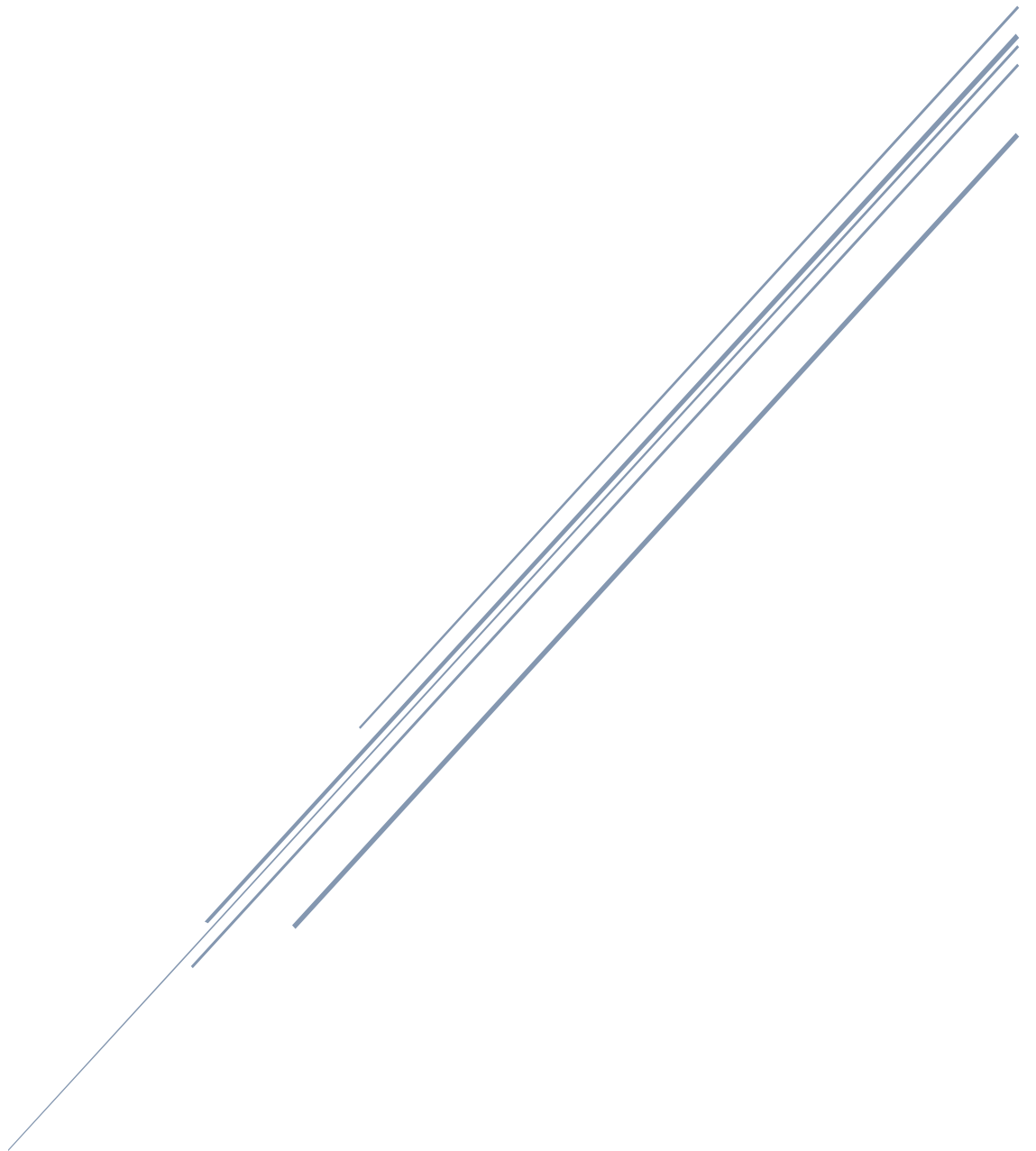


THE TRUTH

“The truth shall set you free!”



Dr. Brian Wood and Lorena Wood

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Introduction

John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Everyone who believes and holds to the teachings of Jesus is truly His disciple and each one has been set free! But before we can truly experience true freedom and become successful in our Christian walk, we must understand the teachings of God's Word. The Bible is an instruction book, meant to teach us how to live according to God's will. It contains a wealth of valuable knowledge that helps us better understand and apply His principles in our daily lives.

Lesson 1: The Truth Shall Set You Free

A. Set Free from Punishment

Through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, he has set us free by taking upon himself the punishment for all our sins.

Matthew 25:31-34, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

Matthew 25:41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

God will one day judge everyone who has ever lived. However, God sent His son to free us from this judgement. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, without sin. He then voluntarily gave his life as the perfect sacrifice for all of mankind's sins. By believing in Jesus and accepting him as one's Lord and Savior, freedom from death and judgment can be found. Those who accept him will have freedom from their past wrongdoings and enter into eternal life with God! This is true freedom.

Freedom from the punishment of sin is only for those who believe in Jesus. As the apostle Paul wrote in *Galatians 3:13*, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’”* Christ was crucified on a cross to take upon himself the punishment which we rightly deserve. It is only through Jesus that we can be saved. This is the good news of the gospel. Through faith in Jesus we are free from sin, free from the curse, free from death, free from judgement, and free from the punishment of hell.

