

**Adult  
Bible Study in  
Simplified  
English**

# **Study Guide**

## ***Help for All the Times of Our Lives***

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# Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

## Help for All the Times of Our Lives

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# Help for All the Times of Our Lives

## *Introduction*

*“There is a special time for everything.  
There is a time for everything that happens  
under heaven.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1)*

What is your age?

You may only be in the beginning time of adult life, full of energy and hope. It is hard to think about a time when you might be older.

You may already be a “senior” adult, an older adult with much wisdom, experience, and many memories.

You may be somewhere in between, not old, not young.

If you are young, be careful to think that getting older is a long way off. If you have good health, and nothing bad happens, the time will come soon when *you* will have gray hair. Read these lessons to know yourself and to understand those who are already older.

If you are past the time of youth, study these Bible lessons with at least two purposes in mind:

- (1) to prepare for the rest of your time;
- (2) to teach those who are younger.

Everyone can learn how to care for people of all ages.

### **Studying These Lessons**

These lessons begin with Bible stories of young people and end with Bible stories of older adults. You will learn what the Bible says about people in all the ages of life.

Look at the special *Bible Timeline: Overview of Old Testament People and Events* before reading each lesson to find out when the person in that story lived and where their story happened in the Bible.

The people in these lessons were chosen for these reasons:

- whether their age was known in the Bible verses
- how their actions teach people today
- finding women as well as men that we can learn from
- studying people and verses not recently used in BaptistWay Bible studies

### Ages of Adult Life

When do you stop being a young adult and become middle-aged? This might happen when your own children are getting ready for college. You have to say, “If my own children are now young adults, how can I call myself a young adult?”

When does someone become old? We often laugh and say, “*Old* is at least ten years older than what you are.” That could be 90 years old if you are 80. Or if you are 40, then 50 is “old.”

These lessons are not divided into units: Young, Middle, or Senior Adults. One reason is that each person sees those ages as something different. Life goes from one age to the next without any big sign telling us when they happen. Sometimes we only notice when we look at new and old pictures of ourselves or see ourselves in the mirror.

Also, each person may do things at different ages. Today, some 40-year-old women are having their first child. Death can happen to young adults. Senior adults get married.

These lessons go from one story to the next in the same way. Each story can teach us something about ourselves, no matter our age.

Daniel (lesson 1), Samson (lesson 2), Joseph (lesson 3), and Rebekah (lesson 4) might be thought of as young adults.

Samuel (lesson 11) and Moses (12) could be considered senior adults.

The other studies are about people who are somewhere between young and old.

Joseph is studied three times, as a young adult (lesson 3) and again later in his life (in lessons 7 and 9).

Plan to learn about yourself and people you love in **Help for All the Times of Our Lives**.

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### *About the Writer*

**Phyllis Merritt** has taught ESL since 1970, serving as a home missionary in New York City, New Mexico, Georgia, and Texas. She has taught English in China 12 summers and is a Bible Study and English teacher at Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco, Texas where she and her husband, Jack, are members.

# Help for All the Times of Our Lives

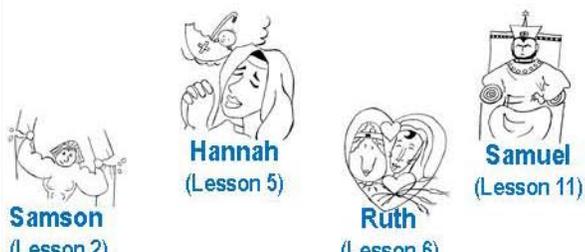
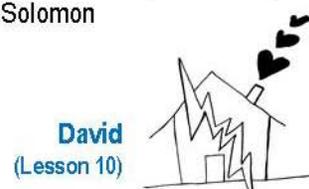
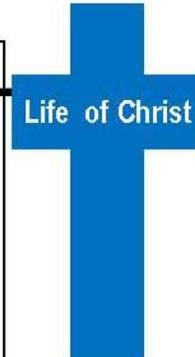
## *Lesson Overview*

Lesson 1	<b>Daniel and His Friends: Choose to be Faithful</b>	Daniel 1
Lesson 2	<b>Samson: Trust God, Not Self</b>	Judges 16:4-9, 15-30
Lesson 3	<b>Joseph: Gain Wisdom</b>	Genesis 37:2-14, 18-28 Genesis 39:1-12
Lesson 4	<b>Rebekah: Find Love</b>	Genesis 24:34-51, 58-67
Lesson 5	<b>Hannah: Pray for a Child</b>	1 Samuel 1:1-20
Lesson 6	<b>Ruth: Find Love After Loss</b>	Ruth 1:1-19a; 3:6-13; 4:13-17
Lesson 7	<b>Joseph: Use Abilities to Serve Others</b>	Genesis 41:28-30,35-57; 45:4-8
Lesson 8	<b>Caleb: Become a Wise and Brave Leader</b>	Numbers 13:17-20, 23-33; Joshua 14:6-11
Lesson 9	<b>Joseph: A Good Son and a Good Parent</b>	Genesis 47:27 to 48:2, 8-19; 49:33 to 50:6
Lesson 10	<b>David: Family Troubles</b>	2 Samuel 13:1-2, 20-22, 30, 32-33, 37; 14:23-24; 15:7-14; 18:6-15, 33
Lesson 11	<b>Samuel: Leaders Change</b>	1 Samuel 8:1-10; 12:1-5
Lesson 12	<b>Moses: A Life Lived Well</b>	Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34:1-12
Lesson 13	<b>Christ Gives the Best Life</b>	1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 35-44, 50-57

## Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide: Introduction

## Help for All the Times of Our Lives

*Bible Timeline: Overview of Old Testament People and Events*

before 1750 B.C.	about 1750-1350 B.C.	about 1350-1250 B.C.	about 1300-1200 B.C.	
<p><b>1</b> <u>Creation and Early Records</u>  <b>Book:</b> Genesis 1-11  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah</p>	<p><b>2</b> <u>The Patriarchs</u>  <b>Book:</b> Genesis 12-50  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Abraham, Sarah, Lot, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Joseph</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Joseph</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rebekah</b> (Lesson 4)</p>	<p><b>3</b> <u>The Exodus</u>  <b>Books:</b> Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers 1-12  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Moses, Aaron</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moses</b> (Lesson 12)</p>	<p><b>4</b> <u>Wandering in the Wilderness and Entering the Promised Land</u>  <b>Books:</b> Numbers 13-36, Deuteronomy, Joshua  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Caleb, Rahab, Joshua</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Caleb</b> (Lesson 8)</p>	
<p><b>5</b> <u>The Judges</u>  <b>Books:</b> Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel 1-12  <b>People:</b> Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Hannah, Samuel</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Samson</b> (Lesson 2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hannah</b> (Lesson 5)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ruth</b> (Lesson 6)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Samuel</b> (Lesson 11)</p>	<p><b>6</b> <u>The Kingdom</u>  <b>Books:</b> 1 Samuel 12-31, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1-12, 1 Chronicles 10 through 2 Chronicles 9  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Saul, Jonathan, David, Bathsheba, Nathan, Solomon</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>David</b> (Lesson 10)</p>	<p><b>7</b> <u>The Divided Kingdom</u>  <b>Books:</b> 1 Kings 12-22, 2 Kings 1-17, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah 1-39, 2 Chronicles 10-28  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Kings of Israel and Judah, Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah</p>		
<p><b>8</b> <u>Only Judah</u>  <b>Books:</b> 2 Kings 17-25, Isaiah 1-39, Micah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, 2 Chronicles 29-36  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Kings of Judah, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Hezekiah, Josiah, Huldah, Jeremiah</p>	<p><b>9</b> <u>The Exile</u>  <b>Books:</b> Ezekiel, Isaiah 40-66, Obadiah, 2 Chronicles 36, Daniel  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Daniel</b> (Lesson 1)</p>	<p><b>10</b> <u>Return from Exile</u>  <b>Books:</b> Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Malachi, 2 Chronicles 36  <b>People Who Lived in This Time:</b> Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Life of Christ</b></p> 	<p>721-587 B.C.</p> <p>597-539 B.C.</p> <p>539-333 B.C.</p> <p>About 55 A.D.</p> <p><b>11</b> <u>Paul writes letters to church in Corinth</u></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>(Lesson 13)</b></p>

# Help for All the Times of Our Lives

## *Word List*

### Lesson 1

**compromise:** to settle a disagreement by *compromise* means each person gets some of what they wanted, but not all they wanted. Also, *compromise* can mean to do less than your best in order to get a job done quickly.

**cuneiform:** an ancient language of wedge-shaped characters, usually written on clay tablets with a sharpened stick.

### Lesson 2

**humble:** not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people

**Nazirite:** a person set apart to serve God. A Nazirite promises not to drink wine or strong drink, never to cut their hair, to stay away from dead bodies (Numbers 6:3-6).

### Lesson 3

**mature:** a person who thinks and acts like an adult

**tattle-tale:** to tell untrue things about another person; usually something a young child does

### Lesson 4

**negotiate:** reach an agreement or compromise by discussing with others

### Lesson 5

**longing:** to want very much, a strong feeling of need or desire for someone or something

**boasted:** to say something with too much pride in yourself for what you have done

**infertility or infertile:** unable to become pregnant or unable to carry a pregnancy to birth

### Lesson 6

**kinsman-redeemer:** the nearest male in the family; in the law of Israel, when someone was widowed, an unmarried man in the family would marry her and take care of her

**redeem:** when someone pays the price so that a person can be free. This is what Christ did when He gave His life to pay for our sins. Then God could forgive us and we could have life that lasts forever.

**resident alien:** A foreigner who is a permanent

*resident* of the country in which he or she lives, but does not have citizenship

# Help for All the Times of Our Lives

## *Word List*

### Lesson 7

**cup-carrier:** gave the king's cup to the king whenever the king drank; always drank some of the wine before he gave it to the king to show there was no poison in it; always near to the king; Joseph often talked with the cup-carrier in prison and learned many things about Pharaoh.

**famine:** a time when food plants do not grow, so people do not have food to eat

### Lesson 8

**Promised Land:** the land that God promised to give to Abraham and his family

### Lesson 9

**sandwich generation:** adults who take care of their parents and their own children

**boomerang kids:** adult children returning to live at their parents' home, sometimes with their own children

**Jacob/Israel:** *Israel* is Jacob's name as the head of the family. This family would become a nation called *Israel*.

**generations:** groups of people in a family of similar age; parents, children, children's children are three generations

### Lesson 10

**handsome:** good-looking; usually a male is called handsome and a female is called beautiful

**united:** people or groups working together well and in agreement with each other

### Lesson 11

**retire:** leave your job and stop going to work, usually at a certain age

**bribe:** take or give money rather than make fair decisions

**anoint:** pour oil on someone's head for a special purpose; part of the ceremony of giving a position to someone

### Lesson 12

**mountaintop experiences:** times when we feel God is near us in a very special way

### Lesson 13

**resurrection:** to become alive after death

**loving-favor:** grace; God's love that no one deserves

# Help for All the Times of Our Lives

## *Memory Verses*

**Lesson 1**

“If you do not have wisdom, ask God for it. He is always ready to give it to you and will never say you are wrong for asking.”  
(James 1:5)

**Lesson 2**

“Good understanding wins favor, but the way of the sinful is hard.” (Proverbs 13:15)

**Lesson 3**

“The Lord was with Joseph, and all went well with him....” (Genesis 39:2a)

**Lesson 4**

“Then I bowed low and worshipped the Lord. I gave honor and thanks to the Lord.” (Genesis 24:48a)

**Lesson 5**

“Then Eli answered, ‘Go in peace. May the God of Israel do what you have asked of Him.’” (1 Samuel 1:17)

**Lesson 6**

“But Ruth said, ‘Do not beg me to leave you or turn away from following you. I will go where you go. I will live where you live. Your people will be my people. And your God will be my God.’” (Ruth 1:16)

**Lesson 7**

“God sent me before you to make sure that your people will keep living on the earth. Now many of you will be saved.”  
(Genesis 45:7)

**Lesson 8**

“So Moses promised on that day, ‘For sure the land where your foot has stepped will be a gift to you and your children forever. Because you have followed the Lord my God with all your heart.’” (Joshua 14:9)

**Lesson 9**

“Honor your father and your mother, so your life may be long in the land the Lord your God gives you.” (Exodus 20:12)

**Lesson 10**

“A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.”  
(Proverbs 10:1)

**Lesson 11**

“They said, ‘You have always been honest with us. You have not made it hard for us, or taken anything from any man’s hand.’”  
(1 Samuel 12:4)

**Lesson 12**

“Moses was 120 years old when he died. But his eyes were not weak, and his strength had not left him.” (Deuteronomy 34:7)

**Lesson 13**

“I am different now. It is all because of what God did for me by His loving-favor. His loving-favor was not wasted. I worked harder than all the other missionaries. But it was not I who worked. It was God’s loving-favor working through me.” (I Corinthians 15:10)

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 1: Daniel and His Friends: Choose to be Faithful

### Bible Text

Daniel 1

### Memory Verse

"If you do not have wisdom,  
ask God for it. He is always  
ready to give it to you and  
will never say you are  
wrong for asking."

(James 1:5)



*Find Daniel on the  
Bible Timeline in box 9.*

### Word List

**compromise:** to settle a disagreement by *compromise* means each person gets some of what they wanted, but not all they wanted. Also, *compromise* can mean to do less than your best in order to get a job done quickly.

**cuneiform:** an ancient language of wedge-shaped characters, usually written on clay tablets with a sharpened stick.

### The Lesson

Has there been a time in your life when you were far from home with people who did not know you? Did you sometimes wonder what God wanted you to do? Did you always do the right thing? Did you know how to

stand up for yourself, your values, your faith, your God, even in times that were difficult?

The Book of Daniel gives help so we can have power to live for God and choose to be faithful even when it is not easy.

Important people ordered Daniel and his friends to do things that would not please God. Daniel and his friends boldly refused. They could have been killed for refusing! But God looked after them because they were loyal to Him.

### Israel's Treasures Taken to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-5)

The time was about 605 years before the birth of Jesus. God had warned His people many times about their sin. But they would not obey Him. God used a foreign king to punish them. Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem with his army from Babylonia. The Jews had God's special house in Jerusalem (called the Temple). They thought they were safe. But the foreign king took holy things from the Temple and gave them to a false god.

Then the king took something even more important. He took the Jewish people as slaves. They were taken to live in Babylonia, a strange land almost 1,000 miles away. The people of Babylonia worshipped many false

gods. The Jews knew they would probably never see their homeland again.

The king sent his head ruler to the prisoners. He wanted young men from the best Jewish families. They must be smart, good-looking, and strong. They would be trained for three years to serve in the king's house.

The king wanted them to learn his language and writings. The Jewish men probably had to learn to write **cuneiform**. It



*Babylonian almanac written in cuneiform script on a clay tablet*

was the international language of that time, much like English is today. They would study science, history, languages, and

astronomy. The king wanted the Jewish young men to eat the same kind of food that the king ate. They were to drink the wine that the king drank. He wanted them to start thinking the way he thought.

Daniel and his three friends were chosen by the king. Now their lives would never be the same.

