. Who are some of the "pillars" of your church (faithful, godly members who give their full support)?
- 26. Why are some Christians seemingly more able or better equipped to "endure patiently"?
- 27. What advice would you give to a Christian friend who expressed physical exhaustion and a lack of spiritual strength?

Apply It

- 28. How can you share what you have learned so far in Revelation with a non-Christian friend who is looking for spiritual answers?
- * 29. How can you pray this week as a result of your study?
- 30. In what areas of your life do you need to turn away from wrong attitudes?
- 31. Where can you go for the encouragement you need to keep walking with Christ in a hostile world?

To the Church in Laodicea - Revelation 3:14-22

Topics: Angels, Apathy, Church, Complacency, Deceit, Discipline, Faithfulness, Holy Spirit, Invitation, Jesus Christ, Repentance, Wealth

Open It

1. What is the nastiest food or drink you ever tasted?
- * 2. What are some foods or drinks that taste better cold or hot than at room temperature?
3. If you could have dinner with anyone in the world, whom would you pick? Why?

Explore It

4. Who spoke these words and told John to write them down? (3:14)
5. What church was the focus of this letter from Jesus? (3:14)
6. By what unusual description did Jesus identify Himself? (3:14)
- * 7. How did Jesus describe the church at Laodicea? (3:15)
- * 8. What response did Jesus promise to the Laodicean church because of its behavior? (3:16)
- * 9. In what ways was the Laodicean church deceived? (3:17)
10. What counsel did “the ruler of God’s creation” give to this church? (3:18)
11. What did the Laodicean Christians need? Why? (3:18)
12. What reason did Jesus give for His stern warnings? (3:19)
13. What invitation was given to individual Christians in Laodicea? (3:20)
14. What did Christ promise to do if accepted and embraced by the Laodiceans? (3:20)
15. What promise was made to “him who overcomes” in Laodicea? (3:21)
16. How did Christ conclude His message to this wayward church? (3:22)

Get It

17. What do we know about the Laodicean Christians from the fact that Jesus described Himself as being outside the door?
18. What are some ways people in our society are deceived?
19. What does it mean that Jesus “stands at the door and knocks”?
20. How can a person “invite Jesus in” and eat with Him?
21. What is a hot Christian, a cold Christian, or a lukewarm Christian?
- * 22. What does a lukewarm Christian act like?
- * 23. In what ways can a person be religious yet indifferent to what God wants?
24. What should we do to be hot in our devotion to God?
25. How much stock do we tend to put in our own resources (especially money and things)?
26. What is the significance of the phrase, “He who has an ear to hear, let him hear . . . “ at the end of each of the letters to the churches?
27. What can we learn about the Lord’s character based on His strong words to the Laodicean church?
28. Which of the seven churches described in Revelation 2:1-3:22 are you most like? Why?
29. What can we do to listen more closely to Christ?
30. How can we pray to invite Christ into all areas of our lives?

Apply It

- * 31. What steps can you take this week to keep from being indifferent to what God wants?
32. How can you use the Word of God to help clear up your perspective on life?
33. What possession or portion of money can you use to “buy gold” from Christ? How?
34. Into what specific areas of your life do you want to invite Christ today?

The Throne in Heaven - Revelation 4:1-11

Topics: Creation, Future, Glory, Heaven, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Honor, Power

Open It

1. What do you most look forward to about heaven?
- * 2. What is a place or experience that is difficult for you to describe to others?
3. When and where was your most meaningful worship experience?

Explore It

4. After receiving messages for the seven churches, what did John see? (4:1)
5. What kind of voice did John hear? (4:1)
6. What did the voice John heard say to him? (4:1)
7. What incredible sights did John see? (4:2-11)
8. How did John describe the one sitting on a throne? (4:3)
9. How did John describe what he saw? (4:3)
10. What encircled or surrounded the throne? (4:3-4)
11. How were the twenty-four elders dressed? (4:4)
12. What came from the throne? (4:5)
13. What did John see in front of the throne? (4:5-6)
14. What kind of creatures were “in the center, around the throne”? (4:6-7)
15. How were the four living creatures around the throne similar? (4:8)
- * 16. What attribute of God did the four living creatures praise again and again? (4:8)
- * 17. How did the twenty-four elders worship the Lord God? (4:9-10)
- * 18. Why did the elders say God was worthy of their worship? (4:11)

Get It

19. Why do you think God’s throne figures prominently in the book of Revelation?
20. What attitudes do you think are expressed by falling down before God?
- * 21. What does it mean to worship God?
22. What impressions does this passage give you of God the Father?
23. How would you describe God to someone who had never read the Bible?
24. Based on this chapter, what seems to be an important occupation in heaven?
25. How would you answer someone who complained that “heaven will be boring . . . like one eternal church service”?
26. What is the significance of the lightning and thunder that comes from God’s throne?
- * 27. What changes are you moved to make when you reflect on the holiness and majesty of God Almighty?

Apply It

28. What reminders can you use this week to keep the reality and glory of God at the front of your mind?
- * 29. How can you begin today to make praise and worship of God a more regular part of your life?

The Scroll and the Lamb - Revelation 5:1-14

Topics: Angels, Atonement, Jesus Christ, Power, Praise, Prayer, Sacrifice, Serving, Strength, Wealth, Wisdom, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What kind of books do you like to read? Why?
- 2. What was the biggest and most electric crowd of which you were ever a part?
- 3. What foreign language were you first exposed to? When and how?

Explore It

- 4. What was in the hand of the one sitting on the throne in heaven? (5:1)
- * 5. What loud proclamation did a mighty angel make? (5:2)
- 6. Who first came forward to open the scroll? (5:3)
- * 7. What was John's reaction when the scroll could not be opened? (5:4)
- 8. What did one of the twenty-four elders say to John? (5:5)
- 9. Who was the only one worthy to open the scroll and its seals? (5:5)
- 10. What did the Lamb that John saw look like? (5:6)
- 11. Where was the Lamb that John saw? (5:6)
- 12. What did the Lamb do? (5:7)
- 13. How did the creatures around the throne respond to the actions of the Lamb? (5:8-9)
- * 14. For what was the Lamb praised and worshipped? (5:9-10)
- 15. How many angels did John see? (5:11)
- 16. What were the angels doing? (5:12)
- 17. What were all the other living creatures doing and singing? (5:13)

Get It

- 18. Why do you think John was upset when nobody came forward to open the scroll?
- 19. Why do you think the prayers of the saints appeared as "golden bowls full of incense"?
- * 20. What did Christ do for us?
- 21. What evidence do we have from this passage that God makes no distinction between races or ethnic groups?
- 22. Why should we value people of all races equally and treat everyone with equal respect?
- 23. Who in your sphere of influence needs to know about Christ?
- 24. What is the benefit of bowing down to worship God?
- * 25. How can we serve God as His priests?

Apply It

- 26. How can you worship God in your private times of prayer this week?
- * 27. How can you develop an attitude of praise and thanksgiving to God as you go throughout your day?

The Seals - Revelation 6:1-17

Topics: Death, Hell, Holiness, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Last Days, Peace, Truth

Open It

1. What do you picture the end of the world being like?
2. What is one natural disaster (earthquake, tornado, etc.) that stands out in your memory?
3. How do you react in really frightening situations?
- * 4. Given the human power and authority, what would you do to try to bring about lasting peace and prosperity on earth?

