

There Is a Loving God

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There Is a Loving God

Lesson 1 – There Is a Loving God for People from All Nations

Opening Questions

1. What are some of your purposes in coming to America?
2. What are some of the things that you worry about in your life?
3. What would bring happiness into your life?

Introduction

Many international students and scholars come to America to prepare for their future lives and work in a global world. Nobody wants to be a failure. Everyone wants to be a successful person. However, there are many successful people who are unhappy. There are many wealthy people who are not satisfied with their wealth. Many people still look for meaning and happiness for their lives.

There are many things in this world that can cause us to worry. Students worry about their exams or research papers. Working people worry about their jobs and careers. Parents worry about their children. We worry about many things, including things that may not happen. We need *inner peace* in our hearts and minds that makes us calm and not worry about the situations in our lives and in this world. But who can give us peace that is not *temporary peace* but *permanent peace* in our hearts?



To think about:

- Will career success really give you meaning, significance, and happiness in your life? What is the real purpose of your life?
- What if there is a God who can give you permanent peace in your heart?



From the Bible

Psalm 67:1-7

¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, ² that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! ⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. ⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! ⁶ The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. ⁷ God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Discussion Questions

1. What does the writer hope that God will do (v.1)? Why (v.2)?
2. What does the writer hope to see in the nations of the world (v.3-7)?
3. If there is a God for people from all nations, what do you think that God should be like? Why?



Notes

Failure: lack of success.

Significance: the quality of being worthy of attention; importance.

Psalm: a religious song.

Gracious: very kind.

Make his face to shine upon us: asking God to be with us and to be pleased with us.

Peoples: people groups; people from all nations.

The earth has yielded its increase: many people from all nations will eventually know the true God, the Creator God who has created this world.

Acts 17:22-28

²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’ ...



Discussion Questions

1. How did Paul find that people of Athens were very religious (v.22-23)?
2. How did Paul describe God [the God of the Bible] (v.24-26)?
3. What did Paul recommend the people of Athens to do (v.27a)?
If there is a Creator God, how do you think He wants us to find Him or to learn about Him?
4. The Bible tells us that God reveals Himself to us through:
 - (1) nature
 - (2) our conscience — our awareness of what is right and what is wrong
 - (3) the Bible — the word of God
 - (4) Jesus Christ — a special revelationHow far is God from us (v.27-28)?

Lesson Summary

1. The Bible teaches that there is a God who has created this universe, our world, and everything in it, including us. The Creator God rules and guides the history of this world.
2. The Creator God is a loving God for people from all nations. He has given us our lives and many good things in this world.
3. God desires us to learn about Him and to have a loving and joyful relationship with Him. He also wants us to learn about His will for our lives.

Notes

Paul: a follower of Jesus Christ who went to many countries to teach people about Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.

In the midst of: in the middle of.

The Areopagus: a place in a hill where Athenians discuss and debate important matters.

Athens: the capital city of ancient Greece.

Altar: a structure where people can honor a deity (God).

The God who made the world and everything in it: Paul introduced God as the Creator God, who has created this world and everything in it, including us.

Lord: master; ruler.

Determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place: God is in control of all people’s lives—their times and dwelling places—in this world.

Seek: attempt to find.

There Is a Loving God

Lesson 2 – There Is a Loving God Who Is Our Heavenly Father

Opening Questions

1. What is one of the most memorable times you have had with your parents?
2. If your parents could have done a better job as parents for you, what is one or two things you wish they could have done for you?

Introduction

All children desire to have parents who love them greatly and who take care of them sacrificially. Many parents do raise their children sacrificially. Many parents work very hard to provide for their children. There are many nights when parents do not sleep enough because they care for their children. Children usually do not realize the love and care that their parents have given them during their childhood, but they gradually understand as they grow up.

Since there is no perfect person, there are no perfect parents. Parents make many mistakes. They learn to be better parents as they raise their children. Most of us wish that our parents could do a better job in some areas of their parenting. Some people wish that their parents would have: (a) helped them learn a musical instrument, (b) put them in a better school, (c) took them to visit another country, or (d) love them more.



To think about:

- What if there is a God, who is the perfect model for parents, and from whom all parents can learn to be better parents?
- What if there is a God, who is our perfect heavenly Father, and from whom we can receive the kind of perfect love and care that our earthly parents cannot give us?

From the Bible



Psalm 139:13-18

¹³ For you [God] formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸ If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the writer say about God (v.13-14)?
2. How does the writer describe in more detail about how God made him (v.15-16)?
3. How does the writer describe the wonder of God (v.17-18)?



Notes

Sacrificially: giving up what you want to keep in order to help someone.

Inward parts: everything in our bodies, including organs.

Knit: to put together; to make.

My frame: my bones; my substance.

Intricately woven: to be made or formed in a very complicated or detailed way.

Vast: of very great extent or quantity; immense.

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.



Discussion Questions

1. What matters are more important and what matters are less important (v.25)? Why?
2. How does Jesus teach us that we are more important to God than animals and plants and that God will take care of us (v.26-31)?
3. If there is a loving God who can be your heavenly Father, does it mean anything to you (v.32)?
4. What does Jesus teach us to focus on in our lives (v.33)?