### **Daniel's Bravery (Daniel 1:6-10)**

Daniel and his friends had Jewish names. These names gave honor to the one true God. But the king's official wanted to

erase all that was Jewish about these young men. So he gave them new names—Babylonian names. These new names gave honor to the false gods of Babylon.

Think about each name change:

- The name **Daniel** (*God is my judge*) was changed to **Belteshazzar** (*Bel's prince*).
- **Hananiah** (*beloved by the Lord*) became **Shadrach** (*illuminated by Sun-god*).
- **Misael** (*who is as God*) was changed to **Meshach** (*who is like Venus*).
- **Azariah** (*the Lord is my help*) was changed to **Abed-nego** (*servant of Nego*).

Next, the king's official brought food from the king. But Daniel made up his mind that he would not make himself unclean by eating the king's best food and wine. God had made rules about the kinds of food that Jews should eat. They were not to eat pork. They were not to eat food given to idols.

Daniel asked the head ruler to allow him and his friends to eat food that was not used to honor false gods (verse 8). This showed how brave he was. He would not **compromise** what he knew was right. But the official was afraid he would be killed if he did not obey the king's command completely.

Daniel had learned as a young boy that there was only one true God. He knew God

was in control, even in terrible times. Daniel chose to trust God.

### **The Test (Daniel 1:11-14)**

Daniel made an offer to the head official. He asked the man to give them vegetables and water for 10 days only. After 10 days, Daniel and his friends seemed healthier than the young men who ate the royal food. So, the guard agreed they could keep on eating vegetables and water.

They continued to go to school. They learned the history of the Babylonian people. They learned to speak Assyrian. They learned all about the government of Assyria.

### **Things to Think About**

1. Why did Nebuchadnezzar want the young men to learn the writing and language of the Babylonians as they served in the king's palace?
2. Daniel and his friends did not want to eat the king's best food and wine. What are some things that are common where you live that you should not do?
3. Do you think people who are bold in their faith (like Daniel and his friends) have more or less difficulty than others? Does it really matter if you are true to your faith in God? Why or why not?
4. Do you think compromise happens all at once or a little at a time? What are the signs that someone is starting to compromise their faith? How can it be stopped?
5. What is happening in your life now? What would you like for a friend to pray for you?
6. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

Daniel trusted God bravely when put to the test over what kinds of food to eat. He learned that when we obey God, He blesses our obedience.

### **The Outcome (Daniel 1:15-21)**

It was not easy to obey God in Babylon. But God helped Daniel and his friends to be faithful. He also made them very wise. God gave Daniel a special gift so that Daniel could understand all kinds of dreams.

At the end of three years, the king talked to all the young men. Nebuchadnezzar asked questions to see how wise they were. God had made them so wise that they were better than the other young men. They were even much better than all the older wise men. Daniel and his three friends were 10 times smarter than their teachers.

God made them to become important people in a foreign country, a country where people worshiped false gods. In that country, Daniel and his friends were able to stay faithful to the one true God.

God knew that they would stay loyal to Him, even if He asked them to do harder things. Daniel honored God by doing the right things. They made wise choices in a land that didn't worship the one true God. Daniel served in the king's palace for almost 60

years, from 597 to 538 B.C. The rest of the book of Daniel tells about his long life and faithfulness to God. Even from the beginning when he was taken away to Babylon as a young man, Daniel served God.

Daniel chose to be faithful.

### Daniel 1

1 In the third year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came against Jerusalem. His army was all around the city.

2 The Lord let him take King Jehoiakim of Judah, with some of the objects of the house of God. He brought them to the house of his god in the land of Shinar, and put the objects into the store-room of his god.

3 Then the king told Ashpenaz, his head ruler, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, both those of the king's family and of the important leaders.

4 They were to be young men, perfect in body, good-looking, with wisdom, understanding, much learning and able to serve in the king's house. The king told Ashpenaz to teach them the writings and language of the Babylonians.

5 And the king gave them a share of his best food and wine every day. They were to be taught for three years, and after that they were to serve the king.

6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the sons of Judah.

7 The king's head ruler gave them new names. To Daniel he gave the name Belteshazzar. To Hananiah he gave the name Shadrach. To Mishael he gave the name Meshach. And to Azariah he gave the name Abed-nego.

9 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not make himself unclean with the king's best food and wine. So he asked the head ruler to allow him not to make himself unclean.

9 Now God gave Daniel favor and pity in the eyes of the head ruler.

10 The head ruler said to him, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has said you were to have so much and he would see that you were not looking as good as the other young men who are as old as you. The king would cut off my head because of you."

11 Then Daniel said to the man whom the head ruler had chosen to watch over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12 "Test your servants for ten days. Give us only vegetables to eat and water to drink.

13 Then compare how we look with the young men who are eating the king's best food. And do with us what you think is best by what you see."

14 So he listened to them, and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of ten days they looked even better. They were fatter than all the young men who had been eating the king's best food.

16 So the man who watched over them took away the best food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

17 God gave these four young men much learning and understanding in all kinds of writings and wisdom. Daniel even had understanding in all kinds of special dreams.

18 At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the head ruler brought them to Nebuchadnezzar.

19 The king talked with them, and found no one like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they became the king's own helpers.

20 Every time the king asked them questions that needed wise and understanding answers, he found that they knew ten times more than all the wonder-workers under his rule who used their secret ways.

21 And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

# Adult Bible Study

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*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

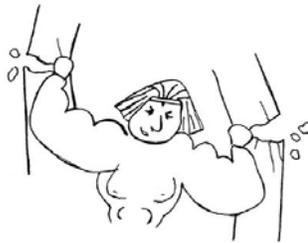
## Lesson 2: Samson: Trust God, Not Self

### Bible Text

Judges 16:4-9, 15-30

### Memory Verse

"Good understanding wins favor, but the way of the sinful is hard." (Proverbs 13:15)



*Find Samson on the Bible Timeline in box 5.*

### Word List

**humble:** not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people

**Nazirite:** a person set apart to serve God.

A Nazirite promises not to drink wine or strong drink, never to cut their hair, to stay away from dead bodies (Numbers 6:3-6).

### The Lesson

Two-year-olds are not the only ones who like to tell others, "Don't help me, I can do it myself." Whatever our age, we all go through times when we think we can take care of our problems alone. We do not want anyone's help. We do not want to trust God.

The book of Judges tells about a man who thought he could do it all—and all by

himself. Samson had been a judge in Israel for 20 years. He had special strength from God. He began to think he could do anything—without God's blessing.

Maybe you have heard the saying, "The bigger they are, the harder they fall." This is a story that teaches the truth of that saying.

### Delilah Tries to Learn Samson's Secret (Judges 16:4-9)

God gave Samson great strength so he could help his people. An angel from God promised Samson's parents that their son would be brave and strong. He would make the enemy (the Philistines) leave the land. He would be a **Nazirite**. To show this promise, Samson was to never cut his hair.

Then Samson fell in love with Delilah. She was beautiful, but dangerous. Samson was strong, but he was a weak judge of women. The five rulers of the Philistines told Delilah they would each give her 1,100 pieces of silver to find out what made Samson strong. Delilah begged Samson to tell her what gave him power so she could get the money.

Three times Samson lied to Delilah by telling her wrong ways that would take away his power. Each time she tried, she failed. The first time she tied him with seven new ropes that were not dried. He broke them. The

second time she used new ropes again. He broke them as if they were strings. The third time he told her to weave his hair into a piece of cloth and nail it down. He pulled out easily.

Samson probably knew these false ways sounded as if his power was from magic. But Samson knew His power came from God. Samson's promise to never cut his hair showed his obedience to God. No, it was not magic. It was God's plan for Samson to be stronger than any other man.

### **Samson's Fall (Judges 16:15-22)**

When these three ways failed to make Samson weak, Delilah complained, "If you loved me, you would tell me the secret of your strength." She kept talking like this for days.

Finally, Samson told her what she wanted to know. "If my hair is cut, I will lose my power." Why would he tell her this? Surely he knew she was a woman not to be trusted! But he gave in to her begging.

Perhaps he had forgotten his promises to God. Perhaps his desire to please Delilah made him think nothing bad would happen to him. He began to trust in his own power, and he stopped trusting God.

When Samson went to sleep, Delilah had his hair cut off. Then Samson woke up and tried to escape as he had in the past. But

now, his strength was gone. The Bible says that Samson did not even know that the Lord had left him. How very sad!

The Philistines cut out his eyes and took him to Gaza to spend the rest of his days in prison, pushing a stone to crush corn. This was a job usually done by women. The strongest man in the land was now blind, weak, and forced to do the most **humble** work.

### **Samson's Revenge (Judges 16:23-30)**

Some time later, about 3,000 Philistines gathered for a special meeting to thank their god, Dagon. They were full of joy because Samson was beaten. They brought him out so they could make fun of him. Their greatest enemy was now powerless and blind.

But Samson's blindness and his time in prison had given him much time to think. Perhaps he remembered what it was like to trust God again. Perhaps the humble work had humbled his proud heart. Perhaps he thought about his sin—and about God's faithfulness.

His enemies did not know anything about the God Who is faithful. Before Samson's birth, God said Samson would be a Nazirite until the day he died. God was faithful when Samson was not. Samson could still be part of God's plan.

Samson's hair had grown again while

he was in prison. He asked God for strength one last time so he could pay back the Philistines for the loss of his eyes.

Tall stone pillars held up the building where the Philistines praised their false god. Samson was resting against the pillars. God answered his prayer and gave Samson super-strength again. He pushed the pillars with both arms until the whole building fell down. Three thousand Philistines died that day—along with Samson.

Just moments before, the Philistines had said, “Our god (the god for corn) has delivered our enemy into our hands.” But as

the building fell down, they found out the truth: Their god could not save them.

### What We Can Learn from Samson

What can we learn from this? Even if we have only a little trust, God stays true and worthy of our trust. It is not possible for God to act in a way that is different from Who He is. He is faithful. He always keeps His promises.

Read this sentence and think about what it can mean to you: *Experience is what we have when we learn from our own mistakes. Wisdom is what we have when we learn from others’ mistakes.*

We can think about times in our lives when we used our own strength and did not ask God for help. Samson shows us that being strong does not protect us from bad choices. His pride had hurt him. Finally, Samson turned back to God and asked for help. And God helped him as He promised He would.

None of us has Samson’s strength. But all of us must choose whether to obey God and trust Him—or to selfishly trust in ourselves. Samson’s advice? Trust God. Always trust God.

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### Judges 16:4-9, 15-30

4 After this Samson loved a woman in the valley of Sorek. Her name was Delilah.

5 The leaders of the Philistines came to her, saying, “Tempt Samson to tell you the secret of

### Things to Think About

1. Samson let Delilah turn him away from God. Do we let friends do this to us? How can we stop doing wrong things?
2. Delilah was a test of Samson’s trust in God. Samson chose to trust his own strength. He went against his vow as a Nazirite. Do you ever get tired of being strong when you are tempted, tired of making the right choices?
3. Do you think Samson returned to God only because he wanted to hurt his enemies, the Philistines?
4. In Judges 16:28, Samson prayed, “Give me strength only this once, O God.” Have you ever prayed an “only this once” prayer to God? Does God answer “only this once” prayers every time?
5. Samson has been called the “Prodigal Son of the Old Testament who wasted his life in wild living. But Samson was the prodigal who came home dead.” What are your thoughts on this statement?
6. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

his powerful strength. Find out how we can get power over him so we can tie him and hold him. Then we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver.”  
6 So Delilah said to Samson, “I beg you. Tell me the secret of your powerful strength. Tell me how one can get power over you and tie you up and hold you.”

7 Samson said to her, “They must tie me with seven new ropes that have not been dried. Then I will become weak and be like any other man.”

8 So the leaders of the Philistines brought her seven new ropes that had not been dried. And Delilah tied Samson with them.

9 She had men hiding and waiting in another room. She said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he broke the ropes like a string breaks when it touches fire. So they did not find the secret of his strength.

...15 Delilah said to Samson, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have lied to me these three times. You have not told me the secret of your powerful strength.”  
16 She asked him day after day until his soul was troubled to death.

17 So he told her all that was in his mind. He said to her, “My hair has never been cut. For I have been a Nazirite to God from the time I was born. If my hair is cut, my strength will leave me. I will become weak and be like any other man.”

18 Delilah saw that Samson had told her the truth. She sent and called the leaders of the Philistines, saying, “Come once again. For he has told me all he knows.” So the leaders of the Philistines came to her. And they brought the money in their hands.

19 She made Samson sleep on her knees. Then she called for a man to cut off the seven parts of Samson’s hair. She began to hurt Samson, and his strength left him.

20 She said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” He awoke from his sleep and said, “I

will go out as I have at other times. I will shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

21 The Philistines took hold of him and cut out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and tied him with brass chains. Samson was made to grind grain in the prison.

22 But the hair of his head started to grow again after it was cut off.

23 Now the leaders of the Philistines gathered to give a large gift to their god Dagon. They were happy, for they said, “Our god has given us Samson, the man who has fought against us.”

24 The people praised their god when they saw Samson. They said, “Our god has given us the one who fought against us, destroyed our country, and killed many of us.”

25 After the people had had much to drink, they said, “Bring Samson here so we can have some fun with him.” So they called Samson out of prison and made fun of him. They made him stand between the stone pillars that held up the building.  
26 Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand, “Let me feel the tall pillars that hold up the building. I want to rest against them.”

27 Now the building was full of men and women. All the leaders of the Philistines were there, and there were about 3,000 men and women on the roof looking down and laughing at Samson.

28 Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, I beg You. Remember me. Give me strength only this once, O God. So I may now punish the Philistines for my two eyes.”

29 Samson took hold of the two center pillars that held up the building. He pushed against them, with his right hand on one and his left hand on the other.

30 Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” Then he pushed with all his strength so that the building fell on the leaders and all the people in it. He killed more at his death than he killed in his life.

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 3: Joseph: Gain Wisdom

### Bible Text

Genesis 37:2-14, 18-28

Genesis 39:1-12

### Memory Verse

"The Lord was with Joseph,  
and all went well with  
him...." (Genesis 39:2a)



*Find Joseph on the  
Bible Timeline in box 2.*

### Word List

**mature:** a person who thinks and acts like an adult

**tattle-tale:** to tell untrue things about another person; usually something a young child does

### The Lesson

Did you ever do something when you were younger that you would not do now that you are older—and perhaps wiser? Can you remember that you did not think anything bad would happen from what you did? Perhaps you thought you had all the answers and were happy to let others know it.

Joseph was like that. But he later changed and became someone who was more interested in what others needed than what he

wanted. He became a leader, a man of strength, wisdom, and faith. How did this happen? How did he become **mature**? It was a long journey.

### Only in My Dreams (Genesis 37:2-6, 10-14)

Would you want to go back in time and be 17 again? Maybe not. Joseph was 17 years old and he was a **tattle-tale**. He told his father bad and untrue things about his brothers.

Joseph was a favorite son of a favorite wife.

