



CHARACTER
DEVELOPMENT

Term Five
Oral Bible Study Curriculum

Second Edition



Ambassador Institute
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Plymouth, MN 55441
763-412-2029
ambassador@afic.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

57.	Not a Lover of Money.....	5
58.	Hold to the Truth.....	12
59.	Slow to Anger	16
60.	Manager of Your Home	23
61.	Not Quarrelsome.....	29
62.	Faithfulness in Marriage	34
63.	Being a Servant	40
64.	Not Double-Minded	44
65.	Honest Gain	50
66.	Generosity	55
67.	Self-control	59
68.	Humility	65
69.	Perseverance	70
70.	Faith	75

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible,
New International Version®, NIV®.
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan.
All rights reserved worldwide.
www.zondervan.com

57. Not a Lover of Money

Naaman's Leprosy

2 Kings 5:1-27

2 Kings 5

¹ Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

² Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

⁴ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. ⁵ "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. ⁶ The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

⁷ As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"

⁸ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel."

⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

¹¹ But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.

¹³ Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

¹⁵ Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant.”

¹⁶ The prophet answered, “As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing.” And even though Naaman urged him, he refused.

¹⁷ “If you will not,” said Naaman, “please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the LORD. ¹⁸ But may the LORD forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I bow there also—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD forgive your servant for this.”

¹⁹ “Go in peace,” Elisha said.

After Naaman had traveled some distance, ²⁰ Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said to himself, “My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him.”

²¹ So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. “Is everything all right?” he asked.

²² “Everything is all right,” Gehazi answered. “My master sent me to say, ‘Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two sets of clothing.’”

²³ “By all means, take two talents,” said Naaman. He urged Gehazi to accept them, and then tied up the two talents of silver in two bags, with two sets of clothing. He gave them to two of his servants, and they carried them ahead of Gehazi. ²⁴ When Gehazi came to the hill, he took the things from the servants and put them away in the house. He sent the men away and they left. ²⁵ Then he went in and stood before his master Elisha.

“Where have you been, Gehazi?” Elisha asked.

“Your servant didn't go anywhere,” Gehazi answered.

²⁶ But Elisha said to him, “Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants? ²⁷ Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever.” Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and he was leprous, as white as snow.

Study Questions: Not a lover of Money

2 Kings 5:1-27

Introduction:

Money in itself is not sinful and evil. It is simply a part of the material goods that God has created on this earth for us to oversee. However, the love of money and the focus on it can control our lives. This allows it to become a “god” leading us down a broad path to all kinds of evil and perversion. In this story, we see God’s grace shown to Naaman through the free gift of healing. Elisha would not accept money for something that God had done; which is in contrast to the greed of Elisha’s servant. In faith, Naaman is healed, but in selfishness, the servant is cursed. The disease of sin carries a debt that could not be paid for, but the blood of Jesus paid its debt. He willingly gave his life in exchange for our sin.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand the destructive path of greed and selfish ambition.
- To know that whenever we place anything before God, we rely on temporal earthly things rather than trust in the eternal all-powerful God.
- To realize that all we have is merely that which the Lord has entrusted to us for a short time.

Attitude

- To trust that God knows our needs and will meet them in His timing and in His way.
- To be content with what the Lord gives us.

Actions

- To be generous with what the Lord freely gives us.
- To remove our focus from the things that we desire so that we desire the things of God.

Memory Verses:

Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money.”

1 Timothy 6:10 “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

Hebrews 13:5 “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Scriptures for Further Study:

Ecclesiastes 5:10; Matthew 6:19-21, 24-34; Luke 16:13; Acts 5:1-11;
Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 6:3-10; Hebrews 13:5;
James 5:1-6

Questions about the Story:

1. What do we know about Naaman? (2 Kings 5:1. Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man, highly regarded, serving as a valiant soldier and the Lord had been using him, but he had leprosy.)
2. What does the servant girl have and what does she freely give? (2 Kings 5:3. The servant girl has faith in God and she shows that faith to Naaman by telling him about the prophet in Samaria. As a captive of war she could have had a bitter spirit and even wanted evil for Naaman.)
3. How did Naaman expect to get healed? (2 Kings 5:5-6. He expected to pay a lot of money, to bring a letter of reference and to go to the one in authority for his healing.)
4. What result did Naaman receive from his efforts to be healed? (2 Kings 5:7, 9, 16. The king of Israel knew that he could not heal leprosy, the letter of recommendation caused confusion with the King and Elisha would not accept any money.)
5. What does Elisha recognize as the purpose of this leprosy? (2 Kings 5:8. Elisha realizes that this issue is for the glory of God, so Naaman would recognize that there is a prophet of God in Israel.)
6. What is the contrast between Naaman's approach to Elisha and Elisha's response to Naaman? (2 Kings 5:9-10. Naaman came in a manner of greatness expecting respect. Elisha did not greet him personally but sent a messenger with instructions. The Lord does not recognize greatness based on title or position.)
7. Why was Naaman angry in response to Elisha's instruction to wash in the Jordan River? (2 Kings 5:10-12. Naaman was angry because Elisha didn't come out and do anything, the instruction seemed simple and insignificant and it was a different answer than he expected.)
8. What does Naaman's obedience show? (2 Kings 5:13-14. It shows that God was working in his heart. He humbled himself, he had to trust in God alone and it revealed his faith.)
9. What was Naaman's response after his healing? (2 Kings 5:15. Naaman realized that God had done the miracle. He humbly

went back to Elisha to thank him, urged him to accept a gift and vowed to never offer a sacrifice to any other god but the Lord.)

10. Why didn't Elisha accept a gift? (2 Kings 5:16. Elisha refused the gift because it was the Lord who lived and the Lord who healed Naaman. Elisha was just the Lord's servant.)
11. What did Elisha give Naaman as a gift? (2 Kings 5:17-19. Elisha sent Naaman home with two mules of dirt and the blessing of peace.)
12. What were the thoughts of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, after seeing the miracle that took place and the refusal of Naaman's gift by his master? (2 Kings 5:20. Gehazi said to himself that his master was too easy on Naaman by not accepting what was brought. His thoughts reveal his disrespect toward Elisha, his selfishness and greed, which led to lies and then to leprosy.)
13. How does Elisha's vow to not receive something compare to Gehazi's vow to get something? (2 Kings 5:16, 19. Gehazi vowed by the LORD God Almighty that he would run after Naaman to receive something, which is the same type of vow that Elisha had made regarding not accepting a gift from Naaman.)
14. What can be seen about Gehazi from his pursuit of the money? (2 Kings 5:21-25. He was thinking of himself first. He was willing to sacrifice truth for money. He thought he could hide from Elisha and ultimately God and he thought that these things would bless him. He missed the fact that the Lord is the blessing.)
15. What was the result of Gehazi's sin of greed and of lying? (2 Kings 5:26-27. Elisha foretold that he and his descendants would inherit the leprosy that had clung to Naaman. As a result of this, Gehazi was also forced from the presence of Elisha, from the house of the "Man of God." James 5:1-6)

Discussion Questions:

1. How do we like Naaman depend upon our status, who we know or what we have? (2 Kings 5:1)
2. How can we share our faith with others - in the midst of our slavery or lowly position? (2 Kings 5:3) [Like the servant girl, we can confidently tell people about the Lord God Almighty and His ability to do anything. Regardless of our position, we can be the messenger of God's glory.]
3. How should we respond when we are faced with problems and dilemmas in this life? (2 Kings 5:3) [As Christians, we should

be continually renewing our gaze upon the Lord God Almighty and realize that He alone can save us in our times of need.]

4. When do we, like Namaan, look to our own resources, relationships or influence to change our situation before we look to the Lord? (2 Kings 5:5-6) [We are trusting in ourselves first instead of the Lord when we think of prayer as a last resort; when we trust in people more than the Lord; or when we think of ourselves more than the Lord.]
5. In what ways do we, like the king of Israel, despair or tear our robes concerning the problems we face? (2 Kings 5:7) [We take on other people's responsibilities and worry about things that are not ours to fix.]
6. What situations do we face that are intended for the glory of God? (2 Kings 5:8) [All of the situations of our lives are opportunities to look to God and to see His answer.]
7. How should we as Christians be reacting when unbelievers are coming to us for help and assistance? (2 Kings 5:9-10) [We should help them and point them to the Lord, rather than to ourselves or for our own gain. They need to see the power of God rather than the power of man.]
8. What do we learn about how the Lord operates when we look at how Naaman was healed? (2 Kings 5:10-14) [We see that the Lord saves in simple ways. There isn't any grand work that we have to do in and of ourselves, but to simply be washed and cleansed. The same is true for us Christians with baptism and repentance.]
9. What do we learn about the love and patience of God when we look at the healing of Naaman? (2 Kings 5:10-14) [We see the love of God for all people, even for those not associated with God's chosen people, and in fact their enemies. We also see God's patience with Naaman's anger and initial response to leave.]
10. How have you seen the patience of God in your life?
11. What do we learn from Elisha's response to Naaman's offer of gifts and treasures? (2 Kings 5:15-16) [Our focus must be on pointing people to the glory and majesty of God and opening their eyes to the true God rather than on ourselves.]
12. What does it mean to be a lover of money?
13. What are some of the ways we are tempted to respond when we are faced with the temptation of material wealth and possessions?

14. How can we be guarding ourselves against the temptation of greed and selfishness in your own lives?
15. What can we learn from Gehazi's response and attitude toward his master Elisha? (2 Kings 5:20) [We must show respect and honor to those in authority rather than being rebellious.]
16. How does sin multiply in our lives like it did in Gehazi's? (2 Kings 5:19-25) [We also can disrespect our leaders, look to our own interests, try to cover up our true motives to the point that we are leaving God.]
17. What happens to us when we allow sin to be the master in our lives? (2 Kings 5:26-27) [We see that there will always be a consequence and that the effect of sin is destruction. For Gehazi, this was the destruction of leprosy and the separation from the presence of Elisha. For us as Christians, we see that likewise our sins have earthly consequences. Sin's destruction is death and separation from God's presence for all of eternity.]
18. Why don't we need to worry about wealth and finances? [We don't need to worry about financial gain because the Lord knows our needs and is able to supply it if we look to Him.]
19. How can we see Jesus in this story? [Jesus is the one that takes away our disease of sin. He is the one that healed the lepers and He heals us through the cross. The washing in the Jordan is like Peter's message in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."]

58. Hold to the Truth

Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 4:32 – 5:10

Acts 4

³²All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

³³With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

³⁶Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 5

¹Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.

²With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

³Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

⁵When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

⁶Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." ⁹Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." ¹⁰At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Study Questions: Hold to the Truth

Acts 4:32 – 5:10

Introduction:

As Christians, it is essential for us to hold to the truth because it is the character of God and the description of His Word. Jesus said to His disciples, - “I am the truth” (John 14:6) and prays to the Father - “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17). Jesus also describes Satan as the “Father of Lies” (John 8:44) and those that lie as Satan’s children. When our lifestyle is consumed by lies, we unite with the character of this world, our flesh, and the devil. Holding to the truth is essentially holding on to Jesus and His Word.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To know that God’s nature, character and Word is true.
- To realize that when we lie, mislead or misrepresent, it is sin because it is contrary to the character of God.
- To recognize that when we do not hold to truth in our life, everything crumbles because there is no solid foundation.

Attitude

- To humbly trust in the absolute truth of God’s Word even if we don’t fully understand it.
- To repent of the lies that we believe in and live with.

Actions

- To watch our words carefully
- To speak truth in what we say and what we do.
- To expose lies in our lives, in others and in the culture we live.