B. Free to Live for Jesus

We are now free to live our lives for Jesus and obey His commands.

While believers still battle against sin, we are no longer slaves to sin. We are equipped to fight the battle and be victorious, no longer under sin's power. We can proclaim with confidence that we have been set free from sin's grip, enabling us to live in holiness and righteousness. This is a life of freedom! The battle may still rage on in our hearts, but through Christ's victory on the cross, we can be set free from the bondage of greed, sexual immorality, pride, pornography, alcohol and drug addictions, abusive behavior, selfishness, and any other sin.

In John 8:31 Jesus said, "If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

C. Put It Into Action

Being his disciple is more than saying the right words. It involves action! Only those who obey His teachings are truly His disciples. We can find power and strength through Christ, no matter what we face. With Jesus on our side, we can live victoriously, regardless of the temptation or conflict.

Knowledge of truth is useless unless it's put into practice. Those who are wise and know the truth have an ability to put the truth into action. Some people confess to be His disciples, but their actions prove that they are not. The proof of your confession is found in the way you live your life!

For example, the Bible says that knowing the truth keeps you from sin. *Psalm 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.* The truth of God's word will change your actions when you allow it to enter your heart.

This is why Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."

D. Satan Wants to Keep You from the Truth

The demonic world attempts to keep you in bondage to sin and prevent the light of God's word from transforming your life.

Jesus warned His disciples that we have an enemy who wants to keep us from the truth! God calls Satan a liar and the father of lies.

John 8:22, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Satan wants to keep you from the truths in the Bible! He does not want you to understand who Jesus is. He does not want you to understand what Jesus has done for you. And he never wants believers to understand all the benefits they have in Jesus Christ.

Here are some of God's truths with Satan's opposing lies:

Lie: You don't need to read and learn the Bible because you already know enough.

Truth: *2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Joshua 1:8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Lie: You cannot be free from the bondage of sin.

Truth: *Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Lie: You don't have to follow the truth in order to be Jesus' disciple.

Truth: *John 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.*

E. Conclusion / Application

Conclusion:

Jesus came to proclaim freedom and liberty to the world.

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me, to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free!"

If you know the truth, you can be set free from all of Satan's lies! God wants you to live a life of joy and fulfillment. He wants to set you free from the bondage of sin. Knowing the truth and acting upon it will set you free!

Application:

Say to yourself, “I chose to believe the truth and live in freedom!” Pray and ask God for the grace, strength, and wisdom to do this.

F. Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Jesus take the punishment for our sins, and how does that make us free?
2. What does it mean to live in freedom for Jesus? Can you think of a way you can show love or kindness like Jesus did?
3. How does knowing the truth of being “free” in Christ vs. living a life of bondage to sin give you hope?

Lesson 2: Truth Comes from the Word of God

2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness”

A. False “truths”

Don’t believe false “truths” given to us by the world, Satan, or even yourself.

In the world we hear lies. The world tells us how to live, but if we follow the world’s ways, we find only sorrow and spiritual death.

Can you think of some ways the world tells us how to live (maybe on social media, TV, or the radio) that is opposite of what God says in his Word? For instance, the world’s idea of love is selfish, self-seeking, and lustful. God’s idea of love is self-sacrificing, giving, and pure. Jesus exemplified love when he laid down his life as a sacrifice for our sins. You can also see a broader definition of true love in I Corinthians 13.

Satan lies. If we do not know the truth of God’s Word, we will be deceived by his lies. Satan’s lies also lead to sorrow and spiritual death even though he often gives a temporary benefit. He appears as an angel of light, mixing a little truth in with the lie. For example, God created sex and the idea of marriage as good and holy. He blesses and encourages this union. Satan, however, challenges God’s limitations and tempts people with the idea that sex is good and OK anytime, anywhere, resulting in broken hearts, broken families, and disease.

This is why it is so important to know that the Bible is where we find truth.

We cannot even trust our own feelings.

Romans 3:4, "Let God be true, and every human being a liar."

Human beings lie and human beings make mistakes.

Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

Proverbs 28:26, "Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered."

God's ways are not our ways!

Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

The things that we do, the things that we believe, and the things we teach need to come from God and His Word.

Read and/or listen to the Word of God.

B. How to Know the Difference Between Truth and Lies

We must search the Scriptures.

Acts 17:11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Paul the Apostle was preaching in the city of Berea. The people there read the Scriptures to see if Paul was teaching the truth. God says this is exactly what someone of noble character should do.

1 John 4:1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God."

Only God can define what we should believe. We must test what people say by the Word of God. Even when we listen to teachers, evangelists, or famous pastors, test what they say. If what they say does not agree with Scripture, we cannot follow them.

Read the Bible and learn God's ways. It will keep you in the truth and protect you from the lies of Satan.

2 Timothy 3:14-15, “You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

C. How to Have Hope

When we believe the truth found in the Word of God, we are filled with hope.

God has made so many wonderful promises to us, with over 7,000 listed in the Bible! He describes who we are as Christians - the wonderful privileges we have as believers in Jesus Christ. God reveals our great future - how amazing heaven will be when we spend all eternity with Him and our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:9, “However, as it is written: ‘What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived’— the things God has prepared for those who love him.”

Romans 15:4 “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

When we have faith and believe the Scriptures are true, we are filled with hope!

D. How to Have More Faith

We learn in Romans that **faith** comes by hearing the Word of God.