His father showed others that Joseph was the favorite by giving him a special coat. It was longer than most coats and had sleeves. It was beautiful, with stripes and colors. This coat would be hard to work in. People who had to work wore coats that were short and had no sleeves to get in the way. This beautiful coat did not help his brothers to like him. They could think of no kind words to say about Joseph. They hated their brother because their father loved Joseph the most.

Two dreams came to Joseph. The dreams told that one day he would be a great leader. In one dream, the brothers were all in a field. Joseph's bundle of grain stood up. The bundles of his brothers gathered around it and bowed down to his bundle. In the other dream, the sun and moon and 11 stars were bowing down to Joseph. The dreams meant

all his brothers and father would one day come before Joseph and bow down to him.

His father, Jacob, raised him to think he was important. (Later, Jacob was renamed Israel.) Now Joseph's dreams showed he would be more important than anyone in his family. When he told his brothers, they were so angry! It made them hate him more.

Soon after, Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers and the sheep. The brothers were about 50 miles away. Joseph never thought when he started out that he would never return home again.

### **Keep the Dream(er) Alive (Genesis 37:18-21, 26-28)**

The brothers saw Joseph coming in his special coat. They decided to kill "the dreamer" and throw him into a dry well. They planned to tell Jacob that wild animals had eaten Joseph. But one brother, Reuben, spoke for Joseph and told the others not to kill him. (He planned to get Joseph later and send him back home.)

When Joseph came, they tore off his coat and ripped it to pieces. They threw Joseph into the well. Then they sat down to eat lunch. Their brother, Judah, saw some traders on camels coming up the road that leads to Egypt. He came up with a new plan:

Sell Joseph to the traders for 20 pieces of silver. Reuben was away, so he could not save him. Perhaps the brothers thought, "No more dreamer. No more bragging."

### **Beautiful Dreamer (Genesis 39:1-7, 11-12)**

God was with Joseph when he was in the deep hole. God was with Joseph on the way to Egypt. The trip to Egypt was about 250 miles. An important man named Potiphar bought Joseph to be a house servant. God helped Joseph to work hard for Potiphar.

Potiphar could see that the Lord was with Joseph and that the Lord helped Joseph do a good job. Later on, Joseph was put in charge of all of Potiphar's house and all the servants. God had blessed Joseph and now God was blessing everything Potiphar had.

Joseph was learning what God wanted him to learn. He would be ready for the next job God had for him. It would take time and it would not be easy. More hard things were about to happen to Joseph.

Joseph was strong and good-looking. Potiphar's wife wanted him. Joseph knew she was his boss's wife. He knew that it would be a sin against Potiphar and against God to do what she wanted. He refused.

But one day, she grabbed his coat and told others that Joseph had tried to hurt her.

But it was not true. Joseph had done nothing. He had even run away from her!

But Joseph was thrown in prison. Still, God had a plan for Joseph's life.

### What We Can Learn from Joseph

When Joseph was 17, he did not always think about what he said. In time, he grew to become a person of truth and faith. His brothers had hated him. But one day, he would care for them and love them. Hard times helped him become a good leader.

Ephesians 4:13 says, "All of us are to be as one in the faith and in knowing the Son

of God. We are to be full-grown Christians standing as high and complete as Christ is Himself." We learn from Joseph that God is at work in our lives, even when we are having trouble. God cares for us. He leads us toward maturity through life's hard times.

### Genesis 37:2-14, 18-28

2 This is the story of the children of Jacob and of their children. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he was caring for the flock with his brothers. The boy was with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph told his father about how bad they were.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because Joseph was born when he was an old man. And Israel made him a long coat of many colors.

4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers. So they hated Joseph and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 Then Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.

6 He said to them, "Listen to the dream that I have had.

7 We were gathering grain in the field. My bundle of grain stood up. Your bundles of grain gathered around it and bowed down to my bundle."

8 Then his brothers said to him, "Are you going to be our king? Are you going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for what he said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. He said, "I have had another dream. The sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 He told it to his father and to his brothers. His father spoke sharp words to him, saying, "What is this dream you have had? Will I and your mother and brothers come to bow ourselves down to the ground in front of you?"

### Things to Think About

1. How do you define maturity? Does it mean that you can take care of yourself, do not depend on your parents, finished your education, married, have a job, have children, or have reached a certain age?

2. Think about yourself at age 17. Did you think you were already mature? Did you always make good decisions? Were you too confident? Are there any decisions you made then that you would change if you could?

3. In America, teenage boys generally want to get away from home and live on their own someday. Do you think Joseph had these same kinds of feelings? Or do you think he had everything he needed as his father's favorite son and did not want to change?

4. God could have changed Joseph from favorite son to Pharaoh's second-in-command without Joseph being a slave or in prison. Why do you think God allowed Joseph to become a slave and go to prison for something he did not do?

5. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

11 Joseph's brothers were jealous of him. But his father thought about what he said.

12 Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

13 Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And Joseph said to him, "I will go."

14 Then Israel said, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock. Then come and tell me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

...18 When they saw him far away, before he came near them, they made plans to kill him.

19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer!

20 Now come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the deep holes. Then we will say that a wild animal ate him. And we will see what becomes of his dreams!"

21 But Reuben heard this and saved him from their hands, saying, "Let us not kill him."

22 Reuben then said, "Do not put him to death. Throw him into this hole here in the desert. But do not lay a hand on him." He wanted to be able to save Joseph and return him to his father.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they tore off his coat, the coat of many colors that he was wearing.

24 And they took him and threw him into the hole. The hole was empty and had no water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat. When they looked up, they saw a group of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. They were taking spices and perfumes on their camels to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, "What do we get by killing our brother and covering his blood?

27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him. For he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him.

28 Some Midianite traders were passing by. So

the brothers pulled Joseph up out of the hole. And they sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, and they took Joseph to Egypt.

### Genesis 39:1-12

1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt by the Ishmaelites. And Potiphar, an Egyptian leader, the head of the soldiers of Pharaoh's house, bought him from the Ishmaelites.

2 The Lord was with Joseph, and all went well with him. He was in the house of his boss the Egyptian.

3 Now his boss saw that the Lord was with him. He saw how the Lord made all that Joseph did go well.

4 So Joseph found favor in his eyes, and worked only for him. Potiphar made him the one to watch over his house and take care of all that he owned.

5 And from the time that he watched over his house and all he owned, the Lord brought good to the Egyptian's house because of Joseph. The Lord brought good upon all that he owned in the house and in the field.

6 So he put all he owned in Joseph's care. Having Joseph near, he did not need to think about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was strong and good-looking.

7 The time came when his boss's wife saw him, and she said, "Lie with me."

8 But he would not do it. He said to his boss's wife, "See, with me near, my boss does not worry about anything in the house. He has put all he owns in my care.

9 There is no one more important in this house than I. And he has held nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this sinful thing, and sin against God?"

10 She spoke to Joseph day after day. But he did not listen to her. He would not lie with her or be with her.

11 Then one day Joseph went into the house to do his work. None of the men of the house were inside.

12 She caught him by his coat, saying, "Lie with me!" But he ran out of the house leaving the coat in her hand.

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 4: Rebekah: Find Love

### Bible Text

Genesis 24:34-51, 58-67

### Memory Verse

"Then I bowed low and worshiped the Lord. I gave honor and thanks to the Lord." (Genesis 24:48a)

### Word List

**negotiate:** reach an agreement or compromise by discussing with others



*Find Rebekah on the Bible Timeline in box 2.*

### The Lesson

Talk to people you know who are married. They all have a story to tell about how and when they met. For some, it was in school. For others, it was their parents who introduced them. Some met on the Internet.

My great-grandmother met her future husband in England. She left her home to come with him to Texas in the 1880s. He came to be a pastor. One of his churches gave her a statue of Rebekah. The statue (shown here) shows Rebekah getting water for Abraham's servant and camels. Today, I have

that statue. It reminds me of the love shared by Rebekah and Isaac—as well as my great-grandparents.

How does God help us find the one to marry?

The story of Isaac and Rebekah gives us some lessons.



### The Search Begins (Genesis 24:1-41)

Abraham's wife, Sarah, died at age 127. Abraham was ten years older than Sarah. So, Abraham was at least 137 years old when he started looking for a wife for their son, Isaac. God had promised a blessing to all the world through Abraham's family. To make that happen, Isaac needed a wife and children.

Abraham asked his chief servant to go back to Abraham's home country to Abraham's relatives to look for a wife for Isaac. He did not want Isaac to have a wife from the women of Canaan. They did not believe in the one true God.

Isaac was not sent on the trip. Abraham told the servant to bring the woman back to meet Isaac. He took 10 camels which showed great wealth. He traveled to Haran to visit

Abraham's brother, Nahor. It was about 600 miles from where Abraham lived.

The servant wondered how he would find Abraham's family. How would he find the right woman for Isaac to marry? He prayed. This is the first prayer in the Bible where someone asks God for special help.

Abraham's servant prayed that God would send the right woman to get water for him and for his camels. He had not finished praying when a beautiful young woman named Rebekah came to the well. She was the granddaughter of Abraham's brother!

Abraham's servant asked her for a drink. She gave him a drink and also offered to get water for the camels. A camel can drink 25 gallons of water if they have not had water for a while. Rebekah's jar could hold no more than three gallons of water. Rebekah had to fill the jar 80 to 100 times! Only a kind, humble, polite, and generous person would get water for a traveler and his 10 camels.

Jesus said you can tell a good tree by its fruit—and you can tell a good person by their actions. How good is your fruit today? Would the servant have picked you?

### **The Negotiation (Genesis 24:34-67)**

Then the servant gave her a gold nose ring and two gold arm bracelets for her

kindness. He told her he was the servant of Abraham. He went to her family's home and told his story to Rebekah's family.

Rebekah listened as Abraham's servant explained he had come to find a wife for his master's son. He told how his prayers were answered when he met Rebekah. He asked Rebekah's father and brother for permission for Rebekah to marry Isaac.

Laban (Rebekah's brother) and Bethuel (Rebekah's father) said, "This is from the Lord. Here is Rebekah; take her and go and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed." Rebekah was asked and gave her agreement to go.

The servant explained that his master was a wealthy man, blessed by God. Then the servant gave Rebekah gold and silver jewelry and expensive clothes. He also gave precious things to her brother and mother. In those days, it was a custom for the father of the groom to give presents to the bride's family.

It took a lot of faith for both Rebekah and Isaac to trust their parents to make this decision. No one forced Rebekah to marry Isaac. Her family asked her whether she wanted to go. They asked if she would stay longer with them before leaving. Rebekah said she was willing to leave right away.

Rebekah's family knew they would probably never see her again. So, they blessed her as she left. They prayed that she would have many children and grandchildren. They prayed that her children and children's children would overcome their enemies.

The servant returned with Rebekah to Hebron. Isaac was in the field at sunset. Perhaps he was spending some quiet time with God. Perhaps he was wondering who would be coming to be his wife. He had waited patiently nearly four months while the servant was gone. Then, he saw a camel caravan coming. Maybe his bride was in it!

### Things to Think About

1. How has God worked in your life to meet your needs for love and family?
2. What are some ways God works through dating and courtship customs today?
3. What is important in deciding whom to marry?
4. Abraham's servant asked God for a sign to show him Isaac's future bride. Should Christians today ask God for signs? What cautions, if any, should believers have about asking for signs?
5. Some people read the story of Isaac and Rebekah and say that God has one right person for each person to marry. Others say God helps us as we make choices. Do you think there is such a thing as *the right one*? Why or why not?
6. What role should the church and believers play in helping married couples? How does your church help young adults?
7. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

Rebekah was so excited that she slid down off her camel. She covered her face to show that she was modest. A bride usually covered her face when she saw the bridegroom. She would only uncover her face after their first night together. Isaac married Rebekah. Although they had not met before their marriage, they loved each other deeply. Isaac's mother had died recently. The Bible says Rebekah was a comfort to Isaac.

### What We Can Learn from Rebekah

What are some things we should look for in the person we marry? Faith in God, kindness, not being selfish, and being generous. In the same way, we should look for these good things in our own life, too.

### Genesis 24

*(This Bible story is longer than usual. But we did not want you to miss any details, so we have included it all. To make it fit, we have presented it in paragraphs.)*

**34** So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. **35** And the Lord has brought much good to my boss. He has become rich. The Lord has given him flocks and cattle, silver and gold, men and women servants, and camels and donkeys. **36** My boss's wife Sarah gave birth to my boss's son when she was very old. And he has given him all he has.

**37** "My boss made me promise, saying, 'Do not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live. **38** But go to my father's house, to those of my family, and take a wife for my son there.' **39** I said to my owner,

‘What if the woman will not follow me?’ **40** He said to me, ‘The Lord, Whom I have always obeyed, will send His angel with you to make all go well during your visit there. You will take a wife for my son from those of my family and from my father’s house. **41** Then you will be free from your promise to me. When you come to those of my family, and if they do not give her to you, then you will be free from your promise to me.’

**42** “So I came to the well today. I said, ‘O Lord, the God of my boss Abraham, may all go well during my visit here. **43** See, I am standing by the well of water. If I say to the girl who comes out for water, “Let me drink a little water from your jar,” **44** and she says, “You drink, and I will get water for your camels also,” then let her be the woman whom the Lord has chosen for my boss’s son.” **45** Before I had finished speaking in my heart, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the well and got water. I asked her, ‘Let me drink.’ **46** And she was quick to take down her jar from her shoulder. She said, ‘Drink, and I will give water to your camels also.’ So I drank and she gave water to the camels also. **47** Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah and Nahor.’ And I put the gold objects on her nose and arms. **48** Then I bowed low and worshiped the Lord. I gave honor and thanks to the Lord, the God of my boss Abraham. For He had led me in the right way to take the daughter of my boss’s brother for his son. **49** So now if you will show kindness and be true to my boss, tell me. And if not, tell me so I may know which way to turn.”

**50** Then Laban and Bethuel answered, “This thing comes from the Lord. We cannot speak for or against it. **51** See, Rebekah is in front of you. Take her and go. Let her be the wife of your boss’s son, as the Lord has spoken.” **52** When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he put his

face to the ground before the Lord. **53** He brought out things made of silver and gold, and clothes, and gave them to Rebekah. He gave things of much worth to her brother and mother also. **54** Then he and the men with him ate and drank and stayed the night there. When they got up in the morning, he said, “Send me away to my boss.”

**55** But her brother and her mother said, “Let the girl stay with us a few days, at least ten. Then she may go.” **56** But he said to them, “Do not make me stay any more days, since the Lord has made my way go well. Send me away so I may go to my boss.” **57** They said, “We will call the girl and ask her what she wants to do.” **58** They called Rebekah and asked her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will go.” **59** So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse. They went with Abraham’s servant and the men who were with him. **60** They prayed that good would come to Rebekah, and said to her, “You are our sister. May you become the mother of millions. May your children and all their children’s children after them take over the cities of those who hate them.” **61** Then Rebekah and her servants got up on the camels and followed the man. So the servant of Abraham took Rebekah and left.

