



NOV/DEC 2025



EveryDay Foundations

Teaching Guide AND Essentials

- **FOR ADULTS** -



GROUP MEMBERS USE *THE BRINK*, *FUSION FAMILY*, OR *FUSION NEXT*
DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDES

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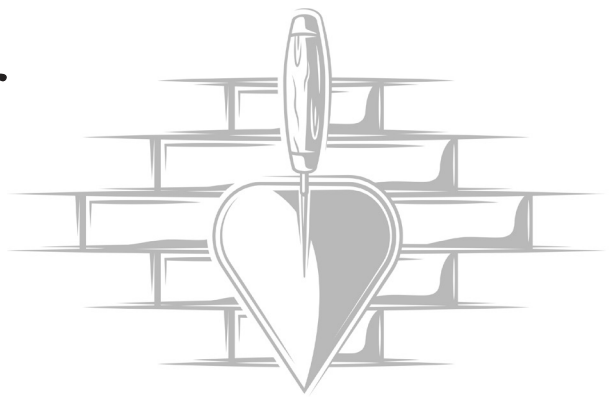
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Adult Teaching Guide



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WELCOME TO THE D6 EVERYDAY FOUNDATIONS ADULT TEACHING GUIDE. This is the one-size-fits-all guide for teaching adult small groups. It correlates with *The Brink*, *Fusion Family*, and *Fusion Next* 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 parents with the mortar to hold together the building blocks of faith.

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 three devotional study guides for adults.

- ***The Brink***—for young adults without children
- ***Fusion Family***—for parents with kids at home
- ***Fusion Next***—for empty nesters

Singles in your group can choose the magazine that best fits their life stage.

In addition to daily devotions to help reinforce biblical principles, readers enjoy relevant articles, columns, and more. Even if your group is made up of various ages, members 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, PowerPoint, 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 pre-school lesson
- D6 Family App—this app delivers free resources designed to equip you for generational discipleship
- Family Faith Moment—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



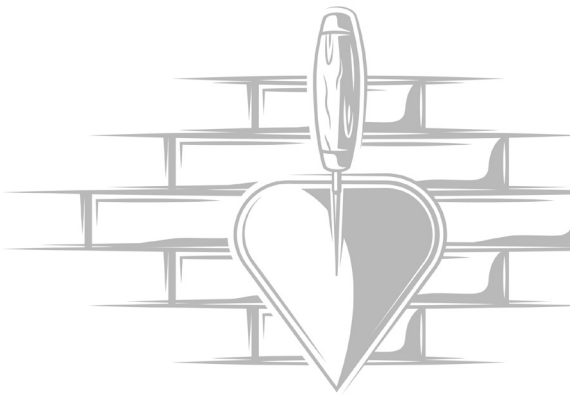
Digital Downloads—To enhance your teaching, digital downloads are available. There you will find PowerPoint slides for each lesson, teaching essentials, and editable teaching outlines. We’re also excited to offer a digital version of this Teaching Guide that includes live hyperlinks so you can click 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 the following: **d6.family/6844**.

FAMILY THEME

Developing Discernment

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners let godly discernment guide their media and entertainment usage.

STUDY TEXT: Colossians 2:6–8; Matthew 13:10–17; Proverbs 4:23–27



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 1-1 or AH 1-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 1* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 1-2), the *Lesson Citations* handout (AH 1-3), the *Dig Deeper* handout (AH 1-4), the *Media Log* handout (AH 1-5), and *Parent Page* (PP-1) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-1) to parents.



Key Truths

- **Believers Are Called to Exercise Discernment Over Media and Entertainment** (Colossians 2:6–8)
- **Failing to Practice Media Discernment Brings Consequences** (Matthew 13:10–17)
- **Let Godly Discernment Guide Your Media Choices** (Proverbs 4:23–27)

Verse of the
Month

PSALM 119:11

CONNECT

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

OPTION 1: Consider showing this video that shows how TV affects our brains and cognitive ability: tinyurl.com/TVBrains. Discuss the video with your group. Why is discernment important when it comes to our viewing habits? What is the danger in believing everything we see or read? After discussion, say: *Today we will examine how scriptural principles should guide us when it comes to our media consumption.*

OPTION 2: Ask your learners how they consume media and entertainment. How has their media usage changed over the last five, ten, fifteen, or even twenty years. What kind of impact do they sense their media consumption has on them? After discussion, say: *Sometimes we wonder what impact our media consumption has on us. Today we will see how we should exercise discernment when it comes to media usage.*

OPTION 3: Ask group members if they can name all the streaming services to which they subscribe. Are any of them surprised by how many streaming services they have? You could also see if group members can guess the five most popular streaming services: (tinyurl.com/FPStreaming). After discussion, say: *Entertainment is all around us. It's available on our phones, on our TVs, in our cars. Today we will examine how we can exercise discernment when it comes to media.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

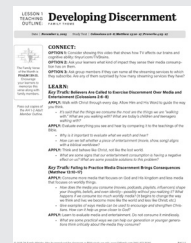
Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 1-2) and the *Dig Deeper* handout (AH 1-4).

Who has our ears? Those we listen to influence our thinking. We can't control everything we see or hear so it is important to have a discerning heart and mind, and to understand how movies, TV, and music impact us.

KEY TRUTH: Believers Are Called to Exercise Discernment Over Media and Entertainment (Colossians 2:6-8)

Paul wrote the book of Colossians likely around AD 62, but it is still relevant today. Consider the timeless principles he presented. He told those at the church at Colossae to *walk in Christ (verse 6)*. What does this mean? Certainly, it means to read the Bible and listen to the words of Christ. However, walking with someone involves more than just giving them a snippet of your day. To walk with someone means

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



AH 1-1



AH 1-2



AH 1-4

TEACHING TIP

Be a teachable teacher—convinced of the authority of God's Word and continuing to learn and apply its truths.

you are with them throughout the day, and they influence you as you go along. As believers go through their day, Christ is with them. He puts His roots down into their lives, building and teaching them, resulting in a joyful life of thanksgiving which abounds, impacting others (**verse 7**).

What are the implications of Paul's teachings as far as our media consumption is concerned? What we watch and listen to as we sit in our homes, drive, and go throughout our day is what we are "walking with." Many children are being trained by the TV. They spend more time with the television than with their parents. Today we might say that many youth are being trained by social media and many parents and grandparents by streaming services and cable news. Who or what is disciplining you?

APPLY:

Walk with Christ through every day. Allow Him and His Word to guide the way you think.



PowerPoint 1

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 1-1) and on *PowerPoint 1*, which is customizable. Files *1A* and *1B* are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Evaluate everything you see and hear by comparing it to the teachings of the Bible.

DISCUSS:

• *It's said that the things we consume the most are the things we are "walking with." What are you walking with? What are today's children and teenagers walking with?*

In **verse 8**, Paul warned those at Colossae that they were susceptible to the philosophies and teachings of the lost world. How could they know that the philosophies were of the world, and ultimately the Devil? Their teachings contradicted the teachings of Christ. Today, Paul would warn us about the TV, movies, and music we consume and challenge us to evaluate these things from the teachings of the Bible.

How do the teachings of our favorite shows and movies stack up to the Bible? What about the lyrics of the songs we listen to every day? For example, are they in line with the Ten Commandments? How do they match up with the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount? Do they contain themes of sacrifice and redemption, or do they promote self and worldly pleasure above all else? If they don't match up with what's good and true, then they fall into the worldly category of **Colossians 2:8**.

DISCUSS:

• *Why is it important to evaluate what we watch and hear?*

• *How can we tell whether a piece of entertainment (movie, show, song) aligns with a biblical worldview?*

Perhaps it is to be expected that non-believers will fall prey to the teachings of the world. In Paul's letter to the Romans, he implored them to give their bodies and minds to God (**Romans 12:1-2**). He pointed out that this was only reasonable because of what Christ has done

for us. As a result, the Christian is not to be conformed to or behave as the world behaves. Rather, God owns our minds and our thoughts and they are to be controlled by Him (Romans 12:2).

DISCUSS:

- *What are some signs that our entertainment consumption is having a negative effect on us? What are some possible solutions to this problem?*

How do we know when our media is transforming us to be more like the world? Are we thinking and behaving like Christ, or like the lost world? A good hint is found in Philippians 2:1–8. Is the entertainment we are consuming making it harder to live as Jesus did? Another way of thinking of it is the fruit of the Spirit and the fruit of the flesh (Galatians 5:16–24). The wrong kind of media consumption can lead us toward jealousy, anger, and envy. It might put profane language in our heads that could come out in our speech. Movies and TV with sexual themes could lead one to lust or to develop unbiblical views of sex and marriage. Whatever media we consume, we must see the fruit of the Spirit exhibited in our lives (e.g., love, joy, peace, longsuffering, etc.). When we watch our favorite shows or movies, do we find it more difficult to behave as God has called us to behave?

The more we listen to the message of Hollywood, the more we begin to behave like the world. When we surround ourselves with themes like sexual immorality, greed, deception, or the normalcy of homosexuality, we begin to become desensitized to those issues, and they start to become accepted parts of life rather than things from which Christians should flee. Paul warned the Corinthians about this in 2 Corinthians 10:3–6, teaching them we are not to behave or argue as other people do. Instead, we capture rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. We are to use the spiritual weapons God has given us as we fight our battles. They have *divine power* that brings down strongholds. Are we bringing down strongholds today? If not, perhaps it is because we are using the world's weapons rather than the Lord's.

KEY TRUTH: Failing to Practice Media Discernment Brings Consequences (Matthew 13:10–17)

In Matthew 13:10–11, Jesus' disciples asked why He spoke to the crowds in parables. It was because many in the crowds did not really want to hear and obey. The kingdom of Heaven was only for people who wanted to trust and follow God. If we are going to learn more about God's kingdom, it will take some time and the proper priorities. The more we focus on the kingdom of God, the more we will grow and

APPLY:

Think and behave like Christ, not like the lost world.

learn. The more we focus on the things of the world, the harder our spiritual hearing will become (**Matthew 13:12**).

What are the implications for our consumption of media and entertainment? We can consume media that focuses on God and His kingdom (e.g., we can watch or listen to Scripture and other biblical content, Christian music, etc.), or we can consume the world's media. When our ears are filled with worldly voices, they drown out the Word and make us spiritually hard of hearing. As a result, we might see or hear but we do not understand (**Matthew 13:13**). Jesus said that Isaiah prophesied about this (**Matthew 13:14–15**).

APPLY:

Consume more media that focuses on God and His kingdom and less media that focuses on worldly things.

DISCUSS:

- *How does the media you consume (movies, podcasts, playlists, influencers) shape your thoughts, beliefs, and even identity—possibly without you realizing it? What happens if we consume too much worldly media? (It begins to change the way we think and live; we become more like the world and less like Christ; etc.)*
- *Give examples of ways media can be used to encourage and strengthen Christians. How can it help us grow closer to God?*

Consider some of the discussions you hear around the dinner table or even at a meal with people from church. Are you more likely to hear scriptural principles echoed or content from the latest streaming series? We are all susceptible to this which is why Jesus warned us about it. The key to the blessed life is to really see, hear, and understand godly principles (**Matthew 13:16–17**).

Here is one consequence of listening to and dwelling on the wrong things: After a while the content begins to change us. An example of how all kinds of media have transformed our culture is in the rise of the use of profanity. Much has been written about this. But as profanity has become more common in movies, news shows, and other outlets, it has transformed our culture.¹ This behavior has even impacted many Christians despite the fact the usage is in disagreement with Scripture.²

We see another consequence of dwelling on the wrong things in 1 Peter 1:13–19. We fail to be holy and are not prepared to fulfill the mission Christ has given us. Instead, we are to be sober minded and looking forward to Christ's return. We are to live holy lives that are different from how we lived before we knew Christ (1 Peter 1:13–16). We must remind ourselves that God sees us and that we don't really

See *Lesson Citations* (AH 1-3) and the *Dig Deeper* handout (AH 1-4) for links and citations.



AH 1-3



AH 1-4

belong; we are exiles and must live differently. Christ died for us and our lives must reflect that truth (1 Peter 1:17–19).

Does all this mean we should never consume media that does not have a biblical foundation? That would nearly be impossible. We would have to isolate ourselves. Paul indicated we can't avoid the ungodly (1 [Corinthians 5:9–13](#)). The key is that we recognize the truthfulness or lack thereof behind the media we consume. What is the mindset and motivation of the presenter? Is the material we hear accurate? Is the movie, TV show, or song promoting a biblical worldview, propaganda, or a humanistic mindset? Can we consume entertainment without it transforming us into a worldly mindset? Of course, there is some entertainment that should never be consumed by Christians and has no redemptive value. But if we do choose to consume secular media (or even Christian media, as not all “Christian” entertainment is biblical), we must do so with a mind of discernment, dissecting what we watch or hear and comparing it to our biblical values. We cannot consume mindlessly and take on the ways of the world, simply because our favorite celebrity said we should or because we find it entertaining.

It's also important to help our families understand how to consume media. Our children, especially our teenagers, need to know that what's coming out of Hollywood isn't mindless entertainment. There's often a message or agenda. Sometimes it can be a very positive message, but sometimes it's a message meant to steer their thinking away from God. It's important we teach our kids to be critical thinkers. As a family, perhaps you could take a popular song on the radio and look at the lyrics line by line. As a family you could discuss, “What are the lyrics saying? What message is the artist promoting? Do the lyrics line up with the principles in [Philippians 4:8](#)? (See the next Key Truth for more information on this.) Do the lyrics promote a biblical worldview or a secular worldview?” Similar things can be done with TV shows and movies. If the show or movie is acceptable to watch as a family, discuss the themes, decisions of characters, and overall message.

EXPLORE:

Plugged In (pluggedin.com) is a ministry of Focus on the Family. The editors at Plugged In evaluate many of the latest movies, TV shows, games, and YouTube channels. This can be a helpful guide for parents who want to know what's in the latest forms of entertainment, and it can also provide important discussion starters for families.

APPLY:

Learn to evaluate media and entertainment. Do not consume it mindlessly.

DISCUSS:

- *What are some practical ways we can help our generation or younger generations think critically about the media they consume?*
- *What would it look like to engage with secular media critically rather than passively?*
- *<FUSION FAMILY> What steps can we take as a family to build habits of media discernment together?*

 KEY TRUTH: Let Godly Discernment Guide Your Media Choices (Proverbs 4:23–27)

The nonnegotiable with the Lord is that our hearts must be attuned to the Lord rather than the world. This means we must guard our hearts (**Proverbs 4:23**). If we find ourselves being transformed into worldly people by what we are watching or hearing, we must cut that out of our lives (**Proverbs 4:24**). This means we must keep our focus on God (**Proverbs 4:25**). We constantly evaluate the path we are on and stay on the right path (**Proverbs 4:26–27**).

Although we cannot truly know what a person thinks about, the Bible teaches we can have a good idea. Jesus told us that whatever is in the heart will come out (Matthew 15:18–19). Paul wrote that minds set on the flesh are hostile toward God, and minds set on the Spirit bring life and peace (Romans 8:5–8).

Philippians 4:8 notes the positive qualities the believer is called to think about. Does our media usage lead to thinking about these qualities? Verse 9 teaches us to spend time with and learn from people who model the qualities found in this passage. Could hours of binge watching keep people from fully focusing on their children, their neighbors, their community, or their church? Would people be better stewards of their lives if they were gardening instead of sitting in front of the TV? What visits or witnessing or Bible study does not take place because we are sidetracked by media? These are questions we need to ask ourselves, with eternity in mind, knowing we will give an account for how we spent our time in this life.

APPLY:

Evaluate how media usage is affecting you and make changes if necessary.

DISCUSS:

- *What changes might need to be made if we realize our entertainment choices are consuming our minds and time?*

We can also put our entertainment choices to the Philippians 4:8 test. Begin by asking, *Is it true?* The truth will set us free (John 8:32). The Devil, on the other hand, is the father of lies (John 8:44). God hates lies (Proverbs 12:22) and will punish those who lie (Proverbs 19:9).

Is it honorable or noble? This gets to whether it presents arguments correctly or distorts them or takes them out of context. *Is it just or right?* Is good presented as good and wrong presented as wrong? *Is it pure?* This gets at how we are impacted and if it is profanity laced or filled with sexual immorality. *Is it lovely?* *Is it of a good report, commendable, and admirable?* We want to watch and listen to that which lifts people up rather than what tears them down. *Is it virtuous or excellent?* The media we consume should make us better people. *Is it something that should be praised?* When we find media that is untruthful, motivated to cause division, and filled with immorality, Scripture teaches us to mark it (Proverbs 6:16–17; Titus 3:10–11).