Romans 10:17 “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

In this book we are seeing many of the wonderful blessings the Lord has given us. These promises will bless our lives as long as we realize they are true. His Word is the only place we can find absolute truth.

2 Timothy 3:15, “...from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7, “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”

E. Satan’s Lies vs. God’s Truth

Lie: You don’t need to read and learn the Bible.

Truth: *Matthew 4:4, “Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

Lie: You already know enough.

Truth: *2 Peter 3:18, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..."*

Lie: You cannot be free from the bondage of sin.

Truth: *John 8:11b, "... you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*
Psalm 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
2 Cor. 5:17, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

Lie: You don't have to follow the truth in order to be Jesus' disciple.

Truth: *In John 8:31 Jesus said, "If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

Lie: God is not good.

Truth: *Romans 8:28, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."*

Psalm 106:1, "Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Lie: God is not on your side.

Truth: *Psalm 118:6, The Lord is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?*

Lie: God does not want to give you blessings in this life and for all eternity.

Truth: *Psalm 23:6, "Surely your goodness and love will follow me **all the days of my life**, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

F. Conclusion / Application

Conclusion:

We cannot trust the truth that is given to us by the world, Satan, and even ourselves. The only way to know the truth is by searching the Scriptures. When we believe the truth found in the Word of God, it will fill us with hope and faith. We must make the reading and understanding of God's Word a priority in our lives.

Application:

Decide and commit to a time each day when you will read or listen to the Scriptures. Read it little by little, being sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is teaching you as you go. His Word is active and alive! Ask God to help you understand these truths, remember them, and apply them to your life. Take time to be still and enjoy His presence.

G. Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important to learn the truth from the Bible instead of believing what the world or our feelings tell us?
2. What are some lies you might hear in the world - on the internet, TV, radio, etc., and what does the Bible say about them?
3. How can reading the Bible every day help us know the difference between what is true and what is a lie? Can you share of a time when a specific scripture brought you hope or clarity?

Lesson 3: How can we know the Bible is True?

A. Evidence

The Bible is like a library, because it's actually a collection of books written by various authors over hundreds of years. Thousands of ancient manuscripts (including the famous Dead Sea Scrolls) give evidence of this fact.

Is the Bible true? Repeatedly it's been shown to be historically accurate — through archeological discoveries, other ancient writings, and so forth. After all, if it talked about kings who never lived or battles that never took place or nations that never existed, then we'd have reason to doubt what it tells us. But this isn't the case. When Luke wrote his Gospel, he tells us that he “carefully investigated everything from the beginning” — and the same was true for the Bible's other writers (Luke 1:3).

Luke 1:3 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

But can the Bible be trusted in what it says about God? Yes, it can. One reason is because it records how God worked in the lives of His people across the centuries. It also assures us that God was at work behind the scenes, directing and inspiring its human authors. Most of all, it points us to Jesus Christ, who lived, died, and rose again for our salvation.

I challenge you to discover the Bible for yourself. I suggest you begin with one of the Gospels (such as John). Read it with an open mind and heart. Ask God to show you if it can be trusted. Then act on what you learn, by humbling yourself before God and giving your life to Jesus Christ. You'll be thankful you did, because “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul” (Psalm 19:7).

Psalm 19:7, “The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.”

B. Truths to Meditate On...

Romans 3:4 Let God be true, and every human being a liar.

Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”

Proverbs 28:26 Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

Isaiah 55:8, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. 9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Acts 17:11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

1 Corinthians 2:9 “However, as it is written: ‘What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived’— the things God has prepared for those who love him.”

We learn in Romans 15:4 that the Scriptures were written for our instruction and that through the Scriptures we can have hope.

Romans 15:4 “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

Romans 10:17 “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7, “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”

C. Satan’s Lies vs. God’s Truth

Lie: The Bible is not that important.

Truth: *2 Timothy 3:16. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*

Lie: No one needs to study the Bible.

Truth: *Romans 15:4 “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”*

*Ps. 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."
2 Timothy 3:16. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*

Lie: You can trust the teachings of this world.

Truth: *Proverbs 28:26 Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.*

Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

Lie: You are too busy to read the Bible; just do what you think is right.

Truth: *Proverbs 21:2, "A person may think their own ways are right, but the LORD weighs the heart."*

Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death."

D. Conclusion / Application

Conclusion:

You can trust the Bible because it's true and comes from God. If it's a guide from God, then it should be an important part of your life. Start by reading it every day, even if it's just a little bit. Think about what it says and ask God to help you understand it. You can also talk about it with your family and friends, like it says in Deuteronomy 6:6-7. The Bible teaches us how to make good choices and grow closer to God. Just like the Bereans in Acts 17:11, who studied the Scriptures every day to know what was true, you can read the Bible to learn what God wants for your life.

Application:

The Bible is more than just a book, it's God's Word to you. It helps you learn about who God is, what He has done, and how much He loves you. Romans 10:17 says that your faith grows when you hear the Word of God. So, don't just keep the Bible on a shelf—read it, trust it, and live by it. When you follow what the Bible says, you'll feel closer to God and see how much He cares for you. By reading and obeying the Bible, you'll find joy, peace, and hope in your life. Make a plan – when will you read the Bible each day? Suggestion: in the morning before you get distracted and at night before you go to sleep.

E. Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important to check what we hear or believe against what the Bible says?
2. What are some benefits from reading the Bible as a regular habit?
3. What are some distractions challenging your time with God and reading His Word?

4. What changes can you make to help you with these challenges?

Lesson 4: God is For You!

A. God is Good

Too many Christians think that God is not on their side. They picture God as someone who gets angry at them for every failure. They do not understand that He wants the absolute best for them.

We can experience His goodness!

Psalm 118:1 Give thanks for the Lord, for he is good!

Psalm 34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

The Bible uses the illustration of food to describe our relationship with the Lord. Everyone likes good food. He tells us to taste and see that the Lord is good. This is an invitation for us to draw close to God, to experience His love and goodness. He offers us so many good things, protections, direction, peace, forgiveness and even wisdom. In Psalm 63 the writer tells us that with God we will be blessed with the richest of foods.

Psalm 63:4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

God is truly good!

B. God is on our side

Psalm 118:6-7 The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The Lord is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

We are told in the Bible that the Lord is on our side as our helper.

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Though the whole world may be against us, God is always for us and on our side.

C. Jesus loves us!

John 15:9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God loves us and nothing can separate us from that love.

Titus 3:4-5 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

It is not because of the good or righteous things we do that God loves us. It is because of His mercy that He loves us.

D. Importance of Believing These Truths

The most important thing in this life is our relationship with Jesus. Nothing is more important!

All fruitfulness comes from this relationship.

John 15:4, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Satan wants you to think that God does not love you. This is a lie. Satan wants you to stay away from Jesus! The devil wants you to believe that God is angry with you and is against you. If Satan can keep people from the Word of God, he can continue to deceive them.

We must remember and live by the truth that God is good and loves you.

E. Scriptures to Meditate On

Psalms 118:1 Give thanks for the Lord, for he is good!

Psalms 34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Psalms 63:4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

John 15:9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Titus 3:4-5 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

F. Satan's Lies and God's Truth

Lie: Satan wants you to stay away from Jesus!

Truth: Jesus said, *4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:3-5).*

Lie: The devil wants you to believe that God is angry with you and is against you.

Truth: *Psalm 118:6-7 The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The Lord is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.*

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

G. Conclusion / Application

Conclusion:

If we stay in a close relationship with God, we will bear much fruit. Apart from an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ we can do nothing.

If we understand that God is good, that He loves us and is on our side, we will want to spend more time talking to Him, reading and meditating on His Word, worshipping Him, and loving Him.

This is how we "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

Application:

Make a decision that you believe God is good and on your side. Then let this decision lead you into a natural desire to spending time talking to Him and worshipping. Experience and enjoy his goodness.

H. Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean when the Bible says God is good? Can you think of some ways you have seen God's goodness in your life?

2. How does it make you feel to know that God is on your side and loves you no matter what?
3. Why is it important to stay close to Jesus, like a branch stays connected to a vine?
4. How can you stay connected to Him every day?

Lesson 5: God works everything together for your good

A. God's Wonderful Plan for our Lives

As we live close to Him through prayer, reading the Bible, worshiping, and loving Him, He does great things in our lives. Even when we go through difficulties or suffer, God says He is using those things for our good.

Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

When we experience blessings and prosperity, we can rejoice. We can thank God and be filled with joy. The Bible also says that when we suffer or go through hardships, we can rejoice.

James 1:2, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,"

Every time we go through a trial of any kind, God tells us that He works it together for good.

In James chapter 1, God tells us to consider it all joy. He goes on to say that trials will produce perseverance, making you mature and complete, lacking nothing.

James 1:3-4, "because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

What a wonderful thing when God works all things together for good. God has a good plan for our lives. His plan will be a blessing for us in this life and for all eternity.

Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

B. Satan's Lies vs. God's Truth

Lie: All the bad things you are experiencing have no point and will not help you in any way.

Truth: *James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 "because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

Lie: God has no plan for your life.

Truth: *Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

C. Conclusion/Application

Conclusion:

God wants us to prosper in this life. He does not want to harm us. God's plans will give us hope and a good future. God's plan for us is wonderful now and for all eternity.

Application:

Trust God in all His ways! Thank Him for His goodness. Worship Him for His love. Praise Him for the good plans He has for your life.

D. Discussion Questions:

1. What does Romans 8:28 mean when it says God works all things for good? Can you think of a time when something hard in your life turned out to be good?
2. Why does James 1:2-4 tell us to be joyful during hard times? How do challenges help us grow?
3. How does Jeremiah 29:11 show us that God has a good plan for our future? How can this give us hope when life gets hard?

Lesson 6: God is With Us

A. God's Promise

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Jesus said to all of His disciples (this includes us), *"And surely I am with you always, to the end of the age."* Matthew 28:60

Many Christians believe that God is only with them when they are doing good things and will leave if they make mistakes. However, God promises He will never leave us or forsake us.

God lives in our heart. There is only one God, but He has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

B. Jesus Lives in Us

Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me."

Ephesians 3:17, "That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith."

Colossians 1:27, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Speaking to his disciples, Jesus said in *Matthew 28:20b*, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

C. The Holy Spirit Lives in Us

2 Timothy 1:14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

D. God the Father Lives in Us

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."

This is wonderful news. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit live in us and will never leave us!

E. Inseparable

Nothing can separate us from this loving relationship.

Romans 8:35-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor

demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What a wonderful God we serve. He works everything together for good, He lives inside of us, and He will never leave.

