



LESSONS 170-182

“AND HE SPAKE A PARABLE...”

THE
Answer

www.apostolicfaith.org

A Bible study resource for use at home and church.

The Answer is a Bible study course for fourth grade through junior-high level. Bible references are taken from the King James version of the Bible. A Teacher's Guide accompanies this series and is available online, on our app, and in print.

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“AND HE SPAKE A PARABLE . . .”

You’ve probably read or heard some of the stories Jesus told. We call them parables. But have you ever thought about what a parable really is?

*The dictionary tells us that the word **parable** means “a short, simple story from which a moral lesson may be drawn.”*

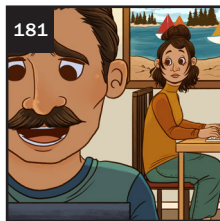
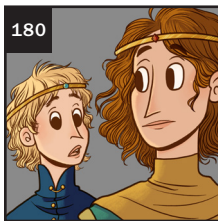
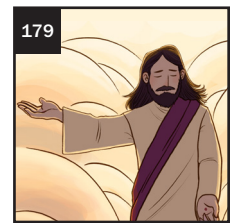
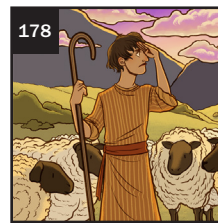
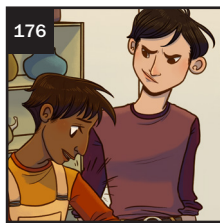
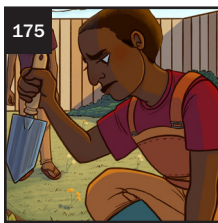
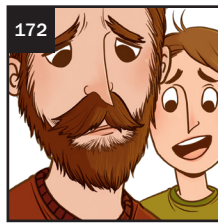
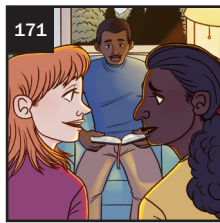
The word is found in the New Testament forty-six times, and in the Old Testament fifteen times. In the New Testament, Jesus is the only One we read of who used parables. The Master Teacher knew the importance of His message, and He chose the best way to get the people to understand.

*The parables Jesus gave were not only for the people of His day. They have valuable lessons for us too! How can stories which were told hundreds of years ago have any relationship to our lives? Let’s study *The Answer* together this quarter and find out!*

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THE Answer

UNIT 14



(USPS 591-390)
Postmaster: Send address change to
APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH
5414 SE Duke Street
Portland, Oregon 97206
United States

THE Answer

is an official publication of the Apostolic Faith Church, and is published quarterly. Periodicals postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

A PLACE OF FORGIVENESS

LESSON 170 → Luke 7:36-50

A tragic accident finally led Calvin to pray.

The first thing Calvin remembered was hearing voices. But they seemed far away.

Then there were lights. Faint at first, but gradually growing brighter. And Mom . . . there was Mom, leaning over him. She seemed hazy somehow. And why did she look so troubled?

Where was he? What had happened?

Suddenly he remembered it all. He had talked his brother, Andrew, into taking their raft out on the river, even though he knew Mom and Dad would never have given permission for them to go out alone. The day had been just too beautiful to waste, and when his parents had to be gone somewhere for the afternoon it had seemed like the perfect chance. He had told Andrew that Dad had said it was okay—and at first everything had been just great.

He remembered the fear that had shot through him when he first felt the strength of the current. Dad had always handled the raft before, and it had looked so easy! But in moments the strong pull of the water had them out in the middle of the river. Calvin remembered struggling to keep the raft steady. Then the motorboat had sped by, causing a flurry of white spray, and the raft tipped. Andrew had hollered out . . .

Andrew! Where was Andrew?

Calvin struggled up through the haziness that seemed to surround him. “Andrew,” he managed to say weakly. “Where’s Andrew?”

His mother leaned over him. “Calvin! You’re awake! Can you hear me, Calvin?”

“Andrew,” he managed to get out once more. “Where’s Andrew? Is he okay?”



His mother glanced over her shoulder helplessly. Then she stroked the hair back from his forehead. “Shhhh, Calvin. Don’t talk. Just rest now.”

Mom, tell me. His mind struggled to say the words he needed to get out. I have to know about Andrew. Before his eyes flashed the picture of his towheaded eight-year-old brother. Is Andrew okay?

Troubled thoughts churned through his mind. I lied to Andrew. I told him Mom and Dad said we could go. He’s got to be all right!

But Andrew wasn’t all right. They had found him, limp and unconscious, about half a mile from where the raft had tipped. He was alive, but just barely. And for the next week his life hung in the balance.

Calvin’s own condition was not good, and for a few days the doctors felt it best that he not be told about Andrew. When his parents finally did break the news, he turned his face to the wall. My brother! The anguish of what



KEY VERSE

JESUS FORGAVE ME, TOO.

But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity. — Psalm 78:38

he had done swept over him. My little brother . . . and I'm to blame!

Calvin couldn't eat that night. He couldn't sleep either. Even if Andrew does get well, he'll never forgive me, Calvin thought. Now he's missed the pizza party with his Sunday school class that he had been looking forward to. He's missed all this time at school, and he hates to get behind on his schoolwork. He didn't even get to celebrate his own birthday on Friday; he was so sick he probably didn't know or care. Who knows when he'll ever get up and around . . . or if? Oh, why did I ever do it?

As the days went by, Calvin's despair didn't lessen, even though Andrew finally began to make steady improvement. It's all my fault—I'm to blame, he thought continually. Misery wrapped around him. Andrew probably will never even want to talk to me again. And he used to like me so much!

Then, one Saturday morning, the nurse came into his room with a big smile. "Calvin, there's a young man down the hall who is asking to see his big brother. How about hopping into this wheelchair and I'll take you down there for a little visit?"



Calvin's heart was beating hard . . . but he went. Could Andrew really want to see him after what he had done?

Andrew did! There was no anger against his brother. Their visit was short, but as Calvin settled back into his own hospital bed, an overwhelming feeling of relief swept over him. Andrew had forgiven him! Did that mean . . . could it possibly mean that God would forgive him too?

The tears that he had held bottled up inside for all these long days and nights began to spill over. And Calvin did something he hadn't been able to do since he came to in the hospital—he prayed and asked God for forgiveness. "Not just for lying and taking the raft out and letting Andrew get hurt," he prayed, "I want You to forgive me for all the things I've done wrong. I know I should have been saved a long time ago. But if You'll forgive me now I promise, with Your help, to live the way You want me to for the rest of my life."

Calvin found forgiveness that day. What a surge of love he felt in his heart as peace and relief came over him! I feel like a different person, he thought in amazement. No wonder everyone always says it is so good to be saved! God has forgiven me and everything is going to be all right now.

FORGIVENESS FOR ALL

God's forgiveness is for all people. When we are forgiven for our sins, there is great love in our hearts for Him. The words on the list to the right of the word-find are from the Bible text. Find and circle them in the word-find. They read up, down, across, backwards, and diagonally.

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

BOX
OIL
FEET
HEAD
KISS
LOVE
MOST
FAITH
HAIRS
HOUSE
JESUS
PEACE
PENCE
SAVED
SIMON
TEARS
WATER
WIPED
WOMAN
ANOINT
JUDGED
LITTLE
MANNER
MASTER
SINNER
DEBTORS
FORGAVE
PROPHET
CREDITOR
FORGIVEN
OINTMENT
ALABASTER
PHARISEES



WHERE DO I STAND?

