James, the Lord’s Brother

Surveying the Source
Mark 3:13–18; 6:1–3; Acts 1:12–14; James 1:1, 22.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand the clear connection between beliefs and lifestyle.
► Strive to find ways to make faith practical.
► Come to know that without full submission to Christ, a person cannot be a Christian.

Preparing to Lead
Say: “Talking like a Christian is easy. However, living like one is the only real proof that we truly know Christ.
“If we are honest, we will admit that often times our lives don’t line up with what we say we believe. We have a high religious IQ, but we have allowed worldly influences to shape our daily choices.

“However, in James 1:22, James urges us to walk the talk. Throughout his letter, he shows us three things: (1) that Christianity isn’t just another appealing world philosophy, (2) that Christ has the power to change our lives, and (3) we can stand as evidence of that power.”

Getting Started
A. Divide your class into groups of three or four. Have each group read James 1:2–18 and make a list of the practical advise found in these verses.
Then have them discuss how they can use that advise in their daily lives.
Allow time for each group to report back to the rest of the class.
B. Have the words of Acts 1:12–14 written on the chalkboard. Ask someone to read it out loud, or have the entire group read it out loud in unison.
Ask: ● “What do we learn about James from these verses?” ● “How can we apply what we’ve learned to our own lives?” Urge the group to give real-life examples.
After the discussion, stress that James is a how-to book in which he helps us to understand that our commitment to love and to serve others is evidence of the faith we have in Christ, whose life sets the example.

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class into small groups. Allow each group to use a concordance to discover what the Bible says about the following: sexual immorality, gossip, trials, prayer, doing good.

When each group is finished, have them share their findings with the rest of the class. Allow time for the class to discuss to each groups findings.
B. Make copies of the reproducible

Materials
Bible concordances; paper; pens or pencils; whiteboard, chalkboard, or flip chart, and appropriate markers
activity “Living What I Believe” for each student (p. 31). When the students are finished, have them share and discuss their various responses.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Based on what we’ve learned this week, in what ways should our spiritual life be connected to the rest of our lives?
2. How can we resist the devil?
3. Why do we need specific instructions on how to live like a Christian? Why isn’t loving Jesus enough?
4. As Christians, what should be the motivation behind everything we do?
5. How do you know if your faith is alive?
7. How can the book of James keep us from being hypocrites?
8. Consider your circle of friends either in school or in church. What problems are you facing as a group? If even just one or two of you followed James’s advice, how could these problems be solved?

**Closing the Activity**

Challenge the students to find one biblical command for each week left in the quarter that reflects the sentiments found in James.

Invite them to prayerfully ask God to help them live out each command during that week. Suggest that they keep a journal or a blog about their experience.

_Sandra Araújo-Delgado, Apison, Tennessee, U.S.A._
The following verses are commands found in the Bible.
Under each verse, explain how you can apply that verse to your life.

| “Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:13, NIV). | “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Phil. 4:8, NIV). | “Always [give] thanks to God the Father for every-thing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20, NIV). | “Do not let any un-wholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is help-ful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. . . . But among you there must not be . . . obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving” (Eph. 4:29; 5:3, 4, NIV). | “The entire law is summed up in a single command. Love your neighbor as your-self” (Gal. 5:14, NIV). |
The Perfecting of Our Faith

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
➤ Have a greater understanding of how difficult situations in life will either lead us to have more faith or more doubt.
➤ Be able to recognize specific events in their lives as opportunities God is allowing for building up their faith.
➤ Be able to better articulate the connections and differences between faith, wisdom, trials, and temptations.

Preparing to Lead
We have all wondered at one time or another why God allowed a particular bad event to happen. The lesson this week is about perspective. Faith is forgetting about our small, selfish views of things in order to see a small piece of what God is doing. And then, even though we only have a small piece, we still choose to believe and to follow Him with every fiber of our being.

Consider the verse, “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” (Rom. 8:28, NIV). What are the practical implications of this text in the framework of this week’s lesson?

Getting Started
A. Request that the students share one or two stories of contemporary Christians who have had extraordinary faith. Some examples may include George Müller, the Christian director of the Ashley Down Orphanage in Bristol, England, who decided he would not ask donors for money. Instead, he and his staff spent hours in prayer for what they needed and trusted that God would arrange for their necessities. His autobiography tells countless stories of God providing exactly what they needed at just the right time.

B. Ask: ●“If you were president of your country, what would you do with your leadership power?” ●“Would you stop bad things from happening?” ●“Would you try to give people good things after something bad happened to them?” Have someone read Philippians 4:6. Say: “We all would be benevolent leaders, trying to give everyone good things. How much more does God want to give us good things? He especially wants to give us the best gift possible—a closer relationship with Him.”

Delving Into the Word
A. As a class, list all of the Bible verses from the lesson that focus on God’s character and what He does. Make another list of Bible verses from the lesson that...
focus on what we do and our character (Job 23:10; James 1:2–8, 19–22; 2:15–17; 3:13; Heb. 11:1; 12:2; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7; Phil. 4:6, 7; 1 John 5:4).

Using a Bible concordance and/or a Bible with cross references, add additional verses about faith to your list. Are there some verses that appear in both columns? Which is more important: what God does, or what we do? God always does what He says He is going to do, but what if we don’t have faith? What else do you discover as you make these lists?

B. Distribute copies of the reproducible activity (p. 32). In several small groups (2–4 people per group), read

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Is doubt ever a good thing? Why or why not?
2. What is the difference between a trial and a temptation? Can both be present in a particular situation?
3. When in the midst of a difficult situation, what can we do to develop faith, not doubt?
4. How are faith and patience connected? Must you have patience to have faith? Must you have faith to have patience?
5. Thursday’s lesson has the following statement: “God is more interested in changing our character than in changing our circumstances.” In our prayers, do we focus more on asking God to change our circumstances or our characters? Why?
6. If you have a non-Christian friend who asks how you stay positive when bad things happen to you, what do you say? (Remember, the simpler the answer, the more you will probably be able to keep this person’s attention.)
7. How are wisdom and faith connected? What about knowledge and faith? Are there any things you have to have before you can have faith, or does it stand alone?
8. What are you going to do differently this week because of a thought God impressed you with as you studied this lesson?

**Closing the Activity**

Say: “We all have opportunities to build faith. Think about the challenges you are facing right now. Let’s pray for each other today and for the rest of the week that God will help us develop more faith and a closer walk with Him.”

Have everyone divide into prayer groups of two or three. Give everyone time to pray for each other and then close with a prayer all together.

Christy Gussie, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.
2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many 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.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.
Enduring Temptation

Surveying the Source
James 1:2–18, 21; 4:7; 1 Cor. 10:13.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand the main forms of temptation (body, soul, spirit).
► Accept God’s provision against temptation and sin.
► Develop practical strategies for enduring and resisting temptation.