F. Lies vs. Truth

Lie: Because you are so sinful, God is going to abandon you.

Truth: *Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Lie: God is far from you and wants nothing to do with you.

Truth: *John 14:28 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.*

G. Conclusion/Application

Conclusion:

We can have confidence when we pray, knowing that God hears us and is with us.

We can have confidence that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit remain with us through all our experiences in life.

Application:

Think about these lies and renounce them if they describe how you are thinking. Replace these lies with the truth which you have now read in the above scriptures. Ask God to help you remember these truths and recognize the lies when they come into your mind. Memorize one of these verses that will help you stay faithful and strong when times get difficult.

H. Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean when God promises to never leave us or forsake us? How does this make you feel in hard times?
2. How can knowing that God lives in our hearts—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—help us when we feel alone or scared?
3. What are some lies people might believe about God leaving them, and what truths from the Bible can help us fight those lies?

Lesson 7: Heaven Gives Us Great Hope

In Lesson 2, we learned that when we believe the truth found in the Word of God, we are filled with hope. One of those truths, which we will learn more about now, is our eternal home in heaven with our loving Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, along with all our brothers and sisters in Christ!

Hebrews 13:13-14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. 15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

Here in this life, we do not have a permanent place to live, but we look forward to heaven, which is coming soon.

A. Home in Heaven

John 14:1-3 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

No matter what we experience, God tells us to not let our hearts be troubled. This is because we have a wonderful future. Jesus promises that he has gone ahead of us to heaven and is preparing a place for us. One day he is going to come back to this earth and take us there, to be with him and all believers forever.

B. No More Tears, Only Joy

In heaven there is only joy. God will wipe away every tear.

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

These promises should fill our hearts with joy and praise.

In heaven there will be no more suffering nor pain.

All the sorrows of this life will be gone. In heaven there is no sickness, no hunger, no pain, and no death. All of those “former things have passed away.”

Our hearts should be filled with love for God and with hope for the future.

C. A Glorious Inheritance

Ephesians 2:6-7 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the

heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

In the coming age, God is going to show us incomparable riches.

In Ephesians 1, Paul the Apostle prays that all the believers would be able to see the hope all of us have as Christians.

Ephesians 1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

Paul prayed this for the church. He knew that we all needed to have the eyes of our hearts enlightened to know this truth. After we die, we have a glorious inheritance of riches, joy, and glory. God help us to have our hearts open to this truth.

D. Eternity with Jesus

Eternity with Jesus in heaven is our great hope.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

There is a power when we hold on to the hope that God is going to do great things for us through all eternity.

God tells us in the book of Isaiah that our hope in the Lord will make us “soar on wings like eagles.”

Isaiah 40:31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

As we saw in Jeremiah, God has plans to prosper us and give us a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

E. Hope for Today

This promise is not just for eternity with Jesus in heaven it is for today as well.

All farmers work hard to plant a field. They work for hours and hours preparing everything. Then they must wait until the harvest comes. The hope of a good harvest gives them the motivation to work hard on the field. This is how hope works. We know we have a “glorious inheritance” coming soon but we also have promises for

this life. Therefore, we serve God, obey His word, and seek to do His will, knowing a reward is coming soon. Jesus promises us eternal life, but He also promises us an abundant life right now.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.

F. Hope Gives us Endurance

With the hope of heaven, we can endure all things.

2 Timothy 2:10, "For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us."

We are promised eternal glory in heaven.

God has also promised that we will reign with Jesus forever.

Life on earth is short.

Life with God in heaven will be for all of eternity.

By knowing this truth, we can live a different kind of life from everyone else! We have a wonderful future coming and it is coming soon!

When Paul the Apostle wrote 2 Timothy, he was in jail. He was deep in a dungeon, and in chains. About a month after writing 2 Timothy, he was beheaded for his faith in Jesus Christ. He tells us that he can "endure all things" because he knows that he will receive eternal glory and reign with Jesus forever.

Life is short. We may experience many difficulties in this life. However, we can endure all things because we know that in a short time we will be with God in heaven forever.

James 4:14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

1 Peter 1:23-25, "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, 'All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever. 'And this is the word that was preached to you."

Grass and flowers do not last a long time. But God says we have been born again of an imperishable seed. That means that we will live forever!

Knowing that we have a wonderful future in heaven should fill us with hope and help us endure all the difficulties of life.

G. Lies vs. Truth

Lie: Today is all that matters, don't think about the future.

Truth: *Colossians 3:2-3 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

Lie: You have to enjoy as many sins in this life as you can.

Truth: *Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Proverbs 29:6 Evildoers are snared by their own sin, but the righteous shout for joy and are glad.*

Lie: You should not live for the future, now is all that is important.

Truth: *Luke 12:20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'" Matthew 16:26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?*

Lie: Things in the world are so bad, you will never find hope, peace, or joy.

Truth: *Psalms 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

H. Meditate on These Verses

Hebrews 13:13-14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. 15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

John 14:1-3 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Ephesians 2:6-7 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Isaiah 40:31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

2 Timothy 2:10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

James 4:14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

1 Peter 1:23 “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, ‘All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever. ’And this is the word that was preached to you.”

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

I. Conclusion /Application

Conclusion:

God wants us to know that all the wonderful things He has prepared for us are better than anything we could even imagine.