LESSON 171 → Luke 8:4-15

Her friend was the one who needed salvation, yet Avery felt the need to examine her own heart.



Avery groaned inwardly. She had asked Zoey to spend the night with her, and now Dad was getting out his Bible for family worship. What will Zoey think? She'll probably think we're really strange, Avery answered her own thoughts. I don't think her family reads and prays together.

"Come on, Avery. Let's go to your room and listen to that new song on your iPod," Zoey said, not noticing the family gathering in the living room.

"Uh, Zoey . . . I think it's time for our family devotions. Would you like to join us?" Avery asked, hoping Zoey wouldn't notice her red face.

Zoey looked a little blank, but she shrugged and sat down beside Avery on the couch. "What do I have to do?" she whispered.

"Nothing, just listen while my dad reads the Bible. It won't take too long," Avery whispered back, hoping that that was the truth.

"Tonight we're going to hear a story Jesus told while He was on earth. It's found in the eighth chapter of Luke." Avery's dad settled himself into the recliner. Looking down at the open Bible on his knees, he began to read. "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; . . ."

Oh, the parable of the sower, Avery thought. As she listened to the story of the seeds and the different types of ground they fell upon, she wondered if Zoey understood any of it. Avery knew that Zoey didn't come from a Christian home. Zoey maybe doesn't know that the different kinds of ground are supposed to be like people who hear the Word of God, Avery thought with a



HELP ME RECEIVE YOUR WORD, JESUS.

All my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. — Ezekiel 3:10

flicker of amusement. She is probably wondering why this story about farming is in the Bible!

“That’s an interesting story,” Zoey commented politely in the brief pause that followed the conclusion of the parable.

“It’s more than just a story, Zoey,” Mr. Holland said with a smile. “It is called a parable. It’s a type of illustration Jesus used to help people understand what He was trying to teach them. In this case, the seed is compared to the Word of God, the Bible. The different kinds of ground represent the different kinds of people who hear the Word of God. Some accept it, others reject it, some go along with it only for a while, and others let that ‘seed’ go deep into their hearts and begin to grow.”

“I’ve never heard this part of the Bible before,” Zoey said thoughtfully. “But it seems pretty important.”

Avery shifted against the cushions restlessly. She hoped her dad wouldn’t say too much more. She didn’t want Zoey to feel uncomfortable or be embarrassed.

But Zoey didn’t look embarrassed. She looked interested as Avery’s dad replied, “It is important, Zoey. We have to hear and understand, or Satan may trick us into thinking other things are more important.”

“How does a person know which type of soil he is?” Zoey asked, looking from Avery to her dad. When Avery didn’t answer, her dad spoke again.

“A person can choose which soil he will be. When we hear God’s Word, we must decide if we will believe it and act upon it. If we don’t, the devil will steal it away, and we will lose that opportunity to become a Christian.”

There was a moment of silence in the living room. Avery stole a look at her friend. Zoey seemed a little troubled, and now she stared at the floor

in front of her. “That sounds pretty serious,” she said.

“It is serious, Zoey. Have you ever heard that Christ died on the Cross to save you from your sins?” Avery’s dad asked.

“No . . . I used to go to Sunday school sometimes, but I never heard that,” Zoey replied, looking up.

Avery had heard about it all her life, it seemed. In fact she had been saved when she was a little girl. But that seemed so long ago.

Suddenly Avery forgot all about her dad and Zoey sitting there beside her as a thought flashed into her mind. Was that seed still growing in her heart?

She had supposed it was.

She had always assumed she was still saved. But was she really? Could she be like the stony ground that the seed fell on and grew only for a little while? Had she let her own interests and things she was involved in “choke” the seed that had once been growing in her heart?

Her attention came back to her friend as she heard Zoey ask. “How do people get Christ to come into their heart?”

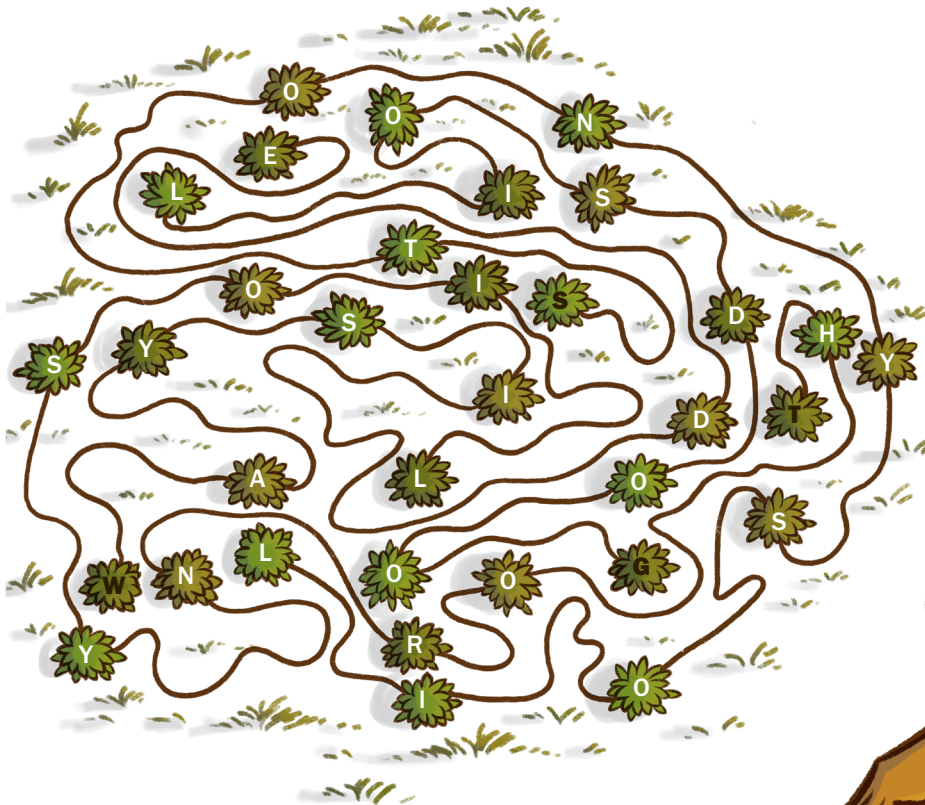
As Avery’s dad simply explained how to be saved, Avery sat silently next to her friend. Zoey needs this, she thought to herself. She needs to be saved. But maybe I need to think about myself. Am I bringing forth the good fruit that Dad read about? A lump rose in her throat.

“Thank you, Mr. Holland,” she heard Zoey saying softly. “I really appreciate your taking the time to explain this to me. I’m sure going to do some thinking about what you’ve said.”

I’m going to be doing some thinking about this too, Avery determined. I want to be certain my heart is like the good ground so I can hear and do the Word of God.

WHICH SOIL ARE YOU?

When the sower was planting the seed, it fell on different kinds of ground. There are four black letters in the maze below. Using these as the starting points, follow each path and write the words on the lines provided.



Put a check mark next to the kind of “soil” you would want your heart to be when the seed (Word of God) is planted.

