

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE ADVENTURE



## ***"Count The Cost – A Revival Call To The Next Generation"***

**When you have completed this material, check each box and sign below.**

- I have read every section.
- I have completed all questions and required activities.
- I did not copy any answers from a friend. (It is ok for your parents to help you.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teen Version

# **YOUR 21 DAY ADVENTURE WITH GOD**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>MISSION</b>
Day 1	The Call - Do You Hear It?
Day 2	What Is Worship?
Day 3	Connecting to God Through Worship
Day 4	Worship in Spirit and Truth
Day 5	What Is Fearing God?
Day 6	Standing Before a Holy God
Day 7	The Revival Cycle
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Day 11	The Mystery Revealed!
Day 12	What Is Hope?
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Day 14	Personal Journey Day
Day 15	What Is Love?
Day 16	Loving the Unlovable
Day 17	Speaking in Love
Day 18	The Road to the Cross
Day 19	What Is Perseverance?
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Day 21	Count the Cost!

*“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”*

*-Jim Elliot, missionary to Auca Indians, killed for his faith on January 8, 1956.*

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*Illustrations by Lauren Ernst*

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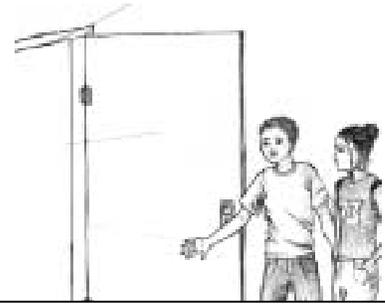
## WELCOME TO THE ADVENTURE!

You're getting ready to start a great Adventure with the Lord. Another step in your relationship with God, these missions will push you to dive deeper into the Word and God's presence through daily study, prayer and activities. The journey may be tough work, but the rewards are priceless. It will take you 21 days to complete the Adventure.

When tackling the Adventure each day, work on it in a quiet place away from distractions. Get away from the TV, the radio, etc. Make sure to honor God as you complete each day's activities. Pray before doing the Adventure each day. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the things you need to know to draw closer to God and to serve Him better.

## BIBLE VERSIONS

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture passages are taken from the New International Version (NIV). Feel free to use whatever version of the Bible is easiest for you. The NIV is the most popular modern translation due to it being easy to understand. At times, I will use brackets [ ] to clarify something. Things in brackets [ ] are my words



**Follow the journey of Craig and Angela** as they learn to count the cost. At the beginning these two kids are very selfish and misguided. They do not read the Bible or pray very much because God seems boring to them. They are more focused on having "fun", buying the latest clothes and video games, and hanging out with friends.

Craig and Angela are changed as they hear the call of God and obey. They discover that a greater joy awaits those who do count the cost and follow God's plan.

**What will you do?**

# THE CALL

## DAY 1

**Have you ever felt like God seems to talk to everybody else but you? Have you struggled with recognizing the voice of God in your life? Do you look around at your relationship with God and wonder if there is something more?**

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you are not alone; many people today and in the Bible have dealt with these same struggles. This first mission covers hearing from God – the first step in your Adventure.

One of the major reasons why people miss the voice of God is that they really don't stop to listen. Throughout the Adventure, you will be challenged to listen for God's voice.

You may be thinking, "What am I listening for? I don't hear anything." People usually listen for the wrong things. It's not usually a loud roar or a booming voice coming from the sky. We tend to hear God in the whispers of life – in our spirit. You may be like Samuel who at first did not recognize the voice of God (1 Samuel 3:1-19). Typically, God does not speak to us in a voice we hear with our ears. I have never heard the audible voice of God, but He speaks to me every day. God is a spirit, and He tends to speak to our spirits. You may have sensed deep down inside of you something before and later it turned out to be right. Many times that is God trying to tug on our hearts to communicate His love, will and correction. God's deepest desire is to have a relationship with you. The Lord is calling your name. He wants you to come into His presence.

God speaks to His people in many ways. Here are some ways that the Lord communicates to His people:

- The Word – The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Bible. It contains history, instruction, prophecy, poetry/songs and first person accounts of key Biblical characters including Jesus. The Bible is just as relevant today as when it was written. The Bible will always line up with what the Holy Spirit shows us in our prayer time. It helps us tell what is true and what is a lie in a word full of deception. The truth of God's Word gives the believer hope to follow Christ through tough times.

### **2 Timothy 3:14-17**

*"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

- Still small voice of the Holy Spirit – The Bible says that God's children are led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14). In Acts while the Christians worshiped and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." The Spirit spoke to the believers as they spent time focused on God. Distractions from TV and video games to

friends and sports can keep us from hearing the Holy Spirit if we don't take time to stop and listen.

**John 16:13-14**

*“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”*

- Other people as inspired by the Holy Spirit – God used the prophets to carry his message to the Israelites in the Old Testament. Today, God still uses prophets to speak to His children. The main difference is that prophecy today is NOT considered equal to Scripture. Prophecy must be judged according to the Bible and the wisdom of the Church leaders.
- Visions/Dreams – In Acts chapter 10, the apostle Peter had a vision where God instructed him to hang out with the Gentiles (non-Jewish people). God spoke through the vision and used it to spread the truth about Jesus to many nations. Visions and dreams still happen today.
- Nature – From the beauty of a morning sunrise to the rolling crash of ocean waves, all creation shouts the praises of God. We can learn by watching nature and looking for what it shows us about God.

**Romans 1:20**

*“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

- Everyday experiences of life – We can see God working in the little things of everyday life.

**No matter how God speaks to you. Hearing from God requires faith to listen and obey. According to the Bible, without faith it is impossible to please God.**

Today, God is speaking to you if you will only listen, believe and obey.

**Mission 00.1**

Take a minute and stop to consider a time where God spoke to you. Write down your experience including what the Lord showed you and how He revealed it to you. (Use the back of this sheet if you need more room to write.)

**Mission 001.2**

As you pray, stop and take time to listen to God. Ask the Lord to make this Adventure come alive to you.

# WHAT IS WORSHIP?

## DAY 2

### Mission 002.1

When someone talks about worshipping God what is the first thing that comes to mind? Write down your first impression of what worship looks like. You may draw a picture if you want to answer this question.

Worship can take many forms. At its heart, worship is deeply personal. Depending on your personality and natural abilities, you can worship God through music, dance, serving others, writing, photography, building something, cooking, sports, or just about anything else. Worship can be anything we do to bring glory to God or to spend time with Him.

If you're like most people, you might think that worship is what Christians do on Sunday morning when they sing songs and dance. But this is just one form of worship. Worship can happen at any time or place. As I write this material, I am worshipping God. There are a few critical elements to worship. Let's look at what are the key building blocks to true worship.

- **Sacrifice** – If you are going to worship God, it will cost you something. Consider when King David desired to build an altar to honor God. He went to the owner of the piece of land and asked about buying it. The owner offered to give it to the king. But David replied, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24).

- God Focused, Giving God Glory – Worship is never about what we get. Although worship does make us feel good most of the time. Jesus must be the center of our worship. We worship God because He is holy and worthy of praise (Psalm 29:2).
- Humility – When we approach God, we must come before him in humility, thankful for His sacrifice to remove our sin (Micah 6:8).
- Submission – Worship causes us to recognize God’s authority and to lay down our own desires to serve Him (2 Chronicles 30:8).
- Whole Heart – God calls His children to worship Him with their whole heart. God doesn’t want us to mouth the words and not to mean it. We should live out what we sing. The prophet Isaiah warned, “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Isaiah 29:13).

### **Mission 002.2**

What are the key building blocks to true worship of God?

- 1.)
- 2.)
- 3.)
- 4.)
- 5.)

### **Mission 002.3**

Do something today as an act of worship. It can be anything. Consider the list of suggestions below. Record your experience in the journal below. Describe what you did and how you turned it into worship. Describe how others responded. Explain how you applied the keys to worship in your actions.

Suggestions:

- Sing praise and worship music to God.
- Play an instrument.
- Develop a wholesome dance routine to a worship song.
- Write a poem to God.
- Serve others (This should not a typical chore or duty for you. Do not charge for this service. Ex: Yard work, babysit for a neighbor or etc.)

