A. I wish I wasn’t so much afraid of growing up.
   – Joanna

B. My parents got divorced, and it took a toll on my schooling, my grades, and basically my life was twisted upside down really quickly.
   – Hannah

C. I basically had to raise myself.
   – John

D. It seemed like every day was getting worse.
   – Hannah

E. I wish that I could have the normal family that you see all the time on TV.
   – Shade

F. It’s really hard to have all those responsibilities and still be young.
   – Joanna

G. Living with my mom can be hard, day to day. There are things that we just don’t get along about.
   – Kimberly

H. I think I was mad at God... And I thought, “God, why are you punishing me? Why are you being mean to me? And of all of the kids why are you picking on me?”
   – Hannah

I. I didn’t really understand: How is this great hurt in my life going to help people?
   – Alina

J. I felt like I didn’t have any self worth. I felt that I wasn’t worthy to be cared for, you know. Like, for some reason I just wasn’t good enough to be loved.
   – John

A statement that could have been said by someone I know: ______
What I might say in response to that person:

The statement that’s most like the way I feel: ______
Re-phrase that statement in your own words:
1. Dear Gabby,
   My dad pays no attention to me. He adores my twin brother, but I guess I’m not big enough, athletic enough, or hairy enough. I thought this might change as Dad got older but it didn’t. He loves to hear the stories my brother tells when he comes back from hunting, but he won’t even listen when I tell him about the latest casserole I invented in the kitchen. Mom says I could trick him into paying attention to me, but I’m not sure if that’s the answer. What should I do?
   – Sad Lad of Bad Dad

2. Dear Gabby,
   You wouldn’t believe what a jerk I have for a younger brother. He just sits around home all day while the rest of us go off to work. And Pop just lets him! In fact, I think Pop encourages it. I tried to mention it to him once, but Pop just went on and on about how “special” Little Joe was. Somewhere along the line, the kid got that in his head too, because he keeps making up these stories about how we’re all going to bow down to him someday. It’ll be a dry day in Canaan before I bow down to that spoiled brat. Anyway, my brothers want to beat him up and throw him in a pit, but I think there has to be a better way. I just don’t know what.
   – Big Brother

3. Dear Gabby,
   My little sister and I live with our mom, who is divorced. We don’t see Dad very much. I know Mom’s trying really hard to raise us on her own, but it’s tough. She gets really mad sometimes and she yells at us for no good reason. She doesn’t hit us or anything, but I’ll be, like, eating cereal in the afternoon and she’ll scold me like I was robbing a bank or something. I feel like yelling back, but then it’ll just get worse. It doesn’t seem fair. We have to tiptoe around her all the time, afraid to do anything that might set her off. Any ideas?
   – Cereal Killer

4. Dear Gabby,
   My parents are so unjust, I can’t believe it. I have a curfew of 9 o’clock on weeknights, which is just insane anyway, but I went to the mall with my friend and his brother was going to pick us up at 8:45, but he didn’t show up until, like, 9:15, so we were just talking outside the mall and lost track of time, which is why I didn’t call my folks. Anyway, I got home at 9:30 and they’re like all woo-woo where were you? And so now I’m grounded for the weekend because of a stupid half-hour which wasn’t really my fault anyway. What can I do to get out of here?
   – Prisoner in My Own Home
1. My parents aren’t Christians. My dad heard me listening to Christian music one day and threw a fit. He told me not to listen to Christian music anymore. Now I’m confused. Those songs really help my faith. Is it right to stop listening just because my dad doesn’t believe? Any ideas of what I should do?

2. My folks split up a few years ago and it got pretty ugly. Now, whenever I come back from seeing my father, my mother keeps asking me for information about him, and whatever I tell her, she uses it to criticize him in some way. My dad isn’t the greatest guy, I know, but it doesn’t seem right to tear him down like that. But if I say anything to my mother, she thinks I’m on his side.

3. My little sister and I were talking when Dad came home ultra stressed. Anyway, my sister said something that Dad totally misunderstood. He thought my sister was sassing him or something, and the more she tried to explain, the worse it got. Anyway, my sister is grounded for two weeks and that’s just unfair. Should I say what I think or just keep quiet?