Explore It

5. What happens in the opening scenes of this passage? (6:1)
6. What did John hear after Christ opened the first seal? (6:2)
7. What was the nature and the appearance of the first horse and its rider? (6:2)
8. What happened after the second seal was opened? (6:3)
9. How are the second horse and its rider described? (6:4)
10. What happened at the opening of the third seal? (6:5)
11. How did the voice that John heard explain the meaning of the scales in the hand of the third rider? (6:6)
12. What were the fourth horse and its rider like? (6:7-8)
13. What did John see at the opening of the fifth seal? (6:9)
- * 14. What question did the martyrs ask God? (6:10)
- * 15. What answer was given the slain ones? (6:11)
16. What happened at the opening of the sixth seal? (6:12-14)
- * 17. How did the inhabitants of earth respond to the events unleashed by the breaking of the seals? (6:15-17)
18. How will people try to escape from being judged by God? (6:15-17)

Get It

- * 19. How does reading this passage make you feel?
20. What do you think each of the four horsemen represents?
21. What do the judgments wrought by the horsemen have in common?
22. When do you think the judgments (represented by the four horsemen) will take place?
23. Why will God judge the earth?
24. Why do people try to escape from God?
25. Why do you think some people react so negatively to the message of Christ?
26. How long do you think God will wait before judging the earth?
- * 27. What does God want us to do as we wait for Him to judge the earth?
28. How should we pray in light of the fact that God will judge all people?

Apply It

29. How can you help a non-Christian friend or family member see his or her need for Christ?
- * 30. How can you encourage a faithful Christian today who is being persecuted for following Christ?

144,000 Sealed - Revelation 7:1-8

Topics: Angels, Earth, Judgment, Last Days, Serving

Open It

- * 1. What forms of identification do you typically carry?
- 2. How do you protect or mark items that you don't want to lose or to have stolen?
- 3. How might you prove ownership of your valued possessions?

Explore It

- 4. Who did John see after the breaking of the first six seals? (7:1)
- 5. Where were the four angels located? (7:1)
- 6. What were the four angels at the four "corners of the earth" doing? Why? (7:1)
- 7. What did John see coming from the east? (7:2)
- * 8. What did the angel from the east have in his possession? (7:2)
- 9. What power or authority did the four angels possess? (7:2)
- 10. What did the angel from the east say to the other four angels? (7:3)
- * 11. When were the angels given permission to "harm the land and the sea"? (7:3)
- * 12. What people were marked? How? (7:4)
- 13. How many individuals were sealed in John's vision? (7:4)
- 14. How many individuals were sealed from each of the 12 tribes of Israel? (7:4-8)

Get It

- * 15. How has God marked or sealed His people?
- 16. Whom does God protect?
- 17. How will God protect His people during the coming judgment?
- 18. In what ways does God protect His people now?
- 19. Why is it important for us to know that God's servants will be sealed before God afflicts the land and the sea with the final judgments?
- 20. Who are the 144,000 sealed servants?
- 21. What are some ways angels are at work in the world today?
- 22. What can we do to reflect the fact that we are servants of God who bear His mark (or seal) of ownership?
- * 23. What mark of ownership is there in your life-style that shows God's possession of your life?

Apply It

- 24. What mark of ownership do you need to place in your life today to show your obedience to God?
- 25. What Bible-study tools could you get in the next couple of weeks that would help you gain a better understanding of Revelation and the rest of Scripture?
- * 26. How do you need to alter your routine to reflect the fact that God owns every area of your life?

The Great Multitude in White Robes - Revelation 7:9-17

Topics: Angels, Atonement, Eternal Life, Glory, Heaven, Honor, Joy, Power, Praise, Purity, Salvation, Serving, Wisdom, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What are some things about earth you won't miss in heaven?
- 2. When was the last time you saw or experienced racial prejudice?
- 3. What is the hardest you ever cried in grade school?

Explore It

- 4. What did John see after seeing the revelation of the 144,000 sealed servants of God? (7:9)
- 5. Where did John see a great throng of people? (7:9)
- 6. What were the people John saw wearing and holding? (7:9)
- 7. What was the crowd before the throne saying? (7:10)
- 8. What group was around the throne worshipping? (7:11)
- 9. What were the angels, the elders, and the four creatures saying to God and about God? (7:12)
- 10. Who spoke to John and what did this person say? (7:13)
- 11. How did John respond to the elder's question? (7:14)
- * 12. How did the elder explain the identity of those wearing the white robes? (7:14)
- * 13. What is the main job of the believers who come out of the great tribulation? (7:15)
- * 14. What blessings await those who are martyred in the great tribulation? (7:16-17)
- 15. What is the involvement of the Lamb with those in white robes? (7:17)

Get It

- 16. Why is it important for us to know that the "robes" of the martyrs will be made white in the blood of the Lamb as they come out of the tribulation?
- * 17. What does it mean to you that "a great multitude" will serve God day and night in His heavenly temple?
- 18. What is the difference between singing a hymn and singing an ordinary song?
- 19. How do we know that God does not favor people for their skin color or ethnic background?
- 20. How can we thank God for salvation?
- 21. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being "terrible" and 10 being "terrific"), how would you rate the quality and consistency of your personal praise life?
- * 22. What new insights into the character of God does this passage give you?
- 23. What is the significance of the fact that the angels and elders around the throne of God fall down and worship God?

Apply It

- * 24. What step can you take this week to praise and thank God more consistently?
- 25. What are some specific ways you and your family can encourage or support a missionary?
- 26. How can you imitate God today in leading someone to Him or comforting a friend in grief?

The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer - Revelation 8:1-5

Topics: Angels, Heaven, Listening, Praise, Prayer, Sacrifice, Serving, Silence, Worship

Open It

- * 1. In what ways can silence be good or helpful?
- 2. In what way can silence make us uncomfortable?
- 3. How would you describe heaven to a friend?

Explore It

- 4. Who is the one here described as opening the seventh seal? (8:1)
- * 5. What happened in heaven upon the opening of the seventh seal? (8:1)
- 6. For how long was there silence in heaven during John's vision? (8:1)
- 7. What did John see after the opening of the seventh seal? (8:2)
- 8. What was given to the creatures seen by John? (8:2)
- 9. What did John see another angel come and do? (8:3)
- 10. What did the angel standing at the altar have in his possession? (8:3)
- * 11. What was the angel at the altar assigned to do? (8:3)
- * 12. What did John see going up before God? (8:4)
- 13. With what did the angel fill the censer? (8:5)
- 14. What did the angel eventually do with the censer? (8:5)
- 15. What happened on the earth after the angel's actions? (8:5)

Get It

- * 16. What is dramatic about silence in heaven?
- * 17. How can we make silence a part of our worship?
- 18. What is a censer?
- 19. How is it significant that incense accompanies the prayers of all God's people?
- 20. What needs are you praying about these days?
- 21. When the seventh seal is opened there is first silence, then prayer; how do you interpret the heavenly response to the saints' prayers?
- 22. What does this passage teach us about prayer?
- 23. Why do you think the angel hurled his censer to the earth?
- 24. The angels in heaven have God-given tasks; what are your God-given tasks or areas of responsibility?

Apply It

- * 25. When could you make time this week for silent meditation on God's Word and on what God has done for you?
- 26. How might you improve the way you pray?
- 27. What God-given responsibility do you need to carry out today?

The Trumpets - Revelation 8:6-9:21

Topics: Angels, Blindness, Danger, Darkness, Death, Enemies, Environment, Evil, Heaven, Hopelessness, Judgment, Last Days, Pain, Rebellion, Stress, World

Open It

1. What do you think of when you think of a “trumpet blast”?
2. What is most moving to you about wildfires, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes?
- * 3. Why do you think some people believe that everyone will go to heaven (that is, no one will be punished or sent to hell by God)?