- Play a team sport.
- Build something and give it to another person.
- Take pictures of nature and create a collage.
- Cook a meal for a needy person.
- Write a letter of encouragement to a friend or someone who may be feeling sad.

**Write below about your personal worship experience:**

# **DAY 3**

## **WORSHIP CONNECTS US TO THE HEART OF GOD**

Worship connects us to the very heart of God. God is a spirit, and the physical world can blind us to God's spiritual truths. From piles of homework to a long list of chores to missing a key play in an important game, everyday concerns can overwhelm us – taking your eyes off of God. We get too busy to spend time with Jesus. We try to do things in our own strength and keep coming up short.

Worship is the answer. God never intended us to live without Him. Intimate worship lifts us to God's presence and His rest. Our concerns fade away as the Holy Spirit fills us. Worship removes doubt and builds up passion for the Lord. The Holy Spirit actually does His work while we worship. He conducts inner healing by stripping away the old and putting on the new.

Yesterday, we focused on out of the ordinary forms of worship. Let's concentrate today on worshipping God through music and prayer.

### **Mission 003.1**

Read Psalm 42 and write a prayer to God using Psalm 42 as a model.

### **Psalm 42**

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?  
My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long,  
"Where is your God?"

These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude,  
leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving  
among the festive throng.

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast  
within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon-  
from Mount Mizar.

Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers  
have swept over me. By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me - a prayer to  
the God of my life.

I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning,  
oppressed by the enemy?" My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

**Write below your personal prayer to God:**

-----  
Just as water is necessary to live, so is God essential for emotional and spiritual life. In this Psalm, the author feels thirsty – desiring a touch from heaven. He pants for God just like a deer for the streams of water. Have you ever been so thirsty that you panted for water? Stop and think if you are really that thirsty for God?

In the time of need, the psalmist cried out to God. Confused about his feelings, he asked himself why has his heart become so sad. He knew that God is faithful and will answer his request. But he had become overwhelmed by problems. He felt abandoned by the Lord. Do you ever feel completely alone? Even when God seems to be silent, He is there always loving and desiring the best for you.

### **Mission 003.2**

Pick your favorite Christian praise and worship music and spend at least 15 minutes worshipping God. Find a nice quiet place where you will not be distracted. While you sing and worship, express your feelings openly to God. If your feelings have been wounded by something that God has allowed to happen, tell Him. Have people who are close to you hurt you? Do you feel betrayed by good friends? Are you struggling with school, relationships or reading the Bible and prayer? It is OK to be honest with God. He can take it. Think about the Psalm you just read. The author was

honest with God. He was thirsty for more of the Lord's presence. He felt alone. Take a chance and see what the Lord does as you worship Him and give Him your concerns.

**Explain below what God did or how God worked in your life during your worship time.**



Angela connects to God through worship one night and is overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit. Angela repents of her sin and commits her life to Christ.

**You too can have powerful encounters with God if you will seek Him with your whole heart!**

# **DAY 4**

## **WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH**

It can become real easy for praise and worship to become a big show based on feelings and high-energy music. But Jesus said that there will come a time when real worshippers will worship in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). So what does real worship look like?

Do you have to fall down under the power of the Spirit to experience real worship? Does it matter if you stand, sit, kneel or lift your hands. Do you have to laugh or cry? Do you have to feel warm all over to have a real worship experience?

Real worship is not restricted to the above expressions or movements of God. Although there is nothing wrong with any of the above actions or experiences, they are not the reason you worship. Worship should be a unique experience for each person. Too often, people think that something spectacular has to happen for God to move in their lives or be pleased with their worship. The goal of worship is not to experience some supernatural move of God like falling down under the power of the Spirit but to enjoy simply being with Jesus and praising Him. The prize is to lose yourself in worship.

True worship must be God centered – a sacrificial act of surrender. It is not based on what you get out of it but what God gets. You worship God because the truth is that He is worthy of all praise. You may sing for hours and not feel anything. Be honest with God and like the author of Psalm 42, praise God even when you don't feel like he is listening or moving in your life.

Worshipping in Spirit, can only happen as you alone focus on God – forgetting about everyone else in the room. Not worried about what others think, you seek God as directed by your spirit. Real worship starts with the heart. Let's look at one story in the Bible to see an example of real worship.

### **II Samuel 6:14-16, 20-22**

When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.

When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"

David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD , who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel-I will celebrate before the LORD . I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."

-----

King David completely lost self-awareness. He simply let go and allowed the feelings bubbling up inside of him to come out. David's wife (Michal) thought he was making a public spectacle of himself. David removed his royal robes and danced around in front of the multitudes in a simple tunic similar to what the slaves wore. Michal thought David's actions were embarrassing for someone as powerful as a king. But David decided to let nothing hold him back from praising God with all of his might. David knew the key to passionate worship. He put the focus on God and strove to give Him maximum glory.

### **Mission 004.1**

Below is a list of names used to describe God in the Bible. The Old Testament law assigns great respect to the name of God. It forbids the misuse of God's name. From Genesis to Revelation, God's people realized that there is power and divine authority in the proper use of the Lord's name. Consider this promise in Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

What name of God touches your heart? Pick one of the following names and explain why you think it describes what God means to you.

Elohim: God - The One and Only True God  
Yahweh/Jehovah: LORD - He that is who He is, The eternal I AM  
Adonai: Lord - Master  
El Shaddai: God Almighty - The All-sufficient One  
El Elyon: Most High - Possessor of heaven and earth  
El Olam: Everlasting God - God over eternal things  
El Gibbor: Mighty God - The Only All Powerful God  
Jehovah Jireh: The LORD will provide  
Jehovah Rapha: The LORD who healeth  
Jehovah Nissi: The LORD is my banner, The LORD is my victory  
Jehovah Shalom: The LORD our peace, The LORD gives peace  
Jehovah Tsidkenu: The LORD Our Righteousness

Jehovah Shammah: The LORD is present  
Jehovah Sabaoth: The LORD of Hosts, LORD Almighty, King of Glory  
Father  
Messiah  
King  
High Priest  
"I AM"  
Word  
Wisdom  
Good Shepherd  
Bridegroom  
Redeemer  
Vine  
Light  
The Helper  
Spirit of Truth  
Comforter

**Write your answer below:**

**Mission 004.2**

Spend some time praising God today through prayer. Use some of the names above to declare the praises of the Lord.

# DAY 5

## WHAT IS FEARING GOD?

People are afraid of many things from snakes and spiders to heights to death, but according to the Bible, we are only supposed to fear God (Isaiah 8:13 and Psalm 76:7). You may be thinking, “But I thought that God loves me and wants to bless me? Why should I be afraid of God?”

While God is love, He is also holy, righteous and just. When the Bible calls Christians to fear God it is not trying to drive us away from God. Instead, Christians are to respect and honor God. As the Creator of the universe, God is all-powerful and all knowing. Just like you are supposed to honor and obey your parents, the Bible calls Christians to honor and obey God as the highest authority in their lives (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

It’s human nature to try to get away with doing wrong when no one else is looking. Have you ever tried to grab a piece of candy before dinner, pick on your brother or sister, or even cheat on a homework assignment when your parents leave the room? People tend to treat God the same way. It can become easy to forget that God sees everything. When people don’t fear God, they create a lifestyle where sin can grow and grow. More sin leads to greater separation from God.

The Bible promises many blessings and protections for those who fear God. Consider the following promises:

- **Psalm 25:14** - The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.
- **Psalm 34:7** -The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.
- **Psalm 34:9** - Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.
- **Psalm 103:13** - As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;
- **Psalm 111:5** - He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.
- **Psalm 128:1** - Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways.
- **Proverbs 10:27** - The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.
- **Proverbs 22:4** - Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

As you can see, the fear of God is a good thing, not something to avoid. Fearing God leads to happiness and eternal blessings.

### Mission 005.1

List four of the ways that God blesses those who fear Him.

1.)

2.)

3.)

4.)