4. One of my friends at school is going through a rough time. I was talking with her after school last week and she seemed very down. I mean, she was nearly suicidal. I was afraid to leave her like that, but I had arranged with my mom to go shopping that day. She was taking off of work and everything. Unfortunately, my cell phone was dead, so I couldn’t call my mom to talk about it. I just had to decide something—stay with my needy friend or go home to spend time with my mom. What do you think I should have done?
CHRIS: Let’s go over to Scott’s.

NICKY: Can’t. Gotta be home by 10.

CHRIS: Oh, come on!

NICKY: No, my parents said 10. It’s big trouble if I don’t make it.

CHRIS: You know what you need? The Loophole 5000.

NICKY: What?

CHRIS: (producing something that looks a lot like a cell phone) The latest in technology for the willful teen. Look, your folks said what exactly? You have to be home by 10?

NICKY: Right.

CHRIS: Well, I’ll just text that in to the Loophole 5000. “Have to be home by 10.” And look what it says.

NICKY: (reading) “Get home by 10. Sneak out later.” I can’t do that.

CHRIS: Why not? You’d be doing exactly what they say, plus a little extra they don’t know about.

NICKY: I guess you’re right.

CHRIS: Hey, last Saturday my mom said, “I want to see this room clean by the end of the day.” So I consulted the Loophole 5000, and it was genius. It told me to take a picture of my room and Photoshop out all the mess. So . . . she sees my room clean.

NICKY: Wouldn’t it take less time to actually clean it?

CHRIS: Details, details. What else have your folks told you?

NICKY: Well, they don’t like some of my friends.

CHRIS: What did they say exactly?

NICKY: “We don’t want you going places with Chris.”

CHRIS: (typing in) “. . . places with Chris.” Hey, that’s me.

NICKY: They think you’re a bad influence. Go figure.

CHRIS: Here we go. (reading) “Go to the same places. Meet Chris there.” Brilliant.

NICKY: Amazing. I’ve got to get one of those for myself.

END
1. **Don’t lose yourself in a romance.** Even the best relationships can go bad when you forget who you are.

2. **Use X-ray vision.** (Stop giggling!) It’s not seeing through people’s clothes, but seeing through their *looks*. It’s natural to look for the hottest, cutest, person you can get. Try to get beyond that and see people’s souls. Are they kind? Are they responsible? Do they care about the things you care about?

3. **Grab good advice, and bury the bad.** You will have friends who are only looking at the outside. They will urge you to go too far, too fast, with the wrong kind of person. Don’t let them decide who you are. Look for wise advisors. An older brother or sister. A youth leader. A teacher. A pastor. Maybe even your parents.

4. **Watch out for users.** Some people win your heart, do serious damage, and then dump you. Some are all mixed up themselves, and they’ll take all your time and attention and give very little back. Healthy relationships are give and take. They should have a balance.

5. **Don’t be a user.** People get into relationships for a lot of reasons that have very little to do with love.
   
   • the pride of having someone – *anyone* – to go out with
   • rebellion against your parents
   • proving yourself to your friends
   • curiosity
   • boredom

   Try to keep your own motives pure.

6. **Avoid Danger Zones.** Stay out of dark rooms in empty houses. As Doug Fields says, “Keep the lights on, stay upright and always be around other people.” Don’t flirt with temptation. It’s strong enough without your help.

7. **Bring your love life before God.** Tell him what you want and how you feel. Ask for his guidance. Pray for the needs of the ones you care most about.

   “May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”

   — Psalms 19:14 (NLT).
What should you do . . .

1. . . . If you really like somebody, but you’re afraid to tell them?
   a. Tell a friend, who will tell that person
   b. Send an anonymous txt msg: smbdy lvs u
   c. Just say it
   d. Become a stalker
   e. Other

2. . . . If someone you like also likes you, but they’re not a Christian?
   a. Start going out, so you can turn them into a Christian
   b. Just be friends with them, no romance
   c. Go with them only to church activities
   d. If they’re really hot, convert to their religion
   e. Other

3. . . . If you’ve already gone too far sexually in your relationship?
   a. Confess it together and commit yourselves not to do it again
   b. Break up; there’s no way you’ll become less intimate now
   c. Get advice from older, wiser believers
   d. Since you’re not virgins anymore, who cares what you do?
   e. Other

4. . . . If you find yourself in an abusive relationship?
   b. Give the person one more chance
   c. Learn to fight back
   d. Break up; then try to hook them up with your worst enemy
   e. Other

