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**BLESSED NEW YEAR!**

Blessed New Year to you! It is always wonderful to start the New Year with a lesson from the Bible and today we will read three verses from Psalm

90. Moses was the one who wrote this Psalm and he wrote it during the 40 years the Israelites were in the Sinai Wilderness. This was the time between their leaving Egypt and arriving at the Promised Land.

During this period, Moses led about 2 million Israelites as they wandered through the desolate landscape of the wilderness. It was a very tough time. It was a time when many Israelites died. And these words

do not seem like the usual happy messages one may read of on the first day of the year!

But these are words of wisdom. Moses reminds us that life is short, we must trust in God. The “days of our years are threescore years and ten” means that the average lifespan of a typical person is about 70 years. It may be longer in Singapore and many other parts of the world, but not much longer.

As we start the New Year, it is wise to remind ourselves that we are to number our days (verse 12). What does that mean? It is NOT to literally count the days in a week or month as we progress through the year. It is to live a life that will please God in terms of obeying Him. It is to be a wise child. It is not to continue making the mistakes you made last year. It is to apologise for any wrongs which you have committed last year. It is to be kinder to your classmates, more grateful to your parents and more giving to your siblings or friends. In short, it is to apply our hearts unto wisdom (verse 12b).

Thought: Start the year right. Start the year with God!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me another year. As I start this year, may I be given the wisdom to live a godly life for You. Please grant me strength and endurance, for I know I am weak, but You are strong. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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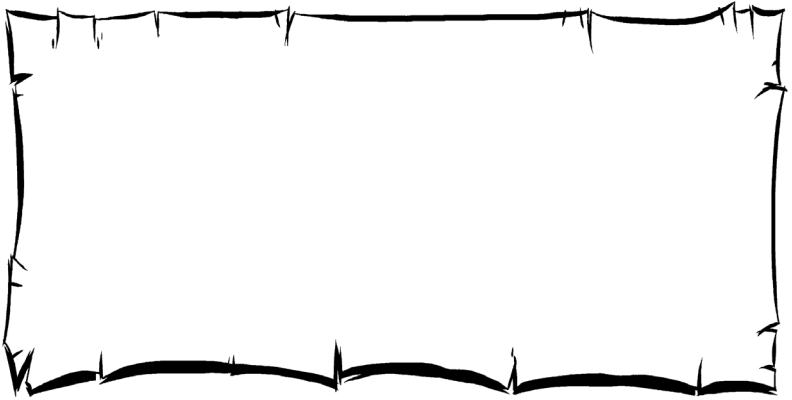
**CHRIST EXISTED FROM ETERNITY PAST**

It is the second day of the New Year, nonetheless, Blessed New Year! As we start the year, may we start it right with a focus on our wonderful Lord Jesus. Jesus is the Word or the Revelation of God. God has not only spoken in written form but also through a person - that person is Jesus Christ. There is a Written Word – the Bible. And there is also the Living Word - Jesus Christ. Just as the Bible tells us clearly who God is, Jesus as the Living Word tells us clearly who God is.

Jesus, being God, was with God the Father in the beginning. As God the Father existed from eternity, so too Jesus existed in eternity, even before He was born as a baby in Bethlehem. It is wrong to think that Jesus only existed when He was born into this world. Jesus Christ was with God the Father when He made the world, bringing life and light.

Not only did Jesus exist from eternity, He knew us from eternity too. Is it not amazing – that He knew about us way before we were born? In fact, He knew that we would be born way before Adam & Eve were created!

Memorise John 1:1 and write it down below:



Thought: It is so blessed to have a Saviour who knew us before we were born.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we praise You that Jesus existed from everlasting to everlasting, and also that You knew and loved us before we were born. Help me to return a portion of that love by being a good Christian – In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF JOHN'S BIRTH (I)**

Before Jesus Christ was born, His cousin was born to be His messenger and forerunner. This man was John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth. The birth of John was an unlikely one, because his parents were old. What happened was this: An angel announced his birth to his father, a priest, while he was performing duties in the temple. But Zacharias was full of fear and unbelief and was struck dumb until his son was born.

True enough, Elisabeth, his wife, became pregnant! In those days, women who could not conceive were despised, and so Elisabeth thanked the Lord greatly for taking away her shame and blessing her with a child. Elisabeth must have prayed to the Lord for a child for years, and finally, God answered her prayers.

I would like you to focus on verse 15 – it tells us that John would be great in the sight of God. You may know that John lived a life that was very different from others. He wore camel's hair and leather; he ate locusts and wild honey. One cannot say he was well-dressed or had great taste for yummy food. He was a simple man, even rough, in the eyes of men. He did not have any great education nor was he rich. It was not mentioned in the Bible that he was handsome or athletic; neither was he "cool" in any sense of the word. So why was he great? He was great because he would live a life of obedience to God. John was given such a great privilege – to announce the Coming of Jesus Christ to the world!

Dear child, do you know that we have the same privilege of telling the world about Jesus? Of course, it is not about His First Coming. He had come to die for our sins and is now in Heaven. But we may be able to tell others of His Second Coming! Jesus will come back one day, in glory and power!

Some of us may prefer to be "great" in the eyes of men. We may want our classmates to like us or to invite us to birthday parties. Some children do the wrong things to draw attention to themselves. Dear child, aim to be great in the eyes of God, not men.

Thought: Aim to be great in the sight of God, not man.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the precious example of John, who was great because he was obedient to You and was used to tell the world about Jesus. May You also use me to tell others about Jesus. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF JOHN'S BIRTH (II)**

It is almost strange that after praying for a long time for a child, Zacharias did not have the faith to believe that his wife would be pregnant. That caused the angel to remind Zacharias who he was. That he was Gabriel. The words in verse 19 are powerful – “*I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God!*” The name Gabriel means “strong man of God”.

Gabriel is not some low-ranking or ordinary angel – he is an archangel. What is an archangel? It is an angel of the highest rank. He is God’s direct messenger and we know that every time Gabriel appears, a great announcement would take place. In the New Testament, we read of Gabriel here, and soon we would read of the same angel appearing to Mary to tell her that she had been chosen to be the vessel through whom Jesus would be born.

When Gabriel saw that Zacharias was not convinced, he showed him a sign. It was a painful one for Zacharias, for the sign was such that he would be struck dumb from that moment until John was born. That would be at least 9 months long! That is a long time for anyone who can speak normally to not be able to. Imagine you not being able to talk for 9 waking hours. That is a long time, is it not; especially for those of you who like to talk! But Zacharias was struck dumb for at least 9 long months!

Dear child, do not doubt the Word of God. In today’s reading, we learn that Zacharias was struck dumb not because he did not believe the word of the angel Gabriel, but that he did not believe the power of God; that his wife would be pregnant. May we learn to have more faith in God from this incident!

Thought: Heavenly Father, increase my faith!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the reminder to always have faith in You. In this world that encourages us to have faith in ourselves or only in things we can see or touch, I confess it is sometimes not easy to have faith in a God that I cannot see with my eyes. But Father, please teach me to be able to see with the eyes of faith, that I may continue to be a good Christian boy or girl. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF JESUS' BIRTH (I)**

God sent the archangel Gabriel to announce the special birth of Jesus to Mary. Who was Mary? She was a devout woman. She was betrothed to Joseph and a betrothal in those days was similar to someone getting engaged to be married today. But the commitment to marry is stronger.

Some of you may have Roman Catholic friends and they put Mary on par with Jesus, giving her the respect and honour we do not find in the Bible. From today's reading, we will learn a few things about Mary that would tell us she was a wonderful woman. For God to select her from among all other Jewish women, she must have been special. But like us, she was a sinner too.

In verse 28, we read that she was blessed by God. Not that she was blessing others, She had found favour with God and enjoyed the wonderful blessing of being chosen to be the human vessel through whom Jesus would be born. Verse 31 tells us that the angel told her to name her child Jesus, which means Saviour. Every time she called Jesus, she was reminded that she, too, needed Him as her Saviour. In verse 46, we read that Mary was grateful to God and called Him Lord; meaning she was to serve Him and was clearly not His equal. Finally, verse 47 shows that she regarded God as her Saviour, a reaffirmation of verse 31.

Roman Catholics believe they should pray to Mary and that Mary can intercede on their behalf with God. Some of them also believe we should also pray to holy men who have died, whom they call saints. However, we find none of these practices taught or even practised in the Bible.

Dear child, Jesus is the only Saviour of the world. He has taught in many passages that only through Him can we find salvation. Let us just consider one verse – John 14:6, *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”*.

Thought: Only Jesus, Always Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for today's reminder that only Jesus saves. I humbly ask that You would help me to learn more about Jesus as this month's reading focuses on my precious Saviour. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF JESUS' BIRTH (II)**

God sent Gabriel to announce the special birth of Jesus to Mary and Joseph on separate occasions. Mary was living in the city of Nazareth and was told she would conceive the Son of God and call Him Jesus, which means Saviour. This was possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit. Imagine this – she would become pregnant although she would remain a virgin throughout her entire pregnancy! For this supernatural conception and birth, we thank God.

Soon, Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary, knew about her pregnancy. He thought that Mary was unfaithful and wanted to break off the betrothal. However, God intervened and spoke to him in a dream to take Mary as his wife as the baby in her womb was no ordinary child.

How did God prepare Mary and Joseph regarding the birth of Jesus?

1. God sent the angel \_\_\_\_\_ to Nazareth where Mary lived to speak to her.
2. God caused \_\_\_\_\_, a virgin, to have a baby.
3. God spoke to \_\_\_\_\_ so that he will understand and accept Mary.

Some people do not believe that God can bring about a virgin birth. They say it is humanly impossible. Of course, these people forget that God is God, and not human! That which is humanly impossible is not impossible with God, should He want to do it!

Thought: Nothing is too hard for God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please give me faith to believe You that You can do anything. You know I may have some problems in my school or home, and these problems hurt me. Heavenly Father, please help me to bear these problems, and to always go to You for help. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF JESUS' BIRTH (III)**

Joseph was a kind and godly man. He did not question or doubt the words of the angel. Although he would suffer shame and disrepute because his wife-to-be was pregnant, he continued to trust God. He believed that such a thing could happen for God is the God of the impossible.

Jesus became a man because God had planned from eternity that He shall save His people from their sins. Only Jesus, 100% God and 100% Man, can save because He is the only perfect sacrifice needed. He fulfilled that when He died on the cross for us.

Can you imagine that – God was willing to be born as a helpless baby in order that He may experience the pains and troubles of man, so that He can then die for man? Think about the sacrifices He made when He forsook the glory and power of Heaven to be born, and to be the son of a poor carpenter. What an amazing Saviour we have!

God worked a supernatural work when the birth of Jesus was announced. In saving you, God also worked a supernatural work, for He gave you salvation when you believed in God.

Try these questions:

1. When did God love you – before or after you were born?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Is God able to predict what you will be when you grow up?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. If God knows our future – should we not place more trust in Him?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thought: We have a God who knows our past and future.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I learn to trust in You, for I am weak but You are strong. It gives me so much comfort that You know what will happen to me and my loved ones tomorrow, and even years from now! So Heavenly Father, please help me to stay really close to You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## ANGELS APPEARED TO THE SHEPHERDS

The same night that Jesus was born, was also the night that the angel appeared to the shepherds. The shepherds were sitting in the field, keeping watch over their flock of sheep. Before the angel appeared, it was probably another usual night. They could have been admiring the fantastic array of stars in the night sky, or perhaps exchanging stories or accounts of how they fought against predators which wanted to attack their flock.

Suddenly an angel appeared, shining with a bright light. The shepherds were afraid, but the angel brought them wonderful news from Heaven, *“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”* (Luke 2:10-11).

This was immediately followed by a great company of angels praising God and saying, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”* (Luke 2:14). Then the angels were gone and the shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem to visit and worship Jesus.

There is a wonderful repetition of the idea of “great” in these few verses. One can see the progression from great fear (verse 9) to great joy (verse 10) to great host of angels (verse 13) singing a great song of praise to God (verse 14). What great news it is to have the King of kings born to man so that man may live forever more!

There are famous carols (see below) that tell us of that wondrous account of the birth of Jesus. Which is your favourite?

Write the number in the cloud!

1. Silent Night! Holy Night!
2. Away in a Manger
3. Joy to the World
4. Angels We Have Heard on High



Thought: What a wonderful account that reminds us of that blessed Christmas.

Prayer: Father in Heaven, thank You for bringing the good news of Jesus' birth. May I learn to appreciate His birth and to understand that without the birth of Jesus, I would not have experienced spiritual birth myself. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



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## WORSHIPPED BY THE SHEPHERDS

The shepherds finally found the manger where Jesus was born. With the song of the angels ringing in their ears and the joy of hearing that the Saviour was born, they fell on their knees to worship Jesus. Filled with great joy, they will remember this night long after the visit.

When they returned home, they did not keep this quiet, but burst out telling everyone of the wonderful news of the Saviour's birth! Moreover, they have seen the baby Jesus – and what a great privilege that must have been! These shepherds, having seen Jesus, just had to tell others about Jesus. How about you? Do you want to tell others about Jesus too?

Imagine that you have discovered the most wonderful game or toy which you know would benefit your loved ones and friends. Would you not want to share that with them? Of course! What more when you know such a great Lord as Jesus!

If you are saved, you would have done some of these things.  
Put a tick if you do.

- You have told someone that you are a Christian.
- You have invited someone to church or VBS.
- You pray everyday or almost everyday.
- You enjoy reading/listening to the Bible.
- You like to sing/play/listen to hymns.
- You share tracts with friends or others.

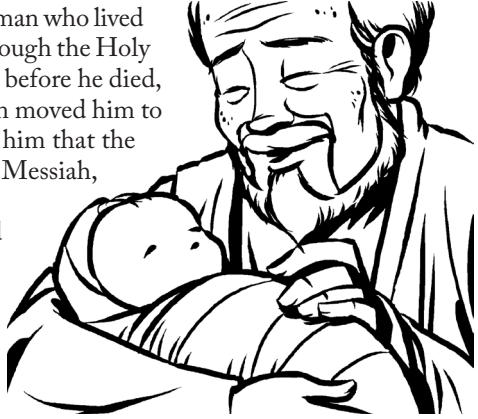
Thought: Blessed are those who believe in Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give me courage and great joy in telling others about Jesus. Sometimes it is not easy, and I am afraid that people may laugh at me. But give me courage, Heavenly Father, that I will be brave enough to share this good news with the people You have placed in my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## THANKSGIVING OF SIMEON

Simeon was a godly old man who lived in the time of Christ. God, through the Holy Spirit, had promised him that before he died, he would see Christ. God then moved him to go to the temple, revealing to him that the child in Mary's arms was the Messiah, or Christ.

He was so happy and excited that he took Him out of His mother's arms into his own. He held the baby Jesus lovingly and respectfully. He blessed God, and praised Him, and gave



glory to Him for His great goodness in sending the promised Messiah. This was to be the greatest act of love and sacrifice that the world has ever seen, for Jesus will be the Saviour of all people – both Jews and Gentiles.

It is not surprising that Simeon was blessed for he lived a holy life. Do you live a holy life? Do you seek to please God as best you can? If you do, God will surely bless you!

It is easy to start on the right footing; it is tough to end on a right footing, for many of us waver and do not remain faithful to the end. The remarkable account of Simeon is that although he was already an old man, the Bible tells us that he was “just and devout”.

Perhaps many people then would have poured scorn on the baby Jesus, for a woman who was not married gave birth to Him. It must have been such a shame and many would not want to be associated with Mary or Jesus, but not Simeon. He who was faithful from earlier days, remained faithful to the end and he knew this was the Promised Son of God. Despite very possibly the contempt and ridicule of others around, he had faith that the baby was God born in human form.

Thought: Those who walk closely with God will be blessed.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I walk close to You for I want to be blessed by You and Your presence. May I learn from the wise old man Simeon, to dare to be different if that is what Your Holy Bible teaches. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

Who were these wise men from the East? We will never know for sure. They could have been Persian priests skilled in the study of the stars (cf. Daniel 1:20). If they had lived in Persia, how could they have come to know about the “King of the Jews”? It is possible that Jews taken captive during the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity preached to the Persians about the coming of the Messiah.