**Mission 005.2**

Stop and think about the fear of God in your life. Write about one of the following:

- A time when you thought about doing something wrong but stopped because you realized that God was watching.
- How the fear of God has protected you from evil.
- Why the fear of God should be important to a Christian.
- How the fear of God is different from other fears such as fear of spiders or heights.

**Mission 005.2**

Pray for at least 5 minutes about the fear of the Lord. Ask God to reveal how you have not shown Him the proper respect or honored Him. Confess any sin in your life. Make any commitments that you feel the Holy Spirit is calling you to make to fully honor and fear God.

# **DAY 6**

## **STANDING BEFORE A HOLY GOD**

King David learned about the holiness of God the hard way. He took it lightly, which ended up costing another man his life. The incident started when David desired to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Although David had good intentions, he acted without consulting God or the law about how to transport the ark. More than just a gold box, the ark represented the presence of God with His people. When David initially sought to bring the ark to Jerusalem, he appointed men who were not authorized to move it.

Here's the rest of the story according to the Bible. "Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah, and He struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So he died there before God. Then David was angry because the Lord's wrath had broke out against Uzzah...David was afraid of God that day and asked, 'How can I ever bring the ark of God to me?'" (1 Chronicles 13:9-12). What was Uzzah's great sin? He touched the ark. The first time I ever heard this story, I thought that God had acted too strongly toward Uzzah. God loves His people; He had to have a good reason for His severe punishment. Why did Uzzah have to die?

Uzzah died because he did not show proper respect to the ark. As the symbol of God's covenant and presence with Israel, the ark had to be handled in a certain way by those who were consecrated (ceremonially clean) to transport it. Uzzah acted in disobedience possibly because the ark had been stored in his father's house for years. Maybe he had become too familiar with it, lacking the proper respect. This story illustrates the danger of approaching God on our terms instead of His. In the Bible, God is described as a consuming fire. It is God's very nature to judge and punish sin. His holiness must be kept apart from anything impure including man's sin. By touching the ark, Uzzah came too close to the presence of God without being clean.

### **Mission 006.1**

What does the story of Uzzah show us about the holiness of God? In your own words, explain what you believe it means for God to be holy.

After reading about Uzzah, you may be thinking, “But I thought God wanted people to come close to Him? If I say or do something wrong, is God going to zap me like He did Uzzah?” Don’t worry. God has made a way for you to hang out with Him. Jesus’ death and sacrifice removes our sin as if it had never happened. We can come close to God without worrying about our sin. The Lord sees us as righteous, purified by the blood of Jesus.

But even in these modern times, Christians must honor God. Just because Jesus made it possible to be close to God does not mean that we should treat Him with any less respect. God opposes the proud but shows mercy to the humble. Read the following story and notice the differences in how the two men pray.

**Luke 18:9-14**

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

**Mission 006.2**

Explain the difference in attitude between the Pharisee and the tax collector. Why was the Pharisee’s prayer not pleasing to God? Which person do you relate to best and why?

# **DAY 7**

## **THE REVIVAL CYCLE**

What's the big deal about the fear of God and how will it help me be a better Christian? Well, I'm glad you asked. In the Bible, the fear of God usually came about as people saw how serious God was about punishing sin and proclaiming His glory. The fear of the Lord fell upon the Israelites when God destroyed the armies of Pharaoh in the Red Sea (Exodus 14:31). The Israelites had just left living in Egypt as slaves.

Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) allowed them to leave after God sent many plagues and disasters upon the Egyptians. But Pharaoh changed his mind and chased after the Israelites to capture them or kill those who resisted. God parted the Red Sea allowing the Israelites to walk across on dry ground. Then as the Egyptians crossed, God released the waters to flow back over the Egyptians, which killed them all.

At first, the Israelites were tempted to complain and doubt God. They were afraid, and fear caused them to worry. As the Israelites saw the Lord deliver them from the hand of Pharaoh, they trusted God to protect and save them. The fear of the Lord leads people to hope and trust in God. Instead of worrying about what others think or what they will do, fearing God frees us to focus on the things of God.

### **Mission 007.1**

Can you relate to how the Israelites felt when the armies of Pharaoh approached them? Try to remember a time when you worried about something but ended up trusting God, and the Lord came through and answered your prayer. Write a letter to God about your experience. Describe what He did and thank Him for dealing with your need.

Christians should fear the Lord because just as he punished the Egyptians, unconfessed sin comes with serious consequences for the Christian. It robs us of reward in heaven and drives us farther away from God. Although we may not have to die for our mistakes because of Jesus, God will judge His children for every wrong thing we do. It is kind of scary to think that God sees every wrong thing we do, say or think. Just consider the strong warnings in the following Scriptures:

- **2 Corinthians 5:10** – For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
- **Galatians 6:7-8** – Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Remember that the fear of God is a good thing, not something to avoid. Fearing God leads to happiness and eternal blessings. From the stories about the early Church, we see a pattern where the fear of the Lord caused revival to take place among the Christians.

### Acts 9:31

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.



It's a pretty simple formula. Here's how it works. In our example, Billy begins to recognize sin in his life as he prays and reads the Bible. Billy starts to see just how big and mighty God is. This produces the fear of the Lord in his life. Billy confesses his sin asking God to forgive Him. Billy asks God to help him stop doing bad stuff. As Billy repents (turns away from sin), the Holy Spirit moves in his life. The Holy Spirit gives Billy the power to act in a godly way. Billy receives encouragement from the Holy Spirit, which builds up his faith and trust in God. As Billy is encouraged, he begins to feel at peace. Where Billy used to worry, he lives at peace knowing that God is bigger than any of his problems. His sins are forgiven, and he feels comfortable coming to God. The perfect love of Jesus drives away all fear. Billy will still have to deal with temptations and tough situations. But now, he knows that Jesus is with him. Most people don't know what it is like to live with this kind of peace and joy. As they see others live with it, they will start to ask questions and want it too.

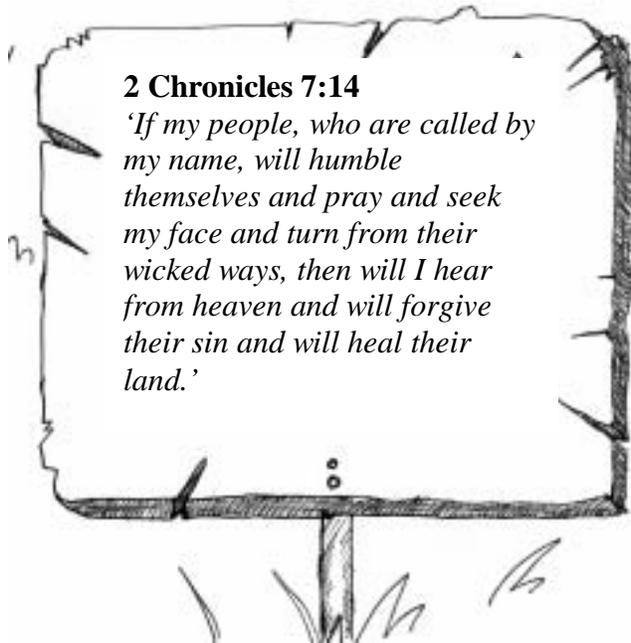
**Mission 007.2**

There are many people in your school, neighborhood, family and community that do not know the peace of loving Jesus. Stop and make a list of these people. Pick three of them and spend at least ten minutes praying that they will come to know Jesus as their savior and friend. While you are praying, confess any sin in your life to God and ask Him to help you change. Thank God for all the way He has blessed you.

**Write below the name of the three people you picked:**

# DAY 8

## WHAT IS REPENTANCE?



Repentance is the cry of God's heart for His children. God wants to heal the wounds in your life. He desires to remove the guilt caused by all the bad stuff you have done. The above Scripture is taken from a response that God gave to King Solomon upon the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem. God established a pattern that still works today. The key for God to move in the lives of His people is repentance.

Well what is repentance? Is it just saying you're sorry. Or does repentance involve something more? Read the following story and be ready to explain what you think Jeff and Craig can do to repent for their actions.

