



SALLY MICHAEL





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May each one of you come to the end of your earthly fight of faith with these words on your lips:

***I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith.  
—2 Timothy 4:7***

Our vision at Truth78 is that the next generations know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God.

Our mission is to nurture the faith of the next generations by equipping the church and home with resources and training that instruct the mind, engage the heart, and influence the will through proclaiming the whole counsel of God.

We equip churches and parents by producing curriculum for Sunday School, Midweek Bible, Intergenerational, Youth, and Backyard Bible Club settings; vision-casting and training resources (many available free on our website) for both the church and the home; materials and training to help parents in their role in discipling children; and the Fighter Verses Bible memory program to encourage the lifelong practice and love of Bible memory.

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*Dedicated to my sister,  
Linda McIntire.  
who has shown me what it means  
to fight the good fight.  
May God strengthen your hand  
and cause you to persevere to the end.*

# A Tribute

**July 8, 2000**

*This week, a very good friend, Mary Ann Bayless, finished her earthly race. She fought a losing physical battle with cancer. But she fought the good fight of faith and won. To her last breath, she believed in the goodness and the faithfulness of God. She believed that “all things work together for good” for the children of God, and that God is working His good purposes even in hard things. The battle with cancer may have taken her earthly life, but it could not extinguish her faith because God gives persevering faith to His children.*

*Mary Ann has helped with the parent pages for several of my curricula. These curricula were “faith-encouragers” for her—learning the names and character of God, trusting in His promises, and believing in the providence of God. The truth of the Word of God sustains His children through trials. Watching Mary Ann die was a lesson in victory. She fought well and she died well, trusting in Jesus to the end.*

*The words of this curriculum are not just lessons to occupy children. They are a battle strategy to fight for faith. May you, the teacher, fight well and, in turn, encourage the children you teach to fight well. May you finish your race well and fight the good fight to the end. May we all die like Mary Ann, trusting in Jesus to the end.*

# Preface

A third-grade boy came up to me at church and said, “Mrs. Michael, I have something to tell you.” He proceeded to tell me about an experience he had of lying in bed and being overcome with fear. He was becoming more and more fearful. A month prior to this conversation, he had listened as I taught the lesson titled, “Battlegrounds: Spirit of Fear.” Did this lesson make any difference in his life? Did it help him fight fear?

What he said next caused gratitude to God and great joy to rise in my heart: “Then I remembered what you taught us about fighting the fight of faith. And I started saying Bible verses. I said all the verses I could think of. I just kept saying verses. And then I wasn’t afraid...You know what? Fighting the fight of faith really works!”

Fighting the fight of faith really works because God has promised His children victory. We are not alone in the fight of faith. God Himself fights with us to keep us persevering in faith until the end. And God is always victorious. This is the message of *Fight the Good Fight*.

Everyone is in a battle. You are either fighting against God as an unbeliever, or you are a believer and God is helping you fight the fight of faith. Joining the fight of faith is a work of grace. Completing the fight of faith is also a work of grace, for it is God Himself who works in us to persevere in faith.

***...he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.***  
**—Philippians 1:6b**

*Fight the Good Fight* is about persevering to the end. To persevere, one must fight. In a battle, there is no room for passivity. There is no room for compromise. There is no vacation from the battle. You must fight...and you must keep on fighting. And you must never give up because in Jesus there is the wonderful promise of victory and an eternal home.

If you are content with habitual sin in your life (that is, you do not struggle against it and you are not troubled by it), you may not be a child of God. May God in His mercy save your soul. If you are fighting the battle, God has given you ample weapons to fight the good fight, and He is working in you. Do not be afraid of the enemy. Do not grow weary in the battle. Do not despair of the fight, for

***...he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.—1 John 4:4b.***

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- overview of the curriculum and its components
- how each lesson is structured and the major features within each lesson
- description of small group application time, its importance and intended focus
- how the study is designed to equip and engage parents

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## Appendix

The Appendix of this Teacher's Guide offers the following features for teachers and small group leaders:

- structuring your classroom schedule
- building your classroom team of teachers and small group leaders
- using this curriculum at home and in other settings
- brief overview for substitute teachers and small group leaders
- contents of the Curriculum Resources
- lesson-by-lesson list of teaching visuals required beyond those provided
- activities to encourage students to learn Scripture and the books of the Bible
- ministering to children from non-Christian homes
- sharing the Gospel with children
- ministering to children with special needs
- articles on justification, the importance of Bible doctrine, etc.

## About Truth78

The About Truth78 tab of this notebook offers the following features:

- the vision, mission, and values that undergird this curriculum
- resources and training material available
- an explanation of our curricula scope and sequence
- the curricula scope and sequence
- distinctions of Truth78 curricula

# Fight the Good Fight

## *A Study for Children on Persevering in Faith*



*Fight the Good Fight* is a Midweek Bible study for children on persevering in faith. The curriculum communicates that everyone is in a battle—either as an unbeliever fighting against God or as a believer fighting the fight of faith with God’s help. The lessons present these two battles and explain God’s work of grace both in justification and in the perseverance of faith. The study also introduces common battlegrounds of the heart, provides practical suggestions on how to fight these battles, and gives helpful strategies to guard one’s faith. The study ends by presenting the vision of an eternal life in heaven that makes our perseverance worthwhile. Students are encouraged to memorize selected Fighter Verses™ in conjunction with this study.

### **LESSON 1: THE HEART CONDITION**

*Various Passages*

Every person is born with a sin nature. The curriculum begins by showing students that the heart involves a person’s whole being. Students will quickly realize that there is a problem with the condition of our hearts because everyone was born with a sinful heart. The really bad news is that our sinful hearts make us unacceptable to God and deserving of His wrath. However, there is also good news...

**Key Verse:** Genesis 6:5

### **LESSON 2: WHERE IS THE BATTLE?**

*A Tree and Its Fruit (Luke 6:43-45); Various Passages*

The battle for faith is in the heart. The lesson shows that actions flow from the heart. Since everyone is born with a sinful heart, we need a new heart, which only God can give. Everyone is in a spiritual battle—either a battle against God, or fighting the fight of faith with God’s help. The battle for faith takes place in the heart.

**Key Verse:** James 4:1

### **LESSON 3: SAVED BY GRACE**

*Various Passages; The Gospel Call through Stephen (Acts 6-8:1)*

The grace of God saves man from the wrath of God. This lesson reveals the solution for the problem of man’s sinful heart. Students learn that because of his stubborn and unrepentant heart, man deserves the wrath of God. They will see that it is the grace of God that saves man from the wrath of God, and this salvation is by grace through faith alone. This lesson also highlights God’s gospel call and the two responses of heeding it or rejecting it, and what it means to be chosen by God.

**Key Verses:** Ephesians 2:8-9

### **LESSON 4: GOD CHANGES HEARTS—REGENERATION** *Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5); Various Passages*

Only God can change the heart. The previous lesson addressed the need for a new and good heart. This lesson shows that only God can change the heart—man is powerless to change his own heart. Students also learn that God knows the heart of man. This lesson describes the regenerated “heart of flesh” that no longer fights against God.

**Key Verse:** Ezekiel 11:19

**LESSON 5: CONVERSION—FAITH AND REPENTANCE***Various Passages*

Conversion involves faith and repentance. When God gives someone a new heart, the person turns toward Christ and away from sin. This lesson explains that conversion involves both faith and repentance. In both of these acts the mind, heart, and will are employed. Students are then encouraged to examine their hearts to see if they are in the faith.

**Key Verse:** Hebrews 11:6

**LESSON 6: JUSTIFICATION AND ADOPTION***Various Passages*

God declares righteous all those who have faith in Jesus. This lesson explains the doctrine of justification, teaching that a person is justified before God through faith in Jesus alone. Students will learn that those who have been justified are adopted into God's family and receive the promise of eternal life rather than eternal punishment. The danger of relying on good works to be right before God is emphasized.

**Key Verse:** Romans 8:1

**LESSON 7: THE BATTLE ISN'T OVER—SANCTIFICATION***Various Passages*

The battle for faith and against sin does not end at salvation. In this lesson, students see that Christians are in a spiritual battle and God is fighting the battle with them. He is working to keep His children persevering in faith. The lesson teaches students that God will complete His work in His children. He is true to His promise to complete His work because His reputation is at stake.

**Key Verses:** Philippians 2:12b-13

**LESSON 8: BE A FIGHTER!***Various Passages*

We must fight if we are to win the battle. This lesson continues the discussion on the spiritual battle by challenging students to fight that battle. Students learn that all of life is spiritual, and every battle we face is actually a spiritual battle. Students study three Bible stories—the 12 spies sent to investigate Canaan, David facing Goliath, and Peter and John before the Sanhedrin—to identify the spiritual battles beneath the outward battle.

**Key Verse:** 1 Timothy 6:12a

**LESSON 9: BATTLEGROUND—UNBELIEF***Psalms 77-78*

Remembering the mighty acts of God helps us battle unbelief. This is the first in a series of lessons on specific battlegrounds of the heart, this lesson focusing on the battleground of unbelief. Students examine two psalms to see that God is faithful in spite of our faithlessness, and that the best way to fight unbelief is by remembering the goodness, faithfulness, and mighty acts of God.

**Key Verse:** Mark 9:24b

**LESSON 10: BATTLEGROUND—PRIDE***Uzziah's Pride and Punishment (2 Chronicles 26)*

Pride unchecked leads to destruction. The next battleground introduced is that of pride. Students see that pride exhibits itself in different ways and will lead to destruction, if left unchecked. Using the acronym "PRIDE," students will learn five characteristics of pride. They will also discuss strategies to fight against pride and encourage humility in their hearts.

**Key Verse:** 1 Peter 5:5b

**LESSON 11: BATTLEGROUND—REBELLION***Jesus Prays in Gethsemane (Matthew 26); Simon Submits to Jesus (Luke 5)*

Rebellion is resisting God and what is right. In this lesson, students learn about the battleground of rebellion. Noting the example of Jesus' submission to His Father and Simon's submission to Jesus, students are encouraged to submit to God and His ways. In addition, the lesson teaches that we must fight rebellion when it is small so it does not grow and consume our hearts.

**Key Verse:** Psalm 40:8

**LESSON 12: BATTLEGROUND—SPIRIT OF FEAR** *Peter Walks on Water (Matthew 14); The Apostles Before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5)*

We can fight against a spirit of fear. This lesson teaches that good fear (fear of the right things) comes from God, but a spirit of fear comes from a sinful heart. Students learn that Christians do not have to accept a spirit of fear—Christians can fight against it. A spirit of fear is defeated by focusing on God rather than on fear, and by having a greater fear of God than fear of men or other things.

**Key Verse:** 2 Timothy 1:7

**LESSON 13: BATTLEGROUND—SELF**

*The Lord Answers Job (Job 38-40)*

Self is a battleground of the heart. This lesson teaches three things that can help fight the battle of self: 1) acknowledging that God is supreme; 2) understanding that our lives are not our own because we have been bought with a price; and 3) understanding that we have been created for God's glory.

**Key Verse:** Luke 9:23b

**LESSON 14: EXPECT OBSTACLES...AND NEVER GIVE UP!**

*Opposition to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 4-6)*

There is a reward waiting for those who persevere and finish the fight of faith. This lesson encourages students to never give up in the fight of faith, but to persevere to the end. Students examine the obstacles facing Nehemiah as he strove to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and how he persevered despite adversity. Nehemiah and Paul are given as examples to encourage us to persevere and receive an eternal reward.

**Key Verse:** 2 Timothy 4:7

**LESSON 15: THE ENEMY'S TACTICS AND OUR WEAPONS—PART 1**

*Opposition to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 4)*

Spiritual battles are fought with spiritual weapons. This is the first in a two-part lesson showing how to fight the fight of faith. Students learn that knowing Satan's tactics helps Christians to defeat him. They are reminded that all of life is spiritual and that Satan is persistent. The study of Nehemiah's response to adversity continues from the previous lesson to illustrate the themes of the lesson.

**Key Verses:** Ephesians 6:10-12

**LESSON 16: THE ENEMY'S TACTICS AND OUR WEAPONS—PART 2**

*Opposition to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 4-6)*

Spiritual battles are fought with spiritual weapons. The study of Nehemiah continues as it emphasizes that Satan is a liar and a deceiver. Students continue to investigate strategies to battle against the enemy's tactics.

**Key Verses:** 2 Corinthians 10:3-4

**LESSON 17: OUR STRATEGY—THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S**

*Jehoshaphat's Prayer (2 Chronicles 20)*

God will work for those who wait on Him. This is the first in a series of lessons on strategies for fighting the fight of faith. This particular lesson teaches students that we must depend on God to fight our spiritual battles, not on our own strength. The lesson demonstrates that depending on God means admitting our weakness, and asking for His help.

**Key Verse:** Isaiah 64:4

**LESSON 18: OUR STRATEGY—STAND GUARD**

*The Disciples Abandon Jesus (Mark 14)*

Christians need to be on guard against the enemy's attack. The lesson teaches that Christians should have a healthy fear of their own weakness, and therefore recognize their need to depend on God. Students are warned that Satan is an aggressive enemy and will attack our weaknesses, so it is important that we are on guard against him.

**Key Verse:** 1 Peter 5:8

**LESSON 19: OUR STRATEGY—BE PREPARED**

*Temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4)*

Preparation for spiritual battles is essential. This lesson cautions students by reminding them that we must prepare for spiritual battles, and that knowing the Word of God is an important preparation for battle. In the example set by Jesus, students learn that when we memorize the Word of God we can have the Bible on the tips of our tongues to fend off the attacks of the evil one.

**Key Verse:** Psalm 119:11



**LESSON 20: OUR STRATEGY—RESIST THE ENEMY***Joseph and Potiphar's Wife (Genesis 39)*

When Christians resist Satan, he flees from them. The next strategy presented is resisting the enemy. Students learn that Christians can resist Satan or go along with him, showing that resisting Satan starts with godly inner desires. The lesson also teaches that resistance must be immediate and includes fleeing from sin.

**Key Verse:** James 4:7

**LESSON 21: OUR STRATEGY—RENEW YOUR MIND***Various Passages*

Christians are IN the world but not OF the world. In this lesson, students learn what that means. Because students are in the world, they are influenced by the world. Students learn that the correct way of thinking is the way the Bible teaches us to think, which includes renewing our minds.

**Key Verse:** Romans 12:2

**LESSON 22: OUR STRATEGY—DWELL ON THE TRUTH***Various Passages*

What we put into our minds will influence the way we think. The aim of this lesson is to teach that what we put into our minds will influence the way we think, and the way we think will influence what we do. The Bible tells us to put good things into our minds. Dwelling on the truth includes choosing to believe the truth rather than the lies and attacks of the enemy.

**Key Verse:** Philippians 4:8

**LESSON 23: OUR STRATEGY—DO NOT COMPROMISE***A Father's Wise Instruction (Proverbs 4)*

Any compromise with sin is dangerous and brings serious consequences. This lesson shows that sin that is not dealt with grows, and "little" sins become "big" sins. Students see that letting sin grow in their hearts is a perilous compromise as they give up what is best (God and His good ways) for something that is inferior (sin). As students study the book of Proverbs they see the dangerous consequences that come from such compromise.

**Key Verses:** Proverbs 4:23, 27

**LESSON 24: OUR STRATEGY—CONFESSION***Various Passages*

We should confess our sins daily. In this lesson, students learn that because we are easily deceived, we must ask God to reveal hidden sin in our lives. Revealed sin should be confessed immediately. The lesson teaches that confession and repentance include turning away from sin.

**Key Verses:** Psalm 139:23-24; 1 John 1:9

**LESSON 25: OUR STRATEGY—TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES***Various Passages; Ephesians 6:10-18*

Strongholds are destroyed with the power of God. This lesson begins with a reminder that sin permitted to grow in the heart becomes deep-rooted sin. Students are challenged to take drastic measures with sin in their lives and to use the spiritual armor God has given His children. They are reminded that Jesus has set them free from slavery to sin.

**Key Verse:** Galatians 5:1

**LESSON 26: VICTORY IN JESUS!***Various Passages*

Jesus defeated Satan and his works. As the curriculum draws to a close, students see that Jesus lives in His children and, if we are His children, His power to defeat Satan is ours. The lesson warns that Satan tries to deceive us by making us think that we cannot be victorious over sin, but the Bible teaches that we can take our thoughts captive to Jesus Christ and defeat Satan with the truth.

**Key Verse:** 1 Corinthians 15:57

**LESSON 27: ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER***Various Passages*

Christians need encouragement from each other to persevere in faith. Students are shown the importance of Christian fellowship and encouraging each other. The tone of encouraging and confronting each other with sin should be one of humility and grace. Knowing the Word is a great means of not only strengthening our own faith, but also of encouraging one another.

**Key Verses:** Hebrews 3:12-14

**LESSON 28: STRANGERS AND EXILES***Description of Heaven (Revelation 21-22)*

Heaven is our home. The last lesson reminds students that, for Christians, this world is not our home. Christians are aliens and strangers here. Students will be encouraged as they remember that this life is temporary and heaven is forever. The study closes by teaching that to persevere in faith, Christians must forget this world and press on toward heaven.

**Key Verses:** Philippians 3:13b-14

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*Please visit [www.Truth78.org](http://www.Truth78.org) to find more information about Fight the Good Fight, to review curriculum samples, to see the entire line of curriculum from Truth78, or to place an order for your church or home.*

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# Introduction

## Curriculum Overview

Everyone is in a battle—either as an unbeliever fighting against God, or as a believer fighting the fight of faith with God’s help. *Fight the Good Fight* presents these two battles and explains God’s work of grace in justification and God’s work of grace in sustaining our faith. The challenge to believers is to be fighters and not give up. This is God’s gift of perseverance in the believer. If a person is not fighting the fight of faith, he may not be a believer.

This study explores common battlegrounds of the heart, and provides practical suggestions on how to fight these battles. It also exposes the enemy’s tactics, discusses the weapons that God gives His children, and equips believers with a strategy to guard their faith and battle the enemy.

The lessons end by presenting the vision of the “better country” talked about in Hebrews 11. The children of God can endure suffering, persecution, and torture victoriously because God has given them a vision of an eternal life in heaven that shows this present life as insignificant in comparison.

**Important Note:** This curriculum was developed out of Truth78’s vision, mission, and values. Please take time to read more about this at the end of this Teacher’s Guide.

## Lesson Order

Although the lessons are independent units, they are designed to teach overarching truths and encourage responsive hearts. Some lessons are dependent on truths taught in previous lessons, and some lessons expand the truth taught in a prior lesson. For these reasons, it is very important to teach the lessons in the order in which they appear in the curriculum.

The easiest way to get a clear picture of the scope of *Fight the Good Fight* is to read the Scope and Sequence chart (at the end of the Preface section).

- **Lessons 1-2** introduce every person’s condition as a sinner involved in a heart battle.
- **Lessons 3-7** introduce the steps of salvation. It is important for students to understand that they are either fighting against God as an unbeliever, or fighting for faith and against sin with God’s help as a believer. Assuming that many students are unregenerate, the material lays the foundation for salvation before explaining how to fight for sanctification.
- **Lesson 8** encourages students to fight spiritual battles.
- **Lessons 9-13** instruct about specific battlegrounds of the heart.
- **Lessons 14-16** are taken from Nehemiah 4-6, encouraging students to expect obstacles and never give up, and acquainting them with the enemy’s tactics and the Christian’s weapons.
- **Lessons 17-25** lay out strategies for fighting the fight of faith.
- The curriculum concludes with a lesson on the Christian’s victory in Jesus (**Lesson 26**), the instruction to encourage one another (**Lesson 27**), and finally the Christian’s status as an exile on earth destined for his real home, heaven (**Lesson 28**).

## The Role of the Bible in the Classroom

Because one of the goals of this curriculum is to encourage and help students to see the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, it is of the utmost

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

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

Always use your Bible to look up the passages (unless otherwise noted), and teach with an open Bible before you. Our desire is to constantly point the students to the Scriptures. It is important to demonstrate that the source of truth is in the Word of God. By teaching from an open Bible, we want to repeatedly communicate that God, not the teacher, is the source of truth.

Since the Bible is an essential component of the lesson, student should bring their own Bibles to class. They will need to look up the given Scriptures, participate in reading the texts out loud, and answer questions based on the texts. This curriculum was written using the English Standard Version (ESV) translation of the Bible, and this is the version we recommend for the students and teachers.

## Your Classroom Schedule

The following chart provides a basic classroom schedule if you have approximately an hour of class time. Please see the Classroom Schedule in the Appendix section for details, as well as suggestions for adjusting this schedule if you have more or less than one hour of class time available.

| Recommended Classroom Schedule |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Lesson Time                    | 30 Minutes |
| Application Time               | 20 Minutes |
| Notebook Time                  | 10 Minutes |

## Component Overview

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

### Classroom Kit

One Classroom Kit is needed for every classroom using this study. It includes a Teacher's Guide with the curriculum introduction, lessons, and appendix; and Curriculum Resources (on a CD or as electronic downloads) with PDFs of all visuals, and Optional Activity and Parent Pages. It also comes with one copy of the Student Notebook. *It is very important for teaching purposes that each classroom have Curriculum Resources (on a CD or as electronic downloads) to use.*

### Teacher's Guide

One Teacher's Guide is included in the Classroom Kit. Each teacher should take time to thoroughly review the Teacher's Guide to understand where everything is located for easy reference.

- **Introduction**—Introductory material for this curriculum, overview of the components involved in teaching the study, a walk-through of how a typical lesson works in the classroom, etc.
- **Lessons**—All the lessons included in the study, each containing the lesson presentation, application discussion questions for small groups, and optional activities (to use if time allows).
- **Appendix**—Articles for further study, helps and tips on how to teach or lead a small group discussion, a list of visuals the teacher must provide, etc.

The Teacher's Guide is also sold as a separate resource for additional teachers or small group leaders in your classroom. When purchased separately (not as part of the Classroom Kit), it contains the curriculum introduction, lessons, and appendix, but it does not include the Curriculum Resources.

### Curriculum Resources

Curriculum Resources are packaged with the Classroom Kit on a CD or as electronic downloads. To use this study successfully, every classroom needs the following printable PDFs:

- Visuals Packet
- Parent Pages
- Optional Activity Pages
- Student Notebook (for leader reference only)
- Fighter Verses Bookmark (to print and distribute to your students to encourage Scripture memory)
- Commitment Cards for Lesson 19 (for Scripture memory)
- How to Use These Resources
- Additional Materials You Will Need
- Lessons for Substitute Teachers
- Substitute Teacher Guide
- Scope and Sequence
- Script and Visuals for the Fight the Good Fight Skit

To use the PDFs, you will need Adobe Reader® (a free download from [adobe.com](http://adobe.com)). The How to Use document provides further information on the various files.

The curriculum logo is also included for churches to use in promotional materials.

### Lesson Visuals

- All visuals should be saved for potential use throughout the study.
- See the Appendix for a list of visuals the teacher must provide.
- For large classrooms, we suggest using electronic display and/or printing the visuals on legal- or tabloid-sized paper.

### Student Notebook

Each piece of the curriculum is an integral part of the learning experience—nothing is extraneous or intended to be “busy work.” Use of the Student Notebook will help students take ownership of listening, learning, and applying the lesson. It takes the truths presented in the lessons and

helps the student examine his own life in light of these truths. That’s why each student is encouraged to use a Student Notebook in class throughout this study.

Because there are components of small group interaction in the Notebook, each small group leader should have a Notebook to use throughout the study. An electronic reference copy is provided on the Curriculum Resources (on a CD or as electronic downloads) for this purpose.

### Buttons

There are four buttons students can earn as they study *Fight the Good Fight*. Some of the work may be done in class, if time permits, but much of it will be done at home.

**Fighter Verse**—Memorize 50 Fighter Verses.™

**Reading for Victory**—Read *The War for Mansoul*, a John Bunyan classic as told by Ethel Barrett. Or, girls might opt to read *Hinds’ Feet on High Places* by Hannah Hurnard, or *Stepping Heavenward* by Elizabeth Prentiss. (Note: The choice of *Hinds’ Feet on High Places* should not be seen as an endorsement of other books written by Hannah Hurnard.)

**Spiritual Warfare**—Write and illustrate a book for younger children, teaching them about spiritual warfare.

**The Fight of Faith**—Identify one area in which you need to experience a faith victory (e.g., fear, pride, laziness). Write a summary of your struggle and the strategies you will employ to gain victory in that area. Then make a commitment to pray daily about that struggle for 30 days, keeping a log of the fight of faith for that time, noting the successes and failures and what you are learning in the process. Memorize at least one verse to help you with that struggle.

### Printed Visuals Packet

Churches may wish to order a professionally printed Visuals Packet. This contains the same printable full-color visual resources provided as

PDFs in the Curriculum Resources (on a CD or as electronic downloads), printed on high-quality cardstock.

## Walking through a Lesson

### Roles and Responsibilities in the Classroom

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

- **Team Leader**—the person responsible for organizing and administering the class, communicating with parents, and encouraging the team of volunteer leaders.
- **Teacher**—one or two people who teach the lesson presentation to the large group, perhaps alternating weeks of teaching if there is more than one teacher.
- **Worship Leader**—if there is a time of worship, an individual or team should lead the class in a prepared worship set.
- **Small Group Leader**—an adult or spiritually mature youth is needed for every four to eight students to lead small group discussions and mentor students in their spiritual growth. (See “Building Your Classroom Team” in the Appendix for more information on this.) This job should be seen as encouraging each student in the group inside and outside of the classroom.

**Note:** We suggest that, beginning in fourth grade, students be divided into same-gender small groups, with a small group leader of the same gender. These groups should be consistent throughout the study.

See the Appendix for more role-specific helps and a short overview of this curriculum for substitute teachers and small group leaders.

### Lesson Preparation

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

A good teacher is a prepared teacher. After reviewing the lesson the first time, the teacher should go through the lesson again, asking the Holy Spirit to bring to mind specific ways in which the truths presented apply to his group of students. For example, maybe the teacher has noticed a particular way in which a small group encourages one another through their words and manner of speech. When preparing for the lesson on communication, a teacher may want to briefly incorporate that as an example in the lesson.

After preparing his heart spiritually, the teacher should gather and prepare visuals, practice each illustration, and go through a trial run of the lesson to check for timing and flow.

### Understanding the Lesson Overview Section

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

### MAIN IDEAS

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



#### KEY VERSE/S

The Key Verse (or verses) capture/s the essence of the lesson.

#### SCRIPTURE

The Scripture texts are listed in the order in which they appear in the lesson presentation. Those used only during the Small Group Application Time are set apart with parentheses.

#### CURRICULUM RESOURCES

These are classroom visuals to print or display electronically, and handouts for students and their parents to either print or email from the Curriculum Resources (on a CD or as electronic downloads), which are included in the Classroom Kit.

#### OTHER SUPPLIES

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

#### VISUALS PREPARATION

These are notes to read while preparing to teach your class, giving you a heads-up about things that need to be done before you start your lesson.

#### LARGE GROUP LESSON

The Large Group Lesson section contains the text that should be used for the teacher's lesson presentation. This text and the Bible passages studied should be the main focus of the classroom time.

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

#### Understanding the Lesson Presentation Format

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

#### GRAY SHADING

Sections of the lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. If you opt to do this, make sure to do it efficiently.

#### VISUAL THUMBNAILS

The left margin provides a quick reference for visuals or supplies that will be needed during the lesson. Visual thumbnails indicate what should be displayed from the Curriculum Resources (on a CD or as electronic downloads). Visuals and illustrations should be used to emphasize key biblical themes.

#### ACTION PROMPTS

The margin of each page also has space for brief mention of visuals that aren't included in the Curriculum Resources, as well as classroom handouts, and other special instructions for teachers.

#### FONT

- Sentences in *italics* **recommend** a specific wording of the concept or illustration being taught. This is used to make certain theological points very clear, to convey a specific tone, or to touch the heart in a special way.
- Lesson material **not** in italics should be conveyed in your own words.
- Scripture portions are in ***bold italics***.

While the Scripture portions are usually included in the lesson, you are strongly encouraged to read from your Bible while teaching the lesson so that the authority of the Bible in teaching is emphasized.

#### PARENTHETICAL TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Each lesson contains teaching instructions and other helpful information in parentheses for the teacher. Read these carefully when preparing to

teach the lesson. In addition to reading these instructions, it is important to think through the lesson yourself and decide how you can most effectively teach the concepts presented.

### Understanding Student Interaction

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

#### QUESTIONS

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

#### ILLUSTRATIONS

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

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

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

### Understanding Gospel Presentation

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

#### GOSPEL CALL

Some lessons will challenge students to respond to the gospel by trusting in Jesus alone for the forgiveness of sins, depending on Him alone for their salvation. If you have children in your class who have not yet made a profession of faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, but as a result of God's call on their heart would like to make a commitment of faith in response, it seems appropriate to recommend that they discuss this with their parents. If parents are not believers, you may have the privilege of leading the student in this step. (See the Appendix for articles on how to share the gospel and how to minister to students from unbelieving families.) Rather than using confusing and unbiblical terminology, such as "ask Jesus into your heart," we suggest using the term "trust in Jesus." This can be explained as "depending completely on the work of Jesus on your behalf."

#### EXCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

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

- **Not:** God promises to guide us.
- **But:** God promises to guide His children.
- **Not:** God will help you fight the fight of faith.
- **But:** God will help Christians fight the fight of faith.

Although we do not want to deny true saving faith, we also do not want to provide false

assurances to those who hear the Word, but do not believe it in their heart. We want to continually point to the need to make a personal commitment to Jesus and to trust Him as our Savior.

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

### **Small Group Application Time**

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

#### **Understanding the Application Format**

This curriculum contains discussion options that are linked to specific lesson truth statements. The goal is not to complete all the discussions. Rather, small group leaders should read this section and select which discussions are most appropriate for the students in their groups. These are recommended questions, but you should adapt them as necessary to meet the needs of your particular group. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you steer the discussion. The responses your students give may determine succeeding questions.

The discussions in this section are carefully designed to cover three main areas: head knowledge, heart response, and practical action. The percentage of time spent in each area is dependent on your students' ability to process and articulate concrete/abstract concepts.

It is important for small group leaders to first verify that the students can remember and articulate the main points of the lesson: Do they understand what they just heard? The small group leader should help his students work through any misunderstanding and, if possible, answer questions that may arise. This review should be

very brief, as the goal of the Application Time is not to reteach the lesson, but to apply the lesson.

After briefly reviewing the content, the next step is to examine how a student's heart responds to this truth. Does the student rejoice in the truth, or rebel against the truth? These questions move students beyond the intellectual conversation and ask them to think through their emotional (heart and attitude) response to the truth. What is their response to God?

The last, but crucial, step in the application discussion is to challenge students to apply the truth to their own lives in practical ways. How can each student apply the truth of the lesson to his life this week? Small group leaders should take time to follow up from week to week with students to ask how they are applying the truth to their lives.

#### **Optional Activities**

Ideas for meaningful, optional, lesson-specific activities are included after the Small Group Application section. Classroom time should be focused on the lesson and application discussion, but these activity ideas are available for use if time allows. Also, the Appendix has a feature providing ideas for activities related to memorizing Scripture and the books of the Bible, including information about Sword Drills.

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

It is important to keep the focus of the Small Group Application Time Christ-centered. Many of the questions that follow the lesson will challenge students to examine personal desires, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Through this process, rebellious attitudes may be expressed by certain students. Sinful thoughts and desires may be exposed. Other students may give voice to a self-righteous superiority. Or it may be that this is the first time that a student has been led to see a certain topic biblically, causing him to be somewhat taken off guard. These are all possible outcomes in your small group time, and it is important that you as a small group leader

respond with the truth and with the love of Christ. Pray that your words would be “seasoned with salt”—kind and gracious, meant for building up, and fitting the occasion (Colossians 4:6 and Ephesians 4:29). Our goal should be to continually point the students to Jesus: His all-sufficient work on the cross for sinners; His perfect righteousness given to all who believe; His forgiveness and cleansing work when they confess their sin; His power that enables His children to continually grow in obedience to His truth; and His unshakable promise to complete the work that He began in His children.

### Understanding the Student Notebook

The Student Notebook is meant to provide an opportunity for individual, personal response to the lesson for your students. Give the students time to interact with the notebook activity before engaging in the small group sharing of the responses of the students. Be sure to study the Notebook and application questions carefully before class so that you are prepared to make the most of the opportunity God has given you to lead the students.

### At-Home Parent-Student Interaction

The primary responsibility and privilege of nurturing the faith of youth rests on parents (Deuteronomy 6:5-9). Parents will also have the greatest opportunity for “teachable moments,” situations that arise in everyday life that can be opportunities to apply the truth of God. Faith nurturing should not be seen primarily as a classroom experience, but rather as a consistent weaving of spiritual truth with everyday life in the context of the home. Real “heart” application of biblical truth, which changes lives, usually takes place in the context of relationships and everyday life. Since this most naturally occurs in the home, in the context of loving relationships, teachers and small group leaders should make significant efforts to connect the classroom teaching with daily parental involvement in the student’s life.

### Using the Parent Pages

A Parent Page for each lesson helps connect parents to the classroom. The pages are available as PDFs on the Curriculum Resources CD or electronic downloads to print and/or email.

Each Parent Page includes the lesson’s main idea/s, key verse/s, Scripture references, questions to consider, and suggestions for journaling. For student-parent interaction, there are discussion questions and prayer suggestions.

Please send the Parent Pages home for parents to use every week, and encourage them to interact with their children on the truths being taught. Encourage both parents and students to pursue these important at-home interaction opportunities.

The document titled “A Note to Parents” should be sent home with every student the first week of the study, and then with every new student who joins the class after that. In addition, you may want to periodically send a copy of this overview home again with every student to replace lost copies or to serve as a reminder.

### Recommended Resources

*God’s Battle*, an illustrated book by Sally Michael, summarizes the teaching of this study in 26 short chapters. It is part of the *Making HIM Known* series from P&R Publishing and Truth78 (formerly Children Desiring God). This book is a great companion and review tool for the curriculum, or an end-of-the-year gift for students. (Visit [Truth78.org](http://Truth78.org) for details.)

Other recommended resources include the Fighter Verses Scripture memory system’s printed verse packs and the Fighter Verses App. Visit [fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com) for more information.

# The Heart Condition

## MAIN IDEAS

- **The heart involves a person's whole being.**
- **Man's heart is evil.**
- **Every person is born with a sin nature.**

## KEY VERSE

*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*  
—Genesis 6:5

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Genesis 6:5
- 2) Jeremiah 17:9
- 3) Psalm 51:5 (NIV 1984)
- 4) Romans 5:19a
- 5) (Ephesians 2:3)
- 6) (Romans 5:12,19)



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

**Note:** Visuals that *do not* need to be cut out and/or assembled in some way for use during the lesson presentation are provided as PDFs for electronic display in the Curriculum Resources. These visuals are identified below and in the lessons following with bold text.

- Fight the Good Fight Skit and Visuals (see Preparation)
- **Thin Ice (1A)**
- Heart—Front and Heart—Back (1B-1C, see Preparation)
- Evil (1D, cut out)
- Headline 1-2 (1E-1F, see Preparation)
- Parent Page for Lesson 1 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (preferably the English Standard Version)
- Optional: Materials for student nametags (see Preparation)
- 2 newspaper pages (see Preparation)
- Ice skates (or an appropriate substitute)
- A rusty object (or any object in bad condition)
- Tape
- For Application (for each student):
  - › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Fighter Verses™ App

- For each small group:
- › Mobile device/s with the Fighter Verses App downloaded and installed

### 3. Dangerous Situations

- › No materials required.

### 4. Headlines

#### Option 1

- For each small group:
- › A number of newspaper pages with appropriate headlines
  - › Scissors
  - › Tape/glue

#### Option 2

- For each student:
- › Paper
  - › Pencil/pen

### 5. Missionary Testimony

- › Invite a missionary to share about his work of warning people about their heart condition.

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

### VISUALS PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- If you will not be using the skating illustration in the Introduction, think of an appropriate alternative situation that is dangerous (e.g., walking in front of a speeding car).
- **Nametags**—You may want to make nametags for each student, or provide materials for the students to each make their own.
- **Heart**—Cut out the **Heart—Front** and **Heart—Back** visuals. If they are not printed back to back, glue to them together in that way. Then fold the Heart visual in half with the red heart side on the inside, and place it in your Bible.
- **Headlines 1 and 2**—Cut out **Headline 1**, fold it on the dotted line, and tape the top edge of the headline to one of the newspaper pages, keeping the bottom part folded away from the tape. You want to be able to show the first half of the headline, discuss it, and then open the newspaper page to show the second half. Cut out and tape **Headline 2** across another newspaper page.
- Be sure to explain the **Fight the Good Fight Buttons** and how to earn them.
- **Skit**—You could use the **Fight the Good Fight Skit** and **Skit Visuals** (see the Curriculum Resources) to introduce this study.



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

ICE SKATES OR  
OTHER PROP  
RELATED TO A  
DANGEROUS  
SITUATION

(Call a student to the front and show him the **ice skates or other prop related to a dangerous situation**. If you're using the skates, ask him to drape them over his shoulder. Pose the following dangerous situation.)

*Suppose I saw you with ice skates slung over your shoulder and knew you were going ice skating. And suppose that I also knew this.*



(Display the **Thin Ice** visual and read the sign.)

*Do I have a responsibility to tell you about the thin ice? Why? What could happen if I didn't tell you about the ice? If I did tell you about the ice and saved you from falling through the ice, how would you feel toward me? How would you feel if you found out that I knew about the ice but didn't tell you about it?*

### The Heart Condition

*I know about a situation that could be dangerous to every one of you. Do you think I should I tell you about it?*

*Did you know that every single person in this room has a heart condition that could be fatal? You could die from it! Your heart has a disease that can kill you. It won't do any good to go to the doctor or take medicine because I am not talking about your physical heart that pumps blood through your bodies. I am talking about the heart that the Bible talks about.*

BIBLE WITH HEART  
VISUAL INSIDE

(Open the **Bible** and take out the **Heart** visual, being careful to show just the front with the words, "Deepest and Most Personal Thoughts and Feelings," and not the back with the text of Psalm 51:5.)

*The heart that the Bible talks about is your deepest and most personal thoughts and feelings.<sup>1</sup> It is the things you really want to do—your desires (what you like); how you feel on the inside.*

*So, what is wrong with this heart?*

(Continue to display the **Heart** visual. Have a Sword Drill with the following verses.)

<sup>1</sup> The actual quote from the following book describes the heart as the "deepest inmost thoughts and feelings of a person": Grudem, Wayne. *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub., 1999), 196.

**Genesis 6:5**—*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

**Jeremiah 17:9**—*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

❓ *How does the Bible describe man's heart? [evil; deceitful, sick]*

TAPE, EVIL AND  
HEART VISUALS

(Have a student **tape** the **Evil** visual over the words, "Deepest and Most Personal Thoughts" on the **Heart** visual.)

❓ *Is this heart just a little bit bad? How many inclinations of the heart are evil? What does this mean?* (Make sure they understand that the heart involves every part of their being. Since the heart is evil, every part of their being is affected by their sin nature—their ability to love God and others; their desire to do good; their thoughts and motives.)

## The Origin of Sin

**Illustration**.....

RUSTY OBJECT

(Display the **rusty object**. Ask the class to describe it, and then ask these questions.)

*Was it always like this?*

*How did it come to be in its present condition?*

*What could I have done to prevent it from being ruined?*

(Display the **Heart** visual.)

*How did our hearts get in this evil condition? Let's see what the Bible tells us.*

(Ask a student to turn the **Heart** visual over and read Psalm 51:5.)

**Psalm 51:5**—*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (NIV 1984)*

❓ *This verse is part of a psalm of David in which he is confessing his sin to the Lord. When did David's heart become sinful? [before he was born—from the time he came into being]*

*Let's look at how David got that sinful heart.*



(Have a Sword Drill with Romans 5:19a, or read and discuss it at the small group tables. Ask the students to read just the first part of the verse.)

**Romans 5:19a—For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners...**

? *Who is the “one man” referred to in this verse?* [Adam]

? *What happened to all men when Adam sinned?* [all men were made sinners; all people inherited Adam's sin nature; every person is born with a sin nature]

? *Could David have done anything to prevent his heart from becoming sinful or evil? Why?* [No, because he was sinful before he was even born; it was out of his control; he inherited his sin nature from Adam as all people do.]

? *Is there anything we can do to prevent our hearts from getting in this evil condition? Why, or why not?*

### Illustration.....

*When each person is born, he is born with already determined characteristics. A person cannot decide his eye color, or what he will look like. He can't decide how tall he will be, or if he will be born with all his fingers and toes. All of this is already determined by God (and encoded in his genes) before he was born.<sup>2</sup>*

*Just as we cannot determine our eye or hair color, so we can't determine whether we will be born with a sinful heart. Just as David was born with a sinful heart, so all of us are born with a sinful heart. We cannot change or prevent that.*

*I could have prevented the [object] from becoming rusty if I had taken care of it, because it did not start out rusty. But if the [object] was already rusty when I got it, there would be nothing I could do. That's the problem with our hearts. We can't prevent them from becoming evil and sinful because they started out that way. Before we were even born, we had sinful hearts. Just as you were born with blue eyes or brown eyes, so you were born with a sinful heart. You had no power to decide your eye color, and you had no power to decide your heart condition.*

## The Danger of a Sinful Heart

? *What is the danger of having a sinful, evil heart?* [we are unacceptable to God; we are under God's wrath]<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> You may want to quickly interview a child about himself (e.g., what color of hair he has, when his hair color was decided, if he could decide the color, etc.).

<sup>3</sup> If this is not “common knowledge” to your students, you may want to direct them to Romans 1:18a—“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...”

- God, the Creator of all things including man, has supreme authority, and His character establishes a standard of holiness.<sup>4</sup> He is perfect in every way and perfectly righteous—everything He thinks, says, and does is right.<sup>5</sup>
- God created us to be like Him, holy and righteous in His image.
- We must keep all of God’s commands perfectly all the time, or we rightly deserve punishment for our sin.
- The danger of having a sinful, evil heart is that it means we are unacceptable to God; we deserve God’s wrath.
- We have no right to enter heaven, and instead we deserve eternal punishment or death in hell. *This is very bad news; it is horrible news.*

**Illustration.....**

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HEADLINE 1 VISUAL (Display and read aloud the top half of the **Headline 1** visual.)

**Man Falls Off House Roof**

*This is horrible news! The result for the man could be death.*

(Then fold down and read the rest of the **Headline 1** visual.)

**and Lands on Haystack**

*Is this such horrible news now? It is still bad news to fall off a roof. It’s very frightening, and you could still get injured falling into a haystack if you landed wrong. But at least you would be saved from death.*

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HEADLINE 2 VISUAL (Display the **Headline 2** visual.)

**Every Intention of the Thoughts of Man’s Heart is Only Evil Continually.**

*The news about our heart condition is horrible news. The condition of our heart is so awful, and there is nothing that we can do about it. But there is more to the story. Just as the first part of the headline of the man falling off the roof sounded awful until the rest of the headline is read, so there is a better part to the news about our heart condition that will keep us from despairing. In the next few weeks, we will be learning about the better part of the story. The headline about our hearts doesn’t end with “Every Intention of the Thoughts of Man’s Heart is Only Evil ALL THE TIME.”*

(End with prayer.)

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4 See Psalm 24:1; Deuteronomy 32:4; Leviticus 19:2, 37; and 1 Peter 1:16.

5 Michael, Sally, Jill Nelson, and Bud Burk. *Helping Children to Understand the Gospel*. (Mendota Heights, Minn.: Truth78, 2009), 47.

## Small Group Application

You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.

- *What does—“... that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” mean? [Sin affects us at all times; we are greedy, selfish, and covetous and do not love or honor God as we should.] Do you see evidences of the evil in man’s heart in the world?*
- *How does this verse affect you? Have you seen evidences of evil in your heart? How did your heart get like that? Do you need to teach a baby to do wrong things? Why not? Did anyone teach you to do wrong? Why not? What does that tell you about your heart?*
- Discuss Jeremiah 17:9.

***Jeremiah 17:9—The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?***

*We tend not to think of our heart as being desperately sick because we compare ourselves with others. But we really need to compare ourselves with God. In looking at our own heart attitudes, how do we fall short—how do we not measure up?*

- *Why is our heart condition bad news? If this were the end of the story, how would we be affected?*
- *Do you truly rejoice that there is more to our heart condition than just Genesis 6:5? Explain.*
- You may also want to look up and discuss Ephesians 2:3 and/or Romans 5:12 and 5:19.
- *You may want to talk about their responsibility to warn others of man’s heart condition and appropriate ways that they could do this.*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good.—C.S. Lewis*

- Explain the Fight the Good Fight Buttons and how to earn them, and encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses you choose.

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 1.

### 2. Fighter Verses App

Explore the Fighter Verses App ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)). Check out the different features, including listening to the verse, listening to a Fighter Verses song, trying the quizzes, and sharing the verse with someone.

### 3. Dangerous Situations

Divide the class into two teams. One poses a potentially dangerous situation. The other has to the count of five to call out a solution. (You may need to adjust the time limit depending on your class.) For example:

- A car was speeding toward me...BUT I was able to jump out of the way.
- I fell out of an airplane...BUT I was wearing a parachute.
- I came face to face with a roaring lion...BUT a hunter shot him.
- I fell out of a boat...BUT I was wearing a life jacket.
- A shark was swimming toward me...BUT he wasn't hungry.

Teams gain a point when they finish a “BUT” clause appropriately within the time limit. The team with the most points wins. Remind the class that the “I have a sinful heart” has a BUT clause, too.

### 4. Headlines

Make a collage of newspaper stories or headlines in your small groups showing that man has an evil heart. Or, have students create their own newspaper page by writing headlines about Bible events, current, or historical events. Students can summarize the stories under the headlines.

### 5. Missionary Testimony

Invite a missionary to share about his work of warning people about their heart condition.

### 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Show the buttons and explain the requirements for earning them. Then, give an opportunity to work on these requirements, helping when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 1 (for each student)

# Where Is the Battle?

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Actions flow from the heart.**
- **Everyone is in a spiritual battle.**
- **The battle for faith is in the heart.**
- **True heart change is a work of God; it cannot happen through our own efforts.**

## KEY VERSE

*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?—James 4:1*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) James 4:1
- 2) Luke 6:45
- 3) (Luke 6:43-45)



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- See Preparation:
  - › Heart (2A)
  - › Heart Doors (2B)
- Parent Page for Lesson 2 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Tape
- Blindfold
- Half an orange and sliced strawberries (or any two objects with easily identifiable smells, such as a rose, vinegar, garlic, bacon, rubbing alcohol, chocolate)
- See Preparation:
  - › Baking soda
  - › Small container
  - › Vinegar
  - › Tray
- Large rubber band

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Baking Soda and Vinegar

- For each small group:
- › Baking soda
  - › Small container
  - › Vinegar
  - › Tray

### 3. Act of Kindness

- › Supplies will depend on what you choose to do. (See Optional Activity section for details.)

### 4. Battle for the Heart Game

- › Fiery Dart Card (OA-2A)

### 5. Where is the Battle?

- For each student:
- › Where is the Battle? (OA-2B)
  - › Pencil/pen

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- ➔ Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students

know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

- **Heart Visual**—Cut out the **Heart** and **Heart Doors** visuals. Tape the Heart Doors to the Heart along the sides where indicated so you can open and close the doors.
- Place a few teaspoons of baking soda in the small container. During the lesson, you will be pouring vinegar into the container with baking soda and watching it fizz and bubble over onto the table. So you will want to experiment at home to make sure your container is the appropriate size for the proportions you are using. You might want to do this demonstration on a tray to contain the mess.
- **Battle for the Heart Game**—If you choose to do this Optional Activity, you will need to look at your space and determine the location of the jail, the size of the safety zone, etc. in order to give both teams an equal advantage.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

BLINDFOLD,  
ORANGE HALF,  
STRAWBERRIES

(Call a student to the front and **blindfold** him. Then hold the **orange half** under his nose. Ask him to smell it and identify the smell. Do the same with the **strawberries**. Take off the blindfold and show him the orange and strawberries. Establish that oranges produce orange smells and strawberries produce strawberry smells. See example below.)

*How do you know the first smell came from the orange? How do you know it did not come from the strawberries? Can an orange produce a strawberry smell? Why not? Can a strawberry produce an orange smell? Why not?*

*Each object produces what it is—oranges produce orange smells because they are oranges. Strawberry smells flow from strawberries because strawberries can only produce their own smells—strawberry smells. A strawberry cannot give off orange smells because “orangeness” is not inside of a strawberry. “Strawberry-ness” is inside a strawberry, and “strawberry-ness” is what comes out.*

.....

## Our Hearts Affect Our Actions

(Ask where fighting and quarreling comes from. Then have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**James 4:1—What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?**

❓ *What does James tell us is the cause of fighting? [our passions; what we feel in our hearts; the battle in our own hearts]*

*Just as orange smells overflow from oranges, our actions flow from our hearts.*

### Illustration.....

HEART AND HEART  
DOORS VISUALS  
ASSEMBLED AS  
DESCRIBED IN  
THE PREPARATION  
SECTION

(Display the **Heart** visual with the **Heart Doors** closed. Talk about some of the actions, and then talk about what desires of the heart cause the actions, opening the Heart Doors as you do so. See example below.)

*When we make a mistake or do something wrong, we often fight against having to say we are sorry or admit we are wrong. We make excuses, rather than just admit we were wrong. What desire of the heart causes us to do that? [pride] Our*

*refusal to apologize flows from pride—we want to be right all the time; we want to be the best.*

*Why do we take the biggest cookie or the best seat? Why do we try to get our own way? What is it in our hearts that causes us to look out for ourselves and to grab the best? [selfishness; greed] Because we are selfish, we aren't as concerned about how things are for others as much as we are concerned about how things are for us. Our selfishness causes us to act for ourselves rather than act for others.*

- Our hearts affect what we do and say. They determine our actions.
- What is in the heart is what comes out of the heart. Our actions are just an overflow of what is in our hearts.

### Illustration.....

BAKING SODA,  
VINEGAR,  
CONTAINER, TRAY

(Display the **container of baking soda**. Ask a student to pour some **vinegar** in the **container**. You may want to have the student do this demonstration on a **tray** to contain the mess. Make sure the other students can see, too. The baking soda and vinegar solution will fizz and bubble out over the top of the container.)

*Why did this happen? Was I pushing on the container making the mixture bubble over? Was I blowing on the mixture causing it to bubble over? Did someone do something to the baking soda and vinegar mixture to make it bubble over? Why did it bubble over?*

*The mixture itself bubbled over—vinegar and baking soda mixture has to expand. The bubbling up came from within the mixture, and it just poured over the top of the container; what was inside the container overflowed. The overflow was caused by the baking soda and vinegar mixture.*

*Our actions work in much the same way as the baking soda and vinegar overflow.*

- Our hearts overflow into actions. No one makes us do things—we act because of what is in our hearts. Our actions come from the overflow of our hearts.
- Our hearts just have to express themselves, and they do it through our actions.

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse, or read and discuss it in small groups.)

***Luke 6:45—The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.***



**?** *What does this verse say?* [If a person's heart is good, good will flow from his heart. If his heart is bad, bad will flow from his heart. We tend to do the things that our hearts desire.]

*The kind of heart we have determines the kind of things we do. Just as kittens come from cats, puppies come from dogs, and apples come from apple trees, so right actions come from right hearts and wrong actions come from wrong hearts. The condition of our hearts determines the condition of our actions.*

## Behavior Change Is Not Lasting

**?** *Is it possible for a person to make his heart do right when in his heart he wants to do wrong?* (Let the students respond to this and expand on their answers before doing the following illustration.)

**Illustration.....**

LARGE RUBBER  
BAND

(Show the **large rubber band**.)

*Can I make this rubber band longer? How? Does the rubber band want to be long? By sheer force, I can make this rubber band longer—for a little while. But what will happen? Can I stretch out this rubber band forever? What will happen as soon as I let go of the rubber band? Why?*

- Just as it is possible to make the rubber band change its shape for a little while, so a person with a bad heart can force himself to do right for a little while.
- But because the heart is bad, he will be unable to keep forcing himself to do right—the heart keeps pulling him back to what is wrong. His will or strength to do the right thing is not enough. It won't last. It takes more than just trying to do what is right.
- It is not a matter of merely changing our actions, or simply trying hard to be good.
- A person with a bad heart can fake good actions for a while, but he can't change his heart; the heart will still be a bad heart.

## We Need a Heart Change

**?** *What did we learn about the human heart in our last lesson?* [man's heart is evil; everyone is born with a sinful heart]

*Every person was born sinful and is in a spiritual battle. The battle is a battle for our hearts—will our hearts love God and what is right, or will our hearts reject God and love what is wrong?*

- Since we have all been born with a sinful heart, we each need a heart change. True heart change is a work of God. It cannot happen through our own efforts.
- When God changes a sinful heart, right actions come from a good heart.

*In the next few lessons, we will learn about true heart change and how true heart change is possible. For now, what you need to recognize is that you are in a spiritual battle. You are either not a Christian and you have a rebellious heart fighting against God, or you are a Christian fighting the fight of faith with God's help.*

*The battle for faith takes place in our hearts. The battle to believe God and to trust Him in all things is a battle of the heart. The battle to love God, to love the truth, and to read the Bible is a battle of the heart. The battle to do good is a battle of the heart.*

*If you are not a Christian, you are God's enemy, resisting His rule in your life and His commands. You are fighting against God as your sinful heart pulls you toward what is wrong.*

*If you are a Christian, you are still in a battle. You are in a battle to keep believing. Even though you have a changed heart, you will still battle sin in your life. But God is on your side, helping you in the battle to turn away from sin, to love Him above all else, and to follow Him.*

(End with prayer.)

## Small Group Application

You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below or make up your own.

- *Do you feel like you are in a spiritual battle? Why or why not? Describe the battle for the non-Christian. Describe the battle for the Christian. Do you have a personal example of a battle you face or have faced?*
- Discuss Luke 6:43-45.

***Luke 6:43-45—For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, <sup>44</sup>for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup>The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.***

- *Do only good things come from good hearts and bad things from bad hearts? Why? <sup>1</sup>*

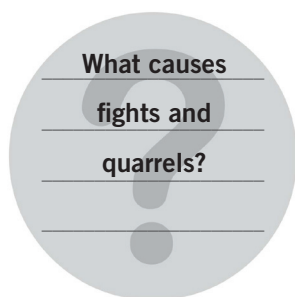
<sup>1</sup> If students seem confused by this question, you might explain that even unbelievers with bad hearts do "good" things at times because of God's common grace given to all. Such "good" deeds still do not measure up to God's perfect standard of goodness and are tainted with the sin that is found in their bad hearts.

- *How do you know what kind of heart you have?* (Make sure the students understand that even people with “good hearts” do wrong things at times. But the overall desires and most of the actions of a “good heart” are right and good.)
- *What do your actions reflect about your heart? Can you change your heart?*
- *Why is it important to know that the battle for faith is a heart battle? What does this say about what you can do?* (Encourage students that though they cannot change their own hearts or the hearts of others, they can ask God for a changed heart.)
- Discuss the following statement from the lesson that has been included in the Student Notebook:

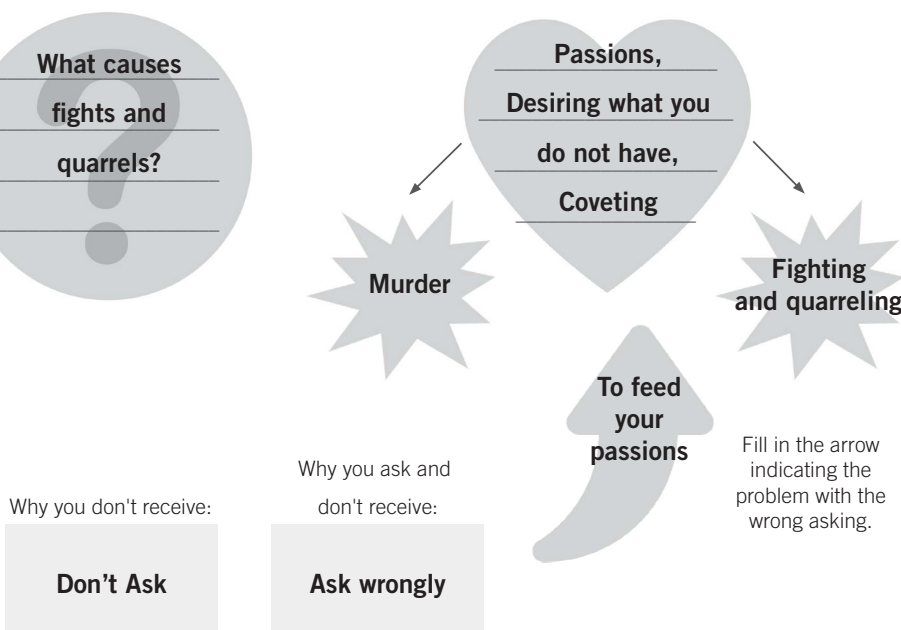
*Everyone is in a spiritual battle. You are either not a Christian and you have a rebellious heart fighting against God, or you are a Christian fighting the fight of faith with God's help. The battle for faith takes place in our hearts.*

- Answer Key for the Student Notebook:

The Question (verse 1):



The Answer (verse 1) and Examples (verse 2):



## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 2.

### 2. Baking Soda and Vinegar

Students can experiment with baking soda and vinegar mixtures. Remind them that just as the mixture flows from the container, so our actions flow from our hearts.

### 3. Act of Kindness

Perform an act of kindness requiring sacrifice. For example, bring cookies, icing, and sprinkles to decorate cookies to give to another class. Ask students to think about what is in their hearts as they give the cookies away, instead of eating them.

### 4. Battle for the Heart Game

Form a “guard your heart” team and an attack team that tries to steal the guard team’s hearts. *Satan uses all kinds of “fiery attacks” to try to capture your hearts. Can you name some of these attacks?* [e.g., technology, the drive for popularity, pornography, love of money and things, etc.] Establish a time limit. Designate a safety zone for the guard team and a jail/bondage area outside the safety zone. The attack team designates a jailer to guard the jail. Give the attack team the **Fiery Dart Card** to place far from the safety zone. The guard team must try to capture and destroy the Fiery Dart Card. The attack team tries to tag the guard team members and send them into bondage (jail). When a person is in jail, someone from his team must “fight for his heart” by avoiding the jailer and tagging a teammate to set him free. The game is over when the Fiery Dart Card is captured (or destroyed), the entire guard team is in jail, or you’ve reached the time limit. The attack team wins if the Fiery Dart Card is not captured by the time limit, or everyone on the guard team is in jail. The guard team wins if it captures the Fiery Dart Card.

### 5. Where is the Battle?

Students can complete the **Where is the Battle?** handout.

### 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 2 (for each student)

# Saved by Grace

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Because of his stubborn and unrepentant heart, man deserves the wrath of God.**
- **The grace of God saves man from the wrath of God.**
- **Salvation is by grace through faith initiated by God to those He has chosen.**
- **God calls people to faith through the preaching of the gospel.**

## KEY VERSES

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

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Romans 2:5 (NIV 1984)
- 2) Ephesians 2:8-9
- 3) Ephesians 1:3-4
- 4) Acts 6:8:1
- 5) (Hebrews 3:7-8)
- 6) (John 6:37)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

See Preparation for each of the visuals provided for this lesson.

- Fly (3A)
- Salvation Diagram:
  - › Romans 2:5 (3B)
  - › Under a Curse (3C)
  - › Fighting Against God (3D)
  - › Stubborn Unrepentant Heart (3E)
  - › Wrath of God (3F)
  - › Deserved (3G)
- Salvation Diagram Continued:
  - › Ephesians 2:8-9 (3H)
  - › Under Grace (3I)
  - › Gift (3J)
  - › Chosen by God (3K)
  - › Chosen (3L)
  - › Gospel Call (3M)
  - › Effectual Call (3N)
- Headline (3O)
- Parent Page for Lesson 3 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Optional: String and tape for Fly visual (see Preparation)
- Fly swatter
- Tape
- Optional: Posterboard (see Preparation)
- Newspaper page
- Whiteboard and markers

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Key Word & Verse Poster

- › Construction paper
- › Scissors
- › Markers
- › Glue

### 3. Key Word Booklets or Cards

- › Construction paper
- › Scissors
- › Markers
- › Glue

### 4. Fly Swatter Tag

- › Fly swatters

### 5. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.

- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses (fighterverses.com) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Fly**—Cut out the **Fly** visual. You may want to attach it to a string.
- **Salvation Diagram**—Cut out pieces for and begin building the “Salvation Diagram.” You will continue to add pieces in Lessons 4-7. Be sure to plan out your space so all the visuals will fit. You will find a visual of what the diagram will look like when all of the pieces for this lesson are assembled at the end of this lesson. You'll also find a version of the entire diagram in the Student Notebook for the students to complete during the lesson presentation over the next five lessons (Lessons 3-7). Note: If you aren't able to leave the diagram on a wall during the course of the next five lessons, you might want to build the diagram on posterboard, planning on at least a 3-foot by 3-foot space.
- **Additional Note on Salvation Diagram Pieces**—To save class time, you could attach the **Stubborn Unrepentant Heart** and **Wrath of God** pieces together before the day of your class. You could also do this to the **Chosen By God** and **Chosen** pieces, and to the **Gospel Call** and **Effectual Call** pieces. If you do this, you will only need to attach the one combined piece when the two pieces are mentioned.
- **Headline**—Cut out the **Headline** visual and fold it on the line. Tape the top edge of the top of headline to a newspaper page, keeping the bottom part folded away from the tape. You want to be able to show the first half of the headline, discuss it, and then open the newspaper page to show the second half.
- **Note:** This lesson on God's initiating grace can be a difficult doctrine for some to accept. The fact that God chooses some (Ephesians 1:3-4) and not all may seem “unfair.” But consider that no one—not even one—deserves God's grace and mercy. On the contrary, all of us deserve His wrath and hell. Hence, God is not obligated to save anyone. But He is merciful and initiates saving faith in sinners. This quote by Mark Webb may be helpful:

*After giving a brief survey of these doctrines of sovereign grace, I asked for questions from the class. One lady, in particular, was quite troubled. She said, 'This is the most awful thing I've ever heard! You make it sound as if God is intentionally turning away men and women who would be saved, receiving only the elect.' I answered her in this vein: 'You misunderstand the situation. You're visualizing that God is standing at the door of heaven, and men are thronging to get in the door, and God is saying to various ones, 'Yes, you may come, but not you, and you, but not you, etc.' The situation is hardly this. Rather, God stands at the door of heaven with His arms outstretched, inviting all to come. Yet all men without exception are running in the opposite direction towards hell as hard as they can go. So God, in election, graciously reaches out and stops this one, and that one, and this one over here, and that one over there, and effectually draws them to Himself by changing their hearts, making them willing to come. Election keeps no one out of heaven who would otherwise have been there, but it keeps a whole multitude of sinners out of hell who otherwise would have been there. Were it not for election, heaven would be an empty place, and hell would be bursting at the seams. That kind of response, grounded as I believe that it is in Scriptural truth, does put a different complexion on things, doesn't it? If you perish in hell, blame yourself, as it is entirely your fault. But if you should make it to heaven, credit God, for that is entirely His work! To Him alone belong all praise and glory, for salvation is all of grace, from start to finish.—Mark Webb<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Webb, Mark. “A Quote on Election,” posted February 3, 2006 at <http://www.reformationtheology.com/2006/02/election.php> (accessed 7/5/18).

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

*FLY VISUAL* (Display the **Fly** visual. Make it fly around while you are talking.)

*Have you ever watched a fly in your house? It flies around for a while—flying high and low. It might land on a wall for a while. Fly around some more. Fly around your head. And then around the room some more. It might land on a chair for a while. At first you ignore the fly and it keeps buzzing around. But eventually it lands somewhere and...*

(Swat the **Fly** visual loudly with a **fly swatter**.)

*that's the end of the fly!*

.....

## God's Wrath

*The fly buzzed around for a while, oblivious to the danger around it. Then, very unexpectedly, its life was over. This is very much like the condition of man.*

*ROMANS 2:5 VISUAL AND TAPE* (Hand a student the **Romans 2:5** visual, and ask him to read it to the class.)

***Romans 2:5—But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. (NIV 1984)***

(**Tape** the **Romans 2:5** visual to the wall to start the **Salvation Diagram**.)

*STUDENT NOTEBOOKS* (Have the students open the **Student Notebook** to the two-page Salvation Diagram in Lesson 3, so that they can follow along as you build the Salvation Diagram on the wall, filling in missing words, which are underlined in your lesson text.)

*God's judgment is righteous—He is right to punish sin. If our hearts are stubborn and unrepentant, we are storing up wrath...storing up wrath...storing up wrath. We might think, "Oh, I have lots of time to repent. I don't need to think about God or obey Him now"...we're storing up wrath...storing up wrath...storing up wrath... until...SWAT!*

*FLY SWATTER,* (Slam the **fly swatter** down. After making the following statement, you may want to look up Romans 9:28, as a class.)

*God's judgment falls on us.*



CURSE, FIGHTING  
AGAINST GOD,  
STUBBORN/  
UNREPENTANT  
HEART, WRATH OF  
GOD, AND DESERVED  
VISUALS, AND TAPE

(Tape the **Under a Curse** visual to the wall to continue building the **Salvation Diagram**, referring to the diagram below for placement.)<sup>2</sup>

- Because of the fall of man in the garden, every person is under a curse. (Have the students add this word to the appropriate place in the **Student Notebook**. From this point forward, these instructions will be identified with the words “See Student Notebook.”)

(Tape the **Fighting Against God** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- Our sin nature causes us to fight against God and His ways. (See Student Notebook.)
- Man’s sinful, stubborn, unrepentant heart fights against God and will someday receive the wrath of God. It will probably be unexpected, but it will be swift and sure.

(Tape the **Stubborn Unrepentant Heart** and **Wrath of God** visuals to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- Man’s heart condition condemns him to God’s punishment eternally. Every person who rebels against God deserves this punishment.

(Tape the **Deserved** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**, which should now look like the diagram on the right.)

- This is the condition under which every single person was born. Every person is under a deserved curse.

## God’s Grace

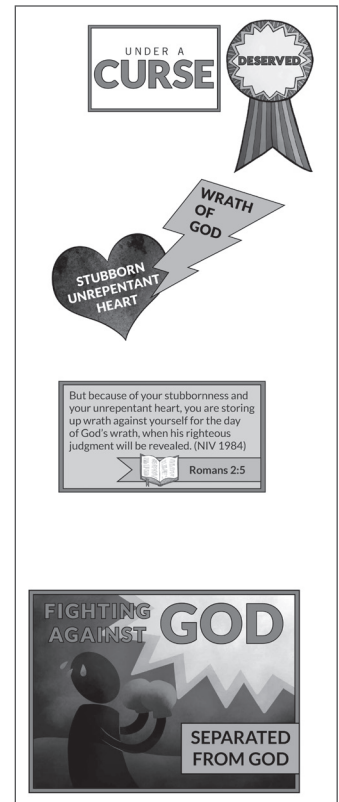
HEADLINE VISUAL  
ATTACHED TO THE  
NEWSPAPER

(Display the **Headline** visual attached to the newspaper. Read the headline as you reveal it.)