The supernatural appearance of an extraordinary star led them to conclude that the time was auspicious. The Holy Spirit guided them in their understanding concerning the birth of the “King of the Jews”, who would come to save His people. It also gave them the determination to travel that long journey to Jerusalem to worship the long-awaited Messiah.

For the Lord, these wise men travelled far along dangerous routes. Remember these were times when there were no paved roads, safely-lit stops, hotels, rest-points and the like. Furthermore, there were many bandits or robbers and it was not safe to travel long distances, especially at night. But for the Lord, these men were willing to suffer not just inconveniences, but grave danger.

How about you? What would you be willing to do for Jesus? Would you be willing to share a treasured toy with a friend? Or a limited amount of a favourite food of yours? Would you be willing to help others with school work, even if it means you have to give up watching that television show you have waited a whole week for?

Dear child, if you are a Christian, your life **MUST** be different from what it was. If no one can see that you are different, chances are that you may not be saved, which means that you may not be a real Christian. If you are a real believer, you must be willing to change for the better, and others should be able to see the new you!

Thought: May I really be a “new me” so others can see Jesus in me!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me the example of the wise men. May I learn to be willing to suffer or accept inconveniences for Thee. I pray that I will be a real Christian so that others can see my Lord through my good behaviour. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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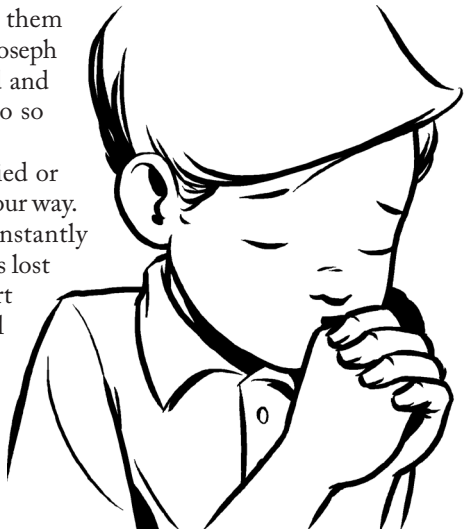
## ESCAPE TO EGYPT

As the evil king Herod was intent on killing the infant King, Joseph was instructed by the Lord to escort the little Jesus and Mary to Egypt for safety. Herod was afraid that this child would threaten the position he and his son had when He grows up to become King of the Jews. Of course, Jesus would not want to vie to be an earthly king, but Herod was selfish and wanted to kill the baby at all costs.

When Joseph woke up from his dream, he obeyed and took both mother and child by night for Egypt. We can take heart that God will protect His own. Even the powerful king could not take the life of a baby, because God intervened. Let us remember that God is not just our God who controls our lives, but He controls the lives and circumstances of even non-believers.

Do you have worries or problems? Probably none of them would be as serious as the one Joseph had! Still, Joseph trusted God and followed His will. May you do so too, and likewise be blessed.

Sometimes we are worried or discouraged as troubles come our way. Perhaps your parents are constantly quarrelling? Or your father has lost his job? Or your sister was hurt in an accident? Or your school results are not as good as you would like them to be? Dear child, pray to God. He does not promise that He will solve all your problems, but God does promise that He will give you the strength to continue to have faith in Him.



Thought: When God says He will take care of us, we can trust fully in that.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please give me the assurance, that come what may, You will always be with me. I commit to You the fears and insecurities that I have and ask that You will help me with them. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## RETURN TO NAZARETH

Joseph's family departed just in time. Soon, Herod became exceedingly angry and had all Jewish children, two years and under, killed. Hoping that baby Jesus would be killed in that mass murder, Herod did not know that Jesus had escaped to Egypt where He was under the care of God Almighty.

As with even the greatest of kings, Herod died. In fact, Herod was not even any great king for he was placed there as king by the Roman empire to help rule over the Jews. In any case, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and instructed Joseph to return to the land of Israel as it was now safe.

God always protects His own. We see in this passage how He guided and guarded Joseph. As He guarded Joseph, so will He help you in your troubles. This reminds me of the story of "Footprints in the Sand". Have you heard this?

*One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.*

*Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there was one only.*

*This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints, so I said to the Lord, "You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?"*

*The Lord replied,  
"The years when you have seen only one set of  
footprints, my child, is when I carried you."*

Thought: God is a shelter in the time of a storm.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for this wonderful reminder that You will never leave or forsake me. I know that if I keep close to You, You will protect me and keep me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



## JESUS – THE MODEL CHILD

Not much is recorded in the Bible of the childhood of Jesus. However, we do know that when Jesus was twelve, He accompanied Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem for the yearly feast of the Passover. The Passover is an important festival in the Jewish calendar, when they commemorate the “passing over” of the angel of death when God slew the firstborn of all Egypt (Exodus 12:11-28).

In that visit, Jesus was left behind by Mary and Joseph; you know how adults are sometimes! When they discovered that He was missing, they returned for Him and were astonished to find Him discussing deep truths with the learned rabbis.

Although Jesus was God, He was also fully human. He also did not cheat. Imagine what He could do in school tests which He may have attended, or any games. He may have participated in! He would be topping every test and competition since He was God Almighty! Jesus was a good child; He was obedient, humble, and followed the instructions of His parents. He was also obedient to God the Father, and that is perhaps why the last verse in this chapter states, *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”*.

Are you like that? Are you an obedient child who is courteous and helpful? Are you a polite child, knowing that being polite instils and demonstrates grace in us? Are you helpful to weaker students? Do you take time to orientate new students or newcomers to Sunday school? Do you willingly share your pencils and other writing instruments?

Do you also show a growing understanding of God’s Word? You are to read the Junior RPG every day. The abbreviation “RPG” stands for “Read, Pray, Grow”. Do you spend time praying over what you read? Most importantly, do you see growth in your Christian life? Do your parents see that you are a better child, perhaps more patient, more kind, and more helpful?

Thought: May I be more like the child Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you know that I need help in becoming a better person. I am so glad that I have an example in Jesus; so Heavenly Father, please help me to follow Him and to be a child whom others may see and praise God for. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

During the time of the rule of the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar, in the year AD 26, John, the forerunner or herald of the Messiah, began to preach the baptism of repentance in order for sins to be forgiven. This was exactly what was promised in Isaiah 40:3-4 that the Lord's first coming would be preceded by His forerunner, *"the voice of one crying in the wilderness."*

The people went out to him from "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about." He did not have to go to the people; the people went to him. Even the Pharisees and Sadducees went to see and hear John. His strong messages about those who were not bringing "forth good fruit" and God's judgement upon them did not stop them from coming to hear God's Word. Do you try to talk to people about God? Do you dare to share the gospel with friends? At your age, you may not know a lot about doctrines or profound teachings of the Bible, but that is fine! Just share with your friends, or family members, why you believe in God, and what changes He has made in your life. If you are truly saved and changed, they should be able to see that you have turned a new leaf; and that is the power of Christ seen in your personal example. That would be one of the most powerful testimonies for God!

The message of John the Baptist was a strong one. What was it?

He courageously condemned the people of their \_\_\_\_\_.

He asked them to \_\_\_\_\_ for God is angry with them.

They must \_\_\_\_\_ by their life that they have truly repented.

If not, they will be like the \_\_\_\_\_ that does not have  
\_\_\_\_\_ fruit and will be \_\_\_\_\_ down.

*(Helping words: good, chopped, show, tree, repent, sins, bad, axe, wrath)*

Thought: The truth will set the people free.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me to understand that the love of God deals strongly and boldly against sin in our lives. Help me to know that having sin in my life makes You displeased; and so Father, help me to examine my life and purify myself. And if I change, others can see these changes in me too! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

### BAPTISM OF JESUS

Why does Jesus, who is God, need to be baptised? John’s baptism was a baptism for those who repented of their sins and wanted to be forgiven. Jesus was sinless. There was nothing, no sins, for Him to repent of. John himself was puzzled as to why the Lord would seek baptism from him.

The Lord Jesus told John the reason why He had to be baptised. Jesus said that He needed to be baptised in order “to fulfil all righteousness.” As 100% Man, Jesus wanted to offer His Father full obedience. God the Son obeyed God the Father and humbly submitted Himself to do His will. Can you imagine, the Eternal God willing to be baptised by a mortal man? Such humility and love, no one can give except the Lord Jesus. At the end, we are not surprised to hear the Father’s commendation, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

God is three persons in one God. We can see the three persons of the Godhead in this baptism scene of Jesus. Who did the following:

1. Who commanded Jesus to be baptised?

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2. Who was baptised?

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3. Who descended like a dove on Jesus as He was baptised?

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Thought: Jesus is our perfect representative.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Jesus’ full obedience to be the perfect sacrifice for my sins, for without that we will not have salvation. May I learn from His humility and have that in my life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



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## SATAN TEMPTS JESUS (I)

There was a documentary on National Geographic about a French cave explorer who fell into a deep maze of caves while exploring them alone. Guess how many days did that man go without food? 35 days. At the end of the ordeal, he was absolutely without any energy, lying almost dead when rescuers found him; it was a real miracle that he survived. Yes, he had lost about 40 pounds of fat and muscles, but his mind was still alert. How hungry and thirsty do you think a man like that would be?

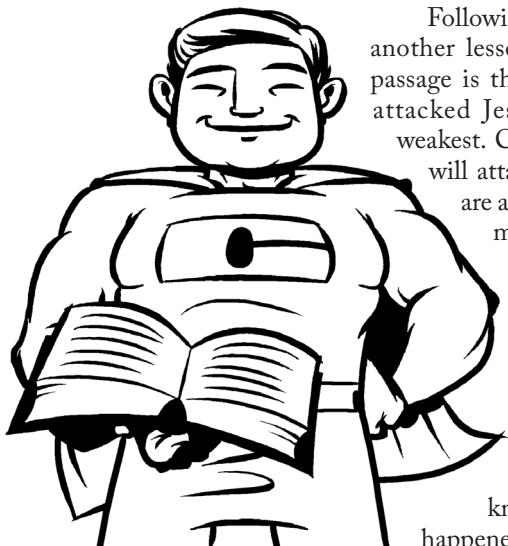
From today's text, we learn that Jesus was without food for an even longer period - 40 days! At Jesus' weakest, Satan tempted Him. Satan knew the first thing on the mind of Jesus would be material replenishment; thus he tempted Jesus with the idea of turning stones into bread. Was it wrong for Jesus to eat bread? No, of course not! However, Jesus wanted to be like any other human - to be totally helpless in the physical sense. Thus He went through the 40-day fast voluntarily. It would have been wrong for Jesus to turn stones to bread as He would then be using His powers to solve His human problems. He would not have been living with the weaknesses of being "fully Man"! Thank God that Jesus went through those temptations, for He was better able to understand the weaknesses of man after having been physically weak himself.

Do you at times wonder whether Jesus understands your problem? Maybe you are bullied in school? Maybe you feel stressed with your mountain of homework? Maybe you have few friends? Remember that Jesus can understand your problems fully. Even if mummy or daddy may not be able to fully know the extent of your worries, Jesus does. So go to God in prayer and seek His strength to solve your problems.

Thought: What a wonderful and understanding Saviour in Jesus!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank You that Jesus is such a wonderful Saviour who understands my every need and weakness. As I come to You now, You know all my problems and that sometimes no one else knows them. Heavenly Father, to You I commit these problems of (...share your problems here). In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## SATAN TEMPTS JESUS (II)



Following up on yesterday's lesson, another lesson we can learn from this passage is that Satan is very smart; he attacked Jesus when He was at His weakest. Child, remember this: Satan will attack or tempt you when you are at your weakest, when you are most likely to fall into his trap.

When was the last time you fell into sin? It could be a burst of anger, or a rude reply to your parents, or pushing a schoolmate, or being lazy to do your quiet time. It could be so many other possibilities. But you know, before each of these sins happened, you were weak. You felt irritated, or tired, or moody, and Satan knows that. How many years of experience do you think Satan has had in tempting Christians? Yes, thousands of years! He has successfully tempted many boys and girls, and you are no different.

It is always a moment of weakness. But this one moment is enough to cause us to fall. Therefore, we must always keep close to God so that Satan will not have the opportunity to succeed.

How did Jesus fight Satan? Jesus was weak and hungry, but He resisted turning the stones to bread and quoted scripture. In fact, Jesus also resisted the other 2 temptations using God's Word. This is a clear teaching for us: we must use the Word of God to fight Satan, for on our own, we can do nothing. How consistent is your quiet time or reading of the Junior RPG?

How often and seriously do you pray? How much do you rely on God on a daily basis? If you keep close to Him, read His Word, rely on Him, and you will be like Jesus; you will have victory over Satan!

Thought: Victory over Satan is ours, if we use the Word of God!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be close to You and Your Word so that I can fight against the tricks and temptations of Satan! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## FIRST CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

The first cleansing of the temple by Jesus took place during the feast of the Passover. You will recall that this is a national religious feast for the Jews, commemorating the time when the Angel of the Lord “passed over” the homes that had blood on their door-posts, on their last night as slaves in Egypt.

When Jesus visited the temple, what He saw angered him. Greedy and evil men selling animal sacrifices for high profits, money-changers overcharging people – these were not supposed to happen in the temple! Jesus was filled with righteous anger at the filth that had invaded His Father’s house. He made a whip and chased all the evil-doers out.

Was Jesus too violent? Did Jesus sin in His anger? The answer to these 2 questions is “No!” You will learn that in the things of God, we have to take a stand against evil. Jesus took a tough stand against what was clearly wrong – business people trying to make a profit from the ordinary folks who were trying to worship God, and turning the temple of worship into a temple of sin. These people had no right to be in the temple, and thus Jesus had to drive them away.

We, too, must learn what righteous anger is. It is anger arising from a righteous spirit. It is a godly response to the sin that we see around us, and sometimes, we have to take action. If we see someone bullying a kitten, go and stop it. If we hear bad language on the TV or evil images, switch the channel or turn the television off. Learn to be like Jesus – He was quick to act. You, too, learn how to have righteous anger at ungodly things, and act on them.

However, let us face it: most of the time we are angry for the wrong reasons. When was the last time you were angry for the wrong reason? Perhaps it was when you thought someone was rude to you? Or some classmates did not include you when they played a game? Or you thought your parents loved your sister or brother more than you? Being angry for the wrong reason is a sin!

Thought: Don’t be angry for the wrong reasons!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me not to be angry for the wrong reasons, but to be more like Jesus – to be angry only for righteous reasons. Help me to dare to stand up for the helpless, to dare to stand up for You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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**BIBLE'S MOST FAMOUS VERSE**

In today's reading passage is found, perhaps, the Bible's most famous verse, John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" To whom did Jesus say those immortal words? They were given to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a teacher of the Jewish law.

Nicodemus had mistakenly thought that salvation came by way of keeping the law and doing good works, but Jesus told him otherwise. Nicodemus should have known what Jesus meant when He said, "Ye must be born again." To become a citizen of Heaven, one must be reborn spiritually, by repenting of one's sins and believing in Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Although Nicodemus was a learned teacher of the Jewish law, he did not know the ultimate truth. There will be many in your life who may teach you things: your school teachers, your tuition teacher or your tennis instructor. However, the greatest truth is the fact that God loves us, and that we must accept Jesus to go to Heaven.

Do you know this greatest truth – that God loves you and sent His precious and only Son, Jesus, to die for you? Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour?

If you have the salvation of the Lord, you are born-again.

Do you know whether you are born-again? How do you know?

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Thought: It is so good to trust in Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank You for giving me salvation and I ask that You will help me to be sure of my salvation and to live out my life such that my new life in Christ is seen. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## JESUS MUST INCREASE, WE MUST DECREASE

John the Baptist had a wonderful ministry ushering in the ministry of Jesus, and often he was mistaken as the Christ. However, he was not one to be taken by pride, and John's timeless words are in verse 30, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

What does it mean, that Jesus must increase and we must decrease? As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit in us, but also remaining in us is still the same old self that can be selfish, proud, complaining, and disobedient. You know that, do you not? How many times have you been selfish, perhaps not wishing to share a favourite food or possession with another? Or the times when you were a 'champion' at complaining – "this is not good" or "that is not nice"? The phrase "Jesus must increase, but I must decrease" means that we must control our old self, for our old self is selfish! This also means that we must reduce what old desires and bad habits we had or have. Instead, if there is anything that will help us to be more like Jesus – in His kindness, patience, love – those must be increased!