DISCUSS:

- *What does it look like to “guard your heart” (Proverbs 4:23) in a world where media is constantly trying to capture your attention and affection?*
- *How can we practically use the Philippians 4:8 filter when choosing what to watch, stream, or listen to?*
- *How might excessive media consumption—even of “neutral” content—be keeping you from your calling in Christ (i.e., serving others, evangelism, growing in the Word)?*

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: For many of us, it’s very easy to spend hours doing mindless things (scrolling on a phone, binge watching TV, etc.). While mindless activities might have their time and place, we often neglect spiritual disciplines like Bible reading, Scripture memorization, and prayer because we get consumed with “entertainment.” Encourage group members to prioritize spiritual disciplines over mindless entertainment this week. That could mean making sure they study their Bible before streaming their favorite show. Being intentional about these things will help us keep our priorities in order.

OPTION 2: Ask your learners to keep a log of time they spend using media this week (social media, podcasts, television, movies, radio, etc.). Have them list the activity, the start time, and the total time spent on the activity. Encourage them to ask themselves these questions: *Who has my ear? How is this entertainment impacting me? Do I need to make any changes in my media usage?* The AH 1-5 Media Log handout can help with this.

APPLY:

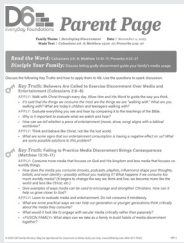
Put media to the Philippians 4:8 test. Is it true? Is it honorable? Is it just? Is it pure? Is it lovely? Is it commendable? Is it excellent? Is it worthy of being praised?

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.



AH 1-5

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 Devotional Study Guides this week.



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 copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

OPTION 3: Ask learners to exercise media discernment this week by comparing everything they see and hear to the teachings of the Bible. Ask how their media usage is affecting them. Do they need to make changes to their media usage?

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

God expects believers to continue to grow in grace and righteousness throughout life.

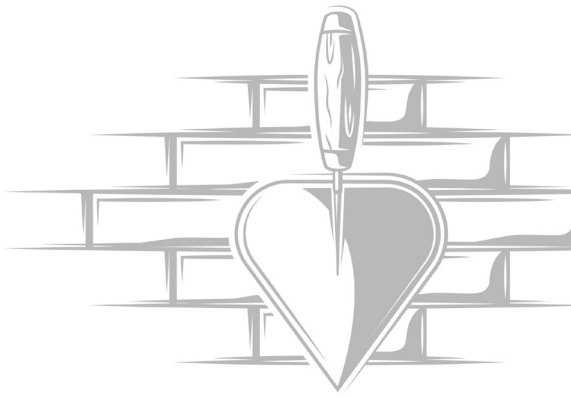
Pray!

FAMILY THEME

God's Miraculous Provision

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners trust God in every situation, knowing He can provide whatever is needed.

STUDY TEXT: 1 Kings 17:1–24



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 2-1 or AH 2-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 2* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 2-2), the *God Is My Provider* handout (AH 2-3), and *Parent Page* (PP-2) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-2) to parents.

Key Truths

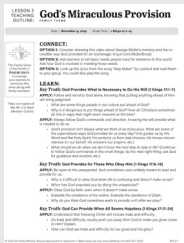
- **God Provides What Is Necessary to Do His Will** (1 Kings 17:1–7)
- **God Provides for Those Who Obey Him** (1 Kings 17:8–16)
- **God Can Provide When All Seems Hopeless** (1 Kings 17:17–24)

Verse of the
Month

PSALM 119:11

CONNECT

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



AH 2-1



AH 2-2

TEACHING TIP

Your goal is not simply to cover the material in each lesson but to help your students mature in their faith. Don't forget the big picture.

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

OPTION 1: Consider showing this video about George Müller's ministry and the incredible way God provided for an orphanage: tinyurl.com/MullerBread. Ask group members why Müller was able to have such incredible faith. Does your group believe God still provides like that today? After discussion, say: *God is our Provider, though He doesn't always provide in ways we might expect. Today we'll discuss why we can trust Him in every situation.*

OPTION 2: Begin by asking your learners to list the basic needs that people have for existence in this world. Ask how God is involved in meeting those needs. After discussion, say: *God is able to provide for our needs in a variety of ways. Today we will see how God is able to supernaturally move to accomplish His will.*

OPTION 3: Consider looking up the lyrics to the song "Way Maker" by Leeland and reading them to the group. You could also play the song for the group. Focus specifically on the description of God in the chorus. Ask your learners for examples they have observed for each of these descriptions. After some discussion, say: *First Kings 17 provides clear examples of these qualities of God. Today we will see how God is able to supernaturally move to accomplish His will.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 2-2).

The prophet Elijah is introduced in 1 Kings 17. God sent him to deal with wicked Ahab, king of Israel, and his wife Jezebel. They committed idolatry, practicing the false religion of Baalism. Ahab angered God more than any king before him ([1 Kings 16:29–33](#)).

KEY TRUTH: God Provides What Is Necessary to Do His Will ([1 Kings 17:1–7](#))

After being introduced in **verse 1**, we see that Elijah announced to King Ahab that there would be a drought in the land. It would last until Elijah said otherwise. The opening phrase of Elijah's declaration is weighty, taking the form of an oath (*As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives . . .*). Breaking of such an oath was punishable by death. The serious nature of the sins that had led to God's judgment was reflected by the seriousness of this address. The sentence of drought should have

been expected, having been proclaimed during Solomon's foreshadowing prayer at the dedication of the Temple ([1 Kings 8:35](#)). Prior to that, rain had been promised as a blessing resulting from obedience to the Lord's commands ([Deuteronomy 11:13–14](#)). Likewise, God had promised to stop the rains in response to disobedience ([Deuteronomy 11:17](#)).

DISCUSS:

- *What are some things people in our culture put ahead of God?*
- *Why is it dangerous to put things ahead of God? How do Christians sometimes do this in ways that might seem innocent at the time?*

EXPLORE:

We are introduced to *Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead*. There are a variety of interpretations of the meaning here. The Hebrew words for *Tishbite* and *Tishbe* are nearly identical. Some Bible translations, such as the KJV, designate one as a location (likely of his birth), and another as his status in the land of Gilead (that he lived there, but was not originally from there, thus being a “stranger” in the land). Other versions translate the terms nearly identically: *Tishbite* and *Tishbe*, designating distinct geographical locales (to differentiate between the place named *Tishbe* located in Gilead and another place named *Tishbe* located in Naphtali). This difficulty in translation has led some to speculate that Elijah's geographical origins mean he was not a Hebrew, but a Gentile (perhaps an Ishmaelite in particular). This seems highly unlikely, though, given the way Elijah is presented ([1 Kings 19:14](#)) and the way he interacted with others throughout the rest of the biblical account. Additionally, Elijah's very name means *my God is Jehovah*, which points strongly to his being of Hebrew origin.

The fact that God's Word came to Elijah (**verse 2**) is significant and a stark contrast between Elijah's departure here into the wilderness and his later flight from Jezebel in [chapter 19](#). It was in accordance with the Lord's command that he ventured to the brook Cherith (**verse 5**). This was a means of protection for Elijah from Ahab during the early days of God's judgment as He allowed circumstances to develop and play out. The wisdom to go and stay there was indeed part of God's sovereign provision.

More than that, the way in which God made it possible for Elijah to dwell there was clearly miraculous. The employment of the ravens was certainly amazing, but so was the nature of the food they provid-

APPLY:

Follow and worship God alone, knowing that putting anything ahead of Him will bring judgment.

ed (**verses 3–4**). Elijah received both bread and meat every morning and night (**verse 6**). God miraculously met Elijah’s needs as he obeyed.

God provides what we need to follow Him. He provided safety for Elijah amid difficult political circumstances, as well as sustenance in the midst of a drought. God meets our needs and deserves our thanks for doing so. We ought not take for granted His provision. We draw breath because He wills it ([Isaiah 42:5](#)). He causes rain to fall on the just and unjust alike ([Matthew 5:45](#)), and He withholds His rain when it is necessary for His purposes (**1 Kings 17:1**).

APPLY:

Always follow God’s commands and direction, knowing He will provide what is needed to do so.



PowerPoint 2

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 2-1) and on *PowerPoint 2*, which is customizable. Files 2A and 2B are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Be open to the unexpected. God sometimes uses unlikely means to lead and provide for us.

DISCUSS:

- *God’s provision isn’t always what we think of as miraculous. What are some of the supernatural ways God provides for us every day?* (He guides us by His Word and the Holy Spirit; He protects us from bad choices; He moves circumstances on our behalf; He answers our prayers; etc.)
- *What should we do when we don’t know the next step to take in life?* (Continue to follow God’s commands in the small things; do the next right thing; ask God for guidance and wisdom; etc.)

KEY TRUTH: God Provides for Those Who Obey Him (1 Kings 17:8–16)

Elijah’s obedience preceded God’s provision for him in the wilderness. Likewise, obedience was a requirement prior to God’s miraculous provision for a widow and her son (as well as Elijah).

God instructed Elijah to go to Zarephath, 13 kilometers south of Sidon (**verses 8–9**). This location between Tyre and Sidon was the dwelling place of Gentiles. First the Lord had provided for Elijah through unclean birds (ravens). Then God would go on to meet his needs through a Gentile widow, one the Hebrews would have deemed unclean (**verse 9**).

DISCUSS:

- *Why is it difficult to obey God when life is confusing and doesn’t make sense?*
- *When has God surprised you by doing the unexpected?*

This region would likely have been rife with the worship of Baal, making it an unlikely place for Elijah to seek refuge and provision. Yet he found both through God’s leading. This serves as an example of the way God’s provision is not limited by circumstances that would present significant challenges for man. It also illustrates the power of

a little faith in dire circumstances, as well as the fact that faith can be found in places where we least expect it.

The widow had to act on faith. Elijah's request for the woman to bring him a little water to drink (**verse 10**) was no small thing. The drought had impacted that area as well, so water was scarce and valuable. The text records no hesitation on her part to fulfill Elijah's request. Elijah tested her further, following up his request with another for food as well (**verse 11**). It was at this point that the widow revealed the depths of her despair and the dire nature of her circumstances. This confirms that the impact of the drought and subsequent famine had indeed spread far and wide. Her response also revealed her understanding of Elijah's identity. The widow's qualification of her statement with an oath (*As the LORD your God lives*; **verse 12**) demonstrates that she had knowledge of the God of Israel and recognized that Elijah was an Israelite.

Elijah's request was extreme, not only asking for food as well, but instructing her to make food for him first, then for herself and her son. The prophet promised that the Lord would provide if she would obey (**verses 13–15**). The text is clear. Elijah was not making a promise of his own accord and then expecting God to fulfill it. It was, rather, the Lord promising through Elijah (**verse 16**). Jesus, the living Word, also spoke about faith in this regard when He spoke about moving mountains by faith (Matthew 17:20). This was not a promise that we can do anything if we believe enough, but rather a promise that God can do anything He wills through anyone who believes. That belief is demonstrated through obedience to His specific commands. The widow did that, and her faith was rewarded.

DISCUSS:

- *Evaluate the obedience of the widow. Evaluate the obedience of Elijah.*
- *Why do you think God sometimes waits to provide until after we obey?*

The widow's obedience had a direct impact upon Elijah, with God blessing him through her act of faith. In turn, Elijah's obedience to God had a direct impact upon the widow and her son, with his faith resulting in the most profound miracle of three recorded in this chapter (her son being brought back to life).

EXPLORE:

There is debate regarding the nature of the widow's faith. Some argue that Jesus' words in Luke 4:24–27 indicate she was a worshiper of God. However, Jesus' statements do not necessarily

APPLY:

Obey God by faith, even when it doesn't seem to make sense.

clarify one way or another, as the context does not require that preexisting faith was a prerequisite for Elijah's acceptance by the widow. In fact, in referencing those circumstances to His own as a prophet who found no acceptance in His hometown among those who should have had faith in God, Jesus might have been indicating she was not yet a believer. It is worth noting that she spoke of the Lord as "your" God, not "my" God. On the other hand, her willingness to meet Elijah's request certainly demonstrated a significant amount of faith. Regardless of whether she had believed before, her actions in these circumstances were transformative.

 KEY TRUTH: God Can Provide When All Seems Hopeless (1 Kings 17:17-24)

Even after God's miraculous provision of sustenance, the widow still endured extreme hardship. There is no promise or guarantee by God that faith leads to ease in this life. In fact, the opposite is true (Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4). While the purpose of this text is not to address the reasons for this, it is worth noting the way in which God addressed this here. Instead of removing all difficulties, the Lord provided in the midst of them.

APPLY:

Understand that following Christ will include trials and difficulty.

DISCUSS:

- *Do trials and difficulty usually push you away from God or make you grow closer to Him? Explain.*
- *How can God use trials and difficulty for our good and His glory?*

The amount of time that passed between the events recorded in **verses 8-16** and those of **verse 17** is unknown. At some point the widow's son became terribly ill (**verses 17**). Some (including Josephus) have interpreted the condition described as that of a coma or near-death state. However, the Hebrew word translated as *breath* primarily refers to the breath of life, the spirit of a person that enlivens them. Additionally, the widow's declaration in **verse 18** makes it clear that she understood him to be dead. Elijah did not counter this but echoed that understanding in his prayer to God (**verses 20-21**).

The widow's reaction ought not be faulted. While we might say she should have believed after the provision for their nourishment, there was no guarantee this would equate to another miracle in bringing her son back to life. Even Elijah did not respond casually as though he expected the miracle to be an automatic result. The mother reacted in the way almost any parent would, with despair and heartache. It is noteworthy that she did not blame God in all this. The presence of

a *man of God*, in her estimation, had brought greater attention to her own sin, which she identified as the cause for the death of her son, believing it to be a punishment for her sins (**verse 18**).

Elijah, too, reacted with confusion and sadness. Even in the midst of these emotions, though, Elijah took the boy to his chambers and laid him on his bed (**verse 19**). He sought the Lord fervently. He cried to the Lord and stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the Lord again (**verses 20–21**). Though he did not understand why God had allowed such a thing to come to pass, Elijah continued to exercise faith in God’s ability to do the impossible. As the widow’s faith had been rewarded earlier (**verse 16**), so too was Elijah’s, and the child lived again (**verses 22–23**). God’s miraculous response served as an affirmation of Elijah as God’s instrument, enabling the woman to testify to this fact for the sake of others (**verse 24**).

Multiple times in this chapter God provided for the needs of people in miraculous ways. Each time He did so to accomplish His will through the obedience of a person. God is able to do what people cannot do (Luke 18:27).

DISCUSS:

- *How does God’s will come into play when we pray?*
- *God does not always respond in the way we want Him to. How should we respond when the result is different from what we want?*

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: Do your learners have needs that need to be met? Maybe it’s a financial problem, car repairs, relationship issues. Allow group members to share needs and then pray for those, not only right now but also during the week. God provides for our needs. Also, encourage your learners to listen to our interview with Jackson TerKeurst on *The D6 Podcast* to hear how God works in mysterious ways to provide for our needs.

OPTION 2: Ask your learners to list three ways God has provided for them. Then encourage them to list three ways each day this week, taking time to give the Lord thanks and praise for His provision throughout each day. This is a great way to start the habit of being more mindful of the ways God is present in our daily needs. The *God Is My Provider* handout (AH 2-3) can help.

APPLY:

Have faith that God can do the miraculous when it is His will.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.



AH 2-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 Devotional Study Guides this week.



PP-2

The *Parent Page (PP-2)* is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

OPTION 3: Make sure all learners have paper and something to write with. Ask them to share prayer requests they are asking God to answer and to write each other's requests on the paper. Remind them that God can provide when all seems hopeless. Encourage your learners to pray for each other's requests this week.

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

A miracle is something only God can do. Natural events cannot explain it.

Pray!

Notes

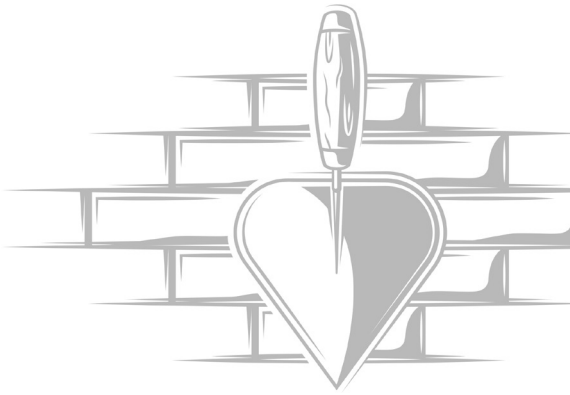


FAMILY THEME

Standing for the One True God

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners will respectfully stand for God and His ways even when it is not popular.