Preparing to Lead
Think back through your week. Were you tempted to quit your job, yell at your boss, honk at a reckless motorist, be stressed over a strained relationship, eat too much, have that double chocolate brownie? Most likely you experienced some type of temptation.

As an earliteen, I would often keep track of my “sins,” trying hard to have a sin-free week. Only as I matured did I realize that my pride at accomplishing my goal was a sin and that even if I did have a “sin-free” week, I still needed a Savior. I needed the mind of Jesus to be in my mind. Only through His saving grace can any of us be sin-free.

Getting Started

A. Prior to class, make three posters. Label one poster “Body (Rom. 12:1),” another poster “Soul (Rom. 12:2),” and the third one “Spirit (Rom. 12:3).” Ask the students to place a temptation under each category, for example, sugary desserts, movies, pride.

Some categories will overlap. For example, thrill seekers experience both a physiological and psychological response.

Conclude the exercise by reading Genesis 1–5 and naming the three main categories of temptation that Eve faced.

B. Play the game “Yield Not to Temptation.” Begin by asking all the students to resist the temptation to laugh. Choose one student to be the “tempter.” The other students are to refrain from laughing. The “tempter” may laugh or make faces. At some point, the “tempter” passes off his/her role to another student by pretending to shove the expression from his/her face toward the other student. Now that student becomes the tempter and the previous tempter may not laugh. Students who have refrained from laughing or smiling have “resisted temptation,” while those who laughed or smiled have “succumbed to temptation.”

Delving Into the Word

A. Divide the class into three groups. Give each group one temptation category (body, soul, spirit). Students are to find biblical examples of each type of temptation.
prayer’ and they ‘shrink, shrink, shrink.’

“It’s such a simple, yet profound concept. Let’s pledge to read our Bibles and pray every day, even throughout the day as our stress levels elevate.

“Please come back next week prepared to share some of the victories you experienced.”

Think back to your childhood and some of the songs that shaped your beliefs about sin and temptation:

‘“Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin...” or the song ‘Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day.’ In this song, the children grow and stretch as they sing the words, but then they ‘forget to read and pray’ and they ‘shrink, shrink, shrink.’

“It’s such a simple, yet profound concept. Let’s pledge to read our Bibles and pray every day, even throughout the day as our stress levels elevate.

“Please come back next week prepared to share some of the victories you experienced.”

Rose Gamblin, Smithsburg, Maryland, U.S.A.

1. This week we’ve been studying about enduring temptation. How is it possible to be more proactive than what the word “endure” suggests?

2. What is the difference between “enduring” temptation and “entering” into temptation?

3. Do you think God holds us accountable for an addiction/sin that someone else leads us into? Why or why not?

4. Are there degrees of sin? For example, which would you choose—a gluten-free church or a gossip-free church?

5. Is it possible to focus too much on the sin and forget the Savior? How?

6. What does it mean “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23, NIV)?

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ARM YOURSELF AGAINST TEMPTATION

Directions: After reading each text, give a name to each strategy for fighting temptation.

Strategy #1 Title: __________________________________________________________
Scriptures: James 1:15; 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5

Strategy #2 Title: __________________________________________________________
Scriptures: Matthew 26:41; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:16

Strategy #3 Title: __________________________________________________________
Scriptures: Ephesians 2:19–22; 4:25; James 5:16

Strategy #4 Title: __________________________________________________________
Scriptures: Matthew 8:21, 22

Strategy #5 Title: __________________________________________________________
Scriptures: Matthew 6:12, 13
Lesson 4/October 18‒24, 2014

Being and Doing

Surveying the Source
Mic. 6:8; John 13:18‒35; Rom. 12:9‒21; 1 Cor. 12:13; James 1:22‒25.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Discover the all encompassing principle of love as revealed in God’s law.
► Explore the relationships between love, actions, faith, and obedience.
► Understand how our faith grows through obedience.

Preparing to Lead
This week’s lesson grapples with what it means to be a doer of the Word. Are we suddenly expected to know every detail in the Bible and strive to live perfectly? Yes and no, because we are supposed to study God’s Word carefully. However, the way to abundant life is through faith in Jesus, not through a personal battle for perfection. The Bible helps us to get to know Jesus, because every story, verse, and promise points to Him and His plan to save us.
To know Jesus is to love Him. To love Jesus is to obey Him.

Getting Started
A. Play the song, “Heart of Worship” by Matt Redman, which is available on YouTube or a CD from your local Christian book store.
Ask: “How do you avoid simply ‘going through the motions’ when you are worshipping God—either publicly at church or privately in your home?”
Read Romans 12:9–21 and James 1:26, 27. Then discuss the characteristics God is looking for in His followers. Discuss the kind, loving, compassionate actions of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels.

B. Bring enough donuts or bagels with cream cheese for each person in your class to have at least one. Begin by discussing where you got them. Then describe everything you can think of about them—how many bagels/donuts, their colors, flavors, sizes, ingredients.
Ask the students to remember the last time they ate a donut or bagel and how it tasted. Read James 1:22. Then discuss how talking about the food without eating it is like hearing God’s Word but not doing it.
Read Jeremiah 15:16 and discuss how we can actively live a joyful Christian life. Then serve the donuts or bagels.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “In Romans 10:17, Paul writes about how our faith grows when we hear (or read) the Word of God. Faith is not just a feeling, but it must always lead to action. For example, when a young man and woman begin to explore...
Stories of faithful people, verses filled with promises and instruction, and the actual words of Jesus Christ explain every aspect of God’s plan for us. Sometimes we can get a little tangled up in the details, but if we take a deep breath and focus, we find it’s really all about love.”

Give everyone a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 34). Allow ten minutes to complete it. Then ask volunteers to share something they learned. Read Matthew 22:37–40.

Say: “The concepts of receiving salvation through Christ and living a Christian life are presented in deep, soul-stirring detail throughout the entire Bible. When we read the Bible, our faith grows and our love for God grows. Likewise, the Word nourishes us and helps us to be renewed daily.” Have students take turns reading Job 23:12, Romans 12:2, and 2 Corinthians 4:16. Then say: “The words in the Bible give us wisdom and power to overcome the temptations of the devil.” Read and discuss Psalm 119:11 and Luke 4:1–14. Say: “Not only can we resist Satan’s attacks, but the Bible shows us how to love others.”