The next time you feel angry, or impatient, or selfish, think of how you can CONTROL yourself. Remember today's lesson: how you must decrease these old desires and inclinations and allow the Holy Spirit to control your life. It will not be easy to reduce oneself, as that is natural. However, we are told not only to decrease ourselves, but at the same time, to increase in being more and more like Jesus.

There is a hymn with words that make this idea very clear...

*While passing thro' this world of sin, and others your life shall view,  
Be clean and pure without, within; Let others see Jesus in you.*

*Chorus*

*Let others see Jesus in you, Let others see Jesus in you.  
Keep telling the story, be faithful and true; Let others see Jesus in you.*

*Your life's a book before their eyes, They're reading it thro' and thro'  
Say, does it point them to the skies, Do others see Jesus in you?*

Thought: Jesus must increase; I must decrease.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may You help me to be like John the Baptist, to decrease more and more of myself, but to increase more and more of Jesus in my life. I know it is not easy, so Heavenly Father, please help me along the way. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT & IN TRUTH**

At Jacob's Well, Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman and asked her for water. Initially, she was reluctant to offer Jesus a drink, as He was a Jew, a man and a stranger. But Jesus told her that if she knew who He was, she would have asked for the living water which only He could provide, and He would have given her that water willingly and freely. By and by, she realised that Jesus was the promised Messiah, especially when He revealed, "*I that speak unto thee am he.*"

Besides learning that Jesus is God, this woman also learned another truth: that God is a Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. What does "worship God in spirit and in truth" mean? To worship God in spirit and in truth means that we must first be born again (born of the Spirit). It also means that we must also worship God in the correct manner, according to His ways, as taught in the Scriptures. We cannot worship God anyhow, in our own ways.

Some charismatic churches teach doctrines that are contrary to what the Bible teaches us. These churches permit the speaking in tongues and the use of rock music in worship services. Remember that God is holy and deserves our reverential worship. Are you reverential to God during worship? Do you pay attention when hymns are sung or when the Word of God is taught to you? Do you honour God by coming punctually to worship Him every Sunday?

Thought: We must worship God in spirit and in truth.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me how to worship You in the right way, in spirit and in truth and not in error. Teach me also to be a true Christian, not only in church or when I am with Christians, but all the time. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## SAMARITAN WOMAN BECAME A WITNESS!

Convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Samaritan woman became evangelistic! She went straight to the city centre and told the people about Jesus. What was the result? Many of the Samaritans were saved. In fact, the Samaritans pleaded with Jesus to stay longer and Jesus obliged for 2 days. During this time, many more believed.

The Samaritan woman was a 'big-time' sinner before she met Jesus. Why do we say she was a 'big-time' sinner? John 4:18 tells us that she was living with a man who was not her husband, and she had 5 husbands in the past. Such a woman would be despised today. In those more conservative times, in the time of Jesus, she was certainly frowned upon. But Jesus was compassionate and knew that the woman, like all of us, needed God's love and forgiveness.

What we can learn from this woman after she accepted Jesus as her Saviour and Lord, is her transformed life.

From this passage, we learn from the Samaritan woman:

1. She wanted to know more about the \_\_\_\_\_ water that Jesus gives. We should be interested in what Jesus says too.
2. She listened carefully and believed what Jesus said, in particular that He was the \_\_\_\_\_. Believing in Jesus, she had simple \_\_\_\_\_.
3. She promptly went to tell people about Jesus, showing that she was a good \_\_\_\_\_ for the Lord.

*(Helping words: witness, listener, living, Messiah, faith, love, joy)*

Thought: Share the good news of salvation!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, keep me active and zealous in sharing the good news of salvation to my friends too. I may not have done it in the past as I have been shy, or afraid of not knowing what to say. Teach me to know that if I am faithful in my life as a Christian, that would be the best message for them! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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**BELIEVING IS SEEING**

In Cana, a wealthy man was desperate. However, his power and wealth could not give him what he wanted: recovery for his very sick son. Knowing that Jesus could work miracles, he sought help from our Saviour.

Initially, Jesus rebuked the man for wanting to see only signs and wonders; he would only believe if Jesus could miraculously heal his son. The man humbly accepted the Lord's rebuke and did not argue. Instead, he begged Jesus to see and heal his child before he died. Instead of going to see the child, Jesus gave him a test – and told him that his son would be healed even without Him seeing him. The man passed the test because he believed Jesus, he no longer needed to see to believe. For him, 'believing is seeing'. For most people, even for us today, very often it is 'seeing is believing'. For Christians, it should be the reverse: that 'believing is seeing'.

Answer these statements with a T for True or F for False.

1. Jesus healed the man's daughter. (     )
2. Jesus healed the son by going to see him. (     )
3. Jesus healed the son with His word. (     )
4. Because he was wealthy, the man was proud. (     )
5. The man had faith to believe  
that Jesus will heal his son. (     )

Thought: Faith sees what you believe.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please grant me that simple faith of believing Your every word which is contained in the Bible. Help me to realise that with faith, I can do what others cannot: to see what I believe. Help me to see how your grace and mercy has been manifested in my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

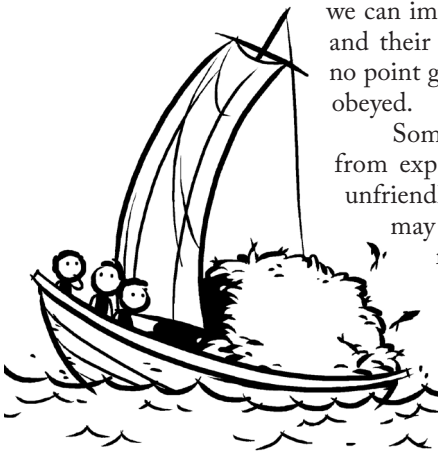


## THE BEST FISHERMAN!

Jesus, the Creator of the world, demonstrated His control over the animal world in this encounter with His future disciples. Peter, James, and John were out fishing the whole night. To their disappointment and surprise, they caught nothing at all. With no fish to show for their overnight toil, they were perhaps resigned to take a break, washing their nets before they returned home. Then, Jesus called them. It was a strange request, for Jesus wanted them to launch out into what appeared to be a fishless sea. Nevertheless, they obeyed.

What they experienced next shocked them! The men caught so many fishes so quickly that their nets broke! Getting a neighbouring ship to help load the fishes, the abundance of fishes was so much that both ships began to sink! The rest is history: the first few disciples were called and they left to follow Jesus.

God is able to do much more than what we can imagine or hope for. The fishermen and their experience told them there was no point going back to the waters, but they obeyed.



Sometimes, life is like that. We know from experience someone is selfish and unfriendly, so we avoid him. But the Lord may be impressing on your heart to reach out to this child; or your father has been too strict in the past, and you are now very afraid of him. Maybe he has just been converted to Christianity and is trying to change. Would you forgive him and give him a chance to do so?

Thought: God can do more than what we imagine or hope for.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for reminding me that You are indeed the Lord, and that You can do way above what we think or imagine. Sometimes when my troubles surround me, they distract me and worry or discourage me. Help me to trust in You and to look to You for help in prayer. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## DELIVERANCE OF THE DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

This passage tells us that when Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, He encountered a demon-possessed man. If you read verse 24 carefully, you will know that there was more than one demon in the man! These demons were very afraid of Jesus for they knew who He is, and the power He has; Jesus is God! Thank God it was a happy ending for that man; the demons left him.

This miracle highlights to us that we must be serious in our faith. Christianity can be fun; we play games and sing happy songs. But, Christianity is not only fun and games. We live in a spiritual world, and the forces of darkness war against us. So dear child, do remember to be close to God that He may protect and guide you.

Write "YES" or "NO" against the sentences.

1. Jesus has power over the demons. (     )
2. Jesus has power over all things. (     )
3. Christianity is only fun and games. (     )
4. We must be serious about our faith. (     )
5. The demons know Jesus. (     )

Thought: Jesus is much more powerful than Satan and all his demons combined.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your victory over Satan through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Remind me that I am Your child, and that nothing can harm me. Even if I may have nightmares, I pray that You will give me courage and to always pray. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## HEALING OF THE LEPER

Leprosy is a terrible disease; it was incurable in biblical times. Lepers usually hide themselves and cover their whole body because the disease eats into its victims. Because it is a disease that causes decay in the flesh, a leprosy victim would smell bad, with his flesh literally rotting. It was a terrible ailment and since the disease is infectious, no one would dare live near anyone with leprosy. The victims have to live by themselves, far away from family, friends and the society. When they go out into the streets, they would have to cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!" to warn others of their condition, as the Old Testament book, Leviticus tells us (Leviticus 13 & 14).

A leper came to Jesus and begged Him for healing. Jesus did not shun him or shoo him away. In fact, Jesus did what most people would not do: touch him. Would you do that? Almost all of us would run away the moment we see a leper. But our precious Lord is different. When Jesus saw the leper kneel and ask for help, He was moved with compassion. He touched the leper and answered his request with these healing words, "I will; be thou clean." With these words and that kind touch, restoration was given to the leper; he was instantly cured and cleansed! That man would never forget those words of power and instant cure.

Does God heal today? Of course! Does He heal in the same way as He did then? No. God has given us modern medicine, and great advances in medical technology, and there is no need to heal in the way Jesus did.

You may hear of "Healing Rallies" by certain Christian groups, but is it the healing that we read of in the Bible? The healings in biblical times were complete and immediate. The entire leprosy of this man was gone. And the healing took place immediately, with absolutely no delay. What we may hear of in such rallies today are "improvements, gradual advances", not what we read about in the Bible. Instead, God heals us spiritually and mentally. If we are hurt, God can soothe our sorrows. When we are lonely, we can always go to Him for comfort. When we need guidance, He is waiting to show us the way. What a wonderful God we have!

Thought: Jesus, our kind and heavenly Doctor

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You that we have in Jesus such a wonderful Saviour and healer. May I learn to trust Him more, and to commit my problems to Him. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

HEALING OF THE PARALYSED MAN

Due to His growing ministry, we are not surprised that Jesus attracted crowds wherever He went. In this Bible passage, masses gathered to hear Him such that houses or buildings He preached from were packed full.

In today’s reading, we learn of one such instance. There was a paralysed man whose buddies wanted to bring to Jesus. However, the house was jam-packed and try as they may, they could not get in! They then had a good, though dangerous, idea. Since they could not get in through the doors, they would get in through the roof! Climbing up to the roof was a risky matter as they had to carry their paralysed friend. Clearly, their determination revealed that they believed in Jesus and His power to save. Lowering their friend through an opening or hole must have been spectacular: the masses must have gasped in amazement when they saw the lowering of the paralysed man.

When Jesus saw the man, He could see the faith in him. Satisfied that the man had repented, Jesus forgave the man of his sins. That was more important than physical healing, but Jesus was gracious enough to also heal the man physically. As the formerly paralysed man was instantly and completely healed, and took up his mattress-bed and walked off, the crowds were astonished!

Here is a picture of the house where the four friends lowered the paralyzed man down from the roof.



Join the dots for the staircase by which the four friends carried the man up to the roof.

Thought: Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, ever more give me that precious faith that believes every word of the Bible. Thank You for this example of great faith. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## GIVING YOUR ALL TO JESUS

In this familiar passage, we read of a huge group of people following Jesus. Jesus saw that the people were hungry and wanted to provide for them. In those days, it was not common to have food stalls or restaurants. They certainly do not have the food centres we have in Singapore where one may buy food at a relatively low price for a large group of people.

Furthermore, although some of the people may have brought their own lunch, many did not. So what did they do? The disciples found a boy with a small lunch, probably enough only for himself or at most for a small group of people: 5 loaves of bread and two fishes. And we know with that, Jesus performed a miracle in providing lunch for all of the people. And after all had eaten their fill, the fragments that were gathered up filled 12 baskets! What a wonderful

God Jesus is!

Today, we focus on that boy, for he was willing to share his food.

Although it was not very much, it was his all. And although it would not have been able to feed many people in the hands of anyone else,

it was able to feed thousands in the hands of Jesus.

Dear child, learn to serve God. You may not have much in terms of time or talent, but give of your all or your best to God. Service to God is not just doing things in church. It includes that, but it covers so many more things. Service to God will mean you being a good Christian example to others. Service to God will mean being an obedient child to your parents, or a kind friend who gives in to others. As the boy in today's passage gave all of his 5 loaves and 2 fishes, let us learn to give our all to Jesus too!



Thought: Give of your all or best to the Master.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the wonderful example of this boy. Help me to be like him, that others may be able to learn positive things from me as I serve You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## SHOULD WE STUDY ON THE SABBATH?

According to the Pharisees, the Sabbath law was broken when the disciples plucked and rubbed the grains in their hands, as that meant working on the Sabbath. Jesus was deemed guilty because He did not stop His disciples from “breaking the Sabbath.” His disciples were hungry and had plucked some wheat grains to eat. Was Jesus wrong not to stop them?

Jesus and His disciples clearly did not break any Sabbath law. What they went against were the wrong interpretations of the Pharisees. Jesus rebutted the accusations of the Pharisees by citing the example of David who ate of the bread in the temple that only the priests were allowed to eat; David and his men needed to survive and so had to eat! The higher law of necessity overrides the lower law of ceremony.

Today, we keep the Lord’s Day (Sunday) as a replacement of the Sabbath (Saturday), in line with the practice seen in the New Testament church.

All of you are students; should you study or have tuition on Sundays? Should adults work on Sundays? Preferably not, unless the services they provide are essential – like doctors or bus-drivers. God has given us, students, 7 days a week; and other than Sunday, there are 6 other days we could have had tuition or studied. Sundays should be spent literally resting from our daily work; reading more of God’s Word and Christian books, etc. However, if you had forgotten to do your homework and needed it Monday morning, then do it – the Lord will understand. It should however not be a regular occurrence.

We are told to keep our Sabbaths, but in reality the Sabbath keeps us. It keeps us in balance, reminding us that there is much more to life than studies and doing well. We often say we want to learn to trust God. Trust Him also in this issue – honour God by studying hard for 6 days and on Sunday, spend it for Him.

Thought: God has made the Sabbath a delight for His children.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to honour You in the way we observe the Christian Sabbath, not pursuing our own selfish pleasures. I know I am to keep the Sabbath Day holy, so please help me to do it. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**ALWAYS FOCUS ON JESUS!**

It is a frightening thing to be caught in a stormy sea. Many of us will not know what it is like, but if you were in a ship or boat in the midst of a big storm, you would agree that it is not a fun thing at all! In today's reading, we know that the disciples were caught in such a situation. When they saw Jesus, they were initially frightened as they thought they had seen a ghost! When Jesus comforted and assured them, they were settled. Then Peter wanted to walk on water and Jesus gave him the power to do so. However, what happened soon after?

Look at verse 30 again. When Peter saw that the winds and waves were boisterous – meaning they were powerful and noisy – he began to sink. And as he began to sink, he got even more frightened! It was good that he then did the right thing – calling out to Jesus for help.

All of us will continue to have problems in life. You are now in Primary School, and you will have to face exams, perhaps other problems at home as well. As you grow older, more problems will come. As Christians, how are we to respond? God does not promise we will have no troubles or problems. So what do we do? Look at Jesus, and not at our troubles or problems. Had Peter focused on Jesus, and not on the waves and howling winds, he might have been able to continue walking on water. What a fantastic feat to be able to walk on water! Although Peter was initially able to do it with God's help, he failed later when he took his focus off Jesus.

In a way, it is the same for us. With God's help, we can do a lot. We may be able to do our daily Quiet Time and be faithful to God; we may be able to trust God despite difficulties, but if we lose our focus on God and the Bible and instead, focus on our problems and difficulties, they will seem too big for us.

Thought: Look to Jesus!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me never to forget to turn my eyes upon Jesus and to remember He is my source of strength. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## RIGHT IN THE EYES OF THE LORD

After the death of king Solomon, his kingdom was split into two – the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel. The first two kings of Judah were Rehoboam and Abijam. They were not good kings as they did not do right in the eyes of God.

The third king was king Asa and the Bible says that he “did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord”. This is important as it tells us that king Asa sought the Lord and worshipped Him. Those who seek the Lord will be accepted by Him. God will bless those who fear Him (Ps 115:13). Do you obey God’s Word and do what is right in the eyes of the Lord?