5. . . . If your boyfriend or girlfriend is starting to take drugs?
   b. Threaten to break up unless they stop
   c. Take them to see a counselor with you
   d. Flush their stash
   e. Other

6. . . . If, for no good reason, your parents dislike the person you’re dating?
   a. Honor your parents by breaking up with the person
   b. Prove to your parents how wrong they are
   c. Pretend to obey your parents, but keep seeing the person in secret
   d. Find someone worse, so your parents will like the first one better
   e. Other
Some have made the following observations:

**GUYS TEND TO . . .**
- Compete
- Shut off certain experiences or emotions
- Respond to the sense of sight
- Express themselves with actions

**GIRLS TEND TO . . .**
- Connect
- Welcome emotions into every situation
- Communicate with the sense of touch
- Express themselves with words

*Given those tendencies, we often have situations like the following. What advice would you give these people? How can they deal with their differences in a way that shows genuine love to God and to each other?*

1. HE always wants to play video games with HER, and HE usually wins. When he doesn’t win, he gets into a bad mood. She has learned to let him win most of the time, but she’s not having a lot of fun.

2. SHE worries a lot about things that might go wrong. Then she’ll get emotionally troubled about things that haven’t happened yet. This bothers HIM. He wishes she would just deal with situations logically.

3. HE “falls in love” with a beautiful girl, even though they have nothing in common. After they’re together for a while, he sees another beautiful girl and dumps the first one.

4. SHE likes HIM, but just as a friend. In her friendly way, she hugs him sometimes and touches him casually. But he gets the message that she wants a romantic relationship, so he tries to kiss her. She pushes him away, wondering how he got that idea. He’s embarrassed.

5. HE spends a lot of time with HER, but he doesn’t talk much. He has never said he loves her. She wishes he would. At first she dropped a lot of hints about that, but it just seemed to bother him, so she stopped. Now they just don’t talk about their relationship.

6. SHE loves to talk about her own life – and the lives of everyone she knows. HE loves to listen to her, most of the time. But sometimes he gets overwhelmed. He wants to get away and spend some time alone, in peace and quiet. When he says this, she gets all hurt and breaks up with him.
Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

— Ephesians 5:25-27

Instructions: Beginning at your assigned chapter, look for verses in the Song of Songs that might apply to Jesus. Explain why.

Assigned chapter: 

Verse found: 

How it applies to Jesus: 

Another verse found? 

How it applies to Jesus: 

A principle I can claim for my romantic relationship: 

How I will apply that: 

A thought that will make my relationship with Jesus more loving: 

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We’ve been asking why God lets bad things happen to us. Here are some possible responses. Which of these makes the most sense to you? You might even rank the three most helpful answers.

____ 1. God has given human beings freedom of choice. Sometimes we make bad choices that hurt others. If God prevented those bad choices, we wouldn’t be free to make good ones.

____ 2. God will set things right eventually. It’s just a matter of timing. We need to wait for the world’s full redemption.

____ 3. Our struggles can show God’s glory. That’s what Jesus said about the blind man in John 9. Our problems often show God’s power or God’s care.

____ 4. God is bigger than we are. His ways are beyond our ways. We won’t always understand why he does what he does.

____ 5. God works everything together for his good purposes. He does have a purpose, and he calls us to be a part of it, even if we have to go through some unpleasant times.

____ 6. God has suffered too. He sent his beloved Son to suffer and die for us, taking the burden of our sin. When we suffer, we step into the heart of God.

____ 7. Our physical well-being – even our life and death – is a tiny thing in the light of eternity. A disease may seem huge to us, but after we find healing in heaven, it will seem rather trivial.

____ 8. Suffering and doubt can lead us to stronger faith. It takes away all the easy answers and forces us to trust a God we can’t figure out.

____ 9. God wants us to trust in his grace. As he told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness.”
For more than a century, the Assyrians were the dominant force in the Mideast, but they faltered in the late 600s. The Babylonians won some crucial battles in 626, 612, and 605, and began taking over the Assyrian empire – including Judah.

Meanwhile in Judah, good king Josiah (628-609) had led a revival, bringing the nation back to God – temporarily. But when he died, things went downhill fast. Leaders grappled for power, corruption was rife, and people forgot God's law. A few lonely prophets (especially Jeremiah) called for repentance. But then it became clear that God was going to judge his people in a major way.

