



# Forward

## Teaching Guide

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# Welcome to the new D6 EveryDay Curriculum *Forward Teaching Guide* from Randall House!

*Forward Teaching Guide* is part of a Bible study curriculum for high school students with the goal of helping them know God through the study of His Word and through interacting with family members at home. *Forward* is part of the D6 family of Sunday School/Bible study curriculum for all ages. D6 EveryDay curriculum provides a three-year study of the *story* of the Bible, helping lead the entire family to interact around the same biblical theme each week.

*Forward Teaching Guide* and its companion publications, *Forward Teaching Essentials*, *Forward* student magazine, and *Parent Page*, are the arm of D6 EveryDay curriculum for high school students.

## **Variety**

Every quarter includes lessons from both the Old and New Testaments. There will occasionally be topical lessons that reinforce and enhance the Old or New Testament lessons.

## **Apologetics**

Teachers and learners alike will find tools to help them explain and defend key Christian doctrines.

## **Lesson Objective**

It's hard to know if your lesson is successful if you're not sure what you're trying to accomplish. That's why every lesson includes an objective that identifies what you want learners to take away from the lesson.

## **Bible Basics**

These brief notes help teachers, parents, and students develop deeper biblical literacy by discussing and memorizing important truths every believer should know.

## **Zoom In notes**

Lessons include brief notes to help teachers, parents, and students develop a biblical worldview and think biblically. These notes, along with the Bible Basics notes, help learners see the world through the lens of Scripture.

## **How It Fits**

These brief notes help teachers, parents, and students see how the entire Bible fits together by showing how each lesson fits in the big picture of God's plan.

## **Teaching Tips**

Teacher training in bite-sized nuggets helps you make your lessons more interesting and effective.

*D6 Digital! D6 curriculum is available in a digital format!* You can study from your laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Go to [randallhouse.com](http://randallhouse.com) or call 800.877.7030 for more information.



Icons indicate how the lesson may be customized for a large group (LG) or small group (SG) format.

**D6 EveryDay curriculum is built around five important steps to help students learn and participate in every lesson. These five steps are:**

### **Get Started**

This opening activity helps capture the learners' attention and answers the question, *Where is this lesson going?* Two options are provided so teachers can choose the activity that best fits their students and their classroom setting.

### **Study the Word**

*What does the Bible say?* This section answers this question by digging into the biblical text and explaining it in ways both teachers and students can understand.

### **Dig Deeper**

When a verse or element of the lesson needs further explanation, Dig Deeper provides more information for the teacher. These notes address issues such as cultural background, historical context, theological importance, and other complementary biblical teachings.

### **Apply It**

*How does this impact me?* This is the question most teens want to know when learning something new. Apply It helps learners see how the biblical truths they have just heard fit into life in the twenty-first century. Each Apply It section includes at least one thought-provoking question that is meant to help you spark a meaningful discussion with your students.

### **Live It**

The final section in each lesson answers the question, *What now?* After learning biblical truths and how those truths apply to life, students still need to know how to take practical action. Live It encourages learners to take practical steps to daily apply the biblical principles they have learned. This is the perfect lead-in to each week's daily devotions in *Forward* magazine. These weekly, six-day Bible studies reinforce the theme teens studied on Sunday, allowing God to continue speaking to them from His Word each day.

The *Forward Teaching Guide* works in conjunction with *Forward* student magazine, a publication that helps high school teens study God's Word on their own. *Forward* includes timely articles that seek to reach students where they are in life. The magazine also features 13 weeks of daily devotional Bible studies, which help reinforce the themes of the lessons they learn each Sunday. *Forward* magazine includes practical applications for each daily devotion. Every student in your class needs his or her own copy of *Forward* student magazine to read and study throughout the quarter.

*Forward Teaching Essentials* is a collection of posters, reproducible handouts, *Parent Pages*, student outlines, and other resources to enhance the lessons provided in this teaching guide. These tools will help make your class time more interesting and effective. The *Parent Pages* are designed to help parents and grandparents disciple their children and grandchildren at home. (Each packet of teaching essentials comes with a copy of *Forward Teaching Guide*.)

All of the *Forward* products can be ordered online at [D6curriculum.com](http://D6curriculum.com). Or, you can order them by calling 1-800-877-7030. We also welcome your comments and suggestions at this number or at our address:

**Forward Staff** - P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, TN 37217

Email: [forward@d6family.com](mailto:forward@d6family.com)

# IN THIS TEACHING GUIDE

## Exploring Truth

The first two lessons will help us set the foundation for what we can know as truth. We will explore how God gave us absolute truth in His inspired Word.

## Matthew/Luke





Five lessons from Matthew and Luke will help us explore Christ's birth and early ministry, as well as some of His key teachings including the Beatitudes and other teaching from the Sermon on the Mount, the Good Samaritan, and the Prodigal Son.

## Genesis

Six lessons from Genesis will help us see how God began to build the nation from which He promised to bless the world through the Savior. We will examine events in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

# LEADING STUDENTS TO CHRIST

Christianity is about more than going to church and obeying your parents. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Your greatest privilege as a teacher may be leading students to a relationship with Christ. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

-  Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a life-long relationship. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.
-  Salvation is a supernatural process. People can be arm-twisted into buying a product, but they have to come to Christ of their own free will.
-  Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on students who don't know Christ.
-  Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it: **ACKNOWLEDGE** your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23). **TRUST** in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10). **SURRENDER** your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2). Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way students can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond.

# Truth We Can Trust

December 6, 2020

## Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 1-1 (poster)
- FWTE 1-2 (student outline)
- FWTE 1-3 (handout)
- FWTE 1-4 (handout)
- FWTE 1-5 (#teenfeed)
- PP-1 (Parent Page)

## Family Theme

God Revealed Truth

## Lesson Objective

Learners understand that God revealed truth in His inspired Word. We can base our lives on the Bible, knowing that everything it asserts as truth is true.

## Study Text

Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12



## Key Truths

- The Bible Reveals Truth About God.
- The Bible Is Inspired by God.
- The Bible Gives Truth for Everyday Life.



## Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to go over the following question and answer each day this week and to work with family members to do so as well. **How do we know about God? Answer:** We know God through the wonders of creation (Psalm 19:1-4), through His image in which we are made (Genesis 1:27), and especially through His Son Jesus (John 1:18). We know about God from the Scriptures, the Bible. (This note is on this week's Student Outline you give to your students.)



## How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

These books were written as persecution increased for the early church. Having firm confidence in the truth and reliability of one's beliefs is essential when it is a matter of life or death. This lesson fits with the whole of Scripture because it demonstrates how the God of all truth revealed His truth to us in the Bible.

## Get Started LG SG

**Option 1:** Some topics in the Bible can be confusing and difficult to wrap our minds around. The inspiration of Scripture can be hard to explain, but it is an important concept to comprehend. This video from Three Minute Theology can help your teenagers better understand what we mean when we say the Bible is inspired (<https://tinyurl.com/3MinuteInspiration>). After showing the video, say, *God revealed His truth in His inspired Word. As a result, we can base our lives on the Bible, knowing that everything it asserts as truth is true.*

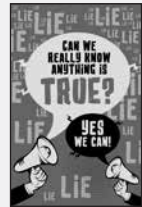
**Option 2:** Many films were inspired by books. However, sometimes a book's title gets changed before it hits the big screen. Read the following book/short story titles to your group and see if they can figure out what film was inspired by that book. (The film titles are in parentheses.)

- *The Greatest Gift* (*It's a Wonderful Life*)
- *The Snow Queen* (*Frozen*)
- *Rapunzel* (*Tangled*)
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (*Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*)
- *The Iron Man: A Children's Story in Five Nights* (*The Iron Giant*)

Say, *While many books have inspired films, inspiration plays an even greater role when it comes to the Bible. God revealed His truth in His inspired Word. We can base our lives on the Bible, knowing that everything it asserts as truth is true.*

Use one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

Display the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 1-1 ("What About Truth?") poster.



FWTE 1-1

## Study the Word LG



### The Bible Reveals Truth About God (Hebrews 1:1-2)

God wants to be known; He wants to be found (Proverbs 8:17). He has intentionally created all we see with evidence of His fingerprint on it. When we observe all He has created, we discover overwhelming evidence that an intelligent Designer has intricately designed everything. This is known as *general revelation*. We believe (with good reason and solid evidence)



FWTE 1-2

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 1-2 student outline and something to write with.



### Teaching Tip:

Seek to be a disciple maker as well as a teacher. As possible, build personal relationships with your learners outside the classroom so they can learn from your example.

that God has generally revealed Himself to all of humanity through His creation. The revelation of the Creator through nature is considered general because it is available to every person, everywhere; nobody can hide from it.

**Apologetic Focus:** Many examples within God's *general revelation* point to an intelligent Designer. Many are layered with incredible detail, indicating intelligence behind its origin. The human brain is intricately wired, with synapses firing in perfect conjunction with others in order to provide proper brain function. All the hormones, fluids, minerals, and chemical reactions of the body must maintain the right balance for the body to function properly. The human hand is designed with the tendons and ligaments perfectly positioned to provide the movement where needed. These are only a few of many examples that point to an intelligent Creator God. Check out [www.icr.org/creation-anatomy](http://www.icr.org/creation-anatomy) for more examples of the amazing design of the human body.

Romans 1:19-20 teaches us that God has revealed Himself in all that has been made, and He has placed that knowledge on our hearts. Admittedly, general revelation does not teach us details of God's plan (the incarnation of Christ, the atonement of our sins, the resurrection of Jesus), but it can lead us to the conviction that there is a transcendent God who is self-sufficient, eternal, and powerful.

### Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Point out that the creation around us reveals in general ways that there is a *God who created the universe and everything in it*. Encourage learners to discuss this truth with family members.

The evidence for God throughout His creation is similar to looking at a beautiful building. You can look at the building, admire the craftsmanship and attention to detail, and acknowledge that an incredibly skilled architect designed the building. But you could never actually know the architect unless he spoke to you. That is exactly what God did for us through the Bible. He chose to reveal Himself further through giving the Scriptures and sending His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). This is known as *special revelation*. God provided a way for humanity to

discover Him on a deeper and more intimate level. God’s Word and His Son who lived among us reveal what God is like, how He made us, how He redeems us, how He restores us, and how He provided a way to reconcile us to Himself.

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## Apply It

**We can know God on a personal, intimate level by understanding who He has revealed Himself to be in His Word.**

- *What are some things the Bible tells us about God?* (He is a personal being who loves us; He is holy and just; He is all-powerful and all-knowing.)
- *How would you explain to a friend how we can know God on a personal level?*

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Distribute copies of FWTE 1-3 (“God Is . . .”). It gives a small sample of what God has revealed about Himself in the Bible.

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FWTE-1-3



## **The Bible Is Inspired by God** (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16a)

The thought that there is a God who created us and has spoken to us in His Word sounds wonderful, but how do we know it is true? Wasn’t the Bible written by men? How can we trust it? These are valid questions. *Why should* we trust that the Bible is from God?

Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:21 that Scripture is not just thoughtful principles or fanciful prophecies that were conjured up by random men. The 40 plus authors that contributed to the Scriptures were prophets, kings, leaders, disciples, or servants who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Though the writers were indeed human, they were filled and guided by the Holy Spirit. We do not trust in God’s Word because important individuals wrote it; rather, we trust in God’s Word because it was given to us by God. Second Timothy 3:16 describes the Scriptures as *inspired* or *breathed out* by God. It is God’s divine truth. The source of the Bible is the Spirit of God. We can trust that the Bible is true because the Holy Spirit inspired the writers so that they recorded what God wanted us to know.

The Scriptures we read today originated with God, not men. That is the only way 40-plus human authors, over a 1500-year period, in three languages could write something

that all fits together without contradicting itself. The accuracy of the hundreds of prophecies, some given centuries in advance, could only have been accomplished by God inspiring His prophets in what to write and say. What Peter described in 2 Peter 1:21 is known as dual authorship. God spoke through the authors to reveal truth, guiding them, yet never suspending their own personalities. The authors could freely use their own faculties.

The accuracy of historical details, the confirmation of archaeology, the absence of mistakes and contradictions, the remarkable agreement of the different writers, the astounding fulfillment of prophecy all point to a supernatural source—the Spirit of God. (See <https://probe.org/the-inspiration-of-the-bible/> for more on the inspiration of Scripture.)

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## **Apply It**

**Confidently learn and live out the truths of the Bible, knowing it was inspired by God.**

- *What does it mean that the Bible was inspired by God? (The Holy Spirit guided the writers so they recorded what God wanted us to know.)*
- *How does knowing the Bible was inspired by God motivate us to follow and obey it? (It is the directives of the all-knowing, all-wise God, who is holy, just, loving, and merciful. He knows what is best for us.)*



## **The Bible Gives Truth for Everyday Life**

**(2 Timothy 3:16b-17; Hebrews 4:12)**

God's special revelation to us is inerrant, infallible, and sufficient. It is entirely truthful in all that it affirms. More than any other religious book, the Bible corresponds with the world as it actually is. The Bible has shown itself to be completely accurate. It does not make fictitious assertions or factual errors in what it claims, though it does accurately record false statements, such as Satan deceiving Adam and Eve or Peter denying Jesus. The Bible has been faithfully recorded, though it does not necessarily mean God endorses everything within the recordings, such as the evil actions of wicked men.

The Bible is infallible. It is incapable of error since it is a reflection of the character and nature of God. When we obey

God's Word, it will always lead to human flourishing, which includes salvation. The Bible is sufficient in that it accomplishes everything God intended in our lives. Though we may want more information about God, the Bible is all we really need in order to know God, to live for His kingdom, and to be equipped for the work He wants to accomplish.

Paul told Timothy that all Scripture is from God and is useful for every part of life (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Scripture can speak to anything we go through. God's truth, found in His Word, is invaluable.

Since Scripture is God-breathed it is applicable to every believer. God's divine truth is timeless and will always be effective. All truth comes from the One who established the standard of truth. Truth does not run its course and then become ineffective. Truth is everlasting.

### **Dig Deeper:**

There are different types of writing in Scripture that are to be interpreted differently: historical narrative or prose is to be understood literally; prophecy can include literal and symbolic fulfillments; poetry can include symbolism and figures of speech; apocalyptic writing can include symbolism and veiled statements; parables can involve true-to-life stories to teach a spiritual truth.

Assurance that the Holy Spirit inspired the writing of Scripture undergirds our confidence that we can trust it. Since God, the supreme authority, has spoken to us through Scripture, then whatever God has said *must* have authority for us. Only when we give God's Word its proper place of prominence will we truly experience the freedom it can provide.

### **Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview**

Remind your group members that the Bible, as God's Word, is our final authority for what we believe and practice. It takes precedence over everything else. Encourage learners to discuss this key truth with family members.

Hebrews 4:12 informs us that Scripture is like a double-edged sword that will convict us to our core when conviction is necessary. Whenever the Bible is read, its truthfulness will always "tell it like it is." As the Good Shepherd, Jesus

The *Parent Page* (PP-1) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. (You may also want to use some of the discussion starter questions as you teach this lesson, or it can be used to lead another discussion group.)



PP-1

called His followers sheep who would listen to His voice (John 10:27). This implies that any words from our Lord should be authoritative. God is the source of Scripture, and it bears authority. Whenever Scripture speaks, God speaks.

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## Apply It LG SG

### Go to God's Word for guidance in every situation.

- *The Bible should be our final authority for what we believe and how we live. In what ways have many in our culture turned away from the authority of God's Word? (Beliefs about origins; sexuality; treatment of others; lying; stealing; etc.)*
- *Give an example of a verse that has given you direction in a decision or help in a difficult time.*

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put the truths of this lesson into practice.



FWTE 1-4

Encourage your group members to complete this week's devotions in *Forward* devotional study guide and to discuss the devotions with family members.



FWTE 1-5

## Live It LG SG

### Trust God's Word

Ask and discuss the following questions:

- *Why can we trust what God's Word says?*
- *The Bible was given to us by God. What characteristics or attributes of God assure us that the Bible must be true?*
- *What truth from God's Word do you need to put into practice this week? How will you do so?*

### Make God's Word the Final Authority

Ask group members to name a current issue or problem being debated in our society. Choose one of the issues and ask: *What would it look like for us to make God's Word the final authority for what to do about that issue?* After discussion, give group members a copy of FWTE 1-4 ("It's Our Authority") to complete. Encourage them to apply God's Word this week to some issue they are dealing with.

Give a copy of *FORWARD Teaching Essential 1-5* ("#teen-feed") to all parents of teens.

# Consider the Source

## Lesson 2

December 13, 2020

### Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 2-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 2-2 (handout)
- FWTE 2-3 (handout)
- PP-2 (Parent Page)

### Family Theme

God's Word Is Absolute Truth

### Lesson Objective

Learners accept God's Word as absolute truth and base their lives on it.

### Study Text

Psalm 119:89, 142, 160; John 17:17; Deuteronomy 30:19-20; John 8:31-32



### Key Truths

- God's Word Is Always True.
- Life and Freedom Are Found in God's Word.



### Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to memorize 2 Timothy 3:16 this week and to work with family members to do so as well. (Learners will find this Bible Basics note on the FWTE 2-1 student outline you give them.)



### How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson fits with all of Scripture because it affirms that all of God's Word is absolutely true.

## Get Started LG SG

Use one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

**Option 1:** Prior to your students' arrival, write several easy trivia questions on the board. If you don't have a board, you could write this on paper or just ask them to your students. Some examples might include:

- $2+2 = \_$
- The capital of our state is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ronald McDonald is the mascot for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Christmas falls on December \_\_\_\_.

However, when students give the answer, write a wrong answer for each question (For example, " $2+2 = 3$ "). When your students object, tell them you get to decide what's true. After a discussion about why thinking that way is faulty, say, *Many people in our culture are trying to redefine truth. However, opinions and preferences don't change what is true and what is not. As we'll see in today's lesson, God's Word is absolute truth, and therefore we can base our lives on it.*

**Option 2:** Absolute (objective) truth has come under attack with many believing that truth and morality are subjective and relative. Someone asked the late apologist Ravi Zacharias why he was afraid of subjective moral reasoning, and his answer shows why objective truth and morality are so important (<https://tinyurl.com/RZIMSubjective>). (Note: The questioner uses the example of rape. Use discretion.) Show this video to your students, and then say, *There are many in our culture who believe truth and morality are matters of opinion. However, opinions and preferences don't change what is true and what is not. God's Word is absolute truth, and we can base our lives on it.*



FWTE 2-1

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential 2-1* student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.