### Brotherly Love?

Starting over in a new city, the Nelson family packed its bags, loaded everyone in the minivan and traveled across country. They were moving to Atlanta from Denver and planned to arrive in their new hometown in just enough time for Mr. Nelson to start his new job. Besides one suitcase of clothes apiece, each of the three boys were allowed to take one bag of personal belongings. Everything else would come later in a big moving truck. They were leaving behind their friends in Denver, but Mr. Nelson believed the move was the right thing. It was a tough time for everyone in the family.

The three boys are Jeff (15 years old), Craig (12 years old) and Ben (6 years old). Tightly packed into the van, the drive seemed to take forever. As the trip went on, the three boys began to get on each other's nerves. Jeff kept complaining that Craig was putting his feet in his face and being annoying. Craig responded by saying to his parents that Jeff was trying to boss him around and tell him what to do. The family stopped for lunch and a break from each other being crammed in such a confined space. As the boys headed back for the car, Craig began to tease Jeff about a girl who smiled at him in the restaurant. Jeff turned around and said, "No wonder you have so few friends. You're so annoying; you'll be lucky if anybody in Atlanta will want to hang out with you." Craig stuck out his tongue at his brother.

For the rest of the day, Craig fumed over what his brother had said. He planned on getting even. While at a rest stop the next day, Craig stole one of Jeff's favorite CDs and threw it into a trash can. When Jeff went looking for the CD, he denied taking it. Mr. Nelson told Jeff that the CD

would probably turn up when they unpacked the car in Atlanta. Believing that Craig had stolen the CD, Jeff kept on looking at his brother with anger in his eyes. When they finally reached their new home, Jeff went into Craig's bedroom and looked through Craig's bag for the CD. He never found it. As Jeff left the room, Craig saw him. He said, "You can't go in my room. I'm going to tell mom and dad." Jeff pointed his finger at his brother and said, "I'll show you not to mess with my stuff." He shoved his younger brother aside and walked downstairs.

### **Mission 008.1**

Explain in your own words what you believe it means to repent. Based on the story above, what should the two boys do if they really want to repent and fix their relationship with each other? Explain how you think God feels when we treat others the way that Jeff and Craig did.

### **Mission 008.2**

Pray and ask the Lord to show you anything you have done wrong. Admit your faults and sins as you pray. Ask God to forgive you and to help you change. The Holy Spirit may lead you to do something to make up for ways you have hurt others. Listen to the direction of the Spirit and obey. Use the following Scripture as a model for your prayer.

#### **Psalm 139:23-24**

*"Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about; See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong - then guide me on the road to eternal life." (The Message)*

### **Mission 008.3**

Remember the three people in Mission 007.2? Take at least ten minutes to pray for them every day this week. As you pray for them, ask God to create opportunities for you to show the love of Jesus to them.

# DAY 9

## THE HEART OF DAVID

King David made mistakes and did evil things. Just like you and me, he was far from being perfect. Yet God described him as a man after His own heart. David messed up big time by having a righteous man killed. And as a leader, he made many bad decisions. If David wasn't perfect, what was it about him that made his life so pleasing to the Lord?

Maybe David knew how to make really good excuses? Or maybe David did enough good stuff that God forgot about the bad? Well, none of these seem like the right answer. It must have had something to do with how David responded to his sin.

David knew that sin would build a wall between him and God if he let it. So David was quick to repent and accept God's punishment. He would turn from evil and try to make up for his sins. Time after time, David prayed and asked for God to forgive him. He never allowed sin to build a big wall between him and God.

If you have the same attitude toward sin, God can move mightily in your life too.

### **Mission 009.1**

Read the following Psalms that David wrote. Notice how David responds to sin and seeks to run to God not away from Him. Highlight or underline the four parts of the following Psalms that really speak to you. Explain why you picked these four parts.

### **Psalm 51:1-3, 6-12**

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions [sins/evil actions].

<sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

<sup>6</sup> Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

<sup>7</sup> Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.

<sup>14</sup> Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

<sup>16</sup> You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

<sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

**Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 7-8, 10**

*Of David.*

1 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

2 Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD "- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.

7 You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

10 Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

**Explain below why you picked the four parts you highlighted?**

**Mission 009.2**

Memorize Psalm 32:7-8. You may want to write the verse on a note card and look at it from time to time.

**Psalm 32:7-8**

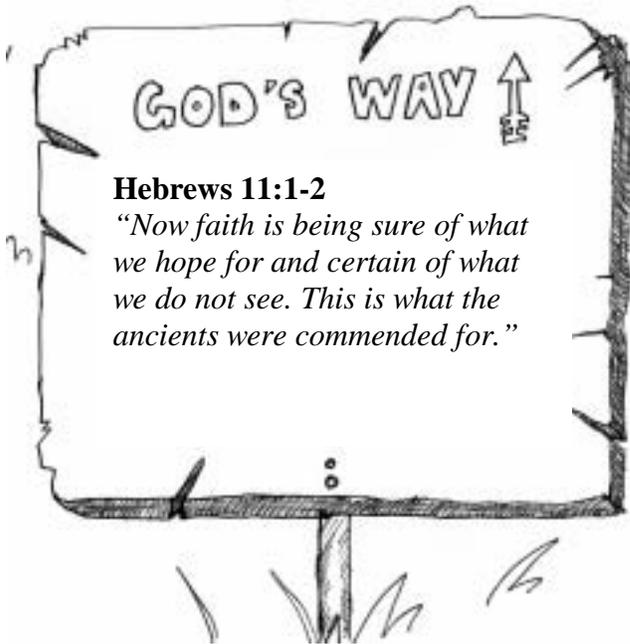
*"You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."*

**Mission 009.3**

Continue to pray for the three people you identified in Mission 007.2. As you pray for them, ask God to break down any walls that they have allowed sin to create in their lives.

# DAY 10

## WHAT IS FAITH?



Many people today take the attitude that they will believe something when they see it. Christians can easily fall into the same trap when it comes to God. We want something we can touch, see and hear with our physical senses. God and His plans can seem distant or just something we dreamed up. Although we may not be able to see God with our eyes, we know He is there. But at some point, it takes faith to know God.

According to the Bible, man cannot please God without faith. The invisible nature of God seems to be a key reason why many reject Him. By definition faith is being sure of what we cannot see. The development of faith cannot be avoided. Abraham received forgiveness for his sin

because he believed God, and his faith was credited to him as righteousness.

Remember the words of Jesus to Thomas, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

### **Mission 0010.1**

Pick one Bible character or story that you believe is an example of faith in God. (Hint: For ideas look at the people listed in Hebrews 11.) Do not select Abraham because he was my example. In the space below, write on the following:

- What does faith mean to you?
- Why did you pick this person or story as an example of faith in God?
- What did they do that was an act of faith?

**Mission 0010.2**

Memorize Hebrews 11:1. You may want to write the verse on a note card and look at it from time to time.

**Hebrews 11:1**

*“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*

**Mission 0010.3**

Continue to pray for the three people you identified in Mission 007.2. As you pray, ask God to reveal to them His deep love.

# DAY 11

## THE MYSTERY REVEALED

If you have ever read a mystery novel, you are probably familiar with idea of deception used as a cover for evil. In most mysteries, the bad guy tried to trick the detective in order to get away with the crime. But the detective pieces together the truth based on clues. Think of life as a big mystery. The Bible gives us clues to understand the truth. Meanwhile, the devil tries to get away with stealing souls by tricking the world.

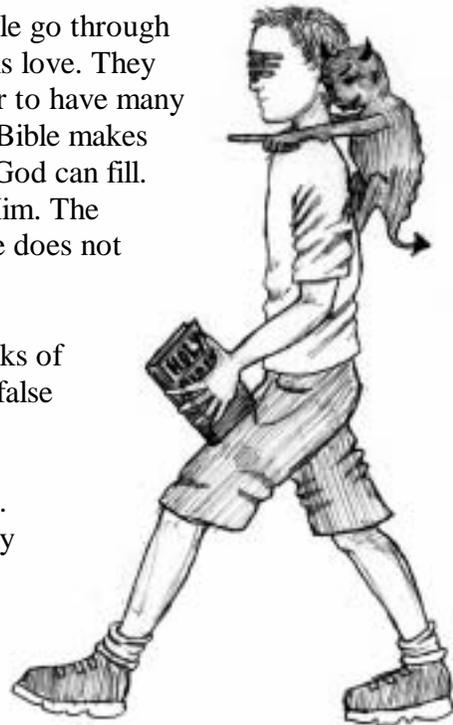
The devil use lies and trickery to control people. Many people go through life blinded to the truth; they never know about Jesus and His love. They think the goal to life is to have a lot of stuff, to be popular or to have many friends. While there is nothing wrong with any of these, the Bible makes it clear that each person has a big hole in their life that only God can fill. Jesus gives joy and peace to those who believe and accept Him. The devil tries his best to create doubt in the minds of people. He does not want them to believe the Bible or trust God's promises.