**62** Now Isaac had come from Beerlahairoi, and was living in the Negev. **63** Isaac had gone out to pray in the field in the evening. He looked up and saw that camels were coming. **64** And Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac. She got off the camel **65** and said to Abraham’s servant, “Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?” Abraham’s servant said, “He is my boss.” So she took a cloth and covered her face. **66** The servant told Isaac all the things he had done. **67** Then Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah’s tent, and she became his wife. And he loved her. So Isaac found comfort after his mother’s death.

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 5: Hannah: Pray for a Child

### Bible Text

1 Samuel 1:1-20

### Memory Verse

"Then Eli answered, 'Go in peace. May the God of Israel do what you have asked of Him.'"

(1 Samuel 1:17)

### Word List

**longing:** to want very much, a strong feeling of need or desire for someone or something

**boasted:** to say something with too much pride in yourself for what you have done

**infertility or infertile:** unable to become pregnant or unable to carry a pregnancy to birth



*Find Hannah on the Bible Timeline in box 5.*

### The Lesson

Sometimes we want something so much that we feel we cannot live without it. What we want may be a good thing. Some might wish to be married. Others might want their children to do well. Another person might wish for a child. Someone might want to live without pain.

Sometimes we pray and do not see an answer. It is so hard to live every day,

wanting so much for something we cannot have. Sometimes we pray, and nothing happens. So we wait...and wait...and wait.

Sometimes, we may feel a physical pain *and* a spiritual pain. It can make us bitter or angry or sad. Do you have a terrible pain or sadness in your life? Maybe you have prayed for something for years but it has not happened. As we will learn from Hannah, do not let these **longings** take you *away from God*. Instead, let these feelings bring you *closer to God*. In times of deep sorrow, we need God's loving-kindness more than ever.

### Deep Sorrow (1 Samuel 1:1-8)

The book of 1 Samuel tells that Hannah had deep sorrow. The first two verses of 1 Samuel tell us why: Hannah was married to a man who had two wives. The other wife had children, but Hannah had none.

Hannah's husband was Elkanah. The other wife was Peninnah. Three people in a marriage is never a good idea!

Genesis 2:24 explains that God's best plan was for a man to have only one wife. When a man had more than one wife, usually there was trouble between his wives. This was true in Hannah's family. Hannah's husband loved her more. But this made for problems with the second wife, Peninnah.

At that time, a woman felt shame if she had no children. A husband could divorce his wife if she did not have children. Sons were needed to grow up to receive the family name, land, and money. Also, a son would care for his aging mother after his father (her husband) died. If a wife could not have children, a man might take a second wife. This is probably what happened to Elkanah.

Holidays can be a time of joy. But they also can bring out a family's troubles. Every year on a Jewish holiday, Elkanah took his family to Shiloh to worship and make thank offerings to the Lord. It was about 15 miles from their home.

Everyone who came to celebrate the holiday shared a meal called the fellowship offering. Everyone shared part of the meat from the burnt sacrifice. Elkanah always gave a double part of the meat to Hannah, "for he loved Hannah" (verse 5). This made Peninnah more jealous of Hannah. Peninnah probably **boasted** that she had children, but Hannah did not. She was unkind and cruel way to Hannah. It made Hannah cry and unable to eat.

Elkanah tried to comfort his weeping wife. He told her that he was better for her than 10 sons. This sounds a little strange to our ears, but it was his way of saying how

much he loved her. A son would care for his aging mother, but Elkanah was promising to care for her even more than 10 sons would! He was not going to divorce her. He loved her. She was safe in his care.

But the sadness of **infertility** is deep, powerful, and painful. However, it was not Hannah's fault that she could not have children. The Bible says, "The Lord had made it so she could not have children" (verse 5). During Hannah's time, people saw everything that happened—good or bad—as something God had done. If a woman had children, they would say that God had blessed her. If she didn't, they would say that God had made it so she could not have children.

But sometimes, those **infertile** women saw God work in amazing ways. Hannah would soon find out what God was doing!

### **Hannah's Heart-Cry (1 Samuel 1:9-18)**

Hannah was very troubled. But she did

#### **Dig Deeper into God's Word**

Sometimes a woman's infertility was allowed by God so He could show His amazing power to heal her. Read about the women who saw God use their infertility for His good purposes:

- Sarah, Abraham's wife: Genesis 16:1-2; 21:1-7
- Rebekah, Isaac's wife: Genesis 25:21-26
- Rachel, Jacob's wife: Genesis 30:1-2, 22-24
- Manoah's wife: Judges 13:1-5
- Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah: Luke 1:5-25

not turn away from her faith in God. She prayed to the Lord and cried with sorrow. She did not pray in a selfish way. She wanted a son so that she could give him to God.

She went to the house of the Lord and told God how she felt. She prayed to the “Lord of All,” the all-powerful God. This is the first time that the Bible calls God by this name. It means that God is the ruler of everything that He made.

Hannah prayed without fear. She asked God for a son. She promised to give this child to the Lord. His hair would never be cut. This promise suggests that Hannah would raise her child as a Nazirite\*.

Hannah prayed in a humble way. She felt that God had forgotten her. But she knew

*\*See Numbers 6:1-21. Lesson 2 featured Samson, a Nazirite, Judges 13:3-5.*

### Things to Think About

1. Have you had prayers that you thought were not answered? How did you feel about yourself? About others? About God?
2. Hannah “poured out her soul” before the Lord. When have you “poured out your soul” to God?
3. At first, Eli judged Hannah. He did not see her sadness. Are we ever guilty of judging others and not seeing their hidden pain that does not show? How can we make sure we are not like Eli?
4. How does Hannah’s story help you to remember that God has heard your prayers even if you are still waiting for Him to answer?
5. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

that God was all-powerful. God was the only one Who could help her.

### The Answer (1 Samuel 1:19-27)

In those days, people did not have silent prayers. They prayed aloud. Eli the priest watched Hannah. He saw her lips moving, but he could not hear her speak. He thought maybe she had drunk too much wine. So spoke to Hannah. She answered him with respect. Then he knew that she was a good woman who trusted God.

Eli was kind to her and told her, “Go in peace. May the God of Israel do what you have asked of Him.”

Now she was not sad. She was trusting God to answer her prayer. Hannah could eat again. When the family returned home, God made it possible for Hannah to birth a son.

She named him Samuel, which means “I have asked the Lord for him,” or “God hears.”

When Samuel was three years old, Hannah fulfilled her promise to God. She took Samuel to the priest Eli where Samuel would be raised to serve God. She fulfilled her promise with a heart of thankfulness.

Later, Samuel grew up and became the last of the judges and the first prophet. He was a great leader who helped Israel change from being led by judges to being ruled by kings.

## What We Can Learn from Hannah

We sometimes wonder whether God has forgotten us. At these times, we need to be like Hannah. We can take our pain to God. God heard her prayers. He hears ours. That brought Hannah comfort even before her prayers were answered. Even in suffering, God can bring us joy and peace when we trust Him completely.

### 1 Samuel 1:1-20

1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim. His name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

2 He had two wives. The name of one was Hannah. The name of the other was Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 This man would go from his city each year to worship and to give gifts on the altar in Shiloh to the Lord of All. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were the Lord's religious leaders there.

4 On the day when Elkanah killed animals on the altar in worship, he would give part of the gift to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.

5 But he would give twice as much to Hannah, for he loved Hannah. But the Lord had made it so she could not have children.

6 Peninnah would try to make her very angry, because the Lord would not let her have children.

7 So it happened, year after year, each time Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, Peninnah would make her angry. Hannah cried and would not eat.

8 Then her husband Elkanah said to her,

“Hannah, why are you crying? Why are you not eating, and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?”

9 Then Hannah stood up after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh. Eli the religious leader was sitting on the seat by the door of the house of the Lord.

10 Hannah was very troubled. She prayed to the Lord and cried with sorrow.

11 Then she made a promise and said, “O Lord of All, be sure to look on the trouble of Your woman servant, and remember me. Do not forget Your woman servant, but give me a son. If You will, then I will give him to the Lord all his life. And no hair will ever be cut from his head.”

12 While she kept praying to the Lord, Eli was watching her mouth.

13 Hannah was speaking in her heart. Her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she had drunk too much.

14 Eli said to her, “How long will you be drunk? Put wine away from you.”

15 But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have not drunk wine or strong drink, but I was pouring out my soul to the Lord.

16 Do not think of your woman servant as a woman of no worth. For I have been speaking out of much trouble and pain in my spirit.”

17 Then Eli answered, “Go in peace. May the God of Israel do what you have asked of Him.”

18 And Hannah said, “Let your woman servant find favor in your eyes.” So she went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

19 The family got up early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord. Then they returned to their house in Ramah. Elkanah lay with his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her.

20 The Lord made it possible for her to have a child, and when the time came she gave birth to a son. She gave him the name Samuel, saying, “I have asked the Lord for him.”

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 6: Ruth: Find Love After Loss

### Bible Text

Ruth 1:1-19a;  
3:6-13; 4:13-17

### Memory Verse

"But Ruth said, "Do not beg me to leave you or turn away from following you. I will go where you go. I will live where you live. Your people will be my people. And your God will be my God.'" (Ruth 1:16)



*Find Ruth on the  
Bible Timeline in box 5.*

### Word List

**kinsman-redeemer:** the nearest male in the family; in the law of Israel, when someone was widowed, an unmarried man in the family would marry her and take care of her

**redeem:** when someone pays the price so that a person can be free. This is what Christ did when He gave His life to pay for our sins. Then God could forgive us and we could have life that lasts forever.

**resident alien:** A foreigner who is a permanent *resident* of the country in which he or she lives, but does not have citizenship

### The Lesson

The book of Ruth tells a beautiful story. It happened over 3,000 years ago. It

tells of a family who watched as God helped a sad and hopeless widow, her loyal daughter-in-law who was an "outsider," and a good man. It is a story of kindness.

### A Funeral (Ruth 1:1-19a)

A woman named Naomi lived during the time of the judges. Naomi's name means "pleasant." But her life was far from it. There was no rain. Plants needed for food were dying. It was a hard time.

Naomi, her husband (Elimelech), and their two sons (Mahlon and Chilion) moved from Bethlehem in Judah to the land of Moab. Bethlehem means "house of bread"—but there was no bread. There was hunger.

In Moab, they were **resident aliens**. There was food to eat in Moab. But most people in Moab worshipped a false god. Yet, Naomi's family worshiped the one true God.

After they found a home in Moab, Elimelech died. Mahlon and Chilion found wives, Ruth and Orpah. Then 10 years later, both sons died. Now Naomi was alone in a foreign land with no husband and no sons.

Naomi was now a widow with no one from her family to take care of her. As a woman, she could not own a business. What else could she do? Remarry? Become a slave? Sell her body? Die? She heard there was now

food in Bethlehem. She decided to go home.

As she left, her two daughters-in-law started to go with her. They loved her and wanted to stay together. But Naomi told them to go back to their mothers' houses. She said they were young and could find husbands again. She had nothing for them. She asked God to show kindness to them as they had shown kindness to her and her sons.

This time Orpah started back home. But Ruth said Naomi's family was her family now. She would go where Naomi went, stay where she stayed, worship Naomi's God, and be buried next to her. It was a great promise.

Naomi saw that Ruth had made up her mind. Together, they would move to Judah.

### **A Wedding (Ruth 3:6-13)**

When they got to Naomi's hometown of Bethlehem, they had no jobs and very little money to buy food.

God had made a law in Israel that the farmers were to help people who did not have any food. They were to leave part of the grain at the edges and corners of the fields. The poor could pick up what they needed.

Ruth went to a field to pick grain to make bread for herself and Naomi. The owner of the field was a man named Boaz. He saw her and told her she could pick as much as she

wanted. He told his servants to drop extra grain for Ruth. She was allowed to take water from his water jars when she was thirsty.

When Ruth asked why he was being so kind, he told her he had heard of her kindness toward Naomi. He had heard of her before he met her. Ruth returned home with much food.

Naomi was so happy to see the large amount of grain! She told Ruth that Boaz was a relative of Naomi's husband.

Then Naomi had a plan. She told Ruth to put on her best dress and go to the threshing floor. That night, she would go to the end-of-harvest celebration. She would wait until Boaz was asleep near the piles of grain. When Boaz was asleep, Ruth was to lift the cover from his feet and lay down by his feet.

About midnight, Boaz woke and found her. He asked who she was. She told him she was his servant and that he was of her family. She asked him to place his covering over her. This showed he was willing to marry her.

Boaz showed kindness to Ruth. He wanted to marry her. But he knew of a man who was a closer relative to Elimelech's family. To be fully legal, Boaz had to ask this man if he wanted to marry Ruth. The person in the family who was a close relative was known as the **kinsman-redeemer**. Before

Ruth left, Boaz gave her much grain. He was very generous, then he sent her home to Naomi.

The next morning, Boaz went to the city gates and waited for the relative. The relative was told he could buy back Naomi's land. But if he bought the land, he would also need to marry and care for Ruth. He said no. Now Boaz and Ruth were free to marry.

### A Birth (Ruth 4:13-17)

The story of Ruth, which started out with much death and sadness, ended with great joy. Ruth and Boaz became husband and wife. They saw God at work when Ruth was able to give birth to Obed. (Ruth was married for 10 years to Mahlon, yet she had no child.) The women told Naomi she was blessed. Her name ("pleasant") was now true!

Years later, Obed became grandfather of King David and a distant great-grandfather

of Jesus. The names of Boaz and Ruth are in the family tree of Jesus (Matthew 1:5).

### What We Can Learn from Ruth

Romans 8:28 tells us, "We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him and are chosen to be a part of His plan." Ruth and Naomi show us the meaning of this verse. Both had deaths in their family, but God did not forget them. God was working to help even in their pain.

Naomi found a relative who "redeemed" Ruth. Jesus is our redeemer. We have hope today. We can know that God is working in our lives, too. He gave His Son to redeem us and give us life that lasts forever.

### Ruth 1:1-19a; 3:6-13; 4:13-17

- 1:1 In the days when there were judges to rule, there was a time of no food in the land. A certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to visit the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons.
- 2 The name of the man was Elimelech. His wife's name was Naomi. And the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the land of Moab and stayed there.
- 3 But Naomi's husband Elimelech died. And she was left with her two sons,
- 4 who married Moabite women. The name of one was Orpah. The name of the other was Ruth. After living there about ten years,
- 5 both Mahlon and Chilion died. Naomi was left without her two children and her husband.
- Naomi and Ruth Return to Bethlehem
- 6 Then Naomi got ready to return from the land of

### Things to Think About

1. Naomi felt that God had left her. How did God show He was faithful when her husband and sons died?
2. How can the story of Ruth help us in times of loss?
3. How does Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi show that God is faithful to us?
4. How could you help someone see that God is faithful in a time of grief?
5. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

Moab with her daughters-in-law. She had heard in the land of Moab that the Lord had brought food to His people.

7 So she left with her two daughters-in-law and went on the way toward the land of Judah.

8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, each one of you return to your own mother’s house. May the Lord show kindness to you, as you have done with the dead and with me.  
9 May the Lord help you to find a home, each in the family of her husband.” Then she kissed them, and they cried in loud voices.

10 They said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.”

11 But Naomi said, “Return to your people, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Do I have more sons within me, who could become your husbands?