## Study the Word LG



### God's Word Is Always True (Psalm 119:89; 142; 160; John 17:17)

"There is no such thing as absolute truth!" Ironically, that is an absolute statement, which would refute itself. It is also absolutely false. In reality, the entire universe operates under absolute truth. In fact, if the universe did not operate under absolute truth such as the laws of gravity, physics, mathematics, thermodynamics, etc., then the universe would be complete

chaos. However, minimal observation shows that the universe is orderly and appears to be breathtakingly designed.

### **Dig Deeper:**

The Psalmist wrote about God's laws being eternal. These are great passages that could lead into discussing the fine-tuning of the universe and how it points to God's eternal laws. There are many finely-tuned details about our universe that imply something or someone knew what they were doing when it all began. A few examples of these details include:

- The Earth's atmosphere has just the right amount of oxygen. With too much oxygen, the Earth's atmosphere would become more combustible; spontaneous combustions (explosions and fires) would take place randomly. Yet, if there were not enough oxygen, life would cease to exist.
- The distance from the sun to the Earth's atmosphere is exact for a reason. If the sun were too far away, Earth's atmosphere would grow too cold and eventually kill all life. Likewise, if the sun were any closer, Earth's atmosphere would become too hot to sustain life.
- Earth's gravity is important as well. If the gravitational pull increased, chances for meteor showers would also increase, making Earth uninhabitable. If the gravitational pull decreased, Earth's oceans, lakes, and rivers would drift away into space, leaving us with no water resources.

These are only a small sample of hundreds or thousands of finely-tuned details of how our universe functions (which are based on absolute truth laws), all of which indicate an intelligent mind behind it all.

Which is easier to believe? The universe is the work of an infinitely powerful and intelligent Creator, or everything abruptly fell into place from an accidental, chaotic explosion? Which scenario takes more faith to believe? Biblical creationism asserts there is better evidence that the Creator exists and He placed these laws in motion so His creation could be orderly and sustain itself. Scripture provides authoritative testimony of the creative work of God (Genesis 1; Exodus 20:11; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3). This Creator has given us absolute

### **Teaching Tip:**

Be sure to model the principles and truths you are teaching. Learners will follow your example as much as your instruction.



truth in His Word. The psalmist proclaimed that God's laws are eternal; they will endure forever (Psalm 119:89, 160)!

It is a logical conclusion that an all powerful, intelligent God has established absolute truth, which provides our general standard for morality. Without the Creator, there is no rational explanation for the existence of life, and morality would depend entirely on individual opinions. A popular-opinion approach to morality fails because there is no standard for right or wrong and no authority beyond the individual. Psalm 119:142 tells us that God's righteous laws are true and everlasting. For more on absolute truth see <http://bit.ly/truth-absolute>.

### **Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview**

Point out that God's existence logically leads to the existence of absolute truth. God has revealed absolute truth in the Bible. *The Bible is God's Word*. Encourage learners to discuss this truth with family members.

Every person in his or her right mind knows that murder is wrong regardless of culture, background, or belief. If humanity is a cosmological accident and only the strong can advance or survive, then how do we account for the intrinsic understanding of right and wrong in the hearts of all human beings? After all, in order for our sense of morality to work in conjunction with the theory of evolution (survival of the fittest), would it not make more sense for murder to be permissible since it would allow for the weakest to be wiped out and for the strongest to survive? Culture would have to agree with that logic if it were to follow the theory of evolution to its logical conclusion. However, no one can truly accept murder (as well as other things) as permissible. Why? There is a Creator who established His laws into His creation—His righteous, eternal laws. Regardless of what any person may or may not admit, the laws of the Creator are written on his or her heart.

Another reason for us to have confidence in the truth of God's Word comes from the words of Jesus. When Jesus prayed in the Garden before His arrest, He prayed that God the Father would sanctify His disciples by the truth of His Word. He affirmed that God's Word is true (John 17:17). Jesus often quoted Scripture in His teachings. He even quoted it to fight against the temptations of Satan. Jesus clearly believed in the truthfulness of Scripture.

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## Apply It

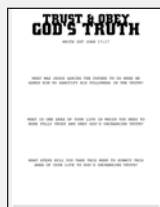
**Have confidence that the Bible is absolutely true and reliable.**

- *Where do most people your age go when searching for direction and answers?*
- *Why is the Bible the best source for wisdom, direction, and answers to what is right and wrong? (It is absolute truth from God. The Bible's truth gives life, improves life, protects life, and fulfills life.)*

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If time allows, use FWTE 2-2 (“Trust and Obey God’s Truth”) to help your learners examine what Christ said in John 17:17 and submit every area of their lives to God’s unchanging truth.

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FWTE 2-2



## **Life and Freedom Are Found in God's Word**

**(Deuteronomy 30:19-20; John 8:31-32)**

The truth of the Bible can change anyone’s life. Even people who are not Christians find some benefit from following the principles of God’s Word. Life simply works better if lived according to God’s ways. Applying God’s moral principles from the Scriptures is generally beneficial to anyone. We must be careful, however, not to stop at the point of simply following some of the moral teachings of the Bible. People need to be forgiven and redeemed through turning from sin to trust in Christ alone. (For the weaknesses of a moralistic use of Scripture go to [bit.ly/MoralTherapeuticDeism](http://bit.ly/MoralTherapeuticDeism).)

Have you ever thought about how our culture decides who is considered “decent” or “good”? It is often measured by variations of biblical principles, particularly when considering how other people should be treated. God’s Word is filled with commands for selflessness, unconditional love, grace, and forgiveness. Even our foundational understanding of justice is rooted in Scripture. The moral commands and principles in the Bible are so life-changing that many other religious books or philosophies have adopted many of the biblical principles for themselves (some portions of the Koran, eastern religions, or even atheism). It is extremely ironic and inconsistent for people who do not believe in God to argue that the God of Scripture is immoral.



PP-2

The *Parent Page* (PP-2) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. (You may also want to use some of the discussion starter questions as you teach this lesson, or it can be used to lead another discussion group.) *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

God does exist and we have every reason to be confident that He has spoken to us through the Scriptures. This means that the words of the Scriptures are from God, and when He speaks we should listen. After teaching the people God's commands and ways, Moses stated that they had a choice between life and death and blessings and curses. Choosing to obey God would lead to life and blessing, while turning away from God and His Word would lead to curses and death (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). Life is found in living out God's truth.

In John 8, Jesus was speaking to His followers about who He really is. Many people were unsure if Jesus was truly the Messiah or simply some sort of prophet. As the conversation developed, Jesus said that His true followers would hold to His teachings and apply them. When they did that, living in accordance with His teachings, they would see the truth and it would free them of their burdens, their baggage, and their doubts (verses 31-32).

But how could someone experience freedom in that way? The freedom Jesus offers can only be fulfilling if what He said was true! From what we observe throughout church history, we can be confident that the words of Christ are true indeed. Why? Because His words have been providing freedom for centuries to the people who live for Him. An example of the freeing words of Christ is the apostle Paul. Once a passionate enemy of the gospel, Paul became the most passionate ambassador of the gospel and the very first missionary of the Church era. The truthfulness of Christ's teachings revolutionized the life of Saul of Tarsus.

Two thousand years later, the freedom found in the truthfulness of the words of Christ (as well as in who He is) continues. We live in a world filled with brokenness. Sin is what has broken the world, and a broken world produces broken people and broken circumstances. Every person on earth experiences brokenness of various kinds every single day. Every human being also struggles with sin through temptation or participation every single day. The guilty burden that comes with the brokenness of sin is overwhelming. Yet, the freedom that is found in the person and Word of Christ releases us from that burden, leading to a greater purpose and a fulfilled life. Concerning the life-giving words of Christ, Christian apologist Josh McDowell wrote that the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ brings life-change. People once known for sinful ways change for the better. The truth sets them free from lifestyles of brokenness and sin (Read more in Josh and Sean McDowell's book, *The Unshakeable Truth*, Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, OR, 2011, 159-170.).

## Dig Deeper:

Throughout history, God's Word has done far more good for this broken world than any other religious book. Compare the ripple affect any major religious book has had in contrast to the Bible and Christianity. There is no match. It would be odd for so much good to take place in the name of Jesus if it was not based on truth. Why? Because truth endures even the toughest trials, while lies are exposed over time.

## Apply It LG SG

### Following God's truth gives us abundant life and freedom from the bondage of sin.

- *Why is it better for people your age to live according to God's truth rather than the ways of the lost world? (Obeying God brings meaning, joy, and fulfillment; God created us and knows what is best for us.)*
- *What happens when an individual, a family, or a culture ignores God's unchanging truth? (When people choose to ignore God and His Word, morality begins to deteriorate, causing a negative ripple effect on others. Paul described this process in Romans 1.)*

## Live It LG SG

### Jesus on Truth

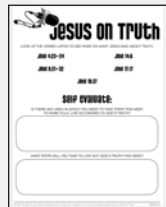
Use *FORWARD Teaching Essential 2-3* ("Jesus on Truth") to help your group members examine what Jesus said about truth and how they can submit to God's unchanging truth. Encourage them to take steps this week to more fully live according to God's truth in some area.

### Buck the Culture

Ask and discuss the following questions with your group.

- *What ideas and philosophies in our culture clash with the truth of God's Word?*
- *In what area will you choose to believe and obey God's Word this week rather than to conform to what our culture believes and does?*

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 2-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *FORWARD* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.

# Just as Promised

December 20, 2020

## Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 3-1 (poster)
- FWTE 3-2 (student outline)
- FWTE 3-3 (handout)
- FWTE 3-4 (handout)
- PP-3 (Parent Page)

## Family Theme

The Promised Messiah Is Born

## Lesson Objective

Learners understand that Jesus, the long awaited Messiah and King, was born to a virgin as promised. We acknowledge and obey Christ as king of our lives.

## Study Text

Matthew 1:18–2:12



## Key Truths

- Jesus' Birth Was Miraculous.
- Jesus' Birth Was Promised in the Old Testament.
- Wise Men Worshiped the Promised Savior.



## Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to review the names and order of the first five books of the Old Testament and the first four books of the New Testament from last quarter's Bible Basics. (Learners will find this Bible Basics note on the FWTE 3-2 student outline you give them.)



## How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson tells about the birth of Jesus, God's Son. He was the Messiah whom God had promised long before in the Old Testament, the One who would save us from our sins. The Old Testament pointed to Him. The genealogical record of Matthew demonstrates Jesus met the requirements of being of the royal line of the descendants of David, as well as a son of Abraham.

## Get Started LG SG

**Option 1:** Wrap three “presents” before your class meets. For the first present, put a brick or something heavy in a medium sized box and wrap it in nice looking paper. For the second present, fill a big box with packing peanuts or wadded up paper and wrap it in nice looking paper. For the third present, place money in a small box and wrap it in very plain paper of some kind. When your class meets, ask teens which present they would open if they only had one choice. Have them unwrap the first two presents and see the worthless items. Finally, show them the money that was inside the small, plain box, and say, *Like these presents, we’re often attracted to what’s big and flashy. However, as we’ll see in today’s lesson, a gift that seems ordinary can end up being the greatest gift of all.*

**Option 2:** New products often make huge claims and promises to appeal to buyers. However, not all of those promises come through. Ask your teens to name some products (or even movies, video games, etc.) that promised big things, but ultimately flopped. Examples include:

- Cheetos Lip Balm (It was orange and disgusting.)
- Google Glass (The high price and privacy concerns made this a flop.)
- Samsung Galaxy Note 7 (These phones exploded.)
- Alliance of American Football (The AAF filed for bankruptcy before its first season was completed.)

After students have shared, say, *Companies and products make a lot of promises, but many of them fall short on their claims. As we will see today, God made promises about a coming Messiah, and Jesus fulfilled those promises in an amazing way.*

## Study the Word LG

Matthew was led by the Holy Spirit to begin his account of the life of Christ with a genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17). This genealogy established that Jesus was indeed a legal heir to the throne of David. He met all of the qualifications necessary to be the promised king. Matthew also referenced Jesus as the *Christ*. The title *Christ* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word for *Messiah*, meaning *Anointed One*. As the Christ, Jesus was the

Use one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

Display the *FORWARD Teaching Essential 3-1* (“Come and Worship”) poster.



FWTE 3-1



FWTE 3-2

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential 3-2* student outline and something to write with.

### Teaching Tip:

When appropriate, share your own struggles and how God is helping you through them. Identifying with your students lets them know God can help them as well.

fulfilment of prophecy and the end of their searching for the long-awaited one.



## Jesus' Birth Was Miraculous (Matthew 1:18-21)

After establishing Jesus' royal genealogy, Matthew shared details of Christ's birth, indicating it was very unique. Jesus' conception was not the result of normal relations between a man and a woman, but rather He was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit (verse 18). Joseph and Mary had not come together sexually, and Mary was a virgin. Jesus was born of an earthly mother without the need of an earthly father. This is the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

At this point in the story, Mary and Joseph were pledged to be married. The term translated *betrothed* or *pledged* or *espoused* to be married, in verse 18, meant more than being engaged means in our society. Marriage was taken more seriously in that culture, and the engagement period was an initial stage of the marriage covenant, but without sexual relations. Both the man and woman continued living with parents. Unfaithfulness during engagement was as serious as adultery. They did not simply break off an engagement; it called for a formal divorce. The only reasonable explanation Joseph could see was that his pregnant fiancée Mary had somehow been unfaithful to him. We can only imagine what Joseph must have been thinking, what the talk of the town was, and what advice Joseph was receiving from his friends. While his love for Mary was genuine, unfaithfulness on Mary's part would have given him every right to divorce her and walk away.

Still, Joseph, a righteous man (verse 19), apparently wished no ill upon Mary. He could have brought her to public shame for adultery. Instead, he planned to divorce her quietly, with as little public scrutiny as possible. God, however, sent an angel to tell Joseph to go ahead and take Mary as his wife (verse 20). Joseph was to be an integral part of the child's life, regardless of the fact that he was not the biological father. The angel explained that the child Mary carried came from the power of the Holy Spirit, not from some sinful human immorality. In verse 21, the angel confirmed to Joseph the same name that Mary had received—Jesus—with an explanation: the child would save His people from their sins.

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### Apply It

**Trust God to accomplish His plan.**

- *How does Jesus' birth give us confidence that God can keep all His promises? (Jesus' virgin birth demonstrates that God can do what He promises to do, even when it would seem impossible to us.)*
- *Which of God's promises do you most look forward to?*



## Jesus' Birth Was Promised in the Old Testament

(Matthew 1:22-25)

After recording the miraculous events that surrounded Christ's birth, Matthew gave more evidence that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, taking his audience back almost 700 years to when the prophet Isaiah had declared that God would provide a "sign" concerning the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14). A virgin would conceive and give birth to a son. Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of that prophecy (verses 22-23).

This prophecy seems to have had a double fulfillment, one immediate for Ahaz and one in the future regarding Jesus. In Isaiah's day, it was a young woman who was a virgin at the time of the prophecy that would later marry and give birth to a son. This son would serve as a reminder to the people that God had not abandoned them and was still with them.

Beyond that immediate fulfillment, however, was a future one, as revealed in Matthew 1. Another unmarried virgin would give birth to a son, while remaining a virgin. This miraculous birth would produce a son whose name was Immanuel, "God with us" (verse 23). While Jesus was the human name ascribed to Him, Immanuel was the name prophesied by God that would inform the reader of Jesus' role in coming to earth. He is indeed a reminder that God is with us!

### Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Point out that Jesus' fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy demonstrates that *the Bible is God's Word*, and is reliable and without error. Encourage parents and grandparents to teach this key truth at home.

Joseph obeyed fully the words of the Lord, immediately taking Mary into his home rather than completing the year-long betrothal process (verse 24). The expression, "as the Lord commanded him," captured the heart of Joseph to obey his Lord. In refraining from sexual intercourse with her, Joseph further fulfilled Isaiah 7:14, enabling Mary to actually give birth to Jesus as a virgin, just as prophesied.

Distribute copies of *FORWARD Teaching Essential 3-3* ("About That Virgin Birth") to help your group members defend the doctrine of the virgin birth.



FWTE 3-3



## Dig Deeper:

There is much debate about the term used to describe Mary in Matthew 1:23. Did Matthew use a term meaning “virgin” as understood today, or could it be understood merely as a young maiden? While the Old Testament usage of the term could mean either, context determines the meaning. Matthew explicitly used the Greek word *parthenos*, the Greek term for virgin. His desire was to portray the birth of Jesus for what it was—miraculous. While quoting Isaiah 7:14 with a Hebrew term that could be ambiguous, Matthew’s understanding and translation of the term is a word that can only mean a virgin, not merely a young maiden girl. When translating the Hebrew Scripture into Greek, the Septuagint translators intentionally chose the Greek term for *virgin*, which affirmed their understanding of the term used by Isaiah. In fact, it was a matter of practice and cultural expectation that any unmarried young woman would be a virgin. Therefore, without a doubt, the text can be understood to support Mary’s virginity at the time of Jesus’ birth.

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## Apply It

### Rely on everything God says in His Word.

- *How does fulfilled prophecy affirm that God’s Word is completely trustworthy? (We can trust God’s Word because it was inspired by God. Fulfilled prophecy demonstrates its reliability.)*
- *What truth or promise from God’s Word have you been relying on lately? Why is this truth or promise important to you right now?*



### Wise Men Worshiped the Promised Savior (Matthew 2:1-12)

Meanwhile, in the east, magi had seen what they understood to be a star announcing the birth of the king of the Jews. They were under no particular obligation to go, but God drew them onward toward Bethlehem (verses 1-2).

## Dig Deeper:

Who were the wise men? Some sources refer to them as kings, and others call them magi. Magi carefully observed the stars, always alert to special signs or heavenly messages in them. Some scholars believe they were Persian in origin, while some traditions place them in central Asia close to China. Yet others believe they were Jewish scholars, perhaps descended from scholars aligned with Daniel's activities in Persia centuries before. The Bible mentions three gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), but does not note how many magi there were. Some ancient traditions suggest as many as 12. Also, the Bible does not mention their names.

Herod's concern at the news from the wise men (verse 3) made sense: he had no legitimate claim to the throne of Israel. Many Jews resented that he was not fully Jewish. The birth of a legitimate king spelled trouble for Herod, and for all those in Jerusalem who profited from his rule. Only the power and goodwill of Rome kept him in power, and the last thing he needed was a popular uprising. His inquiry about where Messiah was to be born (verse 4) brought a swift response (verses 5-6). The religious scholars and leaders understood that *Bethlehem* was to have that privilege, according to Micah 5:2.

## Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Point out again that fulfilled prophecies such as Micah 5:2 affirm that the Bible is true. *The Bible is God's Word*.

Herod, practicing flawless political intrigue, deceived the wise men, pretending he would welcome the child as soon as they notified him of the child's location (verses 7-8). He likely expected them to take quite a while to find the child, if indeed there was a child to be found. God, however, guided the wise men. They seem to have had no difficulty finding Jesus and presenting their gifts to Him (verse 9-11).

