

- FOR TEENS -



STUDENTS USE *VELOCITY* OR *FORWARD* DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDES

1 KINGS PROVERBS JAMES



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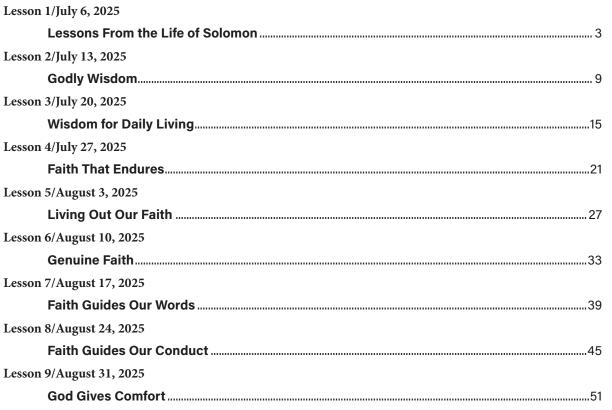
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WELCOME TO THE D6 EVERYDAY FOUNDATIONS TEEN TEACHING

GUIDE. This is the one-size-fits-all guide for teaching teen small groups and correlates with Velocity and Forward devotional study guides.

D6 EveryDay Foundations curriculum is built on:

- A high view of Scripture
- Church and Home emphasis
- Family alignment and resources for every age
- Practical biblical application
- Intentional focus on developing biblical literacy and a biblical worldview
- Biblical truth and perspective on important cultural issues
- Spotlights on Bible characters

D6 EveryDay Foundations curriculum helps you build confidence in the unchanging, enduring, and authoritative Word of God. The three-year scope and sequence includes an overview of the story of the Old and New Testaments, emphasizing major characters and themes, as well as the application of God's Word to current cultural issues.

Even if the student never misses a single Sunday in the three-year cycle, the task is too much for curriculum alone. We must also depend on the work of the Holy Spirit and the partnership of families so the truth goes beyond head knowledge to heart knowledge and anchors in a permanent place. Combining both at-church and at-home tools, D6 EveryDay Foundations curriculum helps churches equip families to grow together, building on the foundation of faith in God's Word.

Elementary and Teen students (and preschoolers, when possible) study the same family themes as their parents and grandparents. This family-aligned curriculum philosophy opens the door to everyday opportunities for faith conversations.

D6 EveryDay Foundations curriculum offers a choice of two devotional study guides for teens.

- Velocity— for younger teens
- Forward—for older teens

In addition to daily devotions to help reinforce biblical principles, readers enjoy relevant articles, columns, and more. Even if your group is composed of both younger and older teens, each student can choose the guide that fits best.

Every lesson in this teaching guide is built around the CLEAR® Learning System. This time-tested method gives a simple but effective approach to successfully teaching God's Word.

Connect—These suggested activities help capture the group members' attention and answer the question, *Where is this lesson going?*

Learn—What does the Bible say? This section answers this question by digging into the biblical text and explaining it in ways both teachers and group members can understand.

Explore—These notes provide more information for the teacher. They address issues like cultural background, historical context, theological importance, apologetics, and other complementary biblical teachings.

Apply—What difference does all this make in my life? Apply statements help group members see how the biblical truths they have just heard fit into everyday life. These Apply statements, along with thought-provoking discussion questions, are included in with the **Learn** section as they most naturally fit.

Respond—The final section in each lesson answers the question, *What now?* **Respond** encourages group members to take practical steps to apply the biblical principles they have learned. The lessons are further reinforced in the devotional study guides.

Every lesson also includes:

- Lesson objective—identify the lesson's main goal
- Building Blocks—encourage biblical literacy for the whole family
- Family Verse of the Month—focus on memorizing key Scripture together
- Teaching Tips—give helps and strategies for effective teaching
- Thought-provoking discussion questions—encourage deeper application of biblical truth
- Teaching essentials—downloadable extras (handouts, posters, outlines, and more)
- The teaching guide is also available for download to help you customize the lesson for your group.

Bonus resources:

- Parent Page—weekly tool that provides the key truths of the lesson, application ideas, talking points to extend family discussion, and family activity ideas, as well as a summary of the preschool lesson
- D6 Family App—this app delivers free resources designed to equip you for generational discipleship
- Family Faith Moments—biweekly email providing simple ideas to turn everyday routines into discipleship moments.
- D6 Teacher group on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/D6Family)—a Facebook forum for D6 curriculum users to share ideas and ask questions



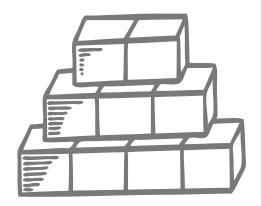
Digital Downloads—To enhance your teaching, digital downloads are available. There you will find teaching essentials and editable teaching outlines. We're also excited to offer a digital version of this Teaching Guide that includes live hyperlinks so you can click directly on a website or Scripture passage and have it pop up on your device. To access these resources, scan this QR code or visit **d6.family/6803.**

FAMILY THEME

Lessons From the Life of Solomon

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will put life lessons from Solomon into action.

STUDY TEXT: Various Scriptures From 1 Kings



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Teen Teaching Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Teen Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 1-1 or TH 1-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Student Outline* (TH 1-2), "Solomon Is Like..." (TH 1-3), "Solomon's Mistakes" (TH 1-4), and *Parent Page (PP-1)* if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803.
- ☐ If you are using Connect Option 2, bring an assortment of items related to Solomon.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-1)* to the parents of your students.

In This Character Study:

- · An Introduction to Solomon
- Key Events in Solomon's Life
- Life Lessons to Apply From Solomon
- Ways to Respond

Verse of the Month JAMES 1:5



TH 1-1

Lessons From the Life of Solomon			
	Text July 6, annual State Section Stripes and Printer Stripe		
o ^c	May frush 15 Selection Place to Preser in Fulfillment of God's Promise 21 Kings 1:5—2:10) Notes and application		
o ^c	Key York 2: God Gree Wildom to Solomoo 2: Kinga 25-28; 429-34; 105-108 Notes and application		
o ^s	Nay Trush 3. With Wilsdom From God, Salamon Chevrater e Gelden Age in Introd"a History (3 Kongre 4 n.C. 20-01; 8 n.d.s. 76-03, 10.50-27) Notes and applications		
o*	Key Truth & Just as God Warred, Solomon Regar to Practice the Infolding of this Pagas Wises () Kings 101—10) Notes and application		
	What will I put into practice this week?		
	Building Blacks God called Solomon, the son of Devid, the world's wised man (1 Graps 6:00-26). He was the author of three Did Solomon busins Property, Solomontes, and Song of Solomon.		
	Verse of the Month: Jones 15		

TH 1-2



TH 1-3

TEACHING TIP

Because self-directed learning is the most effective, help your group members know how to use and evaluate resources such as Bible atlases, dictionaries, commentaries, and web sites.

You will not have time to read all the Scriptures listed for this lesson. Summarize the commentary and read the Scripture passages you feel are most important.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Ask students to write an introduction for Solomon as if he were speaking on a Sunday morning at your church. What would they highlight? Transition to the lesson by saying, *In today's lesson*, you'll be able to add some details to your understanding of this wise Old Testament king.

OPTION 2: Bring a collection of items that link to Solomon in some way. You might include a poetry book, a textbook, a stack of money or play money, something that features IQ or SAT scores, something about the *Jeopardy* gameshow, a crown, and so forth. Ask students what your collection has in common. Transition to the lesson: *King Solomon was quite an interesting character. We'll talk in today's lesson about the way these things relate to him.*

OPTION 3: Use "Solomon Is Like..." (TH 1-3) to view some of Solomon's character in analogies. Instead of giving the suggested answers immediately, transition to the lesson by saying, You might be able to make a few more comparisons after we learn more about Solomon in today's lesson.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Student Outline (TH 1-2).

Meet Solomon

Solomon was the tenth son of King David. His mother was Bathsheba. Ascending to the throne around 971 BC, Solomon reigned as the third king of united Israel until his death in 931 BC. His name has become synonymous with wealth and wisdom, although his story testifies to the presence of rebellion and foolishness as well.

Key Events and Life Lessons from Solomon's Life

KEY EVENT: Solomon Rose to Power in Fulfillment of God's Promise (1 Kings 1:1—2:9)

As King David aged, a beautiful young woman named Abishag saw to the king's needs. The biblical text clarified that David was not intimate with her (1 Kings 1:1–4). Without a public announcement of David's successor, his fourth son, Adonijah (2 Samuel 3:4), made preparations to assume the throne. He gathered an entourage of horses and men to celebrate. Like his half-brother Absolom, Adonijah was a handsome man and gained the endorsement of Joab, the military commander, and Abiathar, the high priest. To many, this might have seemed the logical choice. The text, however, indicates David's failure to discipline the young man. Adonijah had a strong position but weak character (1:5–10).

Life Lesson 1: Wise people discipline their children and teach them God's ways.

DISCUSS:

- We tend to think of discipline as negative. Is this the correct perspective?
- What happens when children grow up without discipline? How does discipline from parents relate to self-discipline?

The prophet Nathan allied himself with Bathsheba to alert the aged king of Adonijah's plans and request his intervention (1:11-14). David publicly declared Solomon as his successor. David and three trusted men mounted Solomon on the royal donkey, marched him to Gihon, and publicly anointed him with oil, stating that He was the new king (1:28-40).

Adonijah was feasting with his supporters when he heard of the public coronation of Solomon. Fear enveloped the group. Adonijah fled to the Temple where he pleaded for mercy. Solomon promised not to hurt his brother as long as he did not cause problems in the kingdom (1:41-53).

On his deathbed, David admonished Solomon to live in obedience to God's law and teach his sons to do the same. He then instructed Solomon to deal decisively with Joab, watch out for men like Shimei, and show favor to Barzillai, who had been helpful to David and his kingdom (2:1-9).

As God established Solomon's reign, He proved faithful to the promise He made to David (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Jesus was to be the ultimate gift of the Davidic covenant, but Solomon was the first of David's descendants who would rise to the throne of Israel. After Solomon's death, Israel split into two nations, Israel and Judah. David's descendants ruled over Judah. Solomon's reign was an important part of Israel's national history and an important part of God's plan of salvation.

Life Lesson 2: God always keeps His promises. Follow His Word at all times.

DISCUSS:

- What do you know about Solomon's parents, David and Bathsheba? How did Solomon's family situation influence him?
- What impact does your family situation have on you?

EXECUTE: God Gave Wisdom to Solomon (1 Kings 3:1-28; 4:29-34; 10:1-13)

In the beginning of Solomon's reign, he loved God and tried to follow God's law like his father David (1 Kings 3:3). Showing divine favor to the new king, God appeared to him in a dream. God told Solomon to ask for the gift he most wanted God to give him (3:5). Solomon's response recognized God's steadfast love to David, his father (3:6). However, the blessing of ruling Israel was an overwhelming responsibility for someone as young as he was (3:7–8). Solomon asked for an understanding heart and mind so he would be able to exercise good judgment and govern God's people well (3:9).

Discussion questions can also be found on the Teen Teaching Outline (TH 1-1).

Life Lesson 3: Seek godly wisdom over power, success, and wealth. Wisdom is of greater value.

DISCUSS:

Why is wisdom a better request than power, wealth, or earthly success?

Solomon's request pleased God. God would give him great wisdom (3:10–12). Additionally, God decided to give Solomon riches, honor, and long life if he continued to live in covenant faithfulness to God (3:13–14).

Intelligence and wisdom are not synonymous. Solomon might have been a man of exceptional intelligence from birth, but the wisdom to use that intelligence for the good of Israel was from God. This wisdom would be a blessing to the entire nation.

Challenges from the administrative responsibilities facing a king quickly tested Solomon's discernment. Two prostitutes living in the same house both had infant sons. When one child died during the night, each mother claimed the living child was hers (3:16–22).

After hearing their claims, Solomon requested a sword. He declared they would simply divide the baby in two, giving half to each woman. The woman whose baby died approved the plan while the other woman, horrified, immediately begged for the other woman to have custody as long as the child was spared. The court realized Solomon had devised a test to find the true mother. He never intended to harm the child but to discern the true mother from the women's reactions to his proposal. As the story spread, people marveled at the wisdom God had given their king (1 Kings 3:23–28).

Upon hearing of Solomon's wisdom, the queen of Sheba traveled with her entourage to test the rumors. She arrived with camels carrying spices, gold, and gems. The king answered all her questions (1 Kings 10:1–3) and she was amazed (10:4–5). She realized she had not heard even half of what was true about Solomon and his wisdom (10:6–7). She praised God who had blessed the nation with such a man of wisdom on the throne (10:8–10).

God gave Solomon a wisdom described as measureless (1 Kings 4:29–31). The king spoke 3000 proverbs and wrote 1005 songs. His interests spanned botany, biology, philosophy, ethics, and the pursuit of God (4:32–34). He wrote most of the book of Proverbs, along with Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Psalms 72 and 127.

KEY EVENT: With Wisdom From God, Solomon Led a Golden Age in Israel's History (1 Kings 4:1-7, 20-21; 8:1-61; 7:1-12; 10:14-27)

Solomon led Israel into a golden age built on the political, military, and spiritual foundation set by his father, David. The continued success of the kingdom stemmed partly from Solomon's administrative work in organizing the officials who oversaw the day-to-day workings of the kingdom (1 Kings 4:1–7). During a time of peace, the population grew and feasted. Solomon's rule extended from the Euphrates in the north to Egypt's border in the south (4:20–21). Tribute paid by smaller kingdoms added to the wealth of Solomon's reign.

Life Lesson 4: Pray for wisdom for your own good and the good of those around you.

DISCUSS:

• How can our wise decisions make life better for those around us?

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment of Solomon's reign was the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 5-6). David had begun assembling the needed materials for the Temple, but Solomon also enlisted the aid of King Hiram I, from the Phoenician city-state of Tyre. Through this alliance Solomon found the supplier of wood needed to complete the Temple. At the end of the seven-year construction project (1 Kings 6:38), the people of Israel assembled as the priests marched the ark of God into the Temple. God's presence arrived in the form of cloud and filled the Temple in such a way that the priests could not continue to minister there (1 Kings 8:1-11). In the ceremony Solomon blessed the Lord for keeping His good promises to David's family, then prayed a dedicatory prayer over the Temple (8:12-61).

Life Lesson 5: God blesses the work of those who seek His wisdom and obey His Word.

DISCUSS:

• Why is obeying God's Word so important?