Lesson Summary

1. God is a loving God who has wonderfully formed each of us in our mother’s womb. He is our Maker and Creator.
2. Worry is useless. Being worried will not add time to our lives. It usually wastes our time. We do not even need to worry about tomorrow. Just live one day at a time. This does not mean that we do not need to make plans. It means that we do not need to worry about the future, because our future is in God’s hands.
3. God desires us to know Him and to have a loving relationship with Him. He wants to be our heavenly Father. To Him, we are valuable and are more important than the birds and plants that He has created. He knows our needs, and He will take care of us. He wants our loving relationship with Him to be the most important in our lives. When we do this, He will give us peace in our hearts and take away our worry.

Notes

Anxious: experiencing worry.

Sow: to plant seeds.

Reap: to harvest or gather a crop.

Toil: to work very hard.

Spin: to turn rapidly.

Solomon: a great and very rich king of Israel.

Glory: majesty; beauty.

Gentiles: non-Jewish people who do not believe in the God of the Bible.

Heavenly Father: God is the heavenly Father for people from all nations.

Seek: attempt to find.

The kingdom of God: the spiritual realm where God reigns as King.

His righteousness: the right relationship between us and God. Our being right in the presence of God.

There Is a Loving God

Lesson 3 – There Is a Loving God Who Does Wondrous Things

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever been in national parks? Which ones did you like? Why?
2. What other things in the universe or in this world amaze you?

Introduction

Many people like to go to national parks to see the beauty and wonder of nature. Some of the famous national parks in America are Olympic, Mt. Rainier, Glacier, Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Grand Canyon, and Acadia. People are captivated by the views of mountains, lakes, and even animals. People take many pictures so that they can see those views again and again at their homes and share them with friends.

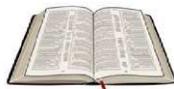
When we see a beautiful painting or a piece of art, we know that the painter or the artist has put a lot of thoughts in designing or making it. Likewise, the wonders of the universe and of this world tell us that there is an intelligent designer, who has put a lot of thought into designing and making them.



To think about:

- What if there is a God (an Intelligent Designer), who has created the wondrous universe and everything in it?
- What if there are more wondrous or supernatural phenomena in this world that we can experience, but only if we believe that there is a Creator God, who is the source of all these wonders.

From the Bible



Psalms 19:1-6

¹The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

²Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

³There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

⁴Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun, ⁵which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

⁶Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the universe tell us that there is a Creator God who has created all things in the universe (v.1-4)?
2. How does the writer compare the sun with a bridegroom (v.5)?
3. How does the writer describe the power of the sun (v.6)?
4. How does the power of the sun tell us about the power of its Creator?



Notes

Wondrous:

inspiring a feeling of wonder or delight; marvelous.

Wonder: a feeling of surprise with admiration; something that is surprising.

Captivate: to attract the attention by some special charm.

Phenomena: unusual occurrences; events.

The heavens: the skies; the universe with all the stars and planets.

Glory: great splendor, beauty, or magnificence.

The glory of God: his glorious being or existence.

Proclaim: declare or reveal.

v.3-4: the universe and nature speak without sound or words, but all people receive their message, or **natural revelation**, that there is a God who is their Creator. Not all people pay attention to this revelation.

Tent: here means a permanent place.

Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he [Jesus] said to them [his disciples], "Let us go across [the sea] to the other side." ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith [in me]?" ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"



Discussion Questions

After a full day of teaching people, Jesus was tired and wanted to rest and spend time alone with his disciples. They got into a boat and went across the Sea of Galilee to the other side.

1. What happened to them on the sea (v.37)?
2. Where was Jesus, and what was he doing (v.38)?
3. What did his disciples do when they saw him sleeping? What did they ask of him (v.38)?
4. What did Jesus do after he awoke? What happened to the wind and the sea (v.39)?
5. What did Jesus say to his disciples (v.40)?
6. How did the disciples react to the situation (v.41)?
7. If you were in the boat with Jesus, how would you react to the situation?

Lesson Summary

1. The Bible teaches us that there is a Creator God, the Intelligent Designer, who has designed and created the universe and everything in it, including our beautiful Planet Earth and us.
2. The Creator God is wondrous. His creations are wondrous. The universe and this Planet Earth are wondrous. We are wondrous too in the eyes of God. We are beautiful to him.
3. God has revealed His existence through the wondrous universe. The universe reveals to us that there is a wondrous Creator God. Many people pay attention to the existence of God and many people do not.
4. If there is a Creator God who has created us, he must have a purpose for creating us. The Bible teaches us that God has created us so that we can have a personal, loving, and wondrous relationship with him that brings wondrous joy to our hearts.
5. Jesus came from heaven to this world to specially reveal God to us. He invites us to have a personal, loving, and wondrous relationship with him that brings wondrous joy to our hearts, by having faith in him and trusting our lives to him.

Notes

Disciple: a follower or student.

Stern: the back part of a boat.

Cushion: a pad stuffed with soft material.

Perish: to die or be destroyed.

Rebuke: to express sharp disapproval.

Cease: stop.

Calm: not windy.

Faith: confidence or trust in someone or something.

Wondrous: inspiring a feeling of wonder or delight; marvelous.