For the wise men, the journey began with being open to God's leading back in their homeland comparing their celestial observations. Then they followed God's leading until they found what God wanted them to find. Finding the child led to worshipping the child (not necessarily *divine* worship, but at least the homage appropriate to a new born king). The proper result of hearing and following God's leading is *worship* (verse



PP-3

The *Parent Page* (PP-3) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. (You may also want to use some of the discussion starter questions as you teach this lesson, or it can be used to lead another discussion group.) *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

11). After their visit, they wisely followed God's instructions and returned home without revisiting Herod, in obedience to the dream they had received (verse 12).

### Dig Deeper:

Herod determined to wipe out anyone who could have a claim to his throne. He determined that the baby in question could be as old as two years. The solution was simple: kill every boy from Bethlehem and the surrounding region under the age of two (Matthew 2:16-18). For Herod, the lives of those children and their families lost out in his political calculation to stay in power.

### Apply It LG SG

**Draw close to Christ and worship Him as your Savior.**

- *What are some ways we can draw closer to Christ and worship Him this Christmas season?*

### Live It LG SG

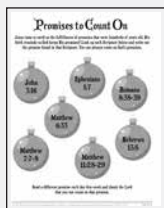
#### Count on God's Promises

Use *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 3-4 ("Promises to Count On") to help your group members think about how they can count on God's promises. Encourage them to read one of God's promises each day and thank the Lord for that promise.

#### Worship the Savior

Ask your learners to list reasons Jesus is worthy of our worship. Write their responses on the marker board if possible. After several reasons are mentioned, ask them to give various ways we can express our worship to Him. After discussion, encourage them to spend time each day this week expressing worship to our Savior as they celebrate His birth.

Use one or more of the following options to help your group members put to work the principles learned in this lesson.



FWTE 3-4

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *FORWARD* devotional study guide this week.

# He Showed the Way

## Lesson 4

December 27, 2020

### Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 4-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 4-2 (handout)
- FWTE 4-3 (handout)
- PP-4 (Parent Page)

### Family Theme

Jesus Is Our Example

### Lesson Objective

Learners declare their allegiance to Christ through baptism and follow Jesus' example in overcoming temptation.

### Study Text

Matthew 3:13–4:11



### Key Truths

- Jesus Set the Example in Baptism.
- Jesus Set the Example in Overcoming Temptation.



### Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to go over the following question and answer each day this week and to work with family members to do so as well. **What is the relationship among the three persons of the Trinity? Answer:** They love one another (John 14:31; 17:26; Galatians 5:22). They are equal, though they have different roles (Matthew 28:18-20). (Learners will find this Bible Basics note on the FWTE 4-1 student outline you give them.)



### How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry when He set the example for us in being baptized and in overcoming temptation.

## Get Started LG SG

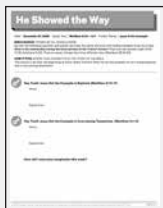
Use one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

**Option 1:** Temptation is all around us. When we give in to temptation, it always costs us something. To illustrate this point, ask students how they would respond in each of the following situations. Ask, *What would you do if I offered you . . .*

- \$10,000 . . . but you had to give up social media for a year?
- Free college . . . but you had to use a flip phone during your entire collegiate career?
- Your dream car . . . but you could never watch another movie?
- A lifetime of free books . . . but the last page is missing in all of them?

After discussing the scenarios, say, *Temptation can make things look appealing, but there is always a cost, and it's much more severe than any of these examples. However, Jesus showed us the way to deal with temptation and gave us a great example to follow.*

**Option 2:** Amateur bakers know how frustrating it is to follow a recipe, only to have the finished product look nothing like the original design. Search the Internet for pictures or videos of failed attempts at baking. Show these to your students and discuss how difficult it can be to copy what someone else has done. Then say, *While it's important to follow a recipe when baking, it's even more important to follow the example of Jesus for living. As we will see today, He set the example for all of us, and following His ways will always lead to success.*



FWTE 4-1

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 4-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.

## Study the Word LG



### Jesus Set the Example in Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17)

With no record of Jesus' activity since He was 12 years old (Luke 2:41-50), He appeared and presented Himself to be baptized by John the Baptist (verse 13). John refused the Lord's initial request. Logically speaking, Jesus should have been doing the baptizing, and not John. Jesus' request made no sense to John, and he struggled with the idea of baptizing the One who was greater than he was.

Jesus' response in verse 15 to John's hesitation revealed His desire to be aligned with John's message of righteousness. This included both avoiding sin and living in a holy way. At this point, John consented to Jesus' wish and baptized Him.

Although Jesus had never sinned and had no need to be baptized in the sense of having repented, His baptism was necessary for several reasons. For instance, many scholars believe that the idea of *fulfilling all righteousness* means to complete everything included in a relationship of obedience to God. For that reason, the baptism of Jesus was necessary. Second, baptism gave approval to the work, ministry, and message of John. Third, baptism would be a new ordinance of the soon-coming church. It ended the Jewish rite of circumcision as the symbol of identity as part of God's family and instituted another ritual of initiation. Fourth, through baptism, Jesus identified Himself with those He came to save. His baptism connected Him to the process that all believers should follow. In so doing, Jesus identified with and endorsed John's ministry as divinely ordained and his message as one to be heeded by all His followers.

### **Dig Deeper:**

In Romans 6:3-4, the apostle Paul used baptism as an illustration of the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The beauty of baptism is in the image it portrays. It symbolizes Christ who was dead, buried, and raised to new life. Our baptism symbolizes our death to sin, being buried to that way of life, and being raised to live a new life in Christ.

Matthew did not describe Jesus' baptism itself, but rather focused on what happened immediately afterward. The most significant thing about His baptism was the authentication from Heaven as seen and heard in verses 16-17. While scholars are unsure who the "he" is that saw the heavens opened, it seems best to relate it to John the Baptist (John 1:32-33).

As Jesus came up out of the water, God demonstrated His approval of Him. First, the Holy Spirit came down "like" a dove. This suggests that some visible manifestation of the Spirit similar to a dove came to rest on Jesus. Second, a *voice from heaven* was heard. The unseen speaker claimed the one being baptized was His Son and expressed great pleasure in Him. This was one of three instances in which God the Father did this, the other times occurring at the Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:5) and during the "Passion Week" (John 12:28).

### **Teaching Tip:**

Help your learners identify with the characters, challenges, and events in the Scriptures you are studying. This will deepen their learning and make it more relevant to them.

## Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Point out how God the Father confirmed that Jesus is His Son. As such, *Jesus is the sovereign Lord of all*. Encourage learners to discuss this truth with family members.

At this event, all three persons of the Trinity were revealed and distinguished from one another. From Heaven, the Father spoke of His Son, the Son (Jesus) was standing in the water, and the Holy Spirit descended in the likeness of a dove on the Son of God. This was all the verification John needed that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

### Apply It

**Live and speak in ways that identify you as a follower of Christ.**

- *What does baptism represent for the believer?* (Baptism shows others we have decided to follow Jesus; it illustrates we have died to our old way of living and been raised to live for Christ.)
- *Why is it important for believers to live differently than unbelievers do?* (God calls us to live His way; unbelievers can see the difference Christ makes.)



FWTE 4-2

Let your learners complete FWTE 4-2 (“What Baptism Means to Me”) to dive deeper into the meaning of baptism.

## Jesus Set the Example in Overcoming Temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)

After Jesus experienced the joy and excitement of the Father’s affirmation (Matthew 3), He was immediately led into the wilderness. The same Spirit that appeared *like a dove* also led Jesus to the place where He would be tempted.

Just as Jesus had set the example of baptism, He also revealed the truth that our enemy will tempt us. If the Son of God was not exempt from temptation, neither will anyone else be. This tempting was being carried out by the Devil, also

known as the slanderer and the god of this world. The tempting would not only test the Lord's commitment to the mission at hand, but would also reveal His humanity and the fact that He was tempted just as believers today are tempted (Hebrews 4:15).

Matthew noted that Jesus fasted 40 days and nights (verse 2). While fasting carries different connotations for today, during this time it meant eating nothing at all. There is no indication in Scripture that the Lord was supernaturally sustained. He felt true hunger and physical weakness as a result of this deprivation. So when Matthew stated that the Lord was hungry, it further revealed that the Son of God was not exempt from human suffering.

This event in the life of Jesus provides insight as to how the Enemy will tempt us. This passage records three ways the Devil tempted Christ. Each temptation involved a different source of testing. It is worth noting that Satan never tempted Christ with anything that was intrinsically evil. His first temptation was to try to get Jesus to satisfy a legitimate need in an illegitimate way. The Lord was hungry. It would be nothing for the Son of God to take stones that already looked like little loaves of bread and miraculously transform them into bread (verse 3). Instead, Jesus rejected the temptation, understanding that the Father's purpose involved Him being hungry in the desert with no food. To give in to this suggestion of the Evil One would have been in opposition to God's will.

His second temptation involved misapplying Scripture in an effort to get Jesus to seek glory for Himself apart from God's will and timing (verse 5). Satan took Jesus up to the pinnacle of the Temple and quoted Psalm 91:11-12, in which the Lord promised to care for His own. The temptation, as odd as it sounds, would involve giving the Father an opportunity to fulfill His own promises.

His last temptation was simply to take a shortcut in God's plan, setting up His earthly kingdom without going to the cross (verses 8-9). Through this temptation, the Devil portrayed himself as the owner of all the kingdoms of the world with the option of dispersing them as he saw fit. In essence, Satan was saying *I have a shortcut for you and can provide the kingdoms right now if you will simply bow down and worship me*. In reality, Jesus was already going to have control of all the kingdoms and the glory that comes with that position. However, He would receive it after He accomplished the Father's will for His life, and not through the provision of the Evil One.



## Dig Deeper:

In his temptation of Jesus, Satan quoted Scripture. It becomes quite clear throughout this event that the Evil One has a keen awareness of God, His Word, and righteousness. Here he did all in his power to dissuade Jesus from following the path of obedience. He misused the Scriptures. The sad fact is, Scripture is often used in ways that God, the author, never intended it to be used. We must be careful to rightly interpret God's Word.

We can learn from Jesus' response to each temptation. His primary defense was the Scriptures. Jesus knew God's Word, and undoubtedly dwelled on it and applied it in every situation, including temptation. He was able to quote Scripture that specifically applied to the temptation He was facing at that moment. God's Word is our defense in times of temptation (Psalm 119:9).

In response to the temptation to turn stones into bread, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, a text that indicated His dependence on the Father (verse 4). While recognizing the value and the need for bread, bread alone does not provide all that people need. After all, humans have a soul and thus have spiritual needs. Bread does nothing for the spiritual needs. The Word of God will always satisfy, but physical bread will leave us yearning for more. In summary, it is better to obey God's Word than to satisfy human desires.

In response to the second temptation, found in verse 7, Jesus again cited Scripture. In this case, the Lord quoted Deuteronomy 6:16, a passage that prohibits putting God to the test and expecting Him to do something that is contrary to His will. By doing so, Jesus indicated that the Devil had completely misapplied God's promise of protection.

For the third and final temptation (verse 10), the Lord cited Deuteronomy 6:13. In this passage, the Israelites were being tempted to worship other gods. Jesus refused to give homage and worship where it was not due. In response to Scripture and what He knew to be right, He could not, and would not, bow down and worship the Evil One.

As a result of the Lord's refusals, the Devil went away defeated and the angels came and ministered to Jesus (verse 11). Many scholars believe that the ministering of the angels included not only food, but also supernatural support and encouragement. Luke informed the reader, however, that Satan's departure was only until a more opportune time (Luke 4:13). This was undoubtedly not the only time Satan tempted



PP-4

The *Parent Page* (PP-4) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. (You may also want to use some of the discussion starter questions as you teach this lesson, or it can be used to lead another discussion group.) *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

Jesus. Regardless, it was the use of Scripture that brought victory to our Lord and will bring victory for us as well.

## Apply It LG SG

### Follow Jesus' example in overcoming temptation.

- *Discuss the difference between being tempted and giving in to temptation.* (It is not a sin to be tempted. Even Jesus was tempted. It becomes sin when we give in to the temptation.)
- *What are some boundaries we can put in place to help us resist temptation?* (Memorize Scriptures that apply to ways we are tempted; avoid tempting situations; have an accountability partner; etc.)

## Live It LG SG

### Live Differently, Overcoming Temptation

Ask and discuss the following:

- *Contemplate the following: Would a new student or coworker who watched you for a week know you are a follower of Christ? Why, or why not?*
- *What is one way you will live differently this week than teens who don't know Christ?*
- *What steps will you take this week to overcome temptation?*
- *What Scripture could you memorize this week to prepare yourself for a specific temptation?*

Encourage any believers who have not been baptized to arrange to do so and to put these ideas into practice this week.

### Plan Your Strategy

Use FWTE 4-3 ("My Resistance Strategy") to help your group members develop a strategy for overcoming temptation. The strategy may include avoiding tempting situations, memorization of Scripture, and so on. Encourage them to put their strategy to work this week.

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *FORWARD* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.



FWTE 4-3

# Attitude Adjustments

January 3, 2021

## Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 5-1 (poster)
- FWTE 5-2 (student outline)
- FWTE 5-3 (handout)
- PP-5 (Parent Page)

## Family Theme

Jesus Teaches a New Way of Living

## Lesson Objective

Learners go beyond the letter of the Law and adopt godly attitudes and live out the intent of God's Law. This will lead to true happiness and well-being.

## Study Text

Matthew 5:1-48



## Key Truths

- Godly Living Brings True Happiness.
- Godly Living Goes Beyond the Letter of the Law.



## Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to go over the following question and answer each day this week and to work with family members to do so as well. **What is Hell? Answer:** Hell is a place of separation from God, where those who practice sin and reject Jesus suffer eternal and terrible punishment (Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 21:8). (Learners will find this Bible Basics note on the FWTE 5-2 student outline you give them.)



## How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set early in the ministry of Christ when He taught a large crowd, giving clarity to the meaning of the Law that had been given to God's chosen people in the Old Testament.

## Get Started LG SG

**Option 1:** Ask your students to name some of the most prominent villains from TV shows, books, movies, etc. Names like Thanos, Voldemort, Scar, and Prince Hans might be included on their lists. Ask your group what makes these villains so evil and despicable. Say to your students, *We know how evil people can be, both in fictional stories and in real life. Jesus knew that too, but He still issued a surprising command and told us to love our enemies. Today we'll discuss why and what that means.*

**Option 2:** Show students this video that shows some of the top inventions of the 1980s (<https://tinyurl.com/80sInventions>). The video shows how much technology has changed in the past 30-40 years. Discuss with students why technology becomes outdated. After your discussion, say, *Technology gets outdated because new technology comes along that makes it obsolete. In today's lesson, Jesus introduced a new way of living. It's been 2000 years since this lesson was given, and unlike technology, there is nothing outdated about what He taught.*

Use one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

Display the *FORWARD Teaching Essential 5-1* poster.



FWTE 5-1

## Study the Word LG



### Godly Living Brings True Happiness

(Matthew 5:1-16)

The Sermon on the Mount serves as a bridge from the Law to the gospel. Jesus explained the heartfelt, godly attitudes and lives that God desires from us. As was customary, Jesus sat down to teach, and His disciples (those who had already committed to follow Him) and the crowds came near to hear. He began by stating the kinds of attitudes He wants to develop in His followers, which lead to true happiness.

Four attitudes are addressed in verses 3-6: *poor in spirit, mourning, meek, and hungering and thirsting for righteousness*. The attitudes are followed by a resulting condition: *belonging to the kingdom, comfort, inheritance, satisfaction*. The overriding emotion that occurs when living this way is happiness.

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential 5-2* student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



FWTE 5-2

### Teaching Tip:

Copy reproducible handouts on brightly colored paper. Color enhances the appearance of the handout and makes it more appealing to students.

A maturing follower of Jesus is *poor in spirit*—continually aware of his or her spiritual bankruptcy (verse 3). This is in contrast to a self-righteous law-keeper. Admitting our need for God unlocks the door to the kingdom. We enjoy the presence of God by admitting our helpless condition and our need for total dependence on God.

### Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Point out that being poor in spirit means understanding we cannot save ourselves. We need a Savior. Encourage learners to discuss this key truth with family members.

*Mourning* reflects our attitude toward sin (verse 4). We are sad, even distressed over sinful behavior, especially our own. As we adopt that perspective, the comfort of forgiveness is ours. No longer are we condemned. What happiness that brings!

*Meekness* is not a false modesty or humility that we try to display, but it is a quality of being unpretentious, gentle, or not desirous of recognition or fame (verse 5). Trumpeting our accomplishments reflects our cultural emphasis on success. Solomon cautioned us not to draw attention to ourselves (Proverbs 27:2). Surprising to all, persons not seeking special position will end up inheriting the earth.

*Hunger for personal righteousness* describes those who realize their spiritual bankruptcy and want more (verse 6). Elsewhere in Scripture we find the exhortation to grow, obey, and respond to biblical teachings. Taking in and practicing the Word of God creates a hunger for more. The more we eat of spiritual truth, the hungrier we get.

*Merciful* people are compassionate (verse 7). This value is directed not only to those who are guilty, but also to those who are in need. We offer grace to those who do not deserve it, and we offer help to those who are in need. As we offer mercy to others, our eyes more clearly see the mercy extended to us.

*Pure in heart* draws our attention to the inner man (verse 8). Jesus taught that the condition of our heart is the source of who we really are (Matthew 6:21). Proverbs 4:23 alerts us to guard the heart. A person who is addressing character and motives is in a position to experience God. As taught in Psalm 24:3-6, our heart condition will affect our ability to understand God's ways and be in close fellowship with Him.

Earthly kingdoms often use power and violence to gain advantage. Jesus set a new tone of *peacemaking* (verse 9). This

is not an embrace of “peace at all costs,” but an indication that we can be different from the world. We discard the ways of the world and manifest self-control, listening, extraordinary patience, and tactful use of words for noble means. This otherworldly attitude distinguishes us as people belonging to God.

Jesus then warned His disciples that they would be *persecuted* (John 15:18-21). Paul echoed Christ’s teaching in his instructions to Timothy (2 Timothy 3:12). Believers will be subjected to all kinds and degrees of opposition, attacks, and losses. However, we will experience the kingdom and the presence of God. Even in persecution, we will be blessed (verse 11). We need not take it personally; our persecutors are reacting against the One who died on the cross for us, ushering in His kingdom. Clothed in that perspective, we can have an attitude of acceptance, knowing we join the prophets of old who stood up for God in God-forsaken societies.