Explore It

- * 4. What did the seven angels who stand before God prepare to do? (8:6)
5. What happened when the first angel sounded his trumpet? (8:7)
- * 6. What were the trumpet blasts that John heard? (8:7-8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13-15)
7. What was the result when the second angel sounded his trumpet? (8:8-9)
8. What happened when the third angel blew his trumpet? (8:10-11)
9. What events followed the fourth angel’s trumpet blast? (8:12)
10. What did John see an eagle do? (8:13)
11. What did John see at the sounding of the fifth trumpet? (9:1)
12. What creatures came out of the Abyss? (9:2-3)
13. What special powers did the creatures from the Abyss have? (9:4-6)
14. What did the creatures from the Abyss look like? (9:7-10)
15. What events transpired when the sixth angel blew his trumpet? (9:13-19)
- * 16. How were the few human survivors affected by these horrible plagues and catastrophes? (9:20-21)

Get It

- * 17. What significance is there to the plagues that will befall the world in the final days?
18. Why do you think the survivors in the last days will still refuse to turn to God—especially after seeing the horrible judgment all around them?
19. What does this passage tell us about God?
20. Why do you think so many of the plagues described here stop short of complete devastation?
21. What difference does it make to you that God chooses what these judgments will and will not mean?
22. What is most frightening to you about these judgments? Why?
- * 23. What difference does it make that we are making life more and more comfortable with better and better technology?
24. How can you use what you’ve learned in Revelation as a tool in talking with non-Christian friends who are looking for spiritual answers?

Apply It

- * 25. What changes can you make in your prayer life this week as a result of what you have studied today?
26. In what areas of your life do you need to turn away from wrong attitudes and actions this week so that you can avoid the disciplining hand of God?

The Angel and the Little Scroll - Revelation 10:1-11

Topics: Angels, Creation, Delay, Encouragement, God's Will, Guidance, Instructions, Judgment, Obedience, Responsibility, Silence, Surprises, Witnessing

Open It

1. About what beloved hobbies or special interests of yours might someone remark, "He/she can't get enough of that!"
- * 2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being ghastly and 10 being great), how good are you at keeping secrets?
3. What is something for which you have waited a long time?

Explore It

4. After the first six trumpets of judgment, what did John see? (10:1)
5. What did the mighty angel of John's vision look like? (10:1)
6. What did the mighty angel have in his possession? (10:2)
7. What did the mighty angel do? (10:2-3)
8. What did John try to do about what he heard? (10:4)
9. What command did John receive from heaven? (10:4)
10. What did the mighty angel do after John sealed up what the seven thunders said? (10:5-6)
11. What did the angel swear? (10:6)
12. How did the angel describe God in his oath? (10:6)
13. What announcement did the angel make? (10:6-7)
14. What did the voice from heaven tell John to do? (10:8)
- * 15. What did the angel tell John to do with the little scroll? (10:9)
16. What unusual act was John asked to perform? (10:9)
17. What warning did the angel give John? (10:9)
- * 18. What happened when John ate the scroll? (10:10)
- * 19. What is the last thing John was told at this time? (10:11)

Get It

20. What does it mean that the angel's voice sounded like thunder?
21. Why is it significant that God sent His angel to announce that there would be no more delay in God's intervention?
22. Why is it significant that the angel called God "him who lives for ever and ever"?
- * 23. What do you think is symbolized by John's eating the scroll of God's words and finding it sweet in his mouth and sour in his stomach?
- * 24. In what situations has God's Word ever tasted sweet at first hearing but then sour as you "digested" it?
25. What is the "mystery of God" that will be accomplished?
26. When will the "mystery of God" be accomplished?
27. What confidence or secret do you need to keep that you may be tempted to share?

Apply It

- * 28. What step can you take this week to help you internalize what you have heard from God's Word?
29. How can you practice patience and trust today in an area of your life where God's working seems to have been delayed?
30. Who in your life has God called you to speak His truth to this week?

The Two Witnesses - Revelation 11:1-14

Topics: Ambassadors, Angels, Celebration, Death, Enemies, Heaven, Judgment, Miracles, Persecution, Resurrection, Unbelievers, Witnessing, Worship

Open It

1. Why are some people so turned off by “fire and brimstone” type preachers?
2. What determines how you interpret a hard-to-understand Bible passage?
3. What groups seem to you to be most opposed to the Christian message and to the spread of the gospel?
- * 4. Why do you think so many people are gleeful to learn of the moral failures of prominent Christians?

Explore It

5. What was John given? (11:1)
6. What was John told to do with the object he had been given? (11:1)
7. What was John told to count? (11:1)
8. What part of the temple was John to exclude from his “fact-finding mission”? (11:2)
- * 9. What important “end times” individuals are mentioned in this passage and what will be their mission? (11:3-6)
10. What special protection will be given the ones called the “two olive trees and the two lampstands”? (11:4-5)
11. What supernatural powers will the two witnesses possess? (11:6)
- * 12. What will happen to the two witnesses when they have finished their God-ordained ministry? (11:7)
13. How will the two witnesses die? (11:7)
- * 14. What will take place in the three and a half days after the two witnesses die? (11:8-10)
15. In John’s vision, what happened three and half days after the two witnesses were killed by the beast? (11:11-12)
16. What catastrophic events will follow the two witnesses? (11:13)

Get It

17. What do the events in this passage tell us about God?
- * 18. What do the events in this passage tell us about the world?
- * 19. What encouragement for Christians today does the story of the two witnesses offer?
20. How do you explain the response of the people described in this passage?
21. How do you think you might react if you saw two men dead for three and half days come back to life?
22. How does it make you feel to know that God and His servants will ultimately triumph over the evil of the world?

Apply It

23. How can you be a witness this week to those who don’t know Christ?
- * 24. What can you do to show your support this week for ministers, evangelists, and Christian leaders?
25. What sins do you need to confess and renounce today in order that the Spirit of God might fill your life with His power?

The Seventh Trumpet - Revelation 11:15-19

Topics: Angels, Eternal Life, Heaven, Judgment, Rewards, Serving, Thankfulness, Victory, Worship

Open It

1. Who is one famous and one not-so-famous Christian that you think will receive great reward in heaven? Why?
- * 2. What are you most thankful for?
3. What about this world would you most like to see changed? Why?

Explore It

4. What did John observe? (11:15)
5. What did John hear? (11:15)
- * 6. What did the voices say about the world? (11:15)
7. What did the voices say about the reign of Christ? (11:15)
8. What group of people in addition to John heard the heavenly voices? (11:16)
9. Where were the twenty-four elders seated? (11:16)
10. How did the twenty-four elders respond in the wake of the message of the heavenly voices? (11:16)
11. How did the elders describe “the Lord God Almighty”? (11:17)
- * 12. Why were the elders thankful to God? (11:17)
13. How did the elders describe the nations of the world? (11:18)
14. In the elders’ prayer, what “time has come”? (11:18)
- * 15. Who did the elders describe as deserving a reward? (11:18)
16. Who did the elders describe as deserving destruction? (11:18)
17. What happened in the heavenly temple of God after the prayer of the elders? (11:19)
18. What spectacular phenomena accompanied the opening of the temple? (11:19)

Get It

- * 19. How is the promise that God will reign over the earth significant to you?
- * 20. For what do we have to be thankful to God?
21. What does the promise of both reward and judgment mean to you personally?
22. What determines whether a Christian receives a big or a small heavenly reward?
23. What does it say to us that even angels with awesome power and beauty and elders with great heavenly position worship God in total humility?
24. What are some ways nations display anger toward God?
25. What changes need to take place in your personal worship of God?

Apply It

26. What is one specific act you could perform this week to advance the kingdom of God in your neighborhood, school, office, or home?
- * 27. For what spiritual and material blessings will you spend some time today thanking God? How?

The Woman and the Dragon - Revelation 12:1-13:1

Topics: Accusation, Angels, Atonement, Conflict, Deceit, Earth, Heaven, Judgment, Power, Salvation, Satan, Victory, War

Open It

- * 1. How does it feel to be accused of something you didn't do?
- 2. What is the clearest example of the existence of Satan that you're aware of?