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Lesson 4 – There Is a Loving God Who Creates Us to Have a Loving Relationship with Him

Opening Questions

1. With whom do you have the closest relationship? Why?
2. Deep down in your heart, do you hope to have a better and closer relationship with that person? What may be a weakness of that person—personality, habit, etc.?

Introduction

All of us desire to have a personal and loving relationship with others (our parents, spouses, siblings, relatives, and friends). In a personal and loving relationship, there is mutual love and happiness that are shared. We give and receive love and happiness to one another to some degree. The closer the relationship, the more love we give to and receive from the other person. Oftentimes, our loving relationships with others are up and down because each of us has weaknesses in our characters. We are not perfect people.



To think about:

- What if there is a perfect God who wants to have a personal and loving relationship with us? What would that relationship be like?
- What if there is a loving and perfect God who can deeply satisfy our hearts with His love and who is always with us and will never leave us alone?

From the Bible



Genesis 1:26-31

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

Discussion Questions

1. What is so special about human beings that animals do not have (v.26)?
2. What are the responsibilities that God has given human beings (v.26-28)?
3. What food did God give human beings and animals to eat after creating them (v.29-30)?
4. What did God see about his creation (v.31)?



Notes

man in our image, after our likeness: We are created in God’s image and likeness means that we have (1) personality, including intelligence, emotion, and will; (2) souls (spirits); and (3) morality. These three things enable us to have a personal and loving relationship with God.

The heavens: the sky.

John 1:1-5, 9-14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.



Discussion Questions

1. What does the Bible tell us about the Son of God? What is His role in the creation of the universe and everything in it (v.1-3)?
2. What does “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” mean (v.4)?
3. How was the Son of God (Jesus Christ) treated in this world when He came (v.9-11)?
4. What privilege is given to those who receive and believe in Jesus (v.12)?
5. How can a person be spiritually born of God—not physically born through sexual union between a man and a woman (v.13) [see notes]?
6. What does Jesus is “full of grace and truth” mean (v.14)?
7. If Jesus is God (v.1), the Creator (v.3), the Life-Giver (v.4), the Light (v.4), and full of grace and truth (v.14), how is this important to us? How does this affect our lives?

Lesson Summary

1. Love brings happiness. Love is mutual, giving and receiving.
2. In Genesis 1:26, God said, “Let us ...” The Bible describes God as one God—singular, not plural Gods—but there is plurality in God. We call this the Trinity, one God in three persons. The Bible describes God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit as three distinct persons, yet they are in unity. They are one and are equal in substance, power, and glory. They exist eternally without beginning. Their perfect love for one another brings perfect joy. God has created us with a purpose to have a loving relationship with Him—and with other people—so that we can experience His perfect love for us that brings perfect joy into our hearts.
3. God is the source of life and light. Spiritually speaking, the light of God shows us the darkness of this world and the right path of life with God. If we have a personal and loving relationship with God, His light will guide our lives in this dark and broken world.
4. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came from heaven to this world. He was not welcomed but was rejected and crucified. People could not receive Him because of the darkness of their hearts. But to all who believe in Him, trusting their lives to Him, He makes them children of God and gives them a new life in Him—a loving relationship with Him.

Notes

The Word: refers to the Son of God, who was with God the Father and was God. The Son of God reveals or expresses God to us. Jesus was the name given after the Son of God was born as a human being.

Born of God: spiritually speaking, refers to receiving a new life from God, when we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him. We receive a new life and become God’s children. We have a personal and loving relationship with God through Jesus.

Grace: undeserved favor; an act of mercy and kindness to someone who does not deserve it. To many people who grow up learning that everything needs to be achieved by working hard (self-achievement), the concept of grace is hard to be practically realized.

There Is a Loving God

Lesson 5 – There Is a Loving God Who Is Our Good Shepherd

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever seen sheep? Have you ever seen shepherds taking care of their sheep?
2. Have you ever felt unsafe or vulnerable in a certain situation?
Was there anyone trying to help or protect you?

Introduction

Everyone wants to feel safe. Feeling secured is one of the greatest necessities for every person. Since we were born, we have wanted to feel safe. Not feeling safe is emotionally unhealthy for us. It makes us anxious, afraid, and even cry. When we were children, we depended on our parents to protect us and to give us a sense of security.

This world is a broken world and is full of bad people who can harm others. We feel safer when we are at home than outside. Even when we are at home, we still lock our doors. We depend on police officers or the government to give us a sense of security, but there are still many crimes and many places where we do not feel safe to go to, especially alone.



To think about:

- Who can give us a perfect sense of security and peace in this broken world? What if there is a loving God, and if we want Him in our lives—if we want to have a personal and loving relationship with Him—He will always be with us and will always protect us in this broken world?
- What if there is a loving God who has a perfect home for us, where there is perfect peace and love?

From the Bible



Psalm 23:1-4

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want [anything]. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Discussion Questions

1. Knowing that God is his Shepherd, how does the writer feel (v.1)?
2. What does God do for the writer (v.2-3)?
3. How does the writer feel when he is in a dangerous situation (v.4)? Why?



Notes

Vulnerable:

susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm.

The LORD: English translation for God's name in Hebrew "YHWH." It is read "Yahweh" or "Jehovah" or "Yehowah."