*If we were to write a headline for this situation, it would read:*

**Man’s Stubborn and Unrepentant Heart Stores Up the Wrath of God...**

*But there is good news! There is another part to this headline and the Bible’s message about the plight of man.*



<sup>2</sup> You may want to have a student stand under the Curse visual, and then hold the next two visuals. Then, add those visuals to the Diagram and have the student hold the Deserved visual. If you have a small class, at that point have everyone stand under the Curse visual.



(Read the **Headline** visual again.)

## Man's Stubborn and Unrepentant Heart Stores Up the Wrath of God...

*BUT*

WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS

(Write a very large BUT on the **whiteboard**. Then, open the **newspaper** to reveal the end of the headline.)

## But the Grace of God Saves Man from the Wrath of God!

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses.)

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

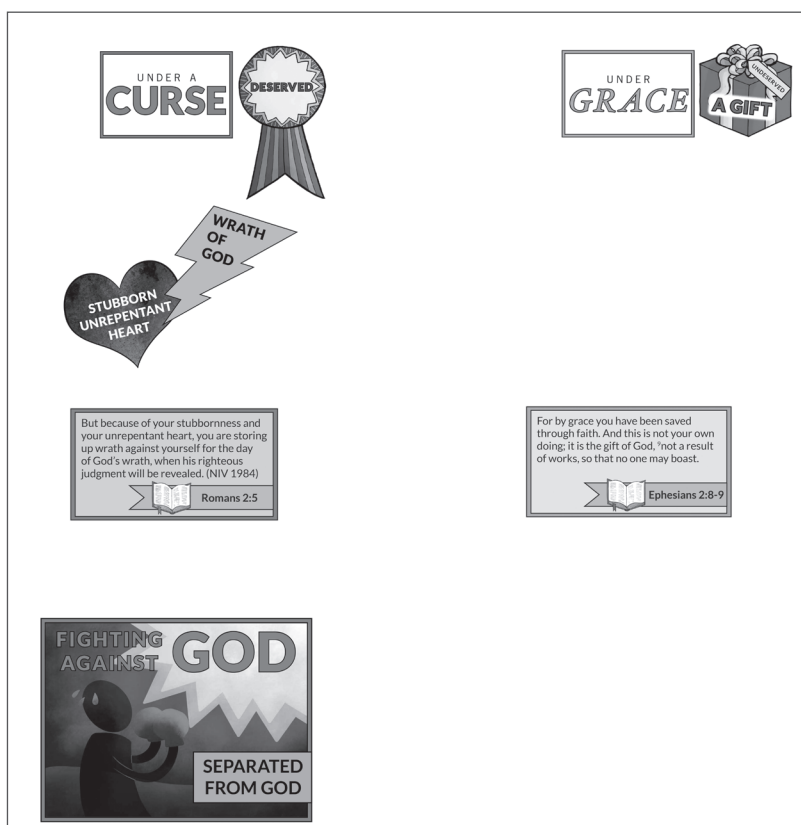
EPHESIANS 2:8-9,  
UNDER GRACE  
VISUALS

(Tape the **Ephesians 2:8-9** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**. See the diagram to the right for placement.)

? *What does this verse tell you about salvation?*  
(Answers may vary but make sure the following points are made.)

(Tape the **Under Grace** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- Salvation is a gift of grace—God's kindness to undeserving sinners.  
(See Student Notebook.)
- We do not deserve any favor from God. God does not owe us anything. The only thing that we deserve is the wrath of God and eternal punishment. We are completely unable to save ourselves—we cannot earn salvation by any means.



*GIFT VISUAL* (Tape the **Gift** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- God is merciful, and in His kindness to undeserving sinners He offers salvation as a free gift. (See Student Notebook.)

## Called and Chosen by God

(Have a Sword Drill with Ephesians 1:3-4, read and discuss the verses at the small group tables.<sup>3</sup> Either way, leave off the last two words, which start the next thought.)

***Ephesians 1:3-4—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ‘even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him...***

❓ *What is Paul telling the Ephesian church that God has done for them?* [blessed them with every spiritual blessing; chose them to receive His grace; chose them to be holy and blameless even before the world began]

❓ *How can they be holy and blameless?* [it is possible “in Christ”—by being joined to Christ through faith; it is possible through Jesus’ death on the cross, taking on their sin]

❓ *What does this show you about who is the initiator in salvation (who takes action, who starts the process)?* [God—by choosing to save some and bring them to faith]

*God is the initiator in salvation and has chosen a people to be His own.*

*CHOSEN BY GOD AND CHOSEN VISUALS* (Tape the **Chosen by God** and **Chosen** visuals to the **Salvation Diagram**, and have the students write “Chosen” in the Student Notebook, referencing the diagram on the next page for placement.)

*Let’s look at a picture of God’s initiating grace to save sinners.* (Tell the story of God’s call through Stephen from Acts 6-8:1, making the following points.)

- In the book of Acts we read that the church in Jerusalem was growing in number. The church was generously helping the poor, but it was not helpful to the church for the apostles to be pulled away from preaching the gospel to care for the poor.
- So the apostles appointed seven men, called deacons, to help the poor. One of these men was Stephen, “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5).
- Stephen not only helped the poor, but he also preached the gospel with great power. This was God’s call to sinners to repent and believe.

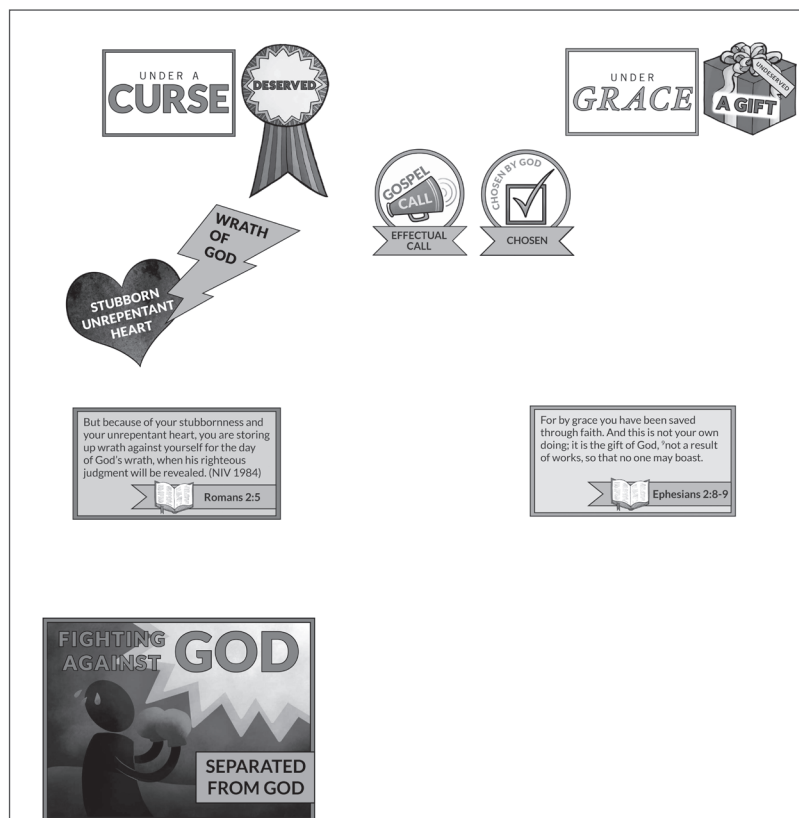
<sup>3</sup> If this discussion takes place at the small group tables, just post the Chosen By God visual as a reinforcement after the discussion.

GOSPEL CALL AND  
EFFECTUAL CALL  
VISUALS

(Add the **Gospel Call** and **Effectual Call** visuals to the **Salvation Diagram**, which should look like the diagram on the right.)

- Many people heard God's call to repent and believe...for some, it was effective; it was an "effectual call"—they repented and believed. (See Student Notebook.)
- But for others it was not effective—they only hardened their hearts.
- In fact, some of them were so angry at Stephen's teaching that they stoned him to death.

*Let's read about those who rejected God's call.*



(Ask the students to read aloud Acts 7:54-8:1.)

**Acts 7:54-60**—Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup>But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup>And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." <sup>57</sup>But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. <sup>58</sup>Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup>And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <sup>60</sup>And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

**Acts 8:1—And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.**

*Though Saul was a religious man, he hated Jesus and hated Christians. But he had been chosen by God before the foundation of the world to be saved.*

SALVATION DIAGRAM

(Point to the **Chosen by God** visual.)

❓ *Who can tell us what God did in calling Saul (later called Paul) and giving him the gift of salvation? [Saul was on the way to Damascus to persecute Christians when a light from heaven flashed around him. Saul fell to the ground and a voice spoke to him saying, “Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9:4) This was God’s call to salvation for Saul. The voice was the voice of Jesus who told Saul to go to the city and wait for instructions. When Saul got up, he was blind. God sent Ananias to Saul to pray for the healing of his eyes and that he might be filled with the Holy Spirit.]*

*Paul was a special messenger chosen by God to preach the gospel. He planted many churches and wrote several of the New Testament books. God took an enemy and made him a follower! Paul did not deserve God’s grace; he did not deserve to be chosen by God and respond to God’s call. He was saved by grace through faith, not of his own works, but as a free gift.*

(End with prayer.)

## Small Group Application

You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below or make up your own.

- *Where do you hear the call of Christ? How does that compare to the amount of time you are hearing the call of the world? What do you think about this? How can you put yourself in a position where you hear the Word of God more?*
- *What is your usual response to God’s Word, preaching, teaching about God, or family devotions? What does this tell you about your heart?*
- Discuss the following verses.

**Hebrews 3:7-8—Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup>do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness,”**

- What does rebellion in the heart feel like? Describe it. Can you give an example of a situation when you felt rebellion rise in your heart?
- Do you feel God calling you to Himself? (Read the following verse.)

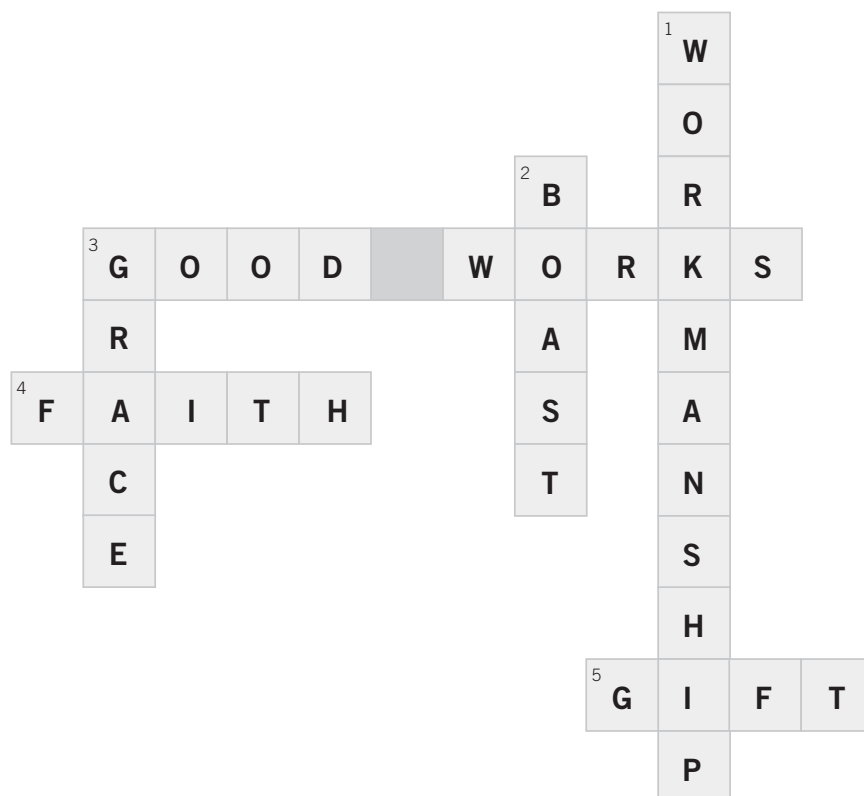
**John 6:37—All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.**

- What comfort can you get from this verse?
- Do you think it is “fair” that God chooses some to be saved and not others? Why or why not? Why does God have the right to decide? What does this say about God? What does this say about us? What does every one of us deserve? Does anyone seek God because he just wants to be a Christian? <sup>4</sup>
- Discuss the quote from the Student Notebook:

*If you perish in hell, blame yourself, as it is entirely your fault. But if you should make it to heaven, credit God, for that is entirely His work! To Him alone belong all praise and glory, for salvation is all of grace, from start to finish.*

—Mark Webb<sup>5</sup>

- Answer Key for the Student Notebook:



<sup>4</sup> You may want to read the Mark Webb quote in the Preparation section at the start of this lesson, and help the students understand some of the points he makes.

<sup>5</sup> Webb, Mark. “A Quote on Election,” posted on February 3, 2006 at <http://www.reformationtheology.com/2006/02/election.php> (accessed 7/5/18).

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 3.

### 2. Key Word & Verse Poster

Students can make a poster of the key words and verses learned in this lesson (much like the Salvation Diagram, or one of their own design).

### 3. Key Word Booklet or Cards

Students can make a booklet or cards of the key words. Encourage them to use the booklet or cards to tell others about the truths in this lesson.

### 4. Fly Swatter Tag

Define boundaries for the students to play a modified game of tag. Give a few students (clean!) fly swatters. Explain that the other students are flies. The flies are to run within the boundaries until TAPPED with a fly swatter. (Note: Make sure the students know that they are to TAP not SWAT the other students, and that they should tap each other from the shoulders down.) When tapped, a student is out. The game is over when all the students have been “swatted.” Remind the students that unrepentant men may think that everything is fine, but that the day of God’s punishment will come and there will be no remedy.

### 5. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 3 (for each student)

# God Changes Hearts—Regeneration

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Man is powerless to change his heart.**
- **God knows the heart of man.**
- **Only God can change the heart.**

## KEY VERSE

*“And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,”*  
—Ezekiel 11:19

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Genesis 6:5
- 2) Jeremiah 17:9
- 3) Acts 5:1-11
- 4) 1 Chronicles 28:9
- 5) Ezekiel 11:19
- 6) (1 Kings 8:39)
- 7) (Acts 1:24)
- 8) (1 Peter 1:23)
- 9) (1 John 3:9)



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Salvation Diagram (see Preparation):
  - › New Heart (4A)
  - › Regeneration (4B)
- Parent Page for Lesson 4 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Salvation Diagram (from Lesson 3, posted on the wall)
- Block of wood and a metal car (or other objects appropriate for the illustration)
- 4 or more tools (e.g., screwdriver, hammer, pencil, scissors)
- Masking tape
- Optional: Play money (for Ananias and Sapphira story)
- Three pieces of paper
- Scissors
- Clear tape
- Optional: Supplies for baking soda and vinegar illustration done in lesson 2, if you would like to repeat it during this lesson.

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Hearts of Mankind Collage

- › Magazines with pictures of people
- › Scissors
- › Glue
- › Posterboard
- › Marker

### 3. New Heart Testimony

- › Invite someone to give a testimony of how God gave him a new heart.

### 4. Good Actions Game

- For each team of five students:
- › Chalk
  - › 10 regular-sized marbles
  - › 1-5 large “shooter” marbles

### 5. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.



- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Salvation Diagram**—You will continue to cut out the pieces and add visuals to the Salvation Diagram started in Lesson 3. The students will also continue to complete their own version of the diagram in the Student Notebooks, started in Lesson 3. Note: You might want to laminate the Stubborn Unrepentant Heart visual.
- **Note:** A question that may come up is, “If God is the one who changes the heart, does that mean I just sit and wait for that to happen. Is there nothing I can do to soften or harden my heart?” This answer from John Piper provides helpful understanding of this conflict:

*The biblical truth lies in the gospel paradox—we could call it the new covenant paradox—in which God causes the miracle of unhardening. God causes it, and I act the miracle of unhardening. God is the decisive cause, but my acting is a real, essential part of the miracle taking place.*

*Here is the promise God made for all of us who experience the power of the new covenant promise that was purchased by the blood of Jesus according to Luke 22:20. Here is what he promises in Ezekiel 11:19–20: “I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” Here it is again in Ezekiel 36:26–27: “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”*

*So, the point in those passages is that God must do the decisive, miraculous heart transplant, heart replacement. If we are going to escape the hardness and deadness of that heart, the old heart has to be taken out, a new heart has to be put in—and we can’t do that surgery on ourselves. That is the point. This is God’s sovereign, gracious, saving work, and the effect of it is new, tender, obedient love toward God. And Deuteronomy puts it a little differently: “The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:6). So, if we are going to ever turn around, stop hating God and start loving God, he has to do that heart transplant and that heart circumcision.*

*But now, having made that point, we have to also say that God commands us to do the very thing he promises to do in the new covenant. For example, alongside the promise of Ezekiel 36:26, “I will give you a new heart,” there is Ezekiel 18:31, “Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!” And right alongside the promise—the Lord will circumcise your heart—there is the command in Deuteronomy 10:16, “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.” And the command in Jeremiah 4:1, 4, “If you return, O Israel...to me you should return...Circumcise yourselves to the Lord; remove the foreskin of your hearts.” We see the same thing in the New Testament. There is the command of 1 Peter 3:8, “All of you, have...a tender heart, and a humble mind.” Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted.” In other words, we are commanded to be tender — commanded not to be hard. Tenderheartedness is the opposite of hardness of heart, and we are commanded to pursue it and to have it.*

*The biblical picture is that God does the decisive work of heart transplant and heart circumcision and heart unhardening, and we are immediately participants in this miracle as conscious, intentional, willing actors renouncing the old heart, cutting away with all of the opposition we can muster the old life, and embracing the new and feeding the new tenderness of heart on God’s word and by God’s Spirit.*

*So, very specifically in answer to the question that was asked: What activities will unharder our heart? I would say besides the divine activity which is decisive and essential, there are at least*



three things we are called to do as we participate in acting this miracle that God is performing: 1) beholding or seeing, 2) hearing, and 3) trusting—just a verse for each of those.

1. Second Corinthians 3:18, “Beholding the glory of the Lord, [we] are being transformed into the same image [of God] from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” So, what do we do? We look to Jesus. We look to Jesus.
2. And if you ask, “Where and how does that happen?” Paul says, secondly, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). So, faith is the tender, dependent opposite of rebellion and resistance and self-reliance, and faith comes by hearing. We are looking to Jesus with our ears. We look with our ears. The eyes of the heart look through the ears of the mind as the word of God is read or preached or presented to us in some way and, thus, being drawn by this sight to be conformed to him, we trust him.
3. And that is the third verse, trust. Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” So, what comes alive when the old, hard heart is crucified and dead and taken out and circumcised away and cut off, what comes alive is the new, tender heart of faith. “I live by faith.”

So, my final word to paraphrase Paul is: Work out your tenderness of heart. Be about the miraculous unhardening of your heart. For God is the one who is at work in you to remove the hardness of heart and give you a tender heart of seeing and hearing and trusting.—John Piper <sup>1</sup>

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

BLOCK OF WOOD,  
METAL CAR, AND  
TOOLS

(Call a student to the front and show him the **block of wood** and the **metal car**.)

*I would like you to change this block of wood into a car like this.*

(When the student protests, hand him **two of the tools**. As he continues to protest, continue to hand him **more tools**.)

*It is obvious that you are powerless to change the block of wood into a metal car—no matter how many tools you have. The material is the wrong material, and the tools are inadequate.*

### We are Powerless to Change our Hearts

*Just as [student's name] was unable to change the wood into a metal car, so we are powerless to change our hearts.*

<sup>1</sup> Piper, John. “How Can I Soften My Own Heart?” from the “Ask Pastor John” podcast, episode 935, posted September 9, 2016, copyright Desiring God Foundation. For a complete written transcript and audio, see [www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org).

❓ Do you remember what Genesis 6:5 and Jeremiah 17:9 say about man's heart? [evil; deceitful, desperately sick]

*We cannot change our hearts because the “material” they are made of is not good—our hearts are evil. And our tools are inadequate—our will to try to do right things and like right things and to do good works just can’t change the heart. We cannot make ourselves love God or the things of God. We cannot make our hearts right.*

## Illustration.....

*My hair is [name your hair color] hair. I do not have [name another hair color]. I can [dye/bleach] my hair to try to change the color, but I haven’t really changed my hair color. I have only covered up my hair color. My hair is still [name color]. When my hair grows out it will be [name hair color]. I can put more [dye/bleach] on it, but I will still only be covering up my hair color. I have not changed my hair color because I cannot change my hair color; I can only hide it.*

*Our hearts are like our hair. We cannot change our hearts. God has to put a new heart in us. We cannot become Christians by doing Christian things. Going to church, singing worship songs, reading the Bible, and doing good things does not change the heart.*

.....

- A person can do all those right things and still have a wrong heart. A person with a stubborn and unrepentant heart who does right things is just covering up his heart.

MASKING TAPE AND  
SALVATION DIAGRAM

(Lightly place the **masking tape** over the words “stubborn” and “unrepentant” on the **Stubborn Unrepentant Heart** visual within the **Salvation Diagram** started in Lesson 3.)

- But the heart is still stubborn and unrepentant even if a person tries to hide this with good works, going to church, and singing worship songs. Hiding the heart doesn’t change the heart.

(Peel off the **tape**.)

- Sometimes people try to change their hearts and can even fool other people into thinking that their hearts are right. Sometimes they even fool themselves.
- But they cannot fool God. Unless God changes a person’s heart, the person’s heart is still not right.

OPTIONAL: PLAY  
MONEY FOR THE  
ANANIAS AND  
SAPPHIRA STORY

(Tell the students the story of Ananias and Sapphira from Acts 5:1-11, making the following points.)

- Ananias did a good thing. He sold some land and brought money to the apostles.<sup>2</sup>
- The land belonged to Ananias. The money belonged to Ananias. Ananias did not have to bring any money to the apostles.
- The problem was that Ananias was pretending to be better than he really was. He was pretending that he was giving the full amount he sold the land for when he was only giving part of the money. He was pretending to be good and generous. But he lied about the money and had deceit in his heart. He was not giving the money from a generous heart; he was giving the money so others would think he was good. He was covering up his deceitful heart.
- But Ananias could not fool God. God knew Ananias' heart. God showed the apostles Ananias' heart.
- Ananias died in his sin—he fell down dead for lying to the Holy Spirit. The apostles said that Satan filled his heart.
- Ananias' wife, Sapphira also had a heart that was not right before God. She too tried to deceive the apostles and the Holy Spirit.
- But God cannot be deceived. God knows the heart of every person.
- The same thing that happened to Ananias happened to Sapphira. She fell down and died in her sin.
- Doing good things does not make the heart right. You can do something good but still have a wrong heart.

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

*Before King David died, he gave his son this warning:*

**1 Chronicles 28:9—“And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.”**

 *What does this verse tell us about our hearts?* [God knows what is in our hearts.]

*God knows each person's heart, and He knows why we do the things we do—He knows our motives. We cannot fool God. We cannot fix our hearts by covering them or trying to change them.*

<sup>2</sup> You may want to demonstrate this using play money. Ananias counts out a lot of money, and then puts some of it in his pocket. He gives the rest, stating that it was the full amount he received.

## We Need a New Heart

### Illustration.....

*Suppose I am instructing you to make a paper heart. I tell you to fold the paper in half the long way and to cut out a half heart shape.*

THREE PIECES OF  
PAPER, SCISSORS,  
AND CLEAR TAPE

(Demonstrate as you talk with a **piece of paper and the scissors**. Then show the students the heart.)

*But you cut all the way around when you cut out the half heart shape, and you end up with two separate half hearts.*

(Demonstrate with a **second piece of paper**, cutting out the heart on all sides, including the folded side. Then hold up the two half hearts.)

*You realize that you made a mistake, so you tape the two halves together but you overlap them when you tape them. Then you rip off the tape because the heart pieces are taped wrong and you end up ripping the paper.*

(Demonstrate each step as you talk about it, using the **clear tape** to tape the heart.)

*Are you ever going to have a right heart? Your heart will never be right because you started out wrong. No amount of fixing will make it right. What do you need to do? You need to start over with a new piece of paper.*

(Show the **third piece of paper**. Then show the **badly mended heart** again.)

*This is just like our real hearts. They started out wrong or bad, and no amount of fixing can make them right. What we need is a new heart. Only God can make our hearts new.*

## Regeneration—God Gives New Hearts

*God is not the kind of person who just sits back and folds His hands and says, "Tough luck. All of you are stuck with your stubborn and unrepentant heart. I'm through with you all." God delights to call people to Himself and give them new hearts.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse, or read it and discuss it at small group tables.)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> If the small group will be discussing this section, add the New Heart visual after the discussion.

**Ezekiel 11:19**—“And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh.”

NEW HEART  
VISUAL, TAPE, AND  
SALVATION DIAGRAM

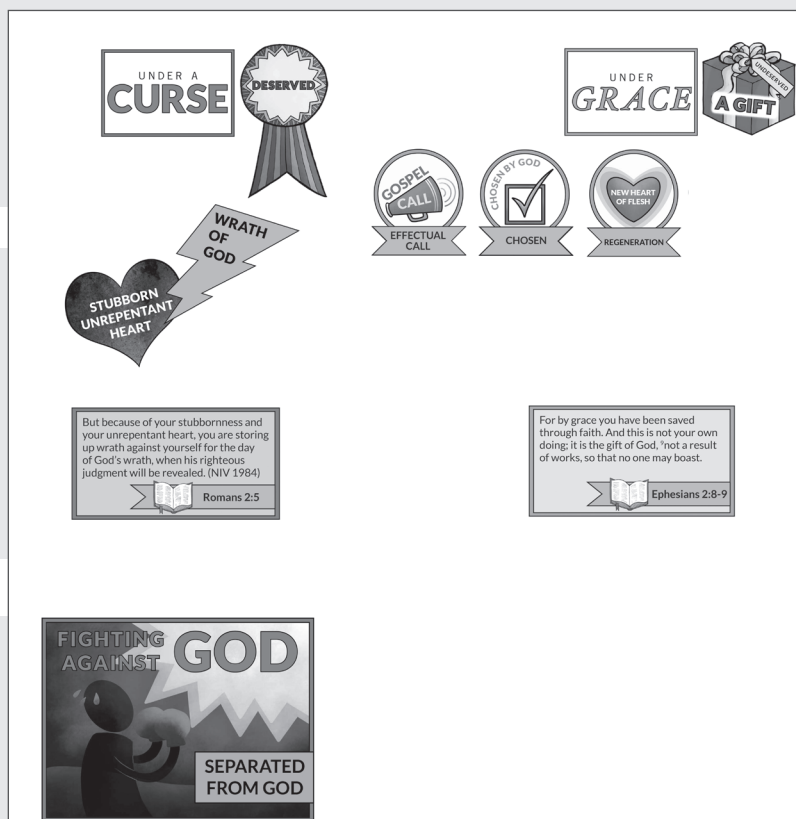
[Add the **New Heart** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**. See the diagram to the right for placement.)<sup>4</sup>

? Why do you think the Bible calls our hearts a “heart of stone”?

[because they are hard—stubborn and rebellious]

? What is a “heart of flesh”?

[a soft heart—one that is not stubborn and rebellious and does not resist God; a heart that loves God and His ways]



REGENERATION  
VISUAL AND  
STUDENT  
NOTEBOOK

(Add the **Regeneration** visual to the **New Heart** visual the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- When God takes out a heart of stone and gives someone a new heart of flesh, that is called “regeneration.” (See diagram in Lesson 3 of the Student Notebook.)
- Regeneration means to be given new life and to be made new.
- When God gives you a new heart of flesh, you become interested in the things of God. You have new spiritual life. You want to do what is right. You hate sin and grieve when you do sin. You read the Bible and go to church because you want to... not because your parents make you go or just to see your friends...but because you want to know God better.

<sup>4</sup> If the small group will be discussing this section, add the New Heart visual after the discussion.

- You do good works for the right reasons because you have a changed heart. Those truly good works are evidence of a changed heart—they show that God has changed your heart.
- Good works aren't things that you do to try to make your heart right, but they flow from a right heart.<sup>5</sup>
- God's grace has changed you and you are no longer fighting against God.

SALVATION DIAGRAM

(Point to the **Salvation Diagram**, and then end with prayer.)

### Small Group Application

You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.

- *How does it make you feel to know that God knows the hearts of all men?* (You may want to look at 1 Kings 8:39 or Acts 1:24.) *Think about what God sees in your heart.*
- Discuss 1 Chronicles 28:9:

**1 Chronicles 28:9—“And you, Solomon, my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.”**

- *What does “the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought” mean? What could be some wrong motives behind behavior that looks okay? What is the promise in this verse? What is the warning? What does it mean to forsake God?*
- *What does it mean to seek God? Where does the desire to seek God come from? What can you do if you do not have the desire to seek God?*
- *Is there anything you can do to harden your heart? To soften your heart?* (See the note in the Preparation section for a short article by John Piper that should help you as you respond to your students' questions.)
- Discuss 1 Peter 1:23.

**1 Peter 1:23—...you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.**

*What does this verse tell you about how we are born again (receive a heart of flesh)? How often are you reading or hearing God's Word? What specific things can you do to hear God's Word more often? Explain the difference between hearing God's Word and truly taking it into your heart. What should you do to not only hear but accept and act on God's Word? Give an example.*

- Read and discuss the following verse:

<sup>5</sup> You may want to remind the students of the baking soda and vinegar illustration from Lesson 2. You may even want to repeat it if there is time, making the point that genuine good works flow out from a heart of flesh.

**1 John 3:9—No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.**

- Has God given you a new heart? Can you tell us about that?
- Does having a right heart mean we never do wrong things or desire wrong things? [Explain the difference between perfection and direction to the students. God expects His children to be going in the right direction, but we do not obtain perfection until we get to heaven.]
- Read and discuss the quotes in the Student Notebook:

*Every part of us is affected by regeneration.—Wayne Grudem<sup>6</sup>*

*God is the decisive cause of unhardening my heart, but my acting is a real, essential part of the miracle taking place.—John Piper<sup>7</sup>*

- Answer Key for the Student Notebook:

Only God can change a rebellious heart. When you receive a new heart of flesh you are born again into new spiritual life marked by a love for God and his Word and a hatred for sin.

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 4.

### 2. Hearts of Mankind Collage

Cut out magazine pictures to make a collage of people. Label it, “You Only Know the Hearts of All the Children of Mankind (1 Kings 8:39b).”

### 3. New Heart Testimony

Have someone share his testimony of how God gave him a new heart.

### 4. Good Actions Game

Divide the class into small teams (each no more than five students). Draw a heart on the floor with chalk about two to three feet in diameter for each team. (The width of the heart will be determined by the surface on which the students are playing. You may need to experiment in order to determine the correct distance.) Then draw a circle around the heart about a foot from the heart. Place 10 marbles inside the heart. These will be called “actions.” Using a larger marble (shooter), players take turns trying to shoot the “actions” (marbles) out from the heart. The shooter can be placed at any spot outside the heart and is shot by flicking it with the thumb. A player plays as long as he knocks the “actions” (marbles) out of the heart. If he hits an “action” (marble), and it remains in the heart (or if he doesn’t hit any of the action marbles), his turn is over and a player from the next

<sup>6</sup> Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994), 701.

<sup>7</sup> Piper, John. “How Can I Soften My Own Heart?,” from the “Ask Pastor John” podcast, episode 935, posted September 9, 2016, copyright Desiring God Foundation. For a complete written transcript and audio, see [www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org).

team takes a turn. A team receives a point for every “good action” that comes from the heart. A “good action” is one that comes from the heart and lands within the circle. When all the “actions” have been knocked from the heart, all the players can shoot the “actions” back into the heart but no points are awarded, as “actions” cannot change the heart. (All the players shoot at the same time to put the marbles back in the heart if you have enough shooters.) The game continues with players taking turns until all players have had a turn. The team with the most points wins.

## **5. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

## **6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 4 (for each student)



# Conversion—Faith and Repentance

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Conversion is turning toward Christ and away from sin.**
- **Conversion involves faith and repentance.**
- **Faith encompasses the mind, heart, and will.**
- **The Bible warns us to examine our hearts and see if we truly are Christians.**

## KEY VERSE

*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.—Hebrews 11:6*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Mark 1:14-15
- 2) Hebrews 11:6
- 3) Matthew 15:8
- 4) 2 Corinthians 13:5
- 5) (Isaiah 55:6)
- 6) (Romans 10:13)
- 7) (Psalm 86:11)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- **U-Turn (5A)**
- Salvation Diagram (see Preparation):
  - › Conversion (5B)
  - › I Give Up (5C)
  - › Faith (5D)
  - › Repentance (5F)
- **Repentance Definition (5E)**
- Parent Page for Lesson 5 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Salvation Diagram (from previous lessons)
- Tape
- Whiteboard and markers
- Container of milk
- Chocolate syrup
- Glass
- Spoon
- \$1 bill
- Magnifying glass

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Gospel Aid Booklet or Cards

- For each student:
- › Gospel Aid (OA-5A and OA-5B)
  - › Scissors
  - › Pencil/pen
  - › Markers
  - › Optional for booklet: Stapler and staples or other method of binding the booklet

### 3. U-Turn Game

- › No materials required for this activity.

### 4. Testimony

- › Arrange for someone to give his testimony, or be interviewed by the class.

### 5. Ee-Taow Video

- › Equipment to show the video to the class from the internet

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

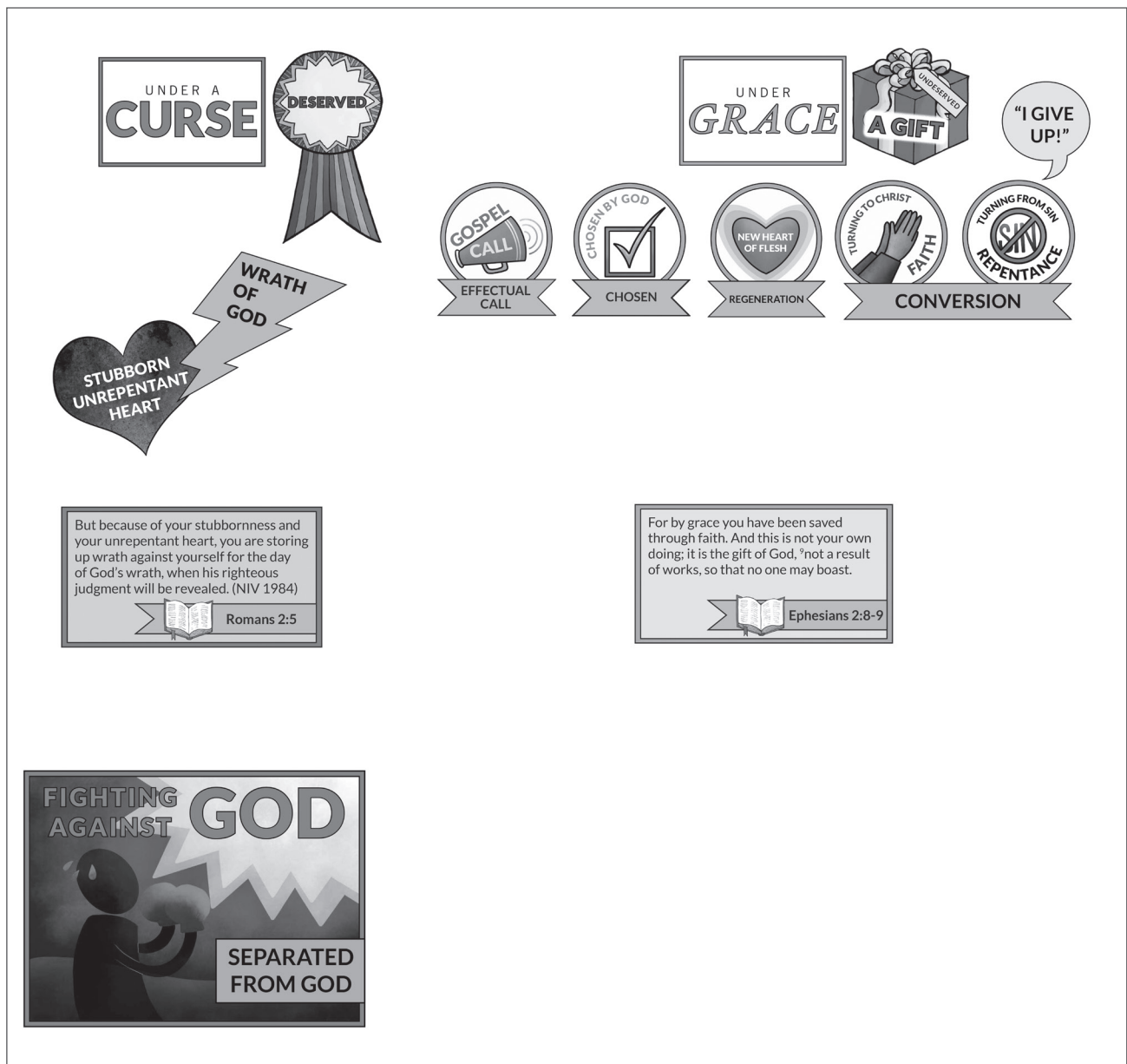
- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.

## Conversion—Faith and Repentance

- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Note:** If you do not have time in class to do the “Gospel Aid” project in the Optional Activities section, you may want to send the **Gospel Aid** handouts home and encourage the students to share the message with someone this week.
- **Salvation Diagram**—You will continue to cut out pieces to add during the lesson as you have since Lesson 3. The students will also continue to complete their own version of the diagram in Lesson 3 of the Student Notebooks. The classroom Salvation Diagram should look as follows after adding the pieces for this lesson.



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....



(Display the **U-Turn** visual.)

*What does this sign mean?* [to turn around]

*When you make a u-turn, you are changing direction. You were going one way in your car, but you turn and go another way.*

### Conversion is a Spiritual Change of Direction

- A person can make a spiritual u-turn, too.

WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS

(Write the words SIN, ME, and GOD/CHRIST on the **whiteboard** in this order with a space for an arrow between each word.)

**SIN                      ME                      GOD/CHRIST**

- We have already learned that all of us are born running away from God and running toward sin.

(Draw an arrow from ME to SIN.)

**SIN ←                      ME                      GOD/CHRIST**

- But when God gives a person a new heart, he makes a spiritual u-turn.

(Continue the arrow from ME, making it into a u-turn and draw the arrow to point at GOD/CHRIST.)

**SIN ←                      ME                      GOD/CHRIST**

CONVERSION  
VISUAL, SALVATION  
DIAGRAM, AND TAPE

(Add the **Conversion** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**, referencing the lesson introduction for help with placement.)

STUDENT  
NOTEBOOKS

- He changes direction and turns toward Christ and away from sin. This is called conversion. (See Student Notebook.)
- Conversion is when a person makes a spiritual change in direction, turning from fighting against God and running away from Him to turning toward God.

I GIVE UP VISUAL,  
TAPE, AND  
SALVATION DIAGRAM

(Add the **I Give Up** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**, referencing the diagram in the introduction.)

STUDENT  
NOTEBOOKS

*In conversion, a person's mind, heart, and will says, "I GIVE UP!"*  
(See Student Notebook.)

*"God has won the battle for my soul. I give up on setting the course for my life and doing things my way. I give up on trying to earn my way to heaven or thinking that my works could be good enough that I would deserve the favor of God. I give up on loving the world and the things of the world. I give up depending on myself, and instead I am depending on God. I know that I cannot get to heaven on my own, and that I cannot be right before God on my own." He is no longer fighting against God, but instead has joined the fight of faith.*

*Conversion involves two activities or actions...or we could say two "ingredients."*

### Illustration.....

MILK, CHOCOLATE  
SYRUP, GLASS, AND  
SPOON

(Use the **milk**, **chocolate syrup**, **glass**, and **spoon** for the following demonstration, starting by holding up the milk.)

*Is this chocolate milk?*

(Hold up the **chocolate syrup**.)

*Is this chocolate milk?*

(Pour the **milk** and **chocolate** into the **glass** at the same time. Then stir them together.)

*Milk and chocolate together make chocolate milk. Milk alone doesn't make chocolate milk...and chocolate alone doesn't make chocolate milk. Both are necessary for chocolate milk.*

*Just as chocolate milk requires two ingredients, so conversion involves two different "ingredients" or actions—faith and repentance.*

*This is what Jesus proclaimed when He came.*

(Have a Sword Drill with Mark 1:14-15.)

**Mark 1:14-15—Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God,<sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."**

## Faith

❓ *What is faith?* [believing in Jesus, trusting in Jesus' payment for sin]

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse, or look it up and discuss it in small groups.)

**Hebrews 11:6—*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.***

❓ *In your own words, what does this verse say we must we believe?* [that there is a God, that God is real; that you will receive a blessing or reward when you seek Him]

- Faith is more than knowing about God. The Bible says that even the demons believe in God—they believe that God exists.
- Saving faith involves the heart, the mind, and the will.
- Your mind must understand the facts of the gospel—that God is holy, and we are not; that our sin condemns us, and we can't fix our sin problem; that Jesus died to solve our sin problem by taking our punishment.<sup>1</sup>

*But believing in your head is not enough.*

(Have Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**Matthew 15:8—*“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;”***

*Jesus is talking about people who believed in God in their heads. But in their hearts they were not honoring Him. They did not trust or treasure God. It is very easy for children growing up in Christian homes to know about God, but not know Him personally or trust Him.*

- After your mind understands the facts of the gospel, your heart must approve or agree with the facts.<sup>2</sup> Faith is more than just knowing about what the Bible says; it is agreeing in your heart that it is true and it matters to you.
- Your will must personally trust in Jesus as your Savior.
- Faith is trusting in and depending on God—not just agreeing with facts about God, but a heartfelt coming to Jesus and trusting in His character (trusting in who He is), and depending on what He offers (salvation, heaven, His strength, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994), 712.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> “[Faith] is not a simple mental assent to facts... It is a heartfelt coming to Christ and resting in him for what he is and what he offers.”—John Piper, from his book *The Pleasures of God*. (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah, 1991), 288.

- Faith is believing that God is who He says He is, and that He will do what He says He will do. It is trusting in God to solve the sin problem, rather than trusting in yourself. It is saying, “Jesus, I entrust my whole self to you.”
- Faith is what happens in the heart so that it no longer fights against God, but instead is drawn to God.

FAITH VISUAL, TAPE,  
AND SALVATION  
DIAGRAM,

(Add the **Faith** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**, referencing the lesson’s introduction, as needed for placement.)

- Faith is turning to Christ.

## Repentance

❓ *What is repentance?* [turning away from sin]

*Repentance is more than just feeling sorry that you have sinned.*

Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.

(Hand the **Repentance Definition** visual to a student and ask him to read it two times.)

**Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.<sup>4</sup>**

❓ *Using the mind, heart, and the will, explain what repentance is.* (Answers may vary.)

- Mind—understanding that sin is wrong.<sup>5</sup>
- Heart—heartfelt agreement with the Bible’s teaching; sorrow for sin and hatred of it.<sup>6</sup>
- Will—a turning away from sin; forsaking sin and living in obedience to Christ.<sup>7</sup>

REPENTANCE VISUAL

(Add the **Repentance** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**, which should now look like the diagram shown in the introduction of this lesson.)

*Repentance is turning away from sin.*

❓ *Where do you see this in Zacchaeus’ life?* [He gave back four times as much money as he had stolen.]

4 Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994), 713.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

## Examine Yourself

### Illustration.....

*\$1 BILL AND  
MAGNIFYING GLASS*

(Call a student to the front and give him a **\$1 bill**. Tell him to look at it and describe it to you. Then give him a **magnifying glass** and ask him to describe it again.)

*Why did you notice more the second time than you did the first time? We notice things when we look more closely than we do at first glance.*

.....

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**2 Corinthians 13:5—Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!**

*Paul is warning us to examine our hearts to see if we truly are Christians. Many people think they are Christians, but they really aren't. A person who has continual, habitual sin in his life with little feeling of remorse (sadness over sin) and little evidence of change may not be a Christian. This person can say that he is a Christian and might even think that he is a Christian, but there is no evidence of saving faith in his life.*

*Just as we noticed something about the dollar when we examined it more closely, we may notice something about ourselves when we examine ourselves. We should ask, "Do I have a stubborn and unrepentant heart? Do I love the things of God, or do I love the things of the world? Do I want to follow God, or do I want to do things my own way? Do I depend on myself, or do I depend on God? Am I truly a Christian?"*

(End with prayer asking God to show each student whether he is still fighting against God, or if he is fighting the fight of faith.)

## Small Group Application

You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.

- Discuss the following verse:

**Isaiah 55:6—“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;”**

*What is the warning in this verse? What is implied in the warning? What excuses do people give for not trusting in Jesus as the Savior? What do you think of these excuses? Why?*

- *Do you know that you are a Christian? How do you know? What are the characteristics of those who follow Jesus?*
- *Have you examined your heart? Do you need to examine your heart?*
- Discuss the following verse:

**Romans 10:13—For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

*What is the promise in this verse? Why is this so reassuring? What does it mean to “call on the name of the Lord”?*

- Discuss Psalm 86:11, and then pray for each other using this verse as a guide.

**Psalm 86:11—Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.**

- Discuss the lines from hymn *Rock of Ages* by Augustus M. Toplady in the Student Notebook.

*Not the labor of my hands  
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling...*

How do the words of this hymn reflect faith?



## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 5.

### 2. Gospel Aid Booklet or Cards

Students can create a booklet or cards to review the gospel using the truths below, included on the **Gospel Aid** handouts (two pages). Students may copy the verses and draw illustrations. Encourage them to share the gospel with someone this week using their booklets or cards.

#### Creation

- God is the Creator and Owner of the universe. (Genesis 1:1)
- God is holy and righteous. (Deuteronomy 32:40)

#### Fall

- Every person is born a sinner in rebellion against God. (Romans 3:23)
- The punishment for sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

#### Redemption

- Through His death on the cross, Jesus took the punishment for the sin of those who repent and believe. (Isaiah 53:5-6)
- God is kind to undeserving sinners—He changes hearts of stone and offers the free gift of salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

#### Restoration

- God helps those who have trusted in Christ for salvation to fight the fight of faith and to turn away from sin. (Philippians 2:12-13)
- Jesus has promised eternal life to those who are trusting in Him. (John 3:16)
- Jesus will return some day and restore God's creation, making all things new. (Revelation 21:5)

### 3. U-Turn Game

Divide the class into two teams. Line the teams up facing each other on opposite sides of the room. The goal is for each team to reach the opposite wall (the opposing team's starting line). Signal the teams to begin. Players may tag their opponents as they try to reach their goal. When a player is tagged, he must make a u-turn and run back to his starting line before trying to reach the opposite side again. The team whose players make it to the opponent's starting line wins the game. Remind the players that conversion is making a spiritual u-turn.

#### 4. Testimony

Arrange for someone to share his testimony with the class, or have the students interview the person. If you plan to have the class interview the person, it might be helpful for you to come up with some questions to get them started.

#### 5. Ee-Taow Video

On the internet, find the video *Ee-Taow: The Mouk Story*, the story of the Mouk people responding to the gospel in faith.<sup>8</sup> Due to the length, skip ahead to the part where they realize the significance of Jesus' death and rejoice in salvation. Show this portion to the class.

#### 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

#### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

### Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 5 (for each student)

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8 <https://ethnos360.org/mission-videos-and-mission-photos/ee-taow-the-mouk-story> (accessed 10/5/18)

# Justification and Adoption

## MAIN IDEAS

- God declares those who have faith in Jesus as righteous.
- The only way to be justified before God is through faith in Jesus.
- God adopts as His own those who have been justified.

## KEY VERSE

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*  
—Romans 8:1

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Romans 3:22-24 (NIV 1984)
- 2) Galatians 2:16
- 3) Romans 8:1
- 4) John 1:12



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Unrighteous (6A)
- Salvation Diagram (see Preparation):
  - › Declared Righteous (6B)
  - › Justification (6C)
  - › Declared a Son and Heir (6I)
  - › Adoption (6J)
- Romans 3:22-24 (6D)
- Faith/Justification (6E, see Preparation)
- Sin (6F)
- Faith (6G)
- Cross (6H)
- Parent Page for Lesson 6 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Salvation Diagram (from previous lessons)
- Paperclips or tape
- Marriage license
- Sticky note
- Whiteboard and markers
- Empty wallet
- Tape

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Justification Document

- For each student:
- › Paper
  - › Pencil/pen
  - › Markers
  - › Sticker (to seal the document)

### 3. Adoption Document

- For each student:
- › Paper
  - › Pencil/pen
  - › Markers
  - › Sticker (to seal the document)

### 4. Court of Heaven Role Play

- › No materials required for this activity.

### 5. Judgment Seat Tag

- › Righteous or Unrighteous Cards (OA-6, see Optional Activities section to determine how many cards to print and cut out)

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.

## Justification and Adoption

- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Salvation Diagram**—You will continue to cut out pieces and add visuals to the Salvation Diagram started in Lesson 3. To save time during the lesson, you could attach the **Declared Righteous** and **Justification** visuals together, as well as the **Declared a Son and Heir** and **Adoption** visuals before class. The students will also continue to complete their own version of the diagram in Lesson 3 of the Student Notebooks. Here is how the classroom diagram should look at the end of this lesson.



- **Faith/Justification**—Cut out the **Faith/Justification** visual. Then fold the blank part up to cover the word JUSTIFICATION, and paperclip or tape up the folded part.
- This lesson has many examples and illustrations to help the students to understand justification. You may need to omit some of the illustrations if the lesson seems too long for your students. Choose those you feel will best help your students to understand this complex but crucial theological concept. If you do opening exercises or worship, may want to shorten them this week.
- The doctrine of adoption has only been briefly mentioned. Though it is a fairly easy concept to understand, it is still a glorious truth. You may want to focus on adoption during the Small Group Application time.
- For a clear explanation of justification, see the section on Justification in the Appendix from *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

#### MARRIAGE LICENSE

(Display the **marriage license** at the appropriate point.)

*Wearing a veil or a tuxedo, giving a person a ring, even loving a person does not make two people married. This legal document is what makes a man and a woman husband and wife. Once the document is signed by the proper authorities, two unmarried people become married.*

*Although the legal declaration of marriage started with the marriage license, did the relationship begin with the document? Did two strangers just decide to get married? What happened before the marriage ceremony and marriage license?*

*Before the wedding, something happened in the heart of each person. Their hearts were turned toward each other. Then they had the legal ceremony and the legal declaration of marriage. This changed their legal standing. They were no longer single people; they became married people.*

### .....

## Unrighteous and Deserving of Eternal Punishment

*This is the same way it works in salvation. First the heart is turned toward God. God changes a stubborn and unrepentant heart from fighting against Him to trusting in Him. This is the work of God. It is undeserved and cannot be earned. A changed heart that has faith in Jesus Christ is a gift from God.*

*Before faith, a person is far from God, lost in his sin, and deserving of eternal punishment for his sin. He is guilty before God. He has broken God's law and cannot save himself.*

### Illustration.....

*Suppose you want to go skating in a rink, and the admission costs \$4.25. Can you get in if you only have the 25 cents?...What if you have really nice skates? Will the manager let you in if you have 25 cents, really nice skates, and a pack of gum? If you don't meet the qualifications, if you don't "have what it takes," you cannot get into the rink.*

*This is an unbeliever's state before God. He does not "have what it takes" to enter heaven.*

## Declared Righteous Through Faith in Jesus

- An unbeliever is not qualified to go to heaven and live eternally. He is qualified only for the wrath of God because he is guilty of breaking God’s law. He cannot save himself.
- After God changes a person’s stubborn and unrepentant heart and gives him a heart of faith, God changes that person’s legal standing.
- God declares the person “not guilty,” and perfectly righteous.

UNRIGHTEOUS  
VISUAL AND STICKY  
NOTE

(Display the **Unrighteous** visual.)

- God changes a person’s legal standing from unrighteous—guilty of breaking God’s law—to righteous.

(Change the **Unrighteous** visual into a “Righteous” visual by covering the prefix “un” with a **sticky note**.)

- God sees that person’s sins as forgiven and accepts Jesus’ death as the payment for his sins.

DECLARED  
RIGHTEOUS AND  
JUSTIFICATION  
VISUALS, TAPE, AND  
SALVATION DIAGRAM

(Add the **Declared Righteous** and **Justification** visuals to the **Salvation Diagram**. See the diagram in the introduction of this lesson for placement, as needed.)

STUDENT  
NOTEBOOKS

- The righteousness of Jesus becomes the righteousness of the person who trusts in Jesus. This is called justification. (See Student Notebook.)
- Justification is God seeing and declaring a person right before Him.
- He now has a right standing before God by trusting in Jesus’ work on the cross to pay for his sins rather than trusting in his own efforts.
- He is no longer under the wrath of God, but has been freed from punishment! He is now able to stand before a holy God.

### Illustrations.....

(Give one or both of the following two examples to help students to understand what it means when we are justified and declared righteous.)

### Math<sup>1</sup>.....

OPTIONAL:  
WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS

*This is like math. When we are justified, two things happen—one is a subtraction and one is an addition. Our guilt before God is subtracted. The penalty for our sin is paid and taken away. An addition is also made—perfect law-keeping is added*

<sup>1</sup> You may want to illustrate this example on the whiteboard using a subtraction sign and the word “guilt,” and an addition sign and the words “perfect law keeping.”

*or given to us. Even though we have broken the law, our standing before God is as a perfect keeper of God's law.*

## Test<sup>2</sup> .....

OPTIONAL (SEE  
FOOTNOTE):  
WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS AND/OR  
EXTRA COPIES OF  
THE ROMANS 3:22-  
24 VISUAL

*Another way to think about it is that it is like a test. Our test is full of wrong answers. Jesus erases all the wrong answers—He erases our sins. But He does more than that. He writes the right answers in their place—He gives us perfect law-keeping. Jesus declares us righteous before God.*

.....

*Let's see how a person receives this righteousness.*

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.—Romans 3:22-24 (NIV 1984)

(Hand the **Romans 3:22-24** visual to a student to read.)<sup>3</sup>

**Romans 3:22-24—This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (NIV 1984)**

? Who is a sinner? [everyone]

? Where does righteousness come from? [God]

? How does this righteousness come to sinners? [through faith in Jesus]

? What is the cost to sinners for this righteousness? [nothing; it is free]

? What was the cost to God for the righteousness of sinners? [the death of His Son Jesus on the cross]

? Who is justified? [those to whom God has extended His grace and who have faith in Jesus]

<sup>2</sup> You may want to illustrate this using the whiteboard or a "math test"—the wrong answers are erased and the right ones inserted. Another way to illustrate this is to imagine that we take a test to get into heaven. God requires perfection so we must get 100 percent on the test. But all people fail the test. Jesus is the only one who lived a sinless life and scored 100 percent on the test. If we trust in Jesus, He takes His perfect test and writes our names on it, and He takes our tests and writes His name on it. When God looks at our test, He sees us as perfect. Jesus the righteous makes the unrighteous righteous.

<sup>3</sup> If you are reading and discussing this in small groups, make sure every group has a card. Write the questions on the whiteboard, or print them if your small group leaders don't have Teacher's Guide.

## Faith in Jesus Alone is the Only Means of Justification

### Illustration.....

(Call three students to the front. Tell two of them that they are going to play a game of “evens and odds.” Assign one student to be “even” and one to be “odd.” Explain that they are each to make a fist. Then, at the count of three, each student is to extend one to five fingers. The extended fingers are added and if the total is even, the “even student” receives a point and vice versa. Continue in the same manner until someone gets four points. A third student should be instructed to also extend his fingers at the count of three as well. However, since he is not playing with anyone, he will not receive any points. Start by pointing to the third student.)

*Why didn't this student get any points? [he had no one to play with] He wasn't even in the game. He can try and try, but he will never have enough points to win the game because he can't even get points. A person has to be in the game to get points.*

*This is how it is with a person who is relying on good works—going to church, being nice or not stealing—or a person who is relying on his parents' faith and his Christian background to be right before God. He is like the student trying to get points when he isn't even in the game. He can try to win, but he will never win the game.*

*A person who is relying on good works can try and try, but he will never gain God's favor through his good works or by trying to do what is right. Relying on good works is as useless as trying to win a game that you are playing by yourself. It isn't going to work.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

***Galatians 2:16—yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.***

- There is only one way to be justified before God.

FAITH/  
JUSTIFICATION  
VISUAL

(Display the folded **Faith/Justification** visual with only the Faith side showing.)

- God places faith in our hearts...

(Fold down the **Faith/Justification** visual to reveal the word Justification.)



- and then He declares us righteous before Him; He justifies us.
- Justification only comes through faith in Jesus alone.

### Illustration.....

(Act out the following role play with a student.)

*Suppose you asked me for \$5. So I pulled out my wallet and opened it.*

EMPTY WALLET

(Open the **empty wallet**, showing the student the contents of the wallet.)

*Would I be able to help you? Could I give you \$5? Why not? I cannot give you something I do not have.*

*Can I give you righteousness? Why not? I cannot give you righteousness because I have no righteous of my own. I can't give you what I don't have. Who is the only person who can give you righteousness? Why? Only Jesus can declare us righteous before God by giving us His righteousness.*

*God sees only those who are trusting in Jesus as righteous. He does not punish believers for their sins because He sees them through Jesus as without sin and as possessing Jesus' righteousness. So the Bible says there is no punishment for those trusting in Jesus!*

.....

(Read the following verse.)

**Romans 8:1—There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

### Illustration.....

TAPE AND SIN  
VISUAL

(Call a student to the front. Ask him to **tape** the **Sin** visual to his chest.)

*Before we have faith in Christ, God looks at us and this is what He sees—*

(Point to the **Sin** visual.)

*We are deserving of God's wrath and eternal punishment...but God in His mercy gives those He has called faith to trust in Jesus.*

FAITH VISUAL

(Ask the student to hold the **Faith** visual over the **Sin** visual.)

*Because God has accepted the death of Jesus as the payment for sin, this is what God sees when He looks at this person.*

FAITH VISUALS

(Hold the **Cross** visual over the **Faith** visual.)

*God sees Jesus' payment on the cross and forgives the debt owed for sin. He sees the righteousness of Jesus and gives it to this person. And rather than eternal punishment in hell, this person is promised eternal life with God in heaven.*

## Adoption

*There is another legal status that changes when a person comes to Christ in faith. Not only is he now legally righteous rather than unrighteous, but his legal standing changes from being a slave to sin to being a child of God, an heir of eternal life.*

(Have a Sword Drill with John 1:12.)

***John 1:12—But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,***

ADOPTION VISUAL,  
TAPE, SALVATION  
DIAGRAM

(Add the **Declared a Son and Heir** and **Adoption** visuals to the **Salvation Diagram**, so that it now looks as shown in the introduction of this lesson.)

*God adopts all who are trusting in Jesus into His own family. We become His children. This is called adoption. (See Student Notebook.)*

*You can become a child of God through faith in Jesus.*

(End with prayer.)

## Small Group Application

You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.

- *Are you afraid of punishment from God? Why or why not?*
- *What are some things that people trust in for favor from God? Do you ever trust in any of these things to be right before God?*
- *How can you escape the punishment you deserve for your sins? Are you trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, or are you trusting in your own efforts? How do you know this?*
- *What rights and privileges does an adopted child have? What does this tell you about being adopted by God?*

- Discuss the adoption quote in the Student Notebook:

*Who is to have authority in the matter of gracious adoption? The children of wrath? Surely not; and yet all men are such! No, it stands to reason, to common sense, that none but the parent can have the discretion to adopt.*

—Charles Spurgeon

- *Why does God have the right to adopt whom He chooses? What do you think about this? What does this tell you about your heart? (If a student thinks God is being unfair, he does not understand God's ownership and sovereign rights over His creation. This shows a judgmental attitude toward God rather than trust in His authority, wisdom, and goodness. A heart that trusts God does not always understand why God does what He does, but recognizes God's superior wisdom and goodness, and honors His authority.)*
- You may want to have a time of thanking God for declaring those who trust in Him as right before Him.
- Here are a few sample sentences for the JUSTIFICATION activity in the Student Notebook:
  - J—Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins.
  - U—Understanding about God is not enough.
  - S—Salvation comes through faith in Jesus.
  - T—The way to God is through faith alone.
  - I—If a person tries and tries, and does all kinds of good works, he still cannot earn his way to heaven.
  - F—"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus."

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 6.

### 2. Justification Document

Students may want to make a legal-looking document containing the following words (or something similar): "JUSTIFICATION," and "Man is declared justified before God through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22-24)." Students can add a fancy border and attach a sticker to seal the document.

### 3. Adoption Document

Students may want to make a legal-looking document to function as an adoption document, containing the following words (or something similar): "ADOPTION," and "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (John 1:12)." Students can add a fancy border and attach a sticker to seal the document.

### 4. Court of Heaven Role Play

Role play an imagined “court scene” in heaven with at least the following key players: God, the Judge of the Whole Earth; Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith and our defense attorney; and a sinner. You could enact the scene using other people as well (a court reporter, bailiff, etc.). The scene could be played both from the perspective of a sinner who has put his faith in Jesus, and from the perspective of a sinner who has not put his faith in Jesus.

### 5. Judgment Seat Tag

Explain that you are the judge. Choose two students to tag the others. Give one the **Unrighteous** card, and one the **Righteous** card. They should each put a card into their pocket without allowing the other students to see which card they have. These two students will be your taggers. They will tag the other students and bring them to you (designate a spot for students from tagger 1 versus students from tagger 2). The game continues until all the students have been tagged and are standing before you as the judge. Then, ask the two taggers to take the cards out of their pockets and read them. You as the judge then declare all the students who have been tagged by the student with the Righteous card to be not guilty or righteous. Explain that this is like Jesus standing for us at the Judgment. Then, declare all the students who have been tagged by the student with the Unrighteous card to be guilty or unrighteous. Explain that this is like being before God with only Satan, the accuser, as our defense. The verdict of guilty/unrighteous cannot be changed, and condemnation is the result. The game can be played again by choosing two different students as the next taggers. (You may want to tell the students that, in real life, there is no second chance.)

**Variation:** Instead of ending the game as described above, designate someone to be Jesus and give that person a number of Righteous cards. Those who are tagged guilty (by being given an Unrighteous card) may go to exchange signs with Jesus. He takes on their guilt; they take on His righteousness.

You may want to end the game by discussing 2 Corinthians 5:21.

### 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 6 (for each student)

# The Battle Isn't Over—Sanctification

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Christians are in a spiritual battle; the battle for faith and against sin does not end at salvation.**
- **God fights the battle with us; God is working to keep His children persevering in faith.**
- **God will complete His work in His children; God is true to His promise to complete His work in us because His reputation is at stake.**

## KEY VERSES

*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*  
—Philippians 2:12b-13

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Philippians 2:12-13
- 2) Philippians 1:6
- 3) (Hebrews 3:14)
- 4) (1 Corinthians 1:8-9, NIV 1984)
- 5) (Psalm 86:11)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Salvation Diagram (see Preparation):
  - › Fighting Against Sin (7A)
  - › Before Salvation (7B)
  - › After Salvation (7C)
  - › Fight of Faith (7D)
  - › Sanctification (7E)
  - › Never Give Up! (7F)
- Parent Page for Lesson 7 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Salvation Diagram (from previous lessons)
- Tape
- A piece of sports equipment (e.g., baseball hat, basketball)
- A musical instrument or music book
- Optional: Chaise lounge
- Crown (and anything else that would signify kingship, such as a robe or scepter)

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Decipher the Code

- › Decipher the Code (OA-7A, for each student)
- › Code Key (OA-7B, for the leader/s)

### 3. Persevering Poems

- For each student or small group:
- › Paper
  - › Pen/pencil

### 4. Fighter Verses App

- For each small group:
- › Mobile device/s with the Fighter Verses App downloaded and installed

### 5. Perseverance Race

- › 36" of rope (for each student)
- › Tape or chalk (to mark the start and finish lines)

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.

- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- You will continue to cut out and add visuals to the Salvation Diagram started in Lesson 3. To save time during the lesson, you could attach the **Fight of Faith** and **Sanctification** visuals together before class. The students will also continue to complete their own version of the diagram in Lesson 3 of the Student Notebooks. At the end of the lesson, the classroom diagram should look as shown below.
- As part of your preparation, read the article “Gift and Grit (In that Order)” by John Piper in the Appendix.





## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

SPORTS EQUIPMENT,  
AND MUSICAL  
INSTRUMENT OR  
BOOK

(Call two students to the front of the room and give one the **piece of sports equipment** and the other the **musical instrument or music book**. Interview them in the following manner, adapting the illustration to fit the equipment you have.)

#### Student with Sports Equipment

*Suppose you were chosen for the [basketball] team. After you got on the team, what did you do? Did you stop practicing? Did you say, "Now that I am on the team, I don't have to practice shooting baskets anymore. I don't have to work on my dribbling or go to practice." During the games, do you sit around eating popcorn and hamburgers and say, "I'm on the team now so I don't need to wear basketball shoes or play in the game"? Why?*

#### Student with Musical Equipment or Music Book

*Suppose you were chosen to be in the school band. Would you say, "Hurray! Now that I am in the band I can throw my [instrument] away"? Would you say, "Now I don't need to practice or bring my music to the band rehearsal because now I am in the band"? Why?*

.....

## The Spiritual Battle Continues

*Just as the work of practicing and playing [basketball] doesn't end when a person joins the [basketball] team, so the work of fighting against sin in your life and fighting for faith doesn't end when a person is saved. Just as the work of practicing and playing the [instrument] doesn't end when a person gets in the band, so the work of fighting against sin in your life and fighting for faith doesn't end when a person is saved.*

*CHAISE LOUNGE* (Optional: Sit in the **chaise lounge** at this point to dramatize what you're saying.)

*When a person becomes a Christian he can't say, "Well, now I did that. Now I don't have to fight against sin or fight for faith. I can just relax and take it easy. I don't need to read the Bible or pray because I am already saved. Now Satan will leave me alone because I am a Christian. He won't tempt me to sin because I'm saved. Now that I have a new heart, I can't sin. So I don't need to fight against sin."*

- Before salvation, a person fights against God. That is a battle that can never be won, and the result is condemnation in hell.
- (Point to the **Fighting Against God** visual in the **Salvation Diagram**, referring to the completed diagram in the introduction, as needed, for this and the pieces that follow on this page and the next.)

FIGHTING AGAINST  
SIN, BEFORE  
SALVATION, AND  
AFTER SALVATION,  
VISUALS, SALVATION  
DIAGRAM, TAPE,  
AND STUDENT  
NOTEBOOKS

(Tape the **Fighting Against Sin** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- However, Christians are still in a fight. Now they are fighting for faith. (See Student Notebook.)

(Tape the **Before Salvation** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- However, even though Christians have new hearts, they still have a sinful nature that must be battled. Their new nature battles against the old nature. So they are fighting for faith and against sin. (See Student Notebook.)

(Tape the **After Salvation** visual to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- As Christians, they still have battles to win against Satan and their sinful nature. But after salvation, God works in Christians to help them fight the fight of faith.
- Christians need to fight the fight of faith all their lives. Christians are still tempted to sin and still battle against sinful thoughts and a heart that, at times, wants to sin. But they battle because they hate sin.
- Satan tries to make Christians give up on faith. He tries to make Christians quit trusting God and doubt God's Word and His promises.

## God Fights the Battle with His Children

*Paul describes this battle as “working out our salvation.”*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses, or discuss them in the small groups.)

***Philippians 2:12-13—Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.***

❓ *What does it mean to “work out your own salvation”? We learned that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works, so how can we “work out” our own salvation? [we are saved by faith, but fighting sin and persevering in faith is a sign or an indication that we are saved; though we are saved by faith, we still have to fight for our faith, which shows our faith is genuine]*



? What does Paul show us by using the words “fear and trembling”? [this is a very important battle; it is serious business]

? What is the promise in this verse? [God works in His children helping them to fight the battle.]

