

Discipleship Stories for Preferred Oral Learners



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All scripture references are from the New Living Translation of the Bible.

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1. Water Baptism

Acts 8:26-40

Introduction:

In the Christian church there are only two ceremonies given by Christ. Every true Christian must comply with these ceremonies because they are Christ's commands. The first command is Water Baptism. This is our subject for today. As we believe in Jesus and repent of our sins the first step of obedience is water baptism. Water baptism serves as a public witness, an announcement to the whole world that we are followers of Christ. It is also an act of obedience by the new believer who makes a verbal declaration of his faith.

This declaration consists of a commitment to keep our conscience clear before God all the days of our life (1 Peter 3:20-21). Water baptism does not save us, but it demonstrates to the whole world that we are obedient followers of Christ. Our story today is an account of a new believer being baptized in water.

Story:

After Jesus' resurrection and return to heaven, it happened that there was an African official returning to Africa from Jerusalem in his chariot on horseback. He was returning from the temple where he had gone to worship the true God. As he traveled in his chariot, he read the scriptures. God sent Philip, a follower of Jesus, to meet this African. Philip approached the chariot and heard the man reading the scriptures. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The African replied, "How could I understand unless someone explains it to me?" The African then invited Philip to sit beside him so that he could explain the passage of scripture to him. The verses he was reading were written hundreds of years earlier and predicted that Jesus, would come into the world and die. The African asked Philip. "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about? Philip then explained that it was a prophecy of Jesus' death and told him the good news of Jesus in full. As they traveled along the road, they came to a place where there was water.

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

The African said to him, "Look, here is water. Why can't I be baptized?" Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you can." And the man said, "I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then Philip and the African went into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit was taken away from Philip, and the African saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing exceedingly.

Extra help:

The following questions can be used to help students learn more about the subject of water baptism. Many times, there is confusion about the form and meaning of baptism. The purpose of the questions is to motivate dialogue.

- What does the verse we memorized mean?
- Does baptism in water save us? Yes or no? Explain your answer.
- What are the purposes of water baptism?
- How is one baptized? By immersion or sprinkling?
- Matthew 28:19 states the formula for baptism; in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Could you defend this formula against those who are baptized only in the name of Jesus?
- Based on this story, what would be your next step of obedience in following Christ? When will you be baptized? When you are baptized invite your friends. Let them see your public testimony of what God has done in your life.

Memory verse:

Acts 2:38

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

2. The Lord's Supper, Communion

1Corinthians 11:23-31; Mark 14:12-26

Introduction:

In this meeting we want to touch on the topic "The Lord's Supper". In the Bible there are two special commands that Jesus gave to the church. They are activities that Jesus commands us to do. For the church to be obedient, we have to fulfill the two commands. The first one most of you have already fulfilled; this is the commandment of water baptism. Baptism is a once-for-all act. The second is the commandment to partake of the Lord's Supper. Believers partake of the Lord's Supper often. It is preferable for Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper once a month. Today we will understand why and how to celebrate the Lord's Supper together. The apostle Paul wrote a letter to the new church in a city called Corinth to encourage them in their walk with Jesus. In one part of this letter he encourages them and teaches them how to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Listen, then, to what Paul taught them about the Lord's Supper. Paul says that he had received this teaching directly from Jesus. The following is what Paul received.

Story:

On the night Jesus was betrayed by Judas, Jesus was sitting with his disciples performing his last supper with them before dying on the cross. After supper, he took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God for it, broke it and said, "This is (represents) my body which I give for you, do this in remembrance of me." Everyone took a piece of bread and ate it together. After eating the bread together, Jesus took the cup of wine, gave thanks to God for it, and said to his disciples, "This cup is (represents) the new covenant in my blood; do this every time you drink of it in remembrance of me." Then they all drank the wine from the cup.

Paul went on to say, "Whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup of wine together, you are proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes. The person who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin." For this reason, each person, before taking the Lord's Supper, should examine himself to see if there is sin in his life. Because he had not

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Questions:

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- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
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- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
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- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

repented of his sin, Paul said to the Corinthians, "There are among you sick people, and there are also some who have died." So, in order not to be judged now by the Lord, we must examine ourselves and repent. At the completion of this special supper, they sang a hymn and then left together for the garden, where Christ was betrayed and arrested.

Additional Questions

- How often should a child of God partake of the Lord's Supper?
- Who can serve the Lord's Supper?
- What should a believer who has sin in his life do before participating in the Lord's Supper?
- What are some purposes of performing the Lord's Supper in church?

Extra Help:

One way to follow Christ faithfully is to make a commitment to meet regularly with other Christians to observe the Lord's Supper. We suggest that you meet monthly to celebrate the Lord's Supper as a way of remembering the sacrifice Jesus made for you and to renew your commitment to him. When we eat the bread, it reminds us of Jesus' body that was sacrificed for us. When we drink the cup, it reminds us of the blood of Jesus that covers our sins. This is a good time to make sure that you have confessed your sins to God and to others whom you have offended. The Lord's Supper is always a precious moment in the presence of God.

Memory verse:

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I Corinthians 11:26

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
.....

3. The Parable of The Sower

Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23

Introduction:

Jesus Himself has chosen us to bear much fruit. In John 15:16 Jesus said: **"You did not choose me, but I chose you and commissioned you to go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, and whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you"**. God wants us to bear much fruit in this Christian life. So, our longing is to grow spiritually.

Our story is **"The Sower"**. In this story Jesus speaks of four kinds of soil. Each kind of soil represents a type of the human heart. Of the four kinds of heart only one bears fruit. The other three kinds of soil represent nonproductive hearts. As you listen to the parable let the Holy Spirit show you what kind of heart you have. Is there anything in our life that hinders us from bearing fruit for God? This story teaches us how to grow spiritually.

Story:

One day Jesus came out of a house and sat by the lake. There were so many people that he had to get into a boat to teach them while the people stayed on the beach.

Jesus said to them, "Listen! The sower went out to sow. As he scattered the seeds, some fell on the hard path; and the birds came and ate them up. Some fell among stones, where there was not much soil. These seeds soon sprouted, but when the sun came up, the seedlings were burned and withered because they had no roots. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with the plants and choked them. But, another part fell on the good soil and began to bear fruit. Some plants produced thirty grains, others sixty, and others up to one hundred grains per seed.

In the evening Jesus was alone with his disciples. They said to him, "Lord, tell us the parable of the sower. And Jesus said to them:

- Those who hear the message of the kingdom and do not understand it, are like the seed that fell on the hard road and the devil comes and takes away the message already sown in their hearts.
- The seed that fell among the stones represents those who hear the message and receive it gladly, but because they do not have sufficient root they do not stand firm; when they suffer trials or persecution, they fail.

Instructions:

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Questions:

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- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
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- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

- The seed sown among thorns represents those who hear the message, but the business of life preoccupies them too much and the love of wealth deceives them. All this chokes the message and does not allow it to bear fruit in them.
- But the seed sown in good soil represents those who hear the message, understand it and give a good harvest, like the ears of corn that give thirty, sixty or even a hundred grains for each seed.

Additional questions:

- ☐ Who is the sower?
- ☐ What represents the seed?
- ☐ The hard road represents what kind of heart? The birds?
- ☐ The land full of stones in which the plants sprout soon, but because it has no root and it burns and dries up represents what kind of heart?
- ☐ The land full of thorns which choke the plants represents what kind of heart?
- ☐ The land that produces fruit up to thirty, sixty or a hundred grains to each seed represents what kind of heart?
- ☐ What does fruit mean?
- ☐ How is God speaking to you through this parable?
- ☐ How can we grow spiritually? What are some important habits that a Christian must develop in order to grow in Christ?
- ☐ How will you obey the lessons of this parable this week?

Memory verse:

John 15:16

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”

4. Prayer: The Widow and The Judge

Luke 18:1-8

Introduction:

God always answers prayer. Sometimes the answer takes time, but according to today's story we should never lose heart in prayer, because God will answer sooner or later. When I was a child, the children in my neighborhood would ring the doorbell of the houses in our neighborhood, and then run. The owner of the house would come to the door and no one was there. For the children it was a game, a joke. But when it comes to praying to God, sometimes we pray like this: we ring the doorbell of heaven in prayer and leave before we receive an answer. We do not have the faith, nor the patience to wait on God until the answer comes. Today's story shows us our weakness in prayer, and encourages us to be persistent in prayer. Let's focus on the widow's prayer of faith.

Story:

Jesus told them a story to teach the people that they should pray always, without becoming discouraged. He said to them, "There was in a certain town a judge who neither feared God nor respected men. In the same town there was also a widow who had a lawsuit and who went to the judge to ask for justice against her adversary. For a long time the judge would not listen to her, but afterwards, he thought, **"Although I neither fear God nor respect men, nevertheless, since this widow keeps bothering me, I will defend him, so that he will not keep coming and put an end to my patience."**

And Jesus added: "This is what the evil judge said. Well then, will not God also defend his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he make them wait? I tell you, he will defend them without delay. But when the Son of Man comes, will he still find faith on earth?"

Additional Questions:

- Jesus told this story for two reasons, what are they?
Answer: To teach that they should (1) pray always and (2) not lose heart.
- Describes the Judge in this story.
- Describe the widow.

Instructions:

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Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
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- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

- At last the judge attended to the widow. Why did he attend to her?
- Describe the difference between the judge and God.
- Verse 8 says: "When the Son of Man comes, will He still find faith on earth?" What does this verse mean?