Habakkuk was probably prophesying about the year 600 BC. The Babylonians invaded Judah and took thousands of captives. In 597, as the Babylonians invaded Judah, the treasures of the Temple were taken. In 586, they returned to destroy Jerusalem and carry away the treasures of the Temple. The prophets predicted a 70-year period of exile – a "time out" in which the chosen people could think about what had happened.

Sure enough, the Persians overthrew the Babylonians in 539 BC and began letting captives return to their homelands – including the Jews. The temple was rebuilt by 515 BC, about 70 years after its destruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>628-609</td>
<td>Good king Josiah led revival, bringing Judah back to God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>609</td>
<td>Josiah died; chaos ensued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>605</td>
<td>Babylonians invaded Judah and took thousands of captives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>597</td>
<td>Babylonians invaded again, smashing Jerusalem and temple, taking thousands captive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>586</td>
<td>Babylonian empire falls to Persia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>539</td>
<td>Temple rebuilt by returning Jews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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HABAKKUK’S STRATEGIES


2. Habakkuk asked the G H O U T N O I T Q E S U

3. Habakkuk D E N T S I L E for a P E E R N O S S

4. Habakkuk was told to R E W I T God’s W E S A N R for others.

5. Habakkuk was told to E V I L by A I F H T

6. Habakkuk was reminded that the wicked are never S I D E I F A S T


8. Habakkuk knew that, unlike idols, God really V E R S E E D S our worship.

9. Habakkuk celebrated God’s U S I P R O V E deeds.

10. Habakkuk asked God to act in T R U C E R N S T E E V E N

11. Habakkuk agreed to A I T W for God’s actions.

12. Habakkuk rejoiced in God’s upcoming L O V A S T A I N
These are statements made (or implied) in the video. Put the appropriate symbol next to any statement you feel that way about. And in the space below each statement, you can explain yourself – if you choose.

? = I have questions about this statement. ! = I’ve been there
★ = A quote worth saving ➔ = I need to say this to someone else.

___ 1. God’s way is more attractive than the world’s way.

___ 2. Every time we decide to say no to God, it makes it easier to say no the next time.

___ 3. Nobody makes great decisions when they’re consuming alcohol.

___ 4. Who you choose as your friends is one of the most important decisions you can make as a teenager. You become like the type of friends that you choose.

___ 5. When I’m hurting, I can tell another Christian and they can express help and healing to me.

___ 6. People say I’m destined to end up like mom or dad and be a junkie, but that’s not true. Everybody has a chance and everybody can change.

___ 7. Sorry cuz, but I love that boysenberry. But my tummy’s acting bad like Mariah Carey.

___ 8. I would feel a sense of invincibility, but as soon as that feeling was gone, I felt empty again.

___ 9. People try to make the Bible way too difficult. They get way too deep into things. The simple fact is that salvation is a free gift.

___ 10. Some of us don’t hear God’s voice because we’re too busy. We’ve got the radio on too loud.

___ 11. God wants to give you the desires of your heart.

___ 12. All of us need to make good decisions – and not just choosing the good rather than the bad, but choosing the better over the just-okay.
SCRIPTURE TEXTS

**Genesis 3:1-6**
*(Background: God had allowed Adam and Eve to eat from every tree in the Garden of Eden, except one.)*

**1 Samuel 26:7-12**
*(Background: Jealous of David, King Saul had been hunting him down for several years.)*

**Daniel 3:13-18**
*(Background: These three young Jewish men were captives in Babylon, but being trained for high-ranking positions.)*

Assigned Text: _________________________________________________________________________________

Who had a major decision to make? ____________________________________________________________________________________

What were the options? ____________________________________________________________________________________

What choice was made? ____________________________________________________________________________________

On what basis did they make this choice? ____________________________________________________________________________________

Did the person receive any advice or outside input? If so, what? ____________________________________________________________________________________

Was this a good choice or a bad one, or neutral? ____________________________________________________________________________________

What could this teach you about the decisions you’ll need to make this week? ____________________________________________________________________________________
A. GIRL, 15

I’m just a bad person, I guess. I’ve been trying to be good, I really have, but it always seems that something sets me off. My mom mostly. She has a way of saying things that just makes me mad, like I don’t know anything. And she’s always telling me to do stuff, like, five minutes before I would do them anyway. And I know I’m supposed to honor her and everything, but I find myself yelling back at her sometimes. A lot of times, actually.

