

FRIENDSHIP

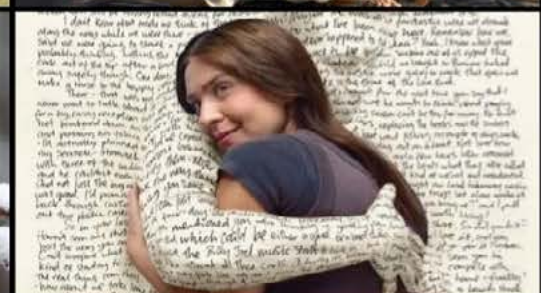


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WITH ALL MY HEART

LESSON 1

1.1 Everyone except Tom seemed so excited about the first week of their senior year in high school. Tom, however, had something heavy on his heart. So, he decided to get some advice from someone he trusted who wouldn't go tell other people. Tom saw Sarah during lunch and asked her if they could talk.

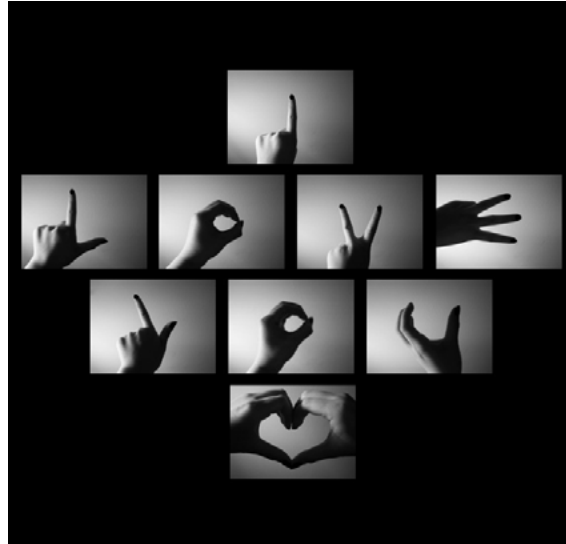
1.2 Tom said, "I need someone to talk to. My parents are having marriage problems. My mother is very upset because my father has a mistress. My father hasn't tried to hide his relationship with this other woman. He seems to think there is nothing wrong with a man loving more than one woman. My father wants my mother just to accept this and not bother him about it. My mother, however, really feels hurt."

1.3 Sarah listened intently, then said to Tom, "I have another friend whose father had a mistress. In both situations the mother has been hurt very much, but the father seems to think the wife should just accept his relationship with the other woman."

1.4 "My mother could never accept my father's relationship with another woman," Tom said. "Think how much pain my mother must be feeling. She has always been loyal to my father. She must really feel betrayed. I'm not really sure how to help her."

1.5 Sarah asked, "What do you think will happen?"

1.6 Tom responded, "Well, if my father refuses to



end his relationship with the other woman, then my mother will leave him. My mother, however, would be willing to forgive my father if he'd leave the other woman. You see, my mom loves my dad with all her heart. The thing she wants most of all is for my father to love her with all his heart too."

1.7 Then Sarah said, "I'm really sorry your family is going through this. I can feel your pain and I can imagine how much your mother must be hurting."

1.8 "Thanks, I appreciate you listening," Tom said.

1.9 Sarah was considerate of Tom's feelings and asked, "Is it okay if I say something about our relationship with God?"

1.10 Tom nodded and said, "Sure, go ahead."

1.11 "Well," Sarah said, "I think your mother's feelings about your father is how God feels toward us. God loves us with all his heart and wants us to love him with all our hearts too. God feels sad when the people he created do not love him. But God feels hurt when some people say they love him, but want to follow other religions at the same time. I..."

1.12 The class bell interrupted Sarah. "Well, we can talk more later. Thanks again for listening," Tom said as he realized Sarah hadn't given him any advice about his parents' situation. It was her listening and understanding that he really wanted even more than her advice.

VOCABULARY:

except
senior year
heavy on his heart
advice
trusted
parents
marriage problems
upset
mistress
hide
relationship
nothing wrong
accept
bother
hurt

listened intently
both
situations
pain
loyal
betrayed
happen
responded
refuses
leave
willing
forgive
mom
dad
going through
imagine

appreciate
considerate
nodded
toward
created
religions
interrupted
realized

LIFE IN A PERFECT WORLD

LESSON 2

2.1 Tom's teacher was talking to the class about how the universe began. The teacher said the world was formed by the Big Bang which caused all of the gases to come together to form the universe. Life started with an amoeba, which slowly evolved into monkeys, then eventually became humans. Tom listened halfheartedly because it was the same thing that he had been taught in school since he was younger.



2.2 After class, Tom walked outside with Sarah. She asked him, "Tom, what do you think about what we just learned in class?"

2.3 Tom thought for a moment and said, "Well, I guess if that's what they teach, I assume it's right."

2.4 Sarah said, "I'm not sure that's the whole story."

2.5 Tom was curious, "Hmm, what do you mean?"

2.6 Sarah said, "Well, if there was a Big Bang, then there also had to be a 'Big Banger.'"

2.7 Tom laughed and said, "That's a funny way to say it."

2.8 "Well, said Sarah, "where did the energy and the matter come from that caused the Big Bang? And why did it happen at that moment?"

2.9 "Well, I'm not sure," replied Tom. "I've never really thought about that before."

2.10 Sarah continued, "And did you know that the earth is the perfect distance from the sun? If the earth moved closer to the sun it would be too hot and everything

would burn up. Or, if the earth moved farther away from the sun, everything would freeze. The world is 'too perfect' to just 'happen' by accident."

2.11 Tom said, "I don't understand. What do you mean it is 'too perfect?'"

2.12 Sarah responded, "I don't think it is possible for a giant explosion to create life. Have you ever heard of biogenesis? Biogenesis means that life must come from life. Let me try to explain. If you take two chairs and stack them on top of each other, they cannot make a baby chair because they do not have life."

2.13 Sarah paused for a moment and then said, "And did you know that the earth has the perfect amount of oxygen. It's exactly the right amount for humans."

2.14 Tom said, "Well, I guess I can see what you're saying about the world, but... I'm not sure what I believe right now because I haven't thought much about it. Maybe we just got lucky and the earth was perfect for our human bodies."

2.15 Sarah said, "I used to think that way too. But then a friend explained to me how the world was made of billions of jigsaw puzzle pieces that came together at the right time to all fit together perfectly."

2.16 Tom didn't respond. He just stood there thinking.

2.17 Sarah continued, "An accidental explosion causes chaos and confusion. Yet, our world is filled with amazing order and design. There must have been 'Someone,' the Big Banger, who helped all of this come together at the right time to form our perfect universe. That's how I started to believe in God."

VOCABULARY:

formed

Big Bang

gases

universe

amoeba

slowly

evolved

eventually

humans

halfheartedly

moment

assume

curious

hmm

Big Banger

energy

matter

perfect

distance

freeze

'too perfect'

accident

possible

giant explosion

create

biogenesis

stack

paused

oxygen

exactly

lucky

billions

jigsaw puzzle pieces

chaos

confusion

order

design

ALL IN THE FAMILY

LESSON 3

3.1 Tom was interested in learning more about God. His conversations with Sarah were fascinating. He decided to get together with Sarah again to ask her some questions.

3.2 Tom saw Sarah after class and said, "Hey, Sarah. I'd really like to pick your brain on the subject of 'God' if you have some free time after school today."

3.3 Sarah said, "That sounds great! Where do you want to meet? Oh, and is it okay if I invite my cousin, John, to join us? I'd like for you to meet him. He's a Christian too."

3.4 Tom said, "Sure. Let's meet at the picnic tables under the big shade trees in front of the school."

3.5 So, when Tom, Sarah and John met together at the picnic tables, Tom asked, "Now, how exactly are you two related?"

3.6 Sarah replied, "John's mother is my father's little sister. Actually, my father has two older brothers and one younger sister. So, it's always a lot of fun when all the relatives get together at my grandma and



grandpa's house for Thanksgiving or Christmas.

3.7 "My mother's side of the family is even bigger," Sarah continued. "She has three older sisters and three younger brothers. My mom is number 4 of 7 children. I don't get to see the relatives on my mother's side very often because everyone lives in different cities. But, we do manage to get together every few years for a family reunion."

3.8 Tom responded by saying, "Wow, that must be fun to be a part of such a huge family."

3.9 John spoke up and said, "Having a big family is wonderful, but having a worldwide family is even better. You see, I have brothers and sisters in Christ all around the world. We Christians call ourselves brothers and sisters. Sarah is not only my cousin, she's also my sister in Christ. And I hope that someday you will be my brother in Christ, too."

3.10 Just as John finished saying this, Tom got a phone call. After Tom hung up, he turned to Sarah and John and said, "Hey, my mom called and I really need to go help her with some stuff. Let's meet up again sometime soon."

VOCABULARY:

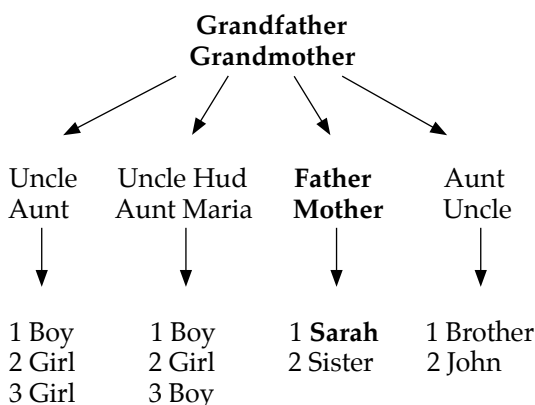
conversations
fascinating
pick your brain

free time
cousin
picnic tables
shade trees

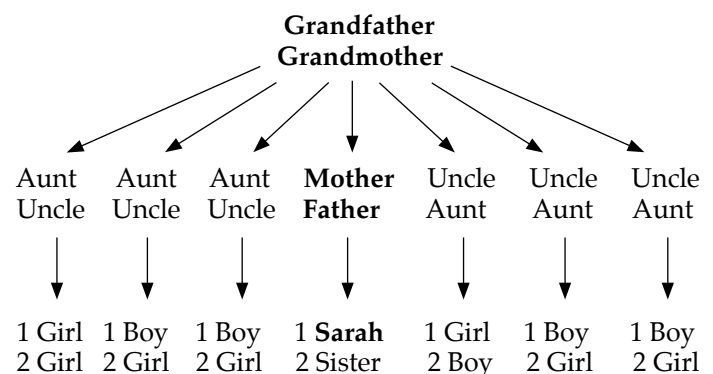
related
relatives
manage
reunion

huge
stuff

Sarah's Father's Side of the Family has 20 people:



Sarah's Mother's Side of the Family has 30 people:



ACTIVITY:

1. Draw a family tree of your father's side of the family.
2. Draw another family tree of your mother's side of the family.

HOT TOPIC OF DISCUSSION

LESSON 4

4.1 A couple of days later John called Sarah on the phone and asked, "Hey, when are we going to get together with Tom again?"

4.2 Sarah replied, "Well, let me talk with Tom first and then I'll let you know."

4.3 The next day they met together at a nice little bakery shop. They each ordered a hot drink and a piece of pie. They ate and enjoyed some small talk together for a while.

4.4 Then John said to Tom, "Sarah told me about your discussion about God as the creator of the universe. Maybe I can help you understand a little more about God. Watch this," John said as he held up a packet of sugar and let it drop on the table. "Gravity pulled it to the ground. Did you know the earth has the perfect amount of gravitational pull? If there was less, we would all float in the air like a balloon. If there was more, we would all be stuck to the ground."

4.5 John took a sip of his coffee and then picked up a toothpick and said, "No one would believe me if I said I picked this off a tree. Everyone knows that someone had to make it in some toothpick factory. So, if this simple toothpick must have a maker, then how can someone say that a tree, which is much more complex than a toothpick, didn't have a maker?"

4.6 John took off his watch and placed it on the table. "No one would believe me if I told them this watch just appeared from nothing. Everyone would say that someone had to put all the parts together correctly in order for it to work."

4.7 John continued, "Here's a problem if just a



random explosion caused the world to begin. If I lit a stick of dynamite under this watch, do you think the parts would fly into the air and then come back together in their correct order? Of course not. In the same way, there's too much order in this world for it to have happened by accident."

4.8 John pulled a laptop computer out of his backpack and said, "In the 1940s computers were built with so many cables and vacuum tubes they filled an entire room. Technology has come a long way since then."

4.9 John continued, "Today, this little laptop is more powerful than those room-size computers. This is a great accomplishment. A computer, however, is nothing when compared to the human brain. Just as this computer must have had a maker, our brains, which are far more complex than computers, must also have had a maker."

4.10 Sarah added, "Think about everything in the universe. Do you really think all this order and detail came about because of an accidental explosion? Surely our universe had a designer and our amazing world had a creator."

4.11 Tom said, "I've never really thought about all this before. I still have some doubts, but on the other hand, I think I'm beginning to believe in God as the creator of this universe. Maybe we can get together again and talk about this some more."

4.12 Sarah said, "Just name the time and place."

4.13 Tom smiled and then said, "How about here at 4:30 on Friday?"

VOCABULARY:

bakery

small talk

discussion

held up

packet

gravity, gravitational

float

balloon

stuck

took a sip

picked up

toothpick

factory

complex

took off

appeared

continued

random

lit

stick of dynamite

pulled

laptop

backpack

cables

vacuum tubes

entire

technology

come a long way

accomplishment

compared

far more

surely

designer

creator

doubts

on the other hand

name the time and place

RELATIONSHIP SEPARATION

LESSON 5

5.1 Tom, Sarah and John met again a few days later at the same bakery shop. After everyone ordered their food they sat down to eat. Tom asked Sarah and John, "So, what's been going on lately?"