Read Matthew 22:36–40. Explore the relationships between faith, obedience, love, and actions. Use a flip chart or whiteboard to draw an “idea cloud” with arrows depicting the relationship between these concepts. Write notes along the arrows to describe their interdependency. Some arrows may crisscross. Once you draw and discuss these concepts, draw three or four arrows pointing down from the “cloud” and list words describing the results that take place when we remain in a close relationship with the Lord. Read Acts 2:42–47 and Galatians 5:22, 23.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why is true obedience impossible without love?
2. How do faith and love produce beneficial actions?
3. What does Jesus mean when He says, “‘If you love Me, keep My commandments’” (John 14:15, NKJV)?
4. What happens to our heart when we only hear God’s Word but we do not follow through with actions?
5. Why is the process of eating and digesting food a good illustration of what happens when we read God’s Word and do what it says?
6. Why is love so important in the plan of salvation?
7. How is love revealed in the Ten Commandments?

**Closing the Activity**

Give everyone a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 34). Allow ten minutes to complete it. Then ask volunteers to share something they learned. Read Matthew 22:37–40. Say: “The concepts of receiving salvation through Christ and living a Christian life are presented in deep, soul-stirring detail throughout the entire Bible. Stories of faithful people, verses filled with promises and instruction, and the actual words of Jesus Christ explain every aspect of God’s plan for us. Sometimes we can get a little tangled up in the details, but if we take a deep breath and focus, we find it’s really all about love.”

Debbie Battin Sasser, Friendswood, Texas, U.S.A.

* www.merriam-webster.com, s.v. “Courtship.”
Explore faith and love exhibited through obedience and Christ-like actions. Read the following Bible verses. Think about them. Then write ways Jesus showed these characteristics and what you plan to do to show each one this week.

**How Jesus showed love and care:**

Matthew 14:14

Matthew 15:32–38

Mark 6:34

Mark 8:2–8

John 11:35

John 13:34

John 15:9

John 1:25

1 John 3:16

**How I will be loving and caring this week:**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Love and the Law

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:

➢ Think about how they view their friends’ spirituality and if they are obeying God’s law the way He would want them to.
➢ Discover how to go from reading the Scriptures to doing something with what they teach us so that they become more caring and merciful.
➢ Explore to Whom we must first show honor in order for God’s law to shine through in our lives.

Preparing to Lead

The lesson this week explains the connection between God’s law, mercy, and love, and reveals how His lordship manifests itself in us.

Consider which comes first: our best accomplishments or Christ’s accomplishments in us. Obedience and loving others comes when we humble ourselves at Jesus’ feet. But this isn’t easy. Matthew 26:41 tells us that the “‘spirit is willing, but the body is weak’” (NIV).

However, when we put God first, we see His promises fulfilled, including His promise to give us a pure heart and the fruit of the Spirit.

Getting Started

A. God’s love instructs us. To illustrate that, announce that you are welcoming a guest to class and that you want the room prepared for him or her in the best way possible.

Give no further instructions. After letting the students hash out a solution, begin “inspecting” the results. Show your disapproval.

Tell them, for example, that the flooring contractor is coming and the room is not properly arranged for him to pull up all the carpet or hardwood.

Transition into discussing their ability to minister to others when they haven’t gotten any counsel from their Boss—Jesus Christ.

B. Show two pictures, the first a tired, dirt-stained man with a downcast expression. The second, a clean, casually dressed man welcoming an ecstatic dog.

Ask which man they would expect to attract the dog. Obviously, it should be the second man.

Explain that the second man has just had a miserable fight with his wife in which he is 85 per cent to blame, while the first man has just finished installing a friend’s septic tank free of charge. Yet it’s the second man the dog is approaching ecstatically.

Transition into a discussion about God’s blessings coming not because of our righteousness but because of His grace.
Delving Into the Word

A. Have class members share in the reading of James 2:1–13. Then, write the word “Motive” in the middle of a whiteboard, chalkboard, or flipchart. Distribute markers and have the students write words around the word “Motive” that describe the reasons James might have had for referring to the believers as sinners.

Ask: “Did they have something to gain or to lose, such as money, power, prestige, or pride?” Remember that these people aren’t the Pharisees, so within this group there was a mixture of wealth levels and status that likely tended toward the middle or working class. Discuss why they had forgotten their own adversarial relationship with the wealthy (verses 6, 7.) Ask: “Why were the people so quick to jump when the wealthy said jump when they had little to gain from it before?” Discuss how these believers were treating the poor the same ways they were treated by the Pharisees.

Have class members share in the reading of verses 8–11. Ask: “What were the differences between the people’s sins of favoritism and the more serious sins of adultery and murder?” Have someone read verses 12 and 13. Ask: “Why is it that mercy triumphs over judgment?”

B. Discuss why it’s so easy to see the changes someone else should make. Ask: “Why is it so difficult to see what your own role is?” Then read Leviticus 19:17.

Ask: ● “How could you benefit yourself and your neighbor when you confront him or her?” ● “Why would you be avoiding sharing in his or her guilt?” ● “How can being healthy in how you understand yourself improve how you treat your neighbor?”

Say: “In Matthew 5:43–48, Jesus shows us how much more He loves us. Not only should we love our neighbor but now we also are to pray for our enemy.”

Ask: ● “How does this deepen our understanding of the way God loves us?”

● “In Mark 2:15–17, Jesus seems to be saying that the Pharisees are the righteous, or is He? What is He really saying here?” ● “Is there anyone Jesus did not come to call? Explain your answer.”

Discussing the Ideas

1. How does Jesus’ warning to the Pharisees in Luke 11:43 speak to us?

2. Can the law teach us about loving God and our neighbor, or is it merely a dry form of obeying God? Explain your answer.

3. Does Jesus change the requirements of the law or does He explain in word and deed the principles behind the law to show us how much God really loves us? Explain your answer.

4. How can we be more effective at showing love and mercy to others, and what do we need to do to get there?

5. What are some of the major obstacles we face that turn us from good Samaritans into callous Israelites skulking along the far side of the road?

Closing the Activity

Have class members do the reproducible activity (p. 35). Then discuss the reasons for the Lord’s blessings. Ask: “How can we remember not be like the Pharisees of Mark 2:17, whom Jesus called righteous?” Say: “Because they viewed themselves as righteous,’ the Pharisees weren’t on Jesus’ ‘list’ of people to be saved. The closer we get to Jesus, the more we become like Him. This is stated in both the Old and New Testaments’ commands to love your neighbor as yourself and to pray for your enemies. What a big change following these commands make in people’s lives!”

Jeremy Vetter, Moscow, Idaho, U.S.A.
Write three barriers that are preventing you from being a greater blessing in the lives of the people you encounter each day. Confess these barriers to God in your daily devotions through the coming week, and ask Him to help you to be more like Him in these areas.

Write down the results of your prayers and the subsequent situations the Lord puts you in this week to witness for Him. Remember to praise Him for the blessings He gives you, for the changes He makes in your life, and for the lives of those He touches through you!

Barrier 1 ________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
Barrier 2 ________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
Barrier 3 ________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

Results 1 _______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
Results 2 _______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
Results 3 _______________________________________________________________________
Faith That Works

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Determine the importance of both faith and works.
► Understand the correlation between faith and works.
► Realize some of the good works God has planned for them.