### **Dig Deeper:**

In the Beatitudes, a result is clearly pronounced for certain attitudes and behaviors. Nine times in this passage Matthew used the Greek word, *markarios*, which is usually translated as “blessed.” At first, it may sound like a reward for a certain behavior, but our culture has given it a shallow meaning as if we are happy because things are going well. Jesus was saying something far different than a feeling based on circumstances. He spoke of well-being because of our relationship with God. Through this word, God promises a richness to be enjoyed that is beyond description.

Jesus summarized this introduction to His sermon with a declaration of the distinctiveness of those in the kingdom. He used two ideas from daily life. The first one is salt (verse 13). When we think of salt we tend to think of it as a seasoning—making something taste better. Another idea that may have related better to these hearers is the preserving nature of salt. It is hard to know which application was intended. Perhaps this is a case where both apply. The notion of seasoning is that the Christian presence flavors situations with kingdom values. Concerning preservation, these attitudes serve as a resistance to the onslaught of sin around us.

The other idea is light (verse 14). Light is distinct from darkness as kingdom living is diametrically opposed to the ways of the world. There is no need to be ashamed of our counter-

cultural behavior. Masterfully, Jesus engaged the imagination of the hearers with a concept to which they could connect instantly—light from a city on a hill. This is not a suggestion to trumpet our righteousness to others. In fact, the intent is for God to get the glory for making us into the persons we are becoming.

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## **Apply It**

### **Find true happiness by adopting godly attitudes.**

- *How do these values presented by Jesus conflict with the values of our culture?*
- *Which of these godly attitudes do you think is most needed by older teens in our culture?*



## **Godly Living Goes Beyond the Letter of the Law** (Matthew 5:17-48)

As if He were reading the minds of His listeners, Jesus abruptly declared, *If you believe I am getting rid of the Law, you have misunderstood. I have come to fulfill the Law* (verse 17). Jesus assured them that even the smallest letter and stroke of the Law would be fulfilled. God's teaching from the Old Testament is not to be relaxed in any way; it must be taught and it is valuable. Jesus was advocating for true fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Verse 20 pulls the loose ends together when Jesus declared that His Jewish listeners would have to do better than their religious leaders and teachers to be part of the kingdom of God. Jesus presented six case studies to make His point. The master teacher hooked His listeners with the known and led them to the unknown by noting they had been taught earlier about these subjects.

The first two examples are murder and adultery. The emphasis of the first example is on the act of taking a life, even in neglect or carelessness. Jesus explained that God has more in mind than a specific act; this command includes anger (verses 21-22). Although not sinful in itself, anger must be addressed before it leads to sin (Ephesians 4:26-27). Matthew used the word in a way that suggests *ongoing* anger. When we are angry we use abusive words we often regret. Jesus alerts us to the emotional destruction left in the wake of an-

ger episodes. Anger is so destructive immediate attention is required. Jesus explained that we should not think we can worship as long as we are at odds with someone (verses 23-26). We must seek reconciliation.

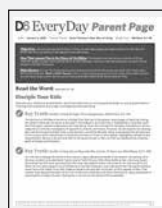
The second example given is the prohibition against adultery (verses 27-28). Conscientious law-keepers would steer clear of this sinful physical act. But Jesus clarified the intention by asserting you can commit adultery in your heart. This is not condemning an appreciative glance by a man or a woman. The Greek word used suggests a lingering look, a look that is filled with desire. The seriousness of this secret adultery is noted when Jesus launched into hyperbole to make His point—gouging out your eye or cutting off your hand.

Another abuse of the intent of the Law related to marriage (verses 31-32). The context is integrity and highlighting the real intent of the Law. Loopholes were used to get out of a marriage. Jesus slammed the door on those abuses, insisting that marriage oaths must be honored and the only possible permission would be in circumstances of sexual impropriety, and even then divorce is not necessarily required. Often lost in the discussion is the lack of respect for the spouse, and that this abuse of divorce places people in potentially adulterous situations.

Another issue relates to not taking the Lord's name in vain. Jesus modified what they had heard from their teachers (verses 33-37). The original law had been embellished by individual interpretations. It would be as if Jesus said, *you have heard some preachers say*. Some oaths were dismissed in the spirit of "I had my fingers crossed." It was commonly believed that the object by which one swore could measure the seriousness of the oath. It became so technical that an oath could be sworn by *the gold* of the Temple and be binding, but swearing by the Temple alone could be negated. The regard for truth had been missed.

Jesus concluded this discussion with illustrations about retaliation (verse 38). Verse 38 is from the Law (Exodus 21:24; Deuteronomy 19:21; Leviticus 24:20) and was meant to make sure the punishment fit the crime and was not excessive. Careful examination reveals the instructions were given to judges and courts, not individuals. Opportunists misapply the teaching to justify their own personal revenge. Jesus, instead, encouraged going the extra mile to keep the peace, rather than escalating the situation by retaliating (verses 39-41). This was not meant to prohibit self-defense, but to encourage peacemaking and helping those truly in need (verse 42). See also Romans 12:17-21.

In verse 43, Jesus was addressing an interpretation taught by their teachers: *hate your enemies*. Jesus corrected that



PP-5

The *Parent Page* (PP-5) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. (You may also want to use some of the discussion starter questions as you teach this lesson, or it can be used to lead another discussion group.) *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)



error, minimizing the value of only loving people who love us, and describing the Christian way as loving and praying for friends and enemies alike. He concluded by commanding us to be complete and godly, going beyond the publicans and Gentiles.

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## Apply It LG SG

### Live out the intent of God's commands.

- *What inward attitudes of the heart do you think Jesus would address with teens in our culture?*
- *How would our community be different if everyone lived out what Christ taught?*

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## Live It LG SG

### Adjust an Attitude

Use *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 5-3 (“Putting the Attitude Into Action”) to help group members think about how they can grow in one of the Beatitudes. They will pick a Beatitude to put into practice this week and answer the questions on the handout. Ask them to find one or two passages of Scripture this week that deal with the beatitude they chose and to focus on applying that beatitude to their lives this week.

### Go Beyond the Letter of the Law

Jesus wants us to go beyond the letter of the Law to heartfelt obedience. Ask and discuss the following:

- *What are some examples of when heart attitudes lead to outward sin?*
- *How do people sometimes obey the letter of the Law, but with the wrong heart attitude?*
- *In what area will you work on obeying from the right heart attitude this week?*

Encourage group members to work on obeying from the heart this week.

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 5-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *FORWARD* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.

# The Neighborly Thing to Do

## Lesson 6

January 10, 2021

### Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 6-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 6-2 (handout)
- FWTE 6-3 (handout)
- PP-6 (Parent Page)

### Family Theme

Love Your Neighbor

### Lesson Objective

Learners choose to act in loving ways to those they come in contact with each day.

### Study Text

Luke 10:25-37



### Key Truths

- Our Neighbor Is Anyone We Come in Contact With.
- Genuine Love Results in Action.



### Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage your learners to review 2 Timothy 3:16 this week and to work with family members to do so as well.



### How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set during the ministry of Jesus, the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. It demonstrates how His teaching on loving others affirms and strengthens the teaching of the Old Testament on this subject.

## Get Started LG SG

Choose one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

**Option 1:** Before your group meets, ask your next-door neighbors if you can take a picture of them, and then also ask friends and family members in your area to send you pictures of themselves that you can use for this lesson. Print out the pictures or have them saved on an electronic device. At the start of your class time, ask your students to look through the pictures and see if they can identify your neighbor. Students will likely assume you're referring to your next-door neighbor, but today's lesson teaches us that our "neighbor" is *anyone* with whom we come in contact. Essentially, all of the pictures represent your neighbors. Say to students, *Our neighbor isn't just the person who lives next door. As Christians, our neighbor is anyone we meet, and we have a responsibility to show the love of Christ to all of our neighbors.*

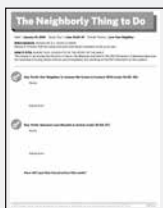
**Option 2:** Actions speak louder than words, and today's lesson shows we should demonstrate love with our actions. Split your group into two teams and let a member of each team act out the following items. No words can be spoken. Give each team 60 seconds to guess. Another possibility is to split the group into two teams, and you can act out each of the words while they guess. Each of the words is connected to today's lesson about the Good Samaritan:

- Lawyer
- Neighbor
- Compassion
- Thief
- Priest
- Bandages
- Donkey
- Money

After you finish, explain to students that it is through our actions that love is shown.

## Study the Word LG

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the most well-known parables told by Jesus. This parable teaches timeless principles about what it really means to love our neighbors.



FWTE 6-1

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 6-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



## Our Neighbor Is Anyone We Come in Contact With

(Luke 10:25-32)

An expert in the Law of Moses tested Jesus with a question (verse 25). This was an effort to catch Jesus saying something that contradicted the Law. The man's motivation is revealed in the purpose of the question: to *tempt* Jesus or *put Him to the test*. It is clear that the motives were ultimately intended to discredit the Lord. In fact, verse 29 states that the man was wishing to justify himself. While the question was a legitimate one, the motives for asking were questionable at best.

This lawyer asked what a person must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus simply referred the expert to the Law and asked him what the Law said. The man responded with two verses that would have been as familiar to him as John 3:16 would be to a preacher today. The first was from Deuteronomy 6:5, to love God supremely. The references to heart, soul, strength, and mind emphasize the inner motivations for one's love for God as opposed to superficial legalism (see also Joshua 22:5). At its core, this love is not shallow or empty but is settled, committed, and all-encompassing. Matthew 22:34-38 and Mark 12:28-30 give other examples of the Lord emphasizing this same love for God.

The second passage referred to by the lawyer was from Leviticus 19:18 in which the Scriptures teach us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. The term *neighbor* in this context had a much broader usage than it would have in today's culture. A neighbor would not only be those that live in close proximity but could refer to anyone a person comes into contact with.

These verses (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18) summed up the many commands and regulations found in the Law of Moses. The concept of loving God is an obvious requirement. But it is noteworthy that loving our neighbor is just as foundational. Further, the verb used for *love* is in the present tense indicating that we are to constantly, continually in an uninterrupted way, love God and our neighbor without a breach or a violation. Truth be told, only Jesus ever loved this way.

The Lord, knowing the man did not truly keep these commandments, said that if he could keep them he would live. Here's the idea: Love God perfectly and you won't ever violate the part of the Law that relates to Him, and love your neighbor perfectly and you won't ever violate the Law that relates to your neighbor. This is the intention and the division of the Ten Commandments. The first four relate to one's relationship to

### Teaching Tip:

Go beyond dispensing information in your teaching. Encourage your learners to actively build their lives around the truths of Scripture you discover together. Help them think through how to put it into practice in their daily lives.

and love for God, while the remaining six relate to one's relationship to and love for those around him.

### **Dig Deeper:**

The Ten Commandments are summarized in the two verses quoted by the expert in the Law. Commandments one through four reflect loving God. They have to do with God and humanity's response to Him. Have no other gods, do not take the name of the Lord in vain, and so on. The final six commandments deal with how we treat one another. Do not steal, kill, commit adultery, etc. When the man was questioned about what he read in the Law, his response reflected this understanding.

The lawyer, in verse 29, showed his insincerity by asking the Lord whom he had to treat as a neighbor. In other words, who qualified as a neighbor and whom could he ignore? He likely already showed love toward those who were like him and agreed with him. This is the way love is often viewed.

In verses 30-35, Jesus responded with a story about a man who came to be in great need. He was traveling on the dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho. On this journey, the man encountered robbers who valued possessions above people, caring only about what they could get from their neighbor. It did not matter if they caused him harm and loss. Upon discovering the traveling Jew, they robbed him, beat him, and left him half dead on the road (verse 30).

To make matters worse, he was then ignored by a priest and a Levite, those who were thought to be the most religious people of that time (verses 31-32). Sadly, they avoided the wounded man on the side of the road, perhaps to avoid the risk of becoming "unclean" by touching a dead body. Ironically, they had dedicated their lives to religious obligation but had little regard for their hurting neighbor. They would have claimed to love God, but their actions showed they did not love their neighbor. What they didn't realize is that their indifference to the injured man was proof they did not truly love God either. They did not consider this man a neighbor and certainly did not demonstrate love to him. As Jesus would make clear in the verses that follow, our neighbor is anyone we come in contact with. (See 1 John 4:20-21 to hear the New Testament's assessment of one who claims to love God but has no regard or love for those around him.)

## Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Point out that we are to love the people around us because God loves them. *Every person is a special creation of God with an eternal soul.* Encourage students to discuss this key truth with family members.

### Apply It LG SG

#### Treat all people as God’s Word Commands.

- How is Jesus’ definition of “neighbor” different from our culture’s definition? (A neighbor is anyone we come in contact with, not just someone who lives nearby.)
- What can we learn from this story about how we should treat people of different ethnicity, economic status, or culture? (We are to show love and compassion to all.)

You can use FWTE 6-2 (“That “Racial” Issue”) to help learners dig deeper into the ethnic tensions we see in our society.



FWTE 6-2



### Genuine Love Results in Action (Luke 10:33-37)

In verse 33, Jesus’ story shifted to what appeared to be the worst-case scenario. For the Jews, there were no enemies like the Samaritans. The fact that a Samaritan was passing by would not be considered a good thing. In the Lord’s parable, however, the Samaritan was the only one concerned enough to stop and assist this injured traveler. The term Jesus used for the Samaritan’s feelings was *compassion*, the same word used of Jesus in Matthew chapter 9 when He saw the people that were like sheep without a shepherd. It was a term that spoke of great affection, gut-level pity, or heart-felt mercy. By way of contrast with the priest and Levite, the Samaritan, out of his compassion, stopped to help the man (verse 33).

### Dig Deeper:

The animosity between the Jews and Samaritans helps us understand the significance of this parable. It was a long-standing hatred that ultimately could be traced

back to the time of the patriarchs. It surfaced, however, when the kingdom was divided into two nations and Samaria became the capital city of the northern kingdom, or Israel. Later, after Israel fell to the Assyrians, those left began to intermarry with the Assyrians and colonists they brought into the land, a practice forbidden in passages such as Deuteronomy 7:3-5. The Jews of Jesus' day often referred to the Samaritans as "dogs" or "half-breeds." Some sources say the Samaritans offered to help rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem but were rudely refused because of their pagan impurity. Tensions between the two parties increased even more when the Samaritans decided to build their own temple. Their temple was located at Mt. Gerizim and the Samaritans often boasted that their mountain was the dwelling place of the Lord. In New Testament times this same animosity continued. On one occasion, in John 4, Jesus made His way through Samaria, seldom traveled by a good Jew, and encountered a Samaritan woman. The division between these two groups exhibited itself as she asked which mountain was the "true mountain" for worship.



PP-6

The *Parent Page* (PP-6) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. (You may also want to use some of the discussion starter questions as you teach this lesson, or it can be used to lead another discussion group.) *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

In verses 34-37, there are six specific verbs demonstrating compassion that the Lord used about the Samaritan. He went; he bandaged; he poured oil and wine; he put him on his donkey; he brought him to the inn; he took care of him. All of these terms illustrate the fact that the Samaritan was emotionally invested—he truly felt compassion for the man. But he also went beyond emotions and feelings. He invested his resources to treat and bind the man's wounds. He invested his money to pay the innkeeper. He put the man on his own donkey, indicating he walked the rest of the way. He invested his day and pledged to invest his future time to care for the injured Jewish man. You'll notice that every part of the Samaritan was involved in this "rescue" including his eyes, his heart, his feet, his hands, his thoughts, his time, his possessions, his speech, and his money.

And the Samaritan did it all without regard for reciprocal treatment. We know this because the Jews despised the Samaritans, so a Samaritan would not have any reason to expect a reward from a Jew for his troubles. The Samaritan valued the injured man above his own schedule and above any prejudice by acting in the injured man's best interests.

In verse 36, Jesus drove home the point of this parable by asking a question that took the young man back to the directives of Christ given in verse 28. The question was, *Which*

man proved to be a neighbor? The answer was clear to the young man, and he replied that the neighbor was the one who showed mercy (verse 37). Jesus' response to this answer: *Go and do likewise*. All people are to be treated as neighbors and should experience mercy and compassion from those around them, especially those who claim to love God. In the Greek language, *do* is an imperative verb, which simply means this was a command. Loving your neighbor, just as loving God, is not optional. It is expected and is best demonstrated with compassion and mercy.

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## Apply It LG SG

### Demonstrate Love with action.

- *How did the Samaritan prove to be a good neighbor? (Met the man's needs.)*
- *What are some specific actions we can take to demonstrate love across ethnic, economic, and cultural lines? (Respect all people; do what is best for each other; reach out to help in times of need.)*

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## Live It LG SG

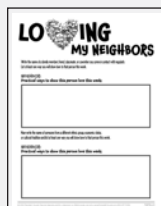
### Love Your Neighbor

Use *FORWARD Teaching Essential 6-3* ("Loving My Neighbors") to help your learners think of specific ways they can show love to someone they come in contact with regularly and to someone from a different ethnic group, economic status, or cultural tradition. Encourage them to demonstrate love to one of these neighbors this week.

### Show Love to All

Close by asking the following questions. *Whom has God put in your life that is difficult to love? To whom from a different ethnicity, economic status, or cultural tradition could you show neighborly love? What are you doing right now to love the friends and family God has put in your life? How could you demonstrate love to one of these people this week?* Encourage your group members to portray Christ to people this week through their actions of love.

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 6-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *Forward* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.



# Lost and Found

January 17, 2021

## Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 7-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 7-2 (handout)
- FWTE 7-3 (handout)
- PP-7 (Parent Page)

## Family Theme

Seek the Lost

## Lesson Objective

Learners understand that God loves sinners and longs for them to repent and be saved. We should seek out and share the gospel with the lost.

## Study Text

Luke 15:1-32



## Key Truths

- Even Sinners Are Priceless in God's Sight.
- Going Our Own Way Leads to Brokenness.
- God Welcomes All Who Repent and Turn to Him.



## Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to go over the following question and answer each day this week and to work with family members to do so as well. **What does it mean to repent? Answer:** To repent of sin is to turn away from it (Ezekiel 18:30). (Learners will find this Bible Basics note on the FWTE 7-1 student outline you give them.)



## How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set during the life of Christ on earth and demonstrates God's desire that all sinners turn to Him for salvation. This was why God planned before Creation to send His Son to die on the cross and prepared for it all through the Old Testament.