Solomon's massive palace took 13 years to complete (1 Kings 7:1-12). Tax revenue amounted to 25 tons of gold in one year. This did not count the wealth imported by explorers and merchants (1 Kings 10:14-15). With the excess of gold he made 500 shields. They were probably for display since gold was not as useful in battle (10:16-17). He fashioned an ivory throne surrounded by lions (10:18–20). Solomon's merchant ships came back with gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks (10:22). Solomon's wealth surpassed all of the other kings of that day, and people throughout the world sought his counsel (10:23-25). Israel did not even consider silver valuable because it was so common (10:21, 27).

KEY EVENT: Just as God Warned, Solomon Began to Practice the Idolatry of His Pagan Wives (1 Kings 11:1-40)

Despite all the wisdom God gave Solomon, the king acted foolishly by marrying many foreign women. He had wives from the Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. The final count was 700 wives and 300 concubines. God directly forbad marrying women of other faiths. These women turned Solomon's heart away from God toward their pagan deities (1 Kings 11:1-3).

Life Lesson 6: Don't let anything pull you away from walking with and obeying God.

DISCUSS:

- What temptations could draw you away from God and convince you to do something stupid?
- How much influence do the people you date and the person you marry have on your spiritual life?

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 Devotional study guides this week. Forward Devotional Study Guide is for older teens (high school), while Velocity is intended for younger students (middle school).



TH 1-4



PP-1

The Parent Page (PP-1) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give print or digital copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com or on the D6 Family App.

Solomon's wayward heart pursued false gods (11:4–8). These false deities involved sex and fertility rituals along with human sacrifice.

God responded to Solomon's idolatry with disciplinary action. The kingdom of Israel would be divided; only the tribe of Judah and the small tribe of Benjamin would remain under the leadership of David's descendants. God would keep the promise that there would always be a descendant of David's on the throne (11:9-13; 2 Samuel 7:1-17).

Another part of God's punishment was to raise up enemies to challenge Solomon's reign. Attacks from Hadad the Edomite (11:14–22), then Rezon (11:23–25), and Jeroboam (11:26–40) were recorded. Solomon foolishly chased after false gods and that cost his kingdom dearly. Although Solomon achieved much, the good that he did was offset by foolish disobedience and idolatry.

EXPLORE: -

Traditionally attributed to Solomon, the book of Ecclesiastes claims that life apart from a close walk with God evaporates without satisfying the heart's desires. The author claimed that life is *hevel* (Ecclesiastes 1:2). Some translations use the word *vanity* here, while others use the word *meaningless*. Life's purpose and meaning can be elusive, like smoke, vapor, or cotton candy. As he developed his theme, Solomon recounted a variety of pursuits he thought might bring purpose and meaning. He explored wine, women, work, and even wisdom. In the end he concluded that apart from God, nothing is satisfying. We should fear God and keep His commandments.

Ways to Respond: Encourage your students to put what they have learned into action this week.

OPTION 1: Ask your students to imagine themselves in Solomon's dream in 1 Kings 3:5. What one important thing would they ask God for? Would God respond as He did in 1 Kings 3:10? Encourage students to ask God to supply all their needs (Jeremiah 33:3; Philippians 4:19).

OPTION 2: Solomon was a builder, a philosopher, a judge, a poet, and a ruler. Have students write their top two career options on a notecard. Discuss: How can wisdom from God help you to choose and prepare for your career? How can God's wisdom help you in your work and in your relationships? Encourage students to read the book of Proverbs for godly advice in all areas of living.

OPTION 3: Use "Solomon's Mistakes" (TH 1-4) to caution students about repeating the mistakes Solomon made. Read <u>Psalm 72</u> together (written by Solomon) to close your class.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

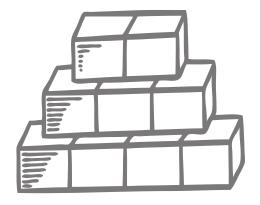
God called Solomon, the son of David, the world's wisest man (1 Kings 4:30–31). He was the author of three Old Testament books: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

FAMILY THEME

Godly Wisdom

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will go to God's Word for wisdom and put it into action.

STUDY TEXT: Proverbs 1:1–33



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Teen Teaching Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Teen Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 2-1 or TH 2-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the Student Outline (TH 2-2), "A Word to the Wise" (TH 2-3), "Adjust the Contrast" (TH 2-4), and Parent Page (PP-2) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803.
- ☐ Distribute print or digital copies of *Parent Page (PP-2)* to the parents of your students.

- Key Truths

- God Is the Source of True Wisdom (Proverbs 1:1–7)
- Wise People Follow Godly Advice and Reject Sinful Advice (Proverbs 1:8-19)
- Rejecting God's Wisdom Results in Ruin (Proverbs 1:20–33)

Verse of the Month

JAMES 1:5

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



TH 2-1



TH 2-2



TH 2-3

TEACHING TIP

Encourage your group members to discuss what they are learning with others. This helps with understanding and retention.

APPLY:

Go to God's Word for wisdom and instruction for living.

The discussion questions can also be found on the Teen Teaching Outline (TH 2-1).

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

Option 1: Read a list of traditional proverbs (such as the list of proverbial phrases on Wikipedia) to see which are familiar to your students. Can they explain what the proverbs mean? Transition to the lesson by saying, We'll study some more inspired wisdom from the book of Proverbs today.

Option 2: Use "A Word to the Wise" (TH 2-3) to challenge students to simplify some traditional words of wisdom. Feel free to give a few clues if they are needed! Transition to the lesson by saying, The book of Proverbs also collected wise words to live by. We'll study some of them this week.

Option 3: Consider showing this clip of Gibbs' Rules from the television show, NCIS: bit.ly/GibbsRules101. Transition to the lesson by saying, God has some very important rules to live by too. You can find many of them in the book of Proverbs that we'll study today.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Student Outline (TH 2-2).

The book of Proverbs is a treasure chest of wisdom. The word for *proverb* in Hebrew referred to a brief saying that imparts wisdom. However, it included more. It could also refer to parables. Parables are basically similes ("this is like that"); some are extended into brief stories. We often associate parables with the ministry of Jesus in the New Testament, and some people are surprised to learn that the Old Testament also contains parables. Here are a few examples: Proverbs 6:6–11; Judges 9:7–15; 2 Samuel 12:1–4; Jeremiah 18:1–10; Ezekiel 15:1–8; Zechariah 2:1-13.

WEY TRUTH: God Is the Source of True Wisdom (<u>Proverbs 1:1-7</u>)

Solomon received great wisdom from God (1 Kings 4:29). He authored and gathered a huge collection of proverbs, which we know as the book of Proverbs (verse 1). Solomon's interest was practical: he wanted to help readers gain wisdom and instruction for the purpose of shaping a life of discipline and prudence, doing what is right (verses 2–3). He felt that the proverbs would be helpful to the wise as well as the unwise (verses 4-6).

DISCUSS:

- Why is the Bible the best place to go for wisdom and instruction?
- Google doesn't have all the answers. What are some areas where you'd like to have more wisdom and instruction for your teen years?

EXPLORE: -

Data is just raw information: water freezes at 32° F; Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941. Information is data that we have arranged in a meaningful way. *Knowledge* refers to having a grasp on the information available to us. We learn about history, math, and so on, and retain (we hope!) important knowledge from those disciplines. Wisdom builds on top of knowledge. Wisdom is not an academic subject we can learn. Wisdom involves *skill* in living. As with all skills, it takes practice. We can learn αbout baseball from books, but we will never learn baseball without playing or observing actual baseball games. We can learn about cooking from books, but it takes time and experience to actually know how to cook. Biblical wisdom is not a quick microwave recipe. We can grow in it for a lifetime.

In **verse 7**, Solomon pointed out the key to wisdom: the fear of the Lord. Fear in this case is not just being afraid of something. It involves a healthy respect. Some people are simply afraid of electricity, but a skilled electrician has a healthy respect for what electricity can do-both good and bad. That knowledge and respect equips him to practice his trade. Those who would build a good life must begin with a healthy respect for God.

DISCUSS:

- What does it mean to have a healthy fear of God? (Having a deep respect for Him while desiring to be in close relationship with Him.)
- What would an unhealthy fear look like?
- What steps can you take to develop a healthy fear of God?

That kind of respect involves, at its very beginning, understanding that we deal with a real Supreme Being: God. Reality is not ours to define, deny, or push aside. Reality comes from God Himself, and we cannot attain any level of wisdom if we do not acknowledge that fact. We live in a real world, created by a real God, and our choices and values make a real difference in that world. Only fools (who show up throughout Proverbs) would have it otherwise. The Bible associates various categories of people with being unwise, such as the simple, the mocker, and the fool. We find many examples of these as we read through the book of Proverbs.

EXPLORE:

Adam and Eve feared God in the garden after they sinned, so they hid from Him. They were afraid of some kind of punishment. The fear of the Lord, however, extends much further than being afraid of God's anger or punishment. It involves a healthy respect that leads to making choices that reflect His existence, character, and commands. Though we fail before God in countless ways, our healthy respect for Him should not lead us to cower in fear waiting for the axe to fall. Rather, it should induce us to respond gratefully, joyfully, and obediently to the message of His grace and forgiveness. Then it should guide us into living wisely, acknowledging the God-given patterns and guidelines we need to follow.

APPLY:

Cultivate a healthy fear (reverence) for God.

APPLY:

Follow godly advice from godly people.

APPLY:

Reject sinful advice from those who don't follow Jesus.

EXECUTE: Wise People Follow Godly Advice and Reject Sinful Advice (Proverbs 1:8-19)

Solomon then addressed his son. Did he have a specific son in mind, or did he intend his advice for all those who came after him? Wisdom literature from that time period (both the Proverbs and nonbiblical writings) commonly structured advice in this manner. We can easily imagine ourselves as the recipients of this wise, godly, parental advice (verse 8). Living according to this teaching will make our lives more appealing and even make them stand out to others. That is what garland and chains (decorative accessories and jewelry) do (verse 9).

DISCUSS:

- What are the advantages of following godly advice from godly people?
- Who are the godly people whose advice you value? Where have you also found godly advice in books or online?

The first piece of advice concerns relationships with those who would lead us astray (verses 10-19). These people make plans for evil. They have no concern for what happens to their victims but focus only on the plunder they hope to seize.

Some people, as in this case, talk openly and blatantly about their wickedness. However, more frequently, they dress it up in more acceptable language. The wise will know how to look below the surface to perceive the reality of wickedness at its core.

DISCUSS:

- How can we respond if unbelievers ask us to participate in sinful activities? (Respectfully decline or remove ourselves from the situation; simply say we are not comfortable with the situation or activity; respectfully explain why you don't want to participate; etc.)
- Peer pressure has strong influence for teenagers. What factors do you consider when you choose close friends?

Solomon recognized that sin and bloodshed accompanied sinful people. Wisely, he further recognized their affairs do not end well. Can such wicked people achieve the gain they seek? Certainly—but only temporarily! **Verse 19** tells us it is ill-gotten gain. The wicked want to entice fools to come along with them, using the gain as bait. The wise person looks beyond the gain to the destruction it brings in its wake. Wicked people of this sort are not merely bad associates—they are *dangerous*! The wise will avoid danger and the people who spread it. If a clean sock is sealed up in a plastic bag with dirty, smelly clothing, the dirt and odor will rub off on the clean sock. If we are too close with those who oppose God, their rebellion will rub off onto us.

EXECUTE: Rejecting God's Wisdom Results in Ruin (Proverbs 1:20-33)

To personify wisdom is common in wisdom literature, both biblical and secular. Notice where she (Wisdom) calls out to those who need her: in the street, in the public squares, and in the gateways of the city (verses 20-21). These are

the places where public life occurs. They were places of public commerce, legal justice, and employment. In other words, wisdom is not a religious concept intended only for the sheltered confines of church worship or private devotions. Wisdom speaks out to us *where* we live and work and expects to change *how* we live and work.

DISCUSS:

- How can young people share words of wisdom?
- How has wisdom that's been shared with you made a difference in your schoolwork, job, or relationships?

The questions of **verse 22** indicate that wisdom had been available and within reach. Wisdom addressed three kinds of people: the *simple*, the *mockers*, and the *fools*. The *simple* are ignorant, and contrary to the popular saying, ignorance is *not* bliss! *Mockers*, on the other hand may be quite clever. They are defiant, often cynical, proudly tearing down the ways of wisdom and puffing up their own image. *Fools* are morally insensitive, unaware that their actions have real consequences.

Wisdom is not some hidden knowledge, available only to experts. God would have been eager to pour out His heart and thoughts to them—if only they had been receptive (verse 23). They refused to receive God's wisdom and will suffer the results of their own stupidity, mockery, and foolishness (verse 24). They laughed at and mocked God's advice; therefore, Wisdom will mock their calamity. They did not accept God's rebuke; Wisdom will not answer them in their distress (verses 25–30).

DISCUSS:

- Is all wisdom created equal? (Consider the advice you might get from social media in contrast to the wisdom from God's Word.)
- How do you determine whose wisdom impacts your decisions?
- Our culture celebrates youth and celebrity, often bowing to their influence.
 When choosing wisdom, are youth and celebrity the best guides? Explain your answer.

Is Wisdom unfair in this position? Not at all! These people earned this distress **(verses 31–32).** Fools build their own destruction, without fail. Yet, God's wisdom enables us to live in safety, at ease, and with no fear of harm **(verse 33).**

EXPLORE: -

When Osama bin Laden was killed, many rejoiced. Others, however, objected, saying that people in general (and Christians in particular) should never rejoice in the calamity of another. Indeed, Christ instructed us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44), and God certainly loved us before we were friends of His (Romans 5:8). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9). God loves all people and desires that all be saved and enjoy His blessings, but He also eventually brings His wrath and judgment on those who refuse to turn to Him. He understands there is an ironic justice at work when calamity falls on those who have resolutely refused to listen to God. In the relationship between the unbeliever and God, mocking receives mocking; refusal receives refusal; rejection receives rejection. God does not wait, lurking in the shadows, ready to pounce on us when we slip

APPLY:

Be wise! Let God's wisdom guide and change how you live and work.

APPLY:

Don't follow worldly wisdom. It eventually leads to tragedy.

or fall. He waits for us to repent. He longs to be able to respond to faith and repentance, to restore us to fellowship with Him. Nevertheless, the time to repent will someday end. We dare not take it for granted!