“AND HE SPAKE
A PARABLE . . .”





*The letter telling
of Grandfather's
visit brought
mixed emotions.*

PRAYER PAYS OFF!

LESSON 172 → Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8

“Not again,” Lucas groaned. “Dad, Grandpa just left here three weeks ago. Now he’s coming for Christmas? He’ll spoil everything!”

Lucas’s father sighed deeply, folding the letter he had just received. “I’m sorry, Son. I know it’s hard for you when he gives orders all the time. He acts as if he were still in the Army. The rest of the family won’t put up with it—that’s why he keeps coming back here.” He sighed again. “When your grandma was alive it was so much easier.”

“Dad, why is Grandpa so hard to get along with? He’s such a great person some of the time. But he gets mad so easily, and he’s so bossy that most of the time it’s hard to be around him.”

“Lucas, when I was a young boy there was a short time when my dad was a kind, helpful person. That was when our whole family went to church.

During that time I realized my need of salvation and became a Christian. I was ten years old—two years younger than you are right now. But soon afterward, Dad was promoted and transferred to another base. We moved away from that church, and Dad seemed to lose interest in the things of God. He became bitter and angry at life, and resented anyone who tried to talk to him about God. Your grandma and I used to pray together for him. Even though she is dead now, I continue to pray that he’ll come back to God.”

“I’d think you’d get tired, Dad. How long have you been praying for Grandpa?”

“Over twenty-five years, Lucas. I’ll admit that sometimes I get discouraged. But Jesus said to keep on praying even when we don’t see the result right away. I know God wants Grandpa to be saved. One of these days Grandpa will want



KEEP ON PRAYING!

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. — Luke 18:1

to be saved too. Anyway, the letter says he'll be here in ten days."

As the days passed, everyone was busy preparing for the Christmas season. Lucas couldn't decide whether to be excited about Christmas or upset because Grandpa would be with them. In family devotions, the evening before Grandpa was to arrive, Dad prayed for him as usual. Lucas thought about how often Dad had prayed that prayer, and wondered again how he could keep praying the same thing for so many years. Grandpa would never change.

The next morning at the airport, as they walked down to the baggage claim, Lucas thought of how Grandpa would greet them. He'd shake hands with Dad, let Mom give him a hug, then he'd look at Lucas and say, "Well, Boy, haven't changed much, have you? Still don't know how to stand up straight. You'll never be a good soldier if you don't stand up straight." Just the thought of Grandpa's scowl made him stand up a little straighter.

Lucas watched expectantly to catch sight of his grandfather. It was not hard to spot him. Standing tall and erect as if he were still a soldier, he stood out in the crowd. "There he is, Dad!" Lucas pointed excitedly.

When Grandpa spotted them, his stern expression softened to one of glad recognition. He soon reached them, set down his bags, and hugged both Mom and Dad. Then he gently laid a hand on Lucas's shoulder. "Sure am looking forward to Christmas, Boy. Thanks for letting me come."

Lucas, prepared for a stern remark, could not think of what to say. He stammered, "We're glad to have you, Grandpa." Then, embarrassed, he picked up one of the bags and started toward the car.

Seated in the backseat with Grandpa, Lucas pretended to be interested in the passing traffic.

But he was really listening to the conversation between his parents and his grandfather. What's happened to him? Lucas thought. He's almost as nice as Dad. We're nearly home, and he hasn't scolded me or found fault with anybody yet. Maybe this Christmas won't be so bad after all.

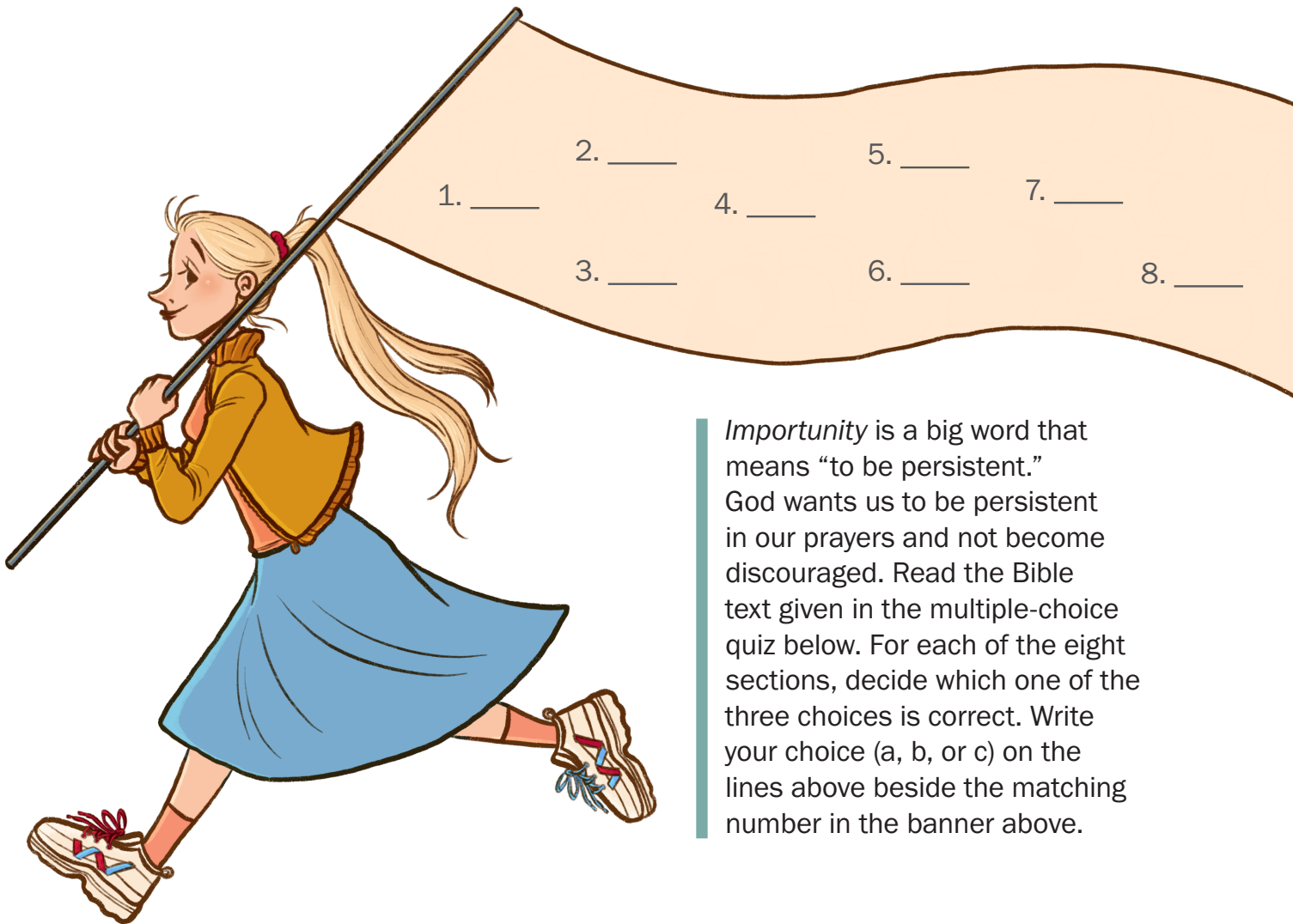
That evening after dinner, Dad asked Lucas to bring him the Bible for family devotions. Uh-oh, Lucas thought, I wonder what will happen now. Grandpa always makes some excuse to leave before Bible reading. But to his amazement, Grandpa just scooted his chair back from the table, settled into a more comfortable position, and prepared to listen. Lucas looked from his father to his grandfather, hardly knowing what to think. Dad looked at Grandpa and smiled. "I think you had better tell Lucas what you told me a little while ago, Dad."