Ancient Hebrew did not use vowels in its written form.

I shall not want:

I don't need anything; I have all that I need.

Pasture: meadow; land covered with grass and other low plants suitable for feeding animals.

Still waters:

peaceful streams.

Righteousness: the quality of being righteous—being morally right with God or blameless.

For his name's sake: for the honor of God's name.

The valley of the shadow of death: *the darkest valley* that is very dangerous for sheep to walk through, where predators are hiding and waiting.

John 10:11-18

¹¹ [Jesus says] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as [God] the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”



Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus say about Himself, and how does He prove that (v.11)?
2. How does a hired hand differ from the shepherd of the sheep (v.12)? Why (v.13)?
3. How close is the relationship between Jesus and His sheep, and what does Jesus compare that relationship with (v.14-15)?
4. What does Jesus desire, and what will He do to accomplish that (v.16)?
5. Several times Jesus speaks about laying down or sacrificing His life (v.11, 15, 17, 18). What may be the significance of it?

Lesson Summary

1. God is a loving God and a good Shepherd for us. He is not only with us but also guides us in the path of righteousness in this broken world.
2. If God is our Shepherd, we will not lack anything. God will make sure that we will have everything we need in this life.
3. We can have a loving relationship with the Creator God through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus came from heaven to this world, to sacrifice Himself and to die for the punishment of our sins as our substitute, so we can have a new life in Him by trusting our lives to Him. He has laid down His life for us. He protects us from the evil one.
4. Jesus wants us to trust our lives to Him and to have a personal and loving relationship with Him. If we do so, He will be our Good Shepherd. He will always be with us, watching our lives and protecting us.

Notes

The good shepherd

Jesus uses the Greek word “kalos” which means *good* in the sense of beautiful and perfect (the good, beautiful, and perfect shepherd).

Lay down: sacrifice.

A hired hand: a paid worker.

Snatch: to take suddenly.

Scatter: to throw in various random directions.

Flee: to run away.

Know: in the Bible, knowing someone means having a personal and close relationship with the person; not just knowing about the person.

Other sheep: followers of Jesus from other nations (non-Jewish people). Jesus explains that His *sheep* are people from all nations.

Fold: sheepfold; shelter for sheep.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God; self-centeredness that we are born with.

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Lesson 6 – There Is a Loving God Who Hears and Answers Our Prayers

Opening Questions

1. What are some of the struggles you have experienced in your life?
2. How do you find comfort or peace for your heart when you struggle?

Introduction

We live in a broken world that is full of brokenness. All of us have struggles in our lives. Some of us have more than others. Sometimes we wonder why we struggle, and we never get a perfect and satisfied answer. We are anxious about many things in our lives. We worry about exams, research, getting a good job, family situations, relationship with other people, health, and getting old.



To think about:

- What if there is a loving and wise God who is happy to listen to and answer our prayers to Him with much love and wisdom.
- What if there is a loving and wise God who can give us comfort and peace in our hearts when we struggle, and who can assure us that He is with us and watches over our lives.

From the Bible



Psalm 86:1-13

- ¹ Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.
² Preserve my life, for I am godly; save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.
³ Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all the day.
⁴ Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
⁵ For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. ⁶ Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace.
⁷ In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.
⁸ There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.
⁹ All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. ¹⁰ For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.
¹¹ Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. ¹² I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. ¹³ For great is your steadfast love toward me ...

Discussion Questions

1. What does the writer know about God (v.5)?
2. There are many wondrous works of God that the writer knows and has personally experienced (v.8-10). What is one of the wondrous works of God (v.9)?
3. What does the writer want God to do for him? Why (v.11)?
4. Why is the writer thankful for God (v.12-13)?



Notes

Incline: to have a tendency to do something.

LORD: English translation for God's name in Hebrew "YHWH." It is read "Yahweh" or "Jehovah" or "Yehowah."

Lord: a master or a ruler. God is our Lord.

Godly: being like God; religious, devout, pious.

Gracious: showing grace (undeserved favor) or kindness.

Gladden: to make glad.

Abounding: very plentiful; abundant.

Steadfast: firm. God's **steadfast love** for us is his faithfulness and unwavering love.

Plea: request

among the gods: Israel was surrounded by countries who worshipped man-made gods (not real gods).

Glorify: to give glory or honor.

fear your name or fear God: to honor God with great respect and worship.

Matthew 7:7-11

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Peter 5:7

⁷casting all your anxieties on him [God], because he cares for you.

Discussion Questions

1. What illustration does Jesus use to teach people about praying to God (Mt 7:7-8)? What do you think the meaning of the illustration is?
2. How is God, as our heavenly Father, compared to earthly fathers (Mt 7:9-11)?
3. If we are God’s children, what assurance do we have (Romans 8:38-39)?
4. Why should we not hesitate to bring our anxieties to God in prayer (1 Peter 5:7)?

Lesson Summary

1. God is a good and loving God. His steadfast love for us is abundant.
2. Unlike man-made gods, the God of the Bible is the Creator God who has created all the nations in this world. He is a wondrous God.
3. God desires to hear our prayers. He wants us to come to Him and to develop a personal and loving relationship with Him.
4. Jesus teaches us to keep praying to God. God is loving and wise. As our Heavenly Father, God is much better than earthly fathers. He is our good Heavenly Father who delights in giving good things to us according to His wisdom.
5. Our personal and loving relationship with God is much more important than the good things we want God to give us.