Explore It

- 3. After the seventh trumpet, what "great and wondrous sign" did John observe in heaven? (12:1)
- 4. How did John describe the woman in his vision? (12:2)
- 5. What second sign did John see in heaven? (12:3)
- 6. In what activities was the enormous red dragon involved? (12:4)
- 7. What did John say about the child born to the woman? (12:5)
- 8. What happened to the newborn child? (12:5)
- 9. Where did the woman go right after giving birth? (12:6)
- 10. What was taking place in heaven in John's vision? (12:7)
- 11. What happened to the dragon and his angels? (12:8-9)
- 12. By what names was the dragon known? (12:9)
- 13. What did a voice from heaven announce? (12:10)
- 14. How did the voice from heaven refer to Satan? (12:10)
- * 15. According to the voice from heaven, how was Satan defeated? (12:11)
- 16. What warning was sounded to the earth and sea? Why? (12:12)
- * 17. What happened when the dragon tried to destroy the woman? (12:13-13:1)
- * 18. When the dragon was unable to kill the woman, where did he redirect his destructive efforts? (12:17-13:1)

Get It

- 19. Of what events is the story of the woman a parable or parallel?
- 20. What can we learn about Satan (his character, activities, and destiny) from this passage?
- 21. What does it mean not to love your life so much as to shrink from death?
- * 22. In what way does Satan try to oppose God today?
- 23. In what ways is Satan limited? Why?
- 24. What does it mean that Satan was "hurled to earth"?
- 25. How, in your own words, would you describe Satan's earthly exploits after he has been cast from heaven?
- 26. What do we learn about God from this passage?
- 27. What does this passage tell us about God's people?
- 28. When tempted by Satan, "the accuser of our brothers," how can we resist and fight back?
- * 29. In what ways does Satan try to tempt and hurt us?
- 30. How can we strengthen ourselves against Satan's attempts to weaken and tempt us?

Apply It

- * 31. What can you do this week to strengthen your hold on the testimony of Jesus?
- 32. What books, tapes, articles, or fellow believers could you use to help you grow in your commitment to Christ? How?
- 33. How can you take the message of today's passage and encourage a fellow Christian who is struggling in his or her walk with Christ?

The Beast out of the Sea - Revelation 13:2-10

Topics: Authority, Blasphemy, Death, Deceit, Endurance, Faithfulness, Last Days, Persecution, Perseverance, Power, Satan, War, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What alternatives to God do some of your coworkers or friends have (such as New Age beliefs, Islam, atheism, etc.)?
- 2. What names of living and/or dead individuals have you heard end times enthusiasts mention as being the “antichrist”?

Explore It

- 3. What kind of creature did John observe? (13:2)
- 4. What did the beast look like that John saw? (13:2)
- 5. What did the dragon (Satan) give the beast out of the sea? (13:2)
- 6. What was unusual about one of the heads of the beast? (13:3)
- 7. How did the world react and respond to the beast out of the sea? (13:3-4)
- 8. How long did the beast have authority? (13:5)
- 9. What kind of pronouncements did the beast make? (13:5-6)
- 10. How did the beast use his authority? (13:7)
- * 11. Who will worship the beast? (13:8)
- * 12. What warning did John give to all who would listen? (13:9-10)
- * 13. What do we need to do about this? (13:10)

Get It

- 14. In light of verses such as Psalm 24:1; Matthew 4:8-10; John 8:44, 12:31; and 2 Corinthians 4:4, who controls events on earth?
- 15. What is significant about the way the beast is described?
- 16. If you were facing death because of your Christian beliefs, how do you think you might respond?
- 17. Why do you think people will worship the beast?
- * 18. What difference does it make whom we worship?
- 19. What are some simple steps we can take to ensure that we give worship to God alone?
- * 20. In what sense do we need to be closed-minded about faith in Christ?
- 21. Why is it important that the beast will exercise authority for a period of only forty-two months?
- 22. Why do you think God allows His people to undergo severe trials and the kinds of persecution that are described in this passage?
- 23. What insights into spiritual warfare and blindness does this passage give you?
- 24. What are some situations you are facing that call for patient endurance and faithfulness?

Apply It

- 25. What can you do to prepare for those times this week when you will need patient endurance and faithfulness?
- * 26. How can you worship God in your attitudes and actions today?

The Beast out of the Earth - Revelation 13:11-18

Topics: Authority, Death, Deceit, Enemies, Idolatry, Loyalty, Miracles, Opposition, Power, Pressure, Satan, Wisdom, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is the most amazing trick you have ever seen a magician or an illusionist perform?
- 2. What are the most incredible special effects you have ever seen in a movie?

Explore It

- 3. What kind of creature did John observe? (13:11)
- 4. How did John describe the beast he saw coming out of the earth? (13:11)
- 5. Whom did the second beast represent? (13:12)
- 6. What did the second beast make the inhabitants of earth do? (13:12)
- 7. What powerful signs did the second beast use? (13:13)
- * 8. How did the second beast deceive everyone all over the world? (13:13-14)
- 9. What evil act did the second beast require of everyone all over the world? (13:14)
- * 10. How did the beast out of the earth use his Satanic power in relation to the image of the beast out of the sea? (13:15)
- * 11. What happened to those who refused to worship the image of the beast out of the sea? (13:15)
- 12. What did the beast out of the earth (also called the false prophet) force every living person to do? (13:16)
- 13. What consequences awaited those who refused to take the mark of the beast? (13:17)
- 14. What difference did it make whether a person took the mark of the beast? (13:17)
- 15. To what does the rise of the beast call us? (13:18)
- 16. How did John say one could “calculate the number of the beast”? (13:18)

Get It

- 17. What do you think is the significance of the fact that the beast’s number is 666?
- 18. How could Satan use economics (the ability to buy and sell) to control people and gain their allegiance?
- * 19. What are some chief ways people are deceived or blinded by Satan today?
- 20. How might you respond to someone who insisted that every miracle is from God?
- 21. How do you interpret and explain the kind of mark that Satan will require people to put on their hands and foreheads?
- 22. How would you react to a giant statue that could talk and move?
- 23. How can we tell whether a miracle is from God or from Satan?
- 24. What value is there in trying to determine the identity of the beast and the meaning of the symbols of the Book of Revelation?
- * 25. What should we do to be wise about the schemes of Satan?

Apply It

- 26. How can you shine the light of Christ in your part of our world?
- 27. What steps can you take today to renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?
- * 28. What actions could you take today to instruct or guide a young Christian?

The Lamb and the 144,000 - Revelation 14:1-5

Topics: Ambassadors, Commitment, Dedication, Eternal Life, Fruit, Heaven, Integrity, Obedience, Purity, Righteousness, Worship

Open It

1. What are your favorite sounds in all the world?
2. What five adjectives do you think your friends and family would use to describe you?
- * 3. What is one song you would like to learn to sing by heart?

Explore It

- * 4. Who did John see standing before him? (14:1)
5. Where in this vision of John's was the central character standing? (14:1)
6. Who was standing with the Lamb? (14:1)
7. What was written on the foreheads of the 144,000? (14:1)
8. What was the sound that John heard from heaven like? (14:2)
- * 9. What did the 144,000 do as John looked on? (14:3)
10. Who besides John heard the 144,000 singers? (14:3)
11. Who was given the privilege of learning the song of the 144,000? (14:3)
12. How is the purity of the 144,000 described? (14:4)
13. How is the commitment and faithfulness of the 144,000 pictured? (14:4)
- * 14. What is said here about the unique spiritual condition of the 144,000? (14:4-5)
15. How is the integrity of the 144,000 described? (14:5)

Get It

16. What is significant about the sound from heaven described in this passage?
- * 17. Why do you think only the 144,000 are able to learn the new song of praise?
18. In your own words, how would you describe the redeemed 144,000?
19. In what ways are you tempted to place your affections on the world of business, politics, social life, etc.?
- * 20. What does it mean to "follow the Lamb wherever he goes"?
21. What does it mean to be blameless?