STUDY TEXT: 1 Kings 18:19–46



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 3-1 or AH 3-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 3* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 3-2), the *Stand Strong* poster (AH 3-3), the *Stand for Truth* handout (AH 3-4), and *Parent Page* (PP-3) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-3) to parents.



Key Truths

- Standing for God Is Often Not Popular (1 Kings 18:19–24)
- God Honors Our Stance for Him (1 Kings 18:25–40)
- God Hears and Answers When We Pray According to His Will (1 Kings 18:41–46)

Verse of the
Month

PSALM 119:11

CONNECT

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

OPTION 1: Begin by showing this video that explains Elijah's victory on Mount Carmel and provides a visual representation of the site: tinyurl.com/ElijahLineage. After discussion, say: *Elijah had a showdown with evil and won because he was standing for the one true God. Today we'll examine the importance of standing for God and His ways, even when it isn't popular.*

OPTION 2: Ask your learners if any of them have been made fun of or persecuted for standing for God and His truth. What was the situation and how did unbelievers react? After discussion, say: *Many of God's truths and principles are not popular in our culture. Today we will see how Elijah stood alone for God and His truth.*

OPTION 3: Begin by asking your learners to name some truths God has given us that are not popular in our culture. Examples might include: God created all things; sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman is sin; practicing homosexuality is not acceptable to God; Jesus is the only way to God; etc. After discussion, say: *The further our society drifts from God's revealed truth, the less popular our beliefs become. Today we will see how Elijah stood alone for God and His truth.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

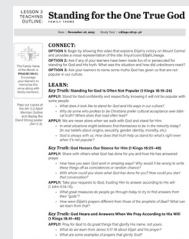
Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 3-2) and display the *Stand Strong* poster (AH 3-3).

As seen in previous chapters, some people, as was the case with Jezebel, hated Elijah because he stood for the one true God and prophesied the drought for Israel. Some admired him for his willingness to stand for what he believed in. Yet others were curious regarding Elijah and his God. In the closing verses of chapter 18, all these feelings would be tested as the prophet faced the greatest challenge of his lifetime.

KEY TRUTH: Standing for God Is Often Not Popular (1 Kings 18:19-24)

In **verse 19**, Elijah challenged Ahab to summon the people of Israel and the prophets of Baal and Asherah to a showdown with the prophet of God. The actual contest would be 450 prophets of Baal against

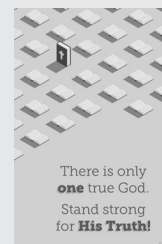
Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 3-1



AH 3-2



AH 3-3

TEACHING TIP

While emotional responses to teaching are not the end goal, we recognize that the lesson should touch on feelings as well as the intellect and the will.

one prophet of God! (It appears that the 400 prophets of Asherah did not attend.) That was the situation Elijah faced on Mount Carmel. He was in a very lonely position. Doubtless there were hundreds, or even thousands, who gathered to watch the showdown (**verse 20**). The number of prophets that were provided for by Queen Jezebel revealed the extent of idolatry that existed during Ahab's reign. What a travesty to see how far Israel had drifted since her early days of committing herself to the service of the Lord.

The fact that Mount Carmel was between Israel and Phoenicia and was believed by the Phoenicians to be the sacred dwelling place of Baal made it an acceptable site in Ahab's mind. This seemed to shift the advantage to the false prophets, making both Ahab and Jezebel comfortable with this proposed meeting.

Elijah challenged the people to end their double-mindedness and decide whom they would worship (**verse 21**). The Israelites seemed to be waiting to see which god would prove to be the most powerful. Elijah challenged them to make up their minds and choose the deity they would follow. If God was who He said He was, then follow Him. If Baal was really all the false prophets claimed him to be, then follow him. The decision was theirs, and they needed to stop shifting between the two very different and opposing options.

APPLY:

Stand for God confidently and respectfully, knowing it will not be popular with some people.



PowerPoint 3

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 3-1) and on *PowerPoint 3*, which is customizable. Files 3A and 3B are provided for customization.

DISCUSS:

- *What does it look like to stand for God and His ways in our culture?*
- *Why do some who profess to be Christians prefer cultural acceptance over biblical truth? Where does that road often lead?*

In **verse 22**, Elijah acknowledged that the odds of this contest were not in his favor, humanly speaking—450 prophets of Baal against one prophet of the Lord. Apart from a divine miracle, Elijah (and his God) would easily be defeated. Beginning in **verse 23**, Elijah proposed the details of the contest. Both Elijah and the prophets of Baal were to prepare an altar and a bull for a sacrifice, but neither was to have a fire source to light the sacrificial fire. Then, both sides were to call upon their god, and the one who answered by sending fire was to be acknowledged as the true God (**verse 24**).

Even today, those who follow the Lord might be called to stand for Him alone, or in the minority. However, what appeared to be a situation of one against 450 was actually two against 450, with the Lord Almighty on Elijah's side. As Elijah partnered with God to do His will, he was never alone and could withstand even the worst odds.

DISCUSS:

- *In what situations might believers find themselves to be in the minority today? (In our beliefs about origins, sexuality, gender identity, morality, etc.)*
- *God is always with us. How does that truth help us stand for what's right even when it's not popular?*

KEY TRUTH: God Honors Our Stance for Him **(1 Kings 18:25–40)**

The terms of engagement having been agreed upon, Elijah continued his quest to demonstrate that the God of Heaven was real and answered the prayers of His people. First, the prophets of Baal followed the instructions of Elijah and prepared the altar (**verse 25**). Apparently, they believed their god would respond to them, possibly because of past demonic activity they mistook for an act of their false god.

DISCUSS:

- *How have you seen God work in amazing ways? Why would it be wrong to write these things off as coincidences or random chance?*
- *With whom could you share what God has done for you? How could you start that conversation?*

Then, in **verse 26**, they spent the entire morning hours praying to their god, but to no avail. Scripture tells us these false prophets then limped or leaped or danced around the altar. Scholars are divided about the actual meaning of this expression, some asserting that it was a ritual dance performed by the Baal followers while others assert it was a derogatory pun used to portray the foolish gestures of these idolaters.

In **verse 27**, Elijah responded to their foolish actions by taunting them. *Maybe you should pray louder*, Elijah said. Each of the reasons cited for their need to do so are humorous. It could be that their god was busy and could not focus on their needs at that time. It was also possible that he was in the bathroom relieving himself, or maybe he was away on a journey or was asleep. Elijah's words caused more consternation among the prophets of Baal, and they worked themselves into an even greater frenzy in **verse 28**. They mutilated themselves, a custom of many pagan worshipers, but also a sign of distress on the part of these idolatrous priests. Three negative statements are made at the end of **verse 29**, each emphasizing the fact that all their crying and bodily destruction were in vain.

APPLY:

We are never alone when we walk with God and stand for Him.

APPLY:

Share with others what God has done for you and how He has answered prayer.

In **verse 30**, Elijah called the people to come near and observe what he would do. Because the former altar of the Lord had been disassembled or was in disrepair, Elijah began by repairing it. With 12 stones, representative of the 12 tribes of Israel, he built an altar and then dug a trench around it that would hold approximately 12-14 quarts of seed (**verses 31-32**). Elijah then began the sacrificial rite as the bull was cut into pieces. He then instructed that the sacrifice and the wood be soaked in water three separate times, which caused the trench around the altar to be filled with water (**verses 33-35**). In **verses 36 and 37**, Elijah prayed a simple prayer, one that stood in great contrast to the theatrical prayers and cries of the prophets of Baal. Elijah asked God to answer the prayer of His servant to show that He is the true God, and turn the hearts of His people back to Him.

In an amazing demonstration of His power, the Lord responded and fire came down from Heaven and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the surrounding dust and water (**verse 38**). The people were amazed and cried out in **verse 39** that *the Lord is God!* There was no question as to whose god was the true God. He had done what the supposed god of sky and weather had been unable to accomplish.

APPLY:

Take your requests to God,
trusting Him to answer
according to His will
(1 John 5:14-15).

DISCUSS:

- *What great measures do people go through today to try to find answers from their “gods”?*
- *How were Elijah’s prayers different from those of the prophets of Baal? What can we learn from that?*

Because of Elijah’s stance for God’s truth and glory, he experienced a unique display of God’s power and blessings. In addition, his already strong faith in God was strengthened even more because of God’s response. Possibly the greatest outcome of this showdown was that many people recognized Elijah’s God was indeed the true God! This was not an isolated event. Scripture and history are filled with stories and events that demonstrate how God magnificently reveals His glory for those who take bold steps of courage in the face of opposition and how His name and power are advanced and honored.

Elijah had one final item of business to attend to. In **verse 40**, he gave instructions to seize the prophets of Baal. None of them were to escape. Judgment was coming. Elijah then took them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them, just as God commanded Moses in Deuteronomy 13:1-5, which was the civil punishment for idolatry.

 KEY TRUTH: God Hears and Answers When We Pray According to His Will (1 Kings 18:41–46)

In **verse 41**, Elijah spoke to Ahab and declared that heavy rain was coming. King Ahab celebrated the end of the drought while Elijah made his way back up the mountain to pray (**verse 42**; [James 5:17–18](#)). The posture of his prayer indicated there was no pride in Elijah for his accomplishments. Even then he was seeking to honor God and bring glory to Him.

DISCUSS:

- *What do we learn from [James 5:17–18](#) about Elijah and his prayer?*
- *What are some examples of prayers that glorify God?*

EXPLORE:

There are those today who doubt the veracity of this account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, or they consider it to be a myth or legend. While there are aspects of the story that parallel mythological accounts, the New Testament verifies the account and teaches us lessons about prayer through it. In [James 5:13–18](#), the brother of the Lord encouraged New Testament believers to pray, and in doing so referenced the account of Elijah on Mount Carmel. Apart from the Lord Jesus, we have no greater example of prayer and what it can accomplish. James taught several key truths about Elijah and prayer. First, he was a man who was subject to the same weaknesses and passions as any other human. Elijah knew his limitations and was aware there were many things he could not accomplish on his own, so he prayed. Finally, the prophet prayed earnestly and persistently. As a result, God heard him and answered his prayer. After all, the fervent prayers of righteous persons still account for much.

At the heart of prayer is the acknowledgement that we are insufficient. We need God to meet our needs. This is powerfully seen in Elijah's prayer on the mountain. Prayers come in various lengths, words, and situations. Elijah's prayer is a reminder that it is not always the length of our prayer that is important, but our faith in God to accomplish His will. Elijah had taken a stand for truth and then prayed for God to do what He said He would do.

DISCUSS:

- *Why do we sometimes make prayer our last resort rather than our first option? What might help us prioritize prayer and turn to God first when tough times come?*

APPLY:

Pray for God to do great things that glorify His name, not yours.

APPLY:

Trust God to do what He said He would do.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.



AH 3-4

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 Devotional Study Guides this week.

• *Why can we trust God to do what He said He would do?*

Elijah instructed his servant to arise and look out over the Mediterranean Sea, the direction from which rain usually came. While the first glance revealed nothing, Elijah instructed him to look again, up to seven times (**verses 43–44**). Elijah kept praying and a small cloud appeared that quickly grew until the entire sky was dark and ominous. Foreseeing what was coming, Elijah sent word to Ahab to prepare himself and get off the mountain before the rain arrived. In fulfillment of Elijah's word, the clouds and wind arrived followed by torrential rains (**verse 45**). As the king headed toward Jezreel, his winter capital, located halfway between Mount Carmel and Samaria, Elijah overtook him running the 25 miles with divine energy driving him (**verse 46**). Through this encounter, Elijah had not only defeated the prophets of Baal but had also disquieted and humbled Jezebel, a deed that would not go unnoticed.

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: Standing for truth isn't always easy, but it becomes easier when we're surrounded by a community that is standing with us. Discuss the power of community with your group. What is the benefit of being surrounded by likeminded believers? How can your group members encourage each other when you're not inside the church walls?

OPTION 2: Have learners list biblical truths and principles that are not popular in our culture. Discuss how we can stand for those truths appropriately and effectively. What would not be appropriate or effective? Encourage learners to stand for God when opportunities arise. The AH 3-4 *Stand for Truth* handout can help with this response.

OPTION 3: Ask your learners to name some things we should pray for that we know are God's will. Write these on the board. After compiling a list, encourage your learners to choose one or two of these things to pray about in the coming week.

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Christians tithe by giving 10 percent of their income to God. This is not a requirement of faith but a demonstration of stewardship and love for God.

Pray!



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 copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for **FREE** download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Notes

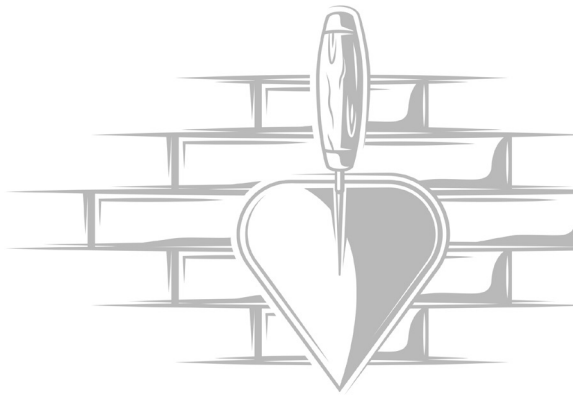


FAMILY THEME

Faithful Leadership

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners determine to serve God as long as they live and to do so in His power.

STUDY TEXT: 2 Kings 2:1–15



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 4-1 or AH 4-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 4* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 4-2), the *Our Power Source* handout (AH 4-3), and *Parent Page* (PP-4) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-4) to parents.



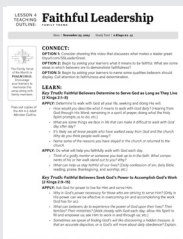
Key Truths

- Faithful Believers Determine to Serve God as Long as They Live (2 Kings 2:1–8)
- Faithful Believers Seek God's Power to Accomplish God's Work (2 Kings 2:9–15)

Verse of the
Month

PSALM 119:11

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



AH 4-1



AH 4-2

TEACHING TIP

The more involved learners are in the lesson, the more they will learn. That means lectures are less productive than discussions.

CONNECT

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

OPTION 1: Consider showing this video that discusses what makes a leader great: tinyurl.com/SSLeaderGreat. Discuss the video with your group. Does the video align with a biblical worldview? Are there any elements group members would tweak or add? After discussion, say: *Today we will examine the lives of Elijah and Elisha and see what it means to be a faithful leader.*

OPTION 2: Begin by asking your learners what it means to be faithful. What are some areas in which believers are to demonstrate faithfulness? After discussion, say: *Although not always easy, it is important for believers to remain faithful to what God has called them to do. Today we will see how Elijah and Elisha demonstrated that kind of faithfulness.*

OPTION 3: Begin by asking your learners to name some qualities believers should display. After discussing those qualities, say: *Two important qualities for believers are faithfulness and determination. Today we will see how the prophets Elijah and Elisha displayed those qualities to accomplish God's work.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 4-2)

Up until this point in 1 and 2 Kings, we read primarily about the ministry and service of Elijah. Chapter 2 marks a shift from his ministry to that of Elisha, the one who had faithfully served as an apprentice and assistant to the prophet for seven or eight years. In this chapter, the transition from Elijah to Elisha takes place.

KEY TRUTH: Faithful Believers Determine to Serve God as Long as They Live (2 Kings 2:1-8)

As the time drew near for God to take Elijah to Heaven, both Elijah and Elisha demonstrated faithfulness to the end. Elijah, knowing the time was near, continued to follow God's direction in visiting and encouraging the young prophets he apparently mentored and taught. Elijah had trained and developed the young prophets, including Elisha, wanting God's work to continue and thrive after he was gone. **Verse 1** gives the background for this event, informing the reader of what was about to happen. This was the time when Elijah was to be

taken to Heaven in a miraculous fashion—without dying and on a chariot of fire. An exit of this magnitude had not happened since the days of Enoch (Genesis 5:23–24).

EXPLORE:

Elijah and Elisha played significant roles in God’s plan for Israel. Consider the key details regarding each. **Elijah** was one of the most interesting and significant prophets in all the Bible. In 1 Kings 17:1, he suddenly appeared on the scene challenging King Ahab, the evil, idolatrous king who reigned in the northern kingdom from 874 to 853 BC. Nothing is known of Elijah’s family or upbringing, only the fact that he was from Tishbe. While Elijah is most known for his encounter with the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18, his ministry was comprised of many other significant moments and events. In fact, Elijah was present with Moses at the Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:3) and is the prophet to whom John the Baptist was likened (Luke 1:17). **Elisha** was the successor of Elijah as a prophet in Israel and served in this capacity for approximately 60 years. Elisha was called to follow Elijah in 1 Kings 19, and spent the next several years as the prophet’s assistant and protégé. It was during the ministry of Elisha that Baal worship was eradicated in Israel. Elisha’s ministry was characterized by humility, a love for the people of Israel, and faithfulness over the course of a lifelong ministry.