- If you are a child of God, God Himself works in your heart to give you the desires and the determination to fight for your faith and to fight against sin.
- Satan will battle against us, but if you are a child of God, God will help you persevere and keep trusting in Jesus until the end of your life. God will give you the determination and a heart to stand firm in your faith.

FIGHT OF FAITH AND  
SANCTIFICATION  
VISUALS, TAPE,  
AND STUDENT  
NOTEBOOKS

(Tape the **Fight of Faith** and **Sanctification** visuals to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

- God will help you to fight sin and to become more like His Son. This is called sanctification. (See Student Notebook.)

*Then any good work you do is not an effort to gain God's favor; but it is the result of the gracious work of God in your life, a way of reflecting a new heart, showing what is in the new heart God has given you.*

## God Will Complete His Work in His Children

*There is something very important to remember about fighting sin and fighting for faith.*

NEVER GIVE UP!  
VISUAL

(Hand the **Never Give Up!** visual to a student and ask him to read it. Indicate where he should **tape** it to the **Salvation Diagram**.)

Never give up! *This is a battle we cannot give up!* (See Student Notebook.)

*Christians have a great promise from God that should encourage us in the fight of faith. For those saved by grace, God does not give up in the fight for our faith. He does not just help for a little while and then decide that He is tired of helping us fight the fight of faith, or that we aren't worth fighting for, or that there are too many other people to help fight the fight of faith and so He has to let us go. God has given a promise about this to His children.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

***Philippians 1:6—And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.***

? How long will God fight for the faith of His children? [until Jesus returns—He will finish His work of sanctification]

Illustration.....

CROWN AND ANY  
OTHER SYMBOLS OF  
KINGSHIP

(Carefully choose a student to dress as a king, using the **crown and any other props** that signifies kingship. Give the following illustration.)

*If these things were real*

(Point to the **crown and any other props**.)

*what would they signify about this person? [he is a king] They would be a sign or an indication that he is a king.*

*What if he only wore them for a short time—like in a play? Would they be a sign that he is a king? But if he wore them his whole life until he died, what would they show?*

*Just as a king's crown worn until death is a sign that a man is truly a king, so persevering in faith is a sign that you are truly saved. If a person is not fighting for his faith, there may not be any faith to fight for. If a person is not persevering in faith, then he may not be saved. But if a person is truly a Christian, he will fight the fight of faith until he dies. He will persevere in faith until the end of his life.*

❓ *Why does God fight the fight of faith with His children? (Answers may vary.)*

Illustration.....

MUSICAL  
INSTRUMENT OR  
BOOK

(Display the **musical instrument or music book** again.)

*Suppose I tell you that I am a famous [violinist]. Not only am I famous for how well I play the [violin], but I am also known the world over for being an outstanding [violin] teacher. My teaching methods are extraordinary. I care that my students learn to play well. I watch diligently over their techniques. I make sure they hold their instrument correctly and play it correctly.*

*If you were my student and you were holding your [bow] incorrectly, do you think that I would show you the right way to hold it? Would I help you to get the “feel” for the music and show you how to express that feeling on your instrument? If you did not practice, what would I do?*

*A good teacher helps a student become familiar with his instrument. A good teacher helps a student express the music well. A good teacher encourages his student to practice. Would I want a student who didn't hold the instrument correctly, play the music well, or didn't practice to brag that I was their teacher?*

*Why not? What would you think of me as a teacher if my student played poorly?  
What would you think of me if my student played well?*

*God has said that He will continue His work in His children until the end—that He will not give up. He will complete His work in us. He will keep us faithful to Him and fighting the fight of faith. What would it say about God if someone who is truly a child of God did not persevere in faith?*

*God's reputation is more important to Him than a [violin teacher's] reputation is to the [violin teacher]. God will keep our faith until the end because God cares about His reputation. God is who He says He is, and God will prove that He is great by keeping His children fighting the fight of faith and completing His work in us. God will keep us faithful because our faithfulness shows His greatness and worth—His glory. We do not need to worry that God will give up on someone who is truly His child. God is a great God. He has said that He is at work in us. When we fight the fight of faith, it shows that a great God is at work in us.*

(End with prayer.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *What does relaxing in the fight of faith look like? What does seriously fighting the fight of faith look like? What are we to fight against, exactly? What are we to fight for?*
- *Are you fighting the fight of faith? Are you taking the fight of faith seriously, or are you trying to coast and take it easy?*
- *How can you tell if you are persevering in faith? What are the consequences of not persevering in faith?*
- Read and discuss one of the following Scripture passages:

***Hebrews 3:14—For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.***

***1 Corinthians 1:8-9—He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. (NIV 1984)***

*Look at the connection between verses 8 and 9—that God will keep you strong to the end because He is faithful. If this is a work of God, why do you need to work out your salvation. Why do you need to fight?*

- *How do you want to fight the fight of faith? What can you do to fight the fight more seriously?*

- Discuss Psalm 86:11 and then pray for each other using this verse as a guide.

***Psalm 86:11—Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.***

- Discuss the quote by John Piper in the Student Notebook:

*What God creates in the new birth is not a sinless Christian, but a sin fighter.*

*—John Piper<sup>1</sup>*

- The Student Notebook invites students to come up with their own illustration/s of Christian life. Give them time to think of an illustration. If needed, give them some prompts such as, what would the following illustration look like? Have them share their ideas and record them in the Notebook.
  - Football or basketball? [trying to run the football to the end zone with the whole opposing team in front of you; trying to dribble toward your basket while being blocked by all the opposing players]
  - Swimming, walking, running, or biking? [swimming against the current, walking uphill, running against the wind, biking through mud]
  - Lawn mowing? [mowing a field of tall weeds]

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 7.

### 2. Decipher the Code

Students can complete the **Decipher the Code** handout. (There is a **Code Key** for the leaders.)

### 3. Perseverance Poems

Have the students work individually or as a group writing three-line poems, using any rhyming pattern (aaa, aba, abb), encouraging each other to persevere in the fight of faith.

### 4. Fighter Verses App

Explore the Fighter Verses App ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)). Check out the different features, including listening to the verse and/or song, trying the quizzes, and sharing the verse with someone.

### 5. Perseverance Race

Give each student 36" of rope tied into a circle. Line up the students along the starting line, and have them twist the rope into a figure 8 and place one foot into each loop. At the signal, the

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<sup>1</sup> Piper, John. "If I'm Dead to Sin, Why Must I Kill It Every Day?" from the "Ask Pastor John" podcast, episode 924, posted on August 22, 2016, copyright Desiring God Foundation, [www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org).

players race to the designated finish line (and maybe back again). Encourage them to persevere and finish the race. Relate this to persevering in the fight of faith.

## 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

## 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 7 (for each student)



# Be a Fighter!

## MAIN IDEAS

- **We are in a spiritual battle.**
- **All of life is spiritual; every battle we face is a spiritual battle.**
- **We must fight if we are to win the battle.**

## KEY VERSE

*Fight the good fight of the faith.*—1 Timothy 6:12a

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Ephesians 6:10-13
- 2) Acts 20:35b
- 3) Numbers 13-14
- 4) 1 Samuel 17
- 5) Acts 4
- 6) 1 Timothy 6:12a



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Letters (8A, see Preparation)
- **Situation Visuals 1-4** (8B-8E, see Preparation)
- Situation Cards 1-4 (8F-8I, see Preparation)
- Parent Page for Lesson 8 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Paperclip or envelope (for each student, see Preparation)
- Two paddleballs (or any equipment for a contest, see Preparation)
- A large and a small treat (e.g., cookie, candy bar, piece of cake, packs of gum)
- Optional: Whiteboard and markers

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 3. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

### 4. Fight the Battle Game

- › Ball
- › Tape (or something else to serve as a marker)

### 5. Public Battle Ground Project

- › See the Optional Activity section.

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- ➔ Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students

know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

- **Letters**—Prepare enough for each student to have a set. Cut apart the **Letters** visuals, and paperclip each set together (or place each set into an envelope). You could then place the letter pieces under each chair before the students arrive and, at the appropriate time in the lesson, ask them to retrieve a set from under their chairs. (They will be asked to figure out what the letters spell.)
- **Two Paddleballs, or Other Equipment for a Contest**—A simple paddleball contest toy can be made using a paper cup, a 12" piece of string, and two buttons or two metal washers. Attach one end of the string to a button or washer. Make a small hole in the bottom of the cup and thread the free end of the string through the hole from the inside of the cup. Pull the string until the button or washer reaches the bottom of the cup. Attach the free end of the string to the second button or washer. The object of the contest is to see how many times the student can catch the button in the cup.
- **Introduction**—Adapt the illustration to the contest you have chosen. The contest can also be played between two students if you instruct one ahead of time how to intentionally lose the contest. Bring any materials needed to half-heartedly participate. Be sure that you do not drag out this illustration. You merely need to make your point.
- **Lesson Situations**—Decide how you want to handle this part of the lesson and make appropriate preparation to: 1) have a class discussion; or 2) have the students work in groups or pairs and report their findings. If you decide to have a class discussion, you could electronically display the **Situation 1-4 Visuals**, or write them on a whiteboard for the class to read together. If you decide to have the students work in groups or pairs, you could pass out the **Situation 1-4 Cards** (one set per group or pair). If you decide to have the students break into groups or pairs, you may want to discuss the first situation as a big group first.



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

TWO PADDLEBALLS  
OR OTHER  
EQUIPMENT FOR A  
CONTEST

(Call a student to the front of the class and tell him that you would like to have a contest. Explain to him that the object of the **paddleball** contest is to hit the ball with the paddle. The person with the most hits wins the contest. Divide the class in half, one half counting the number of hits for you, and the other half counting the student's hits. Start the contest, setting a timer to end the contest or determining a winning number of hits. While the student tries to win the contest, you should be half-heartedly trying—looking around, scratching your head, taking a drink, talking to someone, sitting down to take a break, etc. When the contest is over, make the following points.)

*Why did [student's name] win instead of me?*

*Concentration, perseverance, and effort are important if you are to win. A winner cannot be half-hearted or passive about the task—you must throw your whole self into winning if you are going to win.*

## We are in a Spiritual Battle

*There is a battle going on around us in which we are a part. It is not a battle that you can see with your eyes—although you may see evidence of that battle. It is not a battle fought with fists and muscles, or even with guns and bombs. It is not a physical battle; it is a spiritual battle, the battle of faith.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses or read and discuss them in the small groups. Ask four students to read the following verses, each reading one verse.)

***Ephesians 6:10—Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.***

***Ephesians 6:11—Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.***

***Ephesians 6:12—For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.***

***Ephesians 6:13—Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.***

? What kind of battle is Paul talking about? Who are we fighting? [spiritual battle; rulers, authorities, powers, spiritual forces]

? What are we supposed to do in this battle? [be strong in the Lord, put on God's armor, take our stand, struggle, stand our ground, do everything]

*Does this sound like looking around, scratching your head, taking a drink, talking to someone or sitting down to take a break? (Mention the distractions from the contest.) This is a battle. In a battle, you fight to win. You ignore distractions and fight because, if you don't, you could lose, be wounded, or die. You cannot "sort of" fight. You cannot watch the battle from the sidelines. You cannot run away at the first sign of trouble. You have to get in there and fight with all of your might.*

*God is fighting this battle with us. But that does not mean that we just take it easy and sit back and rest. If we want to be strong Christians, we must be strong fighters. We must fight hard and resist the enemy with all our might. We must fight against our sinful nature.*

## All of Life is Spiritual

### Illustration.....

TWO TREATS

(Show the **two treats**.)

*Suppose your mom left these two treats for you and your sister. Your sister thinks she should get the big treat, and you think you should get the big treat. So you start to fight.*

*What is the real fight here? Is it you against your sister?*

(Allow the students to give some answers about the real fight. This can be done as a class or in the small groups. Make sure to make the following points.)

- The real fight is not against flesh and blood—two siblings who both want the biggest treat. It is not even just a fight against their own selfishness.
- The real battle is a battle of faith—a battle by faith and a battle for faith.

? What is the battle of faith in this situation? (Answers will vary. Some possibilities are below.)

- Will they trust that God will supply all their needs, and that He will give them all things that are good for them?

- Will they trust that God will not withhold any good thing from them and that if He withholds something, it is for their good?
- Will they trust that God's ways are really best and that Jesus' Word is true: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35b)?

*All of life—everything you face—has a spiritual side. What we see easily is not all that there is. Therefore, we must consider the unseen spiritual side of things.*

(You may also pose the following situations to the students and ask them where the spiritual battle lies. Use either the **Situation Visuals 1-4** or the **Situation Cards 1-4**.)

#### Situation 1

12 spies sent to investigate Canaan  
—Numbers 13-14  
Can we trust God to give us the land?  
Do we believe He will keep His promise?

#### Situation 1

12 spies sent to investigate Canaan—Numbers 13-14

[Can we trust God to give us the land? Do we believe He will keep His promise?]

#### Situation 2

David facing Goliath  
—1 Samuel 17  
Do I believe that God is greater than Goliath?  
Do I believe that God will defend His people?  
Will I trust in the might of man, or the might of God?

#### Situation 2

David facing Goliath—1 Samuel 17

[Do I believe that God is greater than Goliath? Do I believe that God will defend His people? Will I trust in the might of man, or the might of God?]

#### Situation 3

Peter and John before the Sanhedrin  
—Acts 4  
Will I allow fear to overcome me, or will I follow God and trust Him with the results?  
Do I believe that all things work together for the good of God's people—no matter what happens to me?

#### Situation 3

Peter and John before the Sanhedrin—Acts 4

[Will I allow fear to overcome me, or will I follow God and trust Him with the results? Do I believe that all things work together for the good of God's people—no matter what happens to me?]

#### Situation 4

The kids at school are ridiculing you for taking a stand against something you believe is wrong.  
Do I want the approval of other people, or of God?  
Will I trust God to give me the strength to stand up against opposition?  
Will I trust that God's standards are best?

#### Situation 4

The kids at school are ridiculing you for taking a stand on something you believe is wrong.

[Do I want the approval of other people, or of God? Will I trust God to give me the strength to stand up against opposition? Will I trust that God's standards are best?]

## We Must Fight If We Are to Win the Battle

*Paul tells us what to do in all the spiritual battles we face.*

#### LETTERS PIECES FOR EACH STUDENT

(Give the students their **Letters** pieces, or have them retrieve them, if you've put them under their chairs, for example). Ask them to each make a word from their Letters. When they have discovered the word, they should call it out loudly. [fight, fight, fight]

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse. Have the students read it in unison.)

**1 Timothy 6:12a—Fight the good fight of the faith.**

*Does Paul tell us to just hope our spiritual battles will be won? Does he tell us to just watch the battle? Does he tell us to be so afraid of the battle that we are paralyzed and don't know what to do? No! Paul tells us to jump in and FIGHT the battle! He tells us to put on God's armor and take our stand against the devil's schemes. We are to fight with everything in us, not half-heartedly.*

(End with prayer.)

## **Small Group Application**

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *Why is it important to fight for your faith?*
- *What are some battles in your life? What are the spiritual battles behind these battles?*
- *Are you fighting your battles, or are you just coasting along? What does half-hearted fighting look like? What does earnest fighting look like? How are you fighting these battles? Are there any changes you need to make in fighting for faith and against sin?*
- *Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:*

*God never gives strength for tomorrow or for the next hour, but only for the strain of the moment.—Oswald Chambers*

- *You may want to have a time of prayer for each other.*

## **Optional Activities**

Reminder: The Optional Activities are NOT a replacement for the Small Group Application time. Only use them if there is extra class time.

### **1. Student Notebook**

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 8.

### **2. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 3. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

### 4. Fight the Battle Game

Divide the class into two teams facing each other at opposite ends of the room or field. The team with the ball must attempt to carry it to the opposite team's side. They can pass it from player to player, or run with the ball. The opposing team fights against these efforts by tagging the runner with the ball or capturing the ball while it's being passed. When the runner is tagged or the ball is captured, the team that has lost the ball marks the spot where this happened, and the team that now has the ball starts where the marker was placed. When a team is successful at getting the ball to the opposing team's side (by carrying it there or by passing it to a team member), that team earns a point. The team with the most points wins. After playing the game, be sure to talk about how this game is like a spiritual battle. You don't win all at once, but in steps or stages that add up to victory. Satan, our spiritual foe, is always trying to oppose and stop our progress in the faith, etc.

### 5. Public Battleground Project

Choose a public battleground (i.e. abortion) and find a project in which your students can get involved, working with parents.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 8 (for each student)



# Battlegrounds—Unbelief

## MAIN IDEAS

- One battleground in the fight of faith is the battle against unbelief.
- God is faithful and good though we fail.
- Remembering the goodness, faithfulness, and mighty acts of God helps us battle unbelief.

## KEY VERSE

*"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"*  
—Mark 9:24b (NIV 1984)

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Psalm 78:12-29, 32
- 2) Psalm 77:3, 7-9, 11-12
- 3) Psalm 77:16-20
- 4) Hebrews 3:14
- 5) (Mark 9:17-26)



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- **Plagues 1-10** (see Preparation):
  - › Plague 1: Blood (9A)
  - › Plague 2: Frogs (9B)
  - › Plague 3: Lice (9C)
  - › Plague 4: Flies (9D)
  - › Plague 5: Livestock (9E)
  - › Plague 6: Boils (9F)
  - › Plague 7: Hail (9G)
  - › Plague 8: Locusts (9H)
  - › Plague 9: Darkness (9I)
  - › Plague 10: Death of the Firstborn (9J)
- **Crossing the Red Sea** (9K)
- **Cloud by Day** (9L)
- **Fire by Night** (9M)
- **Water from the Rock** (9N)
- **Manna** (9O)
- **Quail** (9P)
- See Preparation:
  - › Israel Grumbles in the Desert (9Q)
  - › People (9R)
- **War Visuals** (see Preparation)
  - › Belief Battleship (9S)
  - › Unbelief Battleship (9T)
  - › Explosion (9U)
- **Remembering Gift** (9V, see Preparation)
- **Parent Page for Lesson 9** (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Mousetrap
- Bait for trap
- See Preparation:
  - › Tape
  - › Aluminum foil
  - › Stapler with staples
- See Preparation:
  - › Box with fist-sized hole
  - › Red posterboard or paper
  - › Optional: Whiteboard and markers
  - › Wrapped present

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 1. Student Notebook**  
For each student:
  - › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen
- 2. Remember the Lord's Deeds Bulletin Board**  
› Materials to create a bulletin board or a mural
- 3. Miraculous Deeds Bookmark**  
For each student
  - › Cardstock
  - › Pencil/pen
- 4. Might Acts of God Game**  
For each team of students:
  - › Paper
  - › Pencil
- 5. Key Verse Game**  
› See Appendix for ideas.
- 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**  
For each student:
  - › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

### PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Plagues 1-10**—Since you will only have a very brief time to display and tape up these visuals, it might be helpful to ask for volunteers to help you during the lesson presentation.
- **Tape**—Prepare pieces of tape before class so that you can quickly use them to tape up the visuals used during the reading of Psalm 78:12-29 during the lesson. You will also need the tape to attach visuals to the large heart (see details below).
- **Box with Hole**—Cut the lid off the box. Cut a fist-sized hole in the end of the box. You will be turning the box upside down to cover the mousetrap. A student will be putting his hand through the hole to grab the mousetrap.
- **Israel Grumbles in the Desert**—Cut along the dotted lines of the door in the **Israel Grumbles in the Desert** visual. Bend the doors back so they will open easily. On the **People** visual, tape a piece of aluminum foil on the rectangle. Place the **Israel Grumbles in the Desert** visual on top of the **People** visual, and staple them together along the left-hand and right-hand edges and in the center between the two doors. This will make a hinged effect. You will want the doors closed for the lesson. You may need to tape the doors shut.
- **Belief and Unbelief Battleships**, and **Explosions**—Cut out **Belief Battleship**, **Unbelief Battleship**, and the three **Explosion** visuals. You may want to laminate these pieces. You will only need one of the Explosion visuals for this lesson. Save the other two for use during future lessons.
- **Large Heart**—Cut a large heart from a piece of red posterboard or paper. You could also just draw a heart on the whiteboard. You will be attaching the **Belief Battleship**, **Unbelief Battleship**, and an **Explosion** visual to it during this lesson, and additional visuals in the lessons to come. You will want to have the Large Heart in place before starting the lesson. Be sure to keep the Large Heart after this lesson, as you will need it again during this study. It would be helpful if you could laminate this visual since you will need to tape other visuals to it, and remove them.
- **Wrapped Present**—Cut out the **Remembering Gift** visual and wrap it in a box as a present. You could wrap the lid separately so the student just needs to lift the top off the box, or you could wrap it so the student would need to tear off the paper.



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

MOUSETRAP, BAIT,  
AND BOX WITH HOLE

(Display the **mousetrap** and **bait**. Explain and demonstrate the process of baiting the trap and how it works to catch a mouse. Place the trap under the **box**, discreetly springing the trap so that it's not set. Then ask a student to put his hand through the hole to get the mousetrap. Or you could ask him to pretend his hand is a mouse going after the bait. When the student hesitates, assure him that "it won't hurt." Continue in this manner, letting the students observe how the student wavers between belief in your words and unbelief as in the example below.)

(**Note:** You may want to start the illustration by asking, "Do you think that I tell you the truth? Do you think that I would hurt you?" When you bait the trap, you might want to touch it gingerly, reinforcing the feeling that the trap can hurt you. Be sure the students do not see you spring the trap. Also, you will not want the student to look in the box. Most will be reluctant to stick their hands in the box. If the student should not show this reluctance, redeem the illustration by saying, "Often, a person will not be sure whether to put his hand in the box...")

TAPE



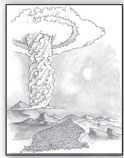
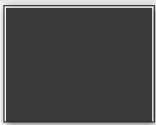
*Go ahead and grab the trap. It won't hurt...Really. It's okay. You won't get hurt...  
Don't you believe me? Just grab the trap. It won't hurt you.*



## The Battle Against Unbelief

*This is often the way we act toward God. We say we believe that He is good, that He can do anything, that He will keep His promises, and that all His purposes are right, but sometimes when we have to act on that belief, we waver. Sometimes we know all those things in our heads, but we are not so convinced that we plunge ahead and act on the belief. In some situations, when our faith is put to the test, we do not come out victorious. We fight a battle in our hearts—belief and unbelief clash.*

(Ask the students to read Psalm 78:12-16 to find all the ways that God showed Israel that He is faithful and powerful. You may want to ask five students to each read a verse. As the students mention God's mighty acts, **tape** the following visuals in a line across the front of the room: **Plagues 1-10**, **Crossing the Red Sea**, **Cloud by Day**, **Fire by Night**, and **Water from the Rock**.)



**Psalm 78:12-16—In the sight of their fathers he performed wonders in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan. <sup>13</sup>He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap. <sup>14</sup>In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a fiery light. <sup>15</sup>He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. <sup>16</sup>He made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers.**

(Point to the visuals that you have just taped up.)

*The Israelites had seen all these miracles. God had proven Himself to be the faithful and almighty God, and yet the Israelites battled with unbelief.*

(Ask four students to read verses 17 to 20.)

**Psalm 78:17—Yet they sinned still more against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert.**

**Psalm 78:18—They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved.**

**Psalm 78:19—They spoke against God, saying, “Can God spread a table in the wilderness?”**

**Psalm 78:20—“He struck the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he also give bread or provide meat for his people?”**

❓ *How would you describe the heart attitude of the Israelites? [grumbling and rebellious; unbelieving; doubting God]*

*The Israelites did not like the situation in which God had placed them, and they struggled to believe God would take care of them. They doubted God could feed them in the desert. They looked at the emptiness of the desert, rather than at the all-sufficiency of God Almighty.*

Look at verses 21-22 to see how God felt about the unbelief of the Israelites.

**Psalm 78:21-22—Therefore, when the LORD heard, he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob; his anger rose against Israel, <sup>22</sup>because they did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power.**

In spite of their unbelief, this is what God did for them.

(Read Psalm 78:23-29)

**Psalm 78:23-29—Yet he commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven,<sup>24</sup> and he rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven.<sup>25</sup> Man ate of the bread of the angels; he sent them food in abundance.<sup>26</sup> He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind;<sup>27</sup> he rained meat on them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas;<sup>28</sup> he let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings.<sup>29</sup> And they ate and were well filled, for he gave them what they craved.**



TAPE

(Tape the **Manna** and **Quail** visuals to the line of visuals.)

*Even though the Israelites did not trust in God's deliverance, He delivered them. He gave them more than enough food to eat. Why did God do that? The Israelites did not deserve God's goodness to them. They did not believe that God would provide for them.*

## God is Faithful and Good, though We Fail

❓ *So why did God give them food to eat?* [God is good; God is faithful; God cares for His children]

- God is faithful in spite of our faithlessness.
- God cares about His name and reputation, so He will not forsake His people—even when His people forsake Him.
- God wants His glory—His goodness and worth—to be seen.

*After all that God had done for Israel, after all the miracles they had seen Him do, after the number of times He had proven Himself to be trustworthy, Israel should surely believe in God and trust Him.*

(Point to the **line of visuals**. Ask a student to read verse 32.)

**Psalm 78:32—In spite of all this, they still sinned; despite his wonders, they did not believe.**

*When we look at Israel, we think that they were so foolish to doubt God. We cannot believe that in spite of how many miracles they had seen God do, they responded in unbelief. Even though God had shown Himself to be faithful and trustworthy, they did not believe He would take care of them—they did not trust Him. We look at them and wonder how they can be so dumb, so blind, or so foolish.*

## Illustration.....

*But when we look at Israel, this is really what we see.*

ISRAEL GRUMBLES  
IN THE DESERT  
VISUAL ASSEMBLED  
WITH THE PEOPLE  
VISUAL

(Display the **Israel Grumbles in the Desert** visual, and have a student open both **doors**.)

*What do you see?*

- As we look at Israel, we need to remember that this is often a picture of ourselves.
- God has proven Himself to be great and mighty. He has proven Himself to be trustworthy and faithful.
- Yet when something bad happens, we often do not trust in His promises or that it will “work out for our good.”
- When we must act on our belief in God, we often waver. We become afraid or unwilling to act.
- When our faith is put to the test, we find that our faith is often weak. We battle against unbelief in our hearts. We want to believe but we find that unbelief crowds in.

*Even great men of faith have at times battled unbelief. Listen to what the psalmist said in Psalm 77:*

**Psalm 77:3—When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints.**

**Psalm 77:7-9— “Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable? <sup>8</sup>Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? <sup>9</sup>Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?”**

*The psalmist is having a hard time believing in the continuing goodness of God.*

TAPE, BELIEF  
BATTLESHIP,  
UNBELIEF  
BATTLESHIP, AND  
EXPLOSION VISUALS,  
AND LARGE HEART

(Tape the **Belief Battleship** and the **Unbelief Battleship** visuals to the **Large Heart**, and tape one of the **Explosion** visuals between them.)

## Battling Unbelief by Remembering Who God Is

*But God has given us a wonderful gift to help us fight unbelief.*

WRAPPED  
PRESENT WITH  
REMEMBERING GIFT  
VISUAL INSIDE, AND  
TAPE

(Ask a student to open the **wrapped present** and tell the class what is inside—the **Remembering Gift** visual. Tape this visual to the battle line between the **Belief Battleship** and **Unbelief Battleship** visuals and above the **Explosion** visual. This is to

symbolize that the battle is still there, but God has given us a gift—a weapon—to help us to fight the battle. Then, have a Sword Drill with the following verses.)

***Psalm 77:11-12—I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. <sup>12</sup>I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.***

*In this psalm, the psalmist goes on to rehearse the mighty act of God in opening the Red Sea.*

(If there is time, you may want to read Psalm 77:16-20.)

*When your faith is weak, when you are battling unbelief, open your Bible and read the miraculous acts of God. Remember His faithfulness from generation to generation. Remember how He opened the Red Sea, rained manna from heaven, delivered Israel from the Philistines through a shepherd boy, made the walls of Jericho fall down, gave Zechariah and Elizabeth baby John in their old age, healed the lepers, calmed the sea, fed 5,000 with five loaves and two fish....Remember that God is mighty, and He is faithful!*

*One of the battlegrounds of the fight of faith is the fight to believe in God until we die. We not only fight little faith battles, but we also fight the big faith battle of persevering in faith until the end. But God Himself fights with us. God will not reject His people—because God will protect His name and His glory. If we fight the fight of faith until the end, we are truly a child of God.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

***Hebrews 3:14—For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.***

*The mark of a true child of God is that he perseveres in faith. He does not lose his faith. He battles unbelief and perseveres in believing in God.*

(Close in prayer.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *What are some ways in which we waver in our faith? How do we fail to act on our beliefs? How do we respond to difficult things? How should we respond in these situations? Why don't we? (Remind the students that actions are based on our beliefs. The way we respond shows how much we truly believe.)*

- Briefly tell of the healing of the demon-possessed boy in Mark 9:17-26. Then discuss the following verse:

**Mark 9:24—Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (NIV 1984)**

- What ideas do you have to help you remember the faithfulness and the mighty acts of God? [keep a list in my Bible of miracles and read it over when feeling weak; read the Bible daily; keep a prayer journal of answered prayer; write an account of how God has been faithful in my own life; ask older people how God has proven Himself to be God to them over a lifetime]
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*All the sinful states of our hearts are owing to unbelief in God's super-abounding willingness and ability to work for us in every situation of life so that everything turns out for our good. Anxiety, misplaced shame, indifference, regret, covetousness, envy, lust, bitterness, impatience, despondency, pride—these are all sprouts from the root of unbelief in the promises of God.*

—John Piper<sup>1</sup>

- You may want to have a time of prayer asking God to help overcome unbelief in our lives. (You may want to explain that faith is a gift given by God.)

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 9.

### 2. Remember the Lord's Deeds Bulletin Board

Make a bulletin board labeled "I WILL REMEMBER THE DEEDS OF THE LORD." Students can each draw a miracle picture to place on the board. These can be either personal or biblical. Or, make a mural of one of the miracles in the Bible.

### 3. Miraculous Deeds Bookmark

Help the students to each make a list of miraculous deeds of God recorded in the Bible to use as a bookmark and read periodically so they can rehearse the goodness of God.

### 4. Mighty Acts of God Game

Divide the class into teams of eight or fewer students. Each team should have a piece of paper and a pencil. At your direction, each team starts compiling a list of the mighty acts of God. After a specified time period, tell the teams to put their pencils down. Each team receives a point for each mighty act listed. Then, have each team read their list aloud. They should cross off the acts from

<sup>1</sup> Piper, John. "Battling Unbelief at Bethlehem," a message delivered at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minn. On September 11, 1988. Copyright Desiring God Foundation, [www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org).

their lists that are listed by another team. Each mighty act of God not listed by another team earns them another point. The team with the most points wins the game.

### 5. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 9 (for each student)





# Battlegrounds—Pride

## MAIN IDEAS

- A battleground of the heart is pride.
- Pride exhibits itself in different ways.
- Pride unchecked leads to destruction.

## KEY VERSE

*Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”—1 Peter 5:5b*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Psalm 10:4 (NIV 1984)
- 2) Proverbs 16:18
- 3) 2 Chronicles 26:3-21
- 4) 1 Peter 5:5b
- 5) (Philippians 2:3)
- 6) (Proverbs 29:23)
- 7) (Isaiah 2:17)



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Pride 1-5 (10A-10E, see Preparation)
- Psalm 10:4 (10D)
- Parent Page for Lesson 10 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- 2 balloons (see Preparation)
- Tape (see Preparation)

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Humility

- › Humility (OA-10, for each student)
- › Stapler with staples

### 3. Uzziah Posters

- › Materials to create posters

### 4. Balloon Relay

- › 2 (or more) balloons
- › Tape or chalk (to make the start and finish lines)

### 5. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

- You may want to read the article “How to Fight the Sin of Pride, Especially when You are Praised” by John Piper (find by searching for title on [www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org)).
- **Pride 1-5**—Cut each of the **Pride 1-5** visuals along the dashed line. This will give you two pieces for each visual—a letter and an explanation. During the lesson, you will ask students to tape up the letter parts of these cards vertically to spell the word “PRIDE.” Then, you will have them add each explanation part back to its letter part in the order indicated in the lesson (not in spelling order). Note: You should plan to move through these definitions quickly. You are quickly painting a picture of what pride looks like, rather than fully explaining the nature of pride.
- **Balloons**—One of the two balloons will be blown up to the point of popping during the illustration. The other balloon will be blown up to the point of popping during the main part of lesson. For this second balloon, be sure to monitor the size of the balloon as the student blows it up so that it pops at the right time. Or, you may want to choose an adult to help you with this part to make sure that it is executed well. You may also want to bring a pin to use in popping the balloon in case the student has difficulty popping it.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

BALLOON

(Call a student to the front and give him a **balloon**. Ask him to blow up the balloon. When the balloon is half blown up, ask him if it is big enough or if it can be blown bigger. Encourage him to blow the balloon bigger and bigger—until the balloon pops.)

.....

## The Heart Battle against Pride

*Some people are like the balloon. They keep getting more and more “puffed up.” Their “heads swell,” or they think that they are really important and do things really, really well, which makes them better than other people. Sometimes we say that they are “getting too big for their britches.”*

❓ *We have a word for this feeling of self-importance. What is the word? (Provide clues until the students correctly guess the word “pride.”)*

TAPE AND PRIDE 1-5  
VISUALS

(Ask a student to **tape** the **letter portions of the Pride 1-5** visuals the wall vertically to spell “PRIDE.”)

*Pride is when you:*

**Inflate** your opinion of yourself.

(Ask a student to add the appropriate “explanation” part to the “I” visual.)

*When the balloon was blown up, we call this “inflated.” An inflated balloon is a balloon full of air. To inflate your opinion of yourself is to be full of the feeling that you are so important. This is when someone thinks he is so great; he thinks he is better than he really is. He thinks he knows everything, so he does not “listen to advice or accept instruction” (Proverbs 19:20).*

*When he is corrected or disciplined, he rebels against it because his pride is hurt. When he is disciplined by God, he resents it rather than understanding and rejoicing that God, in love, is protecting and humbling him (Hebrews 12:5-11). He is not teachable; he thinks his way of doing things is best, and that the opinions or ideas of others are not worth listening to.*

*We have probably all met someone who is full of pride, but to some degree all of us have pride in our hearts. Pride causes us to look down on others.*

*Whenever you:*

**P**erceive (or think of) yourself as better than others

*pride is at work in your heart.*

(Ask a student to add the appropriate “explanation” part to the “P” visual.)

*When what you want is most important, and what is good for others is of lesser importance—when you think you should be first and have the best—pride is at work in you.*

**?** *What are some ways in which you can consider others as “more significant” or more important than yourself? Give some specific examples. (Answers will vary.)*

*Pride shows itself in other ways as well. Pride is when you:*

**D**eny your faults.

(Ask a student to add the appropriate “explanation” part to the “D” visual.)

*We are unwilling to admit when we are at fault in a problem or a disagreement. We do not want to apologize when we have wronged someone. It is hard for us to say, “I’m sorry.” That is pride at work.*

**?** *Can you give some examples of admitting your fault and killing pride, or of a time when you didn’t and wish you had. What was the result? (Answers will vary.)*

*Pride is when you:*

**R**ely on yourself rather than on God.

(Ask a student to add the appropriate “explanation” part to the “R” visual.)

*We are tempted to do things in our own strength, acting as if we don’t need God’s help. We think we are strong and don’t recognize our weakness. Instead of depending on God to solve our problems and work things out for us, we try to solve them ourselves. (You may need to give an example of this.)*

**?** *How can we fight this characteristic of pride? [Answers will vary. Be sure the students understand that though there are strategies to fight pride, the most important strategy is to ask God to help you fight pride and give you a humble heart.]*

In his pride the wicked  
does not seek him; in  
all his thoughts there  
is no room for God.  
—Psalm 10:4 (NIV 1984)

(Ask a student to read the **Psalm 10:4** visual.)

***Psalm 10:4—In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. (NIV 1984)***

*It takes a humble heart to depend on God and admit that we need Him.*

(Ask a student to add the appropriate “explanation” part to the “E” visual.)

*Another way in which pride is shown in us is the tendency to:*

### **Elevate yourself rather than God**

*What does an elevator do? It lifts things or makes them go higher; it elevates things. When we elevate ourselves, rather than God, we try to put ourselves above God. Our desires become greater than His to us. Our ideas become more important to us than God’s truth. Our plans become more important than God’s will. We see ourselves as great, rather than God as great. We should see God as great. Then we will realize how small we are compared to God.*

*A humble heart understands that any good in us comes from the work of God. Any ability we have is a gracious, undeserved gift from God. A proud heart thinks that the good in us comes from our own efforts. The humble will not take credit for God’s work. The person who is humble in heart will turn all praise for a job well done or a talent demonstrated back to God, because he recognizes that without God, he is nothing.*

### **Illustration.....**

*Suppose you sang a solo and did a very good job. People come up to you afterward and say, “You have a beautiful voice,” or “You did a good job!” A person who recognizes that any good in him is the work of God might respond with a prayer of praise to God such as, “Lord, I know my voice is a gift from you. I give you back this praise I received.” Or perhaps he may say to the person who said, “You did a good job,” something like, “You know, I prayed that God would help me sing this solo. God answered my prayer. It was He who helped me to do a good job.”*

*If we have pride in our hearts, we will receive the congratulations of others and think that we deserve them. We will not recognize that every “good and perfect gift” comes from God (James 1:17).*

## Pride Brings Destruction

? What happened to the balloon when it was blown too big? [it popped]

? What does that tell you about pride that grows in our hearts? [it will cause problems; it will break things in our lives]

*Just like the balloon that grows too big and bursts, so when we grow too puffed up and grand, we will be destroyed as well. All of us have pride in our hearts. We can either battle against pride in our hearts, or we can be destroyed by it. When we do not fight the pride in our hearts, pride grows and grows—until it causes huge problems in our lives.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**Proverbs 16:18—Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.**

*God gives us little experiences with pride, causing us pain and embarrassment and problems to keep us from allowing pride to go unfought in the heart. But if we do not heed God's warning, pride will destroy us.*

BALLOON

(Tell the story of Uzziah from 2 Chronicles 26:3-21. Have a student stand next to you with a **balloon**. At each point where the Bible tells of Uzziah's accomplishments and fame, have him blow the balloon a little bigger. Make the following points.)

- Uzziah was a king of Judah. He did right in the eyes of the Lord.
- As long as Uzziah "sought the Lord"—relied on God—God gave him success.
- Uzziah was successful in warring against the Philistines and other enemies. He broke down the walls of the Philistine cities. Then he rebuilt cities. Uzziah started to become a little proud of himself.

(Student should blow into the balloon.)

- Uzziah became very powerful, and his fame spread as far as Egypt. Uzziah got a little prouder.

(Student should blow into the balloon.)

- Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem and equipped them to defend Jerusalem. More pride grew in Uzziah's heart.

(Student should blow into the balloon.)

- Uzziah dug wells because he had so much livestock. He had many workers to work in his fields and vineyards. He was a powerful and prosperous man. Uzziah thought he was pretty important. He did not fight pride, but let it grow and grow.

(Student should blow into the balloon.)

- Uzziah had a large, well-trained army. He equipped his entire army with shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows, and slingstones. Pride was growing and growing in his heart.

(Student should blow into the balloon.)

- He built machines for the towers that could throw large stones and shoot arrows.
- Uzziah became famous far and wide. Uzziah became more...and more...and more famous...and more and more proud.

(Read the following verses, or ask students to each read a verse. This can be done with the whole class, or at small group tables.)

***2 Chronicles 26:16a—But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction.***

(Student should blow into the balloon until it pops.)

***2 Chronicles 26:16b-20a—For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. <sup>17</sup>But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the LORD who were men of valor, <sup>18</sup>and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the LORD God.” <sup>19</sup>Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the LORD, by the altar of incense. <sup>20</sup>And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead!***

(At this point, you may need to explain that leprosy is a disease that eats away a person’s skin, then the muscles, and then the bones until it kills the person. In the time of King Uzziah, there was no cure for leprosy.)

**2 Chronicles 26:20b-21—And they rushed him out quickly, and he himself hurried to go out, because the LORD had struck him. <sup>21</sup>And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's household, governing the people of the land.**

God gave Uzziah many opportunities to fight pride, but Uzziah did not fight the pride in his heart. Instead, he let the pride in his heart grow until it destroyed him.

Pride is a dangerous thing. We must battle it in the heart, or it can destroy us like it destroyed Uzziah. Pride also leads to battling against God instead of receiving God's help. Battling pride is fighting the fight of faith.

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**1 Peter 5:5b—Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”**

Receiving grace from God is much more desirable than being opposed by God!

(End with prayer.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- You may want to read and discuss one or more of the following verses:

**Philippians 2:3—Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**

**Proverbs 29:23—One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.**

**Isaiah 2:17—And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.**

- How could Uzziah have fought pride in his life?
- What are different ways that pride shows up in our lives? How does pride demonstrate itself in your life? Are you battling against pride in your life? What can you do?
- Do you heed God's warnings?



- Discuss the quotes from C. S. Lewis in the Student Notebook:

*As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you.*

*True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.*

- Answer Key for the Student Notebook:

Perceiving yourself as better than others.

Relying on yourself rather than on God.

Inflating your opinion of yourself.

Denying your faults.

Elevating yourself rather than God.

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 10.

### 2. Humility

Give each of the students a **Humility** handout, and encourage them to think of ways in which humility shows itself in our lives (e.g., letting someone go ahead of you in the grocery line, giving up your turn for someone else, saying “I have a very good teacher” when someone compliments your musical ability, etc.). When they are done, staple all of their handouts together into a booklet and read it to the class.

### 3. Uzziah Posters

Make posters of the life of Uzziah. Label each poster according to the bullet points in the lesson. Then use the posters to decorate the room.

### 4. Balloon Relay

Divide the class into relay teams. Give each team a balloon. At the signal, two people from each team will attempt to get the balloon to the finish line by hitting the balloon back and forth in the air. When the pair reaches the finish line, they run back and hand the balloon to the next pair of teammates. The game continues until each pair has had a turn. The team that finishes first is the winning team.

#### Variations:

- If the balloon hits the floor, the pair must return and start over.
- Play the relay again, but this time kicking the balloon back and forth.

Emphasize to the students that they must humbly work together to get the balloon to the finish line. Trying to “get all the glory” for one’s self will not get the job done well.

### **5. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### **6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 10 (for each student)

# Battlegrounds—Rebellion

## MAIN IDEAS

- **A battleground of the heart is rebellion.**
- **Rebellion is resisting God and what is right.**
- **Jesus was submissive to the Father in all things, and He is our example.**
- **We must fight rebellion when it is small so that it does not consume our hearts.**

## KEY VERSE

*I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.*—Psalm 40:8

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Matthew 26:36-45
- 2) Luke 5:1-11
- 3) Psalm 40:8



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- War Visuals (see Preparation)
  - › Belief Battleship (9S)
  - › Unbelief Battleship (9T)
  - › Explosion (9U)
  - › Pride Jet Plane (11A)
  - › Humility Jet Plane (11B)
  - › Heart (11C)
  - › Rebellion Strip (11D)
  - › Rebellion Soldier (11E)
  - › Submission Soldier (11F)
- Remembering Gift (9V)
- **Fire 1-2 (11G-11H, or use supplies below)**
- Parent Page for Lesson 11 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Large Heart (from Lesson 9)
- Tape
- Whiteboard and markers
- Optional (see Preparation, or use Fire 1-2 visuals):
  - › 2 pieces of paper
  - › Large metal pan
  - › Book of matches

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Letter to God

- For each student:
- › Paper
  - › Pen/pencil

### 3. Simon's Thoughts

- For each small group:
- › Paper and pen/pencil
- OR
- › Recording equipment

### 4. Crack the Code

- › Crack the Code (OA-11A, for each student)
- › Code Key (OA-11B, for each leader)

### 5. Submissive Heart Game

- For each team:
- › Numbered list of instructions (see Optional Activity section for details)

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

### PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **War Visuals**—Cut out **Pride Jet Plane**, **Humility Jet Plane** visuals. Cut out the **Heart** visual and cut slits in it where indicated by the lines. Cut out the **Rebellion Strip**. (You may want to laminate all the War Visuals pieces.) From the back of the Heart, push the Rebellion Strip through the slit so that the word faces the back of the Heart. You may need to curl or slightly fold the “handles” on the end of the strip. At this point, the strip should be hidden behind the page, but by pulling the “handles,” you will be able to lift the strip up from behind the Heart so that the word “REBELLION” can be read.
- **Large Heart**—You will need to have the Large Heart from Lesson 9 that you cut out or draw on the whiteboard before the lesson starts.
- **2 Pieces of Paper**—Twist the pieces of paper together. You will be lighting them with a match over a pan to contain the ashes, but you will still need to use caution in performing this illustration. (Note: The **Fire 1** and **Fire 2** visuals are provided for those who are need this option.)
- **Personal Testimony**—At the end of the lesson, there is a suggestion that you could share a personal testimony of a time when you battled rebellion in your heart. If you want to do this, you should give it some thought as you prepare to teach this lesson.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

#### Review

*Fighting the fight of faith involves fighting the battles in the heart.*

(Ask students to name the battlegrounds that have been taught. When students name the battles, they can come forward and place the **war visuals** on the large heart as in the example below.)

*Where are spiritual battles fought?*

LARGE HEART,  
BELIEF AND  
UNBELIEF  
BATTLESHIP,  
AND ONE OF  
THE EXPLOSION  
VISUALS, TAPE, AND  
REMEMBERING GIFT  
VISUAL

(Point to the **Large Heart**.)

*What is the first battleground of the heart that we talked about? What is unbelief? [not trusting in the character and promises of God] We want to trust God, but sometimes it is hard to believe the promises of God.*

(Place the **Belief Battleship** and **Unbelief Battleship** on the **Large Heart**, and put an **Explosion** visual between them.)

*What has God given us to help us fight unbelief? [the gift of remembering]*

(Add the **Remembering Gift** visual to the heart.)

*What other battleground of the heart did we talk about?*

PRIDE AND  
HUMILITY JET  
PLANES, AND THREE  
EXPLOSION VISUALS

(Place the **Pride Jet Plane** and **Humility Jet Plane** visuals on the **Large Heart** and an **Explosion** visual between them.)

❓ *What is pride?* [putting your confidence in yourself instead of God; thinking of yourself more highly than you ought; P-R-I-D-E: Perceive yourself as better than others, Rely on yourself rather than on God, Inflate your opinion of yourself, Deny your faults, Elevate yourself rather than God]

What happens if we don't fight pride? [it grows and grows until it destroys us]

## The Battleground of Rebellion

*We will be talking about another heart battle that every person—even Christians—must fight.*

REBELLION AND  
SUBMISSION  
SOLDIER VISUALS,  
LARGE HEART, AND  
AN EXPLOSION  
VISUAL

(Have one or two students read the **Rebellion Soldier** and **Submission Soldier** visuals and place them on the **Large Heart** with an **Explosion** visual between them.)

*Rebellion is our natural resistance to authority. It is our tendency to oppose when someone else tells us what to do. It is our desire to do what we want rather than submitting to what someone else wants. It is our desire to “go against” the rules. It is a spirit of disobedience. Rebellion is resisting God and what is right.*

## Illustration.....

REBELLION STRIP  
AND HEART VISUAL,  
ASSEMBLED

(Role play with the students a rebellious spirit in the following situations.<sup>1</sup> As the student in each role-play situation reacts rebelliously, pull the **Rebellion Strip** up to the top of the **Heart** visual.)

*Rebellion or resistance rises in the heart,*

(Pull up the **Rebellion Strip**.)

*and we can either foster it or “push it down.”*

(Push the **Rebellion Strip** down.)

*Pushing rebellion down is fighting the fight of faith.*

## Situations

You need to go change your shirt.

It is time for bed.

Would you take out the garbage?

You need to get a haircut.

It is time to do your homework.

## Choosing Submission

*Jesus showed us what a heart of submission looks like.* (Remind the students of the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane from Matthew 26:36-45 making the following points.)

- Jesus knew what He was facing. The physical, emotional, and spiritual pain were very real to Jesus.
- Jesus did not like the idea of suffering on the cross.

<sup>1</sup> If you think your students will have difficulty role playing a rebellious spirit, you may want to first discuss and demonstrate the outward signs of a rebellious spirit. For example: “Rebellion is in the heart, but it can be seen in our faces, our words, and in our body language. What does rebellion look like on the outside?” [scowling, refusing to do what is asked, talking back, “smart” remarks, folding the arms, etc.]

- Jesus did not rebel, but submitted perfectly to the will of the Father. Even though He did not like the idea of suffering on the cross, doing the Father's will was more important than His own will or His own comfort.
- Jesus did all that the Father told Him to do; He perfectly obeyed His Father. Even the words He spoke and the way He spoke them were by the Father's instruction (John 12:49).
- Our heart attitude should be like Jesus' heart attitude. Following the will of God should be more important to us than our own will or our own comfort. We should be obedient to the Father, just as Jesus is. Jesus is our perfect example of submission.

### Illustration.....

(Reenact the role plays, this time asking the students to reflect an attitude of submission. Remind the students that our outward actions are a reflection of the heart attitude; they show the condition of the heart.)

### Illustration.....

*Suppose you spent the whole day washing cars—one car right after another. Maybe you worked in a car wash, or your school or church group had a car wash. You scrubbed so many whitewall tires that your hands were “prune” or “wrinkly.” You went through a whole roll of paper towels washing windows. And you were really tired. How would you feel if, when you got home, your mother said to you, “You need to wash the car”? Would you be happy about washing the car? Would it be hard to be submissive to the will of your mother?*

*This is probably the way Simon felt in Luke 5.*

(Ask the students to open their Bibles to Luke 5:1-11.)

**?** *Simon and the other fishermen had been out fishing all night—and had caught nothing. How do you think Simon and the other fishermen felt? [tired, discouraged, mad, frustrated]*

*But Jesus told Simon to go fishing again—“put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch.” (Luke 5:4b) How do you think Simon felt about Jesus' idea? What excuses could he have given Jesus for not obeying Him—for not submitting to Jesus' will? (Make a list of these excuses on the whiteboard, such as in the example below.)*

- *We just got back from fishing.*
- *The fish aren't biting today. This is not a good day for fishing.*
- *This is not a good time to go fishing—I have other things to do.*

- *Fish don't bite this time of day.*
- *We just cleaned the nets.*
- *We are tired. We haven't slept all night.*
- *We are sick of fishing.*
- *We don't feel like it.*

*What Jesus was asking of Simon went against Simon's natural instincts; it was a hard instruction for Simon to obey. Jesus' request seemed unreasonable and foolish. What do you think the natural attitude of the heart is toward a request like Jesus made? [rebellion, resistance]*

*The natural thing for Simon to have done is refuse Jesus' request.*

(Ask a student to read verse 5.)

***Luke 5:5—And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”***

*Simon knew that Jesus' request SEEMED unreasonable—“we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything.” But Simon also knew that Jesus was the Master; Jesus was superior to him; Jesus was an authority over him. Simon bent his will to conform to Jesus' will—even though he probably didn't feel like it. Simon resisted the natural rebellion within his heart and was submissive to the Master. Simon let down the nets because Jesus told him to—“at your word, I will let down the nets.”*

*So often, we just don't want to do what God wants us to do, or what our parents want us to do. We just want to have our own way. We don't want to do what is right. But fighting the fight of faith means attacking our own rebellion in our hearts and submitting to what we know is right.*

(Have a Sword Drill with Psalm 40:8, and answer the questions as a class or at small group tables.)

***Psalm 40:8—I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.***

❓ *What does the word “delight” indicate in this verse? [that the psalmist is glad to obey God; that it gives the psalmist joy to do what God wants him to do]*

❓ *What does it not mean? [that the person is just doing it but is angry about it; that the person's heart really doesn't want to obey]*



? What is the significance of the phrase “O my God”? [it shows the psalmist has a personal relationship with God; the psalmist sees himself as a child of God]

? What does “your law is within my heart” mean? [he loves the law of God; he thinks the law is good and his heart wants to obey]

## Fighting Rebellion and Not Letting It Grow

*When God is “your God,” like the psalmist, you will generally love His law and want to follow His commands. There may be moments of resistance, as a child of God still battles sin, but deep down, a child of God wants to please God and fights rebellion in his heart.*

### Illustration.....

OPTIONAL: TWO  
PIECES OF PAPER  
TWISTED TOGETHER,  
PAN, MATCH

(Give the following illustration to help the students understand how to fight against rebellion in their hearts. Hold the **two pieces of paper that you have twisted together** over the **pan** and light the corner with the **match**. Or, if you are not able to use fire in your classroom, use the **Fire 1-2** visuals.)



*What will happen to the paper? How could I have prevented the paper from being destroyed? I needed to put out the fire immediately. The longer I waited, the harder it would be to put out the fire, and the more paper the fire consumed.*



*A small fire can be put out easily if it is caught immediately. But if the fire is not put out right away it gets out of control. It gets so big that it cannot be put out until it consumes the object it is burning.*

*This is the same way it is with rebellion in the heart. We must snuff it out immediately. As soon as those feelings of rebellion arise in the heart, we must fight against them. Rebellion is very strong. We cannot fight it by ourselves. We need to ask God to give us a heart of submission and to squash rebellion right away. We cannot nurture rebellion—we cannot “enjoy” it for a little while because it might consume us. As soon as rebellion starts to rise in our hearts, we need to ask God to help us fight against it and get rid of it.*

*We also cannot decide that some things aren’t very important, so it is okay to feel a little rebellious about something that is not really important. But every sign of rebellion is dangerous to our faith, and we cannot let even little rebellions grow.*

OPTIONAL:  
PERSONAL  
TESTIMONY

(You may want to end by sharing a personal testimony of a time when you battled rebellion in the heart, laid down your will, and submitted to the will of God or another person.)

(End with prayer.)

## **Small Group Application**

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *How does rebellion show itself in your life? In what kinds of situations is it hard for you to be submissive? Why? What can you do about that?*
- *What other heart attitudes encourage rebellion in our hearts? In what way?*
- *Do you act on rebellion in your heart right away? Do you fight rebellion in your heart, or do you encourage it? How can you fight against rebellion in your heart?*
- *Is there anything that God is requiring of you that you are resisting?*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*The beginning of men's rebellion against God was, and is, the lack of a thankful heart.—Francis Schaeffer*

- Pray for submissive hearts.

(You may want to encourage the students to finish reading the story in Luke 5:1-11 at home.)

## **Optional Activities**

### **1. Student Notebook**

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 11.

### **2. Letter to God**

Students can write a letter to God confessing rebellion in the heart, asking for a submissive heart, or laying down an area in which they have been rebelling. They could label their letter “At Your Word” or “I Delight to Do Your Will.”

### **3. Simon’s Thoughts**

In their small groups, students can write or record a “conversation” Simon may have had with himself after hearing Jesus’ request as he is contemplating how to respond to Jesus, or as he is fighting rebellion in his heart (Luke 5:1-11).

### **4. Crack the Code**

Students can do the **Crack the Code** handout. (There’s also a **Code Key** for leaders.)

### 5. Submissive Heart Game

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a list of instructions. For example: Go up and down the stairs three times, make a list of all of your teammate's names, get a drink from the water fountain, do 10 jumping jacks, etc. (You will need to choose instructions that work in your situation.) Number your list of instructions, and give each team the same list, but have them start on a different number on the list so the groups don't crowd each other. Stress that they must follow the instructions exactly. The team that finishes first wins, but if the team has not completely submitted to the instructions, the team must forfeit its win.

### 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 11 (for each student)



# Battlegrounds—Spirit of Fear

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Good fear (fear of the right things) comes from God, but a fearful spirit comes from a sinful heart.**
- **Christians do not have to accept a spirit of fear; we can fight against a fearful spirit.**
- **A fearful spirit is defeated by focusing on God, rather than on our fear.**
- **A spirit of fear is defeated by having a greater fear of God than our fear of men or other things.**

## KEY VERSE

*for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*  
—2 Timothy 1:7

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) 2 Timothy 1:7
- 2) Numbers 13:17-31
- 3) Romans 8:9, 12-15
- 4) Matthew 14:25-33
- 5) Acts 5:17-42

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Poison (12A, see Preparation)
- War Visuals (cut out as indicated):
  - › Spirit of Fear Tank (12B)
  - › Reject Fear (12C)
  - › Trust Tank (12D)
  - › Explosion (9U)
- Roaring Lion (12E, see Preparation)
- **Focus on God (12F)**
- **Fear God, Not Men (12G)**
- Parent Page for Lesson 12 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Bottle of colored water (see Preparation)
- Empty glass
- Tape
- Large Heart (from previous lessons)
- Clear plastic sheet (e.g., sheet protector, see Preparation)

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Psalm Poster

- › Materials to create a poster

### 3. Personal Testimony

- › Prepare to share a testimony.

### 4. Retelling Acts 5

- › No materials required for this activity.

### 5. Reporting on Acts 5

- Optional Supplies:
- › Props and costumes
  - › Recording equipment

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students

know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

- **Bottle of “Poison”**—Cut out the **Poison** visual and tape it to the bottle of colored water.
- **Large Heart**—You will need to have the Large Heart in place on a wall before the lesson starts.
- **Roaring Lion**—Tape a sheet of clear plastic over the top of the **Roaring Lion** visual so that it functions as a visual “barrier” between you and the lion.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

*BOTTLE OF "POISON" AND GLASS* (Call a student to the front and show him the **bottle** and **glass**.)

*Suppose you are thirsty and tell me that you really want a drink.*

(Open the **bottle** and pour the liquid into the **glass**. Make sure the **Poison** label is very visible. Then, hand the glass to the student.)

*Would I give you this to drink? Would I give you something that would hurt you?  
Why not?*

*I want to give good things to you because I love you. I want what is best for you  
and would never want to hurt you.*

### Good Fear and a Spirit of Fear

*God is good and loving so what God gives His children is always for their good.  
He does not give His children things that are bad for them. Let's look at a verse  
that shows us the good gifts that God gives His children and the bad gift He does  
not give His children.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**2 Timothy 1:7—for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love  
and self-control.**

- God gives the good gifts of power, love, and self-control.
- God does not give His children a “spirit of fear” or a “fearful spirit.”

*TAPE, SPIRIT OF  
FEAR TANK VISUAL,  
AND LARGE HEART*

(**Tape** the **Spirit of Fear Tank** visual on the **Large Heart**.)

- Having a fearful spirit is not the same thing as simply experiencing fear.
- God gives us good fear in order to protect us. When we are afraid to stand in the middle of the street because we might get run over by a car, that is the gift of good fear that God gives to protect us.

**?** *What other fear is good fear given to us by God?* (Answers may vary, such as those following.)

- The fear of hell
- The fear of God (you may or may not need to explain this to the students)
- The fear of disobeying God
- The fear of sinning
- The fear of deserved punishment (the fear of punishment often keeps us from doing something wrong)
- The fear that keeps us from doing dangerous things

*All of these fears are good for us. They are for our protection. They are given to us by God for our good. Good fear is fear of the right things. There are things we should be afraid of—like disobeying God—and it is good for us to be afraid of those things.*

*But the spirit of fear, or a fearful spirit, is sinful and is not for our good. The spirit of fear is when fear takes a deep root in our hearts...and fear keeps us in bondage. Sometimes when we see a difficult situation—something that is hard—we become overwhelmed by fear instead of trusting God to help. If that happens once in awhile, it may just be fear. But if it happens as a pattern in life—if this is the way we react to many things in life—that is a spirit of fear. When fear paralyzes us so we can't do something that looks difficult because we think we might not do it well, it could be that we have a fearful spirit.*

*A spirit of fear keeps us from attempting to learn new things, or from attempting things for the kingdom of God. A spirit of fear holds us back. A spirit of fear is when we live in fear instead of relying on God and trusting Him. Our fear is bigger than our trust.*

(Remind the students of the story of the 12 men who spied out Canaan for the Israelite people from Numbers 13:17-31. Ask questions to bring out the following points.)

- The land was a good land just as the Lord had promised. God is trustworthy.
- Ten of the men said the people of the land were big—like giants—and they felt like grasshoppers in comparison.
- Joshua and Caleb were not afraid to take the land because they knew the Lord was with them, and they trusted in His power and protection.

*Ten of the men had a spirit of fear. They saw the Canaanites and were afraid of the size of the Canaanite men. The Canaanites were stronger than they were. Their fear of the Canaanites was stronger than their trust in God. They were more afraid of what the Canaanites might do than they were afraid of disobeying God. They did not trust God's promise to give them the land, but instead they listened to their fear.*



*Joshua and Caleb saw the size of the Canaanites, but their trust in God was greater than their fear of the Canaanites. They did not have a spirit of fear, but a spirit of trust, a spirit of power and love and self-control. Moses and Aaron trusted God. They were not afraid of the Canaanites but were afraid of rebelling against God. Being afraid of rebelling against God is a good fear. It is given to us by God to keep us from disobeying Him. It is for our protection.*

*The spirit of fear kept the Israelites from going in and possessing the land of the Canaanites. It kept them from going in and gaining God's promised land. A fearful spirit made them rebel against God and, as a consequence, they received a punishment of 40 years of wilderness wandering.*

## Fight Against a Spirit of Fear by Refusing to Accept It

*One of the temptations to sin is to give in to our fears and develop a fearful spirit. But we do not have to accept fear. We can refuse to listen to our fear and trust God instead...*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses and quickly discuss them in the class or in small groups.)<sup>1</sup>

*In these verses, when Paul says "in the flesh" he is talking about our sin nature, not about our physical bodies.*

**Romans 8:9—You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.**

❓ *Another version (the 1984 New International Version) says you "are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit." What does this say about you if you are a Christian? [our sin nature does not control us but the Holy Spirit does]*

**Romans 8:12—So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.**

❓ *What does this verse say? [We do not have to obey our sin nature.]<sup>2</sup>*

**Romans 8:13—For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

<sup>1</sup> If you are short on time, just read the passage and ask, "What do these verses teach us?" [A child of God does not have to accept a spirit of fear; we are not controlled by our sin nature, but by the Holy Spirit.]

<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:12—Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. (NIV 1984)

❓ *What does this verse say?* [If we live our lives following our sin nature, we will die—we will not inherit eternal life, but if we fight our sinful desires and actions, we will live eternally.]

**Romans 8:14—For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

❓ *According to this verse, how can you tell if you are a Christian?* [Christians follow the Holy Spirit, not their sin nature; Christians put to death their sin nature, they fight against it, and instead desire to live according to what is good and right]

**Romans 8:15—For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”**

❓ *What does this verse tell you about those who are trusting in Jesus?* [Jesus does not give those who are trusting in Him a spirit of fear; Christians are not slaves to fear—they do not have to act in fear; Christians do not have to accept a spirit of fear; Christians have a close personal relationship with God so they can call Him their Father—they are sons of God]

*For those of us who are Christians, we are not obligated to “live by the flesh.” We do not have to live in fear—we can fight against fear.*

TAPE, AND REJECT  
FEAR, TRUST TANK,  
EXPLOSION, AND  
SPIRIT OF FEAR  
TANK VISUALS, AND  
LARGE HEART

(Tape the **Reject Fear** visual to the wall.)

- To reject a spirit of fear in your life, you need to fight against it with the truth. You need to remember that a spirit of fear does not come from God.
- We need to remember that God has given us a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline. God wants us to trust Him.

(Tape the **Trust Tank** visual and an **Explosion** visual to **Large Heart** with the **Spirit of Fear Tank** visual.)

## Defeat Fear by Focusing on God

Illustration.....

ROARING LION WITH  
CLEAR PLASTIC  
SHEET OVER IT

(Display the **Roaring Lion** with the **clear plastic sheet** in front of it.)

*Suppose you were facing a real roaring lion...who was very hungry...and you looked very good to eat. Do you think that would be a really scary situation?*

(Call a student to the come and look closely at the visual.)

*What do you see in front of the picture? Would that scary lion look different if it were in the zoo, and this plastic sheet was a glass window between you and the lion? If all we saw was the scary lion, we would be afraid. But if we focused on the glass window, we would realize that there was no reason for fear. What we focus on determines how we act in a situation.*

*When we focus on the wrong thing, we can become fearful, and in time that sin can take a deep root in our hearts. So one of the ways we fight the spirit of fear is to keep our focus correct.*

(Briefly remind the students of the story of Peter walking on water from Matthew 14:25-33, making the following points.)

- When Peter was focused on Jesus—when he was trusting in Jesus—he walked in victory. He was able to walk on the water. He was without fear.
- When Peter took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the water, he was overcome with a spirit of fear. He was afraid of the water and afraid of drowning. He realized that he was in danger, and all he could see was the danger around him. He did not remember the Lord's love for him and protection over him.
- At that moment, his spirit of fear was greater than his trust in Jesus. This caused him to lose this battle in the fight for faith.
- Jesus is faithful even when we are not. He was faithful to Peter and would not let Peter sink in the water or sink in his faith. Jesus showed Peter and the other disciples that He is truly the Son of God.

*One way to fight a spirit of fear is to focus on God and not on the things that would frighten us.*



TAPE

(Tape the **Focus on God** visual to the wall.)

*We need to remember that God is greater than anything that would tempt us to fear. When we are tempted to look at the circumstances around us, we need to fight and say, "But God is greater than all these things."*

## Defeat Fear by a Greater Fear of God

*Another way to fight the spirit of fear is to have a greater fear of God and a greater love for God than for man. (Briefly remind the students of the following story from Acts 5:17-42 making the following points.)*

- The Sanhedrin charged the apostles not to preach about Jesus.

- The Sanhedrin had the power to harm the apostles, but the apostles did not focus on what the Sanhedrin could do to them. Instead, the apostles continued to preach about Jesus.
- When the apostles were questioned about why they did not obey the Sanhedrin, they replied, “We must obey God rather than men.” The apostles were more afraid of disobeying God than disobeying the Sanhedrin. They feared God, loved God, and trusted God. This freed them from the spirit of fear.

FEAR GOD,  
NOT MEN

TAPE

(Tape the **Fear God, Not Men** visual to the wall.)

*If we fear God more than we fear man, we can be free from many of the ways in which Satan will try to give us a spirit of fear. If we love God more than we love man, we will be free from the spirit of fear of offending man. If we trust God more than we fear others, we will be free from the spirit of fear of what others can do to us. We should fear and respect God more than we fear anything else.*

## Trust God’s Promises

*A very important way that we can fight fear in our lives is to remember the promises God has given us in His Word—verses that show us the greatness of God, that God is our helper, and that show us that God is with us are mighty weapons against fear.*

(Ask the students to state some of these verses. Answers will vary. Some examples are below.)

**Joshua 1:9**—“*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*”

**Psalms 46:1**—*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

**Psalms 56:3-4**—*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. ‘In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?’*

**Psalms 9:9-10**—*The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. <sup>10</sup>And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.*

**Proverbs 18:10**—*The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.*

***Psalm 16:8—I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.***

(Pray for the class using some of the verses the students have suggested.)

### Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *In what ways are you tempted to have a spirit of fear? How can you fight a fearful spirit?*
- *Do you fight a spirit of fear? How do you fight? In what ways are you defeated by a spirit of fear? Why?*
- *How can you fight a spirit of fear in your life? Be specific.* (Ask students to give an example of fearing man rather than God. For example: A friend tells you to do something wrong and you don't really want to do it. But you do it because you are afraid of offending your friend. You are more concerned about what your friends will think than what God will think.) *In what ways do you fear men? Why? We don't want to offend our friend. How can you fear God more?*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*Martin Luther, when he walked in the woods, used to raise his hat to the birds and say, 'Good morning, theologians—you wake and sing, but I, old fool, know less than you and worry over everything, instead of simply trusting in the heavenly Father's care.—Richard Wurmbrand from In God's Underground*

- You may want to divide the students into pairs and ask them to pray for each other.

