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**Adult  
Bible Study  
in  
Simplified  
English**

**Study  
Guide**



**Participating  
in God's Mission**

Jim Gayle

# ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

## Study Guide

### **Participating in God's Mission**

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# Introduction

## Participating in God’s Mission

**W**hat is this world coming to? Often we may think there is no hope because of what is happening in the world: Wars, poverty, divisions, and selfishness.

We need to be reminded that God, Who created the world, is still at work in the world. He has a mission, a work that He is doing in the world. God’s work is to change the lives of people. God’s mission is to bring people out of a sinful life into His righteous family. He wants those of us who know Him to be partners in His work and mission.

In these lessons, we will understand the ways God is at work in the world. We will see that God calls us to participate with Him in this work. When we participate with God in His mission, we learn about the action we must take to change the way we live and how we must love others. As we study the Bible each week, we will ask ourselves, “Am I willing to join God in His mission? How can I participate with God in His work?”

### Unit One: Important Truths About God’s Mission

Lesson 1: God’s Mission Begins	Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 46:5-9; Acts 17:24-31
Lesson 2: God’s Reason for the Mission	Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Psalm 136:1-11, 23-26; Jonah 3:10 to 4:3, 9-11; John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8
Lesson 3: God’s Choice for the Mission	Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:1-6; Luke 1:46-55
Lesson 4: God’s Mission Includes All People	Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 49:5-6; Luke 2:25-32; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:12-13

### Unit Two: God’s Mission: His Work in the World

Lesson 5: God’s Mission: Redeem All People	Exodus 5:22 to 6:8; 15:1-2,13; Isaiah 55:6-7; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 9:11-14
Lesson 6: God’s Mission: Restore and Do Things Right	Deuteronomy 15:1-11; Micah 6:8; Jeremiah 7:1-7; Luke 4:16-21; James 1:27; 2:14-16
Lesson 7: God’s Mission: Clearly Seen in Jesus	Matthew 11:2-6; 23:23-24; John 1:10-14; Romans 3:21-26; Philippians 2:9-11

### Unit Three: God’s Call to You

Lesson 8: Experience God’s Good News	Luke 19:1-10; Acts 9:1-9, 19b-22; 16:13-15,25-34
Lesson 9: Live Faithfully for God	Romans 12
Lesson 10: Working Together in God’s Mission	Acts 4:32-35; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; 1 Peter 2:6-10
Lesson 11: Tell the Good News of How God Redeems and Restores	2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Colossians 1:24-29
Lesson 12: Help People with Physical Needs	Deuteronomy 10:14-19; Amos 5:21-24; Matthew 25:31-46
Lesson 13: Participate in God’s Mission to Everyone	Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 11:19-26; Revelation 5:1-10

*Participating in God's Mission*

# Word List

## Unit 1

### Lesson 1

**idolatry:** bowing down to something that is a false god

**mission:** work that has clear goals to be reached

**prophet:** a person who speaks to people for God

**unique:** something of which there is only one, nothing like it

### Lesson 2

**demonstrate:** to show after careful thought and planning

**motivation:** the reason or cause for taking action

**repent:** to change directions; to be sorry for sin and turn away from sin

**transform:** to change completely

### Lesson 3

**covenant:** an agreement between two people or groups that is hard to break

**descendants:** family members—children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, great-great grandchildren, and so on

**partner:** one who works with and helps another

**priest:** someone who helps others to bring them to God

### Lesson 4

**excluded:** kept out of a group or activity

**exiled:** sent or taken from one's own country to another country

**prejudice:** thinking a person or group is not

good before we really know them

**salvation:** being saved by Jesus from the punishment of sin

## Unit 2

### Lesson 5

**kingdom:** an area or a group of people ruled over by a king

**Lord:** a name for God Who is over His people

**redeemed:** bought back by the rightful owner

**sacrifice:** a gift of worship given to God

### Lesson 6

**faith:** belief and trust in someone, especially in God

**justice:** to treat others right and fair

**restore:** to fix something so it is like new again

**righteous:** a person who does what is right and good

### Lesson 7

**honor:** to respect and give a high place above others

**neglect:** to fail to help or take care of something or someone

**pardon:** to forgive so there is no punishment for sin

**pity:** a sad feeling because of others' hurts and difficulties

# Word List

## Unit 3

### Lesson 8

**amazing:** something very surprising

**confronted:** to meet face to face and demand an answer

**despised:** to look upon as worthless

**influenced:** to cause change in another person

### Lesson 9

**attitude:** a way of thinking

**circumstances:** everything that is happening around a person, good or bad

**faithful:** being true and showing love even when it is difficult

**respect:** treating others with honor

### Lesson 10

**afford:** able to do something with money or time because there is plenty

**bestow:** to give, award, or present

**distinct:** clearly different from another thing

**equality:** fairness for all

### Lesson 11

**awe:** a feeling of great respect

**boldly:** acting without fear

**motive:** the reason for action

**mystery:** something that cannot be explained

### Lesson 12

**bribe:** to pay money to get something not deserved

**ignore:** to refuse to notice or follow

**inspire:** to encourage to action

**practice:** to do something over and over until it becomes natural

### Lesson 13

**commission:** an order or command to do something

**persecute:** to harm or hurt

**public:** open for all people

**vision:** something seen in the mind like a dream but while still awake

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# ◆ Participating in God's Mission ◆

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*Adult Bible Study  
in Simplified English*

## **Lesson 1**

God's Mission Begins  
Genesis 1:1  
Isaiah 46:5-9  
Acts 17:24-31

## **Lesson 2**

God's Reason  
for the Mission  
Deuteronomy 7:7-8  
Psalm 136:1-11, 23-26  
Jonah 3:10 to 4:3, 9-11  
John 3:16  
Romans 5:6-8

## **Lesson 3**

God's Choice  
for the Mission  
Genesis 12:1-3  
Exodus 19:1-6  
Luke 1:46-55

## **Lesson 4**

God's Mission  
Includes All People  
Genesis 12:1-3  
Isaiah 49:5-6  
Luke 2:25-32  
Acts 1:8  
Romans 10:12-13

## **Important Truths About God's Mission**

The four lessons in this unit will lead us to understand four truths about God's mission.

God's mission begins with the fact that God is Creator and Lord of the entire world. His mission began because He loves all people and wants them to know of His love personally.

God started this mission through one man, Abraham, and the people who are descendents of Abraham. These descendents became the nation of Israel. God began to carry out His mission through this nation.

Now God's mission includes every person who is willing to join in His work.

### *About the writer*

*A native Texan, Jim Gayle and his wife, Margaret, served as missionaries in Vietnam and Indonesia for more than 24 years. He is retired after serving with the Baptist General Convention of Texas as Coordinator of the International Friendship Corps for five years. He has pastored several churches and worked as minister of missions. Jim and Margaret live in Plano where they are members of First Chinese Baptist Church of Dallas. They work through the church with international students at UTD & SMU. They have three adult sons and ten grandchildren.*



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### **Bible Text**

Genesis 1:1  
Isaiah 46:5-9  
Acts 17:24-31

### **Memory Verse**

“The God Who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth. He does not live in buildings made by hands. No one needs to care for Him as if He needed anything. He is the One who gives life and breath and everything to everyone.”

(Acts 17:24-25)

### **Word List**

**idolatry:** bowing down to something that is a false god  
**mission:** work that has clear goals to be reached

**prophet:** a person who speaks to people for God

**unique:** something of which there is only one, nothing like it

# God's Mission Begins

People believe many different things about God. Our family once lived in Indonesia, and we met people who believed rocks or trees had powerful spirits living in them. They were very careful when going near such objects. They feared that the spirit they believed lived there might cause them harm. These people lived in fear of their gods. They did not know of the one true God Who loves them.

Who do you think God is? In your mind, is God someone far away from our world? How great is your understanding of God? Do you believe God is working in your life and in the world each day?

The Bible declares, “O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your great power and Your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and powerful acts as You do?” (Deuteronomy 3:24). In this lesson we will learn that God has always had a **mission** on earth. He is at work every day in the world.

## **God's Unlimited Rule over Everything (Genesis 1:1)**

To understand God's mission in the world, we begin by understanding that God has no limits. He is all powerful. God can create everything from nothing. He is a God Who is truly all powerful. The God of the Bible is Creator. Everything else is creation. What God created He rules over. Therefore, His rule has no limits.

Throughout all time, people—the creatures God created—have failed to recognize God and His greatness. Even though

**Things to  
Think About**

1. What danger does a person face when living among people who worship idols?
2. What are some reasons people might worship idols?
3. What kind of idols are Christians tempted to have in America today?
4. How can you participate in God's mission?

God has made Himself known in many ways, people still do not recognize Him as God. Like the people in Indonesia, some people have made their own gods. They bow down to created things such as the sun, stars, and even trees. The Bible calls such action **idolatry**.

God, Who created everything, wants all people to know Him. He wants them to know of His power and His love for them. People who know God want to obey and serve Him. We show His greatness to others by the way we live and by what we say. When we declare God's greatness and love, we participate in His mission on earth.

**Idolatry in the Old Testament (Isaiah 46:5-9)**

Israel, the descendents of Abraham, were God's chosen people. Their nation was surrounded by people who worshiped idols. At times, Israel's neighbors attacked and defeated them. Some Israelites were taken off to foreign lands and made to serve as slaves for the people who worshiped idols. The Israelites surely wondered why their all-powerful God didn't rescue them from their cruel neighbors.

Some Israelites may have wondered if these idols had power greater than God. They may have been tempted to bow down and worship idols as a god. An idol could be seen and touched. It was always there. People believed idols could be controlled by sacrifices and offering. Israel's God was not like that. He was the One Who controlled and directed His creation. He would not be controlled by His creation.

People today worship idols just like people did thousands

of years ago. How can we compare an idol to the living God? An idol is made by man. It cannot move itself. It has to be carried from place to place. An idol cannot speak to the person seeking direction. When someone cries out, an idol cannot help. It has no power at all.

The **prophet** Isaiah reminded God's people that they belonged to Him. He reminded them what great things God had done in the past. He had shown His power and goodness to the Israelites in many ways. God had led them and given them the land where they lived.

The God of Israel is **unique**. There is none like Him. He chose Israel to serve Him and participate in His mission to the people of the world. If Israel turned away from God and bowed down to idols, they would limit what God wanted to do through them. They would become like other people who worshiped idols. They would not be able to participate in God's work or help others know the all-powerful God.

### **Idolatry in the New Testament (Acts 17:24-31)**

Paul was a man who followed Jesus. He went many places telling people about

the living God Who created everything. Paul went to Athens where he saw many idols all around the city. Paul was sad to see how the people of Athens worshiped many false gods. Everyday he told them about the living God Who made the world and everything in it.

But Paul saw one place where people worshiped which said, "To the god who is not known." He used this saying to tell them about the living God Who is so powerful that He raised Jesus from the dead. He is God Who can be known and Who wants all people to know Him.

Paul said God does not need anything from us. He is the One Who gives us life and breath. The God Who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth. He does not live in buildings made by hands. He is very near to us and helps us each day. God is not like the idols found in Athens. He sent Jesus to earth so all people could know God's love.

We, as God's people today, must not turn away from our living God Who loves and blesses us. If we do, we will be like those who worship idols. Our idols may not be like idols in the Bible times. Our idols

can be money or jobs or a desire for power. Our idols are anything that takes God's place in our lives.

If we let anything take the place of God in our lives, we become less than what God made us to be. We cannot participate in His work and help others to know Him. To participate in God's mission, we must believe in and obey our great and powerful God.

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**Genesis 1:1**

**1** In the beginning God made from nothing the heavens and the earth.

**Isaiah 46:5-9**

**5** "To whom will you compare Me? With whom will you make Me the same and compare Me, that we should be alike?"

**6** Those who take much gold from the money bag and weigh silver hire one who works with gold, and he makes it into a god. Then they bow down and worship it. They lift it upon their shoulders and carry it.

**7** They set it in its place and it stands there. It does not move from its place. When one cries to it, it cannot answer. It cannot take him away from his trouble.

**8** Remember this and be men. Bring it to mind again, you sinners.

**9** Remember the things of long ago. For I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there is no one like Me."

**Acts 17:24-31**

**24** The God Who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth. He does not live in buildings made by hands.

**25** No one needs to care for Him as if He needed anything. He is the One who gives life and breath and everything to everyone.

**26** He made from one blood all nations who live on the earth. He set the times and places where they should live.

**27** They were to look for God. Then they might feel after Him and find Him because He is not far from each one of us.

**28** It is in Him that we live and move and keep on living. Some of your own men have written, "We are God's children."