And then I’ll be out with my friends, and I know Mom wants me home at a certain time, but I’ll intentionally stay out later, just to bug her. And lately I’ve been hanging around with people I know she doesn’t like. Maybe I shouldn’t, but it’s my way to be me, you know? I can’t be the good girl she wants me to be all the time, but then sometimes I feel incredibly guilty. I don’t know what to do. Any ideas?

Which verses from the list below might this person need to read? ____________________________

_______________________________________________________________

What else would you say to this person? ____________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

B. BOY, 16

Is it a sin if you do the wrong thing for the right reason? I think it is. But what if you do the right thing for the wrong reason?

My friend Scoots got me into a jam. He didn’t do his math homework because, well, things have been bad for him at home lately. He’s got a lot of stuff to deal with, and he just didn’t get this done. But this was his third time, and it would knock his grade down to, like, almost failing, so he told the teacher his grandmother died and he had to go to the funeral, which was why he didn’t do the work. He pointed to me and said, “Ask him. He was at the funeral too.” Except the whole thing was a complete lie. So I was really on the spot. Do I help out my friend by telling a lie? It’s a sin to lie, I know that. But what would Scoots think of me if I didn’t. We’ve been friends since we were three.

So here’s what I did. I just said, “It’s been a real sad time for that family.” That was all. Not exactly a lie, but now I’m worried that maybe it was. I think the teacher bought it, because she gave him a break. So did I commit a sin or not?

Which verses from the list below might this person need to read? ____________________________

_______________________________________________________________

What else would you say to this person? ____________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

(continued on next page)
C. Girl, 17

I’ve been a Christian for ten years. Youth group, mission trips, the whole thing. I’m serious about it. I try to pray every day and have devotions. Well, for the last six months I’ve been dating a guy from my church – he’s a Christian too – and lately things have been getting kind of intimate between us. I’ll go over his house after school and one thing leads to another and I don’t need to spell it out for you.

At first we both felt really guilty. I mean, it seemed right because we really love each other, but we still felt that God probably didn’t like it. But then my boyfriend said, “That’s the cool thing about being a Christian. If it’s wrong, God forgives us.” So that made me feel a lot better about it, because I really don’t want to stop.

And still, it’s weird. I find it hard to pray every day like I used to.

Which verses from the list below might this person need to read?

_______________________________________________________________

What else would you say to this person?

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

D. Boy, 15

You don’t know my name, so I guess I can tell you this. I wouldn’t say it to anyone I know. But I think about sex all the time. I know I shouldn’t. I know God wants us to be pure. “The renewing of your mind” and all that, but I’m telling you – I see a pretty girl walk by, and . . . she really doesn’t have to be pretty. I see any girl walk by, and my mind starts racing. Every time I watch TV or go to the movies, I mean, I can’t get away from it.

And after I start having those thoughts, I start to feel guilty. God must really hate me for that. I mean, I must be some kind of sex fiend, because as hard as I try to stay pure, I just can’t control my thoughts. I’m starting to think I’ll never be a very good Christian, because I can’t get beyond this.

Any advice?

Which verses from the list below might this person need to read?

_______________________________________________________________

What else would you say to this person?

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Verses

Psalms 103:13-14 Roman 13:10 Ephesians 2:10
Isaiah 1:18 2 Corinthians 10:5 Ephesians 4:15
Romans 6:12-14 Galatians 5:24-25 Ephesians 4:26-27
Romans 7:21-25 Galatians 6:2 Colossians 3:12-14
Two students seated in cafeteria.

AL: So, like I was saying, Brandon’s thinking about having a party next week, or the –

BO steals some chips from AL’s tray.

AL: Hey, you just stole my food.

BO: Sorry.

AL: I like those chips. You can’t just take them.

BO: I said I was sorry. You’re my friend, right? So you’ll forgive me.

AL: I guess so. Anyway, Brandon’s thinking of making his whole back yard into this –

BO steals some more chips from AL’s tray.

AL: You did it again! You stole my chips.

BO: Oh, yeah. I guess I did. Sorry.

AL: That’s what you said last time. Don’t do it again.

BO: But we’re still friends, right? Forgive and forget?

AL: All right. So the party’s kind of this South Sea Island theme. Like “Lost,” only instead of a hatch.

BO: (pointing) Look! A purple mongoose!