### Optional Activities

#### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 12.

#### 2. Psalm Poster

Have the students write the words of Psalm 46:1-3 or Psalm 27:1-5 on a poster, and then illustrate or decorate these verses.

#### 3. Personal Testimony

You may want to share a personal testimony with the students of how you fought a spirit of fear in your life.

#### 4. Retelling Acts 5

Have the students retell the story from Acts 5 as if the apostles had a greater fear of men than of God. Ask them to imagine what the consequences of a spirit of fear in the apostles would have been.

**5. Reporting on Acts 5**

Some of the students can be news reporters gathering information on the story from Acts 5. Others can be apostles, members of the Sanhedrin, or eyewitnesses (captain of the guard, crowd hearing the apostles preach, etc.). The reporters can interview these people, perhaps recording or filming the interview. If there is time, the class can compose and present a news story of the Acts 5 events.

**6. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

**7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

**Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 12 (for each student)

# Battlegrounds—Self

## MAIN IDEAS

- **A battleground of the heart is SELF.**
- **Seeing that God is supreme helps fight the battle of SELF.**
- **Understanding that our lives do not belong to ourselves because we have been bought with a price helps fight the battle of SELF.**
- **Believing that we have been created for God's glory helps fight the battle of SELF.**

## KEY VERSE

*“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”—Luke 9:23b*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Job 38:4-5, 8, 12, 19-22, 35
- 2) Job 39:19, 26-27
- 3) Job 40:2-4
- 4) 1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a
- 5) Isaiah 43:7
- 6) 1 Corinthians 10:31
- 7) (Luke 9:23)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- War Visuals (cut out as indicated)
  - › Belief Battleship (9S)
  - › Unbelief Battleship (9T)
  - › Explosion (9U)
  - › Pride Jet Plane (11A)
  - › Humility Jet Plane (11B)
  - › Rebellion Soldier (11E)
  - › Submission Soldier (11F)
  - › Spirit of Fear Tank (12B)
  - › Trust Tank (12D)
  - › Self Helicopter (13A)
  - › God's Glory Helicopter (13B)
  - › Explosion (13C)
- See Preparation:
  - › Large M (13D)
  - › Large E (13E)
  - › ME 1-2 (13F-13G)
  - › Poem 1-4 (13H-13K)
  - › Job References 1-10 (13L-13U)
  - › Very Large G (13V)
  - › Very Large O (13W)
  - › Very Large D (13X)
- **Car Title (13Y)**
- Parent Page for Lesson 13 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Tape
- 12 chairs (see Preparation)
- See Preparation:
  - › Large Heart (from previous lessons)
  - › Piece of paper

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Poem Poster

- › Materials to make a class poster

### 3. Heavenly Kingdom Title

- For each student:
- › Heavenly Kingdom Title (OA-13)
  - › Pencil or pen
  - › Optional: Church seal

### 4. Battleground Prayers

- For each small group:
- › Paper
  - › Pencil/pen

### 5. Target Game

- › Large posterboard
- › Markers or paint
- › Fuzzy fabric
- › Velcro®
- › Ping pong ball

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

**PREPARATION**

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Large and Very Large Letters**—Cut out the **Large** and **Very Large letter** visuals. **Note:** While it would cut the preparation time to merely write a large ME and a larger GOD on a whiteboard, these visuals will make a greater impact.
- **ME 1-2**—Make six copies of the **ME 1-2** visuals, and cut them apart. Place them face down under 12 chairs throughout the room. Do not let the students handle the visuals until you ask them to do so in the lesson. **Note:** You may need to adjust the number of ME visuals that you use for this illustration. Enough students need to pop up and say ME that it makes a point. However, that will, in part, be determined by the number of students in the class. For example: If there are 10 students, just use 10 cards. If there are 14, use 14 so each student can have a turn. If the class is large, you will need to limit the number of cards to about a dozen, so the activity doesn't become tedious. If there are only a few students, you may want to give students more than one visual, but copy them on different colors so they do not recognize at first that the cards all contain the same word.
- **Poem 1-4**—Cover the words “THAT I NOW SEE” on **Poem 1** visual with a piece of paper. **Note:** You will want to read the Poem visuals repeatedly as indicated so that by the time you finish the lesson, the students have the poem memorized.
- **Job References**—Cut apart the **Job Reference 1-10** slips. You will be handing them out to students to read during the lesson.
- **Large Heart**—Mount the Large Heart to a wall, or draw the outline on the whiteboard before the lesson starts, but do not include the visuals before this lesson so that you can add them during a review of what you have learned thus far.



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

### Review

WAR VISUALS, LARGE  
HEART, TAPE

(Briefly review the heart battlegrounds from the previous lessons.<sup>1</sup> As appropriate, **tape** the **War Visuals** to the **Large Heart**, as in the example below.)

*Spiritual battles are fought in the heart. One battle that we must fight is **UNBELIEF**. We want to trust God and believe in His Word, but sometimes doubts creep in or situations come up where we find it hard to trust in God. Then we have a battle in our hearts between belief and unbelief. The way to fight unbelief is through the gift of remembering—**remembering** the goodness, faithfulness, and mighty acts of God.*

***PRIDE** is another battleground of the heart. Fighting pride means fighting the feeling that we are better than others. It means being able to admit when we are wrong, and depending on God rather than on ourselves. It means giving God the credit for every good thing in us and every ability we have. If we don't fight pride, it will destroy us.*

***REBELLION** is another battleground of the heart. We are rebellious when we don't want to submit to God or others; we want our own way. We resist God, and we resist what is right. Rebellion must be fought when it is still little, or rebellion will grow bigger and bigger—just like pride.*

*The fear of the right things is given to us by God to protect us. But a **SPIRIT OF FEAR** comes from a sinful heart. We don't have to accept a spirit of fear, but we can fight it by focusing on God and having a greater fear of God than of others.*

.....

## The Battleground of Self

*We will only be talking about one more battleground, but there are many more battlegrounds of the heart. All of these battles must be fought; none can be ignored.*

TAPE, SELF  
HELICOPTER VISUAL,  
AND LARGE HEART

(Ask a student to **tape** the **Self Helicopter** visual to the **Large Heart**.)

*The battle against self is such a big battle that I brought some big letters to help explain about this battle.*

<sup>1</sup> You may want to review this material by questioning the students and helping them to recall the main points of the past four lessons (e.g., "Where are spiritual battles fought?...How do we fight unbelief?...What is pride?")

TAPE, AND LARGE M  
AND E VISUALS

(Tape the **Large M** and **Large E** visuals to the wall.)

*The battle against self is the battle to make ME smaller or less important.*

(Point to the **Large M** and **E** visuals every time you say the word ME. Be sure to emphasize the word “ME.”)

*Self says:*

*What makes ME happy is most important.*

*I deserve the best, so the best should be given to ME.*

*It is what I want that counts because the important person here is ME.*

*Others should care about ME and my feelings.*

*What’s in it for ME?*

*How will this affect ME?*

*What about ME?*

*I want to look good to everyone, and I want everyone to think well of ME.*

*The world should revolve around ME.*

*God exists for ME and my needs.*

(Tell the students that some of them have something under their **chairs**. When you raise your hand, those students are to pick up the **ME** visual, read it, and then pop up one after another and say the word in a loud voice.)

*The battle against SELF in the heart is to stop thinking about...* (raise your hand)  
[ME, ME, ME, ME, ME...]

*Every person struggles with SELF.*

- *What does self say when dessert is served?* [“I want the big piece. The big piece should be mine!]
- *When choosing a game, what do our hearts not naturally say, “Whatever my friend wants to play is most important.” What do our hearts scream instead?* [“This is the game that is fun for ME. We should play the game I want to play.”]
- *What should we do each time this battle comes up in the heart?* [Fight it!]

*Fighting self means that when dessert is passed out and our hearts scream ME, ME, ME at the big piece, we must fight the battle of SELF by asking God to help us to pass the big piece on to someone else. When our friend wants to play a different game than we do, we must fight the battle of SELF, ask God for help, and graciously agree to play the game that would make our friend happy. This is not easy to do and we cannot fight the battle without God’s help.*

## Recognizing the Supremacy of God

*But knowing three things will help us fight the battle of SELF.*

TAPE, AND POEM 1  
VISUAL WITH PAPER  
COVERING ONE  
PHRASE

(Hand the **Poem 1** visual to a student to read: “God is supreme.” Then **tape** it to the wall. Briefly tell the story of Job, making the following points.)

- Job was a follower of God.
- Job experienced much suffering—his enemies carried away his oxen, donkeys, and camels; lightning killed all his sheep; and all his children died when a house collapsed on them. Then Job got sores all over his body.
- Job did not understand why he had to suffer, so he questioned God about his suffering.

❓ *Did Job have the right to demand answers from God?* [though God understands our weaknesses and allows us to come to Him with our questions with respect, we have no “right” to question God in anger or doubt; we should not “demand” answers from God.]

❓ *Why not?* [because God is the supreme authority and is infinite in wisdom and righteousness; God does not answer to us, but has the right to do whatever He pleases.]

- Job had an inadequate understanding of God...he did not see the greatness of God.
- Job did not realize that he had no right to question the ways of God. He failed to see his own unworthiness before God—he didn’t realize that compared to God, Job’s understanding was very limited.
- Because Job did not understand the greatness of God, he did not realize what an offense it is for a mere man to question the Almighty God of the universe.
- However, God was patient with Job, as He is with all His children.

*The suffering in Job’s life was to teach Job to see God in a new way. It was to show Job how great God is and how small Job was. Let’s look at God’s response to Job’s questioning.*

JOB 1-10  
REFERENCE SLIPS

(Have the students open their Bibles to Job 38-40, and then pass out the **Job References 1-10** slips for them to find and read to the class or in small groups.)

Job Reference 1

***Job 38:4-5—“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. <sup>5</sup>Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?”***

Job Reference 2

***Job 38:8—“Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb,”***

Job Reference 3

***Job 38:12—“Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place,”***

Job Reference 4

***Job 38:19-21—“Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, <sup>20</sup>that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? <sup>21</sup>You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!”***

Job Reference 5

***Job 38:22—“Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,”***

Job Reference 6

***Job 38:35—“Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we are’?”***

Job Reference 7

***Job 39:19—“Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane?”***

Job Reference 8

***Job 39:26-27—“Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars and spreads his wings toward the south? <sup>27</sup>Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high?”***

Job Reference 9

***Job 40:2—“Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it.”***

Job Reference 10

***Job 40:3-4—Then Job answered the LORD and said: “Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth.”***

❓ *What was God saying to Job?* [He was showing Job His greatness; He was showing Job that his understanding was nothing compared to God's]

❓ *How did Job respond to God?* [Job realized his error.]

*God was showing Job that He is far superior to Job. God is the supreme Ruler of the whole universe. He created all things and gives all things life. He holds all the mysteries of the universe. Man is nothing compared to God. Man knows almost nothing of the mysteries of God. Man does not understand the purposes of God and has no right to question what God does. Job learned to see himself and God in a whole new way. He saw that he was very small, and God is supreme. He saw his smallness—and God's greatness.*

TAPE, AND THE VERY  
LARGE G, O, D, M,  
AND E VISUALS, AND  
THE POEM 1 VISUAL

(Tape the **Very Large G, O, and D** visuals next to the **Large M** and **E** visuals. Then, uncover the second phrase on the **Poem 1** visual, and read the line: “God is supreme, that I now see.”)

*One way to fight self is to see that we are really very small and limited. If we can see that God is so far above us and all things...that He is supreme... we will realize that what we want and think is not most important—God is most important. We will also understand that all His purposes are right and good.*

## Recognizing God's Ownership

TAPE, AND POEM 1  
AND 2 VISUALS

(Have a student read the **Poem 2** visual: “My life does not belong to me” and **tape** it beneath the **Poem 1** visual.)

*This is the second thing we must know in order to fight the battle of SELF.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following passage.)

**1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a—You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.**

*Jesus paid a high price for us—His own death on the cross. So we do not own our own lives—we belong to God. If we do not own ourselves, we do not have any rights. We cannot demand anything.*

## Illustration.....



(Display the **Car Title** visual.)

*A car title shows ownership of a car. It proves who owns the car. When you own a car, you have the right to drive the car when you want. You can paint the car or put in a different radio if you want. You can let someone else drive the car.*

*But once you sell the car, you lose all those rights. A new title is made with the new owner's name on it. You can't go drive the car when you feel like it. You can't paint it or change the radio. You can't let someone else drive it. You have lost these rights to the car. The rights belong to the new owner.*

*This is the same way it is with us. The ownership of our lives does not belong to us—it belongs to God. He created us and He holds the title. He made us. He paid the price of His Son's death on the cross for us. We do not have any rights to ourselves. We cannot demand that our lives are a certain way. We do not have the right to do whatever we want. We cannot demand that only good things happen to us or that we would never get sick. We cannot tell God what He should do for us. We do not have the right to question what God does in our lives. All the things that SELF pushes for, we have no right to.*

POEM 1 AND 2  
VISUALS

(Ask the students to read the first two lines of the **Poem** visual aloud with you.)

*GOD IS SUPREME, THAT I NOW SEE;  
MY LIFE DOES NOT BELONG TO ME.*

## Recognizing We are Created to Bring Glory to God

TAPE AND POEM 3  
VISUAL

(Have a student read the **Poem 3** visual: "I solely exist to bring glory to Him" and **tape** it beneath the **Poem 2** visual. Then have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**Isaiah 43:7—“everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”**

**?** What does this verse say about the reason that God created us? [We were created for God’s glory—to show His greatness and worth.]

*We were created for God’s glory, to show His greatness and worth. We were not created so that we could get our own way or think about what we want. Our hearts should not be screaming ME, ME, ME, but GOD, GOD, GOD! We were not created to focus on SELF, but to focus on God. Our purpose is to bring glory to God—not to get what we can for ourselves. And in everything we do—whether it is choosing a game to play or choosing a piece of dessert—we should ask ourselves: “What brings glory to God—what shows God’s greatness and worth?”*

(Illustrate this truth with the following verse.)

**1 Corinthians 10:31—So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

*Everything we do, we should do to bring glory to God. What is most important is not what we want, but what brings glory to God. However, if we are God’s child, we will discover that bringing glory to Him will make us happy. Pushing for our own way does not bring happiness. Thinking about SELF does not bring happiness. God and His way bring happiness. We are most satisfied when we rejoice in God and in what brings Him glory.*

TAPE AND POEM 4  
VISUAL

(Have a student read the **Poem 4** visual: “When I fight the battle, my SELF will grow dim,” and **tape** it under the **Poem 3** visual.)

*As in all the heart battles, when we fight the battle of SELF, SELF becomes less important. We cannot rest or ignore the battle. We must ask God for strength, and then fight with all that strength. We should not be fighting for ME, ME, ME, but for God’s glory.*

TAPE, AND GOD’S  
GLORY HELICOPTER,  
AND EXPLOSION  
VISUALS, AND LARGE  
HEART

(Tape the **God’s Glory Helicopter** and **Explosion** visuals to the **Large Heart**. Then, end by reading the whole poem together.)

*GOD IS SUPREME, THAT I NOW SEE;*

*MY LIFE DOES NOT BELONG TO ME.*

*I SOLELY EXIST TO BRING GLORY TO HIM.*

*WHEN I FIGHT THE BATTLE, MY SELF WILL GROW DIM.*

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- Discuss the following verse:

***Luke 9:23—....“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”***

*What does it mean to deny ourselves? What does it mean to “take up our crosses”? How can we take up our crosses daily? What happens to SELF when we deny ourselves and take up our crosses?*

*Why does Luke 9:23 tell us to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily? (Make sure the students understand that the Christian life is a daily battle. Even though at times the battle may be less intense, there will always be battles of faith.)*

- *Why is what God wants more important than what we want?*
- *How can we see God as He really is? How can we see ourselves as we really are?*
- *What step can you take in fighting the battle of SELF?*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*Sin makes us glory thieves...Sin causes us to steal the story and rewrite it with ourselves as the lead, and with our lives at center stage. But there is only one stage and it belongs to the Lord. Any attempt to put ourselves in his place puts us in a war with him.—Paul Tripp from Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 13.

### 2. Poem Poster

Have the students make a poster with the poem from this lesson, and then illustrate or decorate it.

### 3. Heavenly Kingdom Title

Have the students fill out the **Heavenly Kingdom Title** handout. If you have a church seal, you could add it to the titles when they’re done.

### 4. Battleground Prayers

Help the students make a list of other battlegrounds (e.g., anger, resentment, discouragement, envy). Ask them to choose one battleground from the list that is a difficult battle for them, and to pray about it every day. Tell them that you will give them an opportunity to share their battle



experience with the group the next week. (Make sure the students understand that although they may see some victory in a week, the battle will be ongoing.)

### 5. Target Game

Make a target from posterboard. Mark all the outer rings ME. Cover the center circle with fuzzy fabric (i.e., fabric that Velcro® will stick to) and label it GOD or GOD'S GLORY. Glue Velcro® strips to a ping pong ball. Split the class into teams. Show the students the target and tell them that we are not the center of the universe; God is the center of the universe. We should not focus on self but on God. Ask the students to aim for the center of the target and throw the ball. The team gets a point for each ball that hits the center of the target, but no point for focusing on self and hitting the ME portion of the target.

### 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 13 (for each student)



# Expect Obstacles...and Never Give Up!

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Expect obstacles to your faith, and be prepared for them.**
- **Do not give up in the fight of faith; persevere to the end.**
- **There is a reward waiting for those who persevere and finish the fight of faith.**

## KEY VERSE

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.—2 Timothy 4:7*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Nehemiah 4
- 2) Nehemiah 6
- 3) Romans 15:4
- 4) 2 Timothy 4:7-8
- 5) (2 Timothy 3:12)



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Opposition 1-5 (14A-14E)
- Did Not Give Up 1-5 (14F-14J, cut out)
- Parent Page for Lesson 14 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Tape
- Whiteboard and markers
- See Preparation:
  - › Scrabble® or Dominoes® pieces, or other objects
  - › Table or another surface
  - › Books or other obstacles
  - › Memory verse rewards

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Never Give Up Mural

- › Materials for a class mural

### 3. Finish the Race

- › Materials and prizes for chosen races

### 4. Obstacle Course

- › Materials for an obstacle course

### 5. Never Give Up Cards

- For each student:
- › Index card
  - › Pencil/pen
  - › Markers

### 6. Fight of Faith Cheer

- › No materials required for this activity

### 7. Nehemiah Interview

- › Equipment (e.g., a recording device) for the class to be reporters

### 8. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 9. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.

- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Scrabble® or Dominoes® pieces, Table, and Obstacles**—In the opening illustration, a student will decide how many playing pieces are needed to cover the length of a table (or other specified surface). You will need to give him the measurement of the distance, as well as the object he is using to cover the distance. (Seven Scrabble® tiles cover five inches. Five Dominoes® cover seven inches. Or you could choose another item to use as a unit of measurement.) You will also need something to use as obstacles (e.g., books) for this illustration.
- **Memory Verse Rewards**—Decide what rewards to offer for memorizing Scripture. If you are not participating in this, you will have to skip this part of the lesson.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

TABLE OR OTHER  
SURFACE, PLAYING  
PIECES OR OTHER  
ITEM TO USE  
AS A UNIT OF  
MEASUREMENT, AND  
BOOKS OR OTHER  
OBSTACLES

(Ask a student to come to the front of the room. Tell him the measurement of the **table or other surface** in **Scrabble®** and **Dominoes®** pieces, or another item to use as a unit of measurement. Ask him to calculate the number of pieces he will need to cover the distance with each piece touching the piece next to it. The class can help him estimate if needed. After he starts, put a **book or other obstacle** in his way, which he must go around still with his pieces touching. Then add another obstacle...then another...until it is obvious that he will not have enough pieces to finish.)

*Why couldn't you reach the other end? You did not realize that you would have obstacles in your way, and you weren't prepared for them.*

*In the Christian life, there are many obstacles to faith—distractions, trials, problems, and people who make fun of what Christians believe. These obstacles are a normal part of the fight of faith...and we have to keep going. We have to keep believing. We cannot give up...no matter what obstacle or problem or opposition comes our way. If we trust God, He will keep us persevering in faith.*

.....

## Expect Obstacles and Persevere

*The Bible tells about someone who did not quit in the face of great opposition.*

TAPE, AND  
OPPOSITION 1-5 AND  
DID NOT GIVE UP 1-5  
VISUALS

(Remind the students of the story of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem in Nehemiah 4 and 6, making the following points.<sup>1</sup> At the appropriate times, **tape** the **Opposition 1-5** visuals to the wall. Then tape the **Did Not Give Up 1-5** visuals on top of the Opposition visuals after you say “did not give up.”)

- Nehemiah was a cupbearer to the king of Persia where the Jews were exiled after the fall of Judah.
- God moved the heart of the king to grant Nehemiah permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- When their enemies heard that the Jews were rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, they ridiculed the Jews (**Opposition 1**), but Nehemiah prayed to God and he did not give up (**Did Not Give Up 1**).

<sup>1</sup> You will not need to tell the story in detail, as future lessons will highlight verses from these two chapters of Nehemiah. Each time you say “Did Not Give Up,” increase the intensity of your voice and hold up one of the Did Not Give Up visuals. Tape each visual to the wall after you show it so that, at the end, the students can see how many times Nehemiah faced opposition and did not give up. This will also serve as a visual picture of the persistence of Nehemiah and the Jews.

- Then their enemies plotted together to fight against the Jews and to stir up trouble against the Jews. (**Opposition 2**) But once again Nehemiah and the Jews prayed, posted a guard, and did not give up (**Did Not Give Up 2**). They kept building the wall.
- Their enemies threatened to kill them and some of the people of Judah started complaining (**Opposition 3**), but Nehemiah posted more guards, reminded the people of the greatness of God and did not give up (**Did Not Give Up 3**). He kept building the wall.
- Half of the men carried weapons, and half of the men did the work of rebuilding the wall. The enemies tried to lure Nehemiah away from the city, but he ignored them and kept on working.
- Then the enemies sent a letter to Nehemiah saying that a report was being passed around that the Jews were planning to revolt against the king and make Nehemiah king (**Opposition 4**). The message said that this report would be told to the king of Persia. But Nehemiah replied that the report was a lie, prayed to God for strength, and DID NOT GIVE UP (**Did Not Give Up 4**). He and the Jews just kept building the wall.
- Finally, he was warned to flee into the temple because his enemies were coming to kill him that night (**Opposition 5**). Nehemiah realized that this warning was not from God. Nehemiah refused to flee to the temple, he DID NOT GIVE UP (**Did Not Give Up 5**), and continued building...and FINISHED THE WALL.

*In spite of all the obstacles and opposition, the wall was finished because God helped Nehemiah and the Jews...and they did not give up! If they had given up, the wall wouldn't have been finished. But they didn't give up and the wall was rebuilt.*

❓ *How easy it would have been for Nehemiah and the Jews to give up. What kinds of tempting thoughts might have come into their minds?* [this isn't worth it; it's just a wall; this is too much trouble; we are having too many problems; I'm tired and there are other things I would rather be doing]

❓ *Why was Nehemiah able to continue the work in spite of the obstacles and not give up?* [he trusted in God; God gave him strength and perseverance; God was with him]

❓ *What was the result of the perseverance of Nehemiah and the Jews?* [the wall was built, the Jews could live in safety in Jerusalem, Nehemiah and the Jews learned not to give up, their enemies were defeated]

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**Nehemiah 6:16—And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.**

❓ *What does this verse tell us is the result of the perseverance of the Jews in finishing the wall? [the enemies of the Jews were now afraid of them and in awe of God; they knew that God had helped Nehemiah and the Jews]*

*The story of the rebuilding of the wall is in the Bible so that we will be in awe of God. It shows us His greatness, faithfulness, and goodness. It should cause us to worship Him. That is the most important reason this story is in the Bible. But there is another reason as well.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**Romans 15:4—For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**

❓ *What is the other reason the story of the rebuilding the wall is in the Bible? [it is an example to us of perseverance and God's faithfulness, which encourages our faith; to teach us; to help us to persevere in faith; to encourage us to fight the fight of faith; to teach us to expect obstacles and to persevere through them]*

*Obstacles to our faith will come. We should just expect them. The Christian life is a life of continual battle, and if we think it will be easy, we will not be prepared to fight the battles ahead of us.*

❓ *What are some of the obstacles Christians face that threaten our faith—what fights against your faith in God? [false ideas about God and the world; ridicule; other interests that capture our hearts; wrong use of technology; ungodly friends; doubts]*

## God Promises a Great Reward to the Faithful

*Sometimes the battle is fierce. But there is a great reward awaiting those who persevere. There are also many rewards and joys along the way.*

*To help you fight the fight of faith, I have some rewards for you.*

### MEMORY VERSE REWARDS

(Note the **rewards** you are offering for memorizing Fighter Verses, the key verse, or other Bible verses, and how the students can earn these rewards. Also remind the students that they can earn the Fighter Verse button, and remind them about the page in the Student Notebook they can use to record their progress.)

*These rewards are really nice, aren't they? But these are material rewards—they are just things that someday will get lost, worn out, or consumed (used up). Do you remember that we talked about all of life being spiritual? There are spiritual rewards to memorizing verses and earning buttons.*

❓ *What do you think these spiritual rewards could be? [storing up the Word of God so that you can fight the fight of faith, learning how to fight spiritual battles, comfort from the Word of God, encouragement when discouraged; encouragement from the Word to others]*

*Will you get these rewards if you give up? If you are truly a Christian, God will help you fight the fight of faith and receive a reward for persevering in faith. This is what Paul says about persevering and the reward.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses.)

***2 Timothy 4:7-8—I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup>Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.***

*The reward is the crown of righteousness—to appear before the Judge of the whole earth and be accepted into His eternal kingdom. Would Paul have gotten this reward if he had given up? And neither will we if we give up.*

*I have a message for you—actually it is a word of advice and a word of warning.*

WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS

(Draw five short lines on the **whiteboard**, a space, four more lines, a space, and then two more lines as shown here. Then, have the students guess letters. Fill in the lines with the appropriate letters as they are guessed until they can read the message below.)

\_\_\_\_\_

NEVER GIVE UP

*...in the fight of faith.*

(Have the whole class read the message in unison, and then end in prayer.)



## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *Do you often give up on things, or do you usually keep at a task? Can you give any examples?*
- *What kinds of things cause you to give up? How can you fight this?*
- *We often expect that life will be easy, and only pleasant things will happen. But life usually isn't like that. In fact, this is what 2 Timothy 3:12 says:*

**2 Timothy 3:12—Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,**

*What does this verse tell us to expect? How can expecting problems help you fight the fight of faith? What can you do to prepare your heart and faith for obstacles or opposition? How can you readjust your mindset to understand that life isn't supposed to be easy? Do you know of anyone who has persevered through great trials? Tell us this person's story.*

- *What is threatening your faith right now? What can you do about it?*
- *Why is it so important to persevere in the fight of faith? How was Nehemiah able to persevere? What does that teach you about persevering in faith?*
- *Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:*

*Sometimes when we get overwhelmed we forget how big God is.—A.W. Tozer*

- You may want to ask the students to read Nehemiah 4 and 6 at home.
- Answer Key for the Student Notebook:

ifednsr = friends

Isicao dimae = social media

tspros = sports

ssssopineo = possessions

phyiscoyr = hypocrisy

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 14.

### 2. Never Give Up Mural

Make a mural of the Jerusalem wall with the words NEVER GIVE UP! Sponges dipped in paint could be used to make the blocks on the wall.

### **3. Finish the Race**

Have some races, providing prizes for all who finish the race. Some suggestions for races: sack race, wheelbarrow race, piggyback race (student carries another student on his back), backwards race, crab race (crawl on all fours, stomach up). Remind the students that those who don't give up receive the reward.

### **4. Obstacle Course**

Set up an obstacle course and encourage the students to complete it.

### **5. Never Give Up Cards**

Students can design a sign on an index card saying NEVER GIVE UP! This can be placed on the bathroom mirror or refrigerator at home as a reminder to persevere.

### **6. Fight of Faith Cheer**

Make up a cheer reminding each other not to give up in the fight of faith.

### **7. Nehemiah Interview**

Students can pretend to be reporters and using a recording device, interview Nehemiah about the rebuilding of the wall and the opposition he faced.

### **8. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### **9. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 14 (for each student)

# The Enemy's Tactics and Our Weapons—Part 1

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Knowing Satan's tactics helps Christians to defeat him.**
- **All of life is spiritual.**
- **Spiritual battles are fought with spiritual weapons.**
- **Satan is persistent.**

## KEY VERSES

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*  
—Ephesians 6:10-12

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Nehemiah 4:1-6
- 2) Ephesians 6:10-12
- 3) 2 Corinthians 10:3-4
- 4) Nehemiah 4:7-9

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Cut out as indicated:
  - › Enemy's Tactics (15A)
  - › Our Weapons (15B)
  - › Spiritual Battle (15C)
  - › Sanballat Nametag (15D)
  - › Tobiah Nametag (15E)
  - › Nehemiah Nametag (15F)
- Scripts 1-3 (15G-15I)
- Parent Page for Lesson 15 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- 2 pan lids (same size)
- 12 pairs of socks (see Preparation)
- Tape
- Whiteboard and markers

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Spiritual Battle Charts

- For each student:
- › Paper
  - › Pen/pencil

### 3. Build the Wall Game

- For the class:
- › Whiteboard and markers
  - › Optional: A cardboard "brick" template

### 4. Coat of Arms

- For each student:
- › Coat of Arms 1-5 (OA-15A through OA-15E)
  - › Markers
  - › Pen

### 5. Fighter Verses Worksheet

- For each student:
- › Fighter Verses Worksheet (OA-15F)
  - › Pencil/pen

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.

- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Pile of Socks**—Roll each pair of socks into a ball and pile the balls of socks before the class begins.
- Although you have already looked at Nehemiah 4 and 6, you will be looking at these chapters again in more depth in Lessons 15 and 16. In Lesson 14, you emphasized that Nehemiah and the Jews faced obstacles and did not give up. In Lessons 15 and 16, you will be emphasizing the enemy's tactics and the weapons that Nehemiah and the Jews, as well as all Christians, have for battling the enemy. Some of the weapons of our warfare that will be mentioned in this lesson and the next will be discussed in fuller detail in the lessons about our strategy. So, rather than trying to exhaust these topics, just mentioning them will be sufficient for this lesson.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

2 PAN LIDS AND PILE  
OF SOCKS

(Give the **pan lids** to two students, and have them stand about 18 inches apart facing a third student. The third student should face the other two students about 3.5 feet away. Give the third student the **pile of socks**. Instruct the third student that he is to throw the socks at the other two students, and that he may “fake” his actions before actually throwing the socks. He must try to hit the other students from the shoulders down. Make sure the student knows that he is not to throw the socks at the faces of the other students. The other students are to defend themselves with the pan lids. After the third student hits the other students with the socks four or five times, tell the students that you will instruct the third student where to throw the socks and you will let the other two students know where he will attack them as in the example below.)

*Now I am going to tell you where to throw the socks. This time, throw the socks at [student's name's] foot. Now try to hit [student's name's] knees.*

(Try this technique long enough for the students to realize that once the tactic of the attacker is known, it is much easier to fight off his attack.)

.....

## All Attacks are Spiritual Attacks

*It is much easier to defend yourself when you know how you will be attacked. Just as it was easier for the students to block the socks when they knew the target, so it is easier for us to fight the attacks of Satan when we know how he will attack us. Knowing the tactics of the enemy helps us to fight him.*

*In this lesson and in the next, we will be learning about the tactics of Satan and how to fight him.*

TAPE, ENEMY'S  
TACTICS AND OUR  
WEAPONS VISUALS,  
AND WHITEBOARD

(**Tape the Enemy's Tactics and Our Weapons** to the **whiteboard**, leaving a space between them for the **Spiritual Battle** visual, as in the example below. This will be referenced in the future as the Spiritual Battle Chart.)

|                 |  |             |
|-----------------|--|-------------|
| ENEMY'S TACTICS |  | OUR WEAPONS |
|-----------------|--|-------------|

(Ask the students to open their Bibles to Nehemiah 4.)

*This chapter is about Nehemiah and the Jews rebuilding the destroyed wall of Jerusalem.*

TAPE, AND  
NEHEMIAH,  
SANBALLAT, AND  
TOBIAH NAMETAGS,  
AND SCRIPTS 1-3

(Call three students to the front, **tape** a **Nametag—Nehemiah, Sanballat, or Tobiah—** on each of them, and give each one a **Script**)

*When I come to the words in the Bible of the man whose nametag you are wearing, I want you to read his words.*

#### Teacher Reads

***Nehemiah 4:1-2a—Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. <sup>2</sup>And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria,***

#### Sanballat Reads

***Nehemiah 4:2b—“What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?”***

#### Teacher Reads

***Nehemiah 4:3a—Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said,***

#### Tobiah Reads

***Nehemiah 4:3b—“Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!”***

#### Nehemiah Reads

***Nehemiah 4:4-5—Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives. <sup>5</sup>Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight, for they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders.***

#### Teacher Reads

***Nehemiah 4:6—So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.***

(Ask the students to help you fill in the chart with the enemy's tactics and the weapons of Nehemiah and the Jews, as in the example following. Write on the **whiteboard** below the visuals.)

| ENEMY'S TACTICS    |  | OUR WEAPONS             |
|--------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Ridicule or insult |  | Ignore ridicule; prayer |

*Because all of life is spiritual, this was not just a battle between Nehemiah and the Jews versus Sanballat and Tobiah.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses.)

***Ephesians 6:10-12—Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.***

*The battle in building the wall was not really a battle against flesh and blood—it was not against Sanballat and Tobiah...*

(Point to the two students playing the parts of Sanballat and Tobiah)

*but it was a spiritual battle.*

TAPE AND SPIRITUAL  
BATTLE VISUAL

(**Tape** the **Spiritual Battle** visual to the chart between the Enemy's Tactics and the Our Weapons visuals.)

*It was a struggle between Nehemiah and the Jews, and Satan. However Sanballat and Tobiah were being used by Satan to attack Nehemiah and the Jews spiritually.*

(The three students can sit down as you begin the next discussion.)

❓ *What spiritual battle were Nehemiah and the Jews fighting?* (Fill out the chart with the answers as shown.)

| ENEMY'S TACTICS    | SPIRITUAL BATTLE                                   | OUR WEAPONS             |
|--------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Ridicule or insult | Discouragement; unbelief; temptation to fight back | Ignore ridicule; prayer |

*The real battle was whether Nehemiah and the Jews would believe that God would help them build the wall. Would they get discouraged and give up, or would they trust that God was working for them and keep on building the wall?*

*The big, spiritual battle was not the flimsy words that Sanballat and Tobiah were flinging at them, but the attack on the heart and soul to doubt that God was at work. What they really had to fight was discouragement and unbelief.*

❓ *What would the normal, worldly reaction of our sin nature be to the attack of Sanballat and Tobiah?* [ridicule them back, make smart remarks to them, fight them]

(Ask the students to demonstrate this as in the example below.)

*“Oh yeah! Look who’s feeble—you’re feeble. In fact, you’re wimps!”*

*“Feeble? I’ll show you who’s feeble!”*

*“We never said we would finish in a day. You are a bunch of liars.”*

*“Shut your mouths, or we will shut them for you!”*

*“A fox! Are you kidding? Nothing can break this wall down!”*

## Fight Spiritual Battles with Spiritual Weapons

❓ *How did Nehemiah and the Jews fight the attack of Sanballat and Tobiah?* [they didn’t even respond; they prayed]

*Nehemiah and the Jews remembered that they were in a spiritual battle. They did not use a worldly weapon, but a spiritual weapon—the weapon of prayer. Spiritual battles are fought with spiritual weapons, not with worldly weapons.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following passage.)

**2 Corinthians 10:3-4—For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.**

*Did Sanballat and Tobiah just give up? Did they quit trying to destroy the rebuilding of the wall? Sanballat and Tobiah were being used by Satan to try to defeat Nehemiah and the Jews. Satan is not a quitter—he does not give up easily. One of his tactics is to be persistent. If he cannot attack successfully one way, he will try another way.*

### Illustration.....

(Ask three students to pretend they are playing basketball. Two of the students are on one team, and the other student is on the opposing team. Explain that the two students are trying to get the ball down to the other end of the “court” so they can shoot a basket. Of course, the student on the opposing team doesn’t want them to do that, so he blocks



the student dribbling the ball. Ask the students to demonstrate this and to pretend that they really are playing basketball and trying to get the ball to the other side of the room. Ask the other students to watch what they do.)

*The student who is blocked doesn't just sit down and say, "I quit. I got blocked, so I give up! I guess the game is over."*

❓ *What does a blocked student do when trying to get the ball down the court to make a basket? [he tries to maneuver around the blocking student; pass the ball]*

*He tries to get the ball down the court another way. If he can't maneuver around the blocking student, he will pass the ball to his teammate. He will not just give up. He will try another tactic.*

*Satan does the same thing. If he cannot defeat us one way, he doesn't just give up and say, "Oh well, I tried, but I couldn't do it. I give up." Instead, if one tactic doesn't work, he will try another one. He does not give up easily and will try many different ways to defeat us.*

(Ask a student to read Nehemiah 4:7-9 while the students listen for another tactic the enemy used and the weapons the Jews used.)

***Nehemiah 4:7-9—But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. <sup>8</sup>And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. <sup>9</sup>And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.***

*When ridiculing the Jews did not produce the desired result, Sanballat and Tobiah tried another tactic. Let's remember that Sanballat and Tobiah were being used by Satan, and Satan does not give up easily. When ridicule—simple words—did not stop the Jews, Sanballat and Tobiah threatened to harm their bodies. They stirred up the people to fight against the Jews.*

❓ *What is the spiritual battle Nehemiah and the Jews faced and the weapons they used? (Fill out the chart on the **whiteboard** with the answers.)*

WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS

| ENEMY'S TACTICS                    | SPIRITUAL BATTLE                                   | OUR WEAPONS                            |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Ridicule or insult                 | Discouragement; unbelief; temptation to fight back | Ignore ridicule; prayer                |
| Plot against them; stir up trouble | Fear; unbelief; anger                              | Prayer; watchfulness; ignore the enemy |

*Nehemiah and the Jews prayed, and they also posted a guard so they would be warned when the enemy approached to harm them. The weapons that Nehemiah and the Jews used against Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the men of Ashdod, we can use in fighting our enemy, Satan. A weapon against the enemy of our souls is to be alert, to watch for his attacks. We must be ready for attacks. If we are aware that an attack is coming, we can be ready to fight it—just like the students in the illustration were better at fighting off the socks when they knew the attack was coming.*

*This is not the end of the story of the rebuilding of the wall. Satan had many more tactics to use against the Jews. But the Jews had a weapon against every tactic Satan used. We are involved in earthly battles too that are more than earthly battles. They are spiritual battles since all of life is spiritual. Spiritual battles are fought with spiritual weapons, and God has given His children a weapon for every tactic Satan uses against us.*

### Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *What battles do you face in your life? What spiritual battles are behind these earthly battles? How can you remember that your battles are spiritual battles?*
- *Does Satan attack you once, and then leave you alone? Do you have an example? How can you defeat his attacks?*
- *How can you be prepared for the attacks of Satan? What does it mean to be watchful?*
- *What are some spiritual weapons you can use against the attacks of the enemy? Why is it easier to use worldly weapons than to use spiritual weapons? How effective are worldly weapons? How effective are spiritual weapons? Why?*
- Discuss 2 Corinthians 10:3-4:

***2 Corinthians 10:3-4—For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.***

- *How can you learn to use spiritual weapons rather than worldly weapons?*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*We may pray with our eyes on God, not on our difficulties.—Oswald Chambers*

- Spend some time praying for each other.

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 15.

### 2. Spiritual Battle Charts

Help the students make their own charts like the one in the lesson. They will need to leave five additional spaces to add the tactics and weapons that will be taught in the next lesson.

### 3. Build the Wall Game

Choose two students to be Sanballat and Tobiah. The rest of the students will be Nehemiah and the Jews. Line up the Jews on one side of the room. On the other side of the room, place a whiteboard and marker. (You may also want to provide a cardboard “brick” pattern for students to trace around so that you can monitor the size of the bricks.) Draw a line across the whiteboard indicating the height of the completed wall, or draw the outline of the wall for the students to fill with bricks. At the sound of the signal, members of the team of Jews run across the room to the whiteboard. Sanballat and Tobiah try to tag the students to disqualify them. Every student who reaches the whiteboard without being tagged by Sanballat or Tobiah may draw a brick on the wall. When students are tagged, they forfeit the right to draw a brick. You may also want to allow Sanballat and Tobiah to ridicule the Jews (within reasonable limits), and encourage the Jews to not retaliate but ignore the taunts of the enemy. The Jews return to the starting line and the game continues until the wall is built. Remind the students that the Jews DID NOT GIVE UP in spite of opposition. They also ignored the attack of the enemy and kept at their job.

### 4. Coat of Arms

You may want the students to make a coat of arms that shows that they belong to the Lord. In medieval times, coats of arms were used to identify warriors. The coat of arm was unique to each warrior. As a soldier or warrior for Jesus Christ, we can identify ourselves with a coat of arms as well. An excellent resource is *Design Your Own Coat of Arms—An Introduction to Heraldry* by Rosemary A. Chorzempa, published by Dover Publications, 1987. If this book is not available to you, use the **Coat of Arms 1-5** handouts, and explain to the students that they can decorate their shields with animals, flowers or plants, celestial objects, or any other object. The objects they choose should depict who they are. They should be able to explain why they chose the objects they did. They may want to write a verse or a saying on the shield.

### 5. Fighter Verses Worksheet

Students can work on the **Fighter Verses Worksheet**. Discuss the passage. Students can also work on memorizing the passage.

### 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

## **7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 15 (for each student)

# The Enemy's Tactics and Our Weapons—Part 2

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Knowing Satan's tactics helps Christians to defeat him.**
- **All of life is spiritual.**
- **Spiritual battles are fought with spiritual weapons.**
- **Satan is a liar and a deceiver.**
- **Satan is persistent.**

## KEY VERSES

*For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.  
 4For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.  
 —2 Corinthians 10:3-4*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Nehemiah 4:10-23
- 2) Nehemiah 6:1-9
- 3) John 8:44
- 4) Nehemiah 6:10-15
- 5) (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Numbers (16A, see Preparation)
- Parent Page for Lesson 16 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- See Preparation:
  - › Whiteboard and markers
  - › Prepared volunteer
- Table
- Wrapped pieces of candy
- Spiritual Battle Chart (from Lesson 15)
- Optional: Cardstock (see Preparation)

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Spiritual Battle Charts

- For each student:
- › Paper
  - › Pencil/pen

### 3. The Wizard of Oz

- › *The Wizard of Oz* movie
- › Equipment to show a clip of the movie

### 4. Fighting Satan's Tactics Game

- › Large beach ball

### 5. Fighter Verse Worksheet

- For each student:
- › Fighter Verse Worksheet (OA-15F)
  - › Pencil/pen

### 6. Ephesians 6 Poster

- › Materials to make a class poster

### 7. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 8. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.

- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Spiritual Battle Chart**—Recreate the chart from Lesson 15 on the whiteboard.
- **Numbers**—Cut apart the **Numbers** visuals. If you haven't purchased the printed visuals packet, you might want to print them from the CD on cardstock, or mount them on construction paper so the numbers don't show through.
- **Prepared Volunteer**—Choose someone to try to bluff the student in the opening illustration. Coach him ahead of time that he should pretend he has a really high number and is trying to bluff the other student. Practice with the student to make sure he knows what to do.
- This lesson looks very long because there is so much Scripture quoted and because the chart is reproduced after each Scripture passage. Although the lesson is not as long as it looks, you will still need to progress through the Scripture portions fairly rapidly. By splitting the class into five groups to study the passages simultaneously, you will save time. Each group can then report on their discoveries. Remember that many of the weapons mentioned will be discussed more thoroughly in subsequent lessons. If you have time, you may want to teach this lesson over two weeks and look at each passage more closely.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

NUMBER VISUALS,  
PREPARED  
VOLUNTEER, AND  
WRAPPED PIECES OF  
CANDY

(Place the **Number** visuals face down on the table. Call two students to the front, one being the student you have coached ahead of time to bluff the other student. Tell them each card has a number on it. Give the student—not the bluffer—a piece of **candy**, explaining that he can keep the candy or draw a card. If the card is higher than the other student's card, he can have an additional piece of candy. But if the card he draws is lower, he will lose the candy he has. Then tell the other student—the bluffer—that he can draw a card. Through the bluffer's comments and facial expressions, he should try to lead the other student to think that he, the bluffer, has picked a high number, as in the illustration below.)

**Bluffer:** *Oh, wow! I can't believe that I drew this card! Out of six cards, I chose this one! This is great!*

(Pretend to quiet the bluffer.)

**Teacher to First Student:** *Do you want to draw another card or keep the candy?*

(If the first student decides against choosing another card: Ask the bluffer to turn over his card, and tell the first student that the other student was just bluffing. The bluffer was pretending to have power over him that he really didn't have. The bluffer could not harm him. He did not have a big number. The bluffer was just trying to make him believe that he did.)

(If the first student chooses to pick a card: Congratulate him, and explain that the other student was trying to bluff him, but he did not fall for it.)

## Remember Satan is Small and God is Big

*Sanballat and Tobiah had plotted to fight against the Jews, but they were "all talk." They did not attack the Jews. They did not have as much strength as they wanted the Jews to think that they did. They were just bluffing.*

WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS

(Add "bluffing" to the chart on the **whiteboard**, as shown in the following chart. Note that "bluffing" is bolded in this Teacher's Guide just to help you to know where to add the word to the chart, since there are already words in that cell from Lesson 15.)

| ENEMY'S TACTICS                                     | SPIRITUAL BATTLE                                   | OUR WEAPONS                            |
|---|--|--|
| Ridicule or insult                                  | Discouragement; unbelief; temptation to fight back | Ignore ridicule; prayer                |
| Plot against them; stir up trouble, <b>bluffing</b> | Fear; unbelief; anger                              | Prayer; watchfulness; ignore the enemy |

*Satan does the same thing to us. He wants us to think he has more power than he actually does. He wants us to think he can harm us in ways he really can't. Many times, his attacks against us are merely bluffs.*

*Let's see how Satan used this tactic and others on Nehemiah and the Jews as they were building the wall. Don't forget that the Jews were not just building a wall; they were also involved in a spiritual battle. They were not just fighting against "flesh and blood"—Sanballat and Tobiah—but also against the enemy of their souls. Let's see what spiritual weapons they used to fight these spiritual battles.*

(Divide the class into five groups.<sup>1</sup> Assign each group one of the following Scripture passages to study, and give them a few minutes to study the passage and to discover the enemy's tactics, spiritual battles, and weapons indicated.)

- 1) Nehemiah 4:10-14
- 2) Nehemiah 4:15-23 (no new tactics or battles, but reveals many weapons)
- 3) Nehemiah 6:1-4
- 4) Nehemiah 6:5-9
- 5) Nehemiah 6:10-15

(Then pull the whole class together so each group can report on their passage and fill in the chart on the **whiteboard**. Make sure each group gives enough background so the class can understand the passage. Include the following discussions for each passage.)

1

***Nehemiah 4:10-14—In Judah it was said, "The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall." <sup>11</sup>And our enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work." <sup>12</sup>At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, "You must return to us." <sup>13</sup>So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. <sup>14</sup>And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the***

<sup>1</sup> If the class is too small to divide into five groups, divide it appropriately and repeat the exercise, assigning each group an additional passage.



***officials and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”***

| ENEMY'S TACTICS                              | SPIRITUAL BATTLE                                   | OUR WEAPONS   |
|--|--|---|
| Ridicule or insult                           | Discouragement; unbelief; temptation to fight back | Ignore ridicule; prayer                                 |
| Plot against them; stir up trouble, bluffing | Fear; unbelief; anger                              | Prayer; watchfulness; ignore the enemy                  |
| Threats                                      | Fear; unbelief                                     | Remember the Lord; protect weak areas, expose the enemy |

*Nehemiah posted the guards near the low areas of the wall because they were the weakest sections of the wall, and therefore the most likely spot for the enemy to attack. Satan uses the same tactic. He attacks us where we are most weak. We should know our weak areas and place protection around them. For example, if we know that fear is a weak area for us, we should pray every day that God take away our fear and give us courage. If we know that selfishness is a weakness for us, we should “take precautions” such as taking out our tithe as soon as we get money so we are not tempted to spend it on ourselves.*

*Nehemiah encouraged the people to “remember the Lord.” Instead of thinking about the enemy and his strength, Nehemiah told them to remember how great and awesome God is. Satan looks big and powerful when we are looking at him, but we must look to God who is great and awesome. When we look to God, we realize how small Satan really is. One weapon we have to fight Satan is to remember how big God is. Also, praising God is a mighty weapon against Satan. He hates it when we praise God, so he flees when we praise God.*

## **We are Not Fighting Alone**

### **2**

***Nehemiah 4:15-23—When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work. <sup>16</sup>From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, <sup>17</sup>who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. <sup>18</sup>And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. <sup>19</sup>And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on***

*the wall, far from one another. <sup>20</sup>In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.” <sup>21</sup>So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out. <sup>22</sup>I also said to the people at that time, “Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day.” <sup>23</sup>So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand.*

| ENEMY'S TACTICS                              | SPIRITUAL BATTLE                                   | OUR WEAPONS   |
|--|--|---|
| Ridicule or insult                           | Discouragement; unbelief; temptation to fight back | Ignore ridicule; prayer   |
| Plot against them; stir up trouble, bluffing | Fear; unbelief; anger                              | Prayer; watchfulness; ignore the enemy  |
| Threats                                      | Fear; unbelief                                     | Remember the Lord; protect weak areas, expose the enemy   |
|  |  | Equip self with weapons; join with others in the battle; recognize that God will fight the battle—dependence on God; state of readiness |

*Weapons will not help us if we do not use them. We must remember that we have spiritual weapons and use them. We must always be ready to fight spiritual battles.*

*Also, sometimes we are defeated when we battle alone, but when we ask others to join us in the battle, we are stronger. One way that others can join us in the battle is to pray for us. Another way to fight the battle together is to encourage each other with verses from the Bible or truth about God.*

*But the greatest way to fight the battle of faith and defeat the enemy is to remember that God Himself will fight for us. Instead of trying to battle Satan on our own, we need to pray and ask God to help us. For example, if someone says something mean to us and Satan tempts us to say something mean back to him, we can fight on our own by just trying to do what is right. But we are weak, and when we rely on our own strength, we are often defeated. Relying on God means that instead of trusting in ourselves we will run to God when we are tempted to say something mean. We will say, “Jesus, help me to be forgiving and kind. Help me to return good for evil. I am weak. I need your strength. Fight this battle for me.” When we let God fight our battles, we have victory because God is strong.*

## Resist Satan's Persistence

3

***Nehemiah 6:1-4—Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), <sup>2</sup>Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono.” But they intended to do me harm. <sup>3</sup>And I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?” <sup>4</sup>And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner.***

| ENEMY'S TACTICS   | SPIRITUAL BATTLE  | OUR WEAPONS   |
|---|---|---|
| Ridicule or insult  | Discouragement; unbelief; temptation to fight back      | Ignore ridicule; prayer   |
| Plot against them; stir up trouble, bluffing                        | Fear; unbelief; anger                                   | Prayer; watchfulness; ignore the enemy  |
| Threats   | Fear; unbelief  | Remember the Lord; protect weak areas, expose the enemy   |
|   |   | Equip self with weapons; join with others in the battle; recognize that God will fight the battle—dependence on God; state of readiness |
| Distraction (luring Nehemiah away from task); scheming; persistence | Focusing on unimportant things—“losing your first love” | Single-mindedness; discernment  |

*Satan was attacking Nehemiah through Sanballat and Tobiah. Sanballat and Tobiah tried to pull Nehemiah away from his wall building. They did not really want to meet with him. They wanted to get him away from the other Jews so they could hurt him. It is important for us not to get distracted by Satan's attempts to pull us away from the things and the people of God.*

*Satan is very persistent. Sanballat and Tobiah sent Nehemiah a message to meet with them on the plain of Ono four times. They did not give up after Nehemiah said, “No.” Satan does the same thing to us. He does not take “no” for an answer. When we resist him, he keeps bugging us. But we must be like Nehemiah and keep resisting him. He will eventually give up, but we have to show him that we mean business, that we are not going to give in to him (James 4:7).*

## Fight Satan's Lies with Truth

4

***Nehemiah 6:5-9—In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. <sup>6</sup>In it was written, “It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall. And according to these reports you wish to become their king. <sup>7</sup>And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, ‘There is a king in Judah.’ And now the king will hear of these reports. So now come and let us take counsel together” <sup>8</sup>Then I sent to him, saying, “No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind.” <sup>9</sup>For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done.” But now, O God, strengthen my hands.***

| ENEMY'S TACTICS   | SPIRITUAL BATTLE  | OUR WEAPONS   |
|---|---|---|
| Ridicule or insult  | Discouragement; unbelief; temptation to fight back      | Ignore ridicule; prayer   |
| Plot against them; stir up trouble, bluffing                        | Fear; unbelief; anger                                   | Prayer; watchfulness; ignore the enemy  |
| Threats   | Fear; unbelief  | Remember the Lord; protect weak areas, expose the enemy   |
|   |   | Equip self with weapons; join with others in the battle; recognize that God will fight the battle—dependence on God; state of readiness |
| Distraction (luring Nehemiah away from task); scheming; persistence | Focusing on unimportant things—“losing your first love” | Single-mindedness; discernment  |
| Persistence; lies and false accusations                             | Fear; worry; unbelief                                   | Truth; recognize our weakness; prayer   |

*Sanballat and Tobiah still did not give up. This time they sent a report along with the message. The report said that Nehemiah and the Jews were plotting against the king, and that Nehemiah was planning to become the king of the Jews. They said that the report would go to the king. The report was a lie—Nehemiah was not planning to become king, and he and the Jews were not plotting against the king.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

**John 8:44—You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

❓ *Satan is a liar. We cannot believe what he says. Often he will trick us with lies. What are some of the lies that Satan tries to trick us with? (Answers will vary. See some possible answers below.)*

- “God is not real.”
- “God will not forgive you.”
- “It is okay to disobey your mom. She will never find out. It is no big deal.”
- “There is something wrong with you. You are unlovable.”
- “God will not punish us for sin.”
- “Cheating is alright because this test is dumb.”
- “You don’t have to confess that sin. It is such a small sin.”
- “Don’t ask your brother to forgive you. He should come to you first. He started it, so you are not responsible to make the first step toward fixing things between you and him.”

*Nehemiah recognized the lies and ignored them. We should do the same with Satan’s lies. We should see them as lies and ignore them. Nehemiah fought the lies of Sanballat and Tobiah with the truth—“No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind” (Nehemiah 6:8). We can fight Satan’s lies with the truth, too. But to do that, we must know the truth. That is why it is so important to read the Bible and to memorize verses. We can’t recognize lies if we don’t know the truth. We can’t fight lies with truth if we don’t know the truth.*

*Nehemiah knew he was weak—he admitted his weakness—and prayed for God to strengthen him. We are very foolish to think we can fight spiritual battles on our own or to think we are strong. We need to see our weakness and run to God for help.*

## 5

**Nehemiah 6:10-15—Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, “Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night.”<sup>11</sup> But I said, “Should such a man as I run away?**

*And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in.”<sup>12</sup> And I understood and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.<sup>13</sup> For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me a bad name in order to taunt me.<sup>14</sup> Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.<sup>15</sup> So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.*

| ENEMY'S TACTICS   | SPIRITUAL BATTLE  | OUR WEAPONS   |
|---|---|---|
| Ridicule or insult  | Discouragement; unbelief; temptation to fight back      | Ignore ridicule; prayer   |
| Plot against them; stir up trouble, bluffing                        | Fear; unbelief; anger                                   | Prayer; watchfulness; ignore the enemy  |
| Threats   | Fear; unbelief  | Remember the Lord; protect weak areas, expose the enemy   |
|   |   | Equip self with weapons; join with others in the battle; recognize that God will fight the battle—dependence on God; state of readiness |
| Distraction (luring Nehemiah away from task); scheming; persistence | Focusing on unimportant things—“losing your first love” | Single-mindedness; discernment  |
| Persistence; lies and false accusations                             | Fear; worry; unbelief                                   | Truth; recognize our weakness; prayer   |
| Intimidation; deceit  | Fear; unbelief; self                                    | Discernment; prayer   |

*Even when his life was threatened, Nehemiah refused to give in to fear. The man who warned Nehemiah was not known to be an enemy; he was supposed to be a friend. Sometimes even friends can be used by Satan to work against us. Satan is a deceiver, and he will deceive us in any way he can. That is why we need to question things and test things by what the Bible says is true.*

*It took fifty-two days to complete the wall. The Jews were attacked in different ways and many times by their enemies. But God gave them the weapon for each attack. God was faithful to the Jews, and God is faithful to us. He has given us the weapon for each attack of Satan. God helped the Jews rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and defeat their enemies. God will fight for us, too. The fight of faith is won by relying on God to fight the battle for us.*

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *How can we always “be ready” to fight spiritual battles?*
- *How can we help others fight the fight of faith? How can others help us fight the fight of faith?*
- *How does Satan attempt to lure you away from the things of God? Why is it important to be with other Christians?*
- *What kinds of lies does Satan tell you? How can you tell if something is a lie?*
- *How does Satan intimidate you?*
- *Discuss 2 Corinthians 10:3-4:*

***For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.  
‘For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to  
destroy strongholds.***

- *How can you rely on God to help you fight spiritual battles?*
- *Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:*

*The reason why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle.—R. A. Torrey*

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 16.

### 2. Spiritual Battle Charts

If the students made a chart last time, they can fill out the rest of the chart. If they did not make a chart, they can make one this time.

### 3. The Wizard of Oz

If you have the movie of *The Wizard of Oz* starring Judy Garland, you may want to show the part where the “wizard” attempts to intimidate Dorothy and her friends until he is exposed as a fake. After watching that part, discuss with the students the actual power Satan has and the perceived power he has. Ask the students how Satan is like the wizard. Talk about how he tries to intimidate the children of God, and how he can be exposed.



#### **4. Fighting Satan's Tactics Game**

Line the students up in two teams facing each other about 8-10 feet apart. (Base the distance on the age of the students.) Explain that the large beach ball represents the tactics of Satan. Throw the ball into the air and let the teams bat it back and forth to each other. Comment that no matter what Satan “tosses” our way, God has given us a weapon to fight it with. His tactics will not destroy us if we use the weapons of our warfare.

#### **5. Fighter Verse Worksheet**

If you didn't use the Fighter Verse Worksheet during the last lesson, you could use it this time, encouraging the students to memorize the passage

#### **6. Ephesians 6 Poster**

Make a poster of the following verse (or you may choose to use just the first part of the verse): Ephesians 6:18—“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

#### **7. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

#### **8. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

### **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 16 (for each student)



# Our Strategy—The Battle Is the Lord's

## MAIN IDEAS

- **We must depend on God to fight our spiritual battles, not on our own strength.**
- **Depending on God means admitting our weakness, and asking for His help.**
- **God will work for those who wait for Him.**

## KEY VERSE

*From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.*  
—Isaiah 64:4

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) 2 Chronicles 20:1-30
- 2) Zechariah 4:6b
- 3) Isaiah 64:4



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Cut apart as shown:
  - › God Nametag (17A)
  - › Satan Nametag (17B)
  - › Christian Nametag (17C)
- **Stop (17D)**
- **Pray (17E)**
- **Listen (17F)**
- Parent Page for Lesson 17 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Tape
- Large man or tall teenage boy (see Preparation)
- Volleyball or basketball

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Interviews or News Reports

- › Materials for mock interviews or news reports

### 3. God's Strength Poster

- › Materials for a class poster

### 4. Relay Game

- › Basketball (for each relay team)
- › Whistle
- › Tape or chalk (to make the start and finish lines)
- › Stop (17D)

### 5. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.

## Our Strategy—The Battle Is the Lord's

- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Large man or tall teenage boy**—Prepare this volunteer to help you with the Introduction of this lesson. Also, choose the students for this role carefully, taking into account that some students are sensitive about their size. You may want to let the bigger boy know ahead of time about the role play.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

LARGE MAN OR  
TEENAGE BOY

(Call two male students—one bigger than the other—and the **large man or tall teenage boy** to the front of the room. Pair the smaller student with the man/teenager, and give the following illustration, beginning by addressing the adult/teenager and the smaller of the two boys.)

*Suppose you two were friends and were walking in the park.*

(Point to the larger boy.)

*This kid comes up to you. He is a real bully and threatens to beat you up.*

(Turn to the smaller boy.)

*Will you fight with him? Why not? What will you do instead? Why will you let the man handle the situation?*

*It would be foolish for the smaller boy to fight with the larger boy. It would be much better to let the big man handle the larger boy.*

SATAN, CHRISTIAN,  
AND GOD  
NAMETAGS, AND  
TAPE

(Then place the **Satan Nametag** on the larger boy, the **Christian Nametag** on the smaller boy, and the **God Nametag** on the man/teenager.)

*But when it comes to dealing with sin and fighting the fight of faith, sometimes we act very foolishly. Instead of turning to God to fight our battles for us...*

(Point to the man/teenager.)

*we try to fight Satan...*

(Point to the larger boy.)

*in our own strength. He is stronger than we are, so it is foolish to fight him alone. But he is not stronger than God! God is so much stronger than Satan. How much better it is if we let God fight Satan for us. In the fight of faith, we can try to fight with our own determination and self-will, or we can turn to God for help.*

.....

## Depend on God Not on Yourself

(Tell the students the story of Jehoshaphat seeking God when Judah's enemies came against them, from 2 Chronicles 20:1-30, making the following points.)

- The Moabites, Ammonites, and Menuites came to war against Jehoshaphat. They had huge armies and were a strong enemy.
- Jehoshaphat's first response to hearing that the armies were marching against him was to call a fast and pray to God
- When Jehoshaphat prayed, he recognized that God rules all the kingdoms of the earth. He understood that power and might belonged to God, not to large armies, and that no army can stand against God.
- Jehoshaphat recognized that he and Judah had no power to stand against the armies of their enemies. Jehoshaphat admitted his weakness and the weakness of his people and looked to God for help.

(Ask the students to read the following verse.)

***2 Chronicles 20:12—"O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."***

- The people of Judah "stood before the Lord." They waited for God to show them what to do. They did not rush out and confront the enemy; they first waited to hear from God.
- God spoke through Jahaziel. (Ask the students to read the following verses.)

***2 Chronicles 20:15-17—And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's. <sup>16</sup>Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. <sup>17</sup>You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you."***

- Jehoshaphat and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down and worshipped God.
- God set ambushes against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, and they were defeated. The men of Ammon and Moab fought against the men of

Seir and slaughtered them. Then the Ammonites and Moabites fought each other.

- When the men of Judah got to the place where God told them to meet the armies, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground. No one had escaped; all were killed.
- Jehoshaphat and the men of Judah carried off the wealth of their enemies. They returned to Jerusalem, went to the temple, and praised God.

**?** *We know that all of life is spiritual, so although the men of Judah were facing flesh and blood enemies, they were also fighting spiritual battles. What kind of spiritual battles were they facing? [fear, unbelief, self-reliance or independence—relying on their own fighting ability and strength, pride]*

*Not only did God give Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah victory over their flesh and blood enemies, but He also gave them victory in the spiritual battles they faced. What can we learn about fighting spiritual battles from Jehoshaphat?*

**?** *What is a person's natural inclination when hearing that an army is marching against him and his people? [go out and fight them or run away]*

## Stop, Pray, and Listen



BALL

*Was Jehoshaphat's reaction natural or normal? No, his inclination was supernatural. Instead of reacting by rounding up the army and marching against the enemy, Jehoshaphat called the people to fast and pray. He knew he could not defeat the enemy; he knew he needed God. This should be our reaction to spiritual battles, too. Instead of jumping in and fighting the battle, we need to STOP, PRAY, and LISTEN.*

(Display the **Stop**, **Pray**, and **Listen** visuals.)

### Illustration

(Call a student to the front and pick up the **ball**. Act as though you are going to throw the ball in the student's face, but don't let go of the ball.)

*When you saw the ball coming, what did you do? Why did you put your hands up to stop the ball? You reacted when you saw something attacking you or coming at you. Let's try this again, but this time, I don't want you to react at all.*

(Demonstrate this for the students.)

*The second response should be our initial response when spiritual attacks come our way. We should not just react “in the flesh,” or react in our own strength and ability. We need to STOP.*



(Display the **Stop** visual.)

*We need to stop reacting on our own because the battle belongs to God. He is stronger and wiser than we are.*

*Then we should PRAY.*



(Display the **Pray** visual.)

*So we are not just stopping and relaxing and watching the battle, letting God fight it. We are actively praying. Because the battle belongs to God, and because God is better able to fight the battle than we are, we need to involve God in the battle we are facing. We should pray as Jehoshaphat prayed—“We are powerless.”*

*First, we should recognize our own weakness; we should recognize that the enemy is too strong for our own strength to battle. Next we need to seek God's help just as Jehoshaphat did—“our eyes are on you.” Then it does not matter how strong the enemy is, because he will always be weak compared to God. No battle is too hard for God. Our might and power are not enough to face the spiritual battles that come our way, but the Spirit of God will fight for us if we depend on Him.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

***Zechariah 4:6b—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”***

*The next step is to LISTEN.*



(Display the **Listen** visual.)

*This is where we depend on God to show us how to fight the battle. Instead of acting on our own, we act as God shows us. God has promised to work for us when we wait for His leading.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

***Isaiah 64:4—From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.***

? *What is this verse saying?* [never in history has anyone seen a god besides the one true God who acts in strong and miraculous ways for those who trust in Him; the children of God can't even imagine how God will work for us if we depend on Him]

## Illustration.....

(Give a “real life” example of how this works, as in the example below.)

*Suppose you have a real problem with anger, and you lack self-control. A kid comes up and shoves you, cuts in front of you in line, and says, “You’re in my way. Move!” What is the spiritual battle you are facing? [anger, self-control, hate, believing that God will work for you]*



*Your natural inclination is to shove him back and say, “Hey! This is my place—go to the end of the line!” But instead, God helps you to STOP.*

(Display the **Stop** visual.)

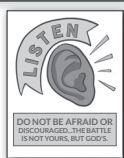
*You do not react, but you PRAY.*



(Display the **Pray** visual.)

*You say, “I have no power to fight this battle. I am weak. I want to shove this kid and show him a thing or two. I cannot fight this battle on my own. God, my eyes are on you. You are strong—power and might are in Your hand. You can fight this battle for me. Help me, God.”*

*Then you LISTEN.*



(Display the **Listen** visual.)

*Listen to God’s Word and you will know that the right thing to do is to turn to the student and say, “This is my place, but you may step in front of me,” and you feel God giving you the strength to respond graciously. God has helped you fight the fight of faith and given you victory over your anger. God has replaced your angry spirit with a gracious spirit. God might even bring a Fighter Verse to your mind that will help you fight the fight of faith and respond graciously.*

.....