**29** If we are God's children, we should not think of Him as being like gold or silver or stone. Such gods made of gold or silver or stone are planned by men and are made by them.

**30** God did not remember these times when people did not know better. But now He tells all men everywhere to be sorry for their sins and to turn from them.

**31** He has set a day when He will say in the right way if the people of the world are guilty. This will be done by Jesus Christ, the One He has chosen. God has proven this to all men by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.



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### **Bible Text**

Deuteronomy 7:7-8  
Psalm 136:1-11, 23-26  
Jonah 3:10 to 4:3, 9-11  
John 3:16  
Romans 5:6-8

### **Memory Verse**

“God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

(Romans 5:8)

### **Word List**

**demonstrate:** to show after careful thought and planning

**motivation:** the reason or cause for taking action

**repent:** to change directions; to be sorry for sin and turn away from sin

**transform:** to change completely

# God's Reason for the Mission

A television program showed a man standing on a street and giving out money. Some people passed by and refused to accept the money. They were afraid the man had a secret reason for passing out money on the street. When someone does something we do not understand, we wonder why. We want to know their **motivation** or the reason for their action.

What is God's motivation for His mission? Some people may wonder if God wants to use people in some way for Himself. Since God is all powerful, why does He pay attention to people who are so weak? As we study the Bible in this lesson, we will learn why God is on mission to the people of the world.

### **God Declares His Love (John 3:16)**

A man named Nicodemus asked Jesus what he must do to know God and receive eternal life. Jesus explained God's mission in this way:

—God loved all the people in the world and wanted to give us eternal life with Him in heaven.

—God gave His Son, Jesus, so everyone who believes in Him may know God and have eternal life.

—God's Son, Jesus, died for us so our sins would not separate us from God. Jesus rose from the dead and conquered death forever.

—If we accept His forgiveness, we will live with God forever.

Therefore, God's love is the motivation for His mission.

**Things to  
Think About**

1. How do you define love? How would you describe God's love?
2. Did the people of Nineveh deserve God's love? Why, why not?
3. In what ways has God's love transformed your life?
4. What will keep our participation in God's mission from being a boring task?

**God's Love in the Psalms (Psalm 136:1-11, 23-26)**

Long before Jesus came to earth, people knew of God's love. The book of Psalms in the Old Testament told of His love. God's people would sing these songs as they worshiped Him. Psalms reminded them of God's loving-kindness.

Psalms also reminds us of God's great work and His love for His creatures. He has shown His love from the beginning of time. Psalm 136 tells of God's greatness in creation and how He delivered His people from slavery in Egypt (verses 1-11). It tells how God's love provided for and protected them (verses 23-24).

**God's Love for All People  
(Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Jonah 3:10-4:3, 9-11)**

Some people say the Old Testament is about God's judgment, and the New Testament is about His love. But God's love for the world is clear in the Old Testament as well.

In Deuteronomy, God tells His people (Israel) the reason He chose them. It was not because they were a large, strong nation, but because of His love. God gave them freedom from slavery in Egypt so they could carry out His mission. God's mission is to set people of all nations free from idols and spiritual darkness. The story of Jonah is an example of this.

Jonah was a prophet who spoke to people for God. God told Jonah to leave his country and go to the city of Nineveh. He was to tell the people of Nineveh that God was not pleased with the way they were living. They were a very wicked people. God was going to bring judgment on them if they did not **repent**.

Jonah did not like the people of Nineveh. He wanted God to punish them. He knew God loved Israel, so why should he go

to the wicked people of Nineveh? Jonah ignored God, but not for long.

Finally, Jonah arrived in Nineveh. He told the people if they did not repent from their evil living, then God would punish them. The people heard Jonah's message and repented. Then Jonah got angry because God spared them from punishment. God was forgiving because of His love.

Even though the people of Nineveh were not God's people, God showed His love for them by sending Jonah to warn them to repent. Though they were wicked, God still loved them. Truly, God loves all people of the world. The motivation for His mission is clear—love.

### **Nature of God's Love (Romans 5:6-8)**

The book of Romans says all have sinned and missed God's goal for our lives (Romans 3:23). Therefore, every one of us is a sinner. Our sin separates us from God and keeps us from enjoying the blessings God intends for us to have. God's mission is to reach out and save sinners.

Jesus came to make a way for us to be free from sin and sin's penalty. He died because of our sin so we may become the people of God. The Bible calls this

salvation, being saved from sin. Salvation is possible when we truly believe Jesus is the Savior of the world.

In verses 6-8, we understand two important things about God's saving love: His love is **demonstrated**, and His love **transforms**. God did not just say, "I love you." He demonstrated love by sending Jesus to earth to die on a cross for our sins. Love cannot be demonstrated in any greater way than to give one's life for another.

God's love is also powerful to transform all who accept His love in Jesus. Paul says when we were still sinners and could not help ourselves, God's powerful love changed us. God did not wait until we became good or lovable to demonstrate His love for us. By His love we are changed from helplessness to wholeness.

What a wonderful, powerful, loving God we have! His mission is to save us so we may participate in His mission to the people of the world. We participate in God's mission because we have been transformed by God's love. When love is our motivation, we will have peace and joy in our work for Him.

**Deuteronomy 7:7-8**

**7** The Lord did not give you His love and choose you because you were more people than any of the nations. For the number of your people was less than all nations.

**8** But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the promise He made to your fathers. So the Lord brought you out by a strong hand. He set you free from the land where you were servants, and from the power of Pharaoh King of Egypt.

**Psalms 136:1-11, 23-26**

**1** Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**2** Give thanks to the God of gods, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**3** Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**4** Give thanks to Him Who alone does great works, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**5** Give thanks to Him Who by wisdom made the heavens, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**6** Give thanks to Him Who spread out the earth upon the waters, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**7** Give thanks to Him Who made the great lights, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**8** He made the sun to rule during the day, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**9** He made the moon and stars to rule during the night, for His loving-kindness last forever.

**10** Give thanks to Him Who killed the first-born of Egypt, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**11** He brought Israel out from among them, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**23** Give thanks to Him Who remembered us when we had nothing, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**24** He took us away from those who hated us, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**25** He gives food to all men, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**26** Give thanks to the God of heaven, for His loving-kindness lasts forever.

**Jonah 3:10 to 4:3, 9-11**

**3:10** When God saw what they did, and that they turned from their sinful way, He changed His mind about the trouble He said He would bring upon them, and He did not destroy Nineveh.

**4:1** But Jonah was not pleased at all, and he became angry.

**2** He prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord, is this not what I said You would do while still in my own country? That is why I ran away to Tarshish. For I knew that You are a kind and loving God Who shows pity. I knew that You are slow to anger and are filled with loving-kindness, always ready to change Your mind and not punish.

**3** So now, O Lord, take my life from me. For death is better to me than life."

**9** Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have a good reason to be angry about the plant?" And Jonah said, "I have a good reason to be angry, angry enough to die."

**10** The Lord said, "You had loving-pity on the plant which you did not work for. You did not cause it to grow. It came up during the night and died during the night.

**11** And should I not have loving-pity for Nineveh, the large city where more than 120,000 people live who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

**John 3:16**

**16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever.

**Romans 5:6-8**

**6** We were weak and could not help ourselves. Then Christ came at the right time and gave His life for all sinners.

**7** No one is willing to die for another person, but for a good man someone might be willing to die.

**8** But God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.



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Simplified English

### Bible Text

Genesis 12:1-3

Exodus 19:1-6

Luke 1:46-55

### Memory Verse

“My spirit is happy in God, the One Who saves from the punishment of sin.”

(Luke 1:47)

### Word List

**covenant:** an agreement between two people or groups that is hard to break  
**descendants:** family members—children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, great-great grandchildren, and so on

**partner:** one who works with and helps another

**priest:** someone who helps to bring others to God

# God's Choice for the Mission

Our granddaughter's teacher was chosen as Teacher of the Year. She was chosen because of the successful results she had teaching children. It was an honor for her to be chosen and given the title of Teacher of the Year. Every school and every parent wants teachers who are successful in their teaching style.

God chooses people to participate in His mission. He does not choose them because they are skillful or successful in what they do. God chooses people because of what He knows they can do when they agree to be a part of His mission to the people of the world.

In this lesson we will meet people whom God chose to **partner** with Him in mission. God chose both individuals and a nation to bring His blessings to all people. We will see the sacrifices that were necessary for those whom God chose.

## **Abraham: The Model of God's Mission (Genesis 12:1-3)**

The first person God called to partner with Him in mission was a strange choice. Abraham was 75 years old. He was told to leave his homeland and his family and go to a place that God would show him. Abraham believed God. He journeyed to a country he had never seen. Abraham has become a model for all who follow God since that time.

Abraham obeyed God, and God promised him wonderful blessings. His **descendants** would become a great nation. His name would become great, and he would be honored. He would be protected from the curse of others. Abraham did receive great

**Things to  
Think About**

1. What keeps us from obeying God as Abraham and Mary did?
2. Why are we so happy to receive good things from God and yet make excuses about why we cannot participate in His mission?
3. What qualifies a person to partner with God in His mission?
4. Are you willing to go wherever God calls you?

benefits by becoming a partner with God. Perhaps the greatest benefit, according to the Bible, was he became a friend of God.

Being a partner with God also meant that Abraham would be a blessing to the people of the world. God said, “Good will come to all the families of the earth because of you” (Genesis 12:3b). This statement gives us some understanding of God’s purpose in calling Abraham. God wanted to bless all people through Abraham. He wants to bless people through each person who participates in His mission.

God chose Abraham, not because He loved him more than other people. God chose Abraham because He loves all people and wanted Abraham to show others how they can know God. This is the pattern God has used through the ages. He calls people and nations to tell others who God is.

**Israel: God’s People Participating in Mission  
(Exodus 19:1-6)**

The descendants of Abraham became the nation of Israel. God chose them, not because they were better than any other nation of people, but God chose them to participate in His mission. The family of Abraham had been slaves of the Egyptian kings for 400 years. Then God rescued them in a wonderful way and destroyed the Egyptian army.

This passage in Exodus describes Israel’s special work in God’s mission. If they obeyed and kept His **covenant**, they would be God’s special people from all the nations of the world. God did not want them to be proud and look down on other people. He had a task for them to do.

God said, “You will be to Me a nation of **priests**, a holy nation.” Israel was to represent God to the people of the world. They were to show God’s love to others. They were chosen, not so they could enjoy good things but to participate in God’s work and mission in the world.

### **Jesus and God’s Mission (Luke 1:46-55)**

God chose a poor and ordinary young woman to give birth to Jesus, the Savior of all people. Mary knew being the mother of Jesus was a great honor. In her joy, she sang a song. She said she was a nobody whom God chose to become a somebody. (Mary was not an important person on her own. She was important because God chose to work through her.) She accepted God’s calling to be the mother of the Lord Jesus. She experienced many hardships and difficulties, but because she obeyed God, great joy has come to many people for almost 2,000 years.

Even though Mary lived many years after Abraham, she understood what God was doing. She knew God was fulfilling

His promise to Abraham. Mary knew that Jesus was the One Who would bless the world as the descendent of Abraham.

Of all those called to participate in God’s mission, Jesus is the greatest. He is the fulfillment of what God promised.

Jesus’ sacrifice was the greatest. He was sinless, yet He took all our sins on Him so that we might enjoy the blessings of God.

We who follow Jesus are also called to sacrifice and to show God’s love to the people of the world. We are called to participate in God’s mission, to continue His mission in the world today.

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### **Genesis 12:1-3**

1 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country, your family and your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you.

2 And I will make you a great nation. I will bring good to you. I will make your name great, so you will be honored.

3 I will bring good to those who are good to you. And I will curse those who curse you. Good will come to all the families of the earth because of you.”

**Exodus 19:1-6**

**1** In the third month after the people of Israel left Egypt, they came to the Sinai Desert on the same day.

**2** They had left Rephidim and had come to the Sinai Desert. There Israel set up their tents in front of the mountain.

**3** And Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Say this to the house of Jacob and tell the people of Israel:

**4** ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.

**5** Now then, if you will obey My voice and keep My agreement, you will belong to Me from among all nations. For all the earth is Mine.

**6** You will be to Me a nation of religious leaders, a holy nation.’ These are the words you will speak to the people of Israel.”

**Luke 1:46-55**

**46** Then Mary said, “My heart sings with thanks for my Lord.

**47** And my spirit is happy in God, the One Who saves from the punishment of sin.

**48** The Lord has looked on me, His servant-girl and one who is not important. But from now on all people will honor me.

