

TRANSFORMATION OF THE HEART

Planting the Seeds of God and the Gospel

GOD & THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TOPICS

1. Pursuing the Truth
2. The Greatness of God
3. The Goodness of God
4. Building Friendship with God
5. The Value and Design of People
6. God's Law of Love
7. The Root of Sin
8. The Destructiveness of Sin
9. The Kindness of God in Salvation
10. Salvation from Sin
11. The Command of Missions

OUTREACH

- Skill focus: Bible Storying
- Skill practice with small group
- Weekend community outreach

SAMPLE WORKSHOPS (Customized Electives)

- The Father Heart of God
- The Marks of a Christian
- The Trinity
- Satan and His Strategies
- Old & New Testament Overview
- Foundations for a Strong Marriage
- Successful Parenting

PURSUING THE TRUTH

Lesson Summary

God wants us to know Him and to make Him known on the earth; therefore He sent us the Bible and Jesus, both of which are called the Word of God. The Bible is God breathed and is an accurate, unchanged record of historical events and God's will for us, and therefore, we can base our lives upon it. The more we understand and apply the truths of the Word of God in our own lives, the more our lives and ministry will be transformed.

A. Key Bible Stories

1. The two builders. Matthew 7: 24-27
2. The four soils. Mark 4:1-9, 13-20
3. God commissions Joshua for leadership. Joshua 1:1-9

B. The Bible is can be trusted and is the standard for our lives

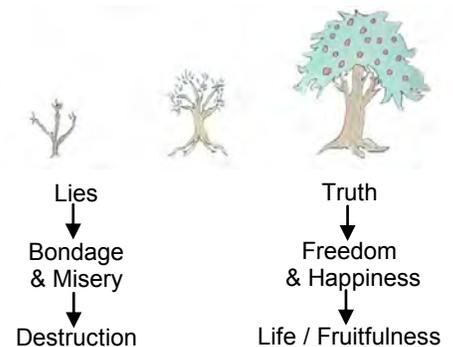
1. The Bible is a historical record of how a merciful God made a way to deliver people from their sins and restore them back into friendship with Himself, and how He lovingly provided truth for every area of life for all people, families and nations on earth. The Old Testament and the New Testament form two parts of the same story.
2. God has revealed himself through His creation (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1) and His messengers (2 Peter 1:20; Hebrews 4:12), but the perfect revelation came through Jesus (John 1:1-4, 14; 14:6-7).
3. The Bible is an accurate, historical record of God's will for us and a standard for our beliefs, our lives and our ministry. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

C. Knowing and applying the truth is essential for a fruitful life and ministry

1. Joshua 1:1-9. God's keys for success for Joshua as a leader were courage and faith in God (v5, 9) and knowing and obeying the Word or truth (v7-8).
2. Mark 4:1-9, 13-20. Jesus tells the story of a farmer who sows seeds which land in four types of soils. The seed represents the Word of God (truth). What do each of the four types of soil represent?
3. Matthew 7:24-27. Jesus gives an example of two builders who build their houses on different foundations. How can we build strong foundations for our lives and ministries? (Wisdom is the practical and loving application of truth or knowledge.)

D. Transformation requires a renewing of our thinking or ideas

1. Knowing truth brings transformation. Romans 12:2; John 8:31-32; Psalms 1:1-4; Hosea 4:6
 - a. Truth describes things as they really are.
 - b. Ideas → Actions (application of ideas) → Habits → Character & Lifestyle → Destiny (life or death)
2. God desires worshipers in "*spirit and in truth*" (John 4:23 -24).
3. Discovering and applying the truth takes a willing and teachable heart, plus time and effort. Acts 17:10-12; Pr 2:2-5

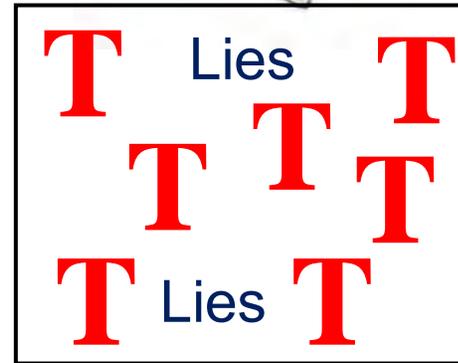
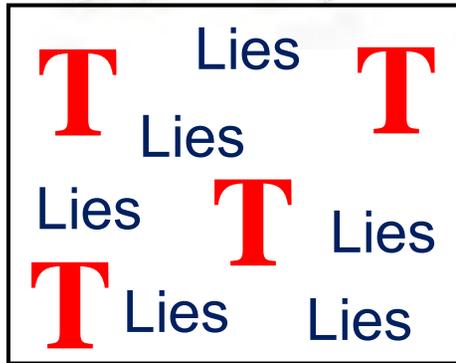
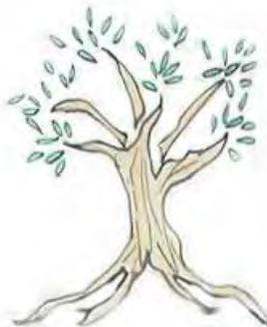
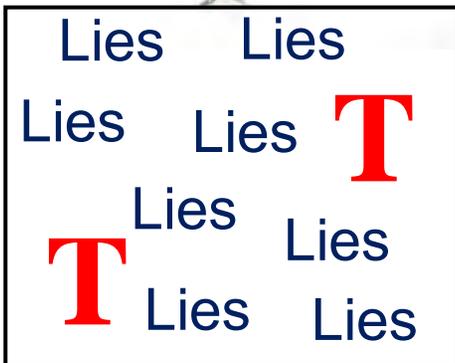


Discussion Questions

1. Are you teachable, recognizing that we don't know it all but that growing in wisdom and truth is a life-long process? Are you willing to take the time and effort needed to know the Bible?
2. As leaders, are we living by (applying) and modelling to others what we know to be true? Or, do we say or teach one thing to be true and do another? (Discuss Matthew 23:2-3 and Matthew 15:14)

Pursuing the Truth

“You shall know the **TRUTH**, and the **TRUTH** shall make you **FREE**.” John 8:32



Lies
 ↓
 Bondage & Misery
 ↓
 Destruction

Truth
 ↓
 Freedom & Happiness
 ↓
 Life/Fruitfulness

THE GREATNESS OF GOD

(What God is like in His Nature)

Lesson Summary

An accurate and Biblical understanding of the greatness of the triune God (who is spirit, everlasting, and personal) and His infinite abilities (of power, knowledge and presence) should not only inspire great wonder and humility in us, but also reverence for God as the Creator and Ruler of all things.

A. Key Bible Stories

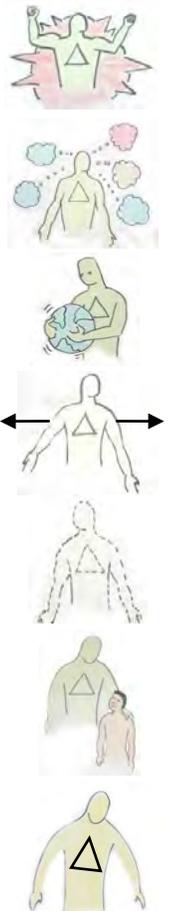
1. God creates the world. Gen 1:1-31
2. The crossing of the Red Sea. Exodus 14:1-31
3. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. John 11:1-48

A. God is exceedingly great

1. We see God's greatness and goodness as He creates the earth as a home for people. Genesis 1:1-31
2. The vastness of the universe shows that God is far greater than any person, ruler, nation or "god". Psalm 19:1-2; 33:6-9; Romans 1:20; Isaiah 40:12-31
3. God is the only living God. It is foolish to worship man-made idols. Isaiah 44:6-24; 1 Kings 18:1-46

B. God's greatness (or nature) can be described further in the following ways:

1. **God is infinite** (unmeasurable) in His:
 - a. **Power:** God uses his power for creation (Genesis 1:1), for deliverance (Exodus 14:21-31; 15:6-11); for provision (Exodus 16:12-15, 17:1-6; Mark 6:33-44), for healing (John 11:1-48; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 6:17-19; 2 Kings 5:1-16) but also to bring about judgment and destruction (Exodus 7:1-5; 9:13-17; 10:7; Revelation 19:15).
 - b. **Knowledge:** God uses His great knowledge and intelligence for the benefit of others (i.e. wisdom). God's uncountable thoughts towards us are tender. Psalm 147:4-5, 139:1-6, 17-18; Jeremiah 29:11
 - c. **Presence:** God has access to everyone at the same time and nothing escapes His notice! Psalm 139:7-10; Hebrews 4:13; Jonah 1:3, 2:1; Gen 16:1-16, 21:9-20
2. **God is everlasting or eternal** – He has always existed and will always exist, having no beginning and no end. Rev. 4:8; 22:13; Psalm 90:2, 4
3. **God is Spirit** – He is "invisible" and has no physical substance or a body like us. Because God is spirit, He does not have the physical limitations we do. 1 Timothy 1:17; John 4:24; Isaiah 40:28
4. **God is personal** – He can relate to us in a way we know and understand. He is not an impersonal force like gods of some other religions, but has personality and emotions. He is acutely aware of our lives and responsive to our needs. 1 Kings 19:9-13; Acts 17:28-29; Isaiah 43:1-2, 49:14-16
5. **The unity and diversity of God (the Trinity)**
 - a. At the creation of the world and the baptism of Jesus, all three persons of the Trinity are present, distinct from each other, equal in their abilities and in perfect unity (having common purpose and love). Genesis 1:4, 26; John 1:1-3; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:19-34
 - b. People were created from an overflow of love amongst the Trinity and were invited into their circle of fellowship. God's purpose for marriage (Genesis 2:24-25 "one flesh") and for His Church (John 17:20-23) are the closest earthly models we have to describe how the Trinity relates together.



C. God is the Ruler

1. God is the highest Authority and is the Ruler over all things. 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Revelation 4:1-11; 15:3-4; 17:14; 19:1-6
2. God is the most qualified to rule our lives because of His greatness and goodness.