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your students put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: During the next two or three months, challenge your students to read a chapter each day from the book of Proverbs. (In July and August, they can read the chapter that corresponds with the day of the month.) This practice can help us to soak in and apply God's Word to our circumstances each day.

OPTION 2: Take your students on a proverb hunt. Challenge each one to discover a proverb that speaks to some issue they are facing right now. Have them copy and memorize their verse. Some suggestions might be Proverbs 3:5–6; 4:24; 6:20; 12:11; 12:19; 13:20, and many more.

OPTION 3: Use "Adjust the Contrast" (TH 2-4) to contrast the wise and the foolish in the book of Proverbs. Encourage students to continue their study by searching for contrasts between the righteous and the ungodly. Remind your students that God wants them to be wise. He provides a way to seek His wisdom for everyday decisions.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

The book of Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings compiled by Solomon.

Pray!



TH 2-4

Encourage your students to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional study guides this week. *Velocity* is written for middle school students; *Forward* is the guide for high school students.



PP-2

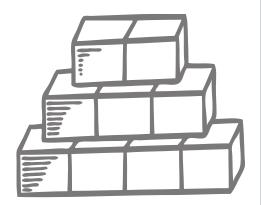
The Parent Page (PP-2) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children. Give print or digital copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com or the D6Family App.

FAMILY THEME

Wisdom for Daily Living

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will seek out God's wisdom and put it into practice.

STUDY TEXT: Proverbs 2:1–22



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Teen Teaching Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Teen Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 3-1 or TH 3-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the Student Outline (TH 3-2), "Pro-Verbs" (TH 3-3), "Write Your Own Proverb" (TH 3-4), and Parent Page (PP-3) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (*PP-3*) to the parents of your students.

• Key Truths

- Those Who Seek and Practice Godly Wisdom Will Know and Fear God (Proverbs 2:1–5)
- Following Godly Wisdom Is the Best Way to Live (Proverbs 2:6–8)
- Following Godly Wisdom Keeps Us on the Right Path (Proverbs 2:9–22)

Verse of the Month JAMES 1:5 Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



TH 3-1

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TH 3-2

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BEGINNING	END		
A picture	Paints a thousand words		
All that glitters	Is not gold		
An apple a day	Keeps the doctor away		
Beggars	Can't be choosers		
Birds of a feather	Flock together		
Blood	Is thicker than water		
Curiosity	Killed the cat		
Crime	Doesn't pay		
Great minds	Think alike		
The early bird	Gets the worm		
Practice	Makes perfect		
The darkest hour	Is just before dawn		
Talk	Is cheap		
Silence	Is golden		
The pen	Is mightier than the sword		
Time	Waits for no man		
Walls	Have ears		
Those who sleep with dogs	Will rise with fleas		
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TH 3-3

TEACHING TIP

Encourage your group members to imagine they are in the scene when studying the Bible. We don't want to stray from truth, but they can still "put themselves in the picture."

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Ask students to share wise sayings they've seen on coffee cups, such as "Throw kindness around like confetti" or "Be calm and carry on." You might even know someone with a collection of them! You can find others with a Pinterest search (but screen them carefully). Transition to the lesson by saying, God's Word has the best wisdom for us, and we'll talk more about it as we continue our study of the book of Proverbs.

OPTION 2: Divide your students into two groups and give each a cut-apart copy of "Pro-Verbs" (TH 3-3). Challenge the teams to race to correctly match the beginning and end of some traditional wise sayings. Transition to the lesson by saying, Today's study of Proverbs will continue to help us put together God's wisdom on living.

OPTION 3: Discuss the difference between intelligence and wisdom. Show this short kid's video (bit.ly/SmartWise2) then ask your students for other examples that show the difference between being smart vs. being wise. Transition to the lesson by saying, Today we will examine what Proverbs 2 teaches us about the value of God's wisdom and why that's a smart thing to pursue.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Student Outline (TH 3-2).

EXECUTE: Those Who Seek and Practice Godly Wisdom Will Know and Fear God (Proverbs 2:1-5)

There is wisdom in learning from our own experiences. There is greater wisdom still in learning from the experiences of others. When we heed the hardwon knowledge gained by those who have discovered the best paths through trial, error, and success, we can avoid costly missteps. This is the message the author is conveying in the second chapter of Proverbs. Notice the opening address: My son (verse 1). This was a common way for teachers at that time to address those with whom they were sharing wisdom. The information that follows is from someone who had "been there and done that," an experienced person with valuable insight. And it is also the inspired word and wisdom of God. This is always the best path.

The value of seeking God's wisdom is the theme of the opening verses (Proverbs 2:1-4). The format of these verses is one that is commonly found in the wisdom writings of Scripture. It is parallelism: the repetition of phrases, ideas, or themes in order to make a point. Synonymous parallelism is used here and in many other places in Scripture. The same idea is expressed in multiple lines using different words that correspond to each other. The overall message of these synonymously parallel lines is that wisdom must be highly valued, sought out, and put into practice so that it can have a full impact.

DISCUSS:

- What is the difference between wisdom and godly wisdom? Why is godly wisdom more valuable than the wisdom of the world?
- What does godly wisdom look like in a teenager?

The impact of wisdom is conditional (*if you*, **verses 1, 3, 4**), not automatic. Here the teacher provides the conditions that must be met in order for wisdom to work. **Verses 1 and 2** teach that a humble heart and a mind that is willing to listen and learn are necessary. The student is instructed to be open to the lesson (*receive my words*, **verse 1**) and to listen intently (*making your ear attentive*, **verse 2**).

Wisdom must also be sought out. **Verse 3** asserts that the learner should *cry* out for insight and understanding. Being intentional has become a bit of a buzzword in recent years. Perhaps that is because it is so easy to drift through life and just get through a day rather than living with purpose moment by moment. This is not a wise way to live. Wisdom takes effort to accumulate. A life of purpose must be pursued.

The final parallelism in **verse 4** declares the necessity of valuing wisdom directly. The pursuit of wisdom and purpose requires effort (**verses 3–4**). Therefore, wisdom must be seen as worthwhile it if we are to do what is necessary to gain it. It should be treated as hidden treasure that is worth searching for (**verse 4**). The author spends the rest of the chapter explaining why wisdom is indeed worthy of whatever it takes to acquire it.

DISCUSS:

- Where do we go to find godly wisdom? (God's Word; wise believers; Christian songs and hymns; etc.)
- What are some routines that help us to seek out godly wisdom?

The conditional statements found in **Proverbs 2:1–4** find the delivery of their promise in **verse 5**. Seeking, accepting, and living out godly wisdom leads to a healthy fear of God and to knowing Him more and more.

EXPLORE: -

The link between the fear of the Lord and wisdom is often cited in Proverbs (<u>Proverbs 1:7; 2:5; 9:10</u>; etc.), but it is also repeated throughout the Scriptures (<u>Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10</u>; <u>Isaiah 11:2</u>; <u>33:6</u>; <u>Micah 6:9</u>).

KEY TRUTH: Following Godly Wisdom Is the Best Way to Live (Proverbs 2:6-8)

Verse 6 reminds us that God is the source of wisdom. If a person recognizes God as the giver of wisdom, pursues an understanding of His ways (**verses 1–4**), and then lives in submission and obedience to His sovereignty (**verse 5**), it will have a notable and positive impact on his or her life (**verses 7–8**).

As Creator of the world, the Lord is the One who knows best how life is meant to be lived. He alone is uncorrupted by the impacts of sin, and He alone has pure and complete knowledge and understanding (**verse 6**). Rather than an

APPLY:

Place high value on the wisdom God gives us.

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Teen Teaching Outline* (TH 3-1).

APPLY:

We don't become wise automatically. We must seek wisdom out, accept it, and put it into practice.

APPLY:

Live according to God's wisdom and commands. He knows what is best.

APPLY:

Follow God's wisdom. It protects us from the terrible consequences of sinful choices.

exercise in selfish control or meddlesome oversight, God's wisdom, as given through His commands, is always for our good and His glory.

DISCUSS:

• How would you respond to someone who says the Bible is just a book of rules meant to take the fun out of life?

The word translated as *upright* in **verse 7** refers to those who live with integrity of mind, those who believe in the sovereignty of God and have the understanding to value and obey His ways. Compare that person with the double-minded seeker of wisdom in James 1:6–8 who has his or her thoughts divided between the knowledge given by God and the supposed wisdom of this world. A person cannot be led by both. Greater wisdom and protection is promised for the person with undivided loyalty who does not deviate from God's prescribed path (i.e. the one who walks in integrity or uprightly, verse 7). The sound wisdom (verse 7) that is stored up is accessed only through fear of the Lord. Only by living in accord with His knowledge can one gain the understanding necessary to see all things with the right perspective. The wisdom for life is added to the wisdom of trusting God as God. God is a shield (**verse 7**), protecting those who live in such a manner. God guards people from the terrible consequences of sinful choices by providing the knowledge and understanding of His Word, where His wisdom can be found.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). The first step in wisdom is acknowledging God as God, not just intellectually but in the way we live. Once this crucial first step is taken, wisdom can grow and transform every facet of our lives. God's care for us begins to work out in our choices and the consequences that result.

DISCUSS:

• How does God protect us from sin's consequences? What specific tools does He use? (His Word; His people; the Holy Spirit; circumstances; etc.)

Justice or *judgment* (**verse 8**) refers to rightness. God alone is the true arbiter of what is right and wrong. It is unwise to deviate from His decrees. No matter what the world says, God's judgment is what really matters. Mankind has repeatedly changed opinions about what is right and true, but God's paths of justice have not. He watches over His saints (verse 8) and gives insight to truth.

EXECUTE: Following Godly Wisdom Keeps Us on the Right Path (Proverbs 2:9-22)

The results of valuing God's wisdom (**verses 1–4**) enough to put it into practice (verses 5-8) are discussed further in the rest of the chapter (verses 9-22). These verses contrast the way of those with integrity (verse 21) and the way of the wicked (verse 22).

The terms paths and ways are repeatedly used (verses 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, **20**). *Walk* is also used often (**verses 7, 13, 20**). Each of these terms refers to the way a person lives or moves through life. These verses are an observation of choices and consequences. Consider the words used to describe the results of following the wisdom of God: righteousness, justice or judgment, equity, good, discretion, and understanding (verses 9–11). Compare those with the words

describing those who forsake the wisdom of God: evil, perverted or perverse, darkness, crooked, and devious (verses 12–15).

DISCUSS:

- What is the overall outcome of following God's wisdom? Of rejecting God's wisdom?
- Up to this point in your life, would you say you have pursued God's wisdom, avoided it, or ignored it? Why?

The ultimate outcome of the two paths is placed in extreme contrast. The way of the *upright* (**verses 7, 21**) brings that which is good and pleasant (**verse 10**) and results in continuing to prosper in the land (**verse 21**). The *wicked*, however (**verse 22**), become the opposite of upright, *sinking down to death* (**verse 18**). Though such outcomes seem like they would make the choice easy, the wayward path is seductive, noted here by the warning about the forbidden woman or adulteress (**verse 16–19**). It takes wisdom to recognize the danger and to avoid it, wisdom that only God can provide (**verse 6**). God's way of life is superior to every other way. It is sound. It is trustworthy. These truths can be observed by all those with eyes willing to see.

EXPLORE: -

The Hebrew word translated as integrity or perfect in verse 21 is also often translated as without blemish (Exodus 29:1; Leviticus 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6) or blameless (Genesis 6:9; 17:1). The idea is that of completeness or soundness, not damaged or deficient. In modern terms, we might speak of the integrity of a piece of infrastructure. Through observation and testing, the structural integrity of a building or bridge can be determined. Once that integrity has been established, it can be trusted. Likewise, the integrity of God's wisdom can be observed and tested. A person needs only to look around at the practices of those who follow the wisdom of God and those who do not in order to determine which way is sound and trustworthy.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Use "Write Your Own Proverb" (TH 3-4) for students to apply biblical wisdom to today's situations. Some humor is good, but encourage them to think seriously about their suggested proverbs, using the structure of some of the proverbs in Proverbs 10 as models. Encourage them to edit for impact and share with one another.

OPTION 2: Ask your students to think seriously about the best advice they have received. What would they share with someone else? Have them write their advice on a notecard, collect the cards, and then allow each student to select a word of advice to reflect on this week.

APPLY:

Choose the wisdom of God's ways. They lead to what is good and pleasant.



TH 3-4

Encourage your students to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional study guides this week.



PP-3

The Parent Page (PP-3) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give print or digital copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com or at the D6 Family app. **OPTION 3:** Encourage your students to actively pursue and seek out God's wisdom this week. Discuss ways to gain wisdom. (Be sure to include reading and listening to God's Word each day, meditating on and memorizing Scripture, talking with wise believers, reading a good book or article, listening to a good podcast, or studying.) We are never too old or too young to learn; we are never wise enough. Wisdom for living helps all of us to make good choices and live without regrets.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

There are five books of poetry in the Old Testament, sometimes called Wisdom literature. They are: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

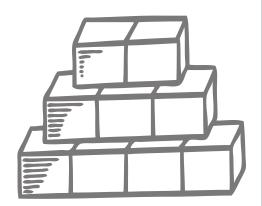
Pray!

FAMILY THEME

Faith That Endures

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will overcome temptation and allow God to grow their faith through trials.

STUDY TEXT: James 1:1-25



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Teen Teaching Guide.
- Review the *Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 4-1 or TH 4-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the Student Outline (TH 4-2), "Finding Joy" (TH 4-4), "Passing the Test" (TH 4-5), and Parent Page (PP-4) if necessary. If possible, print the "Test Time" (TH 4-3) poster on larger paper or make "mini" versions for each student. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (*PP-4*) to the parents of your students.

• Key Truths

- God Uses Trials to Test and Grow Our Faith (James 1:1-8)
- Both Poverty and Wealth Bring Trials (<u>James 1:9–11</u>)
- Our Own Sinful Desires Entice Us to Sin (James 1:12-25)

Verse of the Month JAMES 1:5 Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



TH 4-1



TH 4-2



TH 4-3



TH 4-4

TEACHING TIP

Group members can reflect individually on the truths of Scripture through a time of silent meditation, journaling, commitment to action, or decision to change a particular behavior.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: With masking tape or painter's tape, mark out a "balance beam" on the floor (16 feet long, four inches wide) and challenge a volunteer to walk it, then do a gymnastic stunt on it (spin, balance on one foot, stoop and stand, etc.). Have volunteers repeat the "routine," this time with people distracting them by shouting, throwing paper wads, or trying to make them laugh. Transition to the lesson by saying, Our walk with Christ can be difficult, even without distractions and attacks. But we can keep our balance when we learn some important lessons from God's Word.