Memory Verses:

John 17:17 “Sanctify them by your truth; your word is truth.”

Ephesians 6:13-14 “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist.”

Scriptures for Further Study:

Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13; John 8:42-47; 14:6; 17:17; 18:37;
1 Corinthians 4:7; Ephesians 6:10-18; James 3:1-10

Questions about the Story:

1. How did the believers of the early church show a sense of community in their fellowship (Acts 4:32. They were of one heart and mind. No one claimed his possessions as his own but they shared all that they had.)
2. What difference did truth make to that fellowship of believers? (Acts 4:32-36. It enhanced the unity of the group, the needs of the group were met, they were encouraged and there was great power working among them.)
3. What is significant about the sharing among the early believers? (Acts 4:32-35. Everyone shared what they had and the gifts were sacrificial.)
4. What is the difference between Joseph (Barnabas) sharing verses Ananias and Sapphira? (Acts 4:36-5:2. Barnabus gave from his heart and it was an encouragement. Ananias and Sapphira held back some of their money for themselves. They lied about the price that they received for the land. Their hidden agenda was destructive to the group.)
5. Who's land did Ananias and Sapphira sell? (Acts 5:1. Although they were the property owners, they were really only the caretakers of land that God had created and given to the Israelites.)
6. Why is Ananias and Sapphira's "small lie" such a big deal? (Acts 5:3. It showed the true condition of their hearts. It was a picture of Satan's work in their lives. They were not only lying to men but to God.)
7. What does a heart that has been filled with Satan look like? (Acts 5:3. It is self-centered, proud, wanting recognition, greedy and not trusting in God.)
8. How did Ananias lie to the Holy Spirit? (Acts 5:3-4. He lied to God since the Lord sees everything and knows everything. The Lord knew that they were pretending to be kind, generous and care about others.)
9. What was the result when Peter revealed the truth about Ananias and Sapphira's lie? (Acts 5:5, 10. When Ananias and Sapphira heard the truth, they fell down and died. Their physical death is a real picture of the death that comes from sin. It is easy to think that sin is small and has little real consequence, but it is sin that separates us from God.)
10. What is significant about the fear that seized people? (Acts 5:5. Everyone was reminded of the seriousness of how they lived before God.)

11. What is significant about Sapphira's testing of the Spirit of the Lord? (Acts 5:9-10. She did not die for her husband's sins but admitted her own participation in the plot.)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is our response when we see the needs of those around us in the body of Christ? (Acts 4:32-35)
2. Do we sacrificially give what we have to help people in need? (Acts 4:32-35) [Sometimes we do give generously like the early church, but it is easy to have other motives as well.]
3. Who owns what you possess? (Acts 4:32) [None of the possessions that we have are in fact ours. We do not have anything that has not been entrusted to us by God.]
4. When we look at our possessions as our own, what are we also doing? (Acts 5:2) [We are making an idol and putting it before God, we are trusting in ourselves rather than Jesus and we are denying someone else a gift that the Lord intended to give through us.]
5. In what ways do we, like Ananias, give half-heartedly of ourselves toward those in need or the fellowship of the body? (Acts 5:2) [We can give to receive personal recognition, we can give what is easy and we can give with mixed motives.]
6. Why is it hard to want to tell the truth? [It points out our sin, and our guilt. We may see the possibility of a short-term benefit to our lives (popularity, temporary gain, etc.), but we miss the fact that every lie will be revealed when we stand before God.]
7. When we lie, whose character are we associating with? (Acts 5:3) [When we lie, we are associating with the character of Satan, who is the "Father of Lies." Genesis 3:4, Matthew 4:1]
8. Why is lying such a serious thing in the eyes of God? (Acts 5:3-9) [Lying is a very serious thing in the eyes of God because it is contrary to His nature and it is opposing Him.]
9. Is there always a consequence for sin? (Acts 5:5-9) [There is always a consequence for sin. At times there is a present consequence, however, for all who are without Christ, there is an eternal consequence of separation from God.]
10. What is our defense against Satan's lies? (Acts 4:33) [The truth of God's Word, the resurrection of Jesus and the grace of God which "was upon them all." Ephesians 6:14 tells us to put on the belt of truth.]

59. Slow to Anger

Nabal and Abigail

1 Samuel 25:2-39

1 Samuel 25

² A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. ³ His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.

⁴ While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. ⁵ So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. ⁶ Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!'"

⁷ "Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. ⁸ Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them."

⁹ When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited.

¹⁰ Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. ¹¹ Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?"

¹² David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. ¹³ David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.

¹⁴ One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: "David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. ¹⁵ Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. ¹⁶ Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them. ¹⁷ Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and

his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.”

¹⁸ Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. ¹⁹ Then she told her servants, “Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

²⁰ As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. ²¹ David had just said, “It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. ²² May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!”

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. ²⁴ She fell at his feet and said: “My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. ²⁵ May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.

²⁶ “Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal. ²⁷ And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. ²⁸ Please forgive your servant’s offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD’s battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. ²⁹ Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. ³⁰ When the LORD has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, ³¹ my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD has brought my master success, remember your servant.”

³² David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. ³³ May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. ³⁴ Otherwise, as surely as the

LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.”

³⁵ Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.”

³⁶ When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak. ³⁷ Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. ³⁸ About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

³⁹ When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head.”

Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife.

Study Questions: Slow to Anger

1 Samuel 25:2-39

Introduction:

Anger is an emotion that can quickly control and capture the actions of anyone, as well as attempt to lead him in negative ways. In anger we can respond irrationally and sinfully, without God's love and peace in our lives. Anger in itself is not sinful. It is possible to have righteous anger (John 2:12-17). However, we are often not able to discern this for ourselves unless we spend time going first to the Lord and His Word. We should not be quick to anger, but rather respond slowly and gently so that love can radiate from our lives.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand how destructive anger is for us and for those around us.
- To submit to the Lord and give our expectations to Him.
- To realize the effectiveness of a calm and humble approach to an intense situation.

Attitude

- To be humble and respectful to those around us, even if we do not agree with them or they are provocative and arrogant.

Actions

- To live calm and quiet lives in the world around us, while holding strong and firm to our convictions.
- To live in fear and respect of God, knowing that we must answer to him for our actions.

Memory Verses:

Psalm 4:4 "In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent."

James 1:19-20 "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

Scriptures for Further Study:

Ecclesiastes 7:9; Romans 12:17-21; Ephesians 4:26, 31; James 1:19-21

Questions about the Story:

1. What was Nabal known for? (1 Samuel 25:3, 14, 17, 25. Nabal was known as surly, mean, insulting, wicked and a fool.)

2. How was Abigail described? (1 Samuel 25:3, 18, 23. She was beautiful, intelligent, quick minded, had good judgment and was humble servant.)
3. What is significant about how David dealt with Nabal? (1 Samuel 25:6-8. David and his men showed him good respect when the men were in the fields. David greeted Nabal with honor and blessing and he asked for whatever Nabal would voluntarily give them.)
4. How does Nabal's response cause David to respond in anger? (1 Samuel 25:10-11, 14. Nabal's response of arrogance, pride and insults caused David to feel cheated, disrespected and dishonored.)
5. Did David respond out of his own anger or as a judgment from God? (1 Samuel 25:22, 26-32. Although David responded with the thought of God on his mind, it was the Lord who protected him from needless bloodshed from a rash response. See also Romans 12:17-21)
6. How does Abigail's actions affect the situation? (1 Samuel 25:18-19, 23. Her kind, generous, loving and humble response literally stopped David and his men in their tracks. Her response turned away David's wrath and made up for Nabal's wickedness.)
7. How does Abigail's speech change David's response? (1 Samuel 25:24-30. She first accepts the blame personally then apologies for Nabal, and points out that the Lord is in charge. She honors David as master, recognizes his good work and honors his name. She appeals to David's future destiny, his conscience and the insignificance of this one moment.)
8. How does David respond to Abigail?(1 Samuel 25:32-36. He praises the Lord and recognizes that Abigail was sent by God to keep him from avenging himself. He listened to her, accepted her gift and sent her home in peace.)
9. What does Abigail's response to Nabal show? (1 Samuel 25:36-37. She continued to show Nabal respect by telling him the events of the previous day. She continued to trust the Lord to be her judge and her defender.)
10. Why did David praise the Lord when he heard about Nabal's death? (1 Samuel 25:39. David saw the LORD as the One who had upheld his cause, as Nabal had been treating him with contempt. God had kept Nabal's wrongdoing on his own head.)

Discussion Questions:

1. How would we be described by those around us? (1 Samuel 25:2-3) [People know us by our character. It goes before us and is a witness of who we are on the inside.]
2. What does our response to others say about us? (1 Samuel 25:4-11) [How we respond to people outwardly is a picture of what is in our hearts on the inside. In this text we can see a wide range of responses and emotions. It is the Lord working on the inside of Abigail and David that shines in the end. Ecclesiastes 7:9]
3. How are we like Nabal to in our responses to people? (1 Samuel 25:10-11) [We can be greedy, self-centered and unconcerned about others.]
4. How can we easily respond in anger like David? (1 Samuel 25:13) [We can try to take revenge when we have been wronged. We can feel justified in our actions and even use God as the reason for our “righteous anger.” James 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:26, 31]
5. What would our life look like if we were responding like Abigail? (1 Samuel 25:18-31) [We would be considering carefully what was going on around us and taking action to intervene. We would be generous and humble, accepting the blame for problems rather than pointing to others. We would be showing respect and honor when we interact with others.]
6. When we respond in anger, who does it end up affecting? (1 Samuel 25:17) [The disaster of our sin, especially anger, ends up affecting not only us, but also all of those around us.]
7. What is the source of Nabal and David’s anger? (1 Samuel 25:10-13) [Both of them had expectations of the other. David expected to receive some gifts of food for the protection that he offered Nabal’s men. Nabal expected that everything he owned was his alone and he had no obligation to share his things with anyone.]
8. What kind of life does God want us to have in order to better represent Christ? (1 Samuel 25:17-18) [God does not want us be men and women filled with anger, rather that we would be slow to anger, filled with love and peace that surpasses understanding so that when people look at our lives they would see a reflection of His Son. Exodus 34:6]
9. How should we respond when we see those around us rising up in anger? (1 Samuel 25:17-18) [Like Abigail, we should lose no time in responding in love and peace, and making

amends even if we are not directly responsible for the negative actions that started the anger to arise.]

10. What are some of the characteristics of a peacemaker? (1 Samuel 25:18-28) [Peacemakers are wise and humble, mediators, gift givers, and encouragers.]
11. What are some of the ways in which we can act as the peacemaker among those around us? (1 Samuel 25:18-31) [We can walk in the spirit of God. Galatians 5:16-26]
12. How did Jesus act when He was treated badly in response to the good He gave? [Jesus continued to love those around Him and did not open His mouth or show anger. He allowed God to be the final judge.]
13. What do we learn about the justice of God in regard to sin from this passage? (1 Samuel 25:38) [The Lord will always have the final word on how we live our lives. The only thing that can save us on that judgment day is Jesus. Jesus is the one, like Abigail, who took the blame for our foolishness. He is the one that stops us from the guilt of our own bloodshed and He is the one who made peace with God on our behalf.]

60. Manager of Your Home

Mary, Joseph and Jesus - Luke 2:39-52

Eli and His Sons - 1 Samuel 2:12-26

Luke 2

³⁹When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

⁴¹Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. ⁴³After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

⁴⁹"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

1 Samuel 2

¹² Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD. ¹³ Now it was the practice of the priests with the people that whenever anyone offered a sacrifice and while the meat was being boiled, the servant of the priest would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand. ¹⁴ He would plunge it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot, and the priest would take for himself whatever the fork brought up. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. ¹⁵ But even before the fat was burned, the servant of the priest would come and say to the man

who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw."