5.2 "A lot's been going on with me," John said. "Yesterday when I tried to start my pickup it wouldn't start. The gasoline gauge showed that the tank was nearly empty. When I got out I noticed the cap was off the gas tank on my pickup. When I asked my mother if she knew why the gas cap was off she said, "Bobby, your nephew, was playing with it yesterday."

5.3 Tom asked, "Did you ever find it?"

5.4 "Yes" John said, "I finally found the gas cap in a bucket of water and then I put it back on my pickup. Then I took a one-liter bottle to fill it up with gas at a Shell station near my house. I walked back to my house and poured the gas into the gas tank. I then tried to start my pickup, but it still wouldn't start."

5.5 John continued, "When my brother came home, I listened to his suggestion and we pushed my pickup to the gas station to fill it up to make sure there was plenty of gas. Then we tried to start it again. It was so frustrating because it just wouldn't start. So, we asked a professional car mechanic to check it out."

5.6 Sarah asked, "Have you found out anything yet?"

5.7 Then John said, "Yes, today the mechanic called and said the reason my pickup wouldn't start is because a lot of water is in the gas tank. Immediately I knew how the water got in there. He said in order to fix it,



he would have to completely drain everything out and then refill it. So, all the extra gas I put in yesterday really didn't help solve the problem at all."

5.8 Tom encouraged John, "Well, I'm glad you know what the problem is and how to fix it."

5.9 John replied, "I've been thinking about it a lot today and I think this story can help us learn a valuable lesson about our relationship with God."

5.10 Tom said, "I'm not sure I understand what you mean."

5.11 John picked up a glass and poured a little drinking water in it and said, "This is pure drinking water isn't it?" Then he poured some black pepper into it and said, "It's not pure any more, is it? What if I add more water to it, will that make it pure again? Even if I completely fill it up to the top with pure water, it won't make it pure again. The glass needs to be washed completely clean and then new pure water can be added."

5.12 John continued, "God is pure. He is without sin. However, when we sin our lives are no longer pure. Our relationship with God changes because sin separates us from God. No matter how many good things you do, you can never solve the problem of sin. Our goodness cannot erase our sin."

5.13 "Also, we can study and learn about religion all our lives and we can even participate in many ceremonies, but all these things cannot help us erase the sin in our lives," John said. "The main point is that sin separates us from God and we cannot help ourselves overcome this problem. We need God to clean us and refill us."

VOCABULARY:

ordered
pickup
gauge
tank
nearly empty
noticed
cap
nephew
bucket
bottle
station
poured
suggestion

fill
frustrating
professional
mechanic
check it out
immediately
fix
completely
drain
refill
solve
problem
valuable
lesson

pure
black pepper
add
sin
separates
no matter
erase
study
learn
participate
ceremonies
main point
overcome

3 - IN - 1

LESSON 6

6.1 On Monday they all met at the mall for a cup of coffee together.

6.2 After they had ordered and sat down, Sarah said, "Tom, how are you feeling about all our talks about God?"

6.3 Tom responded by saying, "I think I believe in God as creator of the universe. But, there are some other things I don't really understand. I know that Christians believe in Jesus Christ, but what do God and Jesus Christ have to do with each other?"

6.4 Sarah replied, "That's a great question, Tom. Actually, it can get even more confusing when I tell you that Christians also believe in the Holy Spirit."

6.5 John noticed the confused expression on Tom's face as Sarah tried to explain, "The relationship between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit is called the Trinity. Trinity is made up of two words 'tri' and 'unity.' Trinity means the unity of three parts — God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They are three and yet they are one."

6.6 "Wait a minute," said Tom. "I think you lost me there. What do you mean they are one?"

6.7 Then John said, "It's kind of a hard concept to comprehend. Let me give a coffee cup illustration that might help."

6.8 John held up his coffee cup. Then he asked Tom, "What am I drinking?"

6.9 Tom answered, "Coffee."



6.10 John reached over and picked up a packet of sugar. Then he tore it open and poured the sugar into the coffee and said, "Now what am I drinking?"

6.11 Tom answered, "Well, it is still coffee, but you've added sugar to it."

6.12 Then John picked up a packet of non-dairy creamer. He tore it open and poured its contents into the coffee and asked, "Now what am I drinking?"

6.13 Tom said, "Well, it's still coffee, but now it also has cream and sugar mixed in it."

6.14 "Right," said John. "This can help us better understand the nature of God. You see, God is one, but he is also three. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are both a part of God. If you take God and add Jesus, you still have God. If you also add the Holy Spirit, you still have God."

6.15 Tom smiled and nodded and said, "I think I'm following you, but I probably need to learn a little more about Jesus and the Holy Spirit to really understand. Maybe you guys can tell me about them too."

6.16 Sarah said, "We can, but you really shouldn't just take our word for everything. You need to read the Bible for yourself. There's a Christian bookstore here in the mall. Let's go get you a Bible."

6.17 That night Tom began to read his Bible. It was so interesting he couldn't stop. After reading for several hours, he finally fell asleep.

VOCABULARY:

have to do with each other

Holy Spirit

expression

Trinity

tri

unity

and yet

you lost me

kind of

concept

comprehend

illustration

reached over

tore

poured

non-dairy

creamer

contents

mixed

nature

smiled

I'm following you

take our word

Bible

SIGNS OF HIS LOVE

LESSON 7

7.1 Tom saw Sarah in the hallway at school the next day and said, "I couldn't put my Bible down last night. It was so amazing to learn about the beginning of the world."

7.2 "That's great," Sarah said. "So tell me about some of the things you read."

7.3 "I started at the beginning and just kept reading," said Tom. "The next thing I knew, my alarm clock woke me up."

7.4 "So how far did you read?" Sarah asked.

7.5 "I read all the way to the part where God was so sad because no one loved him any more. All the people he made had become really evil. God decided he would start over with a few people who still loved him. So he sent a great flood to destroy all the people except Noah and his family. Then God made a promise to Noah and his family that he would never again destroy the world by a flood. Then God made a sign to remind everyone of his promise. He made a rainbow in the sky. So, the next time I see a rainbow, I'll remember it's a sign of God's love for us."

7.6 "Wow Tom," said Sarah. "I'm impressed with how much you've read. I can see you are really trying to seek God with all your heart. I want to encourage you with another promise from God in the Bible. God said in Jeremiah 29:13, 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart.' Keep seeking God Tom. You're going to find him."

7.7 Sarah paused for a moment and said, "Tom, I was just wondering... How are things going between



your mom and dad? I didn't feel like I could ask you in front of John."

7.8 "Well, things are still tense around my house. My mom is still insistent that my dad must leave the other woman. It's interesting though. My mom loves him so much that she is giving him time to change."

7.9 Tom continued, "Oh, I forgot to tell you about something that happened last night. After I fell asleep while reading my Bible, I had this strange dream. I dreamed I was walking down the street and stopped to buy some roses. As I continued walking on the sidewalk, I saw my dad and handed him the roses and said, 'I think you need these more than me.' And my dad took them and just walked away. As I watched him walk away, I noticed the clouds above him. There was a hole in the clouds in the shape of a heart and the sunshine was trying to find its way through the opening. I'm not really sure what to think about this dream."

7.10 Sarah said, "Maybe your dream is a sign. Maybe it's God's way of letting you know that everything is going to be okay between your mom and dad."

7.11 "I hadn't thought about that. I hope you're right," Tom said. "Maybe this dream was my personal rainbow — a special sign from God to me."

7.12 The class bell rang. Sarah said, "Let's get together at the mall tomorrow to talk about what you're reading. I'll let John know. Same coffee shop at 4:30?"

7.13 "Sounds great—can't wait," said Tom.

VOCABULARY:

hallway
kept reading
alarm clock
flood
destroy
except
promise
sign
rainbow
impressed
encourage
wondering
in front of

tense
insistent
though
strange
dream
roses
sidewalk
handed
clouds
hole
shape
sunshine
trying to find its way
through the opening

letting you know
personal
sounds great
can't wait

FEELING HIS PAIN

LESSON 8

8.1 When the three of them met together the next day, all three had their Bibles.

8.2 John said, "So, how are you enjoying that new Bible?"

8.3 "It's amazing," Tom said. "I can't put it down. I've been taking notes so I can remember everything." He pulled out his notes and continued, "Let's see... The creation story was awesome. At first everything was formless and empty. Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. I wonder if that was the Big Bang? I read in the footnote that the first three days were forming and the last three were filling. And God rested on the seventh day."

8.4 Then Tom explained how God created Adam and Eve. Tom said with amazement, "I wonder what it was like to walk and talk with God?" Tom paused to think about it, and then said, "When God told Adam and Eve not to sin, I think it's kind of like a parent telling their child not to touch a hot stove or hot iron. They are really trying to protect their child from things that will hurt them."

8.5 "But then," Tom continued, "it must have really hurt God when Satan deceived Adam and Eve and they sinned. They had to leave the Garden of Eden



and struggle in the world. Then they had children, and grandchildren and their descendants multiplied, but they totally forgot about God."

8.6 Tom said, "In Genesis chapter 6 it says that God saw man had become very wicked. And God was 'grieved' that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain."

8.7 Sarah said, "That verse helps me feel God's pain. He loves us so much. Most people, however, live their lives in ways that hurt him instead of ways that show him that they love him."

8.8 "Yeah," said Tom, "God was so hurt by all the sinful people that he decided to start over by destroying everyone except Noah's and his family—because they were still faithful to him. Everyone else died in the great flood."

8.9 Tom continued, "After the flood, God told Noah's family to multiply and fill the earth. After many generations God was hurt again when all the people just wanted to stay in the same place and build this Tower of Babel that could reach up to heaven. So, God had to confuse them by giving them all these different languages. Now I know where all the worldwide languages came from."

VOCABULARY:

pulled out

creation

awesome

formless

footnote

forming

filling

kind of like

stove

iron

protect

Satan

deceived

Garden of Eden

struggle

descendants

multiplied

Genesis

wicked

grieved

verse

instead

faithful

flood

generations

Tower of Babel

reach up to heaven

confuse

languages

worldwide

WILLING TO SACRIFICE HIS SON

LESSON 9

9.1 Tom scanned his notes again and said, "Oh yeah. This is an incredible story. There was this 90-year-old man named Abraham. He and his 80-year-old wife Sarah didn't have any children. Then one day God told Abraham that he would have a son. At that time Abraham believed God. But then, ten years later, when God again told him that he and his wife Sarah would have a son, Abraham laughed because he was now 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old. Sarah laughed too. Then God said to Abraham, 'Is anything too hard for the LORD?' Then God told them to name their son Isaac, which means to laugh."



you imagine the anguish Abraham must have felt when he reached the top, built an altar and then began to tie up Isaac's arms and legs! Isaac was probably screaming and Abraham must have been wailing in pain."

9.2 Tom smiled and said, "Can you imagine how much they must have loved that little boy? They knew he was truly a gift from God." Tom looked at his notes again and said, "Then I was shocked when God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. I was confused because God had already promised Abraham that his descendants would be so many they couldn't be counted—like stars in the sky. I wondered as I was reading, 'Why would God tell Abraham to sacrifice his son?' I guarantee you that Abraham didn't tell his wife Sarah what God told him to do."

9.3 Tom crossed his arms and continued, "I could really feel Abraham's pain as he struggled to follow God or follow his heart. Abraham took Isaac on a three-day journey to a certain mountain where they would make a sacrifice to God. Isaac was carrying the firewood up the mountain when he asked, 'Where is the lamb we will sacrifice?' Abraham said, 'God will provide.'"

9.4 Tom took a deep breath, sighed and said, "Can

9.5 "I didn't realize that it was actually just a test to see how much Abraham was willing to be faithful to God. It nearly brought tears to my eyes when Abraham was about to sacrifice his son and then a voice from heaven said, 'Do not lay a hand on the boy.' Then God provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice."

9.6 "You're amazing," said John. "You've read all that since Monday? And look at your notes."

9.7 Sarah added, "I'm impressed that you can sense how God must have felt in all those situations."

9.8 "By the way," Tom said, "you guys said I could learn more about Jesus in the Bible, but he wasn't in any of the stories I read."

9.9 Sarah and John looked at each other and chuckled. Sarah explained, "We should have told you that the story of Jesus is in the New Testament. But, it's probably good that you now have some Old Testament background understanding."

9.10 Then John added, "Well, in a sense this story is about Jesus. This story is a foreshadowing of God's willingness to sacrifice his Son Jesus. Just as Abraham was ready to give up his precious son, God was also willing to sacrifice his only Son Jesus on the cross. God did this so that those of us who believe in Jesus can be forgiven of our sins."