## Get Started LG SG

**Option 1:** Before class, write out the numbers 1-15 on small pieces of paper and hide them around the room. Tell your group there are 15 pieces of paper hidden and each piece has a number. The number on the paper represents its point total. Have your teens search for the pieces of paper until all 15 are found, or until you reach a time limit of your choosing. Have your teens count their points and award a prize to the winner. Then say, *Just as you sought out the pieces of paper, God seeks out the lost. However, much more is at stake than just a small prize.*

**Option 2:** Many explorers search for lost treasure. One of the greatest finds happened in recent years when an underwater robot discovered a 310-year-old Spanish shipwreck, carrying treasure that could be worth up to \$17 billion. Show this video to your students (<https://tinyurl.com/RobotSpanishShip>) or look up information about the Spanish galleon *San José*. After discussing this, say, *While \$17 billion sounds like a lot of money, today we are going see how people are even more valuable to God than this treasure.*

Choose one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

## Study the Word LG

Jesus often spoke in parables. By definition, parables are simple stories that use the obvious or common to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. Chapter 15 of the gospel of Luke contains three such parables, each of which portray the Father's intense love for sinful humanity.



### Even Sinners Are Priceless in God' Sight (Luke 15:1-10)

This chapter demonstrates one reason most of the Jewish religious leaders opposed Jesus. They felt it was inappropriate, and even sinful, for Jesus to have any association with those they considered sinners. They grumbled among themselves when they saw how "sinners" were drawn to Jesus and how He ate with and associated with them (verses 1-2).

Tax collectors or publicans were considered traitors, thieves, or extortionists. Because of this and their alliance

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 7-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



FWTE 7-1

### Teaching Tip:

Don't be afraid to tackle tough questions about the Scriptures. Study to find answers and help your learners discover them as well.

with the Roman government, they were reviled or hated by the people of Israel. The sinners were those who did not even attempt to line up with the religious standards of the day. Needless to say, their reputations were not good. Seeing this, the Pharisees and scribes were constantly grumbling about Jesus' interaction with these second-class citizens. They leveled two charges against Him: He receives these sinners and even worse, he eats with them.

### Dig Deeper:

The scribes and Pharisees were two groups that united for the purpose of opposing the Lord. Historically, the scribes were learned men whose business it was to study, transcribe, and write commentaries on the Law. They would often copy and recopy the Old Testament meticulously, even counting letters and spaces to ensure accuracy. The Pharisees were tasked with explaining the Law and enforcing obedience to it. Over time, they added many man-made regulations to what God had said. Their preferences and standards eventually became more important than the Law itself, causing repeated confrontations with the Lord. Their great sin was pride as they boasted of their adherence to the Law. They often clashed with Jesus regarding the particulars of the Law with no consideration taken for the heart and spirit of the Law. The Pharisees, along with the scribes, looked for ways in which they could "trap" Jesus in His teaching and bring Him down.

Jesus responded to their charges with parables that demonstrate God's love for those lost in sin and His desire for them to come to repentance. The first parable is that of a man who had 100 sheep and lost one of them (verse 4). Sheep and shepherds would have been common throughout the region and the Lord used this fact to make His point. The ratio of 99 to 1 doesn't seem too bad at first glance. The man, however, left the 99 to seek the one lost sheep. Note that Jesus was not saying the other 99 sheep were not important. All were important, but his priority was to rescue the one that was lost. When he found it, he would joyfully carry it back and celebrate. That is a picture of the joy in Heaven when a lost soul is saved (verses 4-7). The one sheep correlated with the tax collectors and sinners. They needed a Savior.

Jesus told a second parable in verses 8-10 in which a woman owned ten coins. If she lost one of them, she would set the nine to the side and pour her effort into finding the one

that was missing. She would scour every corner of the house and move every piece of furniture if necessary. This coin was very important to her. In many respects, this parable had the same message as the previous one. The difference lies in the thoroughness of the search. The specific coin alluded to here (the only place in the New Testament) was a *drachma* and equaled about a day's wages. Jesus made the point that the sinners with whom He was eating were of great value to God.

Like the shepherd in verse 7, when her hard work and diligence paid off and she found the coin, she would rejoice with her friends and neighbors. This, too, pictures the joy that fills Heaven when a sinner repents and is saved (verses 8-10).

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## Apply It LG SG

### View unbelievers as God does and share His love with them.

- *How do we tend to view unbelievers who live sinful lifestyles? What changes in our thinking must occur for us to view them from God's perspective? (They are valuable enough for Christ to give His life for them; our assignment is not to judge them but to love them.)*

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Use FWTE 7-2 to reinforce the truth of God's love for those lost in sin.

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## Going Our Own Way Leads to Brokenness

(Luke 15:11-19)

Beginning in verse 11, Christ told a third parable. Much emphasis in this story is on the son, the one who was lost, as opposed to the seeker as in the previous two parables. Here, a younger son asked his father for his share of the inheritance and immediately wandered far into sin. The portion or share requested in verse 12 spoke of that which was normally given to a son after the father passed away. In this case, it was the same as the son saying, "Dad, I cannot wait for you to die."

In verses 13-16, this son who thought he had it all together began to lose it all. Sadly, he wasted all he had to feed his passions, his ego, and his pleasures. He quickly discovered that his pockets were not deep enough, the pleasures were



FWTE 7-2

temporary, and his ego could bruise. By verse 15, this Jewish young man was feeding pigs, an act that was repugnant to the Jews. The Jews considered pigs an unclean animal and no good Jew would eat or even touch one. He thought life would be better far from his father's watchful eye. What he realized in verses 17-19, however, was that his father's servants were better off than he was out in the world. He realized he was not worthy to be his father's son but determined to return home, hoping his father would treat him like one of his servants.

### **Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview**

Help learners see that going our own way eventually leads to emptiness and brokenness. Sin does not satisfy, but brings death and destruction. Encourage students to discuss this truth with family members.

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### **Apply It**

**Share with the lost the emptiness of sin and the blessings of walking with God.**

- *A sinful lifestyle eventually leads to emptiness. Why does sin never truly satisfy? (It is based on lies of the enemy; it goes against the way God made us.)*
- *What are some blessings of walking with God that you can share with an unbeliever? (Peace with God; the promise of His comfort; guidance and direction.)*



### **God Welcomes All Who Repent and Turn to Him**

**(Luke 15:20-32)**

The heartbroken father's response to his rebellious son is presented in verse 20 and following. While the repentant young man was still a long way off, the father saw him making his way back home. Several aspects of the father's response are noteworthy. For instance, he ran to meet his son, an act that was taboo among men of that culture. He kissed him over and over, another abnormal action on the part of a Jewish man. Verse 21 records the son's apology to his father, words he had rehearsed prior to returning home (verse 18).

The father's continued response portrays love, joy, and commitment. He placed a robe on the son, acknowledging the son as a "guest of honor" and also portraying a sign of acceptance to the community. He placed a ring on his finger, a symbol of trust, and shoes on his feet, an indicator that this son would be viewed as a son and not as a mere servant. The calf was killed, the band was cued up, and the celebration party had begun. Needless to say, the father's reception went well beyond what the son could have ever hoped for.

### **Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview**

Make sure learners understand that *God offers salvation and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ*. All who turn away from sin to follow Him are welcomed. Encourage students to discuss this truth with family members.

This is a picture of the condition in which the lost eventually find themselves. Far from the Father's care, the world gives the lost soul some sinful pleasure. But the cruelty of sin is such that it takes far more than it gives. Instead of satisfied, it leaves the wanderer empty, desperate for the very things the Heavenly Father provides His children. While the son repented of his sin and humbly asked to be treated like one of the hired servants, the father gave a joyful reception for the son who could have been lost to him forever.

Tragically, the older brother did not share his father's sentiment. Like the Pharisees and teachers of the Law in verse 1, he was upset that this renegade brother of his was celebrated. He was angry that his brother who wasted his father's wealth on prostitutes (a possible exaggeration) would receive such love and affection. The father had to celebrate because his son had been dead to him, possibly lost forever. But now he was alive and home. The older brother made it all about himself while the father made it about celebrating the return.

Notice the attitude of the older brother (verse 28). He was angry and refused to attend the celebration the father had arranged. In verses 29 and 30, the brother exaggerated his own righteousness and his brother's sinfulness. After all, who among us could boast that we have never disobeyed our father?

Rather than rebuking the older son, the father entreated him with gentleness and kindness (verses 31-32). He assured the older son that what remained was truly his. The celebration and rejoicing of verse 32 ties together the three parables and again reminds the reader of the celebration in Heaven



PP-7

The *Parent Page* (PP-7) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

that occurs when the lost are saved. As in the previous parables, Jesus was conveying the Father's desire to love and embrace sinners who turn to Him.

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## Apply It LG SG

### Thank God for welcoming you into His family and long to see others saved.

- Which character in the parable of the prodigal son do you most identify with and why?
- Why does God care so much about lost people being saved?

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## Live It LG SG

### Joy in Heaven!

Use *FORWARD Teaching Essential 7-3* ("Joy in Heaven!") to help your students think about how much God longs for the lost to be saved and how they should celebrate whenever a lost sinner comes to Christ for salvation. Encourage them to share the good news this week with someone who is lost.

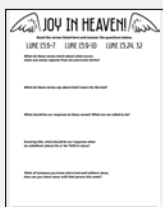
### Love and Seek the Lost

Ask and discuss the following:

- How were Jesus' attitude and actions toward sinners different from that of the religious leaders of His day?
- How can we demonstrate Jesus' attitude and actions toward the lost?

Encourage group members to practice these attitudes and actions toward the lost this week.

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 7-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *Forward* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.

# Bank on It

January 24, 2021

## Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 8-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 8-2 (poster)
- FWTE 8-3 (handout)
- PP-8 (Parent Page)

## Family Theme

God Promises Blessings

## Lesson Objective

Learners understand that God promised to bless the world through Abraham and his seed, Jesus Christ. God has blessed us so we can be a blessing to others.

## Study Text

Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6



## Key Truths

- God Promises Blessings to Those Who Trust and Obey Him.
- God Reassures Those Who Trust in Him.
- We Are Saved by Faith.



## Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to memorize Ephesians 2:8-9 this week and to work with family members to do so as well. (Learners can find this Bible Basics note on the FWTE 8-1 student outline you give them.)



## How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set a few hundred years after the events of the Tower of Babel. It introduces Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. God called him to an unknown land and gave him covenant promises of a future nation through which God would bless all the earth.



## Get Started LG SG

Choose one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

**Option 1:** Ask for a volunteer who is good at following directions. Show that student a specific item (a pencil, dollar bill, paper clip, etc.), and then blindfold the student. With the student unable to see, place the item somewhere in your classroom. Next, have one student give the blindfolded student directions on how to reach the item. To make things more difficult, you could place small obstacles in the way. After you finish, say, *The success of this game depended on the level of trust between two people. As we'll see today, God asked Abraham to trust Him, even though the circumstances were unusual. In return, God promised something amazing.*

**Option 2:** In this video, the guys from Dude Perfect perform “trust shots” with their kids (<https://tinyurl.com/DudePerfectTrust>). Show this video to your students and discuss what it takes to have trust in someone. (If time is an issue, consider starting at 1:02 and ending at 3:02.) Afterward, say to your students, *It can be difficult to trust someone, especially when we're asked to do something that might seem crazy. As we'll see today, God asked Abraham to trust Him, even though the circumstances were very unusual.*

## Study the Word LG

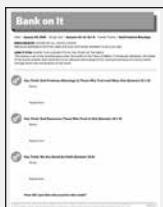
In these passages God revealed His will for Abram, later called Abraham. God would make a great nation from Abraham's descendants and send the Savior through them.



### God Promises Blessings to Those Who Trust and Obey Him (Genesis 12:1-9)

Abram (later called Abraham) is first introduced in Genesis 11:27-32. Terah, his father, headed out for Canaan after his son Haran died, but stopped short in the city of Haran (also see Acts 7:2-4). Abraham lived in Haran with his father, brother, nephew, and wife. The Lord appeared to Abraham and commanded him to leave his country and his home and extended family, and go to an unknown place that the Lord would make known to him (verse 1). God promised that when Abraham did so, God would bless him and make him a great man and give

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 8-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



FWTE 8-1

him many descendants, and that he in turn would be a blessing to all the people of the world. God would even bless or curse others because of how they treated Abraham (verses 2-3). He was to walk away from his home and idol-worshiping family (Joshua 24:2). Abraham's official name change came in Genesis 17:5. In those days, names were to reflect character traits, personalities, and so on. By definition "Abram" means *exalted father*. "Abraham," on the other hand, means *father of the nations, or father of the multitudes*.

### **Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview**

Point out that God's personal dealings with Abraham demonstrate that God is a personal, spiritual being. He wants us to have a relationship with Him. Encourage students to discuss this key truth with family members.

### **Dig Deeper:**

The promise to bless all peoples of the earth was fulfilled through Jesus, Abraham's descendant. Christ has blessed all people in several ways: Primarily He blessed people by paying the penalty for all sin. His sacrifice covered every sin from the sin of Adam and Eve to the last sin that will be committed. The teachings of Christ have blessed the cultures of the earth unlike any other teachings. Regardless of whether a person believes in Christ or not, His philosophies provide a foundation of morality and ethics. Christ continues to bless the peoples of the earth through His Spirit who lives in His believers. As believers live out the principles of Christ, they impact the world for the better.

Abram's obedience required great faith, yet verse 4 states that Abraham did as the Lord told him. In spite of all the questions, he refused to doubt God and followed the Lord without hesitation (verse 4). Abraham left Haran with his wife, his nephew Lot, all his people, and his possessions and later arrived at the land of Canaan (verse 5). As Abraham traveled through the land, the Lord appeared to him and confirmed that this was the land and that He would give it to Abraham's children (verses 6-7). In response, Abraham built an altar in Shechem as both an expression of appreciation and as a consecration of the Promised Land to God. Moving on to Bethel, he there built another altar of worship to the Lord (verse 8). This was not only a refusal on Abraham's part to worship at

### **Teaching Tip:**

Effective teachers seek to gain learners' attention at the start of each lesson. Some ideas for gaining attention include posters, demonstrations, maps, pictures, relevant personal stories, and thought-provoking questions.

an existing altar dedicated to a false god, but also served as opportunities for Abraham to make an open profession of his religion and to establish the worship of the true God. The faith of Abraham led him to obey, to sacrifice, and to worship.

### **Dig Deeper:**

God's covenant with Abraham had four components:

- *The promise of land.* Once Abraham arrived in Canaan, God informed him that this was indeed the land of promise. For many years, Abraham had to believe based solely on what God told him.
- *The promise of descendants.* At this point Abraham was 75 and childless. His greatest challenge was to believe in something he could not see or understand. However, the promise of a great number of descendants would later be fulfilled with both physical and spiritual descendants.
- *The promise to bless those who blessed Abraham and curse those who cursed him.* God assured Abraham of divine favor. God would honor those who honored Abraham and would be against those who dishonored Abraham.
- *The promise to bless Abraham's descendants and all people on the earth through him.* Abraham became the original conduit through whom God blessed His chosen people, the Israelites, and later the whole world. Abraham was to believe a promise regarding a people that were not yet in existence. Again, Abraham's faith ruled the day.

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### **Apply It** (LG) (SG)

#### **Be willing to do whatever God asks.**

- *What are some things God asks us to do that require faith?* (Forgive those who hurt us; don't worry; pray for enemies; etc.)
  - *Name various ways we can be a blessing to the people around us.* (Treat others like we want to be treated; meet physical needs; be encouragers; etc.)
-



## God Reassures Those Who Trust in Him

(Genesis 15:1-5)

Abraham did not understand how God would bring His plan to pass. This is understandable because he and Sarah were well beyond the age of childbearing. Abraham was trying to make sense of God's promises. In his discouragement he started devising ways to work out God's plan for Him. But God's promise didn't require Abraham or Sarah's help. The Lord, knowing the struggles of Abraham's heart and mind, appeared to him in a vision. He told Abraham not to be afraid, and that He was Abraham's shield and great reward. Some translators render this last phrase *your reward shall be very great*. Either way, God is a great reward to those who know Him and greatly rewards His faithful people (verse 1). The shield portrays God as protecting Abraham while the reward speaks of a recompense for faithful service.

Abraham's struggle to understand how God would fulfill His promise rises to the surface in verses 2 and 3. In Abraham's culture a childless man could adopt someone to be guardian and heir of his estate if necessary. It seemed only logical at this point for Abraham to believe that his servant named Eliezer would fill that role.

In verse 4, God reiterated that Abraham would have a son that would serve as his heir. In verse 5, the Lord's patience and grace are on display. God used an incredible object lesson to assure His servant. He told Abraham to look into the sky and try to count the stars. This image of countless stars would be forever etched in Abraham's mind as God said, *so shall your offspring be*.

While Abraham is often chided for attempting to formulate a plan himself, it is only natural for us to wonder and question what we do not understand. The fact that Abraham is still known as one who believed God should be an encouragement to believers today. There may be moments when we question, but God will patiently prod us to believe and remind us of His promises, strengthening our faith.

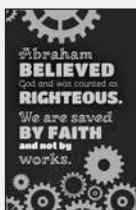
### Dig Deeper:

God promised Abraham the land and vast numbers of descendants. Both promises would be fulfilled after his lifetime. By the time of Moses, Abraham's descendants had become a great nation estimated to be about two million strong. God's promise to bless all peoples of the

The *Parent Page* (PP-8) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)



PP-8



FWTE 8-2

Display the FWTE 8-2 ("Saved by Faith") poster.

earth through Abraham was fulfilled by Christ, one of his later descendants. Galatians 3:6-9 shows how all who trust in Christ are blessed because of Abraham's faith.

## Apply It LG SG

### Trust God to keep His promises.

- *When have you struggled to understand what God was doing in your life?*
- *Why can we consider God trustworthy? (He cannot lie; He always wants what is best for us; He has proven Himself trustworthy all down through history; etc.)*

## We Are Saved by Faith (Genesis 15:6)

Verse 6 reports that Abraham believed what God had told Him. Another translation of the word *believed* would be *trusted*. Abraham considered God to be trustworthy. He was sure that what God says is true and will come to pass. He was fully persuaded that God would fulfill His promise: he believed God. The original Hebrew usage of the word suggests an ongoing activity: he kept on believing the promise.

In response to Abraham's trust, God gave Abraham His righteousness. Righteousness portrays a state of acceptance by God and right standing with Him. Since it is impossible to attain this by perfectly keeping all of God's commands, God made an exchange of righteousness for Abraham's trust.

This verse is significant for Christianity today because it confirms that God's plan of salvation has never changed. In fact, this statement is repeated four times in the New Testament (Romans 4:3, 22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23) illustrating its importance. Our faith or trust in God brings us Christ's righteousness, and this exchange of faith for righteousness is, and always has been, God's plan.

### Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Help your learners see how Genesis 15:6 demonstrates that salvation and forgiveness come through faith in Jesus Christ and not by good works. Encourage students to discuss this key principle with family members.