**49** He Who is powerful has done great things for me. His name is holy.

**50** The loving-kindness of the Lord is given to the people of all times who honor Him.

**51** He has done powerful works with His arm. He has divided from each other those who have pride in their hearts.

**52** He has taken rulers down from their thrones. He has put those who are in a place that is not important to a place that is important.

**53** He has filled those who are hungry with good things. He has sent the rich people away with nothing.

**54** He has helped Israel His servant. This was done to remember His loving-kindness.

**55** He promised He would do this to our early fathers and to Abraham and to his family forever.”



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### Bible Text

Genesis 12:1-3

Isaiah 49:5-6

Luke 2:25-32

Acts 1:8

Romans 10:12-13

### Memory Verse

“There is no difference between the Jews and the people who are not Jews. They are all the same to the Lord. And He is Lord over all of them. He gives of His greatness to all who call on Him for help. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved from the punishment of sin.”

(Romans 10:12-13)

### Word List

**excluded:** kept out of a group or activity

**exiled:** sent or taken from one's own country to another country

# God's Mission Includes All People

In the cartoon *Peanuts*, the character of Charlie Brown is often **excluded** from the games others are playing. They tell him he is not good enough, and they don't want to play with him. Charlie Brown usually tells himself that it's okay, but by the way he looks, you know he feels sad because he is not included.

People everywhere can be cruel by excluding others from being a part of a group or activity. **Prejudice** is when we show our dislike for others who are different from us by excluding them. God is not pleased when we act toward others with prejudice and exclude them.

In this lesson we will learn that God's mission is to include everyone in His love. God's mission is that all people know Him and live together in love and respect for one another. His followers are to be loving, kind, and to reach out to all people.

### **God's Purpose for All People is Made Known (Gen. 12:1-3)**

When God chose Abraham to participate in His mission, He promised him great things. Remember, Abraham was not chosen because he was better than other people. He was chosen to be a part of God's mission to bless people in all nations of the world. God promised, “Good will come to all the families of the earth because of you.”

God shows His love to us so we can show His love to others. As God's people, we are to partner in God's mission so all the people of the world might know Him.

**prejudice:** thinking a person or group is not good before we really know them

**salvation:** being saved by Jesus from the punishment of sin

**Things to Think About**

1. What should you do when you feel prejudice toward people?
2. Where should followers of Jesus begin to share the message of salvation?
3. Who are some people in your neighborhood who need to know about God's promise of salvation in Jesus?
4. How has God equipped you to be His witness to other people?

**Understanding God's Great Purpose  
(Isaiah 49:5-6; Luke 2:25-32)**

Often we do not fully understand God's great mission. We think more about ourselves than we think about other people. We spend our time and money on things we want for ourselves and our families. Even in our churches, do we usually think about how to make the buildings we meet in more comfortable for us? When we spend our time and money on ourselves, we exclude the nations from receiving God's blessings.

These verses in Isaiah were part of Lesson 1. God had permitted Israel to be conquered, and many of the people were taken into exile in Babylon. The Babylonians worshipped idols. God's people were tempted to forget God and worship idols like the Babylonians.

Isaiah reminded the people in exile that God had made a great promise to them. He would send His Servant to bring the people back to their land. God's purpose was as great as His promise. Isaiah said God's purpose was to make His Servant a light to the nations, so that men over all the earth could be saved from the punishment of their sins.

This was a dream the people in exile could hardly believe. Many years after the people returned from exile to their nation, God gave that same dream to a man named Simeon. Simeon was a very good man who trusted God. God told him that he would not die until he saw the promised Servant.

When Jesus' parents came to God's house to dedicate baby Jesus, Simeon was there. When Simeon saw baby Jesus, he said, "Lord, now let me die in peace, as You have said. My eyes have

seen the One Who will save men from the punishment of their sins. You have made Him ready in the sight of all nations. He will be a light to shine on the people who are not Jews. He will be the shining-greatness of Your people, the Jews.”

Simeon saw that Jesus was the fulfillment of the promise God had made to Abraham and the people of Israel. God would send a Servant to save all men from the punishment of their sins.

### **Jesus' Followers Called for God's Mission (Acts 1:8)**

The Jews, God's chosen people, misunderstood God's mission. For many years they had excluded non-Jews from God's promise. They thought of themselves as better than other people. They were prejudiced and did not share God's promise with anyone else.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He met His disciples and gave them instructions. He was returning to God the Father, but He was calling them to participate in God's continued mission. They needed to understand that God wanted all people to know Him. The disciples were to go to the people of the whole world.

### **Salvation is Open to All (Rom. 10:12-13)**

Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in the city of Rome. Before he met Jesus, Paul had believed very strongly that only Jews were to enjoy God's promise. But Jesus changed Paul's mind, and his whole life changed. Paul became a messenger to the non-Jews of the world.

Paul understood that God's original promise made to Abraham was fulfilled in Jesus. He proclaimed that salvation was for all people. God is not prejudiced. He is Lord of all, and He loves all people and wants them to know Him. Paul declared, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved from the punishment of sin.”

God's purpose is clear. He wants everyone everywhere to receive the promise of salvation. God is not like people who exclude others because they are different. To Him, all people are worthy of His love.

God has chosen and called all who follow Jesus to tell this good news to people everywhere. It is our blessing to become partners with God in His mission.

**Genesis 12:1-3**

**1** Now the Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country, your family and your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you.

**2** And I will make you a great nation. I will bring good to you. I will make your name great, so you will be honored.

**3** I will bring good to those who are good to you. And I will curse those who curse you. Good will come to all the families of the earth because of you.”

**Isaiah 49:5-6**

**5** And now the Lord speaks, Who made Me before I was born to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, that Israel might be gathered to Him. For I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and My God is My strength.

**6** He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the family groups of Jacob, and to bring back those of Israel I have kept safe. I will also make You a light to the nations, so that men over all the earth can be saved from the punishment of their sins.”

**Luke 2:25-32**

**25** There was a man in Jerusalem by the name of Simeon. He was a good man and very religious. He was looking for the time when the Jewish nation would be saved.

**26** The Holy Spirit was on him. The Holy Spirit made it known to Simeon that he

would not die before he had seen God’s Chosen One.

**27** He came to the house of God being led by the Holy Spirit. The parents took Jesus to the house of God. They came to do what the Law said must be done.

**28** Then Simeon took Jesus in his arms. He gave honor to Him and thanked God, saying,

**29** “Lord, now let me die in peace, as You have said.

**30** My eyes have seen the One Who will save men from the punishment of their sins.

**31** You have made Him ready in the sight of all nations.

**32** He will be a light to shine on the people who are not Jews. He will be the shining-greatness of Your people the Jews.”

**Acts 1:8**

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes into your life. You will tell about Me in the city of Jerusalem and over all the countries of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

**Romans 10:12-13**

**12** There is no difference between the Jews and the people who are not Jews. They are all the same to the Lord. And He is Lord over all of them. He gives of His greatness to all who call on Him for help.

**13** For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved from the punishment of sin.

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# ◆ Participating in God's Mission ◆

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*Adult Bible Study  
in Simplified English*

## **Lesson 5**

God's Mission:  
Redeem All People  
Exodus 5:22 to 6:8;  
15:1-2,13  
Isaiah 55:6-7  
Colossians 1:13-14  
Hebrews 9:11-14

## **Lesson 6**

God's Mission: Restore  
and Do Things Right  
Deuteronomy 15:1-11  
Micah 6:8  
Jeremiah 7:1-7  
Luke 4:16-21  
James 1:27; 2:14-16

## **Lesson 7**

God's Mission:  
Clearly Seen in Jesus  
Matthew 11:2-6;  
23:23-24  
John 1:10-14  
Romans 3:21-26  
Philippians 2:9-11

## **God's Mission: His Work in the World**

The three lessons in this unit focus on what God is doing now in the world. They show that God is concerned about both physical and spiritual needs.

The concern for the physical and spiritual needs of people is best seen in Jesus as He works here on earth fulfilling God's mission. Sometimes Christians have emphasized physical needs over spiritual needs. Other times spiritual needs are emphasized, and physical needs are neglected. These lessons remind us that God is concerned with every need we have. God's mission is to fulfill these needs and help us know Him better.

These lessons also lead us to think of ways we can participate in meeting every kind of need in Jesus' name.



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### Bible Text

Exodus 5:22 to 6:8;  
15:1-2, 13;  
Isaiah 55:6-7  
Colossians 1:13-14  
Hebrews 9:11-14

### Memory Verse

“We have been  
bought by His (Jesus’)  
blood and made free.  
Our sins are forgiven  
through Him.”  
(Colossians 1:13-14)

### Word List

**kingdom:** an area or a  
group of people ruled  
over by a king  
**Lord:** a name for God  
who is over His  
people  
**redeemed:** bought  
back by the rightful  
owner  
**sacrifice:** a gift of  
worship given to God

# God’s Mission: Redeem All People

Once I was visiting a friend in a village in Indonesia. I removed my shoes and left them outside before entering the house. When I came out to go home, my shoes were gone. We thought the children were playing a trick on me. But the children said someone else had taken my shoes.

About two weeks later, my friend told me he found a man who had my shoes. The man had bought them from the person who had taken them. The new owner of my shoes said I could have my shoes back, but only if I gave him the same amount he paid for them. I gave him the price he asked and got my shoes back. I **redeemed** my shoes.

God redeemed us. When sin separated us from God, He sent Jesus to earth to pay the price for our sins. Jesus died in our place so we could know God and belong to Him. This lesson studies how God’s mission is to redeem people back to Himself.

### **God’s Mission to Redeem Israel (Exodus 5:22 to 6:8; 15:1-2, 13; Isaiah 55:6-7)**

The people of Israel were slaves in Egypt for many years. The Egyptian ruler (Pharaoh) made them work very hard. The Israelites were treated badly, and they cried out to God. He listened to their cry and told a man named Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the people go free. Pharaoh did not listen to Moses. Instead, he made life more difficult for the Israelite slaves.

Moses was unhappy that the people were treated harshly. He cried out, “O **Lord**, why have You hurt these people?” God

**Things to  
Think About**

1. What did the Israelites do to be set free from slavery in Egypt?
2. How did the Israelites show their thankfulness to God? How should we show our thankfulness to God?
3. How is a person redeemed from sin?
4. Why did God give His Son Jesus to redeem us from our sins?

told Moses that Pharaoh would be punished for making life hard for the people. Then Pharaoh would send them away from Egypt.

It happened just as God said it would. God showed His power over Pharaoh through many unusual events. Finally, Pharaoh let the people go free. God's strong hand had rescued the people! He told them they would be His people. Now they would know Him as Lord. God led them to the land He promised to Abraham. It became their land. God truly redeemed Israel.

The people joyfully sang songs about God's loving-kindness. They praised God because He had redeemed them, singing praises for bringing them to their land. They called the land "God's holy place" and honored God as their ancestors had.

But many years after God redeemed Israel from slavery, the people forgot the Lord. They began doing evil and did not call on Him as before. God still loved His people and wanted them to follow Him. He told the prophet Isaiah to remind the people to seek the Lord, to turn from their evil ways, and turn back to God. If they turned from their sins, the Lord would forgive them and accept them as His chosen people.

God's mission to Israel was very clear. He wanted to redeem them from slavery and a difficult life. He wanted to save them from their enemies and bring them to His holy place. Even though they sinned, God wanted to forgive them. All they needed to do was accept His love and turn from their sins.

God is a loving Lord. His mission is to redeem us to Himself. When we obey and turn to Him, He forgives our sins. Like the Israelites, we can know the same joy as we sing songs of worship to our God.

## Jesus, God's Redeemer for All People (Colossians 1:13-14)

In Lesson 2, we read John 3:16. It tells of God's love for the people of the world. God's love was the reason He sent Jesus to earth so that no one would be lost. Jesus is God's redeemer for all people. If you do not know God, Jesus can forgive your sins and bring you to God.

Colossians 1:13-14 tells how Jesus redeems us. He bought us by His blood and made us free. People who do not know God are like people in the dark. They are slaves to sinful ways of living. They do not understand or know God. They do whatever they want to do. But Jesus died to pay the penalty for all sin. Jesus can set anyone free from the power of sin that rules their lives.

When Jesus redeems us from sin, we are not left alone. Whoever trusts in Jesus becomes part of God's family, part of God's nation. This nation or **kingdom** includes people from all over the world. We are part of His holy family and kingdom.