Discussion Questions

1. Read through Genesis 1:1-31 and/or Isaiah 40:9-31, then discuss and write down what Scriptures say about the greatness and goodness of God.
2. Identify and discuss any of your ideas about God that have been challenged or deepened by this lesson. Which quality of God's greatness stands out to you the most? Why?
3. Take time to thank God that even though He is so exceedingly great compared to us, yet He is so very personal – He knows your name and is aware of your deepest needs and desires.

The Greatness of God



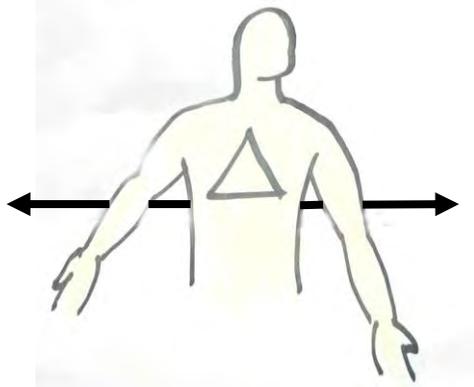
God is all powerful



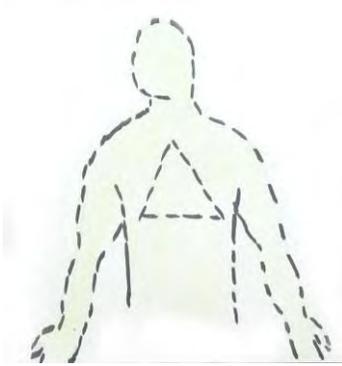
God knows all things



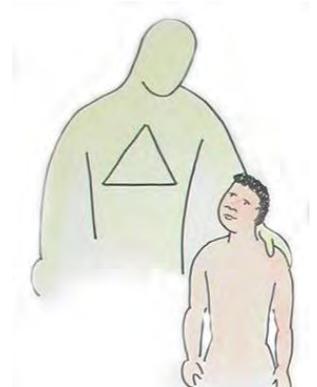
God is present everywhere



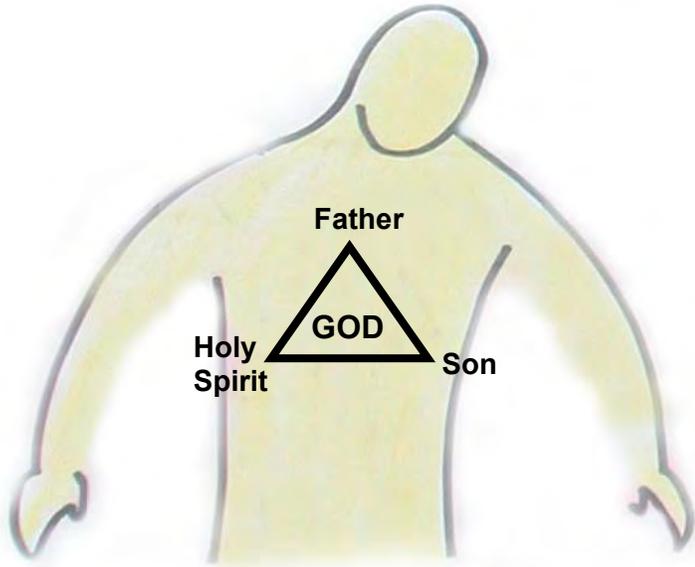
God has no beginning and no end



God is invisible



God is personal



The unity and diversity of God (the Trinity)



The Trinity is One God yet distinct persons, equal in abilities (nature), perfect in unity (purpose and love)

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

(What God is Like in His Character)

Lesson Summary

We become like the god we worship. Therefore, an accurate Biblical understanding of God's good and loving character is not only essential for a fruitful life and ministry, but as His representatives, is necessary to correctly portray His beauty to the world around us. Love is the primary attribute of God's character from which many other wonderful attributes come, and for which He is most worthy of our devotion.

A. Key Bible Stories

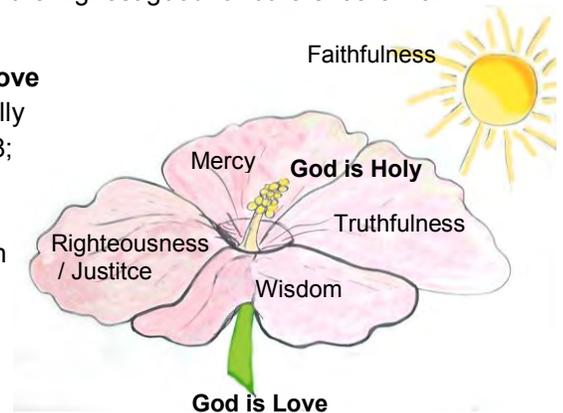
1. The story of the loving father. Luke 15:11-32
2. God reveals his glory to Moses. Exodus 33:17-19; 34:6-8
3. The adulterous woman. John 8:1-11

B. God is good and loving in all that He does

1. Moses asked God to reveal the fullness of who He is. God doesn't reveal His greatness but "all His goodness". Moses falls on his face in worship. Exodus 33:17-19; 34:6-8
2. God's character is what He chooses to do with who He is (His nature). He has *always* chosen to act according to goodness and love in every situation.
3. Jesus reveals God's good and loving character to sinners. Luke 15:11-32; John 8:1-11
4. **God is love** – God's primary attribute. Love is choosing to do the highest good for others. Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:37-39; 1 John 4:7-11, 16; Psalm 68:5

B. Each of God's character qualities are expressions of God's love

1. **Truthfulness:** God always describes things the way they really are. He never lies or hides what is best for us. John 18:33-38; 1:14; 8:42-46; 16:13
2. **Wisdom:** God uses His infinite knowledge in practical and loving ways for the good of others. Proverbs 24:1-4; Jeremiah 51:15; Romans 11:33-35; 1 Corinthians 1:22-25
3. **Mercy:** God is kind and lenient to the undeserving, always patient ("slow to anger") in bringing judgment. Luke 15:11-32; Ephesians 2:4-5; Psalm 86:5; 2 Peter 3:9
4. **Righteousness / Justice:** God does what is right, and is fair in all His dealings with others, showing no favoritism (He cannot be bribed). Deut. 32:4; Psalm 89:14, 9:8; Hebrews 1:8-9; Genesis 18:19-33
5. **Faithfulness:** God is unchanging and consistent in His commitment to live according to His character of love. He is completely dependable. Hebrews 13:8; Deuteronomy 7:9; James 1:17; 2 Timothy 2:13



B. God is holy and perfect in His character

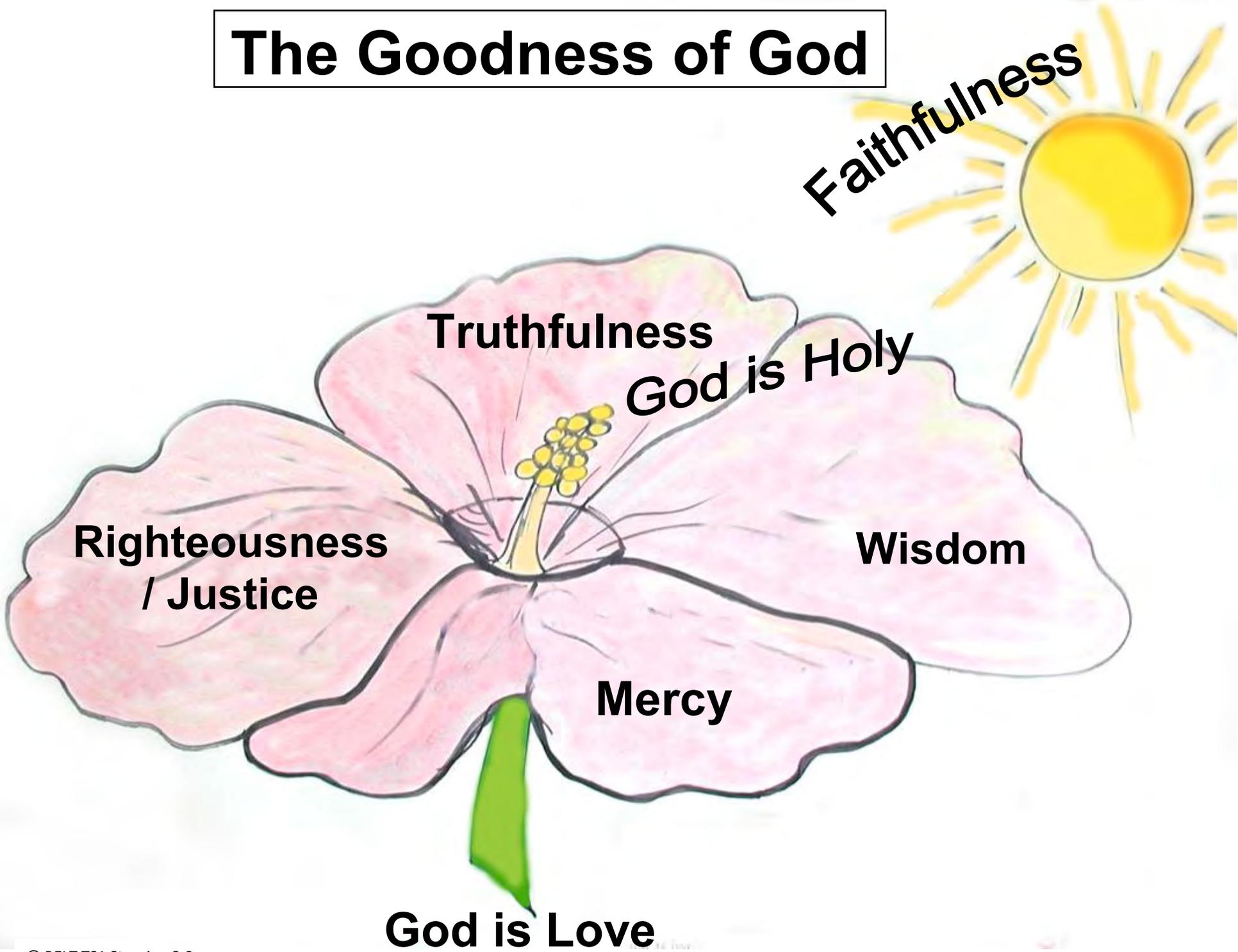
1. God does what *He knows* to be right in every situation (i.e. He always does what is most loving.) Therefore, God can't be blamed for any wrongs or evil in this world. Holiness is a summation of the way God lives. 1 John 1:5; Revelation 4:8-11
2. God wants us to be holy like Him – to *always* do what *we know* to be right and most loving. 1 John 1:5-7; 2:6; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Ephesians 5:1; Genesis 6:8-9

Discussion Questions

1. Identify and discuss any of your ideas about God that have been challenged or deepened by this lesson. Which quality of God's goodness stands out to you the most? Why?
2. God commands us to be like Him in our character and behaviour (i.e. be holy). Which attributes of God's character do you need to grow in most personally and in your leadership?