OPTION 2: Ask students to describe the hardest exercises they know about. (Ideas might be pull-ups, climbing a rope, dragging a chain, running the bleachers or the lines, or many others.) Ask for volunteers to demonstrate these drills. Discuss: Why would anyone want to do these exercises? Transition to the lesson by saying, Though the trial of the exercises is not welcome or fun, people do them with a goal in mind. That's similar to what James said in his epistle.

OPTION 3: Use "Finding Joy" (TH 4-4) to explore where your students found joy at different stages in life. Discuss together what is consistent about their lists. Transition to the lesson by saying, James instructed believers to find joy in something very unusual. Let's look at his challenge together today.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Student Outline (TH 4-2). Display the "Test Time" poster (TH 4-3).

James' letter is one of the earliest New Testament books written. Some scholars believe it came as early as AD 45 or 50. James emphasized faith's practical side. His words call to mind the everyday ethical and behavioral examples that Jesus used. James presented Christian discipleship as something you are and something you do, never as something you merely know or believe.

SET OF TRUTH: God Uses Trials to Test and Grow Our Faith (James 1:1-8)

Some of the Jewish believers James addressed (verse 1) might have scattered around the Roman Empire following the death of Stephen, as persecution increased toward the newborn church (Acts 7-8). Others possibly returned to their home regions following the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Believers were experiencing trials and difficulty at this time, including persecution, yet James encouraged them to have joy in trials (verses 2-4). He understood that trials served as the first link of a long, yet profitable chain of growth: perseverance, steadfastness, and patience. God can use trials and difficulties for good in our lives.

What does it mean for us to be *perfect* and *complete* (verse 4)? It refers to being fully equipped and suitable for the task. James was not indicating that believers are sinless. Perfect or mature believers have what they need to live in a way that honors God's purposes for them.

EXPLORE: -

Jesus warned that His followers would be persecuted (Matthew 10:16–25). The earliest persecution of Christianity was prompted by Jews seeking to correct what they deemed to be corruptions of their traditional faith (Acts 8:1-3; 13:50). The Roman government initially considered Christianity a segment of Judaism. But after it became clear that Christianity was a different faith, the Romans began to persecute the church.

In Greek, the word translated as perseverance, endurance, steadfastness, or patience in these verses refers to holding up under a heavy load. The concept calls to mind engineers who stress test a bridge to show it is able to perform as designed. Our difficulties are stress tests, designed to show we are able to perform properly as God intends for us.

DISCUSS:

- What is the right attitude for believers to have about trials and difficulties? (We can have joy in the midst of trials because God uses them for our good.)
- What are some good results God can bring through trials? (Trials develop our patience and perseverance; God uses trials to make us more like Christ and develop our faith.)

Our joy in trials does not indicate the way will be easy. We will recognize our need of wisdom, and God will supply the wisdom we need (verses 5-6). Trials are good for us because they show what God has already accomplished in us. They drive us to God for the wisdom we need. However, like a colander or a sieve is unsuited for holding water, a person who doubts is unsuited to receive wisdom from God (verses 7-8).

It is a blessing to those around us when we can demonstrate joy in facing trials. It shows others the difference it makes to know and walk with Christ, convicting and encouraging them. All believers need to learn that trials are going to come and that God can use trials to accomplish good things within us.

DISCUSS:

- How can your trials help others?
- How can we react to trials in a way that draws others to Christ?

When we say we want to grow spiritually, do we mean we are willing to face with joy the trials that will come in the process? We often want instant growth, as though we could pour it out of a box and warm it up in the microwave. Maturity, however, often comes through times of trial or testing. Yet even in trials, we can have joy because we know that God will use them to develop our faith.

APPLY:

Maintain a positive attitude toward trials, knowing God uses them to develop our faith.

The discussion questions can also be found on the Teen Teaching Outline (TH 4-1).

APPLY:

React to trials in ways that will draw others to Christ.

EXECUTE: Both Poverty and Wealth Bring Trials (James 1:9-11)

One particular source of difficulty and temptation is our economic status. Wealth can shield people from *some* trials, but no one leads a trouble-free existence. James knew that rich and poor alike face testing. Social and financial status means nothing to God. Yet James also knew that people do not understand this. He suggested the poor are in the lofty position, while the rich are humbled. How can this be?

Believers from the lower economic ranks should rejoice (verse 9). They can only do this because they know what they endure is not the end of the story. Their rich status as redeemed children of God will eventually be revealed. Wealthier believers, however, should remind themselves of life's fragile brevity **(verses 10–11).** This helps them focus on obedience to God rather than an undue concern for their wealth. His reminder echoes Isaiah's words from centuries before (Isaiah 40:7).

James wanted believers to live above the traps of "normal" human existence. In that kind of life, the poor have little to look forward to, the rich focus on what they have now and how to get more, and both look mainly to their own situation with little concern for others. Among believers, it is to be different. High and low alike should seek to love God and others, rather than to focus on how much or how little they have on earth.

APPLY:

Handle your economic situation in ways that glorify God.

DISCUSS:

- Why does our culture focus so much on material wealth?
- How can these insights from James help you to focus on glorifying God, whether you feel like you belong with the rich people or the poor people?

EXPLORE: _

James did not indicate the poor are somehow saved just because they are poor. He didn't say the rich are somehow condemned because they are rich. Instead, he addressed both groups in ways that correspond to the temptations each group commonly faces. The poor are tempted to envy those who have more, to see themselves as helpless victims. Those who are financially comfortable are tempted to think of their situation as normal or earned by their abilities and efforts, without the need for dependence on God.

KEY TRUTH: Our Own Sinful Desires Entice Us to Sin (James 1:12-25)

Testing comes in two main forms. The first form encourages success. This is the kind of testing we receive from God (verse 12). It is the kind of testing that a racecar team will perform in pre-race trials to ensure that all their hard work, preparation, and calculation have produced a vehicle ready for the race.

The second kind of testing or temptation aims for failure. This testing comes from Satan and sin, never from God (verses 13-15). James informed us that we are tempted when our own sinful nature and desires are drawn to the sources of temptation around us. Satan, his demons, and the worldly system he rules

over dangle the temptation before us, but our own sinful desires draw us to sin.

We can be sure God never works to induce us to do or think wrong. He never desires us to participate in evil or to follow our evil inclinations. In times of testing and temptation we must understand the differing desires that God and Satan have for us. Satan is pulling against us, using every tool available, including our own desires, to pull us away from God and toward spiritual destruction. God, on the other hand, is pulling for us, to see us through the temptation, to see us emerge in victory.

DISCUSS:

• When you are aware that Satan wants to destroy you, does it make a difference in how you face temptation? How?

We must fight our own deception. Anything that qualifies as a good and perfect gift comes from God. His nature does not change (verses 16-18). Our Father's desires for us do not change like shadows do as the day moves along. The changing circumstances of life do not change His love for us. He brings us into His kingdom through truth, and we need to let that truth guard us from deception, especially self-deception. We are to be good listeners and slow to become angry. We are to set wickedness aside and receive the truth of God's Word (verses 19-21).

Willpower alone cannot rescue us from trials and temptation. It will always eventually give way to our own inclination and weakness, as well as to Satan's efforts. The only way we can stand firm against temptation is with God's strength and power. As we submit to the control and direction of the Holy Spirit, He gives us the power to take the way out that God provides (1 Corinthians 10:13).

DISCUSS:

- What will help us overcome temptation? (Walk in the direction of the Spirit; avoid putting ourselves in tempting situations; flee temptation when it comes; resist through prayer and Scripture when we can't avoid or flee.)
- How can being quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger help you to resist temptation?

Paul explained that people come to faith as a result of hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17). Our journey of faith in Jesus begins with hearing and believing the gospel. However, our hearing should result in more than just intellectual knowledge. It should include a change of heart that leads to a different lifestyle (verse 22). If, when we say, "I heard the gospel," we only mean that we read it in God's Word or heard some Christian proclaim it, then we need to realize that true salvation consists of more.

Examine James' argument for a moment. Hearing alone can be deceptive (verse 22b). How often do we see people live in complete contradiction to the attitudes, principles, and commands of Scripture, yet claim to be Christians when asked about their religious affiliation? These people would express shock if someone suggested they misunderstood the nature of their relationship with Jesus. James described such people as self-deceived. Jesus told His listeners that there will be many people on the day of judgment who thought they knew God, only to find out otherwise with tragic results (Matthew 7:21-23).

APPLY:

When tempted to do wrong, remember that Satan is seeking to destroy us while God wants what is best for us.

APPLY:

Ask God for strength to resist temptation, and submit to the Holy Spirit's control and direction.

APPLY:

Go beyond hearing or reading God's Word. Put it into practice.



TH 4-5

Encourage your students to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional study guides this week.



PP-4

The Parent Page (PP-4) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give print or digital copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com.

Hearing alone does not bring change. James used the illustration of a mirror to help us understand this idea (verse 23). His word picture involved people who looked at themselves in a mirror but refused to do anything about the blemishes the mirror revealed. Seeing oneself in the mirror does not change what is wrong. That information is only helpful when we act on it. Acting on truth reveals our faith (verses 24-25).

DISCUSS:

- What truth from God's Word do you need to more fully put into practice?
- How can you become more accountable for doing the good deeds you know to do?

The same is true with the gospel message of salvation. God's Word shows us our need to be saved and God's provision of salvation through His Son, but this information itself does not change us. It is only helpful when we respond to the message in a way that changes our attitudes and lifestyle.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Show one of these Truist commercials about enduring hardship to reach your goals: bit.ly/TrCatch or bit.ly/TrFootball. Discuss the discipline and endurance required for us to live in a way that pleases God. Pray that your students will willingly listen to their "Coach" to grow strong in their faith.

OPTION 2: Use "Passing the Test" (TH 4-5) to help your students strategize ways to overcome temptation.

OPTION 3: Most teens need the reminder from James 1:19: *be quick, be slow.* Ask students to team up to play a round or two of the slap game, Red Hands (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red hands). Then talk about when we are to be quick (to listen) and when we are to be slow (to speak, to become angry). Pray for them to learn self-discipline in these areas.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

The General Epistles were written by early church leaders. They are: Hebrews; James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; and Jude.

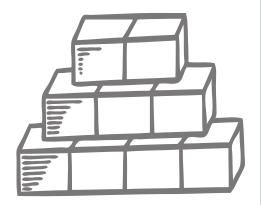
Pray!

FAMILY THEME

Living Out Our Faith

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will show love and care for those who are vulnerable and needy.

STUDY TEXT: James 1:26—2:13; Luke 10:25–37; Matthew 25:31–40



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and the Teen Teaching Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 5-1 or TH 5-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Student Outline* (TH 5-2), "See Me!" (TH 5-3), "Brainstorm Session" (TH 5-4), and *Parent Page* (*PP-5*) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803.
- ☐ If you are using Connect option 1, bring an assortment of items representing someone's needs. If you are using Connect option 2, bring "Smarties" and an ice cube for each student. If you are using Respond Option 3, assign students to bring supplies to build simple first-aid kits.
- ☐ Distribute digital or print copies of *Parent Page (PP-5)* to the parents of your students.

Key Truths

- Genuine Religion Ministers to the Vulnerable (James 1:26—2:13)
- Genuine Religion Shows Love to Neighbors (<u>Luke 10:25–37</u>)
- Ministering to the Vulnerable Is Ministering to Jesus (Matthew 25:31-40)

Verse of the Month

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



TH 5-1



TH 5-2



TH 5-3

TEACHING TIP

Reflect together on the truths of Scripture by planning a project or ministry opportunity, reading a prayer or statement together, or singing an appropriate hymn or Christian song together.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Bring an assortment of items that represent someone in need, such as a broken pencil, a lost button or patch, an empty water bottle, a band aid, and an empty wallet. Ask students to identify what the items have in common. Transition to the lesson by saying, *In our lesson today, we will talk about the* believer's responsibility to help those who are in need.

OPTION 2: Give every student a piece of "Smartie" candy (or some other small candy) to hold on their tongues. Ask them to tell a classmate about how it tastes. Then distribute ice cubes for each student. Challenge them to hold the ice on their tongues until it is melted. Afterward, give everyone another "smartie" and repeat the taste test. With a numb tongue, the candy will be flavorless. Transition to the lesson by saying, Sometimes we become numb and frozen to the needs around us instead of responding with sweetness. Our lesson today helps us overcome that tendency.

OPTION 3: With school soon starting back, help your students to focus on the needs of others with "See Me!" (TH 5-3), examining some of the vulnerable people they see on a routine basis. Say, Our lesson today encourages us to notice and respond to the needs around us.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Student Outline (TH 5-2).

Genuine religion means living out our faith by putting it into action. As we saw in last week's lesson, we are to go beyond simply hearing God's Word. We are to live it out.

WEY TRUTH: Genuine Religion Ministers to the Vulnerable (James 1:26-2:13)

Living out God's Word involves controlling our tongues and looking out for the fatherless and widows (James 1:26-27)—those who are vulnerable. We are also to live holy lives.

Many churches do a good job discussing the importance of controlling our tongues well. For example, we talk about the dangers of gossip and the importance of being mindful of our words in places like social media. We also spend a lot of time talking about holiness, though probably not as much as we should. But we do not hear as much about how we should focus on fatherless children or widows. God expects us to help these groups. However, James was making a bigger point: we must minister to the truly vulnerable to have genuine religion.

But what about those who take advantage by asking for help they don't really need or could acquire if they would work for it? Are we obligated to help anyone who asks for it? Second Thessalonians 3:10-12 tells us that those who

will not work should not be given food to eat. People are not to be idle. They are to work for a living. If possible, we should try to determine if people are truly needy and be ready to help if it seems they are.

DISCUSS:

- What types of people in our community are vulnerable? What are their needs?
- Why is it important to see the vulnerable as people made in the image of God? How might that change our approach to ministry and loving our neighbor?

EXPLORE:

Who are the *fatherless* in our communities today? This would include children of single mothers, those in foster care, and perhaps even those in the juvenile justice system. Children who are being sex trafficked and the unborn who are aborted would be in this category as well. The Statistica database reports 15.09 million children living with a single mother in the United States and 3.05 million children living with a single father; 186,600 children are in foster care in the United States. In addition, juvenile courts deal with around 430,000 youth a year. In 2021, there were 17,200 reports of sex trafficking in the United States. In the first six months of 2024, an average of 98,000 abortions were committed each month. The vulnerable include still others who have an intellectual disability (6.5 million), mental illness (57.8 million), or dementia. The vulnerable are in our families, churches, and communities.