VOCABULARY:

scanned

incredible

laughed

shocked

sacrifice

descendants

guarantee

crossed his arms

journey

certain

firewood

lamb

sighed

anguish

altar

tie up

screaming

wailing

test

provided

ram

by the way

chuckled

New Testament

Old Testament

background

foreshadowing

precious

cross

KEEPING THE PROMISE

LESSON 10

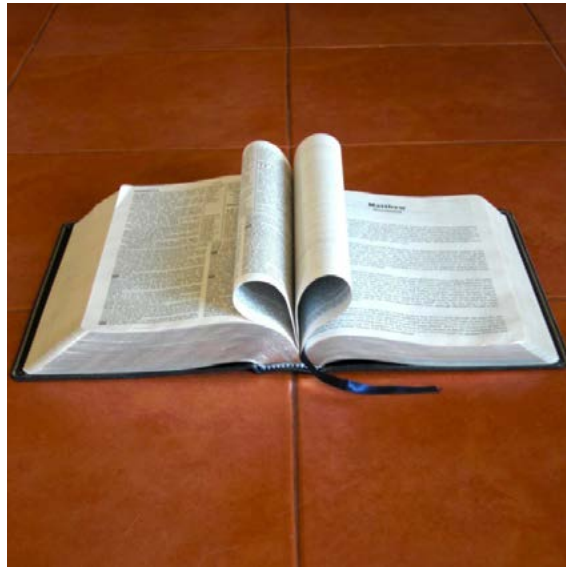
10.1 Sarah opened her Bible to the book of Matthew. Tom started flipping through pages trying to find it. He finally turned to the table of contents to see the page number where Matthew began.

10.2 “Actually,” Sarah said, “while you’re looking at the table of contents, let me explain why the books of the New Testament are in this order. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the names of four men who each wrote a historical account of the life of Jesus. Each man wrote from his own perspective. So, each one is slightly different, but they don’t conflict with each other.”

10.3 John added, “It’s kind of like if we were in a car accident and a policeman asked each of us separately to describe what happened. Each of us might emphasize something different, but the main story would be the same.”

10.4 Sarah said, “The next book is Acts. It’s the second book written by Luke. It focuses on things that happened after Jesus went back to heaven. Then there is Romans through 2 Thessalonians. These are letters that were written by Paul, a Christian leader in the first century, to churches in these cities. Then 1 Timothy through Philemon are letters that Paul wrote to Timothy, Titus and Philemon to instruct them. So, Paul actually wrote 13 books in the New Testament.”

10.5 John then said, “The book of Hebrews was written to show the Jewish people that Jesus Christ is the true God. And the books of James through Jude are each named after the authors who wrote them. And



then the final book is Revelation, which was written by one of Jesus’ disciples named John. And he actually wrote five of the books in the New Testament.”

10.6 Sarah said, “Before we start talking about Jesus in the New Testament, I think I need to explain that the Old Testament can be summarized as God’s time of preparing people for the Savior who would be coming into the world. One way that God prepared people was by giving them laws for knowing what is right and wrong. Then God said that in the future, he would make a new promise with the people

and that he would write the laws on their hearts. The New Testament shows how God fulfilled his promises to send a Savior and write his laws on our hearts.”

10.7 Sarah continued, “God keeps his promises. Remember the rainbow and how God promised to never again destroy the world by a flood? God also promised Abraham that his descendants would be so many that they couldn’t be counted — like sand on the seashore. Later God promised King David that one of his descendants would reign forever. God fulfilled this promise by sending Jesus to be our eternal King. God always keeps his promises.”

10.8 “I wish my dad would keep his promise,” Tom said.

10.9 John said, “What do you mean?”

10.10 Sarah sat there quietly. Tom looked embarrassed and then finally said, “Um...my parents are going through a hard time right now. I just wish my dad would be consistent and do what he said he would do.”

VOCABULARY:

flipping
table of contents
historical account
perspective
slightly
conflict
emphasize
focuses
century
churches
instruct
authors
disciples
summarized

Savior
laws
fulfilled
seashore
king
reign
forever
eternal
embarrassed
hard time
consistent

NEW TESTAMENT TABLE OF CONTENTS

Matthew }
Mark }
Luke }
John }

These four books are called the gospels. Gospel means Good News. These books are about the life of Jesus Christ.

Acts

2nd book written by Luke. About the beginning of Christianity.

Romans }
1 Corinthians }
2 Corinthians }
Galatians }
Ephesians }
Philippians }
Colossians }
1 Thessalonians }
2 Thessalonians }

These nine books are letters written by Paul to Christians in these cities.

1 Timothy }
2 Timothy }
Titus }
Philemon }

These four books are written by Paul to these men.

Hebrews

Written to help Jews believe Jesus is the true God.

James }
1 Peter }
2 Peter }
1 John }
2 John }
3 John }
Jude }

These books are named after the men who wrote them.

Revelation

The 5th book written by John.

TRYING TO COMMUNICATE

LESSON 11

11.1 The next day when they all met together at the coffee shop in the mall, John said, "Hey Tom, I'm really sorry your parents are having marriage problems."

11.2 "Yeah, it's been a little stressful lately, but these talks have helped me not to focus on the problems. I'm really beginning to understand a lot. So, let's keep going!" Tom said.

11.3 "If that's what you want," Sarah said as she turned in her Bible to the book of John. "Remember how the book of Genesis begins? *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* Now listen to how the book of John begins. *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.* Just as you and I use words to help others understand us, God sent his 'Word,' Jesus, into the world so that we would understand him. God literally had to come in the flesh in order to be understood by humans."

11.4 Then Sarah said, "Maybe this story will help you understand. Once there was a man inside a small house on a mountain. It was very cold outside and snow covered everything. He made a fire in the fireplace to keep the house warm. He was reading a book when he heard something hit the big bay window beside him. He looked up and saw a bird on the windowsill. The bird flew over to a tree and then flew quickly and crashed into the clear window and fell to the ground. The bird



seemed dazed, but flew back to the tree and then flew and crashed into the window again. The bird kept repeating this action.

11.5 Sarah showed pain in her face as she said, "The man realized the bird was trying to get into the warm house. He thought to himself, 'This bird is going to kill itself trying to get through this window.' So, he went to the front of the house, opened the door and yelled to the bird, 'Over here! Over here! Come through this door into my warm house.' But the bird just kept flying and crashing into the window. The man thought to himself, 'How can

I communicate with this bird to help it understand?' He thought, 'If only I was a bird, then I could communicate and be understood.'"

11.6 Sarah looked into Tom's eyes and said, "This is how God must have felt when the humans he created didn't understand him. I wonder if he said, 'I will have to become a human and go live with them so that they will really understand me.' God really wanted to be understood so he sent Jesus to communicate with us."

11.7 Tom said, "That's a great story." Then he looked down and said, "Speaking of communication...My family doesn't have very good communication. My dad and I don't talk much. My parents don't talk much unless they are arguing. Wait a minute. I'm getting us off track. Let's keep talking about John chapter 1. I love your stories and your insights are amazing.

VOCABULARY:

stressful
lately
literally
flesh
snow
covered
fireplace
bay window
windowsill
crashed
dazed
repeating
yelled
communicate
arguing
off track
insights

GENESIS 1:1

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

JOHN 1:1-2

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

LESSON 12

12.1 Tom said, “Both of you guys are great at helping me understand things.”

12.2 “Thanks,” Sarah said, “but the thing that is really amazing is the way you are so hungry to understand about God.”

12.3 Sarah looked down at her Bible and said, “Okay, let’s look at verse 3. It says, *Through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that has been made.* This shows that Jesus was not only with God when the world was created—the world was created through him!”

12.4 “Verse 4 says, *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.* Jesus came offering true life, a light to guide our lives in God’s direction. Sadly most people refuse to accept Jesus and his message—so they remain in darkness.”

12.5 “Verses 6 to 9 introduce us to John the Baptist, the final prophet sent by God to prepare the way for Jesus. *There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*”

12.6 “Now look at verse 15, *He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.* I love John the



Baptist’s humility. He wanted people to focus on Jesus and not on himself. He knew he was only God’s tool to prepare the world for Jesus. I want to be more like John the Baptist.”

12.7 “Look at how verses 10 to 12 describe Jesus, *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.* Even though Jesus created the world, most people did not recognize him.

They rejected him. But those who received him became true children of God. That must have been so painful to Jesus to be rejected by the people he created.”

12.8 Then Tom said, “I thought my mom’s rejection was painful. Think how Jesus must feel—rejected over and over by the billions of people he created!”

12.9 “That’s right,” Sarah said, “but, think how happy he must feel when we receive him. Oh, and verse 18 says Jesus is the only one who has ever seen God. So, Jesus is the ‘One’ who came to help us know and love God.”

12.10 Then John said, “I like verse 14 about the Word becoming flesh—alive! It’s like the words on a page coming to life and stepping off the page and into our lives to show us how much God loves us.”

VOCABULARY:

hungry
direction
message
remain
John the Baptist
prophet
witness
testify
concerning
surpassed
humility
tool
describe
recognize
rejected
received
stepping off the page

JOHN 1:1-18

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’” ¹⁶ From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.

BETTER TO GIVE THAN RECEIVE

LESSON 13

13.1 As they were getting ready to leave, Tom invited John to play soccer on Saturday morning but John said, "I have to mow a lawn this Saturday.

13.2 Tom asked, "Do you have a lawn-mowing business?"

13.3 "Yeah, it gives me some extra spending money, but I don't charge anything for the one I'm mowing Saturday. I do it for free because, well, he's my uncle. Plus I just love being around him. But I guess the main reason I do it for free is because he's blind."

13.4 Tom paused for a moment and then said, "Do you need any help?"

13.5 "Sure, I could use a hand. I can't wait for you to meet Uncle Hud. You're going to love him."

13.6 On Saturday morning, just as John and Tom finished mowing the lawn, a man holding two drinks came walking down the steps of the wooden deck in the back yard and said, "John, Maria tells me that you brought a friend today. Here's some of Maria's iced tea. You boys need to take a break."

13.7 As John and Tom took the glasses of iced tea, John said, "Great timing Uncle Hud. We just finished. Uncle Hud this is Tom. He's good friends with Sarah."

13.8 "Good to meet you Tom. My name's Hudson, but you can just call me Uncle Hud. So, you're good friends with Sarah? That Sarah is quite a girl. John, can she still beat you in arm wrestling?"

13.9 Tom laughed and looked puzzled at John as he said, "Sarah can beat you in arm wrestling?"



13.10 John quickly said, "Now wait a minute Uncle Hud, that was when we were 8 years old and you've never let me live that down."

13.11 "That's only because I know it gets under your skin every time I remind you of it," Uncle Hud said with a smile.

13.12 As they sat down at the picnic table on the deck, the back door opened. Uncle Hud said, "Tom, let me introduce you to my better half. This is my sweet wife Maria. She's the best thing that ever happened to me."

13.13 "Nice to meet you Tom," she said.

13.14 Then John said, "Aunt Maria, Sarah's the one who introduced me to Tom. We've been getting together recently to talk about God."

13.15 "Now that sounds like a discussion right up my alley," said Uncle Hud. "Maria, let's have these boys and Sarah over for dinner sometime soon.

13.16 Aunt Maria said, "Great idea. I'll see if Sarah is free tomorrow night. How about fried chicken?"

13.17 Uncle Hud looked in the direction of Tom and said, "You're going to love Maria's fried chicken."

13.18 After John put the lawn mower in the back of his pickup, he turned to Tom and said, "The Bible says it is better to give than to receive, but every time I come over here I feel like I receive so much more than I give."

13.19 Tom smiled and said, "I think I know what you mean."

VOCABULARY:

mow a lawn

lawn-mowing business

charge

blind

use a hand

wooden deck

back yard

iced tea

take a break

timing

quite

arm wrestling

puzzled

wait a minute

live that down

gets under your skin

my better half

right up my alley

dinner

A TIME FOR OPENNESS

LESSON 14

14.1 Tom rang the doorbell. Sarah answered the door and invited him in and said, "John's not here yet. Uncle Hud and Aunt Maria are in the kitchen cooking fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, and corn-on-the-cob."

14.2 They joined them in the kitchen. As they were all talking and preparing the food, Tom noticed how Uncle Hud and Aunt Maria were always complimenting each other. He felt very impressed with their relationship. Tom whispered to Sarah, "They're an amazing couple." Sarah nodded her head in agreement as she stirred the iced tea.

14.3 Uncle Hud said, "Tom, let's go for a walk while the food's still cooking." When they were outside Uncle Hud held out his arm and said, "Guide me down to the gazebo." Tom took Uncle Hud's arm. As they walked slowly together, a flood of emotions came over Tom and he couldn't talk. The warmth and closeness he felt beside Uncle Hud reminded him that his relationship with his own father is cold and distant.

14.4 When they reached the gazebo and sat down, Uncle Hud broke the silence, "So Tom, tell me about yourself."

14.5 Tom said, "Our family moved here a few years ago. My dad's a carpenter and my mom's a teacher. I'm an only child."

14.6 "So, your dad's a carpenter? Just like Jesus."

14.7 "Really?" Tom said. "Jesus was a carpenter?"

14.8 "That's right. He learned the trade from his



father. Has your father passed on the trade to you yet?"

14.9 "No, not yet." Tom paused and then said, "Uncle Hud, can I ask you a question?"

14.10 "Sure son, go ahead."

14.12 "Why does it seem so easy for you and Aunt Maria to talk with each other? It seems both of you really love each other."

14.13 "Well, you're just seeing the results of years of working on our relationship. A great relationship doesn't come easy. It requires a lot of hard work.

Maria and I decided before we got married that God would always be at the center of our relationship. And we also agreed that we would both love God first and each other second."