Notes

Seek: to attempt to find something.

Cast: to throw.

Anxieties: worry, nervousness.

Hesitate: to be uncertain to act.

There Is a Loving God

Lesson 7 – There Is a Loving God Who Can Give Us a New and Much Better Identity

Opening Questions

1. How many cards that show your name (driver’s license, school ID, membership ID, credit cards, etc.) do you have? Which one(s) do you like the most? Why?
2. If you could have another identification card, what would you like that to be?

Introduction

Our identification cards describe who we are, our status, our job, and our connection with the organizations that issue the cards. University ID cards show our membership with the university as students, faculty, or staff. Our identity gives us a sense of worth or value. Many people work hard to get a higher position in their career or an honorable social status. As children, we receive our identity from our parents. If you were a child of the president of your country, you have a higher value of identity than if you were a child of a university professor. Your VIP (very important person) identification would be different. The higher the position that a person has, the higher the value of identity that the person can give to someone.



To think about:

- What if there is a loving God, the Creator and King of the Universe, who can give us a new identification card that shows that we are His children? Would it not be the highest value of identity that we can ever receive?
- Which one is more important: an identity that we try so hard to achieve on our own or an identity that we can freely receive from God?

From the Bible



Luke 15:11-16

¹¹ And he [Jesus] said [a parable], “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about the younger son’s request for his inheritance from his father before his father died (v.12)?
2. Where did the younger son go, and what did he do there (v.13)?
What kind of person do you think he wanted to be?
Can money truly give us happiness and a sense of identity?
3. What happened to him later on, and what did he do then (v.14-15)?
4. Do you think he wanted that job? What happened to him there (v.16)?



Notes

Self-esteem: an individual's subjective evaluation of their own worth.

Parable: a simple story to illustrate a lesson. Jesus used parables as illustrations to help people understand his teachings.

Squander: to waste in a foolish manner.

Reckless: without thinking or caring about the consequences of an action.

Famine: extreme lack of food; hunger.

Pods: dry fruit or seed vessels, such as the outside shell of a green pea.

Inherit (verb): to receive money or property as an heir at the death of a previous owner.

Inheritance (noun): money or property that is inherited or received.

Luke 15:17-24

¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.



Discussion Questions

5. What does “he came to himself” mean? What did he think he should do (v.17-19)?
6. Was there a change in his attitude? Why do some people change only after encountering difficult situations in their lives?
7. What can we guess about his father’s character (v.17)?
8. What did the father do when he saw his younger son at a distance (v.20)? What do you think about the father’s action?
9. How did the son express his regret (v.21)?
10. Did the father question or rebuke him? What did the father do for his son (v.22-23)? Why (v.24)? What do you think it means?
11. Celebrating with a fattened calf—a lot of food—means that the father would invite neighbors to come. He wanted to restore his son’s identity not only in his home but also socially in the neighborhood community. What do you think the effects might be for the son and for the community?

Lesson Summary

1. The younger son in Jesus’ parable was a rebellious and run-away son, who dishonored his father. The son points to all of us, who dishonor God and who do not want a personal and loving relationship with Him. We often want only God’s gifts but not God Himself.
2. The father in the parable had been waiting for his son to return home. The father points to God, our Heavenly Father, who has been waiting for us to return to Him and to develop a personal and loving relationship with Him. His loving arms are always open for us to return to Him.
3. The father forgave the son, restored his identity, and gave him a new life. When we come to God with regret and humility, God will forgive our sins and give us a new life with Him. We have a new and much better identity. We become *children of God*; children of the Creator and King of the Universe.
4. The big celebration at the end of the parable points to the big celebration that Jesus will have with all God’s children in God’s Kingdom when He returns to this world.

Notes

Perish: to die or be destroyed.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God; self-centeredness that we are born with.

Sin against heaven: All sins or wrongdoings we do to other people are fundamentally sins against God, who wants us to love and obey Him and to love other people.

Compassion: deep sympathy for the suffering or misfortune of someone, accompanied by a strong desire to help.

Embrace: to hold (someone) closely in one's arm.

Robe: a long, loose outer garment.

Fattened: become fat.

Calf: a young cow.

There Is a Loving God

Lesson 8 – There Is a Loving God Who Can Save Us from the Danger of Money

Opening Questions

1. What are some of the reasons that many people are obsessed with making money?
2. What are some of the dangers or negative impacts of being obsessed with money?

Introduction

Money is not bad or evil, but our desire of it can be bad. When money has become the center of our lives, perhaps the most dangerous impact is magnifying our self-centeredness. It means that making money has become much more important than building a happy family, developing good friendships with others, and even our own physical and mental health. We hear many stories of broken families. A husband neglects his wife, or a father neglects his child, because of wanting to make more money. Being obsessed with money can make us very prideful and selfish. It can make us look down on and even do harm to others to get what we want. It can also make us discontent with ourselves and what we already have. Thus, if money has become the center of our lives, it can rob our happiness and ruin our lives.