The first three kings of Judah were:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Thought: For Thou, LORD, will bless those who fear and obey You.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to have a godly fear of You and obey You in all that You have taught me in the Bible, Your Word. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



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## REMOVED ALL THE IDOLS

One of the first things that good king Asa did was to get rid of the sodomites out of the land. Sodomites are homosexuals. They are condemned by God for their sinful life. When you see such sinful behaviour, know that it is wrong because God says so. It is sad that in Singapore today, homosexuals are not told they are wrong, but accepted by some people.

Another thing that king Asa did was to remove all the idols that his forefathers had made. This was pleasing in God's sight. Do not accept the sinful habits of our forefathers. They might be in darkness. Thus, to leave the idols of our forefathers to turn to the living and true God is always right.

The picture below shows men destroying idols by breaking into pieces.



Another way of destroying idols is by

\_\_\_\_\_ (ginnurb) them.

Thought: It takes courage to remove the idols belonging to our parents. It takes greater courage to remove the idols of our heart.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thou art the living and true God. Idols are not gods because they are the works of men. Thee will I worship always. I pray especially for myself, as I have idols in my life. These could be a friend I look up to excessively, a toy I love too much, a bad habit I am unable to break from. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## REMOVED QUEEN MOTHER'S IDOL

Another good thing that king Asa did was to remove his mother from being the queen. This was because she worshipped idols and made an idol in a grove or wooded place. This is a great act of courage as being the queen, she would certainly try to resist and show her great anger against him.

Next, king Asa destroyed her idol by burning it by the water brook called Kidron. This shows that he was serious and was determined to wipe out all the queen's power. Also, he did not want anybody to be tempted to worship the idol if it remains there. Do you know that anybody who comes from idol worshipping background must also remove and destroy their idols if they repent and turn to the Lord?

Read Psalm 135 which tells us how useless idols are and fill in the blanks.

The idols of the heathen are silver and \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
 the work of men's \_\_\_\_\_ .

They have mouths, but they \_\_\_\_\_ not;  
 eyes have they, but they \_\_\_\_\_ not;

They have ears, but they \_\_\_\_\_ not;  
 neither is there any breath in their \_\_\_\_\_ .

Thought: Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for Your grace that has opened my eyes to see that idols are nothing and only You are the living and true God. May I worship You and reverence You always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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## WAR WITH KING OF ISRAEL

After many years of peace, war broke out! From the north, King Baasha of Israel invaded the kingdom of Judah, and took over Ramah, a city five miles north of Jerusalem. This city belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, one of the 2 tribes in the kingdom of Judah.

Contrary to king Asa, king Baasha was not a good king. The Bible says that he “did evil in the sight of the Lord” and “made Israel to sin” (1 Kings 15:34). King Baasha fortified the city of Ramah and would not allow the people in Ramah to go south to Jerusalem to support king Asa of Judah. Thus, he built strong walls in Ramah to stop the people from going out of the city.

Mark on the map below where you think the city of Ramah might be located.



Thought: Make peace and not war. This is what I should always seek to do as a child of God, especially within the family of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, when there are “walls” to divide us, may You give us love in our hearts that we might reach out to others with Thy love. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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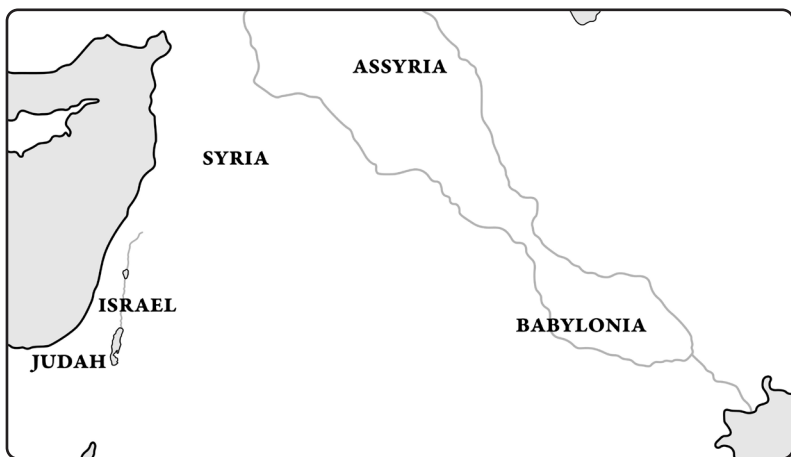
## IN WHOM DO YOU TRUST?

King Asa panicked when he saw the strong walls being built in the city of Ramah. Instead of trusting the Lord, as he had done a few months earlier when he bravely dealt with the queen mother, he became foolish. Trusting in his own wisdom, which is never a good thing to do, he took out of God's temple the gold and silver he had recently dedicated to God.

He sent these treasures to the city of Damascus in Syria, to its king Benhadad, bribing him to break his friendship and agreement with Baasha king of Israel. He wanted Israel to leave Ramah.

King Asa turned to men and used physical resources to get himself out of trouble. This was not right. He should have turned to God and trusted Him for help.

Look at the map showing Judah, Israel and Syria. Join with a line the two countries that made friends.



Thought: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." (Ps 20:7) Instead of putting my confidence in man, I must trust God for help, always.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me always to trust in You, and not in the strength of man. In times of trouble, help me not to worry but to pray and look to Thee always. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## BEN-HADAD FOUGHT AGAINST ISRAEL

Benhadad agreed with king Asa and sent the captains of his armies to attack the north of Israel, destroying many cities. When king Baasha heard the bad news, he quickly withdrew from Ramah to try to save his cities in the north. Thus, in this way, king Asa felt that he had succeeded in making king Baasha “depart from” his kingdom and stop building the strong walls in the city of Ramah.

What do you think? Was it right for king Asa to co-operate with Benhadad, a heathen king, and Judah’s ancient enemy?

Although there were times in his life when king Asa did wrong, the Bible says that “Asa’s heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.” (1 Kings 15:14b). “Perfect” does not mean sinless. A faithful servant of God will always repent and seek God’s forgiveness whenever he sins. God looks at our hearts; we should fear God and remain faithful to Him all the days of our life.

Complete these sentences. It was wrong of king Asa to get help from the king of Syria because:

1. He should get help from \_\_\_\_\_ first.
2. He should not make friends with the enemy to fight against his \_\_\_\_\_ ( erbohrt ).

Thought: What fellowship has light with darkness?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, search me and know my heart today. Teach me not to have fellowship with darkness for nothing good can come out of it. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## KING HEZEKIAH RIGHT IN THE EYES OF THE LORD

King Hezekiah was another good king that Judah had. When he came to the throne, he was only twenty-five years old. Like king Asa, he did that which was “right in the sight of the LORD.” He followed the example of king David, a man after God’s own heart, and not the example of his father, king Ahaz, who did that which was evil. Hezekiah (whose name means “Jehovah strengthens”) was a godly king who feared God and worshipped Him.

To be right in the sight of God should be our motto in life. Do you know how to do right in the sight of God? God has shown us how to, in the Bible, His Word. We need to learn and know the Bible well in order to do right in the sight of God.

Over the next few days, we will learn more about king Hezekiah and what he did that was right in the sight of God.

In this picture of good king Hezekiah,  
God judged him good because

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Thought: May we strive to do right in God’s eyes, always.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to always do what is right in the eyes of God. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## THE BRAZEN SERPENT BROKEN

An excellent thing that king Hezekiah did was to break the brazen serpent that was made by Moses in the wilderness seven hundred years ago (Numbers 21: 8-9). It had remained as a reminder to the people of the blessed truth that salvation comes by obedient faith in God's promises. But by now it had been misused to become an idol before which men bowed and offered incense.

If anything positions itself between us and God, all of us should be prepared to see it as what it really is and destroy it. The young king did exactly this with the brazen serpent. He called it "Nehushtan" which means a brass (or brazen) thing and destroyed it. This excellent deed of king Hezekiah showed that he trusted in the LORD God of Israel.

Draw the brass serpent (on a pole) and the cross.

Although the brass serpent was made by Moses, the people must not worship it. It should only serve as a reminder of God's promise.



Although Jesus died on the cross, we must not worship a wooden cross; it should only serve as a reminder of how Jesus died.

Thought: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me not to make an idol of computer games or toys. Nothing must be more important than Thee. Help me to put You first always. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

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## HE TRUSTED IN THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL

King Hezekiah was one of the very best kings in the history of Judah in terms of his trust in and faithfulness to God. The Bible says that he “clave” (or lean completely and totally) to the Lord and did not depart from following Him. He was faithful in keeping God’s commandments.

The actions that Hezekiah took to cleanse the nation of idols and turn the people back to God pleased God. God was with Hezekiah and gave him freedom from serving Assyria and victory in war with the Philistines.

King Hezekiah kept the commandments of God.

What are the first two commandments listed in Exodus 20?

*First commandment*

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*Second commandment*

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Thought: God is pleased when we trust Him and put Him first in all that we do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to always remember that You will be pleased with those who trust in You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

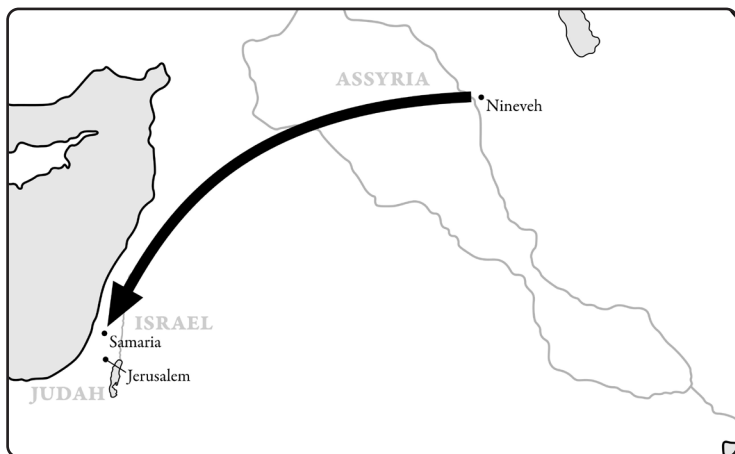


## TROUBLED BY ASSYRIA

The fall of the northern kingdom of Israel to the Assyrians happened in the 6th year of king Hezekiah's reign. The king of Assyria had attacked the capital city of Samaria and conquered it after 3 years. The people of Israel were carried into exile in faraway Assyria. This was God's judgement on the people for their disobedience to God's commandments.

Eight years later, the Assyrians turned their attention to the southern kingdom of Judah. They came with such a mighty army against Judah that they were even able to conquer cities that were fenced up. It was a difficult time for king Hezekiah as he had to face this strong enemy. What do you think he did?

In the map below, the arrow shows the king of Assyria attacking Samaria (northern kingdom of Israel). Draw another arrow to show the king of Assyria attacking Jerusalem (southern kingdom of Judah).



Thought: Trust God both in times of peace and war.

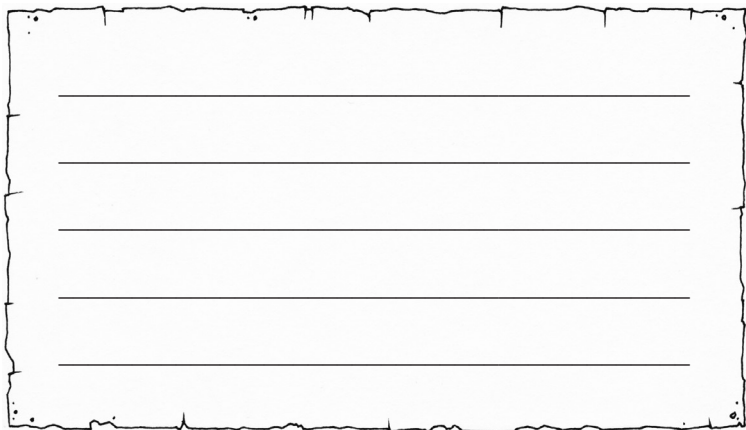
Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thou has been our dwelling place all the years. Grant us courage to trust in Thee always, more so in times of trouble. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## TRIBUTE TO SENNACHERIB

Faced with the strong army of Sennacherib king of Assyria, king Hezekiah was terrified. He apologized to Sennacherib for rebelling and not serving him, and asked him what he must pay to buy peace. Sennacherib demanded 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. King Hezekiah gave him what he wanted, by taking the gold and silver from his own house and from the temple of God.

Instead of giving in to Sennacherib, king Hezekiah could have learnt courage from king David by seeking to trust God for deliverance from enemies. King David's prayer is recorded in Psalms 7:1 for our learning too; write it in the box below.



A rectangular box with a rough, hand-drawn border, containing five horizontal lines for writing.

Thought: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."  
(Ps 46:1)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me to call upon Thee in times of trouble and not try to get out of trouble in my own way. Help me to trust You always and also to honour You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## SENNACHERIB DEMANDS MORE

When we give in to wicked men, things may get worse. This was the case with king Hezekiah when he gave in to Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Now, the king of Assyria became greedier and wanted more. He was determined to take everything. He sent three officials (Tartan, Rabсарis and Rabshakeh) to terrify the Jews of Jerusalem into surrender.

The three officials met at the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field. The fuller's field was the place where some people washed their clothes. Fullers are laundrymen. Hezekiah sent Eliakim, Shebna and Joah to meet the three Assyrian officials. The enemies asked for immediate surrender and spoke loudly to terrify and bully the people who were nearby listening.

In this picture of three Assyrians officials, write down their names in the space given.



\_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Thought: Adversities are sent by God to draw me closer to Him. So I must not bow down to adversities but to God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me to trust in You when trouble comes. Teach me to pray and not to faint in the day of adversity. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## SENNACHERIB'S MESSAGE

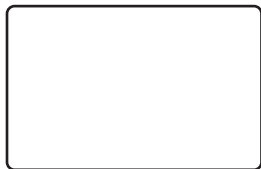
Rabshakeh (which means “chief of the princes”) delivered Sennacherib king of Assyria’s message to king Hezekiah through his leaders, Eliakim, Shebna and Joah. Sennacherib rebuked Hezekiah for his rebellion, and demanded a tribute and loyalty. He belittled Hezekiah’s military strength and threatened him into surrender by saying that Hezekiah had no other help because:

- Pharaoh and the Egyptians whom the Jews trusted were too weak to help them.
- God would not help the Jews because Hezekiah had removed the idols and the altars of God.

Rabshakeh added that if the Jews were to surrender to Sennacherib, they would get two thousand horses. Rabshakeh mocked the Jews’ ability to gather two thousand riders for the horses.

Read Proverbs 27:1-2, fill in the blanks with little pictures.

Boast not thyself of tomorrow;  
for thou knowest not what a day  
may bring forth. Let another  
man praise thee,  
and not thine own



a stranger,  
and not thine own



Thought: Our God is the true and living God; He is mighty and will deliver us from our troubles.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give us grace not to be frightened by the enemies around us. Looking unto Jesus, we will be strengthened. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**ABSHAKEH DEMANDS SURRENDER**

King Hezekiah's leaders requested Rabshakeh to speak in the Syrian and not Hebrew language. He refused and continued speaking, and loudly in the Hebrew language, as he purposely wanted the Jews to hear him. He wanted to frighten them to surrender. He said that king Hezekiah was not able to fight back; the people should not listen to him even if he asked them to trust in the Lord to deliver them.

If the Jews surrender, the Assyrians promised to provide free transportation to a beautiful land far away, where every one of them would enjoy life with vines, grain and both olive and honey – like the Garden of Eden! Do you think the Jews should listen to him?

When Satan tempted Jesus with power and said that he would give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would fall down and worship him, did Jesus yield to that temptation? YES / NO

What did Jesus do, instead, when Satan made such false promises? Read Matthew 4:10 and write down the answer.