## **Review**

(Ask the students to quickly review the main points.)

- We cannot fight spiritual battles on our own with worldly weapons. Spiritual battles require God's strength.
- We must STOP reacting in our own strength,
- PRAY, admitting our weakness and asking for God's help,
- and then LISTEN and remember what God has said in His Word, and then act in God's strength.

## **Small Group Application**

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *Since the battle is God's, does this mean that we should sit back, relax, and see what happens? How can we fight the fight of faith, and yet let God fight for us?*
- Discuss Isaiah 64:4.

***Isaiah 64:4—From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.***

- *How hard is it to STOP from reacting in our own strength? What will help us to STOP?*
- *What battles do you face? What would STOP-PRAY-LISTEN look like in your battle? How does God speak to us? What verse would be applicable to your situation?*
- *Do you believe God will act for you?*
- *You might want to discuss the need to pray regularly that they would STOP-PRAY-LISTEN so that when they face spiritual battles, they have already been prepared in prayer. They can ask God to prepare their hearts for future battles.*
- You might also want to discuss the necessity of practicing STOP-PRAY-LISTEN in little things so that when big battles come, STOP-PRAY-LISTEN is a habit.
- Discuss the quote from the lesson, which is included in the Student Notebook:

*To fight spiritual battles in God's strength we must STOP reacting in our own strength, PRAY admitting our weakness and asking for God's help, and then LISTEN for God's leading in His Word and act in God's strength.*

- Answer Key for the Student Notebook:

John 8:44—Lies and murders

Mark 4:15—Snatches up the Word of God



Genesis 3:3-4—Plants doubts about God through lies  
 2 Corinthians 4:4—Blinds the minds of unbelievers  
 2 Corinthians 11:14—Disguises himself to look good  
 2 Corinthians 11:13-15—Sends false teachers  
 1 Thessalonians 2:18—Interferes in our work for God  
 1 Thessalonians 3:5—Tempts us to sin  
 Revelation 2:10—Persecutes Christians  
 Revelation 12:10—Accuses Christians before God

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 17.

### 2. Interviews or News Reports

The students can do mock interviews with Jehoshaphat and the men of Judah. Or they could write or perform a news report about the defeat of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Meunites.

### 3. God's Strength Poster

Students can make a poster of one of the following verses:

***Zechariah 4:6b—Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.***

***Isaiah 64:4—From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.***

***Psalms 18:29—For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall.***

(Discuss God's strength in our weakness.)

### 4. Relay Game

Divide the class into different relay teams and indicate a start and finish line. You will need a ball for each team. At the sound of the signal, the first person on the relay team starts to dribble the ball to the finish line. The other team members run ahead of him. He may dribble the ball until you blow the whistle and hold up the **Stop** visual. Then he may pass the ball to another person. If the person fails to catch the ball (no bounce is allowed), the team must start over. If the person catches the ball, he may then begin to dribble until you blow the whistle and hold up the **Stop** visual. The ball must be passed to a different person this time. (You may make the rule that the ball must be passed to two different people before a person who has had the ball can have it again. Or, you may make

the rule that the players cannot repeat turns until everyone has had the ball once.) When the team reaches the finish line, the players must dribble the ball back to the starting line; then back to the finish line, and so forth. The goal is to be the first team to reach the finish line three times. If a player does not stop at the whistle signal, but continues to dribble, the team must go back to the starting line and begin again. Once the whistle is sounded and the **Stop** visual shown, the only acceptable reaction is to pass the ball. In this game, there may be opportunity for players to fight the fight of faith against bad attitudes or lack of self-control. Talk about the necessity in spiritual battles to stop from reacting and to “pass” the ball to God—to ask God for help.

## **5. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

## **6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 17 (for each student)

# Our Strategy—Stand Guard

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Christians should have a healthy fear of their own weakness and recognize their need to depend on God.**
- **Satan is an aggressive enemy.**
- **Christians need to be on guard against the enemy's attack.**
- **Satan will attack us where we are weak.**

## KEY VERSE

*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*  
—1 Peter 5:8

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Mark 14:27-41, 50
- 2) Romans 15:4
- 3) 1 Peter 5:8
- 4) (Proverbs 4:23)
- 5) (1 Corinthians 10:12)



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Cut apart, as indicated:
  - › Wrong Thinking 1-2 (18A-18B)
  - › Right Thinking (18C)
- Parent Page for Lesson 18 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Masking tape (see Preparation)
- Stack of books

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. C.S. Lewis Quote Poster

- › Materials to create a class poster

### 3. Visit from a Police Officer

- › Invite a police officer or another professional to talk with the class.

### 4. Movie Clip

- › Equipment to show a short movie clip

### 5. Be Alert for the Enemy Game

- › Chalk or tape
- › Object to guard/steal

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

## Our Strategy—Stand Guard

- **Masking Tape**—Make a six-foot line on the floor in the front of the room. Note: You could also set this illustration up ahead of time as a role play between two students, being careful to choose two students who will do the role play appropriately and not be overly aggressive.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

*STACK OF BOOKS*

(Ask for a student who thinks that he is strong. Give him a **stack of books** for the following illustration.)

*Do you think that you are pretty strong? Do you think you can hold these books over your head for a minute? Are you strong enough to do that? Are you sure?*

(Tell the student to hold the books over his head with his arms stretched up as high as he can. Then tickle the student under the arm. The student should “buckle” or drop the books.)

I thought you were strong! You weren’t able to hold the books up over your head for a minute. You are not quite as strong as you thought you were, are you?

.....

### Recognize Your Weakness

*This illustration can be a picture of us in our spiritual life. We can think that we are so strong spiritually, and that we are very good at fighting the fight of faith. But we may be less strong than we think we are. It is good for us to realize that we may not be as strong as we think we are—that we are not above temptation.<sup>1</sup>*

### Illustration.....

*WRONG THINKING  
1-2 AND RIGHT  
THINKING VISUALS*

(Give three students a **Wrong Thinking 1-2** or **Right Thinking** visual, and ask them to read their card when you indicate.)

*Here is an example of WRONG THINKING:*

(Student reads the **Wrong Thinking 1** visual): I can handle it...

*I know this is not a good crowd of kids, but they won’t influence me. I can handle it...*

*Or...*

(Student reads the **Wrong Thinking 1** visual again): I can handle it...

<sup>1</sup> You may want to remind the students of King Uzziah and the pride that caused his downfall.

*It's alright if I skip having my Bible time sometimes. I am a strong Christian. I can handle it.*

*Here's another example of wrong thinking.*

(Student reads the **Wrong Thinking 2** visual): I would never...

*I would never use drugs. It is just not a temptation for me. I am strong enough to resist them...Or...*

(Student reads the **Wrong Thinking 2** visual again): I would never...

*I would never give up on my faith. I'm strong so I don't need to fight so hard for my faith. I would never turn from God or follow the world.*

*This is very dangerous thinking. We may not be as strong as we think we are. We must not be too confident in our strength. There is a better and a right way to think. Our attitude needs to be...*

(Student reads the **Right Thinking** visual): "But for the grace of God..."

*I could be just like that person. I could be on drugs or fall into sin. I need God's help and protection every day. I am weak, but He is strong.*

*Or...*

(Student reads the **Right Thinking** visual again): But for the grace of God...

*I could fall away from God. I could turn my back on God. It is God who keeps me faithful—Jesus, I need You every hour of every day. Keep me from falling. It is You who saved me, and You who will keep me.*

*Or...*

(Student reads the **Right Thinking** visual again): But for the grace of God...

*my heart affection for God will grow cold. I could love the world and the things of the world so easily. I need the Word of God every day, because my heart is so easily swayed. I need the truth to remember over and over in my mind. I need other Christians to encourage me in my faith.*

*We need a healthy fear of our own weakness. We need to fear feeling too confident or too strong in our faith.*

*This is an example of feeling strong...*

.....

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.<sup>2</sup>)

**Mark 14:27-30—And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’<sup>28</sup> But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”<sup>29</sup> Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.”<sup>30</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”**

(Read the following verse with emphasis.)

**Mark 14:31—But he [Peter] said emphatically, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all said the same.**

❓ How were the disciples feeling? [strong, proud, confident]

(Describe the scene in Gethsemane from Mark 14:32-41, making the following points.)

- Right after the disciples claimed that they would never disown Jesus, they went with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus asked the disciples to sit and keep watch.
- Jesus came back only an hour later to find the disciples asleep—Jesus did not require them to stay up all night. This was just one hour later.
- Jesus knew their weakness, even though they did not.

(Ask the students to read the following verse.)

**Mark 14:38—“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**

*Their protection against falling into temptation was to watch and pray.*

- Jesus went away again, and when He came back the second time they were again sleeping. They were not watching and praying.
- Jesus went away again, and a third time found them sleeping when He returned.

❓ *After this, the crowd came to arrest Jesus in the Garden. What happened to the disciples who had vowed to die with Jesus?*

(Ask someone to read Mark 14:50.)

**Mark 14:50—And they all left him and fled.**

<sup>2</sup> You may want to choose one student to read the words of Jesus and another to read the words of Peter.

*They ALL LEFT HIM and FLED! The disciples were confident that they would never disown Jesus. They thought they were strong, but when temptation came, they fell into sin. They fell into sin because they did not protect themselves. They did not watch and pray.*

*Do you remember that Romans 15:4 tells us “whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction”? So, one of the reasons this story is in the Bible is to instruct us. We are very much like the disciples. We are weak without the Lord’s help. But for Christians, God in us is strong. If we realize that we are weak, we will depend on God and not on ourselves. We will be watchful of the enemy’s attack on us. And we will be on guard to spot the ways he tries to lure us away from God. The way to persevere in faith is to watch and pray.*

## Be On Guard

### Illustration.....

LINE (CREATED  
BEFORE CLASS WITH  
MASKING TAPE)

(Call a student to the front and show him the **line**, OR call the two students prepared to do this illustration as a role play.)

*Your job is to keep me from crossing this line. When I approach the line, you will need to try to push me away from the line.*

(Look around for a while, and then nonchalantly try to cross the line. As soon as the student resists you, turn away from the line. Do this two times demonstrating a very non-aggressive stance.)

*Now I am going to try to cross the line again, but this time I will do it differently.*

(This time, be very aggressive in your maneuvers. Do not let up, try repeatedly to cross the line, and refuse to be intimidated by the student’s attempts to resist you. Cross the line repeatedly.)

*What kind of an enemy do you think Satan is? Do you think he is kind of halfhearted in his attempts to cause us to sin or to destroy our faith? Do you think he is taking it easy, only taking a weak stab at us once in a while? Or is he aggressive? Is he always on the lookout for a way to get at us?*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

***1 Peter 5:8—Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.***



? What does *sober-minded* mean? [to be serious; to treat the situation with a seriousness and a clear understanding of the truth]

? What is an *adversary*? [an enemy]

? What are the implications of having Satan as our enemy? [he always wants to attack us; he doesn't want good for us; he is trying to destroy us; we can't trust him; we should never let our guard down]

*Satan is very aggressive—he is on the prowl. He is actively looking for a way to destroy us. Because Satan is so determined to destroy us, we must be very alert. We must watch for his attacks. Remember that when Nehemiah and the Jews were building the wall, they posted guards day and night. They were ready to fight back as soon as the enemy attacked—they did not even take off their clothes at night, and they had their weapons with them at all times. This is the way we must be with Satan—always ready to resist his attacks.*

### Illustration.....

(You may want to give an illustration like the following to show what a constant state of watchfulness and readiness looks like. You could give the illustration of a policeman, a soldier, a lifeguard, etc.)

*A policeman is always a policeman, even when he is not on duty. He always has his gun with him; but even more importantly, he is always on his guard. He is trained to be watchful. He notices details—even when it is not his job to notice details. He is always aware of what is going on around him. He may be in a restaurant talking with a friend; but at the same time, he is aware of the other people in the restaurant. He notices who comes in and who leaves. Often, a policeman will not sit with his back to the door or his back to the rest of the restaurant. He will sit in the spot where he can see the largest area around him. He always expects the unexpected.*

*The professional in the illustration is trained to be watchful. Just as he could train himself to be on his guard at all times, we can train ourselves to be on our guard spiritually. Part of being on our guard is to recognize that we are weak. So, in all situations we need to pray and ask God for strength. Part of being on our guard is to realize that our enemy is aggressive, and therefore we must train ourselves to examine things that come into our lives to see if they will cause us harm.*

(Give the following examples to the class or in the small groups; or ask different small group leaders to give an example to the class.)

- Instead of just reading a book or watching a movie without thinking of the effect it will have on us, we must ask, “Will this help or hinder my spiritual life? Are there things in this book or movie that will work to damage my faith? Should I be reading or watching this?”
- Instead of blindly following the suggestions of others, we need to ask, “Is this a good thing for me to be doing? Does this take me away from God or bring me nearer to God? Is there anything here that threatens my faith or pulls my affections away from God?”
- Perhaps you love baseball and spend hours playing baseball. Being on your guard means asking yourself, “Does baseball have too great a hold on my life? Am I spending too many hours on baseball? Does it crowd out opportunities for me to spend time in the Word or to seek Christian fellowship? Does baseball have an appropriate place in my life, or is it too important to me?”

## Satan Will Attack You Where You Are Weak

❓ *In the opening illustration, how did I get [student's name] to keep from holding up the books? [you looked for the weakest spot and attacked there]*

*Satan does the same thing. He looks for where we are weakest, and he attacks us there. If we know our weaknesses—greed, or anger, or love of entertainment, or selfishness—we can be especially on our guard when we approach situations when we may be attacked in those areas. We need to approach those situations prayerfully. Here is an example:*

(Give the following example or ask a small group leader to do so.)

- If you struggle with greed, and you know that you will be going to a store where you will find many things to desire, you may want to pray before you go in the store—“God, this is a hard situation for me. I find I want so many things. Help me to see these things as temporary and empty. Help me to know that You are the greatest treasure. Protect me from greed and give me a heart of contentedness.”

(Ask a student or small group leader to pray that those in the class will become more watchful, that everyone would be on their guard against the enemy's attacks.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- Read and discuss the following verse:

**Proverbs 4:23—Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.**

- *How are we like the disciples? What common weaknesses do we have? What was the consequence when they did not depend on the Lord for strength? Why would it be any different for us if we fail to ask God for help?*
- *Last week we said that the battle is the Lord's. Does this mean you can just sit back and do nothing? How does the battle involve you and God?*
- *Are you watchful of the enemy? How can you train yourself to be more watchful?*
- Read and discuss the following verse:

**1 Corinthians 10:12—Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.**

- *If you wanted to hurt a turtle, where would you try to hurt it? Why? Do you think that Satan knows the same tactic?*
- *Where are you weak? How can you be watchful of those weak areas? How can you become stronger? What does it mean to "be strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10)?*
- *Are there areas in your life where you have not been watchful? Is there anything you are involved in that is leading you away from God? If so, what will you do about that?*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*There is nowhere this side of heaven where we can safely lay the reins on the horse's neck.—C.S. Lewis*

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 18.

### 2. C.S. Lewis Quote Poster

If you haven't already done this during the Small Group Application time, discuss the C.S. Lewis quote from the Student Notebook and then create a poster using this quote.

### **3. Visit from a Police Officer**

You may want to have a police officer or other appropriate professional visit your class to give a short presentation on what it means to be alert or on your guard and how a person can train himself to be that way.

### **4. Movie Clip**

You may want to show a short movie clip and then ask the students what they observed. Ask questions about the setting, easily missed actions, etc. Then remind them that we need to be alert to everything around us and to train ourselves to be alert. You may want to replay the clip or another, this time asking them to be on constant alert.

### **5. Be Alert for the Enemy Game**

Draw a large circle or square in the middle of the room or field. Place an object in the middle of the square or circle. Designate one quarter of the students to be the enemy and three quarters of the students to be the guards. The enemy must try to steal the object. The guards must stay on the outside of the square or circle unless the enemy crosses the line. Then two guards may cross the line for each enemy that crosses the line. Guards may tag the enemy at any time. When an enemy player is tagged, he must go to the edge of the field or room and count to 30 before he can reenter the game. You may want to have the enemies score a few points before ending the game, or you may want to designate different students to be the enemy after each time the object is stolen. Then play the game again, this time with a more aggressive enemy. Designate three quarters of the students to be the enemy and one quarter to be the guards. Talk about how much more difficult it is to deal with an aggressive enemy and how much more necessary it is to be on the alert at all times.

### **6. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### **7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 18 (for each student)

# Our Strategy—Be Prepared

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Preparation for spiritual battles is essential.**
- **Knowing the Word of God is an important battle preparation.**
- **By memorizing the Word of God, we can have the Bible on the tips of our tongues and be in constant preparation.**

## KEY VERSE

*I have stored up your word  
in my heart, that I might  
not sin against you.*  
—Psalm 119:11

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Matthew 4:1-11
- 2) Deuteronomy 8:3
- 3) 2 Chronicles 16:9a
- 4) 2 Timothy 1:7
- 5) Proverbs 15:1
- 6) Proverbs 16:24
- 7) (Psalm 119:11)



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Commitment Cards (see Preparation)
- Parent Page for Lesson 19 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Squirt bottle full of water (e.g., an empty dish soap bottle)
- Backpack with a raincoat and many other objects inside (see Preparation)
- See Preparation
  - › Role-play volunteer
  - › Fighter Verses Pack
  - › Musician and instrument

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Fighter Verses Pack and App

- For each small group:
- › Fighter Verses Pack
  - › Fighter Verses App on a mobile device

### 3. Practicing Patterns

- › Plan one more more pattern for the class to learn, as explained in the Optional Activities section.
- › Timer

### 4. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 5. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- ➔ Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students

know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

- You might also want to download the short booklet titled *An Approach to Extended Scripture Memorization* by Dr. Andrew Davis, especially the section in the booklet titled “Daily Procedures.” The booklet is available free at: <http://www.fbcdurham.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Scripture-Memory-Booklet-for-Publication-Website-Layout.pdf>
- **Fighter Verses Pack**—If you don’t have a Fighter Verses Pack readily available to use during this lesson, you could use another Scripture memory tool or plan of your choosing.
- **Role-Play Volunteer**—Arrange for someone to role play the Introduction with you.
- **Backpack**—The raincoat and many other objects should fill the backpack so that it’s obviously a challenge to find the raincoat. And once the role play volunteer finds the raincoat, it should be inside out, or have a twisted sleeve or something else that makes it challenging to easily and quickly put it on.
- **Musician**—Ask someone to come to your class to play a musical selection on an instrument. Or, you could substitute another developed talent for this illustration, such as juggling, speaking a foreign language, etc., adjusting the illustration as needed.
- **Commitment Cards**—Print and cut out enough of the Commitment Cards (see the “Commitment Cards for Lesson 19” PDF in the Curriculum Resources (CD or downloads) for each student for today’s lesson.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

*SQUIRT BOTTLE  
WITH WATER,  
AND BACKPACK  
PREPARED AS  
DESCRIBED IN THE  
INTRODUCTION*

(Perform the following role play with your role-play volunteer. Start by squirting your partner with the **squirt bottle** and saying something like this...)

**Teacher:** *Aha! Take this...and this. I've got you now! Here's another shot.*

(While you are squirting, your volunteer should be going through his **backpack** looking for the raincoat, and ultimately asking if anyone has an umbrella. He should show an obvious unpreparedness, as in the example below.)

**Volunteer:** *Oh...ahhh...Where's my raincoat? I know it is here somewhere! This isn't it.*

**Volunteer (pulling out other objects from the backpack):** *I really need my raincoat. I'm getting soaked. Where is it?*

(When your volunteer finally pulls out the **raincoat**, it should be inside out or one sleeve should be twisted so he has difficulty putting it on. He may even throw the raincoat away in disgust and ask, "Does anyone have an umbrella?")

**Teacher (to the class):** *What was wrong here? Why did he get all wet? What should he have done? He got wet because he was not prepared. By the time the water attack came, it was too late to get prepared.*

## We Must Be Prepared for Spiritual Battles

*In spiritual battles, preparation is important, too. It is important to be prepared at all times because we do not know when the attack will come, and once the attack comes, there is no time for preparation. It is too late to prepare because you are already fighting the battle and you must concentrate on fighting the battle.*

(Ask the students to open their Bibles to Matthew 4. Then tell them the story of the temptation of Jesus from Matthew 4:1-11, asking them to read Jesus' response to the temptation. Make the following points.)

- Jesus is God and, when Jesus came to earth, He also became a man. After not eating for forty days and forty nights, Jesus was hungry just like any man would be.

- Satan looks for the weak spots, and he knew that Jesus was hungry. So Satan tempted Jesus to turn the stones into bread.

(Ask the students to read verse 4 aloud.)

***Matthew 4:4—But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"***

**?** *Where was it written that man doesn't live on bread alone? [in the Scripture; Deuteronomy 8:3]*

*How did Jesus fight Satan's temptation? Did Jesus say, "Oh, somewhere in the Word, there is a verse that will help me? What is that verse? I know there is some verse somewhere." Jesus knew exactly what to say. He knew the verse perfectly and could say it with no problem. Why? Because Jesus was prepared. He knew the Word of God.*

(Continue making the following points from the passage.)

- Satan took Jesus to the holy city, Jerusalem, and had Jesus stand on the highest point of the temple and tempted Jesus to throw Himself down from the temple. Then Satan used Scripture. (Read the following verse.)

***Matthew 4:6—and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"***

- Satan is an aggressive enemy. He does not give up easily; he is persistent.
- Satan is also a liar and deceiver. He was trying to use the Word of God to tempt Jesus. He was twisting God's Word to make it serve his purposes—he was not using the Word of God correctly.

**?** *What battleground was Satan appealing to? [pride]*

- Jesus was prepared, and He was not deceived.

(Ask the students to read the following verse aloud.)

***Matthew 4:7—Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"***

*How did Jesus fight the fight of faith? Did Jesus say, "I wonder if I should throw myself down? I wonder what is the right thing to do. There must be something in the Word of my Father that will help me." Did Jesus say, "Just a minute, let me go inside the temple and check the scrolls?"*



(Continue making the following points.)

- Jesus knew the Word of God so well that He had exactly the right answer to give to Satan's deception. Jesus had the Word ready on the tip of His tongue.
- We will not spot deception if we do not know the Bible. We will not know the Bible if we don't read it much—or read it without thinking about what it means. We have to know the Bible well in order to fight the fight of faith.
- Satan did not give up in his attempt to make Jesus sin. He is very persistent.
- Satan continued his attack on Jesus, taking Him to a high mountain and promising Him all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would bow down and worship him.

(Ask the students to read the following verse aloud.)

***Matthew 4:10—Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”***

*How did Jesus fight Satan's attack? Was Jesus like the person who did not have his raincoat on? Jesus was fully prepared. When the attack came, He was ready.*

(Continue making the following points.)

- Satan finally left Jesus. He knew that Jesus was standing firm in resisting him and that He was fully prepared.
- Satan continues his attacks on us until he sees that we are standing firm in resisting him. Then he backs off for a while.
- We can stand firm if we know and use the Word of God.
- When Satan attacks us, we need to have the Word on the tip of our tongues. We can still grab our Bibles and look things up as well, but we will fight better if we are well prepared.
- We need to be like Nehemiah and the Jews who were ready for battle—they were prepared—at all times (Nehemiah 4:23). They did not take off their clothes at night. They had their weapons with them. We should be just as ready for battle. Our weapon is the Word of God. We need to have it with us at all times.

## Prepare for Battle by Memorizing Bible Verses

**FIGHTER VERSES  
PACK, OR YOUR  
CHOICE OF  
SCRIPTURE MEMORY  
AID OR PLAN**

(Display the **Fighter Verses Pack**, or your choice of Scripture memory aid or plan.)

*These verses will not help you if they are sitting on a shelf in your room. They will not help you if you look at them and then forget them. They will help you fight the fight of faith if they are a ready weapon on the tip of your tongue.*

Examples

1. *Suppose Satan tempts you to feel that God doesn't know or care what you are going through. Maybe God doesn't even see the problem that you are having. And His help seems far away. When those thoughts come to you, how do you fight the fight of faith? What is a verse that will help you battle Satan's attack? (See if any of the students can quote an appropriate verse. If someone can, commend him on being prepared to fight the battle, and comment on the verse. You may then want to share the following verse as well. If the students cannot quote a verse, share the following verse and comment on it.<sup>1</sup>)*

**2 Chronicles 16:9a—For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.**

*It is not true that God doesn't see our problems. God is actively watching and has ways to help us. Satan is a liar and a deceiver, and when he tempts us to think that God does not see us, he is telling us a lie. The way to fight lies is with the truth.*

2. *Suppose you are going to a new school and you don't know most of the kids, and you don't know where the rooms are or where to find your bus. Satan tempts you to be fearful. What verse can you use to fight the fight of faith? (If a student does not state an appropriate verse, quote the following.)*

**2 Timothy 1:7—for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**

*You cannot use the Bible to fight the fight of faith if you don't know the Bible. One of the best ways to have the Bible with you at all times—to be prepared—is to memorize parts of the Bible.*

3. *Maybe someone says something really mean to you. Perhaps someone calls you a name and makes fun of you. What battle are you facing? What verse can you use to fight that battle? (If the students cannot come up with an appropriate verse, quote and explain one of the following.)*

**Proverbs 15:1—A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.**

**Proverbs 16:24—Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.**

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<sup>1</sup> If your students cannot quote verses in this section, you may want to have Sword Drills with the following verses.

❓ *How do soldiers and pilots get prepared to do their jobs? (Answers will vary.)*

*Do soldiers and pilots just know how to do their jobs? Can soldiers march for miles without working up to it? Can they hit the center of a target without practice? Can a pilot just get in a plane and fly it? They all have to work hard to be prepared to do their jobs.*

*We have to work hard to be prepared to fight the fight of faith, too. We can't just read the Bible and expect we will have the verse memorized. We can't just look at a verse once and expect to know it. We can't learn a verse and not review it or use it and expect to remember it when we need it. We have to work hard.*

### Illustration.....

MUSICIAN

(Ask your **musician** to come and play a selection on an instrument. After he has finished, interview him in the following manner.)

- *How long did it take for you to be able to play like that?*
- *Did you have to practice a lot? How much did you have to practice?*
- *Was it really hard at first? Did it get a little easier as you progressed?*
- *Were there times when you felt like giving up?*
- *Were you ever frustrated or discouraged?*
- *Did you ever feel like doing something more fun when you had to practice?*
- *How did you keep at your practicing? What helped you to practice regularly?*
- *What will happen if you quit practicing?*
- *Are you glad that you learned how to play this instrument? Was it worth the effort you put into it?*

*Memorizing verses is very much the same as developing a talent. It is harder to memorize them in the beginning; later it becomes a little easier. There are times when you will feel like giving up, and times when you would rather do something else instead of working on your memory verses. If you quit working at reviewing your verses, you will forget them. But if you learn and use the memory verses, you will be so glad that you did. Having verses memorized is worth the effort.*

(You may want to set some sort of challenge for the class such as the suggestion below.)

- *Let's see if every student can know the key verse next week.*
- *Let's all try to memorize the key verse or a Fighter Verse every week. I will mark a point for each week that everyone knows the memory verse. If we get [number] points, we'll get pizza.*

COMMITMENT  
CARDS

- How many verses do you think our class can learn by the end of the year? (Set a goal. You may want to use the **Commitment Cards**.)

(End with prayer.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- Read and discuss the following verse:

***Psalm 119:11—I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.***

(Be sure to distinguish between merely having the words of Scripture in your head and embracing them with your whole heart.)

- Are you prepared for spiritual battle? How are you prepared? In what ways are you not prepared?
- Do you read your Bible often? What is your usual pattern or habit of Bible reading? Do you know the Bible well?
- In his book *The Pursuit of Holiness*, author Jerry Bridges wrote:

*To memorize Scripture effectively, you must have a plan. The plan should include a selection of well-chosen verses, a practical system for learning those verses, a systematic means of reviewing them to keep them fresh in your memory, and simple rules for continuing Scripture memory on your own.*

*Are you memorizing verses? Why or why not? If you are not memorizing, what is holding you back? Can this be overcome? How? Will you make a commitment to Bible memory?*

*Do you have a plan? A set of verses? A system for learning the verses and reviewing the verses?*

(Display the Fighter Verse Pack and the app.)

- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*What if I offered you one thousand dollars for every verse you could memorize in the next seven days? Do you think your attitude toward Scripture memory and your ability to memorize would improve? Any financial reward would be minimal when compared to the accumulating value of the treasure of God's Word deposited within your mind.*

*—Don Whitney from *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life**

*Is it hard to believe? Do you really believe what Don Whitney says? Why or why not? How does that show in your life?*

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 19.

### 2. Fighter Verses App

Show the Fighter Verses Pack and app. Let them experiment with the app. See if they can memorize a verse using the cards or app.

### 3. Practicing Patterns

Pair the students with partners. Teach them a pattern that they can do with each other (e.g., clap, right hands touch, left hands touch, hit your knees, clap, clap, touch your head, snap fingers right hand, snap fingers left hand). Ask the students to repeat this pattern six times and time them. Then let them practice the pattern a few more times before you time them a second time. Show the students the improvement in their speed. Make the point that practicing something makes it easier. Compare this to working on memory verses, which starts out difficult but gets easier with practice. You may want to repeat this game with a few different patterns. You may also want to make up a 16-step pattern (or 19-step to include the reference) and have the students say a word of the memory verse for each pattern step.

### 4. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 5. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 19 (for each student)



# Our Strategy—Resist the Enemy

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Christians can resist Satan, or go along with him.**
- **Resisting Satan starts with godly inner desires; resisting happens first in the heart.**
- **Resistance must be immediate.**
- **Resistance includes fleeing from sin.**
- **When Christians resist Satan, he flees from them.**

## KEY VERSE

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.— James 4:7*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Genesis 39:1-12
- 2) James 4:7



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- **Godly Inner Desires (20A)**
- Instruction (20B, cut out)
- **Resist Immediately (20C)**
- **Flee from Sin (20D)**
- Parent Page for Lesson 20 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Role-play volunteer/s (see Preparation)
- Tape
- Piece of candy
- Table or other flat surface at the front of the room

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Heart Prayer Bookmarks

- For each student:
- › Cardstock cut into Bible bookmark size
  - › Markers

### 3. Talk Back to Temptation

- › No materials required for this activity.

### 4. Flee Temptation Posters

- For each student:
- › Paper or posterboard
  - › Markers

### 5. Run from Sin Relay

- › Any equipment needed for your chosen relay races
- › Phone or watch with a stopwatch feature

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice.

If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

- **Role-Play Volunteer/s**—Find one or two volunteers for your role play, and talk through it before class.
- **Joseph and Potiphar's Wife**—You will need to decide how much information to share about the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife from Genesis 39. Since sexual sin is a touchy subject, especially for young students, you will need to adapt your comments accordingly. You may decide to note simply that Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to do "something wrong," or you may decide to state that Potiphar's wife invited Joseph to share her bed depending on the situation in which you are teaching. If you are in doubt, err on the side of being too discreet.



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

ROLE-PLAY  
VOLUNTEER/S

(Enact the following role play with your **volunteer/s**, with one person pushing the other toward the other side of the room, while making comments.)

*You need to be on the other side of the room. Get over there. Go on.*

(The **person being pushed** should pay little attention and make little resistance.)

**The one doing the pushing (addressing the class):** *I'm going to try this again.*

**The one doing the pushing (addressing the one being pushed):** *You need to be on the other side of the room. Get over there. Go on.*

(This time, the **person being pushed** should resist. He should plant his feet firmly on the floor and refuse to budge.)

**The one doing the pushing (addressing the class):** *What happened the second time I tried to push him? Was I acting any differently? Was he acting any differently? What happened? How would you describe what he was doing?*

## We Must Have Godly Inner Desires in Order to Resist Satan and Sin

*We just demonstrated two ways we can react to Satan's pressure on us. We can be somewhat ignorant of his influence and be pushed along with little resistance, or we can plant our feet firmly on the floor and resist his nudges—his temptations and attacks. When we resist Satan, he goes away.*

(Tell the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife from Genesis 39:1-12, making the following points.<sup>1</sup>)

- Joseph was a slave in the house of an Egyptian court official named Potiphar. He had a trusted position in Potiphar's house—he was in charge of all that his master owned.
- Joseph was a handsome and well-built young man and Potiphar's wife desired him.
- Joseph refused her invitation. Joseph knew that what she asked of him was wrong—it was against God's law and would be a break in the trust that his master

<sup>1</sup> See the note in the Preparation section of this lesson as you consider how to share this story with your students.

had placed in him. Joseph recognized sin and temptation and it was distasteful to him.

- Potiphar's wife did not give up. She kept tempting Joseph. But each time, Joseph resisted her. He refused to do what was wrong.
- Ultimately, she approached Joseph when no one else was home. She even grabbed his cloak, but Joseph left his cloak in her hand and ran away.
- Joseph resisted sin and did what was right even though there was no one to "check up on him." There was an inner desire in Joseph to please God and to resist sin.

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses)

***Genesis 39:8-9—But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. <sup>9</sup>He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"***

❓ *Why was Joseph successful in resisting sin and Satan? What does this show about Joseph's heart? (Make sure the following points are made.)*

- Joseph did not desire to sin against God. Joseph honored and loved God, so he had a desire to do the right thing and to please God.
- Joseph valued being trusted and had no pleasure in being untrustworthy.
- Joseph understood right from wrong, and sin was not attractive to him.
- We cannot assume that there was absolutely no temptation to Joseph, and that there was no heart battle. Like everyone else, Joseph still had the old nature to battle. But it is very obvious that Joseph had godly inner desires. His heart desired most to please God.



TAPE

(Tape the **Godly Inner Desires** visual to the wall.)

*Joseph's desire for God was stronger than any desire for sin. Sin wasn't attractive to Joseph because God was so attractive to him.*

❓ *How does a person develop godly inner desires? [first a person must have a new heart, a heart of flesh given in salvation; then he must guard his heart by asking God to continue to give him godly desires, by reading the Word, by practicing what is right, by meditating/thinking on the goodness of God's ways and the ugliness of sin, by having friends that have godly desires, etc.]*

*When you are in a situation where you are tempted to sin, the first thing you must do is PRAY for God to give you godly heart desires.*

## Determine to Resist Sin and Take Action

### Illustration.....

PIECE OF CANDY,  
TABLE OR OTHER  
FLAT SURFACE, AND  
THE INSTRUCTION  
VISUAL

(Place the **piece of candy** on a **table or other flat surface** at the front of the room. Call a student to the front of the room and give him the **Instruction** visual. Tell him to read it to himself, and explain that he will be given the opportunity to do what is on the card.)

(Address the class, not the student in the front of the room.)

*Suppose your mom said that you could not have a piece of candy. You already had candy, and it is almost suppertime. You love this kind of candy, and you walk into the kitchen and see a piece on the kitchen counter. There are two ways of responding to this temptation. This is one way.*

(Indicate to the student that he is to follow the instructions on the card. After the student hides the candy and runs away, tell the students that you will show them another way to respond to the temptation. Find the candy, smell it, unwrap it and smell it again, and then lick the candy.)

*Which of us do you think will have the harder time resisting the temptation to disobey mom? Which person has the harder fight of faith? Why?*

- One of the most effective ways of resisting the enemy of our souls is to determine in your heart to resist sin and obey God as soon as temptation hits us.



(Tape the **Resist Immediately** visual to the wall.)

*How long did [student's name] play with the idea of eating the candy or feed his own desires? How long did I play with the candy? The more we think about our desire to sin, the harder it is to resist. We need to resist immediately! The longer we wait, the weaker we get. We cannot let sin take a firm hold in our hearts. We must place a resistance or barrier in our hearts as soon as temptation reaches our hearts.*



(Make sure the students understand that resisting starts in the heart. Then, display the **Flee from Sin** visual.)

- As soon as you determine in your heart to resist sin, you need to “put your feet into action.” You need to run from the situation. You need to flee temptation and sin.

(Tape the **Flee from Sin** visual to the wall.)

*Let's review these three important steps. First, we must pray for GODLY INNER DESIRES. Then we need to RESIST IMMEDIATELY. And then we must FLEE FROM SIN.*

### Examples

(Walk the students through a couple of “real life” situations where they can apply the three steps. You may then ask the students to come up with some examples and walk through the three steps for you. See examples below.)

- *Suppose you were emptying the dishwasher and you accidentally dropped one of your mother's good glasses, and it broke. Instead of telling your mom about it, you threw the broken glass in the garbage. Later, your mom finds a piece of glass on the floor that you missed. Your mom calls you and asks you if you broke one of her good glasses.*

(Lead the students in a discussion regarding the heart battle—to tell the truth or to lie. Then walk them through the three steps.)

GODLY INNER DESIRES: Pray for the desire to tell the truth; loving truth; wanting to please God.

RESIST IMMEDIATELY: Tell yourself, “It is wrong to lie. I’m not going to lie. I’m going to tell the truth.”

FLEE FROM SIN: Immediately tell the truth before you can entertain the temptation to lie any longer.

- *Suppose you have a spelling test in school and one of the words on the test is “requirement.” You don’t know how to spell “requirement,” but you remember that there is a poster on the wall of the classroom that lists the requirements for a contest. You can find out how to spell the word “requirement” by looking at the poster.*

(Lead the students in a discussion regarding the heart battle—to try to spell the word on your own or to cheat. Then walk them through the three steps.)

GODLY INNER DESIRES: Pray for the desire to be honest; wanting to be a trustworthy person; wanting to please God.

RESIST IMMEDIATELY: Determine in your heart, “I’m not going to cheat. It is more important to be honest and to please God than to get a good grade.”

FLEE FROM SIN: Turn away from the poster and write the word “requirement” on your spelling test.

- Suppose a group of kids are talking about a kid in Sunday school. They decide to tease him about his big feet. They see him coming and tell you to come with them to pick on this kid.

(Lead the students in a discussion regarding the heart battle—to be accepted by the group by doing something mean or to do the kind thing. Then walk them through the three steps.)

**GODLY INNER DESIRES:** The desire to be kind and to do what is right even if no one joins you.

**RESIST IMMEDIATELY:** Pray, “Jesus, help me to stand against the crowd. Help me to be kind even if I am alone in it.”

**FLEE FROM SIN:** Walk away from the group of kids who want to tease the boy. (You may want to mention that an appropriate response might be to encourage the others to reach out in kindness to the student. Another way of resisting sin is to do what is right—befriend the student who is teased and encourage him.)

*God has a promise for us when we follow these steps. (Have a Sword Drill with the following verse and discuss it.)*

***James 4:7—Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.***

*When we resist Satan and flee from sin, Satan flees from us. If we let him push us around, he will. The first step in resisting Satan is to submit to God—to humbly acknowledge that God is the highest authority and His ways are best, and to determine to obey Him.*

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *Can we create within ourselves godly inner desires? Where do godly inner desires come from? Remember that sanctification is a process initiated by God, but we also cooperate in it. Specifically, what can you do to encourage godly desires to grow in your heart? Specifically, what must you avoid to help godly desires to grow in your heart?*
- *Think of a situation you were in this week where you were tempted to sin. Did you follow these steps? What would you like to do differently if you had the chance? What will you do next time you are tempted to sin?*
- *Do you pray for godly inner desires? How can you make this a practice in your life? (You may want to have each student identify one ungodly heart desire that he struggles with—selfishness, anger,*

jealousy, etc.—and challenge him to pray for God to give him a godly desire that is greater than the desire to sin.)

- Think through with the students some situations in which they can apply the three steps discussed in the lesson and what each step would look like.
- Discuss the quote (source unknown) in the Student Notebook:

*Be careful of what you entertain. Sin fascinates before it assassinates.*

- Have a time of prayer for each other. Pray that God will give to each one godly inner desires, and then pray for the steps from the lesson to be put into action.

## **Optional Activities**

### **1. Student Notebook**

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 20.

### **2. Heart Prayer Bookmarks**

Students can make a bookmark with Psalm 119:34-37 or Psalm 141:4 on it. Tell them that they can put it in their Bibles and use the bookmark passage to pray for their hearts each day.

### **3. Talk Back to Temptation**

Ask the students to have an imaginary conversation with temptation. Tell them to relate the lies that temptation tells us, and to respond with truth. For example, using the situation of the forbidden candy:

TEMPTATION: *Eat me. No one will know if you take just one piece of candy.*

TRUTH: *God knows everything, and He sees every hidden deed of the heart. Sin also has a way of being found out.*

TEMPTATION: *It's no big deal to eat just one piece of candy.*

TRUTH: *All sin is a big deal. All sin is disobedience against God. It is not just eating candy. It is disobeying God, disobeying my mother, and losing my mother's trust.*

(Continue in the same manner.)

### **4. Flee Temptation Posters**

Each student can make a poster or a sign as a reminder to flee temptation. Here are some quotes to consider:

- *Every moment of resistance to temptation is a victory.*—Frederick W. Faber (christianquotes.info)

- *What makes temptation difficult for many people is they don't want to discourage it completely.*—Franklin P. Jones (quotehd.com)
- *Temptation usually comes through a door that was deliberately left open.* (pic-collage.com)
- *It is easier to avoid temptation than resist it.*—Unknown
- *If born of God I have the power to overcome all that is not of God.* (christianquotes.info)
- *Good habits come from resisting temptation.*—Proverb (picturequotes.com)
- *Be killing sin or it will be killing you.*—John Owen
- *Sin is what you do when your heart is not satisfied with God.*—John Piper
- *Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.*—Unknown

## 5. Run from Sin Relays

Have timed relay races. Talk about the need to run quickly from sin. You may want to vary the races: running backwards, running with an egg on a spoon, hold a balloon between the legs, run with a book on the head, etc.

## 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

## 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 20 (for each student)





# Our Strategy—Renew Your Mind

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Christians are IN the world, but not OF the world.**
- **Because we are in the world, we are influenced by the world.**
- **The correct way of thinking is the way the Bible teaches us to think.**
- **We need to renew our minds.**

## KEY VERSE

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.—Romans 12:2*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) 2 Corinthians 10:3
- 2) 1 Corinthians 2:12
- 3) Romans 12:2

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- 3 Signs (cut out, as indicated):
  - › IN but NOT OF (21A)
  - › IN and OF (21B)
  - › NOT IN and NOT OF (21C)
- See Preparation:
  - › **Matching Buttons (20D)**
  - › **Assorted Buttons (20E)**
- Parent Page for Lesson 21 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- 2 jars of rice, 1 jar of dried beans, and 3 dried beans (or appropriate substitutions)
- Container of flour and a dark porous object (e.g., chocolate cookie, piece of rye bread, navy blue sock)
- Optional: Buttons (see Preparation)

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. What does the Bible say?

- › Materials of your choice to evaluate (see Optional Activities)

### 3. Rules of the Game

- › Materials to play a game (see Optional Activities)

### 4. God's Truth Postcards

- For each student:
- › Cardstock cut to postcard size
  - › Markers
  - › Pens

### 5. Romans 12:2 Poster

- › Materials for class poster, possibly including objects to print with or to make a repeated pattern (see Optional Activities)

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.

- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Buttons**—In lieu of using the printed visuals, you could bring a set of matching buttons, and an assortment of buttons that don't match including one that matches the set of matching buttons.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

JARS AND BEANS,  
3 SIGNS VISUALS,  
AND TAPE

(Set out the **jars and beans** and give the following illustration. Label the jars with the **3 Signs** visuals as you talk about each.)

*This is a dried bean, and this is a jar of dried beans. If I put the bean in the jar of beans...*

(Put the bean in the jar of beans.)

*...we could say that the bean is **IN** the beans, and it is **OF** the beans. Being **OF** the beans means it is like the beans. They are both beans.*

(**Tape** the **IN and OF** visual to the **jar of dried beans**. Leave the bean in the jar.)

*What could we say if I put this bean in the jar of rice?*

(Put the bean in the jar of rice.)

*The bean is **IN** the rice, but not **OF** the rice. It is not like the rice; they are different. It is a bean, not rice.*

(Tape the **IN but NOT OF** visual to the **jar of rice**. Leave the bean in the jar.)

*What could we say if I put the last bean beside the jar of rice? The bean is **NOT IN** the rice and is **NOT OF** the rice.*

(Tape the **Not IN and NOT OF** visual to the **second jar of rice**. Leave the bean next to this jar.)

*If the jars of dry ingredients stand for the world, and the beans stand for Christians, which of these models shows the relationship between Christians and the world?*

(Solicit responses but don't comment on them.)

### Christians are **IN** the World but Not **OF** the World

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses.)

**2 Corinthians 10:3—For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.**

*The New International Version of the Bible states this verse this way, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.” (NIV 1984)*

**1 Corinthians 2:12—Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.**

❓ *What does the Bible mean when it says “the spirit of the world”? [the thinking and values of our culture; the desires of our sin nature; the kingdom of Satan—Satan, the god of this world and his influence in it]*

❓ *According to these verses, which illustration using the beans and rice represents the relationship between the world and Christians? [the bean in the rice jar—in the rice, but not of it]*

❓ *What does it mean that Christians are IN the world, but not OF it?*  
(Their answers should contain some substance from the texts.)

- Until we die, we live in this world, but those of us who are Christians do not have the same spirit as the world does.
- We do not have the same desires as the world.
- We do not act like the world.
- Our values are different than the world’s. What we think is important, and the standards of right and wrong living are different from those who do not follow Christ.
- We do not think just like the world. If we did, we would be OF the world. But we are not OF the world if we are Christians. We are different from the world.

## The World’s Influence on Us

Illustration.....

*DARK OBJECT AND  
THE CONTAINER  
OF FLOUR*

(Ask a student to drop the **dark object** into the **container of flour**. Then instruct him to fish out the object and tell you how it is different from what it was.)

*The [object] has flour on it. It is still at its core dark colored. It is still an [object], but it has flour on it. We are like the [object]. Because we are in the world, the world “rubs off on us.” We pick up part of the world. Sometimes we don’t even notice it, but we are influenced by the world. One of the ways the world affects us is in the way we think. We are so used to being in the world that we don’t notice when we sometimes we think like the world instead of like the Bible. We don’t notice when the world’s thinking rubs off on us.*

(Ask the students to give some examples of how we may be influenced by the world. Some possible answers could include the following. If you choose to do this in the small groups, as time permits have each group briefly share one of their examples with the class.)

- **The way we look at right and wrong.** For example, the world may say it is all right to keep the change when a cashier gives you more than you are due because it was his mistake, or that it is okay to lie if it keeps you out of trouble and “doesn’t hurt anyone.” We hear these things so often that we may begin to believe them.
- **Our standards.** For example, we might take on the world’s standards for watching movies. We know we are not supposed to be like the world with its very low standards. Since our standards are not *that* low, we think they are okay.
- **Our view of God.** For example, some of the world thinks there is no God. Since we know there is a God, we think our thinking about God is correct, but often we fail to see God at work in His world, we fail to understand God’s right to run the universe and our lives, or we fail to ask for His help or guidance.
- **Our view of salvation.** The world often portrays that we can work our way to heaven—that we can earn salvation by being good enough. We know that way of thinking is wrong, but often we still try to earn heaven by trying to be good enough.

## The Bible is the Only Authoritative Source of Truth

❓ *How do we know the right way to think?* [God’s Word tells us; the Bible is the only authoritative source of truth]

*The Bible is God’s truth. So the right way of thinking is the way God tells us in the Bible.*

❓ *How will we know what the Bible thinks?* [We need to read the Bible a lot and know it well.]

*We need to not only read our Bibles often, but we need to think about what we read. We need to ask questions when we read, like, “What does this word mean? What is this verse actually saying? Does the way I am understanding this verse make sense with everything else I know that the Bible is saying?”*

## Illustration.....

MATCHING  
BUTTONS,  
ASSORTED  
BUTTONS, OR  
RELATED VISUALS  
SHOWN BELOW



(Call a student to the front and show him the set of **matching buttons** and the **assorted buttons**, or the **Matching Buttons** and **Assorted Buttons** visuals.)

*Suppose you needed to sew these buttons on a shirt, but you needed one more button. What would you do? When you found a button you thought might be the same, what would you do then? Right, you would compare them. How many holes do these buttons have? Does this one have the same number of holes? Is this button the same size and shape as the other buttons? Are the colors the same? (If there are any other identifying characteristics, note them.)*

*This is what we have to do about our thinking. We need to look at our standards, our ideas about God and salvation, our idea of right and wrong, and all the other ways we think and ask the question, “Am I thinking biblically? Is this the same thing that the Bible teaches?” We need to test our thinking.*

*As we study the Bible, and as we carefully examine the way we think, we will probably see that we are thinking in some unbiblical ways, and we will need to change the way we think.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following passage.)

***Romans 12:2—Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.***

❓ *What does it mean to be “conformed to this world”? [to be shaped by the thinking, values, and standards of the world around us rather than by the Bible; to imitate the world]*

*The “renewing of our minds” is like taking the [dark object] and brushing the flour off it.*

DARK OBJECT  
(THE ONE THAT  
WAS IN THE  
CONTAINER OF  
FLOUR EARLIER)

(Demonstrate this with the **dark object**.)

*We need to make the [object] like new again. We need to get rid of the particles that cling to the [object]. We need to do the same thing with our thinking. We need to brush off the world’s influence. We need to get rid of the ways in which the world’s thinking clings to us. We need to make our minds like new again.*

- Renewing our minds—learning to think in biblical ways—is a way to fight the fight of faith.

- If we know the truth, if we think correctly, Satan will have a harder time deceiving us because we will recognize his deception as false thinking.

(End with prayer.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *Do you know the Bible well? How can you know it better? Do you ask yourself questions when you read the Bible? What kinds of questions can you ask yourself as you read the Bible?* (You may want to introduce your students to the discipline of journaling.)
- *Do you evaluate your thinking? Do you check it out to see if it is biblical thinking? Do you question things that you notice around you, or do you believe things just because you have heard them? How can you learn to evaluate your thinking?*
- *Where have you seen the world influence your thinking, values, affections, or behavior? How do these influences come to you? How can you change the influences on you?*
- *What steps will you take toward renewing your mind?*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*Nothing else in this world can renew our minds like the Bible, which is:  
a light to guide us,  
a rod to correct us,  
a staff to lead us,  
a mirror to reflect us,  
a banquet to feed us, and  
a rudder to steer us.*

—Elizabeth George

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 21.

### 2. What does the Bible say?

Choose an area to evaluate (i.e., music, dress, movies, books, suffering). Ask the students to share their opinions or thoughts in this area. (You may want to bring in samples for them to evaluate.)

Then discover what the Bible says about it. Ask the students to compare their thinking with the Bible's thinking.

### **3. Rules of the Game**

Have the students play a vaguely familiar game according to their idea of the rules. Then check the rules and evaluate whether their idea of the rules was accurate. Talk about the importance of knowing the truth or standard and why it is important to compare your ideas with it.

### **4. God’s Truth Postcards**

Talk with the students briefly about the way that society “changes the truth” and changes standards. Then explain that God’s truth never changes. Students can then make a postcard with this message and write a note to a friend explaining what they learned in the lesson. Postcards can then be mailed.

### **5. Romans 12:2 Poster**

Students can make a poster of Romans 12:2. You may want to provide objects to print with or make a repeated pattern in order to illustrate the first phrase.

### **6. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### **7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 21 (for each student)



# Our Strategy—Dwell on the Truth

## MAIN IDEAS

- **What we put into our minds will influence the way we think; the way we think will influence what we do.**
- **The Bible tells us to put good things into our minds.**
- **Dwelling on the truth includes choosing to believe the truth rather than the lies and attacks of the enemy.**

## KEY VERSE

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

—Philippians 4:8

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Philippians 4:8
- 2) 1 Kings 11:4
- 3) Nehemiah 4:11-14
- 4) Philippians 4:19
- 5) (Colossians 3:1-3)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- See Preparation:
  - › **Cow (22A)**
  - › Cow and Goat Cards (22B)
  - › Truth (22C)
  - › Untruth (22D)
- Nehemiah 4:12 (22E, cut out)
- Parent Page for Lesson 22 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Optional: Laptop computer (see Preparation)
- Two different bags of chips (or any two different items, see Preparation)
- Tape
- Table
- Whiteboard and markers

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Philippians 4:8 Evaluation Chart

- For each student:
- › Philippians 4:8 Evaluation Chart (OA-22)
  - › Pen/pencil

### 3. "What is good about this?" Poster

- › Materials for a class poster

### 4. Choose the Truth Game

- › List of multiple-choice trivia questions (You could use a Bible trivia book for help with this.)

### 5. Replacing One Thought with Another

- › Come up with details of imaginary objects (see Optional Activity).

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.

## Our Strategy—Dwell on the Truth

- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Cows and Goats**—Display the **Cow** visual prominently in your classroom before the students arrive. Cut out the pairs of **Cow and Goat Cards** and place them face up on the table.
- **Truth and Untruth**—Cut out the **Truth** and **Untruth** visuals, and tape one to the back of each bag of chips.
- **Laptop Computer**—If you have a laptop computer, you might want to bring it for one of the illustrations in this lesson.
- **Truth Versus Untruth**—For a clearer understanding of God’s providential work of concurrence and our real, willing, responsible choices, you may want to read pages 145-146 of *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1999).

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

(With the **Cow** visual prominently displayed, and the two pairs of **Cow and Goat Cards** face up on the table, call two students to help with this illustration. Tell the students that you will give them some clues about an animal. When they know what it is, they should pick up the correct card and run to a designated spot with it. Tell them the location of the designated spot, and explain that the student who gets there first with the correct card is the winner. Then, give the following clues while you look at the Cow visual, accelerating the speed of your statements as you get closer to the end of the list.)



COW AND GOAT  
CARDS

*This is an animal that gives us milk.*

*It has four legs.*

*It has a tail.*

*It lives on a farm.*

*There is a letter "O" in its name.*

*It has a beard.*

*Grab it now!*

(Have the students show their cards. You will need to handle the situation according to their responses. The point that you will need to make is that wrong thinking produces wrong actions. Some examples of how you might adjust your comments follow below.)

*Does a cow have a beard? What was the right answer? Why did you two choose a Cow Card? You chose the wrong card because you were thinking in a wrong way. You were thinking cow instead of goat. Why were you thinking cow? What you put into your mind influences how you act. You are going to do the wrong thing if you think the wrong way—wrong thinking produces wrong actions.*

OR

*I can't believe you both got it right! Why would cow have been an easy card to choose? But you didn't think cow. You thought goat, so you picked the right card. Right thinking produces right actions—you can do the right thing if you think the right way. But you are going to do the wrong thing if you think the wrong way—wrong thinking produces wrong actions.*

.....

## Fill Your Mind with What is Best

*What you put into your minds—input—will influence the way you think. The way you think will influence what you do.*

WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS

(Write the following on the **whiteboard**.)

### INPUT → THINKING → ACTIONS

*If wrong thinking produces wrong actions and is influenced by wrong input, what kind of input do you think we should put into our minds?*

*This is what the Bible tells us to put in our minds.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

***Philippians 4:8—Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.***

- The things that we put into our minds are the things that will fill our thoughts.
- The Bible is telling us to put good things into our minds so our minds will dwell on good things.
- This means we should be careful to *not only* avoid putting bad things into our minds, but we should also be sure to put the best things into our minds.
- Even things that aren't particularly bad but aren't really good either take up space in our minds. So it is not helpful to fill our minds with these things either, because we must be deliberate about putting the good things into our minds.
- If we put good things into our minds, we will think about good things.

### Illustration.....

OPTIONAL: LAPTOP  
COMPUTER

(Draw a square on the **whiteboard** and give the following example. OR, if you have a **laptop computer**, you could use it as this point.)

*Suppose this were a computer screen. What will happen to the screen if I do not use my computer for a few minutes? What comes up on the screensaver?*

*If I put a photo of clouds into the screensaver, when my computer is idle, clouds will come up. Bubbles won't come up. If I put a message on my screensaver, the message will come up. Airplanes won't come up. Whatever I put into the screen saver is what will come up when my computer is idle.*

- Our minds are like a computer screen. Whatever we put into our minds is what will come back into our minds when our minds are idle.
- If you put Bible verses into your minds, then Bible verses may pop into your mind when you are riding in the car, or waiting for the bus, or doing your chores and aren't thinking about anything in particular.
- If you put junk into your mind, then when you are not actively using your mind, your mind will dwell on junk.
- It is dangerous to put junk into our minds because junk in the mind will cause our hearts to desire junk.

*King Solomon married many foreign women. They did not worship the God of Israel. They worshipped idols. And they put their idol ideas into Solomon's mind. They put junk into Solomon's mind. And this is what happened: "For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father" (1 Kings 11:4).*

*Because Solomon was not careful to put true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, or praiseworthy things into his mind, his mind did not dwell on these things. This changed his heart and turned it away from God.*

## Make a Deliberate Choice to Dwell on the Truth

*So, one way to help our minds dwell on right things is to fill our minds with good and right things. There is another way for our minds to dwell on right things. This is when we make a deliberate choice to believe and think about the truth.*

### Illustration.....

*TWO BAGS OF  
CHIPS WITH SIGNS  
ON THE BACK OF  
EACH BAG, AND  
TABLE*

(Show the **two bags of chips** to a student, with the **attached Truth and Untruth visuals** hidden from view.)

*I have two bags of chips here. They are not the same kind of chips. I have [brand or type of chips] and I have [other brand or type of chips]. Would you like one of these bags? I don't know which kind you like better, so I am going to let you choose which bag you would like to have.*

(After the student chooses the chips, have him turn the bag over to reveal the visual on the back.)

*Just as we can choose what kind of chips we want, we can choose to believe the truth or dwell on the lies and attacks of the enemy.*

(Hold up the two bags to reveal both visuals.)

*It is a choice we make. When we choose to focus on the truth, we are fighting the fight of faith.*

*In previous lessons, we talked about Nehemiah and the building of the wall around Jerusalem (Nehemiah 4:11-14). The enemies of the Jews threatened to kill them and stop the building of the wall. Let's look at how the Jews responded.*

NEHEMIAH 4:12  
VISUAL

(Hand the **Nehemiah 4:12** visual to a student to read.)

***Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us." (NIV 1984)***

*Do you think the Jews came and told Nehemiah and the others...*

(Speak casually here.)

*"Oh, by the way...our enemies will attack us no matter where we are..."?*

*That's not how they were thinking, is it? The Bible says they told Nehemiah and the others 10 times! It was probably more like...*

(Speak with intensity here.)

*"No matter where we are, our enemies will attack us! This is serious—they could attack us at any point, and they are strong enemies! Maybe we should quit this wall project. It's getting too dangerous. It's just a wall. We heard them say that they would kill in order to stop the wall! I think they mean business! I mean, they are talking about attacking us no matter where we are or what we are doing."*

*What were they dwelling on?*

❓ *What were the Jews doing?* [they were dwelling on the wrong thing—they were not thinking of God and His power, but instead they were thinking of the threat of their enemies]

*The Jews were dwelling on the words of the enemy. They did not choose to think of honorable and praiseworthy things. They mentioned the threat 10 times instead of choosing to push the threat out of their minds. They kept thinking about it over and over, and talking about it over and over. And probably the more they thought about it and talked about it, the more scared and upset they became.*

❓ *Do you remember what Nehemiah's response was?* [He told them to remember God and fight.]

*Did Nehemiah say, “Oh no, I think you’re right. We’re in for it now”? No! He stationed guards with weapons at the lowest parts of the wall, and this is what he told the Jews.*

(Ask the students to read in unison Nehemiah’s words to the people in 4:14.)

***Nehemiah 4:14—And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”***

*Nehemiah refused to think about the threats and attacks of the enemy. He chose instead to think about the truth—that God is great and awesome.*

*We have the same choice. We can either think about the lies and the attacks of our enemy, Satan, or we can dwell on the truth. We can choose where we will focus our minds.*

### Example

*Suppose your family needs some money for something important, and Satan attacks you with worry. You and your family can either dwell on the lies and the attacks of Satan—“How are we going to get that money? It is just too much money, and there isn’t enough time. I don’t know where it is going to come from. This situation is impossible.” Worry, worry, worry...*

*Or you can dwell on the truth of Philippians 4:19— “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” You choose to fill your mind with the truth—God will take care of us. Every time you are tempted to worry or to dwell on the attack or lies of the enemy, you speak the truth to yourself. “Philippians 4:19—And my God will supply every need...”*

### Example

(Ask the students to make the following application.)

*Suppose you have a big sports tournament coming up, and the week before the tournament you break your arm. What kinds of attack do you think the enemy could bring against you? What would dwelling on the lies and attacks of the enemy look like? What is the truth? (e.g., Romans 8:28) What would dwelling on the truth look like?*

(End with a prayer that the students would put good things into their mind and dwell on those things, and that they would choose to believe the truth.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- Discuss Philippians 4:8, defining the words and asking students for specific examples of what to fill their minds with.

***Philippians 4:8—Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.***

- *Think of what kinds of things you fill your mind with. What adjectives would you use to describe them? Do you put good things into your mind? What “not good” things do you put into your mind? What could be the result of this carelessness? Are you willing to pay that price? What does God say about this? How will you respond?*
- *Why is it a battle to obey Philippians 4:8? What can you do to fill your minds with Philippians 4:8 kinds of things?*
- Discuss how to apply the following verses.

***Colossians 3:1-3—If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup>For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***

- Discuss the following statement:

*The question we should ask in deciding whether to put something into our minds is not, “What is bad about this?” but “What is good about this?”*

*What is the difference in thinking between those two questions? (You may want to help students understand that the burden of proof lies in what is good about something, not that it is not bad.)*

*Are you tempted to dwell on the lies and attacks of the enemy? How can you choose to believe the truth?*

- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*Your mind is the garden,  
Your thoughts are the seeds.  
The harvest can either  
Be flowers or weeds.*

*—William Wordsworth*



## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 22.

### 2. Philippians 4:8 Evaluation Chart

Talk through the questions on the **Philippians 4:8 Evaluation Chart**.

### 3. What is good about this?

Students can make a poster with the words “WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT THIS?” as a reminder to question the worth of what they put into their minds. Having this question displayed on a poster will hopefully help them remember to ask this question of themselves when they are deciding what to allow into their minds.

### 4. Choose the Truth Game

Divide the class into two teams. Ask each team, in turn, to “choose the truth” after you read a trivia question with multiple-choice answers. Teams get a point for each truth (correct answer) chosen. You could use a Bible trivia book for the questions.

### 5. Replacing One Thought with Another

Illustrate how the lies of the enemy can be overcome by dwelling upon the truth of God—by replacing one thought with another thought. Tell the students about something imaginary that you do not like. Paint a lengthy word picture of this. Then talk about something else imaginary until everyone has replaced the first image with the second. For example:

*I absolutely hate pink elephants! I can't stand it when people draw pictures of pink elephants—with their pink trunks, big pink ears, pink tails, big pink bodies. I just hate it! Pink elephants! Can you imagine pink elephants walking through the jungle? Pink elephants belong in a ballet! With lace tutus! Can you imagine what a pink elephant would look like? It would be ridiculous! With their big pink feet! All right, I want everyone to stop thinking about pink elephants! Right now!*

Then change the subject to another imaginary animal.

*I would rather think about green horses—with flowing green manes, long green tails, grassy green legs. When you look at a green horse in a meadow, he almost gets lost. Green horses blend in with the green grass. I just love green horses—they are beautiful...*

When everyone is thinking about green horses, emphasize that the first thought is overcome by replacing it with thinking about something else. In the same way, we overcome the lies of Satan by dwelling on the truth of God.

### 6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

## **7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 22 (for each student)

# Our Strategy—Do Not Compromise

## MAIN IDEAS

- Sin that is not dealt with grows; “little” sins become “big” sins.
- Letting sin grow in our hearts and lives is compromising.
- Any turning away from God and His ways is always foolish and leads to serious consequences.

## KEY VERSES

(Choose one of the following.)

*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

—Proverbs 4:23

*Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.*

—Proverbs 4:27

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Proverbs 24:30-31
- 2) Proverbs 4:20-27



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Garden 1 (23A)
- Garden 2 (23B)
- Parent Page for Lesson 23 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- See Preparation:
  - › Gardening supplies (e.g., shovel, gloves, seeds, seed catalogs)
  - › Paper bags
- 3 items (one item should be superior to the other two, see Lesson for how they'll be compared)
- 1 tiny garden seed
- Whiteboard and markers

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Planting Seeds

- For the class, or for each student:
- › Supplies to plant seeds (see Optional Activities)

### 3. Garden Visit

- › Plan a visit to a well-kept or neglected garden.

### 4. Ruler Reminder

- For each student
- › Wooden ruler
  - › Markers

### 5. Tales of the Kingdom

- › *Tales of the Kingdom* by David and Karen Mains

### 6. Church Garden

- › Tools to weed the church garden

### 7. Poem Poster or Bulletin Board

- › Materials for class poster or bulletin board

### 8. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 9. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.

### Our Strategy—Do Not Compromise

- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Gardening Supplies**—Place each gardening item in a paper bag, rolling up the tops of the bags so that they stay closed, and randomly place the bags underneath chairs in the classroom.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

BAGS WITH  
GARDENING ITEMS  
UNDER SOME OF  
THE CHAIRS

(Ask the students to look under their chairs—those with a **bag** under their chairs can come to the front of the room with the bag. Ask the students to open their bags and show the items in the bags to the class. Comment on the items and lead the students to imagine a beautiful garden, as in the example below.)

*Look at all these things we have: a shovel, seeds, gloves, fertilizer. Oh, we even have a seed catalog. [Student's name], why don't you flip through some of the pages so the students can see some of the beautiful flowers and plants in the catalog. Suppose we plan a beautiful garden.*

(Ask the students in the front to go back to their seats.)

*I want you all to close your eyes and imagine a beautiful garden. What is in your beautiful garden? [flowers, bushes, big climbing tree, bench, fountain, walkway, birds, swing, trellis, roses, daisies, etc.]*

### Sin That is Not Dealt With Will Grow

*The Bible talks about a garden, too.*

(Read the following verses to the students.)

**Proverbs 24:30-31—I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, <sup>31</sup>and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down.**

*Does this sound like our garden? What happened? How did this garden get like this?*



(Lead a discussion covering the following points showing the **Garden 1-2** visuals at the appropriate points.)

- The man who owned this garden was lazy, so he did not take care of the garden.
- The man was also foolish; he was not wise and did not make good decisions.
- The soil had weed seeds in it. Other seeds were probably blown in on the wind or brought in by birds. The seeds were small and looked unimportant.

- Little weed seeds become weeds. The man did not pull up the weeds because he was lazy.
- If weeds are not pulled up, they get bigger and produce more weed seeds. They choke out the good plants. Because the man had no judgment, he did not think about weeds getting bigger, making more weed seeds, or choking the plants.
- Eventually the garden was covered with weeds.
- The stone wall began to fall apart. But the lazy, unwise man did not fix it.

*The garden was not destroyed in a day or a week. Little by little, over time, the garden deteriorated until all its beauty—everything good in it—was gone. Our hearts are like gardens. The beautiful flowers and bushes are like our love for God and the work of His goodness in us. If we want our gardens to be beautiful, we must take care of them. We must plant good seeds and provide good nourishment—like seeds of renewing our minds and dwelling on the truth.*

*Our enemy, Satan, blows weed seeds of temptation to sin into our heart gardens. Seeds that begin to grow into weeds need to be plucked up immediately. We must guard our hearts diligently—with all vigilance—and be prepared for sin seeds and weeds. We must resist the enemy's seed sowing and weed growing.*

*If we are lazy and foolish like the man in the Bible verse, the sin weeds will grow in our hearts, and we will not pluck them out. We will let them continue to grow. Little sins will become big sins with deep roots. Those sins will produce more sin in our hearts. Every sin weed in our hearts crowds out our love of God and the work of His goodness in us. Sin takes up the space in our hearts that our love of God had in our hearts. If we continue to let sin grow, eventually the weeds of sin will crowd out our love for God, and our hearts will look like the garden in the Bible.*

## We Must Guard our Hearts and Reject Compromise

*Letting sin grow in our hearts and lives is compromising. Compromising is giving up what is best for something inferior.*

### Illustration.....

3 ITEMS (ONE  
SUPERIOR TO THE  
OTHER TWO)

(Ask a student to come to the front and hand him the **superior item**. Role play trying to convince him to compromise and give up the best for what is inferior.)