3. As leaders, we often face difficult problems in our lives, and some may seem almost impossible to solve. When you don't know what to do, it is helpful to review Scriptures about the greatness and goodness of God and remember His provision and care in the past. Discuss any difficulties you are presently facing and how these lessons and the Scriptures have helped build faith in God to tackle those situations.

The Goodness of God



BUILDING FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Lesson Summary

The great Creator of the universe wants to be known. He invites us to be close friends with Him. People in the Bible have modeled this friendship which involves spending regular time in prayer (talking and listening to God), worship (admiring and thanking God), as well as time reading and thinking about God's Word.

A. Key Bible Stories

1. Luke 10:38-42 Mary and Martha
2. Mark 14:32-42 Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

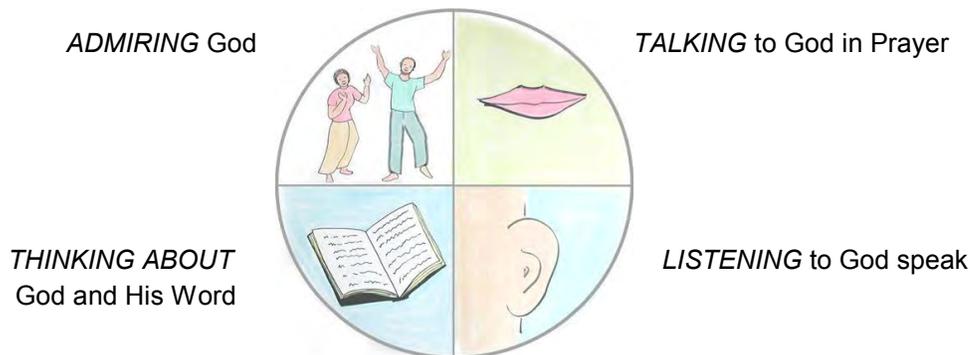
B. We were created for close friendship with God

1. God introduced His personal name to Moses and Israel as "Yahweh" (meaning "I am" - I am your God and present with you). God's revelation of Himself to them was an invitation for them to know Him (Exodus 3:13-15; 34:5-8; 33:11). God's greatest desire for us is that we love Him and know Him as a friend, not just serve him. John 15:15; 17:3;; 1 John 1:3-4
2. Adam, Eve and Noah "walked with God" (Genesis 3:8-9; 6:8-9). The strong desire of people like Moses, David and Paul was that they would know and experience God - not just know about Him. (Exodus 34:18; Psalm 41:1-2; Philippians 3:8-10). The highest goal in life is knowing God – the most valuable Being in the universe. Jeremiah 9:23-24; Luke 10:38-42
3. Prior to the calling of the disciples and healing of the multitudes, Jesus spent the night praying (Luke 6:12-19; 5:15-16). As leaders, our wisdom, direction, comfort and power for ministry will come directly from our time with God. Mark 14:32-42



C. Ways to build friendship with God

The following areas are all parts of building a close relationship with God. We build this friendship in a similar way that we do with other people.



1. TALKING to God in prayer

- a. Good communication is a necessary part of all friendships (Luke 11:1).
- b. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray. Matthew 6:5-15
 - 1) Be humble and honest (vs. 5-7)
 - 2) Approach God with love and respect (vs. 9)
- c. What to include in our prayers: (Matthew 6:9-15)

- 1) Worship - praising God for who He is (vs. 9, 13)
- 2) Intercession - praying for others and for God's ways to be brought about on the earth (vs. 10)
- 3) Personal requests - asking God to meet our daily needs (vs. 11)
- 4) Repentance and forgiveness - confessing our sins and forgiving others for what they have done to us (vs. 12-15)

2. LISTENING to God speak to us

- a. Friendship involves not just talking, but also listening. *John 10:27*
- b. Some of the ways God speaks:
 - 1) The Bible. Psalm 119:105
 - 2) An audible voice. 1 Samuel 3:1-20 - Samuel; Acts 9:3-4 - Paul
 - 3) The inner voice of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:26-40 - Philip; 1 Kings 19:1-19 - Elijah [1 Cor 2:9-12]
 - 4) Godly people. Acts 8:26-40 - Ethiopian official; 1 Kings 20:1-6 - Hezekiah
 - 5) Circumstances. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9; Acts 16:6-10 - Paul
 - a. Supernatural events: angels, visions, dreams, signs. Luke 1:26-38 - Mary; Daniel 2:1-30 - Daniel
 - 6) An inner peace. *2 Corinthians 2:12-13*
- c. Learning to hear God speak to us takes practice. Always be listening and be quick to obey.
- d. God will never speak to us something that does not agree with the teaching in the Bible.

3. Thinking About God and His Word

- a. Bible meditation means to think deeply about or reflect upon the Scripture you are reading. *Philippians 4:8-9*
- b. Ways to meditate on the Bible:
 - 1) Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you think about the Scripture. John 16:13
 - 2) Memorize Scripture and think about it regularly as it applies to various situations. Psalms 119:11; Matthew 4.
 - 3) Pray out the Scriptures - use the words as a basis for your prayers.
 - 4) Ask yourself questions to apply the Scripture to your life. For example: What does this passage tell me about God? Is there a lesson, warning or encouragement for me?

4. Admiring God (Worship and Thanksgiving)

- a. We worship and thank God for who He is and what He is accomplishing even in difficult times. *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*
- b. The result of admiring God is loyalty and service.

Discussion Questions

1. As a leader, do we regularly spend the time needed to seek God, His wisdom and direction, or are we too busy and distracted with work or ministry?
2. What are the difficulties or obstacles that stop you from spending time with God on a regular basis? Discuss ways you can overcome these.
3. Evaluate what you usually do when you spend time with God. Do you do all the talking or do you listen to what God wants to speak to you? What are some ways you can enhance your time with God?

Building Friendship With God



We were
created for
close friendship
with God

ADMIRING
God



TALKING to
God in prayer



THINKING
ABOUT God
and His Word



LISTENING
to God speak



THE VALUE AND DESIGN OF PEOPLE

Lesson Summary

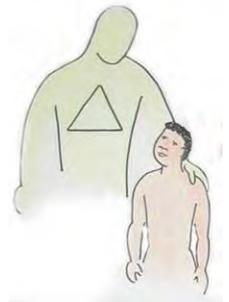
God created people in His likeness and, therefore, all people (including men, women and children) regardless of race, position, or wealth are highly valuable, equal in worth, and individually unique. We were wonderfully designed with the abilities of the mind, the will and the emotions, in order to have wonderful friendship with God and others, and to manage and care for the earth.

A. Key Bible Stories

1. John 4:7-29 The Samaritan woman at the well
2. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7-8,15-24 The creation of Adam and Eve
3. Acts 10:1-48 Peter and Cornelius

B. All people are created unique and highly valuable

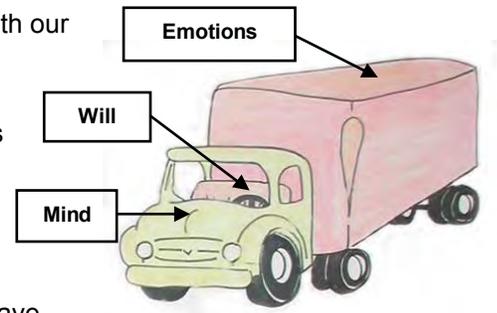
1. Each person is wonderfully handmade by God and individually unique. Genesis 1:31; Psalm 139:13–15; Romans 1:20
2. All people are highly valuable because they are made in the image and likeness of God. Genesis 1:27; Luke 12:24; Matthew 12:12a
3. Men, women and children of all races and languages have equal value.
 - a. Jesus valued the Samaritan woman at the well. John 4:7-29
 - Jews despised both Samaritans and women and would have no dealings with them, especially with prostitutes, like this woman.
 - Jesus went out of His way and against His culture to show her love and value.
 - b. Jesus treated children with value. Matthew 19:13-15
 - c. God showed Peter that Jews and Gentiles were equal in his eyes. Acts 10:1-48; Galatians 3:28
4. We are to treat all people, regardless of status or wealth, without favoritism and with equal justice, just as God does. Deuteronomy 10:17-19; 1:15-17



C. God designed people with special abilities so they could fulfil their created purpose

1. The first man cared for the Garden and fellowshiped with God and with his wife. (Gen 1:26-28; Gen 2:7-8,15-24).
2. God created people with special abilities (superior to other living creatures) to have a close friendship with Him and others, and to manage and care for all his creation. We are designed with the amazing abilities of the mind, the will and the emotions (personality).
 - a. Our mind, will, and emotions work together as an integrated whole. Mark 12:30
 - b. **The mind** has the ability to think and reason, be creative (imagination), remember and communicate to others (language). It also has the ability of conscience (knowing right from wrong) and an awareness of God.
 - c. **The will** has the ability to choose one thing over another. Our ability of choice is not programmed, and is essential for forming genuine relationships. It is often called the heart in the Bible.
 - d. **The emotions** are spontaneous reactions. They allow us to experience and enjoy life and relationships in their fullness.
3. We can still choose to do what is right even if there is a strong emotional influence or temptation to do otherwise.
 - a. In the story of the fiery furnace, the three friends chose to do what was right even under great pressure to conform. (Daniel 3)
 - b. We can choose to do good to our enemies and those who hate us. (Luke 6:27-29)

- c. See the **truck diagram**: God intended that we evaluate with our mind what is the most intelligent and loving thing to do (engine). Then we ought to choose to do what is right with our will (steering wheel) even if our emotions are telling us otherwise. When we choose what is right, our emotions will eventually follow (trailer) - i.e. we are glad we did the right thing. (Luke 10:41-42; Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15; Proverbs 1:24)

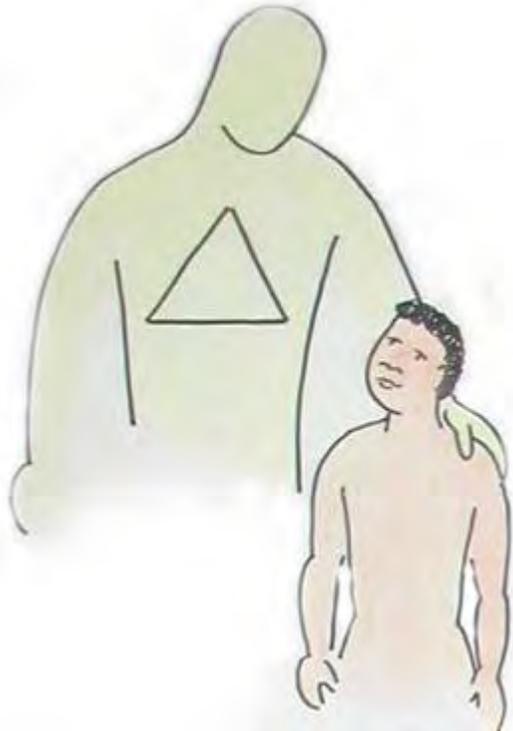


4. God holds us responsible for our wrong actions because we have the ability to understand what the right thing to do is and we have the ability to do it.