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Thought: The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, when the enemy tempts me, teach me not to yield. Strengthen my courage and my heart in such times. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

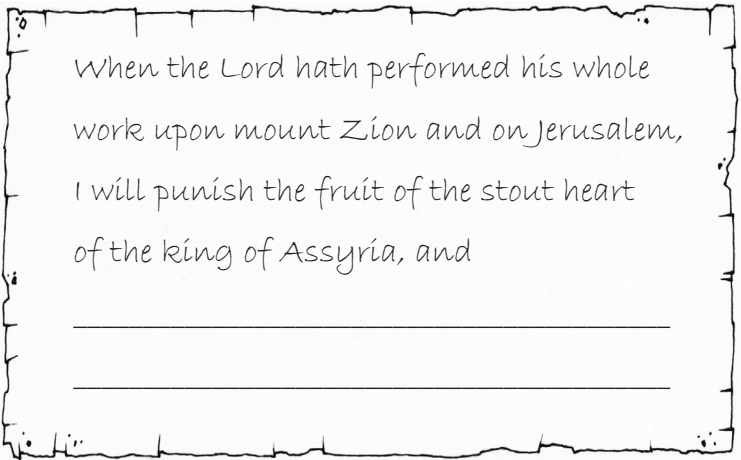
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## RABSHAKEH'S FINAL ARGUMENT

Rabshakeh's final argument on why the Jews should surrender was the religious argument of "the more powerful god". He thought that the gods of the other nations were weak as they were not able to stop the Assyrians. The god of the Assyrian therefore must be stronger than those of the people they had conquered.

In the same way, Rabshakeh thought that the God of Jerusalem also cannot be greater than those gods of the cities of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivah. What can the LORD do except to surrender Jerusalem to the Assyrians? Do you agree?

Read Isaiah 10:12 which tells us that God will punish the king of Assyria who boasted too highly of himself. Complete the sentence.



When the Lord hath performed his whole  
work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem,  
I will punish the fruit of the stout heart  
of the king of Assyria, and

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Thought: Our God created the universe with a command. He can destroy our enemies with the breath of His mouth.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me remember that You are the only true and living God. Please help me to have faith and trust in Thee even when things look impossible to man. Please help me remember that with Thee, nothing is impossible. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

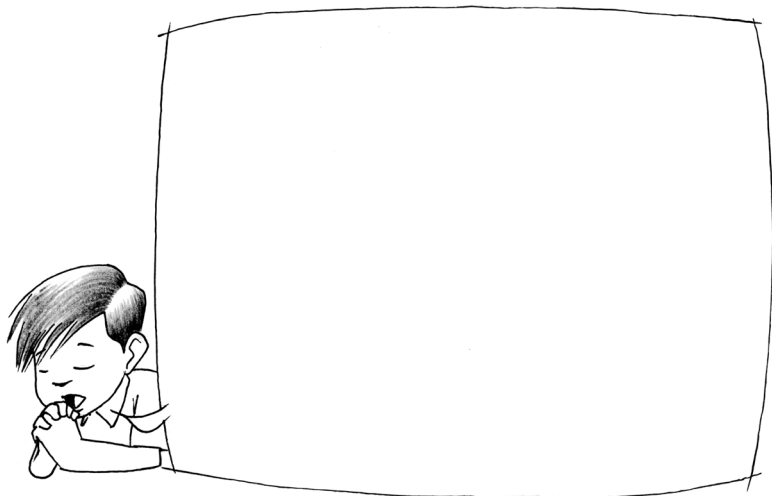
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## HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

King Hezekiah had wisely told his people not to answer Rabshakeh. So the people held their peace and reported to him what took place.

King Hezekiah rent (or tore) his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth (a coarse garment used for mourning). This was the custom in those days to show grief and sorrow. Then he set a good pattern for his people in following God's way of dealing with problems. After showing godly sorrow, he went to God's house to pray and ask God for help. Do you ask God for help when you are in trouble in school or at home?

A boy Samuel is praying that God will help him because he is in trouble. Write down Samuel's prayer.



Thought: Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me not to act foolishly when in trouble but always pray to Thee to seek wisdom and help. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## ISAIAH THE PROPHET'S ADVICE

King Hezekiah, at the same time, also sent for the prophet Isaiah. His servants went quickly to tell Isaiah of the deep trouble the nation of Judah was in. They requested that Isaiah pray for the king and country that God will judge righteously for Judah and against the Assyrians who had boasted and spoken against the living God.

Isaiah told them to tell king Hezekiah not to be afraid because God would send bad news to the king of Assyria. There would be a rumour in the land of Assyria. It would cause him to return to his own land and he would be killed by the sword.

Sarah prayed to God when she was late for school. God answered her prayer because the teacher... What words did the teacher say to her?



Thought: God is still on the throne even though great troubles come.

Prayer: Father in heaven, help me to look up to Thee and know that You are in control. Thank you for the privilege to be Your child. Thank you for taking care of me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.



**RABSHAKEH'S LETTER**

Rabshakeh and his men left Judah to deal with some fighting that had broken out between the king of Assyria and the king of Ethiopia. However, Sennacherib king of Assyria was still very determined to overcome and conquer Jerusalem.

He sent Rabshakeh to deliver a second threat. A threat is the method used by gangsters and bullies to force people to do what they say. This threat was to tell the people of Jerusalem that if they do not surrender, they would surely be all destroyed. He mentioned that other great cities that had refused to surrender to the mighty Assyrian army had all been destroyed.

Can you search for these words in ten minutes?

RABSHAKEH ASSYRIA LIBNAH LACHISH  
ETHIOPIA HEZEKIAH JERUSALEM EDEN

R A B S H A K E H E  
A A O L A C H I S H  
B E B L I B N A H R  
S D B S A D O R O A  
H E Y A H E O E O S  
J E R U S A L E M S  
H E Z E E F K D O Y  
A I P O I H T E O R  
V W O A E B O N H I  
H E Z E K I A H E A

Thought: We must not fear when men threaten us because our God is in control.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be strong and of a good courage when people threaten and persecute me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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## THE LETTER BEFORE THE LORD

What did king Hezekiah do when he received this second threat from Rabshekeh? After reading it, he went straight to the house of the Lord and spread the letter before the Lord. He wanted to let God know what had happened and what will happen. He wanted God to know everything. Our all-knowing God of course was aware of the development even before king Hezekiah told Him.

Then king Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, acknowledging that He alone was Creator of heaven and earth. He pleaded for God to hear his prayer and hear the words of Sennacherib. Although they have destroyed the other nations and lands, yet their gods were merely idols and not God. The king beseeched God to save them from this enemy.

Draw the letter that King Hezekiah is spreading before God in prayer.



Thought: The works of men's hands are merely idols and not God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thou art the God of my salvation and I will exalt Thee forever and ever. Let me give You all honour and praise with my whole heart all the day. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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## THE LORD'S REPLY THROUGH ISAIAH

The Lord sent a speedy reply through the prophet Isaiah. The reply was a great comfort to king Hezekiah because it assured him that the king of Assyria shall not come into the city of Jerusalem. He will not be able to even shoot one arrow against it. He will come and he will return home empty-handed. How did that happen?

Verse 35 tells us very clearly that the angel of the Lord came to the camp of the Assyrians and killed 185,000 of their soldiers in one night. They were all found dead in the morning. It was God who sent the angel of the Lord to do this to save the people of Jerusalem. That is amazing, isn't it?

Draw the tents of the Assyrian army around the dead bodies of their soldiers after the Angel of the Lord struck them dead.



Thought: God can do mighty works.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You can save and You can do mighty and wonderful works not only in times past but even today. Thou art a wonderful God. I thank You so much! In Jesus name I pray, Amen

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## KING HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS

One day king Hezekiah was sick unto death. When Isaiah predicted that he was going to die, Hezekiah prayed to the Lord to extend his life. He prayed earnestly and wept. God heard his prayers and sent Isaiah back again.

This time Isaiah told Hezekiah that God had heard his prayer and seen his tears. God will heal him and on the third day he would be able to get up and go to the house of the Lord. Indeed, God graciously added fifteen more years to the life of Hezekiah and even promised that Jerusalem will be safe from the attacks of the king of Assyria.

God granted Hezekiah's request  
because God is very

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(carigson)

This means that  
we are not worthy of it  
but God is more than  
kind to us.

Thought: I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever, and His mercies are new every morning!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank and praise You for You love to answer my prayers and are ever ready to strengthen me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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## GOOD KING JOSIAH

Good king Josiah came to the throne at the young and tender age of eight. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He turned not aside to the right hand or to the left but walked the straight and narrow path of godliness.

How blessed the nation of Judah was under his reign. A good king will do good works. His good works will bless the people and the country. Do you pray for good leaders in Singapore that our country may be blessed too?

Read Proverbs 29:2 and fill in the blanks.

When the righteous are in authority,  
the people \_\_\_\_\_  
when the wicked bear rule,  
the people \_\_\_\_\_

Thought: Righteousness exalts a nation (makes a nation great).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, our lives are in Thy hand. May Thy mercy, grace and goodness never leave us so that we can live lives pleasing to Thee. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

## HE REPAIRS GOD'S HOUSE

One of the good things that king Josiah did was to repair the house of the Lord. It was in poor condition, having been neglected during the days of the previous kings. It is a good thing to care for the house of God.

In order to do this, he organized men to collect the silver brought to the house of the Lord. This sum of silver was to be paid to the workers who repaired the house of the Lord. Some of these workers would be the carpenters, builders and masons. The money was also to be spent on buying timber and stone to repair God's house.

Write on 3 ways you can care for your church today.

Clues: books, tables/chairs, floor, litter, lights, fans

I can \_\_\_\_\_

I can \_\_\_\_\_

I can \_\_\_\_\_

Thought: "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, let me spend many happy days in Your house, worshipping, learning, serving and fellowshiping with the saints. Help me serve Thee in small ways: perhaps picking litter, arranging chairs or any other way You want me to help. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

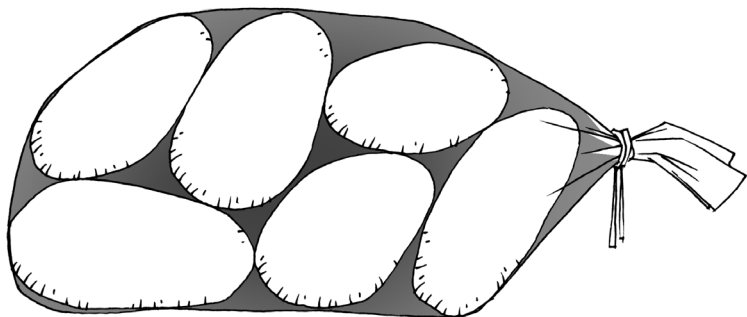
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## DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF THE LAW

Shaphan was a scribe (or writer) who showed king Josiah something exciting found in the house of the Lord. The high priest Hilkiah was the one who found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. It had been missing for a long time and now it was found. The people were excited at this discovery.

Shaphan took the book to king Josiah and read it for him to hear. The king was very touched by God's Word and began to rent (or tear) his clothes to show that he was sorry for his sins. It was a good sign that he recognized his sins as the Word of God was read to him. Have you been sorry for your sins? How do you show you are sorry?

Draw a small stick man carrying this heavy load of sins.  
Also write down 6 sins that you see in yourself in the bag.  
Pray now for others that they will not be guilty of such sins.



A HEAVY LOAD OF SINS

Thought: God's Word is sharper than a two-edged sword to show us our sins.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I read Your Word prayerfully and may it show me where I have sinned against You. Let me be sorry for my sins, like king Josiah was. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

**READING THE BOOK OF THE LAW**

The discovery of the book of the law in God's house led to a special occasion. The king sent and gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. There were also others waiting for him at the house of the Lord. These were all the people of Jerusalem, both small and great. Thus men, women and children were present too.

With everybody gathered and attentive, the king read all the words of the book of the law (or covenant) which was found in the house of the Lord. The king and the people stood as it was read to show that they would keep all the commandments of God.

Write this verse beautifully below

**Psalm 119:103**

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Thought: We show that we love God's Word when we listen to it attentively and obey it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, grant me a love for Your Word. Help me to grow each day in the grace and the knowledge of Thee. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.



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## CLEANSING OF GOD'S HOUSE

When we are sorry for our sins, we do not return to our old sins again. We confess and we cleanse ourselves from all uncleanness. This was exactly what the king and the people did. The king commanded the high priest and all the other priests to remove all the idols and unclean vessels of Baal out of the temple of the Lord. They were brought to the fields of Kidron and burnt. Their ashes were carried to Bethel. There was a thorough cleansing.

The idolatrous priests that had crept in to the house of the Lord were also killed. They had burned incense to their idols all over the land. They even burned incense to the sun, moon and stars to show that they worshipped them. God hates such worship. It was abomination to God, as we remember God has commanded that we serve no idols.

Some churches have to be cleansed too. They have ungodly practices and objects.

Gossiping  
Electric guitars playing  
Tongue speaking  
Good News Bible  
Loose living  
Jazz and pop music

Does your church need to be cleansed of these? YES / NO

Thought: As we worship God Almighty, may we cleanse ourselves that we may be accepted by Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, search my heart and see if there be any wicked way in me. Help me to see my sins that I may repent and make right with Thee and others. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

**CLEANSING OF THE LAND**

Because of the widespread idolatrous worship in the land, the land also had to be cleansed. The king ordered that the houses of the sodomites that were near the house of the Lord be destroyed too. These were houses of wickedness where sins multiply and increase.

The king personally travelled the length and breadth of the kingdom, from Geba to Beersheba to destroy all the priests who had burned incense. The high places with their groves full of images, he brake in pieces and made dust of them and scattered it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them (2 Chronicles 34:4).

We have learnt that God's house, the land and even the people have to be cleansed. How do we get ourselves cleansed? Circle the correct ways to cleanse our sins.

**Throw away Harry Potter books**

**Read the Bible    Seek God's forgiveness**

**Confess our sins to the priest    Do 20 push-ups**

**Return things borrowed    Wash with holy water**

**Repent of your sins    Shave your head**

Thought: We worship God with clean hands and pure hearts.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I count it a privilege to be able to worship Thee in the beauty of Thy holiness. Teach me to honour and obey You always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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## KING JOSIAH A REFORMER

A reformer is a person who sees the evils in the land and removes them in order that good measures can be put in place so that the land can be cleansed and blessed. King Josiah is a good example of a reformer with strong spiritual leadership when he got rid of the evils in the land.

He destroyed a place called Topheth, also called the valley of the children of Hinnom. It was a place of iniquity where idol-worshippers sacrificed their sons and daughters to the idol Molech. Taking another person's life is murder, a sin against God and man; killing their own children to worship idols was certainly a great evil in God's sight.

What do good parents do for their sons and daughters?

They \_\_\_\_\_ (ovle)  
them the way the Bible teaches.

They \_\_\_\_\_ (naitr)  
them in the way they should go.

They \_\_\_\_\_ (nisturct)  
them in the way of the Lord.

Thought: Sins multiply when people worship idols.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, it is indeed a blessing to be able to worship Thee and to sing praises to Thy holy name. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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## KING JOSIAH'S PROPHECY CAME TRUE

King Josiah went to Bethel, at the border of Judah and Israel. There was an altar there with the golden calves which Jeroboam had made and had caused the people of Israel to become idolatrous. Josiah destroyed that altar and the surrounding high place and the idols that were there. The idols were burnt into ashes and powder.

He also saw the sepulchers (or tombs) where the bones of the priests were buried. He ordered that the bones be taken out of the sepulchers and be burned upon the altar. Thus, the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:1-2 was fulfilled which said that "...a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; ...and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee."

Write down one or two prophecies that came true.

Check with mummy or daddy.

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Thought: God knows the future and all that the Bible predicts will come true.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for holding my future in Your hand. Teach me to trust You for my future is safe in Your loving almighty hand. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## THE PASSOVER WAS KEPT

God had ordered that the Passover be kept in remembrance of the night that the Lord delivered them out of Egypt, the land of bondage. But for many years, neither the judges of Israel nor the kings of Judah had observed or kept it. They were bad kings who worshipped idols and caused the people to sin. They and the land were unclean.

In the eighteenth year of king Josiah, the Passover was kept in obedience to the Lord. The many reforms carried out by the king had cleansed the land. The hearts of the people were prepared to offer their devotion to God. The king himself set the example and leadership in God's work.

Every Passover, the Jews must repeat a certain sentence to remind their children of how God had saved them from the land of bondage in Egypt. This sentence is found in Exodus 12:27. Write it in the speech bubble.



Thought: A godly king can bless a nation greatly.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help the leaders in my church to be always zealous and faithful to Thee. We pray that Thou will help them to be humble and be men of prayer as they serve Thee. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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## JESUS DELIVERS!

What is our world like? You may live in a happy family and Singapore is blessed with peace and prosperity. Why then does the Bible describe the world as evil? Well, the world was created perfect. But the world turned evil because sin entered the world. Adam and Eve, the first couple had disobeyed God and so sin came into the world. This is the kind of world you live in. Does it sound scary to know you live in a wicked world?