Make a commitment to begin each day by spending time praying to God and waiting on Him until the answer comes, because God always answers every prayer.

Memory verse:

Matthew 7:7-8

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

5. Mending Broken Relationships

Matthew 5:23-25; 7: 1-5; 18:15-17

Introduction:

A major obstacle to prayer and spiritual growth is broken relationships. In today's story Jesus teaches how to mend broken relationships. In everyday life it is inevitable that we will all clash with others. There will be disagreements in our family, in our church, in our work, in our community. Sometimes people hurt us and sometimes we hurt others. This is a fact. According to the teachings of Jesus the important thing is what do we do after we clash with others? As children of God, we are responsible for fixing the broken relationships in life. Today's story shows us how.

Story:

Jesus went up on a hill where he sat and taught the people. Jesus taught various subjects, among them he taught them how to mend broken relationships.

Jesus said, "If you are praying to God and there you remember that your brother has something against you, stop praying, go to where your brother is and mend your broken relationship. When you are already reconciled with him, go back and continue praying to God."

Also, Jesus told them: "If your brother sins against you, you have a responsibility to fix the broken relationship. First, you have to humble yourself, examine yourself and take the log out of your own eye. Then, you have to go to your brother imploring him, confessing your faults and asking his forgiveness. Then tell him what he has done against you. If he repents, you have helped him out of his sin. But if he does not repent, you must take one with you or two other brothers who can serve as witnesses that you are trying to mend the broken relationship.

If he refuses to listen to what you say, you should take the case to the church leaders seeking their help in mending the broken relationship. If he does not listen to the leaders, the church should treat him as someone who is not a believer."

Instructions:

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Questions:

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- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

Additional Questions:

- What are Jesus' instructions for those who come praying and remember that their brother has something against them?
- We should think and ask ourselves if we have a broken relationship with another person. If so, why not make a commitment to go and look for a solution? Restoring a broken relationship takes courage and humility, but it yields wonderful results. The gospel reaches people through relationships. If relationships are broken, it damages our witness and the witness of the church in the community.
- What are Jesus' instructions if you come praying and remember that your brother has something against you?
- What should you do if a brother sins against you? What is the first step?
- In examining your own heart, what would be the next step?
- What does "taking the log out of your own eye" mean?
- With what kind of attitude should we approach our brother to reconcile?
- According to Jesus' teaching, what is the next step in confessing your own fault to your brother?
- What do you do if your brother does not want to acknowledge his own sin?
- What do you do if your brother does not want to listen to you in the presence of a witness?
- What are the positive results and personal benefits if we follow Jesus' instructions in cases of broken relationships?

Memory verse:

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Hebrews 12:14

"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."

6. The Devil Tempts Jesus

Matthew 4:1-11

Introduction:

Temptation, all Christians face various temptations. You can be sure that Satan will tempt you in the area where you are weakest. To be tempted is not a sin. Even Christ was tempted by Satan, although He never sinned. The Bible says that God will never tempt us with evil. It is the devil himself who tempts us to sin with God. Also, the Bible says that, if we submit to God and resist the devil, he will flee from us. With every temptation God provides a way out. "The Lord's Prayer" exhorts us to ask God to, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." By God's grace it is possible to overcome temptation. Today's story teaches us how to overcome temptation, and Christ is our example.

Story:

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus came to be baptized by John. After his baptism Christ was tempted by the devil. It happened that Jesus was led into the desert by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil. After he had fasted about forty days, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Jesus answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took Jesus into the holy city, and set him on the highest point of the temple and said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, cast him down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels to guard you so that you will not even dash your feet against the stones.'" Jesus answered, "It is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Then the devil took Jesus up into a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and said to Jesus, "I will give you all these things, if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus answered him, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

The devil left him, and the angels came to serve him.

Instructions:

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Questions:

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- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

Additional questions:

- Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit for what purpose?
- What tool did Jesus use to resist temptation?
- What was Jesus' first temptation?
- What did Jesus' second temptation consist of?
- What was the third temptation of Jesus?
- What are the weak points of man which the devil uses to tempt us?
- What are some ways to resist temptation?
- Why does God allow the devil to tempt us?

Memory verse:

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1 Corinthians 10:13

"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure."

7. The Day of Pentecost, The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1-13

Introduction:

Jesus rose from the dead and then ascended into heaven. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus commanded the disciples not to leave Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them. Jesus told them that when the Spirit came they were to receive power to be his bold witnesses. So the disciples, in obedience, gathered together with about 120 people, persevering in prayer and waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. They waited and persevered in prayer like this for ten days. Also today Christ is able and willing to baptize us with the power of the Holy Spirit so that we may be effective witnesses.

Story:

The 120 people together with the apostles were gathered in an upper room waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The day of the feast came, which is called Pentecost. All 120 were sitting and praying. And immediately there came from heaven a sound of a wind, a noise like a hurricane. This sound filled the house where they were gathered. All those gathered were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages as the Spirit caused them to speak.

At the same time many people were visiting Jerusalem to worship God. They came from all the nations around them. They, hearing the sound of this wind, came to the place where the followers of Christ were gathered to find out what had happened. When they arrived, they were astonished, and confused because each one heard them speaking the wonders of God in his own language. Some of them said, "What does this mean?" But others mocked them, saying, "What is happening is that they are drunk."

Peter hearing this, and being filled with the Spirit, stood up and said to them, "Fellow Jews, let me explain to you what is going on. These are not drunkards. What is happening is a fulfillment of the prophecy of the prophet Joel." He prophesied, "It will happen in the last days," says God, "I will pour out my Spirit on every human being." Then Peter

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Questions:

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preached to them the truth about Jesus, his birth, his ministry, his crucifixion and his resurrection. When the people heard this, they asked Peter, "What should we do?" Peter answered, "Change your way of thinking and living and be baptized in Jesus' name. Then God will forgive you your sins." So those who received his message were baptized in water, and that day about 3,000 joined the 120.

Additional Questions:

- ☐ How many people were gathered in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came?
- ☐ What were the visible signs of the coming of the Spirit?
- ☐ What is the sign today of being baptized in the Holy Spirit?
- ☐ 3,000 men arrived where the 120 believers were, how did they know something happened?
- ☐ When the 3,000 men arrived, what did they hear?
- ☐ What did these unknown languages consist of?
- ☐ How did they feel?
- ☐ What was the misinterpretation of some of them in hearing and seeing the Spirit-filled believers?
- ☐ What did Peter do to clarify the misunderstanding of some of the 3000 men?
- ☐ Peter explained what happened by quoting which prophet?
- ☐ Broadly speaking, what does Joel say in his prophecy?
- ☐ When the crowd heard Peter's preaching, they asked the disciples.
- ☐ "What shall we do?" What was the answer?
- ☐ How did Peter receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit? How did the baptism help Peter?
- ☐ Explain the difference in Peter before and after the baptism in the Spirit.
- ☐ How can one receive the baptism of power today?

Memory verse:

Acts 2:4

"And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability."

8. The Holy Spirit Falls On Cornelius' House

Acts 8:1-47

Introduction:

In the story where the Holy Spirit fell upon the 120 believers gathered, praying and awaiting His coming, all those gathered were baptized in the Spirit and as a sign they spoke in unknown tongues. As a result of their infilling, they received power to be witnesses. Similarly, in today's story God again pours out his Spirit on another group of believers. In this case they also speak in tongues as evidence that they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Today we need the same experience, that is, the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the great task of the church. Individually and together we can ask God to fill us with His Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues.

Story:

Cornelius was a captain in the Roman army. He was a good man. He worshiped the true God along with all his family. One evening while he was praying an angel appeared to him and said, "Cornelius, send a group of men to go to the city of Joppa to bring Peter." Then immediately Cornelius called his servants and sent them to Joppa to bring Peter. The next morning Peter went up to the second floor in the house where he was staying to pray. While he was praying, the Holy Spirit spoke to him, saying; "Peter, three men are looking for you; come down and go with them, for I have sent them."

Then Peter and some of his companions accompanied the men to Cornelius' house. When they arrived, Peter went into Cornelius' house where he found many people gathered. Cornelius said, to Peter. "Now we are all here before God, and we want to hear everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." Peter then began to speak and preached to them about Jesus, his ministry, his death and resurrection.

Peter was still preaching when the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard his message. Peter and his companions were amazed that the Holy Spirit was given even to those who were not Jews, for they heard them speaking in strange tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, "Can these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have, be prevented from being baptized in water?" And Peter commanded that they be baptized in water. Then they begged Peter to stay with them a few days longer.

Additional questions:

- ☐ Who was Cornelius?
- ☐ What kind of relationship did Cornelius have with God.

Instructions:

- ☐ *Tell the story*
- ☐ *Retell the story.*
- ☐ *Tell the story with the help of others.*
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- ☐ *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
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- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
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- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

- What happened at the meeting in Cornelius' house while Peter was teaching?
- How did Peter know that Cornelius and his family had received the Holy Spirit?
- What is God's purpose in pouring out His Holy Spirit upon us?
- What are the necessary requirements for a believer to meet in order to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?
- What prevents believers from receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Extra Help:

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience in which the Holy Spirit comes upon a believer empowering him or her with the power of God. The purpose of this power is for us to be bold witnesses for Christ. Without this power from God we are timid and fearful to speak and witness to non-believers. To receive this promised gift we must wait in the presence of God, asking Him to fill us according to His promise. The believer must persist in prayer, asking for the filling until he receives it. The Christian knows that God is baptizing him when he speaks in unknown tongues. For the apostles the sign of tongues was the proof of the true filling of the Spirit, and tongues is still the proof of baptism today. I strongly encourage you to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit and not be satisfied until God fills you with the strength of His power.