Discussion Questions

1. Are there parts of yourself that you don't like? How does God see you?
2. Discuss if there are people who are treated as inferior in your culture?
3. As a leader, do you treat everyone fairly and with equal value regardless of their status, gender or how much money they have? Do you treat your own spouse, husband or children with the value they deserve?
4. Discuss examples where you were faced with a situation where there was great pressure or strong emotions (fear, anger) to do something you knew was wrong. What did you do?

The Value and Design of People

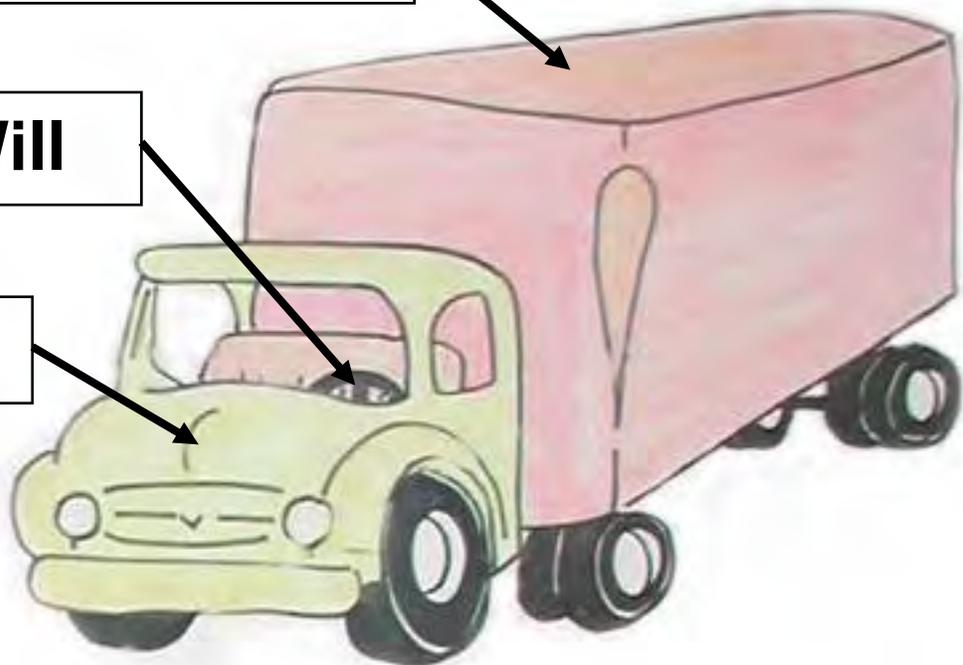


All people
are
HIGHLY VALUABLE
and **EQUAL**
because
they are created
in the likeness
of God

3 - Emotions

2 - Will

1- Mind



GOD'S LAW OF LOVE

Lesson Summary

God's law of love is a universal law that God has required of all people to live by from the beginning. By His example, Jesus showed us how to live by God's law of love and summarized it as firstly, loving God supremely and secondly, loving others. Living by this law of love brings safety, happiness and freedom to individuals and their communities.

A. Key Bible Stories

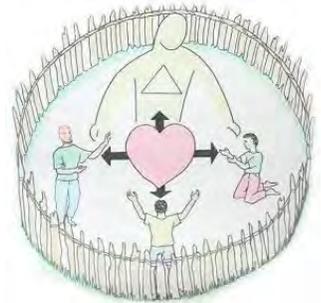
1. Luke 10:25-37 The good Samaritan
2. Matthew 19:16-26 The rich young ruler

B. God's law of love is a description of how God lives. God commands all people to live this way also.

1. God Himself has always lived in a loving and wise way towards His creation. (1 John 4:8)
2. God has commanded all people from the start to live under His loving rulership and by His law of love. This fulfils our created purpose and will bring about the greatest happiness and freedom in our lives and others. Genesis 2:16-17; 1 John 3:11; John 15:12-13; Ephesians 5:1

C. Jesus summarized the requirements of God's law as love

1. Jesus summarized the requirements of the laws in the Old Testament as: love God first and love others as yourself. Because God is the most valuable Being, we are to love Him supremely (Matthew 22:36-40). By example, Jesus showed us how to live by God's law of love, (Matthew 5:17, 21-22, 27-29). Matthew 5:17-18, 21-22, 27-29; Romans 13:8-10
2. In the Old Testament, the "fear of the Lord" is having a reverence and love for God over all other things, resulting in wanting to "obey His commands" (which describe how to treat others with high value). Deuteronomy 10:12-14; Ecclesiastes 12:13



D. The Ten Commandments are a description of how to live by God's law of love

1. The account of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. Exodus 19:1-19
 - a. God and Israel agree to be in close relationship together. The heart commitment of the covenant came before God gave the requirements of it. (Exodus 19:3-8)
 - b. This was a special event so the people would never forget to love God first and would want to obey his commandments for the rest of their lives. (Exodus 19:10-20)
 - c. Tragically, later many Israelites turned away from loving God and disobeyed His laws which resulted in much violence to others and misery in the nation.
2. The Ten Commandments are spoken by the voice of God to the people. Exodus 20:1-17 [Deut. 5:6-21]
 - a. First four commandments deal with **LOVING GOD**
 - 1) *Have no other gods (put God first)* – protects God's proper place of authority
 - 2) *Do not make and worship idols* – protects correct view and worship of God
 - 3) *Do not dishonor God's name* (by words or actions) – protects God's reputation
 - 4) *Keep the Sabbath holy* – protects the correct focus of life: relationship with God
 - b. Last six commandments deal with **LOVING OTHERS**
 - 5) *Honor your parents* – protects respect for authority in the family and society
 - 6) *Do not murder* – protects the high value of life
 - 7) *Do not commit adultery* – protects marriage and the family
 - 8) *Do not steal* – protects the right to own and enjoy property; provides opportunity for prosperity
 - 9) *Do not lie or distort the truth* – protects justice for all people
 - 10) *Do not covet (desire what others have)* – be thankful and be content with what you have

E. Living by the law of love provides safety, happiness and freedom in the lives of individuals and society

1. The more a person lives under the rulership of God and by His law of love, and the more a community bases its laws on the Ten Commandments, the more safety, happiness and freedom will result.
Deuteronomy 30:11-20; James 1:25; John 8:32
2. There are destructive consequences for breaking God's law of love. There is divine blessing that comes with obedience.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the Ten Commandments and how each one describes living by love and wisdom.
2. Which commandment do you personally find the most difficult to obey? Pray with someone about that. Which one or two of the Ten Commandments are most often broken in your community? What are the destructive consequences you have seen as a result?

God's Law of Love



**God's laws are loving and wise
providing safety and happiness for us**

THE ROOT OF SIN

Lesson Summary

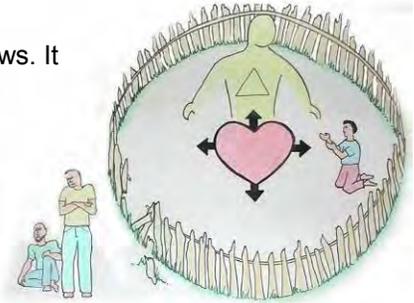
The heart is the root or the center of our being from which comes all our external behavior or actions. God evaluates our actions, regardless of how good they may appear, as either good or bad (sinful or righteous) based upon whether they come from a good heart or a bad heart (from loving God first or from selfishness).

A. Key Bible Stories

1. The first sin. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-13
2. The rich young ruler. Luke 18:18-27

B. The entrance of sin into the world

1. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-13 (3:14-24). When Adam and Eve lived under God's loving rulership and obeyed His law, it resulted in happy fellowship with God and each other (2:23-25). Then Satan deceived Eve by planting doubts about God's loving character and about what God had said about the destructive consequences of sin. He appealed to Eve to satisfy her desires in a forbidden way (3:4-6, 13). Tragically, Adam and Eve knowingly and selfishly disobeyed God's command and ate the fruit (3:2-3, 6). God held Adam and Eve responsible for their wrong actions and disciplined them for their sin (Gen 3:16-19).
2. Some other key Scriptures confirming these ideas about sin and temptation:
 - Sin is doing what we know is wrong. James 4:17
 - Sin is refusing to live under God's loving and wise rulership and laws. It is putting me first rather than God. 1 John 3:4
 - Temptation is an appeal to our mind to satisfy desires in a wrong way. We sin when we give in to temptation, but we also have the ability to resist together with God's help. God never tempts us to sin, but may test us to build our character and faith. James 1:13-16; 1 Corinthians 10:13
3. Satan rejected God's authority in heaven and wanted to be the ruler (Isaiah 14:12-15). In opposition to God, Satan seeks to keep people forever separated from God (from their created purpose). His main strategy is deception – keeping people “blinded” to the truth and living in darkness, bondage and misery. (John 8:44-45; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Mark 5:1-20)



C. Jesus rebuked the Jewish religious leaders for their external “righteousness”

1. Jesus called the very religious Pharisees “blind guides” and even “sons of hell” because they not only had the wrong idea about sin and salvation, but were leading people into the same deception. Matthew 15:12-14
2. Matthew 23:1-7; 23-28; 33, 37 The Pharisees did things for selfish reasons – to be seen by others (v5-7). Jesus said that if the Pharisees wanted their external actions to be seen as righteous by God, they had to first clean or change their hearts (v23-28). But the Pharisees were unwilling to repent and come to God which grieved the heart of Jesus (v37). (Matthew 5:20; 6: 1, 2-4, 5-7, 16-18)
3. Summary: Doing good external “righteous” actions cannot make a sinful heart clean.