Apply It

22. What is one step can you take today to keep yourself pure and devoted to God?
- * 23. What can you do to make yourself more open to follow the Lord wherever He leads you?

The Three Angels - Revelation 14:6-13

Topics: Angels, Blessing, Creation, Death, Earth, Endurance, Faithfulness, Fear, Glory, Gospel, Hell, Judgment, Obedience, Patience, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What do your coworkers believe about hell?
- 2. If you could get on international television and deliver a 10-second message to the whole human race, what would you say?

Explore It

- 3. What did John see? (14:6)
- 4. What was an angel dispatched to do? (14:6)
- * 5. What did the angel tell the inhabitants of earth to do? Why? (14:7)
- 6. Why was it important that people heed the angel's message? (14:7)
- 7. What pronouncement did the second angel make? (14:8)
- 8. How was Babylon's sin described by the second angel? (14:9)
- 9. What warning did the third angel give? (14:9-10)
- * 10. What would be the consequence of taking the mark of the beast? (14:9-10)
- 11. How is God's judgment on those who worship the beast pictured? (14:10)
- 12. What words are used to portray God's anger over sin? (14:10)
- 13. How is the future torment of the unbelieving described in this passage? (14:10-11)
- * 14. What does the future hold for those who do not believe? (14:10-11)
- 15. How should Christians respond to this sober warning? (14:12)
- 16. What instructions did John receive from heaven? (14:13)
- 17. In what sense are the dead blessed? (14:13)

Get It

- * 18. What temptations and trials make it difficult to live for Christ in this society?
- 19. How is it significant that the angel proclaimed the eternal gospel to "every nation, tribe, language and people"?
- * 20. What does it mean to fear God?
- 21. In your own words, how would you describe God's hatred for sin?
- 22. Why do we need "patient endurance" as followers of Christ?
- 23. In what way is it a blessing to die as a believer in Christ?

Apply It

- 24. In what concrete way could you encourage or support a missionary this week?
- 25. In what way can you be a witness for Christ today?
- * 26. How can you cultivate faithfulness to Jesus in all you do each day?

The Harvest of the Earth - Revelation 14:14-20

Topics: Angels, Anger, Consequences, Earth, Heaven, Judgment

Open It

- * 1. What do you think is the average person's view of heaven?
- 2. Why do you think death is personified as the Grim Reaper?

Explore It

- 3. What did John see? (14:14)
- 4. How did John describe the person he saw? (14:14)
- 5. What unusual instrument did the one "like a son of man" have in his possession? (14:14)
- 6. What happened as John stared at the angel sitting on a cloud? (14:15)
- * 7. What did the angel from the heavenly temple tell the other angel to do? Why? (14:15)
- 8. Why did the one angel command the other to harvest the earth? (14:15)
- 9. How did the one seated on the cloud respond to the angel's command? (14:16)
- 10. How did John describe the next angel he saw? (14:17)
- 11. What did John see "still another angel" do? (14:18)
- * 12. What instructions did the angel give to the one with the "sharp sickle"? (14:18)
- * 13. What happened to the grapes that were gathered by the reaping angel? (14:19-20)
- 14. How much blood was produced by the crushing of the "grapes"? (14:20)

Get It

- 15. What does this passage tell us about angels?
- * 16. What does this passage tell us about God?
- 17. What does this passage tell us about people?
- 18. How would you answer a non-Christian's charge that the Bible is too full of blood and judgment?
- 19. How do you interpret this vision of John's?
- 20. Why do you think God delays His judgment when the world is already filled with evil?
- * 21. How do we know that God takes our sin seriously?
- 22. How (if at all) would it change your view of God if God didn't punish sin?
- 23. What would you tell a person about how he or she could escape judgment?
- 24. Whom do you think the grapes in this vision represent?
- 25. What difference should the promise of judgment and wrath against evil make to the way we live?

Apply It

- 26. For what unbelievers will you pray this week?
- * 27. In what way can you express your gratitude to God for sparing you from His wrath?

Seven Angels With Seven Plagues - Revelation 15:1-8

Topics: Angels, Anger, Confidence, Fear, Glory, Greatness, Heaven, Holiness, Justice, Perseverance, Power, Purity, Righteousness, Satan, Worship

Open It

1. Of what difficult accomplishment are you most proud?
2. When in your life have you felt the most spiritually clean or the closest to God?
- * 3. What is your favorite hymn or worship song? Why?

Explore It

4. What great sign did John see in heaven? (15:1)
5. Why did John refer to the plagues he saw as the “seven last plagues”? (15:1)
- * 6. How did John describe the part of heaven revealed to him? (15:2)
7. Who did John see standing before him? (15:2)
8. Who will be “victorious over the beast”? (15:2)
- * 9. What were the saints in heaven doing? (15:2-3)
- * 10. What attributes of God are praised in the “song of Moses”? (15:3-4)
11. By what names was God called in the heavenly hymn heard by John? (15:3-4)
12. What did John see opened in heaven? (15:5)
13. What creatures came out of the temple? (15:6)
14. How did John describe the heavenly beings he saw? (15:6)
15. What was given to the seven angels? (15:7)
16. What events took place in the heavenly temple after the angels were dispatched with their plagues? (15:8)

Get It

17. When and where have you most sensed the awesomeness and greatness of God?
18. How would you answer someone who complained that heaven is “boring because people just sit on clouds and play harps for eternity”?
19. When will believers be “victorious over the beast”?
- * 20. What are some ways to praise or worship God?
21. How can singing help us worship God?
- * 22. How can we use singing in our worship of God?
23. What evidence does this passage give us that God is just and fair?
24. What does it mean that God is marvelous or glorious?
25. Based on this passage, what new insights do you have about heaven?
26. What do you most look forward to about heaven?
27. What God-given provisions do we have in our battle against the devil?

Apply It

28. What God-given provisions can you use today in your battle to be victorious over the devil?
- * 29. What is one practical step you can take to include singing more in your worship of God?

The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath - Revelation 16:1-21

Topics: Angels, Anger, Blasphemy, Consequences, Darkness, Death, Demons, Earth, Heaven, Holiness, Judgment, Justice, Last Days, Pain, Repentance, Sickness

Open It

- * 1. What is the most pain you have ever experienced?
- 2. Which do you think is worse—physical or emotional pain?
- 3. What kinds of natural disasters would you least like to be in the middle of?
- 4. What injustices in the world sometimes cause you to wonder if God is just?

Explore It

- 5. What did John hear from the heavenly temple? (16:1)
- * 6. What instructions did the loud voice give to the seven angels? (16:1)
- 7. What happened when the first angel poured out his bowl? (16:2)
- 8. What happened when the second angel emptied his bowl? (16:3)
- 9. What happened in the wake of the third angel pouring out his bowl? (16:4)
- * 10. What did the angel in charge of the waters say about the judgments being poured out? (16:5-7)
- 11. Why were the judgments that John witnessed called just? (16:5-7)
- 12. What kinds of judgment did the fourth bowl contain? (16:8-9)
- 13. What effect did the judgment of the fourth bowl have? (16:9)
- 14. What effect did the “raising of the thermostat” have on the earth’s inhabitants? (16:9)
- 15. What happened when the fifth angel poured out his bowl? (16:10-11)
- 16. Where was the judgment of the sixth angel directed? Why? (16:12)
- 17. What was the appearance of the three evil spirits after the judgment of bowl number six? (16:13-14)
- 18. What did the three evil spirits do? (16:13-14)
- * 19. What blessing was pronounced in the middle of this outpouring of judgment? (16:15)
- 20. What happened to the kings of the East? (16:16)
- 21. What were the results when the seventh angel poured out his bowl of judgment? (16:17-21)

Get It

- 22. How (if at all) do you think current events fit in with the judgments described in this passage?
- 23. How is the first plague appropriate for those who have allowed the mark of the beast on their bodies?
- 24. How do plagues two and three fit mankind’s crimes?
- * 25. What makes the judgments described here—horrible as they are—perfectly just?
- * 26. How can we “keep our clothes white”?
- 27. What makes a person blessed for “keeping his clothes white”?
- 28. Why would people undergoing judgment still not turn to God in repentance and for salvation?