*I see you have [superior item]. It's not bad, but it's not that great either. Why not trade it for this [inferior item]?*

(Display **one of the two inferior items.**)

*Why not?* (Make some derogatory remarks about the superior item.)

*Look, how about trading for this.*

(Display the **other inferior item.**)

*You will probably like this a lot.* (Make some exaggerated remarks about how good the item is.) *Are you sure you don't want to trade.*

(Address the class.) *You just saw an illustration of someone who will not compromise the best for something inferior. He is guarding the good thing he has. But suppose he is only four years old and is easily persuaded...he would make a bad trade.*

*Trading the best for something inferior or lesser is compromising. Not all compromise is bad. Much compromise is good—it is good to be a peacemaker and offer to give another person something better. But compromising holiness for sin is always bad. Compromising belief for unbelief is destructive. Sometimes we are like a four-year-old making bad compromises. We are sometimes foolish and ignorant of the ways of Satan and the consequences of sin, and we make bad compromises. Any compromise we make with sin and Satan...any turning away from God and His ways is always foolish and leads to serious consequences. Sin gets in the way of our relationship with God, and when we sin, we push God out of our hearts. When we sin, we compromise what is best.*

**?** *How do we compromise the best and allow sin in our hearts and lives?*  
(Make sure the following ways are included.)

- Ignoring sin instead of dealing with it
- Not taking “small” sins seriously—“It’s no big deal.”
- Seeing how close we can get to the line between right and wrong—  
“I can handle it. This won’t affect me.”
- Lowering our standards—“It’s not that bad” or “There’s nothing really wrong with it. Everyone else is doing it.”
- Not grieving over the sin in our lives—“Everyone has sin in his life. We aren’t perfect.”
- Entertaining doubts—dwelling on them and not fighting them with truth.

*You might think, “Watching one bad movie is no big deal.” But it is a big deal. It’s a big deal because the Bible tells us to be pure. Watching something inappropriate attacks our purity. It’s a big deal because little things grow into*

*big things. Next time you may watch something worse. Or you may dwell on the inappropriate thought that watching that movie put into your mind—then it is like watching the movie over and over. And every time that happens, your purity is attacked and sin grows in your heart.*

*You may be unwise and watch something inappropriate. It is one thing to realize your foolishness and repent—“God, I was so foolish. I watched something I shouldn’t have watched. It put crude pictures and awful language into my mind. I am so sorry for having offended You in that way. Please forgive me for my sin.” And then you decide that you will be much more careful about what you watch and how you guard your heart. That is plucking up the weed that you have allowed to grow in your heart.*

*But to watch something inappropriate and get mad when mom or dad express their disappointment, and to harden your heart and to decide that one movie is no big deal, is to give the opportunity for that weed to grow and to produce more weeds. It is not only foolish, it is also wrong.*

TINY SEED, AND  
WHITEBOARD,  
AND MARKERS

(Display the **tiny seed**. Also, consider drawing on the **whiteboard** the process of one seed growing into a weed, which produces more seeds, and all of those weeds growing and producing more seeds, etc.)

*This looks so small. It is so easy for Satan to deceive us into thinking that it doesn’t matter. And if I drop this seed on the floor of this classroom, we might even have a hard time finding it. But if this floor was soil, and one seed like this was dropped into the soil, over time the whole floor could be covered with weeds. One seed can do that if it is allowed to grow and produce more seeds.*

*The Bible gives us some advice on how we can guard or watch over our hearts so that we are not tempted to compromise in a bad way.*

(Ask the students to turn to Proverbs 4 and discuss the following verses with them. You may want to mention in your discussion that parents are given to students to guide them in wise ways. It is good to listen to the good advice of wise parents and to follow it.)

**Proverbs 4:20—My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.**

**Proverbs 4:21—Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart.**

**Proverbs 4:22—For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh.**



***Proverbs 4:23—Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.***

***Proverbs 4:24—Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you.***

***Proverbs 4:25—Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.***

***Proverbs 4:26—Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure.***

***Proverbs 4:27—Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.***

What kind of heart gardens would you like to have? (Instruct the class to sit quietly and think about this, and to pray silently. Then they may have their small group discussion.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *How did you answer the question, “What kind of heart garden would you like to have?” Is your garden like that? What do you need to do to care for your heart garden?*
- *Are there things in your life that you have considered “not a big deal”? Are you in conflict with your mom or dad over something you have allowed into your life or would like to allow that they have felt is unwise? Are you following the instruction of Proverbs 4:20-27? How have you been unwise? What is your attitude toward that foolishness?*
- *When you know what is right to do, are you sometimes influenced by the opinions of your friends who have a different standard? What can you do about that?*
- *Lead a discussion about the influence of some of the things that you know are popular but unhelpful among students of the age you are teaching. Use specific examples of books, movies, games, etc. and discuss where they can lead. Be sure to make the point that just because something is “interesting” or “fun” it does not follow that it is good for you.*
- *Have you compromised in a bad way? Are there any sins you need to pluck out of your heart?*
- *Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:*

*It matters not if the world has heard  
Or approves or understands...  
The only applause we're meant to seek  
Is that of nail-scarred hands.*

*—B. J. Hoff*

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 23.

### 2. Planting Seeds

Plant grass seed in a container. You may also want to plant flowers and talk about how to care for the “gardens.” Weed seeds can also be introduced into the “garden.” You may want to instruct the students to allow the weeds to grow so they can watch how the weeds crowd out the good plants. (You may do one large container for the class or individual ones for the students. Keep in mind that you are approaching the end of the curriculum. If you will continue to teach the same students in the same classroom, you will be able to watch the “garden” for a season.)

### 3. Garden Visit

If possible, visit a beautiful garden or a neglected garden. Converse with the students accordingly.

### 4. Ruler Reminder

Give each student a ruler. Students can make labels for their rulers saying “GIVE SIN AN INCH, AND IT WILL TAKE A MILE.” Students can then use the rulers as a reminder not to compromise in a bad way.

### 5. Tales of the Kingdom

If you have the book *Tales of the Kingdom* by David and Karen Mains (Chicago, Ill.: David C. Cook Pub. Co., 1983), read and discuss the story “Princess Amanda and the Dragon” on pages 74-80.

### 6. Church Garden

If your church has a flowerbed, students can weed the flowerbed. Discuss the similarity between keeping the flowerbed free from weeds, and our hearts free from sin.

### 7. Poem Poster or Bulletin Board

Make a poster or bulletin board of the following poem. (you may want to discuss peer pressure):

*It matters not if the world has heard  
Or approves or understands...  
The only applause we're meant to seek  
Is that of nail-scarred hands.  
—B. J. Hoff*

### 8. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

## 9. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

### Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 23 (for each student)



# Our Strategy—Confession

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Because we are easily deceived, we must ask God to reveal hidden sin in our lives.**
- **Revealed sin should be confessed immediately.**
- **Confession and repentance include turning from sin.**
- **We should confess our sins daily.**

## KEY VERSES (Choose one.)

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! <sup>24</sup>And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*  
—Psalm 139:23-24

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*  
—1 John 1:9

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Psalm 26:2
- 2) Psalm 139:23-24
- 3) Psalm 51:9-10
- 4) 1 John 1:9

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Ask God (24A)
- Confess Immediately (24B)
- Turn from Sin (24C)
- Confess Daily (24D, see Preparation)
- Parent Page for Lesson 24 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Glass of white vinegar and water
- Tape
- Plant
- Table
- Red marker
- Piece of paper (see Preparation)
- Whiteboard and markers
- Optional for Application (for each student):
  - › Paper
  - › Pen

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Prayers of Confession

- For each student:
- › Stationery
  - › Pen/pencil

### 3. Turn from Sin Game

- › Whistle

### 4. Choral Reading

- › Text of Psalm 51:1-17

### 5. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- ➔ Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- ➔ **Confess Daily**—Cover the words “Confess Daily” with a piece of paper.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

GLASS OF VINEGAR  
WATER

(Display the **glass of vinegar water**. Ask the students if it looks like a good, clean glass of water. Ask a student to examine the water.)

*Do you think this is a good, clean glass of water? Test the water by taking a small SIP of it.*

(Student takes sip.)

*What is wrong with the water?*

(If the student will not try the water, comment yourself.)

*Although the water appeared like good, clean water, it had vinegar in it.*

.....

### Examine Your Heart

*This illustration can be a picture of our hearts. They can appear fine. We may think that our hearts are quite good. They may even look good to others. But there may be sin lurking in our hearts. Until our hearts are examined, we may not recognize the sin hidden in our hearts.*

*One way to keep sin from growing in our hearts is to have them examined continually. We can examine our hearts, but often we are deceived ourselves and cannot see the sin in our own hearts.*

*The Bible has a solution to this problem.*

(Have Sword Drills with the following verses.)

***Psalm 26:2—Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind.***

***Psalm 139:23-24—Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! <sup>24</sup>And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!***

❓ What do these verses tell you about the heart of the David, the psalmist? [He loved God and wanted a pure heart.]

*The first step to having a pure heart is to WANT a pure heart. Then, because we do not always see what is in our hearts, we must ask God to reveal any sin in our hearts that is hidden from us.*



TAPE

(Display the **Ask God** visual, and **tape** it to the wall.)

❓ *How do you think that God might point out sin in your life to you?*  
[conviction or growing awareness of sin, through others, through the Word]

## Confess Sin Immediately

**Illustration**.....

PLANT, TABLE, RED  
MARKER

(Place the **plant** on a **table** in the front of the room and call a student to help you with the illustration.)

*Suppose you were walking in the woods and saw this plant. It looked really pretty to you, and you decided to pick a leaf from the plant.*

(Instruct the student to pick a leaf. Place your hand near the plant and, as the student picks the leaf, strike him on the hand with a **red marker**.)

*There was a poisonous snake in the plant, and it bit you.*

(Have the student show the red mark to the class.)

*The snake left poison in your hand. You could die from the poison, but there is an antidote for the poison that will save your life if it is taken quickly enough. Would you pick a few more leaves? Would you wander around in the woods a little longer? Would you go home and have a snack? What would you do? Why?*

*A wise person would immediately head for the hospital because the poison is dangerous.*

*Sin is dangerous, too. When God reveals a sin in our lives should we say, "I need to confess this sin sometime," or just ignore the sin? It is important to confess sin right away and get it out of our lives.*



(Display the **Confess Immediately** visual, and **tape** it to the wall.)

❓ *Why is it important to confess sin immediately?* [If we don't confess sin immediately, we are allowing it to grow and take root in our hearts.]

*We should never be comfortable with sin. This does not mean that we quickly and glibly say, “I’m sorry for my sin,” with no sense of remorse or sorrow over our sins. If we are not sorry, we should ask God to show us the horror of our sin. Sin is not only dangerous, it is also a horrible offense against a Holy God. If we truly love God, we should be horrified when we offend Him. We should also be seriously concerned about the consequences of sin and the damage it causes.*

## Turn from Sin

*When we confess sin, it should be from a sincere and repentant heart. Confession should involve three things.*

(Write each step on the **whiteboard**.)

1. State your sin. (Have the students give an example such as, “I lied when I told my mom that I had my homework done.”)
2. Ask God to forgive you. (Have the students give an example.)

Give this example from Scripture:

***Psalm 51:9—Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.***

3. Ask God to help you turn from your sin. (Have students give an example.)

Give this example from Scripture:

***Psalm 51:10—Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.***

*Part of true confession and repentance is making a commitment to turn from your sin.*



(Display the **Turn from Sin** visual, and **tape** it to the wall.)

*This means that you have committed to not continue in your sin, but to flee from sin. Then you take steps to turn away from your sin.*

## Confess Sin Daily

**Illustration**.....

(Display the **Confess Daily** visual with the words “Confess Daily” covered, and tape it to the whiteboard. Give a **whiteboard marker** to a student, and ask him to circle the days that he thinks that we should confess sin.)

WHITEBOARD AND  
MARKERS, AND  
THE CONFESS  
DAILY VISUAL  
WITH THE WORDS  
“CONFESS  
DAILY” COVERED



*When should we confess sin? On Christmas and Easter? How often should we confess our sins? Every Sunday, or just on communion Sundays?*

*Circle the days you think you think we should confess sin.*

(When all the boxes have been circled, uncover the words “Confess Daily.”)

*Every person was born with a sin nature. For those of us who are Christians, we have been given a new heart and a new nature... but we still struggle with our inborn sin nature. If you are a Christian, it can be a temptation to be self-righteous—to think you are better than others or less sinful. But the reality is that we all sin every single day, whether in our thoughts, attitudes, or actions.*

*Yes, we should confess sin immediately when it is revealed to us...but sometimes we struggle in our hearts. We have to fight our pride. Some sins are deeply rooted and, sadly, we are not at the point that we are willing to repent and turn from them. But if each night we ask the Lord to reveal our sins, convict us of our sins, and give us a heart of repentance, we will gain much ground in fighting the fight of faith. We will also have the joy of a cleansed heart.*

(Have a Sword Drill to discover the wonderful promise of God about confessed sin.)

***1 John 1:9—If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

(Using the **visuals on the wall and on the whiteboard**, briefly review the key points of the lesson, and end with prayer.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *How can you build a habit of examining your heart? Do any of you have a testimony of God convicting you of sin? Why is conviction a gift from God?*
- *What keeps us from confessing our sins? How can we fight against these obstacles?*
- *Does anyone have a testimony of God delivering you from a certain sin, or a testimony of turning from sin? How did God help you?*
- Lead the students in a time of confession, if appropriate. Then talk about what it will mean to turn from their sins. Or, encourage the students to write a confession and take it home to share with their parents.

- Discuss this quote:

*Children of God should not make a general confession by acknowledging their innumerable sins in a vague manner, because such confession does not provide conscience opportunity to do its perfect work. They ought to allow the Holy Spirit through their conscience to point out their sins one by one. Christians must accept its reproach and be willing, according to the mind of the Spirit, to eliminate everything which is contrary to God.—Watchman Nee*

- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*Forgiveness is always free. But that doesn't mean that confession is always easy. Sometimes it is hard. Incredibly hard. It is painful to admit our sins and entrust ourselves to God's care.—Erwin Lutzer*

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 24.

### 2. Prayers of Confession

Ask students to write prayers of confession to God. You might want to provide nice stationery for this.

### 3. Turn from Sin Game

Have the students line up across one side of the field or gym. Explain that they are to run toward the other side until you blow a whistle. As soon as the whistle is blown, they must freeze, and then turn and run back the other direction. Students who take additional steps rather than freezing immediately, are eliminated. Continue playing the game until there is a winner. (Rather than lining up each time, you might just tell them that whenever they hear the whistle, they are to stop where they are and change directions.) Remind the students that it is important to turn from sin immediately.

### 4. Choral Reading

Have the students practice Psalm 51:1-17 as a choral reading. (Split the verses into individual, partial, and full group parts.) Then perform the reading.

### 5. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

## 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

### Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 24 (for each student)



# Our Strategy—Take Drastic Measures

## MAIN IDEAS

- Sin that is permitted to grow in the heart becomes deeply-rooted sin.
- Drastic measures are needed to deal with sin.
- God has given us a spiritual armor with which to fight the fight of faith.
- Jesus has set us free; He has not given us the yoke of slavery.

## KEY VERSE

*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.—Galatians 5:1*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Proverbs 6:27-28
- 2) Matthew 5:29-30
- 3) Ephesians 6:10-18
- 4) Galatians 5:1
- 5) (Ephesians 4:27, ESV and NIV)
- 6) (Romans 13:14)
- 7) (1 John 3:9)
- 8) (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Weed 1-2 (25A-25B)
- Candle (25C)
- Parent Page for Lesson 25 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Optional: Two real weeds (one small with small roots and one large with well-developed roots, or use the Weeds 1-2 visuals)
- Candle
- Matches
- Tape
- Book
- Trash can
- Rope (see Lesson)

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Fighting Deep-Rooted Sin Raps

- For two teams:
- › Paper
  - › Pencil/pen

### 3. Avoiding Sin Race

- › Masking tape (to mark start and finish lines, and “SIN” square for students to avoid)

### 4. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 5. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....



OPTIONAL: REAL  
WEEDS

(Display the **Weed 1-2** visuals, or the **real weeds**.)

*If these two weeds were growing in a garden, which do you think would be harder to pull up? Why? While the small weed has weak roots, the large weed has well-developed, long roots extending into many areas of the garden. The roots have a strong hold on the soil. There is much ripping away, which must be done to pull up the weed. Which one will have done the most damage? Why? What kind of damage will it have done?*

### Unaddressed Sin Can Become a Deep-Rooted Sin

- This illustration shows us the problem we have when we have not been diligent and have allowed a seed of sin to grow in our hearts to the point that it has become a large weed.
- When we do not get rid of sin immediately, we give it opportunity to grow. Its roots become a little longer and fatter. As it continues to grow, it touches other areas of our lives until that sin has a very strong hold on our hearts.
- Sin that has been allowed to grow is a deep-rooted sin. This is a sin that started small, but grew and grew to the point that it is very difficult to control.

#### Example

*An example is lying. Suppose you lie, and immediately you regret that sin. You sorrow over it and confess it to God and to whomever else you need to confess. You determine not to sin again, ask God for help, and stand your guard against the temptation to lie. Lying does not grow in your heart.*

*But if you lie and then brush off the uncomfortable feeling you have after you lie, make excuses for lying, and do not confess that sin, you give it room to grow. Then you lie again to cover up the first sin. You continue to ignore your conscience. More temptations to lie come, and you do not resist the enemy.*

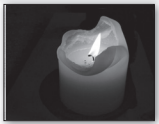
*Lying then becomes a habit—you don't even think about it anymore. Lies just pop out of your mouth when you are in an uncomfortable situation. This is a stronghold. Sin that has grown until it is a habit is a stronghold.*

❓ *What are some other sins that can easily become deep-rooted sins for you? [cheating, stealing, anger, bullying or being unkind, deceit]*

? *How does one of these sins become deep-rooted?* [you refuse to repent and keep doing it; you ignore your conscience and make excuses for your sin]

## Illustration.....

OPTIONAL:  
CANDLE AND  
MATCHES



(Light a **candle** and show it to the class, or display the **Candle** visual.)

*What would you think if I said I were going to put this lit candle in my pocket? Why? How about if I told you I would be really careful?*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses.)

**Proverbs 6:27-28—Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? <sup>28</sup>Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?**

? *What is the meaning of this proverb?* [you can't sin without consequences; sin is dangerous, if you hold sin close, you will get hurt]

*We cannot “play around with sin” without getting burned. Playing with sin is like playing with fire. We cannot hold it in our laps or walk over it without getting burned. Sin is dangerous, and strongholds can be built quite quickly.*

## Take Drastic Measures Against Sin

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses and discuss them.)

**Matthew 5:29-30—If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.**

? *Does the Bible really mean we should tear out our eyes and cut off our hands?*  
[no]

? *What is this verse teaching?* [that sin is serious and we should deal with it drastically]

? *Why should we deal with sin drastically?* [because our eternal destiny is at stake; it could be a matter of going to either heaven or hell, depending on how we deal with sin]



## Illustration.....

*BOOK* (Call a student to the front and show him the **book**.)

*Suppose this were a book that had lots of dirty jokes in it. You didn't know that those jokes were in the book when you bought it. But when you took it home, you discovered bad jokes in the book. Instead of getting rid of the book, you decided that you would just skip the bad parts.*

*But you found yourself reading them occasionally. Then you read them more often. Soon you were telling those jokes to your friends who thought they were funny. Every day you went to school with a new joke, and your friends looked forward to your joke of the day. But you knew in your heart that it was wrong.*

*What should you do with the book? [get rid of it] But you paid a lot of money for the book, and it would be worth a lot of money to your friends if you sold it to them. Don't you think that throwing the book away is a little drastic? Couldn't you just mark out the worst jokes? Do you have to throw the whole book away?*

(Let students respond.)

*Sin requires drastic measures. We want to stay as far from sin as we can.*

*TRASH CAN* (Have the student throw the book in the **trash can**.)

*In the example about the joke book, your friends may make fun of you for throwing away an expensive book, but the verses in Matthew tell us that it is not foolish. These verses tell us that we should not hesitate to do what will spare our souls—we should be afraid enough of sin that whatever we sacrifice to get rid of it is really very small and insignificant.*


*If there is deep-rooted sin in your life—whether it is fear, greed, lying, pride, cheating, anger, unbelief, or whatever—it may take drastic measures to destroy it. It is better to take drastic measures to destroy the sin than to let the sin destroy you.*

## Our Spiritual Weapons

(Ask the students to look up Ephesians 6:10-18. Ask nine students to each read a verse aloud.)

***Ephesians 6:10-18—Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the***

*cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.* <sup>13</sup>*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.* <sup>14</sup>*Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,* <sup>15</sup>*and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.* <sup>16</sup>*In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;* <sup>17</sup>*and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,* <sup>18</sup>*praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,*

 *Paul is giving us the image of a soldier equipped to fight a war. He prepared for battle dressed in offensive and defensive armor. **What can you learn about fighting against sin from this passage?*** (Make sure the following points are made.)

- We must fight with the Lord's strength and not just our own willpower.
- The battle we are in is spiritual. Therefore, we must fight with spiritual weapons. It is not enough to know about the weapons, but we must put on God's armor; we must use the weapons God has given us.
- Satan has schemes against us and wants us to fail in the fight of faith, but we must stand against him and against sin.
- The battle includes wrestling. It is hard work and is not easily won. We must be willing to keep fighting ("having done all, to stand firm"). Therefore, we must not give in but persevere and stand firm.
- We must know the truth and fight with the truth of God's Word.
- We must desire righteousness and realize that it only comes through Christ. His righteousness given to us at salvation protects us against the accusations of the enemy. As we walk in obedience to Christ, we also develop habits of righteous living through the power of Christ. These habits will help us when temptation comes.
- We must be eager to tell the good news of salvation. Remembering the gospel and the helmet of salvation that we wear is a way to protect our hearts from pride, self-sufficiency, fear, discouragement, and other fiery darts the enemy throws at us.
- A shield is a defensive weapon. When we are attacked by evil thoughts, the unkindness of others, the temptation to be afraid or discouraged, faith in God and His promises protects us from these attacks.
- Just as Jesus constantly fought using the truth of the Word, so also God's Word is a sword in our hands. It is powerful and always proves true.

- We must be persistent in fighting against sin, persevering until Jesus brings us home.
- Prayer is a mighty weapon not only to protect ourselves; but in praying for others, we help strengthen them in the Lord.

*Our determination and will are not sufficient to fight against sin. We must pray daily and ask God for help. When we are being tempted, we must recognize that we cannot fight the temptation on our own but call out to God for His strength and help to fight sin.*

*Some of the spiritual weapons we have are prayer, the Word of God, and the strength of God. If you are a child of God and use the spiritual weapons God has given you—if you focus on Jesus and rely on Him continually—your sinful nature will be dealt a powerful blow.*

**?** *What would fighting the fight of faith with spiritual weapons look like in dealing with a deep-seated sin of lying? [admitting that you have a problem with lying; confessing your sin to the Lord; asking Jesus daily to help you tell the truth; calling on Christ when you are tempted to lie, and walking in companionship with Him; determining with Jesus' help that you will be a truth-teller, and then trusting Him each day to help you walk in the truth; memorizing verses that will help you fight the battle]*

## Fighting Sin Brings Freedom

### Optional Illustration .....

**ROPE** (If time permits, call a student to the front of the class and bind him with a **rope**.)

*Would you like to go through life like this? Do you have the freedom to raise your arms when you want, or scratch an itchy nose? (Ask the student to try to do these things.) Can you put on a jacket when you are cold, or eat an ice cream cone when you are hot?*

*Deep-rooted sins are much like ropes that bind us. They keep us from growing in faith. They keep us from doing good things. They steal our joy and peace. They keep us enslaved to that sin. They destroy our freedom.*

*But often we foolishly hold on to sin because it is familiar to us—we are used to it. We are afraid to break the bondage of sin. But Jesus wants to give us something better. Jesus came to set us free from the hold of sin!*

(Free the bound student.)

*When Jesus sets you free, you are free indeed! There is great joy in not being trapped in sin. Sin is destructive...but Jesus brings freedom and life.*

(End by reading Galatians 5:1 and praying it for the class.)

***Galatians 5:1—For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.***

## **Small Group Application**

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *It is better to keep sin from gaining a foothold than to have to get rid of deeply-rooted sins that have grown in your life.* (Have a discussion about how to scale a mountain, noting the importance of handholds and footholds. Explain that without them, it is very difficult to climb the face of a mountain.) *Just as it is hard to climb a mountain without a handhold or foothold, it is also difficult for a particular sin to gain a foothold if we do not make an opening in our hearts for that sin.*
- Discuss the following verse.

***Ephesians 4:27—and do not give the devil a foothold. (NIV 1984)***

***Ephesians 4:27—and give no opportunity to the devil. (ESV)***

*How are these two versions helpful in understanding how to fight the fight of faith?*

- *Is there a deep-rooted sin in your life—sin that has become a habit?* (If the students do not know if there are any patterns of sin in their lives, tell them to ask God to reveal any deep-rooted sins to them.) *Often the greatest sin we face is the sin of unbelief—unbelief that God will keep His promises or that God is working for us.*

*What steps will you take with these sins?*

*Do any measures seem too drastic to take against sin? Explain.*

- Discuss Romans 13:14.

***Romans 13:14—But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.***

- *What does it mean to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ”?* [become what Jesus has declared you to be as His child; the Christian must take on his rightful identity as like Christ in character, attitude and actions]
- *Why is what Jesus offers so much better than what Satan offers?* Discuss the following verse:

***Galatians 5:1—For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.***

- *Discuss the following verse:*<sup>1</sup>

*1 John 3:9—No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.*

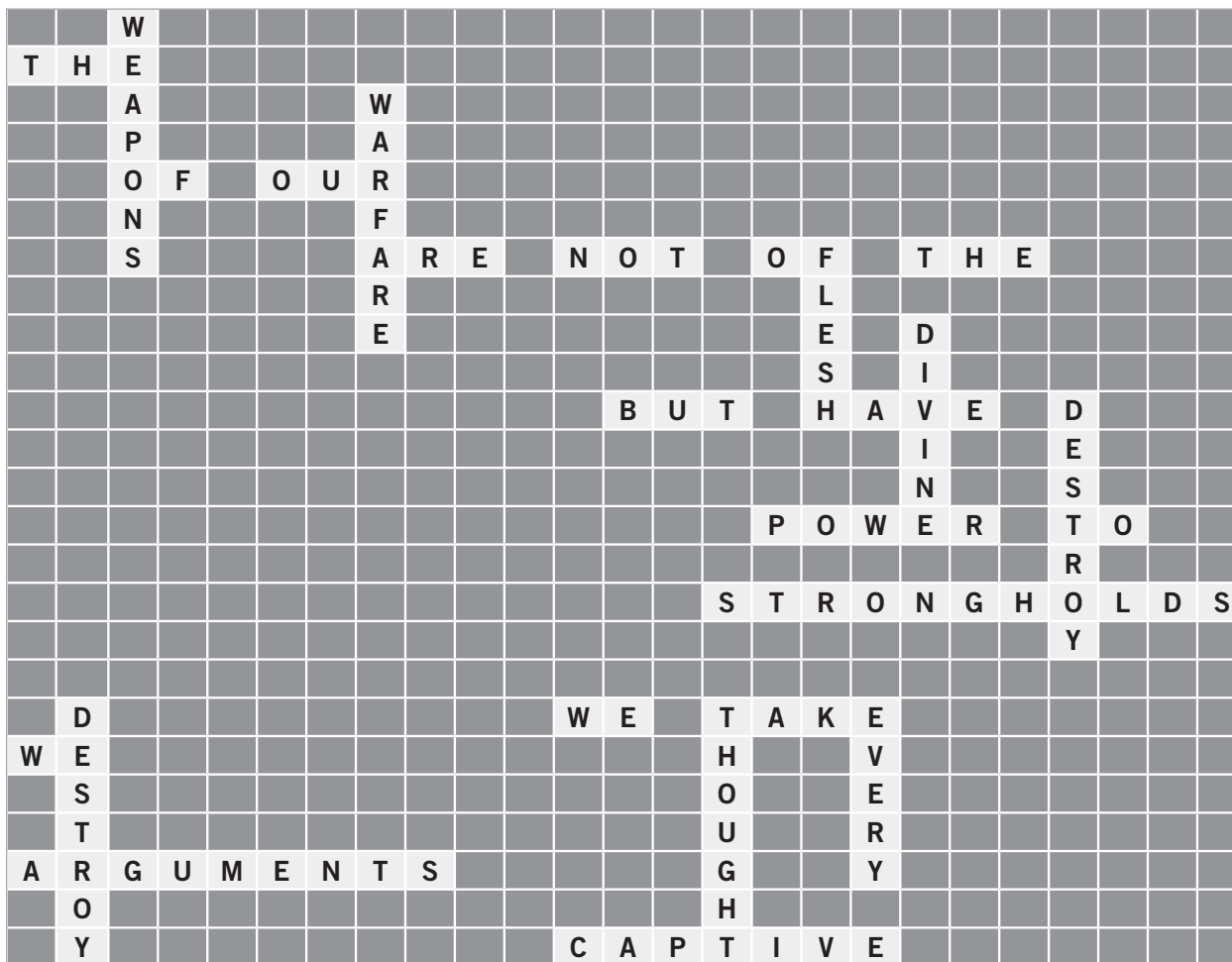
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*The best way to fight against sin is to fight it on our knees.—Phillip Henry*

**Note:** To complete the Notebook for this lesson, students may need to refer to the following passage:

*2 Corinthians 10:3-5—For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

- Answer Key for the Student Notebook:



1 Do not assume the students in your small group are Christians. Many are not. Continually hold out to them that there are only two kinds of people—Christians and non-Christians. Growing up in a Christian home and going to church does not make a person a Christian—only faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin and trust in Him to make you more like Him daily bring salvation.

## **Optional Activities**

### **1. Student Notebook**

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 25.

### **2. Fighting Deep-Rooted Sin Raps**

Students can develop raps on fighting deep-rooted sins. You may want to split the class into teams to work on this, and then ask each team to say their rap.

### **3. Avoiding Sin Race**

Mark a square in the middle of the playing area. Label it SIN. One team lines up on the starting line and tries to run to the finish line at the other end of the playing area. The other team starts in the middle of the playing area (avoiding the center square) and tries to tag the players of the opposite team as they run to the finish line. The tagging team receives a point for every opponent tagged. If any player from either team steps on the SIN square in the middle, he gets “burned,” causing a two point penalty for his team. Once the running players reach the finish line, the teams change positions and continue with another charge to the finish line. The game continues until the time designated for the game has expired. The team with the most points is the winning team. Remind the students that just as playing with fire causes one to be burned, so sin is dangerous and playing with sin has consequences.

### **4. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### **5. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## **Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 25 (for each student)

# Victory in Jesus!

## MAIN IDEAS

- Jesus defeated Satan and his works.
- Jesus lives in His children, and His power to defeat Satan is ours.
- Satan tries to deceive us into thinking that victory is not ours.
- We need to take our thoughts captive to Jesus Christ and defeat Satan with the truth.

## KEY VERSE

*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*  
—1 Corinthians 15:57

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) 1 John 3:8
- 2) Hebrews 2:14
- 3) 1 John 4:4
- 4) 1 Corinthians 15:57
- 5) 2 Corinthians 10:5



## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- See Preparation:
  - › Good News 1-2 (26A-26B)
  - › Verse 1-2 (26C-26D)
- Parent Page for Lesson 26 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Tape
- Optional: Hole punch and ribbon (see Preparation)
- Ribbon or medal
- Role-play volunteers

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Victory in Jesus Poem

- For each student:
- › Paper
  - › Pencil/pen

### 3. Victory in Jesus Poster or Bulletin Board

- › Materials for a class poster

### 4. Victory Cheer

- › No materials required for this activity.

### 5. Relay Races

- › Tape or chalk to mark start and finish lines
- › Ribbons for winners

### 6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

- **Introduction Role Play**—Talk with the person whom you will choose as captain of Team #1 and instruct him that he is to LOSE the race. Make sure he understands that his job is to lose the race, and then to try to intimidate the non-captain runner of Team #2. You may want to practice the role play in advance.
- **Good News and Verse Cards**—Cut out the **Good News** and **Verse** cards as indicated. Tape a Good News card on top of each Verse card. Just tape along the top so that the GOOD NEWS card can be flipped up to reveal the verse. (Or you may want to punch two holes in the top of each card in the same location, and loosely tie a ribbon in each hole. You may want to experiment on a scrap card first.)



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

RIBBON OR MEDAL

(Choose two teams of two people each. Identify a captain for each team. Be sure that you have instructed Captain #1 ahead of time that he is to LOSE the race. Explain the race to them, but before you start the race, send the non-captain runner of team #2 out of the room to practice. While he is gone, have the race with Captain #2 running twice. Give Captain #2 a **ribbon or medal** to put in his pocket. After the race, call the other member of Team #2 back into the room, and let Captain #1 try to intimidate him as in the example below.)

**Captain #1:** *There's no way you guys can win this race. You are way too slow, and I am really fast. It's a hopeless cause. Why don't you just give up now! You are defeated! Victory is mine!*

(Turn to the student who was sent outside the classroom.) *He seems pretty sure of himself, doesn't he? If you believe him, you may even actually run slower. But everything he just told you is a lie.*

(Ask **Captain #2** to pull the ribbon or medal out of his pocket and show it to his teammate, and say): *The race has already been won. And your captain won it for you. This other captain is trying to deceive you. He has already lost the race. He's trying to tell you that you can't win a race that has already been won!*

.....

## Jesus Defeated Satan and His Works

*The illustration we just did is a picture of what happens in real life. Jesus defeated Satan on the cross, and has already won the fight of faith for His children.*

(Have Sword Drills with the following verses.)

**1 John 3:8—Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.**

**Hebrews 2:14—Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,**

? What do these verses say about Satan and his work? [Satan and his work have been destroyed by Jesus.]

*When Jesus died on the cross and made a way for us to be right with God, He destroyed Satan and his work. Satan is like the team captain trying to run a race that he has already lost. The only thing that he can do is try to make us think that he has not lost the race.*

## Jesus Empowers His Children

*But there is really good news for the children of God.*

GOOD NEWS  
1-2 CARDS  
ASSEMBLED WITH  
VERSE 1-2 CARDS

(Hold up the **Good News 1-2** cards, and give them to two students.)

*Satan is a defeated enemy. Jesus defeated him on the cross. But there is more good news.*

(Ask each student to flip up the Good News cards and read the verses underneath.)

**1 John 4:4—Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

**1 Corinthians 15:57—But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Not only has Jesus defeated Satan, but Jesus lives in us! If we are children of God, we have Jesus and His power in us. We have Jesus' power in us to defeat the work of Satan and to fight the fight of faith! We are winners because Jesus is the winner! We have victory because Jesus is victorious!*

## Satan is Deceptive, So We Must Test Our Thoughts

- Even though Satan knows he is defeated, and even though we should know that we are victorious in the power of Jesus, Satan tries to intimidate us with lies and deception, just like the captain of the losing team tried to intimidate [student's name].
- He tries to make us think that he is more powerful than he really is.
- He tries to make us forget that he is defeated, and tries to defeat us instead.
- He tries to make us forget that we are victorious. *He tries to make us think and feel things like, "I can't fight this spirit of fear. I am going to be fearful all my life." But that is a lie! Jesus defeated the works of Satan, and Jesus defeated Satan—and, if we are trusting in Jesus, He is in us.*

*When thoughts come into our heads, we should test them.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

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

*This verse means that when a thought comes into our heads, we “capture” it—we hold it and bring it to Jesus. We say, “Jesus is this true? Is it true that I cannot defeat a spirit of fear?” Or we bring that thought to the Word of God, “Is this what the Bible teaches?” And we find that the Bible teaches that Jesus destroyed the devil’s work.*

*The spirit of fear does not come from God—we do not have to accept it. It is a destroyed work. Satan is only trying to deceive and intimidate us. We see that “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” We have the power of Jesus within us to defeat the work of the enemy. God “gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” When we capture that thought—that we cannot defeat a spirit of fear—and bring it to Jesus and to the Word of God, we see that our thought is a lie.*

*Victory is ours—but if we think we are defeated and we think Satan is stronger than he really is, if we do not realize that Jesus in us is stronger than Satan, we will not live in victory. We will listen to Satan’s lies and be fooled by his deception. The fight of faith is the fight to believe the truth and live as one who believes the truth.*

## Live in Victory

### Illustration.....

(Call the students from the race illustration back to the front. Have the captain of the slow team taunt the teammate of the fast captain again. Ask the teammate of the fast captain to demonstrate how he would respond to the slow captain if he forgets that he is victorious.)

*Example: Oh no. He looks so fast. I don’t know if I can defeat him. I better not even try.*

(Then ask him to demonstrate how he would respond if he realizes that the other captain is lying and trying to deceive him, and he is in fact a victor because his teammate won the victory for him.)

*Example: That’s not true! Everything you have said is a lie! Leave me alone! I already have the victory!*

*This should be a Christian's attitude when Satan "throws his fiery darts" at us. We should remember that Jesus defeated Satan, and this victorious Jesus lives in every Christian—everyone who is trusting in Jesus! Our response should be to know the truth—that in Jesus, we have victory. Our attitude toward Satan should be, "Leave me alone! You are full of lies! I will not listen to your lies. You are a defeated enemy. Jesus in me is stronger than you are. Get lost!" Then we will walk in victory.*

### Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *How does Satan taunt you? What kind of lies does he try to deceive you with? Why are his lies effective at times?*
- *What does it mean to take your thoughts captive to Jesus? Do you take your thoughts captive to Jesus? What happens if we do not take our thoughts captive? Why is it so important to take our thoughts captive? How important is what we think? Why? Can you give an example of taking a thought captive to Jesus Christ?*
- *How can you defeat the lies of Satan and his work against you? Can you give us an example of a time when you defeated Satan's lies?*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*"It is written." Stand upon it, and if the devil were fifty devils in one, he could not overcome you. On the other hand, if you leave "It is written," Satan knows more about reasoning than you do. He is far older, has studied mankind very thoroughly, and knows all our weak points. Therefore, the contest will be an unequal one. Do not argue with him but wave in his face the banner of God's Word. Satan cannot endure the infallible truth, for it is death to the falsehood of which he is the father.—Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

- The answer key for the Student Notebook follows on the next page.

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

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 26.

### 2. Victory in Jesus Poem

Ask the students to compose a poem based on this lesson. This can either be worked on as a class project or individually. If they are worked on individually, students can then read their poems to the class. The poem can be written in couplets (two rhyming lines).

**3. Victory in Jesus Poster or Bulletin Board**

Make a poster or bulletin board proclaiming our VICTORY in Jesus.

**4. Victory Cheer**

Make up a cheer proclaiming our victory in Jesus.

**5. Relay Races**

Run some relay races. Give the winners ribbons. Note that once the victory is won, it is final. It cannot be changed.

**6. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

**7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

**Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 26 (for each student)

# Encourage One Another

## MAIN IDEAS

- **Encouraging each other is a means of persevering in faith; Christians need the encouragement of other believers.**
- **Use the Word to encourage each other.**
- **Encouragement should be accompanied with an attitude of humility and grace.**

## KEY VERSES

*Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup>For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.— Hebrews 3:12-14*

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Hebrews 3:12-14
- 2) Colossians 3:16
- 3) 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11, 14
- 4) (Philippians 1:6)
- 5) (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- 6) (1 Corinthians 8:9)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Parent Page for Lesson 27 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Optional: Fighter Verses Pack

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Encouragement Note or Card

- For each student:
- › Paper or blank notecards
  - › Pen/pencil

### 3. Gift of Service

- › Supplies for chosen service project

### 4. Missionary Care

- › Supplies for chosen project to encourage a missionary family

### 5. Memory Verse Bee

- › Choose verses that you have been encouraging the students to memorize during this study.

### 6. Cooperative Relays

- › Any supplies needed for chosen relay races

### 7. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 8. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- ➔ Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- ➔ Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

*Have you ever run in a race? How enthusiastic were you at the beginning? What happened in the middle? Many people start a race, but not all of them finish.*

*In 1928, the International Transcontinental Foot Race was held with the promised prize money of \$25 thousand. That sounds like a lot of money—a great prize! But the prize only went to the winner, and the race was from Los Angeles, California to...New York City!*

*There were 199 people who started the race, including 21-year-old Andy Payne. Andy was a Cherokee Indian from Oklahoma, the oldest of seven children. He wanted the money to pay off the debt on the family farm.*

*By the end of the first week of the race, 70 runners had dropped out. But Andy kept running. He ran in the rain, in snow, and on hot sunny days. He ran on gravel roads through the desert and uphill through the mountains. His motto was...“just keep stepping from day to day.” That is what he told himself constantly...and that is what he did day after day until he finished the race and won the prize. He ran 3,421.5 miles in 84 days. He just kept “stepping from day to day.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Encourage Each Other

*The Christian life is like the Transcontinental Foot Race. It is sometimes long and hard. There are many temptations to drop out. But only those who persevere to the end receive the prize of eternal life and joy. This is the mark of the true Christian, the person who just keeps “stepping from day to day.”*

(Have a Sword Drill with Hebrews 3:12-14. You may want to ask three students to each read a verse.)

***Hebrews 3:12-14—Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.<sup>13</sup> But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.<sup>14</sup> For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.***

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased from Sally Michael's book, *God's Battle* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Pub., 2014), 120. The facts in the illustration are taken from an article by Veda Boyd Jones titled “The Winner of the Bunion Derby,” published in the *Harris' Farmer's Almanac*.



❓ *What is the warning in this passage?* [We must be diligent to watch over our hearts so we do not turn away from the faith; we must be careful not to be hardened by sin; we must persevere in faith if we are to share in the inheritance of Christ]

❓ *What other means of persevering does this passage teach us?* [We are to encourage each other in the fight of faith.]

- One of the good gifts God has given His children in fighting the fight of faith is the gift of the body of believers.
- Because sin is deceitful, and because Satan “prowls around like a roaring lion” looking for those he can devour, we need other Christians to help us in our walk of faith.
- Other Christians also need us to encourage them. We must all link arms and help each other fight the fight of faith.
- No one can fight the fight of faith alone.

*So let's look at some verses that can help us understand how we can help each other.*

(Ask students to look up the following verses and summarize what they teach regarding fighting together.)

***Colossians 3:16—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.***

[teaching, wisely correcting each other, worshipping together, and encouraging each other through song]

***1 Thessalonians 5:9-11—For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.***

[reassure each other, and give each other hope, share evidences of grace we see in each other]

❓ *So practically, how can we encourage each other and build up each other?* (Answers will vary, but make sure that the students give very practical suggestions, such as sending a note of encouragement, reaching out to those who are hurting or new, sharing a verse of encouragement, singing at the bedside of an ill person or dying saint, making a meal for a family with a new baby, visiting someone in the nursing home and sharing a thought from the Word, etc.)

## Use the Word to Encourage One Another

*If you have been memorizing the Fighter Verses (or other Bible verses), you have a storehouse of truth to help you fight sin and fight to keep believing.*

OPTIONAL:  
FIGHTER VERSES  
PACK

(Display the **Fighter Verses Pack**.)

*You also have a storehouse to help others fight against sin and fight the fight of faith. These verses are not just to memorize and file away in your mind, but they are to be used to encourage others and strengthen your own faith.*

(Pose some situations for the students, and ask them what verses they could use to encourage that person. Ask the student to recite the verse. If possible, use situations of people in your church as examples and challenge the students to actually encourage those people. Some examples are included to get you started.)

- A person who is discouraged due to a number of trials (e.g., Lamentations 3:23-24; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; Isaiah 43:1-3a);
- A person who is nervous about a piano recital or math competition (Psalm 125:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Chronicles 16:9a, Joshua 1:9)
- A student whose dad just lost his job (e.g., Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:31-34, Psalm 94:14)

*1 Thessalonians tells us another aspect of encouraging each other, as well as how to encourage.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:14—And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.**

## Encourage with an Attitude of Humility and Grace

❓ *So how are we to encourage each other? [with patience; graciously]*

❓ *What must our heart attitude be in order to be patient with others? [love; humility; thinking of others as more important than ourselves]*

*The other aspect of encouraging one another that this passage points out is that we are to address the sin we see in each other's life. This does not mean we are the "sin police," but it means we are brothers and sisters coming alongside each other, helping each other to persevere in faith, fight sin, open eyes to the deceitful influences of the enemy, and encourage each other to trust God...all with the attitude of love, humility, and patience.*

❓ *What is a battleground for the person doing the confronting?* [fear—fear that the person might get upset and angry, fear that the person will not be our friend anymore, or that the person will retaliate and treat us meanly]

*And we know how to fight that battle—with the courage that God gives, trusting His Word and His ways, and not listening to the lies of the enemy. We can fight fear by trusting God and His ways, and fight a fear of man. We need to step out and do what is right with the help of God.*

*Confronting each other is not something we do well in the church, but it is a blessing to be among a group of people who can graciously help each other in this way. One way you can make confronting easier for others is to invite them to “speak into your life”—to point out what you might not see...how you are deceived and where sin has a foothold in your life.*

❓ *What is a battleground for those who are being confronted?* [pride]

❓ *What must you remember when someone confronts you?* [confrontation is hard but it is a gift; we are all sinners, and it is a blessing when someone points out what we may not see; pride keeps us from growing, and we must fight it; remember it is hard for a brother to confront, and accept with grace and wisdom what he had the courage to say]

*We need to decide ahead of time that we want and will accept the wise counsel and godly confrontation of others. At that point, we need to remember that we are receiving a gift to help us fight the fight of faith.*

## Small Group Application

- *How is persevering in faith a sign of true belief? What does God promise in Philippians 1:6? What does this tell you about God? What does it tell you about true faith?*
- *Why is the encouragement of other Christians so important? What do you risk when you cut yourself off from other Christians? Do you and your friends encourage each other in faith?*
- *Discuss the following verses:*  
***Hebrews 10:24-25—And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.***
- *How can you “stir up one another to love and good works”? What kinds of speech and behavior do just the opposite?*

## Encourage One Another

- *How much time do you spend in the world compared to the amount of time you spend in Christian fellowship? Why is it important to be involved in the church regularly and not just on Sunday mornings? How can you put yourself in a position where you will have more Christian fellowship?*
- *Read the following verse:*

**1 Corinthians 8:9—But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.**

*What does this verse instruct us to do? Not only should we encourage one another, but we should also not be a cause for damaging the faith of another. In what ways might you harm the faith of another? Are you careful to be one who helps rather than harms the faith of another? How?*

- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*If in fellowship of service I seek to attach a friend to myself, so that others are caused to feel unwanted; if my friendships do not draw others deeper in, but are ungenerous (i.e., to myself, for myself), then I know nothing of Calvary love.—Amy Carmichael*

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 27.

### 2. Encouragement Note or Card

Write a note of encouragement or make a card for someone who needs encouragement.

### 3. Gift of Service

Help someone in the body with a gift of service or do a service project for the church or community.

### 4. Missionary Care

Write a note of encouragement to a missionary family and consider sending them a care package.

### 5. Memory Verse Bee

Have a “Memory Verse Bee” where students are asked to recite verses. Encourage them that Bible memory is not just an academic exercise or a competition, but the verses should be used to fight the fight of faith and to encourage one another.

### 6. Cooperative Relays

Do some relay races where students need to help one another or encourage one another (wheelbarrow race, three-legged race, etc.).

**7. Key Verse Game**

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

**8. Fight the Good Fight Buttons**

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

**Send Home**

- Parent Page for Lesson 27 (for each student)



# Strangers and Exiles

## MAIN IDEAS

- **This world is not our home; Christians are strangers and exiles here.**
- **All believers must understand that heaven is our home.**
- **This life is temporary; heaven is forever.**
- **To persevere in faith, Christians must forget this world and press on toward heaven.**

## KEY VERSES

*But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,<sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*  
—Philippians 3:13b-14

## SCRIPTURE

- 1) Hebrews 11:33-37, 13-16
- 2) Revelation 21:1-7, 22-27
- 3) Revelation 22:3-5
- 4) Philippians 3:13b-14
- 5) (2 Timothy 2:4)
- 6) (John 15:19)
- 7) (2 Timothy 4:7)

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Messages of Faith 1-5 (28A-28E, see Preparation)
- **Alien (28F)**
- Fight the Good Fight Skit and Visuals (see Preparation, if you did not use the skit at the start of the year)
- Parent Page for Lesson 28 (for each student)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- See Preparation:
  - › Five balloons
  - › Permanent marker
  - › Tape
- A pin
- 12-inch piece of string
- Jelly
- Big ball of string
- Masking tape (see Preparation)

## MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
  - › Pencil/pen

### 2. Heaven Pictures

- For each student:
- › Paper
  - › Markers
  - › Glitter glue
  - › Shiny paper
  - › Scissors
  - › Glue or rubber cement

### 3. Perseverance Postcards

- For each student:
- › Blank postcards
  - › Markers

### 4. Eyes on the Goal Relay

- › Two wastebaskets
- › Six pairs of socks or six wads of paper

### 5. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
  - › Supplies to work on button requirements

## PREPARATION

- ➔ Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- ➔ There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.

- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses ([fighterverses.com](http://fighterverses.com)) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- **Balloons**—Cut apart and fold the **Messages of Faith 1-5** slips and insert each message into a balloon. Then, blow up the balloons and tie them. With a permanent marker, write a letter on each balloon to spell the word FAITH. (Put the top of the letter toward the tied end unless you are filling the balloons with helium.) Then tape the tied end of the balloons to the wall to spell the word FAITH.
- **Tape**—Use the tape to mark the start and finish lines for your final illustration.
- **Note:** Read Charles Spurgeon's sermon, "Go Back? Never!," which is included in the Appendix in preparing for this lesson. It is good inspiration to long for heaven.
- **Skit**—If you did not use the skit at the beginning of the year, it can be used with some modification (telling what has been learned) in a year-end program. (The Skit and Visuals are in the Curriculum Resources.)



## Large Group Lesson

### Introduction.....

*During this whole study, we have been talking about fighting the fight of faith. There is a message that I hope you understood from these lessons. It is a message about faith...*

*BALLOONS  
SPELLING FAITH  
WITH MESSAGES  
INSIDE, AND PIN*

(Indicate the **balloons spelling FAITH**.)

*and fighting the fight of faith.*

*Each balloon has a message in it about fighting the fight of faith, but they all really mean the same thing. It is the message I hope you remember the rest of your life and live by until you die.*

(Invite five students to each pop a balloon with the **pin**. Tell them to look for the message in the balloon and read it to the class.)

*This is the most important thing I can tell you about fighting the fight of faith: Don't give up. Don't let go. Stand your ground. Stand firm. Hang onto your faith. They all mean the same thing—they mean to persevere.*

## Christians are Exiles on Earth

*Hebrews 11 gives us a whole list of people who fought the fight of faith and persevered to the end—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses' parents, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets...*

***...who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup>quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup>Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. <sup>36</sup>Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup>They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated (Hebrews 11:33-37)***

*But they did not give up. They held onto their faith. They fought the fight of faith, and they persevered to the end.*

*The Bible tells us how these people were able to persevere in faith. It tells us what means God gave them to help them hold on in the fight of faith in spite of torture and persecution.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses. You may want to choose four students to each read a verse.)

**Hebrews 11:13—These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**

**Hebrews 11:14—For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.**

**Hebrews 11:15—If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.**

**Hebrews 11:16—But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.**

❓ *What does this passage tell us about how these people were able to persevere in faith? (Make sure they include the following points.)*

- They understood that they were aliens and strangers on earth.
- They were longing for a heavenly home.

*The people from Hebrews 11 understood that this world was not their home. They didn't belong here. They were just passing through on their way to heaven. Heaven was their real home. Heaven was where they belonged.*

## Illustration.....

12-INCH PIECE OF  
STRING AND JELLY

(Display the **12-inch piece of string**.)

*Suppose this is your string, and it is all the string you have. Let's say I borrow your string, and I am very careless with your string. I take some jelly, and smear it on your string...*

(Demonstrate with the **jelly**.)

*and then I fray the string at the end*

(Demonstrate this.)

*and I tie knots in your string.*

(Demonstrate this.)

*Would it matter that I did those things? Why would it matter? [because it is the only string you have; and we should be careful with things that belong to others]*

*But suppose you have all this string.*

---

*BIG BALL OF  
STRING*

(Display the **big ball of string**.)

*And suppose that I did those things to the last twelve inches of your string.*

(Display **12 inches of the ball of string**.)

❓ *Would it bother you as much that 12 inches were ruined? Why? What would you do? [cut off the end of the string]*

- The 12-inch piece of string is like life on earth, and the ball of string is like a PART of eternity.
- It doesn't matter what happens to the 12 inches of string when you have balls and balls of string.
- Ridicule and beatings, chains and prison, and torture and persecution in this life don't mean anything when you have all of eternity to hold onto.
- The reason that the people in Hebrews 11 could persevere in faith is that they knew that this life is nothing. They knew they had a better life in heaven.
- This life is just temporary; heaven is forever. The people in Hebrews knew that, if they would just hang onto their faith for a little while on earth, they would gain heaven forever.

## Heaven is the Real and Eternal Home of Christians

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*BIBLES*

(Ask the students to open their **Bibles** to Revelation 21:1-7, 22-27; 22:3-5.)

*This is a little picture of what we have to look forward to in heaven.*

(You may want to have three different small group leaders read these verses, or have the students read the verses in their small groups.)

**Revelation 21:1-7**—Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup>And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. <sup>7</sup>The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

**Revelation 21:22-27**—And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup>And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup>By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup>and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup>They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup>But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**Revelation 22:3-5**—No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

*This was the place that the Hebrews 11 people were longing for. This world had nothing for them. Their eyes were fixed on heaven. They couldn't wait to get there. Heaven was their real home.*

*And if you are a child of God, heaven is your real home. You are just passing through earth on your way to heaven. The way you hang onto your faith is to fix your eyes on heaven. Look at what is in store for you as a child of God—no tears, or death or pain, no darkness, nothing impure or shameful or deceitful—only the glory of God—and you will reign with Him forever. Why would you ever give up in the fight of faith and lose heaven?*

## Illustration.....



(Display the **Alien** visual.)

*Does this guy look a little strange? What is strange about him? Why do you think he looks strange to us?*

- This is the way we should look to the world. We are not supposed to “fit in.” We are not supposed to talk like non-Christians, or think like them. We are not of this world. We are “strangers and exiles” here.
- We will talk about God and heaven. We will think that things are wrong that they don’t think are wrong. They will be interested in things that don’t interest us. Our faith will be important to us, and faith will not at all be important to them.
- It is okay that we are not like the world—we are supposed to be different. We are aliens and strangers here. This is not our home.
- This means if someone makes fun of us for believing in Jesus, it does not matter—they cannot understand because they are from a different world than we are.
- Any ridicule or persecution we receive here is very temporary. But if we fight the fight of faith and hang onto our faith, we will live in heaven forever.

## To Persevere in Faith, Press on Toward Heaven

### Illustration.....

(Call three students to the front of the room and tell them that they are going to run a race. Indicate the starting and finish lines. Then start the race. When the race is over, ask them the following questions.)

*Where were you looking when you were running the race? Why? Were you looking at the starting line? Why not? The way to win a race is to fix your eyes on the goal. Would you win the race if you quit partway through the race?*

*The fight of faith is like a running a race. We must fix our eyes on the goal—eternal life in heaven with Jesus. We cannot give up until we get to the finish line—death. There is something we must forget about when running the race of faith.*

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse to find out what must be forgotten.)

***Philippians 3:13b-14—But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

❓ *What do you think is meant by “what lies behind”? [Christians are to forget the things of this world and press on toward the things of the next world—heaven.]*

*We are to forget this life and press on toward life eternal. This is the way to win in the fight of faith.*

(End with a prayer time for the students, asking God to give faith to those who do not have faith, and to help those of faith to persevere to the end.)

## Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- Discuss the following verse:

***2 Timothy 2:4—No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.***

*Can people tell that you are a stranger and exile here, or are you trying to “fit in” in this world? Does it make you uncomfortable to be different? Why—what fears and desires hold you back? Are you willing for God to change your heart and give you courage to live wholeheartedly for Him?*

*How can you live like a stranger and exile?*

- Read and discuss the following verse:

***John 15:19—If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.***

*Are you looking forward to heaven? What are you looking forward to in heaven? How do you imagine heaven? How can you fix your eyes on heaven?*

- *If you were ever persecuted for your faith, what would help you to hang onto your faith? Are there any verses that would help sustain you?*

Remind the students of the following verse:

***2 Timothy 4:7—I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.***

- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

*If I discover within myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy... the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world*

—C.S. Lewis

## Optional Activities

### 1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 28.

### 2. Heaven Pictures

Students can draw a picture of what they imagine heaven to be like. Be sure to provide plenty of glitter and shiny paper. Label the picture, **THEY WERE LONGING FOR A BETTER COUNTRY, GOD HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR US**, or some other appropriate phrase.

### 3. Perseverance Postcards

Have the students write postcards with verses or messages on them to encourage people toward faith or to encourage them to persevere in faith. Encourage the students to send their postcards to someone during the week.

### 4. Eyes on the Goal Relay

Divide the class into two teams and line the teams up as in a relay race. Place a wastebasket in front of each team at an appropriate distance. Give each team three pairs of socks or three wads of paper (or appropriate substitute) and tell them that the goal is to get as many socks/wads in the basket as they can. Each player can throw three times. The team receives a point for each basket scored. The first time through, have the students close their eyes when they throw. The second time, the students are to fix their eyes on the target. Compare scores. Talk about the importance of fixing our eyes on our goal.

### 5. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

### 6. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 28 (for each student)
- Optional: Year-end gift of *God's Battle* by Sally Michael (for each student)



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APPENDIX I

# Classroom Schedule

The lesson time and the application time are the two pillars of any study. They should be the focus of the program when it comes to scheduling.

- We recommend dedicating **30 minutes** to the lesson presentation.
- After the lesson has been taught, allow **20 minutes** for small group leaders to work through the small group application discussion within their small groups. They should also conclude this discussion time with prayer.
- Finally, you should allow **10 minutes** for the students to complete the Student Notebook for each lesson.

Thus, between the lesson and the small group application time there is material provided to fill, at minimum, **60 minutes** of class time.

In light of differing amounts of time that individual programs have available, we recommend the following schedule.

**Transition Time**—This is the time when students arrive at the classroom. There are a number of ways this time can be used. Typically, they meet with their small group for fellowship and/or follow-up on the previous week's lesson concepts, application, Bible memory, and prayer requests.

Students could also use this time for class projects, such as writing letters of encouragement to church leadership, missionaries, or church members facing difficult times.

You could also have transition time after the small group application discussion when students are waiting to leave. At this time, it would be

appropriate to do Bible memory verse review or to complete any of the additional activities listed at the end of the lesson.

Note: Avoid using transition time to play silly games, as they do not help prepare the students for a serious study of the Word.

**Worship Time**—If time allows, you could include worship through song and prayer in your classroom schedule. You could purposefully structure the worship to reinforce the lesson themes being taught.

**Lesson Time**—After worship has concluded, attention should be directed to the lesson. During this time, the teacher should present the material provided, carefully following the lesson and limiting personal or student tangents. Teachers should watch the clock carefully to leave ample time for small group application.

**Application Time**—After the lesson presentation, students should focus on their small groups. Small group leaders should answer and clarify student questions about the lesson content, but should seek to spend the majority of the time on the application questions and topics (using the Small Group Application material at the end of the lesson). Spend the last 5-10 minutes of this time sharing prayer requests and praying together as a group.

## APPENDIX II

# Building Your Classroom Team: Teachers and Small Group Leaders

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## Teaching and Small Group Leading

The primary responsibility of a teacher is to rightly handle and communicate the Word. This includes presenting biblical truth in a knowledgeable manner from a sincere, grace-dependent heart. Therefore, teaching a lesson requires not only a serious time commitment to master the lesson content and presentation but, more importantly, spiritual preparation that strives to understand, submit to, and embrace God's redeeming work in a teacher's own heart and life.

In order for students to receive the greatest benefit from the lesson material, a teacher should seek to clearly communicate the biblical content in a manner that is interesting, age-appropriate, compelling, and comprehensible. The teacher should be able to clearly explain the concepts being taught and involve the students by helping them focus their attention, interact with the material, and consider a right response to the biblical truths presented. Teaching should aim beyond merely providing information. Instead, teaching should aim to actively engage the students' minds and hearts: challenging them to ponder, analyze, summarize, question, draw conclusions, and make personal application. This type of teaching is more likely to capture their interest and encourage genuine faith and spiritual growth.

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## For Teachers

### Before You Teach

Ideally, lesson preparation should begin several days to a week before you are scheduled to teach. When preparing to teach, you should study the lesson material thoroughly, reading each Scripture and practicing each illustration. Understand each illustration and how it is meant to demonstrate

and explain key biblical concepts. Change an illustration only if necessary, making sure that the new illustration makes the same point as the one it replaces. Organize the visuals in the order in which they are to be used so the lesson can flow smoothly. Secure any necessary props for illustrations.

Don't interject unrelated themes into the lesson. Bible stories often have multiple layers of truths and applications. As important and interesting as each of these may be, keep your focus on the main themes that flow through each lesson, and also the curriculum as a whole.

The most important preparation, however, is spiritual preparation. It is difficult for teachers who are acquainted merely with the information in a lesson to inspire life-changing transformation in the students. Although heart change is the work of the Holy Spirit, students will be more likely to respond to the Gospel when they see and hear genuine faith being expressed as you present the lesson. To that end, it is of supreme importance to pray for God to make the lesson real in your own life, to touch your heart with His character, and then enable you teach from a heart that is overflowing with love for Jesus and His redeeming work in your life.

### In the Classroom

Here are a few suggestions for making your teaching more effective:

- **Know your students.** Make it your goal to be able to call on each one by name. Take an interest in them and discern where they are spiritually. Introduce yourself to them and let them get to know you. Students are more likely to respond to people they know and trust, people who have demonstrated genuine

love for them. Meaningful and spiritual interaction is easier to foster when your students feel they know you and know that you care about them.

- **Start and end the lesson with authentic, worshipful prayer.** Set the tone for your teaching time by opening with prayer, asking for God's help, and acknowledging your dependence on Him as you all seek to learn from His Word. End the lesson by praying for His help to change your hearts and transform your lives. Heartfelt prayers can serve to encourage the students to focus their hearts and minds on biblical truth.
- **Teach from the Bible.** It is crucial that we teach students to continually look to the Bible for the truth. When presenting a Scripture text, read it directly from your Bible rather than reading it from the lesson page. Most lessons will have the students look up one or more texts in their Bibles. If needed, use the Transition Time at the beginning or end of class to help the students become more proficient in finding texts in the Bible. This will help the lesson time move along more efficiently. Be prepared to define difficult words from the text to help the students understand the meaning.
- **Use a variety of teaching methods.** Follow the different teaching styles offered in the lessons. The lessons have been written to incorporate a number of learning styles. However, depending on the themes and stories presented, not every lesson emphasizes all learning styles. For example, some lessons will present many visual elements and others less. Some will have active participation by the students and others will have them remain seated.
- **Encourage students to discover answers.** Students may be reluctant to participate if they are unsure of the answers to your questions, so promote a positive atmosphere of learning together. As the teacher, you will need to put them at ease and communicate that they are valued members of the class.

Encourage discussion and questions from the students that promote the lesson themes, and limit tangents. Be careful in crafting your questions so as to limit unrelated discussion.

- **Follow your prepared lesson and stay focused.** If a visual or illustration is presenting difficulties, simply explain how it is meant to work and move on. If necessary, defer unrelated or difficult questions. Tell the student that you will talk to him after the lesson about his particular comment or question. Watch for signs of attentiveness in the students. If necessary, stop, and redirect their focus. Handle distractions quickly and calmly.
- **Encourage personal application of truth.** When teaching the lesson, it is often helpful to give the students a brief and age-appropriate example of a personal application of a certain lesson concept. This may serve to help the students think of their own personal examples of how to apply an important truth. If you use these examples, be sure they are brief (no more than two minutes) and do not distract from the flow of the lesson.

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### Partnering in Teaching: Team Teaching

The lessons can be taught by one person, or by two people alternating different sections. An advantage of alternating between two teachers is that the responsibility of mastering and preparing the material is shared. Also, by working as a team and sitting with the students to hear part of the lesson presentation, the teachers may be more in tune with how the students are responding. This is a great way to train teachers in a mentoring relationship, or to allow two experienced teachers to share the teaching responsibility.

Another way to team teach is for two teachers to teach the material on alternating weeks, giving

each teacher two weeks of preparation time for a lesson. One benefit of this method is that it provides a built-in substitute teacher who is familiar with the curriculum and lesson format.

Team-teaching partners should be chosen very carefully as it is important to have partners who work together well. Team teachers should be able to welcome each other's comments and suggestions, have similar teaching philosophies, and have schedules that allow them to meet or discuss the lesson together during the week.

### Small Group Leaders

Here are a few suggestions for making your small group time more effective:

#### Before You Lead

Application discussion is vital after presentation of the truth because it is in this time that the students are most personally challenged to embrace the truth with their hearts and respond to it in their lives. Biblical truth is not meant to merely remain head knowledge, but is meant to transform the heart. Because application discussion seeks personal response, we believe it is best done in a small group setting—one adult leader (a spiritually mature adult) with about four to six students. As a small group leader, it is preferable that you stay with the same group throughout the course of the study and seek to build trusting relationships with your group. Encourage them in and with the Word, pray for them regularly, and send notes of encouragement to them. If at all possible, connect with their parents and give them updates about their child's classroom experience.

#### Preparing for the Classroom

A week to several days before the lesson, carefully and prayerfully read through the entire lesson. Pray for God to make the lesson real in your own life, to touch your heart with His character, and then enable you to lead your students from a heart that is overflowing with love for Jesus and His redeeming work in your life. Next, read the Application section. It will give you a number

of discussion options, each based on a main idea introduced in the lesson. The goal is not to complete all the discussion options. Rather, pray that the Holy Spirit will give you discernment to select and prepare the appropriate questions for your group. The aim of this discussion is not merely to see whether or not they remember the main ideas after the lesson, but more importantly, to help students focus on the heart issues addressed in each option. How do the truths presented in the lesson personally apply to their own lives? Note any additional questions you would like to pursue. Think through and be willing to share appropriate experiences from your own life that may be helpful. Also, look at the Student Workbook page for the lesson. Make note of any activity the students will be asked to complete, and be prepared to guide and help them.