### Jesus Takes Away the Old Way of Worship (Hebrews 9:11-14)

Before Jesus came to the world, the Israelites followed many rules and laws to

show God they repented of their sins. They killed animals as **sacrifices** for sins. They gave gifts to God to worship and honor Him. But God had promised to send a sacrifice which would provide a permanent payment for the sins of the people. This sacrifice was Jesus, God's Son.

When Jesus came, He lived a perfect life and became the perfect sacrifice for sin. He did not take the blood of goats and young cows to give to God as a gift in worship. He gave His own blood. He made us free from sin forever.

We cannot live perfectly our whole lives and buy our own freedom from sin. Only Jesus can take away our sins. Only Jesus can buy us back—redeem us. Now we can work with God. He redeems us so we may participate in His mission.

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### Exodus 5:22 to 6:8; 15:1-2, 13

**5:22** Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, "O Lord, why have You hurt these people? Why did you ever send me?"

**6:1** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. For he will be made to let them go because of My strong hand. By My strong hand, he will make them go out of his land."

**2** God said to Moses, "I am the Lord.

**3** I showed Myself as God All-powerful to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I did not make Myself known to them by My name, the Lord.

**4** I also made My agreement with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land where they were strangers.

**5** I have heard the crying of the people of Israel, because they are being held by the Egyptians. And I have remembered My agreement.

**6** So say to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord. I will take you away from the hard work and suffering in Egypt. I will take you away from being their servants. I will make you free by the strength of My arm and by the great things I will do to punish the guilty.

**7** Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God. And you will know that I am the Lord your God. I will bring you out from under the heavy loads of the Egyptians.

**8** I will bring you to the land I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I will give it to you for your own. I am the Lord.'"

**15:1** Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, "I will sing to the Lord, for He is praised for His greatness. He has thrown the horse and horseman into the sea.

**2** The Lord is my strength and song. He is the One Who saves me. He is my God and I will praise Him. He is my father's God and I will honor Him. You have led with loving-kindness the people You have made free. You have led them in Your strength to Your holy place.

### **Isaiah 55:6-7**

**6** Look for the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near.

**7** Let the sinful turn from his way, and the one who does not know God turn from his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have

loving-pity on him. Let him turn to our God, for He will for sure forgive all his sins.

### **Colossians 1:13-14**

**13** God took us out of a life of darkness. He has put us in the holy nation of His much-loved Son.

**14** We have been bought by His blood and made free. Our sins are forgiven through Him.

### **Hebrews 9:11-14**

**9** The outside tent is a picture of that day. With the Old Way of Worship, animals killed and gifts given in worship to God could not take away the guilty feeling of sin.

**10** The Old Way of Worship was made up of Laws about what to eat and drink. These Laws told how to wash and other things to do with the body. These things had to be done until Christ came to bring a better way of worship.

**11** But Christ came as the Head Religious Leader of the good things God promised. He made the way for man to go to God. He was a greater and more perfect tent. He was not made by human hands and was not a part of this earth.

**12** Christ went into the Holiest Place of All one time for all people. He did not take the blood of goats and young cows to give to God as a gift in worship. He gave His own blood. By doing this, He bought us with His blood and made us free from sin forever.

**13** With the Old Way of Worship, the blood and ashes of animals could make men clean after they had sinned.

**14** How much more the blood of Christ will do! He gave Himself as a perfect gift to God through the Spirit that lives forever. Now your heart can be free from the guilty feeling of doing work that is worth nothing. Now you can work for the living God.



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### **Bible Text**

Deuteronomy 15:1-11

Jeremiah 7:1-7

Micah 6:8

Luke 4:16-21

James 1:27; 2:14-16

### **Memory Verse**

“Religion that is pure and good before God the Father is to help children who have no parents and to care for women whose husbands have died who have troubles. Pure religion is also to keep yourself clean from the sinful things of the world.”

(James 1:27)

### **Word List**

**faith:** belief and trust in someone, especially God

**justice:** treating others right and fair

**restore:** to fix something so it is like new again

**righteous:** a person who does what is right and good

# God's Mission: Restore and Do Things Right

The *Antiques Roadshow* is a popular television program in America. The show travels from city to city so people can bring their antiques to see how much those old items are worth. Once, a man brought a painting to the show. He was told the painting was valuable, but it had been damaged. He was told if he **restored** the painting, it would have more value.

When something is damaged, it loses value. People often throw damaged things away, but sometimes they restore the damaged article to give it value again.

People can be damaged by others who do wrong to them. They can be damaged by their own sins. People like this may feel they are worth nothing. They may feel God does not love them.

God sees us as valuable. Sin damages us. God wants to restore us to the value He intended us to have. In this lesson we will learn that God not only wants to restore us, but He also wants us to live right and do right towards others.

### **Doing Right by Helping the Poor (Deuteronomy 15:1-11)**

Israel was a nation that God chose as His own people. They were to be an example for the other nations. God gave them laws and instructions about how they were to treat each other. If the people listened to God and obeyed Him, God promised to give them good things. God wanted to bless them.

God gave a law that every seven years the Israelites were to forgive and cancel all debts of their fellow Israelites. God had

**Things to  
Think About**

1. Why do you think God wants us to help the poor and needy?
2. What can we as a church do to help the poor in our neighborhood?
3. What are some ways the poor are mistreated?
4. In what ways do you show that your faith is more than words?

given them all they had and brought them good things in the land. They were to be kind to each other as God was kind to them. He said they should give freely to those in need. They were not to be proud because they had wealth. If they were selfish and did not help others, God said that was sin. If they did not help the poor, they were not obeying God's law.

Today, if God's people would follow this law there would be fewer hungry people in the world. God wants us to be kind and helpful to the poor around us. This is part of God's mission, and He wants us to be involved in it.

**Doing Right to All People (Jeremiah 7:1-7; Micah 6:8)**

Jeremiah was God's prophet to the Israelites. He told the people to change their ways and work for **justice**. The people thought they pleased God with their words. But God did not only want nice words. He wanted them to treat each other fairly and do what was right. The people were being unfair to each other. They were unkind to foreigners. They were following idols and worshiping false gods. Orphans and widows were not cared for as God said they should be. All this was sinning against God and was separating them from God's goodness. If they did not change their ways, He would not let them continue to live in the land He gave to their ancestors. Their lives did not show that they belonged to God, Who is just and **righteous**.

In the Bible, God tells us to do what is fair, to love kindness, and to walk without pride with our God. He wants to live with us and in us and through us. We need to show the world what God's people are like. We must be righteous because God is righteous. When we do right, especially to the poor and needy,

we truly are partners with God in His mission in the world.

### **Jesus' Mission (Luke 4:16-21)**

Jesus' life was one of doing right and good. Once when He was in the place of worship, He was given the Jewish Bible to read. He read, "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me to preach the Good News to poor people, to heal those with a sad heart, to go tell those who are being held that they can go free, to make the blind to see, and to free those who are held because of trouble. He sent Me to tell of the time when men can receive favor with the Lord." Jesus said this was His mission on earth.

Jesus was on mission for God. He especially helped people who were hurting and in need. Jesus is our example. If we believe in Him as our Lord, His mission will become our mission.

### **Show True Faith (James 1:27; 2:14-16)**

These verses tell us how we are to live in this world. We are to keep ourselves pure from sin and to have **faith** in the Lord. It is easy to say we believe in God and trust Him, but words are not enough. We must show our faith by doing what is right and

good to those who are in need. We are to care for those who cannot care for themselves. When we do, we become partners with God in His mission.

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### **Deuteronomy 15:1-11**

**1** "At the end of every seven years you must do away with debts that are owed.

**2** This is the way you are to do it: Every man who has loaned money must forget the debt. He cannot make his neighbor and his brother pay it because the Lord has said that all should be forgotten.

**3** You may make a stranger pay what he owes, but not your brother.

**4** Yet there will be no poor among you for the Lord will be sure to bring good to you in the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.

**5** But you must listen and obey the voice of the Lord your God. Be careful to do all the Law which I am telling you today.

**6** The Lord your God will bring good to you as He has promised. You will let many nations use what belongs to you but you will not use what belongs to them. You will rule over many nations but they will not rule over you.

**7** "In any of the towns in your land the Lord your God is giving you, if there is anyone poor among you, do not let your heart be hard and not be willing to help him.

**8** Be free to give to him. Let him use what is yours of anything he needs.

**9** Be careful that there is no sinful thought in your heart, saying, 'It is almost the seventh year, the time to do away with the debt owed to me,' so you look on your brother with hate and

give him nothing. Then he may cry to the Lord against you and you may be guilty of sin.

**10** Give much to him, without being sorry that you do. Because the Lord your God will bring good to you for this, in all your work and in everything you do.

**11** The poor will always be in the land. So I tell you to be free in giving to your brother, to those in need, and to the poor in your land.

### **Jeremiah 7:1-7**

**1** This word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

**2** “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house and make this word known: ‘Hear the Word of the Lord, all you men of Judah who go through these gates to worship the Lord!’”

**3** The Lord of All, the God of Israel, says, “Change your ways and your works for the better, and I will let you live in this place.

**4** Do not trust the lies that say, ‘This is the house of the Lord, the house of the Lord, the house of the Lord.’

**5** For if you for sure change your ways and what you do for the better, if you are fair as you judge between a man and his neighbor,

**6** if you do not make it hard for the stranger from another land, or the child whose parents have died, or the woman whose husband has died, and do not kill those who are not guilty in this place, and stop going after other gods, for that will destroy you,

**7** then I will let you live in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

### **Micah 6:8**

O man, He has told you what is good. What does the Lord ask of you but to do what is fair and to love kindness, and to walk without pride with your God?

### **Luke 4:16-21**

**16** Jesus came to Nazareth where He had grown up. As He had done before, He went into the Jewish place of worship on the Day of Rest. Then He stood up to read.

**17** Someone handed Him the book of the early preacher Isaiah. He opened it and found the place where it was written,

**18** “The Spirit of the Lord is on Me. He has put His hand on Me to preach the Good News to poor people. He has sent Me to heal those with a sad heart. He has sent Me to tell those who are being held that they can go free. He has sent Me to make the blind to see and to free those who are held because of trouble.

**19** He sent Me to tell of the time when men can receive favor with the Lord.” (Isaiah 61:1-2)

**20** Jesus closed the book. Then He gave it back to the leader and sat down. All those in the Jewish place of worship kept their eyes on Him. **21** Then He began to say to them, “The Holy Writings you have just heard have been completed today.”

### **James 1:27; 2:14-16**

**1:27** Religion that is pure and good before God the Father is to help children who have no parents and to care for women whose husbands have died who have troubles. Pure religion is also to keep yourself clean from the sinful things of the world.

**2:14** My Christian brothers, what good does it do if you say you have faith but do not do things that prove you have faith? Can that kind of faith save you from the punishment of sin?

**15** What if a Christian does not have clothes or food?

**16** And one of you says to him, “Goodbye, keep yourself warm and eat well.” But if you do not give him what he needs, how does that help him?



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### **Bible Text**

Matthew 11:2-6;

23:23-24

John 1:10-14

Romans 3:21-26

Philippians 2:9-11

### **Memory Verse**

“Christ became human flesh and lived among us. We saw His shining-greatness. This greatness is given only to a much-loved Son from His Father. He was full of loving-favor and truth.” (John 1:14)

### **Word List**

**honor:** to respect and give a high place above others

**neglect:** to fail to help or take care of something or someone

**pardon:** to forgive so there is no punishment for sin

**pity:** a sad feeling because of others' hurts and difficulties

# God's Mission: Clearly Seen in Jesus

Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the United States of America, is a well-known hero. As president, Lincoln made many important decisions. He had great courage and patience. He kept America from dividing into two nations. Under his leadership, a terrible war ended after four long years.

Lincoln was also a kind and gentle man. He was not angry with those who fought against his soldiers in the war. In a speech he said, “With malice toward none, with charity for all...let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds...to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Perhaps the greatest decision Lincoln made was to declare all people living in America to be free from slavery. In January 1863, he gave an order which declared slavery was wrong and all slaves were to be set free. This order is known as the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln was a man who stood strong for what he believed in—liberty and freedom.

Just as President Lincoln clearly represents liberty and freedom, Jesus clearly represents God's mission in the world. Jesus came to help people know more about God and His mission. In this lesson we will study how God's mission is clearly seen in Jesus.

## **God's Mission of Restoration and Justice in Jesus (Matthew 11:2-6; 23:23-24)**

John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the way for

**Things to  
Think About**

1. How did Jesus show that He was the One whom God sent?
2. Why did Jesus speak strong words to the Jewish religious leaders?
3. What must a person do so God will forgive his/her sins?
4. What does the phrase "Jesus is Lord" mean to you?