In **James 2:1–4**, James questioned how a person of real faith can favor some people over others **(verse 1)**. He provided examples such as gold rings and filthy clothes **(verses 2–3)**. We should ask ourselves: Would we prefer an apparently well-adjusted and well-dressed family to enter our church or a single mother with an unruly child? Would we prefer a man wearing expensive clothes or a disheveled person who smells like smoke? Do we celebrate when a group of children with special needs shows up for Vacation Bible School? We've all seen the church websites and marketing materials that tend to more frequently display shiny, happy people. We are susceptible to prefer the well-adjusted over those who are vulnerable and in need of help. Yet failing to value the vulnerable or showing preference is a sin. James referred to this attitude as evil **(verse 4)**.

DISCUSS:

- What does partiality look like in churches today?
- How does a focus on the gospel help us overcome any feelings of partiality?

The poor and vulnerable can teach us a great deal about life and what really matters (verse 5). Once we see them as people God loves, we begin to learn from them. We impoverish ourselves when we focus only on their vulnerability. Too often the people we are so eager to impress are quick to disregard our efforts (verses 6–7). Regardless, we do ourselves a great favor when we love our neighbor and the vulnerable. When we fail to value them as we do others, we are sinning (verses 8–9).

APPLY:

God expects us to help those who are truly vulnerable and needy.

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Teen Teaching Outline* (TH 5-1).

APPLY:

Avoid the sin of partiality.
Welcome the needy and
vulnerable like we welcome
those who "have it all together."

Here, James pointed back to the end of chapter 1. Genuine religion is unspotted from the world, but it also cares for the vulnerable (1:27). Perhaps we've avoided many sins (2:10-11), but if we have failed to love our neighbor we are as guilty as the person who has committed adultery. God expects us to show love and mercy to the vulnerable (verses 12-13).

One way to help the vulnerable is to care for those who care for them—such as doctors and nurses, first responders, nursing home workers, law enforcement officers, jailors and other correctional officers. Many of them work in high stress situations with few easy days, limited staffing, and difficult tasks. Honor them. Remind others of the value these people give to vulnerable people and society as a whole.

EXECUTE: Genuine Religion Shows Love to Neighbors (Luke 10:25-37)

We are all called to minister to the vulnerable. After reading James 1:26—2:13, we realize that fact. We can be tempted to ignore the vulnerable or not seem to notice them to avoid our responsibility to them. That is what a lawyer who approached Jesus might have been thinking. Essentially, he asked, What do I have to do to go to Heaven? implying that he wanted to do the minimum (Luke 10:25). When Jesus asked him what God's Word says, he provided the right answer—love God and love people (Luke 10:26–28). But he was more concerned with discussing spiritual topics than putting his faith into action, so he asked, Who is my neighbor **(verse 29)**? Jesus gave us the answer with the parable of the Good Samaritan (verses 30-37).

The parable begins with a traveler who is robbed and beaten on a dangerous stretch of road (verse 30). "Only a fool would travel the road from Jerusalem to Jericho alone" was an old saying. This could be like people today who are vulnerable due to bad decisions they have made, like running away and finding themselves with oppressive people. We also learn that the traveler's clothes were taken, and he was left for dead (verse 30). He is a picture of vulnerability; he is helpless.

APPLY:

A vulnerable neighbor can be anyone we come in contact with.

DISCUSS:

- When have you unexpectedly come across someone truly in need? How did you respond?
- What type of attitude is needed to help meet the needs of others?

By chance **(verse 31)** is a key phrase. This is the way we often interact with the vulnerable. We didn't plan it. We were not on a mission trip. We might be running late or it might be an inopportune time. A special needs child, a struggling caregiver, an elderly shopper, all might present an opportunity for us to help. The key is sensing someone needs help, though you will be greatly inconvenienced if you provide it.

The priest and the Levite saw the wounded traveler, but they passed by on the other side (verses 31–32). They put some distance between themselves and the vulnerable person. They might have thought this could be a trap or that stopping would keep them from their religious duties. What would we have done?

Who are some of the vulnerable people in your sphere of influence (your home, family, neighborhood, church, greater community)? Identify someone and ask

yourself, "What does that person need?" Some need a break, like a caregiver who has a vulnerable loved one. A widow might need someone to mow her grass. A disabled person might need a ramp. Look for a specific need that you might already be equipped to meet.

Verse 33 tells us that a hated Samaritan responded differently. He had compassion and went to the wounded traveler. The Jews and Samaritans hated each other. But Jesus used an unlikely Samaritan to demonstrate how we should show love to the needy. When you go to the vulnerable person or their caretaker, you begin to see the real need, which leads to compassion followed by action. We might say, "You are hooked," and unable to just walk away and ignore them.

The Samaritan got involved. He dressed the traveler's wounds and took him to an inn to take care of him **(verse 34).** He was prepared. He had bandages, oil and wine, an animal he was willing to share, and financial resources. He prepared before he went down the road. We have the Bible, prayer, our words, our relationships, and the church. However, we must be prepared before we encounter the vulnerable person if we are going to be able to help him in that moment. Helping might be costly **(verse 35).** It will cost you your time and maybe even your money. However, this is what Jesus has called us to do **(verses 36–37).**

DISCUSS:

- What might it cost us to help those in need? (Time; money; inconvenience; etc.)
- Why is it important to see people as people, not as problems?
- How can we move past feelings of inconvenience when we see someone in need?

Ministering to Jesus (Matthew 25:31-40)

Notice what **Matthew 25:31–33** tells us will happen when Christ returns. His angels will be with Him. He, in all His glory, will sit on His throne. Everyone will be there. He will put the sheep (or believers) on the right side and the goats (or lost people) on the left side.

The sheep (believers) will inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for them (verse 34). Why? Because they lived out their faith. They had given food and drink to the hungry and thirsty. They welcomed, clothed, and visited the sick and needy. They thought they had performed these actions for family members, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, people at their church, those in their community—people who were thought of as the least of these. In reality, doing these things for the vulnerable was doing it for Jesus (verses 35–40).

DISCUSS:

- What are specific actions we can take to minister to the vulnerable in our community?
- How can meeting someone's physical need open the door to help meet a spiritual need?

APPLY:

Be willing and prepared to help those in need.

APPLY:

Minister to Jesus by ministering to the vulnerable and needy.

Some people serve others to feel good about themselves. As Christians, what should be our main motivation for serving others?

Put vulnerable people on your radar. How can you minister to them? The best situations usually revolve around a great need in the community and people in the church who have a heart for a specific vulnerable group.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Work together to identify someone in need right now. This could be an elderly person, a single mom, or a foster kid. Ask your students to list specific ways they can be involved in helping. Plan a service project this week and encourage all of them to participate.

OPTION 2: Build first aid kits for students to distribute to needy people. You'll need a ziplock bag, band aids, antibacterial wipes, cotton swabs, and perhaps some small packets of petroleum jelly, medicated cream, lotion, lip balm, nail clippers, soap, or gauze. Encourage students to hand them out with a bottle of water and pack of crackers when they see needy people in the community.

OPTION 3: Brainstorm together or in small groups to work through the vulnerable groups in "Brainstorm Session" (TH 5-4) to suggest ideas for meeting the needs of the vulnerable and those who serve them. Challenge your students to follow up in practical ways this week to minister.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Temptation does not come from God, but He always provides a way to resist it (James 1:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

Pray!



TH 5-4

Encourage students to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional study guides this week.



PP-5

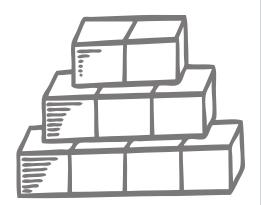
The Parent Page (PP-5) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com.

FAMILY THEME

Genuine Faith

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will put their faith into action.

STUDY TEXT: James 2:14–26



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and the Teen Teaching Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Teen Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 6-1 or TH 6-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Student Outline* (TH 6-2), "Beat the Clock Challenges" (TH 6-3), "Dead or Alive" (TH 6-4), "Faith Dearly Departed" (TH 6-5), and Parent Page (PP-6) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803. If your students are doing the skit in TH 6-5, assign parts ahead of time and gather any props you will use.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (*PP-6*) to the parents of your students.

Key Truths

- Faith Without Action Is Worthless (James 2:14-17)
- Faith Is More Than Just Belief in God (James 2:18-19)
- We Are Counted as Righteous Based on Action-Producing Faith (James 2:20-26)

Verse of the Month **JAMES 1:22**

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



TH 6-1



TH 6-2



TH 6-3



TH 6-4



TH 6-5

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Ask students to predict how many seconds it will take them to beat a challenge. Some are provided on the handout, TH 6-3, or you can create "beat the clock" challenges of your own. Use the stopwatch timer on your phone to see if they can live up to their predictions and "beat the clock." Transition to the lesson by saying, *The book of James has a similar challenge, asking believers to prove by their actions what they said they believe. Let's see how that challenge applies to us as well.*

OPTION 2: Consider showing this video about "playing 'possum': bit.ly/ Possum2. The fact sheet, "Dead or Alive" (TH 6-4) lists other animals and insects that also use "playing dead" as a defense. Ask students to list indicators to prove whether something is dead or alive. Transition to the lesson by saying, Today's lesson will look at the indicators to prove whether our faith is dead or alive.

OPTION 3: "Faith Dearly Departed" (TH 6-5) is a humorous skit about the evidence for real faith. Begin class with the short skit, then ask students to evaluate what evidence we might use to show that our faith is living. Transition to the lesson by saying, We'll look further at that idea in today's lesson.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Student Outline (TH 6-2).

James consistently emphasized the need for faith that leads to action. His approach focused on the practical aspects of the Christian life. (Note: The James who wrote today's passage was the half-brother of Jesus, *not* the brother of John).

KEY TRUTH: Faith Without Action Is Worthless (James 2:14-17)

James began this passage with the general case of someone who claimed Christian faith yet gave no evidence of Christian deeds (verse 14). In verse 15, he illustrated his point with what was probably a common situation in that day: fellow Christians who lacked proper clothing and nourishment. His question in verse 16 carries an obvious answer. It does no good for us to wish someone well without doing what we can about the very real need in front of us. Just as good wishes without action accomplish nothing, neither does "faith" without the action that should flow from it (verse 17). Genuine faith naturally leads to action and obedience.

DISCUSS:

- Is faith in Christ more than a one-time prayer? What does this passage say about that?
- How is our witness affected if our lifestyle does not match what we claim to believe? (We lose credibility; people do not see the difference Christ makes in the lives of His followers; etc.)

In the Gospels, when Jesus spoke of faith, He did not have in mind some vague mental process. His approach focused on a personal confidence in *Him*. His discussions often involved people for whom He performed a miracle. Faith led some friends to let their paralyzed friend down through the roof for Jesus to heal him (Mark 2). Sometimes His discussions of faith involved the disciples and their tendency to doubt and fear (Matthew 16:8). Jesus' approach to faith targets a transformation of attitudes and actions. James adopted a similar approach. The Holy Spirit inspired him to point to a personal commitment to living in a way that fits with being a follower of Jesus.

Service to God and others involves *action*. Even praying for others involves some kind of action; it involves acting to set aside the time, focus our attention and thoughts, and to push aside all else while we pray, even if we pray silently. Most service involves visible *activity*. Jesus called His followers the *light of the world*, *a city on a hill that all could see*. As people see the good works from God's *people*, they will be brought to praise *God Himself* (Matthew 5:14–16).

DISCUSS:

- Why do you think James placed so much emphasis on helping others? What does that look like for us today?
- Why are actions, rather than knowledge, the true indicator of faith? (Action reflects the change of heart that genuine faith brings.)

EXPLORE:

Sometimes believers get confused when they compare what James said in today's passage with what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2. Even the great reformer Martin Luther had difficulty reconciling the two approaches. But that is what we have: two approaches to one reality. Both Paul and James tailored their approach to the needs of their audience and dealt with the errors those audiences more frequently encountered. Paul had to address the issue of Jewish believers who insisted that Gentiles convert to Judaism before they could accept Jesus, the Jewish Messiah. The works that Paul had to combat were merely the outward ritual practices of Judaism (especially circumcision), as if these practices garnered them some merit in relation to salvation. To that audience, Paul insisted that Jesus placed no such requirement on Gentiles. Their redemption was through faith, not the works of the law of Moses. Still, Paul acknowledged that we were created for good works (Ephesians 2:10). James faced a different problem: people, mostly Jews probably, who wanted to claim Jesus as their Messiah without following His example in human behavior. They wanted their Jewish "faith" without the demands of the Jewish Messiah. To that audience, James insisted that faith that does not produce people who live as the Messiah's followers is not valid. In reality, both James and Paul insisted on the kind of ethical living that Jesus demonstrated and preached. For both, this kind of life came through faith, without relation to the rituals of Judaism. For a thorough examination of

APPLY:

Our lifestyle should match what we say we believe.

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Teen Teaching Outline* (TH 6-1).

TEACHING TIP

Biblical texts should be framed in their cultural and historical context. This helps your students understand the issues being addressed.

APPLY:

Demonstrate your faith by putting it into action.

this question, see *Discipleship: The Expression of Saving Faith*, by Robert E. Picirilli (Randall House, 2013).

KEY TRUTH: Faith Is More Than Just Belief in God (James 2:18-19)

James continued to develop his thought as he dealt with possible objections that opponents might raise (verse 18). Without deeds there is no way to know that faith is present. On the other hand, the right deeds would demonstrate quite clearly what sort of faith we have.

James then gave an example that all his Jewish readers could understand. They all proudly and loudly proclaimed—in the midst of the Roman empire's pagan idolatry—that there was only one God. They would quickly quote from Deuteronomy 6:4. But to agree there was only one God guaranteed nothing spiritually. Even Satan's demons understand there is only one God, and their "belief" leads them to tremble in fear (verse 19). Why? Because their relationship to the one God is that of an enemy. Their actions are always in rebellion against Him.

APPLY:

Go beyond intellectual belief to serve and obey God.

DISCUSS:

- Why is intellectual belief in God important? Why is intellectual belief in God not enough?
- How would you describe the difference between intellectual belief and true, saving faith? (Intellectual belief might not drive behavior, while genuine faith leads to actions that match what you believe.)