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## Apply It LG SG

### Trust in Christ alone for right standing with God.

- *Why is faith in Christ the only way we can be right with God?* (He paid the penalty for our sins and gives us His righteousness; we cannot earn salvation by good works.)
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## Live It LG SG

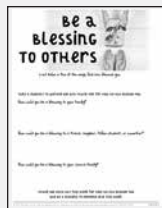
### Keep Trusting God

Although it took many years, God kept His promise to Abraham. During the waiting period, Abraham probably had many questions, but in the end he believed and God kept His promise. Ask what current situations have your students feeling doubtful, discouraged, or confused. Are they waiting for God to make good on one of His promises? Are they in the middle of a difficult time? Are they facing a dilemma that only God could give them the strength to face? Whatever the situation, encourage students to rely on God this week—to turn to Him in prayer, to trust in His promises, and to look in His Word for answers. He offers truth and grace in abundance!

### Be a Blessing

Use *FORWARD Teaching Essential 8-3* (“Be a Blessing”) to help learners thank God for how He has blessed them and to think about how they can be a blessing to people around them. Encourage them to thank God each day this week for how He has blessed them and be a blessing to someone else.

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 8-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *Forward* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.

# Tried and Tested

January 31, 2021

## Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 9-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 9-2 (poster)
- FWTE 9-3 (handout)
- FWTE 9-4 (handout)
- PP-9 (Parent Page)

## Family Theme

Faith Will Be Tested

## Lesson Objective

Learners see that Abraham passed the test when God asked him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. We always trust God and obey His directions.

## Study Text

Genesis 22:1-19



## Key Truths

- God Tests Our Faith.
- Trust and Obey God, Even When It Is Difficult.
- God Provides What Is Needed to Do His Will.



## Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage students to memorize the names and order of books six, seven, and eight of the Old Testament (Joshua, Judges, and Ruth) this week and to work with family members to do so as well. (Learners can find this Bible Basics note on the FWTE 9-1 student outline you give them.)



## How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set after God miraculously provided the promised son to Abraham and Sarah, even though they were well beyond childbearing years. Through this son, Isaac, God would begin the process of building a great nation and blessing all people just as He promised Abraham.

## Get Started LG SG

**Option 1:** Ask your students to name the most difficult academic test they've ever taken. Perhaps it was the ACT, an AP exam, a test in chemistry, etc. Ask them what made it so difficult. How much time did they spend studying and preparing for it? After discussing difficult tests, say, *Academic tests can be very difficult, but the testing of our faith can be even more difficult. As we'll see today, even when our faith is tested, we can trust God and obey His directions.*

**Option 2:** Ask your students about their study methods when they are preparing for a big test. Show this video that explains nine scientific study tips and discuss it with your students (<https://tinyurl.com/TestPrepVideo>). Say, *When we have a big test coming up, it's wise to put in hours of preparation to get ready for it. As we will see today, our faith also gets tested, and preparation is vital so we will be ready for it.*

Choose one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

## Study the Word LG

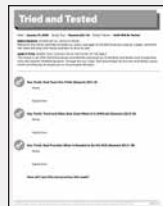
After waiting 25 years for a son, Abraham's faith was put to the test when he was asked to offer that son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. How Abraham responded revealed his trust in God and serves as an example for us today.



### God Tests Our Faith (Genesis 22:1-2)

It is important to note from verse 1 that this was a test of Abraham's faith. God did not "tempt" Abraham in the sense of enticing him to sin. This test was for Abraham's benefit to grow his faith and set an example for all believers. It no doubt also left a hefty impression on young Isaac as a graphic example of his father's unwavering faith. From the perspective of a parent this request seems inconceivable. From the view of a child it feels cruel. From the perspective of God it would create a benchmark for faith that would shine as a beacon to all generations since that day.

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 9-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



FWTE 9-1



### Teaching Tip:

Your enthusiasm for what you are teaching will add energy to your classroom and pique interest from your students. Express enthusiasm in your body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions.

### Dig Deeper:

Some may ask, “Was God an advocate of child sacrifice?” Several things should be kept in mind. In the cases where it is mentioned in the Bible, child sacrifice is always viewed negatively and in conjunction with worship of false gods or disobedience to the God of Israel (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Kings 16:3; 21:6). Another key point is that this had nothing to do with actually sacrificing Isaac, but instead focused on Abraham and his willingness to do what God had asked him to do. Finally, God did not allow Abraham to go through with the sacrifice, but instead provided a ram for a substitute. God has never been an advocate of child sacrifice. He values the lives of children and loves them with an everlasting love.

When the Lord spoke to Abraham, Abraham responded with a willing heart and a simple response of *Here I am*. This simple statement reveals the level of trust and intimacy between Abraham and the Lord while also demonstrating that he was faithful and attentive to whatever God said.

God asked much of Abraham, but promised him much as well. In chapter 12, Abraham was told to leave his country, his people, and his father’s household. Here in chapter 22, he was commanded to sacrifice his only son Isaac, the son he loved so much (verse 2). The promises of the two chapters are also similar in nature as Abraham was told in chapter 12 that he would have many descendants and that all the nations would be blessed through him. In chapter 22, he was told that through his offspring (Isaac), all the nations on earth would be blessed (verse 18). This was Abraham’s big test and it would only be Abraham, Isaac, and the Lord in attendance (see verse 5). Mount Moriah, believed by most to be the later site of Jerusalem, was about a 50-mile journey from Beersheba.

### Dig Deeper:

What is the difference between tests and temptations? God’s tests are never a solicitation to evil (James 1:13). These trials or tests could serve two purposes. First, they could reveal the nature of faith. If the faith were counterfeit or weak, a trial or test would reveal it. Second, tests or trials could be used to strengthen one’s faith like an athlete working out day by day.

Temptations, on the other hand, are a solicitation to do evil. Temptations do not come from God and thus He

should never be blamed when one falls into sin. Instead, they originate with the Evil One who seeks the believer's demise. Whether a believer is experiencing tests or temptations, the Lord gives the strength to persevere.

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## Apply It LG SG

The One who was tempted in all points like we are will provide a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:18).

**See difficult circumstances and commands as opportunities to please God and grow our faith.**

- *What are some things that test our faith?* (Trials, difficult circumstances, death of loved ones; disappointments; etc.)
- *How does it make you feel to talk about being tested in ways like this?*



## Trust and Obey God, Even When It Is Difficult (Genesis 22:3-10)

Abraham obeyed immediately. He set out early the next morning with his son Isaac (verse 3). We get the impression that going out to make a sacrifice together was a normal occurrence. But this time was different because Isaac thought that the lamb had been forgotten. He was old enough and strong enough to help carry the firewood for a sacrifice and also old enough to put two and two together and start asking questions. Imagine the struggle in Abraham's mind as he took each step of the three-day journey with his son walking beside him (verse 4). In some degree this was a test of faith for Isaac as well.

### Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Help learners see that Isaac's familiarity with making sacrifices to God indicates that Abraham had taught him these things. *God established the home to make disciples and transfer the faith.* Encourage students to discuss God's principles and ways with family members.



FWTE 9-2

Display the *FORWARD Teaching Essential 9-2* ("Refined by Fire") poster and read aloud 1 Peter 1:6-7.

Upon arriving in sight of the mountain, Abraham instructed the young servants that had accompanied them to remain there until he and Isaac returned (verse 5). It was not an accident or slip of the tongue for Abraham to say “we will return.” Although Abraham did not yet know how the Lord would work all this out, he had enough faith to believe that God would keep His promise. God would use his son Isaac to bear a descendant who would bless the world, even if He had to raise Isaac from the dead to do so (see Hebrews 11:17-19).

Abraham gave the wood to Isaac to carry, and took fire and a knife and started out for the mountain (verse 6). We can imagine the tension as Abraham carried the weapons he would use against his son. At this point, Isaac was perplexed by the entire situation and asked his father where the animal was that they would sacrifice (verse 7). The reader gets another glimpse of Abraham’s faith in his response to Isaac in verse 8. His response was simply, *God will provide*. Isaac, in total obedience to his father, went with Abraham, even to the point of being bound as a sacrifice himself. Verses 2-10 continue to unfold the story until Abraham had the knife in the air, ready to thrust it into his son.



PP-9

The *Parent Page* (PP-9) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

### Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Help learners see that Abraham’s willingness to do whatever God told him to do serves as an example of how we should respond to God. *He is the sovereign Lord of all*. Encourage students to discuss this key truth with family members.

The test was complete. The benchmark had been set—a benchmark that has been followed by every pastor, missionary, martyr, man, woman, and child that have stepped out of their comfort zone because they believed God.

### Apply It LG SG

#### Trust God and obey all of His instructions.

- *What would you have been thinking if you found yourself in Isaac’s situation?*
- *How does Hebrews 11:17-19 help us understand Abraham’s choice to obey? (Abraham believed so strongly*

that God would keep His promises that He concluded God would restore Isaac to life after the sacrifice.)



## God Provides What Is Needed to Do His Will (Genesis 22:11-19)

Just as Abraham was about to slay Isaac, the Angel of the Lord called out to Abraham and kept him from killing his son. The repetition “Abraham, Abraham” indicates the urgency of the situation. The expression *now I know that you fear God* in verse 12 cannot be taken to mean that God had learned something new. After all, God is omniscient (all-knowing). It does reveal the fact, however, that Abraham had stood the test and had proven himself faithful to God. Abraham would not hold anything back from God, including his son.

Providence was clearly at work and God provided a ram that Abraham could use as a sacrifice (verse 13). Abraham called the place Jehovah-jireh, which is literally translated *God will see or provide* (verse 14). Abraham prophesied of what would one day be seen on these same mountains—the only Son would carry the wooden instrument of His death up this hill and the Lord would provide sacrifice for our sins.

God provides according to His perfect plan. Isaac was present and God reiterated the part of His covenant with Abraham that had to do with his offspring (verses 16-18). This experience would have made a huge impact on Isaac’s faith.

What was accomplished from this test of Abraham’s faith? First of all, the test taught Abraham to step out in faith, even when he did not understand what the future would hold. Second, even though things looked grim for Abraham and Isaac, he obeyed, not knowing the conclusion. Third, it taught Abraham that God had a plan, even though Abraham didn’t fully understand it. Finally, remember that Isaac was also there. This allowed him to witness his father’s faith and to hear the promises God had made to his father and to Isaac himself as his father’s descendant. The most effective way to pass our faith to the next generation is to model it.

### Dig Deeper:

The offering of Isaac points to Christ’s laying down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. Many interpreters identify Mount Moriah as the location where Solomon’s Temple was built. Golgotha, or Calvary, where Christ was sacrificed, was in the same general area. It is impossible to

Use FWTE 9-3 (“Obey Anyway”) to help your students think about obeying God even when it is difficult.



FWTE 9-3

know exactly where Abraham built the altar that day, but it is significant that it was in the same general area where the Temple sacrifices later took place and where the ultimate sacrifice for sin took place. Consider the following similarities:

- The birth of Isaac and Christ were both promised in advance and occurred miraculously.
- Isaac carried the wood and Christ carried the cross (wood).
- From Hebrews 11:19 we understand that Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead after the sacrifice. Jesus knew He would rise again.
- In both cases, God provided the sacrifice.
- The ram and Jesus both served as a substitute.

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## **Apply It** LG SG

**Thank God for providing Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins and trust Him to provide what we need to follow Him.**

- *What are some ways God has asked you to step out in faith?*
- *What resources has God given us to help us obey Him? (His Word; the Holy Spirit; parents and mentors; etc.)*

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 9-4

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *Forward* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.

## **Live It** LG SG

### **Stretch Your Faith**

Use *FWTE* 9-4 ("Stretched") to help your group members think through how they can step out in faith to do something difficult that God wants them to do. Give them time to complete the handout and then discuss it. Encourage them to do what God has asked them to do believing God will keep all His promises and provide what they need to do it.

### **Obey Anyway**

Ask your group members to identify one command or instruction from God that is difficult for them to obey. Then ask them to plan how they will step out in faith to obey it this week. Encourage them to follow through.

# If Not for the Grace of God

## Lesson 10

February 7, 2021

### Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 10-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 10-2 (handout)
- FWTE 10-3 (handout)
- PP-10 (Parent Page)

### Family Theme

Grace Is Undeserved

### Lesson Objective

Learners understand that God graciously chooses us and works His plan through us in spite of our faults and failures. We thank Him for the undeserved grace He pours out on us.

### Study Text

Genesis 27:1-46



### Key Truths

- God Will Accomplish His Plan Regardless of Our Bad Choices.
- Choosing to Do Things Our Way Leads to Negative Consequences.



### Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to review last quarter's memory verses (Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-2, and Proverbs 3:5) this week and to work with family members to do so as well.



### How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set during the time of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) when God began to build the nation through which the Messiah would come and bless all peoples of the earth just as God had promised Abraham and Isaac.

## Get Started LG SG

Choose one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

**Option 1:** Play “Two Truths and a Lie” with your group. Give each student paper and a writing utensil and encourage everyone to write down two true statements about themselves and one false statement. Have students read their lists to the class, and let the class members vote on which statement they think is a lie. After everyone has shared, say, *Sometimes it is easy to deceive others. Today we will see how Jacob deceived his father by pretending to be Esau. Despite this bad decision, God still worked through this situation to bring about His will and show grace.*

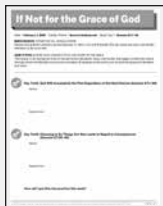
**Option 2:** This video shows some of the process Tom Hanks went through to “become” Mister Rogers for the film *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* (<https://tinyurl.com/BecomingMisterRogers>). Show the video and discuss what must be done to imitate another person. After discussion, say, *Jacob pretended to be his brother Esau in order to deceive his father. Despite this bad decision, God still worked through this situation to bring about His will and show grace.*

## Study the Word LG

To put the turmoil of this chapter in context we need to review events of Genesis 25:19-34.

- Esau and Jacob jostled in the womb.
- The Lord told Rebekah they would be two nations: one stronger than the other, the older serving the younger.
- Jacob was born after Esau, but clutching Esau’s heel.
- Jacob means “he grasps the heel” or “he deceives.”
- Rebekah and Isaac played favorites with the children.
- Esau gave up his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew.

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 10-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



FWTE 10-1



### God Will Accomplish His Plan Regardless of Our Bad Choices (Genesis 27:1-29)

Isaac should have learned from his father Abraham that God does not need our assistance if His plan seems behind schedule. Isaac’s older half-brother Ishmael would have been a perfect example. Abraham and Sarah took matters into

their own hands, and their impatience brought trouble for them and their descendants even to this day. Isaac did not learn from this, nor did Rebekah and Jacob (verses 1-13).

God had promised to pass His choice and blessing through Jacob. The elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). See Genesis 25:23. Apparently Rebekah believed God needed her to lend a hand to bring about His will. Consider her actions and possible motivations (verses 14-17): She planned to deceive her husband and to steal the blessing he intended for Esau. Jacob hesitated, but more out of caution or fear of getting caught, rather than ethics. As with so many others, the two deceivers obtained what they wanted. Their successful deception failed to promote honesty and good will within their family, however. The price paid would far exceed their expectations.

### **Dig Deeper:**

In Genesis 25:29-34, Esau had come home tired and hungry from hunting, and had foolishly traded his birthright to his brother Jacob in exchange for some stew. Perhaps he reasoned his father would give him the blessing anyway. Or perhaps he simply saw little value in it (Hebrews 12:16-17). In today's text, Esau returned from hunting to find his younger brother had indeed managed to receive the blessing. Oral statements, including deathbed blessings, had the legal force of law. It was as official as preparing a will in our day. Rebekah and Jacob's action was more than mere deception. It was fraud. Their behavior indicates that their interest had little to do with God's promise of a redeemer through Abraham and Isaac. It is important, however, to point out that the blessing Isaac thought he was bestowing upon Esau did not specifically invoke the blessing of Abraham. That, apparently, was reserved for Jacob and passed to him when he left home (Genesis 28:3-4).

Killing and preparing the meat to take to Isaac took time. Both Jacob and Rebekah committed themselves to the scheme. Jacob lied to his father (Genesis 27:19). Isaac wondered how his son had returned from the hunt and prepared the game so quickly. In verse 20, Jacob compounded his lie by invoking God's name in the charade (verses 18-20).

Rebekah knew what it would take to deceive Isaac. The coverings on Jacob's arms and hands, along with Esau's clothing all worked together to deceive the aging Isaac. His

### **Teaching Tip:**

When needed, give background information and context that will help your learners better understand the passage or principles they are studying.



failing eyesight betrayed him, but his own wife and son betrayed him even more (verses 21-27).

We do not know all that Isaac understood of God's blessing to his father Abraham, but he must have retained a good deal of it. Much of what he said in his blessing echoed what God had promised Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), and then himself (Genesis 26:3-5, 24). The first element of Isaac's blessing upon Jacob involved material prosperity, expressed in his reference to great quantities of grain and new wine. The second element of the blessing involved foreign nations that would serve Jacob and his descendants. The third element involved headship in the family. Isaac wanted no questions or disputes concerning who was in charge after he was gone. Finally, a fourth item invoked cursing and blessing upon those who would curse or bless his son (verses 28-29).

### **Dig Deeper:**

In the time of Isaac, pronouncing the blessing upon the primary heir was a solemn and important task. Although the firstborn had the right of receiving the blessing, the father *could* pass it on to a different son, especially in the case of an eldest son of unworthy actions or character. This was why fathers would often wait until they were convinced death was approaching. Once the blessing was given, he could not change his mind.

Rebekah doubtless told herself she was helping God accomplish what He had promised. She did not learn from the example of her father-in-law's family strife when Abraham and Sarah had taken matters into their own hands. God could have communicated directly with Isaac to tell him to bless Jacob first. In later studies we will see how much heartache came from Rebekah and Jacob's actions. They could not see what lay ahead. That should have made no difference in choosing to act honestly or not, however. We should always choose to do right.

### **Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview**

The fact that God accomplishes His plan despite our wrong choices demonstrates that He is the Sovereign Lord of all. Point this out to your students and encourage them to discuss this truth with family members.

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## Apply It

### Thank God for letting us be part of His sovereign plan in spite of our faults and failures.

- *Why is God able to accomplish His will in spite of people's wrong choices and actions?* (He is all knowing, all wise, and all powerful, and is able to work everything out according to His plan.)
  - *How does it make you feel to know God can, and will, accomplish His plan for you, even when it seems everything is off track?*
- 



### Choosing to Do Things Our Way Leads to Negative Consequences (Gen. 27:30-46)

Rebekah and Jacob had surely tried not to think about what would happen when Esau returned and the truth came out. Indeed, Esau returned, and took food to his father, expecting to receive his blessing (verse 30-32). Verse 33 indicates that Isaac was angry with what had happened. He *trembled violently*. This was not merely a momentary shiver of a frail aging man. He understood the deception and understood that little remained to pass along to his favorite son. Did he suspect his wife's participation? Did he think of what God had said concerning his two sons? Isaac had good reason to tremble.