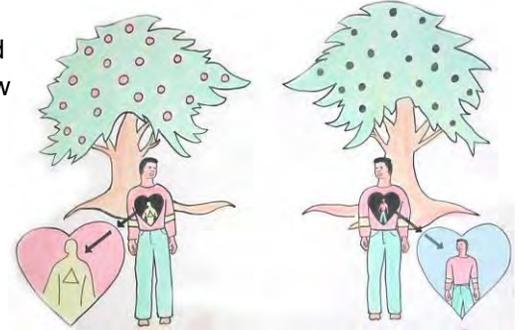
D. The heart is the centre of our being and determines whether our external actions are good or bad

1. Jesus told the rich ruler, who had observed the Ten Commandments from his youth, that there was still “one thing” stopping him from having eternal life – self interest was his highest priority (Luke 18:18-27).

Elsewhere, Jesus taught that we will either serve God or selfish pursuits, but we cannot serve both (Luke 16:13-15).

2. Other Scriptures:

- Matthew 7:13-23: a good tree produces good fruit and a bad tree produces bad fruit (v16-20). Likewise, a “good” person who loves God will do God’s will, and a “bad” or selfish person will produce bad actions even though his words and actions may initially appear good (v21-23). The “bad tree” is cut down and separated from God forever on the day of judgment. (Matthew 12:33-37)
- Mark 7:14-23: all evil external actions come from a selfish heart.
- 1 Samuel 16:6-7 and 2 Corinthians 5:15



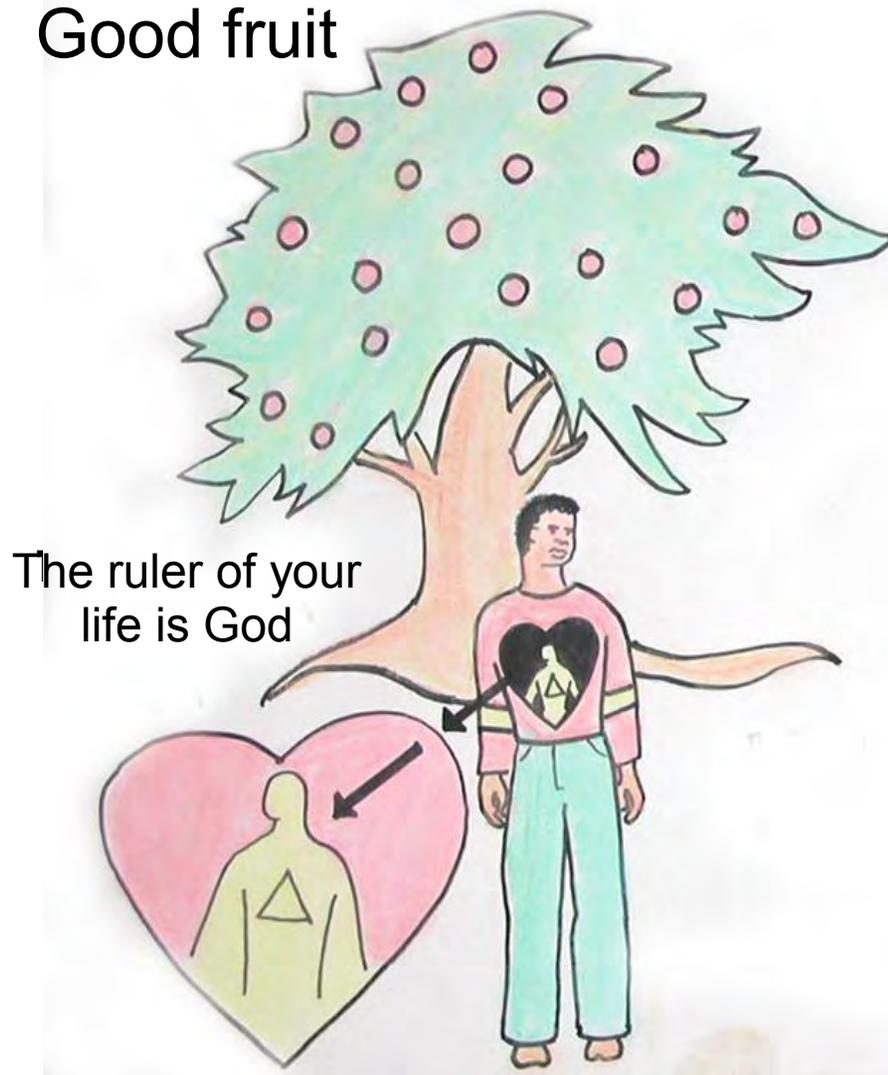
3. Summary: Our heart is where we make the supreme choice to live for God (a good heart) or to live for ourselves (a bad heart). From this comes all secondary choices, words and external actions which are evaluated by God as right or wrong depending on that supreme motivation.

Discussion Questions

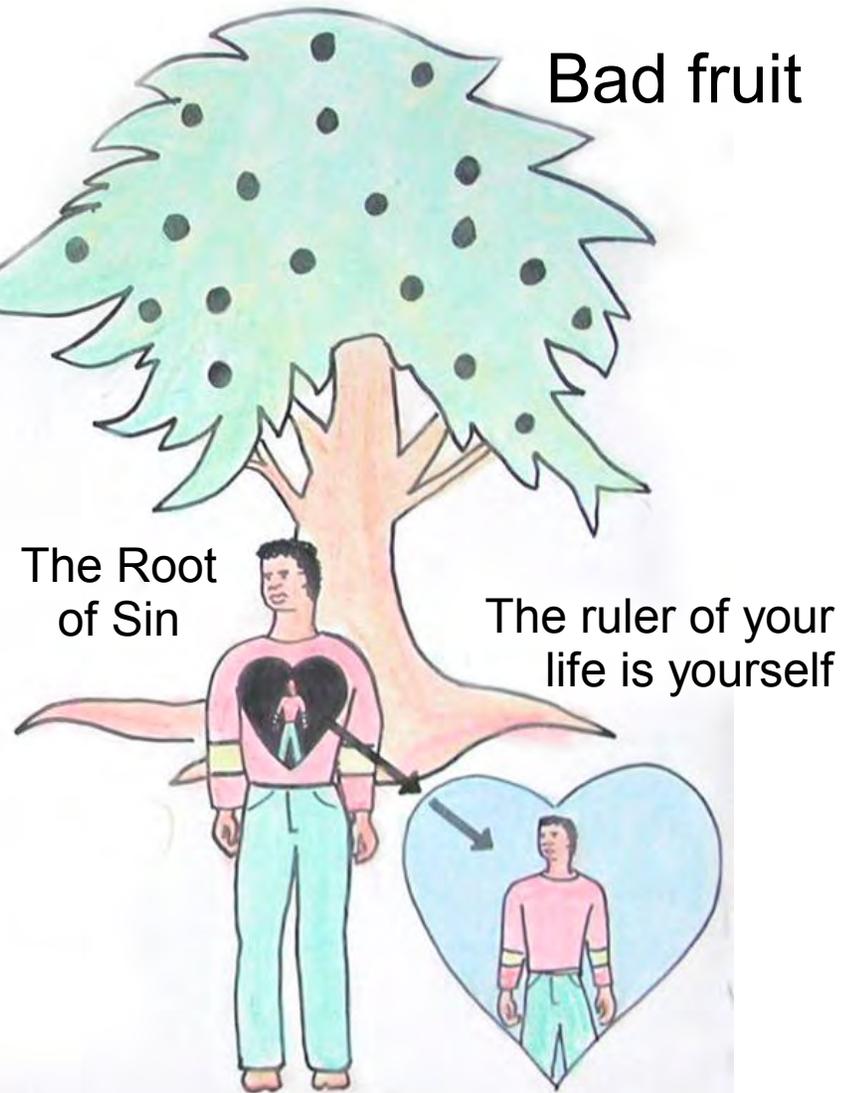
1. What we say and do shows us the condition of our heart. Honestly evaluate your own heart and ask the Holy Spirit to expose and convict you of any sin or selfishness (2 Corinthians 13:5). Consider what you do in secret as well as how you speak and act towards others, especially towards your spouse and your children.
2. Evaluate what your motivation is for being in ministry. Are you in ministry or leadership because you love God and want to serve others or because you want a high position, power, popularity, or wealth?

The Root of Sin

Good fruit



Bad fruit



Our heart determines whether our external actions are good or bad

THE DESTRUCTIVENESS OF SIN

Lesson Summary

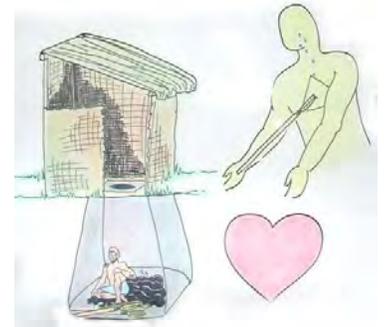
Sin is a crime against God and contrary to our created design and purpose, resulting in devastating consequences to ourselves, to others as well as immense grief to the heart of God.