Heaven is a place of joy and incomparable riches. This great hope gives us the power to endure all things in this life.

Application:

Pray and ask God to help you remember this truth that we will inherit riches, joy, and glory, especially in moments when times are difficult.

Choose one encouraging verse each day to meditate on. Some helpful ideas to help put a verse to memory include writing it down, putting it to a tune, drawing a picture that illustrates the verse, or putting the verse in plain view where you will see it often throughout the day.

J. Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus mean when He says He is preparing a place for us in heaven? How does this make you feel about the future?
2. How does knowing that there will be no more pain, sadness, or death in heaven give us hope when life gets hard?
3. Why is it important to remember that heaven is real and God has a good plan for our future? How can this help us today?

Lesson 8: God Loves Us Right Now

God loves Christians not because of what they do or don't do. God loves us because it is His nature to love. The Bible tells us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8), meaning His very being is defined by love. He created us in His image (Genesis 1:27) and desires a relationship with us. Again, not because of what we do, but because He chooses to love us.

Romans 5:8 explains that God's love is not based on our goodness: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" His love is rooted in His character—full of grace, mercy, and faithfulness—and is a gift to us.

What God has done for us is described as "grace" and "the gift of God" in Ephesians 2:8-9. In 2 Corinthians 9:15, grace is called "His indescribable gift."

Ephesians 2:8-9, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*"

2 Corinthians 9:15, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

A. Two Truths Revealed in God’s Word

Truth #1: Keep all of God’s Commandments

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 Peter 1:15-16 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Truth #2: *You are NOT saved by keeping God’s commandments; you are saved by faith in Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

You are not saved by what you do. You are saved by grace through faith. (Grace means receiving something as a gift. You don’t earn it.)

We read in Ephesians 2:9 that we can **NEVER** boast! Some people are confused and think they are saved because they are a good person. This is not true.

Whoever believes in Jesus is saved.

John 3:15-16 tells us that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Ephesians 1:7, *“In him [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”*

Grace means we did not work for it. All forgiveness comes from the riches of His grace.

Colossians 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Right before Jesus died on the cross, He said, “It is finished.” His work on earth was done; the work of salvation was finished.

John 19:28-30 Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” 29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

B. Lies vs. Truth

Lie: We are saved by keeping God’s commandments.

Truth: We are saved by grace.

Lie: I don’t have to keep God’s commandments because we are saved by grace.

Truth: Because we have experienced the love of God, we should naturally want to do what pleases Him.

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Lie: Good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell.

Truth: You do not go to heaven by being a good person, by going to church, or by making every effort to not sin. These are good things, but they never earn salvation. Salvation is always a gift from God. The Bible teach salvation by grace.

2 Timothy 1:9 He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

C. Scriptures to Meditate On

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

John 1:16-17 From His abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

D. Conclusion / Application

Conclusion

We can be encouraged, because God loves us and because of what Jesus did on the cross. That means that His love for us is perfect. He does not love us because of the things we do each day. God demonstrated his love for us by dying on the cross for our sins.

Application

Rather than attempting to earn God's favor each day, thank him for his unmerited favor. With this revelation, enter boldly into His presence as you pray and worship Him. Rest in the assurance that He loves you right now, silencing the opposing lies of the enemy. After receiving His love, forgiveness, and salvation as a gift, thank Him for the ability to serve Him and others by His grace.

E. Discussion Questions:

1. Why does God love us?
2. What did Jesus do to show His love for us?
3. If we are saved by grace and not by what we do, why is it still important to follow God's commandments?
4. What does it mean when Jesus said, "It is finished" on the cross?

Lesson 9: We are Citizens of Heaven

A. Citizenship

We have so many blessings as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. As we understand these blessings, it will change our lives and bring us great joy.

When anyone becomes a Christian by believing in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, they become citizens of heaven.

It is a wonderful thing to think that we are now citizens of a place that we will one day go to for eternity.

Philippians 3:20-21 But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. 21 He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

As a citizen of a country, you have an identity. When people ask you, “Where are you from?” you could respond, I am a Mozambican (if that is your country). And as a Mozambican, you have privileges. If you are over 18 years old, you can vote, chose your own religion, and express yourself with your own opinions. While you are citizens of Mozambique, you are also citizens of heaven. Your citizenship in heaven is different from your citizenship in Mozambique. It continues even after you die. It is your identity. We can now say, “I am a follower of Jesus” or “I am a Christian.” It has rights and privileges. We are also given over 7,000 promises! One of these is that we will one day receive a glorious, eternal new body.

Philippians 3:20, “He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.”

1 Corinthians 15:43 Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. 44a They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies.

As citizens of heaven, we are called to be different from the rest of the world. You are members of God’s household.

Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household,

We were born again into a new family and a new heavenly kingdom.

John 3:3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

B. Lies vs. Truth

Lie: We are only citizens of earth and that is all we should think about.

Truth: *Philippians 3:20, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

C. Scriptures to Meditate On

Philippians 3:20-21 But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. 21 He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

1 Corinthians 15:43 Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. 44a They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies.

Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,

D. Conclusion / Application

Conclusion:

We are not living for this world. We are citizens of heaven.

Application:

Let joy and hope fill your heart as you dwell on the truth of your heavenly citizenship.

1. What eternal privileges can you think of that come with being a citizen of heaven?
2. What is your new identity as a citizen of heaven?
3. How should being a citizen of heaven change the way we live and act here on earth?