Memory verse:

Ephesians 5:18

"Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit."

9. Tithes and Offerings

Genesis 14:18-20, Malachi 3:7-10

Introduction:

Today we are going to learn about something the Lord wants from us. It is something that demonstrates our faithfulness to him. The subject has to do with our belongings. Today we are going to see that tithing and giving offerings demonstrates our love and trust in God. Those who love God want to express their love. Tithing and giving offerings are ways to express our love and gratitude to God for the blessings we have received. We will learn why to tithe, how to do it, and how to administer it in the church.

Story:

Abraham had a nephew named Lot. Lot and his family were captured and taken by a foreign king. When Abraham heard what happened to Lot, he gathered some 318 men and went after the men in order to rescue Lot. Abraham defeated them and rescued Lot. He also took a lot of their goods from the raiders. On the way back Abraham met Melchizedek, a king and priest of God Most High. Melchizedek brought out bread and wine and blessed Abraham, saying, "Blessed be the most high God, maker of heaven and earth, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abraham gave Melchizedek the tithes of all that he had received." Many centuries after Abraham, God's people had stopped tithing. God said to them, "You have robbed me." And they asked him, "Wherein have we robbed?" And God answered them, "In tithes and offerings. Bring the tithe for the expenses of the temple. Test me in this, says the LORD Almighty, and see if I do not open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon you till there is no end."

Additional Questions:

- ☐ On returning from battle with whom did Abraham have an encounter?
- ☐ Who was Melchizedek?
- ☐ How did Melchizedek bless Abraham?
- ☐ In what way did Abraham honor Melchizedek?
- ☐ How were the priests robbing God many centuries after Abraham?
- ☐ What does God tell us that we must do to pass the test?
- ☐ What is the blessing promised to those who pay their tithe?

Extra Help:

Today there is confusion about the tithe and the offering. The tithe belongs to the Lord. The tithe is a requirement since Old Testament times while the offering is not. You give because it is in your heart to give the offering. The tithe is a mandatory thing, while the offering is a voluntary thing.

Instructions:

- ☐ *Tell the story*
- ☐ *Retell the story.*
- ☐ *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- ☐ *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- ☐ *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story?
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

- How should the tithe be received in the church? All things done by the church should be in order.
- The church should choose two members to receive the tithe and offering at each meeting. A basket can be passed around and each person can put his tithe or offering in it. The tithe is the tenth of what the Lord has given you. After the meeting the two members should count the offering and tithe and record the amount in a notebook assigned for such purpose, keep the money in a safe place and never spend the money for their own needs.
- To use the money the same believers who gave the money should have decided what they are going to spend it on. If there is a pastor over the church, the tithe is given to him. If not, the tithe can be designated to help the needy. The offering is used for church expenses such as lighting, repairs, etc.

Memory verse:

2 Corinthians 9:7-8

"You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

10. Thall Shall Not Covet

2 Kings 5:1-27

Introduction:

Today we will learn about the new actions that should mark our new life in Christ. As a person takes off his clothes before taking a bath and then puts on clean clothes, in the same way, a new believer has to take off the bad habits of his old life and put on the new habits that correspond to his new life. In the previous story we have learned about the importance of putting on the attitude of giving (tithing and offerings). The first attitude we have to remove from our new life is that of Covetousness.

Story:

Naaman was a brave captain in the Syrian military. But he suffered from a disease called leprosy. One day a Jewish girl who worked as a servant in Naaman's house said to him; "There is a prophet in my land who can cure Naaman. "Would that Naaman would go to Elisha the prophet!" Upon hearing the girl's recommendation, Naaman went away taking gifts with him for the prophet; such as gold and costly clothing.

When Naaman came to Elisha's house, Elisha did not go out to meet him, but sent his servant Gehazi to tell him, "Go to the Jordan River to wash seven times to be healed." So Naaman went down into the water and dipped himself seven times; he came out with his skin like a child's! Then he returned to Elisha's house and said to him, "Now I acknowledge that there is no God in all the earth but the God of Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, receive, a gift from thy servant." Although Naaman insisted, Elisha refused to receive a reward for what God had done.

After Naaman had departed for his land, Gehazi, Elisha's servant, decided to follow him and receive from him some of the riches he had brought. When Naaman saw him running to meet him, he asked him if everything was all right. Gehazi said that Elisha had sent him to ask for silver and clothing for two young men who had just arrived when Naaman left. So Naaman gave him all this and more. After hiding what Naaman had given him, Gehazi entered Elisha's presence. Elisha asked him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he answered, "Your servant has not gone anywhere." Elisha said to him, "I know that you went to Naaman and received money from him. Therefore Naaman's leprosy will be heavy on you and on your descendants forever." And Gehazi left his presence leprous, white as snow.

Additional questions:

- ☐ Who was Naaman and what disease did he have?
- ☐ How did Naaman learn about the prophet Elisha and the hope of being healed?
- ☐ Why did Elisha refuse Naaman's gifts?

Instructions:

- ☐ *Tell the story*
- ☐ *Retell the story.*
- ☐ *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- ☐ *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- ☐ *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

- What was Gehazi's (Elisha's servant) motive for receiving Naaman's gifts?
- What does "covet" mean?
- What are some things we can covet today?
- Explain how greed is a manifestation of a lack of trust in God.
- How can we overcome greed in our lives?

Extra Help:

In small groups, take a moment to think about what we have learned. God punished Gehazi because of his greed. As a disciple of Jesus, your commitment is to obey Him in everything. Is there greed in our life? Is greed ruling our life? If so, take a moment to confess it before God. Ask for forgiveness and make a commitment to put away this grievous sin. Your brothers in Christ can pray with you and help you! Make a commitment not to covet this week and be prepared to give a testimony of the story the next time you meet.

Memory verse:

Exodus 20:17

"You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor."

11. The Lie of Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 4:32-5:11

Introduction:

We continue with the theme of bad habits, which must be removed from our lives if we want to follow Jesus. The specific theme of this story is: "Why it is necessary that the Christian should never lie?" In the previous story Gehazi lied to Elisha. Proverbs says: "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." In today's story we will see a case of lying in the New Testament, and the dire consequences suffered by the guilty. The early disciples saw the power of God through the miracles performed by the apostles.

Those who believed in Jesus were of one mind. No one said that what he had was his own, but that all belongings were held in common. When there was a need among the believers, those who had houses or land would sell their possessions and bring the money and give it to the apostles to help those in need. One example was Barnabas. He sold a field and brought the money to the apostles. It was a holy and pleasant environment. And Satan wanted to spoil it. He used lies among the believers to disrupt unity. The devil does not change. He does the same today. The remedy for us is to follow Paul's exhortation to always speak the truth in love.

Story:

There was a follower of Jesus named Ananias, his wife's name was Sapphira. He made an agreement with her to sell a piece of land they had, but he gave only part of the money to the apostles and kept the rest. Ananias lied to the apostles, saying that they were handing over all the money. His wife knew what Ananias had done. As Ananias handed Peter a portion of the money, Peter said to him, "Ananias, why did you allow Satan to enter your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit. You sold the land, but why did you keep part of the money? The land was yours, you could have divided the money as you pleased. Why did you think of that? You lied to God, not to men."

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story?
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

When Ananias heard this he fell down dead. And all who heard this were greatly frightened. And some young men carried the body out and buried it.

Three hours later, his wife Sapphira came in, who did not know what had happened to her husband. Peter asked her, "Tell me, how much did you receive for the sale of the land? Was it this amount?" Sapphira answered him, "Yes, that was the amount." Peter asked her, "Why did you agree to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Those who buried your husband are coming to take you also." Instantly Sapphira fell to the ground and died. The same men carried her away and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the church.

Additional Questions:

- ☐ What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira?
- ☐ In your opinion, what was the motive that caused Ananias to lie?
- ☐ The punishment that Ananias and his wife received was very harsh. Why was their punishment so severe?
- ☐ How could lying spoil the testimony of a believer and the testimony of the church today?

Extra Help:

It is no small thing to lie. God says that lying is sin. We have seen in two lessons that God punishes the liar. Is lying a habit in our life? It may be that lying is spoiling our testimony and damaging our reputation. When we lie to others, people lose confidence in us.

Are we lying to others? If you are still lying, take a moment to confess it before God. Ask for forgiveness and make a commitment to lay aside this sin. Make a commitment not to lie this week.

Memory verse:

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Ephesians 4:25

"So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body."

12. Stealing: The Farm Of Naboth

1 Kings 21:1-29; 1 Kings 22:34-37:2; 2 Kings 9:30-37

Introduction:

Today we will learn about another bad habit that we have to remove from our life if we want to follow Jesus; this is the bad habit of stealing or stealing goods from others. One day in a class we were talking about this subject of stealing among the brethren in Christ. One pastor confessed that he had a lot of books in his house that he borrowed and never returned. Sometimes, we ask our neighbors to lend us a machete, or a hammer, or a book and then we don't return it, or we find a cell phone and we don't return it to its owner. If this is the case, we are not acting differently from the world. If we are not honest and upright, we are not imitating our master, Jesus. Theft has bad consequences in the local church and always spoils the unity among the brethren because trust is quickly lost. We will hear a story of a king who stole the vineyard of one of his subjects and then suffered the consequences.