Jesus to begin God's mission. But John the Baptist had been put in prison by a wicked ruler, Herod. While John was in prison, he wondered if Jesus was truly the Savior doing God's mission.

John sent some of his followers to ask Jesus if He was really the One Whom God had sent to do His mission.

Jesus told John's followers to go back and tell John what they had seen Him do. Jesus gave sight to blind people, made lame people walk, healed sick people, gave hearing to deaf people, and even brought dead people back to life. Jesus also had **pity** on the poor and told them the good news that God wanted to forgive their sins. All this work was a clear sign that Jesus was the One Whom God had promised to send. Jesus restored hope to the hopeless and helped them by doing good.

The Jewish religious leaders did not help the poor or have pity on the sick. They followed the religious laws very carefully. They thought that they were better and more valuable to God than poor and needy people. Jesus spoke strong words to them. He said they should keep the religious laws, but they should not look down on the poor and **neglect** helping them. He wanted the religious leaders to be fair to all people. Jesus showed that people are more important to God than religious laws. He wanted justice for everyone.

**God's Mission to Redeem People by Jesus  
(John 1:10-14; Romans 3:21-26)**

God's mission is much more than helping poor and needy people. He wants all people to know Him and love Him as He loves us. Jesus came into the world so that we might be redeemed and know God in a personal way. Our sins have separated us

from God. We need our sins taken away so we can be accepted by God as His children. God will be Father to all who receive Jesus.

When Jesus came into the world, He came to the Jews, God's chosen people. Sadly, the Jews did not accept Jesus or receive Him as their Redeemer. But Jesus gave the right and the power to all who do receive Him to become children of God. Jesus became like us so we could know God as heavenly Father. Jesus was on mission to do God the Father's work. He wants all to know that God sent Him to be the Savior and Redeemer.

Romans 3 tells clearly how, through Jesus, we are made right with God. People try other ways to be right with God by doing good, living right, and following religious laws. But these all miss the mark of what God wants from us. God made a way for us to come back to Him through the sacrifice of Jesus. God gave Jesus Christ to the people of the world. Our sins can be forgiven because of His blood sacrifice when we put our trust in Him.

We need to know it is not what we do for God that frees us from our sins. It is what God has done for us in giving Jesus as

our Redeemer and Savior that makes us right with Him. We need only to believe in and trust Jesus. Our sins will be forgiven, and we will be made clean before God.

### **God's Mission Declares Jesus as Lord (Philippians 2:9-11)**

Jesus is Lord. This is the most important truth about God's mission. Jesus, by His death, paid the penalty for our sins. He gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins. He rose from the dead and lives forever. Death has no power over Jesus. Because of this, God **honored** Jesus high above everything else. He is Lord of all.

If we confess our sins and ask Jesus to forgive our sins, He will. If we humbly accept Him as Lord, we can be partners in God's mission. We can declare with power the wonderful news that Jesus **pardons** sins. We can become children of God and know Him personally.

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### **Matthew 11:2-6; 23:23-24**

**2** When John the Baptist was in prison, he heard what Jesus was doing. He sent his followers.

**3** They asked, "Are You the One Who was to come, or should we look for another?"

**4** Jesus said to them, "Go and tell John what you see and hear.

**5** The blind are made to see. Those who could not walk are walking. Those who have had bad skin diseases are healed. Those who could not hear are hearing. The dead are raised up to life and the Good News is preached to poor people.

**6** He is happy who is not ashamed of Me and does not turn away because of Me.”

**23:23** “It is bad for you, teachers of the Law and proud religious law-keepers, you who pretend to be someone you are not! You give one-tenth part of your spices, and have not done the most important things of the Law, such as thinking what is right and wrong, and having pity and faith. These you should have done and still have done the other things also.

**24** You blind leaders, you take a small bug out of your cup but you swallow a camel!

#### **John 1:10-14**

**10** He came into the world. The world was made by Him, but it did not know Him.

**11** He came to His own, but His own did not receive Him.

**12** He gave the right and the power to become children of God to those who received Him. He gave this to those who put their trust in His name.

**13** These children of God were not born of blood and of flesh and of man's desires, but they were born of God.

**14** Christ became human flesh and lived among us. We saw His shining-greatness. This greatness is given only to a much-loved Son from His Father. He was full of loving-favor and truth.

#### **Romans 3:21-26**

**21** But now God has made another way to make men right with Himself. It is not by the Law. The Law and the early preachers tell about it.

**22** Men become right with God by putting their trust in Jesus Christ. God will accept men if they come this way. All men are the same to God.

**23** For all men have sinned and have missed the shining-greatness of God.

**24** Anyone can be made right with God by the free gift of His loving-favor. It is Jesus Christ Who bought them with His blood and made them free from their sins.

**25** God gave Jesus Christ to the world. Men's sins can be forgiven through the blood of Christ when they put their trust in Him. God gave His Son Jesus Christ to show how right He is. Before this, God did not look on the sins that were done.

**26** But now God proves that He is right in saving men from sin. He shows that He is the One Who has no sin. God makes anyone right with Himself who puts his trust in Jesus.

#### **Philippians 2:9-11**

**9** Because of this, God lifted Jesus high above everything else. He gave Him a name that is greater than any other name.

**10** So when the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow down before Him.

**11** And every tongue will say Jesus Christ is Lord. Everyone will give honor to God the Father.

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# ◆ Participating in God's Mission ◆

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*Adult Bible Study  
in Simplified English*

## **Lesson 8**

Experience God's Good News

Luke 19:1-10

Acts 9:1-9, 19b-22;

16:13-15, 25-34

## **Lesson 9**

Live Faithfully for God

Romans 12

## **Lesson 10**

Working Together  
in God's Mission

Acts 4:32-35

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

1 Peter 2:6-10

## **Lesson 11**

Tell the Good News of

How God Redeems  
and Restores

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Colossians 1:24-29

## **Lesson 12**

Help People

with Physical Needs

Deuteronomy 10:14-19

Amos 5:21-24

Matthew 25:31-46

## **Lesson 13**

Participate in God's Mission  
to Everyone

Matthew 28:16-20

Acts 11:19-26

Revelation 5:1-10

## **God's Call to You**

Every believer in Jesus is called to be part of God's mission. It is not something we should ignore. When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are to follow what He commands. We have received His loving-kindness, so we are to share His amazing love and forgiveness with others.

These six lessons focus on God's call to be part of His mission. We become the hands and feet of Jesus to people who do not know Him. We become a voice calling people to believe and follow Jesus. God gives each believer a special spiritual gift to use. God's mission moves forward when we work together with each person using his or her special spiritual gift. We make a difference in the world.

God's mission will some day be fulfilled on earth. In these lessons, we can learn how God's people must live right and tell the Good News to complete God's mission. Nothing in life brings greater joy than to participate in God's great mission!



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### **Bible Text**

Luke 19:1-10  
Acts 9:1-9, 19b-22;  
16:13-15, 25-34

### **Memory Verse**

“The Son of Man  
came to look for and  
to save from the  
punishment of sin  
those who are lost.”  
(Luke 19:10)

### **Word List**

**despised:** to look  
upon as worthless  
**confronted:** to meet  
face to face and  
demand an answer  
**amazing:** something  
very surprising  
**influenced:** to cause  
change in another  
person

# Experience God's Good News

Man Dong was a high school senior when his friend told him about Jesus. It was the first time Man Dong had heard of God's salvation in Jesus. He asked Jesus to forgive his sins. The next Sunday he told the church of his new faith in Jesus.

One week later, Man Dong brought two of his brothers and their wives. What was **amazing** was that they had walked about eight miles to church in the heat of tropical Vietnam. After several weeks, these two families received Jesus as Savior, too. They brought others from their village. About a year later, a church was started in Man Dong's village. The year was 1973.

Our family left Vietnam in 1974. Finally, we were able to return for a visit in 2007. We met Man Dong again and heard the story of how he had faithfully served the Lord through difficult years in Vietnam. Although he is a poor farmer, he continues to tell people about Jesus. In his village, more than 500 people follow Jesus now. Only a few do not believe in Jesus.

Man Dong goes to other villages to tell people about God's love for them. Because he has continued to participate in God's mission, hundreds of people now follow Jesus. In this lesson we will learn how Christians participate in God's mission because of what they have experienced.

## **A Tax Collector Meets Jesus (Luke 19:1-10)**

Jesus came to do God's mission. He met and worked with many people. Luke 19 tells about Jesus meeting a tax collector named Zaccheus. Tax collectors were **despised** by the Jews for two reasons. First, they worked with the Romans who ruled

**Things to  
Think About**

1. Why do you think Paul wanted to tell people everywhere about Jesus?
2. If you are a believer in Jesus as Savior, what happened when you believed?
3. If you are a believer in Jesus, what changes have taken place in your life since you believed?
4. With whom have you shared your experience of believing in Jesus?

Israel. Second, they took more money than they should. Tax collectors only thought about how they could get rich.

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem where, in a few days, He would be killed. He had to pass through a city called Jericho. When the people of Jericho heard Jesus was coming, they went to watch for Him. Zaccheus was a short man, so he climbed a tree so he could see Jesus pass by. Jesus called, “Zaccheus, come down at once. I must stay in your house today.” The people were surprised that Jesus would go to a tax collector’s house. Of all the people in Jericho, why did Jesus choose Zaccheus?

As Zaccheus visited with Jesus, he knew he had done wrong by taking more taxes than he should. He promised to pay back four times more than he had taken and to give half of what he owned to the poor. His actions proved his heart had been changed by Jesus’ love and forgiveness. That day Zaccheus became a part of God’s mission.

**A Persecutor Meets Jesus (Acts 9:1-9, 19b-22)**

Jesus’ followers feared Saul, a man who wanted to punish anyone who said Jesus was Lord. Saul was on his way to the city of Damascus to find Jesus’ followers and put them in jail. Jesus **confronted** Saul as he traveled. A light brighter than the sun caused Saul to fall to the ground, and a voice asked Saul, “Why are you working so hard against Me?”

Saul asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The Lord said, “I am Jesus, the One Whom you are working against. You hurt yourself by trying to hurt Me. Get up! Go into the city, and you will be told what to do.” Blinded by the light, he was led into the city by a friend. After three days, Jesus sent someone to heal Saul’s eyes.

At once, Saul began to preach that Jesus was the Son of God. It is amazing that Jesus would choose someone like Saul. But God had a special part in His mission just for Saul. Later Saul changed his name to Paul. He went to many places telling the Good News about Jesus.

### **Two People in Philippi Who Believed in Jesus (Acts 16:13-15, 25-34)**

Paul and his friends went to the city of Philippi to tell people about God's love and Jesus' sacrifice. On the day of worship, Paul and his friends went to the river to pray. Lydia and her friends were there. Lydia believed in God, but she did not know Jesus as the Savior. Paul told them that Jesus was the One which the prophets had spoken and written about. Lydia believed, and she **influenced** her family and friends to follow Jesus, too. She became part of God's mission.

Later, Paul and his friends were thrown in jail, chained by their hands and feet. But they still sang praises to God. Late at night, the earth shook so hard that the prison doors opened and the chains fell off. The prison guard thought the prisoners had surely run away, so he took his sword and

was about to kill himself. Paul called out, "Do not hurt yourself. We are all here!"

Because they had not run away, the guard knew something was different about Paul and his friends. He asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul replied with the most important answer in the Bible: "Put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you and your family will be saved from the punishment of sin." In Paul's language, *your family* meant more than a man's wife and children. It meant his friends and people close to him.

Everyone has a family larger than father, mother, brothers, sisters, or children. Our family includes all the people we influence. As Jesus followers, we are part of God's mission when we share His love and forgiveness with family and friends.

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### **Luke 19:1-10**

- 1 Jesus went on to the city of Jericho and was passing through it.
- 2 There was a rich man named Zaccheus. He was a leader of those who gathered taxes.
- 3 Zaccheus wanted to see Jesus but he could not because so many people were there and he was a short man.
- 4 He ran ahead and got up into a sycamore tree to see Him. Jesus was going by that way.
- 5 When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw Zaccheus. He said, "Zaccheus, come down at once. I must stay in your house today."
- 6 At once he came down and was glad to have

Jesus come to his house.

**7** When the people saw it, they began to complain among themselves. They said, "He is going to stay with a man who is known to be a sinner."

**8** Zaccheus stood up and said to the Lord, "Lord, see! Half of what I own I will give to poor people. And if I have taken money from anyone in a wrong way, I will pay him back four times as much."