Those fallen spirits serve as an informative illustration for us. We must always focus on our relationship with God. We might claim belief in any number of orthodox statements about God. Yet our actions demonstrate (to ourselves and to the world) whether we know and love God. After all, Jesus Himself said that if we love Him, we will do what He has told us to do (John 14:15, 24). The proof of our faith is in our actually doing the good work and service of a follower of Christ.

APPLY:

Our actions demonstrate (to ourselves and to the world) whether we know and love God.

DISCUSS:

- What are some actions that demonstrate we truly know and love God? (We do things that put God and others before ourselves; we turn away from sin; we give our time, abilities, and resources to serve God and others; etc.)
- How can we help our friends who say, "I believe in God," or "I'm a Christian," but do not display faith through their actions or lifestyle?

EXPLORE:

The Greek way of thinking often divided theory from practice, as we still do so often today. The ancient Hebrew way of thinking, however, always involved doing. No one could claim to know the ways of God without walking in the ways of God. God wants to redeem the entire person, not merely his or her actions or thoughts or beliefs. He does not split us into multiple components to deal with them separately. He redeems us entirely. Anyone who truly believes the gospel message will perform gospel deeds. We learn the gospel through living the gospel. Jesus gave no comfort to those who

claimed Him as Savior while they did not follow Him in their behavior (Matthew 7:21-22; Luke 6:46)! Our goal, however, is not just learning about God, but also living as His friends and followers, producing actions that reflect well upon Him.

KEY TRUTH: We Are Counted as Righteous Based on Action-Producing Faith (James 2:20-26)

James continued to support this principle by pointing to Genesis. Both Paul (in Romans 4) and James (here) spoke of the example of Abraham (verses 20-24). Paul emphasized Abraham's belief that God would keep His promises (Genesis 15:6). Abraham's faith made him a child of God. But Abraham provided evidence for his faith: his willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac, in obedience to God (Genesis 22:1–14). The belief culminated in an act of obedience that astounds us even today.

From Abraham, the father of the faithful, James moved to a Gentile example: Rahab (verses 25–26). Rahab demonstrated her faith by acting on it in a very brave way. She risked her life to protect God's servants. She could have consistently claimed to believe that Jehovah would give them victory, but she proved it by actions that put her squarely on the side of God's people (Joshua 2; 6:22-25).

DISCUSS:

- The actions of Abraham and Rahab were very different. How might our "works of faith" look different from one another?
- What actions demonstrate your faith and glorify God?

The deeds these passages discuss are not deeds that we perform in an attempt to make us acceptable to God. It is impossible for us to be good enough or do enough good deeds to earn salvation. The relationship and friendship with God through faith paves the way for behavior that matches our relationship.

DISCUSS:

- Salvation cannot be earned. What relief should that bring us?
- How does a relationship with God lead to good works?

We are not trying to come up with something that will get us into God's favor. On the contrary, through Christ, God already accepts us. If we claim to be friends with God, then we should act like it. This is what James was trying to communicate to his readers. What can we bring to the table that would deserve His favor? Nothing! Isaiah compared our righteousness to dirty rags (Isaiah 64:6). We trust and serve God because He is our God. He redeemed us from sin. He gave us a new life in Christ. What we do in this world is what Christ is doing through us.

EXPLORE:

The assistance Rahab gave the Israelite spies (Joshua 2) qualified as treason in the eyes of the rulers of Jericho. Discovery of her act would have meant her death and possibly the death of her family. She did not make her decision lightly. She was convinced the God of Israel was the God of Heaven

APPLY:

Follow the examples of Abraham and Rahab. Their actions proved their faith.

APPLY:

Do good deeds because you know and love God, not to try to earn salvation.

and earth who intended to give the land to Israel. Rahab, the pagan prostitute, showed greater faith than most of Israel had in the generation before her time. She did not have the Ten Commandments, but she had confidence that Israel's God would give them the land. Her decision to help the spies demonstrated her belief. In a similar way, the deeds we do (or don't do) will tell others what we believe (or don't believe).

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Ask your students to list ways you might recognize a scam, whether on media platforms or in life situations. (See bit.ly/ScamRadar for ideas from the Federal Trade Commission.) Scammers depend on people without discernment to evaluate what is true. Encourage your students to be genuine and true about their faith, demonstrating it in their choices and actions.

OPTION 2: Ask how many of your students have learned CPR or first aid. (Encourage them all to take a class at the Red Cross!) Ask: What if you passed all the training and got the certificate, but then you came to class and found me lying on the floor, not breathing? What would you do? Would you point to your certificate? Or would you help me? Discuss how this scenario relates to faith without works. Challenge your students to be ready to demonstrate their faith in practical ways this week.

OPTION 3: Give a notecard to each of your students and ask them to write down three ways they give evidence of their faith. Remind them that these are only demonstrations of what is happening in their hearts and minds. This evidence is not a substitution for that, but a visual to point to that. Pray for your students to find many ways to demonstrate their faith throughout the week.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Our good deeds do not earn our position in Christ, but we demonstrate our faith in God through our actions. Faith without works is dead (James 2:20).

Pray!

Encourage your students to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional study guides this week.



PP-6

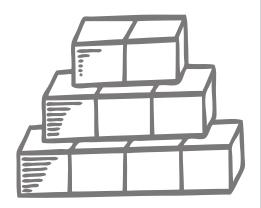
The Parent Page (PP-6) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give print or digital copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com and in the D6 Family App.

FAMILY THEME

Faith Guides Our Words

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will seek God's help to use words in a way that is helpful and builds others up.

STUDY TEXT: James 3:1-12



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and the Teen Teaching Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 7-1 or TH 7-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the Student Outline (TH 7-2),

 "Tongue Twister Challenge" (TH 7-4), "Tame the Tongue"

 (TH 7-5), and Parent Page (PP-7) if necessary. If possible,
 print the "Fire!" poster (TH 7-3) on larger paper and display
 it. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on
 page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (*PP-7*) to the parents of your students.

Key Truths

- Our Words Are Very Powerful (James 3:1-6)
- We Need God's Power and Help to Control Our Words (James 3:7-8)
- Our Words Should Reflect God's Character (James 3:9-12)

Verse of the Month JAMES 1:22 Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



TH 7-1



TH 7-2



TH 7-3

CH Or and the order of the order of the order of the order of the	IE TWISTER ALLENGE
If a deg chews shoes, which shoes does he choose?	A big black bug bit a big black bear.
Sotish shellish.	Eleven benevolent elephants.
Thirty-three thousand feathers on a thrush's throat.	Give Papa a cup of proper coffee in a copper coffee cup.
He threw three free throws.	Tie twine to three tree twigs.
A synonym for cinnamon is a cinnamon synonym.	Zebras zig and zebras zag.
Fresh French fried fritters.	Six sleek swans swam swiftly southward.
Rubber baby buggy bumpers.	Slippery snails slither slowly over the slimy stones in the stagnant stream.
Fred fed Ted bread and Ted fed Fred bread.	The yellow yoyo yanked the young yodeler's yellow yorn in the yard.
She sells sea shells by the sea shore.	Bory the warrior and Roger the worrier were reared wrongly.
Which wristwatches are	Brisk brave brigadiers brandished broad bright blades.

TH 7-4

TEACHING TIP

Help your group members to see how the Scripture passage they are studying fits in with the Bible as a whole with Jesus Christ at its center.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: According to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, the most difficult tongue twister is: "The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick." Ask your students to try to say it correctly, then ask for other tongue twisters they know of. Transition to the lesson by saying, *The biggest problem with our tongues is not pronouncing words incorrectly. Our tongues can get us into a lot of trouble. James 3 has some practical advice for believers on the subject.*

OPTION 2: Display the "Fire!" poster, TH 7-3. Ask your students to imagine pouring gasoline around an old barn. Ask: What might happen? Transition to the lesson by saying, When our words are out of control, we place ourselves in a similar situation. We set up a blaze that may quickly escalate. God's Word has some instructions for us to help us control our tongues. We'll study them today in James 3.

OPTION 3: Start this lesson about the tongue with a Tongue Twister Challenge (TH 7-4). Cut up and fold the tongue twisters, put them in a basket, and ask students to select one to say three times fast. Award prizes, if you wish. Transition to the lesson by saying, We all understand how our tongues can get twisted. James has some practical advice about taming the tongue.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the *Student Outline* (TH 7-2).

KEY TRUTH: Our Words Are Very Powerful (James 3:1-6)

The opening warning of this chapter **(verse 1)** might seem odd. After all, Jesus charged the disciples to go into all the world to make disciples and to *teach* them to observe all of His commands (Matthew 28:19–20). At the time these words were written, teachers were held in high honor. Teachers were notable in Paul's lists of gifts and appointments from God to the Corinthians and Ephesians (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11). Also note that teachers were included along with the prophets when Paul and Barnabas were sent on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1–3). The warning has nothing to do with the value of the position, but rather the responsibility it bears.

While the prophets and missionaries traveled about, the teachers often lived among a group of people for an extended period, providing ongoing instruction and direction. Teachers bear a responsibility for the influence they exert over those around them. Teaching primarily involves speaking; providing information, instruction, application, and clarification. With many words comes much responsibility. The more one uses words to teach, the more opportunities there are for mistakes and inconsistency. Though there needs to be consistency in a person's words and life (more to come about that), these verses are initially focusing on the powerful influence of our words. We will give account

for how we use our words and the impact they have. The more direct influence one has, the greater the accountability. This is why teachers are judged more strictly (verse 1).

DISCUSS:

- What kinds of words build people up and have a positive influence on them? What kinds of words tear people down and have a negative impact on them? Give examples.
- Of course we should speak the truth. How can we be truthful and kind at the same time?

Obviously no one is perfect. And no one is completely able to avoid stumbling in what he or she says (verse 2). The premise of verse 2 is that what we say is a greater challenge to master than what we do.

Words are often easier than actions. Consider criticism as an example. How many people who have never played quarterback at any level of football are quick to criticize the player on their favorite team when he has a bad game? We often speak as experts on topics we know little about and have a great deal to say about how other people do things that we don't even do. It is easier to say than to do.

Our individual words may not seem significant because it takes little effort to use them and there are so many of them. However, this belief is false. James explained the great power of our words using illustrations that are still relevant today. The small bit (part of a bridle) can be used to control the powerful horse. The relatively small rudder can be used to turn the entire ship (verses 3-4). Likewise the tongue can alter the course of our lives. Words may not require a great deal of effort to say, but the consequences from them can be extremely weighty.

DISCUSS:

- When have someone's words made a huge difference for you—for good or for bad?
- Proverbs 25:11 gives a simile about saying the right thing at the right time. How does timing matter with our words?

Words have great power, for good or ill. And they cannot be undone once spoken, much like the spark that starts a great blaze (James 3:5). The destructive power of the tongue is again emphasized in **James 3:6**. The tongue is its own world of unrighteousness, a realm of difficulty unique unto itself. It is a microcosm of the overall struggle against our flesh and evidence of the major effects of sin upon our fallen nature. It can set the entire course of life on fire from beginning to end, presenting an ever-present struggle. When you add up our sinful nature, our fallen world, and the impact they have on our words, you see why the tongue is said to be set on fire by hell.

DISCUSS:

- How are our words like a spark that starts a huge fire?
- How well do you think you control your tongue? How would you rank it on a scale of 1 to 10? What happens with your words when you are tired or "hangry" or frustrated?

APPLY:

Choose your words carefully. We will be held accountable for how we use them and the influence they have on others.

The discussion questions can also be found on the Teen Teaching Outline (TH 7-1).

APPLY:

Our words can alter the course of our lives and others' lives.

APPLY:

Our words have great power for good or ill.

EXPLORE:

The Greek word translated as *hell* in **verse 6** is *Gehenna*, which comes from the Hebrew term meaning *Valley of Hinnom*. This valley was a real place located to the southwest of Jerusalem. In the Old Testament it was the place where idolatry and great evil had taken place, such as child sacrifice to the false god Molech (2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 7:31). It was associated with a place of torment and the ultimate destination for the wicked. In general usage it came to refer to a place of torment beneath the earth.

The contrast of that which came from God (that which is from above) with that which was evil (that which came from below) continues later in the chapter (James 3:15–17). This helps us better understand the meaning of verse 6. James left no doubt how seriously we ought to treat our words. They have great potential for destruction and evil. The tongue is incredibly susceptible to the temptations of the evil one and the weakness of our flesh. We need help if we are ever to overcome these temptations.

KEY TRUTH: We Need God's Power and Help to Control Our Words (James 3:7-8)

The ability and authority of humans to tame anything on this earth comes from God. Genesis 1:26 states that the triune Godhead gave humans dominion over everything in the heavens and on the earth. God ordered all things during the process of Creation. The act of exercising dominion would not have been possible apart from God's design. God gave that action as a command to humans (Genesis 1:28). These fundamental concepts and commands were repeated to Noah after the destruction of almost all of life and the restart of the population of the earth (Genesis 9:2). David also acknowledged God's divine authority as being the source of humanity's authority (Psalm 8:6-8).

This provides important context for understanding the ultimate point and application of **James 3:7–8**. Man has been able to tame beast and bird, reptile and sea creature, but only through divine authority and power. The same holds true for controlling the tongue. We cannot hope to exert any real control through our own willpower, skill, or might. As James clearly stated: No human can fully tame the tongue (James 3:8). However, God is able to do what is impossible for humans to do (Luke 18:27). With God's help, there is hope.

APPLY:

Seek God's help to control your tongue.

DISCUSS:

- What strategies have you learned for controlling your tongue? (Count to ten before speaking, name the fruit of the Spirit, slowly fold your hands, take a deep breath, etc.)
- What steps can we take to seek God's power to control our tongues? (Out of the heart the mouth speaks, according to Luke 6:45, so cultivation of a strong daily relationship with God; learn to walk in the power and direction of the Holy Spirit; etc.)

Jeremiah stated that nothing is too hard for God. By His great power He made everything in the heavens and on earth (Jeremiah 32:17). We must make this connection if we are to have any success in controlling our words. It takes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

KEY TRUTH: Our Words Should Reflect God's Character (James 3:9-12)

Just as we need God's power to exert any control over our tongue, we also need the transformative influence of His character. We must have great faith in God and the wisdom of His Word, allowing who He is to shape who we are and all that we say and do. James said that true worship of God ought to lead to consistency in everything about us. We cannot rightly worship Him with the same mouth with which we curse people who are made in His image (verse 9). Blessing and cursing should not come from the same mouth (verse 10). James' illustrations in **verses 11–12** drive the point home: we need consistency in our speech. Our hearts' consistency with the character of God leads to consistency with our words.