Preparing to Lead
Faith or works? We’re all familiar with the debate over which is more important. Even in biblical times, it was a hotly contested topic, which James and other apostles saw the need to address.

Nowadays, the pendulum can swing from one side to the other. One group thinks they don’t need to do anything to get into heaven except faith. The other side counters with the parable of the goats and the sheep (Matt. 25:31–46), and that the sheep were judged by what they did do and the goats were judged by what they did not do.

Who is right?

Getting Started
A. Read to your class the following quote by C. S. Lewis: “Regarding the debate about faith and works: It’s like asking which blade in a pair of scissors is most important.”

Then write the following statement on the chalk- or whiteboard/tablet, “Faith and works go together like...”

Have the class brainstorm different things that are symbolic of the correlation between faith and works. List these below the original statement. Some examples could be the wheels on a bicycle, food and water, or hydrogen and oxygen in water.

B. Have each class member make a statement about something they know or something they can do that other people may not know or may not be able to do. For example, “I can say the alphabet backwards in less than a minute” or “I know everyone’s birthday in this room.” That individual needs to then do or say their statement.

Ask: •“Did everyone believe right away that each person was speaking the truth?” •“What made them change their mind?” •“Did each class member’s work stem from their own faith?” •“If someone said they could do something, but didn’t do it, would others believe them? Explain your answer.”

Delving Into the Word
A. Which word order is more important: faith and works or works and faith? Hold court to find out. You will need three groups and one individual for...
this activity. The groups should be as fol-

1. Which is more important—faith or works? Why?
2. How is it that the majority of Chris-
tians consider one to be more important
than the other?
3. What is the correlation between faith
and works?
4. Why can’t faith and works be inde-
pendent of each other?
5. Is it easier to have faith or to do good
works? Why? How can you live out both
in your life?
6. Why are the individuals in Hebrews
11 included in that chapter?
7. What made their faith more im-
portant than the faith of other individu-
als?
8. Can anyone have that type of faith?
Explain why or why not?

Closing the Activity

Have a class member read Ephesians
2:10. Say: “God has already interwoven
throughout our lives the good works He
wants us to do. We’re made to do good
works!”

Hand out a piece of paper and a writing
utensil to each class member. Have them
write down some of the good works they
think God planned for them in the past
and some He may have for them right
now or in the future.

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Faith Producing Works

Look up the verses in the middle column describing the works produced from each person’s faith.

List that person’s works on the corresponding line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Works</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abel</td>
<td>Gen. 4:4</td>
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<td>Enoch</td>
<td>Gen. 5:24</td>
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<td>Noah</td>
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<td>Abraham</td>
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<td>Moses</td>
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Taming the Tongue

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Identify key biblical truths relating to taming our tongues and the words we use.
► Explore how our words affect people both mentally and spiritually.
► Reflect upon and respond to biblical texts that urge us to submit our minds and tongues to Christ’s power.

Preparing to Lead
Words. We use them continually to communicate with our outer world. We build, we destroy, we uplift, we inspire, we condemn, and we belittle with the words we use.
This week’s lesson reminds us of the power our words have when combined with the Holy Spirit’s leading. Jesus’ urges us to consider the eternal consequences of the words we use, for they reveal the condition of our hearts (Matt 12:33–37). May we daily submit to Christ’s leading for effective use of our tongues and words.

Getting Started
A. Divide the class in two to read and discuss the following texts and questions:
● In light of Matthew 12:33–37, why do you think Jesus was so concerned that His disciples recognize and harvest spiritual fruit?
● Read Psalm 19:14. What is significant about the psalmist’s desire for his words to be acceptable to God?
   Have the groups return and share their thoughts.

B. Write the words “The Tongue” in the middle of a flip chart. Then have the group brainstorm definitions, examples, feelings, and any ideas associated with the tongue. Try to elicit responses that deal with the church as a whole and with individual followers of Christ. (Have arrows pointing out from the middle).
   Have the group agree on the top four descriptions and share personal reflections on each.

Delving Into the Word
A. Choose eight students to each read aloud a verse from James 3:3–10. Then have the class discuss the following questions:
   ● “Why do you think James compares the tongue to bridle in the mouths of horses?”
   ● “Why do you think the tongue has so much control over our lives?”
   ● “Why do you think James compares the tongue to a fire and to a world of evil?”
   ● “In what ways do you think the tongue can ‘poison’ people and our relationships?”
   ● “In what ways could we be offering more praise to God in our daily lives?”
Revive the class and lead a discussion to help keep the minds of the young people focused. The Lord’s words in Matthew 19:28 are the foundation of our teaching today:

“…” Then Jesus took the twelve aside and began to say to them, “If anyone wants to be my follower, he must give up his own convenience and take up his cross and follow me.”

Discussing the Ideas

B. Divide the class into two groups. Have each group read their assigned text, discuss the following questions, and share their findings with the whole group.

Group 1—Philippians 4:8. ●How does this scripture point us to principles that could lead us to better control and handle our tongues? ●What everyday examples can you give of what it means to be noble, just, pure, and lovely? ●The text instructs us to “think on these things.” What does this imply about the relationship between our thoughts, the words we speak, and even how we speak?

Group 2—James 3:1–11. ●According to these verses, how important is it to control the tongue? ●Do you feel it is possible as the text suggests that if we could “bridle” or control our words, we in turn could control our entire life’s direction (the whole body)? Explain your views. ●Could the idea of controlling the tongue have a non-physical aspect such as what we say in letters or in social media such as Facebook or Twitter?

1. How certain do you feel that your non-Christian acquaintances would know your tongue/words are under the submission of our Lord Jesus?

2. What occasions can you think of during the past week when you blessed someone through the use of your controlled tongue?

3. What relationships are you currently in that require healing through the power of a Christ-submitted tongue? What words can you say that can begin the healing process?

4. Who in your life can help you to be accountable to your decision to control your tongue/words?

5. How much prayer and time in God’s Word would you need to set apart during a typical week that would give you sufficient strength to resist the temptation to hurt others with your tongue?

Closing the Activity

Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 37), and pens or pencils. Have class members individually complete the activity.

Then ask them to share their thoughts and observations on the need to keep their tongues under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Urge them to be accountable for how they will choose to use their tongues during the new week.

Close with prayer.

Jean-Pierre Martinez, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
SPEECH—ONE OF GOD’S GREAT GIFTS

Read Ellen White’s statement below.
Then answer the questions below it.

“Speech is one of the great gifts of God. It is the means by which the thoughts of the heart are communicated. It is with the tongue that we offer prayer and praise to God. With the tongue we convince and persuade. With the tongue we comfort and bless, soothing the bruised, wounded soul. With the tongue we may make known the wonders of the grace of God. With the tongue also we may utter perverse things, speaking words that sting like an adder.