14.14 "Wow. I wish my parents loved each other that way. They've been having serious marriage problems lately." Tom couldn't believe what he just said.

14.15 Uncle Hud was quiet and then responded, "I'm sorry to hear that Tom. Is it okay if I share this with Maria so that we can pray about this together?"

14.16 "Sure," said Tom. "I've already told Sarah and John about it too. I'd appreciate your prayers because it may take a miracle to save their marriage."

14.17 "Tom, nothing is impossible for God. He can do more than we ask or imagine. And by the way, your parents have a lot more in common with Jesus than you realize. Jesus was both a carpenter and a teacher. I'm going to pray they become even more like Jesus."

14.18 Just then Sarah yelled to them, "Time to eat!"

VOCABULARY:

rang
doorbell
mashed potatoes
gravy
green bean
corn-on-the-cob
complimenting
whispered
agreement
stirred
gazebo
flood of emotions
closeness

warmth
distant
broke the silence
carpenter
trade
passed on
results
center
serious
pray
miracle
impossible
imagine
in common

“HELLO GOD, I’M TOM”

LESSON 15

15.1 When all the food was placed on the table and Aunt Maria finally sat down, Uncle Hud said, “Tom, it’s our custom to thank God before we eat, so I’m going to say a little prayer. Loving Heavenly Father, thank you for blessing me with Maria. And thank you for giving her a heart that is always so willing to serve others. Thank you for this feast set before us. And Father, thank you especially for letting me get to know Tom. Bless him as he seeks you and show him how much you love him. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”



and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.’ He’s always willing and ready to help us if we will open our hearts to him. Let’s just stop and pray about this right now.”

15.8 Uncle Hud then prayed for John’s relationship with Cindy and that God’s will would be done. He also prayed that God would give John wisdom in how to handle the situation.

15.9 Tom listened to Uncle Hud’s prayer and thought to himself, “Is God really listening? Does the creator of the universe really have time to listen to each of us?”

15.2 Aunt Maria’s fried chicken was every bit as good as Uncle Hud said it would be. Most of the conversation around the dinner table was just small talk. Then John said, “I guess you guys are the best group for me to share this with. The reason I was late is because I had a little conflict with my girlfriend. I’d appreciate your prayers as we try to work through some issues.”

15.10 Later that night as Sarah, John and Tom were about to leave, Uncle Hud put his hand on Tom’s shoulder and said, “Tom, the prayer of faith really does change things. Maria and I will be praying for your parents, but I want you to pray for them too.”

15.3 Tom tried not to act surprised. He didn’t know that John had a girlfriend. Uncle Hud said, “What’s her name? I’d like to pray for her by name.”

15.11 They said goodbye and everyone went home. When Tom entered his house, the tense feeling came back. He went into his room, knelt down beside his bed and thought, “I don’t know where to start.”

15.4 “Her name’s Cindy,” John said.

15.5 “Hud and I will pray about this tonight before we go to bed,” said Aunt Maria.

15.6 Sarah said, “Just let me know if there is any way I can help.”

15.7 “You can help!” Uncle Hud said. “Prayer changes things. Jesus said if we have faith we will receive whatever we ask for in prayer. He also said, ‘Ask

15.12 “Hello God, I’m Tom. Well, I guess you already know who I am. I guess you’ve known me all my life. Well, it’s finally good to get to know you. Sarah’s the one who introduced me to you, I mean, told me about you. We’ve been talking about you for a while, but this is my first time to actually talk with you by myself. God, my family needs a lot of help. I know my parents don’t seem to care about you, but I do. Could you make my family happy like Uncle Hud’s family? I’ll help you in any way I can. And God, can you give me faith to believe you will really help them?”

VOCABULARY:

custom

prayer

heavenly

blessing

feast

Amen

every bit as good

work through

issues

surprised

faith

knock

willing

God’s will

wisdom

handle

shoulder

knelt down

introduced

a while

A DIVIDED HEART

LESSON 16

16.1 The next day Tom saw John in the hallway and asked, "Hey, do you want to hang out this afternoon?"

16.2 John said, "Sure, if you don't mind riding around with me while I run some errands."

16.3 That afternoon as John was driving to the bank Tom said, "So, tell me about Cindy."

16.4 "We've liked each other a few months. I thought things were going okay, but then I got an eye-opener. You see, she used to like this other guy, but then they broke up. I thought things were over between them. Then last week, I noticed she was wearing a heart locket necklace and asked about it. She started acting all nervous and said, 'Oh, it's just an old necklace' and then she changed the subject. It made me wonder if her and her old boyfriend's pictures are inside it."

16.5 John pulled up to the bank and parked his truck and said, "Then at the mall Saturday when she was paying for something, I noticed she still had a picture of her old boyfriend in her wallet. When I said something about it she just clammed up and wouldn't talk. It was really frustrating!"

16.6 Tom said, "I'm sorry to hear that. Sounds like she has a divided heart like my dad. Sarah said God understands our pain. He loves us with all his heart and wants us to love him with all our hearts. A divided heart is destroying my parents' relationship. How could God ever forgive a dad like mine?"

16.7 Tom decided to open up about something else. "Look at this," Tom said as he turned his back to John and pulled up the back of his shirt. "See these scars across my back? My dad used to beat me with a dowel rod."



I guess he thought that was the best way to make me obey him. Until today I never take my shirt off in front of others for fear that someone will see the scars. I don't know if I'll ever forgive him."

16.8 John was speechless. He realized his problems were small compared to Tom's. "I'm not sure what to say right now. Let me write a prescription that I hope will help you." He then wrote something on a notepad, folded it and said, "Here, read this when you get home. Then take some time to think about it."

16.9 After Tom got home, he read the note. It was two verses in the Bible. He turned to the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:15, "But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." The verse pierced Tom's heart. He realized God would not forgive him if he didn't forgive his dad. He sat in silence as he debated what to do. Then he read God's words in Hebrews 8:12, "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Tears welled up in Tom's eyes. Then he took a deep breath and said, "Okay God. I guess if you're willing to forgive my dad, then I should too." Immediately something changed within his heart.

16.10 When Tom's dad came home that night, Tom didn't feel the same tense feeling as before. Tom said, "Hey Dad, how was work?"

16.11 Tom's dad was surprised that Tom even talked to him. "I'm working on a big job right now. The contractor needs it done by the end of the month."

16.12 Tom wasn't sure how to respond, but decided to be encouraging. "I know you'll get it finished."

16.13 "I sure hope so," Tom's dad replied.

VOCABULARY:

hang out

errands

eye-opener

broke up

locket necklace

nervous

paying

wallet

clammed up

divided

scars

beat

dowel rod

obey

speechless

prescription

notepad

folded

pierced

debated

welled up

within

contractor

encouraging

UNANSWERED PRAYERS

LESSON 17

17.1 Uncle Hud and Aunt Maria invited Sarah, John and Tom for dessert on Thursday night. "Maria, your chocolate pie never ceases to amaze me," Uncle Hud said with a grin. Then everyone else said, "Yes, yes, it's wonderful."

17.2 "Tom," Uncle Hud said, "Maria and I have been praying for your parents every day."

17.3 Tom said, "I took your advice." Uncle Hud turned his right ear toward Tom to really listen. "I talked to God that night about my parents. It felt kind of strange at first, but I think He was really listening. Then I talked to God again on Monday after John wrote out a prescription for some medicine that was pretty bitter to swallow." Uncle Hud got a confused look on his face.

17.4 John clarified, "What Tom means is, I wrote down two scriptures for him to meditate on."

17.5 "So Tom, what did you learn," Uncle Hud asked?

17.6 "I learned a tough lesson," Tom said. "I wanted my dad to change, but I wasn't willing to change myself first. I've held a lot of resentment in my heart against my father for a long time. God helped me realize I had to release this resentment to him and forgive my dad."

17.7 Uncle Hud said, "You're a wise man Tom. Russian author Leo Tolstoy said, 'Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.'"

17.8 Aunt Maria said, "John, we've been praying for your relationship situation too."

17.9 John sighed and said, "Well, she broke up with



me yesterday. So, all day today I've been feeling down."

17.10 "I'm sorry to hear that John," Aunt Maria said. "I need to tell you a story about a break up in my past. I liked a guy before I met Hud. I thought this guy hung the moon. I was crazy about him. I prayed that God would give him to me, but instead he broke my heart. I got depressed and lost my appetite and could hardly eat for two weeks. I couldn't understand why God didn't answer my prayers."

17.11 Sarah stared at Aunt Maria. She had never heard this story

before. Aunt Maria continued, "Years later I bumped into friends who told me some terrible things about him. All I could think was, 'Oh God, thank you for not answering my prayers back then. What if I had married him? Thank you God for giving Hud to me!'"

17.12 She leaned over and held John's hand. "John, we don't always know God's will. Sometimes he says 'Yes,' 'No' or 'Not yet.' We just have to release matters into His hands and trust that He is in control, that He loves us and knows what is best for us."

17.13 Uncle Hud said, "The reason we invited you guys over tonight was to pray about these things. Let's all spend some time praying in silence for a few minutes. Pray for whatever God has put on your heart. Then ask Him for greater faith to entrust all things to Him."

17.14 Tom looked around and saw the others close their eyes so he closed his too. He thought, "God, I don't know what your answer will be in my parents' situation. Just help me trust that you really do love us and want the best for us." He opened his eyes and looked at the others and thought, "God, thank you for bringing these people into my life."

VOCABULARY:

invited

dessert

ceases

grin

medicine

bitter

swallow

scriptures

meditate on

tough

resentment

release

feeling down

hung the moon

depressed

appetite

stared

bumped into

leaned over

matters

control

silence

entrust

THE ACTS OF PRAYER

LESSON 18

18.1 Uncle Hud said, "Let's all move into the living room."

18.2 Tom looked around the living room with amazement. The walls were filled with all kinds of strange, exotic things from foreign countries. Tom asked, "Is that an ostrich egg? It's huge!"

18.3 Aunt Maria said, "An old friend of ours is a missionary in Africa. We've helped support him for many years. He gave us that egg as a thank you gift. These walls are filled with gifts from Christians around the world. I just love this Chinese vase. I think it's really old. And look at these little sculptures called netsuke. They are from Japan. I'm not sure if they are originals or just reproductions. Either way, I just think they are beautiful!"

18.4 Uncle Hud said, "Someday I'll tell you all about my connection with all these people from around the world. But right now, I want to talk a little about prayer. Tom, it's kind of hard to know how to start a prayer, isn't it?"

18.5 Tom nodded his head and said, "It's also hard to know what to say at the end of a prayer."

18.6 Uncle Hud continued, "Most people think prayer is just asking God for things, but prayer is so much more. I used to love it when my first son would climb up in my lap and tell me about his day. I think God wants us to talk with him in this warm special way."

18.7 He then reached in his pocket and pulled out some coins. "What if my son never talked to me until he wanted some money to go to the store? I would begin to feel like he only wanted my money but not a relationship with me. I wonder if that's how we



make God feel sometimes?"

18.8 "Have you ever heard of the acronym—the ACTS of prayer? The A stands for Adoration. We should start our prayers by adoring God and praising him."

18.9 "Then we should Confess that we are sinners in need of his forgiveness. We are totally dependent on him for everything."

18.10 "Next is Thanksgiving. We should thank God for all the blessings in our lives. We should thank him for the big and small things of each day, and even for the unanswered prayers that

end up being blessings in our lives," Uncle Hud said as he smiled and looked in Aunt Maria's direction.

18.11 "The last letter is S, which stands for Supplication. That's a big word, but it just means to supply. We should ask God to supply all our needs. It's okay to ask God for things or for his help. Just don't limit your communication with God to asking him for things. He wants to have a conversation with us."

18.12 Aunt Maria added, "Hud has painted a picture of God as a warm loving father who wants to be close to us. Another view of God is that he is the Almighty Creator of the universe. And some people like to view God as a close friend. There are many ways to view God. And there are many different things that attract us to Jesus. If I held up a diamond, each of us would see a sparkle from a different angle. In the same way, whatever attracts me to God or to the Good News of Jesus Christ may be different from what attracts you. I thank God that he has made each of us to have our own unique ways. All these gifts on the walls of this living room serve as a reminder that God has created a very diverse world and he loves each of us in a special way."

VOCABULARY:

living room

strange

exotic

foreign

ostrich

missionary

vase

netsuke

originals

reproductions

either way

connection

climb

lap

pocket

coins

acronym

stands for

adoration

praising

confess

forgiveness

dependent

thanksgiving

supplication

supply

limit

painted a picture

view

almighty

attract

diamond

sparkle

angle

in the same way

whatever

unique

diverse

NEW WINE NEEDS A NEW WINESKIN

LESSON 19

19.1 Uncle Hud said, "I have an idea. Since Tom is wanting to know more about Jesus, I'd like to suggest that everyone go home and read about the life of Jesus in the first four books of the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These four books are called the Gospels which means *Good News*. Then let's come back on Sunday and talk about our favorite stories."

19.2 Sarah said, "I'm not sure I can read that much before Sunday. How about this Sunday you tell us the story of your relationship with all your friends around the world who gave these gifts on the walls. Then the following Sunday we can begin sharing our favorite stories about Jesus." Uncle Hud and everyone else agreed it was a good idea.

19.3 That night while Tom was on his bed reading the book of Matthew, he read for a couple of hours and then fell asleep. In the middle of the night something startled Tom. He woke up suddenly, sat up in bed and wondered, "What does it mean?" He had just dreamed the same dream again about giving his father the roses. Now that he was wide awake, he decided to continue reading his Bible.