Apply It

- 29. In what situations this week can you be fair and just?
- * 30. What is one step you can take this week to fight spiritual laziness?
- 31. How could you use the message of this passage to engage a non-Christian friend in a discussion about Christ?

The Woman on the Beast - Revelation 17:1-18

Topics: Ambassadors, Angels, Authority, Blasphemy, Faithfulness, Hell, Holy Spirit, Immorality, Judgment, Power, Sin, War, Wisdom

Open It

- * 1. What are some examples of champions or winners?
- 2. If your life was being threatened and you could hire anyone in the world to be your personal bodyguard, whom would you pick?
- 3. What do you think of all the recent talk of a “new world order”?

Explore It

- 4. What did one of the seven angels show John? (17:1)
- 5. How did the angel describe the evil of the “great prostitute”? (17:2)
- 6. What did John see when the angel carried him away? (17:3)
- 7. How did John describe the woman he saw? (17:4-5)
- 8. What could John tell about the woman he saw? (17:6)
- 9. What amazed John? (17:6)
- 10. How did the angel react to John’s astonishment? (17:7)
- 11. What did the angel explain to John? (17:7)
- * 12. Why will people all over the world be astonished at the beast? (17:8)
- 13. What do people need in light of the events that are coming? (17:9)
- * 14. How did the angel explain the seven heads of the beast? (17:9-11)
- 15. How did the angel explain the ten horns that covered the beast? (17:12)
- * 16. What action will the ten kings take and what will be the result? (17:13-14)
- 17. What was the significance of the waters that John saw the woman sitting on? (17:15)
- 18. What is the relationship between the beast, the ten kings, and the prostitute? (17:16-18)

Get It

- 19. How significant do you think it is that ancient Babylon is being rebuilt in modern-day Iraq?
- 20. Why do you think idolatry (worship of false gods) is described as adultery in the Bible?
- 21. In what way is the beast’s “resurrection” a weak imitation of Christ’s resurrection?
- 22. What in your opinion is the best way to understand the symbolism in this passage—the prostitute, the seven heads or hills, and the ten kings?
- 23. How would you describe the difference between knowledge and wisdom?
- 24. Why is it so important for us to seek wisdom from God?
- 25. What can we do to become wise?
- 26. What is the significance of the way in which the prostitute is dressed?
- 27. What does it mean that the beast and the ten horns will eventually turn against the prostitute?
- * 28. What systems (“babylons”) in the world today are hostile to God?
- 29. How do you think you should respond differently to worldly events and situations after having studied this chapter?
- 30. In what ways do you need to reaffirm your commitment, devotion, and loyalty to Jesus Christ this week?
- * 31. What difference does it make that Jesus is the Lord of lords and King of kings?
- 32. How should our behavior or life-style reflect the truth that Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings?
- 33. In what areas of your life do you need more of God’s wisdom?

Apply It

- * 34. What can you use to remind yourself each day this week of God's rule and superiority over all evil in the world?
- 35. What can you do to learn from the wisdom of more mature Christians?

The Fall of Babylon - Revelation 18:1-24

Topics: Adultery, Angels, Authority, Consequences, Demons, Immorality, Judgment, Power, Sin, Wealth

Open It

- * 1. Why do you think many people enjoy seeing the rich, the great, and the famous toppled from their lofty pedestals?
- 2. What is the most extreme or humiliating fall from power you have ever seen someone undergo?
- 3. What place epitomizes evil to you?

Explore It

- 4. What amazing sight did John see? (18:1)
- 5. How did John describe the angel he saw coming down from heaven? (18:1)
- 6. What pronouncement did the angel bring? (18:2)
- 7. Why did the angel say that Babylon was being judged? (18:3)
- 8. What did a voice from heaven urge? (18:4)
- 9. What specific message of judgment did the angel bring concerning Babylon's sins? (18:5, 8)
- * 10. How will the fall of Babylon affect rulers and merchants all over the earth? (18:9, 11, 15)
- * 11. What will happen to Babylon's wealth? (18:10-19)
- 12. Why will the merchants be upset? (18:11-13, 15)
- * 13. Why will the sea captains and sailors be upset over the destruction of Babylon? (18:17-19)
- 14. Why will Babylon be judged? (18:20)
- 15. What instructions did the angel give for heaven and its inhabitants? (18:20)
- 16. Near the end of the vision of Babylon's fall, what did a mighty angel do? (18:21)
- 17. What did the mighty angel's action illustrate? (18:21)
- 18. How will Babylon be judged? (18:22-23)
- 19. What symbol of violence was found in Babylon? (18:24)

Get It

- 20. What is pride and why is it dangerous?
- 21. How is your view of God expanded when you read that mere creatures (such as angels) have great authority and splendor?
- 22. What do you think Babylon symbolizes or represents?
- 23. What warning does the harlot's fate offer us today?
- 24. Why do you think the kings, merchants, and sailors are singled out to mourn the great city's fall?
- 25. What does the harlot's fate tell you about God? (18:4-8, 20)
- * 26. In what ways can we become ensnared by wealth?
- * 27. What can we do to avoid being slaves to money?
- 28. What will be Babylon's most glaring sins?
- 29. What worldly attitudes and actions hinder us from having an impact on the world around us?

Apply It

- 30. What can you do to maintain a spirit of humility as you go about your day?
- * 31. What is one step you can take today to put things and money in proper perspective?
- 32. How can you comfort a suffering friend with the message that God sees every injustice and will one day right every wrong?

Hallelujah! - Revelation 19:1-10

Topics: Adultery, Angels, Consequences, Demons, Glory, Immorality, Judgment, Justice, Power, Praise, Prophecy, Purity, Salvation, Serving, Worship

Open It

- * 1. What is one of the most memorable weddings or banquets you have ever been to?
- 2. Who is one Christian leader or authority that you respect? Why?
- 3. What is one hymn, praise chorus, or spiritual song that summarizes how you feel about God?

Explore It

- 4. What was the roar that John heard coming from heaven? (19:1)
- 5. Why were the inhabitants of heaven praising God? (19:1-2)
- 6. Who shouted? Why? (19:3)
- 7. How did the creatures closest to God act? (19:4)
- 8. What did the voice from the throne urge? (19:5)
- * 9. Why did the great multitude urge everyone to be happy? How? (19:6-7)
- * 10. In what ways did the bride get ready for the heavenly wedding? (19:7-8)
- 11. What is the significance of the fine linen worn by the bride of Christ? (19:8)
- * 12. Who is called “blessed”? (19:9)
- 13. How did John respond to the angel who was his “writing instructor”? (19:10)
- 14. What was the angel’s instruction to John? (19:10)
- 15. What did John learn about worship? (19:10)
- 16. What did John learn about angels? (19:10)

Get It

- 17. How would you describe the mood in heaven when judgment is done and God prepares to unite believers with Him forever?
- 18. What does “hallelujah” mean?
- 19. Why do you think “hallelujah” is repeated again and again in heaven?
- 20. What is the value in praising God?
- 21. What are some of the ways we can praise God?
- 22. What difference does it make to you that God’s judgments are true and just?
- * 23. What are some implications of the fact that Christ’s relationship with the church is described as a marriage?
- * 24. In what ways ought we to act as people “engaged” to Christ?
- 25. To what extent are our “wedding garments” earned, and to what extent are they a gift?
- 26. Who does God invite to the wedding supper of the Lamb? How?