While God builds His kingdom on prayer, the devil uses bricks of deception. Through the years, lie is built upon lie creating a false reality allowing the devil to get away with his evil plan.

Why do people believe the devil? The answer is quite simple. Most never recognize the deception before it is too late. Only revelation from the Holy Spirit can free the human mind to accept reality as God sees it.

People tend to see only the physical world not the spiritual realm behind it. The story of Elisha standing up against a mighty army illustrates this point (II Kings 6:8-23). The king of Aram dispatched soldiers to kidnap Elisha, a prophet of God, because his prophecies assisted the Israelites in

battle. When the soldiers surrounded the city where Elisha lived, he did not worry. Elisha's servant feared for his life. He asked, "Oh my lord, what shall we do?" Elisha responded, "Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are against us." The servant must have thought that Elisha had gone crazy. He saw only the flesh and bone soldiers around the city. He did not consider the unseen spiritual world or the army of God sent to protect his master. Elisha prayed to God and He opened the servant's eyes. All around the city were angels with chariots of fire. God protected Elisha and his servant. The angels struck the Aramean soldiers causing them to become blind. Many people tend to respond to challenges the same way Elisha's servant did. At the first sign of trouble, instead of trusting God and praying for His deliverance, panic and fear takes control.



The devil tries to blind Craig to God's truth. But the devil is a liar, and Craig learns that he can look to the Bible and pray to find the truth.

In your life, you can choose to either trust God or believe the lies of the devil and sink into a life of fear and bondage. Who are you going to believe?

### **Mission 011.1**

Think about the difference between how the world (Non-Christians) and Christians look at the following things. The Bible and the Holy Spirit guide Christians while the world bases its opinion on the devil's lies. Try to explain how the two groups look at life differently by completing the following sentences.

Here's an example:

Christians believe that great leaders are called to be the greatest servants of them all.

Success to the world is

Success to a Christian is

The world finds its value in

Christians find their value in

The world depends upon

Christians depend upon

### **Mission 011.2**

Pray that God would reveal the places in your life where you may have believed the lies of the devil instead of the truth revealed in the Bible. Ask the Lord to build up your faith so that you can trust Him to work through you. Confess any areas of doubt in your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you spiritual vision just like Elisha who saw past the armies of this world to the victory awaiting those who trust in God.

### **Mission 011.3**

Continue to pray for the three people you identified in Mission 007.2. As you pray, ask God to open their eyes to accept their need to know Jesus as savior and best friend.

# DAY 12

## WHAT IS HOPE?



**Hope in God is kind of like the Power Bar of life.**

When you are tired and face a steep hill to climb, hope can give you the ability to press on and reach the top. Those who don't know God tend to put their hope in money, relationships, possessions, power, skills or personal talent. But as a Christian, you can depend on a power source greater than yourself. You can rely on God to help you deal with problems (I Timothy 6:17).

Christians must use the promises of God in the Bible as the basis for their lives. "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that

through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

Hope creates faith in God, which allows you to be filled with joy despite your situation. Maybe you are struggling in school. Maybe you feel lonely and want more friends. Maybe you have low self-esteem and are picked on at school. Maybe those who should have loved you have betrayed you. No problem is bigger than God. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose...In all these things we are more than conquerors through Jesus who loved us" (Romans 8:28, 37).

### **Sara's Struggle**

As the end of summer approached, Sara Brewer feared going back to school. At least last year she was one of the older girls in middle school. This year she would be a lowly freshman in the new mega high school. Never part of the popular crowd, Sara only had a few close friends, and one of them was moving to another state in less than a week. Sara hated school because some of the kids used to make fun of her. Sara towered over her classmates in both height and weight. Some of the other girls called her "Jumbo" behind her back. Life seemed very unfair for Sara.

On the first day of school, Sally, one of the bullies, walked up and harassed Sara. Sally wanted to see exactly what Sara was made of. She said, "Hey, you ought to try out for the football team. You're bigger than any of our current linemen." Hurt by the comments, Sara thought about fighting. But she had never been real violent. Instead, Sara slammed her locker and walked away.

At lunch, several of the more popular girls got up and moved to another table when Sara sat three seats down from them. Sara felt completely alone.

Even worse, Sally tripped Sara while she walked to her last class. Sara fell face first and hit the floor. All the students in the hall laughed. Sally wanted to run and hide. Nobody stopped to help her pick up her books. Once Sara got home, she locked herself in her room. Sara's parents could not get her to talk to them. Overwhelmed by the day, Sara cried herself to sleep.

### **Mission 012.1**

After reading "Sara's Struggle," answer the following questions:

- Why did Sara feel so bad about herself?
- How could God impact Sara's situation?
- How would you have felt if you were in Sara's situation?
- What could Sara do about it?
- Describe a time where you felt down on yourself.

### **Mission 012.2**

Hope starts with trusting God, and one of the best ways to build up your level of hope is to praise God. Take at least 10 minutes to worship God by singing worship songs, playing an instrument, praying a Psalm or drawing a picture describing God's power and glory. If you decide to sing or play an instrument, only use Christian worship music.

### **Mission 012.3**

Continue to pray for the three people you identified in Mission 007.2. As you pray, ask God to give you words of hope to speak to them.

# **DAY 13**

## **YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST**

Most people at some time in their lives have to deal with low self-esteem. Whether it comes from ridicule or comparison to others, people both young and old feel worthless from time to time. A leading cause for low self-esteem is putting value in the wrong things. The world says you are important if you are a talented athlete, have the right friends, come from a wealthy family, wear the stylish fashion, are very attractive, make good grades, or are popular in school. But God says you are important because He loves you and created you in His image.

### **Mission 013.1**

In the space below, write down all the reasons for God to be mad at you.

In the space below, write down how the Bible says that God really feels about you.

If you're like me, you can write down tons of reasons for God to be mad at you. But you probably struggle to answer the second question. Why is that? Why do we think of God as a demanding judge instead of a loving father? One reason is because the devil spends most of his time throwing around accusations. Satan tells us how rotten we are, and he tries to convince us how upset God is with us.

In the Bible, God describes His people (You and me) as the apple of his eye (Deuteronomy 32:10, Psalm 17:8), which means we are the focus of God's love. God showed His love for us by dying to save us while we were still covered in sin (Romans 5:8). God's love is like a gift that keeps on getting better and better.

Beyond just showering us with His love, God has made us sons and daughters. Since God is King of kings, we are princes and princesses in His kingdom, and we will share in the heavenly treasures and blessings (Galatians 4:6-7). When you stop to think about God's love, it helps you realize that you are special and valuable. No matter what the world says. You are important enough to God for Him to Send His only Son to die for you. As you learn to accept your identity in Christ, you will be able to walk with a sense of self worth not because of anything you have done but because of what God has done for you.

### **Mission 013.2**

Memorize Zephaniah 3:17. You may want to write the verse on a note card and look at it from time to time.

#### **Zephaniah 3:17 (New Living Translation)**

*"For the LORD your God has arrived to live among you. He is a mighty savior. He will rejoice over you with great gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will exult over you by singing a happy song."*

### **Mission 013.3**

Continue to pray for the three people you identified in Mission 007.2. As you pray, ask God to reveal to them His deep love.



Angela sees herself in the mirror as a princess because God says in the Bible that all of His children are princes and princesses in His heavenly kingdom. Anyone who accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior becomes part of God's family. As Angela puts her faith in Jesus, her identity and worth come from God not what others say about her.