The aged prophet Elijah spoke to his young apprentice and instructed him to stay put while he continued to Bethel. Elisha, also knowing Elijah’s time was short and wanting the blessing and endorsement of his beloved mentor, determined to remain with Elijah to the end (**verse 2**). The expression, *As the Lord lives . . .* was an oath of sorts and revealed the heart of Elisha for the Lord and for Elijah. Consequently, the two prophets of God made one final journey together and went to Bethel.

DISCUSS:

- *How would you describe what it means to walk with God daily?* (Hearing from God through His Word; remaining in a spirit of prayer; doing what the Holy Spirit prompts us to do; etc.)
- *What are some things we face in life that can make it difficult to walk with God day after day?*
- *It’s likely we all know people who have walked away from God and the church. Why do you think people walk away?*

APPLY:

Determine to walk with God all your life, seeking and doing His will.



PowerPoint 4

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 4-1) and on *PowerPoint 4*, which is customizable. Files 4A and 4B are provided for customization.

- Name some of the reasons you have stayed in the church or returned to the church.

Verse 3 indicates word had spread regarding Elijah and his impending “death.” The sons or company of the prophets (apprentice prophets) spoke of the fact that Elijah would be taken away from Elisha. The truth was that Elijah would be taken from all of Israel and he would be missed by all the young prophets, not just Elisha. Elisha instructed the young messengers to keep it quiet, possibly not wanting to be reminded of the “dreaded” event that would soon occur.

EXPLORE:

The *sons of the prophets* were also known as the *company of prophets* or the *school of prophets*. The title is a technical one referring to the members of a prophetic order or guild and had no reference to physical descent from a prophet. During the days of Elijah and Elisha, there were guilds or locations of these prophets in training in Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and the hill country of Ephraim. These young servants appeared most often during the ministry of Elisha and served as an extension of, or agents of, the ministry of the prophet.

For a second time, Elijah attempted to leave Elisha behind as he continued his journey. Again, Elisha refused to abandon his mentor and the two of them traveled to Jericho (**verse 4**). Then, for a second time, a group of the sons of the prophets asked Elisha about his awareness of Elijah being “taken away.” The prophet again requested that they keep silent regarding this news (**verse 5**).

For a third time, the aged prophet asked his son in the faith to stay behind as he made his way to the Jordan River. Again, Elisha chose to continue with Elijah, a decision he would not regret (**verse 6**). At this point, 50 of the sons of the prophets had a front row seat to an event they would not soon forget (**verse 7**). In what would be his final recorded miracle, Elijah took his cloak, a symbol of his authority, rolled it up, and struck the water. The water of the Jordan parted, and Elijah and Elisha crossed on dry ground together (**verse 8**).

The parting of the Jordan might remind readers of the crossing of the Red Sea or the nation crossing the Jordan at the arrival into the Promised Land. Many commentators believe this scenario reveals similarities between Elisha’s succession of Elijah and Joshua’s succession of Moses (Numbers 27:18–23; 1 Kings 19:15–21). Both successors were chosen by God and endorsed by their mentors.

DISCUSS:

- *Think of a godly mentor or someone you look up to in the faith. What components of his or her walk stand out to you? Why?*
- *What can help us stay faithful all our lives? (Daily confession of sin; daily Bible reading, praise, thanksgiving, and worship; etc.)*

KEY TRUTH: Faithful Believers Seek God's Power to Accomplish God's Work (2 Kings 2:9-15)

After a strategic journey and unwavering determination when Elijah tried to discourage him from going, Elisha was given the opportunity to hear, see, and experience spiritual blessings others were not allowed to experience. When asked what he desired from Elijah, Elisha asked for extra power (a double portion of Elijah's spirit) from God to enable him to accomplish the work God had in store for him (**verse 9**). Elisha's response reminds the reader of Solomon's response when God asked Solomon what he wanted God to give him (1 Kings 3:5-9).

DISCUSS:

- *Why is God's power necessary for those who are striving to serve Him? (Only in His power can we be effective in overcoming sin and accomplishing the work God has for us.)*
- *What can believers do to experience the power of God upon their lives? Their families? Their ministries? (Walk closely with God each day; allow His Spirit to fill and empower us; ask Him to work in and through us; etc.)*
- *Sometimes we speak of finding God's will like discovering a hidden treasure. Is that an accurate depiction, or is God's will more about daily obedience? Explain.*

EXPLORE:

The double portion requested by Elisha can seem like a selfish request if not understood in its proper context. Literally the expression meant *according to two shares* and is rooted in the legal realm as described in Deuteronomy 21:17. In the Jewish culture, the firstborn son was entitled to a double share of the inheritance given by the father. Elisha desired a spiritual inheritance in which he received a double share as compared to the others, such as the sons of the prophets. He was requesting the opportunity to be Elijah's successor, the one who would carry on the ministry established by the great prophet. In essence, his desire was to be as effective as Elijah had been. An apparent fulfillment of that request resulted in Elisha performing twice as many recorded miracles and prophetic utterances as Elijah.

APPLY:

Do what will help you faithfully walk with God each day.

APPLY:

Ask God for power to live for Him and serve Him.

In **verse 10**, the aged prophet informed his successor that this *double portion* was not his to give and was indeed a *hard thing* to confer. While Elijah was unable personally to confer this distinct honor upon Elisha, he did inform Elisha that if he witnessed Elijah's being taken away, this would be the sign or evidence that this double portion would indeed be bestowed upon him.

As the two prophets continued to walk and talk, the miraculous happened when Elijah was taken by a whirlwind up into Heaven (**verse 11**). The details surrounding this event are amazing in and of themselves. Placed in the grand scheme of all the Lord was doing, they become even more amazing. Present at this moment were both chariots of fire and horses of fire. Horses and chariots were the most powerful means of warfare of that day. The fire and the whirlwind were both symbolic of the presence of God. The whirlwind was likely a storm with lightning and thunder. The Lord was reminding Elisha that His presence and power were greater than any military might. Elisha had no reason to fear.

APPLY:

Remember that God's presence and power are greater than any problem we face.

DISCUSS:

- *How does it help us to know that God's presence and power are greater than our problems?*
- *What would you say to someone who says, "I don't feel like God is speaking to me"? (Remind that person that even though God might seem silent at times, He has given us His Word, and we are to be obedient to what He has called us to do. He speaks to us through those things as well as prayer.)*

Upon seeing this event unfold before his eyes, Elisha cried out, *My father* in **verse 12**. Elijah had been Elisha's spiritual father. This relationship was both unique and special. Elisha's reference to *the chariots of Israel and its horsemen* could have been him recognizing that God's power through Elijah had been the true strength of Israel. The same would be said at Elisha's death (**2 Kings 13:14**). With this cry, Elisha tore his clothes, an act of mourning over the loss of the great prophet.

In **verse 13**, Elisha seemed speechless. What more could be said? His action of picking up Elijah's cloak was a reminder of the work left for him to do. Scholars believe this cloak was the same one used by Elijah when he appointed Elisha as his successor (**1 Kings 19:19-21**). In picking up and taking Elijah's cloak for himself, Elisha took up the work Elijah (and God) left for him to do.

DISCUSS:

• *How do we discover the works and service God has prepared for us? Who could we talk to about that?* (We find out how God has gifted us; we talk to the pastor or ministry leaders at church; we try serving in a few ministries that interest us; etc.)

In **verse 14**, Elisha took the cloak of Elijah, struck the water, and asked *Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?* This was probably a request for God to demonstrate His power just as He had for Elijah. The final miracle of Elijah involved this same cloak as he struck the water and the Jordan River parted for the two men of God to walk across together. Now, the miracle was repeated, evidence that the power that once rested on Elijah now rested on Elisha. The young prophets who were present recognized God had empowered and endorsed Elisha for His ministry. God recognized and rewarded Elisha's faithfulness. This entire episode is reminiscent of Joshua parting the waters of the Jordan just as Moses, his predecessor, had done ([Joshua 3:7–17](#)). This was done for the benefit of the prophets and for those who would be expected to follow their leadership.

The respect and honor once given to Elijah by the sons of the prophets was now given to Elisha (**verse 15**). They recognized not only the position he now filled but also the power and spirit with which he would do it. Out of respect for this newly appointed prophet of God and leader, they bowed to the ground in honor.

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: The passage studied today shows us the leadership of both Elijah and Elisha. It's easy to assume we're not leaders if we don't have a "title" that puts us in charge. However, leadership is far more than a title. Discuss the role of leadership with your group. What does it mean to lead, even if you're not in charge? What type of leadership should Christians display at home? At work? At church? In the community? Encourage group members to consider ways they can be leaders in their spheres of influence. Leadership often comes down to seeing and meeting a need. It's as easy as daily obedience and doing the next right thing.

OPTION 2: Ask your learners to identify problems, sins, and temptations (negatives) they need God's power to overcome. Then ask them what good works and service (positives) they need God's power to

APPLY:

Serve God in the ways
He has prepared for you
([Ephesians 2:10](#)).

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.



AH 4-3

Encourage your group members 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 copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

accomplish. Have them choose a negative and a positive situation for which they need God's power and encourage them to ask God every day this week for the power they need for those situations. The AH 4-3 *Our Power Source* handout can help.

OPTION 3: Discuss with your learners things we can do that will help us remain faithful all our lives. Encourage your learners to choose a calling, commitment, or task in which they need to remain faithful. Encourage them to put into action things that will help them remain faithful.

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

A prophet is a messenger chosen by God to share His words.

Pray!

Notes

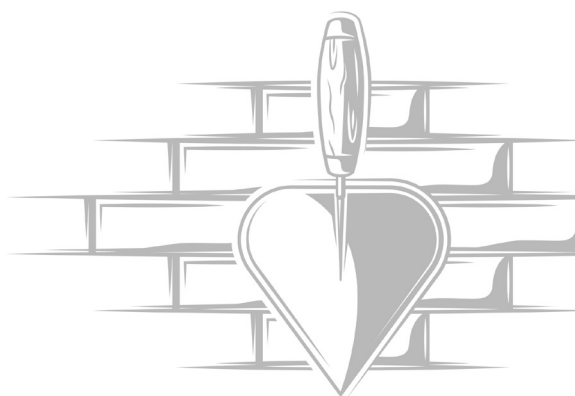


FAMILY THEME

Humble Obedience

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners choose to humbly obey God, even when it doesn't seem to make sense.

STUDY TEXT: 2 Kings 5:1-27



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 5-1 or AH 5-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 5* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 5-2), the *When It Doesn't Make Sense* handout (AH 5-3), and *Parent Page* (PP-5) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-5) to parents.



Key Truths

- God Can Use Any Person or Situation to Accomplish His Purposes (2 Kings 5:1-8)
- God's Commands and Methods Are Best, Even When They Seem Strange to Us (2 Kings 5:9-14)
- Believers Must Guard Against Fame and Greed (2 Kings 5:15-27)

Verse of the
Month

PSALM 119:11

CONNECT

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

OPTION 1: Show this video to your group that discusses the truth about Naaman: tinyurl.com/TruthNaaman. Discuss the video with group members. Why was Naaman willing to obey, even when it didn't make sense? After discussion, say: *Today we'll look deeper into Naaman's story and see the importance of humble obedience.*

OPTION 2: Ask your learners to share a time when an unlikely person did something remarkable or important. What was the situation and who played the important role? How did they do so? After discussion, say: *Sometimes God uses unlikely people, items, or circumstances to accomplish His purposes. Today we will see how He used a servant girl to set in motion events that would change lives and bring Himself great glory.*

OPTION 3: Ask your learners to consider the military chain of command. Are subordinate soldiers expected to obey, even if they do not fully comprehend why orders were given? Why is this so? After discussion, say: *Soldiers are expected to obey their commanding officers even if they do not fully understand why the order was given. Today we will see how a very important commander almost missed coming to know God and receiving a huge blessing because the instructions God had given to him through Elisha didn't seem to make sense.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

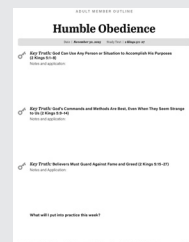
Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 5-2).

Although this week's passage involves important people like kings and the commander of an entire army, its main focus is on how God used a lowly servant girl and strange instructions from the prophet Elisha to point a mighty pagan commander to Himself. That commander was Syrian. The Syrians moved around with their livestock or lived in small villages before beginning to build cities in Syria. They fortified Damascus as their capital. They were usually military and economic rivals with Israel, but they also went through periods of cooperation. Their language, Aramaic, saw wide use as a diplomatic language among nations of that region. It even became the common language spoken among the Jews of Jesus' day. The charge published on the cross was written in Latin, Greek, and Aramaic (sometimes called Hebrew, depending on the translation).

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



AH 5-1



AH 5-2

TEACHING TIP

Don't let discussion be merely shared ignorance. Guide discussion times with comments, suggestions, and additional questions.

 KEY TRUTH: God Can Use Any Person or Situation to Accomplish His Purposes (2 Kings 5:1-8)

Naaman, the commander of Syria's army, was a mighty warrior, but he also was a leper. He had employed his military skill against Israel. That is how the servant girl from Israel came to be serving in his house (**verses 1-2**).

EXPLORE:

Leprosy in both testaments of the Bible included much more than the disease we know today as Hansen's disease. It covered a variety of skin disorders, including psoriasis. Even fabric and buildings could be said to have leprosy. This probably indicates discoloration from mildew or even efflorescence on stone or masonry walls. All cases, in Israel at least, called for the involvement of a priest. In Israel, lepers lived within a set of strict social restrictions because they were considered ceremonially unclean—unfit to participate in the worship of God. This would not have been an issue for a Syrian such as Naaman, but there might have been some restrictions. In addition, depending on the precise nature of his ailment, he might have experienced severe pain or discomfort. Leprosy was considered incurable at that time.

The unnamed servant girl apparently wanted Naaman cured, even as others in her family might have rejoiced at his disease. Her attitude strikes us. Perhaps Naaman was a decent master. Perhaps serving in his household was *better* than what she had left behind. Perhaps respecting the God of Israel had shaped her character. Perhaps she wanted Naaman to see how great the God of Israel is. Whatever the cause, she told Naaman's wife, who shared the news with her husband. He, in turn, went to speak with his master, the Syrian king, relaying what the girl had said (**verses 2-4**). The Syrian king sent a letter requesting that Israel's king cure Naaman. He also sent along some very impressive gifts with the request (**verses 5-6**).

APPLY:

Remember that God can use any person and any situation, good or bad, to glorify His name and accomplish His purposes.

DISCUSS:

- *Describe a time when you saw God do something powerful through an unlikely person. What did you take away from that event?*
- *How did the servant girl use her situation to bring God glory? How could you use your present situation to bring God glory?*

EXPLORE:

Too often we take delight in the discomfort or even suffering of our enemies. Does our faith in Jesus Christ have less effect on our attitudes than the servant girl's faith had on hers? First Peter 2:23 gives us the example of Christ who did not wish evil upon His persecutors because He *entrusted* Himself to the world's righteous Judge. Our desire for revenge or evil upon our enemies might indicate we do not fully entrust ourselves to God.

If we had been able to travel through Israel and Syria during this time to select someone who could set in motion important events, we most likely would *not* have chosen a captive servant girl. We sometimes fail to recognize that the things we view as limitations or qualifications count for little with God. What matters most for someone to accomplish God's will is for the person to love God, and to be available, obedient, and committed to doing what God says.

DISCUSS:

- *How can we always be ready for God to use us?* (Maintain a close walk with God; present ourselves daily for God's use; be open to the Spirit's leading; etc.)
- *How can we make sure we're making the most of the opportunities that God gives us?*

Israel's king was dismayed (**verse 7**). Healing was up to God, after all. He could imagine only one reason for such an outrageous request: the king of Syria wanted to stir up trouble, perhaps create an excuse to attack Israel.

The king found himself trying to respond to events set in motion by a little servant girl whose existence he likely never even suspected. Their resolution depended on hearkening to a prophet he never respected. When Elisha heard what had happened, he sent word that the king was to send the Syrian to him, so Naaman would know there was a prophet of the true and living God in Israel (**verse 8**).