Apply It

- * 27. What is one way you could become a more worshipful person in how you participate in worship services at church?
- 28. When, where, and how could you praise God this week?
- 29. In what way can you honor Christ in your conversations with others?

The Rider on the White Horse - Revelation 19:11-21

Topics: Angels, Death, Enemies, Humiliation, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Last Days, Punishment, Rebellion, Sin, Victory, War

Open It

1. What is your opinion of (attitude toward, feelings for or against, indifference toward, etc.) horses?
2. Who do you think is the greatest military leader of all time?
- * 3. How do most people characterize Jesus?
4. What, to you, is the value of faithfulness?

Explore It

5. What did John see in heaven as this portion of his vision began to unfold? (19:11)
6. What is the name of the individual John saw? (19:11)
- * 7. What is the rider of the white horse like? (19:11-13)
8. What does the rider of the white horse do? (19:11)
9. How did John describe the appearance of the rider he saw? (19:12-13, 16)
- * 10. Who followed the rider of the white horse? (19:14)
11. What did John note about the rider's mouth? (19:15)
12. What message did an angel deliver? How? (19:17-18)
13. What will be the main course served to the birds at the great supper of God? (19:17-18)
14. What battle took place? (19:19-21)
- * 15. Who fought against the rider of the white horse, and what was the outcome? (19:19-21)
16. Who gathered together? Why? (19:19)
17. What happened to the beast and the false prophet? (19:20)
18. What happened to the rest of those who followed the beast? (19:21)

Get It

19. Who is the rider?
- * 20. Why is Jesus depicted as a rider on a white horse?
21. What impressions of the rider does this passage give you?
22. How is Jesus described in this passage?
- * 23. What do all the symbols in this passage tell us about Jesus?
24. What does it mean to be faithful and true?
25. In what area of your life do you want to build a reputation of being faithful and true?
26. What is your impression of the battle described in this passage?
27. How does this snapshot of Christ compare to the typical image most people have of Him?
28. How do you interpret the place called "the fiery lake of burning sulfur"?
29. What's the difference between the wedding supper of the Lamb and the great supper of God?
30. What enables us to be "white and clean" in the sight of God?

Apply It

- * 31. For what "confrontations" do you need to prepare this week? How?
32. How can you develop faithfulness and integrity in your work or home life this week?

The Thousand Years - Revelation 20:1-6

Topics: Angels, Authority, Death, Deceit, Enemies, Hell, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Last Days, Punishment, Rebellion, Resurrection, Satan, Victory

Open It

1. Why do you think our society is growing more and more preoccupied with Satan and the occult?
- * 2. What is your general attitude about politics?
3. What makes people interested in the future?

Explore It

4. What did John see an angel carrying? (20:1)
5. Whom did the angel seize? (20:2)
6. By what assorted names did John call the dragon? (20:2)
7. What did the angel do to the dragon? (20:2)
8. Where did the angel throw the dragon? (20:3)
9. For how long was the dragon locked up? (20:3)
10. What else did John see in his vision? (20:4)
- * 11. Why had some believers died? (20:4)
12. How had the “beheaded souls” defied the beast? (20:4)
13. What happened to the martyrs as John watched? (20:4)
- * 14. When would the rest of the dead be resurrected? (20:5)
- * 15. In what way are the people raised in the first resurrection blessed? (20:6)

Get It

16. When do you think Christ’s reign is—after He takes us to heaven, before He takes us to heaven, or now? Why?
17. What do you think is the point of God binding Satan and then releasing him?
18. Who are the ones seated on thrones and given authority to judge?
19. In what ways is Satan already bound?
20. In what ways does Satan appear to be unbound?
- * 21. In what ways do God’s people already reign with Christ?
- * 22. How can we show our allegiance to Christ the King over all the earth?
23. Who notices when we give our allegiance to Christ?

Apply It

- * 24. In what ways can you give testimony of God’s Word to the people you know?
25. In what concrete ways this week can you resist Satan’s attempts to rule in your life?

Satan's Doom - Revelation 20:7-10

Topics: Deceit, Enemies, Hell, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Last Days, Punishment, Rebellion, Satan, Victory, War

Open It

- * 1. In literature, movies, or television, who do you think is the all-time worst villain or bad guy?
- 2. How likely do you think it is that there will be a nuclear war in your lifetime?

Explore It

- 3. What will happen after the thousand year reign of Christ and His saints? (20:7)
- 4. How is the Abyss described? (20:7)
- * 5. What will Satan do right after his release from the Abyss? (20:7-8)
- 6. Where will Satan go to find followers? (20:8)
- 7. What is Satan's ultimate goal in gathering people at this point? (20:8)
- 8. How did John describe those who will be deceived by Satan? (20:8)
- * 9. In John's vision what battle plan did Satan follow in his war against God? (20:9)
- 10. What is special about the place where the people of God gathered? (20:9)
- * 11. How did God defeat the armies of Satan? (20:9-10)
- 12. Where was Satan dispatched after his defeat? (20:10)
- 13. What is Satan's, the beast's, and the false prophet's final destination? (20:10)
- 14. What will Satan, the beast, and the false prophet experience in their final destination? (20:10)

Get It

- 15. How does this passage help explain the presence of evil in the universe?
- 16. What insights into Satan's nature and character do we gain from this passage?
- 17. Why do you think people are so willing to follow a doomed loser like Satan?
- 18. Who or what are Gog and Magog?
- 19. How are you encouraged by the way God acts on behalf of His people?
- 20. Why do you think God is still waiting to judge Satan finally and completely?
- 21. Why is it just and fair that Satan will be "tormented day and night for ever and ever"?
- 22. How does knowing the end of history affect the way you feel and live in the present?
- 23. In what way does Satan try to deceive us?
- 24. How does Satan deceive us?
- 25. In what areas of your life have you been most susceptible to Satan's deceptions?
- 26. What can we do to keep from being deceived by Satan?
- * 27. When are we prone to lose confidence in God's power and authority over Satan and evil?
- * 28. How can we draw encouragement from the certainty of Satan's doom?

Apply It

- 29. What do you want to remember the next time you are unsure of whether it is worth following Christ?
- * 30. What is one simple way you can remind yourself of God's certain victory over evil?
- 31. How can you make a dent today in the large following and the power that Satan possesses and enjoys?
- 32. What step of faith do you need to take today in the face of a desperate situation that makes you feel surrounded by the enemy?

The Dead Are Judged - Revelation 20:11-15

Topics: Consequences, Death, Earth, Eternal Life, Heaven, Hell, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Last Days, Punishment, Resurrection

Open It

1. What is your favorite book? Why?
- * 2. What is one time you remember getting in trouble as a child?

Explore It

3. What particular vision begins this portion of John's revelation? (20:11)
4. How will creation react to the "great white throne" judgment? (20:11)
5. What will be the effect of God's presence on "earth and sky" at the great white throne judgment? (20:11)
6. Where will the final judgment of all people take place? (20:11-12)
- * 7. Who will be involved in the final judgment? (20:12)
8. What records will be used to judge everyone? (20:12)
9. How does God keep track of what people do in this life? (20:12)
- * 10. On what basis will people be judged at the end of time? (20:12-13)
11. From what diverse places will the dead assemble for this judgment? (20:13)
12. What will happen to death and Hades? (20:14)
13. How did John describe the lake of fire? (20:14)
14. What will hell be like? (20:14)
- * 15. What will happen to those whose names are not found in the Book of Life? (20:15)
16. Who will be thrown into the lake of fire? (20:15)

Get It

17. How does a person get his or her name recorded in the Book of Life?
18. How is it significant that earth and sky fled from the presence of the one seated on the throne of judgment?
19. What is the "lake of fire"?
20. What does it mean that death and Hades "were thrown into the lake of fire"?
21. What does it mean that "the lake of fire is the second death"?
22. What is the only way we can escape the lake of fire?
23. Who are the people whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life?
- * 24. What is the value in knowing that we will be judged for the way we live?
25. Why should the certainty of future judgment affect the way we live?
- * 26. How should the certainty of future judgment affect the way we live?