AL turns to look. BO steals some chips from AL’s tray.

AL: That’s the third time you’ve stolen my food!

BO: What happened to “forgive and forget”? You should have forgotten about the other two times. But we’re still friends, right?

AL: Well, you’re not acting like it. It’s time to go anyway. (getting up) Hey, where’s my cell phone?

BO: (walking out, chatting on AL’s phone) Yo, Brandon, I heard about that party of yours. Sounds great . . .

AL: (chasing after) Hey, that’s mine!

END
THE NEED CONTINUES
Past disasters that might still need our help _______________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

CLOSER THAN YOU THINK
Day-trip needs and ministries ________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

THE WEALTH OF MUSCLES
What can we do to help? ________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

CREATIVE OPTIONS
Our resources; their needs. How can we put them together?

An idea: ____________________________________________

How will this help? ____________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

How soon could this happen? ____________________________________________

What’s the first step? ____________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________
LESSON 13 HANDOUT

GENEROSITY BLUES

1. Walking through a city with your parents, you encounter a man who is unshaven, dirty, ragged, and reeking of alcohol. He asks you for a few dollars so he can get a sandwich. You have it in your pocket, but you know he would just use the money for alcohol, which is the last thing he needs.

   **What should you do in that moment?**

   **What could you do to help in the longer term?**

   **How could you prepare for the next time this happens?**

2. Your youth group identified a needy family in the community, and you raised money for them. You invited them for a little festivity to present them with a check, but they didn’t show up. When you call, the mom gives you attitude, saying she “doesn’t want to be some charity case.”

   **What do you do with the money you raised?**

   **What contact, if any, do you have with this family?**

   **How could you make the whole thing work better next time?**

3. You became aware of the serious food-and-water needs of a small village in Africa. For the last year, you’ve been raising money to help, and you finally sent a generous contribution through an international agency. You just learned that the army in that nation intercepted the shipment and gave it to the prime minister’s family.

   **What do you say to the people who contributed?**

   **How do you get help to the village?**

   **What can you do to improve the situation long term?**

4. You’re in this youth group or class. You see a video about helping poor people, and suddenly everybody is like, “Oh, let’s help the poor folks.” Ideas are batted around, some of them good ones, but you really think the interest will fade away in another 23 minutes or so.

   **What’s the best poor-helping idea you’ve heard in these sessions?**

   **What can you do today to keep that idea alive?**

   **What steps should be taken over the next year to make this idea a reality?**

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A: Ready to go?

Z: Not just yet. They’re about to announce the lottery results.

A: The lottery? You play that?

Z: Absolutely. Did you see how high the jackpot is? Almost a billion.

A: That’s awful.

Z: And I’ve got my system. Birthdate, minus the date of the month, plus the square root of the barometric pressure, divided by the logarithms of the first seven prime numbers. I’m telling you, it’s foolproof.

A: Have you won yet?

Z: No.

A: Well, that’s a relief.

Z: What are you talking about?

A: Think about it. Let’s say you win, and suddenly you have a billion dollars. So people start calling you. “Hey, I need help with this or that. I need a new car. I need college tuition.”

Z: I’d always help out my friends.

A: Sure you would. But pretty soon you don’t know who your friends are. Maybe they’re just after your money. And, by the way, you’d have to move into a big mansion.

Z: No, I like my house.

A: Yeah, but you’ll need greater security. A fence. Maybe a moat. So you’re moving away from all your friends, which is just as well, because they’re getting upset because you stopped giving them stuff. So you’re really lonely. And people keep pitching investments to you, and you have no clue what to do.

Z: I’d hire an advisor.

A: And your advisor might rob you blind. Actually, you might get pretty paranoid about losing all your money. You don’t trust anyone anymore. So you lock yourself up in your prison – I mean, your mansion – and maybe you get married, but you’ll never really know if it’s for love or money. And you’d really just love to go to the corner store for an ice cream cone, but you need the limo and the bodyguards and the Dobermans, and they probably couldn’t break a thousand-dollar bill anyway.

Z: Wait! Here are the numbers. (as the numbers are called) Yes! Yes! Yes! I can’t believe my system is working! Yes! Yes! And . . . oh, no! Lost again.

A: You are so lucky. That could have ruined your life.

Z: Yep, that was close. Hey, let’s get some ice cream.

They exit. END