KEY TRUTH: God's Commands and Methods Are Best, Even When They Seem Strange to Us (2 Kings 5:9-14)

As Naaman approached the home of the prophet, he was in for a surprise. Elisha never even went out to see him, not even to ask who he was or why he came. Perhaps God had revealed all this to him. Perhaps what Elisha had already heard about the situation included these details (**verses 9-10**). Refusing to meet the official to whom he merely sent word might seem odd to us, perhaps even rude or un-



PowerPoint 5

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 5-1) and on *PowerPoint 5*, which is customizable. Files 5A and 5B are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Present yourself to God daily and watch for opportunities to be used by Him.

friendly. It was neither. Elisha needed to make a statement about *his* Master, the God of Israel. Naaman served the master of the Syrians, who had defeated Israel. Elisha served the God of Israel and all the earth. By only sending a message through his servant, he established the hierarchy among the various powers involved.

As one might expect, Naaman was angry, perhaps even skeptical about the authenticity of this prophet (**verses 11–12**). His pride was wounded. He expected first to see the prophet, and then to see some special ritual or ceremony that would restore his health. Instead, he saw nothing special at all.

APPLY:

Naaman almost let pride prevent his healing. Be humble instead of prideful.

DISCUSS:

- *How is humility connected to obedience?*

Fortunately for Naaman, his servants' pride was not as wounded as his, and they saw more clearly (**verse 13**). Surely, he would have undertaken any great task assigned to him by the prophet to bring healing. Might it be worthwhile to give his unusual instructions a chance? Pride and stubbornness have blocked the road for many throughout history. Naaman could have been one of them, but for the logical open-mindedness of his servants. He humbled himself to do what Elisha had instructed. Obedience has its rewards. Naaman went to the river, dipped seven times, and found himself with perfectly restored health (**verse 14**).

God's healing in Naaman's case was not contingent upon some ritual or practice. It needed only Naaman's obedience. It mattered little what the precise instructions were—God could surely have chosen any number of things—it mattered greatly whether Naaman followed them.

APPLY:

Trust and obey God, even when His command or method seems to make no sense.

DISCUSS:

- *What are some commands or methods of God that don't seem to make sense?* (Love and pray for your enemies; put others' interests ahead of your own; bless those who persecute you; etc.)
- *Why can we trust God when things don't seem to make sense?* (He is all knowing, all powerful, and all wise; He has all authority; He knows what is best; etc.)
- *Even though he proceeded with what he was told, Naaman probably had a lot of questions. What is the difference between doubting God and having questions?*

We hear it said that *nothing succeeds like success*, but in God's world, nothing succeeds like *obedience*. What God tells us to do is not usually very complicated or hard to remember. Even little children can understand. It becomes difficult because we sometimes do not think it makes sense (as though we were the perfect judges of what makes sense). What we should understand is that obedience often opens the door through which we come to understanding. We, too, need to swallow our pride and obey the Lord.

 KEY TRUTH: Believers Must Guard Against Fame and Greed (2 Kings 5:15–27)

Naaman's attitude toward Elisha instantly changed. He understood there was only one God, Israel's God, and he pressed Elisha to accept his gifts (**verse 15**). Converted to our measurements, Naaman carried about 750 pounds (341 kilos) of silver and 150 pounds (68 kilos) of gold. Could Elisha have put the gifts to good use? Of course! There were prophets to feed, widows to protect, and perhaps even his old age to prepare for. He understood, however, that it was more important that his actions teach Naaman that the healing came from God, not the prophet. What gift could he accept for something God had done (**verse 16**)?

DISCUSS:

- *Whether it's a job promotion or recognition for a job well done, it's easy to bask in our own glory and successes. When good things happen, how can we make sure God receives the glory?*

Naaman's actions in **verses 17–18** might seem strange, even quaint, to us. *If I cannot leave anything, may I take something?* Naaman understood that Israel's God was the only true God. He misunderstood, as did so many of his time, much about God's nature. The pagan world often held that one could properly worship a deity *only* on the soil with which he was identified. Therefore, Naaman felt he could only truly worship Jehovah God if he could bow down upon the soil of Israel. He even asked forgiveness ahead of time for fulfilling his civic and military duty to accompany the king when *he* bowed before pagan deities. What a contrast with most of Israel, who gleefully added many pagan deities to their worship of Jehovah God. This *pagan* cast them all aside, in favor of the true and living God.

Elisha's response demonstrated that he understood the limitations of Naaman's newborn faith. Rather than instruct him more fully concerning the nature of Jehovah, he told him what Naaman most needed to hear: *go in peace* (**verse 19**).

APPLY:

Give God the glory for every blessing and accomplishment you experience.

Naaman's gifts could not sway Elisha's devotion to God. It was different, however, for Gehazi (**verses 20–21**). He bristled at the opportunity Elisha let slip through his hands, and to the benefit of that foreigner no less. First his feet, and then his mouth continued the perversion his heart had set in motion (**verses 22–23**). He built his deceptive story and took what he knew Naaman would willingly offer. His selfish deception indicated a heart problem. He apparently was not content with God's provision for him and coveted more for himself. He placed his own desires over God's glory.

APPLY:

Worship God alone. Give Him priority over everything else, including fame and riches.

DISCUSS:

- *Elisha put God ahead of everything else, including fame and riches. What idols compete with God for priority in our lives?*
- *Gehazi had spent much time with Elisha, yet he still gave in to greed. What can his example teach us about temptation?*
- *What are some indicators our pursuit of prestige or money might be unhealthy?*

Naaman's servants would surely have carried everything right up to the prophet's home again, and then the truth would have been out. As they got close, Gehazi took the gifts and hid them after the men were out of sight (**verse 24**). His lie to Naaman demanded a lie to Elisha (**verse 25**), which was especially unwise. Naaman's leprosy would move to Gehazi and his descendants (**verses 26–27**).

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: Gehazi seems like a background character in this story, and yet we can learn much from his downfall. Discuss with your group why the pursuit of fame, wealth, and recognition will likely disrupt our pursuit of God. Why is the pursuit of fame at odds with a pursuit of God? How can we guard against this temptation and make sure our egos are kept in check?

OPTION 2: Ask your group members to list commands or instructions in God's Word that are very difficult for them to obey, or don't seem to make sense to them. Encourage them to trust God enough to obey those commands or instructions this week, leaving the results to God. The *When It Doesn't Make Sense* handout (AH 5-3) can help.



AH 5-3

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.

OPTION 3: Ask your learners to think of ways they could bring God glory in their present circumstances, good or bad. Could they demonstrate joy and trust God in some difficult situation? Could they show appreciation for a wonderful blessing from God? Encourage them to demonstrate joy, trust, and thanksgiving in whatever circumstances they find themselves in.

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Obedience to God's commands provides evidence of our belief in God.

Pray!

Encourage your group members 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 those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Notes

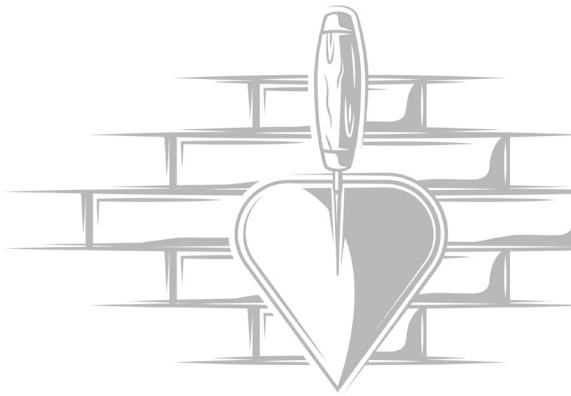


FAMILY THEME

Answering God's Call

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners answer God's call to live for Him and serve Him.

STUDY TEXT: Isaiah 6:1–13



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 6-1 or AH 6-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 6* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 6-2), the *Serve Our Great God* handout (AH 6-3), and *Parent Page* (PP-6) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-6) to parents.

Key Truths

- We Serve a God Who Is Holy, Glorious, and Majestic (Isaiah 6:1–4)
- God Calls Us to Holiness (Isaiah 6:5–7)
- God Calls Us to Commitment (Isaiah 6:8–13)

Verse of the
Month

ISAIAH 9:6

CONNECT

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

OPTION 1: Consider playing this song about Isaiah 6 as your group arrives: tinyurl.com/IsaiahAgnew. You could also end the lesson with this song and have your group sing along. Transition to the lesson by saying: *Today we are studying Isaiah 6 and discussing what it means to answer God's call.*

OPTION 2: Ask your learners what it means to be called to serve God. Is God's call just for pastors, missionaries, and people who serve in other ministries such as that? What are some ways God calls all of us to serve Him? After discussion, say: *Each and every one of us is called to serve God. Today we will examine a special calling God gave to Isaiah and how we all can answer the call to serve God.*

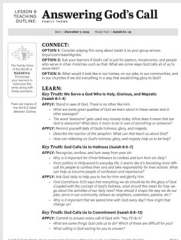
OPTION 3: Ask learners what it might look like for us to do everything in a way that brings glory to God. What would that look like in our homes, on our jobs, in our communities, and in our churches? After discussion, say: *Each and every one of us is called to serve God by doing everything in a way that brings glory to God. Today we will examine a special calling God gave to Isaiah and how we all can answer the call to serve God.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 6-2).

Isaiah's historical context: The call of Isaiah is introduced as taking place *In the year King Uzziah died*, which would have been approximately 740 BC. Isaiah's life and ministry spanned some or all of the rule of Uzziah (767–740 BC), Jotham (740–732 BC), Ahaz (732–716 BC), Hezekiah (716–687 BC), and Manasseh (687–642 BC). He continued to minister until the death of the Assyrian king Sennacherib, approximately 680 BC. Assyria would grow to be the dominant power in the region during this time, ultimately leading to the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel at their hands in 722 BC. Later, as the Assyrian empire's power began to wane, Isaiah also prophesied of the rise of Babylon and how God would use them as an instrument of His judgment against the people's covenant unfaithfulness. The latter portion of the book of Isaiah prophesied about the time of the exile after Babylon destroyed Jerusalem (586 BC) and the subsequent captivity and exile of the Hebrew people.

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



AH 6-1



AH 6-2

TEACHING TIP

Be a friend to your learners. Your group should not feel impersonal. No one should feel invisible.

Isaiah ministered in a difficult time with a difficult purpose. The events of his call in chapter 6 help us understand how he was able to serve faithfully amidst these difficulties and can equip us with the wisdom necessary to remain faithful in our own service to God.

 KEY TRUTH: We Serve a God Who Is Holy, Glorious, and Majestic (Isaiah 6:1–4)

In **verse 1**, we learn that Isaiah was given a glimpse into Heaven. He had a vision of God on a throne with His robe filling the Temple. In the ancient world it was common for kings and high officials to wear long robes, symbols of their majesty and power. The *seraphim* present in **verse 2** are not explicitly mentioned anywhere else in Scripture, though they are represented in John's vision as described in Revelation 4:8. They have the same number of wings, and repeat *Holy, holy, holy* unto the Lord (**verse 3**). Although they are heavenly beings, they, like man, cannot gaze upon the fullness of God's glory, so they cover their faces with two of their wings. Explanations differ for the covering of their feet.

The earthquake and smoke that accompanied God's presence (**verse 4**) are not uncommon scriptural representations of the presence of God and are recollective of God's presence at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:18). The people reacted with trepidation and recognition of their unworthiness to be in the presence of God (Exodus 20:18–20).

Much like the symbolic nature of the number seven within the Scriptures, the repetition of *holy* three times is symbolic of completion, thus presenting God as lacking nothing. There are also those who believe it is indicative of the three parts of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

All these symbols are representative of the staggering “otherness” of God. The concept of holiness is perhaps the primary one regarding God's nature as conveyed in the Old Testament. The term *holiness* as most commonly used in Scripture refers to that which is set apart, distinct.

DISCUSS:

- *What are some great qualities of God we learn about in these verses and in other passages?*
- *The word “awesome” gets used very loosely today. What does it mean that our God is awesome? What does it mean to be in awe of something or someone?*

APPLY:

Stand in awe of God. There is no other like Him.



PowerPoint 6

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 6-1) and on *PowerPoint 6*, which is customizable. Files 6A and 6B are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Remind yourself daily of God's holiness, glory, and majesty.

God is the most set apart, distinct being in existence. There is nothing else or no one else like Him. He stands alone. This concept was reflected in the first phrase of the *Shema*, the daily recitation among the Jews (which is still practiced to this day by more orthodox Jews) of Deuteronomy 6:4–5: *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one*. This statement affirms there is only one God (it can also be translated as *The LORD is our God, the LORD alone*), a significant assertion in a region and era when polytheism (the belief in multiple gods) was the most commonly held belief system. From the beginning of God's relationship with the nation of Israel, the concept of *one* God was explicitly affirmed. This belief was not developed over time as some modern theologians suppose.

DISCUSS:

- Describe the reaction of the seraphim. What can that teach us about God?
- How can reflecting on God's holiness, glory, and majesty help us to be holy?

The singular nature of God demands a singular response, as demonstrated by Isaiah. The call of God to serve Him is also set apart and unlike any other calling. Service to God is of the utmost purpose and priority. He deserves our best. He alone is worthy of all glory and honor. Our service for Him ought to reflect that.

KEY TRUTH: God Calls Us to Holiness (Isaiah 6:5–7)

Isaiah's own uncleanness was thrown into the sharpest relief possible next to the glory of God, and he immediately recognized his peril and cried out for mercy (**verse 5**). Judges 13:22 reflects the common understanding of the day that to see God was to die. Instead of the death he could have rightly expected, one of the seraphim touched his lips with a coal from the altar to burn away his impurity (**verses 6–7**).

EXPLORE:

As Zephaniah 3:9 dictates, purification of the lips was necessary to call upon God. The concept of purification by fire is a common one in Scripture (Malachi 3:2–3; 1 Peter 1:7; Numbers 31:23; etc.) and of that culture. More specifically, coals of fire were taken from the altar into the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:12).

DISCUSS:

- *Why is it important for Christ followers to confess and turn from sin daily?*
- *From politics to Hollywood to everyday life, it seems like it's becoming more difficult for people to confess their sins and take responsibility for their actions. What can help us become people of confession and repentance?*

Even though Isaiah was a man of faith and demonstrated a ready spirit to serve (**Isaiah 6:8** - *Here I am! Send me.*), God still wanted him to be purified in order to serve Him. Also note that the vessel by which the prophetic ministry was to be carried out (the lips/mouth) had to be touched by God to be worthy and capable of fulfilling His calling.

If even Isaiah had to be purified by God, so too must we all. None of us are worthy. None of our talents, skills, or understanding are sufficient. Nothing we possess within ourselves is sufficient to accomplish God's purposes. He alone can equip us. It is His work through us that makes His will possible. We need His touch, His transformation in our lives. As Paul wrote in **Romans 12:1–2**, the presence of God must result in a comprehensive transformation in the way we think and the way we live. We must be holy as God is holy (**1 Peter 1:16**). Only God can do that in us and through us (**1 Peter 1:18–19**).

DISCUSS:

- *First Corinthians 10:31 says that everything we do should be for the glory of God. Coupled with the concept of God's holiness, what should this mean for how we go about the activities of our daily lives? How should it shape the way we do our jobs, serve in our community, behave as neighbors, customers, patrons, etc.?*
- *Why is it important that we spend time with God every day? How might that change us?*

KEY TRUTH: God Calls Us to Commitment (Isaiah 6:8–13)

God calls us in many ways. It might be a call to turn away from sin, to show love to a neighbor, to serve in some ministry, etc. In **verse 8**, we see God call for someone to go and speak to His people. Isaiah responded with *send me*. *Us*, in this verse, most likely points to the doctrine of the Trinity. Isaiah's task was not an easy one, which the Lord made clear from the outset. The phrasing of **verse 9** essentially means that no matter what Isaiah said, the people would not listen, and no matter what he showed them, they would not see. **Verse 10**

APPLY:

Recognize, confess, and turn away from your sin.

APPLY:

Ask God daily to help you to live for Him and glorify Him.

is reflective of God's work in the heart of Pharaoh ([Exodus 4:21; 7:14](#)) when Moses was His mouthpiece. Just as Moses would need to persevere through Pharaoh's stubbornness (followed by the stubbornness and foolishness of the Hebrew people he would subsequently lead), so too would Isaiah need to persevere through a difficult time of service where the only hope would be presented as coming to fulfillment far in the future.

EXPLORE:

It is noteworthy that **verses 9–10** are quoted in all three of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) during Jesus' explanation of the parable of the sower, along with the purpose behind the use of parables ([Matthew 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10](#)). Only those who were willing to really listen to God on His terms and see what He revealed (in contrast with only looking for what they wanted) would be able to perceive the truth. In Isaiah's ministry, there would be very few who would listen.