Leaning forward in his chair, Grandpa spoke in a gentle voice. "Lucas, I know that your father has prayed every day for years for me to become a Christian. I want you to know that those prayers have been answered. I finally realized the reason I'd been so unhappy all these years. It was because I had left God out of my life. It was hard for me to give my life to God, Lucas, but I'm sure that He used the prayers of your grandmother and your father to help me pray. He's forgiven me—I'm not the same grandfather I was before."

Lucas's eyes grew large, and he had to blink to keep from crying. So that was why Grandpa was so different. What a Christmas present! He could hardly believe that it had finally happened.

Dad opened the Bible. "One verse," he said, "helped me keep praying even when it seemed as though there was no hope and no reason to keep on praying. In Luke 18:1, Jesus said, 'Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.' I figured if that was the Lord's advice, it was good advice. And it worked!"

KEEP ON PRAYIN'



Importunity is a big word that means “to be persistent.” God wants us to be persistent in our prayers and not become discouraged. Read the Bible text given in the multiple-choice quiz below. For each of the eight sections, decide which one of the three choices is correct. Write your choice (a, b, or c) on the lines above beside the matching number in the banner above.

1. LUKE 11:5

- a. Which of you shall have a neighbor
- b. Which of you shall have a friend
- c. Which of you shall have a brother

4. LUKE 11:6

- a. for my mother has come
- b. for a friend of mine is come
- c. for a neighbor has come

7. LUKE 11:8

- a. because of his need
- b. because of his importunity
- c. because he asked

2. LUKE 11:5

- a. shall go unto him at midnight
- b. shall go unto him at lunch time
- c. shall go unto him at evening

5. LUKE 11:6

- a. I have no milk
- b. I have no loaves
- c. I have nothing to feed him

3. LUKE 11:5

- a. Friend, lend me three loaves
- b. Neighbor, lend me a loaf
- c. Brother, lend me two loaves

6. LUKE 11:7

- a. Trouble me not
- b. Ask someone else
- c. You can have some tomorrow

8. LUKE 11:8

- a. he will give him as many as he needs
- b. he will give him what he can spare
- c. he will not give to him

GOD HAS A PLAN

LESSON 173 → Luke 2:1-20

Grandfather's gift and loving explanation helped Dakotah to overcome his grief.

For a few moments, he had almost forgotten.

In the excitement of the family gathering—the hugs, the greetings, the noise, and then the opening of presents—Dakotah had shrugged aside the grief that had pressed down on him for the past three months. But when he had opened the beautiful wooden puzzle Gramps had made for him, there had been an instinctive reaction to show it to Dad—a feeling so strong he had held it up and half turned around from his spot on the floor before he remembered. Dad wasn't here this Christmas. And he wasn't ever going to spend another Christmas with Dakotah.

A lump came up in his throat. Hurriedly he picked up his gifts and ran from the room. A concerned look crossed his mother's face and she shifted some boxes from her lap and started to follow him. But Dakotah's grandfather stopped her. "Let the boy go, Cindie, he needs a few minutes to himself. We knew this Christmas was going to be hard for him—for both of you. I'll go up and have a talk with him in a while."

Up in his room, Dakotah set his presents down on the bed and stood looking at them unseeingly. He couldn't have stayed there in the living room for another minute . . . it brought back too many memories of other Christmases. He decided to stay in his room till everyone left. Picking up the puzzle his grandfather had made for him, he thought longingly about last Christmas. His thoughts were interrupted by a light tap on the door. His grandfather opened the door a crack, and asked, "Mind if I come in?"

"No, of course not." Dakotah responded with a weak smile. He gestured with the puzzle box which was still in his hand. "This sure is a neat



puzzle, Gramps. I can tell you spent a lot of time making it. Each piece is just perfect."

"Thank you, Dakotah. I enjoyed making it for you. And there was a special reason behind it. You've had some hard things to go through during the past few months." He sat down on the edge of the bed and gently pulled Dakotah down beside him. "I've been thinking of how the different things we go through in life are a little like the pieces of a puzzle. We can't see much of anything in one piece, but when it's all put together, the picture is complete."

Dakotah looked perplexed. "Yeah, well I don't . . ." His voice trailed off.

"The death of your father is a hard thing for you to understand and accept, Dakotah. But it is



JESUS' BIRTH WAS PART OF THE PLAN.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
— Luke 2:11



a part of God's plan for your life. It's a dark piece of the puzzle, yes, but God has a place for the dark pieces as well as the light. And can a picture really be complete without any shadows or deeper tones?"

He paused for a moment, and then continued. "I had a reason for giving you this puzzle at Christmas, rather than for your birthday two weeks ago. God had a plan for the birth of His Son too. There were some dark pieces in that plan also. His Son had a manger for a bed, and straw for a pillow. Mary traveled many miles from her home in Nazareth, and her baby was born in a strange city. The king of the country wanted the child killed."

Dakotah looked a little disbelieving. "Oh, come on, Gramps. Those things couldn't have been part of a plan. They just happened that way! Why, Jesus wasn't supposed to be born in Bethlehem. He was born there because Mary and Joseph had to go there to pay their taxes. Otherwise He would have been born someplace else."

"Oh, no, Dakotah," his grandfather said soberly. "The fact that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem was prophesied hundreds of years before it ever happened. Many of the details concerning the birth of Christ were. God worked out every detail, including the king's decree which caused Mary and Joseph to have to travel to Bethlehem at that particular time, so that everything fit into His divine plan for the redemption of man." He stopped for a moment and then smiled gently at his grandson. "God's plan for your life is perfect too, Dakotah."

Dakotah sat in silence for a moment. He thought he understood what his grandfather was trying to tell him. If God's plan for His own Son included some dark places, then maybe he should try harder to accept the difficult things that came his way.

Slowly he stood up. "Maybe we should go back downstairs now, Gramps, and join the rest of the family. I think I smell something good cooking!"

NO SURPRISE!

Jesus' birth should not have been a surprise to the people. God had let them know in Old Testament times where Jesus would be born and into what family He would be born. When they really thought about this they finally asked . . . Well, you figure out what they asked. Each letter of the coded verse below represents the letter that comes BEFORE it in the alphabet. Example: B=A, C=B, etc.



IBUI OPU UIF TDSJQUVSF

TBJE' UIBU DISJTU DPNFUI

PG UIF TFFE PG EBWJE'

BOE PVU PG UIF UPXO PG

CFUIMFIFN' XIFSF EBWJE

XBT?

"AND HE SPAKE
A PARABLE . . ."

I WANT TO BE READY

LESSON 174 → Luke 12:35-48



**Some
jokes in the
cafeteria
started
Oscar
wondering
when the
Lord would
return.**

Laughter echoed through the cafeteria where a group of boys sat eating their lunch. One of them motioned for silence as he spoke mockingly, “Then there was the night Adrian Wilson’s dad was driving his car home and saw a bunch of bright lights in the sky. It scared him so much, he pulled over and started praying. He thought the Lord was coming—but he forgot that it was the Fourth of July!” This brought even further laughter from the group.