12 Return, my daughters. Go. For I am too old to have a husband. If I had hope, if I should have a husband tonight and give birth to sons,

13 would you wait until they were grown? Would you not marry until then? No, my daughters. It is harder for me than for you. For the hand of the Lord is against me.”

14 Then they cried again in loud voices. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law. But Ruth held on to her.

15 Naomi said, “See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Return after your sister-in-law.”

16 But Ruth said, “Do not beg me to leave you or turn away from following you. I will go where you go. I will live where you live. Your people will be my people. And your God will be my God.

17 I will die where you die, and there I will be buried. So may the Lord do the same to me, and worse, if anything but death takes me from you.”

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth would do nothing but go with her, she said no more to her.

19 So they both went until they came to Bethlehem.

3:6 So Ruth went down to the grain-floor and did all her mother-in-law had told her to do.

7 When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and his heart was happy, he went to lie down beside the grain. Then Ruth came in secret. She took the covers off his feet and lay down.

8 The man was surprised late in the night. He turned and saw that a woman was lying at his feet.

9 He said, “Who are you?” She answered, “I am Ruth, your woman servant. Spread your covering over me. For you are of our family.”

10 And Boaz said, “May the Lord bring good to you, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than your first by not going after young men, with or without riches.

11 Now my daughter, do not be afraid. I will do for you whatever you ask. For all my people in the city know that you are a good woman.

12 It is true that I am of your family. But there is one closer than I.

13 Stay this night. In the morning, if he will have you for his own, let him take you. But if he does not want to have you, then I will take you, as the Lord lives. Lie down until morning.”

4:13 So Boaz took Ruth. She became his wife, and he went in to her. The Lord made it possible for her to have a child and she gave birth to a son.

14 The women said to Naomi, “Thanks be to the Lord. He has not left you without a family this day. May his name become known in all of Israel.

15 May he bring you new life and strength while you are old. For your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”

16 Then Naomi took the child and held him, and became his nurse.

17 The neighbor women gave him a name. They said, “A son has been born to Naomi!” And they called him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

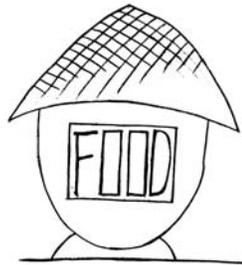
## Lesson 7: Joseph: Use Abilities to Serve Others

### Bible Text

Genesis 41:28-30,35-57;  
45:4-8

### Memory Verse

"God sent me before you to make sure that your people will keep living on the earth. Now many of you will be saved." (Genesis 45:7)



*Find Joseph on the  
Bible Timeline in box 2.*

### Word List

**cup-carrier:** gave the king's cup to the king whenever the king drank; always drank some of the wine before he gave it to the king to show there was no poison in it; always near to the king; Joseph often talked with the cup-carrier in prison and learned many things about Pharaoh.

**famine:** a time when food plants do not grow, so people do not have food to eat

### The Lesson

The story of Joseph in the Book of Genesis is a study of a person at different ages of his life. Our first study of Joseph was in Lesson 3 when Joseph was a teenager and young adult. Now in this lesson, we see Joseph at about age 30. He has grown in

many ways. He has become a good leader.

Potiphar's wife had said untrue things about Joseph. He was put in prison. But God was with him in prison. Joseph did well again. The head guard put him in charge of all the prisoners (Genesis 39:22). The Lord helped Joseph to do well in everything.

The king's **cup-carrier** and baker were in prison with Joseph. Both of them had bad dreams. Joseph saw that they were worried. He knew God could help him understand the meaning of the dreams. They told him their dreams, then the dreams came true three days later. The baker was killed, and the cup-carrier got his old job back. The cup-carrier promised to help Joseph get out of prison, but he forgot.

Two years later, he finally remembered Joseph when Pharaoh had two bad dreams. In the first dream, seven thin cows ate seven fat cows. In the second dream, seven weak stems of grain ate seven good ones. Pharaoh tried to use magic to understand the dreams. But the magic failed. No one in Egypt could explain the meaning of the dreams.

Then, the cup-carrier told Pharaoh about Joseph. Officials took Joseph from the prison into Pharaoh's palace. Joseph himself did not know the meaning of Pharaoh's

dreams. But he knew that God did.

### **Kind Plan (Genesis 41:28-30, 35-46)**

God told Joseph the meaning of these dreams. For seven years, the harvests in Egypt would be good. Then during the next seven years, there would not be enough food. Joseph gave advice to Pharaoh: Store up food from the good harvests. Then, the food can feed the people of Egypt for the seven bad years.

Pharaoh liked this plan. So he put Joseph in charge. Everywhere he went, people bowed down to Joseph. Only Pharaoh was greater than Joseph in all of Egypt.

### **Helping Many (Genesis 41:47-57)**

Joseph was right about the dreams. For seven years, crops grew well. Grain was stored all over Egypt in different cities. So much was grown, Joseph could not count it all!

During this time, Joseph married. He and his wife had two sons. He gave them Jewish names. The first he called Manasseh (means *forget*) and the second, Ephraim (means *fruitful*). Both names show that Joseph knew God was working in his life.

Then the **famine** started just when God said it would. It lasted for seven years, just as God said it would. The Egyptians cried out to the king for food.

Pharaoh sent everyone to Joseph. So,

Joseph opened the store-houses in every city, making grain available for all Egyptians. Soon, all the countries came to Egypt for food. “All the countries” included people from the land of Canaan—Joseph’s brothers.

### **Helping His Family (Genesis 45:4-8)**

God often uses natural events for His purposes. A famine brought Jacob’s family to Egypt to buy grain. But Jacob kept his youngest son, Benjamin, at home.

The brothers were sent to Joseph. They bowed down, just like in his dream long ago. They did not know who he was. He looked like an Egyptian leader, not their little brother.

But he knew them. He asked who they were, and they said, “We are 12 sons of one father. The youngest is with our father. One is no more.” That “one” was Joseph. He was the lost brother, sold as a slave years ago.

Joseph had a plan. When he saw his brothers, he had strong feelings of love for them. He did not want them to suffer while the harvests were poor. He wanted to share with them the good things that he had received in Egypt. Joseph knew that his brothers had done much wrong. They had been selfish. They had been cruel. They had wanted to kill Joseph.

So Joseph tested his brothers. If they

were humble, he would forgive them. If they respected him, he would give them honor and wealth. But if their thoughts were still wrong, Joseph would not help them.

Joseph gave them several tests to see how they would act. Would they be honest? Would they be selfish? One test had them bring his little brother, Benjamin, to join them in Egypt. Joseph saw that his brothers were changed men. They were truly sorry for

what they had done to him.

Then he told them—*I am your brother, Joseph!* At first, they were afraid. He was second in command of all Egypt. But he told them not to be worried for what they had done to him. It was God’s plan to save many lives.

He told them three times—God “sent” him to Egypt (Genesis 45:5, 7, 8). He wanted them to know that he was glad he could help so many people. He was now “father to Pharaoh” (an advisor, such as a father who teaches or helps his child). Joseph was ruler of Pharaoh’s house and of all the land of Egypt.

### What We Can Learn from Joseph

Joseph’s help for hungry people of all nations was part of God’s promise to Abraham that through his family, all nations on earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

Joseph’s story is a picture of the New Testament truths of Luke 16:10a and 19:17. “He that is faithful with little things is faithful with big things also.” Joseph was faithful in all ways, and God used him to save lives.

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*(This Bible story is longer than usual. To make it fit, we have presented it in paragraphs.)*

### Genesis 41:28-30, 35-57; 45:4-8

**41:28** It is as I have said to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. **29** Seven years are coming when there will be much food in all the land of Egypt. **30** But after them will come seven years

### Things to Think About

1. When you see a need, do you look for a way you can help? Or do you wait to be asked for help? Do you think God is calling you to help before being asked?
2. How are you using your skills, abilities, or talents to help others?
3. Why do you help people? Some only do good for others because they want people to think they were good. Take a moment to look at yourself and pray to be sure you help people for the right reasons.
4. Joseph and his brothers were different. Joseph wanted to forget the past. His brothers did not (see Gen. 42:21; 44:16). Do you keep something from your past that will not let you serve God (Phil. 3:12-16)? Do you need to live boldly as a “new person” (2 Corinthians 5:17)?
5. Do you think Joseph was born a good leader, or did God give him skills so that he could serve?
6. Look back on your life and see where God found you faithful with a little and then trusted you with something greater. Think about where you are now. Are you worthy of trust now? Do you think God will trust you to do more for Him in the future?
7. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

when there will be no food. The time of much food will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The time of no food will destroy the land.

**41:35** “Let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming. Have them store the grain under the power of Pharaoh, to be used as food in the cities. And let them keep it safe. **36** This food will be kept for the people to eat during the seven years of no food that will come upon the land of Egypt. This way the land will not be destroyed during the time without food.”

**37** The plan pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. **38** Then Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, who has in him the Spirit of God?” **39** So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Because God has shown you all this, there is no one as understanding and wise as you are. **40** My house will be put in your care. And all my people will do as you say. Only on the throne will I be greater than you.” **41** Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have put you in power over all the land of Egypt.”

**42** Then Pharaoh took the ring from his hand, and put it on Joseph’s hand. He dressed him in clothes of fine cloth. He put a gold chain around his neck. **43** He had him travel in his second wagon of honor. And they called out in front of him, “Bow down!” Pharaoh put him in power over all the land of Egypt. **44** Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh. But unless it is your will, no one will raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” **45** Then Pharaoh gave Joseph the name of Zaphenath-paneah. He gave him for a wife Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara who was the religious leader of On. So Joseph went out through the land of Egypt.

**46** Joseph was thirty years old when he stood in front of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went from Pharaoh to visit every part of Egypt. **47** During the seven good years the land brought much food. **48** So he gathered into the cities all the food of these seven years when there was much in the land of Egypt. He put into each city the food

from the fields around it. **49** Joseph gathered as much grain as the sand of the sea. The time came when he stopped trying to know how much there was.

**50** Two sons were born to Joseph before the years without food came. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, the religious leader of On, gave birth to them. **51** Joseph gave the first-born the name Manasseh. “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my trouble and all those of my father’s house.” **52** He gave the second son the name of Ephraim. “For,” he said, “God has given me children in the land of my suffering.”

**53** The seven good years of much food in the land of Egypt came to an end. **54** And the seven bad years of no food began, as Joseph had said. No food was growing in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was food. **55** So when all the people of Egypt were hungry, they cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. Do what he tells you.” **56** When the hunger was spreading over all the earth, Joseph opened the storehouses. And he sold food to the Egyptians for the time without food had become hard in the land of Egypt. **57** The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the time without food was hard everywhere.

**45:4** Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me.” So they came near. He said, “I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. **5** But do not be troubled or angry with yourselves because you sold me here. For God sent me before you to save your life. **6** For the land has been without food these two years. And there are five more years without plowing or gathering. **7** God sent me before you to make sure that your people will keep living on the earth. Now many of you will be saved. **8** So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and ruler of all his house, and of all the land of Egypt.

# Adult Bible Study

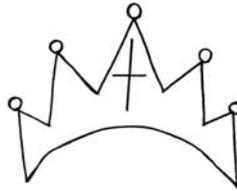
in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 8: Caleb: Become a Wise and Brave Leader

### Bible Text

Numbers 13:17-20, 23-33;  
Joshua 14:6-11



*Find Caleb on the  
Bible Timeline in box 4.*

### Memory Verse

"So Moses promised on that day, 'For sure the land where your foot has stepped will be a gift to you and your children forever. Because you have followed the Lord my God with all your heart.'" (Joshua 14:9)

### Word List

**Promised Land:** the land that God promised to give to Abraham and his family

### The Lesson

A library worker recently found three \$50 bills in a book that was returned to the library. She turned the money in to the office. Her friends asked her, "Why didn't you keep it?" She answered, "I gave the money back because it was the right thing to do."

Turn back to the Study Guide introductory pages and look at the *Bible*

*Timeline: Overview of Old Testament People and Events.* Caleb is found in box 4:

*Wandering in the Wilderness and Entering the Promised Land.* Caleb's story comes after *The Exodus* (box 3) and happened around 1300-1200 B.C. This lesson tells about a time when important decisions had to be made. God's people needed to do the right thing. There was a choice between fear and faith. Read this lesson to learn if the people did the right thing.

### Exploring the Promise (Numbers 13:1-2, 17-20, 23-29)

The people of Israel had come to the borders of the land that God had promised them. God told them to "spy out the land of Canaan which I am going to give to the people of Israel" (Numbers 13:2). The people wanted to know more about this land. It had been 400 years since their relatives had left Canaan. Those long-ago relatives were Joseph's brothers (Jacob's sons) who went to Egypt to ask Joseph for food during the famine. No one alive remembered what this Promised Land was like. A leader from each of the 12 tribes was chosen to go and see. The land would be divided among the 12 tribes.

Everyone wanted to know: Was it good land or bad? What kinds of towns were there?

Do the towns have walls to protect them? Are the towns strongly defended?

The spies were told to learn about the people: Were they strong or weak? Few or many? The people of Israel wanted to know if the dirt in the land was good for growing things. They wanted to see what would grow. It was summer, the time for growing grapes. They wanted to see some of the grapes.

For 40 days, the men looked around the country. They saw the hills and the cities. The 12 men travelled through the country of Canaan from the south to the north. They visited the city of Hebron. The graves of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were in this city. But the men did not seem to notice them. Instead, they saw that the people who lived there were very tall.

They cut down a branch loaded with grapes. It took two men to carry the grapes back. They returned to tell Moses and Aaron and all the people of Israel about the things they saw. “It is a land filled with milk and honey.” But they also told of the powerful people who lived in strong cities.

### **Choosing the Promise (Numbers 13:30-33)**

Ten spies brought back a “bad report.” They found a good land, the land God had promised to give them. But they said:

*The people who live in the land are too strong...*

*The cities have too many walls...*

*There are giants there...*

*There are too many people....*

The ten spies were afraid, and they made everyone else afraid. Many listened to them. By night, their report had gone throughout the camp. “Then all the people cried out with a loud voice, and they cried that night” (Numbers 14:1). Women were crying that their husbands would be killed in battle. Their children would have no father. That night, you could hear the sound of crying in the tents. They were ready to get a new leader and return to Egypt—and be slaves again! It just seemed too dangerous to continue.

But two of the men who went were not afraid. Caleb and Joshua saw everything the others had seen. But they gave a good report. They had faith. They remembered that God had been with them as they got out of Egypt. God had made the Red Sea split open so they could go across on dry land. God had fed them when they were hungry. God had promised them a new beginning. All 12 men saw the same things but came back with two different reports. This is what was different. Caleb and Joshua followed God “wholeheartedly.” The others let their fear

take the place of faith.

The next step was what to do about the report. Choices had to be made. Everyone there had seen what God had done in the past. But they did not have faith. They were afraid to go forward. They thought only about the size of the people and their cities. They did not seem to remember God's promises that He would give this country to them.

The 10 men said they were like grasshoppers next to the giants in the land. God knew about the giants. He knew about the strong cities. He did not want His people to go into the land with just their own strength. God wanted the people to trust Him. They would have His power.