¹⁶ If the man said to him, "Let the fat be burned up first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would then answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force."

¹⁷ This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they were treating the LORD's offering with contempt.

¹⁸ But Samuel was ministering before the LORD -a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹ Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. ²⁰ Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the LORD give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the LORD." Then they would go home. ²¹ And the LORD was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

²² Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ²³ So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. ²⁴ No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. ²⁵ If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.

²⁶ And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.

Study Questions: Manager of your Home **Luke 2:39-52 & 1 Samuel 2:12-26**

Introduction:

In managing one's household, there is little that a parent can do to control the heart of the others who are in the family (spouse and children). However, when God's Word is honored in the home, the Lord changes us from the inside out. When God's Word is taught in the home, worship is a part of family life and the fruit of the Spirit of God is living in our lives; it will make an enormous difference in the home. To manage a home well means to keep the Word of God in the center and the Lord as the leader of the family. Without the Lord God as the master of the house, it will become either a dictatorship run by fear of the leader or an anarchy where everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes. The Word of God is the instruction manual for managing one's house and Jesus is the head of that house.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand the importance of raising your family according to the Word of God and training them in that Word.
- To recognize that God alone is the head or manager of the house and that He is the one who can change lives.

Attitude

- To trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Actions

- To keep love and discipline balanced in the home.
- To first seek the Lord personally then guide and direct your family to be centered in the Lord.

Memory Verse:

Psalm 127:1 "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain."

Scriptures for Further Study:

Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Psalm 127:1; Proverbs 13:24; 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:17-21; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:6-11

Questions about the Story:

1. Why does it say that Joseph and Mary did everything required by the Law? (Luke 2:39. It shows that the Lord was working in their hearts. They followed the Law because it was a requirement but also because God had put that desire in their hearts. In Luke 1:38 Mary says, "I am the servant of the Lord.")
2. What is significant about the reference to "Joseph and Mary" as parents? (Luke 2:39-48. Joseph and Mary were working together to raise Jesus. Repeatedly it describes them together.)
3. How does the text describe Jesus and what made him unique? (Luke 2:40. He grew and became strong, He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him. Wisdom from the Lord and God's grace made all of the difference.)
4. Why is it important that Mary and Joseph went to the Passover every year in Jerusalem? (Luke 2:41-42. The worship of the Lord was a priority in their lives for their family. Jerusalem was a long journey by foot, from Nazareth, but to celebrate Passover was to remember what the Lord had done to bring His people out of slavery and to save them from death.)
5. What is significant about Jesus staying behind in Jerusalem in the temple? (Luke 2:43-49. He desired to be there, He knew that it was His Father's house and He listened to and learned from the teachers.)
6. Why were people amazed at His understanding and His answers? (Luke 2:47. It was the wisdom and the grace of God that shown out from His life.)
7. What is significant about Jesus' going with Mary and Joseph back to Nazareth? (Luke 2:51. He obeyed and submitted to their leadership as parents. He continued to grow in wisdom, stature and in favor with God and men.)
8. How are Eli's sons described? (1 Samuel 2:12. Eli's sons were described as wicked men with no regard for the LORD. Even though Eli was a priest of the Lord, his sons treated the Lord's offering with contempt and they were sleeping with the women who served the Lord.)
9. What does their treatment of the offerings to the Lord show? (1 Samuel 2:13-17. They were not treating it as an offering to God, but as something they were entitled to. It shows that their hearts were hard and unbelieving. They did not care about God, nor His honor.)

10. What does their treatment of the women in the service at the house of God show? (1 Samuel 2:22. Their sin and their disregard for the Lord was also corrupting others.)
11. Why were Eli the priest's sons acting so badly? What was missing? (1 Samuel 2:22-25. Although Eli rebuked them they needed discipline. They should have been removed from their role and punished for their sin long before Eli heard about it from the people. The work of the Lord was missing in their lives.)
12. What stands out from the response of the sons toward their father's rebuke? (1 Samuel 2:25. They did not listen to him and the Lord had kept them from listening for it was His will to put them to death.)
13. Why is there such a strong contrast between the boy Samuel and Eli's sons? (1 Samuel 2:18-21, 26. Samuel was ministering before, listening to and growing up in the presence of the Lord. It was the Lord in His life that made all of the difference.)
14. What do you notice about the last statement that describes both Samuel and Jesus? (1 Samuel 2:26, Luke 1:52. Both Samuel and Jesus were growing in the Lord. It is that alone that describes the difference that the Lord makes inside.)

Discussion Questions:

1. What would our home look like if it were managed well? (Luke 2:39-40) [Like Mary and Joseph, we would desire to follow the Word of the Lord, it would be our custom to go to the house of the Lord to worship and it would be a home filled with the grace of God. Ephesians 6:1-4]
2. Why is it important to manage the home well? (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
3. How do we work together with our spouses to manage our homes? (Luke 2:39, 48) [We must support one another, pray together and be united as a family.]
4. What is our role as parents in raising a family or managing it well? (Luke 1:39-42) [Our role begins as we spend time in the Word of God, in worship and in fervent prayer for our children. It continues as we love and discipline them well. Discipline without love leads to rebellion. Love without discipline leads children to do whatever they want. Deuteronomy 6:4-9]
5. What is the Lord's role in how our children grow up? (Luke 2:40) [It is the grace of God, a gift, when either we, or

our children follow Him. It is evidence of God's work in a person's heart when they desire the Lord or grow in Him, but it is our own evil nature that rebel's against God or shows Him contempt.]

6. With the knowledge that God must be the one to work in our lives to nurture us by His grace, how should that affect our view of parenting? (Luke 2:40) [We should strive to lead a godly example for our children but ultimately be turning them over to their true Heavenly Father, the Lord God Almighty, who is able to do more work than we ever could.]
7. Is your family centered on the Word of God?
8. As lived out in the life of Jesus as a boy, what do we see is the ultimate goal that we should have for our children as they grow up? (Luke 2:51-52) [Our goal as parents should be for our children to be living in obedience and that they would grow in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and men. Proverbs 22:6]
9. As we see with the sons of Eli, is it enough merely to surround our children with the things of God in order to change their lives? [Bringing our children to church and surrounding them with the things of God is not enough to change their lives, as we see both of the sons of Eli were fulfilling the duties of priests. Instead, there must be a constant petition to the Lord to work and minister in the child's life. There must also be an involvement by the parents in the lives of their children to see how they are doing in their walk with the Lord. Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 13:24]
10. How much was Eli involved with the lives of his sons if he did not know of their sinful practices except by what he heard from those around him? (1 Samuel 2:22-25) [Since it was only after Eli heard of their sins that he rebuked them, it shows that Eli was not involved in the lives of his sons and wasn't holding them accountable to their position as priests.]
11. Like Eli, if we hear of our children living or walking in sin, what should our response be? (1 Samuel 2:22-25) [We should rebuke those in our household who are living in sin and discipline them in love. They need the Word and prayer and Jesus to transform their life.]
12. How much time and effort are you investing in your family? Does your wife and children know that you love them?

61. Not Quarrelsome

Rehoboam

1 Kings 12:1-16

1 Kings 12

¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king.

² When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. ³ So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him:

⁴ “Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.” ⁵ Rehoboam answered, “Go away for three days and then come back to me.” So the people went away.

⁶ Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. “How would you advise me to answer these people?” he asked. ⁷ They replied, “If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.”

⁸ But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. ⁹ He asked them, “What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, ‘Lighten the yoke your father put on us?’” ¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him replied, “Tell these people who have said to you, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter’-tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist.

¹¹ My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.”

¹² Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, “Come back to me in three days.” ¹³ The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, ¹⁴ he followed the advice of the young men and said, “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.”

¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the LORD, to fulfill the word the LORD had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite. ¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

“What share do we have in David,
what part in Jesse's son?
To your tents, O Israel!
Look after your own house, O David!”
So the Israelites went home.

Study Questions: Not Quarrelsome

1 Kings 12:1-16

Introduction:

Many times in our lives, we like to have everything done our way, for our own pleasure. This sinful behavior often shows itself in selfishness, quarrelling, and aggression. We see this same attitude in the life of Rehoboam when he stepped into the position of king over Israel. Rehoboam was the son of King Solomon who had used the people to build many grand buildings. Instead of listening to the people and working with them, he set his face against them and chose to listen to the council that would bring strife instead of healing between him and the people. Jesus was also a king in the lineage of King David, but in contrast to Rehoboam's approach, He did not open His mouth when He was on trial. Jesus the King, became the servant of the people, even to the point of death. Three days later, Jesus rose as the eternal king of peace and He waits for the opportunity to rule over our lives.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand the depth of our sinful selfish nature.
- To realize that supporting and serving others will bring us success. By restricting them, you will lose their respect.

Attitude

- To have love, compassion, and mercy for those who support us, realizing that together we make up a body and each part is important.

Actions

- To work with people rather than against them.
- To serve those over us and under us.
- To treat others the same way that we would want to be treated.

Memory Verse:

2 Timothy 2:24 "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful."

Scriptures for Further Study:

Matthew 7:12; Luke 10:27; Galatians 5:14; 2 Timothy 2:23-24; James 1:19

Proverbs about quarreling. 15:18; 17:14; 20:23; 26:20-21

Proverbs for a quarrelsome wife. 21:9,19; 27:15-16

Questions about the Story:

1. What is in the title of “king” that begins to cause problems? (1 Kings 12:1. It is a title that says one person has control or rule over the others. A king has a kingdom and subjects, which means ownership and obedience. It is a title that leads to pride and arrogance on the part of the king.)
2. What does it suggest that all of the Israelites went to Shechem to make Rehoboam king? (1 Kings 12:1. It suggests that they thought of themselves as the ones in charge, the ones choosing this person or the ones granting him this title.)
3. How did this situation lead to a conflict? (1 Kings 12:1-5. Both sides were trying to control the situation rather than serving one another or looking out for each another.)
4. Were the demands of the people right or not? Why? (1 Kings 12:4. It is reasonable that the people would feel the need to lighten the harsh labor. It is also true that when people are given freedom they tend to abuse it.)
5. What does Rehoboam’s request for advice show? (1 Kings 12:6-10. It shows his need for the advice of others, but it also shows his immaturity as a leader by listening to the young men and his selfishness as a person by his desire to control them.)
6. Why did Rehoboam reject the advice of the elders? (1 Kings 12:7-8. The title king assumes that the people are the servants rather than their advice that the king should serve the people. He was thinking of himself. Pride can get in the way of wise counsel.)
7. How is the answer from the young men divisive? (1 Kings 12:8. Rehoboam would have had to force the Israelites to follow him. There was no consideration given to the Israelites. There was no consideration given to the consequences.)
8. How did Rehoboam’s leadership breed quarrels? (He consulted the elders for advice and then completely disregarded what they told him. He failed to really listen to the people when he decided to satisfy his own desires. Then, when he did address the people, he talked to them harshly.)
9. How could have Rehoboam brought peace to this conflict instead of division? (He could have listened to the advice of the elders. He could have asked the Israelites how he could help them rather than adding demands to them and he could have responded gently with compassion.)
10. What was the result of Rehoboam’s harsh answer to the people of Israel? (1 Kings 12:16. The people went back to

their own tents and the strength of the people of Israel was divided.)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways we put ourselves above others? (1 Kings 12:1) [We can use titles to elevate us. Our attitude toward others can be arrogant. We can make people come to us or wait for us.]
2. What are some times that we try to control situations? (1 Kings 12:1-5) [We do that when we resist the authorities that the Lord has put over us and when we tell others what to do. We even try to tell God what to do]
3. How can we bring peace to situations rather than being quarrelsome? (1 Kings 12:7) [We can be servants to people rather than demanding or expecting our own way. We can give gentle responses and lighten our expectations on people. We can listen to godly advice and seek the Lord.]
4. How can we show those around us that we respect them? How can we serve them?
5. As a leader, how can we be motivating those under us to work toward a common goal?
6. What kind of advice should we as Christians seek? (1 Kings 12:7-11) [First, we should be looking to advice that is in line with the Word of God. Secondly, we should listen to those who God has gifted in a specific field or background. 2 Timothy 2:23-24]
7. How do we fuel a confrontation or an argument by not listening to people?
8. What is in the end a consequence for harsh, rash, and quarrelsome leadership? (1 Kings 12:16) [We see that the people under such leadership abandon ownership in the group and forsake commitment to the organization as a whole. If any remain, they are not striving for the best to be done, but are merely doing the bare minimum. The result is a divided kingdom.]
9. How can we overcome a quarrelsome spirit? [By trusting in the Lord, praying to Him, asking forgiveness and by the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23]
10. How does Jesus death on the cross reconcile or reunite that which we divided? [We are separated from God by our sin and Christ alone makes it possible to be re-united with Him.]