DISCUSS:

- How do we become more like Jesus?
- What occasion in the life of Christ can you think of when Jesus spoke difficult words to people? Do we speak as Jesus would when we only say sweet and complimentary words to one another? Explain your answer.

The content of our speech can be a challenge. We may be tempted to utilize different vocabulary or cover different topics with different audiences. Sometimes we appropriately talk about some topics or in a particular way in order to relate with various groups and put the gospel into context. But we can also be driven by our desire to be thought of one way among one group of people and another way among a different group of people. For example, among fellow believers we may use lots of religious terms and try to appear hyper-spiritual. Then we may dispense with all that and never speak of our faith or beliefs in other social circles. Our faith and allegiance to God ought to shape our character and define who we are wherever we go. We should not use godly speech with some and ungodly speech with others (verse 11). That does not mean only using religious language or only talking about spiritual matters all the time, but it does mean we should not willfully avoid those things. Our egos should not guide our speech. The goal is for others to think highly of God, not us (John 3:30).

Content is more than vocabulary and topic, though. As representatives of Christ, we must be sure our words present sound truth, not just opinion. A teacher's words carried tremendous weight (**James 3:1**). If we are to lead people to truth, we must be people of truth. A fig tree cannot bear olives too (verse 12). It is wiser to say that we don't know the answer to something than to repeat things we have heard but haven't tested. All our speech, no matter what we have heard and from whom, must be shaped by the truth of God's Word. That includes the tone and attitude, as well as the content.

DISCUSS:

- Our words can also be written. How do we apply James 3 to our social media usage?
- Many times, we respond in haste, speaking out of anger or pain. How can we make sure our words are building others up instead of tearing them down?

APPLY:

Become more like Jesus. This will shape who we are and what we say and do.

APPLY:

All of our speech must be shaped by the truth of God's Word.

We must speak the truth in love **(verse 10;** <u>Ephesians 4:15</u>). Everything we say should be true. And everything true should be said with care. Our speech must reflect the character of God, His truth and love, in every respect.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Challenge your students to write a sample post for social media that positively applies today's lessons (whether or not they have accounts). Limit them to 50 words. Find a little condiments package of salt for each student as a reminder of <u>Colossians 4:6</u>, so their speech will be full of grace and seasoned with salt.

OPTION 2: Even if your tongues are wild, they can be tamed with God's help. Use "Tame the Tongue" (TH 7-5) to have students (or groups of students) identify Bible verses about the tongue as instruction, prayers, or comparisons.

OPTION 3: Consider showing this memorable five-minute video called "The Tongue Is a Fire": <u>bit.ly/FireTongue</u>. Remind your students of the positive power of their words to encourage others this week.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Inspiration means that human writers were supernaturally influenced to write the very words that God intended for them to write (2 Timothy 3:16).

Pray!



TH 7-5

Encourage your students to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional study guides this week.



PP-7

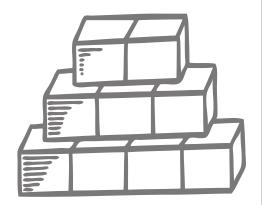
The Parent Page (PP-7) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give print or digital copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com.

FAMILY THEME

Faith Guides Our Conduct

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will allow God's wisdom, priorities, and perspectives to guide their conduct.

STUDY TEXT: James 3:13—4:17



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Teen Teaching Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Teen Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 8-1 or TH 8-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Student Outline* (TH 8-2), "From Above" (TH 8-3), "Wise and Understanding" (TH 8-5) and Parent Page (PP-8) if necessary. If possible, print the "Urgent and Important" poster (TH 8-4) about priorities on larger paper for classroom display. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803.
- ☐ If you are using Connect Option 1, bring masking tape and a blindfold.
- ☐ Distribute Parent Page (PP-8) to the parents of your students.

Key Truths

- Faith Guides Us to Godly Wisdom (James 3:13-18)
- Faith Guides Us to Godly Priorities (James 4:1–10)
- Faith Guides Us to Godly Perspectives (James 4:11-17)

Verse of the Month **JAMES 1:22**

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



TH 8-1

	Faith Guides Our Conduct
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gr.	You from this divides the to body Priorities (bases 43-10) have and application.
3ª	Fay Suth Faith Guides Us to Early Perspectives (James 4.17-17) Trates and application
	What will i put into practice this week?
	Building Block: We can sin against God by what we think, what we say, what we do, and even by what we fell to do (James 4.17).
	Verse of the Worth: Jumes 122

TH 8-2

them alternately of get his beam to sa gestures and with that "back" Them	he game Taboo for this active other teamnets are not no other teamnets are not no at the world in bold type at the scond team will observe the a benned world. The team or a benned world. The team or a benned world.	nd to each other. The first to tig-of the "card" End on word or any of the "Edoor" "refers for" to be over the	town member must it without using words loked below on characteristics describ
internal. Play pane	es to the second team and o	continues around the grou	
onores	HAT	STARS	nens
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Precipitation	Tourse	Smed	Tre
Minter	Best	Indiana	Branches
Store	Hair	Owl	Squinel
MHTNING	CLOUD	GOOD GIFTS	RESCUE LADDE
Clouds	Storm	Presents	Helmoster
Store	Weather	Birthday	Steps
BOOF	OVERPASS	VENTS	SCENIC VIEWS
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Bain	Badra	Helum	Chesh
No.	Air	Pop	Point

TH 8-3

TEACHING TIP

Tell relevant stories that illustrate the lesson. No group is too old to listen to stories.

APPLY:

Live by godly wisdom. It translates into good conduct.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Try an experiment with a student volunteer. Mark a three-foot square on the floor with masking tape, blindfold the student, and ask him or her to jog in place for two minutes inside the square. The student will inevitably move beyond the square without intending to do so. Transition to the lesson by saying, *In our own wisdom, we don't always have the right perspective on our actions. We'll talk about that as we study James 3 and 4 this week.*

OPTION 2: Watch the "Mirror Scene" from *Duck Soup* (bit.ly/MirrorMarx), then divide students into pairs and have one mirror the other's actions. See how closely and quickly one can follow the other's actions, as if in a mirror. (Make it a contest, if you wish). Talk together about what you need to do to be a good "mirror." Transition to the lesson by saying: *When we follow God closely, our actions look much more like His.*

OPTION 3: Play a version of Taboo with the list in TH 8-3 ("From Above"). When the game is complete, ask your students to identify what all of the items had in common. (They are things that are above or from above.) Transition to the lesson by saying, *Today we'll talk more about God's wisdom from above in James 3 and 4.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Student Outline (TH 8-2).

Faith in God is not just a belief system but a way of life. <u>James 2</u> makes it clear that faith by itself, without works, is dead (James 2:17). After making this assertion James logically continued in chapter 3 to explain what a living faith looks like in word and deed.

KEY TRUTH: Faith Guides Us to Godly Wisdom (James 3:13-18)

How should a person live? What is the best path to take? What type of person should one try to be? James, ever practical, explained that a wise way of life can be easily observed. The wisdom that comes from faith (focus on God) is contrasted with the false "wisdom" that comes from a person's focus on himself. Real wisdom translates into *good conduct*—life that is obviously good for the one living it and those impacted by it—and is expressed in the *meekness of wisdom* (James 3:13).

DISCUSS:

- What are some indicators that we are living by godly wisdom instead of worldly wisdom?
- How can others be impacted by your wise choices?

Ultimately, the meekness of wisdom is humbly allowing God to provide us with the right perspective on all things. This is not just thinking lowly of oneself but thinking highly of the right things—the glory of God, His eternal kingdom purposes, and the way those things ought to be expressed in our relationships with other people. Jealousy and selfish ambition (verse 14) and the pursuit of lesser things (such as the praise of men and worldly gain) fall by the wayside when true wisdom is developed. True wisdom recognizes the futility of such things and the worthiness of the pursuit of godliness. The practical picture of the pursuit of godliness is described in **verse 17**. These qualities reflect the character of Jesus Christ and obedience to the second greatest commandment—to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39).

The way of life shaped by wisdom from above (from God) is a better way of life. Earthly living that is worldly and demonic (verse 15) leads to turmoil and evil practices (verse 16), a worse world for everyone. When jealousy and selfpromotion exist (verse 16), people will advance themselves at any cost. When we care about ourselves more than anything else, the people around us suffer as well.

DISCUSS:

- James spoke against selfish ambition, but it's often seen as a good thing in our world. Why is it dangerous for a Christian? Is it possible to be ambitious without being selfish? Explain.
- What are some qualities that come with godly wisdom? What does worldly wisdom bring?

Wisdom from above, though, has a different impact on society (**verse 17**):

- Purity (in motives and purpose; serving others and doing what is best for them)
- Peaceableness (to bring things into harmony, to help people live at peace with each other, caring for each other in a way that brings peace)
- *Gentleness* (caring about the needs and pain of others)
- Reasonableness (honestly looking at all things in the light of truth and being willing to change as needed)
- Mercifulness (being patient and kind with fallen humanity, acknowledging we are fallen too)
- Good fruits (think of the fruit of the Spirit, which makes any and every relationship better)
- *Impartiality* (fairness and justice)
- *Sincerity* (as opposed to deceitfulness and corruption)

The wise conduct outlined in **verse 17** characterizes a life of righteousness that reflects the character of God, life as it was intended to be lived. The peace referenced in **verse 18** is the peace between God and people as well as among people. A good and righteous life among others (a harvest of righteousness) is the result of peace between God and people through faith. It is followed by peacemakers sowing peace with others (verse 18).

The discussion questions can also be found on the Teen Teaching Outline (TH 8-1).

APPLY:

A life shaped by godly wisdom has many good qualities. Worldly wisdom, however, brings many problems. Choose God's ways.

EXECUTE: Faith Guides Us to Godly Priorities (James 4:1-10)

James explained that the cause of so much strife among people comes from mixed and wrong priorities. Giving our fleshly desires priority leads to problems, not satisfaction.

Quarrels and fights (**James 4:1**) are the result of trying to live for the things of this world and the kingdom of God at the same time. The strife is not just external but primarily internal (at war within you, **verse 1**). The priorities of the world are not in line with our eternal design. They will never bring us true contentment. When we desire and do not have, we "murder" others to get it (verse 2). When we want and cannot get, we jealously fight to take or minimize that which others have, trying to bring them down to make ourselves feel better (verse 2).

APPLY:

The world's priorities are incompatible with our purpose and will never bring us true contentment.

DISCUSS:

- For what reasons might we be jealous of others? How might jealousy open the door to many more problems?
- What are some goals teenagers might have if they are influenced by the world's values? Will achieving these goals bring lasting contentment? Explain your answer.

Without faith in God to open our eyes, we look in the wrong places and for the wrong things. Instead of looking to our Creator for our purpose, we look to the world. We don't have what He alone can provide because we don't ask Him (verse 2). Instead we feed our insatiable flesh, only to be left wanting even more (verse 3). James' strong warning against foolishly pursuing the things from below is emphatic (You adulterous people; verse 4) and left no doubt or ambiguity. A person cannot live for the eternal glory of God and the satisfaction of the flesh at the same time (verses 4-6). The destruction that results from prioritizing the world and the flesh instead of the eternal kingdom of God is exactly what the Devil desires. James urged us to resist such efforts by our enemy and to allow God to redefine what matters (verse 7).

APPLY:

A person cannot live for the glory of God and the satisfaction of the flesh simultaneously. Choose God's priorities.

DISCUSS:

- James wrote about the need to be humble. How does it look for a teenager to be humble? Why does humility conflict with our natural desires?
- What are some ways to "resist the Devil"?

The world calls evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20). We must draw near to God (verse 8) and allow His refining fire (Malachi 3:2) to cleanse us from our wrong understandings and desires. The repentance described in verses 8-9 is necessary if we are ever to live for eternal values. Only faith in God will allow us to see all things in the right perspective. We should weep over what we ought to weep (verse 9) and see the world for what it is—a fallen, corrupt, broken place deeply ravaged by sin, in need of redemption. When we prioritize God and His glory, our souls are lifted from the emptiness of this world and exalted with the satisfaction of His goodness (verse 10).

KEY TRUTH: Faith Guides Us to Godly Perspectives (James 4:11-17)

James closed out chapter 4 by providing specific examples of the ways godly wisdom and priorities shaped by faith should change our perspectives.

DISCUSS:

• God has a different perspective than we do. How can we see things more from His point of view?

EXPLORE: -

During the time these words were written, the church was still in its infancy and many people were wrestling with what it meant to live in light of the Messiah's teaching. James had been a part of a critical moment at the Jerusalem Council as recorded in Acts 15. Even after that gathering, Jewish and Gentile believers were still struggling to understand how to live in relationship to the Law and to one another—and how to respond when others came to different conclusions.

James addressed our response when other believers reach conclusions differing from ours in **verses 11–12**. His use of the term *evil* in **verse 11** to describe judging another's behavior means he was not dealing with clear scriptural issues of prohibited sinful behavior. This was a matter among "brothers," indicating that these were believers who were trying to decide how to rightly interact with the Law. In this instance, the one identified as being in the wrong was not the person making the choice, but the one who spoke derisively with judgment in his heart. Since Christ had fulfilled the Law, every believer's relationship to the Law had changed in and through Christ. Jesus specifically commanded us to avoid certain practices, attitudes, and behaviors. But He also freed us from the bondage of the Law (Galatians 5:1) and the attempt to justify ourselves by our Law-keeping (Galatians 5:4). Yet many people still struggled to accept this and to stop defining themselves by their personal standards instead of the person of Christ. James clarified that no person has a right to set him or herself above another in this regard. To do so is to set oneself on equal footing with the only Lawgiver and Judge (verse 12).

DISCUSS:

- James cautioned his readers against speaking evil of one another. Why does this happen among Christians? Does jealousy play a role?
- Sometimes it can be difficult for us to discern between essential biblical commands, personal convictions, and personal preferences. How does God want us to deal with people we disagree with when the Scriptures are not clear on the subject?
- How can we maintain unity with other Christians, even when there is disagreement on nonessential issues?

Our opinions on matters not clear in His Word are not always right. Who are we to judge the heart of another? We should be slow to judge where the Scriptures are slow to judge. We can trust the Holy Spirit to convict others where needed. That is not our job.

APPLY:

Try to see things from God's perspective. That will change the way we view and think about ourselves, others, and the time and plans we have.

APPLY:

Don't judge people who have differing opinions in matters the Bible is not clear about.