Esau displayed his lack of spiritual concern in verses 34-36. He conveniently ignored that his forfeiture of the birthright (for stew) meant he had no right to the firstborn blessing. He saw none of that—he only seemed upset that he had been tricked! What blessing was left was indeed small (verses 39-41). Esau's line would live in violence, surviving in difficult regions. It does not surprise us then that Esau openly planned to kill Jacob after Isaac's death.

Rebekah's "success" in obtaining the blessing for Jacob gave her little comfort as she pondered Esau's desire to kill Jacob. One plot led without fail to another. She prepared to send Jacob away to her brother and his family in Haran, hoping he could return when Esau's anger died down. She could not just send him away, however. Isaac would ask why, and the details of the story, including her role in the whole sorry mess, might come to light. Instead, she worked up a good excuse: Esau's wives, Hittites from Canaan, were such a grief to her

that if Jacob were to marry among them, she would despair of life itself (verses 42-46). Isaac would not let that happen.

### **Dig Deeper:**

In Chapter 28 we see that despite the bad choices and sinful actions of all involved, God's will was accomplished and Jacob received the blessing given to Abraham just as God desired (verses 1-4). Isaac sent Jacob back to his mother's homeland in order to choose a wife from among his mother's family, those who believed in the God of Abraham and Isaac.

Isaac's extended blessing of Jacob (28:3-5) indicates Isaac had begun to think more carefully about the promises God had made to his father Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). Perhaps Isaac came to realize God had also passed by Abraham's firstborn (Ishmael) to work His blessing through the younger brother, Isaac himself (Genesis 26:3-5; 24). He looked at the past and saw God's blessing upon himself—not a firstborn. He looked to the future and expressed his hope in God's blessings yet to come upon his younger son Jacob.

God appeared to Jacob in a dream, and Jacob likely understood two important facts from that dream (28:12-15): First, God is active on the earth. His work on earth (symbolized by the descent of angelic messengers) was constant. Second, God knows what happens on earth (symbolized by the constant ascent of angelic messengers). Jacob needed both reminders. God knew what was happening on earth. Jacob needed to straighten out his ways.

Jacob found himself alone, hated by his brother, and separated from his father and mother. He faced hundreds of miles of risky journey to his uncle's home, not knowing for sure what kind of welcome he would find if and when he arrived. Jacob needed to hear God's promise. It was the same promise He had given to Abraham and Isaac (verses 13-15).

How uneasy Jacob must have been at the thought that God knew all Jacob had done up to that point! Yet how comforting to know that in spite of what God knew about him, God's presence and action in his life were assured. So it is with us. It comforts us to know that God loves us in spite of what He knows about us. God will keep His promises to us, just as He did for Jacob.



PP-10

The *Parent Page* (PP-10) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

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## Apply It



**Choose to do what is right, and trust God to work out His plan.**

- *What negative consequences have you seen people your age suffer because they chose to do things their way instead of God's way?*
- *Why can we be confident God will keep all His promises to us? (He has kept the promises He made to those who have come before us; He has proven His Word to be reliable; God cannot lie.)*

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## Live It



### Pass Grace Along

God shows grace to those who repent and seek Him, no matter how badly they have failed. Use *FWTE 10-3* ("Pass Grace Along") to help your group members think through how God has shown them grace, and how they can reflect God's goodness by blessing and showing grace to someone else, even if that person does not deserve it.

### Do Things God's Way

God will accomplish what He has chosen, in spite of people's wrong choices. Ask and discuss the following:

- *Why is it best to do things God's way, even if it doesn't make sense?*
- *Is there anything you have been doing your way instead of God's way? If so, what changes will you make in order to do it God's way?*

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *Forward* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.



FWTE 10-2

Use *FWTE 10-2* to help students consider anything they have been doing their way instead of God's way, and steps they will take to do it God's way from now on.

Use one of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 10-3

# Going Back to Move Forward

February 14, 2021

## Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 11-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 11-2 (poster)
- FWTE 11-3 (handout)
- FWTE 11-4 (handout)
- PP-11 (Parent Page)

## Family Theme

God Confirms His Promises

## Lesson Objective

Understand that God continually works to bring about His will and plan and confirms that to us when we need it most. Confidently live for the Lord knowing He will keep His promises.

## Study Text

Genesis 35:1-29



## Key Truths

- Reflecting on What God Has Done Strengthens Us.
- God Is Always Working His Plan.
- God Is With Us Through the Ups and Downs of Life.



## Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage your learners to review Ephesians 2:8-9 this week and to work with family members to do so as well.



## How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set later in Jacob's life as God confirmed His promise to make from Jacob's descendants a great nation, just as He promised Abraham and Isaac. God blessed Jacob and changed his name to Israel.

## Get Started LG SG

**Option 1:** Prior to your class meeting, write down the names of famous people and fictional characters on 3x5 index cards (e.g., George Washington, Elsa, LeBron James, Big Bird, Mickey Mouse, etc.). Make sure you have enough cards for every student. Don't let the students see the names. Tape a card to the back of each student, and then have them try to figure out their "name" by asking only "yes and no" questions to other students. After students have discovered their name, say, *Certain names stand out to us. In today's lesson, we'll see how God changed Jacob's name, and why.*

**Option 2:** Anthony Robles was born with only one leg, yet he did not let that stop him from achieving his dream of becoming a wrestler. As a senior at Arizona State, Robles went 36-0 and won the 2010-2011 NCAA individual wrestling championship in the 125-pound weight class. Show your class this video that highlights Robles' life (<https://tinyurl.com/RoblesVideo>) or tell them about his story. After you finish, say, *Today we will see how Jacob was involved in one of the greatest wrestling matches ever.*

Choose one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

## Study the Word LG

In Genesis 28, God appeared to Jacob in a dream at Bethel. Jacob was running away from his brother to seek a wife from among his mother's family. Many things happened before Jacob and his family returned years later.

Jacob found his mother's family, and married not one, but two of his uncle Laban's daughters: Rachel and Leah. Later, because of jealousy regarding who had more children and who had more of Jacob's favor, both of these wives provided their servants as additional wives to Jacob. Jacob had 11 sons and one daughter. Another son would be born later.

Jacob cared for his uncle's flocks, and they prospered. Jacob's portion of the flocks did even better, and his prosperity triggered jealousy from Laban's sons.

Upon God's instruction, Jacob gathered his family to return to Canaan. He wrestled with a heavenly messenger the night before meeting his brother Esau, who forgave and welcomed him.

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 11-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



FWTE 11-1

### Teaching Tip:

Try to anticipate questions your group may raise during your meeting and answer them in the lesson, or be prepared to answer them if your group members ask.

His sons Levi and Simeon took bloody vengeance on the town of Shechem for the rape of their sister. Jacob was rightly fearful the area's inhabitants would turn violent against his family. That brings us to chapter 35.



## Reflecting on What God Has Done Strengthens Us

(Genesis 35:1-8)

Jacob needed protection from angry inhabitants of the land (34:30), but he also needed to worship God, to acknowledge all God had done for him. God therefore told Jacob to return to Bethel (verse 1). This return was to remind Jacob of what God had done to deliver and prosper him in the years that had passed since he left home fleeing his brother.

Jacob understood that his family was not ready for Bethel (verses 2-4). Some of them had household idols or religious jewelry with them. They foolishly held on to these items, perhaps as good luck charms, in spite of Jacob's faith in Jehovah God. Jacob instructed the family to purify themselves, setting aside all their foreign gods.

### Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Point out that Jacob led his family to walk rightly with God and to put away idols. God instructs parents to make disciples at home and transfer the faith to their families. Encourage students to be open to their parents' and grandparents' efforts to lead and teach their families.

As they traveled through what could have been hostile territory, God protected them (verse 5). When they arrived, Jacob built an altar and worshiped God, who had spoken to him, protected him, and blessed him for many years (verses 6-8). God worked patiently over decades to transform Jacob from deceiving trickster to a mature man and father. God keeps working, sometimes slowly, to accomplish His will.

In verse 8 we find the curious mention of the death of Rebekah's nurse, Deborah. Some speculate that Rebekah may have sent her to help Jacob early during his stay with Laban or perhaps to bring back news of Jacob to his anxious mother.

## Dig Deeper:

*Blessed to be a blessing:* God promised that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's seed. God repeated this promise to Isaac, then to Jacob. Israel was to serve as a light to the nations, a way of blessing them (Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6). In the New Testament, we learn that the ultimate blessing to the nations came through Israel's Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth (Luke 2:32, Acts 13:47). What greater blessing could there be! And in spite of their rejection of the Messiah, God has not abandoned Israel. Paul prayed for Israel's salvation and seemed to indicate a day will come when Israel turns to Christ (Romans 10:1, Romans 11:25-32).

## Apply It

**Reflect on what God has done for you and worship Him.**

- *In addition to salvation, what are some great things God has done for you?*
- *Why is it helpful to look back on things God has done for us in the past?*



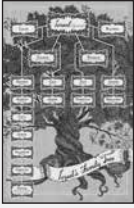
## God Is Always Working His Plan (Genesis 35:9-15)

This passage describes a second appearance by God to Jacob. God reminded him of his name change (verses 9-10). In Genesis 32, after Jacob wrestled all night with the heavenly messenger, he received a new name, *Israel*, which was interpreted as *one who strives with God* (verse 28). Jacob had left home single and had returned with a large family. God had protected him and made him wealthy in many ways. Jacob was learning humility in his striving.

## Dig Deeper:

At this time Jacob had 11 sons and one daughter. We think of him as the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob's twelfth son, Benjamin, came along after he had brought his family back to Canaan. Display the *FORWARD Teaching*





FWTE 11-2

*Essential 11-2* (“Israel’s Family Tree”) poster to illustrate the family dynamics among those sons who became the ancestors of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Jacob knew many struggles in his life (some caused by his own deceptive character), and many more still lay ahead. Yet as he *struggled* with God, he would come to *prevail* with God as well. Jacob’s victory was the change in his own life. God and His promises did not change, but Jacob did! In God’s reaffirmation of His promises to Jacob we find (verses 11-13):

- A great nation would come through Jacob.
- The foundation for the nation was not Jacob, but rather God Himself.
- The nation would have royalty as it grew, such as David and Solomon and many others.
- Jacob’s lineage would be a blessing to the entire world. David wrote psalms, and Solomon recorded proverbs, blessing those who read them. Ultimately, however, it was Jesus, the Son of David, who would provide redemption for Israel and all of humanity.

This time, Jacob did not seek to bargain with God (verses 14-15). He had changed to the point where he was satisfied merely to worship God. Jacob finally understood that he served a God who honored all His promises.

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### **Apply It** (LG) (SG)

#### **Submit to God’s plan and work to advance it.**

- *Much of God’s plan for our lives is found in Scripture. What are some specific instructions God gives us in His Word?*
- *How would things be different in our society if people lived according to God’s Word?*



### **God Is With Us Through the Ups and Downs of Life** (Genesis 35:16-29)

From Bethel, Jacob and his family moved toward Bethlehem (verses 15-19). Jacob was making his way back to Hebron, hoping to see his father again. Before they could get there,

as they drew closer to Bethlehem, Rachel went into labor and died in childbirth. At the birth of her firstborn, Joseph, she had asked God for another son. As her labor grew more difficult, the midwife sought to encourage her, telling her she had indeed received another son. It soon became clear she would not live to see the child grow. With her final breath, she named him *Ben-oni*. This can be translated *son of my sorrow*, but also, *son of my strength (or wealth)*. Jacob wanted to remove the ambiguity and named the child *Benjamin*, which means *son of my right hand*. Jacob undoubtedly grieved and mourned the tragic loss of his first love. He erected a memorial pillar that remained even to the day when this chapter in Genesis was written.

From *Bethel* (“house of God”), Jacob journeyed toward *Bethlehem* (“house of bread”). He could not remain at the place of his “mountaintop experience.” Life moves on. He had to do the same and tend to what life would bring him.

Concubines were among the “items” passed on to a son when his father died. Apparently Reuben sought to establish his primacy among his brothers and half-brothers. Perhaps he sought a way to seek revenge for the favoritism Jacob had displayed through the years. He did so by sleeping with his father’s wife/concubine Bilhah. Bilhah had been *Rachel’s* servant. He could do nothing to Rachel, the one who soaked up his father’s love, leaving little for his mother Leah. But he could defile her servant, his father’s concubine. Jacob knew of the incident, and did nothing—at first (verses 21-26). He would call Reuben to account later, however, as he distributed his final blessings upon his sons (Genesis 49:3-4).

## Dig Deeper:

Jacob’s blessing of his sons (Genesis 49) seems to indicate that his three oldest sons had committed acts that disqualified them from serving as the ancestors of the Messiah. Earlier, Simeon and Levi (sons two and three) had carefully deceived an entire village and sought a bloody vengeance out of all proportion for the crime against their sister (as horrific as that was). Reuben had slept with his father’s concubine. Thus the line of the Messiah moved to the next son in line: *Judah*.

Eventually, Jacob again saw his father, as he had requested of God years before at Bethel. He and his brother Esau, once estranged, came together at the end to bury their father with the proper honors (verses 27-29). In a rather short time,



PP-11

The *Parent Page* (PP-11) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

Jacob had faced the loss of loved ones (Rachel, Isaac), the birth of a child (Benjamin), family problems with his eldest son Reuben, and a sort of reconciliation with his brother Esau.

### Dig Deeper:

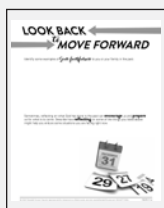
Their own choices and actions had separated Esau and Jacob. Although Esau eventually allowed his brother back to Canaan, it appears that it was only at the death of their father Isaac that they put it all behind them. Let us mend family fences before meeting at the cemetery!

If time allows, use FWTE 11-3 (“Trust at All Times”) to help your group members think about how they can trust God no matter how things seem to be going in their lives.



FWTE 11-3

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 11-4

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *FORWARD* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.

### Apply It LG SG

**Praise God in the good times and trust Him when trials come.**

- *What are some blessings we sometimes take for granted?*
- *Why can we trust God even when things are not going well? (He will never leave us; He uses trials to grow our faith; He causes all things to work out for good for His people.)*

### Live It LG SG

### Reflect on God's Goodness

Use *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 11-4 (“Look Back to Move Forward”) to help students reflect on how God has blessed them in the past and gain encouragement for situations they are facing right now. Encourage them to thank God each day this week for a past blessing and to trust God to see them through any difficult circumstances they are going through.

### Put It Into Action

Ask the following questions and then encourage your learners to put their responses into action this week.

- *What past blessings will you reflect on this week?*
- *What particular command from God's Word will you put into practice this week?*
- *In what difficult circumstance will you continue to trust God this week?*

# All Part of the Plan

## Lesson 12

February 21, 2021

### Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 12-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 12-2 (handout)
- FWTE 12-3 (handout)
- PP-12 (Parent Page)

### Family Theme

God Is in Control

### Lesson Objective

Learners always trust God, understanding He is always with us and is in control even when it seems everything is going wrong.

### Study Text

Genesis 37:1-36; 39:1-6



### Key Truths

- God Accomplishes His Plans, Even in the Midst of Family Problems.
- God Accomplishes His Plans, Even When Life Seems Off Track.
- God Can Use Us for His Glory in Any Work Situation.



### Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to review the names and order of books six, seven, and eight of the Old Testament (Joshua, Judges, and Ruth) this week and to work with family members to do so as well. (Learners can find this Bible Basics note on the FWTE 12-1 student outline you give them.)



### How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set later in Jacob/Israel's life when his older sons sold Joseph into slavery to the Midianites, who then sold him to one of Pharaoh's officials in Egypt. This was all part of God's plan to save the beginnings of the nation from famine and greatly multiply the people.

## Get Started LG SG

Choose one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

**Option 1:** Give your students paper and a pen or pencil and ask them to write a description of a crazy dream they've had. After they finish, collect their responses, read them aloud, and have students guess who each dream belongs to. (If you have students who might be embarrassed by this activity, simply read the responses but do not allow students to guess who wrote them.) After you finish, say, *We've all had crazy and bizarre dreams. In today's lesson we'll discuss the dreams Joseph had, but these dreams had a deeper meaning.*

**Option 2:** Bring in a video game system and a racing game, or use a racing game on a tablet or phone. Let students take turns "racing," but tell them you will be making things difficult for them. While they play, bump their arms, get in their line of sight, and provide other distractions. Afterward, say, *One of the keys to being successful while playing video games is staying in control. However, that's not always possible. Life is the same way. We can't always control our circumstances, but as we'll see today, we serve a God who is always in control.*

## Study the Word LG

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 12-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



FWTE 12-1

### **God Accomplishes His Plans, Even in the Midst of Family Problems**

**(Genesis 37:1-11)**

Genesis 37 picks up the story of Joseph, the main character of the rest of the book. When he was 17 years old, he brought a bad report to his father Israel (Jacob) about the behavior of his half brothers (verse 2). This, of course, did not endear him to his brothers.

We need to remember that Israel had a blended family: 12 sons and one daughter, from two wives (sisters) and their two servants. Just as his own parents (Isaac and Rebekah) had done, Jacob played favorites among his children (verse 3). The favor he showed to Joseph (including a very special robe) was because Joseph was the first born of Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel. The favoritism, symbolized by that resented robe, made Joseph's brothers hate Joseph. They could not

longer even speak to him in a decent manner. Favoritism will tragically shred the fabric of the family. We should avoid it as we would a deadly disease coming into our home!

### Dig Deeper:

Some wonder about the polygamy practiced by people in Old Testament times and even by some of the biblical patriarchs. Here are some things to remember. First, God’s revealed design is marriage between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-6). Second, nowhere in Scripture does God command or endorse polygamy. Third, everywhere we see polygamy practiced in the Bible, including here in Genesis 37, it leads to some kind of tragedy, punishment, problem, or suffering (Genesis 16, 21, and 30; 1 Samuel 1; 2 Samuel 11; Judges 9; 1 Kings 11:1-13). Fourth, the New Testament gives no examples of polygamy among God’s people and clearly teaches monogamy as God’s pattern for marriage (Matthew 19:3-8; Ephesians 5:31-33; 1 Corinthians 7:2; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

Joseph did not help his situation by sharing his peculiar dreams with his brothers (verses 5-10). His brothers understood him to be saying that he was going to be their ruler. Their hatred intensified. Even Jacob rebuked Joseph’s attitude, although he kept the dreams in mind (verse 11).