62. Faithfulness in Marriage

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11:1-17, 26-27; 12:1-14

2 Samuel 11

¹ In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then ¹ she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

⁶ So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

¹⁰ When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?"

¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

¹² Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵ In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." ¹⁶ So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. ¹⁷ When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.

²⁶ When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. ²⁷ After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

2 Samuel 12

¹ The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

⁴ “Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.”

⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”

⁷ Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹ Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’”

¹¹ “This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”

¹³ Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.”

Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. ¹⁴ But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die.”

Study Questions: Faithfulness in Marriage

2 Samuel 11:1-17, 26-27; 12:1-14

Introduction:

Marriage is a sacred institution that is commissioned by God for a man and woman to be joined together and be united as one flesh. Marriage is also given to us as a picture of the believer's relationship with Jesus. Unfortunately, marriages are under attack in our world. The world, our own flesh and Satan all come against us to destroy our marriages. Yet, we are our own enemies if we allow temptation, broken promises or anger to creep into our lives and destroy our marriages. We must protect our marriages through communication, accountability and by keeping Christ in the center.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand that God hates divorce; what God has joined together man must not separate.
- To understand that to break our marriage covenant is a violation against our spouse and against God who joined us.

Attitude

- To love your wife as Christ loved the church unto death.
- To respect your husband as unto the Lord.

Actions

- To have good communication with our spouse and accountability with another trusted friend.
- To submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- To have integrity in our marriage and remain faithful until death.

Memory Verse:

Ephesians 5:33 "However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

Scriptures for Further Study:

Genesis 2:18-25; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Matthew 5:27-32; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 7; 13:4-8; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Timothy 3:2; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 John 1:9

Questions about the Story:

1. Where did David's mistakes begin and how did they multiply? (2 Samuel 11:1-4. David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole army, while he remained in Jerusalem. Then when he saw a woman bathing he continued to look, taking

- special note of her beauty. The glance became a gaze, and then an inquiry, then a request and then an action.)
2. What does David's fall into sin show about him? (2 Samuel 11:1-4. David was only thinking of himself rather than the Lord, the war, the ark, his faithful soldier or the full consequences of his actions.)
 3. What was David's response to Bathsheba after she realized that she was pregnant? (2 Samuel 11:5. He continued down the slippery path by trying to cover up his sin.)
 4. What did David do to attempt to cover up his sin? (2 Samuel 11:6-7. He took Uriah out of the battle, tried to get him to sleep with his wife, made him drunk to get him to go home and then finally he wrote Uriah's death certificate for Joab to carry out.)
 5. How does Uriah show integrity? (2 Samuel 11:6-16. He obeyed all of the commands of the king and he would not take the comforts of home when "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents.")
 6. What commandments did David break? (You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not murder. You shall put no other gods before me.)
 7. What happened to Bathsheba after Uriah died? (2 Samuel 11:17-27. She mourned her husband's death. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house.)
 8. What was the attitude of the Lord toward David? (2 Samuel 11:27. The LORD was displeased with what David had done.)
 9. Why does the LORD send Nathan to David? (2 Samuel 12:1. He sent Nathan to convict David of his sin and to pronounce judgment on him for what he had done.)
 10. Why did David have such a strong reaction to the story? (2 Samuel 12:5-6. David had been a shepherd and knew what it was like to care for a single sheep. In David's anger about the sheep, he pronounced his own judgment deserving death.)
 11. What was the consequence going to be for David for his evil actions? (2 Samuel 12:10-14. The sword would now never depart from his family, calamity would be upon him, another man would sleep with his wives, and his son that Bathsheba was going to bear would die.)
 12. What is David's response to the Word from the LORD? (2 Samuel 12:13. David admitted that he had sinned against the LORD and Nathan says that the LORD had taken away his sin.)

Discussion Questions:

1. When does sin seem like it comes to us most frequently as exemplified in the life of David? (2 Samuel 11:1) [Sin comes to us when we are not in the place that we are supposed to be. When our guard is down and we are not watching.]
2. How does sin multiply in our lives? (2 Samuel 11:1-4) [Like David, it starts with a look or a thought and we allow it to become a desire without confronting it with God's Word. Soon the desire becomes an attitude and then an action. Matthew 5:27-30]
3. Instead of turning our attention away from sin, how often do we continue to pursue sin? (2 Samuel 11:2-4) [We also like David allow our thoughts, attitudes and actions control us rather than giving complete control of our lives over to the Lord.]
4. In what ways can we be guarding ourselves from the sin of lust and adultery in our lives? [1 Thessalonians 4:3-8]
5. What should be our immediate response as Christians when we are tempted? [We should turn the other way and flee from temptation. Galatians 5:16-25]
6. In looking at the story of David, Uriah, and Bathsheba, what can we learn is always the result of sin in our life? [We can see that sin always brings about more sin, destruction and death. This destruction doesn't always result physically here on this earth but we can know for certain that it brings spiritual results.]
7. What do we learn about the secretive nature of marital unfaithfulness? (2 Samuel 11:6-17) [The sin of marital unfaithfulness can be done deceitfully and secretive, yet, God knows what is done in secret and we must answer to Him. 1 Corinthians 6:15-20]
8. Even when "no one else" may be exposed to our sin, who is the One that our sin is always before? How should that affect how we live? [The Lord God is always aware of our sin and our lives are as an open book before Him. We must live holy and reverent lives remembering that He knows everything and we must answer for all of our sin.]
9. How can we be keeping our relationship with others accountable and in the open?
10. What do we see about the love and compassion of the Lord in His sending of Nathan the prophet to David? (2 Samuel 12:1) [We see that the Lord is gracious and compassionate to us.]

While David was still in his sin, God sent Nathan the prophet to bring David His Word.]

11. What do we see about the power of God to convict hearts by His Word? (2 Samuel 12:1-6, 13) [After Nathan told David the parallel story regarding his sin, David was enraged and said that such a man deserves to die. After realizing that this man was himself, he admitted his sin.]
12. What do we learn about the compassion of the Lord to forgive sins? (2 Samuel 12:13) [We can know that the Lord is willing and able to forgive us our sins when we confess them before Him, just as He was willing to forgive David.]
13. What do we learn about the consequence of sin even after we have asked for forgiveness from the Lord? (2 Samuel 12:13-14) [Even though the Lord is just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness, we still must face the consequences for sin in our lives. Proverbs 6:23-29]
14. How can we strengthen our marriages? [Invest love and time into our spouse. Do daily devotions together.]
15. Since marriage is used as a picture of our relationship with Christ in the Bible, how does this text point us to Jesus? [We are all like David. We have all been unfaithful to the bridegroom, Jesus. Yet, He is faithful and remains committed to the covenant relationship that we have with Him.]

63. Being a Servant

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

John 13:1-17

John 13

¹It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

²The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." ⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Study Questions: Being a Servant

John 13:1-17

Introduction:

A servant spirit is one of the hardest things for us to adopt in our lives. Our sinful flesh is filled with pride and self-centeredness. We often want to see ourselves recognized rather than to serve. However, God has a different calling for us. He says that if anyone is to be great he must become the servant of all. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. By doing so, we model Christ to them. In Philippians it says that Jesus took on the very nature of a servant. He served us by becoming obedient unto death and taking away our sins. Now we can serve others by giving them the forgiveness, hope, and grace of God.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand that “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”
- To recognize the real needs that people have and pray that the Lord will give us His love for them.

Attitude

- To consider others as better than ourselves and to look to their interests before our own.
- To love our neighbors as ourselves.

Actions

- To serve others because Jesus served us first.
- To show practical tangible expressions of love.

Memory Verses:

Matthew 23:12 “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

Philippians 2:3-4 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Scriptures for Further Study:

Matthew 18:1-4; 23:1-12; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26-27; Ephesians 4:2; Philippians 2:3-11; Colossians 3:23-24; 1 Peter 5:5-6

Questions about the Story:

1. What was Jesus' purpose in washing the disciples feet ? (John 13:1. Jesus wanted to show His disciples the full extent of His love.)
2. What is the full extent of His love? (John 13:1. The text refers to Jesus washing the disciples feet, but it is more than just water and a towel. Judas the betrayer and Peter the denier were both among those whose feet Jesus had washed. The dirt of their feet was only surface deep. The dirt of each one's sins went to their heart.)
3. What is significant about the fact that they were celebrating Passover and that this event happened the night before Jesus was crucified? (John 13:1. Passover was the celebration of the time when the Angel of Death passed over the houses of the Israelites because they had sacrificed a lamb and put its blood on the door posts. Jesus was now becoming the final Passover lamb and his blood on the posts of our lives is what saves us from death. That is the full extent of His love.)
4. What did Jesus tell the disciples about God the Father? (John 13:3. Jesus told them that the Father had put all things under His power, He told them He had come from God and was returning to God.)
5. Even though Jesus had the power of the Father placed under Him, what did He decide to do for His disciples to show the full extent of His love for them? (John 13:4-5. Jesus took the role of a servant for His disciples as he took up a towel and a basin in order to wash and dry their feet.)
6. Why did Peter respond strongly to Jesus washing his feet? (John 13:6. Because Peter should have been washing Jesus' feet.)
7. Why does Jesus say Peter would have no part with Him? (John 13:8. Peter must learn and live the role of a servant. It is the way of the servant that makes us one with Jesus.)
8. Why did Jesus wash Judas' feet when He knew what Judas would do? (John 13:10-11. Jesus showed the full extent of His love by washing the feet of those who would betray Him.)
9. Why did Jesus set this example for the disciples? (John 13:13. So they could see that things are opposite in the kingdom of God. The "Teacher" or "Lord" is not above someone else, but rather they are the servant.)
10. What did Jesus command his disciples to do after He had washed their feet? (John 13:14. He told them that they should also wash one another's feet.)

11. What had Jesus given to His disciples? (John 13:15. Jesus had given them an example that they should do as He had done.)
12. What did Jesus tell his disciples regarding their obedience to His command? (John 13:17. You will be blessed if you serve.)