19.4 Friday at lunch he told Sarah about the dream. And then Saturday morning when mowing Uncle Hud's lawn he told John about the recurring dream too. "It's weird. I've never dreamed the same dream twice. I just wish I knew what it meant. I couldn't go back to sleep. So, instead of just lying there wide awake, I decided to continue reading about Jesus in Matthew and Mark. How about you? How much have you read so far?"

19.5 John replied, "Well, I haven't started yet. I've had so many things on my plate I haven't stopped to focus on the reading. I need to start today."

19.6 Tom continued raking leaves and grass into a big



pile. Beside the trashcans on the side of the house he found an old plastic garbage bag that was half-full of leaves. He began cramming as many leaves as he could into the bag until it was full. When he squeezed the bag and tried to tie the top, the bottom burst and all the leaves fell out. John saw what happened and laughed and said, "That old bag couldn't handle all those new leaves. I'll go get a new plastic bag in the garage."

19.7 When they finished all the work they sat down at the picnic table on the wooden deck to

enjoy some iced tea with Uncle Hud. John laughed as he told Uncle Hud how Tom pushed so hard on the bag it ripped open and all the leaves poured out on the ground. Then Tom changed the subject and said, "So I guess you guys will be going to church tomorrow morning. Do you think I need to start going to church too?"

19.8 Uncle Hud said, "Well Tom, you could go with John to his church and sit there with about 1000 other people. But I want to help you understand that you guys already have started a church. Jesus said, 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' I'm afraid you will lose the closeness and impact on one another's lives if you try to fit it into another church setting. You guys have something new and fresh. Jesus said if you put new wine into an old wineskin it will burst the wineskin. New wine needs a new wineskin — and that's what you already have. God is doing something powerful among you already!"

19.9 Uncle Hud continued, "Now what you guys and Sarah need to understand is that God wants this little church to grow. He wants you to expand his kingdom. He doesn't want you to be some nice little club of people. He wants you to be a loving community that helps others find a close relationship with the Lord."

VOCABULARY:

Gospels
favorite
startled
suddenly
recurring
weird
lying
wide awake
things on my plate

raking
pile
garbage bag
cramming
squeezed
burst
handle
garage
ripped
church

gathered
midst
impact
setting
wine
wineskin
expand his kingdom
club
community

HOPE WHEN ALL SEEMED HOPELESS

LESSON 20

20.1 In the living room on Sunday evening, Uncle Hud said, "Sarah asked if I would share my story with everyone this week. I have to warn you though. Every time I talk about it I start to cry."

20.2 Tom wondered if Uncle Hud meant tears of pain or tears of joy.

20.3 "After Maria and I got married, I was in graduate school studying a Masters of Divinity and Maria was about to finish nursing school. We were planning on being missionaries on a team with some of our best friends. Then all our plans came to a screeching halt. I was driving in the rain and my car began to hydroplane on a curve and the next thing I knew I woke up in the hospital and never could see again."

20.4 "I don't know what I would have done without Maria in my life at that time. After my accident, I was so depressed. All our hopes and dreams seemed to be shattered. Everything seemed so dark. I couldn't even imagine how to continue on in life. I was so discouraged that I didn't even feel like getting out of bed. God, however, in his infinite wisdom knew it was time to send me a ray of hope."

20.5 "Early one morning, while Maria and I were still asleep, I had a dream that seemed so real, like it was actually happening. I saw the gates of heaven open up just a little bit and an amazingly bright light came bursting through. A warmth filled my heart like I've never experienced before. Then I heard a voice say to me, "Be of good cheer, for you have been chosen to sing the praises of God forever."

20.6 "Immediately I woke up and tears were streaming down my face — just like they are right now." Uncle Hud's voice cracked as he tried to say, "God gave me hope." Aunt Maria put a tissue in his hand and he wiped away the tears. "I was feeling useless and God told me that he had chosen me. I didn't



know what that meant. I just knew he would give me a new way of serving him. And he did, he gave me a new career as a counselor. As you guys know, we never became missionaries, but God used us to support missionaries around the world. And that has given us a lot of joy and satisfaction." Uncle Hud couldn't see it, but there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

20.7 Aunt Maria said, "Hud is my Apostle Paul. Paul was blinded so that he could 'see.' Tom, are you familiar with that story?" Tom shook his head quietly.

20.8 "God changed the heart of a very influential man who had despised Christians. God sent a bright light that blinded Paul and a voice from heaven said to him, 'Why are you persecuting me?' So he asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the answer came back, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city and you will be told everything you must do.' And he obeyed Jesus' command even though he didn't really understand where these actions would lead his life. God used Paul in a powerful way to help thousands of people to come to faith in Jesus Christ. And I think that in the same way, Hud's desire to support people to go tell the Good News of Jesus around the world has indirectly helped hundreds of people become followers of Jesus!"

20.9 Tom said, "So, Uncle Hud, what you are saying is that God can speak to us through dreams, right?"

20.10 Uncle Hud said, "God can speak to us any way he wants. He's God!"

20.11 "I think God spoke to me through a dream too." Then Tom retold the dream about buying roses and giving them to his father and then seeing the sunshine trying to come through a heart-shaped hole in a cloud. Sarah said that this dream may be a sign. Maybe this dream is a ray of hope in my life too."

VOCABULARY:

warn
graduate school
Masters of Divinity
nursing school
screeching halt
hydroplane
curve
shattered
discouraged

infinite
wisdom
ray of hope
gates of heaven
bursting through
cheer
voice cracked
chosen
career
support

satisfaction
dry eye
Apostle
familiar
shook
influential
despised
persecuting
command
indirectly

PROTECTION, WISDOM & GRACE

LESSON 21

21.1 The following Sunday evening Uncle Hud asked John to be the first to share his favorite story about Jesus. John then admitted his weakness was procrastination, and apologized that he still hadn't finished reading Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. An awkward silence filled the room.

21.2 Sarah quickly took the uncomfortable focus off of John by saying, "I have one I'd like to share. I think one of my favorite stories is the Woman Caught in Adultery in John chapter 8. Jesus' wisdom and his protective actions are astounding."

21.3 Sarah read the story out loud to refresh everyone's memory and then said, "I've always wondered where the man was. Why did they only bring the woman?"

21.4 Aunt Maria said, "The Jewish law required both the man and the woman should be punished, but we can see the Pharisees — a strict Jewish sect, were only using this woman as bait to catch Jesus in a trap."

21.5 Uncle Hud said, "Why do you think Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground?"

21.6 "I think Jesus was protecting her," Sarah said. "Everyone was staring at the woman ready to throw stones at her. When Jesus bent down and started writing in the sand, all the focus turned away from her and on to him."

21.7 Uncle Hud added, "Yes, Jesus' silent actions actually protected her. So, if God seems to be silent when you're going through a hard time, remember this: The teacher



is always silent during a test."

21.8 Tom thought to himself, "Wow, that was deep. Sarah and Uncle Hud have great insights."

21.9 John added, "The Pharisees said the Jewish law commanded they stone such women. It seemed like a no-win situation when they asked Jesus, "Now what do you say?"

21.10 John continued, "If Jesus said not to stone her, the Pharisees would have accused Jesus of not keeping God's law. Jesus' followers would have lost faith

and stopped believing he was sent from God. Or, if Jesus said to stone her to death, he would have broken Roman law which did not allow for executions outside of Roman authority. The Pharisees would have immediately notified the Roman authorities about Jesus. It looked as if Jesus didn't have a way out."

21.11 Tom said, "Exactly! But Jesus' answer blew my mind. Everyone was speechless after his wise answer, 'Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' Maybe the oldest men walked away first because they knew they had the most sin."

21.12 Aunt Maria said, "Just because Jesus forgave her doesn't mean it's okay to sin. Jesus knew she was in this situation because of her sin. So, he also told her, 'Go and sin no more.' Tears must have been streaming down her face as she walked away from this near-death experience. I think Jesus knew that grace would change her life forever."

21.13 Uncle Hud said, "Everyone, these are wise insights. Even from someone who put off the reading assignment."

VOCABULARY:

admitted

weakness

procrastination

apologized

awkward silence

uncomfortable

caught

adultery

protective

astounding

refresh

memory

bait

trap

Pharisees

Jewish sect

bent down

staring

throw stones

insights

stone

no-win situation

accused

lost faith

executions

authority

notified

blew my mind

near-death

put off

assignment

WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

John 8:1-11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

THE POWER OF A FATHER'S LOVE

LESSON 22

22.1 The next Sunday night John told everyone, "I finished reading Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Can I talk about the parable of the Lost Son? It's one of my favorite stories because I can really identify with the lost son."

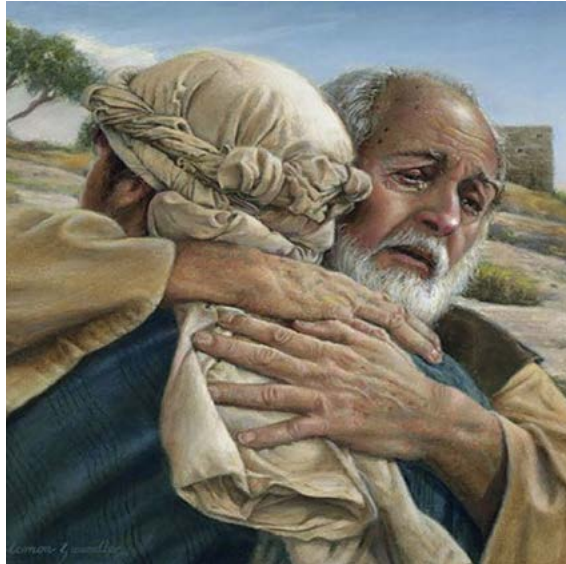
22.2 Everyone nodded and gestured as if to say, "Sure, go ahead." And Uncle Hud said, "John, I'm looking forward to hearing your story."

22.3 John said, "Okay, let's turn to Luke 15:11." John read the entire story for everyone and then said, "Tell me some things we can learn from the father in this parable."

22.4 Aunt Maria said, "God doesn't force us to love him, but He always wants us to come back to Him. Also, asking for the inheritance while the father is still alive is like saying, 'I wish you were dead.' It's amazing the father gives it to him and lets him go."

22.5 Sarah said, "Sometimes we have to hit rock bottom before we come to our senses and turn back to God. I also think the father protected his son by running out to meet him. If the son had to enter the village alone, maybe the neighbors would have ridiculed him, 'Coming back to get more money? You should be ashamed!' No one dared say that after the father hugged and kissed him, and gave him a robe, sandals and a ring."

22.6 John asked, "Have you ever felt like the lost son?"



I have. I'm a little embarrassed to admit this, but I was really distant from God in 10th grade. Even though I grew up in a family that taught me to love God, right after I turned 16 and got my driver's license, I began hanging around some guys who were a bad influence on me."

22.7 John's confession surprised Tom, but he was impressed with his honesty. John continued, "I felt guilty about many of the things we were doing, so I stopped reading my Bible and praying. I used every excuse I could think of to avoid going to church. My father noticed

my behavior had changed and did something I didn't expect. When he came into my bedroom to talk with me, I thought I was going to get a long lecture. But, instead, he asked me to go with him to the golf driving range."

22.8 "We had a really fun time driving golf balls as far as we could. Then he took me to a great little hole-in-the-wall restaurant. He then began to tell me about a time in his life when he was distant from God too. His openness made me open up and I confessed a lot of things to him. I felt a really strong bond with my dad on that day. He never lectured me. He just let me know how much he loved me and how much God loves me. That day changed my life. I decided to turn away from the bad things I was doing and turn back to my Heavenly Father. I guess that's what the word repent means."

VOCABULARY:

identify
gestured
parable
inheritance
hit rock bottom

come to our senses
ridiculed
ashamed
license
influence
confession

guilty
excuse
behavior
golf driving range
lecture
hole-in-the-wall
bond
repent

LUKE 15:11-32

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the

pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and

against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

"The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' " 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

AFFIRMATION FROM THE FATHER

LESSON 23

23.1 Tom said, "I wish my dad loved me like that. My dad doesn't even talk to me very much. I just wish he wasn't so distant and cold toward me. Sometimes I'd give anything to have a dad like the lost son's father."

23.2 Uncle Hud cleared his throat and said, "Tom, you're right. Every son needs their father's affirmation. Let's look at another Father in the Bible who affirms his Son."

23.3 Uncle Hud said, "Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 3:13-17." Then he began to quote all the verses from memory and said, "Jesus was affirmed by his Father. Listen to this again, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.'"

23.4 He continued, "We don't realize how powerful this affirmation is in Jesus' life until the next chapter. In Matthew 4:1-11 it says after Jesus had fasted from food for 40 days, Satan tried to tempt him three times to make him doubt three things: his physical needs, his protection and his power."

23.5 Then Uncle Hud said, "The affirmation Jesus received from his Father at his baptism gave him the strength to overcome each of these temptations of Satan. Each time, Jesus stands strong and uses the scriptures in his heart to withstand the temptation."



23.6 Tom listened intently as Uncle Hud said, "Even though the affirmation from our earthly father is important in our lives, the affirmation from our heavenly Father is even more essential. Tom, I'm sorry about your relationship with your father. I know it's difficult, but I want you to understand how much God loves you. When you truly know this in your heart, it will give you inspiration and strength for your life!"