Oscar Lambert got to his feet and slipped quietly to the door. One of his buddies spied him and shouted, “Hey Lambert, what’s the matter? Did we scare you?”

Oscar shook his head. “Look . . . I just don’t think it’s anything to joke about, that’s all.”

Someone in the group groaned. “Oh, come on, sit down and finish your lunch. We’ll change the subject.” The rest of the boys quieted down with whispers of, “What’s bothering him anyway?”

Oscar shrugged his shoulders and went out the door into the crowded hallway. He felt sick inside. He couldn’t figure out why that one joke had upset him so much. I guess deep down inside I do believe that Jesus is coming back someday. And if He does, where will I be? he asked himself. If only he could get away



I WANT TO BE WATCHING!

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. — Matthew 24:44

to think about all this for a while. But he had three more classes that afternoon.

Two days went by, and Oscar found his thoughts going again and again to the scene in the lunch-room and the possibility that the Lord really would be coming . . . and maybe soon. Crunching through the snow on his way home from school that afternoon, he had a thought, Maybe I'll call Grandma and Grandpa. They seem pretty close to God, and might have some answers.

Oscar's grandparents were delighted when he called and offered to shovel the snow from their walk. "And why don't you stay for supper, Oscar," his grandma invited. "I'm fixing my special mac-n-cheese!"

Gathered around the kitchen table that night, the three of them visited and enjoyed mouth-watering macaroni and cheese. The meal was topped off with homemade apple crisp. Oscar hesitated for a moment, then cleared his throat. "Grandpa, when do you think the Lord is coming back? I mean . . . it's supposed to be soon, isn't it?"

His grandparents quickly glanced at each other, then his grandfather replied slowly. "Well, Oscar, just when that trumpet will sound, I don't know. Even the angels themselves don't know. God does though, you can be sure of that. And He has given us some clues as to when it will be."

"Really?" Oscar was interested. "What kind of clues?"

*Grandpa had reached for his Bible and was leaf-*ing through the pages of the Book of Matthew. "Oscar, Jesus told us that His return will be when we aren't expecting it. Listen to this. In Matthew 24:44, it says, 'Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.'"

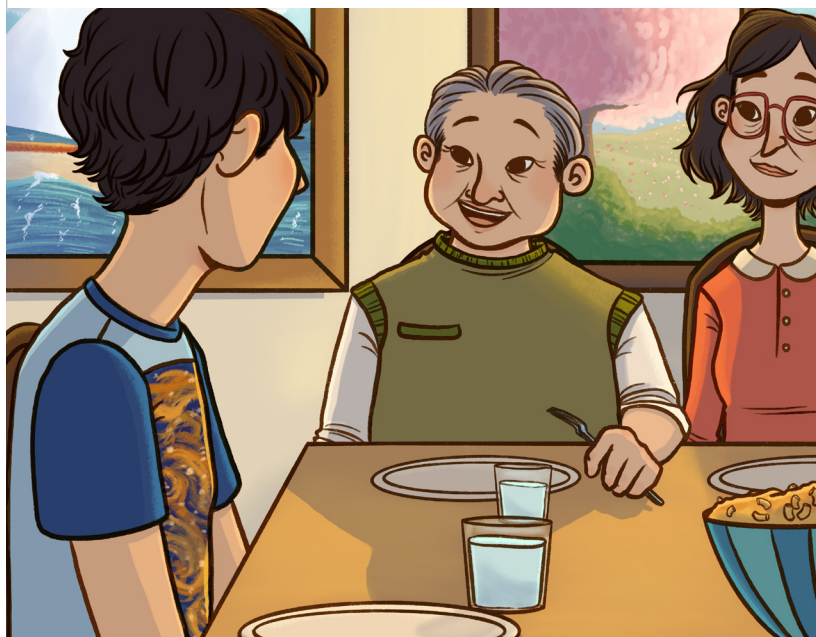
"That's strange." Oscar was puzzled. "How does He expect people to be ready when they don't know when He's coming?"

Grandpa thought a moment. "I guess that's how God knows His own. The people who are living for Him, and watching for Him—they are the ones who really love Him. They will be ready no matter when He comes! And the ones who don't truly care about Him will not prepare for His coming, even though He has given them plenty of warnings. Jesus warns us in Mark 13:33, 'Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.'"

Then Grandma spoke up. "Oscar, there's a lot of prophecy in the Bible. Things have been coming to pass just as Jesus said they would in the last days. So it's bound to be soon." Her voice grew soft. "You know, your grandpa and I have been praying for you for a long time."

As they talked about the end times and how the wrath of God would be poured out on those left on the earth, Oscar thought, Why am I kidding myself? The real question is not, When will the Lord return? but, Will I be ready when He does?

He finally choked out the words he had been wanting to say all evening, "Grandpa . . . I want to be ready. Will you pray with me?"



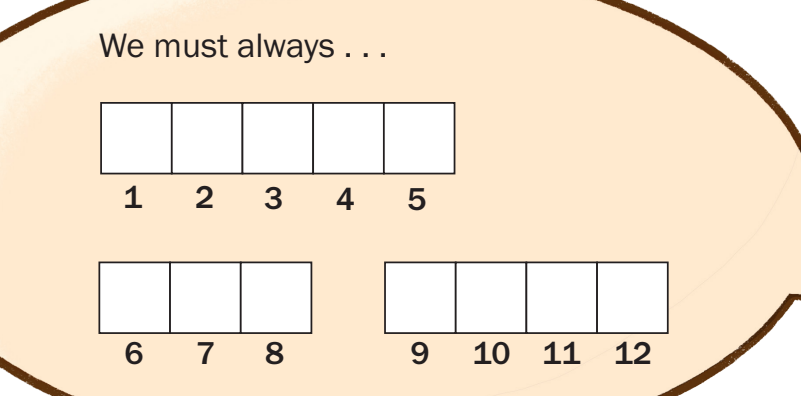
ARE YOU READY?

100

Match them with the numbered boxes at the bottom of the page and write the correct letter in each box. Do what the words tell you and you can make sure you will be ready!

Verse 35: $\frac{\quad}{6} \quad \frac{\quad}{10} \quad :$ $\frac{\quad}{12} \quad \frac{\quad}{3} \quad \frac{\quad}{2}$
 $\frac{\quad}{\quad}, \frac{\quad}{11}$
 $\frac{\quad}{\quad}, \frac{\quad}{5}, \frac{\quad}{\quad}$
 $\frac{\quad}{\quad}, \frac{\quad}{1}, \frac{\quad}{\quad}$
 $\frac{\quad}{7} :$

Verse 36: $\frac{\quad}{4} \quad \frac{\quad}{8}$
 $\frac{\quad}{9} .$



We must always ...