A. Key Bible Stories

1. Cain and Abel. Genesis 4:1-13
2. The Flood. Genesis 6:5-13
3. David & Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 11:1-12:15

B. Sin always brings separation and destructive consequences

1. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-13 (3:14-24). Adam and Eve's sin resulted in shame (3:7), fear (3:8-10), separation from God (3:8), great disappointment to God (3:9-13) a broken relationship with each other, (3:12) and in the end, physical death (3:19, 24).
2. Genesis 4:1-13. God told Cain that he must overcome sin. Instead, Cain allowed his anger to control him resulting in God's grief (4:10) and Cain's punishment (which resulted in less time and energy for him to sin, as it was for Adam).
3. Genesis 6:5-13. The earth became "full of violence" (no safety or happiness) because every person was totally selfish all the time (6:5). God was deeply grieved that the earth had become so spoiled and contrary to what he had ever intended. God waited as long as He could before bringing judgment by a flood, in hopes that some would repent (Noah preached for over 100 years).
4. We all are guilty of breaking God's law, and God holds us responsible. God always disciplines in love and works to limit sin for the safety and good of all people. God's final limit on sin is physical death, as was the case in Eden and the flood.
5. God grieves over sin because of its tragic and destructive consequences:
 - **guilt and shame** – when we sin our conscience convicts us and we feel guilty. Because of our shame, we often distance or separate ourselves from others.
 - **broken relationships** – people living in sin will surely hurt others around them. Selfishness, pride, prejudice, hatred, deception, greed and lust all result in division between people, bringing terrible relational, mental, emotional and even physical pain and suffering. (E.g. divorce, oppression, war, slavery, etc.).
 - **bondage and misery** – when we sin, we become "slaves to sin", which increasingly ensnares us, resulting in great misery for ourselves and others. John 8:34; Romans 6:16-23; 7:14-15, 23-24
 - **death** – every consequence of sin leads to "death" or "separation" (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:24): **spiritual death** / separation from God, and at the end of this life, **physical death**. If a sinner dies, he will be separated from God forever in hell, experiencing terrible loneliness, anguish and the torment of a guilty conscience. (Matthew 8:12; 13:40-42; Luke 13:22-28; Rev 19:20; 21:8)
6. The downward spiral /process of sin is described by Paul. Romans 1:18-32; 2:5-9
 - People don't love or honor God (Rom 1:21, 28)
 - They reject the truth and believe lies. (Rom 1:18, 20, 25, 28, 32)
 - They begin doing "every kind of wickedness". (Rom 1:26-31)
 - God's judgment is just for those who are guilty and "without an excuse". (Rom 1:20, 32; 2:3, 5)



7. The greatest consequence of sin is intense **grief to the heart of a loving God**.
 - Jesus grieved over the Jews unwillingness to respond to God. Matthew 23:37
 - God grieved over His rebellious chosen people, Israel. Psalm 78:37-41; Ezekiel 6:9

C. The destructive consequences of a leader's sin

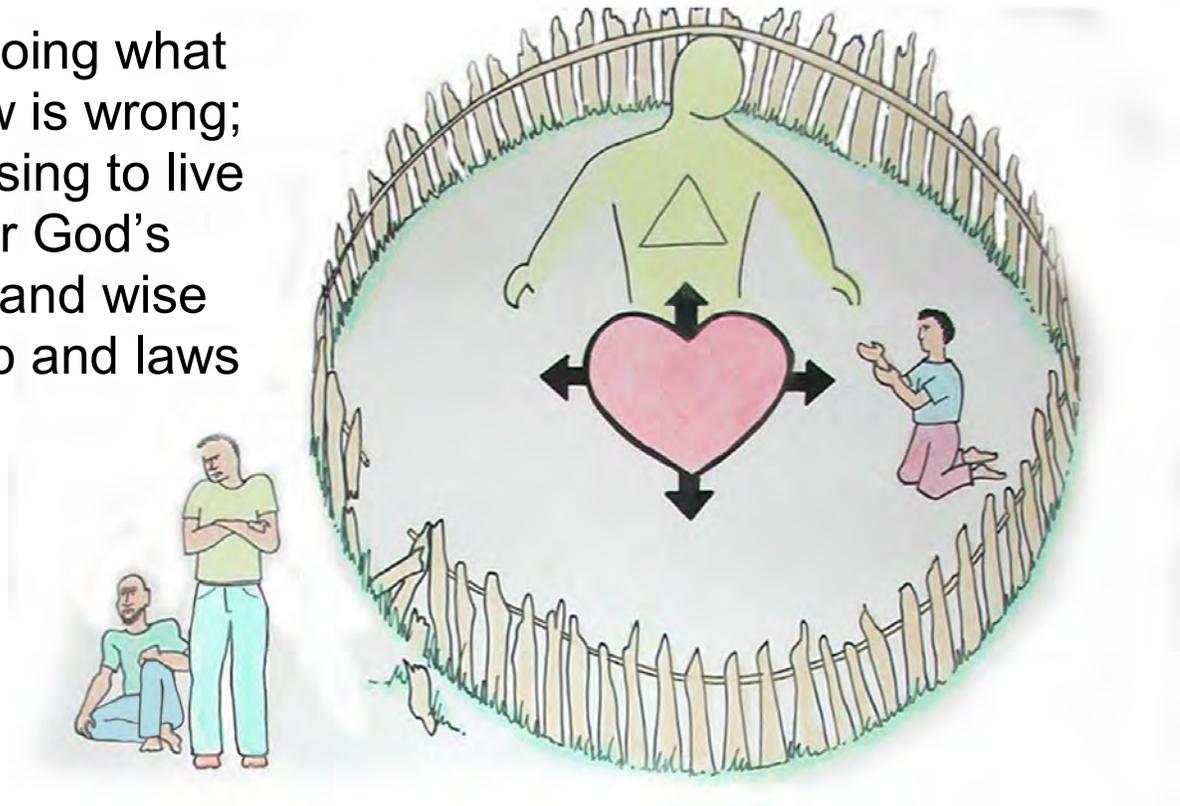
1. The sin of David and Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 11:1-12:15
 - David's sin of adultery was a terrible act of betrayal against God (2 Sam 12:7-9) and his close friends (2 Sam 11:3; 23:34, 39).
 - David was God's anointed leader and was called "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam 13:14), but he selfishly abused his power to get another man's wife and then tried to cover up his adultery with the murder of Uriah. (2 Sam 11:14-15; 12:9)
 - David tried to keep his sin secret, resulting in misery within himself (Psalm 32:1-5). God exposed his sin, but forgave him because of his humility. (2 Sam 12:7-9, 12-13; Psalm 51:1-3, 7-17)
 - David's sin had immediate consequences (2 Sam 12:14), and was a damaging influence on his own sons (2 Sam 13:1-33; 2 Sam 15 to 18).
2. When a godly leader sins, the consequences are far reaching. It damages the reputation of God and the church, providing an excuse for people to continue in sin. (2 Samuel 12:14a)

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss any examples from your own life that show the destructive consequences of sin. Have you seen the tragic consequences when a godly leader has sinned?
2. Discuss the effect of your sin (or the sins of the world) on God in light of the statement, "the greater the intimacy and expectation one has, the greater the potential for disappointment and grief".