In these verses, we see family dysfunction. We wonder how God could ever do anything worthwhile with such people. Perhaps we have similar concerns about other families more familiar to us today. Stay tuned to see what God did.

### Apply It LG SG

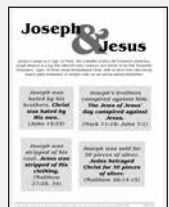
#### Be an example of God’s grace, even in the midst of family problems.

- *What are some problems that families struggle with in our culture?* (Favoritism; jealousy; lack of discipline; addiction; disobedience.)
- *How can we be examples of God’s grace to our families?* (Practice kindness and forgiveness; build up others instead of tearing them down; treat others as we would want to be treated.)

### Teaching Tip:

Do some research to better understand the characteristics and values of the students you teach. This can help you plan lessons that speak to the needs of your learners.

Give each student a copy of FWTE 12-2 (“Joseph and Jesus”). This handout shows several similarities between Joseph and Jesus.



FWTE 12-2



## God Accomplishes His Plans, Even When Life Seems Off Track (Genesis 37:12-36)

Jacob appears to have given no thought to the way his preference for Joseph affected the other brothers. He seems out of touch with the level of animosity they felt toward Joseph. He surely did not realize he was sending Joseph into danger (verses 12-14). Initially, Joseph could not find his brothers, but received word they were at Dothan (15-20 miles away). Ironically, because of his famous colorful coat, his brothers saw him coming, with plenty of time to decide what to do (verses 14-18). They saw this as an opportunity to be rid of the brother they hated. They decided to kill Joseph (verses 19-20).

Reuben, however, talked his brothers into throwing Joseph into a cistern rather than killing him. He hoped to return Joseph to his father. Perhaps he hoped to regain his father's good graces, to make amends for having slept with his father's concubine. Such a rescue would also poison the relationship between Jacob and the brothers who had acted against Joseph. Jacob's favor would thereafter go to the children of Rachel and to *him*. For Joseph, it was off with the robe and into the dry cistern (verses 21-24).

Reuben's plotting did not succeed, however, as the brothers sold Joseph to traders passing by (verses 25-28). Interestingly, it seems he was more concerned for the failure of his plan to curry his father's favor than he was for the prospects of his own brother (verses 29-30).

Jacob had deceived his father Isaac with goatskin on his arms and hands. His sons deceived him with the blood from a goat, sprinkled onto his favorite son's coat (verses 31-33). He was inconsolable, sure that he would mourn Joseph's loss even down in the grave (verses 34-35). Joseph meanwhile arrived in Egypt, where Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, purchased him as a slave (verse 36).

Surely the brothers assumed Joseph would suffer or die as a result of the mistreatment that was common for slaves. They no doubt appeased their consciences with the thought that at least *they* had not killed him. Little did they know God was at work, even in their dysfunctional family dynamic. He would bring life where death had seemed in control. Letting other people do our dirty work does not relieve us of guilt. We need to own our choices, actions, and their consequences.

## Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Help learners understand that the brothers' treatment of Joseph illustrates how *bad things happen because the world is a sinful place*. People do bad things because we all have a sinful nature. We need Christ to change us and help us do what is right and good. Encourage students to discuss this truth with family members.

### Apply It

#### Keep trusting God when things get difficult, knowing nothing can derail His plans.

- Ask group members to think about one of the most difficult times in their lives. What emotions did they experience while going through that time?
- What do we know about God that helps us trust Him in times of trouble? (He is in control; He knows what is best; He will use it for His glory and our ultimate good.)



### God Can Use Us for His Glory in Any Work Situation (Genesis 37:36; 39:1-6)

After turning to Judah's story, which becomes important in the genealogy of the promised Messiah (Genesis 38), the narrative returns to Joseph in chapter 39 (verse 1). Life as a slave had to be difficult, especially at first. Imagine what it must have been like for Joseph as he faced life as a foreigner in Egypt, with different customs, food, and even a different language.

But God was with Joseph in an obvious way. Joseph undoubtedly proved to be a hard and faithful worker, and God blessed his efforts. Even his master Potiphar understood that special divine favor rested upon Joseph (verses 2-5). Because of this favor, Joseph rose in position. Potiphar placed him in charge of the household and all that Potiphar had. The blessing of God upon Potiphar's household probably involved fertility among his servants and flocks. It likely involved protection from calamities like drought, famine, disease, predators, accidents, and so on.



## Dig Deeper:

God does not differentiate between white-collar and blue-collar work. All honest work is His. How we conduct our work can be a way of honoring and glorifying God (Colossians 3:22-24; Ephesians 6:5-8). Consider:

- God instituted work in the garden (Genesis 2:15). This was before the fall—work therefore is not God’s curse on us.
- We are to submit to human authority for God’s sake (Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 2:13-15, 18). In Joseph’s case this involved masters.
- Even free believers must live as God’s slaves (1 Peter 2:16). We are all to be servants of one Master (Ephesians 6:5-6).
- The Christian is expected to work (2 Thessalonians 3:6-10).
- There will be work in Heaven serving the Lord (Revelation 22:3).

Christian participation in human work is a godly thing. It is an evangelistic activity, a way to honor and worship God!



PP-12

The *Parent Page* (PP-12) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)

Some theorize that Joseph may have arrived in Egypt during the reign of the Hyksos rulers. Those were foreigners who had invaded Egypt, and maintained control for nearly 150 years. Other scholars suppose that the Hyksos could have been the new king that did not know Joseph (Exodus 1:8). A condensed Egyptian chronology could also put the Hyksos in power after pharaoh’s army was destroyed in the Red Sea. Nevertheless, we understand that God is the main agent in this story, not foreign rulers, not Egyptian rulers, not Potiphar, and not even Joseph himself. God was in control, even in Joseph’s slavery. For more information about Egyptian chronology and how it aligns with biblical history, see [ly/AIG-EgyptianChronology](http://ly/AIG-EgyptianChronology).

## Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Help learners understand how the events of this lesson demonstrate that God is the sovereign Lord of all. He was in control and used even the “bad” things to accomplish His plan and look out for Joseph. Encourage students to discuss this key principle with family members.

God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that through their seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. In this passage, God did just that, in a small way, for the household of an Egyptian. We should focus not just on the ups and downs of Joseph's story, but even more on God's faithfulness in blessing human beings. Whether we are enjoying life, or facing great difficulty, we want to remind ourselves that God wants to bless others through us.

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## Apply It LG SG

### Point people to God by being an excellent worker.

- *What does it look like to do our work in a way that honors God and brings Him glory?* (Work hard; do what we do to the best of our ability; go the extra mile to please the boss, or the customer, and God.)
- *Why is it important that we set a good example at home, at school, and on the job?* (It brings glory to our God; it reinforces our witness; it makes us a blessing to our employers, our teachers, and our families.)

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## Live It LG SG

### Spread Grace to Your Family

Write the following on the marker board: *Spread Grace to Your Family*. Ask your group members to think of a few ways they could show grace to the people in their families. Encourage them to put these examples into practice this week.

### Bring Glory to God

Distribute copies of FWTE 12-3 ("It's All for God's Glory"). The handout lists situations your students might face at one time or another. Ask the students to describe what it would look like to respond to these situations with God as their focus. In what ways could they seek the Lord's glory in each situation? Remind them that simply obeying God's Word can often make an impact. Encourage them to bring glory to God this week in how they respond to life's circumstances.

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 12-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *Forward* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.

# The Big Reveal

February 28, 2021

## Teaching Essentials

Handouts and Tools

- FWTE 13-1 (student outline)
- FWTE 13-2 (poster)
- FWTE 13-3 (handout)
- PP-13 (Parent Page)

## Family Theme

God Provides for His People

## Lesson Objective

Learners see that God can go to any lengths necessary to provide for His people. We can trust God to provide what we need to follow Him.

## Study Text

Genesis 45:1-28



## Key Truths

- God Can Use the Worst of Circumstances to Accomplish His Purposes.
- God Can Provide for Our Needs in Any Situation.
- God Can Restore Broken Relationships.



## Bible Basics: Things We All Should Know

Encourage learners to review 2 Timothy 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9 this week and to work with family members to do so as well.



## How It Fits: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible

This lesson is set several years after Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt. The famine Joseph predicted had forced Israel (Jacob) to send his sons to Egypt to try to purchase food. Joseph, knowing God sent him to Egypt for this purpose, revealed his identity to his brothers and provided what the family needed. God preserved the people He would make into a great nation.

## Get Started LG SG

**Option 1:** Surprise your class with doughnuts or some other breakfast treat. While you eat, talk about the importance of food and why we need it. Also, discuss why famines are so devastating. As you transition into the lesson, explain that Egypt experienced seven years of famine, yet even in that disastrous time, God provided for His people.

**Option 2:** Videos of people receiving new cars, homes, etc. are inspiring. Show your students this video of a high school custodian receiving a new home from her students after her previous home had burned down (<https://tinyurl.com/NewHomeReveal>). Discuss with your students why this video is so inspiring and emotional. Ask them how it feels when they are able to provide for the needs of others. After discussion, say, *It is a blessing to be able to provide for others. As we'll see today, God provides for His people and blesses us in ways we might never expect.*

Choose one of these options to capture attention and get this lesson started.

## Study the Word LG

Provide the following background information to help your learners see the context for this week's lesson. Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of sexual assault, and Joseph wound up in prison. Even there, God continued to bless him, and he rose to be in charge of the other prisoners (Genesis 39).

He accurately interpreted the dreams of the king's baker and cupbearer who had ended up in prison along with Joseph (Genesis 40). Two years later, Pharaoh had dreams that no one in his kingdom could understand. Then the cupbearer told Pharaoh about Joseph, the Hebrew who had correctly interpreted his dream in prison. Pharaoh summoned Joseph, who interpreted Pharaoh's dream. Following the interpretation, Joseph proposed a wise plan to prepare for the coming famine. Pharaoh agreed and placed Joseph in charge of the preparations, the second in command over all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself (Genesis 41).

When the famine came, Jacob sent Joseph's older brothers to Egypt to buy food to keep the family from starvation. After many years, they did not recognize that they were dealing with their own brother. Joseph tested them to see if they

Give everyone in your group a copy of the *FORWARD Teaching Essential* 13-1 student outline and something to write with so they can take notes.



FWTE 13-1

### Teaching Tip:

If the discussion drifts away from the topic at hand, gently steer the group back in the right direction, suggesting you investigate that topic at another time.

Be open, however, to the Holy Spirit's guidance. Be willing to change directions if the Spirit clearly leads.

had changed (Genesis 42-44). Today's passage tells us what happened when Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers.



## God Can Use the Worst of Circumstances to Accomplish His Purposes

(Genesis 45:1-7)

Joseph had concealed his identity not to deceive his brothers, but to test them. He saw that they were quite concerned for their father, and for his younger brother. He could hide it no more. He announced to them who he was, after sending all the Egyptians out of the room. It was an emotional moment, which we easily understand (verses 1-2). It is not surprising that Pharaoh's house heard about it. Joseph was second in command of the country. If something affected him so deeply, Pharaoh needed to know about it.

Joseph's explanations and questions were small comfort to his brothers. On the contrary, they were terrified (verse 3). He had the power to crush them. Joseph's dreams of Genesis 37:5-11 had come to pass.

Note Joseph's explanation in verses 4-7: the brothers had sold Joseph into slavery, where he should have died—end of story. But Joseph understood the story better. He did not avoid what they had done. Yet, he looked past their actions to see that God used even their treacherous behavior to accomplish His purposes. In Joseph's eyes, God had sent him ahead, so that Egypt and all of Joseph's family would not perish (verses 5, 7). He further explained to them that the famine still had five years to go. God, however, intended for them to survive and had prepared their survival years in advance. God can accomplish good, even through bad things we do to each other—sinful and shameful things. It does not excuse sin, but it fills us with hope for redemption.

### Zoom In: Develop a Biblical Worldview

Point out to learners that God's ability to use both the good and the bad in Joseph's life is one of the most powerful illustrations that *God is the Sovereign Lord of all*. Encourage students to discuss this foundational truth with family members.

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## Apply It LG SG

**Understand God is in control in every circumstance.  
Trust Him to accomplish His will.**

- *What are some of the really difficult circumstances people sometimes face?* (Sickness and disease; death of a loved one; terrible accidents; etc.)
- *Why can Christians view trials and difficulties differently than others do?* (We know God causes all things to work together for our ultimate good and His glory.)



### **God Can Provide for Our Needs in Any Situation** (Genesis 45:8-13)

Joseph continued to attribute his presence there in Egypt to God (verse 8). God had made him not just survive, but to thrive. He had become a ruler of the land, and one whose wisdom and advice Pharaoh treasured as that from a father.

#### **Dig Deeper:**

In verse 8, the phrase *father to Pharaoh* does not seem to be a title, but rather a designation showing the deep trust that existed between the two men. Genesis 17:4-5 employs a similar use of the term *father*.

Joseph proposed a practical solution: *Go back to Jacob, and bring him and all your families and livestock with you. I will find a safe place for you and your herds* (verses 9-10). He had seen God keep His word. He understood his brothers and their families needed refuge from the famine, or they would perish (verse 11). Joseph brought Benjamin into the picture as a witness to his identity. They were to tell Jacob all that had happened, and to bring him quickly down to Egypt (verses 12-13).

Joseph chose the *Goshen* region of Egypt. We assume it was level and well watered, to make it suitable for livestock. It was likely not too far from where he lived. Why did Joseph seek this kind of solution instead of bringing them all to live in palatial luxury?



FWTE 13-2

Display the FWTE 13-2 ("Trust") poster to help students see how to handle the uncertain times of life.

- He may have determined that continued close contact would still have been awkward for years to come.
- He certainly wanted the clan to retain their knowledge of shepherding.
- He wanted to protect them from assimilation into the pagan Egyptian culture.

How much of God’s plan for His people did Joseph understand? We cannot say. It seems clear, however, that he understood it went beyond their mere survival during a famine. He understood God would take them out of Egypt sometime after he was dead. He left instructions for them to take his bones with them when they left (Genesis 50:24-25).

### **Dig Deeper:**

Joseph’s request was honored during the Exodus (Exodus 13:19). After over 40 years of wilderness wandering and conquest of the land, Joseph’s bones were buried at Shechem, in a plot of land Jacob had purchased years earlier (Joshua 24:32; Genesis 33:19).

The children of Israel survived in Goshen, and thrived. They grew into the great nation God had promised, so numerous that the Egyptians became concerned (Exodus 1:6-10). What provisions do we plan to leave for those who follow us? Joseph left a system that saved entire populations from starvation. He secured a place for his own extended family where they could thrive and expand. He left them with instructions based on his understanding that God would fulfill His promises to them. His legacy included opportunity, prosperity, and reminders of faith. We would do well to think in similar terms for those who follow us. Even more important, Joseph saw God’s hand at work, even in actions that hurt him deeply, and he held no grudge. What a great legacy!

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### **Apply It**

**We can look to God to sustain us through difficult times.**

- *How does God typically provide for our material needs?* (Provides jobs; gives us the strength and health to work; etc.)

- *In what ways have you seen God provide for someone's needs during a difficult time?*



## God Can Restore Broken Relationships

(Genesis 45:14-28)

The tearful reunion continued (verses 14-15). After so much hatred, so much sorrow, and so many years, the brothers were talking again. Pharaoh's reaction is interesting (verses 16-20). He directed Joseph to send his brothers to bring back the rest of the clan from Canaan. Specifically, he promised them good land and the best of all Egypt to replace any belongings they might need to leave behind as they packed for the journey. Sending carts was especially important. This would keep the oldest and the youngest from having to walk the entire way. Providing carts made for a safer and faster trip.

Joseph did as Pharaoh ordered, but did not limit himself to what Pharaoh had commanded (verses 21-24). He gave new clothing to each of them. It may also be that Joseph included some clothing that followed Egyptian styles, to help his family blend in better. For his younger brother Benjamin he provided five sets of clothes and a small fortune in silver. To his father Jacob he sent donkeys loaded with fine Egyptian goods, grain, and bread for the journey. His final instruction, not to quarrel on the way, seems especially interesting. What could they argue about: Who had more blame concerning Joseph? Who was the lucky one to explain everything to Jacob? Jealousy over the extra gifts given to Benjamin? Regardless, they are words of wisdom for all of us as we travel through life with our brothers and sisters: *Do not quarrel on the way!*

The relationship between Joseph and his brothers was restored. Soon, father and son would be restored after such a long separation (verses 25- 28). They told Jacob the good news that not only was Joseph alive, but he was also the ruler of all Egypt. They may, however, have conveniently avoided some of the details of how Joseph came to be down in Egypt in the first place! Understandably, Jacob was skeptical. The brothers all insisted, agreeing that Joseph was alive. The good news revived Jacob, who prepared to go see the son he had given up for dead years before.



PP-13

The *Parent Page* (PP-13) is a resource to help parents and grandparents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children or grandchildren at home. Give copies of this page to parents and grandparents of your students and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at [www.D6home.com](http://www.D6home.com). (No password required.)



## Dig Deeper:

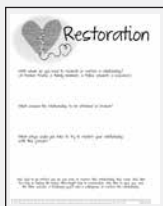
When verse 26 says Jacob was *stunned* at the news about Joseph, it uses a word that literally means his heart was *numb*. He did not believe the good news and was numb from the unexpected report. In the next verse, however, Jacob believed, and his spirit *revived*. At the end of Jacob's life, he blessed Joseph with a double portion by claiming Ephraim and Manasseh as his sons (Genesis 48:5). These two sons of Joseph became recognized as two of the tribes of Israel. Jacob also made a prophetic blessing naming Judah as the tribe of royalty from which the Messiah would come (Genesis 49:10).

## Apply It LG SG

### God restores us to Himself through Christ, and helps us restore other relationships as well.

- *How does God restore people to fellowship with Him?* (Forgives our sin and makes us righteous in His sight when we turn from sin and trust in Jesus.)
- *What is our part in seeking to restore broken or strained relationships?* (Forgive; initiate the attempts to reconcile; make amends where we have hurt others; etc.)

Use one or more of these options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.



FWTE 13-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in *Forward* devotional study guide this week and to discuss the devotions with family members at home.

## Live It LG SG

### Restore a Relationship

Use *FWTE* 13-3 (“Restoration”) to help your group members think about steps they can take to restore a strained or broken relationship. Give them time to complete the handout and then discuss their answers. Encourage them to take steps this week to try to restore a relationship.

### Trust, Even in the Hard Times

Write the following on the marker board: *Trusting God in Difficult Times*. Ask your group members to share a time when they saw God bring good out of a “bad” situation. After discussion, ask them to name truths we should keep in mind next time we go through some trial or difficulty.