The prophecy of the near future was bleak. The final three verses of the chapter speak of the coming destruction of both kingdoms (**verse 11**), the exile of God's people (**verse 12**), and the diminishing of their numbers (**verse 13**). The message was not one people would want to hear. Full commitment to God's mission was necessary for Isaiah to stay the course, and trust in His sovereignty was required to not lose heart. The sovereignty of God is seen in the differences of the practices of the two conquering nations. The Assyrians dispersed their conquests, which resulted in the ten northern tribes losing their identity. The Babylonians brought their captives to the capital city and kept them in their own community, which preserved their national identity and facilitated their eventual return.

APPLY:

Commit to answer every call of God with "Yes, I'll do it," no matter the difficulty.

DISCUSS:

- *What are some things God calls us to do? Which of these are difficult for you?*
- *What calling is God waiting for you to answer?*

This holds true today. Our own era can certainly feel like one in which the darkness is surging. As Jesus explained the fulfillment of **Isaiah 6:9–10** in their day, we too can see the fulfillment of Paul's prophetic words to Timothy: A time will come when people won't tolerate sound teaching but will listen to false teachers who tell them what they want to hear. They won't listen to the truth, but will wander off track pursuing myths and lies ([2 Timothy 4:3–4](#)). The true message of the gospel and the teachings of Jesus which we have been charged to

declare (Matthew 28:19–20) will often fall upon deaf ears. We must be fully committed and follow Isaiah’s example of faithfulness.

We must do what God calls us to do, no matter how difficult. We must be faithful to His Word and truth, regardless of how unpopular it might be. People don’t need to hear what they want (*The heart is deceitful above all things* – Jeremiah 17:9). They need God’s truth presented with love.

DISCUSS:

- *How can we strive for both truth and love in our words, tone, attitude, and actions?*
- *How should we respond if the message we share is rejected? Why can we rejoice even in the face of rejection?*

Answering God’s call to service requires complete commitment if we are to remain faithful. We ought not be surprised when the message is rejected and the hearers make the lives of the messengers difficult. Jesus told us this would happen (Matthew 10:16–18, 21–22). Like Isaiah and the other prophets, we also must trust in the message given to us by God, faithfully delivering it as we received it (Matthew 10:19–20).

RESPOND

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

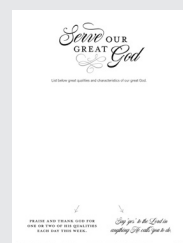
OPTION 1: God has called us to be holy. That might seem like a tall task, but that should be something Christians strive after in their daily lives. Discuss with group members what it means to be holy. What does it look like? How do we become holy people? Encourage group members to implement one idea from the discussion. It could be adding a positive habit (daily Bible reading, Scripture memorization, etc.) or removing a negative habit (use of pornography, gossip, etc.).

OPTION 2: Ask learners to list qualities and characteristics of our God. Then discuss the privilege we have to serve such a great God. Encourage learners to praise and thank God for one or two of His qualities each day this week. Ask them to say “yes” to the Lord in anything He calls them to do. The AH 6-3 *Serve Our Great God* handout can help with this response.

APPLY:

Speak the truth, but do it in love (Ephesians 4:15).

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.



AH 6-3

Encourage your group members 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 copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

OPTION 3: As discussed in today's lesson, holiness means being set apart, distinct from that which is common. Ask your learners to brainstorm ways in which they can be distinct by serving others during their daily routines. This can involve going above and beyond at work, in our community, in our households, in our churches—anything that stands out from what is commonly done. Encourage learners to demonstrate holiness by serving others this week.

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

The Old Testament books of the major prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. They are called major prophets due to the length of the writings.

Pray!

Notes

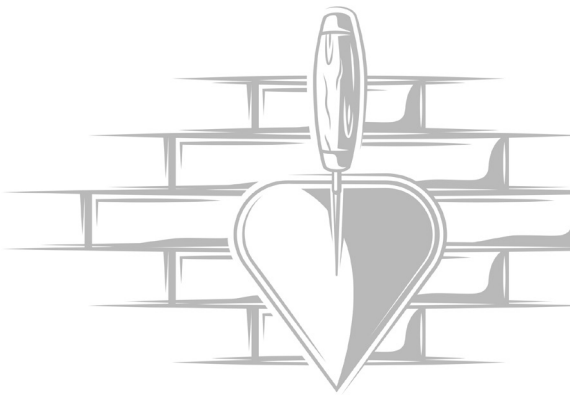


FAMILY THEME

The Suffering Savior

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners live for Christ and tell the lost how He died on the cross to save us.

STUDY TEXT: Isaiah 52:13—53:12



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 7-1 or AH 7-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 7* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 7-2), the *All for Us* poster (AH 7-3), the *Practicing Righteousness* handout (AH 7-4), and *Parent Page* (PP-7) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-7) to parents.



Key Truths

- Jesus Was Despised and Rejected by People He Came to Save (Isaiah 52:13—53:3)
- Jesus Paid the Penalty for Our Sins (Isaiah 53:4–9)
- Jesus Is Highly Exalted Because He Suffered to Save Us (Isaiah 53:10–12)

Verse of the
Month

ISAIAH 9:6

CONNECT

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

OPTION 1: Consider showing this video that gets people’s reactions to Isaiah 53 and other Old Testament prophecies: tinyurl.com/Israel53. Ask group members why Old Testament prophecy proves the reliability of Scripture and strengthens our faith. After discussion, say: *Today we will examine Isaiah 53 and see how Christ suffered so we could find new life in Him.*

OPTION 2: Begin by writing the word *Rejection* on the board. Ask your learners what it means to be rejected. When have they been rejected? How did that feel? After discussion, say, *Being rejected can be very hurtful. Today we will see how Jesus was rejected by those He came to save.*

OPTION 3: Ask your learners if they have ever heard of the concept of “life debt.” This concept has shown up in literature and movies and involves someone pledging to serve or repay someone who has saved that person’s life. After discussion, say: *While we don’t hear much about “life debt” in our culture, it’s a concept that should take place in the Christian’s life. Today we will see how we should live for the Savior who gave His life to save us.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

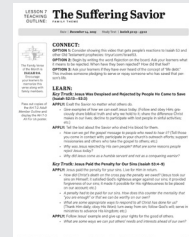
Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 7-2) and display the AH 7-3 *All for Us* poster.

This week’s passage is one of a series of passages in Isaiah that are called “Servant Songs” (others are *Isaiah 42:1–4; 49:1–6; and 50:4–9*). They deal with a special servant of God. Most conservative Christian scholars (and many others) see the Servant Songs as descriptions of the Messiah to come. After Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, His disciples would have read these passages in a new light. Isaiah’s prophecy of the Suffering Servant found its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

KEY TRUTH: Jesus Was Despised and Rejected by People He Came to Save (*Isaiah 52:13–53:3*)

In **Isaiah 52:13**, God the Father described the ultimate position of the Servant—exalted and lifted up. The One who was despised, rejected, and crucified would then ascend to the Father’s right hand (*Hebrews*

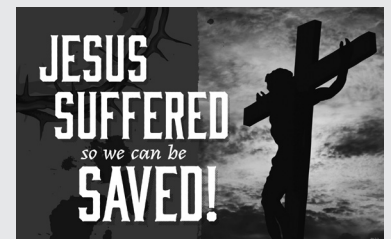
Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 7-1



AH 7-2



AH 7-3

TEACHING TIP

Model what you teach. You cannot escape your responsibility as an example (even if an imperfect example) of the practical truth of God’s Word.

APPLY:

Exalt the Savior no matter
what others do.

**PowerPoint 7**

The discussion questions
can also be found on the
Adult Teaching Outline (AH
7-1) and on *PowerPoint 7*,
which is customizable. Files
7A and 7B are provided for
customization.

APPLY:

Tell the lost about the Savior
who shed His blood for
them.

1:3). **Verse 14** then describes the reaction of those who would encounter the Servant. Some see this as astonishment at His beaten and battered appearance at His crucifixion. In short, they were astonished, appalled. He was marred, disfigured, undesirable, despised, and rejected.

DISCUSS:

- *Give examples of how we can exalt Jesus today.* (Follow and obey Him; graciously share biblical truth and why we hold to it; share the difference Christ makes in our lives; decline to participate with lost people in sinful activities; etc.)

Verse 15, however, moves from the rejection to its result. The sprinkling of many nations uses an image from the Jewish sacrificial system: priests sprinkled blood from the sacrificial animals in consecration. Likewise, for the Passover, God instructed the people to apply some of the blood of the sacrificial lamb upon their doorposts to have judgment pass over them. In the same sense, the Servant's blood would consecrate believers from many nations. This vision looked beyond Israel and Judah, beyond the Babylonian captivity, to a time when God's message of salvation by the shed blood of Christ would spread to people from all nations. People would have nothing to say when they realized they beat and crucified the One who came to save them.

DISCUSS:

- *How can we get the gospel message to people who need to hear it?* (Tell those you meet; participate in your church's outreach efforts; support missionaries and others who take the gospel to others; etc.)

EXPLORE:

Isaiah 52:15 speaks of how kings (rulers) would see and understand that which they have not heard or been told about. We can take this in at least two ways. First, we can apply this to the rulers of Gentile nations, who would not otherwise have had any knowledge of God's written revelation to the Jews. In this case, the verse looks ahead to the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; etc. This would certainly be in keeping with other Old Testament glimpses of God's plan for the Gentile nations. Second, we can also envision that Gentile people, living lives transformed by the power of the gospel, would so change society that even their rulers would have to take notice. This would stress the importance of living out the gospel in such a way that even those who pay no attention to its teachings are forced to pay attention to its effects.

Isaiah 53:1–3 tells us few would believe the truth about the Servant and God’s power to save. The speaker shifted from God’s perspective to man’s perspective. Notice the references to *us* and *we* in these three verses. Isaiah continued his identification as a man of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips. People found no “redeeming qualities” in this Servant. He would not seem special to them. Indeed, Jesus was decisively rejected by the authorities and people of his day. This was not the dignity the God of the universe deserved. John 1 explains that Jesus came to His own, who did not receive Him. They rejected the One through whom all things were made.

DISCUSS:

- *Why was Jesus rejected by His own people? What are some reasons people reject Jesus today?*
- *Why did Jesus come as a humble servant and not as a conquering warrior?*

KEY TRUTH: Jesus Paid the Penalty for Our Sins (Isaiah 53:4–9)

The contrast in pronouns in **verses 4 and 5** says it all. The Servant (Jesus) endured the punishment we deserved for our sins. He paid the price for us. Though He had no sin of His own, He willingly bore the weight (and guilt) of our sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21–24). The people He died for, however, seemed to think this Servant (Jesus) must have deserved this fate, that God was punishing the Servant’s own wrongdoing (**verse 4b**). They overlooked their own sin and the punishment they deserved. **Verse 5** indicates a turning point, however, as the prophet acknowledged it was our sin that brought such suffering upon the Servant.

Finally, in **verse 6**, we see full identification: we all sinned, and God punished this Servant in our place. This is not a “mistakes were made” attempt to escape responsibility. It was for all of us—Isaiah, you, me, everyone—that the Servant was treated so shamefully.

DISCUSS:

- *How did Christ’s death on the cross pay the penalty we owed? (Jesus took our sins on Himself; it satisfied God’s righteous anger against our sins; it provided forgiveness of our sins; it made it possible for His righteousness to be placed on our account; etc.)*
- *A penalty had to be paid for our sins. How does this counter the mentality that “you are enough” or that we can be worthy on our own?*

APPLY:

Jesus paid the penalty for your sins. Live for Him in return.

- *What are some appropriate ways to respond to all Christ has done for us?* (Thank Him daily; obey His Word; turn away from sin; follow God's will; serve in ministries to advance His kingdom; etc.)

Despite His suffering and innocence, the Servant did not seek to defend Himself or claim He was not guilty. Like a meek lamb being led away to be sheared or slaughtered, He did not resist (**verse 7**). The accounts of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion show us this was true of Jesus. He did not try to explain or defend Himself against the false charges that the religious leaders brought against Him (Matthew 26:62–63; 27:12–14).

Verse 8 describes the Servant being oppressed and led away to His death. He was *cut off from the land of the living*. Jesus was arrested and tried for something He did not do, and then He was taken away to die on the cross. He was crucified with wicked men and then buried in a rich man's tomb. This happened even though He was innocent (**verse 9**).

Jesus had done no wrong. Actually, he had a right to justice! Matthew 26:53–54 informs us He could have called for angelic deliverance. Fortunately for us, the resolve He communicated in His earlier prayer (*not my will, but yours be done*—Matthew 26:36–44) held steadfast and He willingly gave Himself to die in our place. He was no overpowered victim; He actively submitted to the horror. Death by crucifixion was reserved for criminals and traitors. He willingly died a criminal's death, as He sacrificed His own rights to obtain our forgiveness.

APPLY:

Follow Jesus' example and give up your rights for the good of others.

DISCUSS:

- *What are some ways we can put others' needs and interests ahead of our own?*

EXPLORE:

Jesus, of course, provided the ultimate example of giving up one's rights for the good of others. The Bible contains others, however:

- Nehemiah did not burden the people or the royal treasury in areas where he had a right to do so (Nehemiah 5:14–18).
- Paul did not claim his right to travel with a wife, even though Peter and others did so (1 Corinthians 9:5). He also worked to support himself rather than depending on support from believers (9:6–7).
- Paul encouraged Philemon not to exercise a master's right of retribution against Onesimus (Philemon 17).

In an era that seems increasingly defined by the struggle over rights, this should be an important reminder to God's people.

 KEY TRUTH: Jesus Is Highly Exalted Because He Suffered to Save Us (Isaiah 53:10–12)

Jesus' crucifixion was not the mere tragic accident of someone who made powerful people angry. It was the turning point of human history. God had planned this before Creation (Revelation 13:8; Acts 2:23; Ephesians 1:4). **Verse 10** informs us the Servant's life was offered as a guilt offering. It is through the Servant that God's plans would prosper, and the Servant's days would be prolonged. He will live forever at the Father's right hand. **Verse 11** gives a glimpse of the resurrection of the Servant. His punishment was for *many*. As proof of the Servant's innocence, he would return to life and accomplish the salvation of many. Because He paid the penalty of their sins, those who believe in Him are counted as righteous in God's sight (Galatians 3:5–6).

DISCUSS:

- *What does it look like for a Christian to practice righteous living?*

Jesus' saving work would result in His being highly exalted. He is now exalted at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20–23). Like a general enjoying the spoils of victory in battle, Jesus shares with the redeemed the blessings and spoils of His victory over sin and Satan (**verse 12**). One day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord of all (Philippians 2:8–11).

Christ sacrificed all for us. How can we honor and exalt Him for what He has done for us? Throughout history, multitudes of His followers have sacrificed their very lives for the sake of the gospel. Where does our level of sacrifice register? What could we sacrifice for Him? In what ways could we give up life in our comfort zone to share God's good news with people we work with or meet? How about our children? How can we steer them toward a life committed to following and serving Christ? How can we actively encourage them to find out what they can do best for God, and then do it wherever God wants to use them? How could we present our bodies as living sacrifices to Him in response to His love and sacrifice for us (Romans 12:1)? How could we think like Christ instead of being squeezed into the world's mold (Romans 12:2)?

Millions of people throughout history have been counted among Jesus' brothers and sisters. It is only fitting they devote their lives to the One who took on their guilt. It is only fitting the Father honor the Servant who was willing to obey to the ultimate measure. No figure in human history has led to as much good as Jesus Christ. In art, music, literature, and even scientific and medical investigation, no other person has inspired so much activity and in such a glorious way.

APPLY:

Be righteous just as God considers you righteous through your faith in Christ.

As the sun works its way around the globe each day, each hour sees millions of people worshipping Him, asking His assistance for the day ahead, or thanking Him for His help during the day that just ended. They worship Him in gratitude for offering Himself in their place, for becoming their sacrifice. Let's join them and stand up for Jesus no matter what others do. Let's live for Christ, thanking Him daily for paying the penalty for our sins. Let's worship and sacrifice for Him in all we say and do!

APPLY:

Worship Jesus for taking your sins on Himself on the cross.

DISCUSS:

- *There are some who argue this passage isn't speaking about Jesus. Look back at the entire passage. What evidence proves this passage is prophecy that's focused on Jesus?*
- *How can these verses encourage and motivate you to serve Christ, even when culture pushes back against you?*
- *How can we worship and honor Christ through everyday activities? (Treat others with love and respect; always do the right thing; put others' needs ahead of our own; do what pleases and brings glory to the Lord; etc.)*

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.