Caleb spoke up and told everyone to be quiet. He said he had faith that they could take the land. Unfortunately, the people

allowed their fear to drown out their faith.

God had to punish the people for their lack of faith. He said that no person who was alive when God led them out of Egypt would be alive to enter the land—except for Caleb, who had followed God completely, and Joshua (Numbers 14:30).

### **Claiming the Promise (Joshua 14:6-10)**

Caleb never gave up his faith. Caleb had lived his middle years well, but he also lived 40 years more in the wilderness. During that time, all the people died who showed no faith and refused to go into the Promised Land. Caleb came to the Promised Land a second time 40 years later. He had the same faith he had shown all those years before. Caleb is an example of someone who gave his all to God. He trusted God. He did not put his faith in himself.

Caleb was now 85 years old. He said, "I am as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me. I am as strong now as I was then, for war, or for anything" (Joshua 14:11).

### **What We Can Learn from Caleb**

What would Caleb say to us today? We should not always look for the easier way. We need to follow when things get tough. We need to walk in faith and not by sight alone. If fear rules, we follow our fears instead of our

### **Things to Think About**

1. Why is it sometimes not easy to know the right thing?
2. How do we forget to give first place to God?
3. Why would anyone oppose efforts that will improve life for others?
4. Why is it hard to go against the majority?
5. How can faith overcome fear when a difficult decision must be made?
6. How can you "catch" both faith and fear?
7. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

faith. Caleb would tell us to walk into the future with faith in God!

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**Numbers 13:17-20, 23-30**

17 Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan. He said to them, “Go up there into the Negev. Then go up into the hill country.

18 See what the land is like. See if the people who live in it are strong or weak, and if they are few or many.

19 Find out if the land they live in is good or bad. See if the cities they live in are open or if they have walls.

20 Find out if the land is rich or poor, and if there are trees in it or not. Then try to get some of the fruit of the land.” Now this was the gathering time of the first grown grapes.

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23 Then they came to the valley of Eshcol. They cut down a branch from there with some grapes on it. And they carried it on a long piece of wood between two men, with some pomegranates and figs.

24 That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of much fruit the men of Israel cut down from there.

25 They returned from looking over the land after forty days.

26 And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the people of Israel in the desert of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought news to them and to all the people, and showed them the fruit of the land.

27 They told Moses, “We went to the land where you sent us. It does flow with milk and honey. This is its fruit.

28 But the people who live in the land are strong. The cities have walls and are very large. And we saw the children of Anak there.

29 Amalek is living in the land of the Negev. The Hittites and Jebusites and Amorites are living in

the hill country. And the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”

30 Then Caleb told the people in front of Moses to be quiet. And he said, “Let us go up at once and take the land. For we are well able to take it in battle.”

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go against the people. They are too strong for us.”

32 So they brought the people of Israel bad news about the land they had spied out, saying, “The land we have gone to spy out is a land that destroys those who go there to live. All the people we saw in it are very large.

33 We saw the Nephilim there. (The sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim.) We looked like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

**Joshua 14:6-11**

6 Then the sons of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God about you and me in Kadesh-barnea.

7 I was forty years old when the Lord’s servant Moses sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land. I returned with news for him as it was in my heart.

8 My brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people weak with fear. But I followed the Lord my God with all my heart.

9 So Moses promised on that day, ‘For sure the land where your foot has stepped will be a gift to you and your children forever. Because you have followed the Lord my God with all your heart.’

10 Now see, the Lord has let me live, as He said, these forty-five years since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel walked in the desert. Today I am eighty-five years old.

11 I am as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me. I am as strong now as I was then, for war, or for anything.

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 9: Joseph: A Good Son and a Good Parent

### Bible Text

Genesis 47:27 to  
48:2, 8-19; 49:33 to 50:6

### Memory Verse

"Honor your father and  
your mother, so your life  
may be long in the land  
the Lord your God gives  
you." (Exodus 20:12)



*Find Joseph on the  
Bible Timeline in box 2.*

### Word List

**sandwich generation:** adults who take care of  
their parents and their own children

**boomerang kids:** adult children returning to live  
at their parents' home, sometimes with their own  
children

**Jacob/Israel:** *Israel* is Jacob's name as the head  
of the family. This family would become a nation  
called *Israel*.

**generations:** groups of people in a family of  
similar age; parents, children, children's children  
are three generations

### The Lesson

More than 20 million people in the U.S.  
are taking care of their older parents. Eighty  
percent of all long-term care is done by the

family and not at live-in facilities. People  
taking care of their children and their aging  
parents are called the **sandwich generation**.  
This is because they are "sandwiched"  
between the older generation and the much  
younger generation.

**Boomerang kids** are grown children  
who have stayed in their parents' home or  
returned to live there again.

We usually think of the typical U.S.  
family as parents and children who live  
together. But other cultures might have  
several **generations** living together. This is  
the way it was in the time of Joseph. Much of  
Joseph's life between the ages of 40 and 60  
had to do with family.

### A Promise Made (Genesis 47:27-31)

Joseph wanted to make sure his family  
was taken care of in Egypt. He met with  
Pharaoh and received good land for them.  
They settled in Goshen, away from many of  
the Egyptian people. This was a place where  
they could raise sheep. They did very well.

Joseph lived with his father for 17  
years before being taken to Egypt as a slave.  
Now Joseph's father lived with him for 17  
years in Egypt. This was the last part of  
Jacob's life. Jacob was 147 years old. He  
knew it was his last days. He asked Joseph for

a special promise: *Do not bury me in Egypt. Egypt is not my home. Return my body to Canaan.* Joseph made this promise to his father. He showed respect to his father.

### Promises for the Future (Genesis 48:1-2, 8-19)

Later, Jacob became quite ill. Joseph took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to Jacob's bedside. Often, in the days before dying, the head of the family would see members of his family, give them blessings, and give a final speech about the future. When he heard that Joseph had come, Jacob tried very hard and sat up in bed.

Joseph's sons had lived a very unusual life. They had always lived in Egypt. They spoke the Egyptian language. They wore Egyptian clothes. But they were half-Egyptian, half-Hebrew. Their grandfather on their mother's side was the priest of a false god (Genesis 41:45). But their grandfather on their father's side—**Jacob**—was part of their family, too. The boys met their uncles and grandfather when Jacob's family moved to Egypt during the famine.

Jacob told Joseph that the two boys would be as sons to him and would receive a share of all he has with Jacob's other sons, their uncles. He adopted them as his own.

Jacob told Joseph, "Bring them to me, so I may pray that good will come to them." Jacob had never expected to be with Joseph again. He thought his son was dead.

Now Jacob was able to know Joseph's sons, his grandsons. Jacob talked about his past. He shared the good that had come to him. Joseph's sons saw how *their* father treated *his* father with respect and bowing to the ground at their grandfather's feet. Joseph had changed since the days when he boasted of his dreams of being better than others.

Joseph placed Manasseh near Jacob's right hand. The firstborn was to receive the best blessing from his right hand. But Jacob reached over to place his right hand on Ephraim, who was standing on his left. Joseph thought his father had made a mistake. But Jacob knew what he was doing.

Jacob's blessing was a time when he remembered how God had been his guide. Jacob remembered how God continued to care for him even when he had told lies and been unfaithful. The blessing Jacob gave the two boys was really a blessing from God. He said the oldest son would also become the father of a nation. He, too, would be great. But Jacob said the younger brother would be greater than the older. The younger brother's

“children and their children’s children will become very many nations.”

Jacob said the Israelites will use the boys’ names to bless people. They will say, “Let God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.” When children are honored, it is an honor to the parents.

### **A Promise Kept (Genesis 49:33 to 50:6)**

After Jacob adopted Joseph’s sons, he called for the 11 remaining sons. He gave them blessings and told them what to do about his burial. Then Jacob lay back on the bed and died. Joseph kissed his father and he cried. Joseph’s sons saw the love and respect their brother had for their father. The people of Egypt also cried. They remembered how

Joseph had saved them during the famine.

Joseph had promised to take his father’s body back to Canaan. Some of Joseph’s servants were doctors who knew the Egyptian ways to preserve bodies. They worked for 40 days. The usual way for Joseph’s people was to bury the body within 24 hours. Joseph asked Pharaoh to let him keep the promise to take his father back to Canaan. Pharaoh told him he could do as he had promised.

### **What We Can Learn from Joseph**

Joseph teaches us what can happen to someone who has been changed by God. He knew God had been “with him” in all the good and hard times. Joseph cared for his father and his children. He showed respect to his father. His sons learned that the purpose for their father’s hard times was that “God planned it for good; to make it happen that many people should be kept alive” (Genesis 50:20).

We can pray that those who come after us will see that we have respected our parents, cared for our children, and served God.

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### **Genesis 47:27 to 48:2, 8-19; 49:33 to 50:6**

47:27 Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen. They became richer there, and had children, and grew to a very large number.  
28 Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So Jacob had lived 147 years in all.

### **Things to Think About**

1. How would you take care of elderly parents or other relatives?
2. How important is it to you that younger generations spend time with older ones?
3. Do you think Joseph should have done anything differently as he followed Jacob’s final wishes and burial? If so, what should he have done? Is it a problem that Joseph had Jacob embalmed, knowing it was not something believers in God did?
4. Do you know a caregiver who needs a word or act of encouragement?
5. If you are a caregiver, are there times you should ask others for help?
6. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

29 When the time came for Israel to die, he called his son Joseph. He said to him, “If I have found favor in your eyes, give me your promise to be kind and faithful to me. I ask of you, do not bury me in Egypt.

30 But let me lie down with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried.” And Joseph said, “I will do as you have said.”

31 Jacob said, “Promise me.” So Joseph gave him his promise. Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed.

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48:1 After this Joseph was told, “See, your father is sick.” So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him.

2 When Jacob was told, “Your son Joseph has come to you,” Israel gathered his strength and sat up in bed.

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49:8 When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he said, “Who are these?”

9 Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” So Israel said, “Bring them to me, so I may pray that good will come to them.”

10 Now Israel’s eyes had become weak from being old, and he could not see. So Joseph brought them near to him. And Israel kissed them and put his arms around them.

11 Israel said to Joseph, “I never thought I would see your face. But see, God has let me see your children also.”

12 Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed to the ground.

13 Then taking Ephraim with his right hand, Joseph put him at Israel’s left side. And with his left hand he put Manasseh at Israel’s right side, placing them near him.

14 But Israel put out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, the younger son. And he put his left hand on Manasseh’s head, crossing his hands. But Manasseh was the first-born.

15 Then he prayed that good would come to Joseph, and said, “The God with Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God Who has been my Shepherd all my life to this day,

16 the Angel Who has set me free from all sin, bring good to the boys. May my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac live on in them. May they become a great nation on the earth.”

17 When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim’s head, he was not pleased. He took his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head.

18 Joseph said to his father, “Not this way, my father, for this one is the first-born. Place your right hand on his head.”

19 But his father would not, and said, “I know, my son, I know. He will become a nation also, and he also will be great. But his younger brother will be greater than he. His children and their children’s children will become many nations.”

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49:33 When Jacob finished telling his sons what to do, he lay back down on his bed and died.

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50:1 Then Joseph threw himself upon his father, and cried over him and kissed him.

2 Joseph told his servants the doctors to make his father ready to be buried. So the doctors made Israel ready.

3 Forty days were needed for this. For this is how much time it took for making the body ready to be buried. And the Egyptians cried for him seventy days.

4 When the days of sorrow for him were past, Joseph said to those of Pharaoh’s house, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh, saying,

5 ‘My father had me make a promise to him. He said, “See, I am about to die. Bury me in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan.” So let me go and bury my father. Then I will return.’”

6 Pharaoh answered, “Go and bury your father as he made you promise.”

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 10: David: Family Troubles

### Bible Text

2 Samuel 13:1-2, 20-22,  
30, 32-33, 37; 14:23-24;  
15:7-14; 18:6-15, 33

### Memory Verse

"A wise son makes a father  
glad, but a foolish son is a  
sorrow to his mother."  
(Proverbs 10:1)



*Find David on the  
Bible Timeline in box 6.*

### Word List

**handsome:** good-looking; usually a male is called handsome and a female is called beautiful  
**united:** people or groups working together well and in agreement with each other

### The Lesson

You may think you know a family with no problems. They are perfect, it seems. If you think that, then you probably do not know that family very well! There are no perfect parents and no perfect children. Every family has problems.

This is nothing new. King David had a family like that. David grew from a shepherd boy to a faithful king, the greatest king of

Israel. He was known as a “man after God’s own heart.” He was a musician poet. He lived when the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel (1020-922 B.C.) were strong and **united**. But he had terrible times with his own family. David’s children caused him much heartache.

The prophet Nathan had told David that bad things would happen to his family (see 2 Samuel 12:10). David had sinned by taking another man’s wife (Bathsheba), then murdering her husband so he could marry her. David had to live with the results of his sin.

His two oldest sons would sin in the same way he did: sex sins and murder. The Bible shows people as they really were. It does not pretend that people were perfect. From them, we can learn about the high cost of sin.

### A Family Tragedy

**(2 Samuel 13:1-2; 20-22; 30-37)**

Amnon was David’s oldest son who was first in line for the throne after David. David also had a beautiful daughter named Tamar. She was Amnon’s half-sister. They had the same father but different mothers. He wanted to have sex with her. This was wrong for many reasons. First, a brother and sister should not do sex sins (Leviticus 18:6). Second, he never planned to marry her. He only wanted to use her for selfish reasons.

Amnon pretended to be sick. David allowed Tamar to go to Amnon's room to cook him some food. Amnon sent all the servants away and forced himself on her.

Tamar's full-brother was Absalom. He learned what happened. He was angry yet he told his sister to say nothing. Absalom expected his father would do something.

David was very angry when he heard. But he did nothing. Maybe he sadly thought of his own sex sins with Bathsheba years earlier.

Two years passed. Absalom gave a party for all the king's sons. Secretly, he told his men to kill Amnon (2 Samuel 13:28-29). After Amnon was dead, Absalom ran away.

David's heart was broken. He had lost two sons. One was dead and one was gone. David tried to ignore his family's problems. But now, things were even worse.

### **Absalom Returns and Pretends to Make Things Right (2 Samuel 14:23-24)**

Absalom went away for three years to stay with his grandfather, the King of Geshur, about 90 miles north of Jerusalem.

King David was still sad about Amnon's death. But he also missed Absalom very much. Finally, Absalom was allowed to return to Jerusalem. But he was not allowed to see his father for two more years.

Joseph forgave his brothers in Egypt after they were sorry for what they had done. But David's family was different. Absalom was never sorry for killing his brother.

### **Absalom Betrays His Father and Dies (2 Samuel 15:7-14; 18:6-15; 33)**

With others, David was a good judge of character. But not with his own children. The first son, Amnon, would have been king. Now he was dead. There were at least 18 sons. No one knew for sure who would be the next king.

Absalom decided he should be king. He made secret plans. He needed people to be loyal to him. So he helped them with their court cases at the city gates. People began to like Absalom more than David.