23.7 As Tom nodded his head Sarah added, "Tom, I'm amazed you're such a great guy even without your father's affirmation. That says a lot about your character."

23.8 John said, "Yeah, I haven't known you for long, but you have become a good friend. Like Sarah said, you have a lot of character. You're consistent and reliable. When you say you'll do something, you do it."

23.9 Aunt Maria chimed in, "Tom, you have a great personality and I think you have a bright future ahead of you. Of course, it doesn't hurt that you're such a nice-looking young man."

23.10 Uncle Hud said, "Tom, it sounds to me like you've just received from this group what Jesus received from his Father - affirmation!"

VOCABULARY:

cleared his throat
affirmation
quote
fasted
tempt
physical needs

baptism
overcome
temptations
stands strong
withstand
essential
inspiration

character
consistent
reliable
chimed in
personality
bright future
nice-looking

MATTHEW 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and

alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

MATTHEW 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It

is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " Then the devil took him to the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' " Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord

your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' " Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

WALKING BIBLE

LESSON 24

24.1 Later, while Sarah and Aunt Maria were in the kitchen preparing dessert, Tom, John and Uncle Hud were outside on the deck. Uncle Hud looked up into the night sky and said, "I sure miss staring at the stars at night. Tom, are the stars shining brightly or are they covered by the clouds?"

24.2 "They're shining brightly tonight," Tom said as he stared at the stars. Then he shouted, "Wow! Uncle Hud, a shooting star just lit up the sky!"

24.3 Uncle Hud said, "Just hearing your excitement to see it gives me pleasure. I love your child-like enthusiasm."

24.4 Tom then said, "I wish I could share this kind of experience with my dad. He's always working. And when he is home, he's usually arguing with my mom."

24.5 Uncle Hud cleared his throat again and said, "In Colossians 3:21 it says, 'Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.' Tom, I'm sorry your father has discouraged you. I've been praying for God to change his heart. He needs to be training you while you're still under his roof. Proverbs 22:6 says, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"

24.6 Tom stared up at the stars as Uncle Hud continued, "Fathers are instructed to teach God's Word to their children. In Deuteronomy 6:4-7 it says, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on



your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

24.7 John said, "Uncle Hud, you're a Walking Bible. You've memorized so many scriptures and you know how to apply them to our daily lives and circumstances."

24.8 Tom said, "Yeah, how do you know so many Bible verses?"

24.9 "Well, after my accident, I asked Maria to read the Bible to me every night. We decided to memorize scripture together because it's the best way to let God's Word live in our hearts. Now I have a computer that can read for me, but I still prefer Maria! Now young men, I'm going to have to excuse myself. Nature calls."

24.10 Tom and John laughed and gave Uncle Hud one more compliment as he was heading into the house, "You're the best Uncle Hud!"

24.11 Uncle Hud deflected their praise and pointed upwards and said, "To God be the glory!"

24.12 They stood there in silence staring up at the stars until John said, "I'd like to say a prayer for your dad." John then prayed for God to change Tom's dad's heart and for God to give Tom a healthy relationship with his dad. He also prayed for God to intervene and change the direction of Tom's parents' marriage. When John ended the prayer with "Amen," Tom also said, "Amen." Just then another shooting star flashed across the sky and Tom said, "I think God heard your prayer! Sure hope He answers it."

VOCABULARY:

shining

brightly

shooting star

pleasure

child-like

enthusiasm

embitter

under his roof

commandments

impress

memorized

apply

circumstances

nature calls

deflected

To God be the glory!

intervene

flashed

DO UNTO OTHERS

LESSON 25

25.1 Tom saw Sarah on Tuesday while walking to class and said, "Hey, are you free for lunch?"

25.2 Sarah said, "I have to work on a group project during lunch today." Tom looked down and wasn't sure what to say next. Then Sarah said, "But I'm free tomorrow if you are."

25.3 Tom smiled and said, "Okay, see you tomorrow at lunch." As he turned to walk away he looked back and said, "Oh, by the way, your brownies last night were excellent!" Sarah's face beamed as she watched Tom walk away.

25.4 Later that day John passed Tom in the hallway and said, "Hey, I'm getting together with some guys to play soccer after school. Want to join us?"

25.5 Tom said, "Sounds great. Can't wait." John then said he'd give Tom a ride home to change his clothes. Tom said, "I'll meet you at your truck after school." As Tom was sitting in his next class he remembered his mom had asked him to help her move some heavy boxes in her classroom after school. Tom sat there frustrated. He really wanted to play soccer but he'd already promised his mom he would help her. Tom saw John after school and said, "I told..." Just then his phone rang. His mom said she had a meeting and would have to reschedule. Tom turned to John and said, "I told you I'd be here. Let's go."

25.6 Tom met a shy 10th grader named Dan while they were warming up. As they were kicking the ball around Tom noticed Dan wasn't very coordinated. Tom showed him a few moves and Dan seemed to appreciate an upper classman giving him the time of day. Tom and Dan ended up on the same team.



25.7 During the first game, Tom had a clear shot at the goal, but decided to pass to Dan. Dan awkwardly swung his leg with all his might and the ball rocketed off his foot and into the goal.

25.8 Everyone cheered as Dan raised both hands into the air and yelled, "My first ever goal!" Dan felt great as all the guys congratulated him and commented that he scored the opening goal of the game.

25.9 On the way home John said, "I've never heard Dan talk as much as he did today. You really made his day by setting

him up with that goal. How many goals did you score today anyway, three or four?"

25.10 Tom didn't answer. Instead he said, "Yeah, that sure was fun to see how happy Dan was after he scored that goal. It reminded me of last night when Uncle Hud said it gave him pleasure just to hear my excitement about seeing a shooting star."

25.11 "Tom, you know how last night we were talking about your character. Well that was a pretty selfless act to pass that ball to Dan. You could have been a ball hog and taken all the glory, but you didn't. Your actions remind me of a verse in Philippians 2:3-4, 'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interest of the others.' Another great verse is Luke 6:31, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'"

25.12 Tom responded, "Well, I guess I would want Dan to pass me the ball too if I was in his shoes. I had a great time today. Thanks for inviting me."

VOCABULARY:

project

by the way

brownies

beamed

heavy boxes

reschedule

shy

warming up

coordinated

upper classman

giving him the time of day

awkwardly

rocketed

raised

congratulated

commented

made his day

selfless

ball hog

value

in his shoes

DON'T WORRY

LESSON 26

26.1 The next day at lunch Tom asked Sarah, "So, where are you going to study next year?"

26.2 Sarah said, "I have applied at a small nursing school that Aunt Maria told me about. She graduated from there and it's supposed to be a really good program. The only downside is that it's a nine-hour drive from here. So, I probably won't be coming home very often."

26.3 Tom's heart sunk when he heard this, but he tried to stay positive and said, "At least you have a clear idea about what you want to study."

26.4 Tom felt a little hope come back into his heart when Sarah said, "Yeah, I know I want to be a nurse, but there's no guarantee I'll get into this program."

26.5 Tom then said, "I'm still trying to figure out what I want to do in the future. I could be a carpenter like Jesus, but I wouldn't need to attend university and get a degree to do that. And to be honest, I don't know the first thing about being a carpenter."

26.6 Sarah said, "Well, it's good that you still have time to explore all your options."

26.7 Tom had a hard time focusing in his next class. He began to worry about his future. He didn't want to lose what he had found in his relationship with Sarah, John, Uncle Hud and Aunt Maria. All afternoon and evening Tom worried to the point where he felt a little lethargic and unable to do anything.

26.8 Tom thought to himself, "What's wrong with me? I never worry about stuff like this. Then he realized the confidence he felt after all the affirmation he received



on Sunday had all but disappeared. So he decided to read his Bible, but wasn't sure where to start reading. He turned to a topic list in the back of his Bible and found the word "Worry" which had a scripture reference to Matthew 6:25-34.

26.9 He turned to it and read, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet

your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

26.10 Tom felt a sense of peace after he prayed, "God, please help me to stop worrying. I realize that I've wasted my afternoon and evening by getting all worked up about not knowing what I want to do in the future. Help me to believe that you are in control of my future."

VOCABULARY:

applied
nursing school
supposed to be
program
downside
sunk
stay positive
figure out
attend
degree
to be honest
the first thing

explore
options
worry
to the point
lethargic
confidence
all but disappeared
topic list
scripture
reference
sow
reap
store away

barns
Solomon
splendor
thrown
pagans
run after
righteousness
wasted
all worked up

TRUST IN THE LORD

LESSON 27

27.1 Later that week Tom also asked John about his future and he said, “I’m applying to attend State U. across town. It has a good business program and I can go home on the weekends to get a good home-cooked meal. Plus, I have to pay for my own university education, so I need to keep my lawn-mowing business.”

27.2 Tom asked, “So do you plan to study business?”

27.3 “Yeah. Well, actually I’m planning to do a double major in business and communication. You know how much I like to talk and teach,” John said with a smile. “How about you?”

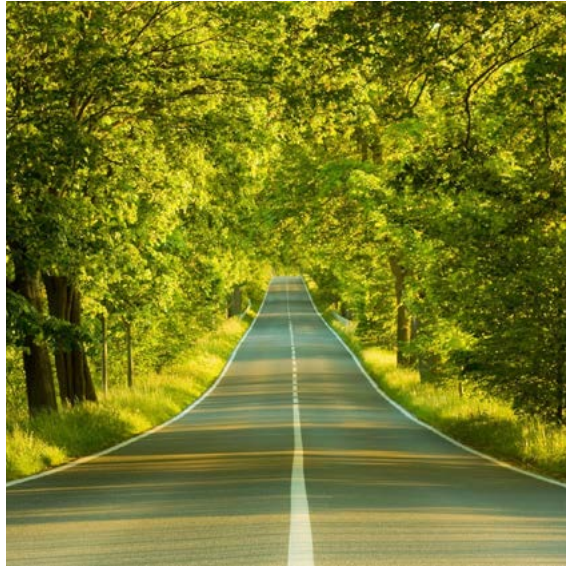
27.4 Tom sighed and said, “I don’t know. I’m not really sure what I want to do. For some reason I started worrying about it this week. Then God led me to read Matthew 6 and it helped me stop worrying so much.”

27.5 “That’s a great verse,” John said, “and it goes well with one of my favorite verses—Proverbs 3:5-6 which says, ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.’”

27.6 John continued, “Sometimes it’s not enough just to stop worrying. We need to replace it with trust. Trust gives us hope that God will take care of our future.”

27.7 That seemed to make sense to Tom. That night he prayed, “God, I believe you know what’s best for my future. Help me to trust that you will lead me in the way you want my life to go.”

27.8 On Sunday evening as everyone was mingling before they sat down to talk, Tom told Uncle Hud about worrying and struggling to trust God with his future.



27.9 Uncle Hud said, “Tom, I’ve met a lot of people over the years who think their own hard work is the reason why they are now successful. Sometimes they totally ignore all the blessings God has given them to be able to achieve what they have accomplished.”

27.10 Uncle Hud cleared his throat and said, “Let me clarify. Our health is a gift from God. So is our ability to think, remember, reason and rationalize. Yes, hard work is important, but it is God who gives us the ability to succeed.”

27.11 Tom responded, “Yeah, sometimes I think I’m a pretty good soccer player because I practice a lot. I guess it’s really because God has given me good health, strong muscles and the coordination skills to play well.”

27.12 “Tom, I didn’t play soccer when I was growing up, but I did play a lot of baseball. So, to use a baseball analogy... Sometimes life throws us a curveball. What I mean is everything was going great in my life when I got married to Maria. I was young, healthy, smart, and had a great wife. I had everything going for me. I thought I was in control of my future plans to go share the Good News of Jesus in a foreign country. Then, well, you know about my accident. That curveball confused and depressed me, but God helped me make the adjustments in my life to become what he wanted me to be. You see, I wasn’t in control. He was! I just had to learn how to trust him—especially during the darkest times. Our self-confidence must grow out of our Godly confidence, that is, that God is the reason we have all we have—and can do everything we do.”

27.13 Uncle Hud was impressed when Tom used another baseball analogy, “My worrying this week was like a knuckleball—hard to figure out—because I wasn’t placing my trust in God for my future.”

VOCABULARY:

State U.

home-cooked

communication

God led me

goes

lean

submit

paths

straight

replace

mingling

over the years

ignore

achieve

accomplished

clarify

gift from God

ability

reason

rationalize

succeed

muscles

coordination

skills

baseball

analogy

curveball

everything going for me

foreign

adjustments

darkest

self-confidence

knuckleball

figure out

placing my trust

AMAZING HUMILITY & FAITH

LESSON 28

28.1 Sarah rounded up everyone and said, "Let's get started." After everyone sat down in their usual places, she said, "Who's going to share one of their favorite stories of Jesus?"

28.2 Aunt Maria said, "I'd like to tell about an amazingly humble woman who impressed Jesus with her faith. Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew 15:21-28." She read the entire passage and then said, "It's hard to swallow your pride and humble yourself isn't it?"

28.3 She continued, "Even though this woman wasn't a Jew like Jesus, she knew he had the power to heal her daughter from demon possession. So, she begged him to do it. Look at the rejection this woman received. First, Jesus ignored her. Second, Jesus' disciples urged him to send her away. How do you think this made the woman feel?"