“The tongue is a little member, but the words it frames have great power. The Lord declares, ‘The tongue can no man tame.’ It has set nation against nation, and has caused war and bloodshed. Words have kindled fires that have been hard to quench. They have also brought joy and gladness to many hearts. And when words are spoken because God says, ‘Speak unto them My words,’ they often cause sorrow unto repentance.”—The Voice in Speech and Song, p. 18.

What stands out to you from Ellen White’s words of caution?

Why do you think Ellen White describes speech as “one of the great gifts of God”?

Reflect on an experience when you were bruised and wounded by someone’s words.

Reflect on an experience when you were blessed and healed by someone’s words.

Consider the words you use and the way you speak. What might you need to change in these areas by submitting to Christ’s power?
The Humility of Heavenly Wisdom

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course

The students will:
- Understand why humility before God is key to acquiring true wisdom.
- Know what heavenly wisdom looks like in daily life.
- Identify struggle-prone areas of life and how godly wisdom will help to solve those struggles.

Preparing to Lead

There is a funny meme that recounts the imagined thoughts of cats and dogs:

Dog: “You pet me, feed me, keep me safe, and love me. You must be God!”
Cat: “You pet me, feed me, keep me safe, and love me. I must be God!”

Self-centered human nature often has us saying “I” just like the cat. However, the humility of godly wisdom would have us look to Jesus. We should be humbled by His loving care toward us and daily seek His wisdom and guidance.

Getting Started

A. Go around the class (or choose 2 or 3 volunteers if your class is large) and ask people to briefly share a time when they felt wise or were perceived as wise. Did their perceptions of wisdom turn out to be valid? Read James 3:13–18, 4:1–3 aloud with the class. Does this change what is seen as wisdom? How would their responses be different in the same situation today?

B. Everyone has his or her own ideas of what wisdom looks like. Ask the class to think of the two wisest person they know, living or dead, one famous and one personally known. Then ask what makes those people wise.

Read James 3:13–18 aloud. Then have the students consider the people they think of as wise. Do they meet many or all of the characteristics listed? Then have them think about their own lives. Are they wise as a lifestyle or only at certain times?

What should we strive for in our own lives?

Delving Into the Word

A. Use a whiteboard (or paper and pen) to make a t-chart. Label one side “God’s Wisdom IS” and the other “God’s Wisdom ISN’T.”

Split the class into two, and have half the class take a side of the chart. Give them approximately three minutes to come up with as many verses for their side of the chart as possible.

When time is up, have each team read their verses. If applicable, explain why they feel the verses falls in that category.
Ask: •“What are some of things that the world considers ‘wise’?” •“Which category would each of these things fall under?” Write these onto the chart with a different color. Then have the class compare and contrast. Ask: •“Does the world’s view of wisdom more often fall under God’s definition or not?” •“What media stories have you recently heard that illustrate your point?”

Ask: •“Which category seems to support a happy, healthy life?” •“Why do we still sometimes feel that following God’s path of humility and wisdom is counterintuitive?”

B. Divide the class into two groups. Using the reproducible sheet (p. 38), challenge the students to put a word in each “step” that they think defines the steps needed to build humble, heavenly wisdom. Also have them include a key verse for each step. (For example: Study—2 Tim. 3:16; Prayer—James 1:5; Teachers—Ps. 37:30; Practice—Col. 4:5).

Set a time limit for this activity. Then ask: •“Did everyone come up with the same word or ideas?” •“Are all of them valid ways of increasing one’s spiritual wisdom-IQ? Explain why or why not?”

•“How does wisdom as described in the Bible improve our walk with God?” •“In 2 Chronicles 1:8–12, what spirit does Solomon demonstrate in asking only for wisdom?” •“What does this say about his spiritual maturity?” •“Consider the stories in 1 Kings 3:16–28 and 1 Kings 11:1–11 comparing Godly wisdom versus human desires in King Solomon’s life. What must we guard against when we seek to increase our wisdom, and why does wisdom not protect us from sin?”

Discussing the Ideas


2. Does having a humble wisdom mean not standing up for yourself or your beliefs? Explain your answer.

3. Is wisdom more an outward or inward characteristic? Explain your answer.

4. In what ways can godly wisdom reduce conflict?

5. In what areas of life should godly wisdom be most evident? Why is godly wisdom outwardly more obvious in some areas than in others?

6. Human nature runs counter to God’s perfect plan. What is His answer to our natural tendency to exalt self?

7. Will there ever be a situation you are wise enough to handle? Why/Why not? How does God work with us where we are?

8. God wants all of His children to grow in their walk with Him. What role does humility in wisdom play in this walk?

Closing the Activity

Give each student a piece of paper and a pen or pencil, and have each student write down one way he or she can foster true wisdom and a humble spirit in his or her life during the coming week.

On the other side of the paper, have each student write a verse about wisdom for encouragement.

Suggest placing the paper in their Bibles as a reminder during the week to prayerfully submit to God and His wisdom.

Amanda Ernst, Charlotte, North Carolina, U.S.A.
Directions: Put a word in each box that defines the steps to acquiring a humble, heavenly wisdom. Include a key verse for each idea.
One Lawgiver and Judge

Surveying the Source
1 Thess. 5:14; James 4:11; Rev. 12:10.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand and state the difference between discernment and judgment.
► Define a practical biblical way of dealing with the sin of others.
► Commit to building up the body of Christ and leaving the judging to God.

Preparing to Lead
Being a Christian requires us to understand and live according to closely related ideas that work together but may clash with each other when one idea is emphasized over others. None of these ideas has been more problematic than handling our judgments of others. Your teaching task is to help students use the Bible to distinguish between judgment and discernment and to learn how to apply what they’ve learned to real-life situations. They will be more helpful and less harmful when they know how to discern right from wrong and how to respond to others without appointing themselves as judge in place of God.

Getting Started
A. Give a red strip and a piece of tape to half the members of the class and have them tape to their clothing. Give a green strip and a piece of tape to the other half of the class to tape to their clothing. Then say that the people with a red strip are guilty people, the people with a green strip are innocent people, and that the innocent ones get to speak in judgment of the guilty ones.

After a bit of silence while that sinks in, say that the class will not actually engage in judgment. Then ask individuals to share their reaction to being publicly labeled guilty or innocent, and how they felt when you said that judgments would be pronounced.

B. Ask the students to share a time when someone judged them negatively, especially if it was unwarranted, but even if it was somewhat correct.

Ask: ● “If the judgment was unwarranted, how did you feel?” ● “How did you respond to the person judging you?” ● “How do you feel now?” ● “If the person judging you was at least partly correct in their assessment, how did that make it different?” ● “How did it make you feel to be publicly accused?” ● “Was it by a friend or someone else?” ● “How did it change the relationship?”