# **DAY 14**

## **PERSONAL JOURNEY DAY**

Ok, here's your chance to do a little exploring on your own. There is no prepared lesson or topic for today. This is just time for you to spend listening to God and studying the Word for yourself. Don't consider this like a vacation day. Remember you still have a mission to do.

### **Mission 014.1**

Read one story or chapter in the Bible. You may pick whatever you want. You can read a favorite story or even look for something new. Dig deep for some real treasure. Before you read the Bible, take a few minutes to pray and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide your search. Write down the passage below and describe the main lesson you learned by reading it. If the Spirit showed you anything specific to do based on your reading, comment on that too. Be ready to share your discovery with your family group.

Scripture Passage:

Describe below the main lesson you learned from the Bible story you selected:

**Mission 014.2**

Continue to pray for the three people you identified in Mission 007.2. Take some time today to pray for others in your family, church or school.

# DAY 15

## WHAT IS LOVE?

Ask anybody to define what love means and expect to receive a number of different answers. Some think of love as a feeling. Some believe love comes and goes like the wind. Others define love by what they see on TV, movies or magazines. But the Bible shows us that true love requires sacrifice.

### **1 John 3:16**

*“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”*

Read the following story of two brothers and notice how one brother truly loved the other.

### **Praying Hands**

Back in the fifteenth century, in a tiny village near Nuremberg, lived the Durer family. With eighteen children to feed, Mr. Durer, a goldsmith by trade, worked almost eighteen hours a day. Despite their seemingly hopeless condition, two of the Durer boys had a dream. They both wanted to become artists. But they knew full well that their father would never be able to afford sending both of them to Nuremberg Academy.

After many long discussions at night, the two young men finally worked out a pact. They would toss a coin. The loser would go down into the nearby mines and, with his earnings, support his brother while he attended the academy. Then, when that brother who won the toss completed his studies, he would support the other brother at the academy, either with sales of his artwork or, if necessary, also by laboring in the mines.

They tossed a coin on a Sunday morning after church. Albrecht Durer won the toss and went off to Nuremberg. Albert went down into the dangerous mines. Albrecht's work at the academy was almost an immediate sensation. His etchings, his woodcuts, and his oils were far better than those of most of his professors. By the time he graduated, he was beginning to earn considerable fees for his artwork.

When the young artist returned to his village, the Durer family held a festive dinner on their lawn to celebrate Albrecht's triumphant homecoming. After a long and memorable meal, punctuated with music and laughter, Albrecht rose from his honored position at the head of the table to drink a toast to his beloved brother. Albert's sacrifice had made it possible for Albrecht to fulfil his dream. His closing words were, "And now, Albert, blessed brother of mine, now it is your turn. Now you can go to Nuremberg to pursue your dream, and I will take care of you."

All heads turned in eager expectation to the far end of the table where Albert sat, tears streaming down his pale face, shaking his lowered head from side to side.

Finally, Albert rose and glanced down the long table at the faces he loved. Albert said softly, "No, brother. I cannot go to Nuremberg. It is too late for me. Look ... look what four years in

the mines have done to my hands! The bones in every finger have been smashed at least once, and I cannot make delicate lines on parchment or canvas with a pen or a brush. No, brother ... for me it is too late."

One day, to honor Albert, Albrecht Durer painstakingly drew his brother's abused hands with palms together and thin fingers stretched skyward. He called his powerful drawing simply "Hands." But the entire world almost immediately opened their hearts to his great masterpiece and renamed his tribute of love "The Praying Hands."

**Mission 015.1**

Read 1 Corinthians 13, which is better known as the love chapter.

**Mission 015.2**

Pray and ask for the Holy Spirit to show you how you can practically demonstrate God's love to others. Now, listen and obey the voice of God.

# DAY 16

## LOVING THE UNLOVABLE

Some people are just hard to love. They find ways to annoy you. They talk bad about you to other people. They exclude you from the group. Or maybe they treat you as if you don't even exist. The world will give you pass if you don't want to love these kind of people. But God has a higher standard.

### **Matthew 5:43-48**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor] and hate your enemy.' But I [Jesus] tell you: Love your enemies] and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors [thieves/crooks] doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans [sinners] do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

### **Luke 6:27-29**

*"But I [Jesus] tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak [coat], do not stop him from taking your tunic [shirt]."*

Doing what Jesus requires can be tough. But the Holy Spirit will help you respond in love as you submit your actions to God. Read the following Scriptures and highlight or underline every time the word "love" is used.

### **Romans 5:8**

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

### **Romans 13:8**

*"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law."*

### **Galatians 5:13-15**

*"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature] ; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."*

### **1 Peter 4:8**

*"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."*

**1 John 2:9-11**

*“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.”*

**1 John 4:12**

*“No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”*

**1 John 4:20**

*“If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.”*

**Mission 016.1**

Explain why you think Jesus calls Christians to love their enemies. What positive outcome can come from loving the unlovable? Explain why you think failing to love you enemies can cause harm to you?

**Mission 016.2**

Spend time in prayer asking God to show you anybody you are angry with or anyone you may be holding a grudge against. This could be a brother or sister, your parents, a friend at school, a classmate, a teacher, another Christian, etc. Begin to pray for the person(s). Ask God to change your heart and to help you forgive them. Release any anger to the Lord. Ask God to bless the person(s). Be honest with God and feel free to express your pain.

# DAY 17

## SPEAKING IN LOVE (THE POWER OF WORDS)

### James 3:5-9 (The Message)

*“A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything--or destroy it!*

*It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell.*

*This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue--it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image.”*

This modern wording of James’ warning about the power of the tongue is still true today. In previous years, careless words have caused damage to team unity and hurt various team members. **From slander to gossip to back talk, your tongue can be either a powerful force to bless or hurt others.**

### Mission 017.1

Make up an example for each of the following types of speech. Explain how you think it will impact others in your life.

Gossip:

Slander:

Back Talk to Leaders:



Angela encourages a friend who just had a bad day. Through her journey, she has discovered that her words can bring life or death. Your words have power too! Will you use your tongue for good or evil?

Teasing:

Complaining:

### **Mission 017.2**

Take the Pure Speech Pledge. Put your initials next to each promise as you commit to it. Sign the whole pledge at the bottom. Your signature says that you promise to use your words to build people up, not tear them down.

If you are not willing to live out the promise, ask God for help. If after prayer you are still not willing to do what the promise says, do not sign it. But be aware that part of growing in Christ is controlling your tongue.

### **Pure Speech Pledge**

*May my words honor God and bless others on the team.*

*God help me to avoid godless talk including gossip, slander, lying, teasing, and impure speech.*

*Lord I will strive to build up others on the team by speaking words of encouragement in humility and love.*

*When I am angry, upset or hurt, I will submit my words to You. God, You will defend me and judge any evil talk.*

*If I offend a team member, I will apologize and seek to reconcile with them.*

*As I give my words to You, God please use me to reach the lost and build up my team.*

*I will use my tongue for good not evil. And if I mess up, I know Christ's blood makes me pure as I seek His forgiveness.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# DAY 18

## THE ROAD TO THE CROSS

The cross has become a common part of the American culture. From rock stars with big crosses on earrings or necklaces to the top of a church tower to merchandise sold at Christian bookstores, the cross can be found everywhere. Unfortunately, many people do not understand the real meaning of the cross. Some may think of the cross as a sign of power. Others view the cross as a religious symbol. Still, others believe the cross shows God's forgiveness of sins. And while the cross does stand for these things, many forget or never really understand that the cross is the ultimate symbol of love through sacrifice and death.

Consider the following Bible verses:

### **Ephesians 5:1-2**

*"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant [beautiful, sweet smelling] offering and sacrifice to God."*

The Bible challenges Christians to follow the example of Christ. We are to live a life of love marked by giving up what we want to do for what God calls us to do through His word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This kind of life pleases God. Think of your favorite smell. Maybe it's a certain type of perfume or the smell of fresh flowers or your favorite food cooking in the oven. Living a life of sacrificial love is just like a fine smelling perfume to God.