To think about:

- What is the center of our lives, or what do we make to be the most important thing in our lives? Can it bring joy to us? To what extent?
- What if there is a loving God, and if we make him as the center of our lives, we will have abundant joy more than we can ever imagine and that can never be robbed away from us.

From the Bible



Luke 12:15-21

¹⁵ And he [Jesus] said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” ¹⁶ And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus warn us against (v.15)?
What does “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” mean?
2. What situation did the rich man in the parable have (v.16-17)?
How would he solve his situation, and what would he say to himself (v.18-19)?
3. What did God say to him (v.20)? What did Jesus say to conclude his parable (v.21)?



Notes

Obsessed: to fill the mind of someone continually to a troubling extent.

Self-centeredness: concerned only or mainly with one’s own interests; selfish; egoistical.

Joy: a feeling of great happiness.

Abundant: plentiful

Covet (verb): to desire wrongfully.

Covetousness (noun): wrong and self-centered desire.

Parable: a simple story to illustrate a lesson.
Jesus used parables as illustrations to help people understand his teachings.

Ample: enough; plentiful.

Rich toward God: having a heart that loves God; doing all thing out of love for God.

Matthew 6:19-24

¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²² The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³ but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! ²⁴ No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Mark 8:36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?



Discussion Questions

1. What is the reason Jesus teaches us not to lay up wealth on earth (v.19)?
2. What do you think to “lay up treasures in heaven” means (v.20)?
What is a good thing about laying up treasures in heaven (v.20)?
3. What does Jesus say about the relationship between our hearts and our treasures (v.21)?
4. Jesus is speaking spiritually about our eyes and bodies. Our spiritual eyes cannot see the things of God or the will of God for us because of our self-centeredness that blinds us (v.22-23). How can we have healthy *spiritual eyes* (understanding) of God’s will for our lives and no be blinded by our self-centeredness or selfishness?
5. Why can we not serve two masters—God and money (v.24)?
6. What is the obvious answer to Jesus’ question in Mark 8:36?

Lesson Summary

1. Jesus teaches us to be careful of our own covetousness and self-centeredness. Jesus says, “For one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”
2. Jesus teaches us that we do not know when we will die and face God. We do not have control over our lives; only God does. We will stand before the judgment of God and give account to Him of all we have done in our lives.
3. Money can be dangerous. Do not be obsessed with money or make money the center of or the most important thing in our lives. Getting rich is not evil in God’s eyes, but how we use what we have is what matters to God.
4. Jesus wants us to be “rich toward God,” having a heart that loves Him and doing all things out of love for Him.
5. All our possessions are God’s gifts to us. Jesus teaches us to “lay up treasures in heaven.” We need to use our possessions that God has given us—including our money, time, and energy—to help others with love, to help the work of God’s kingdom in this world, and to bring honor and glory to Him.

Notes

Lay up: store up.

Moth: a type of insect.

Devote: to give one’s time and resources to (a person or a cause).

Forfeit: to lose.

Glory: majesty, beauty, or magnificence.

There Is a Loving God

Lesson 9 – There Is a Loving God Who is Gracious

Opening Questions

1. What is the kindest act you have ever done to someone?
2. Have you ever graciously forgiven someone?
3. Have you ever received gracious forgiveness from someone?

Introduction

We live in a competitive world where we need to work hard and compete with others to get into a better university and to get a good job. The mindset of *working hard* has been gradually and deeply planted in our minds since we were young. In reality, depending on someone's grace can be a difficult concept to be understood and accepted in our lives. One way to learn about grace is by learning to daily forgive others and ourselves and to gladly receive forgiveness from others over small and big wrongdoings that we do. By learning to be a forgiving and humble person, we learn better about grace. We need to be careful of our own pride that can suppress our humility. Our pride is the biggest enemy for us to learn about grace and to receive grace from God.



To think about:

- What if there is a loving and gracious God who graciously loves us even though we personally do not know Him yet?
- What if there is a forgiving God who graciously forgives all our mistakes and wrongdoings in Jesus Christ, if we trust our lives to Him?

From the Bible



Matthew 20:1-7

¹ [Jesus said a parable] “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ ⁵ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶ And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’”

Discussion Questions

1. What is the topic that Jesus wants to teach in the parable (v.1)?
2. How much money did the vineyard owner (the master of the house) agree to pay the laborers for their wage when he hired them early in the morning (v.2)?
3. How many times did the vineyard owner go back to the marketplace (v.3-6)?
If he already had enough workers, why did he still go back to the marketplace?
4. How much money did he say he would pay the later workers?
What would be the fair amount of wage for those workers respectively?



Notes

Gracious: showing **grace** -- undeserved favor; an act of mercy and kindness to someone who does not deserve it.

Suppress: to prevent the development or action of.

Parable: a simple story to illustrate a lesson. Jesus used parables as illustrations to help people understand his teachings.

The kingdom of heaven: God's kingdom.

Laborer: workers.

Vineyard: a plantation of grapevines, typically producing grapes used in winemaking.

Denarius: an ancient Roman silver coin worth a fair wage/salary for a full day of work.

The third hour: Ancient Jews used the sun as their time. The first hour is 6 am our time. The third hour is 9 am. The sixth hour is 12 pm. The ninth hour is 3 pm. The eleventh hour is 5 pm.