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: The passage you studied today was written about 700 years before Jesus came to earth and was born in Bethlehem. There are some who deny the passage is about Jesus, but the overwhelming evidence makes it unmistakable that this prophecy was speaking about the Messiah who was to come. Encourage group members to dive deeper into their study of this Servant Song and other Servant Songs. When we read about prophecy and see it fulfilled in Jesus, it can strengthen our faith and give us great confidence in the reliability of Scripture.

OPTION 2: Ask your group members to consider ways they can honor and stand up for Christ in their daily activities. What could they do to stand for Christ at work? In what ways could they simply do what is right when others do not? How could they respectfully engage people who belittle their faith or dishonor God? Encourage them to put one of these ideas into action this week.

OPTION 3: Discuss what it would look like to live a righteous lifestyle today. Which of these ideas do your learners need to put into practice? Encourage your learners to put one or two of these ideas into practice this week. The AH 7-4 *Practicing Righteousness* handout can help.

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

When English Bibles spell LORD with all capital letters, it is a translation of Yahweh or Jehovah, the personal name for God. Yahweh is related to God's statement, "I Am that I Am" ([Exodus 3:14](#)) and is used over 6800 times in the Old Testament.

Pray!



AH 7-4

Encourage your group members 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 copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Notes

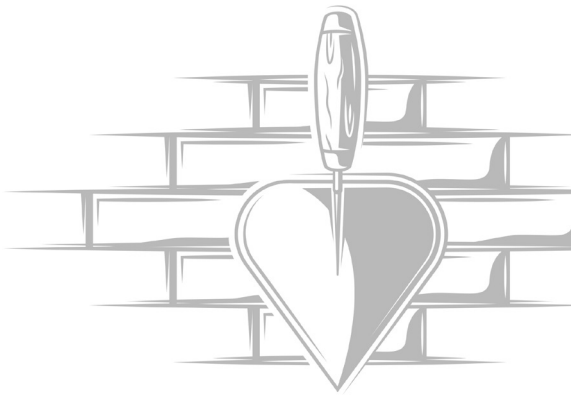


FAMILY THEME

God's Promised Messiah

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners celebrate the birth of our Savior knowing it affirms the truth of God's Word.

STUDY TEXT: Isaiah 7:1-16; 9:2-7; Luke 2:25-38



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 8-1 or AH 8-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 8* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 8-2), *The Messiah in Isaiah* handout (AH 8-3), the *Make Him Lord of All* handout (AH 8-4), and *Parent Page* (PP-8) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide. You could also go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-8) to parents.



Key Truths

- **God Promised a Savior Would Be Born of a Virgin** (Isaiah 7:1-16)
- **God Promised a Savior Would Bring Light and Truth to a Sinful World** (Isaiah 9:2-7)
- **God Proved Faithful to His Word** (Luke 2:25-38)

Verse of the
Month

ISAIAH 9:6

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



AH 8-1



AH 8-2

TEACHING TIP

Reward those who are punctual by starting on time. Latecomers might catch on.

CONNECT

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

OPTION 1: Consider showing this humorous video of a children's Christmas pageant where things didn't go as expected: tinyurl.com/SheepMary. Transition to the lesson: *Like in the video, the birth of Jesus wasn't quite what people expected. Yet, as we'll see today, Jesus came and brought light and truth to a sinful world.*

OPTION 2: Ask your learners to give examples of various promises people make. After several examples are given, discuss how some of our promises are kept and others are not. After discussion, say, *People make all kinds of promises, and some are kept and others are not. Today we will see that God always keeps His promises, including His promise to send a Savior.*

OPTION 3: Ask your learners to list some things about Christmas that point to Christ and give Him honor and glory. Then ask them to list certain Christmas traditions and elements that have nothing to do with Christ and His birth. After discussion, say: *There are things in our culture's Christmas celebrations that point to Christ and His birth and other things that do not. Today we will see how Christ's birth fulfilled God's promises about a coming Savior.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 8-2).

During the Christmas season, cards, sermons, banners, and signs feature familiar words from Isaiah and many other passages. Many people, however, will not understand that the lovely words from Isaiah and the other Old Testament prophets were prophecies recorded hundreds of years before Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. These events related to the beautiful Christmas account set the story in its context of salvation for all the world, including the Gentiles.

KEY TRUTH: God Promised a Savior Would Be Born of a Virgin ([Isaiah 7:1-16](#))

Verses 1–2 set the stage: King Ahaz of Judah feared greatly that the northern kingdom of Israel, allied with the king of Syria, would defeat or destroy him and his kingdom. The nation trembled along with him. God sent Isaiah to inform Ahaz that his enemies' plans would not prevail (**verses 3–9**). God was accomplishing His plan to preserve

the nation of Judah and the line of David to bring the Messiah into the world.

God even offered to fulfill any sign of Ahaz' choosing as proof that what He promised would happen. Ahaz feigned religious sincerity (*I don't want to put God to the test*) to hide the fact that he simply wanted no dealings with God (**verses 10–12**). Isaiah responded swiftly and forcefully, addressing not just Ahaz but the entire *house of David*, meaning the royal family and officials who were present: *So you can't be satisfied wearying people—you have to weary God as well! God will choose His own sign for you* (**verses 13–14**).

DISCUSS:

- *Why can we trust God to do all He has promised to do?* (He has all knowledge and all power; He cannot lie; He has already accomplished other promises in their time; etc.)

Who was the virgin in **verse 14** in Ahaz's day? We do not know. Some believe it was a young, unmarried woman of the royal household, perhaps someone soon to be married. It could have just been a reference to the amount of time it would take for the chain of events to happen. We do not know. Whoever it was, God knew. There is a good chance the king and his entourage knew as well. Otherwise, the sign would have meant little to them. Before the promised child was out of infancy or toddlerhood, the two enemy kings and their land would be destroyed (**verses 15–16**).

Yet this prophecy from Isaiah would have another, deeper fulfillment further in the future. God would return to this theme—the prospects of imminent and deserved destruction, to which God would respond in grace with the birth of a child, working unexpected and undeserved deliverance. Jesus, the Messiah, would be born to a virgin. He would literally be *God with us* (Matthew 1:22–23), and would provide salvation and deliverance by dying on the cross. His fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy affirms that the Bible is God's Word.

DISCUSS:

- *How does the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy help to confirm the truth of God's Word?* (Fulfillment of this prophecy and many others assures us He will fulfill the other promises He has given for eternal life; victory over sin; etc.)
- *Why was it necessary for Jesus to be born of a virgin?* (Conception by a human father would have passed the sin nature to Jesus; conception by the power of the Holy Spirit affirmed His deity;

APPLY:

Trust God to do everything He has promised to do.



PowerPoint 8

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 8-1) and on *PowerPoint 8*, which is customizable. Files 8A and 8B are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Obey God's Word, knowing Jesus' virgin birth affirms its reliability.

since Jesus already existed, He did not need an earthly father for conception, He only needed a way to be born as a human; etc.)

- *Why is it significant that God fulfills all His promises? How does that help with our understanding of prophecy? How does that help with our lives today?*

EXPLORE:

In **Isaiah 7:14**, Isaiah used a Hebrew term that denoted a young unmarried woman, which in their culture was synonymous with *virgin*. Even in an idolatrous regime such as that of Ahaz, Judah and Israel shared the expectation that a young woman would remain a virgin until marriage. This does not mean that everyone lived up to that expectation. Yet it remained the ideal that was expected. The Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to apply this verse to the virgin birth of Jesus. Yet, Matthew chose a Greek word that made the expected virginity explicit. Why did he choose a Greek word that was more specific than what Isaiah had used? Actually, Matthew was merely quoting from what we call the *Septuagint*, a translation into Greek from Isaiah's Hebrew. As the people of Israel developed more contact with the pagan societies of Greece and Rome, many wanted to be able to read the Old Testament Scriptures in Greek. The translators understood that the pagan societies for whom they wanted to translate their Bible did not have the same cultural and ethical values as ancient Israel. In particular, sexual promiscuity was far more common. The translators wanted the pagans to understand that Isaiah had in mind a young woman who was not merely unmarried, but a virgin as well. They therefore chose a Greek word that specifically means *virgin*.

KEY TRUTH: God Promised a Savior Would Bring Light and Truth to a Sinful World (Isaiah 9:2-7)

When Assyria and other enemies swept into Israel in Isaiah's day, they first oppressed the northern regions of Israel. In the time of Jesus, people knew the area as Galilee. Isaiah prophesied that those regions would emerge from darkness to light (**verses 1-2**). Seven hundred years later, in the New Testament, Matthew applied Isaiah's description to the ministry of Jesus (Matthew 4:15-16).

APPLY:

Live in the light and truth of God's Word.

DISCUSS:

- *How is the world different because of the great light? How is your life different?*
- *What does it mean to live in the light of God's truth? (It means we accept God's Word as truth and put it into practice in our daily lives.)*

Isaiah foresaw a time when the nation would not just move from darkness to light. He also saw it moving from the sorrow of oppression to joy and thriving as a nation (**verse 3**). God promised to destroy the weapons of the enemy (**verses 4–5**), even against overwhelming odds, as in Gideon’s victory over Midian in Judges 6 and 7.

As in chapter 7, Isaiah again mentioned a special child (**verses 6–7**). In chapter 7 he focused on the child’s coming. In chapter 9 he focused instead on what the child would accomplish. Judah and Israel had known political instability and civil breakdown. From this special child they would experience stable, unending, and wise government.

This was no mere child, but a ruler, indeed the ultimate ruler that humanity has needed ever since sin entered the world. His shoulders received the lash and carried the cross. Afterward, they would bear the government, the rule over humanity. What names could one use for such a ruler? Isaiah had some good ones:

- *Wonderful Counselor*, possessing a wisdom beyond human understanding
- *Mighty God*, leading us to ask how a child could be God
- *Everlasting Father*, recalling God’s paternal relationship with His creation
- *Prince of Peace*, whose reign would be everlasting peace, not merely a peaceful pause between periods of conflict

DISCUSS:

- *In Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah used several phrases to describe the Messiah. Which one stands out the most to you? Why?*
- *This is a wonderful time of year to celebrate the birth of Jesus. How can the Christmas season also encourage us to obey Him in everything we do?*

Isaiah saw a universal worldwide rule. Yet he also saw something very specific—this child turned ruler would continue the throne of *David*. God promised all this through a particular family in human history. How could Isaiah know that through hundreds of years of human history, such a child would come along? How could he be confident that with all the unpredictability and calamities to come, such a ruler would take the throne? Only one way—the zeal and power of the Lord of hosts would make it happen!

APPLY:

Follow and obey Jesus as Lord of your life. One day all will bow before Him (Philippians 2:9–11).

Give your learners a copy of
AH 8-3 *The Messiah in Isaiah*
for further study.



AH 8-3

EXPLORE:

The Messiah in Isaiah: Along with the Psalms, Isaiah is one of the most quoted books in the New Testament regarding prophecies of the Messiah:

Isaiah 7:14 - a virgin shall conceive . . . call His name Immanuel;
8:14 - a stone of stumbling . . . a rock of offense; 9:2 - the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light . . . ; 9:6-7 - For unto us a child is born . . . The Prince of Peace; 11:1, 10 - a Branch from the root of Jesse; 11:2-5 - Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him . . . judge with righteousness; 11:10 - Gentiles will seek Him; 25:8 - will swallow up death in victory . . . wipe away tears; 28:16 - a precious cornerstone; 35:5-6 - eyes of the blind will be opened . . . (29:18-19; 42:7); 40:11 - the Good Shepherd; 42:1-4 - the gentle Servant; 49:7 - worshiped by kings and princes (60:3, 6-8); 53:1-12 - Suffering Servant (50:6; 52:14); 61:1-2 - The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me . . . (Matthew 11:4-5; Luke 4:17-21); 66:15, 18, 23 - Glorious King.

KEY TRUTH: God Proved Faithful to His Word (Luke 2:25-38)

In this passage we have the account of two older people who retained a steadfast hope that God would send the Promised Messiah. In Simeon's case (**verses 25-35**), we have someone to whom God had revealed something very special: Simeon would not die before seeing the Messiah. As Simeon aged, day by day his hope and excitement surely grew. *One day closer!*

Finally, the day came when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple to offer the sacrifice for His dedication, according to the Law of Moses. Simeon, led by the Spirit, “intercepted” them. Somehow, God let him know that this infant was the One! Simeon approached the couple and took Jesus in his arms.

APPLY:

Walk closely with God,
learning to follow the Holy
Spirit's direction.

DISCUSS:

- *How can we make sure the Holy Spirit is guiding our steps?*

Verses 29-32 reveal a marvelous psalm, addressed to God Himself. First, Simeon reflected on God's faithfulness. He had indeed seen the salvation from God. He now knew He could leave this life, yet another witness to God's steadfast love. Simeon saw more than an individual Messiah. He saw something of God's vast, sweeping plan for the world. Not a private, Jewish Messiah—God had prepared Jesus to save all peoples, both the Gentiles and God's people Israel.

Simeon further revealed important truths about Jesus' ministry. It would cause division. At the time of decision, some would choose unbelief and collapse or fall. Others would rise to faith. Many would oppose Him, and Mary would suffer as a result. This division over Jesus would be the ultimate revealer of people's hearts (**verses 34–35**).

Then there was Anna (**verses 36–38**). Some think she truly lived at the Temple complex. Others believe the text merely means she spent her waking hours there. She, too, joined in the unusual circumstances. Her response still serves as a pattern for us today:

- Thank God for His great salvation.
- Speak of Him to others who need that salvation.

God had promised great things to come through the Christmas child. He made sure other people knew about it. They, in turn, like Anna, made sure to tell others.

DISCUSS:

- *How might Christmas open the door for us to share the gospel with others and have conversations about Jesus?*
- *What promises of God related to Christmas could we share with people around us?*
- *How can we demonstrate thankfulness to God for being faithful to us?*

EXPLORE:

Many scholars believe that the confluence of Mary, Joseph, Jesus, Simeon, and Anna in the Temple represents a fulfillment of Malachi 3:1, which indicates that *the Lord will suddenly come to His Temple*. We can wonder what Simeon expected as he made his way to the Temple complex. He may have expected a great leader or warrior. He may not have expected a baby coming for dedication. If so, he quickly adjusted, subjecting even his expectations to God's promise. That, too, would be a good example for us! Anna is neither the first nor the last *prophetess* (female prophet) the Bible presents to us. Others include Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), and Philip's daughters (Acts 21:8–9).

APPLY:

Tell others how Jesus' birth fulfilled God's promises.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.

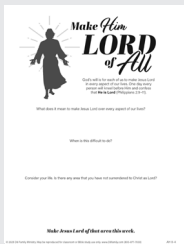
RESPOND

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: It's likely that most of your group members will see family this week, including some family members who might not be Christians. Encourage group members to use these gatherings as opportunities to share the gospel and the good news of Jesus Christ!

OPTION 2: Discuss with your learners how fulfilled prophecies (like those about Jesus' birth) affirm that the Bible is God's Word and that it is completely reliable. Encourage them to recommit to living according to God's Word. They can also share with people this week how Jesus fulfilled prophecies about His birth.

OPTION 3: Discuss what it means to make Jesus Lord over all aspects of our lives. Why is this sometimes difficult for us to do? What have your learners not yet fully surrendered to Christ as Lord? Encourage them to turn that over to Christ this week. The *Make Him Lord of All* handout (AH 8-4) can help.



AH 8-4

Encourage your group members 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. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

God's name *Adonai* (Hebrew) and *Kyrios* (Greek) means my Lord or my Ruler. It is translated as *Lord* in the Scripture.

Pray!

Notes

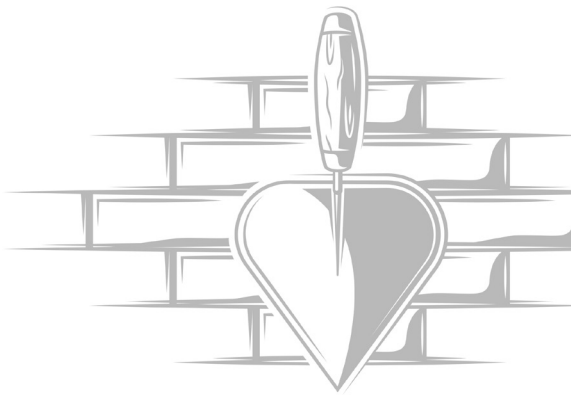


FAMILY THEME

Lessons From the Life of Jonah

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners put life lessons from Jonah into action.