Absalom looked like a king—**young, handsome**, and popular. "He had nothing wrong with him from the bottom of his foot to the top of his head" (2 Samuel 14:25). He was also patient. After four years, Absalom's army forced David to leave the capital.

But David was smart, and he soon made plans to get his country back. The soldiers of David and Absalom fought in the forest of Ephraim. David had told his soldiers to "keep the young man Absalom safe for me." But more than 20,000 soldiers died.

When Absalom rode through the trees,

his long, beautiful hair got caught in a large oak tree. His animal ran away, leaving Absalom hanging there. The head of David's army killed him with a spear.

David was king again, but his kingdom was never the same. Verse 33 is one of the saddest verses in the Bible: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" David was heart-broken.

But David also felt guilty. Absalom's death was part of God's punishment. Three of David's sons were now dead because of his sin (Bathsheba's baby son in 2 Samuel 12:14-20; Amnon in 13:28-29; Absalom in 18:15).

### What We Can Learn from David

Every good parent hopes and prays that their children will make good choices that please God. But when they do not, parents

### Things to Think About

1. How do you think David could have done better when he learned what had happened to his daughter, Tamar?
2. Why does it cause problems to ignore problems and not talk about them?
3. Why do parents have a hard time letting their children learn things "the hard way?"
4. How can adult children break free from the unhealthy patterns of their parents?
5. Why do we try to hide our family's difficulties?
6. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

must step in and guide them toward what is right. David never did this part. David ignored the sins of his children. His problems did not go away, but only got worse.

God does not ignore our sins. He knows each and every one. He wants us to stop sinning, but He also offers us forgiveness. It is through the death of His Son, Jesus, that our sinful past can be wiped clean. God's forgiveness is ready for you whenever you ask Him to be the Lord of your life.

We all need God's loving-kindness as we live in families—our earthly families and God's family.

*(This Bible story is longer than usual. To make it fit, we have presented it in paragraphs.)*

**2 Samuel 13:1-2, 20-22, 30, 32-33, 37; 14:23-24; 15:7-14; 18:6-15, 33**

**13:1** Now David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar. And David's son Amnon loved her. **2** Amnon was so troubled because of his sister Tamar that he became sick. She was a woman who had never had a man, and Amnon thought how hard it would be to have her.

**13:20** Absalom her brother said to her, "Has your brother Amnon been with you? Be quiet now, my sister. He is your brother. Do not take this to heart." So Tamar stayed in her brother Absalom's house, sad and alone. **21** When King David heard about all this, he was very angry. **22** But Absalom did not speak good or bad to Amnon. Absalom hated Amnon because he had put his sister to shame.

**13:30** While they were on their way, the news came to David, saying, “Absalom has killed all the king’s sons. Not one of them is left.”

**32** But Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimeah, said, “Do not let my lord think they have killed all the young men, the king’s sons. Only Amnon is dead. Absalom has wanted to kill him since the day he put his sister Tamar to shame.

**33** So do not let my lord the king take this to heart and think that all the king’s sons are dead, for only Amnon is dead.”

**37** Absalom ran away and went to Talmi the son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. And David was filled with sorrow for his son every day.

**14:23** So Joab got up and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. **24** But the king said, “Let him go to his own house. Do not let him see my face.” So Absalom went to his own house and did not see the king’s face.

**15:7** At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, “I ask you, let me go to Hebron and keep my promise that I have promised to the Lord. **8** For your servant made a promise while I was living at Geshur in Syria, saying, ‘If the Lord will bring me again to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.’” **9** And the king said to him, “Go in peace.” So he got up and went to Hebron. **10** But Absalom sent men to go in secret through all the families of Israel. He said to them, “As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, then say, ‘Absalom is king at Hebron.’” **11** With Absalom went 200 men from Jerusalem. They had been asked to come, and did not know what Absalom had planned. **12** While Absalom was giving gifts on the altar in worship, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, from his city Giloh. He was the man who talked with David about what to do. The plans against David became strong. For more and more people joined Absalom.

**13** Then a man came to David with news, saying,

“The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.”

**14** David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, “Get up and let us run. Or else none of us will be safe from Absalom. Hurry and go, or he will be quick to catch us and bring trouble upon us. He would destroy the city with the sword.”

**18:6** Then the people went out into the field to fight against Israel. The battle was fought among the trees of Ephraim. **7** The people of Israel lost the fight there to the servants of David. Twenty thousand men were killed there that day. **8** The battle was spread over the whole country. Dangers from the trees destroyed more people that day than the sword.

**9** Absalom met the servants of David. He was going on his horse, and the horse went under the many branches of a large oak tree. Absalom’s hair caught in the branches of the oak. He was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the horse under him kept going. **10** When a certain man saw it, he told Joab, “I saw Absalom hanging in an oak.”

**11** Joab said to the man, “You saw him! Why did you not kill him and let him fall to the ground? I would have given you ten pieces of silver and a belt.”

**12** The man said to Joab, “Even for a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, I would not go against the king’s son. For we heard the king tell you and Abishai and Ittai, ‘Keep the young man Absalom safe for me.’ **13** If I had gone against his life, there is nothing hidden from the king. And you would not have helped me.” **14** Then Joab said, “I will not waste time here with you.” He took three spears in his hand and threw them through Absalom’s heart while he was still alive in the oak. **15** And ten young men who carried Joab’s battle clothes gathered around and hit Absalom and killed him.

**18:33** The king filled with much sorrow. He went up to the room above the gate and cried. As he walked he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

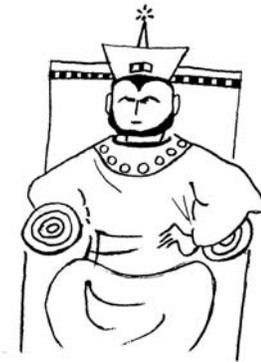
## Lesson 11: Samuel: Make Way for a New Leader

### Bible Text

1 Samuel 8:1-10; 12:1-5

### Memory Verse

"They said, 'You have always been honest with us. You have not made it hard for us, or taken anything from any man's hand.'" (1 Samuel 12:4)



*Find Samuel on the Bible Timeline in box 5.*

### Word List

**retire:** leave your job and stop going to work, usually at a certain age

**bribe:** take or give money rather than make fair decisions

**anoint:** pour oil on someone's head for a special purpose; part of the ceremony of giving a position to someone

### The Lesson

Sharon was almost old enough to stop working and **retire**. But she was not sure this was the right thing to do. She wondered if she would have enough to do when she no longer had a job. Would she be happy? Sharon was over 70 years old and still teaching. But finally, Sharon decided to retire.

Now, she still teaches some days. But she likes to do other things—like helping to serve meals to poor people. She has learned to teach English to people from many different countries. She says she has never been happier! Plus, she says she is having fun.

Another couple wrote after their retirement, "We are not sure what our next step in ministry will be, but we trust the Lord for wonderful days ahead!"

Sometimes life brings big changes our way. Those changes often mean we have to change habits and schedules. Sometimes we welcome change. Sometimes we wish things would stay the way they always have been.

Samuel found that to be true. He really did not want to change. But the people of Israel were growing louder and louder in their demands: *We want a king.*

### Israel Wants a King (1 Samuel 8:1-10)

The book of 1 Samuel tells of a time of change. Israel's leaders were called judges. These judges led the Israelites for about 350 years after the death of Joshua. Some judges were good and led well. Other times, a judge might have more problems (like Samson). Samuel was the last of the judges and religious leaders in Israel.

Samuel is a good example of someone who was able to do well when changes came to his life. We learned about his mother, Hannah, in Lesson 5. She had dedicated Samuel to God before his birth. Samuel worked for God all his life.

When his job changed, he had to change. He would no longer be a religious leader to the Israelites. They did not want judges anymore. His country wanted a king. This was a big change in Israel. Samuel showed great wisdom and faith. He helped Israel in this time. But it was not easy for him.

Samuel had been busy as a judge over Israel. He traveled all over the country for years. He also worked in his own town of Ramah (7:15-17). But he was getting older. Samuel was about 65-70 years old. He set up his two sons, Joel and Abijah, to be judges. But they were not good judges like their father. They took **bribes** to make decisions.

Samuel, like the priest Eli before him, did not see the problems in his own sons. Did Samuel travel too much and help other people? Did he not give his time to train up his sons? It may be that Samuel's sons chose to do wrong even though they knew better. The leaders of Israel were not happy to let these men lead the country (8:5).

The people of Israel had another reason for wanting a king. They wanted to be like the other countries around them. The other nations had kings, so why not Israel?

This upset Samuel. He had given his life to the people of Israel. Now, they did not want him as leader. They did not want his sons as leaders. He knew that Israel was the nation of God. Israel did not need to try to be like the other nations. They belonged to God. But they often forgot about Him.

The people wanted a man to rule them instead of God. God ruled them, but they could not see Him. They wanted a leader that everyone could see. They could have asked for a good leader who trusted God. They kept saying it over and over: *We want a king.*

The Israelites had left God many times in the past. Again and again, God rescued them from their enemies. They were happy for a while and would obey God faithfully. But then sin would creep back into their lives through idol worship. This happened time after time. Samuel often had to give strong words of warning to the Israelites.

The Israelites liked Samuel. But they still wanted to replace him with a king. They were not saying *no* to Samuel. Instead, they were saying *no* to God as their king. Samuel

knew this, and he was not pleased. Samuel asked God what to do. God told Samuel to agree to the people's request for a king.

But God told Samuel to warn the people. If they had a king, he would take their sons and daughters for military service. He would tax them, taking the best of everything they owned, their animals, and what they grew. It was like they would be slaves to their new king. Samuel hoped they would change their decision if they heard all the bad things.

Still, the people said: *We want a king!*

### Remembering a Life of Good Work (1 Sam. 12:1-5)

Samuel did as God said. He **anointed** Saul. He poured oil on Saul's head to show Saul that he had been chosen by God to be

#### Things to Think About

1. How can you tell when a group needs to have a leadership change?
2. How can a church or a family best plan for leadership change?
3. Why is it important to remember that people will have different feelings when new leaders come?
4. Who should be responsible when there are new leaders?
5. How does the old leader feel when there is a change? How do people feel when they get a new leader?
6. What do these verses teach you about your age in life?

king over Israel.

The people were happy with Saul. He led them in battle (1 Samuel 9 to 11). The Israelites thought he looked like a perfect king. He was taller than all of the other men. Finally, the people got what they wanted. They had a king of their own.

Samuel called a meeting of the people of Israel to worship God and say that Saul was God's choice.

Samuel gave a farewell speech at this time. He reminded everyone that they had asked for a king. He told them what he thought of that. Then he spoke about the past when he had been their leader. Everyone agreed that he had been an honest man and had done good work for them. In the rest of 1 Samuel 12, Samuel reminded the people that when they did not obey God, they had hard times. He told them that both Israel and their new king would need to be faithful to God.

Samuel continued to be important to the people of Israel. He would offer Saul advice and warn him about his sinful actions.

Samuel later **anointed** David to be king to replace Saul (1 Samuel 12 to 16). Samuel believed he had done his best for Israel.

His country agreed. He was not perfect, but he knew that God had led him. He did not

like the choice the people had made to have a king. But he still continued to work with the people. He was wise to bless the new kings. He tried to give Saul and David a good start.

God always has a plan for our next steps. Old leaders and new leaders all need to trust God and step forward in faith.

### What We Can Learn from Samuel

Like Samuel, we may find it difficult to give up power or to let go of a job we really enjoyed. Some people wonder if there is any meaning to their life after a big change. This can happen at any time. Job change, location change, family change... God wants to guide us through them all.

You can be sure, God has a plan for the changes that come to your life. In Revelation 21, God said, "I am making all things new." Trust Him to help you step into whatever is "new" to you!

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#### 1 Samuel 8:1-10

1 When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges in Israel.  
 2 The name of his first-born son was Joel. And the name of his second son was Abijah. They were men who judged in Beersheba.  
 3 But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside to get money. They took pay to do things that were not right and fair.  
 4 Then all the leaders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.  
 5 They said to him, "See, you have grown old,

and your sons do not walk in your ways. Choose a king to rule over us like all the nations."

6 But Samuel was not pleased when they said, "Give us a king to rule over us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord.

7 The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all they say to you. For they have not turned away from you. They have turned away from Me, that I should not be king over them.

8 They are doing to you what they have done since the day I brought them out of Egypt until now. They have turned away from Me and worshiped other gods.

9 So listen to their voice. But tell them of the danger and show them the ways of the king who will rule over them."

10 So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who had asked him for a king.

#### 1 Samuel 12:1-5

1 Then Samuel said to all Israel, "See, I have listened to all you have said to me. I have chosen a king to rule over you.

2 Now see, the king walks in front of you. But I am old. My hair is growing white. See, my sons are with you. I have walked in front of you since I was young, until this day.

3 Here I am. Speak against me to the Lord and Saul His chosen one. Whose bull have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? To whom have I not been honest? For whom have I made it hard? From whose hand have I taken pay for closing my eyes to the truth? I will return it to you."

4 They said, "You have always been honest with us. You have not made it hard for us, or taken anything from any man's hand."

5 Samuel said to them, "The Lord has heard you. And His chosen one has heard this day that you have found nothing in my hand." And they said, "The Lord has heard."

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

## Lesson 12: Moses: A Life Lived Well

### Bible Text

Deuteronomy 32:48-52;  
34:1-12



### Memory Verse

"Moses was 120 years old when he died. But his eyes were not weak, and his strength had not left him." (Deuteronomy 34:7)

*Find Moses on the Bible Timeline in box 3.*

### Word List

**mountaintop experiences:** times when we feel God is near us in a very special way

### The Lesson

I was by my mother's bed when she died. She had never been afraid. She knew she would be with Jesus in heaven. Her four brothers had all come by to see her. When one of them called and was sad, she told him, "We spend many hours praying for people to know Jesus and go to heaven. At the end of their lives, why do we spend so much time praying that they will *not* go (that they will not die yet)?"

My dad wanted her to live to be here with him. I wanted her to live so I could enjoy

more years with her. My brother and sister wanted her to stay here, too. But we knew that when she died, she was in a better place. She would have no more pain, no more sorrow. She would be in heaven. We look forward to seeing her again.

This lesson is about the way Moses died. He was with God when he died. We can do the same.

### On Top of the Mountain (Deuteronomy 34:1a)

Who is one of the greatest heroes of the Bible? Many people would say Moses. Remember that he was born and put in a basket in the river for the Pharaoh's daughter to find. Later, he met God at a burning bush. He bravely told Pharaoh to let the children of God go. He led them across the Red Sea on dry ground. He met God at the mountain and brought down the Ten Commandments. On and on the story goes until Moses is 120 years old. It was now time for Moses to die.

God invited Moses to the mountain (Deuteronomy 32:48-50). God had met Moses on mountains before. Moses had many **mountaintop experiences**. The first time was at Mount Horeb. Moses saw the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-12). Twice Moses had gone up to Mount Sinai to get the Ten Commandments

from God (Exodus 19:20; 24:12-18). When Moses came down from being with God, his face was shining with God's glory. It was so bright that people could not look at him. He had to put a cloth in front of his face.