Apply It

- * 27. What can you do to remind yourself of the reality of a future judgment?
28. What step do you need to take today to ensure that your name is written in the Book of Life?
29. How can you help a friend or family member avoid a future in the lake of fire?

The New Jerusalem - Revelation 21:1-27

Topics: Angels, Death, Earth, Glory, Heaven, Hell, Holiness, Idolatry, Immorality, Jesus Christ, Joy, Light, Mourning, Purity, Unbelievers

Open It

1. What is the most beautiful place you have ever been?
- * 2. What is one of the happiest or best memories you have?
3. If you could change one thing about your city, what would you change?
4. What is the most exotic gem or precious stone you have ever seen?

Explore It

5. What did John see once all the judgments had taken place? (21:1)
6. In his vision, what did John see coming down out of heaven from God? (21:2)
7. What did the voice that John heard speaking from the throne of God announce? (21:3)
8. What will life be like in heaven? (21:4)
- * 9. How did the voice from heaven describe the new world to come? (21:4-5)
10. What did the one on the throne promise to those who are thirsty? (21:6)
11. What did the one on the throne promise to those who overcome? (21:7)
12. What fate was assured for those who are evil? (21:8)
13. What did an angel do with John? Why? (21:9-10)
- * 14. What were some of the more spectacular features of the New Jerusalem that John saw? (21:10-21)
- * 15. In what way will the New Jerusalem reflect God's glory and holiness? (21:21-27)
16. What did John discover about the temple in the New Jerusalem? (21:22)
17. What will be the New Jerusalem's source of light? (21:23-24)
18. How did John describe the New Jerusalem in terms of safety or security? (21:25)
19. How did John describe the heavenly city in terms of purity? (21:26-27)

Get It

20. What are the implications for us that this present earth will pass away?
21. In what ways is the promise that God will dwell with us meaningful to you?
22. What does it mean that God will wipe every tear from our eyes?
23. What kind of thirst does God promise to fill in heaven?
- * 24. Why do you think God revealed so many details about the measurements and appearance of the New Jerusalem?
25. What does the Bible mean when, speaking about the New Jerusalem, it says, "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple"?
26. What is the Holy City?
27. What is signified by the fact that the nations will bring their splendor to the Holy City?
28. How should we act in light of the fact that the God of the universe wants to live in us?
- * 29. How can we prepare ourselves for a place like the New Jerusalem?

Apply It

30. What can you do to remind yourself to be faithful to the Lord?
- * 31. How can you remind yourself every day this week of God's promised future for His people?
32. How can you bring comfort today to someone who is facing death or pain or some other kind of sadness?

The River of Life - Revelation 22:1-6

Topics: Angels, Beauty, Glory, Healing, Heaven, Holiness, Jesus Christ, Joy, Light, Purity

Open It

- * 1. What is your favorite fruit? What do you like about it?
- 2. Of all the world's great cities that are situated on rivers, which one would you most like to visit? Why?
- 3. What disease do you most wish there were a cure for?

Explore It

- 4. What sight did John's heavenly "tour guide" show him? (22:1)
- 5. How did John describe the appearance of the river of life? (22:1)
- 6. How did John describe the location of the river of life? (22:2)
- * 7. What was growing on each side of the river of life? (22:2)
- * 8. When did the tree that John saw in the city bear fruit? (22:2)
- * 9. Of what value are the leaves on the tree of life? (22:2)
- 10. What will be missing from the new heavens and new earth? (22:3)
- 11. What will God's people do in heaven? (22:3)
- 12. What kind of relationship will God have with His people in heaven? (22:3-4)
- 13. Where will the inhabitants of heaven get their light? (22:5)
- 14. How long will God's people reign? (22:5)
- 15. How did the angel assure John? (22:6)

Get It

- 16. What kind of service will God's people perform in heaven?
- 17. What will life be like in heaven?
- 18. What do you imagine it will be like to look into the face of the Lord?
- 19. Why do you think it is difficult to imagine how wonderful heaven will be?
- 20. In what ways does the new Jerusalem restore what God created in the Garden of Eden?
- 21. How do you interpret the images "tree of life" and "river of life"?
- 22. What is the significance of the water of life and tree of life being in heaven?
- * 23. What does this passage tell us about God?
- 24. In what way can a person "wear God's name on his or her forehead"?
- 25. To what acts of service does God call us now?
- 26. What difference does it make that God has told us what the future holds?
- * 27. How can we honor God as creator and sustainer of life?

Apply It

- * 28. How can you honor the life that God created?
- 29. What act of service can you do for God this week? How?
- 30. What act or deed can you do today as a "mark of ownership" placed on your life by God?

Jesus Is Coming - Revelation 22:7-21

Topics: Angels, Eternal Life, Glory, Grace, Heaven, Holiness, Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Sin, Worship

Open It

1. What nicknames did you or your friends have when you were growing up?
2. What is your most memorable “returning home” experience?
- * 3. What is one reward you remember getting?

Explore It

4. What promise did Christ make? (22:7)
5. What blessing did Christ promise us? (22:7)
6. Who did Jesus say is a blessed person? (22:7)
7. How did the revelations John saw affect him? (22:8)
8. What command was given to John by his angelic assistant? (22:9)
9. Why was John commanded not to seal up the prophecies of his book? (22:10)
10. What additional instructions did the angel give? (22:11)
11. When Jesus comes, what will He bring with Him? (22:12)
12. How did Jesus describe Himself? (22:13, 16)
- * 13. Who will be entitled to citizenship in the new Jerusalem? (22:14)
14. Who will be barred from entering the heavenly city? (22:15)
15. What is the consequence of living a life of disobedience to God, no matter what it involves? (22:15)
16. What was Jesus’ method for getting His message to us? (22:16)
- * 17. What invitation is given by the Spirit and the bride? (22:17)
18. What warning did John give? (22:18-19)
- * 19. What do we know for sure about Christ’s return? (22:20)
20. How did John bless his readers? (22:21)

Get It

21. How might you react if you were to see an angel?
22. In what ways do we put Christian leaders on pedestals or revere them too highly?
23. How can we put believers we respect in proper perspective?
24. How can a person “keep the words of the prophecy in this book”?
- * 25. What do you think is the point of the angel telling everyone to continue doing what they are doing, whether good or bad?
26. What does it mean to be thirsty for God?
27. What does it mean to “wash your robes”?
- * 28. What is involved in responding to God’s invitation to come to Him?
29. What does it mean that “the time is near” and that Christ is “coming soon”?
30. What do we know about the timing of Christ’s return?
31. What does it mean to add to or take away from God’s prophetic word?
32. How might a person add to or take away from the words of Christ’s revelation?
33. How can we show respect for the revelation Jesus gave us in this book?
34. How do the self-descriptions of Jesus here change the way you view Him?
35. How might we bless others with the way we greet or say good-bye to them?

Apply It

36. What are some concrete ways you can show respect for the messages in the Bible?
- * 37. What can you “continue to do right” this week?

38. What can you do to remind yourself not to put Christian leaders on pedestals or to make them the focus of your praise?
39. How could you bless others this week with the way you greet or say good-bye to them?