**9** Jesus said to him, "Today, a person has been saved in this house. This man is a Jew also."

**10** For the Son of Man came to look for and to save from the punishment of sin those who are lost."

**Acts 9:1-9, 19b-22; 16:13-15, 25-34**

**1** Saul was still talking much about how he would like to kill the followers of the Lord. He went to the head religious leader.

**2** He asked for letters to be written to the Jewish places of worship in the city of Damascus. The letters were to say that if he found any men or women following the Way of Christ he might bring them to Jerusalem in chains.

**3** He went on his way until he came near Damascus. All at once he saw a light from heaven shining around him.

**4** He fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why are you working so hard against Me?"

**5** Saul answered, "Who are You, Lord?" He said, "I am Jesus, the One Whom you are working against. You hurt yourself by trying to hurt Me."

**6** Saul was shaken and surprised. Then he said, "What do you want me to do, Lord?" The Lord said to him, "Get up! Go into the city and you will be told what to do."

**7** Those with Saul were not able to say anything. They heard a voice but saw no one.

**8** Saul got up from the ground. When he opened his eyes, he saw nothing. They took him by the hand and led him to Damascus.

**9** He could not see for three days. During that time he did not eat or drink.

**19b** For some days he stayed with the followers in Damascus.

**20** At once Saul began to preach in the Jewish places of worship that Jesus is the Son of God.

**21** All who heard him were surprised and wondered. They said, "This is the man who beat and killed the followers in Jerusalem. He came here

to tie the followers in chains and take them to the head religious leaders."

**22** But Saul kept on growing in power. The Jews living in Damascus wondered about Saul's preaching. He was proving that Jesus was the Christ.

**16:13** On the Day of Rest we went outside the city to a place down by the river. We thought people would be gathering there for prayer. Some women came and we sat down and talked to them.

**14** One of the women who listened sold purple cloth. She was from the city of Thyatira. Her name was Lydia and she was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to hear what Paul said.

**15** When she and her family had been baptized, she said to us, "If you think I am faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my house." She kept on asking. Then we went with her.

**25** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs of thanks to God. The other men in prison were listening to them.

**26** All at once the earth started to shake. The stones under the prison shook and the doors opened. The chains fell off from everyone.

**27** The man who watched the prison woke up. He saw the prison doors wide open and thought the men in prison had gotten away. At once he pulled out his sword to kill himself.

**28** But Paul called to him, "Do not hurt yourself. We are all here!"

**29** The man who watched the prison called for a light. Then he ran in and got down in front of Paul and Silas. He was shaking with fear.

**30** As he took them outside, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

**31** They said, "Put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you and your family will be saved from the punishment of sin."

**32** Then Paul spoke the Word of God to him and his family.

**33** It was late at night, but the man who watched the prison took Paul and Silas in and washed the places on their bodies where they were hurt. Right then he and his family were baptized.

**34** He took Paul and Silas to his house and gave them food. He and all his family were full of joy for having put their trust in God.



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### Bible Text

Romans 12

### Memory Verse

“Christian brothers, I ask you from my heart to give your bodies to God because of His loving-kindness to us. Let your bodies be a living and holy gift given to God. He is pleased with this kind of gift. This is the true worship that you should give Him.”

(Romans 12:1)

### Word List

**faithful:** being true and showing love even when it is difficult

**circumstances:** everything that is happening around a person, good or bad

**attitude:** a way of thinking

**respect:** treating others with honor

# Live Faithfully for God

Lance and Diana had been married a short time. They were preparing to go and serve as missionaries in Mexico. One Sunday evening as Lance was preaching to the church, Diana became very sick; she could not breathe. When Diana got to the hospital, she could not talk, and she did not know anyone. Her brain was not working properly. From that time on, Diana had to be cared for in a nursing home.

This situation was very hard for Lance. It was like he had no wife. But every day for over 13 years, Lance would visit Diana. Although she could not speak to him, Lance would talk to her and read to her. Lance **faithfully** showed his love to Diana. He celebrated her birthday and Christmas with her, even though she was not able to respond to him. Lance knew if she could, Diana would show her love to him as she had before she became so sick.

It is important to be faithful to God and to other people. The Bible says, “We love because God first loved us” (1 John 4:19). God’s love for us ought to cause us to love Him faithfully and show our love by the way we live. There is a right way to live and a wrong way to live. In this lesson, we will learn what it means to live faithfully for God in all **circumstances**.

### **Worshipping the Right Way (Romans 12:1-2)**

God wants us to worship Him. Worship does not just mean going to church. We worship God by being obedient and doing what is right each day. Worship is giving our entire life to God, letting our bodies be a living and holy gift to God. He is

**Things to  
Think About**

1. Why should we give our bodies to God as an act of worship?
2. What do others see when they look at the way you live day after day?
3. How do you show respect to others?
4. How do you respond to people who hurt you?

pleased with this kind of gift. This is the true worship that we should give Him.

People who do not believe Jesus is Savior may think it is foolish to live for God. They only think about what gives them pleasure and makes them happy now. Those of us who believe Jesus is Lord have changed our minds about how we should live. We want to know what God wants us to do. When we live for God, He will show us what pleases Him. We will have peace in our hearts.

**Thinking How to Live Daily the Right Way  
(Romans 12:3, 9-13)**

People who do not believe in Jesus do not have an **attitude** that pleases God. The way they think about life often brings them problems and makes them sad. As believers in Jesus, we must think in a right way about ourselves and others. Our attitude makes a difference in the way we treat others. Jesus does not want us to think we are more important than other people. God loves everyone. Why should we think we are better than others?

What should our attitude be toward sin and all things that are wrong? We should hate sin. We should run away from all that is evil. We must love what is good. It is good to love fellow believers and show **respect** to all people. It is good to share what we have with fellow believers who are in need, to give meals and a place to stay to those who need it. It is good to work at our jobs with our hands and minds as if we are working for Jesus. It is good to trust God and pray when trouble comes along. By trusting God in all things, we can have hope even in difficult times.

### **Living with Other Believers the Right Way (Romans 12:4-9)**

We live life with others in groups.

We are born into a family. We live in a community of people and go to school, work, and church with them. We grow and develop best as a person when we live with and depend on each other.

Our physical body is much like a group. It has many parts, and all the parts must work together. Each part of the body—hands, eyes, feet, etc.—is unique and has a different function. Each part needs the other parts to function correctly as a body should. If a hand is crippled, the body is limited in how it functions, and the body cannot do what it should.

Jesus' followers are like a physical body. Each believer is a member of the body. Although there are many individuals, we are one body. God gives each member of Jesus' body a different gift to use for the good of all. In these verses, seven different gifts are listed (preaching, helping, teaching, speaking comfort/help, sharing/giving, leading, showing kindness). God has given the right gift to each believer so that His mission moves forward.

Love for each other is most important. As people see the way we show love to each other, they will understand more about Jesus' love for them. That keeps His mission moving forward.

### **Treating All People the Right Way (Romans 12:14-21)**

Finally, living faithfully for God means we must treat those who hurt us as God says we should. We are to pray for and give thanks for those who make trouble for us. Yes, we are to pray for them instead of talking against them. When someone does something bad to us, we should not pay him back with something bad. The anger of God will take care of the other person. He knows what is best for them and us.

We must do what is right and good to all people. As much as we can, live in peace with everyone. Do not let anger and sin have power over us, but let good have power over sin! This is not the way we usually respond to people who wrong us, but God can give us power to love them.

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### **Romans 12:1-21**

**1** Christian brothers, I ask you from my heart to give your bodies to God because of His

loving-kindness to us. Let your bodies be a living and holy gift given to God. He is pleased with this kind of gift. This is the true worship that you should give Him.

**2** Do not act like the sinful people of the world. Let God change your life. First of all, let Him give you a new mind. Then you will know what God wants you to do. And the things you do will be good and pleasing and perfect.

**3** God has given me His loving-favor. This helps me write these things to you. I ask each one of you not to think more of himself than he should think. Instead, think in the right way toward yourself by the faith God has given you.

**4** Our bodies are made up of many parts. None of these parts have the same use.

**5** There are many people who belong to Christ. And yet, we are one body which is Christ's. We are all different but we depend on each other.

**6** We all have different gifts that God has given to us by His loving-favor. We are to use them. If someone has the gift of preaching the Good News, he should preach. He should use the faith God has given him.

**7** If someone has the gift of helping others, then he should help. If someone has the gift of teaching, he should teach.

**8** If someone has the gift of speaking words of comfort and help, he should speak. If someone has the gift of sharing what he has, he should give from a willing heart. If someone has the gift of leading other people, he should lead them. If someone has the gift of showing kindness to others, he should be happy as he does it.

**9** Be sure your love is true love. Hate what is

sinful. Hold on to whatever is good.

**10** Love each other as Christian brothers. Show respect for each other.

**11** Do not be lazy but always work hard. Work for the Lord with a heart full of love for Him.

**12** Be happy in your hope. Do not give up when trouble comes. Do not let anything stop you from praying.

**13** Share what you have with Christian brothers who are in need. Give meals and a place to stay to those who need it.

**14** Pray and give thanks for those who make trouble for you. Yes, pray for them instead of talking against them.

**15** Be happy with those who are happy. Be sad with those who are sad.

**16** Live in peace with each other. Do not act or think with pride. Be happy to be with poor people. Keep yourself from thinking you are so wise.

**17** When someone does something bad to you, do not pay him back with something bad. Try to do what all men know is right and good.

**18** As much as you can, live in peace with all men.

**19** Christian brothers, never pay back someone for the bad he has done to you. Let the anger of God take care of the other person. The Holy Writings say, "I will pay back to them what they should get, says the Lord."

**20** "If the one who hates you is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him water. If you do that, you will be making him more ashamed of himself."

**21** Do not let sin have power over you. Let good have power over sin!



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### **Bible Text**

Acts 4:32-35

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

1 Peter 2:6-10

### **Memory Verse**

“But you are a chosen group of people.

You are the King’s religious leaders. You are a holy nation. You belong to God. He has done this for you so you can tell others how God has called you out of darkness into His great light.”

(1 Peter 2:9)

### **Word List**

**afford:** able to do something with money or time because there is plenty

**bestow:** to give, award, or present

**distinct:** clearly different from another thing

**equality:** fairness for all

# Working Together in God’s Mission

During the 1950s, Dr. Martin Luther King was an African-American pastor. He became the leader of a group which would change the way Americans treat each other. This was known as the civil rights movement. Many people worked together to bring about justice and **equality** for African-Americans. The group had many problems and some people were jailed, but they did not fight back. They worked for change in peaceful ways.

The work for civil rights took many years, but the group did not give up. Then in 1968, Dr. King was killed by someone who hated him and his movement. However, the United States government soon changed the laws. Civil rights were granted because people worked peacefully together for this cause.

In this lesson, we will study how God wants all His followers to work together to complete His mission. Some people think this is an impossible task. But God’s mission can be reached if believers work together in a peaceful way and show the love of God to the world.

### **Sharing for the Good of All (Acts 4:32-35)**

After Jesus rose from the dead and went back to heaven, His followers met together in the city of Jerusalem. God’s Holy Spirit came to them, and they were filled with God’s love and power. Their focus was on Jesus, their powerful, living Lord.

They had sincere love for each other and a desire to help one other with daily needs. Some sold property and used the

**Things to Think About**

1. What would our world be like if all believers gave generously to help others?
2. Why should believers give to the poor?
3. What spiritual gift has God given you?
4. In what ways can God's mission be done in the world?

money to buy food. They shared everything they owned.

Someone said this was like modern-day communism. But there are two **distinct** differences in what the early believers did and what communism demands. First, no one made the believers do such acts of kindness. Second, it was love, not the government, that caused them to share with other believers.

When God's people are filled with the Holy Spirit, they show sincere love to all. People who are not believers are surprised at how God's people treat each other. We need the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with this kind of love. Then we will show God's mission by the way we live.

**Giving Because Jesus Gave to Us (2 Corinthians 8:1-9)**

Paul served many churches as he traveled to help believers. He taught them to give to God's work. He told them that Jesus taught, "We are more happy when we give than when we receive" (Acts 20:35).

Some very poor believers in the area of Macedonia heard of the difficulties facing the believers in Jerusalem. The believers in Macedonia had never met the believers in Jerusalem. But the Macedonian church members were moved by the Holy Spirit to send a gift of money to help them. They gave more than they could **afford**. They believed God would give them what they needed, so they gave with joy.

Paul tells the believers at Corinth to follow the example of these poor believers. They gave themselves to the Lord first. If we give our hearts and minds to the Lord, it will not be hard for us to share what we have received from the Lord with others. The Bible says Jesus was rich, but "He became poor for our good. In

that way, because He became poor, we might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Giving to God’s work is a way we can work together in His mission.