Lesson 10: Seated in Heavenly Places

A. What does God Say?

God says we as believers are now seated in the heavenly realm.

Ephesians 2: 4-7 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

God is rich in mercy and love. He made us alive with Christ and raised us up with Him to be seated in the heavenly realm!

We are seated with Jesus. That is our position. As Christians, we sometimes do not understand how blessed we are in our new position.

Paul prayed for the church that they would have eyes to see what a glorious inheritance they have as Christians.

Ephesians 1:18-21 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Jesus is seated next to God in heaven. He is seated far above all rule and authority, power and dominion. And we are already seated with Him! This is not just something we will experience in the future. This verse describes something that has already happened in our lives as believers.

Ephesians 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

To be seated in heaven with Jesus means that we sit in a place of authority, honor, and triumph.

God wants us to know that we are seated in the realm of heaven, and we share in His victory over Satan. We are triumphant with Christ!

B. Lies vs. Truth

Lie: You are nothing.

Truth: *Ephesians 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.*

Lie: You have **no** power or authority to pray for anything.

Truth: *Ephesians 1:18-21 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*

Lie: You will **never** have victory. You are already defeated.

Truth: *1 Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Deuteronomy 20:4 "For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

1 John 5:4 *“for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”*

Lie: *You have no power over demons*

Truth: *James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

1 John 4:4 ...the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

C. Conclusion and Application

Conclusion

We don't have to work to be seated with Christ, far above all principalities and powers. We are **already** victorious in Christ. We are **already** seated with Christ. We are **already** citizens of heaven.

Application

Ask God to help you comprehend these amazing privileges we have as Christians. Let us rejoice and be thankful for this victorious heavenly position we have in Christ!

D. Discussion Questions

1. How does being seated with Jesus in heavenly places show God's love and mercy for you?
2. If you are seated in heavenly places with Jesus, how does that empower you to live with faith and confidence when you see evil around you or have personal problems?
3. How can knowing we are seated in heavenly places change the way we think?
4. How does it affect the way we pray?

Lesson 11: God is Your Father

In this lesson we will see that God does not just want us to do religious things. He wants to be our Father. He also wants us to always remember that we are His children.

A. Pray to God as “Our Father”

Matthew 6:7 When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father

knows what you need before you ask him. 9 “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...’”

If God is our Father, then this knowledge should transform how we live, pray, and serve. Jesus knew the Father’s love better than anyone, and His desire was to reveal God’s love to all of God’s sons and daughters.

B. A Story that Reveals God’s Love as a Father

We can see very clearly God’s love towards us in the story of the son who wasted all his inheritance on prostitutes and wild living.

Luke 15:11-32 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate. ’So he divided his property between them.

13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants. ’ 20 So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. ’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. ’So they began to celebrate.

25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother has come, ’he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound. ’

28 “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

31 *“My son, the father said, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.*
32 *But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is*
alive again; he was lost and is found.”

Notice what the Father did. It seems that the Father was watching for the son and saw him coming even from a long distance. Filled with love and compassion, he runs to him and throws His arms around him.

To the jealous older brother, he says, “You are always with me, and everything I have is yours.”

What does this story mean to us? Who is this older son? Who is the prodigal son?

The older son is anyone who has NOT turned from God but instead is chasing after all the sins of this world. The prodigal son is anyone who returns to the Father.

- Every single Christian has the same Father.
- Every single Christian is the prodigal son and the older son.
- If you have turned to God, you are the one He runs to. You are the one He puts His arms around.
- You are the one whom God is always with.
- Everything is yours!

Too many Christians believe that God is disappointed with them, that they are not good enough.

They cannot picture God the Father running to them and putting His arms around them, giving them clothing, a ring, sandals, and a party.

How does God feel about you? He loves you like a Father, a groom, and a friend. Does God have happy feelings about you? Yes! You are his beloved!

Rather than being filled with joy, often Christians are unhappy. They feel like they must try harder and do more for God. They do not rest in what God has done for them by sending His Son to die on the cross for their sins. Our Christian life is not about continually doing more and trying harder.

Too many pastors, rather than teaching about love and grace, teach about how much more believers have to do to please God. Here in the Bible we see that the Father was filled with compassion. He ran to His son, threw His arms around him, and kissed him.

This is the kind of love that God has for His children.

Without doing anything except returning to his father, the prodigal son received the best robe. The father put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. He celebrated

with as many people as He could, throwing a big party. The Lord tells us that this party is a picture of how the angels in heaven rejoice every time one sinner turns to God. (Luke 15:10)

Notice the care and love of the Father as he gives gifts to His son. His son did not earn these things. In fact, His son had lived a horrible sinful life. But he turned from his sins and returned to his Father.

The Father was filled with joy that His child was safe. His child was lost and now was found; he was dead, but now lives. The Father announces, “let us feast and celebrate!”

The older brother is also loved by the Father. Anger filled the older brother’s heart as he saw the Father forgive his younger brother and insist on celebrating his return with a huge celebration, which he didn’t earn. But the father replied, “*you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and now is found.*” (Luke 15:32)

God loves His sons and daughters, whether they are returning from a life of sin or have never left the Father’s side. “You are always with Me,” he reminds the older son. “We will always be together and everything I have is yours.” What a loving, generous Father we have.