STUDY TEXT: Various Scriptures From Jonah 1–4



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 9-1 or AH 9-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 9* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 9-2), the *Learn to Love* handout (AH 9-3), and *Parent Page* (PP-9) if you have parents in your group. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6844.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-9) to parents.

In This Character Study:

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

Verse of the
Month

ISAIAH 9:6

CONNECT

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

OPTION 1: Consider showing this video that asks if Jonah was actually swallowed by a whale or big fish: tinyurl.com/JonahRTRQ. Discuss the video with group members. After discussion, say: *Today we will examine the life of Jonah and put lessons from his life into action.*

OPTION 2: Display a mounted fish or a picture of a fish to your group. Then say: *There are several stories in the Bible that include fish. Today we are going to discuss Jonah's encounter with a large fish. Jonah was a prophet who ran away from the mission God gave him. God sent a great fish to redirect His prophet.*

OPTION 3: Begin by asking, *What types of people are most likely to stir up anger in you?* Try to keep the discussion lighthearted (e.g., bad drivers, people who don't put their cart away at the grocery store, etc.) rather than pinpointing specific groups of people. After discussion, say: *Whatever group stirs up anger or fear inside you, understand that is how people viewed the Assyrians in the ancient world. Our lesson today examines the work of God toward such people. We must ask ourselves, "Are we willing to share the gospel with anyone to whom God sends us?"*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 9-2) and summarize the following to your group about the background of Jonah.

Meet Jonah

We first meet the prophet Jonah in a brief mention of his prophecy of the restoration of Israel's national borders under the reign of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:25). This would have taken place in the first half of the eighth century BC (793–753). Our primary source of information about Jonah comes from the prophetic book of the Bible which bears his name. We typically refer to Jonah as one of the minor prophets, which describes the length of the book and not its importance. Jonah's prophetic ministry came during a time of materialism and spiritual decline in Israel. He worked alongside Hosea and Amos in Israel and was a contemporary of Micah and Isaiah in Judah. In this book God challenged His people to communicate God's love and redemptive objective toward people beyond the borders of Israel. We can easily trace the story in four movements.



AH 9-1



AH 9-2

TEACHING TIP

Be a teacher all week long, not just on Sundays. Send a text, a note, or a birthday card. Remember to pray for those in your group.

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

Discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 9-1), and on *PowerPoint 9*, which is customizable. Files 9A and 9B are provided for customization.

Key Events and Life Lessons From Jonah's Life

KEY EVENT: Jonah Ran (Jonah 1:1-17)

This book starts with a straightforward description of God's command to His prophet Jonah. In his role of prophet, Jonah was to travel to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh and preach against their wickedness. Without explaining why, we read that Jonah tried to escape this mission by fleeing the opposite direction to the city of Tarshish. Though the exact location of this city is uncertain, it is often identified as a place near the southern coast of Spain. Most importantly, his intent was to run from the presence of the Lord (**1:1-3**).

Life Lesson 1: Never run from something God wants you to do.

DISCUSS:

- *What are some common ways people “run” from God’s calling today—even if they stay physically in place?*
- *When have you faced a task or command from God that you were reluctant to obey? How did that work out?*

While running, Jonah encountered a vicious storm (**1:4**). This storm was so intense that the sailors feared for their lives. They took panicked measures calling out to their pagan deities and throwing cargo overboard. During the panic Jonah slept below deck (**1:5**). Finally, the captain of the ship located Jonah and demanded his help. He could at least pray to his God for help (**1:6**). The captain's only interest in Jonah's God was to fix the immediate problem of the storm. He had inadvertently stumbled upon the sole solution to their problem.

Life Lesson 2: Obey God. Your sin affects those around you.

DISCUSS:

- *In what ways can our disobedience affect others, just like Jonah’s actions affected the sailors?*
- *Think about choices people make that negatively affect others. Why do people often neglect to think about the long-term consequences of their decisions? What’s the remedy for that?*

In desperation the sailors decided to cast lots as a way of determining who was at fault in this death-storm. The lot fell to Jonah (**1:7-8**). When they asked him to explain himself, Jonah identified himself as a Hebrew. He further detailed the nature of his true God, who reigned from Heaven and created the sea and the dry land (**1:9**). Convinced that they had finally identified the source of the problem they asked

what he had done to provoke such a great God (**1:10**). They were angry that he brought this storm on all of them, but they dared not harm someone belonging to such a powerful God.

Still fearing the destruction of the ship, the sailors turned to Jonah for a suggestion of how to appease his formidable God. Jonah advised that they throw him overboard since the entire debacle was his fault (**1:11–12**). At first the crew refused to throw him overboard (**1:13**). When the sea only grew worse, they finally relented, praying to Jonah's God for mercy and understanding. They also prayed that God would not hold them liable for Jonah's death. After praying, they tossed Jonah overboard and stared in astonishment when the sea immediately calmed. In response these pagan sailors offered a sacrifice to the one true God (**1:14–16**).

It is at this point that the most identifiable part of the story of Jonah arrived—a great fish swallowed him whole (**1:17**). Interpreters and critics have faced off for centuries asking if this could actually happen. When approaching Scripture with the assumption that nothing supernatural can be true, then this part of the story would immediately be stricken as fantasy, but why would one accept such a destructive presupposition? When we understand that God created the world and everything in it, when we believe that God controls His universe, when we believe that God will one day raise the dead, we have no problem accepting the idea that God can design a fish and preserve His prophet. Jonah's internment in *Sheol* was a prophecy that Jesus identified as a sign of His death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 12:38–40). This prophecy is particularly interesting in light of the Pharisee's response to Nicodemus that “no prophet arises from Galilee” (John 7:52). However, the Messiah would be from Bethlehem. There is no need to offer natural explanations for the feasibility of a person surviving being swallowed by a fish. Like a hockey player in the penalty box, God set Jonah aside to fear and wonder for three days and nights. During this time Jonah recalculated His thoughts.

EXPLORE:

God might disguise His work as the normal operations of the created world. One of the features of Jonah's story is that multiple times throughout the book, God inserted His will into the story through acts of divine intervention.

- **1:4** - God sent a great wind to cause a storm upon the sea
- **1:17** - God sent a great fish to swallow Jonah
- **2:10** - God commanded the great fish to vomit Jonah onto the shore
- **4:6** - God caused a plant to grow
- **4:7** - God sent a worm to eat the plant

- **4:8** - God sent a hot east wind that caused Jonah extreme discomfort

Only the use of the fish was noticeably extraordinary. In His care and guidance of His people, God can insert His power and will to accomplish His purposes. He can direct the circumstances of His creation to accomplish His will. In His power and providence God can teach, protect, or provide for His people using means which might not be easily recognizable as divine.

Life Lesson 3: God can work miracles if necessary to accomplish His will and plan.

DISCUSS:

- *Why should we not be surprised that God could cause a fish to swallow and save Jonah?*
- *What are some modern-day examples—big or small—where you’ve seen God intervene in unexpected ways to accomplish His purpose?*

KEY EVENT: Jonah Prayed (Jonah 2:1-10)

Unseen by the sailors, Jonah lay trapped inside a large fish for three days and nights. This terrifying experience left him with no way out. Certain of his death, Jonah prayed what he probably felt would be his last prayer (**2:1**).

Initially, Jonah acknowledged the desperate nature of his situation. He was in distress and, metaphorically, he was in the grave. But God listened to Jonah when he cried out to Him (**2:2**). Jonah realized that God had controlled his circumstances (**2:3**). Though the sailors threw him overboard he stated that God had cast him into the deep. The waves belonged to God. Even in this desperation Jonah’s heart beat with hope that one day he would see the Temple again (**2:4**).

As he described his descent into the depths one can easily sense the fear and helplessness that flooded his mind. Of course, he thought he was about to die. In his despair he remembered God and called out to Him in prayer (**2:5-7**).

His prayer acknowledged that those who worship false gods instead of Israel’s true God miss out on the opportunity to experience grace and love from the Creator (**2:8**). Though we have no record that he actually repented of his disobedience, his vows, thanksgiving, and declaration of salvation indicated he had significantly altered his thinking (**2:9**).

At God's instruction the fish vomited Jonah upon the shore. Perhaps dazed, weakened, and confused, yet certainly relieved, Jonah gathered himself to obey God's directions **(2:10)**.

Life Lesson 4: God often disciplines disobedient servants so they can reassess their obedience toward Him.

DISCUSS:

- *Hebrews 12:6* tells us that God disciplines those He loves. What are some ways God might discipline us today?
- Discipline is uncomfortable for both children and adults. How do we usually respond to discipline? How should we respond?

KEY EVENT: Jonah Obeyed (Jonah 3:1-10)

God shows grace and mercy to His people in many ways including forgiveness, salvation, and power through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Another experience of God's grace and mercy is when His disobedient people receive a second opportunity to follow God's commands. Jonah experienced such grace from God when the Lord's word came to him a second time. In fact, the first verse of chapter three echoes the first verse of chapter one **(3:1-3)**.

Upon hearing again God's instruction to go to Nineveh, Jonah obeyed. When he arrived at Nineveh he encountered a massive city. Some critics have scoffed at the description of Nineveh as three days' journey. This could mean that one would need three days to walk the diameter or circumference of the city. It could mean that one would need three days to preach at all the main sites of the city. Commentators often disagree regarding the meaning of three days' journey, but all understand that the phrase indicates that Nineveh was a huge city **(3:4a)**.

Jonah went deep into the city and began preaching about God's coming judgment. We only read the message that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days. In Hebrew, Jonah's sermon only takes five words **(3:4b)**. This might be an abbreviation of Jonah's sermon, but it could also indicate that Jonah relished the message of Nineveh's destruction. The prospect of these mortal enemies receiving God's wrath might have excited Jonah. He must have looked forward to the day of God's wrath poured out on Nineveh.

Life Lesson 5: Help get the gospel to all people, including those you would consider as enemies.

DISCUSS:

- *What is our church currently doing to get the gospel to all people? As an individual, what are you doing to share the gospel with others?*
- *Who is someone you'd be surprised to see respond to Christ with repentance and faith? What's one way you could share the gospel with that person?*

Unexpectedly, the story turns at that point. Understanding Nineveh to be a deeply pagan city with violent tendencies, one would assume that the people of Assyria's capital city would scoff at a message about a foreign God's judgment. Instead, the entire city repented. All the people from the greatest to the least covered themselves with sackcloth as a sign of sorrow and repented for their actions and lifestyles (3:5). It was a work of God.

Once the word about Jonah's message reached the king of Nineveh, he joined the repentance. Weeping over their sins as individuals as well as their sins as a society, they sat in ashes and asked God for forgiveness. The king proclaimed a fast from food and water to beg for God's mercy. They all hoped this great God would forgive them and turn from His anger so they would not die (3:6–9). God saw they were not only sorry for their sins but that they were changing from their evil ways. Bible readers are not at all surprised to learn that our merciful God heard these prayers of repentance and decided not to destroy the city (3:10).

KEY EVENT: Jonah Complained (Jonah 4:1–11)

Ironically, we learn that God's forgiveness of Nineveh greatly displeased Jonah (4:1). He was angry with God and expressed that anger in another prayer. He had originally fled toward Tarshish not because he feared what the Ninevites might do to him but because he feared the mercy of God toward the Ninevites (4:2). He acknowledged that God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in love, and willing to relent from judgment (see a similar declaration in Exodus 34:1–9). Jonah's mind turned so badly that he quoted these characteristics as vices that stirred resentment in him rather than virtues that stirred praise in him. This hardened prophet writhed in despondency and asked God to take his life (4:3).

God challenged Jonah to consider if his attitude of anger was appropriate to the situation (4:4). In response, Jonah walked to a spot east of the city, built a small shelter, and sat to see what would happen (4:5). To teach the prophet a lesson, God caused a plant to grow near Jonah and provide shade. This became a source of pleasure for the

pouting prophet (4:6). As he enjoyed his shade, God sent a worm that ate the plant, causing it to wither and die (4:7). With his beloved shade now gone, Jonah experienced a miserably hot wind. Jonah was so miserable that he begged God to just let him die (4:8).

Taking the moment to teach His prophet, God once again challenged Jonah. He repeated His question asking if it was appropriate to feel such anger for the plant (4:9). Jonah snapped back like a spoiled child, whining that he was right to be angry. With the preacher disappointed that people responded to his preaching with repentance, God stated His point (4:10–11). He observed that Jonah cared so much about the plant outside the city, while God cared deeply about the people inside the city. His mention of more than 120,000 people who could not tell their right hand from their left might refer to the number of children in the city. Was it wrong of God to care about the people of Nineveh? With no further comment the story ends. The reader is left to infer the concluding instruction. This is no great problem. God wants His people to care more about lost people, even if they are enemies and wicked in their lifestyles. God wants repentance from sinners and obedience from His people.

Life Lesson 6: Remember that God loves all people, including our enemies, and wants them to repent and be saved.

DISCUSS:

- *What group would you hesitate to approach with a declaration and demonstration of God's love?*
- *At times, Jonah showed obedience, but he also showed a lack of compassion. How can we develop compassion for the lost? Why is it important to avoid an “us vs. them” mentality?*

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

OPTION 1: When we think of the lost world, it's easy to have an “us vs. them” mentality. Politics and social media have not helped this. However, we're called to have compassion for the lost. Every unbeliever who angers us is a person who will spend eternity in Hell if he or she does not come to know Jesus. That should humble us and motivate us. Encourage learners to pray each day for a compassionate heart, especially as it relates to someone they know who needs Jesus.

OPTION 2: Ask your learners to think of people or groups of people who anger them or with whom they strongly disagree with their way of life. Discuss how we can show love to them and share the gospel with them. Prayerfully ask God to help you set aside your anger and



AH 9-3



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 those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *Parent Page* is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

learn to love them as He does. The AH 9-3 *Learn to Love* handout can help.

OPTION 3: Jonah demonstrated why we should never run from or disobey a task or command from God. Ask your learners to think of one command or task from God they have not yet obeyed. Encourage them to obey that command or task this week.

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 Devotional Study Guides this week.

Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

The Hebrew word *Elohim* means God and speaks of God's sovereignty over all other gods.

Pray!

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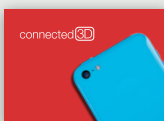
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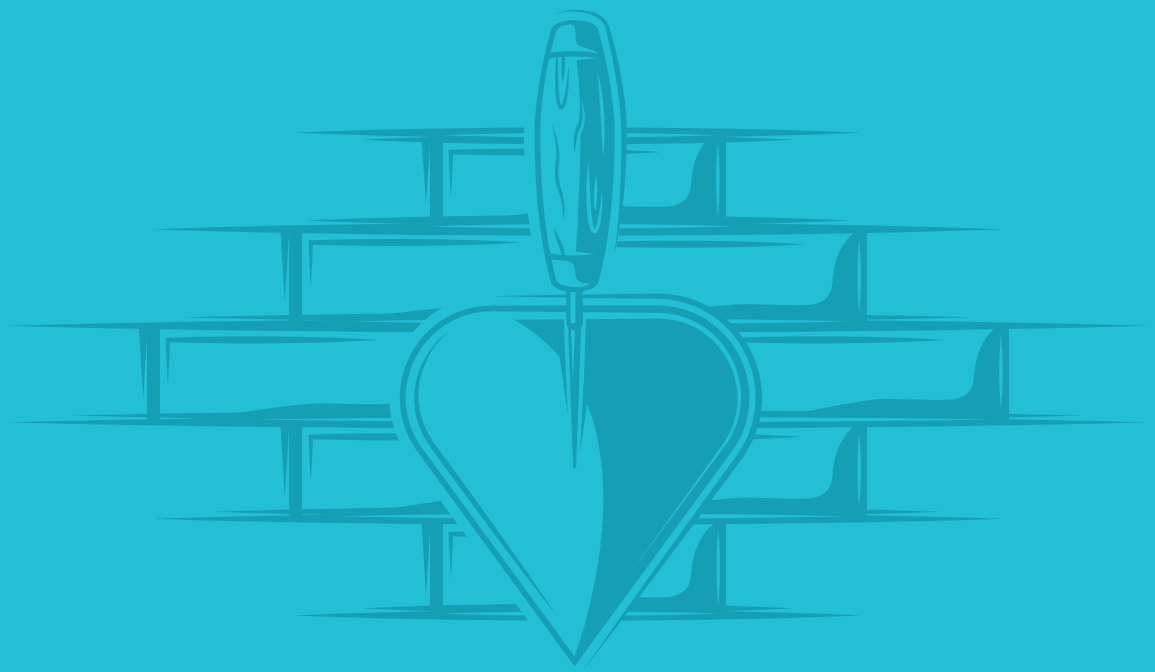


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