With sin around, that is what makes the world a tough place to live for Christians who are serious about obeying God's Word. Some examples of sin are given in Galatians 5:19-21. Can you name a few here?

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But God provides a solution to sin! This is good news for us, don't you agree? To deliver is to rescue. Don't you become excited to hear about rescue stories by brave people or animals? In the animated movie 'Bolt', a dog called Bolt was hailed a hero when it rescued his owner from an inferno. In real life, survivors spoke about how they were saved by strangers when a tsunami hit Japan in 2011.

People in their sinful state are doomed to hell but our God of love has a rescue plan in which He sent His only begotten Son on a rescue mission to save us from the bondage of sin, death and eternal hell. So through Jesus, we can be delivered from "this present evil world".

Imagine you had fallen into rough seas. A boat comes toward you and a hand stretches out to save you. Will you not grasp the hand? Jesus loves you and stretches out His hand to you to deliver you from this terrible world. Will you take His hand? Repent of your sins. Take His hand and you will be free from sin and will be called righteous before God. You will be delivered out of this evil world and shall enter into the heavenly world. God is gracious and merciful.

Thought: Wonderful to be delivered out of this evil world!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am glad that You love us even though we are sinners. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for us, and save us from our sins, and deliver us from this evil world. Please forgive me for the wrong things I do and think, for I want to give my life to You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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**DO YOU KNOW YOUR BIBLE?**

The Christians in the Galatian churches were young in their faith and were easily influenced. False teachers had come into their churches teaching them wrong stuff. To make matters worse, they believed these false teachers. They were told that to be saved, they must also be circumcised. This was on top of other false doctrines. Believing in Jesus alone was not good enough, so they were told. The Apostle Paul became very concerned and disturbed. So he wrote an epistle to warn them. Look out for false teachers in your church!

Paul had started churches in Galatia through his preaching of Christ and teaching of the Scriptures during his missionary trip. Unfortunately, it wasn't long before they had forgotten his teachings and believed the wrong teachings of these false teachers. Are you like the Christians in Galatia? If you do not know the Bible well, how can you tell what is wrong teaching? So, study and know your Bible well.

How did the Apostle Paul help these young Christians? He was very helpful. He was like a father to the believers. When their faith was weakened by wrong teachings, he would encourage them. Read Galatians 6:1 and fill in the blanks:

*“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a \_\_\_\_\_,  
ye which are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ such an one....”*

Paul was always helping weaker Christians. The Apostle's letter to the Galatians must be a great help to them in building up their faith. What will you do when another Christian who is more spiritual, comes up to you and points out your mistake? You will:

Get angry with him and walk away	YES / NO
Scold him telling him to mind his own business	YES / NO
Willingly listen to him	YES / NO
Ask him how to amend your fault	YES / NO

Thought: What must you do so that you can tell what are false teachings?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pray for our ministries and Bible teachers that they will teach God's Word well and accurately so that we will know right from wrong. Keep false teachers away from us because they can undermine our faith. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## PEOPLE CHANGE

The Apostle Paul was the author of the Epistle to the Galatians. Before he came to know Jesus, he was called Saul, who was a terrible persecutor or punisher of Christians! No one can imagine that Saul could change and become a Christian. On his own, it was impossible. Yet he did become a Christian. How could that be possible? The gospel changed him. The gospel in the Bible can change people. After Jesus appeared to him, Saul turned into a totally different person – one who once hated Christians now became a Christian himself, and became Christianity's great preacher. Saul was once an enemy of God. Then he became an enemy of Satan. There must be change in the life of someone who claims he or she is a Christian. Have you changed for the better after becoming a Christian?

How is your temper? Is it better than the past? What about pride? Do you think you're one of the smartest or best-looking child? If you came from a wealthy family, do you look down on those from more modest backgrounds? You must see changes in your life because God has taught that every Christian is a new creature. He now has Jesus in him or her and that would cause him or her to want to follow Jesus. We are not talking about a complete change. Our weaknesses will remain, but increasingly we would want to fight against them. We are not talking about being perfect. No one will be perfect.

What was Saul like? He knew the Old Testament very well and was also a Pharisee, having a very high standard of moral purity. However, he did not know Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior. He had a deep hatred for Christians and went all out to persecute them. He was known as the chief persecutor of the Christian church.

But the gracious God had a plan. God saved and changed him. The gospel changed him – from being a murderer to a missionary. God can change any sinner. What needs to happen is for him to repent of his sins, and accept Jesus as his only Lord and Saviour. And there would be change in that person's life!

Thought: God can change people!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You that You can change people by the gospel. Help me to be willing to be changed and used by You to serve others. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



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## ARE YOU LIKE CAIN?

Do you have brothers? Here is a true biblical account of two brothers – Cain and Abel. They were taught by their parents to obey God.

Who were their parents? Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ .

If they disobeyed God, they were told that they would be punished. Offering to God is giving back to God a portion of what He has blessed us with. The two brothers brought their offerings to God. Cain knew that a lamb was an accepted offering, as taught by his parents. But he doubted and disregarded their teaching. Sin filled his mind and that was followed by his deed. Cain was a tiller of the ground, a farmer, and so he offered to God what he had farmed because to him, it seemed more sensible to give God an offering of what he had grown than a slain animal. Cain did what was right in his own eyes. His brother Abel, however, brought a lamb which was the right thing to do.

What was God's reaction? God did not accept Cain and his offering. Why? When God killed animals and clothed their parents Adam and Eve, He taught the significance of blood sacrifice. *"And almost all things are by the law purged with \_\_\_\_\_; and without shedding of \_\_\_\_\_ is no remission."* Hebrews 9:22. Cain brought the wrong sacrifice and had the wrong attitude in his heart.

Some of the Galatian believers were like Cain – they did not obey what God taught in the Word and did what they thought was best. Today, there are also many people like Cain or those Galatian believers. Many people, like the Galatians, think that they can get to Heaven by doing good works or simply being a good person. Others believe that all ways lead to Heaven. Many people have their own ideas of how to get into Heaven. These people reject God's way and instructions just like Cain did.

But, child, there is really only one way - we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord. He was God's Lamb offered to God for our sins. His blood washed away our sins. This is the only acceptable way of being saved.

Thought: Are you like Cain?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You that Jesus died on the cross for my sins. Only by His blood can I be saved for there is power in His blood. Help me to continue to trust in Jesus. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## DO YOU LIVE BY FAITH?

Today's verse teaches us that we are to "live by the faith of the Son of God". What does that mean? Read on...

Why do you exist? Have you asked yourself this question? It is good that you know why you exist or why God made you exist on this earth.

Consider the following conversation and see if it sounds familiar to you.

Michael: What do you want to be when you grow up?

JW student: When I grow up, I would like to be an engineer or a teacher.

Michael: And after getting a job, what else will you do?

JW student: I'll get married and buy a house.

Michael: What then?

JW student: Have two or three children and live happily together.

Michael: What else might you do?

JW student: I'll buy a car and also go on holiday with my family.

Michael: Then what?

JW student: I'll retire early and look after my grandchildren.

Michael: And after that?

JW student: Like everyone, I'll die.

From this conversation, you have learnt that this Junior Worship (JW) student's life is not much more than growing up, getting a good job, making money and trying very hard to be happy. His life is just living to die. Is this the correct way of living? Paul gives us the answer to life and that was the way he had lived his life – 'live by faith'.

How do we live by faith? You see, faith is believing in the Word of the Lord. It is believing that God answers prayers and He forgives sins. It is believing in God. Think through these carefully and have you been doing all of them? So, living by faith in God is what God wants us to do. That JW student is not living by faith.

Now, write down what you must do to show that you live by faith:

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Thought: Honestly ask yourself if you are living by faith.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to live by faith in God and not in my own strength. I have failed to obey You and please forgive me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## HOW TRUE IS YOUR FAITH? (I)

When someone asks if you are a Christian, do you hesitate and utter a soft ‘Yes’? Do you feel unsure? It does us good to examine ourselves to make sure our faith is genuine. Do you have the Holy Spirit living in you?

Know of any star-gazer in the Bible? There was one such person... Outside his tent on a warm, quiet night, Abram was alone. He was 85 years old. Under the dark dome of the sky, he gazed up. Before his eyes were many silvery stars. Wow! Imagine yourself standing beside Abram. The view would have been simply spectacular and fabulous. There were thousands of stars, all twinkling at Abram.

Was Abram really alone? No. You see, God was there and He said “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them.” God also said to Abram “So shall thy seed be.” How could it be? How many children did Abram have then? At that time, not even one. He and his wife, Sarai, were not young. Perhaps she would have been as old as your grandmother. Would a lady of your grandmother’s age give birth to a baby?

But Abram thought differently. He looked at the beautiful stars for a long time that night. He thought of how great God is and how God can do anything. More importantly, Abram believed in God. This was the faith of Abram and it pleased the Lord. Now God promised him a great family, a great company of people! He and Sarai would not be lonely, for they would have children and grandchildren. Abram believed.

This is the kind of faith that will please the Lord – the faith of Abram. Is your faith like that? Abram trusted God and believed in the impossible. He also prayed to God. Are you, like Abram, walking by faith? Can you say confidently that you are a Christian? Like Abram, you must love and trust the Lord. List some things you will do that are taught in the Bible to show that you love God.

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Thought: May you have faith, like Abram.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be like Abram, to trust in Your Word. I know it is very tough to continue to be a faithful child, so Father, please help me to do so. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## HOW TRUE IS YOUR FAITH? (II)

Sometimes when you get into trouble and difficulties, your faith is tested. Will you still trust God under trying times?

Can you think of any men and women in the Bible whose faith was tested by God?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Why is there testing of their faith? God tries His people to prove whether they mean what they say. Would Abraham continue to trust in God no matter what happens? God had a test for him. It was the hardest test anyone could face – sacrifice his own son! Would Abraham pass the test? Think of how long he waited to have a child! Think of how much he must have loved Isaac! He was the only son Abraham had left, as Ishmael had been sent away. No doubt it would have been easier for Abraham to kill himself than to sacrifice his own dear son. But Abraham obeyed God.

Abraham and his son Isaac, climbed up the mountain. Isaac, having noticed that they hadn't brought any animal with them, asked his father why they hadn't brought anything for the sacrifice. Abraham, the man of great faith, then answered with confidence, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

When you are tested, you must pray and ask God for help. Trust Him and do not rely on yourself. Some Christians blame God for 'bad' things happening to them and turn away from God. No 'bad' thing can befall God's people. Everything that happens to you is always for your good, to build up your faith and to make you a stronger Christian.

Thought: May you be a child of faith!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to trust You always, whatever the problems I may have. When my faith is put to the test, help me to pass! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**RAINBOW AND JESUS!**

“Rain, rain, go away. Come again another day! Little children want to play.” Is this nursery rhyme familiar to you? Had you wished that the rain would go away because you wanted to play in the park? The rain ruined your day and you had to go home. How sad that would be. However, not all rains are sad! After a rain or when the rain has almost come to a stop, something wonderful appears. A beautiful half circle with gorgeous colours. What is it called? A \_\_\_\_\_ (unscramble IAOWRBN). Who but God could have thought of such a lovely thing to remind us of His promise? The promise was never again would it rain such that the whole earth would be covered with water.

The account in the Bible began like this.... At first just a few drops, but before long the rain came thicker and faster. Still, it rained and rained! Bit by bit the water rose. All except those in the ark died. The beautiful world was destroyed. God could not let the wicked people go on living in their wicked ways. Where did all the sin and evil come from? Yes, from the hearts of the people, *“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Genesis 6:5).

Man was wicked. The earth was also filled with violence and was corrupt before God. God was grieved with the world and sent the flood. Noah and his family in the ark were the only human beings saved. After this global catastrophe, God made a promise that the world will be spared from such a great flood, and the rainbow is the sign of this promise. Think of God’s promise every time you see a rainbow!

God also gave us a promise through Christ - it was in God’s plan to give His beloved Son, a descendant or seed of Abraham to be born a human, to die for the sins of the world. He made this promise not because people are good but because He loves us so much. God does not want to destroy men. He desires to save them. Do you believe in Jesus who died for your sins to save you from destruction in hell fire? Don’t be like those God-rejecting people that lived during Noah’s time who perished in the flood.

Thought: Thank God for His precious promises!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are the God of promises and You freely give them to Your children. I thank You for Your promises. In turn, I promise to walk with Christ and follow Him all my life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## GOD'S CHILDREN

You are your parents' child. Since you were born, they have been taking care of your every need. As a baby, you were little and fragile. How could they not respond to your every cry? You needed them and they have always been there for you. Now that you are older and in school, they still care for you. Making sure you have enough to eat and sending you to a good school to receive your education. As long as they are around you, they will continue to care for you! Why do they do what they do? It is simply because you are your parents' child.

Christians are children of God. Wow! Isn't it wonderful to know that you are a child of God? The Almighty King of kings! When we believe in Jesus, we belong to Jesus. We can call God 'Father' because Jesus also calls God 'Father'. "*...no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save [means 'except'] the Son, and he [means 'anyone'] to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*" (Matthew 11:27). God loves you and wants to be your Heavenly Father. We can call God 'Father' when we believe in Jesus.

The Heavenly Father also cares for His children and provides for you. Write Matthew 6:28 down and find out how God cares for you:

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Through your parents, God gives you food and clothes and things that you need.

You are also weak sometimes. You don't have strength to fight against temptation and to overcome Satan. Your Heavenly Father will protect you.

God, your Heavenly Father, does so many wonderful things for you, just because you are His child. Like our earthly parents, God will take care of us. But God is the Almighty and, unlike our earthly parents, He can do much more. So dear child, go to Your Heavenly Father today!

Thought: Think of three wonderful things your Heavenly Father has done for you.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for showing me what You are like. Thank You that You are loving and caring. Thank You that I can call You my Father. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## OTHER GODS?

Some people believe there are multiple gods. Some think there are two gods, others believe there could be four, some of them think there are even a hundred gods, or more. There are even people who believe that the sun and the moon are gods, so they bow down and pray to the sun and the moon.

What about us? Should we pray to created things, no matter how lovely and powerful they may seem to be? What about angels – surely they are powerful and beautiful? Should we pray to angels? Are they gods too? No! They are not gods. Angels are created heavenly beings who serve and worship God. Angels love God and some are in heaven praising God and some are here on earth helping us. When anything other than God is worshipped, that thing is considered an idol.

There are many accounts of idols in the Bible. Paul went to Athens and saw the city filled with idols. It was said that there were more gods than people in Athens.

In the Old Testament, there were accounts of people having other gods. Moses was on Mount Sinai for forty days and the people had become impatient. They still had the fire and cloud to assure them of God's presence, but that was not enough. They wanted another visible representation of God to encourage them. They built the golden calf and worshipped it.

How about us? Of course, most of you would not have a physical idol or statue in the form of some god that you worship. However, many of us have idols in the form of things we admire or love more than we love God. It could be sleep. For some of us are too lazy to read God's word and do Quiet Time, claiming we are "tired". Or it could be studies – that we'd rather put studies before our need to spend some time with God or to go to Sunday School.

God is angry with those who have idols. He is also angry with anyone who loves anything more than they love Him. We must love God even more than our parents and the nice things that we like.

Thought: What idols do you have?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, how can I love anything more than You after You have given Jesus to die on the cross for my sins? Help me get rid of the idols in my life and love You above all. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## NO SPECIAL POWER IN 'SPECIAL DAYS'

Christmas and Easter are important days for Christians, and many churches hold special services on these special days. What then does today's passage teach us?

Paul was teaching the believers in Galatia that they should not be superstitious and think there is power in observing some particular day, or month or period. Although Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter, there is no special power in observing these days - these days are useful in pointing us to Jesus: Christmas to when Jesus was born and given to us as a most wonderful gift; Easter to when Jesus had victory over death for He rose again on Easter Sunday. However, there is no unusual power in going to church on these two days. In fact, we do not know the actual date when Jesus was born or rose from the dead. God in His perfect wisdom did not leave behind any clues for He knows that if He did, man would associate these dates with some holy significance. So does that mean Christmas and Easter are not important? Of course not! It is crucial that we remember the gracious gift of Jesus and His power over death. So we ought to celebrate days like that. It is just that we should not be superstitious and think somehow by going to church on those days, we become cleansed. Or that we need to be particularly holy on those days. We should be holy everyday! Let us also remember not to celebrate Christmas and Easter like non-Christians. To the world, Christmas is often a time of partying and fun. As Christians, we must not forget the birth of Jesus! To the world, Easter is a time for feasting and bunnies with Easter eggs. That is clearly not in the Bible!