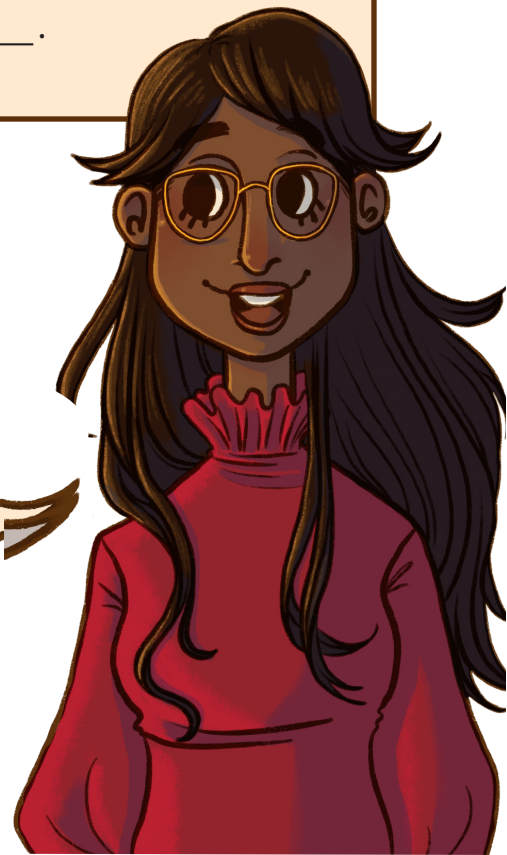
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1 2 3 4 5

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6 7 8 9 10 11 12



ONE MORE CHANCE

LESSON 175 → Luke 13:6-9; John 15:1-8

When his dad offered to help, Colton decided not to give up on his strawberry patch.

Colton threw down his hoe in disgust. What was the use? These strawberry plants were overrun with weeds. You had to get down on your hands and knees and dig around to find a single strawberry . . . and those you did find were so shriveled they were hardly worth the effort.

So much for his great thoughts about earning some extra money this summer by selling his super crop of strawberries! Colton flopped down on the grass beside his garden patch and stared gloomily up into the sky. That warm sun felt so good—these strawberries should just be soaking it up and thriving. Instead they looked like they had given up and died a month ago.

The seed catalog that got this whole project started was a real joke, he thought bitterly. They made it sound so easy. And the strawberries they showed were huge and looked so delicious he could almost taste them just by looking at the picture!

Besides this drastic crop failure, he was out the thirty-five dollars he'd spent on seed, fertilizer, and a couple of garden tools. This was his project and he had to pay for the whole thing. Dad had made that clear from the beginning. I could have bought a new video game, he thought disgustedly. Or I could have bought that Lego set I've been watching on eBay—and still had a couple of dollars left!





GOD EXPECTS SOMETHING FROM ME.

And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.
— Luke 13:9

I guess I'll just dig these plants up, he thought. It's a cinch I'm not going to be able to sell a single berry off of them. The plants are just cluttering up the backyard the way they are now. Mom might as well have a few more feet of space to plant her lettuce and beans.

Colton got to his feet, brushed the grass off the seat of his pants, and picked up the hoe. Just as he was starting to dig up the first plant his dad came around the corner of the house. "Working on the strawberry plants, Son?"

"Nah," Colton said, his disgust with the whole project edging his voice. "Just look at this mess! I'm just going to dig them up and get rid of them. They aren't doing any good, and Mom might as well have the space for her things."

A somewhat amused but sympathetic look crossed his father's face. "They don't look too healthy, do they?" he commented as he looked down at the plants in front of them.

"No, they don't," Colton replied. "I don't know why I ever started this in the first place. Anyway, I've wasted too much time and money on them."

"Oh, now wait a minute, Son," his dad restrained him. "I've been watching your plants, too. I think perhaps we can salvage them. Remember, I did mention to you once or twice that the weeds around them were getting pretty high and that strawberries do need regular watering when the rainfall is as light as it has been this summer."

"Yeah," Colton looked a little sheepish. "I didn't really see what harm the weeds would do, and I have watered them . . . off and on."

"Let's try something. I'll give you a hand at clearing out the weeds from around these plants if, in turn, you'll give me your word that you'll keep the weeds out from now on. Also, you will have to remember to water the plants more often, and on a regular basis."

Colton looked doubtful. "Aw, Dad. Do you really think they're worth it? I think they must have

been bad plants to begin with. Look at those scrawny little berries. They aren't anything like the big beautiful ones in that picture in the seed catalog!"

"You're right about that," his dad chuckled. "But with a little work I believe we can still make your investment pay off. How about giving it a try?"

"Well, okay," Colton finally said, still a bit reluctant. "I'll give them one more chance. But if these plants aren't producing some edible strawberries in short order, I'm giving up on them once and for all."

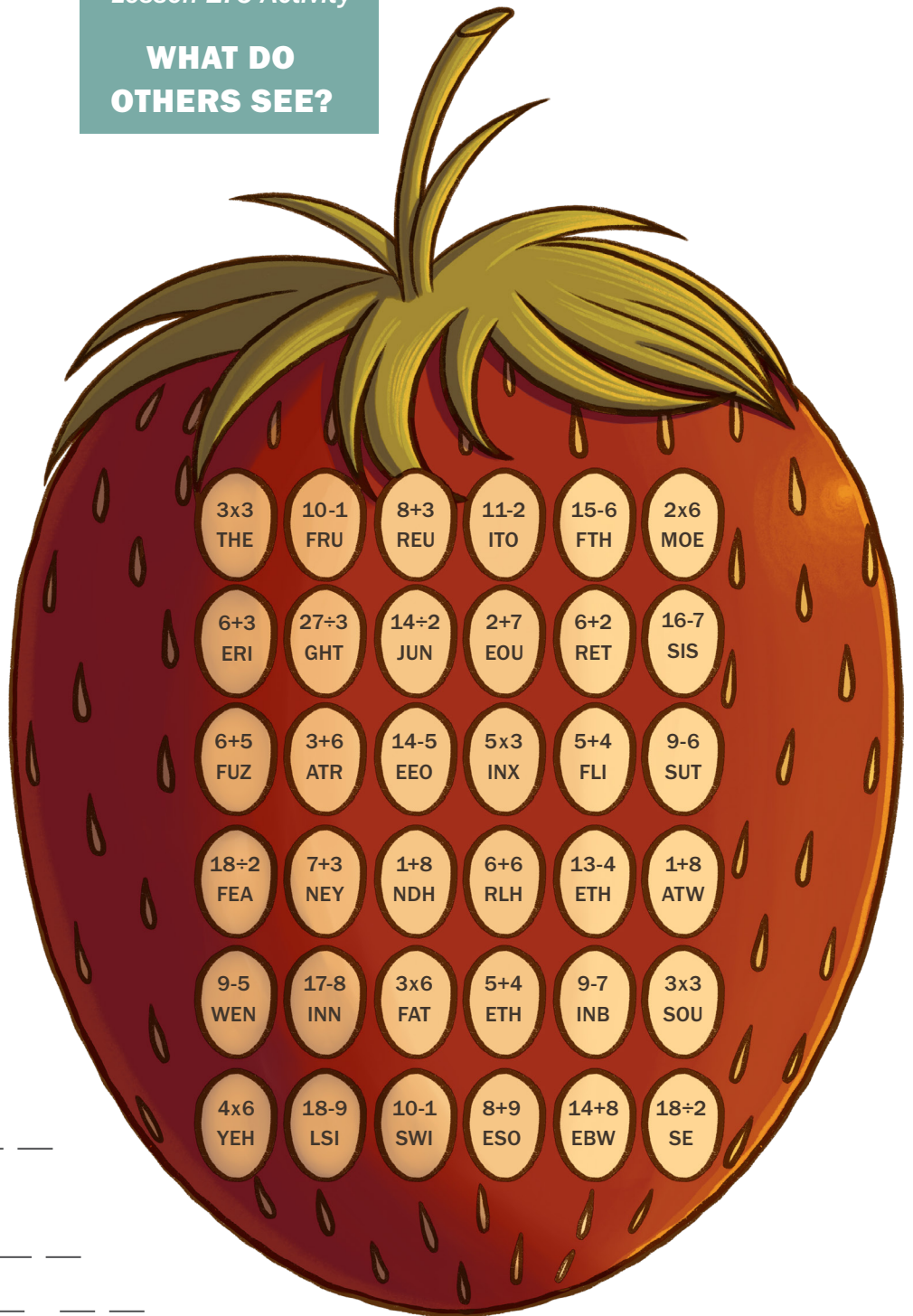
Does this story remind you of the one we studied in our Bible text this week? Jesus told a parable about a man who was dissatisfied because his fig tree wasn't producing fruit. He was ready to chop it down until the dresser of his vineyard asked for one more year to cultivate and fertilize it.