Say: “At the time someone makes a negative judgment, we typically react defensively, regardless of the truth or falsehood of the accusation. We want that person to handle us in a completely different way. Let’s consider what that different way might look like.”
Delving Into the Word

A. Have the class read James 4:11, 12 and answer these questions: ●“Does James mean we should never comment on another person, no matter what? Where do we draw the line?” ●“How is it that when we judge someone, we automatically speak ‘against the law?’” ●“Why is speaking against the law a problem?” ●“Is there ever a situation in which it is acceptable to pronounce a negative judgment on someone? Why, or why not? Give examples.” ●“What about verse 12 reminds you of Satan’s main problem?” ●“What trouble are you in if you have the same problem?” ●“How does this answer the question about whether it is ever acceptable to pass judgment on someone?” ●“In Luke 18:18–21, Jesus said to the rich ruler that he needed to know and follow the commandments. How would that bring discernment?” ●“What are the differences between discernment and judgment and when does discernment turn into judgment?”

B. Have someone read Matthew 7:1, 2. Then hold up the list of statements on the handout (p. 39). Read each of the statements. Ask: ●“Do you agree with these statements?” ●“Putting them together, what would you say or do about the following? (1) Someone in your church recommended a book on meditation to other church members, and the pastor did and said nothing in response. (2) You read a statement by your conference president that seems to promote the ordination of women. (3) You heard a church member harshly criticize your conference president for making a statement about the ordination of women. (4) You notice over time that a coworker wastes time but is not held accountable. Should you and would you remain silent in these situations? If not, who would you talk to and what would you say? What about your judgmental thoughts? Is it OK to judge someone in your mind and keep quiet?

Discussing the Ideas

1. What does it mean to pass judgment on someone? Is it different from observing? When do we cross the line into forbidden territory?
2. What obligation do we have when we are faced with obvious sin in others? How do we avoid judgment?
3. Are we stuck with a dilemma of seeming to approve of sin if we do not judge? If not, why not?
4. Have you ever been mistaken in your judgment of another person? If so, how did that go?
5. Think of the last time you judged someone. Can you honestly say that you knew all of the circumstances, thoughts, motives, and history in the case? Are you still sure you were right, even if you did not know all the details?
6. It’s been said that we sin the most when we’re right. How is that true?
7. What are the two main problems of judging others that we have identified in this lesson?

Closing the Activity

If you feel the class members would be comfortable, ask them to have a short “Alcoholics Anonymous” type of meeting. Each person says, “Hi, I’m [name], and I’m a sinner.” Everyone says, “Hi, [name].” The person continues, “I have been guilty of judging people by . . .” and give an example if they are willing.

Be sure to allow anyone to opt out who is not comfortable. At the end, ask whether anyone feels differently because they admitted the problem and whether it makes them want to change a part of their lives for the better in the future.

Tim Lale, Hagerstown, Maryland, U.S.A.
Every person is a sinner.

Every believer is a disciple maker.

We are encouraged to help carry the burdens of others.

We should be in the world but not of the world.

We will judge the wicked when we get to heaven.
Weep and Howl!

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Examine personal attitudes toward money and how it is used.
► Investigate scriptural models for using wealth in ways which honor God.
► Develop a personal plan for acquiring and distributing wealth.

Preparing to Lead
It has been said that the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, advocated earning, saving, and giving all you can. While the attribution may be apocryphal, the wisdom contained therein is priceless.

The Christian tradition is rooted in the creation narrative where man is described as the reflection of God’s image. Just as God was creative and productive, so we must be creative and productive. Thus we accrue wealth and material possessions.

Just as God shared His creative wealth with us, so we are to share our created wealth with others. We are God’s managers and stewards.

Getting Started
Using the activity sheet (p. 40), ask class members to list their top five goals for the next three years in the left hand column. Next, have them prioritize their goals by putting a number beside each goal in order of importance, with one being the most important and five being the least important.

After two or three minutes, ask them to estimate how much money it will take to realize those goals. They should list the estimated cost in the right hand column. Items may include getting married, having children, advancing their education, walking closer to God, getting a job, etc.

Next ask class members to list the top five injustices or problems in the world in the left hand column and have them prioritize these in order of importance, with one being the most important and five being the least. In the right hand column, they should right yes if money can somehow be used to alleviate the problem, or no if money cannot help. Each participant should be prepared to explain his or her yes or no response.

Delving Into the Word
A. On a whiteboard, write MONEY TALKS. Below this heading, list the following passages: Deut. 8:7‒19; Matt. 25:31‒45; Acts 3:2‒10; 5:1‒11; James 5:1‒12; and 1 Tim. 6:6‒11.

Divide the class into small groups, per-
Each group will read the same passages but address different questions based on those passages. Here are the group assignments. (Write each on a note card to give to each group): ●What does our attitude toward money say about our understanding of God as Creator? ●What does our attitude toward money say about our understanding of the plan of salvation? ●What does our attitude toward money say about our understanding of the church’s mission? ●What does our attitude toward money reveal about our personal spiritual commitment? ●How does our attitude toward money affect the Holy Spirit’s effectiveness in using us? ●How does our attitude toward money affect our preparation for Christ’s return?

After allowing time for the groups to read or review the biblical passages and to formulate their answers, bring them back together to share the insights they developed regarding their questions.

B. Write or project the words: PLASTIC SURGERY. Explain that this has nothing to do with facelifts, but has everything to do with cutting up Satan’s greed on the installment plan—credit cards. Then have the students share in the reading of the following passages: ●Deut. 8:7–19; ●Matt. 25:31–45; ●Acts 3:2–10; ●Acts 5:1–11; ●James 5:1–12; ●1 Tim. 6:6–11.

Discuss the impact that contentment and satisfaction with fewer material goods has on (a) our ability to provide for the education and nurture of future generations [even if we should have no children of our own], (b) our ability to support the mission of sharing the gospel, (c) our ability to meet the basic human needs of those less fortunate than we are.

Add Matthew 6:16–34 to the dialogue. Ask: ●“What is the difference between need and greed?” Make a list of essentials or needs. Ask: ●“How many of these essentials can money buy?”

Discuss the pitfalls of having too much money and the spiritual dilemma of having so much money that we ignore God.

Conclude by discussing practical things we can do to foster contentment within ourselves, thus releasing ourselves to invest in those things God deems most important.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. How can Christians cultivate contentment in a materialistic society?
2. How can Christians encourage and support one another to live more simply? How can financial honesty and integrity be an evangelistic tool to win the lost?
3. What steps should we take to trust God more completely for our needs?
4. What practical things could your church do to use its wealth to relieve human suffering?
5. How does greed contradict the Christian’s profession of salvation through Christ alone?