Discussion Questions:

1. How can we wash people's feet? (John 13:1) [We can literally wash their feet, but more practically we can help them with anything that they need in their lives.]
2. How can we show people the full extent of Jesus love? (John 13:1) [There are many ways that we can serve people, but the full extent of Jesus' love goes beyond helping people with their needs. His love means loving our enemies, giving sacrificially of ourselves and living Jesus to them.]
3. What does it mean for us that Jesus was the Passover lamb? (John 13:1) [If Jesus is our Passover lamb it means that we do not have to fear death because the blood of Jesus protects us. It means that we are forgiven once and for all.]
4. If we are in some position of authority over someone else, what does this text have to say to us? (John 13:3-5, 13-14) [If Jesus is our servant; then we are to be a servant of everyone. Mark 10:45]
5. How does it feel to be served? Would you respond like Peter? (John 13:6-9) [It can feel uncomfortable or awkward to serve us, especially if it is someone that we view as above us. It is also possible to let pride creep in and start to expect to be served or to take others for granted.]
6. Who is the role of serving to be for? [Everyone. Whether you have a high or low position, Jesus calls for all who are His disciples to take the role of servant.]
7. Is there any qualification as to who we are supposed to serve? How did Jesus treat the people around Him? (John 13:6-11) [We are to be serving all men, even those who would try to refuse our service or those who hate us.]
8. Who are we a living example for?
9. What is your attitude toward serving? (Matthew 23:1-12)
10. What character is shown from your life when you are willing to be a servant to those around you?
11. What does the Lord promise will result from serving? (John 13:17) [Jesus promises that we will be blessed if we serve. This blessing is ultimately the blessing of being Christ-like and serving your heavenly Father.]
12. How can we serve those who God has placed around us?

64. Not Double-Minded

King Ahaziah

2 Kings 1:1-17

2 Kings

¹ After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled against Israel. ² Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury."

³ But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?'" ⁴ Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'" So Elijah went.

⁵ When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you come back?" ⁶ "A man came to meet us," they replied. "And he said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you and tell him, "This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending men to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!"'"

⁷ The king asked them, "What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?" ⁸ They replied, "He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist." The king said, "That was Elijah the Tishbite."

⁹ Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!'" ¹⁰ Elijah answered the captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

¹¹ At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, "Man of God, this is what the king says, 'Come down at once!'" ¹² "If I am a man of God," Elijah replied, "may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

¹³ So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. “Man of God,” he begged, “please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! ¹⁴ See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!” ¹⁵ The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king.

¹⁶ He told the king, “This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!”

¹⁷ So he died, according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Because Ahaziah had no son, Joram succeeded him as king in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.

Study Questions: Not Double-Minded

2 Kings 1:1-17

Introduction:

We look to the Lord when it is convenient for us, but then turn to other “gods” the rest of the time. We must not waver between two masters but to choose whom we will serve in our lives. Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” Matthew 6:24

Ahaziah was King Ahab’s son. He followed other gods as his mother Jezebel and his father Ahab had done. Elijah met King Ahab on Mount Carmel to confront him and all of the people of Israel with their double-minded behavior. Elijah had said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.’ But the people said nothing.” King Ahaziah knew of Elijah and was aware of the God in Israel, but he went looking to other gods for answers.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand that we have one true God and need not look to other gods, other things or even ourselves to place our trust.
- To know God’s will through His Word.

Attitude

- To trust the Lord our God in all matters of life and surrender our spirit and heart to following Him alone.

Actions

- To seek the Lord in times of hardships and blessings.
- To stand strong on the conviction to follow the Lord and not be led astray.

Memory Verse:

1 Kings 18:21 “Elijah went before the people and said, ‘How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.’ But the people said nothing.”

Scriptures for Further Study:

Joshua 24:14-15; 1 Kings 18; Proverbs 3:5-6; Luke 16:13

Questions about the Story:

1. 2 Kings begins with a list of problems. What stands out and what is missing? (2 Kings 1:1-2. Ahab's death, Moab's rebellion and Ahaziah's injury are trials that can happen in life. What stands out is that when these trials came, they did not seek the Lord for help.)
2. How was King Ahaziah a double-minded king? (2 Kings 1:1-2, 9) [King Ahaziah was ruling the land of Israel, the people of God. When faced with trouble he decided to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, and then after hearing a message from the Lord through Elijah, he orders Elijah to come.]
3. What is interesting about the conversation Elijah had with the angel of the Lord? (2 Kings 1:3-4. The angel of the Lord told Elijah that messengers would come, the purpose of their trip, that the king was in bed and that he would not recover.)
4. Why did the Lord answer Ahaziah's question about recovery when He wasn't asked? (2 Kings 1:4. It was the grace of God to send the message. It was an opportunity for Ahaziah to repent and ask for the mercy of God.)
5. What is notable about the message of the Lord that Elijah spoke both to the messengers and to the king? (2 Kings 1:4, 6,16) [He repeats the same message word for word each time it was presented.]
6. Instead of repenting or asking God for mercy, how does the king respond? (2 Kings 1:7-8. The king realized that the message had come from Elijah, the well-known prophet of God who had defeated and killed the 450 prophets of Baal under his father. However, instead of repenting or asking for help from Elijah, he sent men to arrest him.)
7. How do we know that the king knew of Elijah and had encountered him in the past? (2 Kings 1:8. The king was able to identify him just based on the simple description of his outward appearance of a garment of hair and a leather belt.)
8. Why did the king send troops to arrest Elijah three times? (2 Kings 1:9-15. The king had a hard heart and would not acknowledge the true and living God of Israel. It also shows that the people of Israel had forgotten the battle on Mount Carmel and the power of the Lord displayed there.)
9. If all the captains acknowledged that Elijah was a man of God, why did the first two order Elijah to come? (2 Kings 1:9-12. The first two captains and the king saw Elijah as their servant who must obey them. Elijah was a servant of the King of Kings and followed God alone.)

10. What is the purpose of the fire coming down from heaven and killing so many people? (2 Kings 1:9-12. The fire from heaven should have pointed the king back to the battle on Mount Carmel and the power of the LORD displayed there. Even the soldiers would have known of the battle between the Lord and Baal, however, they would not listen.)
11. What difference is there in the response of the third captain that arrives to talk with Elijah? (2 Kings 1:13-14. The third captain comes humbly, falling on his knees and stating that they are Elijah's servants. The third captain showed respect, honor and recognized that the Lord is the one to be feared instead of the king.)
12. What finally allowed Elijah to get up and go down to the king? (2 Kings 1:15. The angel of the Lord came to Elijah and spoke to him telling him to go down with the king's men to see the king.)
13. What did Elijah tell the king when he arrived? (2 Kings 1:16. Elijah relayed the Word of the Lord, the same Word that he had spoken to the king earlier - that the king would surely die.)
14. According to what did King Ahaziah die? (2 Kings 1:17. Ahaziah died according to the Word of the Lord spoken through Elijah.)

Discussion Questions:

1. Who/What do you most quickly turn to when you have some type of problem come up in your life?
2. Who do we listen to for guidance? [We listen to popular culture, worldly leaders and our own ideas. Instead, we need to listen to the Lord through His Word. There are many other voices that try to lure us away from God.]
3. What can we notice about being a messenger for God? What kind of message would He have us deliver at times? (2 Kings 1:4) [Being a messenger for the Lord can be hard and difficult because the message may be condemning or hard. It may also be difficult because the people don't want to hear it.]
4. How does God work in our lives so that we remain single-minded? (2 Kings 1:3-4) [He gives us His Word with all of the many stories of His work through history. He gives us prophets who apply that Word and He gives us His Spirit to point out our sin.]
5. Do people recognize us as men and women of God? Do they see us as living a double life? (2 Kings 1:6-8)

6. What are some of ways that we must take a stand for the Lord? [Like Elijah, we must stand against the other gods and idols of the world. We must be a servant of the Lord and not give in to the pressures of others.]
7. What have been some tough situations where you have had to trust in the Lord?
8. How do we discern what is a from the Lord verses our own desire verses another person? (2 Kings 1:15) [We should listen to the Lord through His Word and prayer.]
9. How can our presentation of God's Word be consistent? [We must follow God's Word without going to the right or the left. It must be accurate and free from additions or subtractions.]
10. What do we see about the faithfulness of the Lord to His Word? (2 Kings 1:17) [We see that the Lord is faithful to His Word, seeing what He says will happen come to fruition. This should encourage us because we can know that we can rely on the Word of the Lord and in His promises for our lives.]
11. What does it mean to be double-minded? (See Matthew 23:27-28; James 3:9-12) [To be double-minded is be saying one thing and doing another, or be living two separate ways.]
12. Like Ahaziah, what are other 'gods' that we are tempted to turn to in our lives?
13. How does God see double-mindedness? (See 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4) [Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world lives as an enemy of God, and the love of God is not in him.]
14. How should we as Christians live when we face the temptation to be double-minded? (See Joshua 24:24-15; 1 Kings 18:21)
15. What has been the Lord's single-minded goal from the beginning? [He has desired a relationship with His people and Jesus took the fire of God's wrath for our sin at the cross in order to make that relationship possible.]

65. Honest Gain

Simon the Sorcerer

Acts 8:9-25

Acts 8

⁹Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, ¹⁰and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is the divine power known as the Great Power.” ¹¹They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. ¹²But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money ¹⁹and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

²⁰Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! ²¹You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. ²²Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. ²³For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

²⁴Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me.”

²⁵When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

Study Questions: Honest Gain

Acts 8:9-25

Introduction:

Simon had amazed many with his sorcery and magic. It had become a thing of prestige, power and money. When he tried to do the same with the healings or the Holy Spirit he received a sharp rebuke from Peter. In the Christian faith, men and women do the same when they try to control the people or the work of God for personal gain. It might be to get money, popularity or power. True, lasting and eternal gain can only come through Jesus and what He has done for us. If we look to ourselves, we have nothing to boast in except our weakness and our need for the Lord. Simon the Sorcerer was a man seeking attention and was enthralled with different types of “power.” We see that his thirst for power and focus on gain brought about trouble, as it does for us as well.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father and not from our own efforts.
- To realize that true gain is work that is done for the Kingdom of God.

Attitude

- To believe that there is power in the things of God, but they are for the purpose of honoring God, not ourselves.
- To believe that God must increase and we must decrease.

Actions

- To point people to Jesus in everything so that it would bring honor and glory to His name.
- To do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Memory Verses:

John 3:30 “He must become greater; I must become less.”

2 Corinthians 10:17-18 “But, ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.’ For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”

Scriptures for Further Study:

Matthew 6:19-20; 23:12; John 3:30; 2 Corinthians 10:17-18; 11:18-30; James 4:6, 10

Questions about the Story:

1. What do we know about Philip? (Acts 8:9-13. Philip preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus rather than his own name. Philip was bringing people into the kingdom of God through faith and baptism. Philip also did great signs and miracles for the glory of God.)
2. How does Simon compare with Philip? (Acts 8:9-10. Simon had practiced sorcery and magic for a long time. He boasted about himself and people gave him recognition as the Great Power. His work was only magic.)
3. What is the difference between the work of Simon and the work of Philip? (Acts 8:9-13. Simon was only doing what he himself was capable to do. Philip was not doing anything in his own strength. He was doing the work of God, for the glory of God and the kingdom of God.)
4. What is interesting about Samaria accepting the word of God? (Acts 8:14-17. The Samaritans and those from Jerusalem had previously hated each other. The disciple, John, had previously asked about calling down fire on the Samaritans. Now, Peter and John were praying for the Holy Spirit to come upon them, baptizing them and laying their hands on them.)
5. How is it that God uses people, but the work that is done is completely a work of God? (Acts 8:15-17. The Lord does use people to be part of something that only He can do Himself. The apostles cannot control the Holy Spirit, yet the Holy Spirit chooses to use them. Philip could not do any great sign or miracle, yet God did great signs and miracles through him.)
6. What is wrong with Simon's desire or request? (Acts 8:18-19. Simon thought he could buy that which was a gift. He thought he could control that which was only God's to control. He said, "Give me this ability" to something that it is not his to own.)
7. What was Simon in essence saying about the things of God by offering a price for it? (Acts 8:18-20) [Simon was indirectly stating that the things of God had a "price" and a "limited worth" while failing to realize they were priceless.]
8. What does Peter's rebuke of Simon tell us? (Acts 8:20-21. If we could purchase the Holy Spirit, then it would not be a gift. Participation in ministry is a heart issue before God, rather than a work of man. The sins of the heart corrupt the work of God.)
9. What is the solution to Simon's situation? (Acts 8:22-23. Repent and pray to the Lord. The only solution is to go back to

the Lord and ask forgiveness for the thoughts of the heart. Jesus alone can free him from the captivity of sin.)