Story:

There was a man named Naboth who lived in the city of Israel. Naboth had a field next to King Ahab's palace. Ahab wanted to buy the field from Naboth and offered to buy it. Naboth told him that he could not sell to anyone because it was his inheritance. So Ahab went back to the palace very upset.

His wife, the queen, came and asked him, "Why is your spirit so low?" Ahab explained that Naboth would not sell him his field. "Don't worry," she said, "I'll get you the field."

Then she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sent them to elders who lived in the same town as Naboth. In the letters she told them, "Call an assembly and set Naboth before the people. Then set two false witnesses before him and have them testify against Naboth, saying that he has cursed both God and the king. Then bring him out and kill him by stoning."

The elders of Naboth's people carried out what the queen commanded them. Then they informed the queen that Naboth was dead. The queen said to her husband, "Get up, take

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
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- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
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- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

possession of Naboth's field, for Naboth is dead. Ahab arose and went to Naboth's field." In the meantime God spoke to Elijah the prophet and said to him, "Go down to meet King Ahab in the field of Naboth where he is to take possession of it." When Elijah met Ahab in the field, Elijah said to him, "Have you murdered someone just to get his field? Because of what you have done, the Lord says he will bring disaster upon your whole family and you will all die."

A few years later Ahab died in battle. Shortly thereafter, the king of Judah invaded Israel. When the queen heard that the king was on his way to the palace, she painted her eyes, and sat down at a high window. When she saw the king, she scorned him. The king had her thrown out of the window. There she died and the dogs ate her.

Additional questions:

- ☐ What is the king called in this story?
- ☐ Why didn't Naboth want to sell Ahab the farm?
- ☐ Explain the queen's plot against Naboth.
- ☐ What did the prophet Elijah foretell to Ahab about his future?
- ☐ What happened to Ahab a few years later?
- ☐ What happened to Ahab's wife?
- ☐ Have you ever been the victim of a robbery?
- ☐ Is theft a problem in the community where you live?
- ☐ How do you feel about losing one of your possessions to theft?
- ☐ Do you have something in your possession that belongs to others?
- ☐ Do you know of a case of theft among the brethren in Christ?
- ☐ How can we overcome the temptation to steal?

Memory verse:

.....
Ephesians 4:28

"If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need."

13. King Saul Is Overcome By Anger

Samuel 18:1-22:19

Introduction:

Anger, wrath or rage is a strong emotion of human nature. Self-control is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit and the self-control He produces in our lives, we can overcome our tendency to become angry and the expressions of rage. Anger can be expressed in our families, in our communities and in the church. Only the power of Christ working in us can give us the self-control to overcome anger. We will see in today's story that the first king over Israel could not master anger. Anger ruled him until he tried to kill one of his most loyal generals in the moment of anger. As we listen to the story let the Holy Spirit show us our need in this area and if we have such a tendency, we can pray together after the story. Subject:

Story:

Saul was the first king of Israel. He began his reign by obeying God. In all his ways he was very humble, but as time went by he became filled with pride and began to disobey God more and more. One day God said to him, "Saul, because of your disobedience I am going to give the kingdom to another." Saul realized that God was going to give the kingdom to a young man named David; one of his most loyal generals.

David was a faithful warrior in Saul's army. David served God and Saul wholeheartedly. Saul put him in charge of his entire army. As David won many battles, soon the women began to go out into the streets whenever David returned to the city. They danced and sang, saying, "Saul has killed his thousands, but David has ten thousands." Because of this, Saul became angry and began to look at David with envy. One day Saul's anger flared up so much that he grabbed his spear and tried to kill David there in his palace, but David managed to escape.

David escaped from the palace and fled to a religious community. When he arrived he was hungry and the religious leaders gave him bread. But a servant of Saul saw David in the community and reported to Saul that the religious leaders helped David. Saul arrived there with his army. He accused

Instructions:

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Questions:

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- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story?
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

the leaders of being rebels and killed 85 of them. Already the passion of his anger was completely overpowering him.

In the meantime, David fled into the wilderness. Saul pursued him intending to kill him. But Saul never found David. In fact, twice, David had the opportunity to kill Saul, but he did not. He entrusted Saul into God's hands. Finally, Saul, a defeated man, far from God, dominated by the passion of anger, died in battle, and all Israel chose David as their second king.

Additional Questions:

- ☐ What is the name of the first king of Israel?
- ☐ Saul did not try to master anger in his life. What were some expressions of anger in Saul's life?
- ☐ Could you identify another story in the Old Testament when a person did not master anger in his life?
- ☐ What are the common expressions of anger among us?
- ☐ Are there incidents of family violence in your community?
- ☐ How can we master anger in our lives?

Extra Help:

Anger leads us to sin. Do you have anger against a person? If you say yes, take a moment to confess it before God. Ask for forgiveness and make a commitment to let go of this sin. Further, make a commitment to look for an opportunity to do something good for the person with whom you have been angry. Remember that anger against another person is a sin against God. Unconfessed anger hurts us as well. Forgiving and doing good to these people brings us God's blessings.

Memory verse:

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Ephesians 4:26,27

"And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil."

14. Jonathan and David: The Importance Of Keeping Your Word

1 Samuel 18-20

Introduction:

In this discipleship course we have touched on some bad habits which we must remove from our lives if we want to be true followers of Jesus. Beginning with this story we are going to touch on habits which we need to add to our lives. These are expressions of the new nature in Christ.

In today's lesson we will learn the importance of keeping our word. It is up to us as Christians to keep our word no matter what; when it suits us and when it does not suit us. Jesus commanded us, "let our yes be yes and our no be no." If we do not keep our word, it damages our testimony and that of Jesus Christ whom we serve, and trust and unity fade in the local church. The main character in today's story, Jonathan, kept his word to David, even though it was hard for him to do so. Let's learn from him.

Story:

Saul had a son named Jonathan. Jonathan became a close friend of David. David was a general in Saul's army, and when David's troops returned to the city after a victory, the women would go out into the street dancing merrily, saying, "A thousand men Saul slew, and ten thousand David slew." This greatly annoyed Saul. And from then on, Saul looked upon David with envy.

One day it happened that an evil spirit seized Saul and he went mad. Saul had his spear in his hand and he threw the spear to kill David, but David dodged Saul twice.

David fled and went to Jonathan and said to him, "What have I done that your father should seek to kill me? Jonathan replied, "He will not kill you. My father does nothing without telling me. David said to him, "Your father knows well that I am counting on your friendship, so he has been hiding the truth from you, but God knows that I am one step away from death. Jonathan asked David, "What do you want me to do for you?" David replied, "Look, tomorrow is the feast and I must sit with the king. If your father asks for me, tell him that I asked your permission to go to my village. If he answers that it is all right, I can be at ease. But if he gets angry, you will know that he

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

has decided to kill me." Jonathan agreed and made a pact of friendship with David.

David hid in the field, and when the feast came, the king sat down to eat. Jonathan was present at the table. Saul asked his son, "Why doesn't David come to the meal?" Jonathan replied, "David asked my permission to go to his people." Then Saul was angry with Jonathan, and said to him, "As long as David lives your kingdom is not safe. Send for him, for he deserves death." Then Jonathan met David. He embraced him and wept, saying, "Go in peace. My father has evil intentions against you, but I honor our covenant." Even though Jonathan was going to lose the kingdom, he honored the covenant and kept his word. So Jonathan returned to the city and David set out on his journey.

Additional questions:

- ☐ What is the name of Saul's son who became close friends with David?
- ☐ Why did Saul want to kill David?
- ☐ Who was chosen by God to be the king who was to replace Saul?
- ☐ Who did Saul want to be his replacement?
- ☐ How did Jonathan fulfill his promise to David?
- ☐ Why was it difficult for Jonathan to keep his promise?
- ☐ Is it the same today that brethren do not keep their promises to each other?

Extra Help:

Are we trustworthy, do we keep our word even when it does not suit us, can our brothers in Christ count on us, or are we failing to keep our word as if we were worldly? It is important that we examine our lives and make the necessary changes. We should do so immediately and with all urgency because a true Christian represents Jesus Christ who is the truth and always keeps his word to us.

Memory verse:

Proverbs 20:6

"Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?"

15. Drunkenness: The King of Babylon Gets Drunk

Daniel 5:1-31

Introduction:

Drunkenness is forbidden and condemned in the Bible. Paul says that, "the drunkard cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Drunkenness ruins families, is wasteful of our money, breaks relationships, makes us irresponsible and often ends in disgrace. Today's story is an occasion when drunkenness ended in great disgrace. May God help us to avoid this plague in our society that is destroying the lives of those whom God loves! May we be good examples of Christ in our community!

Story:

When the Jews were in captivity in Babylon, the king of Babylon prepared a great banquet. He invited the most important people of his nation. During the meal, the king and his guests drank a lot of wine. Excited by the wine, the king commanded, "Bring the holy cups of gold and silver, which my father brought from Jerusalem when he destroyed the temple of God." The cups were brought and the king and all the guests drank from them.

At that moment the hand of a man appeared, who, by candlelight, was writing with his finger on the white wall. When the king saw the hand he turned pale and began to tremble. Then he began to call the witches and wizards in his nation. He said to them, "Whoever interprets what is written there on the wall will take third place in my kingdom." But none of them could understand the meaning of the writing.

But the king's mother said to her son. "Don't worry, son. There is a man guided by the true God. Call Daniel to come to your majesty, and he will make known to you the meaning of what is written on the wall." Daniel was brought before the king. The king said to him, "Daniel if you can interpret what is written, I will place you third in my kingdom." Daniel replied to the king, "Your Majesty, keep your gifts. I will explain to you what these words mean. God has blessed you with many blessings, but you have not pleased God in anything. On the contrary, you have mocked God by bringing and drinking from the holy cups.