The Bible says that we are heirs of all things. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

Romans 8:17 *Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

The Father loves you, desiring to bless and embrace you. This is His heart.

He does not just love us when we first turn to Him. He loves us with an everlasting love.

God does not just love us when we are “good enough.” He loves us all the time.

Psalms 103:17 *But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children,*

God wants to be near to us and does not want us to turn away from Him.

James 4:8 *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.*

C. Truth vs. Lies

Lie: Christianity is all about human beings and what they can do for God.

Truth: Christianity is a relationship with the Father. This love relationship with the Father is available to everyone on earth because Jesus died on the cross for their sins.

Lie: You can only be accepted if you work hard and try your best to be good enough.

Truth: *Titus 3:5-7* 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

D. Conclusion / Application

Conclusion

The love of God is seen in the story of the Prodigal Son. Believers all fall into the category of either the older son or the younger son, both of whom the Father loves dearly.

Application:

If God is our Father and loves us this much, then this knowledge should transform how we live, pray, and serve. We do not do things for God in order to earn his love. We serve Him because we are generously loved and give out of this overflow. Take time to meditate on these truths and rest in His powerful, transformative love.

E. Discussion Questions

1. How does the story of the prodigal son show us God's character of unconditional love and forgiveness?
2. Why do you think Jesus taught us to pray to God as "Our Father"? How does this help us feel close to Him as His children?
3. How does knowing that God loves us all the time—whether we are like the younger or older son—change the way we live and pray?

Lesson 12: [A Close Relationship](#)

In the last lesson we learned how God loves us like a parent with his child - unconditional love. This love relationship that God desires with us is now further explained in terms of friendship and marriage.

A. Jesus Calls us Friends

John 15:15 *“I have called you friends.”*

You were created by Jesus to be His friend. Jesus does not just want you to read about Him or study about what He is like. He wants you to know Him and experience His friendship.

We are told to believe in Jesus as our Savior, who is our King and our God. But He wants us also to be His friend. What does it mean for Jesus to be our friend? How do we experience this friendship?

On the night before he was betrayed and taken to the cross, Jesus said to His disciples, “I no longer call you servants, but friends.”

John 15:15, *“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”*

This is an amazing privilege!

Jesus said, I call you friends because *“everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”* Jesus proves this friendship by laying down His life for them.

John 15:4, *“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”*

Jesus laid down His life for us on the cross because He loves us and wants to be our friends. This is the ultimate sign of love and friendship. This is the gospel - that Jesus gave His life for us.

This is an amazing truth - because of grace, Jesus, the creator of all things and the King of kings becomes our friend!

Friends want to spend time with each other. In Revelation 3:20 we read, *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”*

Jesus is standing at the door of our hearts and knocking. He is asking us to open the door and have a relationship with Him. Having a meal together in Jesus’ day was the sign of friendship. It was a way for two people to get to know each other.

We know Jesus wants our friendship with Him to grow, but how does this happen? Relationships grow through conversation. As we read His word, we hear Him speak to us. As we pray, we talk with Him. Throughout the day we should thank him, share what we are going through, tell Him our disappointments and troubles.... We are not talking as servants, but relating to Jesus as a friend.

Of course, our Friend is infinitely wiser than we are. We would be foolish not to listen to everything He tells us. Obeying and honoring Him actually strengthens our friendship.

Four truths about our friendship with God:

- Jesus chose us as friends.
- Jesus died for us as friends.
- We are called to trust Him as our friend.
- We will remain in this friendship relationship for all eternity.

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, no crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

B. Jesus Calls us His Bride

The Church is made up of everyone who has saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. She is called the Bride of Christ.

Revelation 19:7-9 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

In Revelation Jesus is called the Lamb. He is called, “*the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world* (Revelation 13:8).”

We are the Bride, dressed in fine linen, bright and pure.

Here on earth, we as Christians are preparing ourselves for the appearing of the bridegroom. When He arrives, we will all attend the “marriage supper of the Lamb.”

Because we have this special relationship with God, we are told to “rejoice and exult and give him glory.”

- We are not strangers to God
- We are not far away from the Lord
- We are blessed
- We have been invited to the celebration of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

God created us to have a close relationship with Him. James 4:8, “*Come near to God and he will come near to you.*”

C. Conclusion and Application

Conclusion:

The three most important and closest relationships we have as human beings are parents and children (see previous chapter), friendship, and marriage. God uses all three to show how close and important our relationship with Him is.

He loves us like a friend, husband, and parent. Christianity is about believers having a heart felt love relationship with this amazing God.

Application:

Since God desires such a close relationship with us, it makes sense that we would think about who He is. Here are a few of His characteristics and promises to meditate on:

- God is omniscient (all knowing),
- God is omnipresent (present everywhere at the same time)
- God is omnipotent (all powerful)
- He promises to never leave us or forsake us. *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6)*
- *1 Peter 5:7, “Cast all your anxiety on Him, for He cares about you.”*
- *“The LORD is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth” Psalm 145:18.*

Thank Him for who He is and this wonderful relationship you can now have with Him.

D. Discussion Questions:

1. How does it make you feel when Jesus calls you his friend?
2. What are some ways you can nurture this friendship?
3. As a Christian, how does it make you feel to be called Christ’s bride? How does this reflect the depth of Christ’s love and the special relationship He desires with believers?
4. What new things have you learned about God’s character?