Idle: lazy.

Matthew 20:8-16

⁸ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' ⁹ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, ¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?' ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last."



Discussion Questions

- Imagine you were one of the last group of workers who were hired at the eleventh hour. Imagine you had a wife and children at home waiting for you to bring food.
 - How would you feel during those hours of waiting in the market to get a job?
 - How would you feel knowing that the wage of one hour of work would not be enough to buy food for your wife and children?
 - What would be your reaction when you received your fair wage plus extra money for a total of a denarius?
- Compare the two groups of workers: the first group of workers who were hired early in the morning and the last group of workers who were hired at the eleventh hour.
 - What would they think about the master? Were they right?
 - What kind of attitude would they go home with?
 - What would they tell their wives and children about the master?
 - What would their relationships with the master be like from that day on?
- The parable is about the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God (v.1). Who do you think the master of the house is?
- What do we learn about grace in this parable? How is the kingdom of God given to us? What is the impact of God's grace to those who receive it gladly?

Lesson Summary

- Grace is a gift. It is something we can only receive and not achieve or earn.
- We cannot enter God's kingdom or heaven through hard work or self-achievement, including religious work. God gives us heaven by His grace alone. We do not deserve it but can receive it, if we believe in God and have a loving relationship with him.
- God desires to have a personal and loving relationship with us. Only by learning to love God and by developing our personal relationship with Him, can we understand the depth of His love and grace for us.
- The gracious gift of God for us is a "big package" that contains, among many things:
 - sending His own son, Jesus Christ, from heaven to this world. Jesus sacrificed Himself to die for the punishment of all our sins as our substitute on the cross.
 - His forgiveness of our sins when we believe in Jesus Christ and trust our lives to Him.
 - His adopting us as His children and giving us the promise of entering His kingdom.
 - His daily love for us.

Notes

Foreman: a worker who supervises other workers; a manager.

Grumble: to complain.

Burden: a load.

Scorching: very hot.

Begrudge: envy.

Grace: undeserved favor; an act of mercy and kindness to someone who does not deserve it. We receive all God's blessings only by His grace.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God. We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Sinful nature: the self-centered nature that we are born with.

There Is a Loving God

Lesson 10 – There Is a Loving God Who Has Sacrificed Himself for Us

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever watched a movie that shows someone sacrificed himself/herself and died for someone else (spouse, child, or friend)?
2. If there is someone who you would sacrifice yourself and die for, who is that person? Why?

Introduction

When we truly love someone, we want the best for that person. We are happy when the person is happy. When something or someone hurts the person, it also hurts us. Loving someone brings both happiness and pain to us. True love requires us to sacrifice ourselves for the person's good. In the Greek language, there are four words that are used to explain the English word for *love*. *Storge* is familial love between parents and their children. *Phileo* is brotherly love. *Eros* is sexual love or love of the body. *Agape* is self-sacrificial and unconditional love.

God's love for us is *agape* love. God is willing to bear the pain of loving us. God sent His own Son to save us from our sins. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came from heaven to this world to sacrifice Himself and to die for the punishment of our sins as our substitute so that by trusting our lives to Him, we receive a new life in Him—a personal and loving relationship with God in Jesus Christ.



To think about:

- If there is a loving God, would he not demonstrate the most loving action of *agape* love by sacrificing Himself for us somehow?
- What if there is a loving God who does not change, who loves us so much and will never change His love for us regardless of what we do?



From the Bible

John 1:29 The next day he [John] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 3:16-17

¹⁶For God so loved [*agape*] the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Discussion Questions

1. What did John say to the people about Jesus when he saw Jesus coming toward him (John 1:29)? What do you think it means?
2. How does God demonstrate His *agape* love for us (John 3:16)? Why did God do that (v.16-17)?



Notes

Sacrifice: an act of offering something precious; an act of giving up what you want to keep.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions. We are not able to love God with all our hearts as we should because of the sinful nature that we have in us since we were born.

The Lamb of God: a title of Jesus.

God taught the people of Israel to offer lambs to Him as their sacrifices. The lamb died as a symbol bearing the punishment of their sin temporarily. Jesus, as the *Lamb of God*, sacrificed Himself to die for the punishment of our sins as our substitute permanently.

Perish: to die or be destroyed.

Condemn: to pronounce to be guilty; to sentence to punishment.

John 10:11, 14-17

¹¹ [Jesus says] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ ... Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

⁴ Love [*agape*] is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.



Discussion Questions

1. What would Jesus do to prove that He is the good shepherd for His people (John 10:11)?
2. How much do you think Jesus *knows* His people (v.14-15)?
3. How will Jesus bring together all His people from different nations to be one flock [one people] (v.16)?
4. How did Jesus humble Himself (Philippians 2:5-8)?
5. How is *agape* love defined (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)?
How do you think Jesus demonstrates His *agape* love for us in our daily lives?

Lesson Summary

1. God loves us so much that He is willing to sacrifice Himself for us. He wants the best for us. God is unchangeable (does not and cannot change), and His love for us is also unchangeable.
2. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, came from heaven to this world to sacrifice Himself and die, bearing the punishment of our sins on the cross as our substitute, so that by believing in Him, trusting our lives to Him, we can receive forgiveness from God and become His people. Jesus has endured all things for us. He has shown His *agape* love for us.
3. Jesus is our Good Shepherd, who continues to love us even now. Through His Holy Spirit, He guides us and gives us strength in our lives. He is patient with us. He is also working with us to bring many people from all nations to Himself.