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

Therefore, he sent the hand that wrote those words:

MENE: means: "His kingdom is to end."

TEKEL: Meaning: "His Majesty has failed God."

PARSIN: It means, "His kingdom will be given to others."

At once the king ordered Daniel to be clothed with elegant clothes and put him in third place over his nation. But that very night the king was killed and the nation of Media took over his kingdom.

Additional Questions:

- ☐ What did the king command his servants to do after drinking too much wine?
- ☐ For what reason did the King want to drink from the holy cups of God's temple?
- ☐ Why did God respond when the king defiled the cups?
- ☐ Roughly what was the interpretation of the writing on the wall?
- ☐ What are the negative consequences of drinking too much liquor?
- ☐ What could you do to overcome the temptation to drink too much?

Extra Help:

Our story today ends in complete disgrace. The king under the influence of Alcohol acted with pride and recklessness and suffered serious consequences. We have to ask ourselves if the influence of alcohol is impacting our life in a negative way. Drunkenness can negatively impact our health, our family, wife and children, even our economy. Alcohol can enslave us until it dominates us. With God's help we can break the chains of drunkenness. Today if there is someone who needs prayer to be set free from this vice, we would like to pray with you.

Memory verse:

.....
Ephesians 5:18

"Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit."

16. Love: The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

Introduction:

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The Bible gives us a definition of love. Paul says the one who loves has patience with everyone and is always kind. The one who loves is not envious and is not proud. He is not rude or selfish. He does not get angry at anything. He does not spend his life remembering the evil that others have done to him. He does not applaud the wicked, but those who speak the truth. Today's story is of a man who truly loved his neighbor.

Story:

One day a teacher tried to test Jesus, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to attain eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What is written in the word?" The teacher answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as you love yourself."

Jesus answered him, "You are right, do it and you will live." But, the teacher said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered him, "I will tell you a story."

A man was walking along the road between two cities, and some bandits assaulted him and took everything from him. They beat him and drove off, leaving him half dead. The victim was a Jew. By chance, a religious Jew was passing by on the same road; but seeing him, he went the other way. In the same way, another Jew who also works in the temple passed by the same place, saw the man, but also went the other way. But a foreign man from Samaria, who was traveling there, came to where the man was, and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion.

Then, he approached the man, poured medicine on the wounds and bandaged them. Then he mounted him on his pack animal and took him to an inn and took care of him.

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story?
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

The next day the stranger took out the equivalent of two days' wages, gave it to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him, and if more is needed, I will pay you when I return."

Well then, said Jesus, "Which of these three seems to you to have made himself a neighbor to the man who was assaulted?"

The teacher replied, "He who had compassion on him." Jesus said to him, "Go therefore and do likewise."

Additional questions:

- ☐ What race was the man assaulted and thrown into the street?
- ☐ Of what race were the two religious men who passed by without offering help to the victim?
- ☐ What race was the traveler who helped the assaulted Jew?
- ☐ Could you describe the reason why the Jews and the Samaritans did not get along?
- ☐ Why didn't the two religious men help their own countryman?
- ☐ How did the Samaritan show his love to the Jew?
- ☐ How can we show love to our neighbor today?
- ☐ What is the lesson the Holy Spirit wants you to put into practice as a result of this story?

Extra help:

It is easy to talk about love, it is another thing to put it into practice. Yet this is exactly what Christ expects of his followers. The opportunities to show the love of Christ are present to us almost every day. We can pray that God will help us to grow in our love for our neighbor more and more each day. We realize that we are weak in this area, but we can change with God's help. Let us pray that in this coming week God will give us an opportunity to express love to our neighbor. Next week we can testify of our experiences.

Memory verse:

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John 13:35

"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

17. The Parable Of The Rich Man And The Poor Man, Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31

Introduction:

Jesus taught various topics using stories. In this story Jesus teaches us the importance of how to use our resources to help those in need. It appears that the rich man in this story was a very respected man in his community. He was the kind of man that everyone admired. But the rich man looked down on the poor. He held his banquets in which nothing was lacking, while Lazarus sat outside begging for alms. History teaches us the need to be generous. This is another attitude we need to develop in our Christian life. God blesses us with resources so that we can help those who have none. If we do not help with our extra resources to those who do not have, there may be serious consequences at the judgment. Let's learn from the story of the Rich man and Lazarus.

Story:

Jesus said: There was a rich man, who dressed in elegant clothes. Every day he feasted with the best food in abundance. There was also a very poor man, named Lazarus who was full of sores and sat on the ground at the rich man's gate. And even the dogs came near to lick his sores. This poor man wanted to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table. One day the poor man died, and the angels took him to sit beside Abraham in the place of rest. The rich man also died and was buried.

While the rich man was suffering in the place where the unbelieving dead go, he looked up and saw Abraham and Lazarus standing beside him. Then he cried out, "Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and come and cool my tongue, for I am tormented greatly in this fire." But Abraham answered him, "Son, remember that in life you received your share of good things, and Lazarus his share of evil. Now he receives comfort here and you suffer. Apart from this there is a great gulf between us and you, so that those who want to pass from here to there cannot, nor from there can they pass to here."

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

The rich man said, "I pray thee, then, father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house, where I have five brethren, so that he can warn them, and they will not also come to this place of torment." Abraham said, "They already have the Word of God: let them heed it." But the rich man answered, "Father Abraham, this is not enough, but if a dead man rises and appears to them, they will be converted." But Abraham said to him, "If they will not heed the word, neither will they believe, even if one of the dead rises again."

Additional Questions:

- ☐ How did the rich man live in this story?
- ☐ When Lazarus died where did he go and how did he get there?
- ☐ When Lazarus died he went to a resting place and sat down beside Abraham.
- ☐ Could you explain more about this resting place?
- ☐ What happened to the rich man when he died? Explain his torment.
- ☐ How is it that the rich man could communicate with Abraham, but could not reach him or get to where Abraham was?
- ☐ Where did the rich man want Abraham to send Lazarus?
- ☐ Why did Abraham deny the rich man's request?
- ☐ Hearing this story what can you say God expects of us?
- ☐ Could you mention some ways you could help the poorest in your community?

Extra Help:

There will always be people in this world who are more needy than we are. We have to take into account that God wants to work through us to bless others. Also, it is necessary to take into account what Paul said in Acts 20:35 "I have always taught you that this is the way to work and to help those who are in need, remembering those words of the Lord Jesus: There is more joy in giving than in receiving," Let us pray that God will make us a blessing in the life of a needy person this coming week.

Memory verse:

Matthew 25:40

"And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

18. God's Love For Mankind: The Son Who Left Home

Luke 15:11-24

Introduction:

In the story "The Prodigal Son" we see the fatherhood of God. First, in giving his son the inheritance, the father provides in abundance all that his son needs. Such is our heavenly Father. He gives us everything we need. Also in the story it is evident that the father suffered much over his lost son. The story shows us the heart of God the Father, suffering over lost humanity. Finally, and most importantly, the story shows us the father telling about his son's return home. "God so loved the world."

Story:

Jesus said: There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to him, 'Father, I want you to give me now the part of your possessions that would be mine.' So the father divided between his two sons all that he had. Not long after, the younger son gathered all his possessions and went to a distant country. While in that country, he squandered all his money by living a riotous life. When he had spent it all, there was a food shortage in that country, and he began to be in need. He sought work with a man, who sent him to work in the fields feeding the pigs. The son was so hungry that he even wanted to eat what the pigs were eating, but no one would give him anything. Finally he realized that he had been very foolish and said to himself, "I will go to my father's house and say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against you. I no longer deserve to be your son; let me be like one of your workers.'" So the son returned to his father's house.

While the son was still far from home, his father saw him and took pity on him. He ran out to meet him and welcomed him with hugs. The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I do not deserve to be your son." But the father said to his servants, "Hurry up! Dress him in the best clothes. Also put a ring and sandals on him. Kill the best animal and prepare it. Let us celebrate and eat. My son was dead and has come back to life, he was lost and has been found." And they began the feast.

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

The older brother was in the field and as he approached the house, he heard the music. Then he called one of the servants and asked him, "What is all this?" The servant said to him, "Your brother has returned and your father ordered us to prepare the best animal because he got back safe and sound." The older son became angry and would not go in. Then the father went out to ask him to come in. But he said to his father, "I have worked for you all these years, I have not failed to obey you, and you have never given me a kid to celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours comes, who has wasted your money with prostitutes, you have the best animal slaughtered for him".

The father said to him: "My son, you are always with me and everything I have is yours. But we have to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead and has come back to life, he was lost and has been found".

Additional Questions:

- Why did the father give the son the inheritance if he knew full well he was going to squander it?
- What does this mean about our relationship with our heavenly Father?
- How can we know from this story that the father's heart suffered greatly in the absence of his son?

Extra help:

In this story we see very closely the heart of God and His grace, which we did not deserve. In reality, the younger son did not deserve the reception the father gave him. Humanly speaking he deserved punishment or discipline. But God's grace and goodness surpasses human understanding. Instead of punishing his repentant son, the father received him with hugs and spontaneously gave his son a reception celebration. None of us can deserve God's goodness and grace. He loved and forgave us, and he continues to love and forgive us.

Memory verse:

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Ephesians 2:8

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God."