#### In the Classroom

As you come into the classroom prepared, there are several things you can do as a small group leader to help your students learn more effectively:

- **Know your students.** Make it your goal to know not just their names, but also their personalities, and to discern where they are spiritually. If possible, introduce yourself to their parents and ask for their feedback and prayer requests for their children. Students are more likely to respond to people they know and trust, people who have demonstrated genuine love for them. Spiritual interaction is easier to foster when your students feel that they know you and know that you care about them.
- **Participate in the class.** Help your students to focus and follow the lesson by your own example. Always direct their attention to what the teachers and leaders are doing or asking them to do. Avoid distracting behavior (talking with other leaders, going in and out of the classroom, etc.), and help your students remember to love other students by not distracting them. If there is a time of worship, be authentic in your singing and prayer. Direct their attention to the lesson that is being taught. Deal with any disruptive behavior quickly and calmly.

- **Start and end the application discussion time with prayer.** Set the tone for your discussion time by opening with prayer, asking for God's help and acknowledging your dependence on Him as you all seek to learn from His Word. Leave time at the end of your discussion to share prayer requests and pray for one another. As students feel comfortable and led, give them the opportunity to pray aloud for one another.
- **Point to the Bible.** It is critical that we teach students to continually look to the Word in all things. When looking up a Bible passage, read it from your Bible rather than from the text of the lesson pages.
- **Guide the discussion.** Do not let the students wander to unrelated themes during the application discussion. If possible, schedule some fellowship time with them before the lesson or after the completion of your application time. In doing this, you can remind students that now is our "Bible time," and you will be happy to talk to them about other things once you are finished. Learn to be a patient listener, and pray for wisdom to be able to discern each student's heart response.
- **Encourage students to discover answers.** Students may be reluctant to participate if they are unsure of the answers to your questions, so promote a positive atmosphere of learning together. Personal questions may also take more time for them to think through. Do not rush the application discussion. Make sure they have understood the truths that were taught in the lesson, and encourage them to ask you questions. Try to limit tangents in order to discuss how they can respond to the lesson.
- **Wait for answers.** Allow the students time to think and to muster the courage to answer questions, and resist the temptation to fill the silence with your answer. Give the Spirit time and space to work in their hearts. Do not avoid hard questions even if it means that you will need to think about their question further and respond in the following week.
- **Share yourself with them.** Perhaps one of the most powerful tools for teaching is your own life. As you work through this study, pray that God will use these Gospel truths to convict, encourage, and transform your own mind and heart. As appropriate, share what God is doing in your life through Jesus' redeeming work and share parts of your testimony with them.

### Creating a Helpful Environment for Discussion

It is important to have a strategy in place to cultivate spiritual discussion. You will want to minimize opportunity for distraction and maximize opportunity for the students to interact with you.

- **Create a helpful seating arrangement.** Seat yourself in the middle of the table, where you will be best able to interact with all your students.
- **Prepare for workbook interaction.** Look carefully at the application questions that incorporate the completion of the workbook page. Have all the necessary materials and supplies at your table. Know what the students will be asked to do, and have a plan regarding when you want them to complete activities.
- **Know your students' learning styles, and when possible, include interaction tailored to their needs.** If you have visual learners, you may want to bring in pictures that will help application discussion.

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### Worship Leaders

If your program allows for class time beyond what is needed for the lesson and the application discussion, you may consider using some of the extra time for class worship in song and prayer. However, please prioritize the lesson and application time. These require approximately 50 minutes to complete as written.

The goal of worship time is to lead others to recognize and rightly respond to the greatness and worth of God, out of which expressions of song, praise, and prayer flow naturally. This time should be led by a mature adult who is able lead students to make much of God through song.

### Preparing for Worship

Each week, the worship leader should prayerfully read the lesson. As you read, ask the Spirit to give you wisdom and discernment to know how to lead the students in a worship session that will prepare their hearts for the truth of the lesson. Purposefully develop a flow of worship that will encourage students to truly see and embrace the wonderful majesty of God—His matchless character and amazing deeds. Consider the following suggestions as you prepare:



- **Develop a repertoire.** Develop a core repertoire of meaningful hymns and songs. Whenever possible, include God-focused songs that are a regular part of corporate worship so students can become active participants in the wider church body.
- **Focus on God.** Select worship songs and hymns that accurately reflect God's character in both word and tone. Songs should provide students with both deep theological truths and channels to express their worship of our great God. Music should foster true praise and reverence, not silliness.
- **Introduce Scripture and prayer.** Worship time is meant to be more than just singing songs. It is meant to be a time to embrace and exalt our glorious God. In order to remind the students of this, consider adding in a short Scripture reading and prayer (either leader-led or through corporate participation). You could lead them in expressions of praise such as, "Thank you, Jesus for..." or, "We praise You for..." As you introduce these elements into your worship time, make sure you explain to the students why you are doing it.
- **Have a plan.** Have an intentional flow to your worship time. You may want to begin with more rousing songs and praises, and move to more quiet and reflective songs and prayers as the worship time draws to an end. Or you may want to start with reflective songs, and build toward energetic worship.
- **Be ready to explain.** As you select songs and Scripture texts, be mindful of any words or concepts that may need to be explained or defined. Think through how you can explain these things in a concise, clear manner, and offer the explanations when appropriate. Take time to explain what the words you are singing mean. Introduce new songs and hymns by increments. For example, spend two to three weeks focused on learning the first verse of a hymn. Introduce the second verse at week 3 or 4.
- **Check time.** As you prepare, be mindful of the time, and stay within the perimeter allotted for worship to avoid cutting into the lesson or application time.

### Leading Worship

- **Come to class early.** Arrive at your classroom early, with time to set up as needed. Take a few minutes to pray and to quiet your heart as you prepare to lead students in worship.
- **Begin and end with prayer.** As you begin to lead in worship, set the tone by praying. This helps to quiet the students and remind them of the purpose of this time. It also helps to set the tone for the lesson to begin.
- **Be aware of your students.** As you lead, be mindful of what kind of response is coming from your students. If there is confusion, stop and clarify. If there is a wrong overall attitude, you may want to stop and pray with them about it. Encourage them to approach worship with a right attitude.
- **Be aware of unbelief.** It is very likely that not all of the students you are leading in worship have come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Understanding this is important as you observe their attitudes and participation during the worship time. Continually encourage both believers and unbelievers to look to Christ. Pray that, through observing genuine worship, unbelieving students will be attracted to the greatness and worth of Jesus.

### Fostering a Community of Worship

- **Encourage teachers and small group leaders to model worship.** Encourage the other leaders in your classroom to intentionally and genuinely participate during worship time. Ask them to set an example for their students of authentic worship.
- **Encourage students to actively participate.** To help draw the students into worship, you may want to find ways to actively involve them in worship.

APPENDIX III

# Using Truth78 at Home

Parents have the incredible privilege and responsibility of instructing their children's minds, engaging their hearts, and nurturing their faith. Using Truth78 materials at home can be an effective tool in teaching and applying the most important truths that our children and youth need to know and embrace—the truths communicated in the Bible.

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:14-15 ESV).*

Although our materials are specifically designed for use in the church, we believe there are many advantages of presenting this material in your home:

- Children and youth have more time to listen, absorb, and interact with what they've been taught.
- Parents are best suited to make the most meaningful application of these biblical truths when as a family they “walk by the way” (Deuteronomy 6:7).
- The whole family can learn together, providing opportunities to encourage and minister to one another.
- Fathers and mothers can work together in their God-given roles as they train up their children and youth in the instruction of the Lord.

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## Curriculum Features

- The curriculum is Bible-saturated—every lesson is designed so that your children

and youth come to know the Bible and the God of the Bible.

- Lessons include many concrete illustrations that help children and youth understand deep biblical truths.
- Children and youth are directed to look up Bible passages and answer questions from the Bible, which develops Bible study skills and critical thinking.
- The lessons are teacher-friendly and incorporate an interactive teaching approach.
- The question/answer format is very easy to navigate and to adapt to various ages.
- Student Workbooks complement the teaching by giving hands-on opportunities that reinforce the main ideas from the lesson.
- Visual teaching aides are provided in PDF format that can be printed or displayed on a computer.
- The Teacher Guides and Student Workbooks are available in print or PDF formats.

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## Adapting Illustrations and Demonstrations

Though designed for classroom use, the Truth78 material is easily adaptable to a homeschool setting. Some minor adjustments can be accomplished with very little effort. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Look ahead** at the lesson to see where you can use real-life situations for the illustrations given.



- **Use suggested objects or talk through** an illustration—making the same points without using the objects.
- **If desired, omit an illustration.** Some illustrations are especially suited for the classroom in order to keep the attention of a group of students. These can be omitted in the home.
- **Make space adjustments.** For example, if a visual is designed to be printed on a large card in a classroom and you don't have space for this, you can simply put the cards in a notebook.
- **Make number adjustments.** If an illustration calls for nine students to each take a visual, simply divide up the visuals among the number of children you have.

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### Adaptation for Multi-Age Groups

Most of the curriculum titles can be used with multi-age groups. However, you will have to take into account differing vocabulary levels and adjust when needed. Cater to the different age groups you are teaching by assigning tasks appropriate to their age. For example, ask older children to read the Bible texts; younger children can take part in demonstrations. If the workbook is too difficult for the younger children, adapt the assignment by asking them to draw a picture of something in the lesson, allowing them to decorate a visual, or adapt the workbook page to fit their age. Older children can help younger children and can present parts of the lesson; younger children can perform role plays.

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### Scheduling Recommendations

A significant advantage of using the material in a homeschool setting is that it can be presented in smaller increments for maximum comprehension and spiritual impact. Therefore, we suggest presenting the material over the course of several days. Below are a few plans to consider:

#### Two-Day Option

Day 1: Present the lesson and assign the memory verse.

Day 2: Review the lesson, discuss the Application questions, and complete the notebook.

#### Three-Day Option

Day 1: Present the lesson and assign the memory verse.

Day 2: Review the lesson, discuss the Application questions, and complete the notebook.

Day 3: Choose an additional activity from the Lesson, Parent Page or Appendix section.

#### Five-Day Option

Day 1: Present the lesson and assign the memory verse.

Day 2: Review the lesson and discuss the Application questions.

Day 3: Complete the notebook.

Day 4: Choose an additional activity from the Lesson, Parent Page or Appendix section.

Day 5: Create a simple test or quiz, have a sharing and prayer time, or think of a way to apply the lesson by ministering to someone else.

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### Different Ways Dad Can Be Involved

- Dad could be the Bible teacher for your homeschool.
- Dad and Mom could share the Bible teaching responsibility.
- Dad could teach a portion of the lesson before leaving for work, or follow up with review at suppertime.
- Dad could be responsible for any portion of the curriculum (lesson, application, workbook/notebook, or Parent Page).
- Dad could be responsible for the memory verse teaching and review.
- Dad can make practical application of the lesson in real life.

APPENDIX IV

# Using Truth78 in a Christian School

As stated in the “Intended Use” section in the Introduction, this curriculum was designed and written for a church setting. However, the material is adaptable to a Christian school setting. In fact, Christian schools are in a unique position to use a study of this kind, since teachers are with their students more often. Here are some suggestions for using this curriculum in a daily school structure:

**Monday**—Do the lesson presentation only. If you have students of varying ages, give the older ones responsibilities such as reading key Bible passages or roles to act out in the story. Younger children could help gather and decorate visuals and props.

**Tuesday**—Discuss the application questions. Introduce the memory verse.

**Wednesday**—Give the students their workbooks. While they are completing the workbook page activity, follow up on the previous day’s application questions. Review the memory verse. If you have older children who will not be doing the workbook, give them a journal to write in and assign them to write about a topic related to the lesson or how they plan to implement heart changes in their lives. They could also include prayer requests with thoughts God reveals to them throughout the course of the study.

**Thursday**—Have a sharing and prayer time. Ask the students, “What has God shown you in this lesson? What new things did you learn about God? About yourself? Are there heart attitudes that you need to pray about? Do you have something that you would like to praise God for?”

**Friday**—Choose an additional activity to do or choose one of the Bible activities (found in the Appendix) to do. Have a memory verse quiz and include previous memory verses also. Choose to minister to a friend, family member, or unsaved neighbor in a special way.

In a school setting, tests on the content would also be appropriate.

## APPENDIX V

# Guide for Substitute Teachers and Small Group Leaders

*Fight the Good Fight* is a Midweek Bible study for children on persevering in faith. The curriculum communicates that everyone is in a battle—either as an unbeliever fighting against God or as a believer fighting the fight of faith with God’s help.

The lessons present these two battles and explain God’s work of grace both in justification and in the perseverance of faith. The study also introduces common battlegrounds of the heart, provides practical suggestions on how to fight these battles, and gives helpful strategies to guard one’s faith. The study ends by presenting the vision of an eternal life in heaven that makes our perseverance worthwhile.

Students are encouraged to memorize selected Fighter Verses in conjunction with this study.

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## Notes for Teachers

The teacher is responsible for presenting the designated lesson portion of the material.

- Carefully review the entire lesson. Prayerfully focus on the main themes and Scripture.
- If possible, review the lesson that was taught the previous week. Usually, there is an intentional flow in which the current lesson builds on the previous one.
- Gather all the materials listed in the visuals section on the first page of the lesson, and print or plan to electronically display those provided in the Curriculum Resources (on the DVD or among the electronic downloads). Note: Visuals that can be displayed electronically are identified by **bold** font. See more on e-visuals under Component Overview in the Introduction section.

- Ideally, the lesson should be presented within a 25- to 35-minute time frame.

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

» **Visual Thumbnails**—Visual thumbnails and short text descriptions in the left margin give teachers a quick reference to what should be displayed at certain points during the lesson.

» **Font Style**

- Sentences in *italics* recommend a specific wording of the concept or illustration being taught. This is used to make certain theological points very clear, to convey a specific tone, or to touch the heart in a special way.

- Lesson material not in italics should be conveyed in your own words.

- Scripture portions are in ***bold italics***.

» **Scripture**—While the portions are usually included in the lesson, you are strongly encouraged to read from your Bible while teaching the lesson to emphasize the authority of the Bible.

» **Parenthetical Teacher Instructions**—Each lesson contains teaching instructions and other helpful information in parentheses for the teacher. Read these carefully when preparing to teach the lesson. In addition to reading these instructions, it is important to think through the lesson yourself and decide how you can most effectively teach the concepts presented.

- » For more in-depth help on how to teach a lesson, please refer to the Introduction section of the Teacher's Guide.

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### Notes for Small Group Leaders

The small group leader is responsible for the application discussion that follows the lesson.

- In preparation, carefully review the entire lesson, focusing on the main themes and Scripture that will be presented.
- After reading the lesson, prayerfully consider the suggested application discussion questions. You are not expected to cover every possible application point with the students; these are suggestions about how you might direct a conversation. Realistically, you may only have time to cover one or two of these in a 10–15 minute session.
- Keep in mind that the goal of this time should be aimed at encouraging a right heart response to what has been taught, not providing additional teaching.
- If Student Notebooks are provided for your classroom, be prepared with any additional instructions or supplies that may be required.
- For more in-depth help on how to lead a small group application discussion, please refer to the Introduction section of the Teacher's Guide.

### Additional Classroom Information Specific to My Church

*(Provided by class team leader, regular teacher, or small group leader.)*

## APPENDIX VI

# Curriculum Resources

Curriculum Resources are packaged with the Classroom Kit on a CD or as electronic downloads. To use this study successfully, every classroom needs the following printable PDFs:

- Visuals Packet
- Parent Pages
- Optional Activity Pages
- Student Notebook (for leader reference only)
- Fighter Verses Bookmark (to print and distribute to your students to encourage Scripture memory)
- Commitment Cards for Lesson 19 (for Scripture memory)
- How to Use These Resources
- Additional Materials You Will Need
- Lessons for Substitute Teachers
- Substitute Teacher Guide
- Scope and Sequence
- Script and Visuals for the Fight the Good Fight Skit

To use the PDFs, you will need Adobe Reader® (a free download from [adobe.com](http://adobe.com)). The How to Use document provides further information on the various files.

The curriculum logo is also included for churches to use in promotional materials.

## Important Notes on Visuals

- All visuals should be saved for potential use throughout the study.
- See Additional Materials You Will Need in the Appendix for a list of visuals the teacher must provide.
- For large classrooms, there are visuals that can be displayed electronically, and we suggest printing the visuals that must be cut out and/or assembled on legal- or tabloid-size paper.

## Parent Pages

A curriculum overview letter and Parent Pages for each lesson are included as PDF Curriculum Resources to print and/or email. The following two pages contain nearly full-sized samples of the front and back of the Lesson 1 Parent Page for your reference. Please see the Curriculum Resources CD or your electronic downloads for full-sized Parent Pages for all 28 lessons, plus many other helpful resources included with your Classroom Kit.

Full-sized Parent Page for all 28 lessons are available as part of the Classroom Kit.

Each lesson's Parent Page includes the Main Idea, Key Verse/s, Scripture references, and a reminder about Scripture memory.

For student-parent interaction, there are passages to look up and consider together, questions to discuss, and suggestions for prayer.

The Journal section encourages the student to think more deeply and to interact with truth rather than to just read it.

Please send the Parent Pages home for parents to use every week and encourage them to interact with their children on the truths being taught. Encourage both parents and students to pursue these at-home interaction opportunities.

## T:78 FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

A STUDY FOR CHILDREN ON PERSEVERING IN THE FAITH

LESSON 1

# The Heart Condition

### MAIN IDEAS

- **The heart involves a person's whole being.**
- **Man's heart is evil.**
- **Every person is born with a sin nature.**

### KEY VERSE

*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*—Genesis 6:5

### SCRIPTURE

- 1) Genesis 6:5
- 2) Psalm 51:5
- 3) Jeremiah 17:9
- 4) Romans 5:12, 19
- 5) Ephesians 2:3



### MEMORIZE

Work on your Bible memory passage/s for the week. If you haven't decided what to memorize, we suggest memorizing the Key Verse for this lesson or a Fighter Verse. See [www.FighterVerses.com](http://www.FighterVerses.com) for more on Fighter Verses. Whatever you choose to memorize, you could use the Fighter Verse Record Sheets to track your progress.

### LOOK AND SEE

- Look up Psalm 51:5. When did our hearts become sinful?
- Look up Romans 5:12. How did sin enter the world?
- Look up Jeremiah 17:9. How bad is our heart condition?
- Look up Ephesians 2:3. What are the effects of our heart condition?

### JOURNAL

Write this week's key verse at the top of your journal page.

Write Genesis 6:5 in your journal. Let the Bible verses from the Look and See section help you identify the words in Genesis 6:5 that tell us how bad our heart condition is. Circle those words.

Now write about your heart condition. Some questions to consider:

- How does sin affect your ability to love God?
- Your desire to do good?
- Your thoughts?
- Specifically, how do you see sin in your life? (Do you struggle to be unselfish? To tell the truth all the time? Or??)

Make a list of personal battlefields—areas where you battle sin in your own life.

A word of hope: By thinking and writing about your struggles with sin, you are beginning to identify battlegrounds in your own life. In future lessons, you will discover and begin to practice biblical strategies to help you fight these battles.

### TALK ABOUT

- Why is it so hard to look at and name the ways sin affects our life? (Is Satan happy to be found out?)

**FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT****LESSON 1**

- What does that mean for our fight of faith? (Would Satan care if it were not very important? Does he want us to fight the fight of faith?)

**PRAY**

Ask God to help you to see and to understand your own heart condition. Confess to Him the sins that He brought to your mind while you were writing. Thank God for providing a way to fight sin. Trust Him to show you how.

**FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT BUTTONS**

Take time to work on the requirements for your buttons.

APPENDIX VII

# Additional Materials You Will Need

*The following resources are not provided as Curriculum Resources (on a CD or as electronic downloads). Most are common household items, but a few might require planning and preparation. We recommend you review this list before starting this curriculum to make sure you have everything you will need.*

## FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible (English Standard Version is recommended)
- Whiteboard and markers (Note: These may not be specifically required for every lesson, but we recommend that you have them on hand in case you find it helpful to write out some of the concepts as you're teaching.)
- Tape or mounting putty (you'll need a large quantity of tape or mounting putty)
- Pencil and/or pen (for each student)
- Student Notebook (for each student)
- Fight the Good Fight Buttons and Supplies to work on bottom requirements (for each student)

## FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT SKIT VISUALS

- Various kitchen utensils (e.g., cookie sheet; colander—if possible, one that is a bit battered and bent; large pot lid; cake spatula; 2 bread pans)
- Very large purse with purse items inside (e.g., brush, gum, makeup, pad of paper, wallet, mirror)
- Masking tape
- Transformer (or use provided Transformer visual)
- Bible
- Shoes
- Rope

- Fighter Verse™ Pack
- Big hammer
- Large frame glasses
- Duffel bag

## LESSON 1

- Optional: Materials for student nametags
- 2 newspaper pages
- Ice skates (or an appropriate substitute)
- A rusty object (or any object in bad condition)
- For Optional Activity 2—Mobile device/s with the Fighter Verses App downloaded and installed
- For Optional Activity 4—Option 1 (for each small group): A number of newspaper pages with appropriate headlines (see Optional Activity section for details), scissors, and tape/glue
- For Optional Activity 5—Missionary guest to share about his work of warning people about their heart condition

## LESSON 2

- Blindfold
- Half an orange and sliced strawberries (or any two objects with easily identifiable smells, such as a rose, vinegar, garlic, bacon, rubbing alcohol, chocolate)
- Baking soda
- Small container
- Vinegar
- Tray
- Large rubber band
- For Optional Activity 2 (for each small group)—Baking soda, small container, vinegar, tray



- For Optional Activity 3—Supplies will depend on what you choose to do. (See Optional Activity section for details.)

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#### LESSON 3

- String
- Fly swatter
- Newspaper
- For Optional Activity 2 and 3—Construction paper, scissors, markers, glue
- For Optional Activity 4—Fly swatters (number will depend on size of your class)
- Optional: Posterboard (if you can't leave the Salvation Diagram up on your wall over the next five lessons)

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#### LESSON 4

- Block of wood and a metal car (or other objects appropriate for the illustration)
- 4 or more tools (e.g., screwdriver, hammer, pencil, scissors)
- Masking tape
- Optional: Play money (for Ananias and Sapphira story)
- Three pieces of paper
- Scissors
- Clear tape
- Optional: Supplies for baking soda and vinegar illustration (if you want to repeat it from Lesson 3)
- For Optional Activity 2—Magazines with pictures of people, scissors, glue, posterboard, marker
- For Optional Activity 3—Guest to give a testimony of how God gave him a new heart
- For Optional Activity 4 (for each team of five students)—Chalk, 10 regular-sized marbles, 1-5 large “shooter” marbles

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#### LESSON 5

- Container of milk
- Chocolate syrup
- Glass
- Spoon

- \$1 bill
- Magnifying glass
- For Optional Activity 2 (for each student)—Scissors, markers, and (if they will create a booklet) stapler and staples or another method of binding the booklet
- For Optional Activity 4—Guest to give his testimony or be interviewed by the class
- For Optional Activity 5—Equipment to show the Ee-Taow video from the internet (see Optional Activity section for details)

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#### LESSON 6

- Paperclips or tape
- Marriage license
- Sticky note
- Empty wallet
- For Optional Activities 2 and 3 (for each student)—Markers, sticker (to seal the document)

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#### LESSON 7

- A piece of sports equipment (e.g., baseball hat, basketball)
- A musical instrument or music book
- Optional: Chaise lounge
- Crown (and anything else that would signify kingship, such as a robe or scepter)
- For Optional Activity 4 (for each small group)—Mobile device/s with the Fighter Verses App downloaded and installed
- For Optional Activity 5—36” of rope (for each student) and tape or chalk (to mark the start and finish lines)

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#### LESSON 8

- Paperclip or envelope (for each student, see Preparation section)
- Two paddleballs (or any equipment for a contest, see Preparation section)
- A large and a small treat (e.g., cookie, candy bar, piece of cake, packs of gum)
- For Optional Activity 4—Ball and tape (or something else to mark various spots in the room)

- For Optional Activity 5—See the Optional Activity section for details on choosing a project.

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LESSON 9

- Mouse trap
- Bait for trap
- Aluminum foil
- Stapler with staples
- Box with fist-sized hole
- Red posterboard or paper
- Wrapped present (see Preparation)
- For Optional Activity 2—Materials to create a bulletin board or mural
- For Optional Activity 3 (for each student)—Cardstock
- For Optional Activity 4 (for each student)—Paper

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LESSON 10

- 2 balloons
- For Optional Activity 2—Stapler with staples
- For Optional Activity 3—Materials to create posters
- For Optional Activity 4—2 balloons, tape or chalk (to mark the start and finish lines)

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LESSON 11

- Optional: 2 pieces of paper
- Optional: Large metal pan
- Optional: Book of matches
- Optional: If you choose to share a personal testimony of a time when you battled rebellion in your heart, you will want to give it some thought as you prepare to teach this lesson.
- For Optional Activity 3—Optional: Recording equipment
- For Optional Activity 5 (for each team)—Numbered list of instructions (see Optional Activity section for details)

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LESSON 12

- Bottle of colored water (see Preparation)
- Empty glass
- Clear plastic sheet (e.g., sheet protector, see Preparation)
- For Optional Activity 2—Materials to create a poster
- For Optional Activity 3—Prepare to share a testimony.
- For Optional Activity 5 (all supplies listed are optional)—Props and costumes, and recording equipment

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LESSON 13

- 12 chairs
- Piece of paper
- For Optional Activity 2—Materials to make a class poster
- For Optional Activity 3—Optional: Church seal
- For Optional Activity 5—Large posterboard, markers or paint, fuzzy fabric, Velcro®, ping pong ball

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LESSON 14

- Scrabble® or Dominoes® pieces, or other objects
- Table or another surface
- Books or other obstacles
- Memory verse rewards
- For Optional Activity 2—Materials for a class mural
- For Optional Activity 3—Materials and prizes for chosen races
- For Optional Activity 4—Materials for an obstacle course
- For Optional Activity 5 (for each student)—Index card, markers
- For Optional Activity 7—Equipment (e.g., a recording device) for the class to be reporters

## LESSON 15

- 2 pan lids (same size)
- 12 pairs of socks
- For Optional Activity 3—A cardboard “brick” template
- For Optional Activity 4—Markers

## LESSON 16

- Prepared volunteer (see Preparation section)
- Table
- Wrapped pieces of candy
- Optional: Cardstock (see Preparation)
- For Optional Activity 3—*The Wizard of Oz* movie and equipment to show a clip of the movie
- For Optional Activity 4—Large beach ball
- For Optional Activity 6—Materials to make a class poster

## LESSON 17

- Large man or tall teenage boy (see Preparation section)
- Volleyball or basketball
- For Optional Activity 2—Material for mock interviews or news reports
- For Optional Activity 3—Materials for class poster
- For Optional Activity 4—Ball (for each relay team), and whistle, tape or chalk (to mark the start and finish lines)

## LESSON 18

- Masking tape
- Stack of books
- For Optional Activity 2—Materials to create a class poster
- For Optional Activity 3—Police officer or another professional guest to talk to the class
- For Optional Activity 4—Equipment to show a short movie clip (see Optional Activity section)

- For Optional Activity 5—Chalk or tape, object to guard or steal

## LESSON 19

- Role-play volunteer
- Squirt bottle full of water
- Backpack with a raincoat and many other objects inside (see Preparation)
- Fighter Verses™ Pack (or your choice of Scripture memory plan)
- Musician and instrument (see Preparation)
- For Optional Activity 2 (for each small group)—Fighter Verses Pack, and Fighter Verses App on a mobile device
- For Optional Activity 3—Timer, and then plan pattern/s for the class to learn, as explained in the Optional Activities section.

## LESSON 20

- Role-play volunteer (see Preparation)
- Piece of candy
- Table or other flat surface at the front of the room
- For Optional Activity 2 (for each student)—Cardstock cut into Bible bookmark size, markers
- For Optional Activity 4 (for each student)—Paper or posterboard and markers
- For Optional Activity 5—Any equipment needed for your chosen relay races, phone or watch with a stopwatch feature

## LESSON 21

- 2 jars of rice, 1 jar of dried beans, and 3 dried beans (or appropriate substitutions)
- Container of flour and a dark porous object (e.g., chocolate cookie, piece of rye bread, navy blue sock)
- Optional: Buttons
- For Optional Activity 2—Materials of your choice to evaluate (see Optional Activities section)
- For Optional Activity 3—Materials to play a game (see Optional Activities section)

- For Optional Activity 4 (for each student)—Cardstock cut to postcard size, markers
- For Optional Activity 5—Materials for class poster, possibly including objects to print with or to make a repeated pattern (see Optional Activities section)

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#### LESSON 22

- Laptop computer (see Preparation)
- Two different bags of chips (or any two different items, see Preparation)
- Table
- For Optional Activity 3—Materials for a class poster
- For Optional Activity 4—List of multiple-choice trivia questions (You could use a Bible trivia book for help with this.)
- For Optional Activity 5—Come up with details of imaginary objects (see Optional Activity).

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#### LESSON 23

- Gardening supplies (e.g., shovel, gloves, seeds, seed catalogs)
- Paper bags
- Three items (one superior to the other two, see Lesson for how they will be compared)
- One tiny garden seed
- For Optional Activity 2 (for the class or for each student)—Supplies to plant seeds (see Optional Activity section)
- For Optional Activity 3—Visit to a well-kept or neglected garden
- For Optional Activity 4 (for each student)—Wooden ruler, markers
- For Optional Activity 5—*Tales of the Kingdom* by David and Karen Mains
- For Optional Activity 6—Tools to weed the church garden
- For Optional Activity 7—Materials for class poster or bulletin board

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#### LESSON 24

- Glass of white vinegar and water
- Plant

- Table
- Red marker
- Piece of paper (see Preparation)
- For Optional Activity 2 (for each student)—Stationery
- For Optional Activity 3—Whistle
- For Optional Activity 4—Text of Psalm 51: 1-17

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#### LESSON 25

- Optional: Two real weeds (one small with small roots and one large with well-developed roots)
- Candle
- Matches
- Book
- Trash can
- Rope
- For Optional Activity 2 (for two teams)—Paper
- For Optional Activity 3—Masking tape

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#### LESSON 26

- Ribbon or medal
- Optional: Hole punch and ribbon (see Preparation)
- For Optional Activity 2 (for each student)—Paper
- For Optional Activity 3—Materials for class poster
- For Optional Activity 5—Tape or chalk to mark start and finish lines, ribbons for winners

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#### LESSON 27

- Optional: Fighter Verse™ Pack
- For Optional Activity 2 (for each student)—Paper or blank notecards
- For Optional Activity 3—Supplies for chosen service project
- For Optional Activity 4—Supplies for chosen project to encourage a missionary family

- For Optional Activity 5—List of verses you have encouraged your students to memorize during this study
- For Optional Activity 6—Any supplies needed for chosen relay race

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#### LESSON 28

- Five balloons
- Permanent marker
- A pin
- 12-inch piece of string
- Jelly
- Big ball of string
- Masking tape (see Preparation)
- For Optional Activity 2 (for each student)—Markers, glitter glue, shiny paper, scissors, glue or rubber cement
- For Optional Activity 3 (for each student)—Blank postcards, markers
- For Optional Activity 4—Two wastebaskets, three pairs of socks or three wads of paper
- Optional Year-End Gift (for each student)—*God's Battle* by Sally Michael

# Bible and Memory Verse Activities

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## Instructions for Sword Drills

Memory verses or verses used in previous lessons can be used as practice for Sword Drills. You may make up your own rules for Sword Drills, or you may use the following suggestions.

1. Start with the command, “Draw swords.” (You may want to explain that the term “sword” comes from the reference to the Word of God as a sword in Ephesians 6:17.) At the command to draw swords, students should hold up their Bibles by the binding.
2. State the reference clearly and slowly.
3. Students repeat the reference.
4. Give the command, “Charge!” Students are free to start looking for the verse as soon as the command to charge is given.
5. When a student has found the verse, he may stand up. A student should not find the chapter and then stand up while looking for the verse. A student should have his finger on the verse before standing.
6. When all the students are standing, the teacher should call on one student to read the verse. Note: This should not always be the one who was standing first. If the first student standing is always the reader, students who are not as quick tend to grow discouraged and give up on participating.

To make Sword Drills more interesting, you may want to split the class into teams, and give points to each team accordingly. If the same students consistently win the Sword Drills, you may want to vary the stipulations in order for other students to have a chance to find the verses first. For example,

you may stipulate that a reference is for girls or boys only, for anyone wearing green, etc.

It is important to remember that Sword Drills are not merely a fun activity. They are a way to help students become more familiar with the Word of God.

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## Books of the Bible Games

There are a number of games that can be played to help students learn the books of the Bible. Here are a few suggestions:

- Write the name of each of the books of the Bible on a folded sheet of paper. String a clothesline across the front of the room. Hand the students these sheets as they enter the room. Have the students try to arrange the books of the Bible in order on the clothesline. Adults should be on hand to help the students look in the table of contents in their Bibles, if necessary.
- Split the class into two teams. At the signal, someone from each team can run up to the board and write “Genesis” on the whiteboard. He must then run back to his team and hand the marker to someone who is raising his hand. That person can then write “Exodus” under Genesis. The game continues until all the books are listed. If a team gets stuck, someone may look at the table of contents, but the team receives a one-person penalty (they must wait while one person from the opposing team writes a book of the Bible on their list and hands the marker to another team member). The team that finishes first wins the game.

- For each student, make a set of slips of paper with a name of a different book of the Bible on each slip. These can easily be made by photocopying a list of the names and cutting them apart with a paper cutter. Students must then place the slips in order. When each student finishes, he can help a friend. Encourage the students to use the table of contents in their Bibles to help them until they memorize the books and their order. The slips may be kept in an envelope and used periodically.
- **Next Card Please**—This game works best if you have six or more students. Deal out all the cards, excluding category cards, to every student. Have them stand in a line a few feet away from a table. Explain that the object is to place all the cards in order on the table as quickly as possible. Use a stopwatch to determine how long it takes. Start the game by asking who has Genesis, and have that student run to the table and place the card on the far left side. Then he will go back to where he stood on the line. The student who has Exodus runs up and places his card next. Continue until the students place all of the cards on the table in the correct order. Record how long it took. Then, set a goal to have the class beat its previous time and play again.
- Collect small cereal or food boxes. Each box will become a book of the Bible. Wrap each box in solid-colored craft paper. On the “spine” of each covered box, write the name of a book of the Bible. Stand the boxes up like books in a bookcase on a shelf in the classroom, or on the floor against a wall. Use two heavy objects for bookends. Before class, mix up the order of the books and have students come and put them in order. Also, you may scatter or hide the books in the room and present the students with a corresponding index card. Have the students find the books and place them in order. Consider color-coding the boxes with the craft paper to represent different sections of the Bible: Old and New Testaments, or the Pentateuch, Prophets, Wisdom books, etc.
- Other activities for your books of the Bible boxes:
  - **Order the Stack Game**—Divide your class into teams of two or three and have the teams take turns stacking the boxes in order. Give them a certain amount of time to stack. Mix up the boxes after each team takes a turn. The team that stacks the most boxes in the correct order wins.
  - **Books of the Bible Relay Race**—Divide your class into teams. Place the mixed-up boxes and one team at one end of the room. Have the teams take turns picking up boxes, racing to the other end of the room, and placing them in order. Time how long it takes each team to complete the task. The team that completes it the fastest wins. Or you can play using the whole class as one team. Time them to see how long it takes. Have them repeat the game to see if they can beat their time.
  - **Which Book Is Missing?**—Pick five to 10 consecutive books of the Bible and display them in front of the class. Pick one student to remove one of the books (boxes) while the other students close their eyes or turn around. Have the students all turn around at the same time and see who can discover which book is missing first. The student who answers correctly first gets to take a turn and remove a book.
- Print the name of each book of the Bible on a sheet of paper (you may want to laminate them) to play one of the following games:
  - Put all of the pages on the floor and have the students put them in order.
  - Hand out the pages to individual students and have them line up in order.
  - Put the pages in order in a line on the floor (or have the students do it), and then have them walk beside the sheets reading



the names aloud as they go down the line.

- Put the pages all over the floor in order. Call out a book of the Bible and have the students find that page and go stand by it.
- Similar activities can be invented to help them to learn other biblical information (e.g., the Ten Commandments).

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### Memory Verse Games

A variety of games can be played to learn or review memory verses. Some of these can be used in small groups, using small whiteboards for each group.

- **Erase a Word**—Write the memory verse on the board. Erase the verse a word at a time, each time asking the students to say the verse.
- Write each word of the memory verse on a separate slip of paper. Students must place the slips in the correct order.
- Students line up. Each says a word or phrase of the verse, going from student to student.
- Write the first letter of each word of the memory verse on the board. Students then try to write the verse.
- **Ping Pong**—Students call out the first phrase of a verse, another student calls back the second phrase, and so forth. This can be played in pairs or in teams with the students facing each other in a line.
- Students sit around a table. Someone writes the first word or phrase of a verse (or the reference) on a sheet of paper and passes it to the next person, who writes the next word or phrase, and so on until the verse is completed. The next person starts another verse, and so forth. By timing the students to see if they can “beat” their previous time, you can liven up the activity. Timing the activity may help you determine which and how many verses to include (e.g., see how many verses they can write in 10 minutes).
- Have a “spelling bee” to review verses.
- Make a word search using all the words in the verse.
- **Hot Potato**—Have students sit on the floor in a circle. The first student says the first word of the verse and rolls a ball to anyone in the circle. The student receiving the ball says the second word of the verse and so on.
- **Line Up**—Write each word of the verse on a separate slip of paper. Tape a slip of paper onto the front of each student and have them line up in verse order. (Variations: Play this as a team game or tape the slips onto the back of each student and have them ask questions to find out which word is on their back and then line up in verse order.)
- **Picture It**—Have the students write the verse, drawing as many pictures for the words as possible.
- **Verse Relay**—Divide the students into two teams. Place a whiteboard or large sheet of paper at a distance from the starting line. Hand the first student of each team a writing implement, and on the shout of “Go” have him run to the writing surface and write the first word of the verse. Then have him return to his team and hand the writing implement to the second person. The first team that finishes writing the verse correctly wins.
- **Team Scramble**—Before class, write each word of the verse on separate index cards. Say the verse together as a group several times. Divide the class into two teams. Have a race to see which team can put the cards in order so the verse reads correctly in the shortest amount of time.



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### Additional Activity Ideas

- **Review**—Make up your own activities to review the material covered in class.
- **Timeline**—Write biblical events and people (or pictures of them) on cards. Students can place the cards in order. Each student could have a set to work on, or they could work on them as a group. When students are first learning Bible chronology, use only five to 10 cards at a time. Eventually, they will be able to place all the cards in order.
- **Maps**—Give each student a map of Israel. Identify the major water bodies, mountains and towns and have the students label them on their maps (or they can check a Bible atlas). Continue reviewing this until the student can label the maps without help. You may want to start just with the water bodies, and expand the number of items you are asking students to label. You may want to invent a variety of games (e.g., split the class into teams, write each place to be identified on a slip of paper and have students choose slips and label a large wall map).
- **Follow-Up**—Before class, small group leaders can follow up on the previous lessons by reviewing the Parent Page from the previous lesson or talking about the workbook page from the previous lesson.

APPENDIX IX

# Ministering to Children from Non-Christian Homes

by Jill Nelson

Having students in your classroom from unbelieving homes provides both opportunities and challenges. For example, your words, demeanor, and actions can serve as a beautiful demonstration of the gospel. At the same time, you may need to deal with issues that arise from students who are not being spiritually nurtured in the home, requiring a greater investment of your time and attention. Below are some suggestions for ways to maximize the potential for spiritual impact on these children:

- Understand that students from both Christian and non-Christian homes have the same basic spiritual need: They are sinners in need of a Savior. Do not assume that a student from a difficult home situation has a heart that is any more desperate than a pastor's child who has not yet come to saving faith. Both students need to hear and respond to the same biblical truths. Furthermore, ultimately, their salvation is not dependent on their parents' belief or unbelief, but on the sovereign mercy of God.
- Whenever possible, introduce yourself to the parents in person or via phone, letter, or e-mail. Try to connect with the parents on a regular basis, even if it is by simply writing a short note on the student's weekly Growing in Faith Together: Parent and Child Resource Page.
- As a leadership team, commit yourselves to weekly prayer for this student and his parents.
- Provide the student with any necessary resources that he may need, especially his own Bible. The ESV Children's Bible (Crossway Books) is very child-friendly in its design and provides helpful study tips and additional resources at the end that explain the message of the Bible.
- A younger student may be greatly helped by your providing him with a good storybook Bible to make him familiar with the main biblical themes, people, and events.
- If possible, seek out a mentor family from your church to provide the student with spiritual nurture beyond the classroom. Make sure that this is done with sensitivity and with permission from the student's own parents.
- Create a welcoming atmosphere in your classroom and small groups. Be careful not to make the student feel odd or excluded because his parents are not Christians. For example, try to avoid statements that assume parental belief such as, "Your parents read the Bible to you and pray with you and bring you to church. Your parents want you to know and follow Jesus." Rather, try to use language that takes into account that, although the above comments are God's desire for all parents, this is not necessarily the experience of every child.
- If you encounter any problems in communicating with the parents or with interacting with a student, seek counsel from your children's ministry leadership and/or a pastor or elder.

## APPENDIX X

# Sharing the Gospel with Children

by Jill Nelson

## Overview

*Our vision at Truth78 is that the next generations know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God.*

*Our mission is to nurture the faith of the next generations by equipping the church and home with resources and training that instruct the mind, engage the heart, and influence the will through proclaiming the whole counsel of God.*

As teachers, our foremost desire for our students should be that they come to know, understand, embrace, and live out the Gospel as they trust and cherish Jesus Christ. Each Truth78 curriculum is designed with this aim in mind. However, the great majority of lessons in each study do not present the *entire* gospel message. Rather, we have chosen at times to repeatedly (as the whole of Scripture does) present key gospel truths to lay a solid foundation on which the saving work of Christ is clearly seen, explained, and demonstrated. For example, we present the perfect holiness of God as seen at the giving of the Old Testament law so students might recognize the desperate plight of sinners who cannot be accepted through their imperfect attempts at law-keeping. This foundational truth points to the need for Christ, God's holy and righteous Son, and His atoning work on the cross.

*In our minds, while every lesson must present **gospel truth**, not every lesson must explicitly present the **entire gospel**.*

This philosophy—a slower, incremental and systematic approach to presenting the gospel—may frustrate some who, understandably, want children to come to saving faith as soon as

possible. But, while it is true that God can bring about true saving belief even in a toddler, it is very important to note that saving faith does require a basic level of cognitive recognition of key biblical truths. What are these key truths? In *Helping Children to Understand the Gospel*, we present these 10 essential truths for a foundational understanding of the gospel:

1. **God is the sovereign Creator of all things** (Psalm 19:1; 22:28; 24:1; Isaiah 44:24).
2. **God created people for His glory** (Psalm 29:1-2; Isaiah 43:6-7; 1 Corinthians 10:31).
3. **God is holy and righteous** (Leviticus 19:2, 37; Deuteronomy 32:4; Romans 7:12).
4. **Man is sinful** (Romans 3:10-18, 20, 23).
5. **God is just and is right to punish sin** (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 1:18; 6:23a).
6. **God is merciful. He is kind to undeserving sinners** (Psalm 145:8; Ephesians 2:8-9).
7. **Jesus is God's holy and righteous Son** (John 1:1, 14; 1 Timothy 1:15).
8. **God put the punishment of sinners on Jesus** (Isaiah 53:5; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).
9. **God offers the free gift of salvation to those who repent and believe in Jesus** (Mark 1:15; John 3:16-17; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9).
10. **Those who trust in Jesus will live to please Him and will receive the promise of eternal life—enjoying God forever in heaven** (Luke 9:23; John 11:25; 1 John 2:15; Psalm 16:11).

## Practical Implications for the Classroom

1. As you interact with your students, it is important to ask yourself, "Have the children in my classroom or small group been exposed to these key gospel truths in a manner that is biblically accurate and age-appropriate?"

Often, a child will demonstrate spiritual curiosity or even a desire to “trust in Jesus” devoid of an adequate understanding of the gospel. For example, many are drawn to the loving nature of Jesus without recognizing their own sin and need for repentance. It is good to be drawn to Jesus’ loving nature, but His love also serves to expose our sin and need for a Savior. Jesus is not merely a loving figure; He is the righteous Son of God who alone has the power to forgive our sin and rescue us from God’s just condemnation. Therefore, we need to be discerning when a student asks questions concerning salvation or expresses interest in faith in Jesus. If he seems to show a sincere and tender heart toward trusting in Jesus, it may be helpful to briefly review the essential truths of the gospel to better discern whether he understands its basic facts and implications.

Furthermore, we should be careful to use biblical language when presenting the gospel. For example, asking, “Would you like to invite Jesus into your heart?” may distort the gospel’s clear language that you must *believe in* (trust or have faith in) Jesus in order to be saved.

2. We must also recognize our role as teachers and mentors: We are to support and assist believing parents<sup>1</sup> as they assume the primary responsibility for nurturing their child’s faith.

God has given parents the primary role of biblical instruction and gospel proclamation in their child’s life (Deuteronomy 6:7; 2 Timothy 3:14-15). For Christian parents, there is no greater joy than seeing your children come to faith. As teachers, we should always seek a secondary role, especially as it relates to a child responding to the gospel in faith. This does not mean we should ignore a student who seems to be demonstrating a sincere desire to repent and believe the gospel. However, we can use these God-appointed opportunities to encourage the child and involve his parents. For example,

suppose the Holy Spirit has been at work in a student’s heart in your small group. During an application discussion he expresses an informed and sincere desire to repent of his sin and put his trust in Jesus as his Lord and Savior. You could both encourage him and also play a secondary role to his parents by praying with him in the following manner:

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for giving Joe a heart that wants to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of his sins. I praise you that you are at work in his life. Please help Joey to truly know and understand who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. May Joey seek to love, trust, and obey Jesus with all his heart. When Joey goes home today, I pray that he will talk with his dad and mom about how You are working in his heart.*

Then contact his parents and talk to them about your conversation with their son.

3. Be in fervent prayer and trust in God’s sovereign grace.

As teachers, we do have a responsibility to articulate the gospel and challenge students to respond to it in faith. But ultimately, their salvation depends on God. He alone is able to bring about regeneration and saving faith. Therefore, in our desire for saving faith, we must not be manipulative and try to bring about something devoid of the work of the Holy Spirit. Children tend to want to please adults, especially those they particularly admire. Pressuring a student to say a prayer or make a premature confession of faith does not serve to advance the gospel or nurture the soul of the child. We must pray for God to act in their hearts, and trust His good and sovereign grace. We must rest in this great truth from Romans 8:30:

***And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.***

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1. See “Ministering to Children from Non-Christian Homes” in this Appendix.

## APPENDIX XI

# Welcoming Children with Special Needs

by Brenda Fischer

As we prepare our hearts to teach truth from God's Word to children, it is wise to consider that there may be one or more students with disabilities in our classrooms. Our response to this should be reinforced by these truths from the Bible:

- **God is sovereign and creates children with special needs.** Exodus 4:11—"Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I the Lord?"
- **God has a special plan for their lives.** Jeremiah 29:11—"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."
- **God has designed them the way He wants them to be.** Psalm 139:13-14—"You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."
- **God has gifted them with abilities and talents, and they are indispensable to the body of Christ.** 1 Corinthians 12:21-22—"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable."
- **God looks at their hearts.** 1 Samuel 16:7b—"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."
- **God's glory shines through them.** 2 Corinthians 4:7—"We have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."
- **God can call them to Himself.** Mark 10:49—"Jesus stopped and said 'Call him,' and they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.'"
- **God uses disability as a powerful visual reminder that we are all sinful and weak.** 2 Corinthians 12:9—"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Including students with disabilities in our church body and in our classrooms is a reflection of our love for God and His Word. It is a living lesson of doing what God calls us to do. We are trusting that God has brought these special students into the body. If our focus is on God as the marvelous Designer and on His greatness, out of this will come a love for students with special and, perhaps, challenging needs. The blessings that come from loving and including students with disabilities are far-reaching:

- Parents who have a child with disabilities are blessed to have a community of believers who accept and encourage them. They are strengthened and equipped to seek out God and grow in their faith through difficult life circumstances.
- Students with disabilities are blessed when they are a part of the body and have the opportunity to share their unique gifts with the rest of the classroom.
- Teachers and other classroom volunteers are blessed when they depend on and trust in God for provision and wisdom to help them include students with disabilities in a loving and accepting way. They are able to see firsthand how God has given gifts to all of us.

- Typical students are blessed when they see and imitate adults in the classroom who are responding to disability with a loving trust in God's good design. They are also blessed by friendships with students with disabilities. They are given the joy of God-honoring friendship as well as a true life lesson on weakness.

Thoughtful classroom provision is a loving way to model Christ's love to students with special needs. Some will do best with a helper or aide. Others will do fine with just a bit of extra attention from the team. Most are helped by some adaptation and visual examples of the truths being taught. Volunteers do not need to be experts on disability. Just taking the time to get to know the student and asking the parents about their child is an important first step.

## APPENDIX XII

# Justification (Right Legal Standing Before God)

by Dr. Wayne Grudem

*The following is an excerpt from chapter 36 of Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine by Dr. Wayne Grudem. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1994), 722-732. Used with permission.*

*How and when do we gain right legal standing before God?*

## Explanation and Scriptural Basis

In the previous chapters we talked about the gospel call (in which God calls us to trust in Christ for salvation), regeneration (in which God imparts new spiritual life to us), and conversion (in which we respond to the gospel call in repentance for sin and faith in Christ for salvation). But *what about the guilt of our sin?* The gospel call invited us to trust in Christ for forgiveness of sins. Regeneration made it possible for us to respond to that invitation. In conversion we did respond, trusting in Christ for forgiveness of sins. Now the next step in the process of applying redemption to us is that God must respond to our faith and do what he promised, that is, actually declare our sins to be forgiven. This must be a legal declaration concerning our relationship to God's laws, stating that we are completely forgiven and no longer liable to punishment.

A right understanding of justification is absolutely crucial to the whole Christian faith. Once Martin Luther realized the truth of justification by faith alone, he became a Christian and overflowed with the new-found joy of the gospel. The primary issue in the Protestant Reformation was a dispute with the Roman Catholic Church over justification. If we are to safeguard the truth of the gospel for future generations, we must understand the truth of justification. Even today, a true view of justification is the dividing line between the

biblical gospel of salvation by faith alone and all false gospels of salvation based on good works.

When Paul gives an overview of the process by which God applies salvation to us, he mentions justification explicitly: "Those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also *justified*; and those whom he justified he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). As we explained in a previous chapter, the word called here refers to the effective calling of the gospel, which includes regeneration and brings forth the response of repentance and faith (or conversion) on our part. After effective calling and the response that it initiates on our part, the next step in the application of redemption is "justification." Here Paul mentions that this is something that God himself does: "Those whom he called *he also justified*."

Moreover, Paul quite clearly teaches that this justification comes *after* our faith and as *God's response* to our faith. He says that God "justifies him who has *faith* in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26), and that "a man is justified *by faith* apart from works of law" (Rom. 3:28). He says, "Since we are justified *by faith* we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Moreover, "a man is not justified by works of the law but *through faith* in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16).

Just what is justification? We may define it as follows: *Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.*

In explaining the elements of this definition, we will look first at the second half of it, the aspect of justification in which God "declares us to be



righteous in his sight.” The reason for treating these items in reverse order is that the emphasis of the New Testament in the use of the word *justification* and related terms is on the second half of the definition, the legal declaration by God. But there are also passages that show that this declaration is based on the fact that God first thinks of righteousness as belonging to us. So both aspects must be treated, even though the New Testament terms for justification focus on the legal declaration by God.

#### A. Justification Includes a Legal Declaration By God

The use of the word *justify* in the Bible indicates that justification is a legal declaration by God. The verb *justify* in the New Testament (Gk. *dikaioo*) has a range of meanings, but a very common sense is “to declare righteous.” For example, we read, “When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors *justified* God, having been baptized with the baptism of John” (Luke 7:29). Of course the people and the tax collectors did not *make* God to be righteous—that would be impossible for anyone to do. Rather they *declared* God to be righteous. This is also the sense of the term in passages where the New Testament talks about us being declared righteous by God (Rom. 3:20, 26, 28; 5:1; 8:30; 10:4,10; Gal. 2:16; 3:24). This sense is particularly evident, for example, in Romans 4:5: “And to one who does not work but trusts him who *justifies the ungodly* his faith is reckoned as righteousness.” Here Paul cannot mean that God “makes the ungodly to be righteous” (by changing them internally and making them morally perfect), for then they would have merit or works of their own to depend on. Rather, he means that God declares the ungodly to be righteous in his sight, not on the basis of their good works, but in response to their faith.

The idea that justification is a legal declaration is quite evident also when justification is contrasted with condemnation. Paul says, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who *justifies*; who is to condemn?” (Rom. 8:33-34). To “condemn” someone is to declare that person guilty. The opposite of condemnation is

justification, which, in this context, must mean “to declare someone not guilty.” This is also evident from the fact that God’s act of justifying is given as Paul’s answer to the possibility of someone bringing an accusation or “charge” against God’s people: such a declaration of guilt cannot stand in the face of God’s declaration of righteousness.

Some Old Testament examples of the word *justify* (Gk. *dikaioo* in the Septuagint, when translating the hiphil of *tsadak* “to justify”) add support to this understanding. For example, we read of judges who “*justify the righteous* and condemn the wicked” (Deut. 25:1 NASB). Now in this case “justify” must mean “declare to be righteous or not guilty,” just as “condemn” means “declare to be guilty.” It would make no sense to say that “justify” here means “to make someone to be good internally,” for judges simply do not and cannot make people to be good on the inside. Nor does a judge’s act of condemning the wicked make that person to be evil on the inside; it simply declares that the person is guilty with respect to the particular crime that has been brought before the court (cf. Ex. 23:7; 1 Kings 8:32; 2 Chron. 6:23). Similarly, Job refuses to say that his comforters were right in what they said: “Far be it from me that I should *declare you right*” (Job 27:5 NASB, using the same Hebrew and Greek terms for “justify”). The same idea is found in Proverbs: “He who *justifies* the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD” (Prov. 17:15). Here the idea of legal declaration is especially strong. Certainly it would not be an abomination to the LORD if “justify” meant “to *make* someone good or righteous inside.” In that case, to “justify the wicked” would be a very good thing in God’s sight. But if “justify” means “declare to be righteous,” then it is perfectly clear why “he who justifies the wicked” is “an abomination to the LORD.” Similarly, Isaiah condemns those “who *justify* the wicked for a bribe” (Isa. 5:23 NASB); again, “justify” must mean “declare to be righteous” (here used in the context of a legal declaration).

In this sense of “*declare* to be righteous” or “*declare* to be not guilty” Paul frequently uses



the word to speak of God's justification of us, his declaration that we, though guilty sinners, are nonetheless righteous in his sight. It is important to emphasize that this legal declaration in itself does not change our internal nature or character at all. In this sense of "justify," God issues a legal declaration about us. This is why theologians have also said that justification is *forensic* where the word *forensic* means "having to do with legal proceedings."

John Murray makes an important distinction between regeneration and justification:

*Regeneration is an act of God in us; justification is a judgment of God with respect to us. The distinction is like that of the distinction between the act of a surgeon and the act of a judge. The surgeon, when he removes an inward cancer, does something in us. That is not what a judge does—he gives a verdict regarding our judicial status. If we are innocent he declares accordingly.*

*The purity of the gospel is bound up with the recognition of this distinction. If justification is confused with regeneration or sanctification, then the door is opened for the perversion of the gospel at its center. Justification is still the article of the standing or falling of the Church. [See Figure 36:1 in the column to the right.]*

## B. God Declares Us to Be Just in His Sight

In God's legal declaration of justification, he specifically declares that we are just *in his sight*. This declaration involves two aspects. First, it means that he declares that we have no penalty to pay for sin, including past, present, and future sins. After a long discussion of justification by faith alone (Rom. 4:1-5:21), and a parenthetical discussion on remaining sin in the Christian life, Paul returns to his main argument in the book of Romans and tells what is true of those who have been justified by faith: "There is therefore now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). In this sense those who are justified have no penalty to pay for sin. This means that we are not subject to any charge of guilt or condemnation: "Who shall bring any charge

against God's elect? It is God who *justifies*; who is to condemn?" (Rom. 8:33-34).

The idea of full forgiveness of sins is prominent when Paul discusses justification by faith alone in Romans 4. Paul quotes David as pronouncing a blessing on one "to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works." He then recalls how David said, "Blessed are those *whose iniquities are forgiven* and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon his sin" (Rom. 4:6-8). This justification therefore clearly involves the forgiveness of sins. David spoke similarly in Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (cf. v. 3).

But if God merely declared us to be *forgiven from our past sins* that would not solve our problems entirely, for it would only make us morally neutral before God. We would be in the state that Adam was in before he had done anything right or wrong in God's sight—he was not guilty before God, but neither had he earned a record of righteousness before God. This first aspect of justification, in which God declares that our sins are forgiven, may be represented as in figure 36.1, in which the minus signs represent sins on our account that are completely forgiven in justification.

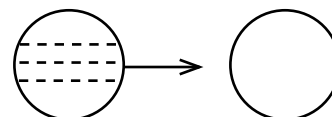


Figure 36.1—Forgiveness of Past Sins is One Part of Justification

However, such a movement is not enough to earn us favor with God. We must rather move from a point of moral neutrality to a point of having positive righteousness before God, the righteousness of a life of perfect obedience to him. Our need may therefore be represented as in Figure 36.2 below, in which the plus signs indicate a record of righteousness before God.

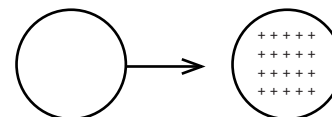


Figure 36.2—Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to Us is the Other Part of Justification

Therefore the second aspect of justification is that God must declare us not to be merely *neutral* in his sight but actually to be *righteous* in his sight. In fact, he must declare us to have the merits of perfect righteousness before him. The Old Testament sometimes spoke of God as giving such righteousness to his people even though they had not earned it themselves. Isaiah says, “He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, *he has covered me with the robe of righteousness*” (Isa. 61:10). But Paul speaks more specifically about this in the New Testament. As a solution to our need for righteousness, Paul tells us that “the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, *the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ* for all who believe” (Rom. 3:21-22). He says, “Abraham believed God, and *it was reckoned to him as righteousness*” (Rom. 4:3; quoting Gen. 15:6). This came about through the obedience of Christ, for Paul says at the end of this extensive discussion of justification by faith that “by one man’s obedience many will be *made righteous*” (Rom. 5:19). The second aspect of God’s declaration in justification, then, is that we have the merits of perfect righteousness before him.

But questions arise: How can God declare that we have no penalty to pay for sin, and that we have the merits of perfect righteousness, if we are in fact guilty sinners? How can God declare us to be not guilty but righteous when in fact we *are unrighteous*? These questions lead to our next point.

### **C. God Can Declare Us to Be Just Because He Imputes Christ’s Righteousness to Us**

When we say that God *imputes* Christ’s righteousness to us it means that God *thinks* of Christ’s righteousness as *belonging to* us, or regards it *as belonging to* us. He “reckons” it to our account. We read, “Abraham believed God, and *it was reckoned to him as righteousness*” (Rom. 4:3, quoting Gen. 15:6). Paul explains, “To one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith *is reckoned as* righteousness. So also David pronounces a

blessing upon the man to whom God *reckons righteousness* apart from works” (Rom. 4:6). In this way, Christ’s righteousness became ours. Paul says that we are those who received “the free gift of righteousness” (Rom. 5:17).

This is the third time in studying the doctrines of Scripture that we have encountered the idea of *imputing* guilt or righteousness to someone else. First, when Adam sinned, his guilt was imputed to us; God the Father viewed it as belonging to us, and therefore it did. Second, when Christ suffered and died for our sins, our sin was *imputed* to Christ; God thought of it as belonging to him, and he paid the penalty for it. Now in the doctrine of justification we see imputation for the third time. Christ’s righteousness is *imputed* to us, and therefore God *thinks* of it as belonging to us. It is not our own righteousness but Christ’s righteousness that is freely given to us. So Paul can say that God made Christ to be “our wisdom, *our righteousness* and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). And Paul says that his goal is to be found in Christ, “not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the *righteousness from God* that depends on faith” (Phil. 3:9). Paul knows that the righteousness he has before God is not anything of his own doing; it is the righteousness of God that comes through Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 3:21-22).

It is essential to the heart of the gospel to insist that God declares us to be just or righteous not on the basis of our actual condition of righteousness or holiness, but rather on the basis of Christ’s perfect righteousness, which he thinks of as belonging to us. This was the heart of the difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism at the Reformation. Protestantism since the time of Martin Luther has insisted that justification does *not* change us internally and it is *not* a declaration based in any way on any goodness that we have in ourselves. If justification changed us internally and then declared us to be righteous based on how good we actually were, then (1) we could never be declared perfectly righteous in this life, because there is always sin that remains in our lives, and (2) there would be no provision for forgiveness

of past sins (committed before we were changed internally), and therefore we could never have confidence that we are right before God. We would lose the confidence that Paul has when he says, “Therefore, *since we are justified by faith* we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). If we thought of justification as based on something that we are internally we would never have the confidence to say with Paul, “There is therefore now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). We would have no assurance of forgiveness with God, no confidence to draw near to him “with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22). We would not be able to speak of “the *free gift* of righteousness” (Rom. 5:17), or say that “the *free gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

The traditional Roman Catholic understanding of justification is very different from this. The Roman Catholic Church understands justification as something that changes us internally and makes us more holy within. “According to the teaching of the Council of Trent, justification is “sanctifying and renewing of the inner man.” In order for justification to begin, one must first be baptized and then (as an adult) continue to have faith: “The instrumental cause...of the first justification is the Sacrament of Baptism.” But “the justification of an adult is not possible without Faith...As far as the content of justifying faith is concerned, the so-called fiducial faith does not suffice. What is demanded is theological or dogmatic faith (confessional faith) which consists in the firm acceptance of the Divine truths of Revelation.” (below, [36:8]) Thus baptism is the means by which justification is first obtained, and then faith is necessary if an adult is to receive justification or to continue in the state of justification. Ott explains that “the so-called fiduciary faith” is not enough—meaning that the faith that simply trusts in Christ for forgiveness of sins is not enough. It must be a faith that accepts the content of the teaching of the Catholic Church, “theological or dogmatic faith.”

The Roman Catholic view may be said to understand justification as based not on *imputed* righteousness but on *infused* righteousness—that

is, righteousness that God actually *puts into us* and that changes us internally and in terms of our actual moral character. Then he gives us varying measures of justification according to the measure of righteousness that has been infused or placed within us.

The result of this Roman Catholic view of justification is that people cannot be sure if they are in a “state of grace” where they experience God’s complete acceptance and favor. The Catholic Church teaches that people cannot be certain that they are in this “state of grace” unless they receive a special revelation from God to this effect. The Council of Trent declared,

*If one considers his own weakness and his defective disposition, he may well be fearful and anxious as to the state of grace, as nobody knows with the certainty of faith, which permits of no error, that he has achieved the grace of God.*

To this statement Ott adds the comment,

*The reason for the uncertainty of the state of grace lies in this, that without a special revelation nobody can with certainty of faith know whether or not he has fulfilled all the conditions which are necessary for the achieving of justification. The impossibility of the certainty of faith, however, by no means excludes a high moral certainty supported by the testimony of conscience.*

Moreover, since the Roman Catholic Church views justification as including something that God does within us, it follows that people can experience varying degrees of justification. We read, “The degree of justifying grace is not identical in all the just” and “grace can be increased by good works.” Ott explains how this Catholic view differs from that of the Protestant Reformers: “As the Reformers wrongly regarded justification as a merely external imputation of Christ’s justice, they were obliged also to hold that justification is identical in all men. The Council of Trent, however, declared that the measure of the grace of justification received varies in the individual person who is justified, according to the measure

of God's free distribution and to the disposition and the cooperation of the recipient himself."

Finally, the logical consequence of this view of justification is that our eternal life with God is not based on God's grace alone, but partially on our merit as well: "For the justified eternal life is both a gift of grace promised by God and a reward for his own good works and merits.... Salutory works are, at the same time, gifts of God and meritorious acts of man."

To support this view of justification from Scripture, Ott repeatedly mingles passages from the New Testament that talk not only of justification, but also of many other aspects of the Christian life, such as regeneration (which God works in us), sanctification (which is a process in the Christian life and which of course does vary from individual to individual), the possession and use of various spiritual gifts in the Christian life (which differ from individual to individual) and eternal reward (which also varies according to the individual). To classify all of these passages under the category of "justification" only blurs the issue and ultimately makes forgiveness of sins and right legal standing before God a matter of our own merit, not a free gift from God. Therefore, this blurring of distinctions ultimately destroys the heart of the gospel.

That is what Martin Luther so clearly saw and that is what gave such motivation to the Reformation. When the good news of the gospel truly became the good news of totally free salvation in Jesus Christ, then it spread like wildfire throughout the civilized world. But this was simply a recovery of the original gospel, which declares, "The wages of sin is death, but the *free gift of God* is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23), and insists that "There is therefore now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

#### **D. Justification Comes to Us Entirely by God's Grace, Not on Account of Any Merit in Ourselves**

After Paul explains in Romans 1:18-3:20 that no one will ever be able to make himself righteous before God ("For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law," Rom. 3:20), then Paul goes on to explain that "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified *by his grace as a gift* through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23-24). God's "grace" means his "unmerited favor." Because we are completely unable to earn favor with God, the only way we could be declared righteous is if God freely provides salvation for us by grace, totally apart from our work. Paul explains, "For *by grace* you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9; cf. Titus 3:7). Grace is clearly put in contrast to works or merit as the reason why God is willing to justify us. God did not have any obligation to impute our sin to Christ or to impute Christ's righteousness to us; it was only because of his unmerited favor that he did this.

In distinction from the Roman Catholic teaching that we are justified by God's *grace plus some merit of our own* as we make ourselves fit to receive the grace of justification and as we grow in this state of grace through our good works, Luther and the other Reformers insisted that justification comes by *grace alone* not by *grace plus some merit* on our part.

#### **E. God Justifies Us Through Our Faith in Christ**

When we began this chapter we noted that justification comes after saving faith. Paul makes this sequence clear when he says, "We have believed in Christ Jesus, *in order to be justified by faith* in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified" (Gal. 2:16). Here Paul indicates that faith comes first and it is for the purpose of being justified. He also says that Christ is "to be received by faith" and that God "justifies him

who has *faith* in Jesus” (Rom. 3:25, 26). The entire chapter of Romans 4 is a defense of the fact that we are justified by faith, not by works, just as Abraham and David themselves were. Paul says, “We are justified *by faith*” (Rom. 5:1).

Scripture never says that we are justified because of the inherent goodness of our faith, as if our faith has merit before God. It never allows us to think that our faith in itself earns favor with God. Rather, Scripture says that we are justified “by means of” our faith, understanding faith to be the instrument through which justification is given to us, but not at all an activity that earns us merit or favor with God. Rather, we are justified solely because of the merits of Christ’s work (Rom. 5:17-19).

But we may ask why God chose *faith* to be the attitude of heart by which we would obtain justification. Why could God not have decided to give justification to all those who sincerely show love? Or who show joy? Or contentment? Or humility? Or wisdom? Why did God choose *faith* as the means by which we receive justification?