In Exodus 32:50, God told Moses that after he had seen the Promised Land from the top of Nebo, that he would die there in the mountains. Moses had great times with God on the mountains. He was not afraid to follow God to the mountain to die. He knew God would meet him there.

Today, we think about our own mountaintop experiences. These are times when God made Himself known to us in a special way. We feel He is with us like no other time. These amazing times get us ready to do what He wants us to do back in the valleys of life. We say we are coming back down to the "real world."

We come down from the mountain ready to serve. We cannot stay on the mountain forever.

Until that final visit to the mountain, Moses had always left the mountain to go down and be with the people. The people could always tell he had been with God. Moses brought God's love and judgment to them. He brought God's mercy. God had led

them through the wilderness as Moses followed God's commands. Moses was not perfect and often the people complained.

One time, they said they had no water for the animals. God told Moses what to do. He was to speak to the rock and water would come out. Instead, Moses was angry. He hit the rock (Numbers 20:2-12). The water came from the rock. But because Moses did not obey God, he was not allowed into the Promised Land. God showed Moses the Promised Land, but he was not to go in to it. (Deuteronomy 32:52).

### **View from the Mountain (Deuteronomy 34:1b-4)**

Moses obeyed God. He climbed Nebo. He reached the top called Mount Pisgah. It was 2,740 feet high. Moses was still strong enough to climb a mountain at 120 years old!

This is what God showed Moses: The Jordan Valley 120 miles north to Mount Hermon. He saw all the country to the west

### **Four Things That Matter Most**

Dr. Ira Byock is famous for his book, *Dying Well*. Another book is *Four Most Important Things*. He offers these ideas for what to say to people so that we build strong relationships. That is part of living well, as Moses did.

Thank you.  
I forgive you.

Please forgive me.  
I love you.

towards the Mediterranean Sea. He saw also the rich plain of Jericho. God gave the names of the places where the 12 Tribes would live. This was a look into the future for Moses.

Some might say, “How sad that Moses did not get to go into the Promised Land.” But Moses was doing what God said to do. He was alone there with God. He could see God’s plan for His people. Moses had done his part. He could see far more than if he had stayed behind. Moses obeyed—and what a view he got!

Moses would not have to see any more fighting and disobedient times with God’s people. Joshua would be the new leader, and he would have to take care of all that. Moses

had followed God the best way he knew how.

Dying well does not depend on meeting all the goals of life. Moses depended on God’s forgiveness. Moses trusted God.

### **Death at Its Best (Deuteronomy 34:5-9)**

“So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, as the Word of the Lord said” (Deuteronomy 34:5). Moses was alone with God on the mountain when he died. God had stayed with Moses all the way through the wilderness. Now God did not leave Moses at his death. Moses had God’s kindness and comfort. God was with him to the end of his earthly life.

Moses was old—but he was at his best. He was still strong and he could still see. Following God all those years did not weaken Moses. It made him stronger.

### **When God Buried Moses (Deuteronomy 34:10-12)**

He had finished his work. He died when God said he would and where God said he would. God buried Moses’ earthly body somewhere in the valley. His friends never knew where that was. The people wept for 30 days because Moses had died.

Almost 2,000 years after Moses had died and gone to heaven, Peter, James, and

### **Things to Think About**

1. When God punishes us, can it be a good thing? What does the happenings at the end of Moses’ life teach us about this? Has God worked in your life this way?
2. Read Deuteronomy 34:10-12. Of all the great things Moses did, which one do you think he would call the best one? Which one do you think is the most important? Why?
3. Think about the death of someone you have loved and admired. Can you say this person died well? Why do you say that?
4. Thinking of your own death may seem hard, but it can be a good thing. What do you think people would say about you after you die? Why? What would you want them to say? Why?
5. What do these Bible verses teach you at your age?

John saw Moses again (Luke 9:28-33). Jesus led the three disciples to a mountain and showed them Moses and the prophet Elijah. The followers of Jesus knew who Moses and Elijah were, even though they had never seen them before.

### What We Can Learn from Moses

Moses had lived well and he died well. We can pray to do the same. We can look at the faces of family and friends and say, “My time has come, and I am ready.” When we place our trust in God, we have given them a gift beyond measure. When we tell others about what it means to trust Jesus for forgiveness and life that lasts forever in heaven, we have given *them* a gift beyond measure!

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#### Deuteronomy 32:48-52

48 The Lord said to Moses that same day,  
 49 “Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, in the land of Moab beside Jericho. Look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel for their own.  
 50 Then die on the mountain you go up, and join your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and joined his people.  
 51 This is because you were not faithful to Me among the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin and you did not honor Me as holy among the people of Israel.

52 You will see the land from far away, but you will not go into the land I am giving the people of Israel.”

#### Deuteronomy 34:1-12

1 Now Moses went up from the valleys of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, beside Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan,  
 2 all of Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the sea in the west,  
 3 the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.  
 4 Then the Lord said to him, “This is the land I promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your children.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not go there.”  
 5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, as the Word of the Lord said.  
 6 And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, beside Beth-peor. But no man knows where he is buried to this day.  
 7 Moses was 120 years old when he died. But his eyes were not weak, and his strength had not left him.  
 8 The children of Israel cried for Moses in the valley of Moab for thirty days. Then the days of crying and sorrow for Moses came to an end.  
 9 Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel listened to him and did what the Lord had told Moses.  
 10 There has never been another man who speaks for God in Israel like Moses. The Lord knew him face to face.  
 11 There has never been another like him who has done all the powerful works the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land.  
 12 There has never been another who has shown all the great power and all the great fear which Moses did for all Israel to see.

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Help for All the Times  
of Our Lives*

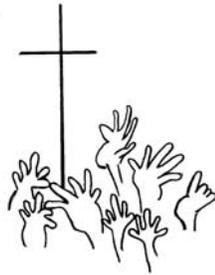
## Lesson 13: Christ Gives the Best Life

### Bible Text

1 Corinthians 15:3-20,  
35-44, 50-57

### Memory Verse

"I am different now. It is all because of what God did for me by His loving-favor. His loving-favor was not wasted. I worked harder than all the other missionaries. But it was not I who worked. It was God's loving-favor working through me." (1 Corinthians 15:10)



*Find the Corinthian Church on the Bible Timeline in box 11.*

### Word List

**resurrection:** to become alive after death  
**loving-favor:** grace; God's love that no one deserves

### The Lesson

What important things would you want to tell others if you knew you were going to die soon? If a reporter had asked Paul this question, he probably would have said the same words that he wrote to the church in Corinth: *Because of the resurrection of Jesus, there is meaning to life. Without His resurrection, life has no meaning.*

## The Good News of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-20)

Paul was the first person to write about the resurrection in the Bible. Paul wrote this letter to the church at Corinth before Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John wrote their books. Paul wrote, "Christ was buried. He was raised from the dead three days later as the Holy Writings said He would" (verse 3).

Paul spent the first 14 chapters of 1 Corinthians writing about their sin problems. Chapter 15 begins with the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. Some people in Corinth were not sure Jesus was alive again. They needed help to understand and believe. Paul gave many reasons to explain how he knew Jesus was alive again:

### ***1. Jesus had been seen in His body.***

Paul told of many people who had seen Jesus after they had seen him die. Some of Jesus' friends had buried Him, then seen Him alive again. Jesus showed Himself to Peter, to the 12 followers, and once to 500 people. Paul told of Jesus' half-brother, James, and all of the followers who saw Jesus alive again.

***2. Paul tells how he saw Jesus two years later.*** The first believers had lived with Jesus for several years while He ministered. As time passed, they believed that Jesus was God's Son, the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. But the way Paul became a follower of Jesus was very different. It was

sudden! It was years after the others. And it was on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-5).

But everyone, including Paul, becomes a Christian through God's loving-kindness. No one deserves the forgiveness God offers. Paul said he did not deserve to have the name "missionary." He had hurt and killed too many Christians in the years before he became a Christian himself. But now, Paul said it is God's loving-kindness that made him want to work harder than all the other followers.

Paul told the church, if Jesus had not been resurrected, then nothing they believed about Jesus could be trusted. He said:

1. *If God has not raised Christ*, then death will have defeated life (verses 13, 16).
2. *If God has not raised Christ*, then those who preach the resurrection are wasting their time (verse 14).
3. *If God has not raised Christ*, then those who have trusted in Christ will be disappointed. Jesus said that He was the truth. What He said would all have been a lie (verse 14).
4. Some people (including Paul) preached that God raised Jesus. *If God has not raised Christ*, then those people are teaching false ideas. They are breaking the law about false witnesses (verse 15).
5. *If God has not raised Christ*, then God will punish Christians for sin. It would mean that God has not forgiven them (verse 17).
6. *If God has not raised Christ*, then those who have died as believers in Christ have

no future or hope of heaven (verse 18).

7. *If God has not raised Christ*, then His promises about eternal life (life that lasts forever) make no sense. We would have no hope for the future (verse 19).

But here is the good news: **Jesus was raised from the dead!** Paul said they could trust Jesus: "But it is true! Christ has been raised from the dead! He was the first One to be raised from the dead and all those who are in graves will follow" (verse 20).

### **Bury a Physical Body, Receive a Spiritual Body (1 Cor. 15:35-44)**

The Christians at Corinth wanted to know what kind of resurrection body they would have. The body we have now is a human body that lives on earth. A fish has a body that is able to live in water. The bird's body is the kind that can live in the air. Paul said that God will give each Christian a risen body that is the right kind to live in heaven.

Paul talked about seeds in verses 42-44. Seeds have to "die" in the ground before they grow into plants. A seed buried in the earth changes into something very different. A tiny brown seed dies and a beautiful flower grows.

In the same way, when the human body dies, the new, risen body will be different. When Jesus rose again, His friends still knew who He was. But He was different. He could

suddenly appear or disappear in a locked room (Luke 24:31). The new, risen body will not die or have any weaknesses. Our risen bodies will be more like God. We will be ready to live in heaven forever with Him.

### Transformed into Glory (1 Cor. 15:50-53)

Next, Paul explained what happens to those who are still alive when Jesus returns. Their bodies will be changed so that they cannot die. It is a mystery to us now. But with God, nothing is impossible!

### God Wins, Death Loses (1 Cor. 15:54-57)

Hosea spoke about death as if it were a

person. He asked where its victory came from (Hosea 13:14). Paul used these words to show that we do not need to fear death. It has no power. Jesus Christ was the victor (winner) over sin—forever.

Christ's last words on the cross were "It is finished" (John 19:30). He had destroyed the power of sin. Then to show that death was destroyed, God raised Christ. God will also raise those who belong to Christ.

Paul ended his teaching with words of praise: "But God is the One Who gives us power over sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. We give thanks to Him for this" (verse 57).

### Things to Think About

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:13-18 again and change each word "if" to **since**. Then change each of the negatives to a positive. (For example, on verse 17, it would read like this: *Since Christ was raised from the dead, your faith is **not** worth nothing and you are **no longer** still living in your sins.*) Why did Christ have to die, and what is the greatness of His resurrection?
2. Do you agree that if Christ had not been raised from the dead, the following Bible verses would have no meaning? John 11:23-25; John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Philippians 3:20-21; and Colossians 3:1-4.
3. If Christ had not been raised from the dead, would this change your view of God? If so, how?
4. All life leads toward death. How does belief in the bodily resurrection of Christ and the promise of your bodily resurrection make a difference in how you live now?
5. How do the verses in this lesson speak to you at your age in life?

(This Bible passage is longer than usual. To make it fit, we have presented it in paragraphs.)

### 1 Corinthians 15:3-20

**3** First of all, I taught you what I had received. It was this: Christ died for our sins as the Holy Writings said He would. **4** Christ was buried. He was raised from the dead three days later as the Holy Writings said He would. **5** Christ was seen by Peter. After that, the twelve followers saw Him. **6** After that, more than 500 of His followers saw Him at one time. Most of them are still here, but some have died. **7** After that, James saw Christ. Then all the missionaries saw Him. **8** Last of all, Christ showed Himself to me as if I had been born too late. **9** For I am the least important of all the missionaries. I should not be called a missionary because I made it so hard for God's church. **10** I am different now. It is all because of what God did for me by His loving-favor. His loving-favor was not wasted. I worked harder than all the other missionaries. But it was not I who

worked. It was God's loving-favor working through me. **11** It makes no difference how you heard the Good News. It could have been through the other missionaries or through me. The important thing is this: We preached the Good News to you and you believed it.

**12** We preached to you that Christ has been raised from the dead. But some of you say that people are not raised from the dead. Why do you say this? **13** If the dead are not raised, then Christ was not raised from the dead. **14** If Christ was not raised from the dead, then what we preach to you is worth nothing. Your faith in Christ is worth nothing. **15** That makes us all liars because we said that God raised Christ from the dead. But God did not raise Christ from the dead if the dead do not come to life again. **16** If the dead are not raised, then not even Christ was raised from the dead. **17** If Christ was not raised from the dead, your faith is worth nothing and you are still living in your sins. **18** Then the Christians who have already died are lost in sin. **19** If we have hope in Christ in this life only, we are more sad than anyone else.

**20** But it is true! Christ has been raised from the dead! He was the first One to be raised from the dead and all those who are in graves will follow.

### 1 Corinthians 15:35-44

**35** Someone will say, "How are the dead raised? What kind of bodies will they have?" **36** What a foolish question! When you plant a seed, it must die before it starts new life. **37** When you put it in the earth, you are not planting the body which it will become. You put in only a seed. **38** It is God Who gives it a body just as He wants it to have. Each kind of seed becomes a different kind of body.

**39** All flesh is not the same. Men have one kind of flesh. Animals have another kind. Fish have another kind, and birds have another kind.

**40** There are bodies in the heavens. There are bodies on earth. Their greatness is not the same.

**41** The sun has its greatness. The moon has its greatness. Stars have their greatness. One star is different from another star in greatness.

**42** It is the same with people who are raised from the dead. The body will turn back to dust when it is put in a grave. When the body is raised from the grave, it will never die. **43** It has no greatness when it is put in a grave, but it is raised with shining-greatness. It is weak when it is put in a grave, but it is raised with power. **44** It is a human body when it dies, but it is a God-like body when it is raised from the dead. There are human bodies and there are God-like bodies.

### 1 Corinthians 15:50-57

**50** Christian brothers, our bodies which are made of flesh and blood will not go into the holy nation of God. That which dies can have no part in that which will never die. **51** For sure, I am telling you a secret. We will not all die, but we will all be changed. **52** In a very short time, no longer than it takes for the eye to close and open, the Christians who have died will be raised. It will happen when the last horn sounds. The dead will be raised never to die again. Then the rest of us who are alive will be changed. **53** Our human bodies made from dust must be changed into a body that cannot be destroyed. Our human bodies that can die must be changed into bodies that will never die. **54** When this that can be destroyed has been changed into that which cannot be destroyed, and when this that does die has been changed into that which cannot die, then it will happen as the Holy Writings said it would happen. They said, "Death has no more power over life." **55** O death, where is your power? O death, where are your pains? **56** The pain in death is sin. Sin has power over those under the Law. **57** But God is the One Who gives us power over sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. We give thanks to Him for this.