19. The Courageous Witnesses For Christ

Acts 4:1-30

Introduction:

God expects all of us to be witnesses for Jesus. This does not mean that we all have to preach to multitudes. God calls certain people to fulfill this task. But we are all called to be witnesses to what Christ has done in our lives. One testifies as much by one's behavior as by one's words. The church in the book of Acts was spreading fast because all the members became courageous witnesses. They used their gifts to extend the kingdom of God. It is up to us to do the same. Today's story shows us the kind of witnesses that filled the church back then.

Story:

One day after Jesus' return to heaven, Peter and John were teaching the people about Jesus. Many people were present because John and Peter had healed a paralytic in the name of Jesus. While they were teaching, a commission of religious authorities came and arrested Peter and John and put them in jail.

The next day the religious authorities met. They sent for Peter and John from prison to question them. "By what power and authority did you heal the paralytic," they asked them. Then Peter and John, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "You know that this man was healed by the power of Jesus Christ. And in Jesus alone there is salvation because there is no other name in this world by which people can be saved."

Then they ordered Peter and John to go out and said, "What shall we do with these men? Everyone knows that they did a great miracle. We cannot say anything against them. But, in order to prevent this from spreading any further among the people, they said, "let us command them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus."

Then they called them and commanded them to speak no more in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Decide for yourselves whether it is better to obey you

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

or God. We cannot remain silent without saying what we have seen and heard."

So the authorities threatened the apostles again and let them go free. Peter and John went to tell their companions all that the authorities had said. When the believers heard this, they prayed aloud together to God, saying, "Lord, listen to their threats and help us to proclaim your message with courage. At the same time stretch out your hand to heal the sick and perform miraculous signs by the power of Jesus Christ." When the believers finished praying, the place where they were gathered shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and went on boldly proclaiming God's message.

Additional Questions:

- How did Peter and John respond to the Jewish leaders' questions?
- By what power and authority was this paralytic healed?
- Why did Peter and John not obey the religious authorities ordering them not to speak in the name of Jesus?
- How did Peter and John react to the religious leaders threats?
- What did the disciples' prayer consist of after hearing the threats?
- What more do you need to be an effective witness?
- Could you share a personal experience about an opportunity when you witnessed to a person about your faith in Jesus?

Extra Help:

We should not be shy to share our faith in Jesus with others. The Bible says that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love and self control. With the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit we can overcome shyness and become courageous witnesses in our community. Everyone needs Christ as their savior, therefore, all Christians need to be courageous witnesses. We have to ask ourselves; Are we courageous witnesses? Yes, No, what keeps us from witnessing? How can we improve our participation in outreach? What is our gift? And how can we use our gift to evangelize? Let's end today's session by praying for the filling of the Holy Spirit to make us courageous witnesses.

Memory verse:

1 Peter 3:15

"Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.."

20. Obedience: The Disobedience Of Saul

I Samuel 13-15

Introduction:

Jesus said that "If you obey my commandments, you will abide in my love." Obedience is a primary characteristic of a follower of Christ. It is impossible to say that we love God if we do not obey Him. Obedience is the test of our love for Him. Are we obeying Christ's commandments from the heart? Our lesson today is an example of a disobedient believer and the results of his disobedience. It concerns Saul, the first king over Israel. He began his reign humble and obedient, but as he went along pride got the better of him, and he began to get away with more and more disobedience to God who chose him and set him as king over Israel. Saul's life ended in disgrace.

Story:

Saul was with his army in a city waiting for the arrival of the prophet Samuel. Samuel had told him to wait for him there; that he would arrive in seven days, and that when he arrived he would offer sacrifices to God before fighting against the Philistines. While Saul waited, the whole nation of Israel was very worried, thinking that the enemy was going to attack. So Saul waited until the seventh day, but Samuel did not arrive. Saul lost his patience. He thought: I have to act now!

Then Saul commanded, "Bring me the animals for the sacrifice." And he himself offered the sacrifice, though it was not his place. Saul had just finished offering the sacrifice when Samuel arrived in time. Samuel said to him, "Why have you done this?" Saul replied, "When I saw that you did not come at the appointed time, I thought that the enemy was going to attack us. That is why I saw the need to offer the sacrifice myself and entrust us to God.

Samuel replied, "What you have done is foolishness!" If you had obeyed the command the Lord gave you, he would have confirmed your kingship in Israel forever. But now, your kingship will not stand. The Lord will find a man to his liking and make him ruler over his people, because you have disobeyed the command he gave you."

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

Additional Questions:

- In what did the prophet Samuel's command given to Saul consist?
- How did Saul disobey this command?
- What was the reason for Saul's disobedience?
- What were the results of their disobedience?

Extra Help:

In the kingdom of God obedience brings us spiritual blessings while disobedience takes away God's blessing. As we have seen in our history, obedience is not always easy. Many times obedience does not suit us and we prefer to do our own will and not God's will. Our goal in the Christian life is to thank God in everything and to remain in his love. When we obey God instead of doing our own will, it is a proof that we love God. In all the decisions we have to make in life such as the selection of a mate, the selection of our career, and the selection of friends with whom we associate, we should do everything to thank the Lord. If so, we can be assured of His blessings.

Memory verse:

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John 15:10

"When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love."

21. Obedience: God Rejects Saul

I Samuel 15

Introduction:

This lesson is the second on the subject of obedience. Obedience to God is so important in the Christian life that we cannot treat it lightly. By Saul's disobedience he lost his kingdom, and then he lost his eternal salvation. God had chosen Saul to reign over Israel, but because of his disobedience, God regretted having chosen him, and sought another man to reign over his people. God has chosen us and called us to be his children. It is a great privilege. Now it is our turn to obey our heavenly Father in all that we do.

Story:

One day the prophet Samuel said to King Saul, "Thus says the Lord Almighty, I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel, for they attacked Israel on their way from Egypt. Therefore go and attack them, destroy them together with all their possessions, and have no pity. Kill all the people and all their animals."

Then Saul attacked the Amalekites and defeated them. However, Saul did not kill the best animals, nor did he destroy the valuable things. Then the Lord said to Samuel, "It grieves me that I have made Saul king, because he has not carried out my commands." So, Samuel went to where Saul was, and Saul said to him, "I have done the Lord's command."

"What then is the meaning of those bleats of sheep and those bellows of bulls that I am hearing?" answered Samuel. Saul said to him, "The people have kept the best animals to offer sacrifices to the Lord, but we have destroyed the rest."

Samuel said to him, "Hold your peace, for I am telling you what the LORD told me. Now the LORD sent you with a command to destroy these sinful Amalekites, until you had done with them. Why did you disobey his command and throw yourself on what was taken from the enemy?"

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story?
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

Saul replied, "I obeyed the Lord's orders. But the soldiers kept the best of the animals to sacrifice in honor of the Lord." Then Samuel said, "It is more pleasing to the Lord to be obeyed than to offer sacrifices."

Additional questions:

- ☐ In what did the Lord's command that Samuel gave to Saul consist?
- ☐ Why did the Lord want the Amalekites to be destroyed?
- ☐ Does it explain Saul's partial obedience?
- ☐ What was the excuse Saul gave Samuel about his disobedience?
- ☐ Put in your own words the meaning of the memory verse.
- ☐ Can you give an example of how God's children disobey the Lord in daily life.
- ☐ What are some blessings that come from obedience?
- ☐ Could you mention a biblical character who obeyed God, even though it was difficult?
- ☐ How do we obey God?

Extra Help:

Today's lesson teaches us the importance of obedience. The memory verse says that obedience is worth more than offering God sacrifices. The command given to Saul was very clear; destroy everything and everyone. Saul said he disobeyed by saying that he would have kept the lives of animals to offer sacrifices to God. But the sacrifices offered to God are worthless if we are disobedient.

In the same way, today, fasting and tithing are worthless if we are disobedient. God rejected Saul as king and selected another to replace him. God chose David, a man after God's own heart. Because of David's obedience, he was very pleasing to the Lord. And God promised David that his kingdom would be an everlasting kingdom.

Memory verse:

1 Samuel 15:22

"What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! **Obedience is better than sacrifice**, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams."

22. God Exalts The Humble: The Anointing Of David

I Samuel 16:1-13

Introduction:

God rejected Saul as king because of his disobedience. Saul began his reign in a very humble way. And with this attitude of humility God blessed him. However, little by little the attitude of humility was lost and pride began to manifest itself in his life. The Bible says that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. God chose David as the second king over Israel because he saw his heart; a heart that was humble and free from pride. As we listen to today's story we have to ask ourselves, do we have a proud heart like Saul or a humble heart like David? This is the story of David's anointing as king.

Story:

The Lord said to Samuel, "Go, fill your bottle with oil; I want you to go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem, for I have already chosen one of his sons as king." Samuel did all that the Lord commanded him. And when Samuel came to Bethlehem he saw Jesse's oldest son, a very impressive man, and he thought, "Surely this is the man whom the Lord has chosen as king." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not notice his appearance or his lofty stature, for I have rejected him. For man takes notice of appearances, but I take notice of the heart." Then Jesse called his second son, also impressive in appearance, and presented him to Samuel; but Samuel said to him, "Neither has the Lord chosen him."

Jesse presented Samuel with seven of his sons, but Samuel had to tell him that none of them had been chosen by the Lord. Finally, Samuel asked him, "Have you no more sons?" "There is one missing, the youngest, who is the one who takes care of the sheep," Jesse replied. "Send for him," said Samuel. Jesse sent for him.