You may be thinking, "Wait a minute, nobody told me that being a Christian would require so much. I thought it was all about me receiving blessings and gifts from God. Now you're saying that God wants me to sacrifice for others?"

Yeah, God calls His children to sacrifice. But the good news is that God always gives us more than we give up for Him. God offers eternal life, healing, joy, peace, His love, His power, and forgiveness of sins. God promises to share his heavenly kingdom and treasures with us. And in the end, God has our best interest at heart. He knows what is best for us even when we do not.

### **Matthew 16:25-26** (New Living Translation)

*"If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul in the process? Is anything worth more than your soul?"*

### **Romans 12:1-2** (New Living Translation)

*"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice--the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you*

*will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.”*

**Mission 018.1**

Based on the teaching in Ephesians 5:1-2, write a personal prayer to God.

**Mission 018.2**

Based on Romans 12:2, explain how your attitude and behavior has changed since you became a Christian and accepted Jesus as your best friend. On the left side of the line describe your life before Christ. On the right side of the line describe your life after Christ. How has knowing God changed the way you see the world?



**Mission 018.3**

Pray that God will create opportunities for you to sacrificially love others. Ask God to prepare your heart and even show you faces of people God wants you to serve, love or encourage.

# DAY 19

## WHAT IS PERSEVERANCE?

### 1 Corinthians 9:24

*“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.”*

Have you ever run on a track team or competed in a race? At first, the race may seem easy. You run without feeling any pain and imagine crossing the finish line in first place. But as the race reaches the half-way point your body starts to react. Your legs ache and feet hurt from the strain. You begin to feel out of breath and pant for air. Every step seems harder than the last. Your entire body begins to burn. You know the pain will go away if you simply stop. But you think about receiving the gold medal and push yourself to keep on running. All the while, you struggle to ignore the pain. While running, there are critical moments where you face a decision – keeping going to stop. It all depends on how bad you want to win the prize.

Your life is a race. God allows you to deal with challenges each day. These races stretch you and make you stronger as you learn to depend on God and His strength. Whether it's tough times in school, failures on the ball field or struggles to make new friends, we all face times when we want to quit. When you face the burn, what will you do? Will you be like the apostle Paul who said at the end of his life, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).”

Perseverance is the key to those who win the race.

According to the Bible, we have to face hard times because challenges help build faith in God and develop godly character in us.

### James 1:2-4 (New Living Translation)

*“Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.”*



Through his journey Craig learns to trust God and persevere even when the climb was hard. **Will you keep on going this summer when it gets tough?**

### **Mission 019.1**

What are some of the current challenges in your life? Write down one challenge in your life and explain how the Lord has helped you deal with it.

### **Mission 019.2**

Read Acts 16:16-40 and explain why you think Paul praised God despite being thrown in prison. What can you learn from Paul's example.

### **Rockin The Jail House**

#### **Acts 16:16-40**

##### *Paul and Silas in Prison*

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.

When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.

**Write below what you learned from Paul's experience in jail:**

### **Mission 019.3**

Memorize James 1:12. You may want to write the verse on a note card and look at it from time to time.

**James 1:12**

*"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."*

# DAY 20

## LIVING IN THE LET DOWN

If you have ever gone on a mission trip or Christian camp, you may have experienced a spiritual let down when you went home. Growing in your relationship with God can be easy while away from your everyday life. Many distractions are removed; you are in an environment where it is cool to seek God. Dynamic worship times create divine opportunities for God to move. Outreach gives people a chance to help others. But what happens when the music stops... when it's just you and Jesus. It can be hard adjusting to the life after "the experience."

Like a car accident, the camp or trip stops suddenly leaving some disoriented and confused. But your experience with God does not have to stop. The fuel for any real move of God is time in prayer, worship and Bible study and learning and serving God through the everyday experiences of life.

Consider the following story about Seth Miller who discovers what it means to live in the let down.

"Wow! Youth camp began with a bang!" Seth thought. He made two new friends the first night and seemed to get along with the other team members. At first learning the dances was difficult, but by the end of boot camp, he had become a pro.

One night during boot camp, Seth prayed, "Give me your Spirit in a big way. Forgive me for holding back and help me to trust you." The Spirit fell down upon Seth as he was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Overcome by the love of Jesus, Seth experienced the power of God as never before in his life. By the third day, Seth started to enjoy the quiet times because the Holy Spirit kept showing him new treasures in the Bible. Seth thought, "I never knew the Bible had so many encouraging stories." He began to discover that reading the Bible could be fun.

Prayer time was intense as the kids and teens led out in prayer for the outreach cities. God gave Seth a vision about ministering to several boys on bikes and skateboards in a park outreach. Seth's team traveled to Atlanta, Georgia for outreach. On the second day of outreach, Seth's team performed and served the crowd at a major park outside of Atlanta. Almost 150 people came by throughout the afternoon. Seth had the opportunity to talk with two 12 year-old boys on bikes. At first, the boys just watched the dancing and ate the free food. They left and came back with a few friends. Seth walked up to the group and introduced himself. Most of the group walked away, but two boys (Alex and Tony) remained to talk with Seth. Tony said, "Dancing is for girls. I do tricks on my bike and skateboard." Alex agreed and laughed at Seth. Seth said with a smile on his face, "We'll I can do both; let me show you." He borrowed Alex's skateboard and did a frontside 180 and 360 degree flip. He came back to where the other two boys stood. Alex said, "Hey, you're pretty smooth. Where did you learn that?" Seth said, "We have a big ramp in my neighborhood. My brother showed me a bunch of moves." Tony asked, "Why are all of y'all here?" Seth smiled again and said, "We're here to tell you about the one who makes all good things possible. We're here to spread the word about Jesus." Alex said, "You mean like church and stuff?" Seth said, "Yeah, sort of, God wants to hang out with you. Tony, God made that snow cone you are eating taste good. He can help you deal with anything." Tony said, "I'm not

big on religion. But one time, I almost ran into a car on my bike. I yelled out to God for help, and somehow my bike swerved just in time to miss the car.” Seth said, “Yeah, God can send angel to help save us when we are in danger.” After talking with Tony and Alex for about 25 minutes, both of the boys accepted Jesus into their hearts. Seth gave them each a small Bible and introduced them to some of the other camp youth.

Throughout boot camp and outreach, Seth kept trusting in God, and He showed up each time to do something unbelievable. On the last day, Seth prayed, “Jesus help me to stay on fire for you after camp.” He planned to keep up the pace despite a busy summer schedule.

At first, Seth read the Bible and prayed every day. Seth even spent time listening to worship music and singing praise songs. Seth missed his friends from camp. But he quickly fit back into his old life hanging out with the kids in his neighborhood.

One day, Seth got too busy. He thought, “I’ll read the Bible and pray tomorrow.” Tomorrow came and the neighbors had just build a new skateboard ramp. Seth thought, “God will understand. I got to go try out the new ramp.” Before long, Seth found more and more reason to avoid God. As time rolled on, Seth stopped reading his Bible. He prayed only a couple of times per week, usually before a big test. A few times, he remembered the fun of experiencing God at camp. He longed for it. But as quickly as the thought popped into his head, he heard the sound of his favorite show coming on the TV. Distracted by so many things, Seth went downstairs to see if it was a new episode.

Seth stopped telling his friends about Jesus. Within four months, Seth’s relationship with God had stalled. Between school work, friends, sports and family activities, Seth was too busy to spend time with God. When he did have a free moment, Seth liked to veg in front of the TV or practice skateboarding. Without spending time letting the Spirit refuel the fire in his life, Seth’s passion for God started to burn out. A year later, Seth thought, “I don’t know God any better than I did when camp stopped. Actually, I feel worse than before camp started last year.” Seth discovered what happens when you live in the let down.

### **Mission 020.1**

After reading Seth’ story answer the following questions:

- What happened to Seth’s relationship with God during camp? Why do you think this happened?
- How did God use Seth during outreach?
- What happened to Seth after camp?
- What do you think the key is to experiencing God every day in your life?
- Have you had a similar experience to Seth in previous years as a camp? Explain your answer.