Let us learn from Jesus. When he walked on earth, He observed special days such as the Sabbath day (Sunday for us) and the Passover (to remember how God led the Israelites out of Egypt - it is now celebrated as The Lord's Supper). Let us continue to observe the special days for Christians, but understand they are to help us remember God, not believe that the days themselves are special or holy. What we want to do is to thank God for the events that these days lead us to remember!

Thought: Thank God for Christmas and Easter!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the special days we celebrate as Christians. Thank You too for today's lesson that these days are to point me to Christ and that there is no special power in the days themselves. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



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## PUNISHMENT IN HELL

Paul warned that those who sinned continuously will not inherit the kingdom of God. Instead, they will be punished in Hell! Hell is a terrible place where there is fire, and pain, and gnashing of teeth, signifying great anguish. It is a real place.

To help us understand that Hell is a destination where sinners face undying fire and agony, God gave us an example by burning Sodom and Gomorrah, sinful cities during the time of Lot, down to the ground. The Bible says that “*the Lord rained... brimstone and fire... out of heaven*” (Genesis 19:24) and the smoke coming out of the cities were described as “*smoke of a furnace*” (Genesis 19:28).

To remind man of the horrors of hell, another event quite like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah happened in an Italian city called Pompeii on 24<sup>th</sup> August 79 AD. Pompeii was wealthy and the inhabitants lived in great sin. Pompeii was one of the larger towns located near the base of a volcano, Mt Vesuvius. On that fateful day, the volcano erupted and rained hot molten ash on the surrounding towns for 6 hours, instantly killing the thousands who lived there.

There is really a place called Hell. God hates sin and those people who do not turn from their sins will be punished and sent to Hell. If you have never asked God to forgive you, cry out to Him now. Tell Him that you are sorry for all the wrong things that you have done – that is called repentance of sin. Thank God that He loves you and has sent His own Son to die on the cross so that the sins of His people could be washed away. Then accept Jesus as the only Lord and Saviour of your life.

Thought: Are you saved from Hell?

Prayer: (If you've already accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour)  
Father, I am grateful for the reminder of how much You hate sin and how I must not sin against You. Thank You that Jesus died to save sinners from Hell. Thank You for Your love. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Prayer: (If you'd like to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour now)  
Heavenly Father, I confess I am a sinner. On my own, I would be lost in Hell. Thank You for today's lesson and the reminder of how much You hate sin. I thank You that Jesus died on the cross to save sinners like me from Hell, and I want to accept Him as my personal Lord and Saviour, right now. Please forgive me and make me Your child. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## DO YOU WORSHIP IDOLS?

The first word in today's verse is "idolatry". What does that mean? It is a sin of loving something or someone more than God. We need to understand that anything that we love more than God can become our idol. God wants no other gods before Him – and that means we must love Him more than anything or anyone in the world. Yes, more than you love your parents, or computer games, or whatever hobby you have. If we let something take the first priority in our life, even watching television, it can become the same as worshipping an idol in God's eyes. There is nothing wrong with watching television, or playing sports, as long as God is still the first priority in our life.

How much time in a busy day have we given to God? Because of our busy lives and our desire to have as much fun as possible, we may often put God in second place. Try this exercise...

Imagine it is Saturday morning at eight o'clock and you just woke up. You slept at ten o'clock the night before, and you'd have another 14 hours before bedtime. Using the chart of activities below, show how much time you would like to spend on each activity, using up all of the 14 hours. If you like, you can show 0 hours on any activity. Try it and see how much time you spend on God and things related to Him. Then you can see how much time you spend on things not related to God. Among the things you do a lot, is any one of them your idol?

Activity	Hours
Watch television	
Play computer games	
Read books or magazines	
Study or do homework	
Do nothing or just relaxing	
Play with friends	
Do chores	
Pray or read the Bible	
Travelling from place to place	

Thought: Is there anything, or anyone, that you love more than God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me love Christ more and more so that there would be no idol in my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## ARE YOU AN ENVIOUS CHILD?

To be envious is to have “a sense of discontentment or jealousy with regards to another’s success or possessions”. An envious person is not happy with what he or she has, and wishes to be able to get what someone else has.

When does one get envious? Sometimes a child looks at others who may be more clever, or from a wealthy family, or with more friends, and that child gets envious. You may come across envious people often. In fact, your closest friend may be an envious person. Even your parents, siblings, or teachers can be envious people! Envy can affect anyone! So how do we overcome envy? Well, one way is to pray that God will help us to be contented. God has given us eternal life, and so many other wonderful gifts, for which we are so blessed and should be so grateful.

Be happy for others around you when they do well in school, or are talented in music or art. If they come from happy families, even if you think your family is not perfect, be glad for them!

Another way is this - instead of looking at others from your viewpoint, try seeing people as God does. He is not interested, or impressed, by their wealth, looks, or popularity. He sees the wicked as sinners on their way to Hell. He sees Christians as repented sinners who want to live a life to please Him.

It is important to remind ourselves how good God is, and these are just some of the many wonderful things He has done for us!

- God is always with me and holds me up.
- God will guide me and receive me to glory.
- The only One who matters is God, and He is the One who takes care of me.
- God is my strength and portion forever, even though I may be weak.

Remember, envy is a sin. The moment you think or know envy is affecting you, pray that God will help you get rid of that thinking and put you back on the right track of being contented yourself, and being happy for others!

Thought: May you never be envious!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have done so much for me. Please remind me never to be envious. I know it can affect me at times so I have to be careful not to commit this sin. Help me to be so grateful and contented for the much that I have already been blessed with. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## ARE YOU A MURDERER?

Is there a mistake in today's title – “Are you a Murderer”? “Of course not!” you'd say.

In today's verse, the idea behind the word “murderer” is not so much about the murders one may read of in newspapers, but hate.

Today's lesson follows from yesterday's, which was on envy. We have discussed that to be envious is a sin. And if you allow envy to stay in your heart, it will grow. And it will grow to such an extent that you come to hate the person you envy. Don't think that is impossible! In fact, there are times when this hate grows so dreadful that it causes the one who hates to actually commit murder!

The problem with many of us in tackling sin is that most of the time, we think that a “little” sin is alright. In any case, many other people do the same thing. That is dangerous thinking and leads us to slide further from God. The less serious we are about sin, the more sin will grow.

But is hating someone considered murder? Yes! 1 John 3:15 teaches us that “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

This verse is a serious warning to all of us – if we are Christians, we cannot have hate in our hearts. That is why the second part of 1 John 3:15 says, “no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” Dear child, do you hate anyone? Do you think someone has done you or someone you love such terrible harm that you cannot but hate this person?

To hate someone and want revenge is part of what our old self would want to do. Before we became Christians, it was natural to envy, or hate, or want revenge. But the Bible teaches us that once we become the children of God, all these must stop. I know it is not easy, but would you not try? Pray to the Lord for help, and He will answer you.

Thought: May you not hate anyone.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, if I have problems dealing with hate, please help me. It is such a difficult area and I know that on my own, I cannot have victory in this area of my Christian walk. So Heavenly Father, please give me the power to submit to You and not to hate anyone, even if this person has done something terrible to me or someone I love. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – LOVE (I)

Instead of envy, hate, and other kinds of sin, what must a Christian possess? He must have evidence that the Holy Spirit is in him and that is demonstrated by the fruit of the Holy Spirit. For the next few days, we'd be learning about the different aspects of this wonderful fruit of salvation, and we start with love!

There are many accounts and lessons about love in the Bible. There is a real account of a young man and his love for a young lady. He had to work for seven years before he could marry the lady. To children like you, seven years seem to be a long time. But to Jacob the days, months and years seemed to pass by quickly. His work in the house of the lady's father never seemed too hard, for he was deeply in love with her. He knew that when the seven years were up, he would be able to have the privilege of having the lovely lady as his wife. She was worth it all. Love made the work easy. Who was she? Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

To love God is central to all Christians. A Christian must always love God, and that must be evident in his life, because love as a trait, is part of the fruit of the Spirit. Do you have this trait?

Jesus was asked by one of the teachers of the law, "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.*" (Matthew 22:36-38) Loving God is a Christian's highest priority. Do you love God above anything? Even more than your beloved toys and computer games! Even more than your parents! ...Examine your heart if you honestly have this love for God inside you.

What does it mean to love God whole-heartedly? Just like Jacob, who loved Rachel so much that he would do anything for her, we will also be ready to do anything to please God when we love Him. The most important thing is not to continue sinning. And we are to love doing the things that would please Him. We will love going to church, being a good child and hardworking student, and performing our duties joyfully for His sake. When we feel like grumbling about something, think of the love of God. We should do things well because we love the Lord Jesus.

Thought: How deep is your love for God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help my love for Christ grow deeper and stronger day by day. I must at the same time learn how not to sin, so please help me, Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – LOVE (II)

You will recall from yesterday's lesson that Jesus taught us that as Christians, loving God is the first and most important commandment. After commanding us to love God, the Lord Jesus also commands us to love others. If we claim that we love God, we must show this love by loving others around us. Jesus taught that the second most important commandment is *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* (Matthew 22:39)

What does it mean to "love our neighbour"? "Neighbour" includes people you know. It is not limited only to those who live near you. It also includes friends, schoolmates, and family members. In fact, it includes everyone you meet or know.

Is it easy to love everyone we meet or know? No! It is very difficult! In fact, it is impossible if we rely on our own strength! Why? Because our sinful self will find fault with others and not be able to love them. The ability to have this kind of love is given only to Christians, for they are to rely on God, not themselves.

If we love God, we would know that we are not perfect but in fact have many areas to improve. When we grow to love God and the Bible more, we would be able to learn that we are very sinful and need God to help us daily. The more we discover our own weaknesses, the more humble we become. When we get more humble, we would be able to appreciate others around us. They, like us, would not be perfect. But we would obey God in trying to love them too. That will teach us so many great lessons! Among the many lessons that we may have, we would learn not to be petty with friends, not to be selfish but to share, not to be jealous of others, and not to be disobedient to parents. The list goes on.

If we are able to love the people we know despite their imperfections, it shows that we are on the right track. It shows that we have obeyed God by being not selfish or proud. It shows that we love God. The sequence is crucial: we must first love God before we can ever love man.

To love everyone is really difficult. Your friend may have just offended you, but you are to still love him. Your sister may have broken your all-time favourite toy, and yet you are to still love her. Wow! It is so hard to love others who have hurt us, but we can do it with God's help.

Thought: Who is your neighbor?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me not to be selfish, but instead, to learn to love others. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - JOY

Christian joy is given by God. It is the joy in our innermost being. It does not mean we are laughing and joking all the time. It does not mean we are giggling and will have success all the way. So what does it mean?

We must first remember who will have this joy? Only Christians! Only people who have committed their lives to God may have this joy? Why is this so? Because only real Christians know they are forgiven by God and have a personal relationship with Christ. And more than that, a real Christian trusts God. That is why he is also joyful! The Christian knows that God allows difficult situations to come our way and that we are to learn from them. Even if going through them does not seem fun or happy, God has His reasons. And as His children, we are to trust in Him completely.

When Jesus was on earth, He allowed His disciples to go through difficult times too. While in the ship, He allowed them to experience a terrible storm in the sea. And yet, they are to have joy for Jesus was with them. However, they failed. That also happens to us, for we often fail too. God does not promise smooth pathways all our lives. But He does promise He would be there, waiting for us to pray to Him for help!

May the words of this hymn encourage our hearts as we learn more about what Christian joy is!

*Joys are flowing like a river, Since the Comforter has come;  
He abides with us forever, Makes the trusting heart His home.*

*Blessed quietness, holy quietness, What assurance in my soul!  
On the stormy sea He speaks peace to me, How the billows cease to roll!*

How do you have this kind of joy? First, you must have a new life in Christ. You must first be a Christian. When you do that, you will have a new life, a fresh start, and a relationship with God. You will then have Christian joy.

Thought: Do you have real joy?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for saving me and giving me Christian joy. Remind me to trust in You and to cast all my worries on You in prayer. This is my humble cry. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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**FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – PEACE**

If you are not a Christian, you are not at peace with God. Your unbelief shows that you are God's enemy. Your sin has built a wall of hostility between you and God. You are at war with God. But Jesus is the greatest peacemaker. He came and died on the cross to make peace between sinful people and God. When you become a Christian, you become God's friend. Jesus has broken the wall of hostility between you and God, for He has bridged the gap between sinful man and a righteous God by becoming the sacrifice needed. So if you have accepted Jesus, you are now a child of God. There is peace. You are made right with your heavenly Father.

Are you at peace with God? As a Christian, you are to have this peace as a result of trusting in God. After we have this peace with God, then we can be peacemakers to live peaceably with people. As Jesus is a peacemaker, He exhorted his disciples to be peacemakers and encouraged them by telling them that peacemakers will receive the blessings of God.

Write down Matthew 5:9.

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A peacemaker is peace-loving. Recently, how many arguments have you had? Think of your last argument. What was it about? Whom was it with? Who started it? Who ended it? When children have arguments, it is often because one of them does not get his way. Are you a quarrelsome child? Do you get unhappy easily and want things your way?

Put the phrases in order  
and write in the blank:

no man shall see the Lord	without
and holiness	Follow peace with all

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(Hebrews 12: 14)

Thought: Are you a quarrelsome child?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You that Jesus had made peace possible between sinners and God by dying on the cross. I pray I would learn from Him to be a peacemaker, and to learn to be a better person so others can see Christ in me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – LONGSUFFERING

Another trait of the fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering. What is longsuffering? It is a wonderful thing and refers to patience with people, forbearance and also slowness to anger. It is to be able to “suffer for a long time”!

Wow, nobody wants to suffer! And who would want to suffer “for a long time”? This verse is not teaching us to look for ways to punish ourselves by suffering. Instead, it is teaching us that there are times when it is necessary for us to be longsuffering, and when that happens, we are to follow God in this respect.

Was God longsuffering? Of course He was! Our God has shown Himself as patient and slow to anger. Here are some examples of His longsuffering:

1. God gave the sign of a \_\_\_\_\_ (AOIRWBN) that He would not send a flood to destroy the world (Genesis 9:11).
2. He is longsuffering and does not wish that any man to \_\_\_\_\_ (HIEPRS) (2 Peter 3:9).

In the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus said, *“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you”* (Matthew 5:11-12).

We are put to the test when our patience is tried or when people are unkind to us. Or, when we try to witness for Christ and others laugh at us. That is when our character, especially our longsuffering or patience is tested. Dear child, remember the words of Jesus and do not retaliate. In fact, Jesus teaches that we are to rejoice! That certainly sounds tough. How may we do that? Only through the power of God. No one would be able to rejoice when others persecute or bully them, unless God empowers them.

The next time you are frustrated, or tempted to get angry, remember today’s verse – that an evidence of the Holy Spirit in us is for us to be longsuffering. Do not retaliate. Do not get angry so easily. Do not seek revenge.

Thought: May you be more longsuffering!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, when trials come, help me to be patient and to trust in You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – GENTLENESS

Gentleness is not to be confused with weakness or a lack of resolve or determination. It is a trait of a true Christian - mildness and kindness of disposition. This is often lacking in our world, and indeed, gentleness doesn't come naturally. Gentleness is something Christians must learn. It is a trait that is godly and, as His children, God expects us to become gentle, as He is. Becoming gentle is not easy. Sometimes gentleness comes with great difficulty and through difficult circumstances.

The opposites of gentleness can be bitterness, anger, slander, malice, deceit and envy. Psalm 103:3-14 describes the gentleness of God.

*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed...*

*The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust...*

Meditate on these verses and write down God's gentle deeds towards us in your own words. As you write, think of yourself how you can show gentleness to others. Example: God forgives, so I must forgive others who wrong me.

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Thought: Why must you be gentle to others?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as your spiritual children, help us be kind and gentle to others. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – GOODNESS (I)

How to be good? We cannot be good until we know where goodness comes from. Of course, goodness can only come from God. God is good! He is good all the time – His character is good, His thoughts are good, His plans are good, and His Word is good. Everything about God is good.