And the boy came and went into the room. Then the Lord said to Samuel, "This is the one. Get up and consecrate him as king." At once Samuel took the bottle with oil, and in the presence of his brothers consecrated the young man, whose name was David, as king. From that moment the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Then Samuel took his leave and departed.

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story?
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

Additional Questions:

- How did Samuel make a mistake in arriving at Jesse's house?
- What are the qualities God looks for in a leader?
- How does the proud heart manifest itself in life?
- How does the humble heart manifest itself in our relationship with God?
- How does humility manifest itself in our relationships with our neighbors?
- Do you know someone with a humble heart and can you describe him or her?
- Why is it important to develop a humble heart?

Let us pray that God will change our hearts, taking away our pride and giving us a truly humble attitude. God exalts the humble.

Memory verse:

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1 Samuel 16:7

"But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. **People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.**"

23. Self-Control: Joseph And Potiphar's Wife

Genesis 39

Introduction:

Our theme today is "Self-control". Self-control is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The mature Christian with self-control is no longer controlled by all the passions of the sinful nature. With the power of the Holy Spirit the Christian can resist and say "no" to fleshly desires and "yes" to the indwelling Spirit of God. With self-control in our life we have power to dominate anger, envy, zeal, love of money, vices, the tongue and sexual desires. In today's story there is an example of a self-controlled man. With God's power, he mastered his fleshly passions in difficult circumstances and for that, God blessed him greatly. May God help us to do the same!

Story:

Joseph, son of Jacob, came to Egypt as a slave and was sold to a man whose name was Potiphar. Potiphar was a high official in the government of the king of Egypt, he was the captain of the guard. Joseph worked in Potiphar's house and Potiphar realized that God was with Joseph. Joseph gained Potiphar's sympathy, and Potiphar made him his personal assistant and the manager of his entire household.

Joseph was a very handsome young man and made a good impression. So after some time Potiphar's wife took notice of him, and said to him, "Lie with me." But Joseph replied, "Look, Potiphar has left me in charge of all that he had. Potiphar has denied me nothing, but only you, for you are his wife; so, How could I do something so bad, and sin against God? Although she insisted with Joseph every day that he sleep with her and be by her side, he did not listen to her. But one day Joseph came into the house to do his work, and since no one was there, she grabbed him by his clothes and said, "Lie down with me."

But he ran away, leaving his clothes in her hands. And she called the servants of the house and said to them, "Look, my husband brought us a Jew. He came in to see me and wanted to lie with me, but I shouted very loudly, and when he heard me shout, he ran out and even left his clothes here." When her husband arrived she told him the same thing. Potiphar

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
- *Ask the seven questions.*

Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
- 2) What do you dislike or find confusing in this story
- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

was very angry. So he seized Joseph and ordered him to be put in prison. But even in prison the Lord continued to be with Joseph and to show him kindness. For he caused Joseph to gain the sympathy of the chief of the prison, and the chief left all the prisoners in his charge, because the Lord was with him and all that he did went well with him.

Additional Questions:

- ☐ Who was Potiphar?
- ☐ How did Joseph gain Potiphar's confidence?
- ☐ What does the story say about Joseph's appearance?
- ☐ What was the temptation that Joseph had to face?
- ☐ How did Joseph respond to the invitation to sleep with Potiphar's wife?
- ☐ How did the evil woman accuse Joseph falsely?
- ☐ The story says that Joseph prospered even in prison. How did Joseph prosper while in prison?
- ☐ What have you learned from this story that you need to put into practice?

Extra Help:

Before we met Jesus, we were slaves to our sinful nature. At the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit begins to dwell in us. He gives us power to subdue all evil desires and not to sin against God. Although we have the power to resist evil desires, it is up to us to use this power in times of temptation. We can examine our lives as Christians and determine where we are weak. We can ask God to give us self-control in such areas of weakness.

Memory verse:

2 Timothy 1:7

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”

24. The Faith of a Woman

Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30

Introduction:

Faith in God is one of the most important fruits in the Christian life. The Bible says that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Many say yes, they believe in God, but their faith is intellectual, it is not the faith that springs from the heart. They do not believe in God with their whole being and surrender to Him. In the Christian life our faith should grow. Our faith grows by hearing the Word of God, and by personally experiencing that God answers prayer. In today's story we see a woman of outstanding faith. Nothing and no one could discourage her faith in Jesus. Therefore, Jesus himself noticed her faith and granted her heart's desire. As we hear the story, we should ask ourselves: How is our faith? Can our faith in God withstand and survive the trials and temptations of life?

Story:

Jesus and his disciples went out of their land to a foreign city to rest for a while. When they arrived, they went into a house, not wanting anyone to know; but he could not hide himself. But soon a woman of that region, the mother of a girl who had an unclean spirit, heard about him. She came to Jesus, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me, my daughter has a demon, and therefore she suffers." But Jesus answered her nothing.

Then the disciples came to him and begged him, "Tell this woman to go, for she comes screaming." Jesus said to the woman, "God has sent me only to the lost people of Israel." But the woman kneeling before him said, "Lord, help me." Jesus answered her, "It is not right to take bread from the children and give it to the dogs." She said to him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, how great is your faith. Go in peace. The devil has already gone out of your daughter." When the woman arrived home; she found her daughter in bed; the demon had already left her.

Instructions:

- *Tell the story*
- *Retell the story.*
- *Tell the story with the help of others.*
- *Have someone tell the story as accurately as possible.*
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Questions:

- 1) What do you like about this story?
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- 3) What did you learn about God and His character?
- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
- 5) What did God show you in this story and what should you obey?
- 6) How will you remember this story? (Answer: Tell others.)
- 7) Who has God told to tell this story, and when will you obey?

Additional Questions:

- Why did Jesus and his disciples come to a foreign city?
- Was this woman a foreigner or a Jew?
- What was this woman's dilemma?
- How did this woman express her great faith in Jesus?
- Why did Jesus respond to the woman in a harsh manner?
- How did Jesus challenge the woman's faith?
- How did the woman show her persistent faith?
- What is the main lesson to take away from this story?

Extra Help:

Nothing and no one could discourage the faith of this woman. She knew that Jesus had the power to deliver her daughter from a demon, and she was confident that He would do it. Jesus tested this woman's faith. Twice He tried to discourage her, but she continued to trust Him. Christ commented by saying, "Woman, great is your faith." She is an example for us. We have great needs in life, the task of world evangelization is enormous, yet if we have this kind of faith in Jesus, he will do impossible things.

Memory verse:

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Hebrews 11:6

"And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him."

25. Idolatry: Elijah And The Prophets Of Baal

1 Kings 17-18

Introduction:

The first two of the Ten Commandments deal with the sin of idolatry. The first: "Have no other gods besides me," and second: "Do not make for yourself idols of any kind." The Israelites failed to obey these 2 commandments repeatedly. And because of this, they suffered serious consequences. Today's story touches on this sin, (idolatry), of the Israelites. There are two questions to consider as we listen to the story.

- What is meant by idolatry?
- Is idolatry problematic today or have we overcome it once and for all?

Our story is about Ahab. He was a king over the northern kingdom of Israel. But his conduct was displeasing in the eyes of the Lord; worse than that of the previous kings. Although he was a Jew, he worshipped the god Baal and built an altar and a temple in his honor. It was a great pity. On the other hand, Elijah was a prophet of the Lord, prophesying in Israel during the reign of Ahab. He was a faithful, loyal and courageous prophet.

Story:

Because of King Ahab's idolatry, God sent his prophet Elijah to Ahab to announce that it would not rain, and indeed, about three years passed without rain. During these years the land suffered a terrible drought. Ahab became angry with Elijah and searched for him everywhere, but the Lord protected Elijah. After three years, the Lord sent his prophet to meet Ahab again. Elijah appeared before him. "Ahab," said Elijah, "I propose the following: Send now to gather all the Israelites on Mount Carmel together with the 450 prophets of Baal." Ahab accepted the proposal.

Then Ahab sent for all Israel to gather together with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Then Elijah also came and said to the people, "How long will you follow with this double game? If the Lord is the true God, you follow Him, and if Baal is, you must follow him." The people did not answer a word.

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Questions:

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- 4) What did you learn about human beings and their character?
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Then Elijah said, "I propose this to you. I am the only prophet of the Lord present. There are 450 prophets of Baal. Let them give us two calves. Let them choose one, and cut it and put it on the wood. But let them not set it on fire. I have prepared the other calf, and I will put it on the wood, and I will not set fire to it. Then you shall call on your gods. And I will call upon the Lord, and the God who answers by sending fire, that is the true God." "Good proposal." Responded all the people. Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You proceed first."

So the prophets of Baal prepared the calf, and from morning until noon they called upon Baal, saying, "Answer us, Baal." And they pranced about the altar. But Baal did not answer. Toward noon Elijah mocked them saying; "Shout louder, maybe he is busy, or he is relieving himself, or he has gone on a journey. Perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." They kept shouting and cutting each other with knives, as was their custom, until they were bathed in blood without any response.

When it was past noon, Elijah called for the people; and the people set about repairing the altar of God that was broken down. Then Elijah dug a trench (ditch) around the altar. Elijah arranged the wood and cut the calf. Then he said, "Fill four buckets of water and empty them over the sacrifice." Then he commanded that they do this a second and third time. At the time of the sacrifice Elijah exclaimed, "Lord, God of Abraham, let it be known today that you are the God of Israel, and that I am doing this because you have commanded me." At that moment the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice, including the wood and the water poured out. When all the people saw this, they fell to the ground, and said, "The Lord is God, the Lord is God."