It is apparently because *faith* is the one attitude of heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves. When we come to Christ in faith we essentially say, “I give up! I will not depend on myself or my own good works any longer. I know that I can never make myself righteous before God. Therefore, Jesus, I trust you and depend on you completely to give me a righteous standing before God.” In this way, faith is the exact opposite of trusting in ourselves, and therefore it is the attitude that perfectly fits salvation that depends not at all on our own merit but entirely on God’s free gift of grace. Paul explains this when he says, “That is why it depends *on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace* and be guaranteed to all his descendants” (Rom. 4:16). This is why the Reformers from Martin Luther on were so firm in their insistence that justification comes not through faith plus some merit or good work on our part, but only *through faith alone*. “For by grace you have been saved *through faith*; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). Paul repeatedly says that “no human being will be

justified in his sight by works of law” (Rom. 3:20); the same idea is repeated in Galatians 2:16; 3:11; 5:4.

But is this consistent with the epistle of James? What can James mean when he says, “You see that a man is *justified by works* and not by faith alone” (James 2:24). Here we must realize that James is using the word *justified* in a different sense from the way Paul uses it. In the beginning of this chapter we noted that the word *justify* has a range of meanings, and that one significant sense was “declare to be righteous,” but we should also notice that the Greek word *dikaioo* can also mean “demonstrate or show to be righteous.” For instance, Jesus said to the Pharisees, “You are those who *justify* yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts” (Luke 16:15). The point here was not that the Pharisees went around making legal declarations that they were “not guilty” before God, but rather that they were always attempting to *show others* that they were righteous by their outward deeds. Jesus knew that the truth was otherwise: “But God knows your hearts” (Luke 16:15). Similarly, the lawyer who put Jesus to a test by asking what he should do to inherit eternal life answered Jesus’ first question well. But when Jesus told him, “Do this, and you will live,” he was not satisfied. Luke tells us, “But he, *desiring to justify himself* said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”” (Luke 10:28-29). Now he was not desiring to give a legal pronouncement about himself that he was not guilty in God’s sight; rather, he was desiring to “show himself righteous” before others who were listening. Other examples of the word *justify* meaning “show to be righteous” can be found in Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:35; Romans 3:4.

Our interpretation of James 2 depends not only on the fact that “show to be righteous” is an acceptable sense for the word *justified* but also on the consideration that this sense fits well in the context of James 2. When James says, “Was not Abraham our father *justified by works* when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?” (v. 21) he is referring to something later in Abraham’s life, the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, which occurred in Genesis 22. This is long after the time recorded in



Genesis 15:6 where Abraham believed God “and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.” Yet this earlier incident at the beginning of Abraham’s covenantal relationship with God is the one that Paul quotes and repeatedly refers to in Romans 4. Paul is talking about the time God justified Abraham once for all, reckoning righteousness to him as a result of his faith in God. But James is talking about something far later, after Abraham had waited many years for the birth of Isaac, and then after Isaac had grown old enough to carry wood up the mountain for a sacrifice. At that point Abraham was “shown to be righteous” by his works, and in that sense James says that Abraham was “justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar” (James 2:21).

The larger concern of James in this section also fits this understanding. James is concerned to show that mere intellectual agreement with the gospel is a “faith” that is really no faith at all. He is concerned to argue against those who say they have faith but show no change in their lives. He says, “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith” (James 2:18). “For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:26). James is simply saying here that “faith” that has no results or “works” is not real faith at all; it is “dead” faith. He is not denying Paul’s clear teaching that justification (in the sense of a declaration of right legal standing before God) is by faith alone apart from works of the law; he is simply affirming a different truth, namely, that “justification” in the sense of an outward showing that one is righteous only occurs as we see evidence in a person’s life. To paraphrase, James is saying that a person is “*shown to be righteous*” by his works, and not by his faith alone.” This is something with which Paul also would certainly agree (2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 5:19-24).

The practical implications of the doctrine of justification by faith alone are very significant. First, this doctrine enables us to offer genuine *hope* to unbelievers who know they could never make themselves righteous before God: if salvation is a free gift to be received through faith *alone* then anyone who hears the gospel may

hope that eternal life is freely offered and may be obtained.

Second, this doctrine gives us confidence that God will never make us pay the penalty for sins that have been forgiven on Christ’s merits. Of course, we may continue to suffer the ordinary *consequences* of sin (an alcoholic who quits drinking may still have physical weakness for the rest of his or her life, and a thief who is justified may still have to go to jail to pay the penalty for his or her crime). Moreover, God may *discipline* us if we continue to act in ways that are disobedient to him (see Heb. 12:5-11), doing this out of love and for our own good. But God can never nor will ever *take vengeance* on us for past sins or *make us pay the penalty* that is due for them or *punish us out of wrath* and *for the purpose of doing us harm*. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). This fact should give us a great sense of joy and confidence before God that we are accepted by him and that we stand before him as “not guilty” and “righteous” forever.

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## Endnotes

**[36:1]** John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* p. 121.

**[36:2]** See chapter 24, pp. 494-96, on the idea of Adam’s sin being imputed to us.

**[36:3]** See chapter 27, pp. 573-74, on the fact that our guilt was imputed to Christ. Paul says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21 NIV).

**[36:4]** One sometimes hears the popular explanation that *justified* means “just-as-if-I’d-never-sinned.” The definition is a clever play on words and contains an element of truth (for the justified person, like the person who has never sinned, has no penalty to pay for sin). But the definition is misleading in two other ways because (1) it mentions nothing about the fact that Christ’s righteousness is reckoned to my account when I am justified; to do this it would

have to say also “just-as-if-I’d-lived-a-life-of-perfect-righteousness.” (2) But more significantly, it cannot adequately represent the fact that I will *never* be in a state that is “just-as-if-I’d-never-sinned,” because I will *always* be conscious of the fact that I *have* sinned and that I am not an innocent person but a guilty person who has been forgiven. This is very different from “just as if I had never sinned”! Moreover, it is different from “just as if I had lived a life of perfect righteousness,” because I will forever know that I *have not* lived a life of perfect righteousness, but that Christ’s righteousness is given to me by God’s grace.

Therefore both in the forgiveness of sins and in the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, my situation is far different from what it would be if I had never sinned and had lived a perfectly righteous life. For all eternity I will remember that I am a forgiven *sinner* and that my righteousness is not based on my own merit, but on the grace of God in the saving work of Jesus Christ. None of that rich teaching at the heart of the gospel will be understood by those who are encouraged to go through their lives thinking “justified” means “just-as-if-I’d-never-sinned.”

**[36:5]** The aorist passive participle *dikaiothentes* placed before the main verb conveys the sense of a completed event prior to the present tense main verb, “We have peace,” giving the sense, “Since we *have been justified* by faith, we have peace.”

**[36:6]** Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* p. 257; also quoted with approval on p. 250. It should be noted that Ott represents more traditional, pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism, and that many contemporary Roman Catholics have sought an understanding of justification that is closer to a Protestant view.

**[36:7]** Ibid., p. 251.

**[36:8]** Ibid., pp. 252-53.

**[36:9]** Ibid., pp. 261-62.

**[36:10]** Ibid., p. 262.

**[36:11]** Ibid., p. 262.

**[36:12]** Ibid., p. 264.

**[36:13]** One example from ordinary life might be seen in receiving a paycheck for work that has been done for an employer. The “means” or “instrument” that I use to get this paycheck is the act of reaching out my hand and taking an envelope from my mail box, then opening it and pulling out the check. But my employer does not pay me for doing any of those actions. The pay is entirely for work that I did prior to that. Actually taking the check did not earn me one cent of the money I received—it was simply the *instrument* or *means* I used to take the payment into my possession. Similarly, faith is the *instrument* we use to receive justification from God, but it in itself gains us no merit with God. (The analogy is helpful but it is not perfect, because I had previously worked to earn the money, whereas justification is based on the work of Christ. The analogy would be closer if I had worked and then died, and my wife then picked up the paycheck from my mail box.)

**[36:14]** The word translated “this” is the neuter pronoun *touto* which refers not to “faith” or to “grace” specifically in the previous clause (for they are both feminine nouns in Greek, and would require feminine pronouns), but to the entire idea expressed in the preceding phrase, the idea that you have been saved by grace through faith.

**[36:15]** James does quote the text, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” in v. 23, but he says that Scripture “was fulfilled” when Abraham offered his son, apparently meaning that the earlier declaration of righteousness was then worked out and its results were seen to be true in Abraham’s life when he offered Isaac on the altar.

APPENDIX XIII

# Bible Doctrine

by Dr. Wayne Grudem

*The following is an excerpt from Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith by Dr. Wayne Grudem. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1992), 145-146. Used with permission.*

It is amazing to see the extent to which Scripture affirms that God brings about various events in our lives. For example, our dependence on God to give us food each day is affirmed every time we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11), even though we work for our food and (as far as mere human observation can discern) obtain it through entirely “natural” causes. Similarly, Paul, looking at events with the eye of faith, affirms that “my God will supply every need” of his children (Phil. 4:19), even though God may use “ordinary” means (such as other people) to do so.

God plans our days before we are born, for David affirms, “In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them” (Ps. 139:16). And Job says that man’s “days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his bounds that he cannot pass” (Job 14:5). This can be seen in the life of Paul, who says that God “had set me apart before I was born” (Gal. 1:15), and Jeremiah, to whom God said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:5).

All our actions are under God’s providential care, for “in him we live and move” (Acts 17:28). The individual steps we take each day are directed by the Lord. Jeremiah confesses, “I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is

not in man who walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). We read that “a man’s steps are ordered by the LORD” (Prov. 20:24), and that “A man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps” (Prov. 16:9). Success and failure come from God, for we read, “Not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up; but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another” (Ps. 75:6-7). Even all of our talents and abilities are from the Lord, for Paul can ask the Corinthians, “What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do YOU boast as if it were not a gift?” (1 Cor. 4:7).

God influences the desires and decisions of people, for he looks down “on all the inhabitants of the earth” and “fashions the hearts of them all” (Ps. 33:14-15). When we realize that the heart in Scripture is the location of our inmost thoughts and desires, this is a significant passage. Yes, we know that we make willing choices, but who formed our will to make those choices? God “fashions the hearts” of “all the inhabitants of the earth.” God especially guides the desires and inclination of believers, working in us “both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

All of these passages, reporting both general statements about God’s work in the lives of all people and specific examples of God’s work in the lives of individuals, lead us to conclude that God’s providential work of concurrence extends to all aspects of our lives. Our words, our steps, our movements, our hearts, and our abilities are all from the Lord.

But we must guard against misunderstanding. Here also, as with the lower creation, God’s providential direction as an unseen, behind-



the-scenes, “primary cause” should not lead us to deny the reality of our choices and actions. Again and again Scripture affirms that we really do cause events to happen. We are significant and we are responsible. We do have choices, and these are real choices that bring about real results. Just as God has created things in nature with certain properties (e.g., rocks are hard, water is wet), God has made us in such a wonderful way that he has endowed us with the property of willing choice.

One approach to these passages about God’s concurrence is to say that if our choices are real, they cannot be caused by God...But the number of passages that affirm this providential control

of God is so considerable, and the difficulties involved in giving them some other interpretation are so formidable, that it does not seem to me that this can be the right approach to them. It seems better simply to affirm that God causes all things that happen, but that he does so in such a way that he somehow upholds our ability to make *willing, responsible choices*, choices that have *real and eternal results*, and for which we are *held accountable*. Exactly how God combines his providential control with our willing and significant choices, Scripture simply does not explain to us. But rather than deny one aspect or the other (simply because we cannot explain how both can be true), we should accept both in an attempt to be faithful to the teaching of all of Scripture.

APPENDIX XIV

# Gift and Grit (In That Order): Thoughts on Human Effort and Divine Enabling

by Dr. John Piper

*The following is an excerpt from The Godward Life: Seeing the Supremacy of God in All of Life by Dr. John Piper. (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Pub., 1992), 38-39. Used with permission.*

**Question:** If God is the one who gives our varied measures of faith, should we pursue greater faith?

**Answer:** Yes! With all our might! Through prayer, word, fellowship, and obedience.

Faith is a gift of God. Romans 12:3 says, “Think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned to him” (RSV). God measures to each believer a measure of faith. Ephesians 2:8 says, “By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God” (RSV). The word “this” refers to the whole act of God, including the accomplishment of salvation on the cross and the application of salvation through faith. Philippians 1:29 says, “To you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” Believing and suffering are both gifts from God. Similarly repentance (the flip side of faith) is called a gift of God (2 Timothy 2:25; Acts 11:18). The revelation of Christ to the heart that makes faith possible is also a gift (Matthew 16:17; 2 Corinthians 4:4,6).

This does not mean faith is static or that we should not pursue it more and more. In 2 Thessalonians 1:3, Paul says, “Your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another.” In 2 Corinthians 10:15, Paul says that he hopes their faith will “increase.”

Therefore it is clear that faith should grow and not remain static. The fact that God gave you yesterday’s level of faith does not mean that his will for you today is the same measure of faith. His purpose for you today may be far greater faith. His command is to “trust in him at all times” (Psalm 62:8; RSV) and to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18, RSV).

God commands what he wills and grants in measure what he commands, but we should always pursue what he commands. He says, “Work out your salvation....for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). God does not say, “Since I work, you shouldn’t.” He says, “Because I do, you can.” God’s gift does not replace our effort; it enables and carries it.

We say with Paul, “[God’s] grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary I worked...” (1 Corinthians 15:10, RSV). The gift of grace produced the grit of hard work. It is not the other way around. He goes on, “I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me.” Even Paul’s working is a gift of grace. Yes, it feels like our effort. It is an effort! But that is not all it is. That is not what it is at root. If it is virtuous, it is God’s “working in us to will and to do his good pleasure.” God “fulfill[s] every good resolve and work of faith by his power” (2 Thessalonians 1:11, RSV). He equips us “with everything good that [we] may do his will, working in [us] that which is pleasing in his sight” (Hebrews 13:21, RSV).

Therefore let us press on to the greatest faith possible with all the means of grace God has given. Let us be like Paul and strive “with all the energy which he mightily inspires within [us]” (Colossians 1:29, RSV). And when we have labored, let us not think more highly of ourselves than is necessary, but say with Paul, “I will not

venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me...by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:18-19, RSV). There is a place for grit in the Christian life (“I worked hard”), but it is preceded by and enabled by gift (“It was the grace of God”). Therefore all grit is living by faith in future grace.

APPENDIX XV

# Go Back? Never!

by C.H. Spurgeon

*The following is a sermon delivered on Thursday evening, July 13, 1871 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle of Newington, England. This text is in the public domain. For more of Spurgeon's writings, see [www.spurgeon.org](http://www.spurgeon.org).*

"And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly . . . city."—Hebrews 11:15, 16. Abraham left his country at God's command, and he never went back again. The proof of faith lies in perseverance. There is a sort of faith which does run well for a while; but it is soon ended, and it does not obey the truth. The Apostle tells us, however, that the people of God were not forced to continue because they could not return. Had they been mindful of the place from whence they came out, they might have found opportunities to return. Frequent opportunities came in their way. There was communication kept up between them and the old family house at Padan-Aram. They had news concerning the family house. More than that, there were messages exchanged; servants were sometimes sent. There was also a natural relationship kept up. Did not Rebekah come from thence? And Jacob, one of the patriarchs, was driven to go down into the land; but he could not stay there; he was always unrestful, until at last he stole a march upon Laban and came back to the proper life, the life that he had chosen—the life that God had commanded him to live—of a pilgrim and stranger in the land of promise. You see, then, they had many opportunities to have returned, to have settled down comfortably and tilled the ground which their fathers did before them; but they continued to follow the uncomfortable life of wanderers of the weary foot, who dwell in tents, who own no plot of land. They were aliens in the country which God had given them by promise.

Now our position is a very similar one. As many of us as have believed in Christ Jesus have been called out. The very meaning of a church is called out—by Christ; we have been separated. I trust we know what it is to have gone without the camp bearing Christ's reproach. Henceforth in this world we have no home, no true abiding home for our spirits. Our home is beyond the flood. We are looking for it among the unseen things. We are strangers and sojourners, as all our fathers were, dwellers in this wilderness, passing through it to reach the Canaan which is to be the land of our perpetual inheritance. I shall this evening first speak to you upon:

**1. The opportunities which we have had and still have, to return to the old house if we were mindful of it.**

Indeed, in the text it seems to me as if the word "opportunities" were not in our case nearly strong enough. It is a wonder of wonders that we have not gone back to the world and to our own sin. When I think of the strength of divine grace, I do not marvel that saints should persevere; but when I remember the weakness of their nature, it seems a miracle of miracles that there should be one Christian in the world a single hour. It is nothing short of Godhead's utmost stretch of might that preserves a Christian from going back to his old unregenerate condition. We have had opportunities to have returned. My brethren, we have such opportunities in our daily calling. Some of you are engaged in the midst of ungodly men. You have opportunities to sin as they do, to fall into their excess, into their forgetfulness of God, or even into their blasphemies. Oh! have you not often strong inducements, if it were not for the grace of God, to become as they are. Or if your

occupation keeps you alone, yet, my brethren, there is one who is pretty sure to keep us company and to seek our mischief—the destroyer, the tempter. And how frequently will even solitude have temptations as severe as publicity could possibly bring! There are snares in company, but there are snares in our loneliness. We have many opportunities to return. In the parlor—in conversation, perhaps, in the kitchen about the day's work—or in the field, or on the mart, on land, and on sea. Where can we go to escape from these opportunities to return? If we should mount upon the wings of the wind, could we find “a lodge in some vast wilderness” where we could be quite clear from all the opportunities to go back to the old sins in which we once indulged? No, each man's calling may seem to him to be more full of temptation than his fellows, but it is not so. Our temptations are pretty equally distributed, I daresay, after all. And all of us might say that we find in our avocations from hour to hour many opportunities to return.

But, dear brethren, it is not merely in our business and in our calling—the mischief lies in our bones and in our flesh. Opportunities to return in our own nature. Ah! who that knows himself does not find strong incentives to return? Ah! how often will our imagination paint sin in very glowing colors; and though we loathe the sin and loathe ourselves for thinking of it, yet how many a man might say, “Had it not been for divine grace, my feet had almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped.” How strong is the evil in the best man, how stern is the conflict to keep under the body, lest corruption should prevail! You may be diligent in secret prayer, and perhaps the devil may have been asleep till you begin to pray; and when you are most fervent, then will he also become most rampant. When you get nearest to God, Satan will sometimes seem to get nearer to you. Opportunities to return as long as you are in this body will be with you to the very edge of Jordan. You will meet with temptations when you sit gasping on the banks of the last river, waiting for the summons to cross; it may be that your

fiercest temptation may come even then. Oh! this flesh, this body of this death—wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from it? But while it continues with me I shall find opportunities to return.

And, dear brethren and sisters, these opportunities to return are prepared for us in any condition of life and any change through which we may pass. For instance, how often have professors, when they have prospered, found opportunities to return? I sigh to think of how many that appeared very earnest Christians when they were struggling for bread have become very dull and cold now that they have become rich. How often does it happen that the poor earnest Christian has associated with the people of God at all meetings and felt proud to be there; but when he has risen in the world and stood an inch or two above others in common esteem, he could not go with God's people any longer. He just seeks out the world's fashionable church and joins in it to get a share of the respectability and prestige that will always gather there, and he has turned aside from the faith—if not altogether, in his heart at least, in the defense of it in his life. Beware of the high places; they are very slippery. There is not all the enjoyment that you may think to be gathered in retirement and in ease; but, on the contrary, luxury often puffs up, and abundance makes the heart to swell with vanity. If any of you are prospered in this world, oh! watch, lest you be mindful to return to the place whence you came out.

But it is just the same with adversity. Alas! I have had to mourn over Christian men—at least I thought they were—who have grown very poor, and when they have grown poor they hardly felt they could associate with those whom they knew in better circumstances. I think they were mistaken in the notion that they would be despised. I should be ashamed of the Christian who would despise his fellow because God was dealing with him somewhat severely in providence, yet there is that feeling in the human heart; and though there may be no

unkind treatment, yet oftentimes the spirit is apt to imagine it, and I have known some absent themselves by degrees from the assembly of God. It is smoothing the way to return to your old places. And, indeed, I have not wondered when I have seen some professors grow cold when I have thought how they were compelled to live. Perhaps they lived in a comfortable home before, and now they have to take a room where there is no comfort and where sounds of blasphemy meet them. Or in some cases, perhaps, they have to go to the workhouse and be far away from all Christian intercourse or anything that could comfort them. It is only grace that can keep grace alive under such circumstances. You see, then, whether you grow rich, or whether you become poor, you will have these opportunities to return. If you want to go back to sin, to carnality, to a love of the world, to your old condition, you never need to be prevented from doing so by want of opportunities. It will be something else that will prevent you, for these opportunities are plentiful indeed.

Opportunities to return—let me say just this much more about them—are often furnished by the example of others.

“When any turn from Zion’s way,  
Alas! what numbers do!  
Methinks I hear my Savior say,  
Wilt thou forsake me too?”

Departures from the faith of those whom we highly esteem are, at least while we are young, very severe trials to us. We cannot think that religion can be true if such a man is a hypocrite. It staggers us; we cannot make it out. Opportunities to return you have now, but ah! may grace be given you so that if others play the Judas, instead of leading you to do the same, it may only bind you more fast to your Lord and make you walk more carefully, lest you also prove a son of perdition.

And oh! my brethren and sisters, if some of us wished to return, we should have this

opportunity to return in a certain sense. We should find that none of our old friends would refuse to receive us. There is many a Christian who, if he were to go back to the gaiety of the world, would find the world receive him with open arms. He was the favorite of the ballroom once; he was the wit that set the table on a roar; he was the man who, above all, was courted when he moved in the circle of the vain and frivolous; glad enough would they be to see him come back. What shouts of triumph would they raise, and how would they welcome him! Oh! may the day never come to you, you young people especially, who have lately put on the Lord Jesus Christ and professed his name, when you shall be welcomed by the world; but may you forever forget also your own kindred and your father’s house, so shall the king greatly desire your beauty, for he is your Lord, and worship you him. Separation from the world shall endear you to the Savior and bring you conscious enjoyment of his presence, but opportunities to return I have shown you now are plentiful enough.

Perhaps you will say, “Why does the Lord make them so plentiful? Could he not have kept us from temptation?” There is no doubt he could, but it never was the Master’s intention that we should all be hothouse plants. He taught us to pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” but at the same time he does lead us there and intends to do it; and this is for the proving of our faith to see whether it be true faith or not. Only he bids us also pray, “Deliver us from evil.” Depend upon it, faith that is never tried is not faith. It must be sooner or later exercised. God does not create useless things. He intends that the faith which he gives should have its test and should glorify his name. These opportunities to return are meant to try your faith, and they are sent to you to prove that you are a volunteer soldier. Why, if grace was a sort of chain that manacled you so that you could not leave your Lord, if it had become a physical impossibility for you to forsake your Savior, there would be no credit in your abiding faithful to him. He that does not run

away because his legs are weak does not prove himself a hero; but he that could run, but won't run, that could desert his Lord, but won't desert him, has within him a principle of grace stronger than any fetter could be—the highest, strongest, noblest bond that unites a man to the Savior. By this you shall know whether you are Christ's or not when you have opportunity to return—if you don't return, that shall prove you are his. Two men are going along a road, and they have got a dog behind them. I do not know to whom that dog belongs, but I'll tell you directly. They are coming to a cross road. One goes to the right, and the other goes to the left. Now which man does the dog follow? That is his master. Now when Christ and the world go together, you cannot tell which a man is following; but when there is a separation and Christ goes one way and your interest, your pleasure, seems to go the other way, if you can part with the world and keep with Christ, then you are one of his, so that these opportunities to return may serve us a good purpose by trying our faith and helping us to see whether we are, indeed, the Lord's or no. But we must pass on (for we have a very wealthy text tonight) to notice the second point.

**2. We cannot take the opportunity to go back because we desire something better than we could get by going back. An insatiable desire has been implanted in us by divine grace, which urges us to:**

“Forget the steps already trod,  
And onward press our way.”

Notice how the text puts it, “But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.” Brethren, we desire something better than this world. Do you not? Has the world ever satisfied you? Perhaps it did when you were dead in sin. A dead world may satisfy a dead heart; but ever since you have known something of better things, have you ever been contented with the world? Perhaps you have tried to fill your soul with worldly things. God has prospered you, and you have said, “Oh! this is well!” Your children have been

about you; you have had many household joys, and you have said, “I could stay here forever.” Did not you find very soon that there was a thorn in the flesh? Did you ever get a rose in this world that was altogether without a thorn? Have you not been obliged to say, after you have had all that the world could give you, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity?” I am sure it has been so with you. All God's saints will confess that if the Lord were to say to them, “You shall have all the world, and that shall be your portion,” they would be broken-hearted men. “Nay, my Lord,” they would say, “don't put me off so, don't give me these husks, though thou give mountains of them. Thou art more glorious than all the mountains of praise. Give me thyself, and take these all away if it so please thee, but don't my Lord, don't think I can fill myself with these things.” We desire something better.

Notice, next, that there is this about a Christian, that even when he does not enjoy something better, he desires it. How much of character is revealed in our desires. I felt greatly encouraged when I read this, “Now they desire a better”—the word “country” has been inserted by our translators—they desire something better. I know I do. I do not always enjoy something better. Dark is my path. I cannot see my Lord, I cannot enjoy his presence; and though it may be a little thing to desire, let me say a good desire is more than nature ever grew. Grace has given it. It is a great thing to be desirous. They desire a better country. And because we desire this better thing, we cannot go back and be content with things which gratified us once.

More than that, if ever the child of God gets entangled, for a while he is uneasy in it. Abraham's slips—for he made one or two—were made when he had left the land and gone down among the Philistines. But he was not easy there; he must come back again. And Jacob—he had found a wife, nay, two, in Laban's land, but he was not content. No, no child of God can be. Whatever we may find in this world, we shall never find a heaven here. We may hunt the world through and say, “This



looks like a little paradise,” but there is no paradise this side of the skies—for a child of God at any rate. There is enough out there in the farmyard for the hogs, but there is not for the children. There is enough in the world for sinners, but there is not for saints. They have stronger, sharper, and more vehement desires; for they have a nobler life within them, and they desire a better country; and even if they get entangled for awhile in this country and in a certain measure become citizens of it, they are still uneasy. Their citizenship is in heaven, and they cannot rest anywhere but there. After all, we confess tonight, and rejoice in the confessions, that our best hopes are for things that are out of sight. Our expectations are our largest possessions. The things that we have, that we value, are ours today by faith. We don’t enjoy them yet, but when our heirship shall be fully manifested and we shall come to the full ripe age, oh! then we shall come into our wealth, to the mansions and to the glory and to the presence of Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, you see the reason why the Christian cannot go back, though he has many opportunities, lies in this, that through divine grace he has had produced in his heart desires for something better; and even when he does not as yet enjoy that something better, the desires themselves become mighty bonds that keep him from returning to what he was. Dear brethren, cultivate these desires more and more. If they have such a separating effect upon our character in keeping us from the world, let us cultivate them much. Do you think that we meditate enough upon heaven? Look at the miser. When does he forget his gold? He dreams of it. He has locked it up tonight, and he goes to bed; but he is afraid he heard a footstep downstairs, and he goes to see. He looks to that iron safe to be quite sure that it is well secured—he cannot forget his dear gold. Let us think of heaven, of Christ, of all the blessings of the covenant, and let us thus keep our desires wide awake. The more they draw us to heaven, the more we shall be separated from earth. But I must close with the sweetest part of the text.

### **3. We have for this reason great blessedness.**

“Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.” Because they are strangers and because they will not go back to their old abode, therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. He might be. What poor people God’s people are—poor many of them in circumstances, but how many of them I might very well call poor as to spiritual things! I do not think if any of us had such a family as God has we should ever have patience with them. We cannot even have, when we judge ourselves rightly, patience with ourselves; but how is it that God bears with the ill manners of such a froward, weak, foolish, forgetful people as his people are? He might well be ashamed to be called their God if you look upon them as they are. Own them—how can he own them? Does he not himself sometimes say of them, “How can I put thee among the children?” and yet he does. Viewed as they are, they are such a rabble in many respects that it is marvelous he is not ashamed of them, and yet he never is; and to prove that he is not ashamed of them we have this fact, that he calls himself their God. “I will be your God,” and he oftentimes seems to speak of it as a very joyful thing to his own heart. “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” and while he calls himself their God he never forbids them to call him their God; and in the presence of the great ones of the earth they may call him their God—anywhere. He is not ashamed that it should be so. We have sometimes heard of a brother who has become great and rich in the world, and he has had some poor brother or some distant relative; and when he has seen him in the street he has been obliged just to speak to him and own him; but I daresay he wished him a long way off, especially if some rich acquaintance happened to be with him who should say, “Why, Smith, who was that wretched seedy-looking fellow that you spoke to?” He does not like to say, “That is my relation,” or “That is my brother.” But we find that Jesus Christ, however low his



people may sink and however poor they may be, is not ashamed to call them brethren nor to let them look up to him in all the depths of their degradation and call him “brother born for adversity.” He is not ashamed to call them brethren. And one reason seems to me to be because he does not judge them by what they are, but by what he has prepared for them. Notice the text, “Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them—he hath prepared for them a city.” They are poor now, but God, to whom things to come are things present, sees them in their fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints. All you can see in the poor child of God is a hard-working, laboring man, who is mocked at and despised, but what does God see in him? He sees in him a dignity and a glory second only to himself. He has put all things under the foot of such a man as that and crowned him with glory and honor in the person of Christ, and the angels themselves are ministering servants to such a one as that. You see his clothes, you see not him; you see but his earthly tabernacle, but the spirit, twice born immortal and divine, you see not that. God does. Or if you spiritually perceive that part, you see it as it is; but God sees it as it will be when it shall be like unto Christ, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. God sees the poorest child of God as he will be in that day when he shall be like Christ, for he shall see him as he is. It seems in the text that God looks to what he has prepared for these poor people—“he hath prepared for them a city.” And methinks that by what he has prepared for them he esteems them and loves them—esteeming them by what he means them to be rather than by what they appear to be.

Now let us look at this preparation just a minute; “he hath prepared for them”—them. I delight to preach a free gospel and to preach it to every creature under heaven; but we must never forget the specialty—“he hath prepared for them a city.” That is, for such as are strangers and foreigners, for such as have faith, and therefore have left the world and gone out to follow Christ. He has prepared for

them, not for all of you, but only for such as he has prepared for the city, has he prepared the city. But note what it is. It is a city, which indicates, first, an abiding happiness. They dwelt in tents—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but he has prepared for them a city. Here we are tent-dwellers, but the tent is soon to be taken down. “We know that this earthly house of our tent shall be dissolved, but we have a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.” “He hath prepared for them a city.” A city is a place of social joy. In a lonely hamlet one has little company, but in a city much. There all the inhabitants shall be united in one glorious brotherhood—the true Communism; Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, in the highest possible degree. There shall be delightful intercourse. “He hath prepared for them a city.” It is a city, too, for dignity. To be a burgess of the City of London is thought to be a great honor, and upon princes is it sometimes conferred; but we shall have the highest honor that can be given when we shall be citizens of the city which God has prepared. But I must not dwell on this, delightful theme as it is; for I must close by noticing you, who are the children of God. Don’t wonder, don’t wonder if you have discomforts here. If you are what you profess to be, you are strangers. Don’t expect the men of this world to treat you as one of themselves—if they do, be afraid. Dogs don’t bark when a man goes by that they know—they bark at strangers. When people slander and persecute you no longer, be afraid. If you are a stranger, they naturally bark at you. Don’t expect to find comforts in this world that your flesh would long for. This is our inn, not our home. We tarry here a night; we are away in the morning. We may bear the discomforts of the eventide and the night, for the morning will break so soon. Remember that your greatest joy while you are a pilgrim is your God. So the text says, “Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.” Do you want a greater source of consolation than you have got? Here is one that can never be diminished, much less exhausted. When the creature streams are dry, go to this eternal fountain, and you will find it ever springing up.

Your God is your true joy; make your joy to be in your God.

Now what shall be said to those who are not strangers and foreigners? Oh! you dwell in a land where you find some sort of repose, but I have heavy tidings for you. This land in which you dwell, and all the works thereof, must be burned up. The city of which you who have never been converted to Christ are citizens is the City of Destruction, and as is its name such shall be its end. The king will send his armies against that wicked city and destroy it, and if you are citizens of it you will lose all you have—you will lose your souls, you will lose yourselves. “Whither away?” says one. “Where can I find comfort then, and security?” You must do as Lot did when the angels pressed him and said, “Haste to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.” The mountain of safety is Calvary. Where Jesus

died, there you shall live. There is death everywhere else, but there is life in his death. Oh! fly to him! “But how?” says one. Trust him. God gave his Son, equal with himself, to bear the burdens of human sin; and he died a substitute for sinners, a real substitute, an efficient substitute for all who trust in him. If you will trust your soul with Jesus, you are saved. Your sin was laid on him. It is forgiven you. It was blotted out when he nailed the handwriting of ordinances to his cross. Trust him now and you are saved. That is, you shall henceforth become a stranger and a pilgrim; and in the better land you shall find the rest which you never shall find here and need not wish to find, for the land is polluted. Let us away from it. The curse has fallen. Let us get away to the uncursed and ever blessed, where Jesus Christ dwells forever. God add his blessing on these words for Christ’s sake. Amen.

# About Truth78

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# Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Truth78 is a *vision-oriented* ministry for the next generations. We use the term “vision-oriented” to describe our ministry because we are aiming our children and youth toward an end goal and target. Our vision has been shaped by Psalm 78:1-7.

*Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;  
incline your ears to the words of my mouth!  
    <sup>2</sup>I will open my mouth in a parable;  
    I will utter dark sayings from of old,  
    <sup>3</sup>things that we have heard and known,  
    that our fathers have told us.  
    <sup>4</sup>We will not hide them from their children,  
    but tell to the coming generation  
the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might,  
and the wonders that he has done.  
    <sup>5</sup>He established a testimony in Jacob  
and appointed a law in Israel,  
which he commanded our fathers  
to teach to their children,  
    <sup>6</sup>that the next generation might know them,  
    the children yet unborn,  
and arise and tell them to their children,  
    <sup>7</sup>so that they should set their hope in God  
and not forget the works of God,  
but keep his commandments.*

These verses serve as a foundation for our vision for the next generations. They also guide our ministry’s specific mission and the values that undergird and define our resources and training materials.

***Our vision is that the next generations know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God.***

Our vision is that the next generations will, by God’s sovereign grace:

- Come to genuinely **know** the truth of the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—by becoming acquainted with His divine character, glorious deeds, redemptive work, and steadfast promises as revealed in His inerrant Word, the Bible.
- **Honor** and revere God in a way befitting His incomparable greatness and worth.
- **Treasure** God with undivided love and devotion, experiencing Him as their all-satisfying joy.

- Set their full confidence and **hope in Christ alone**, who through His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection, reconciles sinners to God so that they might live as His covenant people.
- **Live as faithful disciples** of Jesus through grace-dependent, Spirit-empowered obedience to His holy and righteous ways, which day by day progressively conforms them into His image and likeness so that they will bear fruit and stand mature in Christ.
- Do everything **for the glory of God** by proclaiming His excellencies in all they think, say, and do so that His great name might receive all honor, thanksgiving, and praise!

***Our mission is to nurture the faith of the next generations by equipping the church and home with resources and training that instruct the mind, engage the heart, and influence the will through proclaiming the whole counsel of God.***

- **Nurture faith.**

We believe that our primary responsibility involves pointing the next generations to the need for conversion through faith in Christ, and helping them grow in Christian maturity. To that end, our resources stress an appropriate balance between:

1. Clearly articulating the essential truths of the Gospel and the necessary response of true repentance and belief.
2. Communicating the essence of Gospel-living; guiding and encouraging believers to persevere in their lifetime pursuit of following Jesus (Christian discipleship).

- **Equip the church and home.**

We believe that God has called both the church and home to raise up the next generations to know, honor, and treasure God through Jesus Christ. This is accomplished through a strategic, loving partnership between the church and home. This partnership affirms the role and responsibility of church leadership to provide encouragement and training for parents, and also to provide formal instruction for children and youth. This partnership affirms that parents, by proximity, opportunity, and God's design, bear a unique responsibility for nurturing their children's faith. Our resources are designed to foster this partnership.

- **Instruct the mind.**

God has revealed Himself to us in the Bible, which communicates through words and concepts that first must be understood by the mind. Therefore, we are committed to developing resources and training that teach the next generations to rightly read, study, interpret, and apply Scripture. We believe this is best done by an incremental, age-appropriate approach that provides the tools and skills needed for studying Scripture. Additionally, we aim to teach in a manner that fosters critical thinking and reasoning so that children and youth have an unwavering confidence in, and defense of, the Christian faith.

- **Engage the heart.**

We believe that true saving faith in Jesus involves a radical heart transformation, which produces new desires, attitudes, and actions. While we fully acknowledge that only God can bring about this Spirit-wrought, grace-dependent transformation, we believe it is our responsibility to guide, inspire, and implore the next generations toward a personal and sincere response to God's truth. What is learned in the mind needs to transform the heart and will. Therefore, our teaching and training incorporates a format and methodology that challenges children and youth to embrace the truth of God by graciously entreating them to love, trust, obey, and delight in God through Christ.

- **Influence the will**

We believe that true saving faith will be evidenced by a growing desire to walk in obedience to God. While this is dependent on the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, God also expects His children to exert real effort. Our wills must put to death sinful, selfish ways and choose instead to daily trust Christ, submit to Him, and be doers of His Word. Therefore, our teaching and training is designed to influence the will of the next generations by guiding, challenging, and encouraging them to be Christ-like in all of their thoughts, words, and actions. We want them to see and experience the surpassing worth and lasting joy of living life fully surrendered to the perfect will of Jesus.

- **Proclaim the whole counsel of God.**

God calls us to make known to the next generations His greatness and worth through the testimony of His Word. This entails proclaiming the majestic breadth and depth of Scripture—both the whole, grand narrative and the individual, glorious parts.<sup>1</sup> We believe this is best accomplished with an intentional, strategic plan that acquaints children and youth with the following:

- A chronological overview of the Bible's key stories and themes.
- A study of the Bible's historical, redemptive narrative (biblical theology).
- An examination of the essential doctrines of the Bible (systematic theology).
- God's moral and ethical instruction: His law and commandments, the wisdom literature, and the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.
- An explicit and careful study of the essential truths of the Gospel.

***To that end, we have developed resources and training that are undergirded and defined by the following values: God-centered, Bible-saturated, Gospel-focused, Christ-exalting, Spirit-dependent, doctrinally grounded, and discipleship-oriented.***

**God-Centered**—We heartily affirm that everything exists and has its being through the one, eternal, sovereign, triune God, who alone is worthy of all honor, thanksgiving, devotion, love, obedience, and praise. Therefore, we must impress upon the next generations the necessity of a Godward orientation in all of life. “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36). To that end, our resources and materials aim to communicate, first and foremost, the incomparable majestic holiness of God. It is from this Godward perspective that we can then properly understand and embrace man's duty and delight in glorifying God in all we think, say, and do.

**Bible-Saturated**—We are committed to boldly upholding and communicating the authority, sufficiency, clarity, and necessity of Scripture. We want the next generations to have the Scriptures permeate their hearts, minds, and souls. Therefore, every resource we develop is rooted in Scripture, encourages interaction with Scripture, and draws conclusions from Scripture. By doing so, our hope and prayer is that the coming generations will be equipped to rightly interpret the Bible, memorize and recall it, personally apply it, proclaim it, and confidently defend it. Furthermore, we aim to treat the Scriptures in a manner and tone that appropriately conveys the weight, gravity, and joy of God's holy Word.

**Gospel-Focused**—We believe that the central message of the Bible conveys God's work of salvation for His chosen people accomplished through the Person and work of Jesus, and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, all for the glory of God. The Gospel is simple, yet amazingly profound, freely offered,

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1. Piper, John. “The Great Story and the Single Verse.” October 24, 2012, [desiringGod.org/articles/the-great-story-and-the-single-verse](http://desiringGod.org/articles/the-great-story-and-the-single-verse) (accessed 7/11/17).

yet extremely costly, and should be communicated as such. We believe the Gospel must be firmly grounded within the whole counsel of God, consistently and carefully explaining essential doctrines that are necessary for a proper and thorough understanding of the Gospel. Therefore, the scope, sequence, and content of our resources reflect this incremental and comprehensive approach. Finally, we are committed to declaring to the next generations the Gospel's serious and urgent command to repent and believe in Jesus. Consequently, our resources are designed to encourage thoughtful, meaningful, sincere, biblical reflection in responding to Gospel truth, rather than simply affirming Gospel facts.

**Christ-Exalting**—We must emphasize the preeminence of Christ, who is God the Father's holy and righteous Son and is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is the anointed Savior, who alone reconciles sinners to God so that we might glorify God forever. We aim to provide the next generations with a rich and profound understanding of the Person and work of Christ, emphasizing His full deity and His full humanity; His role as prophet, priest, and returning King; and the necessity of His perfect obedience, atoning death, and resurrection. Therefore, our resources lay a sure foundation, building precept upon precept, regarding the character of God, the nature of man, the essence of sin, and God's righteous condemnation. It is through these foundational realities that the Person and work of Jesus is fully magnified, bestowing on Him a name that is highly exalted above all others. We want our resources to inspire genuine praise and worship of Jesus for all that He is, all He has done, and all He has promised to do.

**Spirit-Dependent**—We humbly acknowledge that true regeneration and saving faith is by God's sovereign grace, through the work of the Holy Spirit who makes us alive to Christ. We acknowledge every believer's daily dependence on the Spirit as He gives understanding in spiritual matters, guiding and empowering us to become more like Jesus. Our resources and training are designed to encourage parents, teachers, children, and youth to rely on the Holy Spirit. For this reason we emphasize prayer as essential component for home and classroom instruction.

**Doctrinally Grounded**—We believe that there are biblical doctrines essential for being firmly established and mature in the Christian faith. These doctrines reinforce right thinking about God, ourselves, and the world, guiding us in godliness and guarding us from deceit. Therefore, our resources are grounded in solid doctrinal truths that are clearly taught, explained, and repeatedly communicated with increasing depth as our children and youth grow and mature. We also believe that difficult doctrines, such as God's absolute sovereignty, His wrath, human suffering, and the existence of evil must be addressed and explained so that the next generations will remain steadfast in their faith through the storms of life. Our resources are carefully reviewed for their theological integrity to ensure they adhere to sound doctrine.

**Discipleship-Oriented**—We want the next generations to be serious, passionate, joyful disciples of Christ, who are fully equipped and prepared to deny themselves, take up their cross, and daily follow Jesus. Furthermore, we want them to eagerly embrace the work of the Great Commission and live as Christ's witnesses, shining the light of the Gospel so that the lost might be saved. Therefore, our resources emphasize a discipleship orientation that fosters lifelong instruction in and practice of the Christian life. We aim to accomplish this through the following:

- Developing a carefully designed scope and sequence of teaching content that progressively moves children and youth toward greater spiritual growth.
- Using a relational, interactive teaching style in which the evidences of Christian discipleship are clearly communicated, visibly demonstrated, and faithfully encouraged.
- Intentionally providing resources and training for the home that encourage about, and equip parents for their responsibility in discipling their children.

# The Theological and Philosophical Foundations of Our Teaching Resources

We believe that if our children are to become mature disciples of Jesus, they must be given a theological education that is grounded in both the breadth and depth of Scripture—teaching them the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Additionally, it must be done in an age-appropriate manner that instructs the mind, engages the heart, and implores children and youth to trust in Christ and walk in His ways. Paul's words to Timothy can serve as model for us:

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup>and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.—2 Timothy 3:14-17*

Acquainting children and youth with the Scriptures in this manner will involve exposing them to the actual content of Scripture, while also emphasizing a core set of *essential truths* (doctrines) regarding the Christian faith. In conjunction with this, there must be a focus on a call to personally respond to those truths (relational). Both are important. John Piper states:

*Sometimes it is necessary to stress that Christianity is primarily a relationship with Jesus rather than a set of ideas about Jesus. The reason we do this is because no one is saved by believing a set of ideas. The devil believes most of the truths of Christianity. We need to stress that unless a person has a living trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord, all the orthodoxy in the world will not get him into heaven.*

*But if our stress on the personal relationship with Jesus leads us to deny that there is a set of truths essential to Christianity, we make a grave mistake. There are truths about God and Christ and man and the church and the world which are essential to the life of Christianity. If they are lost or distorted, the result will not be merely wrong ideas but misplaced trust. The inner life of faith is not independent from the doctrinal statement of faith. When doctrine goes bad, so do hearts. There is a body of doctrine which must be preserved.<sup>1</sup>*

Therefore, we must stress both the doctrinal and relational aspects of the Christian life. Our teaching resources are designed to emphasize and carefully balance these two.

## Teaching the Whole Counsel of God

In Acts 20:27 Paul writes:

*for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.*

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1. Piper, John. "Contend for the Faith," a sermon delivered at Bethlehem Baptist Church of Minneapolis on November 25, 1984, copyright ©2015 Desiring God Foundation. Used by Permission.



D. A Carson makes the following observation from this text:

*What he must mean is that he taught the burden of the whole of God's revelation, the balance of things, leaving nothing out that was of primary importance, never ducking the hard bits, helping believers to grasp the whole counsel of God that they themselves would become better equipped to read their Bibles intelligently, comprehensively. It embraced*

- *God's purposes in the history of redemption (truths to be believed and a God to be worshiped),*
- *an unpacking of human origin, fall, redemption, and destiny (a worldview that shapes all human understanding and a Savior without whom there is no hope),*
- *the conduct expected of God's people (commandments to be obeyed and wisdom to be pursued, both in our individual existence and in the community of the people of God), and*
- *the pledges of transforming power both in this life and in the life to come (promises to be trusted and hope to be anticipated).<sup>2</sup>*

One way to evaluate whether or not we are teaching our children and youth the whole counsel of God is see if they can answer these crucial questions, with increasing biblical depth, as they grow and mature:

- What's in the Bible? Who is the Bible about?
- What's the main message of the Bible?
- What are the essential doctrines of the Christian faith?
- Why do we need to be saved? How are we saved?
- How are we to live?

At Truth78, we have identified and incorporated the following five elements (or theological disciplines) into our scope and sequence. We believe that these five elements, interspersed at different ages and emphasized to varying degrees throughout these ages, comprise an appropriate breadth and depth of Scripture needed for teaching the whole counsel of God. Each element addresses specific and essential questions.

**Bible Survey and Book Studies**—an overview of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In our curricula, this is first introduced in the preschool years by a chronological, story-based presentation that introduces children to the key people, places, events, and themes of the Bible. Most importantly, it emphasizes God as the Author and main character of the Bible. This provides children with a fundamental Bible foundation upon which the other elements will be built. In the older grades, students study individual books of the Bible in more depth.

**Addresses:** What's in the Bible? What is the Bible about?

**Biblical Theology**—introduces the main storyline of Scripture, whereby God progressively reveals His redemptive purposes, which come to their complete fulfillment in the Person and work of Christ, for the glory of God. Students are taught to see that the Bible's many diverse stories, written over time, all serve to communicate one, main unified message.

**Addresses:** What's the main message of the Bible?

2. From: *Preach The Word: Essays on Expository Preaching: In Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, edited by Todd A. Wilson (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2007), 177-178).

**Systematic Theology**—a topical approach in teaching the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith. Systematic theology presents the Bible’s teaching on various subjects, one at a time, and summarizes each topic based on the entirety of Scripture.

**Addresses:** What are the essential doctrines of the Christian faith?

**Gospel Proclamation**—an explicit presentation of the essential truths of the Gospel, leading to a clear understanding of the Person and work of Christ and what it means to respond in true repentance and belief.

**Addresses:** What do we need to do to be saved? How are we saved?

**Moral and Ethical Instruction**—acquainting students with the nature, role, and importance of God’s laws and commands, the wisdom literature, and the moral and ethical teachings of Jesus and the apostles. This instruction is necessary for understanding God’s character and standards and our need for the Gospel, and for guiding believers in righteous and godly conduct.

**Addresses:** How are we to live?

### The Philosophy and Methodology of Our Teaching Resources

We believe children can grasp deep truths when taught in a careful, intentional, age-appropriate manner that constantly points to the end goal...

*That the next generations know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God.*

Toward this overarching goal, our resources and especially our curriculum and devotional materials incorporate a teaching philosophy and methodology that, in age-appropriate ways, is characterized by the following:

- **Nurtures Faith**—Our aim is to see that children experience true conversion and grow in Christian maturity. Therefore, our teaching resources stress an appropriate balance between clearly articulating the essential truths of the Christian faith and the essence of Gospel-living (Christian discipleship). Keeping this two-fold balance will challenge both believing and unbelieving children and students. Furthermore, it is important to note that, while not every lesson explicitly presents the entire Gospel, every lesson presents essential Gospel truths. Also, each curriculum as a whole clearly communicates the Gospel.
- **Builds Precept Upon Precept**—Just as children are taught the alphabet before they are taught to write words and then sentences, biblical instruction is best grasped when taught incrementally with an intentional, step-by-step, age-appropriate approach.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, much care has been taken in the development of our curricula so that each lesson and each curriculum as a whole builds upon and expands upon the previously learned truths and concepts. This precept-upon-precept approach lays a strong foundation for helping children know and grasp deep truths, and also encourages them to increasingly respond to God’s Word in faith.
- **Instructs the Mind**—If children are to know, honor, and treasure God through Christ, they must become well acquainted with His Word. Toward that end, they must be given the proper tools and skills needed for rightly studying, interpreting, and applying Scripture. Beginning in

3. We understand that it is sometimes necessary to combine age groups in the classroom setting. Therefore, our materials give a targeted age range that includes multiple age levels.

earnest in first grade, our curricula use an interactive teaching model that guide students to personally engage with the Bible. This model fosters critical thinking and reasoning skills that are important for confidence in and a defense of the Christian faith.

- **Engages the Heart**—While we fully acknowledge that only God can bring Spirit-wrought, grace-dependent faith in Jesus and walking as His faithful disciple, we believe that it is our responsibility to guide, inspire, and implore students toward a personal and sincere response to God's truth. What is learned in the mind needs to transform the heart and will. Therefore, the curricula include elements meant to challenge and graciously entreat students to love, trust, obey, and delight in God through Christ.
- **Influences the Will**—We believe that true saving faith will be evidenced by a growing desire to walk in obedience to God. While this is dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit, God does expect His children to exert effort, choosing daily to trust Christ, submit to Him, and follow in obedience. Therefore, each lesson includes Scripture and discussion prompts that guide, challenge and encourage students to specific Christ-like thoughts, words, actions, and attitudes. Additionally, these discussions are set in a context of showing the surpassing worth and lasting joy of living life fully surrendered to the perfect will of Jesus.

### Explore Further

The following are some free seminars and some booklets you can purchase through Truth78.org that provide further explanation and practical application of topics covered in this article:

#### Seminars

- “Making a Strategic Plan for Teaching the Whole Counsel of God”
- “Teaching the Difficult Doctrines in Children’s Ministry”
- “The Importance of Biblical Literacy for the Next Generation”
- “Engaging Active Minds in the Learning Process”
- “Reaching the Heart: The Importance of Application”
- “Communicating the Gospel within the Whole Counsel of God”

#### Booklets

- *Discipleship Through Doctrinal Teaching and Catechism*
- *Helping Children to Understand the Gospel*

# Curricula Scope and Sequence

“X” denotes the major emphasis, and “x” a lesser emphasis. These marks are not intended to exclude the other elements. For example, *all curricula offer a clear presentation of the Gospel. Additionally, from first grade and beyond, all curricula include teaching students foundational Bible study skills.*

## Sunday Morning Foundational Curricula

| Curriculum   | Grade   | Bible Survey | Biblical Theology | Systematic Theology | Moral and Ethical Instruction | Gospel Proclamation | Bible Survey and Book Studies |
|--|---------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>A Sure Foundation:</b> <i>A Philosophy and Curriculum for Ministry to Infants and Toddlers</i>  | Nursery | X            |                   |                     |                               |                     |                               |
| <b>He Established a Testimony:</b> <i>Old Testament Stories for Young Children</i>                 | PreK    | X            |                   |                     |                               |                     | X                             |
| <b>He Has Spoken by His Son:</b> <i>New Testament Stories for Young Children</i>                   | PreK    | X            |                   |                     |                               |                     | X                             |
| <b>Jesus, What a Savior!:</b> <i>A Study for Children on Redemption</i>                            | K       |              | x                 |                     |                               | X                   |                               |
| <b>The ABCs of God:</b> <i>A Study for Children on the Greatness and Worth of God</i>              | 1       |              |                   | X                   |                               |                     |                               |
| <b>Faithful to All His Promises:</b> <i>A Study for Children on the Promises of God</i>            | 2       |              |                   | X                   |                               |                     |                               |
| <b>In the Beginning...Jesus:</b> <i>A Chronological Study for Children of Redemptive History</i>   | 3       |              | X                 |                     |                               | X                   |                               |
| <b>To Be Like Jesus:</b> <i>A Study for Children on Following Jesus</i>                            | 4       |              |                   | X                   | X                             | X                   |                               |
| <b>How Majestic Is Your Name:</b> <i>A Study for Children on the Names and Character of God</i>    | 5       |              |                   | X                   |                               |                     |                               |
| <b>My Purpose Will Stand:</b> <i>A Study for Children on the Providence of God</i>                 | 6       | X            |                   | X                   |                               |                     |                               |
| <b>Teach Me Your Way:</b> <i>A Study for Youth on Surrender to Jesus and Submission to His Way</i> | 7       |              | x                 | X                   | X                             | X                   |                               |

| Curriculum   | Grade | Bible Survey | Biblical Theology | Systematic Theology | Moral and Ethical Instruction | Gospel Proclamation | Bible Survey and Book Studies |
|--|-------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Your Word Is Truth:</b> <i>A Study for Youth on Seeing All of Life Through the Truth of Scripture</i> | 8     |              |                   | X                   | X                             |                     |                               |
| <b>Open My Eyes:</b> <i>A Study for Youth on Studying the Bible</i>                                      | 10    |              |                   |                     |                               |                     | X                             |

### Midweek Bible Curricula

| Curriculum   | Grade     | Bible Survey | Biblical Theology | Systematic Theology | Moral and Ethical Instruction | Gospel Proclamation | Bible Survey and Book Studies |
|--|-----------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>He Has Been Clearly Seen:</b> <i>A Study for Children on Seeing and Delighting in God's Glory</i>     | K         |              |                   | X                   |                               |                     |                               |
| <b>I Stand in Awe:</b> <i>A Study for Children on the Bible</i>  | 1         |              |                   | X                   |                               | x                   |                               |
| <b>The Righteous Shall Live By Faith:</b> <i>A Study for Children and Adults on the Ten Commandments</i> | 1st-Adult |              |                   |                     | X                             | x                   |                               |
| <b>Lord, Teach Us to Pray:</b> <i>A Study for Children and Adults on Prayer</i>                          | 1st-Adult |              |                   | X                   | x                             |                     |                               |
| <b>The Way of the Wise:</b> <i>A Study for Children on Wisdom and Foolishness</i>                        | 3         |              |                   | X                   | X                             |                     |                               |
| <b>Fight the Good Fight:</b> <i>A Study for Children on Persevering in Faith</i>                         | 5         |              | X                 | X                   | x                             |                     |                               |
| <b>Pour Out Your Heart Before Him:</b> <i>A Study for Youth on Prayer and Praise in the Psalms</i>       | 7         |              |                   |                     |                               |                     | X                             |
| <b>Abiding in Jesus:</b> <i>A Study for Youth on Trusting Jesus and Encouraging Others</i>               | 8         |              |                   | X                   |                               | X                   |                               |
| <b>Rejoicing in God's Good Design:</b> <i>A Study for Youth on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood</i>        | 9         |              |                   | X                   | x                             |                     |                               |

## Backyard Bible Club/Vacation Bible School Curricula

| Curriculum  | Grade | Bible Survey | Biblical Theology | Systematic Theology | Moral and Ethical Instruction | Gospel Proclamation | Bible Survey and Book Studies |
|---|-------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Wisdom Calls Aloud:</b> <i>An Evangelistic Study for Children on Wisdom and the Fear of the Lord</i> | K-6   |              |                   |                     |                               | X                   |                               |
| <b>The Call of God:</b> <i>An Evangelistic Study for Children on the Work of God in Redemption</i>      | K-6   |              |                   |                     |                               | X                   |                               |
| <b>Things Hidden:</b> <i>An Evangelistic Study for Children on Kingdom Parables</i>                     | K-6   |              |                   |                     |                               | X                   |                               |
| <b>God Always Wins:</b> <i>An Evangelistic Study for Children on the Greatness of God in Salvation</i>  | K-6   |              |                   |                     |                               | X                   |                               |

# Distinctions of Truth78 Curricula

Though each curriculum in our scope and sequence will differ somewhat based on age and particular focus, all our Sunday School, Midweek Bible, and Intergenerational curricula share the following distinctions.

- **A Big Vision of God**

Our curricula aims to acquaint children with the incomparable majesty of the triune God by digging deep into His divine character as revealed throughout Scripture. We believe that children should be taught the beauty and grandeur of His manifold perfections. In completing our scope and sequence, children will have learned and explored, with increasing depth, more than 20 distinct attributes of God.

- **The Centrality of God in All Things**

Every lesson in every curriculum aims to magnify the triune God above all—His name, fame, honor, and glory. We believe that children will find their greatest joy when they esteem God most. Therefore, the lessons use language, illustrations, and applications that point children toward God-adoration. Furthermore, the curricula challenge children to see that every aspect of life is to fall under the centrality of God and His sovereign rule.

- **Doctrinal Depth, Accuracy, and Clarity**

We believe deep, biblical truths and doctrines can and should be taught to children. Doing so requires teaching truths in an accurate, clear, yet child-friendly manner. To that end, every lesson in our curricula is carefully reviewed by a highly qualified and experienced theological editor.

- **Faithfulness to the Gospel**

The central message of the Bible culminates in the Person and work of Jesus—the Gospel—in which He brings sinners near to God. The Gospel is simple yet amazingly profound, freely offered yet extremely costly, and should be communicated as such. We believe this is best done by repeatedly drawing attention to essential Gospel truths found throughout Scripture: God is the sovereign Creator and Ruler, God is holy, man is sinful, God is just, God is merciful, Jesus is holy and righteous, Jesus died to save sinners, etc. Every lesson presents one or more of these essential truths, and every curriculum, as a whole, clearly and explicitly presents the Gospel to children.

- **A Serious and Sober View of Sin**

In order to fully embrace the Gospel, children must first come to an appropriate understanding of the true nature of sin and the offense that it is to God's holiness. Sin is no trifling matter. It is not simply a matter of "mistakes" or disobeying rules. Its consequences go far beyond a broken friendship with God. Our curriculum takes our total depravity very seriously, as well as God's righteous wrath and condemnation. Therefore, lessons dealing with sin and God's judgment use texts, illustrations, and explanations that convey these truths in an appropriate tone and manner. Children are challenged to think deep and hard about their standing before God and Jesus' call to repent and believe.

- **Interactive Engagement with Scripture**  
Using an age-appropriate, step-by-step approach, the lesson format trains students to interact with the text using proper Bible study methods. This process begins in earnest in first grade, and increases in depth and rigor as children age and mature. Furthermore, we incorporate an interactive teaching style, carefully laid out for teachers, which serves to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills aimed at a deeper understanding of the things of God and the ability to rightly apply the Word of God.
- **Age-Appropriate Visuals and Illustrations That Enhance the Learning Experience**  
Key truths are often more easily grasped and better understood when explained in conjunction with concrete visuals and illustrations. Our curricula offer numerous color visuals and suggested illustrations to enhance the learning process. This provides children with opportunities to be actively involved in the lesson. These visuals and illustrations are age-appropriate, yet also treat the subject matter in an honoring manner.
- **Personal Application That Encourages a Proper Response in the Mind, Heart, and Will**  
Each lesson in our curricula ends by encouraging children to personally embrace and apply the truths learned. Through carefully constructed questions, we offer adult leaders practical, specific suggestions to challenge the children in their faith and spiritual walk. Our goal is to encourage genuine faith that is increasingly evidenced by love for God, spiritual fruit, and good works. We also offer questions that specifically challenge unbelievers to consider the truths of Scripture.
- **Excitement for God's Global Purposes**  
We desire that our children and students come to know, love, and actively participate in God's mission among the unsaved and unreached. Every curriculum includes specific, age-appropriate components that focus on evangelism and world missions.
- **Maximizing Classroom Time with Biblical Teaching and Spiritual Discussion**  
We believe that time in the classroom should be structured to emphasize biblical teaching and application. However, depending on the age group and time availability, additional hands-on activities may be warranted. Therefore, each lesson suggests further optional activities for the classroom. They have been developed to either reinforce lesson themes or introduce some other valuable faith-building endeavor: missions, Bible skills, Bible memory, etc.
- **Assistance for Parents in Discipling Their Children**  
We provide parent resource pages to accompany curriculum lessons. Not only do these pages outline the Scripture and main themes presented in the lesson, but they also give suggestions for further spiritual discussion in the home, as well as simple activities to reinforce the lesson.
- **Stewardship of Resources**  
We believe it is incumbent on churches to be responsible stewards of the resources God has given to them. To that end, we strive to offer resources that have been specifically designed for durability and reuse. Though in the first year an average church will spend approximately the same amount of money, or slightly more than it would have spent purchasing a curriculum package from another publisher, subsequent years are much less expensive since only our student materials are consumable. Teacher's materials, including visual classroom aids, are printed and packaged for years of reuse.



# Resources and Training Materials

Truth78 currently offers the following categories of resources and training materials for equipping the church and home:

## **Curriculum**

We publish materials designed for formal Bible instruction. The scope and sequence of these materials reflects our commitment to teach children and youth the whole counsel of God over the course of their education. Materials include curricula for Sunday School, Midweek Bible programs, Backyard Bible Clubs or Vacation Bible School, and Intergenerational studies. Most of these materials can easily be adapted for use in Christian schools and education in the home.

## **Vision-Casting and Training**

We offer a wide variety of booklets, video and audio seminars, articles, and other practical training resources that highlight and further expound our vision, mission, and values, as well as our educational philosophy and methodology. Many of these resources are freely distributed through our website. These resources and training serve to assist ministry leaders, volunteers, and parents in implementing Truth78's vision and mission in their churches and homes.

## **Parenting and Family Discipleship**

We have produced a variety of materials and training designed to help parents in their role of discipling their children. These include booklets, video presentations, family devotionals, children's books, articles, and other recommended resources. Furthermore, our curricula include take-home pages to help parents apply what is taught in the classroom with their child's daily experience in order to nurture faith.

## **Bible Memory**

Our Fighter Verses Bible memory program is designed to encourage the church, families, and individuals in the lifelong practice and love of Bible memory. The Fighter Verses program utilizes an easy-to-use Bible memory system with carefully chosen verses to help fight the fight of faith. There is a preschool version (Foundation Verses) for younger children. We also offer a study and devotional guide that corresponds to Set 1 of the Fighter Verses.

For more information on any of these resources and training materials contact:

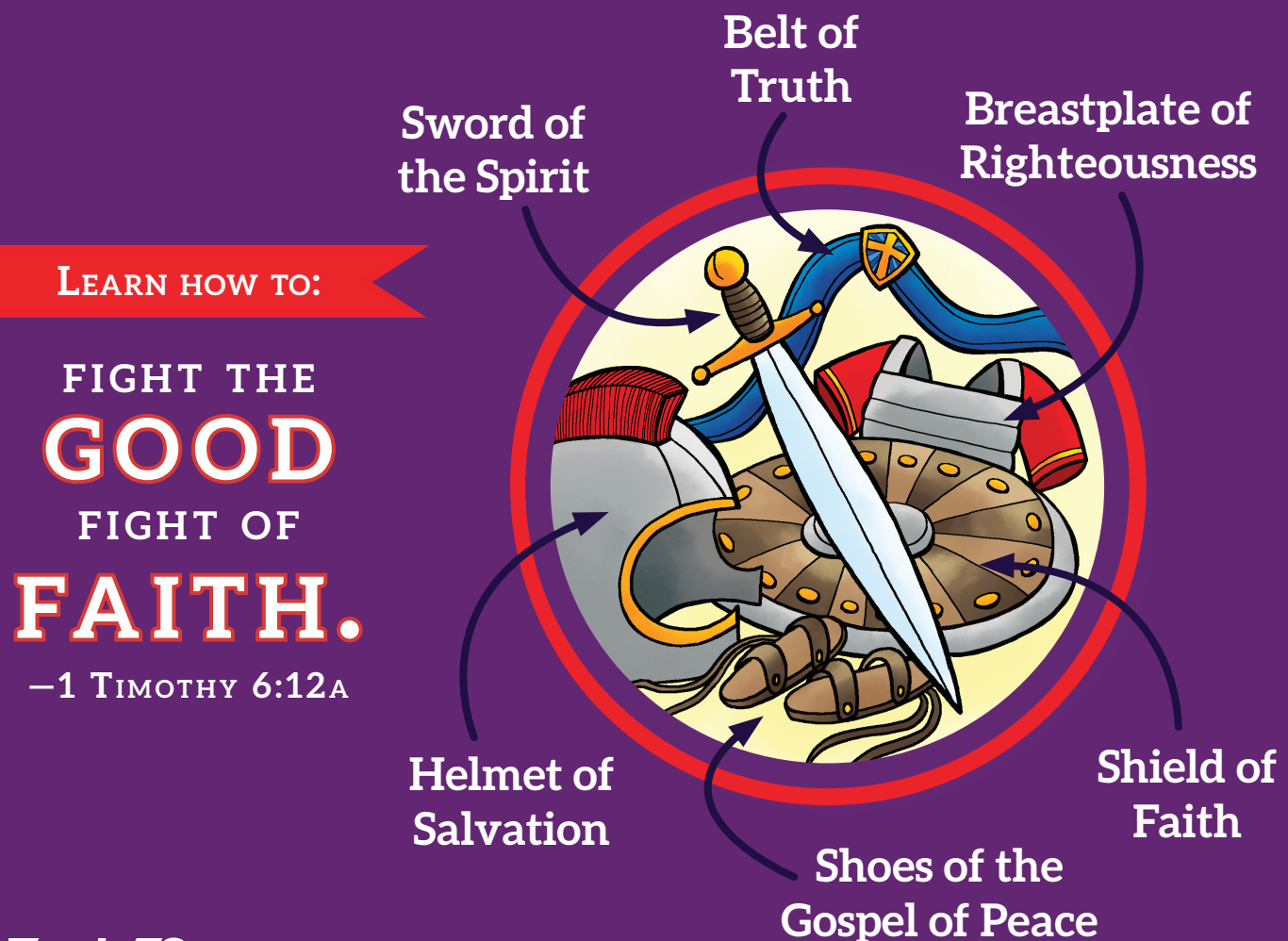
**Truth:78**

[www.Truth78.org](http://www.Truth78.org)  
[info@Truth78.org](mailto:info@Truth78.org)  
1-877-400-1414

Everyone is in a battle—either as an unbeliever fighting against God or as a believer fighting the fight of faith with God’s help.

The lessons present these two battles and explain God’s work of grace both in justification and in the perseverance of faith. Students will also learn about common battlegrounds of the heart, practical suggestions to fight these battles, and helpful strategies to guard their faith. At the end, they will be given a vision for eternal life in heaven, which makes perseverance worthwhile.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.—*Ephesians 6:10-12*



**Truth:78**

FGTGEE REV 7.19 FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, TEACHER'S GUIDE

Permitted use of this resource in any format is dependent on your organization's active Truth78 subscription.