Notes

The *good shepherd*

Jesus uses the Greek word “kalos” which means *good* in the sense of beautiful and perfect (the good, beautiful, and perfect shepherd).

Know: in the Bible, knowing someone means having a personal relationship with the person; not just knowing about the person.

Other sheep: followers of Jesus from other nations (non-Jewish people). Jesus explains that His *sheep* are people from all nations.

Fold (sheepfold): a shelter for sheep.

They will listen to my voice: Jesus speaks to us in our hearts, calling us to come to Him.

equality with God: The Triune God or the Trinity is one God in three persons (God the Father, God the Son—Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit). They are equal in substance and glory.

emptied himself means Jesus
humbled himself.

There Is a Loving God

Lesson 11 - There Is a Loving God Who Has a Perfect Kingdom for People from All Nations

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever watched *the Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*? If yes, what kind of kingdom did the people have at the end of the movie?
2. If there will be a perfect kingdom or country for people from all nations, what would the government be like? What would the king or president be like?

Introduction

Since we were young, through movies—Disney’s and others—we have imagined a world that is peaceful and full of happiness. People sing and celebrate their happiness together. Our world is broken and corrupt because we are broken and corrupt people. There are wars between nations, ethnic groups, and political parties. Many world leaders do not want to give up their power, and many are looking for more power. There are injustices, oppressions, poverty, crimes, and broken relationships in every place of this world.



To think about:

- What if all the governments in this world will one day be no more?
- What if God Himself will establish a perfect kingdom for us (people from all nations) where He will be the King and will rule us with righteousness, justice, and love?



From the Bible

Isaiah 7:14 -- Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [which means, God with us].

Isaiah 9:2 -- The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Isaiah 9:6-7 -- ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end ... to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore ...



Discussion Questions

The Book of Isaiah in the Bible was written by Isaiah, a prophet of God, who lived about 700 years before Jesus was born. Isaiah foretold about the coming of the Son of God to this world as the Promised Savior and a righteous King, who would save us from evil and our own sins.

1. Who would conceive the Son of God? What shall His name be called (7:14)?
2. What is the important result of the coming of the Son of God to this world (9:2)?
3. What other names shall be given to the Son of God (9:6)?
4. What will the government of the Son of God be like (9:7)?

Notes

Righteousness: being righteous or morally right.

Dwell: to live in.

Wonderful

Counselor: Jesus is wise. He guides our lives perfectly.

Mighty God: As the Creator God, Jesus is powerful. No other powers can match His.

Everlasting Father: father here means protector. As King, Jesus is the Father and Protector for all His people for eternity.

Prince of Peace: Jesus will bring peace to His government.

Promised Savior: Since Adam and Eve fell into sin, God has promised to send a Savior who will save people from sin and evil. The Son of God came to this world as the Promised Savior to save us.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God. We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Conceive: to become pregnant with a child.

Luke 1:26-33 -- ²⁶ ... the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High [God] ... ³³ ... and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Revelation 7:9-10 -- ⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Revelation 21:1-5 -- ¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 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." ⁵ And he [Jesus Christ] who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."



Discussion Questions

1. What did the angel tell Mary about the Son of God (Luke 1:26-33)?
2. The book of Revelation in the Bible was written by John, a follower of Jesus Christ. Before John died, Jesus gave him a vision of His kingdom in the future—a kingdom for all His people from all nations—in a renewed earth (heaven on earth). John wrote the vision in his book, Revelation, in about 95 A.D. What did John see in heaven (7:9-10)?
3. What did John see about Jesus' kingdom (21:1-4)?
4. What does Jesus say from His throne (21:5)? What do you think it means?

Lesson Summary

1. This present world is a broken world, and we are all broken and sinful people. We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions.
2. God is a loving God. He sent His own Son to save us from our sins. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this world to die, bearing the punishment of our sins on the cross as our substitute, so that by believing in Him and trusting our lives to Him, we can receive God's forgiveness and a new life in Jesus—a personal and loving relationship with God.
3. Jesus will one day return to this world and renew it. Heaven will come down to the renewed earth and be united. This is the future of Jesus' kingdom and government—a perfect kingdom for those who have trusted their lives to Him and have a personal relationship with Him (all His people from all nations). They will live with Jesus forever. There will be no pain, tears, and death, but a beautiful and loving life with God for eternity.

Notes

Angel: a spiritual being, an attendant or messenger of God.

Betrothed: the person to whom one is engaged.

Discern: to perceive or understand.

Behold: look, see.

The Lamb: one of Jesus' titles is *the Lamb of God*. Jesus sacrificed Himself to die on the cross for the punishment of our sins as our substitute. He became *the lamb*, who died for us, as a sacrifice for God.

New Jerusalem: In Jesus' time, Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel where the temple of God was. It was considered as a holy city, where people from all parts of Israel would come for religious festivals. Here, the new Jerusalem refers to the new heaven, a dwelling place for God's people.