Additional Questions:

- ☐ What is the name of the king of Israel?
- ☐ The king worshipped which pagan god?
- ☐ The Israelites trusted in a false, pagan god instead of trusting in the true God. Which gods or idols do people trust in today instead of trusting in God?
- ☐ What are the idols of our times that pull us?

Memory verse:

Deuteronomy 5:6-7

"I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me."

- What are some forms of idolatry among us today?
- The Bible says that God is jealous. What does jealous mean?
- How can we provoke their zeal?
- In your opinion, what was Elijah's strong point?
- How can we show our faith in God today and in the community where we live, showing them that the Lord is the true God?
- What are some lessons for us from this story?
- How has God spoken to you about this story?

26. Patience: Job's Great Test

Job 1, 40 and 41

Introduction:

Sometimes trials come into the lives of God's children. In some cases the trial is not the result of our sin. We cannot always explain the reason why our God allows trials to come. During such trials it is necessary to be patient, trust God and praise Him in the midst of the trial. God always rewards those who go through trials with faith and patience. The tendencies of our nature is to complain during the trial, until we complain against God. With God's grace we can overcome complaining and unbelief and focus on God in the midst of the trial. Those who pass through trials victoriously are God's approved ones. In today's story we observe Job's attitude of patience as he went through a great trial.

Story:

There was a man named Job. He was a good servant of God and lived a righteous life. He had many children, and many, many sheep, camels, and oxen. Job was the richest man in the Middle East. One day, in the heavens above, the Devil appeared before the Lord and said to him. "The only reason Job serves you is for material blessings. But take from him all that he has and you will see how he curses you." The Lord answered him, "Do what you will with all of Job's things."

One day one of Job's servants came to Job's house and said, "We were in the field with the oxen and enemies came and killed all your servants and carried off all your livestock." He was still speaking when another servant came saying, "Lightning fell from heaven and killed all your shepherds with your sheep." He was not yet finished speaking when another came who said, "An enemy came, killed all your servants and stole all your camels." At the same moment another one came and reported, "All your children were in a house celebrating a feast when a strong wind came and the house collapsed. All your children died."

Then Job arose with a sorrowful heart, fell down and worshiped the Lord: saying, "The Lord has given me

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Questions:

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everything, and now he has taken everything from me. Blessed be the Lord."

Again the Devil appeared before the Lord and said to him, "Job has not cursed you because you have not touched his body. If you touch his body with an affliction, he will curse you to your face." God answered him, "Do what you will, but do not kill him."

The Devil came out of God's presence and sent upon Job a terrible skin disease in which ulcers broke out all over his body. Job's wife looked at him and said, "Curse God and die." But Job said to her, "Woman, if we accept the good that God sends us, why do we not also accept the evils?" So, in spite of everything, Job did not sin against God.

During the time Job was sick, some of his friends visited him, but instead of encouraging him, they accused him of sinning against God. They said that no one would suffer like that if he had not sinned. But Job defended his integrity; explaining that, in the world, good people often suffer while sinners enjoy blessings. He could not explain why.

Job entered into a long argument with his accusing friends, and spoke unadvisedly, yet he never cursed God and always kept his hope in him. One day while Job was arguing with his friends God himself came in a storm. God strongly rebuked Job's friends because they came to Job as judges, judging him instead of encouraging him. He also corrected Job for speaking about things they did not understand.

Job replied to God, "Hitherto I knew you only with my ears, but now I see you with my own eyes. Therefore I take back all that I said and repent." Then God blessed Job in his last days more abundantly than in his former days with more camels, more sheep, more oxen, more servants, and more sons than before.

Additional Questions:

- ☐ Did the trials in Job's life come as a result of his sins?
- ☐ What did Job's two major tasks consist of?
- ☐ Describe Job's attitude in the midst of trials.

Memory verse:

James 1:12

"God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."

- How did Job's friends treat him when they came to visit him?
- What was the difference between Job's attitude and his wife's attitude in the midst of the trials.
- How did God reward Job for his faith and patience in the trial?
- If you were Job, how would you have acted?
- What can we learn from this great man of God to apply to our reality?

Extra Help:

Are we going through the trials that come with Job's faith and patience? Unfortunately some of God's children fail when trials come. They do not endure because they do not have deep roots in their God. In some cases when physical trials come, sickness, even Christians turn to witch doctors for help. They do not show true faith and patience. If so, we can repent, and make the necessary changes so that we glorify God even in trials.

27. Second Coming: Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

Introduction:

Today's story is a parable told by Jesus. A parable is a story from which a spiritual lesson can be drawn. In this parable the main lesson is the need to be prepared for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

To understand this parable well, one must understand the wedding tradition of that time. The wedding of that time did not begin until the bridegroom left the house. When he left, the groom would make a tour, ending at his bride's house. Everyone was waiting for him to leave, but no one knew the exact time. He usually left in the evening. On his way the groom would pass through his neighborhood and people would come out of their houses to congratulate him and to join the procession.

It was also the custom for a group of girls to accompany him. These girls were selected by the groom beforehand. For them it was both a great privilege and a great responsibility, and they had to prepare well for this special occasion. Of all the participants in the wedding they were the most important because they provided the lights during the night tour. Without them it would be impossible to make the tour. The groom depended on them. This description of the Jewish wedding tradition of that time prepares us to understand the following parable of the ten girls.

Story:

The kingdom of God will be as it is at a wedding. Ten girls took their oil lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps, but they took no oil to refill them. On the other hand, the prudent ones took their oil bottles as well as their lamps. As the bridegroom was late in arriving, they all got sleepy, and fell asleep. About midnight they heard shouting, "The bridegroom is coming. Go out to meet him." All the girls got up and began to prepare their lamps.

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Then the five foolish ones said to the five wise ones: "Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out. But the wise girls answered, "No, because it will not be enough for us or for you. You had better go where they sell it, buy for yourselves." But while those girls went to buy oil, the bridegroom came, and the wise girls went with him into the wedding, and the door was shut. Then the other girls came, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But he answered them, "Amen, I say to you, I do not know you."

Stay awake," Jesus added. "For you know neither the day nor the hour of my return."

Additional Questions:

- ☐ In this story the groom represents who?
- ☐ Who do the ten virgins represent?
- ☐ What does the oil represent, is it the Holy Spirit?
- ☐ How did the groom feel when only five girls showed up?
- ☐ The fact that the bridegroom was late in coming. What does it teach us about the coming of Christ?
- ☐ The five careless ones did not bring extra oil. In your opinion, what was their reason for not bringing it?
- ☐ At last the carefree girls arrived to find the door locked. What did the groom say to them?
- ☐ What does the exhortation, "Stay awake" mean?
- ☐ What have you learned from this parable?

Memory verse:

Matthew 25:13

"So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return."

28. The Believer's Responsibility: The History of Money

Matthew 25:14-30

Introduction:

The story of the talents (money) teaches us that God has entrusted each of his children with certain goods. Rather, God has charged each of us with the good news, and the great responsibility of expanding His kingdom according to our ability. In other words, He has given us gifts, talents, abilities, unique personalities, time, health, even material resources to invest in His kingdom. Each of us has an individual responsibility before God as we live to invest in the kingdom according to what we have received. And we will have to give an account to God for how we have used what we have received. Now let's turn to history to see what Christ wants to teach us today.

Story:

The kingdom of heaven will be like a man who, being about to go to another country, called his employees and instructed them to deal with his money in his absence. And one of them was given five thousand pieces of silver, to another two thousand pieces of silver, and to another one thousand pieces of silver, to each according to his ability. Then he went on a journey.

The employee who received five thousand coins did business with his money and earned another five thousand coins. In the same way, the one who received two thousand coins earned another two thousand coins. But the one who received a thousand coins went and hid his boss's money in a hole he made in the ground.

A long time later the chief of the employees returned, and began to make accounts with them. First came the one who had received five silver coins, saying, "Sir, you gave me five thousand, and here is another five thousand that I earned. The boss said to him, "Very well, you are a good and faithful employee, since you were faithful in the little, I will put you in charge of much more. Come in and rejoice with me.

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Then came the employee who had received two thousand coins, and said, 'Sir, you gave me two thousand, and here is another two thousand that I earned.' The boss said to him, "Very well you are a good and faithful employee; since you were faithful in the little, I will put you in charge of much more. Come in and rejoice with me."

But when the employee who had received the thousand coins arrived, he said to his boss: "Sir, I knew that you are a hard man, who reaps where he did not sow. Therefore, I was afraid and went and hid your money in the ground. But here is what is yours." The boss replied, "You are a lazy employee. For if you knew that I reap where I did not sow, you should have taken my money to the bank, and I would have received my money back with interest."

Then the ruler said to those who were there, "Take from him the thousand coins, and give them to the one who has ten thousand. For he who uses well what you have will receive more, and he who does not use it well, even what you have will be taken away from him. And take this useless employee and throw him out into the darkness where there is weeping and wailing."

Additional Questions:

- ☐ In the story who does the rich man going on a trip represent?
- ☐ Who do the three servants represent?
- ☐ What do the silver coins represent?
- ☐ The rich man gave one man five thousand coins, another two thousand, and another one thousand. Why didn't he give all the servants the same amount?
- ☐ What is the reward for the two faithful servants?
- ☐ What do you think of the man who dug a hole and buried his Lord's money? What was his real motive?
- ☐ What was the punishment given to the unfaithful servant?
- ☐ What is the lesson for us from this parable?
- ☐ How should we invest in the Kingdom of God?

Memory verse:

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1 Corinthians 4:2

"Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful."