Jesus wasn't just teaching a lesson about sticking to our gardening attempts. He wanted the people listening to see the importance of bearing spiritual fruit; in other words, acting and looking and living like a true Christian. We might compare the dresser of the vineyard to Jesus Christ. If He sees that one is not doing everything he should as a Christian, He wants to work with that one and help him produce the kind of "fruit" that a Christian should be producing.

Think about it: are you showing the kind of spiritual development God is looking for in your life?

WHAT DO OTHERS SEE?

If we have fruit in our lives, others will see and know what Jesus has done for us. To find out what some of this fruit is, you will need to cross out any “seeds” in the strawberry where the math problem does not equal nine. Then write the letters from the “seeds” that do equal nine on the lines below.



_____;

_____.

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

LESSON 176 → Luke 14:7-14; 18:9-14

Jackson was overconfident that he would win the contest.



Amar hummed quietly to himself as he concentrated on centering the mass of clay on the wheel. Once it was centered, he began to press his fingers into the spinning gray clay, very carefully widening the base and bringing up the sides. As he was developing the contours of the vase, another student walked up behind him and bumped his elbow. The sudden movement destroyed the shape completely.

“Sorry about that!” Amar heard someone say, with a none-too-convincing tone. He turned to see who was speaking.

“That’s all right, don’t worry about it,” Amar said as he removed the crumpled clay from the wheel. “I’ve had it happen a lot of times before when I was the only one to blame.”

Jackson pulled up a chair. “You think you know something about pottery, do you?”

“My aunt owns a pottery shop in southern California where I lived until I moved here a couple of weeks ago. I spent a lot of time there helping out and also learning what I could, though I’m sure no expert. By the way, my name’s Amar Modi.”

Jackson stood up and said, “Well, I’m Jackson Bennett, and all you need to know about me is that I’m the last word on pottery around here. I’ve won the City High School Art Contest three years in a row.”

“Wow! That’s really something! I’d like to see some of your work.”

As he sauntered off, Jackson called back, “Oh, you’ll be seeing it, I’m sure. It’s the only stuff worth looking at around this place.”



GOD WANTS US TO BE HUMBLE.

God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. — James 4:6

When he was gone, Amar shook his head in amazement. I don't think I've ever met anyone like that before, he thought to himself. Talk about conceit!

That night Amar related the incident to his father. "Jackson sounds like a very unhappy boy to me, Son. You're aware that pride is at the root of nearly every sin and it's something that God hates. Do your best to befriend Jackson. He just needs to feel the love of God."

"I'll try, Dad," Amar said with a wry grin.

In the weeks that followed, Amar did his best to be a friend to Jackson, but to no avail. Although they didn't have any classes together, they both ended up spending a lot of time after school in the pottery department. When Jackson saw some of Amar's pottery work, it didn't take him long to figure out that Amar could offer him some pretty stiff competition. One afternoon he walked in and came directly over to Amar.

"You planning on entering the contest next week?" Jackson asked.

"Well, yes, I am. In fact, I hope to enter this piece that I'm working on if I can get it done in time. Last night I mixed up my matte glaze powders," said Amar, as he held up a bag of carefully measured and mixed powders. In doing so, he noticed the time on his watch. "Wow!

Look at the time. I'd better clean up and get out of here!" With a brief wave to Jackson, he gathered up his materials and put them together on his shelf at the other side of the room.

Jackson watched Amar leave. Then he glanced around to be sure no one was watching and moved over to Amar's shelf. Removing the bag of mixed powders, he went to the supply cabinet and selected a blue-gray crystal powder. This stuff ought to fix up Amar's glaze just fine, Jackson laughed to himself. I don't plan on being upstaged this year after winning the last three years, he thought as he returned the doctored-up glaze mix to Amar's area.

Contest night! The air was charged with excitement as the contestants awaited the judges' ruling in the various classes. While others were viewing the entries, Jackson made it known that he wasn't going to waste his time doing the same. Finally the judges announced that their decisions had been made. Jackson could hardly wait for the pottery winners to be announced. He rehearsed again in his mind what he would say when he accepted his first place prize.

"Jackson Bennett," Jackson jumped to his feet at the sound of his name, "second place."

Stunned, Jackson sank into his seat, embarrassed. Who could

have beaten me? he wondered to himself.

"First place, for a finely executed piece with an extraordinarily beautiful crystal glaze—Amar Modi."

Crystal glaze? Amar said he was doing a matte glaze . . . oh, no! The realization that he had un-wittingly helped Amar win struck Jackson full force. He slowly rose to leave. Hearing his name called, he turned and to his surprise saw Amar beckoning for him from the platform.