10. Does Simon show that there is still hope for him? (Acts 8:24. He asks Peter to pray for him; which shows an attitude of humility.)
11. What does Peter and John's work consist of? (Acts 8:25. Their work was to testify and proclaim the work of the Lord.)

Discussion Questions:

1. How do we focus on our own work and ourselves? (Acts 8:9) [We can, like Simon, boast about ourselves, seek the attention of others and desire many different kinds of power.]
2. Where do you see yourself focusing your attention?
3. Like Philip, who are we called to boast about and bring attention to? (Acts 8:9, 12-13) [Instead of boasting about ourselves and drawing attention to "us," we should instead point people toward the Lord Jesus Christ.]
4. Why is it that those who are in ministry need to be very careful about drawing attention to themselves? [Because they represent Christ and His Word, not their own popularity or agenda.]
5. How does God use us to do work that only He can do? (Acts 8:15-17) [Like Philip, Peter and John, we are entrusted with the privilege of bringing the living Word of God to people. That Word is powerful and effective to change lives.]
6. Is it sinful to be noticed and appreciated in the work of God? (Acts 8:18-19) [The work of God is not about us in any form. It is what the Lord does in people regardless of who He uses to do it. However, it is appropriate to recognize people as gifts from God or the talents they have as from the Lord.]
7. What heart issues do we have to deal with? (Acts 8:21) [Like Simon, we also have hidden wickedness in our hearts. We try to control God, give things to appease God or pride ourselves in the relationship we have with Jesus. We are also full of bitterness and captive to sin.]
8. What do we need to repent of and pray to the Lord about? (Acts 8:22)
9. In what ways do we lower the value of the things of God in our lives?
10. What is the end result of money? (Acts 8:20) [In the end, money perishes, and those who trust in it perish with it.]
11. What are some of the ways in which you have trusted in money or kept it as an idol in your life?

12. Why did Peter give Simon an opportunity to repent? (Acts 8:21-23) [Peter gave Simon a chance to repent as his heart was not right before God and was held captive to sin. And God always gives us a chance for forgiveness.]
13. What is your heart captive to?
14. What hope is there for us to be forgiven or to be used by God? (Acts 8:24) [The hope of forgiveness or use by God is through Jesus alone. He is the one that brought people to faith and did miracles through Philip. He is the one that sent the Holy Spirit through Peter and John which comes to us as well.]

66. Generosity

Peter, John, and the Crippled Man

Acts 3:1-19

Acts 3

¹One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ²Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” ⁵So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. ⁶Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” ⁷Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. ¹²When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

¹⁷“Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. ¹⁹Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Study Questions: Generosity

Acts 3:1-19

Introduction:

Generosity begins by realizing that we are only caretakers of the things God gives us. We do not own anything that has not been given to us from the Lord. The air we breathe, the sun that shines and our heartbeat are all gifts from God. When we leave this world, everything that we have held on to will stay behind except for the Word of God and the people we have shared Jesus with.

The real question is; what are we going to share and what are we going hold on to. Our Heavenly Father has given us many blessings, by giving what we have been given; we become channels of God's love. Generosity was lived out through Peter and John as they went to the temple to pray. They met a beggar whom they couldn't help financially, but they gave him something much more valuable than money. From that one gift, many more received the same gift.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To realize that we receive in order to give and it is by giving that we receive.
- To understand some of the ways that we can give of ourselves to those around us and to the work of the Lord.

Attitude

- To enjoy the grace of giving as we watch the Lord open the floodgates of heaven into our lives.
- To rejoice in the glory that the Lord receives when people realize that God is providing everything that they need.

Actions

- To generously give what we have been given.
- To give people Jesus in everything that we do and to daily point people to Him who gives us all things.

Memory Verse:

Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Scriptures for Further Study:

Psalm 50:9-12; Mark 12:41-44; Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Corinthian 9:5-15; James 1:27

Questions about the Story:

1. When Peter and John go to the temple to pray, what are they going there to give? (Acts 3:1. They were going to give God their worship. Regardless of what they did or didn't own, worship is something that overflowed from their hearts.)
2. Why was the crippled man going to the temple? (Acts 3:2. He was intending to receive money from people. Since he couldn't walk, he couldn't work.)
3. How did those who passed by see the crippled man? (Acts 3:2. They saw him as a beggar, dependent and disfigured.)
4. How did Peter and John see him? (Acts 3:4-7. They saw him as a person created by God, worthy of their attention and able to be healed.)
5. What do Peter and John give the man? (Acts 3:6. They gave him the power of the name of Jesus; which in turn was the gift of healing.)
6. What did the man do after he had been healed? (Acts 3:7-8. He went to the temple courts and was walking, jumping, and praising God. He was giving God the only thing that he had and the Lord was glorified through his simple gift. His healing gave testimony in front of everyone and that gave Peter and John an opportunity to tell all the people about Jesus.)
7. Why did Jesus give healing to this man? (Acts 3:7. It was through the healing that the man would praise God, the crowd would be amazed and the testimony of Jesus and his power would be widely heard.)
8. What are some of the contrasts that stand out from this text? (Peter and John have no money, but they give something priceless. The beggar asks for money, but receives Jesus. The man who cannot walk, jumps and leaps. The crowd who casually walked by the beggar now stands amazed at him.)
9. What is the point of the Peter's message? (Acts 3:12-19. It is all about Jesus, from the healing of the man, the drawing of the crowd, the conviction of their sins to the invitation to repent.)
10. What does Peter's message have to do with generosity? (Acts 3:12-19. The Father gave his Son so we might receive the forgiveness of sins. Jesus gave up His life but was raised from the dead. The people gave their lives, repented and turned to God so that their sins could be wiped out and so that times of refreshing could come from the Lord.)

Discussion Questions:

1. Like Peter and John, what are some of the ways that we can be giving our lives for Jesus Christ even in the normal activities of our lives? (Acts 3:1) [We can take advantage of every situation to make Jesus known, in even the routine situations of our day, through prayer and through worship.]
2. How are we like the crippled man? (Acts 3:2) [We are dependent on many people. It feels like our needs are much greater than what we can give. We want more than we have and yet we don't ask for what we really need.]
3. How can we be like Peter and John? (Acts 3:3-7) [We can give our attention to those with needs around us. We can meet their physical needs as well as their spiritual needs. We can look at people as people that God has made.]
4. What has the Lord given us that we can give to others? (Acts 3:8) [We can give people Jesus through the Word, our testimony and our lives. We can share our possessions, which are not really ours anyway, and we can give ourselves.]
5. What does generosity take on our part? (Acts 3:6-8) [Generosity takes faith that the Lord will supply what we need. It takes surrender of everything we have to him. It takes love for other people.]
6. How can we be living Holy Spirit directed lives? [We can be living lives directed by the Spirit by being in the Word of God, seeking His face, spending time in prayer, meditating on His will, and communing with Him.]
7. How can we give glory to God through what He has given us? (Acts 3:8) [Recognize that everything we have is from Him. Praise Him for all that we receive. Tell people about the greatness of the Lord.]
8. How should we respond when people try to give us praise or thanks? (Acts 3:12-19) [Our response should be to give all of the praise and glory to God, who works in and through all things and who is the One causing all things to come together according to His plan.]
9. Have you taken any of God's generosity for granted? (Acts 3:13-16)
10. How has God's generosity amazed you?

67. Self-control

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

Genesis 39:1-23

Genesis 39

¹ Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

² The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. ³ When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, ⁴ Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. ⁵ From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. ⁶ So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, ⁷ and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

⁸ But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" ¹⁰ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

¹¹ One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

¹³ When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴ she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁶ She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁹ When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. ²⁰ Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹ the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²² So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Study Questions: Self-control

Genesis 39:1-23

Introduction:

Self-control is one of the fruits of the Spirit. It is an attribute that gives evidence of God's work in our lives. While it is a quality that we must develop, it is not something we can attain on our own. It is something that the Holy Spirit does in our lives. Perhaps a better title for this attribute is Spirit-control to indicate that the Holy Spirit is causing a desire that is contrary to our own nature. Thus, to be self-controlled means that the Spirit has more and more control of our lives and we are putting to death our sins of greed, lust and pride.

We can see this in Joseph's life because he submits his desires to the Lord. Joseph was put in charge of Potiphar's whole home. He could have used it for his advantage, but he was working for the Lord. Potiphar's wife tried to get him to have sex with her, but Joseph refused because it would have been a sin against the Lord. Later, Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave, but when he answered his brothers he said, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." Genesis 50:20

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand our sinful nature of lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and pride and daily die to it.
- To realize the need to be controlled by the Holy Spirit and desire to please the Lord.

Attitude

- To detest sin to the point of desiring to be separate from it.
- To trust God and call on him whenever the temptations come.

Actions

- To live a life guarded and protected against the world, our flesh, and the devil which continually desire to tear us down and drag us into sin.
- To flee from sin when we see it in our lives.

Memory Verse:

Proverbs 25:28 "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control."

Scriptures for Further Study:

Proverbs 7:2-27; 25:28; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 5:16-25; 2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Peter 1:5-7

Questions about the Story:

1. Where was Joseph brought to and what was his position there? (Genesis 39:1. Joseph was brought to Egypt where he was purchased to serve as a slave to a man named Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials.)
2. What was the result of the Lord's presence with Joseph? (Genesis 39:2-6. Because the LORD was with Joseph, he prospered and had success in everything that he did. The blessing was also on Potiphar, his house and his field.)
3. Since Potiphar entrusted Joseph with everything, what does that say about him? (Genesis 39:4-6. Potiphar recognized Joseph's ability, his character and integrity. He trusted Joseph and he could see an image of the Lord through him.)
4. Why was the Lord with Joseph and why did he bless Potiphar? (Genesis 39:4-6. The LORD was with Joseph and blessed Potiphar because this was part of His plan. The Lord was preparing the way for Joseph to be the leader of Egypt and he was using his time with Potiphar to prepare him. The blessing was from the Lord and for His glory.)
5. What does this text say about the Lord controlling Joseph? (Genesis 39:1-6. Joseph learned a new language, let go of the betrayal from his brothers, worked with all of his heart for a foreign master, carried out his duties faultlessly and showed integrity in everything that he did. More than anything, this shows that the Lord was at work in Joseph.)
6. What was the attitude of Potiphar's wife toward Joseph? (Genesis 39:7, 10. She began to take notice of him and began to desire him saying, "Come to bed with me." She was a daily temptation for him and she had no self-control.)
7. What does Joseph mean by his statement "to do such a wicked thing would be to sin against God?" (Genesis 39:8-10. It means that any sin is first against God. Committing adultery would have been sin and so would showing disrespect to Potiphar. It also means that Joseph continued to trust in the Lord in spite of the situation that he was in.)
8. How does Joseph show that the Lord controls him? (Genesis 39:7-10. Although he could have thought that Potiphar's wife was his master, this shows that Joseph was following a higher authority. He repeatedly set aside his own desires and even ran away from the temptation.)
9. What is the bigger picture of what was going on regarding Joseph, the false accusations and his imprisonment? (Genesis 39:13-20. From an earthly point of view it looks like the Lord

is against Joseph. It appears like he is again in a hopeless situation. From the Lord's point of view, Joseph had passed all of the tests in preparation to be the leader of Egypt and now he was put into the king's prison to wait for the right time to be raised up.)