### **Spiritual Gifts for God’s Mission (1 Corinthians 12:4-13)**

In our last lesson we studied that God gives spiritual gifts to every believer. In these verses we will learn more about the spiritual gifts God gives. God gives spiritual gifts; we do not earn them. The Holy Spirit **bestows** the gifts on believers. There are different kinds of gifts but only one Holy Spirit who gives them. The gifts are given for the good of everyone.

We cannot be proud or brag about the spiritual gift we have. It is from God. We should not be jealous of others who have a different gift than we have. God gave it to them. We should not try to be like others. We need to be who God made us to be. Spiritual gifts are given so that God’s mission on earth can be done.

People who have different gifts work together in God’s mission to help and encourage other people, both believers and non-believers. We should learn what spiritual gift the Holy Spirit has given each

of us. When we use our own spiritual gift, we can work together in a greater way to fulfill God’s mission. As we work together using our spiritual gifts, we are like the parts of our physical bodies which work together as one.

### **The People of God on God’s Mission Together (1 Peter 2:6-10)**

In these verses Peter says that Jesus is a stone that is very important to God’s mission. Jesus is like the stone foundation of a building. A stone foundation makes the building strong and lasting. Jesus is our spiritual foundation. He makes us strong so we do not give up easily. Together we are to be as living stones in the building God is making (see 1 Peter 2:5).

For people who do not believe in Jesus as Lord, He is like a stone that will cause them to stumble and fall. When they do not obey God’s Word, they trip over that stone. Their end will be very sad.

Peter also says believers are a chosen group. God has made us His holy nation. We belong to Him. He has done this for us so we can tell others how God has called us out of darkness into His great light. This is what it means to be on mission with Him.

**Acts 4:32-35**

**32** The many followers acted and thought the same way. None of them said that any of their things were their own, but they shared all things.

**33** The missionaries told with much power how Jesus was raised from the dead. God's favor was on them all.

**34** No one was in need. All who owned houses or pieces of land sold them and brought the money from what was sold.

**35** They gave it to the missionaries. It was divided to each one as he had need.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-9**

**1** Christian brothers, we want you to know how the loving-favor of God has been shown in the churches in the country of Macedonia.

**2** They have been put to the test by much trouble, but they have much joy. They have given much even though they were very poor.

**3** They gave as much as they could because they wanted to.

**4** They asked from their hearts if they could help the Christians in Jerusalem.

**5** It was more than we expected. They gave themselves to the Lord first. Then they gave themselves to us to be used as the Lord wanted.

**6** We asked Titus to keep on helping you finish this act of love. He was the one to begin this.

**7** You are rich in everything. You have faith. You can preach. You have much learning. You have a strong desire to help. And you have love for us. Now do what you should about giving also.

**8** I am not saying that you must do this, but I have told you how others have helped. This is a way to prove how true your love is.

**9** You know of the loving-favor shown by our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, but He became poor for your good. In that way, because He became poor, you might become rich.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-13**

**4** There are different kinds of gifts. But it is the same Holy Spirit Who gives them.

**5** There are different kinds of work to be done for Him. But the work is for the same Lord.

**6** There are different ways of doing His work. But it is the same God who uses all these ways in all people.

**7** The Holy Spirit works in each person in one way or another for the good of all.

**8** One person is given the gift of teaching words of wisdom. Another person is given the gift of teaching what he has learned and knows. These gifts are by the same Holy Spirit.

**9** One person receives the gift of faith. Another person receives the gifts of healing. These gifts are given by the same Holy Spirit.

**10** One person is given the gift of doing powerful works. Another person is given the gift of speaking God's Word. Another person is given the gift of telling the difference between the Holy Spirit and false spirits. Another person is given the gift of speaking in special sounds. Another person is given the gift of telling what these special sounds mean.

**11** But it is the same Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, Who does all these things. He gives to each person as He wants to give.

**12** Our own body has many parts. When all these many parts are put together, they are only one body. The body of Christ is like this.

**13** It is the same way with us. Jews or those who are not Jews, men who are owned by someone or men who are free to do what they want to do, have all been baptized into the one body by the same Holy Spirit. We have all received the one Spirit.

**1 Peter 2:6-10**

**6** The Holy Writings say, "See, I lay down in Jerusalem a Stone of great worth, worth far more than any amount of money. Anyone who puts his trust in Him will not be ashamed." (Isaiah 28:16)

**7** This Stone is of great worth to you who have your trust in Him. But to those who have not put their trust in Him, the Holy Writings say, "The Stone which the workmen put aside has become the most important part of the building." (Psalm 118:22)

**8** The Holy Writings say, also, "Christ is the Stone that some men will trip over and the Rock over which they will fall." When they do not obey the Word of God, they trip over it. This is what happens to such men.

**9** But you are a chosen group of people. You are the King's religious leaders. You are a holy nation. You belong to God. He has done this for you so you can tell others how God has called you out of darkness into His great light.

**10** At one time you were a people of no use. Now you are the people of God. At one time you did not have loving-kindness. Now you have God's loving-kindness.



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### **Bible Text**

2 Corinthians 5:11-21  
Colossians 1:24-29

### **Memory Verse**

“We are Christ’s missionaries. God is speaking to you through us. We are speaking for Christ and we ask you from our hearts to turn from your sins and come to God.”

(2 Corinthians 5:20)

### **Word List**

**awe:** a feeling of great respect

**boldly:** acting without fear

**motive:** the reason for action

**mystery:** something that cannot be explained

# Tell the Good News of How God Redeems and Restores

Recently, my wife and I met Mike and Veronica. They are from another country and have been in the United States for only a few months. Mike was a successful businessman in their country. They lived in a nice house and had an easy life. They left everything to come here so Mike could study to become a pastor.

No one forced Mike and Veronica to give up what they had. What was their **motive** for doing what they did? They gave it up because they knew God had called them to work as God’s missionaries. They want to tell others about God’s love in Jesus. They want to help people put their trust in Jesus.

God has called each of us to tell that Jesus died for our sins. In this lesson we will learn that God redeems and restores all people who put their trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. We will also learn that God wants us to be on mission with Him.

### **Our Motive (2 Corinthians 5:11- 14)**

When we tell others the Good News of how God redeems and restores, we need to do it for the right reasons. Sometimes people tell the Good News because they hope people will join their church. Sometimes they feel that God will not help them if they do not tell the Good News. In these verses, we see two reasons Paul told the Good News: He feared God, and he loved Jesus.

Paul had met God in a great and powerful way. God

**Things to  
Think About**

1. If you believe in Jesus, what is your motive? your reason?
2. What are some reasons people do not join God's mission?
3. Have you ever told someone the Good News of God's love? If so, tell about it.
4. Why are some people treated badly for telling the Good News of God's love to others?

changed Paul's life. He was in awe of God because of what He had done for Paul. He sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem and restore sinners. Paul's awe of God motivated him to tell the Good News to everyone. He did not fear God would punish him if he did not tell the Good News. Paul felt such awe that he wanted to bow down and become a missionary for God. When we truly know God, we will feel awe for Him just as Paul did.

Paul's second motive to tell the Good News was because of Jesus' love for Paul. This love caused Paul to love Jesus in return. He wanted other people to know Jesus' love. We too should be motivated by Jesus' love. Jesus loved us so much that He died in our place because of our sins. We love Him because He loves us. His love should move us to action. We should not live to please ourselves, but we should live for Jesus, Who died on a cross and was raised from the dead for us.

**Our Mission (2 Corinthians 5:15-21)**

God has invited us to be on mission with Him. God's mission has always been to redeem and restore people to Himself. Our mission is to be a missionary, to share the Good News about God's desire to redeem people from sin. God has no other missionaries but those who truly believe in Jesus. He gave us the work of bringing others to Him.

Being on mission with God means we tell people how God can restore them to a new life, free from the power of sin. Jesus never sinned, but God put our sin on Him. We are made right with God because of what Jesus has done for us. Everyone who believes in Jesus belongs to Him. Jesus makes that person clean

from sin. The old life is gone. New life has begun.

This then is our mission, to live for Jesus and be His missionary to all people. We should not live to please ourselves, but to please Jesus. He died on a cross and was raised from the dead for us. We should speak **boldly** as if God is speaking through us. We are speaking for Jesus from our hearts, and we ask people to turn from their sins and come to God. Nothing brings greater joy for followers of Jesus than to introduce people to the Savior.

### **The Mystery (Colossians 1:24-29)**

Paul wrote to his friends in the city of Colosse while he was in prison. He was in prison because he told people the Good News about God's love for them. He did this for the good of others, yet he ended up in jail. Why would someone who served God have to suffer that way? Paul's suffering was a **mystery** to the believers. But Paul said that just as Jesus suffered and died for the sins of all, he too was willing to suffer for telling the Good News.

For Paul, the mystery was not about suffering. The mystery was that God would

love sinful people enough to send His Son to die for the sins of all. Before Jesus' sacrifice, people tried to pay for their sins by what they did. Year after year, the people did the same thing. The great secret of how people's sins were forgiven was hidden to the people of times past.

Now the mystery of how our sins are forgiven was made clear by Jesus' life, death, and resurrection from death. Paul said the mystery is not hidden any longer; the secret has been made known. God redeems and restores all people through belief in Jesus. The mystery that has been made known is this: Jesus living in us brings hope of all the great things to come. Jesus not only redeems us but lives in us to restore us to God.

Like Paul, we let Jesus live in us and give us power to tell the Good News to all people. That is the reason we work with God in His mission. We are to go to all people, even if it means suffering.

**2 Corinthians 5:11-21**

**11** Because of this, we know the fear of God. So we try to get men to put their trust in Christ. God knows us. I hope that your hearts know me well also.

**12** We do not want to sound as if we think we are so important. Instead, we are making it easy for you to be proud of us. In that way, you will be able to tell them about us. They always talk about the way people look, but do not care about their hearts.

**13** Are we crazy to talk like this? It is all because of what God has done. If we are using our minds well, it is for you.

**14** For the love of Christ puts us into action. We are sure that Christ died for everyone. So, because of that, everyone has a part in His death.

**15** Christ died for everyone so that they would live for Him. They should not live to please themselves but for Christ Who died on a cross and was raised from the dead for them.

**16** So from now on, we do not think about what people are like by looking at them. We even thought about Christ that way one time. But we do not think of Him that way anymore.

**17** For if a man belongs to Christ, he is a new person. The old life is gone. New life has begun.

**18** All this comes from God. He is the One Who brought us to Himself when we hated Him. He did this through Christ. Then He gave us the work of bringing others to Him.

**19** God was in Christ. He was working through Christ to bring the whole world back to Himself. God no longer held men's sins against

them. And He gave us the work of telling and showing men this.

**20** We are Christ's missionaries. God is speaking to you through us. We are speaking for Christ and we ask you from our hearts to turn from your sins and come to God.

**21** Christ never sinned but God put our sin on Him. Then we are made right with God because of what Christ has done for us.

**Colossians 1:24-29**

**24** Now I am full of joy to be suffering for you. In my own body I am doing my share of what has to be done to make Christ's sufferings complete. This is for His body which is the Church.

**25** I became a preacher in His church for your good. In the plan of God I am to preach the Good News.

**26** This great secret was hidden to the people of times past, but it is now made known to those who belong to Christ.

**27** God wants these great riches of the hidden truth to be made known to the people who are not Jews. The secret is this: Christ in you brings hope of all the great things to come.

**28** We preach Christ. We tell every man how he must live. We use wisdom in teaching every man. We do this so every man will be complete in Christ.

**29** This is the reason I am working. God's great power is working in me.



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### **Bible Text**

Deuteronomy 10:14-19

Amos 5:21-24

Matthew 25:31-46

### **Memory Verse**

“Let what is fair roll down like waters. Let what is right and good flow forever like a river.” (Amos 5:24)

### **Word List**

**bribe:** to pay money to get something not deserved

**ignore:** to refuse to notice or follow

**inspire:** to encourage to action

**practice:** to do something over and over until it becomes natural

# Helping Poor and Needy People

Most people have never heard the name Agnesë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu. She was born in Macedonian Albania, August 26, 1910. She became well known as Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic nun. She founded the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata (Calcutta), India, in 1950. The Missionaries of Charity grew to 610 locations in 123 countries, helping poor and needy people. More than 4,000 nuns worked in this ministry.

For over 45 years Mother Teresa ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying. She was motivated by Jesus’ love and lived her life to help those she called “the least of these.” She became a citizen of India. It is said that she owned nothing except the clothes she wore. When she died in September 1997, she was buried in India.