**Closing the Activity**

Distribute scissors and play money. Ask the students to cut off that portion of the money which belongs to God and should be returned to Him. Then ask them to cut off amounts for housing, food, personal development (like education), and entertainment.

Ask and say: “If the money were real, who would actually accept strips of cut up money for payment? Obviously, nobody would.

“All the money, not just tithe, belongs to God. When we stop trying to cut up our lives into this much for us and this much for Him, and give Him full control of our lives, we have a whole bill that makes an acceptable payment.”

Dan Solis, College Place, Washington, U.S.A.
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Getting Ready for the Harvest

Surveying the Source
James 5:7–12.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Learn about patience in the lives of Job and other biblical characters.
► Consider ideas about how to live while waiting for Christ to return.
► Reflect about how to be more patient in their own lives.

Preparing to Lead
This lesson opens with some reflections about events on October 22, 1844. From Ellen White’s biographical sketch, we read the following: “Those who sincerely love Jesus can appreciate the feelings of those who watched with the most intense longing for the coming of their Saviour. . . . The time when we hoped to meet Him was close at hand. We approached this hour with a calm solemnity. The true believers rested in a sweet communion with God. . . . None who experienced this hope and trust can ever forget those precious hours of waiting.”

Getting Started
A. Read the following to the class: “It is a fact that there was in those days a power in what was called Advent singing, such as was felt in no other.’ Then say: “So wrote James White in Life Incidents, his autobiography published in 1868.” Next, sing or read songs from the Early Advent section of the church hymnal. The song “Never Part Again” (no. 449 in the Adventist Hymnal) may have been used to close meetings. Ask the class to imagine what it must have been like on October 22, 1844, as the people gathered to sing, pray, and encourage each other. Would you wonder: “Will I ever meet my friends on earth again? Or will we next meet in heaven.”

B. Prepare 3x5 cards that lists events appropriate to your group, such as waiting at the airport for family or friends to arrive; waiting for a job interview; waiting for class/medical test results; etc. Ask a class member(s) to act out an incident, and then ask the group what was portrayed. If your group includes parents or soon-to-be parents, ask them to share their feelings while waiting for their newborn.

Say: “Dr. Seuss’s book Oh, the Places You’ll Go describes The Waiting Place as a most useless place. At times, that seems to be the truth. We’re all just waiting.”
Delving Into the Word

A. Have someone read Hebrews 12:1. 

**Say/ask:** “This week’s lesson focuses on waiting and patience. What examples in the Bible encourage us to be patient?”

James also mentions “the patience of Job.” Present a short overview of his life. Then divide your class into several groups. Give them Bibles and concordances.

Ask three of the groups to come up with a modern-day paraphrase of what might have happened in Job’s life.

Choose someone to play the part of Job, and ask one member in each of those groups to play the role of Job’s friends.

Ask the remaining groups to share encouragement from the Bible that would apply to Job’s situation. Compare the differences in the counsel of Job’s friends and that from the Bible.

Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 41) and suggest that each class member spend some time that afternoon thinking about areas of their lives in which they could become more patient with themselves and with others.

B. Say: “Throughout history, God’s people have been waiting—waiting for a Redeemer, waiting to enter the Promised Land, waiting for the Messiah, and since 1844, waiting for Christ’s return.

“We who have unlimited gifts of food, drink, leisure time, air conditioning, and heating often whine about delays in our lives that send us to Dr. Seuss’ Waiting Place.

“Yet somewhere a child waits for food and clean water from ADRA workers. A farmer or rancher waits for seed to grow for harvest. Families wait for sons and daughters to return from war.

“How then should we wait for Christ to return?”

Read and discuss the following verses:
- **Matt. 5:1‒12; 10:17; 25:31‒46; Gal. 5:22, 23; James 5:7‒12.**

**Say:** “Waiting is often inactive, but it doesn’t need to be.” Discuss one or two projects you can do to help others, either individually or as a group, during the week before Christmas.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What made Job’s patience unique? Do you know people who have that same depth of patience?
2. James 5:8, NKJV, encourages us to “establish” our hearts. How can you do that?
3. The prophets were “examples of suffering and of suffering and of patience” (James 5:10). Why is it necessary to first suffer before you can have patience? Explain your answer.
4. Why does God often ask us to wait for our prayers to be answered?
5. How do the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23) help you to become more patient?
6. What can you do to blend both patience and passion in your life?

Closing the Activity

**Say:** “This lesson encourages us to actively wait for Christ’s return by reaching out to others. Gloria Gaither’s powerful words, set to the tune of Sibelius’s “Finlandia,” is perhaps one of the most meaningful inspirations about how to spend our lives ‘waiting.’” Close by playing “I Shall Stand,” presented by the Gaither Vocal Band. It can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsq3aDNhZIQ.

Twyla Geraci, Belgrade, Montana, U.S.A.

* Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 51.
Becoming a Patient Person

“You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door” (James 5:8, 9 ESV).

List four or five things that make you impatient. Pray about each of them. Then write what you could do to change these situations. What Bible verses would help you with these problems?

I get impatient when: _____________________________________________________________
What I can do: __________________________________________________________________
Help from God’s Word: ___________________________________________________________

I get impatient when: _____________________________________________________________
What I can do: __________________________________________________________________
Help from God’s Word: ___________________________________________________________

I get impatient when: _____________________________________________________________
What I can do: __________________________________________________________________
Help from God’s Word: ___________________________________________________________

I get impatient when: _____________________________________________________________
What I can do: __________________________________________________________________
Help from God’s Word: ___________________________________________________________

I get impatient when: _____________________________________________________________
What I can do: __________________________________________________________________
Help from God’s Word: ___________________________________________________________
Prayer, Healing, and Restoration

Surveying the Source

1 Kings 18:30–46; Ps. 47:7; 66:18; Zech. 7:11; John 14:13; 1 Thess. 5:17; James 1:17; 5:13–19.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

➤ Recognize and discuss the different effects of prayer, specifically in regards to healing and restoration.
➤ Recognize and discuss the different ways in which God answers prayers for physical healing.

Preparation to Lead

“What many young people are looking for both spiritual and physical healing, and even though they have prayed earnestly, they have yet to see the results. However, we must understand that especially when praying for physical healing we must also pray for spiritual healing.

“The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and body. He needed health of soul and the body. He needed health of soul before he could appreciate health of body. Before the physical malady could be healed, Christ must bring relief to the mind, and cleanse the soul from sin.”

Materials

paper for taking notes; pens or pencils; whiteboard, chalkboard, or flip chart and appropriate markers

Getting Started

A. Open with prayer. Use this week’s reproducible activity (p. 42) to begin class. Have class members silently fill out their sheet. Then have them share their specific experiences with requests for physical healing. Focus specifically on the role that prayer played, as well as the spiritual condition of the person at the time. For experiences that are lacking prayer and/or a godly connection, ask members to discuss how adding that into the equation might have changed the outcome.