John 10:14-15 – *“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”* There is no better example of God’s goodness than when He sent His son into the world to save sinners. It was not as if we deserved it, or that God had no other choice. He could have left us in our sins to suffer in Hell eternally. But He sent Jesus to rescue us, to show us His goodness and to turn us back to Himself.

So, goodness comes from God. And as His children, we are to be like Him. Goodness does not exist in a vacuum – it does things. You and I can do good things to others.

Below is a list of things.

Circle “YES” if it is a good thing and “NO” if it is bad thing:

Submit to good authority, e.g. parents, teachers etc.	YES / NO
Submit to bad authority, e.g. gangster leader	YES / NO
Share and be kind to others	YES / NO
Be selfish and greedy	YES / NO
Get angry with other people	YES / NO
Gossip about others	YES / NO
Help friends with their homework	YES / NO
Steal your classmate’s stationery	YES / NO
Share toys	YES / NO
Give way to the old and young	YES / NO

We can do a lot of good things to other people with God’s help and strength. Boys and girls, our lives bring glory to God when we are good to others!

Thought: Do you really do the good things in this list?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are eternally good and You are the perfect example for me. Teach me to learn to be a better child and to show that I am a Christian by doing good to others around me! In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – GOODNESS (II)

Being Christians, we must actively pursue goodness. What people see in us should be what we really are. We are to be completely honest and not hide anything.

Take a look at a Bible character – Barnabas. The Bible has accounts of what this man Barnabas had done. The source of Barnabas' goodness was the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit made Barnabas a good man, and the Holy Spirit can do that for us too. Acts 11:24 describes Barnabas.

He served Jesus and he had goodness in his daily life and did many good things. Child, be prepared to learn from Barnabas. Some of his good deeds are:

1. Goodness prompted him to care for others. When other Christians treated Paul with coldness and suspicion, Barnabas gave him the warmth of friendship and fellowship. Before Paul became a Christian, he was a terrible person for he persecuted the Christians. Perhaps, that is why others shunned him. But Barnabas was sensitive and caring towards him. It was Barnabas who convinced the Jerusalem church leaders to accept Paul.
2. Goodness made him give generously. Barnabas sold his property and gave generously to the church.

Barnabas did many wonderful and good things. His original name was Joses, but the Apostles gave him the name 'Barnabas', which means \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 4:36). The Bible says that 'a good name is better than precious ointment' and 'rather to be chosen than great riches'. (Ecclesiastes 7:1; Proverbs 22:1)

What do people think of you?

What name do you think they will give you?

Thought: What is the meaning of your name? Do you live up to it?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the wonderful example of Barnabas. Help me to learn from him and please help me to be close to You so that I may draw strength to be good in thoughts, words and actions by the help of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – FAITH (I)

How is it that we can put our faith in God with such confidence? It is because He is faithful! There are many verses in the Bible that describe the faithfulness of God.

- Hebrews 10:23 – Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is FAITHFUL that promised)
- 2 Thessalonians 3:3 – But the Lord is FAITHFUL, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil
- 2 Timothy 2:13 – If we believe not, yet he abideth FAITHFUL: he cannot deny himself

God is FAITHFUL, He would not change for He is completely consistent.

So when challenges and temptations come, what should you do? Be afraid or worried? God will give you strength and help you. The verse is *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”* (1 Corinthians 10:13). Making ‘a way to escape’ means giving us a solution to our problems. He will either deliver us or grant grace to endure. The storm would have passed. After passing through a dark tunnel, you come out into the light. ‘Be able to bear it’ means that God will give you strength in times of your need. He will provide help, perhaps through a family member or a close friend or even a stranger. You will not be alone for He is there for you.

Consider one great man in the Bible and the troubles he had - David. David, as a young boy, had to overcome the giant Goliath. Then he was hunted down like an animal by the angry and jealous King Saul, and later his own son turned against him. He had great faith. When you are discouraged and feel like giving up because the Christian life is too hard, think about David and how he remained faithful in spite of all the difficulties. Also remember that we live the Christian life not in our own strength but with the strength God gives us. He is faithful to His children – pray to Him, have faith in Him.

Thought: May you have more faith!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I rededicate my life to You. Help me to live the Christian life not in my own strength but in Yours. You are faithful. Please make me faithful to trust more and more in You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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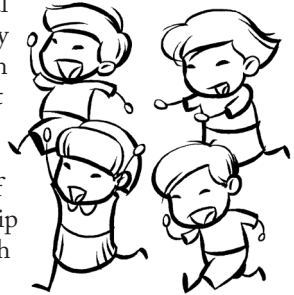
## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – FAITH (II)

Faith is given to us by the Holy Spirit living inside us. How is your faith? Do you really believe that God will save you from an eternal Hell? Do you have a desire to be faithful to Him? The world demands our loyalty. There are many things that attract us and prevent us from keeping a good relationship with God. But we are called to remain faithful to God!

The Christian faith is the experience of living in a new personal relationship with God through the transforming and indwelling power of the Holy Spirit in us. The key to this new experience of living is trusting God. Have faith in Him that He can transform you, and allow Him to make you a kinder, gentler, more faithful child.

One area where we may know if we have this faith is whether we love Christian fellowship. A true Christian will want to have fellowship or friendship with other Christians. All Christians should be involved in some church fellowship. Are you? Or are you always with your non-Christian friends? Or perhaps you do not like being with other Christians? If so, why is that the case?

The Bible instructs us that we should be faithful brothers and sisters to one another in God's family because of our common relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ. We should be eager to think of the kind and good things of others. We help each other in our spiritual walk within the church body. We also stand by each other. Learn to demonstrate your faith in God by getting to know more Christians. That way, you may be able to help them, and they in turn may be able to encourage you. Play more with other Christian children and in turn, all of you would be able to strengthen your friendship with one another and ultimately, encourage each other to be closer to God.



Thought: Do you have enough Christian fellowship?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, make me good and faithful. There are so many distractions that draw me away from being a good and faithful Christian. Heavenly Father, help me have more good Christian friends so that together we may grow and learn more of Your Word and Your goodness. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – MEEKNESS (I)**

Meekness is least appreciated by people. If you are meek, you are called a coward or sissy, especially for a boy. But God's Word tells us that meekness is a trait that you and I should possess. A Spirit-guided Christian is to be meek! What is to be meek? It is to have strength under control. It is to be humble towards others, to be like Jesus. Jesus possessed all the power in the world, but was most meek. He did not go around trying to impress others.

When there are conflicts among people, being meek helps to solve problems. A meek person does not get angry easily but instead calms the situation. Most of us can be easily angered or irritated. Are you? If so, read on! Moses was criticised by his sister Miriam, who spoke against him because he had married an Ethiopian woman. She, together with Moses' brother, Aaron, was jealous of Moses for the Lord spoke through Moses. So, the Lord was angry with Miriam and struck her with leprosy – a disease that causes skin and flesh on the body to come off bit by bit. Leprosy is a terrible flesh-eating disease, very painful, very horrible. But what was Moses' response? Was he happy that Miriam was punished? Instead of saying 'That serves you right, Miriam', Moses prayed for her to be restored and God graciously answered him and healed her. This account is recorded in Numbers 12. Numbers 12:3 says that 'the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth'.

When you are meek, you don't insist on your right. Abram put Lot his nephew's interests first, before his. Abram and Lot moved about together and they both had flocks and herds. While they stayed together, the land could not support them and so their servants began to quarrel. Abram took the initiative to give Lot the first choice, although it was his right to choose first. Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of Jordan was well watered, so he chose that area for himself. The two men parted company, and Lot set out towards the east. Abram, the older man, should have had the first choice. Meekly, he gave that choice to Lot and when Lot chose selfishly, Abram chose to say nothing.

Thought: How can you follow after the examples of Moses and Abram?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be meek when I am provoked, and to give up my rights even though I may have the first choice. It is not easy but with Your strength, I can be meek. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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**FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - MEEKNESS (II)**

Are you proud? Do you like to boast? Do you like promoting yourself as someone clever because you want to be popular with people? Do you like to show off so that your friends will like you? Meekness is the opposite of all these. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained meekness as one of the Christian traits. Jesus wanted his disciples to be meek. So child, you see, Jesus desires you to exercise meekness in your life, not to be proud or boastful.

Most of you may not have heard of a man called William Carey. He was a great missionary to the land of India and was a very faithful man whom God used to a great extent. One day, a very important person – the governor of India - invited him to a dinner party. In the party, a proud guest asked one of the governor’s servants if Carey had once been a shoemaker. Overhearing what was asked, Carey stepped forward and said, “No, not shoemaker, sir, just a cobbler.’ You see, shoemakers may own companies such as Hush Puppies, Bata, Bumble Bee, and etc., and may be rich people. However, cobblers are people you find on the streets or at corners of shopping centres repairing your shoes and footwear. William Carey, though he was at that time already a famous missionary, chose not to be offended, but in great humility, answered that proud man. He was a great example of a meek man.

Child, are you a proud person? Be wary of your pride, be humble. It is difficult to be humble. Satan is keen to put pride in us for he knows that would slowly destroy our testimony and affect our walk with God. Guard yourself.

Proverbs 16:18,

\_\_\_\_\_ goeth before \_\_\_\_\_

and an \_\_\_\_\_ spirit before a \_\_\_\_\_.

Thought: How can you guard yourself from being proud?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me never to be proud but to always remember what I have been given by You. Help me to achieve on a daily basis this fruit of the Spirit - meekness, and never be proud. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



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## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – TEMPERANCE (I)

Temperance is admired by people and nations throughout the centuries. What is temperance? Temperance is self-control. Temperance is to be able to know you can fall into sin and to not allow yourself to do whatever fancies you.

Is it easy to achieve temperance? No, it is very difficult. We have to constantly battle against ourselves, for the fleshly nature in us wants us to commit sins and to do whatever our mind wants us to.

For example, you help a classmate in her school project. When the teacher saw it, he was pleased and asked that classmate whether she did it herself and she said “Yes”! That is simply not true, and the natural reaction for anyone may be anger. For a Christian child, he is to have temperance and that means we are not to be angry as any other would, but to control ourselves.

One other aspect you must watch out for, is your speech. All of us at times tend to speak carelessly and say things that hurt our friends’ feelings or feelings of family members. Are you rash in speaking? Or are you a temperate child? Remember that our tongues can do more hurt than even our actions.

James 3:2,

...If any man offend not in \_\_\_\_\_,  
the same (refers to the man) is a perfect man,  
and able also to bridle the whole \_\_\_\_\_.

A man who can control his tongue can control himself, as what he speaks reflects his heart and mind. He is perfect (perfect as in mature, not perfect as in sinless) – he does not speak angrily, is not critical, and does not make rash promises which he cannot fulfil. Instead, he speaks wisely and kindly.

Thought: Are you a temperate child?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to exercise self-control. Sometimes I get too excited and am not temperate, but please help me to improve. I know I have to be temperate as this is pleasing to You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – TEMPERANCE (II)

Apostle Paul used three examples of people who need to live self-controlled lives if they are to succeed – the soldier, the athlete and the farmer. Let us focus on athletes – you know they have to be very disciplined.

The Olympics is one of the most prestigious sporting events in the world. And one of the most watched events in the entire Olympics is the Men's 100 metre race. Whoever wins it is often called "The Fastest Man in the World". And when this man wins it and stands on the winner's podium, people around the world cheer and acknowledge him. The world is not only giving credit to his achievement in winning the race, but also to the self-control or self-discipline in the many years that he has put in to achieve this win.

Behind all athletes who succeed and win are many consistent habits of self-control. They must be disciplined in having enough hours of sleep and rest, eating and drinking well, and having a disciplined lifestyle. Athletes must spend lots of time training and practising. They run in the tracks and go to the gymnasium. They carry weights to build muscles for strength and stretch to develop flexibility. Often, they are cut off from friends or other social events because they have to concentrate on their training. Similarly, in a Christian's life – we are to be disciplined.

Young reader, as a Christian, you must discipline yourself to be a true Christian. Ask yourself these questions:

Do you honestly love God?	YES / NO
Do you love other people, even those who hurt you?	YES / NO
Are you obeying your parents?	YES / NO
Do you read your Bible and pray every day?	YES / NO
Do you share Christ with unbelievers?	YES / NO
Do you meet Christians for fellowship regularly?	YES / NO
Do you control your tongue?	YES / NO

When we recognise that our aim is to please the Saviour, self-control is not too difficult. All athletes have goals, and you as a Christian must have your goal. What would it be? To please yourself or to please the Lord Jesus?

Thought: Do you seek to please yourself or Jesus?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give me strength to live for Thee, to be disciplined like an athlete to live a pleasing life unto the glory of God. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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**REAP WHAT YOU SOW!**

Most of us live in cities and probably know very little about farming. Consider a farmer. He sows or plants seeds into the soil and waters the soil daily. After a period of time, the seeds grow into shrubs or trees that bear fruits. The farmer then reaps or plucks the fruits and sells them in the marketplace, perhaps keeping some for his own family. The hard work he puts in pays off. What do you think would happen if that farmer sows bad seeds? Would good crops grow out of bad seeds?

Dear child, life is like that too - what you get depends on what you put in in the beginning. That is the meaning of “reaping what you sow”. What happens to a person who has done wrong? When one has done wrong, he will receive punishment. There is a price to pay for sinning. This applies to everyone, young and old, male and female, rich or poor.

If we sin, there would be consequences as well. Even if we repent and ask God for forgiveness after we sin, we still have to bear the consequences of that sin, even if God forgives us. Consider the example of one of Israel’s greatest kings – King David.

He abused his authority and sinned by taking Bathsheba as his wife when she was married to another man! David committed murder by ordering that Bathsheba’s husband be sent to fight where death was certain. And David succeeded; Bathsheba’s husband was indeed killed. Even after David repented of his sins, he had to pay a very high price. He lost fellowship with God. He lost the joy of serving the Lord. As a father, he was a terrible example to his children. His sin also brought great hurt to his own family as four of his sons died! David’s moment of sinful pleasure with Bathsheba led to a lifetime of sorrow.

However, if we sow good seeds, God will bless us! Verse 8b reminds us, “but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”. A Christian would have the fruit of the Spirit in him or her. Being saved, he will have eternal life in heaven.

Thought: What does reaping what you sow mean?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You so much for today’s reminder that whatever I sow I would reap. I confess I have sinned in the past and done bad things. Please forgive me for those times I have sown “bad seeds”. Please help me to sow “good seeds”, so that I may show forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit in my life! In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**ARE YOU DOING GOOD TO MEN?**

The Apostle Paul concluded his letter by encouraging the believers in Galatia to do good to all people. It is interesting to note that Paul teaches us to “not be weary in well doing”, meaning we must continue to do good to others. He also teaches that we “faint not”, and the idea is clear – we must go out of our way to be good to others. Often we feel reluctant to help others. Here, God’s standard is way above that – we are to do so much good to others that we may even feel tired, but we are to press on nonetheless! And among the people to whom we do good, we are instructed in particular, to do good to those who are of the household of faith – meaning Christians.

Sometimes we may not feel like doing good to others, especially Christians. We think some Christians, who ought to know better (since they are supposed to read the Bible and know God’s Word), are not living the life God wants them to. Perhaps they are not showing the fruit of the Spirit. Perhaps they are proud, or easily angered, or envious children. And this is all the more sad as they are called to be witnesses for Jesus! And that could put us off! But think about it – we are often like that ourselves! We, who are to know God’s Word and instructions, often do not live a godly life. We, who have tasted God’s forgiveness and kindness, often are unforgiving and unkind!

What is to “do good” to others? It is to show forth to them the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life. It is to be a consistent witness for Jesus. The ultimate good you can do is to be Christ-like. That means you would live your life as Christ would. That means you would have the fruit of the Spirit in your life. That way, other Christians may see how they can follow after your example in being loving, joyful, peaceful, longsuffering, gentle, good, faithful, meek, and temperate. That way, non-Christians can see how a Christian ought to live and would surely want to follow you in your choice of Jesus as personal Lord and Saviour!

To “do good” to others is to be what a real Christian is.

Thought: Will you do good to others?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for this month’s lessons based on Galatians. There is so much to learn and I pray I could just improve bit by bit on a daily basis. For today’s lesson, I ask that I remember to always try my best to do good to others. This is my humble request. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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