10. How did each of these situations prepare Joseph to lead Egypt? (If Joseph was to direct Egypt for the Lord, he needed to be fully surrendered to the Lord in every area of his life. The betrayal, slavery, success, self-control and imprisonment were all of the steps needed to make Joseph the man the Lord needed him to be.)
11. How did the Lord show Joseph His presence even in prison? (Genesis 39:21-23. The Lord showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. Again Joseph was entrusted with everything and again the Lord gave him success.)
12. What was the response of the warden after seeing that the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did? (Genesis 39:23. When the warden saw that everything was blessed under Joseph, he paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care.)

Discussion Questions:

1. Wherever we end up in this world, who can we rest assured will continually be with us? [We can count on the Lord God being with us wherever we go, both in good and in difficult places.]
2. What are some of the times that you have seen God at work in your life and felt His presence with you?
3. What is the result of centering on the Lord in our situations and bringing Him into our lives? (Genesis 39:5, 23) [When our lives are centered on the Lord, He blesses us. This blessing may not show itself financially, but it shows itself in the joy, love, peace, and patience that comes from the Lord.]
4. Why does the Lord bless us? (Genesis 39:4-6) [The Lord blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others, so that they can be introduced to the Lord and ultimately, He is glorified.]
5. How do we show that the Lord is controlling us? (Genesis 39:1-10) [It is in every area of our life. It can be seen in our language, attitude, work ethic and integrity of our dealings. It is also obvious in how we handle temptation.]
6. What are some of the temptations that we face?

7. When we give into temptation and choose to sin, who is it that we are sinning against in our lives? (Genesis 39:9)
[Ultimately, we are sinning against God. While we are sinning against ourselves and toward other people, that sin more so separates us from God's holiness.]
8. What are some ways that you have practiced self-control in your life? What are some goals that you need to set?
9. How can showing self-control and refusing the pleasure of sin be difficult? [Self-control is a battle within us, from those around us and from Satan himself. We battle the longing for things, the desire for pleasure and the sense of power. We want to be in control of our own lives.]
10. Why is it extremely important for those in leadership to practice self-control? [In Christian leadership, any sin or fall into temptation causes a bad reputation for the Lord. It is easy for those in leadership to be targets of Satan. Our own desires go against the Lord's will.]
11. When is the time when we are most vulnerable to sin and temptation? How can you be safeguarding yourself against that? (Genesis 39:11-12) [When we are alone we are more vulnerable to temptation. Accountability partners can help guard us in the battle.]
12. When we are confronted with the temptation of sin, what needs to be our response? (Genesis 39:11-12) [We need to immediately flee from the situation and remove ourselves from the temptation to fall into sin.]
13. How can the presence or the blessing of the Lord be seen in our lives?

68. Humility
Miriam, Aaron and Moses
Numbers 12:1-15

Numbers 12

¹ Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite.

² “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?” they asked. “Hasn't he also spoken through us?” And the LORD heard this.

³ (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

⁴ At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you.” So the three of them came out.

⁵ Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward,

⁶ he said, “Listen to my words:

“When a prophet of the LORD is among you,
I reveal myself to him in visions,
I speak to him in dreams.

⁷ But this is not true of my servant Moses;
he is faithful in all my house.

⁸ With him I speak face to face,
clearly and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
to speak against my servant Moses?”

⁹ The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them. ¹⁰ When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam—leprous, like snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had leprosy; ¹¹ and he said to Moses, “Please, my lord, do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. ¹² Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother's womb with its flesh half eaten away.” ¹³ So Moses cried out to the LORD, “O God, please heal her!”

¹⁴ The LORD replied to Moses, “If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back.”

¹⁵ So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back.

Study Questions: Humility

Numbers 12:1-15

Introduction:

Our nature is prone to self-recognition, admiration and praise. We put others down in order to build ourselves up. Pride is dangerous because it is an attitude that says we don't need anyone else and then it separates us from the One who can save us. In Philippians, it says our attitude should be the same as that of Jesus, who took on the very nature of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross. That cross is what makes the way possible for us to stand in God's presence.

Aaron and Miriam, Moses' brother and sister, had been leaders along side of him since he was called to lead the people out of Egypt. It can be difficult to follow someone, especially if it is your younger brother. In this text, Miriam and Aaron grumble over Moses wife. They have a complaining spirit that comes out of an attitude of pride. God says throughout the Bible that He detests a proud heart.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To acknowledge that God alone is supreme and that we are nothing without Him.
- To recognize the dangerous attitude of pride in our lives that separates us from God.

Attitude

- To believe in our hearts that the Lord truly must increase and that we must decrease in our lives.
- To be humble is not to think more of ourselves or less of ourselves; rather it is just not to think of ourselves.

Actions

- To walk humbly before the Lord in our lives and to reflect all glory to Him that comes our way.

Memory Verses:

Micah 6:8 “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

James 4:6b “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Scriptures for Further Study:

Micah 6:8; Matthew 18:1-4, 15-17; 23:11-12; Luke 22:26; Ephesians 4:2; Philippians 2:3-11; Colossians 3:23-24; James 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:5

Questions about the Story:

1. What does Miriam and Aaron's question reveal? (Numbers 12:2-3. It reveals that they were thinking about themselves, it reveals their pride and their jealousy. It also reveals the sharp contrast to the statement about Moses' humility.)
2. How is Moses' humility displayed in this text? (Numbers 3:3, 13. He is listed as the most humble man on earth, he also cried out to the Lord for Miriam rather than thinking about himself.)
3. What stands out about the Lord's response to their grumbling? (Numbers 12:2-5. The Lord heard the grumbling and knew what they had said. He called them out immediately and He came down to speak to them in a pillar of cloud.)
4. What did the Lord want them to understand? (Numbers 12:6-8. The Lord reveals himself to whom he chooses. It is not ours to decide to whom or when the Lord gives his message. To speak against the one who brings the message of the Lord is to speak against the Lord himself. We must stand in reverent fear and awe before the Lord.)
5. What happened to Aaron and Miriam's pride when they were standing before the Lord? (Numbers 12:8-12. They could say anything in response to the Lord. They could not do anything except to admit their foolish sin and plead for Moses to have mercy on them.)
6. Why would pride be a barrier to stand before the Lord? (Numbers 12:6-8. Pride in any amount or any form is an attitude that separates us from God. It is the thought that we are something in and of ourselves rather than the humble recognition that the Lord alone is God.)
7. Why was the Lord angry with Aaron and Miriam? (Numbers 12:9. He was angry with them for their disrespect of His chosen messenger. That attitude, if it continued, would have destroyed Moses' reputation before all of the people and left them without a leader, a spokesman and an intercessor before the Lord.)
8. Why did the Lord cause Miriam to become leprous? (Numbers 12:10. It was the Lord's discipline on her. It was a physical lesson that the Lord used to humble both of them.)
9. What does Aaron's response to Miriam's leprosy say? (Numbers 12:11. Aaron's response shows that he understood because he was repentant, he admitted his foolish sin and he cried for mercy.)
10. How is Moses similar to Jesus in this text? (Numbers 12:3, 8, 13. Although Jesus was God, He humbled himself to

the point of death, prayed to the Father on our behalf and made it possible for us to be in relationship with God.)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why can pride be extremely dangerous for those who are in leadership/ministry? (Numbers 12:2) [Those who are in leadership are doing things where people look to them, respect them, and thank them for their work. We can begin to think that it is all about us. Pride also destroys unity.]
2. Who is the most humble person you know? Why are they known for that? (Numbers 12:3)
3. How should we receive praise correctly?? [When those around us acknowledge our service for the Lord, we should continually point them to the Lord.]
4. Who is the One from whom we can never hide our sin and who is there at all times to see and hear what is going on? (Numbers 12:2) [The Lord is continually around us all the time and is intricately involved in our lives so that He is aware of every thought we think, word we say, and thing we do.]
5. When people look at your life, how are you viewed by those who know you? (Numbers 12:3)
6. What is the attitude of the Lord toward His servants? (Numbers 12:2-8) [The Lord watches over and protects those doing His ministry. He is faithful to them as they are faithful to His Word.]
7. What kind of respect should we have towards those who are in positions of ministry and service to the Lord? (Numbers 12:8) [We should not slander and disrespect them, but instead acknowledge them as representatives of God and His ambassadors to His people.]
8. How would your attitude be different if you were standing before the Lord? (Numbers 12:5)
9. How does God handle sin in someone's life? (Numbers 12:10) [All sin must be punished because God is a just God and is Holy, but His desire is to bring us back to a right relationship with Him.]
10. When the Lord punishes us, what should be our response? (Numbers 12:11-12) [Our response must be to repent and ask for mercy.]
11. Why does God allow punishments in our lives? (Numbers 12:14) [At times the Lord brings difficulties and hardships into our lives in order to humble us and cause us to depend on Him.]

12. If Moses is like Jesus, what would Jesus do for you?
(Numbers 12:3, 8, 13. Jesus makes it possible to know the Father, he cries out to the Father on your behalf and he came to earth to provide the way out of the slavery of sin.)

69. Perseverance

Paul's Stoning

Acts 14:8-22

Acts 14

⁸In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked.

⁹He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed ¹⁰and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

¹¹When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" ¹²Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. ¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

¹⁴But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. ¹⁶In the past, he let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." ¹⁸Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

¹⁹Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. ²⁰But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

²¹They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, ²²strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Study Questions: Perseverance

Acts 14:8-22

Introduction:

During hard times; we may want to give up—when the going gets tough, we want to quit. It may seem as if the whole world is against us, especially if we are proclaiming Jesus in a place that is resisting God. However, the Lord calls us to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.” Whether it is enduring persecution, being mocked, discouraged, or fighting against our own flesh, we can stand firm in Jesus and be faithful to the calling He has given us.

Paul and Barnabas saw great successes and great struggles in their ministry. In Lystra, both their successes and their struggles happened within moments of each other. Paul continued his ministry in the midst of possible death, unwavering in the Lord’s calling because he his Lord had endured the cross before him.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To recall that Christ endured the cross, defeated Satan and won the victory.
- To remember with Paul that Christ’s grace is sufficient for us, for His power is made perfect in weakness.”
- To know that perseverance is a state of dependence on Jesus.