B. Open with prayer. Then read aloud this week’s verses found in the Logos section of the CQ Bible Study Guide. With each verse, have class participants take note of what can be learned regarding healing and restoration. Then have members share what they discovered. Write their answers on the whiteboard.

Delving Into the Word

A. Read aloud the story of the paralyzed man whom Jesus healed in Mark 2:1–12 and Luke 5:17–26, as well as a similar story in Matthew 9:1–8. Have the class discuss why it was that Jesus for-gave the man’s sins before He healed his physical ailments. Then read aloud James 5:13–19. Discuss what these verses tell
Discuss ways in which such restorations should impact each person’s daily lives. Focus on the role prayer plays in keeping us connected with God.

Close with prayer.

Have the students share ways in which they have seen God work to restore them in the past, be it physically or spiritually, because after all, we all have been saved, restored, and redeemed by Jesus on the cross.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Share an example of a time when God said “yes” to a prayer for physical healing. Explain what that taught you about Him and how it impacted your spiritual walk.

2. Share an example of a time when God said “no” to a prayer for physical healing. Explain what that taught you about Him and how that impacted your spiritual walk.

3. How have you seen physical ailments bring people to the Lord? How have you seen physical ailments separate people from the Lord? What do you think made these situations different from the situations that brought people to the Lord?

4. How has God’s willingness to spiritually restore you impacted your life?

5. If someone you knew was in the midst of a spiritual sickness, what steps could you take to help them, and why?

6. If someone you knew was in the midst of a physical sickness, what steps could you take to help them, and why?

7. In what ways can you evaluate your own spiritual health? If you find yourself in need of healing and restoration, what can you do?

Closing the Activity

Discuss ways in which such restorations should impact each person’s daily lives. Focus on the role prayer plays in keeping us connected with God.

Close with prayer.

Allison Sauceda, Centerville, Ohio, U.S.A.

Sometimes He Says “Yes.”

Sometimes He Says “No.”

While we know that God will always answer our prayers for restoration of the heart with a resounding “yes,” there are times when He answers our prayers for physical healing with a “no.” However, even in the dark hours of physical struggle or loss, God is there with us. He never abandons us, and He seeks to use the hard times to bring us closer to Him. In fact, these hard times often do more for our relationship with Him than the good times!

Reflect on different instances when you have prayed for physical healing and restoration, either for others or for yourself. Then reflect on how God used these experiences to help you grow.

Times when God has said “no” to your request for healing (for others or yourself).

Your reaction/what have you learned from the times He said “no?”
The Everlasting Gospel

Surveying the Source
John 17:3.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Know that God’s love for us is the ultimate example of love.
► Understand that we must be born again in order to be saved.

Preparation to Lead
Have you ever been lost without a map? Have you ever had to give someone CPR but didn’t know how? The Bible tells us that people who do not have a saving knowledge of God are doomed to perish. Hosea 4:6 says, “‘My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge’” (NIV). On the other hand, “whoever believes in him [Jesus] shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV). This is the good news. God loves us and wants us to know what we need to do to be with Him forever.

Getting Started
A. Bring a map to class. Divide the students into two or three teams. List two common places they are familiar with and have the teams race each other to find those places on the map.
In the first race, the “driver” will be blindfolded, and will “drive” with her/his index finger on the map, as his/her team guides the “driver” to the destination.
In the second race, the “driver” is not blindfolded and can see where the team is guiding him/her.
After the race, discuss the value of both good advice and bad advice on the “road of life.” Talk about the differences in being blindfolded and being able to see the map. Compare this with people who do and who do not know what the Bible says about salvation.
B. Bring a newspaper to class. Ahead of time, find one or two articles that discuss a loving relationship and one or two articles that show unloving relationships.
Ask the class to list the differences between these articles, and discuss the role that trust plays in a loving relationship.
Ask: “How can we discuss our faith and beliefs if we do not have people in our lives who trust us?”

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “This week’s lesson focuses on finding the way to a life in Christ through our relationship with Him, and how His example of love is an example we can trust.”

Ask the class members to make a list of Bible characters who have demonstrated that they have a knowledge of Christ but do not act accordingly. List Bible verses where the stories are found. Also list
Bible characters who have the knowledge of Christ and do act on that knowledge to serve others.

Ask: “What can we learn from this exercise that we can share with our friends and co-workers?”

Make cards in class with messages from this lesson that share the good news. For example, “Jesus loves you and wants to be with you forever.”

Imagine as a class that you are the last group of Christians on Earth. Discuss Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:3, 16, and John 8:32.

Focusing on the belief that salvation is a free gift from God, and that we are created to serve others (Eph. 2:8–10), have the class create an ad campaign for showing love to others and for sharing the good news that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Discuss how you could share the good news using various types of media. Ask: ●“Who is my audience?” ●“What do they know about Jesus Christ and His love?” ●“How does geography impact what people know about Christ?” ●“Why is it that many people believe they are already saved, or they don’t need saving?” ●“How will your ad campaign inform them of their need and of Jesus as the answer to that need?”

Encourage them to post their ad cam-

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. How would you explain the Bible as being a map to guide us to knowledge about Jesus’ life and death and what His life and death mean to us as we prepare to meet Him soon?

2. Ask each person to list three or four people with whom they will share the love of Jesus this week. Also have them list ten ways people can serve others, either individually or as a group.

3. How would you explain salvation by faith to someone who does not believe in God?

4. John 8:32 says, “You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free” (NIV). What truth is Jesus talking about? Explain it in your own words and share it with another person in the class.

5. This lesson talks about “being born again.” What does this mean to a non-believer? What is wrong with our old lives? What do we have to look forward to in a life with Jesus?

6. What information do we need to know to be able to share the good news with our friends, family, and neighbors?

**Closing the Activity**

Say: “If you were aware of an amazing sale, you would not hesitate to tell everyone you knew about it.”

Hand out the reproducible activity (p. 43), and give the class a few minutes to write down their answers. Time permitting, have a short discussion on their responses. Encourage class members to search the Bible for verses and stories that inspire them to share their faith with others throughout the coming weeks.

Choose a volunteer to close with prayer, asking God for strength to share the gospel.

**Stephanie Yamniuk, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada**
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer 1</th>
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<td>What are some of the factors that might stop someone from <strong>sharing</strong> the good news of salvation with their friends and family?</td>
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<td>What are some of the factors that would stop someone from <strong>hearing</strong> the good news of salvation?</td>
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<td>What does the Bible tell us that will help us <strong>not fear</strong> rejection or ridicule for our faith?</td>
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<td>What Bible verses <strong>support and encourage one another</strong> as we look forward to Jesus’ soon return?</td>
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