Mother Teresa **inspired** people in many nations to help the poor and needy. She had no power or wealth except the power of God’s love and the riches God provided. By her example, we see how powerfully God uses a person who joins in His mission. In this lesson we will study what the Bible teaches about being on mission with God to help poor and needy people.

## **Understanding God’s Love for the Poor and Needy (Deuteronomy 10:14-19)**

Deuteronomy tells of God’s love for people, all people. God chose Israel as His people because of His love. He chose them, not because they were better than other people, but to serve and honor Him, to be His missionaries to other nations,

**Things to  
Think About**

1. How many poor people are your friends? How do you help them?
2. What would our world be like if every believer practiced what is right and helped the poor?
3. Describe a group in your community that works with the poor and needy.
4. Why do you think some believers do not practice what they say they believe?

and to help others (Deuteronomy 10:20-22).

We are to honor and fear God. He does not show favor to people who are rich or powerful in the world. He does not take a **bribe** from them so they get the best things. We are obeying God when we help others. We need to be kind-hearted toward everyone, especially to the poor because they have no power.

We are not to look down on the poor or think we are better than they are. God does what is right and fair for children without parents and for women whose husbands have died. He shows His love for the stranger by giving him food and clothing. So we are to show love for strangers, too. We show we are partners in God's mission when we do these things.

**Obeying God's Demand for Justice (Amos 5:21-24)**

The people of Israel had become very religious. But being religious did not mean they were obedient to God. At this time, they lived in comfort. They thought acting religious was enough to please God. They had forgotten God and **ignored** how He said they must live. They left God out of their worship and their daily lives. Then God spoke through the prophet Amos. He said God hated their religious activities. God did not want anything to do with it. He was sad about what they were not doing.

We too can act religious and ignore God. We may meet on Sunday, sing wonderful songs, and do only what pleases us. This shows that we really do not believe all that God says we should do. The Bible says we are to obey what God says and not just hear it. If we do not obey what God says, we are only fooling ourselves (James 1:22).

God said, "Let what is fair roll down like waters. Let what

is right and good flow forever like a river” (Amos 5:24). In Lesson 6, we studied this verse, “O man, He has told you what is good. What does the Lord ask of you but to do what is fair and to love kindness, and to walk without pride with your God?” (Micah 6:8). God demands that we do what is right to all people, especially the poor and needy. This is God’s mission for every believer.

### **Practicing God’s Love in Daily Living (Matthew 25:31-46)**

These verses are some of Jesus’ final teachings after He rose from the dead and just before He went back to heaven to be with God the Father. Jesus tells about the kind of faith we are to have. We do not please God by simply saying we believe in Jesus. The Bible says, “You believe there is one God. That is good! But even the demons believe that and because they do, they shake” (James 2:19).

My friend had this sign on his wall: “We **practice** daily what we believe, all the rest is just religious talk.” The kind of faith that pleases God is one that practices what He has said.

Jesus said when we do what is right and help those in need, we please Him. We

will have a reward in heaven. Jesus said that by giving hungry people food to eat, giving thirsty people water to drink, giving a stranger a room to stay, giving people clothes they need, caring for the sick, or visiting people in prison, we are doing these things to Him. We practice our faith in this way not to earn our way into heaven. We do these things because the love of God is within us. We are on mission with God.

The world is full of sad and hurting people. People need to experience God’s love. God has chosen us to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world today. We can show the world what a true believer is.

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### **Deuteronomy 10:14-19**

**14** See, heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it belong to the Lord your God.

**15** The Lord had joy in loving your fathers more than other nations, and you are still His chosen people to this day.

**16** So then, from now on, obey the Lord. Do not be strong-willed any more.

**17** For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords. He is the great and powerful God and is to be honored with fear. He does not show favor, and cannot be bought with money.

**18** He does what is right and fair for the child

without parents and the woman whose husband has died. He shows His love for the stranger by giving him food and clothing.

**19** So show your love for the stranger. For you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

**Amos 5:21-24**

**21** I hate your special suppers. I will have nothing to do with them. And I am not pleased with your religious meetings.

**22** Even if you give Me burnt gifts and grain gifts in worship, I will not receive them. I will not even look at the peace gifts of your fat animals.

**23** Take the noise of your songs away from Me. I will not listen to the sound of your harps.

**24** But let what is fair roll down like waters. Let what is right and good flow forever like a river.

**Matthew 25:31-46**

**31** When the Son of Man comes in His shining-greatness, He will sit down on His throne of greatness. All the angels will be with Him.

**32** All the nations of the earth will be gathered before Him. He will divide them from each other as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.

**33** He will put the sheep on His right side, but the goats He will put on His left side.

**34** Then the King will say to those on His right side, "Come, you who have been called by My Father. Come into the holy nation that has been made ready for you before the world was made.

**35** For I was hungry and you gave Me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me water to drink. I was a stranger and you gave Me a room.

**36** I had no clothes and you gave Me clothes to

wear. I was sick and you cared for Me. I was in prison and you came to see Me."

**37** Then those that are right with God will say, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You? When did we see You thirsty and give You a drink?"

**38** When did we see You a stranger and give You a room? When did we see You had no clothes and we gave You clothes?"

**39** And when did we see You sick or in prison and we came to You?"

**40** Then the King will say, "For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me."

**41** Then the King will say to those on His left side, "Go away from Me! You are guilty! Go into the fire that lasts forever. It has been made ready for the devil and his angels.

**42** For I was hungry but you did not give Me food to eat. I was thirsty but you did not give Me water to drink.

**43** I was a stranger but you did not give Me a room. I had no clothes but you did not give Me clothes. I was sick and in prison but you did not come to see Me."

**44** Then they will ask, "Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger? When did we see You without clothes or sick or in prison and did not care for You?"

**45** Then He will say to them, "For sure, I tell you, because you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me."

**46** These will go to the place where they will be punished forever. But those right with God will have life that lasts forever.



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### Bible Text

Matthew 28:16-20

Acts 11:19-26

Revelation 5:1-10

### Memory Verse

“Your blood has bought men for God from every family and from every language and from every kind of people and from every nation. You have made them to be a holy nation of religious leaders to work for our God. They will be the leaders on the earth.”  
(Revelation 5:9b-10)

### Word List

**commission:** an order or command to do something

**persecute:** to harm or hurt

**public:** open for all people

**vision:** something seen in the mind like a dream but while still awake

# Participate in God's Mission to Everyone

The story of the Bible is about God's love for all people. From the beginning book of Genesis to the last book of Revelation, the truth is told that God wants to redeem and restore people to be His own. All people have sinned and disobeyed God. Sin separates us from God. But He loves us and wants us to know Him and be with Him now and forever.

God chose a man named Abraham to be the father of God's chosen people, Israel. God planned for Israel to tell the peoples of the world of His love. When Israel forgot God, He sent prophets to call them to turn back to Him. The prophets told them not to forsake God's teaching. Time after time, Israel failed to listen. They followed false gods and disobeyed God.

So God sent His own Son, Jesus, from heaven to fulfill His mission to redeem and restore all who would believe and obey Him. Jesus began His **public** ministry when He was about 30 years old. He chose 12 men, and He taught them all about God's mission. Soon, Jesus was crucified, dying for the sins of all people. On the third day after His death, Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus told His followers to continue God's mission to the people of the world until He returns again. Forty days later, He went to heaven to be with God.

In this lesson, we will study how Jesus' first followers went everywhere telling the Good News of God's love. As Jesus' followers, we also are to go everywhere to help all people know of God's love and salvation through Jesus.

**Things to Think About**

1. When you are going on your way every day, who do you tell about Jesus?
2. Why should we be obedient to Jesus' command to make followers of all people?
3. What do you know about people who are persecuted because they obey Jesus?
4. What do you think heaven will be like?

**God's Command to Go to All Nations (Matthew 28:16-20)**

Sometimes people call these verses the Great **Commission**. Jesus told His followers to continue to carry out God's mission to all people.

Some people think the Great Commission is *to go*. However, the original word *go* really means *as you are going*. The commission is *as we are going*, to *make followers* by telling them the Good News about God's salvation in Jesus. The commission is not just for religious leaders but for all believers. As we go to work, to school, or anywhere, we are to tell the Good News. We are to invite people to become followers of Jesus.

We are to help the new believers become one with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. New believers are to obey Jesus' command by being baptized and showing their faith in Him.

The commission is also to teach the Bible to new believers so they will understand how to live for God. We are to be good examples to new believers by studying the Bible and living as God commanded. If we ignore the commission, we are like the Israelites who turned from God to follow false gods.

**God's Power to Protect in All Difficulties (Acts 11:19-26)**

When Jesus went back to heaven, His followers began to tell the Good News to people in the city of Jerusalem. The religious leaders who were against Jesus began to **persecute** Jesus' followers, too. They killed a good man named Stephen who preached powerfully that Jesus is the Savior of all people.

Many of Jesus' followers left Jerusalem and fled to other cities. As they went, they told the Good News to the Jews, but

some also told non-Jews that Jesus was Savior of all people. God was with them even in this time of trouble. People believed in Jesus wherever His followers went. Even though the believers were persecuted, they had God's power to protect them in all their difficulties. God's mission was going forward through the believers.

Jesus' first followers were faithful to participate in God's mission. They faced many difficulties, but God helped them. As we go through life telling the Good News, we will have problems, too. But God is with us, too. His power will help us as we tell people about His love and salvation.

### **God's Promise Completed (Revelation 5:1-10)**

John was one of Jesus' first followers. When he was old, he was persecuted. He was sent to a small island away from other believers. While he was there, he had a **vision**. In the vision, God showed him what will happen when Jesus returns to earth. John's vision helps us know that God's promise will be completed at the right time. Then, all believers will be with Him forever.

John saw a lamb who was killed but

was alive again. This lamb represents Jesus, who was called "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). People in heaven sang a new song, saying, "It is right for You to take the book and break its locks. ...Your blood has bought men for God from every family and from every language and from every kind of people and from every nation. You have made them to be a holy nation of religious leaders to work for our God. They will be the leaders on the earth."

Jesus has commanded us to share His love and forgiveness and to meet people's needs. When we participate in God's mission, we can know for sure that people will become followers of Jesus. God is making all believers into a holy nation to be with Him forever.

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### **Matthew 28:16-20**

**16** Then the eleven followers went to Galilee. They went to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

**17** When they saw Jesus, they worshiped Him. But some did not believe.

**18** Jesus came and said to them, "All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

**19** Go and make followers of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**20** Teach them to do all the things I have told you. And I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”

### **Acts 11:19-26**

**19** Those who went different places because of the trouble that started over Stephen had gone as far as the cities of Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch. They had preached the Word, but only to the Jews.

**20** Some of the men from Cyprus and Cyrene returned to Antioch. They preached the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Greek people there.

**21** The Lord gave them power. Many people put their trust in the Lord and turned to Him.

**22** The news of this came to the church in Jerusalem. They sent Barnabas to Antioch.

**23** When he got there and saw how good God had been to them, he was full of joy. He told them to be true and faithful to the Lord.

**24** Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And many people became followers of the Lord.

**25** From there Barnabas went on to the city of Tarsus to look for Saul.

**26** When he found Saul, he brought him back with him to Antioch. For a year they taught many people in the church. The followers were first called Christians in Antioch.

### **Revelation 5:1-10**

**1** I saw a book in the right hand of the One Who sat on the throne. It had writing on the inside and on the back side. It was locked with seven locks.

**2** I saw a powerful angel calling with a loud voice, “Who is able to open the book and to break its locks?”

**3** No one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look in it.

**4** Then I began to cry with loud cries. I cried because no one was good enough to open the book or to look in it.

**5** One of the leaders said to me, “Stop crying. See! The Lion from the family group of Judah has power and has won. He can open the book and break its seven locks. He is of the family of David.”

**6** I saw a Lamb standing in front of the twenty-four leaders. He was before the throne and in front of the four living beings. He looked as if He had been killed. He had seven horns and seven eyes. These are the seven Spirits of God. They have been sent out into all the world.

**7** The Lamb came and took the book from the right hand of the One Who sat on the throne.

**8** When the Lamb had taken the book, the four living beings and the twenty-four leaders got down before Him. Each one had a harp. They all had pots made of gold, full of special perfume, which are the prayers of the people who belong to God.

**9** They sang a new song, saying, “It is right for You to take the book and break its locks. It is because You were killed. Your blood has bought men for God from every family and from every language and from every kind of people and from every nation.

**10** You have made them to be a holy nation of religious leaders to work for our God. They will be the leaders on the earth.”