**Mission 020.2**

Do you remember lesson 004.1 where you picked the name of God that meant the most to you? Now take the name you selected and make a poster describing what God means to you. If you are an artist, consider drawing a picture. Or you could cut pictures out of a magazine or print out an image from the Web. On the poster put an image or images showing the theme you select. Find a verse relating to the theme and write it on the poster.

# DAY 21

## COUNT THE COST!



Anything worth having is going to cost you something. Jesus understood this very well. He paid the ultimate price by dying to save the world. Jesus said, “Anyone who would come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

Wow, Jesus sure does have high expectations! Yeah, but He never said we had to go through life alone. Christ calls us to follow his example and to live for something greater than just ourselves. The good news is that God always rewards His people with something better in return. Have you stopped to consider what Christ may be calling you to give up? Maybe you need to let go of the steering wheel in your life. Maybe you need to spend less time doing things with no eternal value. Read the following story and consider how it relates to your life.

Craig and Angela had to decide if they were willing to pay the price to obey God. They know that God’s way are better in the long run but are tougher at first. The good news is that Jesus said He would help them every step of the way. They count the cost and chose to follow God’s will. **What will you do?**

### **Luke 14:27-33 (New Living Translation)**

*“And you cannot be my disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow me.*

*“But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first getting estimates and then checking to see if there is enough money to pay the bills? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of funds. And then how everyone would laugh at you! They would say, ‘There's the person who started that building and ran out of money before it was finished!’*

*“Or what king would ever dream of going to war without first sitting down with his counselors and discussing whether his army of ten thousand is strong enough to defeat the twenty thousand soldiers who are marching against him? If he is not able, then while the enemy is still far away, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace. So no one can become my disciple without giving up everything for me.”*

Your life in Christ is just like the building being constructed in the story. If you fail to stop and count the cost, you might only be able to lay the base. And a building with only the base is a pretty poor excuse for a building. Your walk with God is built as you spend time in studying the Bible, prayer, worship, service and evangelism. These activities produce eternal results. The more and more time you spend seeking God, the more like Him you become. Hanging out with God and serving Him comes at a price. You may have to spend less time watching TV, playing video games, hanging out with friends, shopping, playing sports, etc. You can't know God well if you only talk to Him and read the Bible once or twice a week. Seeking God will cost you something...actually it will cost you everything.

*“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”*

-Jim Elliot, missionary to Auca Indians. , killed for his faith on January 8, 1956.

### **Mission 021.1**

Read Philippians 3:7-9 and explain how the Scripture passage applies to your life.

#### **Philippians 3 (New Living Translation)**

I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him.

### **Mission 021.2**

Have you ever done a prayer of pretending? Close your eyes and ask God to help you pretend. In your mind, pretend that you are throwing all of your great things into the trash can. Pretend that you are throwing your soccer trophy into the trashcan. Pretend you are throwing your musical instrument or your favorite art project into the trashcan. Pretend you are throwing your report card into the trashcan. Pretend you are throwing your favorite video game into the trashcan. Pretend that you are throwing everything that means anything to you into the trashcan.

How do you feel?

Did it cost you something, even while pretending, to throw all your great stuff away?

**Think:** Now ask God to help you pretend you are at home. Pretend you have just been asked to scrub the toilet. What are you going to do?

**Think:** Pretend your little sister is being totally annoying. What are you going to do? Pretend you are at school and the other kids are making fun of someone. What are you going to do? Pretend you wake up one morning and just do not feel like doing your Quiet Time. What are you going to do?

What will it cost you to follow Jesus?

Are you willing to count the cost?

## **YOUTH LEADER TRACK**

All youth leaders must finish the survey and two additional lessons in the leadership track. You may be wondering why you have more to do than everybody else. Well that's simple to answer. The Bible makes it clear that leaders are to be held to a higher standard. With authority comes responsibility, the following lessons will cover things you need to know to be a good youth leader.

# **DISCIPLESHIP**

Discipleship may or may not be a familiar concept to you. Jesus called his followers to make disciples. He wanted them to model out proper behavior and to train others to serve God. At its core, discipleship is helping others connect to God and fulfill their God-given destiny. How do you do this as a youth leader?

Read the following story and look for Jesus' answer.

### **John 13:1-11**

*"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.*

*The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

*He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'*

*'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.'*  
*Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'*

*'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'*

*Jesus answered, 'A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.' For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean."*

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Shortly after the disciples got into an argument over who was going to be the greatest in Jesus' kingdom, the Lord demonstrated godly leadership by washing His disciples' feet. Jesus showed the disciples that real leadership required service not ruling with a heavy hand. Jesus took the position reserved for the lowest servant, the foot washer. Back in the day of Jesus' earthly

ministry, the streets were very dusty and dirty. It would not be unusual for a person's feet to become extremely dirty throughout the day. The foot washers would have to clean the dirty, stinky feet of the master and his guests. Jesus willingly took this role because He loved His disciples.

Peter tried to stop Jesus because he recognized that foot washing was something reserved for the lowest of the low not the Son of God. Peter felt the task was beneath Jesus. But Jesus washed their feet to serve as an example for us today. Think about how you can wash the feet of others. God may call you to clean bathrooms to help out a struggling family group. God may lead you to encourage another team member who seems upset or depressed. God may call you to set a good example by paying attention and not goofing off when learning the dances or practical service skills.

Here's some keys to effective discipleship:

- Disciples Serve – From helping to make sure family life chores are done to encouraging other team members to keeping up with the performance clothes, youth leaders are called to serve their group. Look for opportunities to serve and encourage. If a younger kid is having trouble, do your best to help out in a quiet and respectful way. Only assist in a way that honors God and respects the adult leaders.
- Disciples Model Christ and Godly Behavior – As a leader, other team members will be looking at you. If you are goofing off and causing problems, your group will likely do the same. You need to always set a good example and strive to lead through your actions.
- Disciples Lead Through Christ's Love – Youth leaders must consider their tone and heart when talking with those in their action group. Show love and grace the way Jesus did. Youth leaders should never yell, scream or pick on others in their action group. You may be given the responsibility to carry instructions to your action group or supervise their activity. But you should never punish other kids/teens in your action group. If you are having a problem with another team member, let the pastor or senior leader know about the situation.

### **AGC 01.1**

Write a list of at least eight ways you can serve your group or others on the team.

# LEADING SMALL GROUPS

Youth leaders will be called upon to lead small group activities and discussion from time to time. Adult leaders will provide direction and instructions. Ok, some of you may have just turned whiter than this sheet of paper with the thought of having to talk in public and get others to do the same. Don't worry! The Lord is with you.

Here are some pointers to remember:

- Be Led By The Holy Spirit – Spend time in prayer for your action group during boot camp and outreach. Pray about any problems you detect. Ask God to show you how to deal with them.
- Ask Questions – If you don't understand something, make sure to ask the adult leading the activity. You can't lead if you are confused. Your group is counting on you to know what to do.
- Be Enthusiastic – Your attitude will reflect how successful your group is. If you don't care. They will not care. If you are excited and giving it your all, they will respond in a positive way. Even if you think the activity is boring or useless, be enthusiastic.
- Don't Complain – If you have a problem with a particular activity or another person, talk the situation over with your leader. Don't complain to your group.
- Listen – One of the best ways you can show that you care about someone is to listen to them. Involve everyone including the younger kids.
- Dealing With Wrong Answers – We've all said stupid answers to questions before. If you are leading a group discussion, the worst thing you can do if one of the other team members says something dumb is to make fun of them. Encourage them and move the discussion toward what you believe is the proper direction.
- Silence Is Ok – In group discussion periods, it will not be odd for there to be times where no one else wants to talk. People tend to be afraid of saying the wrong thing. If there is a short period of awkward silence, that is ok. Simply wait and see if anybody says anything. If everyone just stares at each other, after a minute or so pick somebody in the group and ask him/her to comment.
- Godly Advice – If you are having struggles as a leader, talk over your concerns in private with your leader or pastor.
- Don't Do All the Work – If your group has things to do, oversee the activity and make sure that everyone participates. Don't just watch them. Get involved yourself. However, you should not have to do all the work either.

## **AGL 02.1**

What are the skills or gifts you think that you bring to the team? Explain how can you use these as a leader?