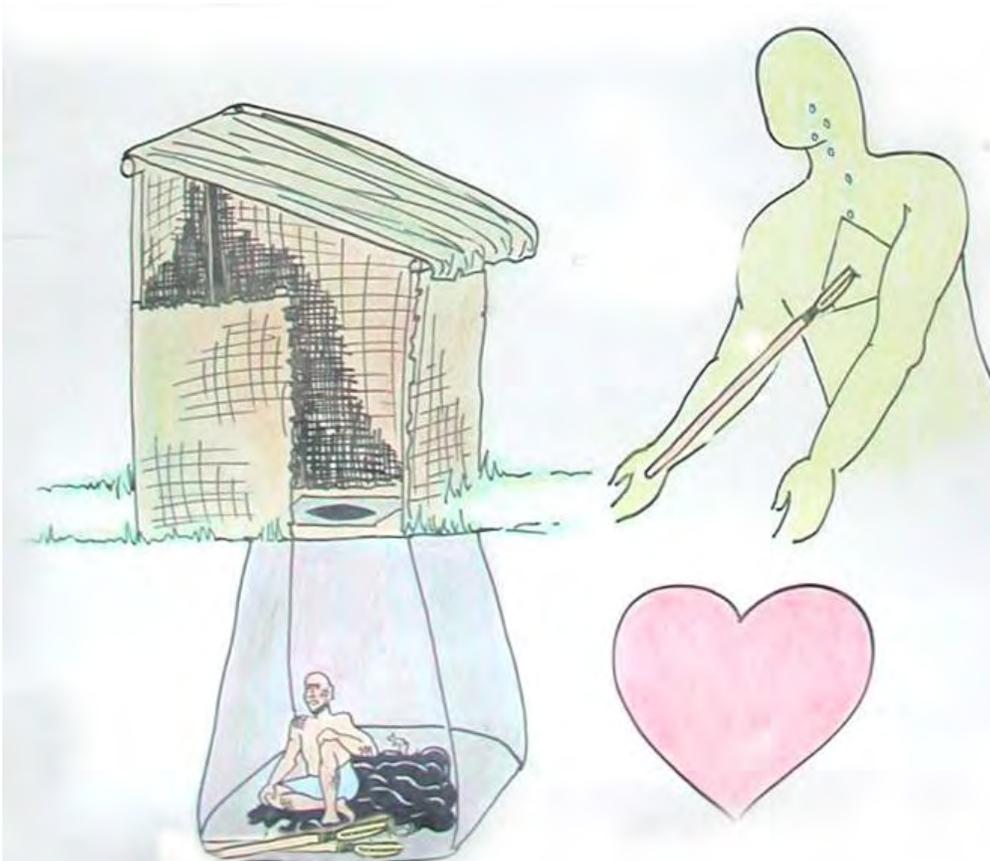
The Destructiveness of Sin

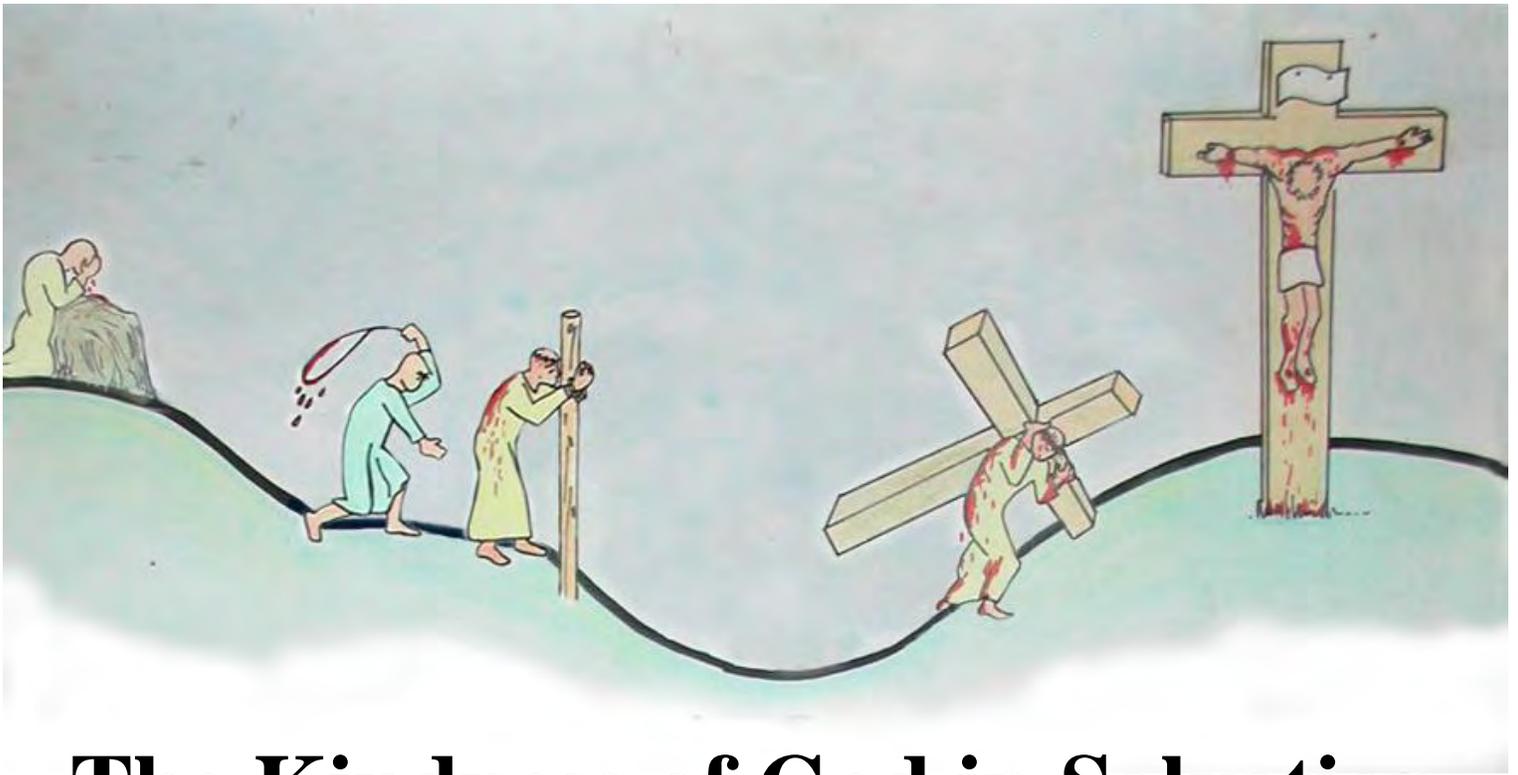
Sin is doing what we know is wrong; it is refusing to live under God's loving and wise rulership and laws



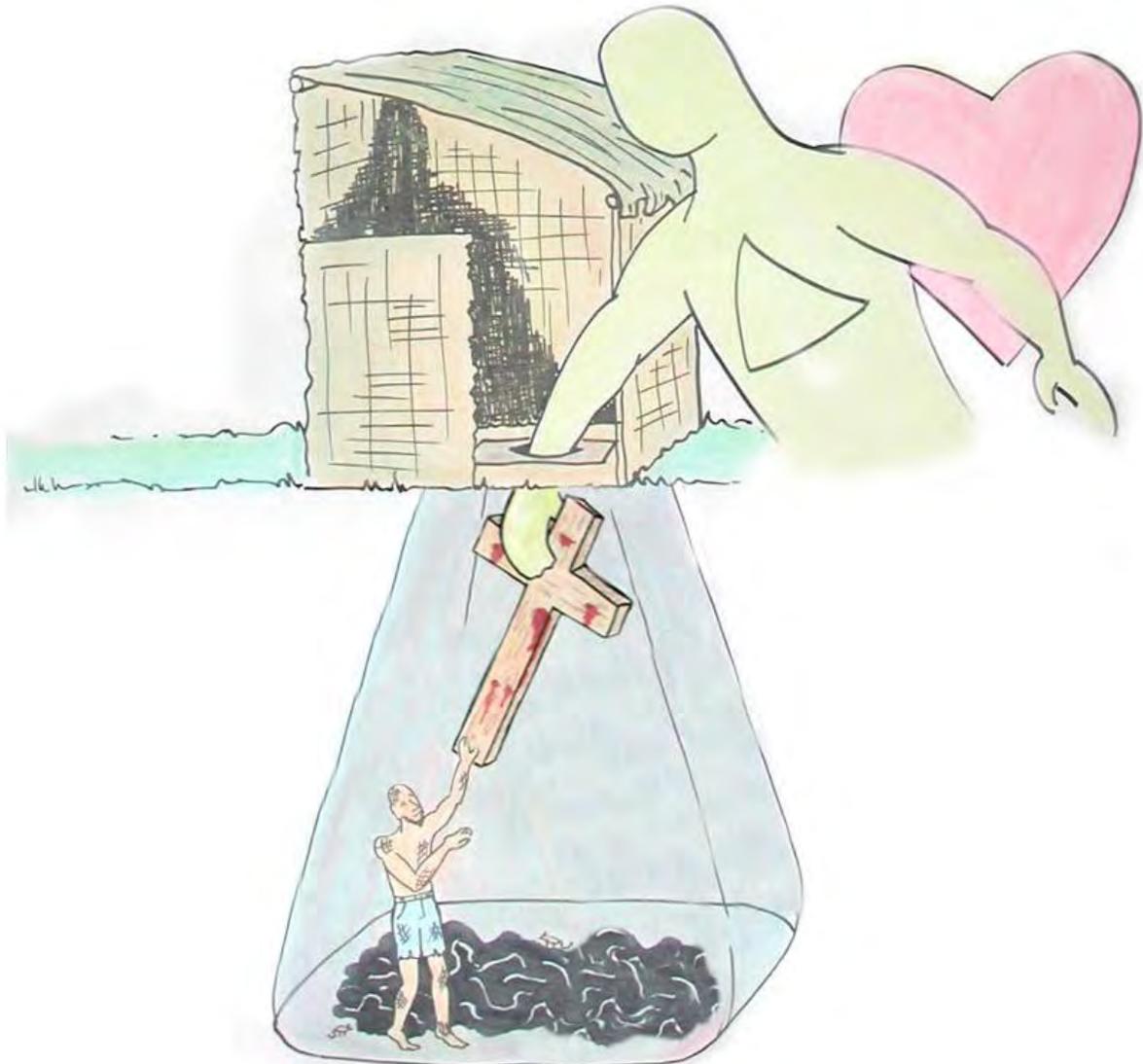
God grieves over the destructive results of sin:

- *guilt and shame*
- *broken relationships*
- *bondage and misery*
- *physical and spiritual death*





The Kindness of God in Salvation



THE KINDNESS OF GOD IN SALVATION

Lesson Summary

God is grieved over sin and the devastating consequences it brings to those He loves. Yet the amazing mercy and kindness of God is demonstrated in Jesus coming to rescue people from their rebellion and sin. In the greatest act of love ever displayed, Jesus willingly suffered on the cross, as the final sacrifice for sin, so sinners might willingly and humbly turn from their sin and live for Him.

A. Key Bible Stories

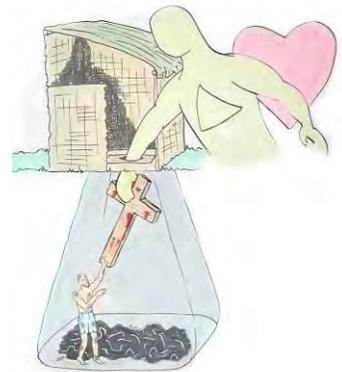
1. Jesus goes to the house of Zaccheus. Luke 19:1-10
2. God forgives the people of Ninevah. Jonah 3:1-4:11
3. The woman caught in Adultery. John 8:1-11

B. God sent Jesus to save sinners and restore them to fellowship with Himself

1. God announced Jesus would come to save people from their sins. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:67, 76-79
2. Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:5, 8) so that we would no longer walk in darkness and bondage, but in the light (John 8:12), and have “life” (now and eternally). (John 18:37; 8:32; 10:9-11; 17:2-3)
3. Jesus sought and befriended sinners which resulted in changed lives (Luke 19:1-10 - Zaccheus; Luke 15:1-7).

C. Because of His great mercy, God desires to forgive sinners. He does not want to bring judgment, but patiently urges sinners to repent.

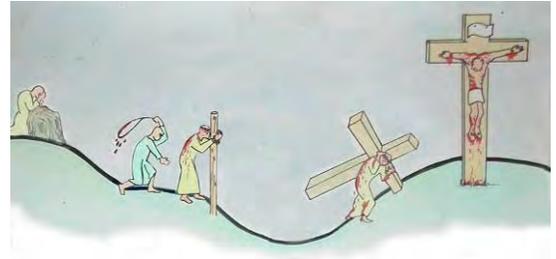
1. Though Jonah felt the Ninevites deserved the coming judgment of God because of their wickedness and cruelty, God forgave them when they humbled themselves. Jonah 3:10-4:4, 11
2. Though the people of Judah repeatedly rebelled against God, He was gracious in His discipline of them, never giving up on them. Nehemiah 9:16-20 (16-31)
3. Jesus responded with kindness to the adulterous woman, though did not excuse her sin. John 8:1-11
4. Other Scriptures about God’s willingness to forgive: Psalms 86:5; 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:23, 30-32
5. Forgiveness is to release someone from the punishment for an offence. When God forgives our sin, He remembers our sins no more. Jeremiah 31:34b; Psalm 103:11-12 Micah 7:18-19
6. As part of the annual Day of Atonement in Israel, two goats were presented before the Lord. The first goat was killed as a sin offering to the Lord – a humbling reminder to Israel that an innocent life was taken for their sin. The high priest then took the second goat, laid his hands on the goat’s head and confessed over it Israel’s sins. The goat was then released, “bearing” the sins of Israel into the Judean desert, never to be seen again. This was a vivid picture of God’s forgiveness for sin – God was setting them free from the punishment of their sins and choosing not to remember their sins any more. (Leviticus 16:7-10, 20-22; Isaiah 53:5-6, 11-12; 1 Peter 2:24).