Attitude

- To trust that He who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.
- To believe that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Actions

- To continue serving Him because we have not yet persevered to the point of shedding blood.
- To go forward in confidence because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Memory Verse:

Hebrews 12:1 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

Scriptures for Further Study:

Luke 9:62; Romans 5:3-5; 2 Corinthians 11:22-33; Galatians 2:20; 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:3, 7; Hebrews 12:1-3; James 1:2-4

Questions about the Story:

1. How does the crippled man relate to the topic of perseverance? (Acts 14:8. Life is hard for a healthy person; imagine the challenge for this man, crippled in his feet, lame from birth and never able to walk.)
2. What things happened for this man to be instantly healed? (Acts 14:9-10. Paul noticed the crippled man; he saw the man's faith; Paul publically challenged the man to stand up; and the man acted in faith.)
3. Why did the crowd equate Paul and Barnabas with Zeus and Hermes? (Acts 14:11. Those are the gods that they were familiar with and the ones that they worshiped. They knew only God could heal like this.)
4. What does the crowd's response indicate? (Acts 14:11-13. It indicates that they were looking for a god to worship. They expected that a god would come down to earth. They believed that offering sacrifices to them was the way to please them.)
5. How does the crowd's perception of a god differ from the living God? (Acts 14:13-17. The worship of Zeus and Hermes required bulls and wreaths. Paul called all of this "worthless things" compared to the living God. Jesus came down to give his life as the sacrifice rather than to receive sacrifices.)
6. Why did Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes and run into the crowd? (Acts 14:14-15. In a moment, they realized that the great success of the man's healing had led to the problem of the whole crowd misunderstanding the message of Jesus. It was just opposite of what they wanted the crowd to hear.)
7. What did Paul and Barnabas tell the crowds they were bringing to them? (Acts 14:15. Paul and Barnabas told the people that they were only bringing them the good news, and a message of repentance, to turn from worthless things to the living God.)
8. How could the crowd quickly go from wanting to worship Paul to stoning him? (Acts 14:19. The people had their own idea of how to worship. The Jews won the crowd over, but the people were not listening to Paul and Barnabas.)
9. How do Paul and Barnabas display perseverance in this text? (Acts 14:20. They preached Jesus even though they were far from home, with a people of a different language, who

misunderstood them, tried to worship them and then turned and stoned him.)

10. What would have been lost if Paul and Barnabas quit after the attempted stoning? (Acts 14:21-22. The large number of people in Derbe would never have become disciples of Jesus and the churches in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch would not have been encouraged.)
11. What were Paul and Barnabas saying regarding the kingdom of God? (Acts 14:22. They were saying that there is a war going on for the souls of men and that there are many hardships or obstacles both for those who are bringing the kingdom of God and for those who are receiving it.)

Discussion Questions:

1. How is life hard and require perseverance from us? (Acts 14:8-9) [Every person has their own crippling challenges that they face. There are physical, mental, emotional and spiritual battles. Sometimes God gives us perseverance for the daily battles and sometimes He gives us victory over the battles.]
2. What kind of kind of things do we need to trust the Lord in? (Acts 14:9-10) [We need to trust the Lord with His ability to answer prayer and perform miracles in our lives. We also need to trust the Lord for His grace to persevere through trials.]
3. What are some examples of times when you have demonstrated your faith in the Lord?
4. What are some of the characteristics of a man of faith, as demonstrated by Paul and the crippled man jointly? (Acts 14:8-10) [Those of faith shine their faith to those around them. (Acts 14:9) - Those of faith call out for the work of God in trust that He can/will do it. (Acts 14:10) - Those of faith respond to challenges by trusting in the Lord without hesitancy.]
5. What kind of response can the world have toward those who are walking with the Lord? (Acts 14:11) [They can be misunderstood. Even though they are trying to communicate one message, it can be interpreted in a completely separate way.]
6. How do we, like the people of Lystra, often worship people rather than God? (Acts 14:13, 18) [We also give great honor to people such as athletes, actors, politicians, and even preachers.]
7. How do we respond when we are given honor, respect or when people are looking at us as great? (Acts 14:14-15)

[Instead of tearing our clothes and mourning, it is tempting for us to enjoy it and be full of pride.]

8. In what ways do we respond when we have the attention of those around us? Do we persevere in the call that is before us, or are we easily distracted by the world?
9. When do crowds turn on us and how do they do it? (Acts 14:19) [When people are seeking their own agenda, anything that gets in the way of that agenda may be considered a threat. Instead of throwing stones, people throw words that can hurt deeply. 2 Timothy 2:3]
10. What things cause us to want to quit and how can we persevere? (Acts 14:20-21) [When we are physically exhausted, verbally attacked, emotionally beat or spiritually drained we can feel like we are left for dead. It is only the strength of the Lord and those gathered around us that give us the perseverance to continue. Hebrews 12:1-3]
11. Why does God allow trials to come to us? (14:22) [It is through trials that we are refined, our faith is tested and we die to our flesh. In 2 Corinthians 11:22-33, Paul said that he would boast about his weakness, that Christ's power would rest on him. James 1:2-3 says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know the testing of your faith develops perseverance."]
12. How do trials cause us to enter the kingdom of God? (Acts 14:22) [The trials on this earth cause us to long for heaven. They reveal our need for Jesus and they show us that He is our rock, shield and savior. He will carry us through anything.]

70. Faith
David and Goliath
1 Samuel 17:4-9, 32-51

1 Samuel 17

⁴ A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. ⁵ He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; ⁶ on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. ⁷ His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.

⁸ Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us."

³² David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

³³ Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."

³⁴ But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

³⁸ Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹ David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

“I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off.⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

⁴¹ Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David.⁴² He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him.⁴³ He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.⁴⁴ “Come here,” he said, “and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”

⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.⁴⁶ This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

⁴⁸ As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.⁴⁹ Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.⁵⁰ So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

⁵¹ David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.

Study Questions: Faith

1 Samuel 17:4-9, 32-51

Introduction:

Why would this young shepherd boy named David go to fight against a large man, a giant, who was well protected and well trained? He had faith. Not a blind faith that was unaware of the danger, but a confident faith in the Lord that came from his own experiences of God's protection. Faith is demonstrated throughout the Word of God. In the Word we see many who followed the Lord wholeheartedly. The things that the Lord asked of them often seemed impossible, but with the Lord, all things are possible. The Lord showed His faithfulness to Noah who built the ark and God saved them from the flood; to Abraham who set off to an unknown land and God made him into a great nation; to Moses who went back to Egypt and God used him to lead out the people of Israel. However, every time God called someone to be His servant, it required faith, now David steps forward in faith to fight Goliath. The battle that he fought was not his own, he said, "The battle is the Lord's." We also face a faith battle against sin and Satan, but that battle is also the Lord's. As Goliath fell with a stone, so also Satan was defeated by Jesus death on the cross.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand that we can trust the immortal, eternal, all-powerful God. He alone is faithful.
- To realize that putting our faith in anything else would be to put our faith in something that will fail and crumble.

Attitude

- To trust the Lord in every battle that we face.
- To be confident that He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it.

Actions

- To go forward with the tasks that the Lord gives us because He is faithful to complete it.

Memory Verses:

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Scriptures for Further Study:

Joshua 1:9; Psalm 18; Habakkuk 2:4; Luke 7:1-10; 17:6; Romans 4:1-9; 10:17; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Timothy 4:12; Hebrews 11

Questions about the Story:

1. What makes Goliath a fearful foe? (1 Samuel 17:4-7. He was a champion, he was over nine feet tall, he was equipped with a bronze helmet, a coat of scale armor of bronze, bronze greaves for his legs, a bronze javelin around his back, and a shield bearer in front of him.)
2. What is behind the content of Goliath's challenge? (1 Samuel 17:8-9. In his challenge, he is causing the Israelites to doubt, question and fear. He is intending to destroy the Israelites confidence and to make them lose heart before the battle was even fought. The mental battle is half of the victory.)
3. What does David's response to Goliath show? (1 Samuel 17:32. David's response showed that he had confidence or faith in the Lord. He fought "this Philistine" for mocking the people of God.)
4. What does Saul's response show? (1 Samuel 17:33. Saul was only seeing the situation from man's perspective. To him it was impossible and foolish.)
5. How did the Lord's protection in the past give David confidence for the present? (1 Samuel 17:34-37. If the Lord protected David against a lion and a bear when they attacked his father's flock then He would do the same again. David had faith in the Lord.)
6. What did David say was the reason the Philistine would be like the killed lion and bear? (1 Samuel 17:36. Goliath would be slain just the same since he had defied the armies of the living God.)
7. How does Saul contradict his message by saying "the Lord be with you" and then giving David his own armor? (1 Samuel 17:37-39. The one is a protection from God while the other is a protection of man.)
8. What are some of the contrasts between David and Goliath as they go into battle? (1 Samuel 17:39-47. David had no armor, Goliath had everything; David carried a stick, stones and a sling compared to Goliath's sword, spear and shield. Goliath cursed David with the name of his gods; David went against Goliath in the name of the Lord.)
9. What did David say was the purpose of the battle? (1 Samuel 17:46-47. That the whole world would know that there is a

God in Israel and that the Lord does not save by sword or spear.)

10. Why would David say what he did to Goliath? (1 Samuel 17:45-47. David pointed out that Goliath was fighting the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel whom he had defied. David made it clear that this battle would be a testimony to the world that there is a God in Israel and that this battle would be won by the Lord who saves.)
11. What was the characteristic of David's faith? (1 Samuel 17:39-40, 46-47. David was not concerned with the physical things around him and what he could come up with that would make the most sense, rather he trusted in the Lord as able to use him just as he was and he was confident of the result.)
12. How did David live and fight for the Lord's glory? (1 Samuel 17:46-47. He made it clear through what he said that this was the Lord's battle. David trusted the Lord and gave Him the credit for defeating Goliath.)
13. What does the response of the Philistine army say about their faith? (1 Samuel 17:51. They had trusted in a dead hero.)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the fearful foes or overwhelming tasks and problems that we face? (1 Samuel 17:4-7) [We face problems, like Goliath, that are impossible in our own strength.]
2. What causes us to doubt, fear and question God's ability to save us? (1 Samuel 17:8-9) [Like the Israelites, we can lose heart and lose the battle of our minds. When we look to ourselves, we will always fall short, but when we look to the Lord, we can be fully confident.]
3. How can we be confident when problems come? (1 Samuel 17:32) [We can have confidence in the Lord, but not in ourselves.]
4. How do those around us respond when they see us stepping out in faith? What should our response be to them? (1 Samuel 17:33) [Many times when people see us stepping out in faith they respond with hesitancy and uncertainty. However, we must not let this discourage us. We must listen to God rather than men.]
5. What can we look to in the past to solidify our faith in the Lord for the future? (1 Samuel 17:34-37) [We can look to the past when God has been faithful to us, but we must look to Jesus and his faithfulness above all.]

6. When are some times we have seen the Lord's faithfulness to us?
7. What are some things we put our faith in apart from the Lord? (1 Samuel 17:38-39) [We can put our faith in other people to help us or save us. We can put our faith in our abilities, our money or our knowledge.]
8. What are some of the contrasts between a life lived in faith versus one without it? (1 Samuel 17:39-47) [A life of faith is one that reads, listens to and obeys God's Word. It is a life full of the fruit of the Spirit confident in where the Lord is leading. A life without faith is confident in things that can fail. It is a life of doubts and questions unsure of the future.]
9. What kind of faith are we showing in God when we trust in Him but decide to make many backup plans just in case His plan doesn't work out? [We are showing that we don't really trust Him but rather we are trusting in our capability and ability to discern the situation better than God.]
10. How do our lives show that the Lord is God Almighty? (1 Samuel 17:45-47) [When we live in confidence that the Lord is with us, people can see it. When we speak with the authority of God's Word, people can hear His Truth proclaimed.]
11. Who is the Lord able to use as His tool for the revelation of His glory? (1 Samuel 17:42) [The Lord is able to use all, no matter their age or physical ability in order to do great things for Him, when their trust is fixated on Him.]
12. Whose glory are you living for in your own life?
13. In what manner should we approach that which the Lord has put before us to do? (1 Samuel 17:48) [We should run quickly to confront it and approach it with readiness.]