28.4 Sarah said, "Well, if it was me, I probably wouldn't stick around. Rejection is no fun. She lost face in front of everyone."

28.5 "Right," said Aunt Maria, "but this woman was humbly persistent because she knew that getting Jesus to heal her daughter was more important than saving face. Now look at the third rejection. Jesus told her, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.' This woman isn't from Israel, she's a Canaanite. Most of us would storm off with a huff at this point."

28.6 John said, "Feeling rejected, I'd be tempted to get revenge by saying something hurtful about Jesus and his disciples. Sometimes I have to bite my tongue."

28.7 Aunt Maria said, "Look at what this courageous



woman did—she went and knelt before Jesus and once again begged, 'Lord, help me!' She humbly bowed before him and even called him Lord!

28.8 Tom said, "You'd think at this point that Jesus would grant her request, but he doesn't."

28.9 Uncle Hud said, "Jesus is doing something here that most of us can't see. I'll let Maria continue before making this point."

28.10 Aunt Maria said, "The fourth rejection is the most painful. It's hard to imagine how she kept her cool as Jesus

told her, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.'"

28.11 Sarah said, "Ouch! That's painful just to hear. And I've heard that in those days, dogs weren't viewed as cute house pets, but dirty street dogs."

28.12 "That's right," said Aunt Maria. "Very few of us could handle being compared to a dog. This woman is one of my heroes in the Bible because of her response, 'Yes, Lord.' She still called him Lord! She then said, 'but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' Usually Jesus is the one stunning others with his ingenious answers. This time, however, Jesus was so impressed with her clever answer he said, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.'"

28.13 Uncle Hud said, "Jesus was testing her faith. Most of us have too much pride to humble ourselves before the Lord. Jesus rewarded this woman because of her humility and, forgive the pun, her dogged faith. She didn't give up. James 4:10 says, 'Humble yourself before the Lord, and he will lift you up.'"

VOCABULARY:

rounded up

usual places

humble

passage

swallow your pride

demon possession

begged

ignored

urged

stick around

lost face

persistent

saving face

Israel

Canaanite

storm off with a huff

revenge

bite my tongue

courageous

bowed

grant

request

making this point

kept her cool

toss

ouch

heroes

crumbs

master's

stunning

ingenious

clever

rewarded

pun

dogged

MATTHEW 15:21-28

"Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly." Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment."

TREMBLING BEFORE JESUS

LESSON 29

29.1 The following Sunday, Tom said, “I don’t want to scare everyone too much before Halloween, but I’d like to talk about a spooky encounter between Jesus and a demon-possessed man called Legion.”

29.2 Tom read Mark 5:1-20 and then said, “This is a wild story. In the previous chapter Jesus calmed the storm and his disciples said in amazement, ‘Even the wind and the waves obey him!’ Now they are about to be even more shocked when the demons obey Jesus too.”

29.3 Uncle Hud said, “When I was growing up, I thought ghosts and evil spirits were just superstition. Then when I went on a mission trip overseas, I came across a guy who told me he could eat glass and channel the spirit of a little boy. It scared me and I didn’t know what to say. So that night I began reading stories in the Bible where Jesus cast out demons and quickly saw that these demons were real, not superstitions. And I read in the book of Leviticus that God said to stay away from mediums, fortune-tellers and palm-readers. So, I realized the power by which that guy could do these things was not coming from Jesus, but from Satan.”

29.4 Tom said, “And Satan’s demons were totally in control of Legion—which means thousands of demons were in him. And no one could control him. When people would chain him up, he’d break the



chains. He’d cry out at night and cut himself with stones. Why would Jesus go to an eerie place like this?”

29.5 John said, “I think Jesus intentionally took his disciples there to show them his power over even the evilest powers in the world.”

29.6 “Right!” Tom said, “When Legion saw Jesus, he ran and bowed trembling before him and said, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?’ The Pharisees had a hard time believing in Jesus, but not these demons. They knew

immediately who Jesus was and they begged him not to send them out of the area but into a nearby herd of pigs. When Jesus did this, the pigs went crazy and ran off a cliff into the lake and drowned.”

29.7 Sarah said, “You’d think the people of that area would be thrilled later on when they saw Legion clothed and in his right mind, but they weren’t.”

29.8 “No, they weren’t,” Tom said, “but Legion sure was thankful. He begged Jesus to be able to go with him, but Jesus told him to go home to his family and tell them ‘how much the Lord has done for you.’ I feel like Jesus is saying these same words to me. I think it’s time for me to go home and talk to my parents about everything I’ve been learning and all that the Lord has done for me.”

VOCABULARY:

wild	channel the spirit	eerie
scare	cast out	intentionally
Halloween	Leviticus	trembling
spooky	mediums	cliff
encounter	fortune-tellers	drowned
demon-possessed	palm-readers	thrilled

MARK 5:1-20

“They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out

and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!” For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!” Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.” And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged

Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen

it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.”

JESUS' BEST (UNWANTED) WITNESSES

LESSON 30

30.1 Uncle Hud said, "Tom, we'll be praying about that talk with your parents. May God give you courage."

30.2 "Thanks Uncle Hud, that means a lot to me."

30.3 "Tom," Uncle Hud said, "I want to expound a little more on a really good point you made. You said the demons knew exactly who Jesus was and never debated him as the Pharisees did. That's exactly right. Now let's look at three more passages where demons recognized Jesus. In fact, these demons are some of the most persuasive witnesses in the Bible. They announce to everyone that Jesus is the all-powerful Son of God. Everyone turn in your Bibles to Mark 1:21-28. Tom, could you read this passage for us?"

30.4 "Sure," Tom said, as he turned to Mark 1:21-28 and read, "They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him." News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee."

30.5 "Uncle Hud said, "Maria, I know you have two other scriptures written in your Bible in the margin beside that verse. What are they?" After she told him he said, "Sarah could you please read Mark 3:10-12 and John please read Luke 4:40-41."

30.6 So Sarah read Mark 3:10-12, "For he had healed



many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him."

30.7 Then John read the last passage—Luke 4:40-41, "At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them

to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah."

30.8 Uncle Hud said, "Look at what the demons said to Jesus—'You are the Holy One of God,' and 'You are the Son of God!' They saw Jesus and immediately knew he had power over them. Then Jesus basically told them to 'Shut up!' Why do you think he told them to, 'Be quiet'?"

30.9 John said, "God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus, not demons. The Pharisees said Jesus was demon-possessed and raving mad. So, Jesus doesn't need or want the demons speaking for him. Jesus said God is his witness, not demons."

30.10 Uncle Hud said, "Unbelieving people might want to debate whether or not Jesus is the Son of God, but demons don't need to be convinced. There's never a doubt in their minds that Jesus is from God and that his Spirit is the most powerful spirit in the universe."

30.11 Tom said, "I don't feel like I know much about the Holy Spirit except that He is part of the trinity."

30.12 Uncle Hud said, "Now that sounds like another conversation right up my alley."

30.13 Aunt Maria said, "The verse that Tom read touches on Jesus' authority. Hud and I have often taught a lesson about the many types of authority of Jesus. I'd like to explore this with everyone next Sunday night."

VOCABULARY:

courage

expound

debated

persuasive

all-powerful

Sabbath

synagogue

possessed

impure

sternly

violently

shriek

spread quickly

region

margin

diseases

pushing forward

strict orders

various kinds

rebuked

Messiah

basically

Shut up

raving mad

convinced

touches on

explore

“YOU’RE AN IDIOT!”

LESSON 31

31.1 All week long Tom looked for the perfect opportunity to talk with his parents. He knew on Sunday everyone would ask him about it. Finally on Saturday night, Tom realized, “There’s never going to be a perfect time.” Both of his parents were in their living room. His dad was reading the newspaper and his mom was reading a magazine and watching TV. Tom mustered his courage and waited for a TV commercial break and then said, “Mom, Dad, can I talk to you about something?”



31.2 His Dad lowered his newspaper and his mom turned toward him and took off her glasses and said, “What is it Tom?”

31.3 “Well,” Tom said nervously, “I’ve been spending a lot of time lately with two friends at school—Sarah and John. They’re both Christians and they’ve been telling me a lot about God and Jesus and I think in the future I might want to become a Christian too...” Tom’s voice died out as he lost confidence in fear of his parents’ response.

31.4 His dad angrily crumpled the newspaper and hurled it at him. He raised his voice and said in a demeaning way, “You’re an idiot to believe that crap! I thought you were smarter than that Tom.” His mom just sat there quietly and said nothing.

31.5 Tom felt crushed and humiliated. He didn’t respond. His actions were almost robotic as he crossed his arms, turned around, walked to his bedroom, closed the door, crawled up on his bed and stared at the ceiling. Tom’s insides ached and he felt so devastated he didn’t even have the emotional energy to pray.

31.6 His body and mind both seemed paralyzed. As he began to doze off, his body began to toss and turn and every once in a while he let out a sigh with a deep

moan. Then it was as if a video clip started playing over and over in his mind. He couldn’t stop thinking about the angry look on his father’s face, and then being hit by the newspaper as his father said, “You’re an idiot!”

Tom felt worn out when he woke up. He moped around his room all day and then went to Uncle Hud’s house early. John and Sarah were already there. Tom suggested, “Why don’t we go outside to the gazebo?” John grabbed a folding chair and they walked down to the gazebo and sat down. Tom said, “Well, it’s

not good news.”

31.8 “What do you mean Tom?” asked Sarah.

31.9 Sarah and John looked disappointed for Tom as he said, “I can’t become a Christian. My dad called me an idiot. I’m really feeling down. I’ve been through the wringer the past two weeks. I felt on top of the world after you guys gave me all that affirmation, and then right when I felt strong, everything started spiraling out of control. I got hit with doubts about my future. Then I got a sore throat which I hope doesn’t turn into a cold. Then last night my dad belittled me which really deflated me. I’m exhausted!”

31.10 As Sarah empathized with Tom a tear rolled down her cheek. Her voice cracked as she said, “I’m so sorry.” She reached out and squeezed his hand and said, “John and I are going to help you get through this—we’re a team.” It says in Ecclesiastes 4:12, ‘A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.’ John sat there quietly nodding in agreement.

31.11 Tom said, “Well, I guess we should head back to the living room. Don’t tell Uncle Hud and Aunt Maria yet. I don’t want to kill the atmosphere of the meeting.”

VOCABULARY:

perfect opportunity	idiot	every once in a while	belittled
mustered	crap	moan	deflated
commercial break	crushed	it was as if	exhausted
lowered	humiliated	video clip	empathized
glasses	robotic	worn out	squeezed
died out	crawled up	moped around	cord
lost confidence	ceiling	folding chair	strands
angrily	insides ached	looked disappointed for	head back
crumpled	devastated	through the wringer	atmosphere
hurled	emotional energy	on top of the world	
raised his voice	paralyzed	spiraling out of control	
demeaning	doze off	got hit with doubts	
	toss and turn	sore throat	

SUPREME POWER OF JESUS

LESSON 32

32.1 After everyone was in the living room Aunt Maria handed everyone a piece of paper and said, "Here's a list of scriptures about Jesus and his supreme authority and power."

32.2 She read Matthew 7:28-29, "'When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, not as their teachers of the law.'" She then added, "Jesus was bold to speak the truth even though the hearers might not like it. Most religious teachers emphasized keeping rules, but Jesus' teaching helped others see the heart of our God who loves us and calls us to leave sin. Sarah, please read the next scripture."

32.3 After Sarah had read Matthew 8:23-27, Aunt Maria said, "These men were fishermen—they were by the sea every day and knew a lot about storms. When this storm came, they were sure they were going to drown. They were amazed when Jesus showed he had the power to calm the waves and the storm. Does anyone have any comments?" No one responded. So Aunt Maria said, "Okay Tom, read the next verse."

32.4 After Tom had read Luke 4:31-37, Aunt Maria said, "This is like the scripture Uncle Hud asked you to read last week. Demons and evil spirits are all under the power of God and must yield to Jesus; the one God has sent. After we entrust our lives to Christ, God's Holy Spirit will live within us. We don't have to live in fear of the darkness or evil spirits anymore. Okay, anyone want to add anything?" Once again, no response.

32.5 Next John read Matthew 9:1-8 and Aunt Maria said, "Not only did Jesus heal this man physically, but he also forgave his sins. Jesus is the only one who has the authority to forgive our sins. Isn't it great that Jesus forgives all of our sins and we don't have to be ashamed of our past ever again!"



32.6 Aunt Maria read John 14:6, "'I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' Jesus has the power to take us to God. Every religion has moral teachings, but Jesus said he is the only one who is the way to the Father, our loving creator."

32.7 "And finally," Aunt Maria said, "Jesus has power over death." She read John 11:17-44 about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead and then said, "When we die, it looks as if our life is over, just like when a caterpillar turns into a cocoon. It seems like it is dead, but in

its own time, it comes out as a beautiful butterfly. It's also like a seed that is planted in the ground. It seems like it is dead, but in its own time, it sprouts up out of the soil and becomes a beautiful tree. In the same way, just as we believe that God can create life from the dust of the earth, we also believe that God can raise people from the dead. Jesus clearly proves that he has the power to raise people from the dead since he himself rose from the dead."

32.8 Uncle Hud added, "It's important to understand that Jesus wasn't just a good moral person and religious teacher. He was from God and God gave him miraculous power to do things beyond human ability."