APPLY:

Live each moment mindful of eternity.

James then addressed how our faith in God ought to change our perspective on our time (verses 13-16). We are to plan and live day by day, keeping in mind that only God knows what will happen tomorrow. We should also have an eye toward eternity, not a focus solely on the now. God gives purpose to every moment and has a plan for each of them (**verse 15**). We should live each moment mindful of its eternal impact. Instead of arrogant boasting, we should avoid sin by doing what we know is right to do (verses 16-17).



TH 8-4



TH 8-5

Encourage your students to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional study guides this week.



PP-8

The Parent Page (PP-8) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Its outline will help to review the lesson, and questions are included for family discussion. Give print or digital copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Urgent or important? Use the poster (TH 8-4) to help students think through the way they spend time. First have them each make a list of what they will do this week (school, assignments, church, chores, leisure activities, Bible study, other special or routine activities). Then ask them to try placing some of their activities on the poster's grid. The vertical grid measures importance; the horizontal grid measures urgency. Obviously, we should spend most of our time on important tasks that have lasting value. Urgent tasks, each day, may be more demanding. But we often end up spending much time on things that are neither urgent nor important. Encourage your students to spend less time with things in that quadrant and to seek God's priorities.

OPTION 2: Use the situations in "Wise and Understanding" (TH 8-5) to have students role play the difference in godly responses and worldly responses. Encourage them to seek wisdom from above in all their activities this week.

OPTION 3: Ask students the following: What are some priorities God wants us to build into our everyday lives? Answers might include time in God's Word, time in prayer, putting others ahead of ourselves, and loving God and others. Challenge students to write on a note card one of these priorities to consistently practice this week.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

We can sin against God by what we think, what we say, what we do, and even by what we fail to do (James 4:17).

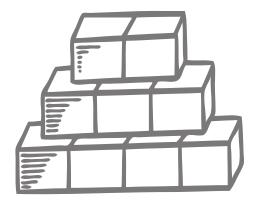
Pray!

FAMILY THEME

God Gives Comfort

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will deal with loss in healthy ways and help others do so as well.

STUDY TEXT: Acts 12:1-5; James 5:7-11; Psalm 46:1-11



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Teen Teaching Guide.
- □ Review the *Teen Teaching Outline* (Teen Handout 9-1 or TH 9-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Student Outline* (TH 9-2), "The Password Is" (TH 9-3), "A Word of Comfort" (TH 9-4) "Six Best Things" (TH 9-5), and Parent Page (PP-9) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 2 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6803. If you are using Connect Option 1, cut out the passwords in advance.
- ☐ Distribute print or digital copies of *Parent Page (PP-9)* to the parents of your students.

Key Truths

- The Death of a Loved One Is a Very Difficult Experience (Acts 12:1-5)
- Healthy Grief Is a Process (James 5:7-11)
- We Can Find Comfort and Direction in God's Word (Psalm 46:1-11)

Verse of the Month

JAMES 1:22

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



TH 9-1



TH 9-2

	n The	
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has the holder one harned on	(Player) from each heart gives the p	
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ASSWORDS: Bath		
ASSWORDS: Bath	Parent	Pizza
PASSWORDS: Bath Blanket	Parent Pasta	Pizza Routines

TH 9-3

TEACHING TIP

Take time to briefly introduce visitors to your group without putting them on the spot.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Play "Password" with the list of things that give comfort in TH 9-3. Ask for two pairs of volunteers to take turns giving one-word clues to get their teammate to guess the secret password. Transition to the lesson by saying: Grief is difficult, and no one wants to go through it. Today we will study how God brings true comfort during times of grief.

OPTION 2: Ask each of your students to think about a loved one who has died. (Yes, even a pet will work.) Give them all a notecard and ask them to draw a symbol or small picture that reminds them of that loved one. In small groups, ask them to explain to one another what they drew. Alternatively, ask them to choose an emoji that symbolizes the loved one. Transition to the lesson by saying, We all deal with emotions of grief after a loved one's death. Today we'll look at some biblical examples of healthy ways to deal with loss.

OPTION 3: Watch a clip from *Frozen* 2 about Olaf's death: bit.ly/F2Olaf. Talk together about the various emotions you feel. After discussion, say: There are healthy and unhealthy ways to deal with loss. Today we will discuss healthy ways we can deal with loss and ways we can help others deal with loss as well.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Student Outline (TH 9-2).

How should a believer handle grief? When a tragic event happens, people often say things like, "They need to go through the grieving process" or "I hope they find closure." As Christians we should be equipped to process grief and help others who experience a loss. We can use examples of dealing with loss found in Scripture.

EXECUTE: The Death of a Loved One Is a Very **Difficult Experience (Acts 12:1-5)**

In Acts 12, we find the tragic killing of the apostle James, followed by the imprisonment of Peter. Peter appeared to be doomed as he waited in prison (verses 3–4). God, however, miraculously intervened and he was saved (Acts 12:7). His release is an encouraging story, with even a bit of humor. Peter arrived at the home where people were praying for his safety (Acts 12:13), only to be left at the door by Rhoda, who ran to tell the disciples he had been saved (Acts 12:14–15). They were so sure of Peter's imminent demise that they assumed Rhoda was seeing things. In this story, we often lose sight of the loss of James, the brother of John, who was a wonderful man of God (verse 2). This passage shows us that even the godliest of people experience loss.

This brief picture characterizes so many losses that people experience. All losses are bad, but research indicates the worst losses in life are the death of a child, loss of a loved one as a result of suicide, and loss due to homicide.

In this passage we see the violent death (verses 1-2) of a beloved man (arguably a homicide). Perhaps worst of all, many celebrated this death (verse 3). Imagine how difficult this would have been for the family and friends of James. This kind of loss is like the sudden and public tragedies some people experience, such as a homicide that is repeatedly covered in the media. The loss of James and the aftermath would have been especially difficult.

- What makes the death of a loved one so difficult to bear?
- How can we best help someone who has lost a loved one? (Be present and mourn with them; don't talk too much; help in practical ways, such as meals and help around the house; be a sounding board; etc.)

Some losses are more difficult to deal with than others. These losses can place us at risk for complicated grief because they can impact us physically, psychologically, and spiritually. The losses Job suffered are a good example. Job's losses affected him physically. Job described the pain he felt throughout his body (Job 30:17). He also experienced psychological pain as he longed for the way he had enjoyed his children (Job 29:2-6) and missed the respect he had enjoyed in the community (Job 29:21–25). The problems Job experienced with his miserable comforters (Job 16:2) are well known, but he specifically described the way he felt his friends were estranged from him and far off (Job 19:13-15). They did not know what to say to him or how to help him. Even his wife was estranged from him (Job 19:17), and he felt that he had become someone that people just talked about (Job 30:9). People either ignored him or said things that hurt him. At times Job felt as if God did not hear his prayers (Job 21:15). He also felt that God had treated him unfairly (Job 31:35). If loss had such a significant impact on a godly man like Job (Job 1:1), we all can expect these difficulties.

DISCUSS:

- Is grief a good emotion or not? Why is grief important?
- What are some ways you have seen others deal with grief?

EXPLORE: -

How long does it take to recover from the loss of a loved one? Research indicates that the stress of a death is as high on the one-year anniversary of the death as it was on the day of the death. We can see an example of this in Scripture. Joseph experienced trauma and loss when separated from his family (Genesis 37). Years later Joseph appeared to be mourning this event, as he watched as his brother Simeon was bound (Genesis 42:24). Joseph cried when he saw his brother Benjamin (Genesis 43:29-30) and when he revealed his identity to his brothers (Genesis 45:1–2, 14–15). Decades later when Joseph's brothers brought up the event he cried again (Genesis 50:17). When dealing with a loss, allow yourself, or others, simply to cry. Tears help us heal. That was certainly the case with Joseph. He was a psychologically and spiritually sophisticated man who readily cried about his memories of loss.

APPLY:

The death of a loved one can impact us physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

The discussion questions can also be found on the Teen Teaching Outline (TH 9-1).

APPLY:

We all can expect to struggle with grief.

KEY TRUTH: Healthy Grief Is a Process (James 5:7-11)

No matter how spiritual a person might be, he or she cannot hurry through the necessary phases of dealing with a loss. Step one is to be patient. Just as farmers cannot make their crops grow faster, James indicated that we too must be patient (James 5:7). There is nothing we can do to make the pain go away quickly. We cannot speed up the grieving process. We must be established, unwavering in our faith (verse 8). No matter what, we are to focus on the Lord and realize He is close to us. We need to be careful not to grumble about each other and not to turn against others (verse 9). We need each other. We need to lean on each other rather than push each other away. We must re*main steadfast* **(verses 10–11).** James pointed us to the prophets and to Job to consider as we deal with suffering **(verses 10–11)**. He reminded us that those who endure experience the Lord's mercy (verse 11). No matter what, we should not quit. We see this attitude from Job as he held onto his integrity (Job 2:3, 9, 10; 27:5-7).

APPLY:

Take steps that will help you process your loss.

DISCUSS:

- What can we do to process grief and loss? (Pray and read Scripture; set physical goals—sleep, diet, exercise; have realistic expectations; prepare for ups and downs; help people understand how to help; talk to family and friends who encourage you.)
- What do people sometimes do that hinders healing from loss? (Withdraw from relationships, especially with Christian friends; withdraw from worship and fellowship at church; stop eating and sleeping properly; etc.)

No matter how difficult the loss, we cannot forget that nothing can separate us from the Lord. Sometimes those who have suffered difficult losses do not know what to do or even how to pray, but they can know that the Lord will never leave them or forsake them (Romans 8:38-39; Hebrews 13:5-6).

APPLY:

Remember that God is always present in your grief.

DISCUSS:

• What biblical truths and principles have helped you during times of griev-

For more information see First Aid for Your Emotional Hurts-Grief, by Edward E. Moody Jr.,

Ph.D., (Randall House 2010).

EXPLORE:

The most complicated grieving situations are those that involve guilt. We hear a lot of "If only I would have . . ." or "I should have!" regarding how we should have prevented the loss. Some also have guilt because they are haunted by arguments with the loved one. Others feel legitimate guilt, as in a person who might have caused an accident. Many who have served in military combat feel a sense of guilt. Whether legitimate guilt or not, only God can help with the guilt. When people insist they are guilty, walk them through Psalm 51 and help them adopt it as their own.

KEY TRUTH: We Can Find Comfort and Direction in God's Word (Psalm 46:1-11)

Sometimes in the most difficult losses it is critical to pause and meditate upon what we have in Christ. When we don't know what to do to help ourselves (or someone else) after a suicide, homicide, or other sudden death, we can focus on Psalm 46 and other Scripture. Psalm 46 tells us that no matter what happens,

God is our refuge (**Psalm 46:1**), He is right there when we find ourselves in trouble. But what kind of trouble does He help us with? Even if the mountains shake and fall into the sea (verses 2-3), God will help us.

DISCUSS:

• What verse can give you comfort in the loss of a loved one? What verse would you share with others? See the list in TH 9-4 ("A Word of Comfort") and choose a favorite to recopy and post.

The death of a loved one can make us feel like our world has turned upside down. But that is when God is closest to us. At the darkest moment, just before dawn, God helps us (verses 4-5). We are given specific instructions in Psalm 46 to be still (verse 10). We can do this to get grounded but also to keep from making bad decisions. Often in the aftermath of a tragic event, people make quick decisions that become problematic later. The psalm ends with a reminder that God is our refuge (verse 11). The same God who helped Jacob centuries ago helps us today. Psalm 46 is comforting to us while also providing practical instruction.

DISCUSS:

- When loss happens, what could we gain by being "still"?
- Describe a time when you experienced heartache and God made His presence known to you.

We can be assured God is there to help us as we deal with loss. The apostle Paul wanted Christians to be informed about what happens to believers who pass away. The Christian experiences death as sleep (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Those who have lost loved ones can focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a coping mechanism (1 Thessalonians 4:14). We will see believing loved ones again with Christ in Heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

DISCUSS:

• Why can believers have hope even in times of loss? (We know we will be reunited with Christian loved ones forever when Christ returns; etc.)

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Make some sympathy cards—as simple as a folded piece of cardstock with a carefully copied Scripture verse (such as those in TH 9-4)—to send to someone who is dealing with grief. Don't forget that people grieve long after a loved one's death. Your students' cards might be a welcome encouragement for someone to know that others are still thinking of them. Be sure to read the interview about grief in Velocity and Forward Devotional Study Guides.

OPTION 2: Is there a cemetery in your area where your students can volunteer for a service project? They could pull weeds, wash headstones, or pick up trash as a tangible way to care for the grieving. You can plan other service projects, too, as a help to widows or widowers.

APPLY:

Go to God's Word for comfort when dealing with loss.



TH 9-4

APPLY:

Being still before God keeps us grounded.

APPLY:

Take comfort in knowing we will see believing loved ones again with Christ in Heaven.



TH 9-5

Encourage your students to complete the daily devotions in the D6 Devotional Study Guides this week. Both Forward and Velocity Devotional Study Guides feature an interview with Clarissa Moll about teens and grief. In Velocity, Shannon Primicerio's "Girl Talk" column focuses on using our grief to help others.



PP-9

The Parent Page (PP-9) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to the parents of your students. Parent Page is also available for free download at D6home.com or at the D6 Family App.

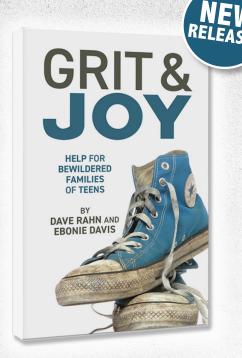
OPTION 3: Encourage your students to find positive ways to deal with grief. Here are three ideas. First, spend time in nature. A quiet walk, a visit to a local park, a day at the ocean or lake may be a way to regroup in light of God's many provisions for us. Second, ask students to make a list of memorable characteristics, habits, or stories about their loved one who has passed away. Use the guide in TH 9-5 ("Six Best Things") if you wish. Third, encourage students to journal their thoughts and feelings. This lets them express their thoughts and feelings without trying to please anyone else. Encourage students to share their grief with loved ones instead of trying to carry it alone.

Building Blocks:

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Helper (John 14:26; John 15:26).

Pray!



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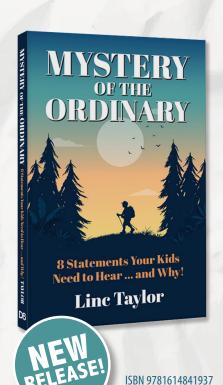
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