D. In great love, Jesus willingly suffered and died a horrible death on the cross as the final sin offering

1. John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus was, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus’ death was the final sin offering whereby God could forgive the sins of the world. 1 Peter 2:21-25; Hebrews 9:25-26
2. Jesus willingly went to the cross and laid his life down so we could become children of God. John 10:14-18; 15:13; 1 John 3:1; 4:9-10

3. The crucifixion of Jesus. Matthew 27:26-54
 - a. Crucifixion was one of the most cruel and painful ways to die.
 - b. Jesus responded to all who mistreated Him in great love, saying, "Father, forgive them..." (Isaiah 53:3, 5; Luke 22:34).
 - c. One of the thieves on the cross was changed by seeing Jesus' responses amidst agonizing pain (Matthew 27:44; Luke 23:43). The cross is the strongest possible influence to humble proud sinners so they will turn away from sin and live for God. (Romans 2:4)
 - d. The moment Jesus died, the temple curtain in front of the Ark of the Covenant (representing the presence of God) was ripped open by God (Matthew 27:51). This event symbolized that we could now have direct access to God through faith in Jesus (Hebrews 10:19-22).
4. The empty tomb: Jesus rose from the dead, defeating the power of Satan, sin and death, giving us hope for the future (Matthew 28:1-7; Hebrews 2:14-15).
5. The book of Revelation reveals Jesus as "the Lamb that was slain", with God in heaven, exalted and worshipped by many angelic beings. Revelation 5:6-14; Romans 8:34



Discussion Questions

1. What impacted you the most about the account of the crucifixion of Jesus?
2. As leaders, how do we respond to people when they hurt and offend us? Discuss what forgiveness is and why it is necessary for relationship to be restored. In what ways is forgiveness needed in your community?
3. Like Jesus, do we befriend and seek out sinners in their own places or situations or do we expect them to come to our churches?

SALVATION FROM SIN

Lesson Summary

The good news of salvation from sin was the main message of Jesus. This process of being restored back to fellowship with God includes the necessity of sinners humbling themselves, turning from their sin (repentance) and putting their complete faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

A. Key Bible Stories

1. The Pharisee and the tax collector. Luke 18:9-14
2. Jesus shares with Nicodemus about salvation. John 3:1-21

B. The good news proclaimed by Jesus was about entering and living in the Kingdom of God

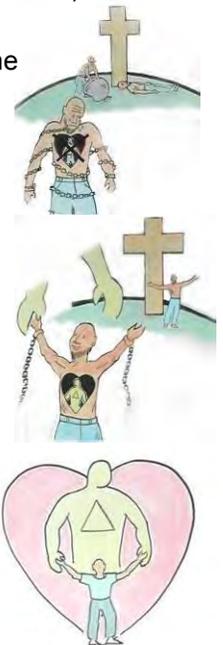
1. Jesus tells stories describing the kingdom of God
 - Matthew 13:44-45. Only those who are willing to give up everything can enter the kingdom.
 - Matthew 22:1-14 Many are invited to be part of the kingdom of God, but only those willing to honor the conditions of entering may enter.
2. The Old and New Testaments describe entering the kingdom as being “born again” (John 3:1-10), becoming a “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:15, 17; Galatians 6:15), receiving a “new heart” (Ezekiel 11:19-20; 18:30-32), and passing “from death to life” (John 5:21, 24; Romans 6:11).
3. The kingdom of God is not a physical kingdom (John 18:33-37), but it does exist here on earth, as well as in heaven. The kingdom of God is where God is the King and where all willingly live according to God’s law of love (Matthew 6:10).

C. The process of salvation from sin

1. Luke 18:9-14. The tax collector was saved because he humbled himself, recognized his sin, and had faith to ask God to forgive his sin. The Pharisee was proud, unchanged and unaccepted by God.
2. The salvation messages of Jesus, Peter and Paul all included the necessity of repentance and faith in order to be saved from sin. (Mark 1:14-15; Acts 3:17-20, Acts 20:20).
3. Jesus reveals himself and his salvation message to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:12-18).

The salvation process includes:

- **Humility** (“open their eyes”) – sinners need to recognize their own sin and pride. The cross is the greatest influence to humble pride. (Isaiah 42:7; James 4:6-10)
- **Repentance** (“turn from darkness to light”) – sinners need to be willing to turn from their sinful ways and live for God. (Prov. 28:13; Joel 2:12-13; Galatians 5:19-21, 24)
- **Faith in Jesus** (“sanctified by faith in me”) – sinners need to trust that God will forgive their sins because of what Jesus did on the cross. They must commit to live under God’s Lordship. (Galatians 2:20; John 1:12; Romans 6:16-18, 22; Hebrews 11:6)
- **Forgiveness of sin** (“receive forgiveness of sins”) – God responds to repentance and faith by forgiving sin and purifying our hearts. God’s grace can’t be bought or earned, it is a gift. (Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 John 1:9; Colossians 1:13)
- **Restored fellowship with God** (“a place” with Jesus) – the new believer is restored to sweet fellowship with God (1 John 1:3, 7). Determined to continue living for Jesus and dying to self daily (John 8:31; Luke 9:23-24; Ephesians 5:8-10), the Holy Spirit empowers our choices to live rightly (Romans 8:13-14; Galatians 5:16, 24; 2 Peter 1:3).



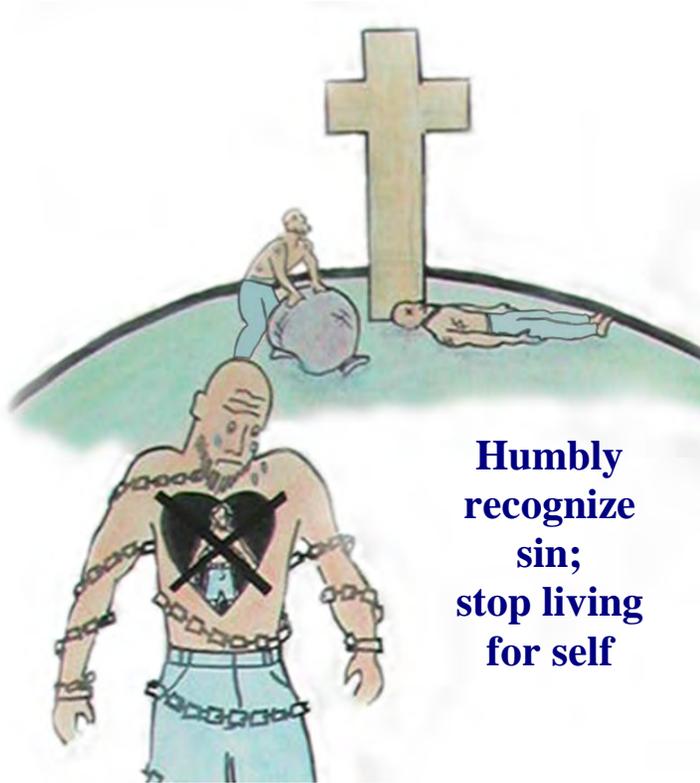
4. We are to consider the “cost” of following Jesus. If we are unwilling to make Jesus Lord, and make Him the first priority over *all* other things and people in our lives, we cannot be a follower of Jesus.
Luke 14:25-33

Discussion Questions

1. Briefly share your own salvation experience with someone, identifying the various aspects of the salvation process.
2. As leaders, do your evangelistic messages or personal evangelism involve all the parts of the salvation message? What areas do you think need more emphasis or understanding?

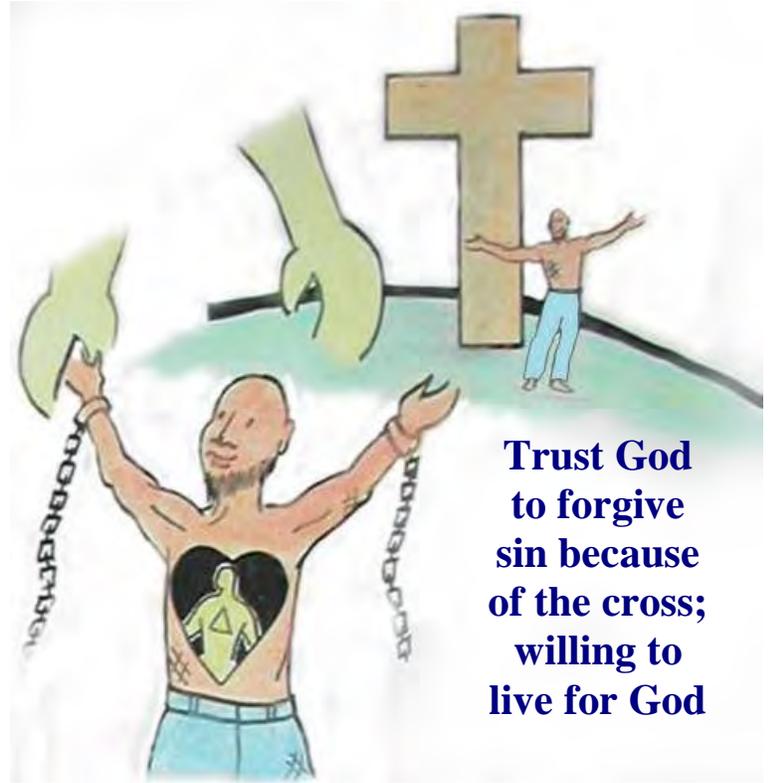
Salvation from Sin

Repentance



**Humbly
recognize
sin;
stop living
for self**

Faith in Jesus



**Trust God
to forgive
sin because
of the cross;
willing to
live for God**

**Sin is forgiven and we have a new heart;
Friendship with God is restored**



**Continue living
under the rulership
of God (loving God
and loving others)
through the power of
the Holy Spirit**

The Command of Missions

As you go, **make disciples of all nations...**
baptizing them...teaching them to
obey everything I have
commanded you.

Matthew 28:19-20