32.9 Aunt Maria said, "Yes, God gave Jesus supreme authority and it's a great comfort to me to be loved and cared for by the most powerful being in the universe." She paused and then said, "Well, we didn't have a lot of discussion tonight." Everyone just nodded quietly. After a long pause she said, "Okay, now Tom, I'm anxious to hear how your talk went with your parents."

32.10 Tom felt put on the spot and wasn't sure what to say. "Um, I think I need some of Jesus' miraculous power in my life. My talk with my parents didn't go well. My dad called me an idiot."

VOCABULARY:

supreme

religious teachers

emphasized

fishermen

storms

drown

yield

physically

moral teachings

caterpillar

butterfly

sprouts

soil

dust

proves

moral

miraculous

comfort

being

anxious

put on the spot

AUTHORITY & POWER OF JESUS

MATTHEW 7:28-29

MATTHEW 8:23-27

LUKE 4:31-37

MATTHEW 9:1-8

JOHN 14:6

JOHN 11:17-44

HONOR YOUR FATHER & MOTHER

LESSON 33

33.1 The mood of the living room was dark and gloomy as Tom told the group about his disheartening talk with his parents. Aunt Maria said, "Tom, I know it's difficult to deal with your dad's disapproval. Don't get too discouraged."

33.2 Sarah said, "I can't resist this. Aunt Maria's alliteration is amazingly addictive."

33.3 Uncle Hud laughed and said, "Sarah, be respectful. Tom's trying to tell us about the traumatic time when he talked to his two parents."

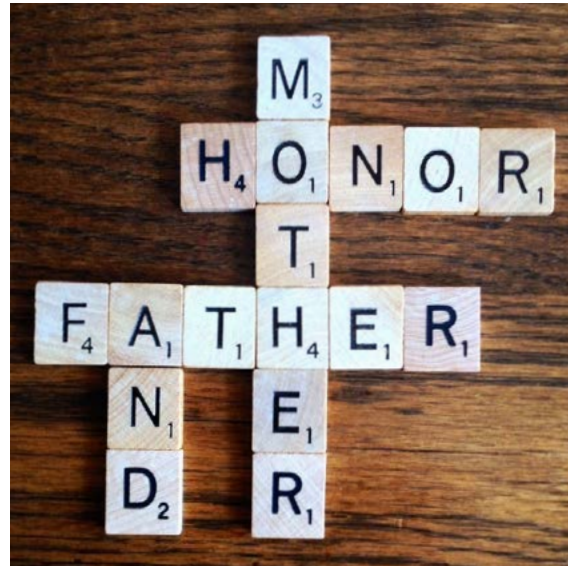
33.4 Sarah laughed and then saw the confused looks on Tom and John's faces. So she explained, "We're making alliteration jokes. You know, when a sentence has a lot of words that begin with the same sound. Aunt Maria said, 'It's difficult to deal with your dad's disapproval. So don't get too discouraged.'

33.5 Then everyone laughed after Tom said, "Now I see what's going on. No pun intended Uncle Hud."

33.6 Before they knew it, the entire mood of the room had changed from sad and somber to light and cheerful. A little comic relief from Sarah and Uncle Hud had changed the atmosphere in the living room.

33.7 Uncle Hud said, "Tom, hang in there buddy. My guess is that your dad is reacting—or overreacting to something more than just your decision to become a Christian. Give him some grace and some time, and maybe his attitude will soften a little."

33.8 Aunt Maria said, "I think it's important to be respectful toward your parents at this time. You don't want to drive a wedge between you and your



parents. Maintaining a good relationship with them is so important because we hope that someday we can help them have a relationship with Jesus too."

33.9 Uncle Hud said, "In the Old Testament God gave his people 10 Commandments. There were many other laws to live by, but these were the top ten. Number five is 'Honor your father and mother.' So, I'd say what Maria is saying is pretty important! Now what does it mean to honor your father and mother? It means being thankful that they have given you life. You need to show respect by

letting them know you are listening and considering what they say. To give them honor means forgiving them, so that you can release the emotional baggage of their treatment of you and also release unrealistic expectations of how they should treat you, so you don't set yourself up for continued disappointment."

33.10 Uncle Hud continued, "Since the mood around your house is tense right now, give your parents some time. Don't push things right now. Let things cool down and then later in a polite and respectful way, go back to them and share with them the reasons you want to become a follower of Christ."

33.11 Aunt Maria added, "Why don't you try to do something to bring your family together. What about playing a game together? Our kids used to like playing board games when we had family night. Of course, Hud couldn't play with us, but he sat there with us and really enjoyed how it brought our family together."

33.12 Tom said, "Um, we never play games together, but I guess we could do some other things as a family."

VOCABULARY:

mood
gloomy
disheartening
deal with
disapproval
alliteration
addictive
respectful
traumatic
sad and somber
light and cheerful
comic relief

hang in there
buddy
reacting
overreacting
soften
drive a wedge
maintaining
Commandments
emotional baggage
treatment
follower
board games

10 COMMANDMENTS

1. You shall have no other gods before me
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol
3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy
5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor
10. You shall not covet

A GOOD, FUN UNCLE

LESSON 34

34.1 Later that evening as Sarah and Aunt Maria were in the kitchen, Uncle Hud said, “Tom, come over here and let me give you a big fatherly hug.”

34.2 Tom said, “You’re more of a dad to me than my real dad.”

34.3 “No Tom, I’m just a good, fun uncle. I can never replace your dad. I’ve been praying God would change your dad’s heart—not just with your mom, but also with you. I believe that when a son has a great relationship with his dad, he feels empowered to grow into the man he’s intended to be. You’re already a great young man, but if you and your dad can reconcile your differences, then it will free you to grow even more.”

34.4 “Wow, I hadn’t really thought about that before. Right now I don’t feel much love for my father. I definitely don’t feel like we’re on the same team.

34.5 “Tom, Jesus was always saying things that went against the norms of society. Jesus said to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

34.6 “I don’t know if my dad is persecuting me right now, but he’s sure making my life miserable.”

34.7 “Tom, have you ever been to the eye doctor to have your eyes checked? Now I know that sounds like a strange question from a blind man. Often the doctor will show you an eye chart and use different lenses to find the clearest vision. In a similar way, we need to adjust the way we look at people—to learn to see the good in others. The more we reflect on the good side of people, the better we feel about our relationship with them. So, Tom, what’s good about your dad?”



34.8 Tom thought for a moment and then said, “Well, he’s a hard worker. He’s a skilled carpenter, and he’s good with finances. I mean, we don’t have any debt because he likes to pay for things with cash instead of borrowing money. He saves a lot of money by repairing things around the house instead of hiring someone else to fix it. Once he paid for me to go to a soccer camp. He wants me to have good grades in school. I think he cares about me, but just doesn’t know how to express his feelings.”

34.9 “I’m sure you could come up with a long list of good things about your dad if you tried. You need to do something radical right now. Instead of hating your dad for calling you an idiot, you need to ask God to help you love him. You need to pray for him. Remember Tom, God can do more than we ask or imagine! He wants us to pray with great faith!”

34.10 “My frustration with my dad makes me not want to pray for him at all, but I know that is a selfish attitude. I’m going to start praying for God to take away the bitterness I feel toward my dad. Then hopefully after that I can pray that God will give me a great relationship with him in the future.”

34.11 “Tom, in the book of Malachi 4:6 it talks about turning the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. I’m going to pray for both you and your dad to turn your hearts toward God so that you’ll turn your hearts toward each other too. I know that sounds impossible, but all things are possible—and work together for the good of those who love the Lord.”

VOCABULARY:

replace

empowered

reconcile your differences

norms of society

persecute

miserable

eye chart

lenses

reflect

hard worker

finances

borrowing

repairing

hiring

express his feelings

radical

selfish

attitude

THROUGH THE ROOF

LESSON 35

35.1 A few days later Sarah asked Tom, “How’s it going with your parents?”

35.2 Tom bit his lower lip, tilted his head back a little, took a deep breath and said, “Well, my dad’s been coming home late every night. So I haven’t talked with him. Honestly, I’m a little gun-shy to talk to him right now. I’m taking Uncle Hud’s advice to give my parents some time to soften a little.”

35.3 Sarah said, “Well, I want you to know I’ve been praying for God to give you wisdom.”

35.4 Tom said, “Thanks, I appreciate it.”

35.5 On Sunday evening, Tom said to the group, “I’d like to talk about a story in the Bible that fits my current situation. Last week, before I came over here, I was really depressed. Then you guys encouraged me to look on the bright side—to keep a positive attitude, honor my parents and give them some grace and time. Well, things have been better around my house this week. I didn’t talk about God with my dad, but we did have a fairly normal conversation about a project he’s working on this week.”

35.6 “That’s great Tom,” said Uncle Hud. “Maria and I have been praying for you every night.” John and Sarah added that they too had been praying for him.

35.7 Tom said, “You guys are great and remind me of the friends in Mark 2:1-12. Let me read it first.” Tom



read the passage and then said, “I would love to have been there to see these men do whatever it took to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus. In some ways, I feel similar to the man on the mat, and each of you are holding one of the four corners of a mat carrying me to Jesus. I know you haven’t torn through the tiles of the roof to get me to Jesus, but you have encouraged me and prayed for me daily, and I really appreciate your help.”

35.8 Uncle Hud joked and said, “I’m not sure how a blind man can help carry a mat. Hope I don’t bonk your head on something.”

35.9 Tom smiled and said, “Well if you did, it might knock some sense into me.”

35.10 “On a serious note,” Uncle Hud said, “Tom, I believe we need to struggle for the salvation of others. What I mean is, all of us need to be willing to do as much as we can to help others fall in love with Jesus. Some Christians only want to be good examples for Jesus without saying a word. I, however, don’t think this is best. We want others to be impressed with Jesus—not with us. How can others develop a relationship with Jesus just by being around good people? They need to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes from hearing the word of God about Jesus Christ. So, we have to open our mouths and speak up for him.”

35.11 Aunt Maria added, “Tom, we love you. You’re such a fine young man. It’s a joy to help carry your mat.”

VOCABULARY:

tilted
gun-shy
current
look on the bright side
positive attitude
fairly normal
whatever it took
in some ways
corners
torn through
bonk
knock some sense
on a serious note
saying a word
speak up for

MARK 2:1-12

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, “Why does this

fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

CHRIST WITH US IN THE STORMS

LESSON 36



36.1 Thursday after school, Tom, John and some friends played soccer at a nearby park. As they were walking back to John's pickup, John got a call.

36.2 Tom could tell by the look on John's face that something wasn't right. John said, "I'm heading there right now, bye."

36.3 John took a deep breath and turned to Tom and said, "My dad just had a heart attack. He's in an ambulance on his way to the hospital right now."

36.4 Tom quickly said, "Hey, I can go with you to the hospital or find another way home. Whatever you think is best. It's your call."

36.5 Tom went with John to the hospital emergency room. John's mom was there crying. John hugged her, but they didn't exchange words. Tom stood at a distance. John's older brother came out of an office and said, "Dad's heart stopped, but the paramedics revived him using a defibrillator. He's stable now, but the doctors are assessing the damage to his heart."

36.6 Later John introduced Tom to his family. As Tom sat in the lobby reflecting on the situation, he realized his problems with his father paled in comparison to the possibility of John losing his father.

36.7 John didn't go to school on Friday but stayed at the hospital with his mom. Sarah talked to Tom that afternoon and said, "John thinks they will move his dad out of the Intensive Care Unit and into a private room on Saturday. Uncle Hud suggested we all visit John's dad, his little brother, on Sunday evening if he's up to having visitors."

36.8 Aunt Maria drove Uncle Hud, Sarah and Tom to

the hospital on Sunday evening. As they entered John's dad's room, Uncle Hud said, "Johnny Boy, how dare you cut in line and try to get to heaven before me!"

36.9 John's dad said, "Hud the Dud your corny jokes are going to give me another heart attack."

36.10 After some small talk, Uncle Hud asked everyone to gather around John's dad and lay their hands on him and pray for him. After the prayer tears filled John's dad's eyes as he whispered, "Thank you."

36.11 Uncle Hud said, "I'd like to let God's word speak to us tonight. Maria, could you read Mark 4:35-41?" After she finished reading the passage Uncle Hud said, "You would think that Christ's presence in the boat would assure a peaceful journey. The truth is, even after we follow Christ; we still face hardships and testing. Sometimes we feel like questioning God 'How could you allow this? How could you sleep—and be silent while we are going through this terrible storm?' His silence, however, and delays in answering our prayers and the mysteries of his dealings are too profound for our natural minds to understand. Yet I believe that his purpose in testing our faith is to strengthen it."

36.12 He cleared his throat and continued, "One thing we must never forget, Christ is with us in the storms of life. He was with the disciples in the boat! He was with me through my car accident and recovery. And Johnny, he's with you now in the midst of this storm in your life. And Tom, he's with you too as you navigate the waters of how to deal with your parents. We need to remember that Jesus said, 'Let's go over to the other side.' He didn't say, 'Let's go to the middle of the lake and drown.' So, if Christ is in our boat, he will bring us safely to the other side!"

VOCABULARY:

heart attack	how dare you
ambulance	cut in line
It's your call	corny jokes
exchange words	whispered
paramedics	assure
revived	journey
defibrillator	hardships
assessing	mysteries
paled in comparison	too profound
Intensive Care Unit	recovery
private	navigate the waters
up to	drown

MARK 2:1-12

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"