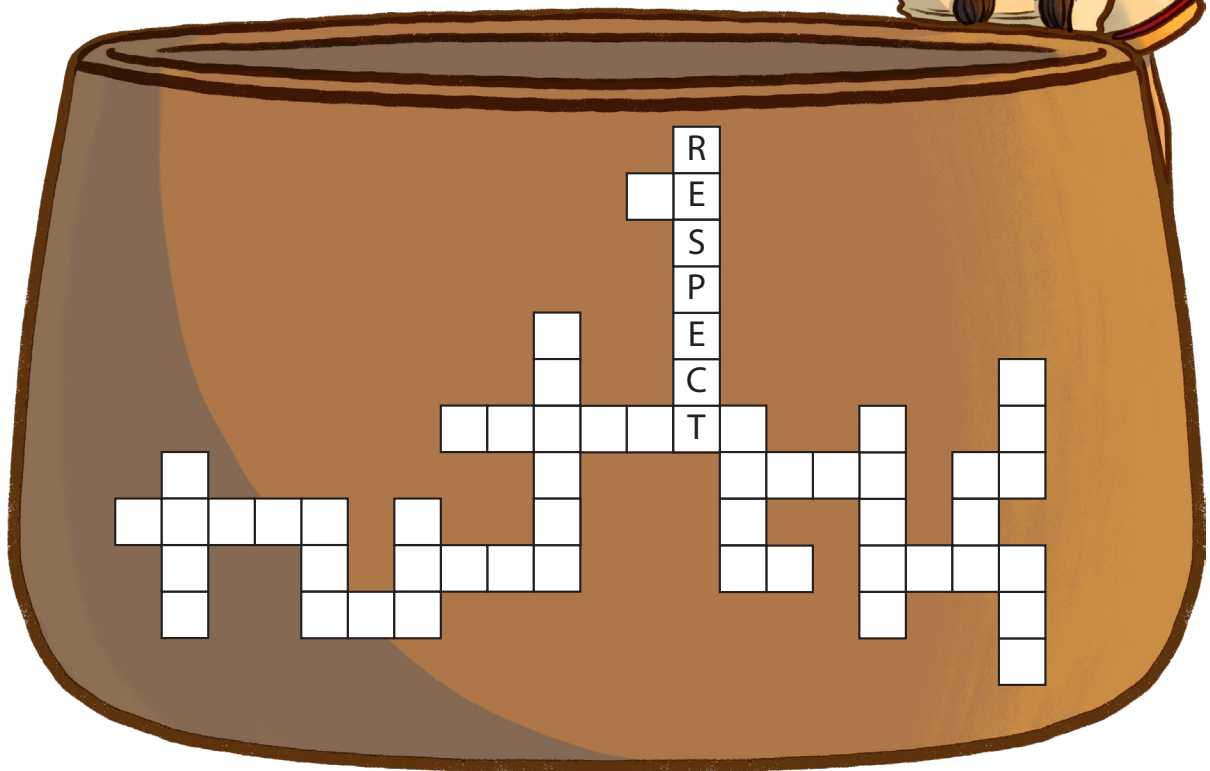
"I have to insist that this first place prize be shared by Jackson Bennett. His contributions to my glaze mixture show his tremendous capabilities in the field of pottery."

Later, Jackson found that he had been observed adding something to Amar's glaze, and the student who noticed it had mentioned it to Amar. But Amar never considered that Jackson would have sabotaged his project and it wasn't until he saw the finished product that he realized his glaze really had been tampered with.

Jackson was amazed that Amar was not mad. Instead he still wanted to be his friend. This guy's got something I don't have, he finally conceded to himself. He really is very good at pottery, even if he doesn't go around making a big deal about it. Maybe I should get to know him a little better.

BE HUMBLE

God honors a humble spirit. Find Psalm 138:6 in your Bible and write it on the lines provided. Then write each of the words from that verse into the puzzle grid below. Memorize the verse so you always remember what God expects of you.



THE FOOLISHNESS OF MAKING EXCUSES

LESSON 177 → Luke 14:16-24

When Jeshuah refused the invitation, it was offered to another.



My Dear Brother:
I write in haste to you this day about a matter of great urgency to yourself and those of your region with whom you have dealings.

It has been brought to my attention that a certain nobleman, Lord Jehuel, will soon be in your area. He is apparently well known in royal circles. Furthermore, it has recently been made known to me that he is held in great regard by the ruler himself. Ah, that I had known this important fact sooner! But I must not get ahead of myself in relating this story to you.

I should begin by letting you know how I came to have knowledge of this man. About two months past, this Lord Jehuel came into our area and took up residence at a large dwelling some twelve furlongs from my home. Not having heard of this man before he arrived, I naturally was

not overly hasty to make his acquaintance. With my important position, I wanted to investigate and be sure he was an acceptable associate for those of my household.

With this intent, I wrote to several of my acquaintances in the area he was reported to be from, inquiring as to his character and various aspects of his background. I had not yet received a reply to these inquiries when one day, quite unexpectedly, a messenger came from Lord Jehuel inviting me to a great banquet to be held at his dwelling that very evening.

Being unsure of his qualifications for immediate acceptance into our society, I made an excuse. I informed the messenger that I had bought a piece of land and needed to go and inspect the property that evening. Of course, my excuse was poor. Who would be so foolish as to purchase a parcel of land without first inspecting it? But it was the only thing that came to my mind at the moment. Actually, I considered it of little import. The messenger accepted the excuse without comment and left my presence.

My brother, that was a foolhardy mistake. And I write you now in the earnest hope that you will not make the same error.

The following day when I went into the city to attend to some business, the marketplace was buzzing with news of the great event that had taken place the evening before. I first became aware that something unusual had happened when I stopped by the shop of Jacob, the shoemaker, to order a pair of sandals. His shop was full—and at that early hour of the morning! The people gathered around Jacob were congratulating him warmly on his “good fortune.” I had no idea what was going on, so I finally drew one man aside and inquired of him. He explained that Jacob had been invited to a great banquet the night before at the home of Lord Jehuel.



HELP ME NOT TO MAKE EXCUSES.

Come; for all things are now ready. — Luke 14:17



Of course, that caught my attention immediately since I, too, had been invited to the same banquet. But Jacob? I confess to feeling a bit surprised that he had been included. After all, a shoemaker does not usually move in our company. I later found that Jacob seemingly had received a last-minute invitation. They say that Lord Jehuel's messenger was out in the streets just moments before the banquet was to begin. Upon meeting Jacob, who was on his way to his home, the messenger insisted that Jacob come with him to the dinner.

Now for the climax to my story. Apparently the dinner itself was a lavish affair, the like of which has never been seen before in these parts. The food was superb and the surroundings unequalled. But, even more astonishing, after the dinner Lord Jehuel arose and began to speak. He explained that his mission was one ordered by the king—that he had been sent into cities to assist the people through gifts of money and materials. The purpose of his banquet was to get acquainted quickly with the local townsfolk and distribute the portion entitled to that area. He would then be moving on to another location in the kingdom.

The banquet that evening was the only occasion at which the distributions were made. It is my understanding that everyone present received gifts and funds—all completely unexpected. And, my brother, I missed this rare opportunity! How I have regretted my impulsive excuse! What it has cost me!

I write to you now in the hope that you will not make the same mistake I have made, for I know that our character and behavior are very much alike. If Lord Jehuel should, indeed, make an appearance in your locality, do not turn aside any invitation from him. I pray you, for your own good, learn from my mistake.

My most sincere greetings to you and all your household.

Your loving brother, Jeshuah

NO EXCUSES!

Many people make excuses for not serving God, but no excuse is good enough. If they continue making excuses they will receive no reward. The word list below is from our Bible text. Find each word in the word-find. Remember, they read up, down, across, backwards, and diagonally.

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

MAN
 BADE
 CITY
 COME
 HALT
 MANY
 OXEN
 POOR
 PRAY

ROOM
 WIFE
 YOKE
 ANGRY
 BLIND
 GREAT
 HOUSE
 LANES
 PROVE

READY
 TASTE
 BIDDEN
 CANNOT
 COMPEL
 FILLED
 GROUND
 HEDGES
 MAIMED

MASTER
 SERVANT
 SUPPER
 EXCUSES
 MARRIED
 QUICKLY
 STREETS
 HIGHWAYS

I'M GOING
 TO THE FEAST!
 ARE YOU?





THE LOST ONE

LESSON 178 → Luke 15:1-10

Alex was tired, but his concern led him to continue the search.

Alex was tired. He stood and stretched, his eyes gazing out across the rough hills surrounding him. The evening sun was just disappearing behind a rim of rock to the west, and there was a bitter bite to the wind that snatched at his cloak. It was time for them to head back to the sheepfold.

His eyes roamed over his flock. “Pasha,” he called to his sheep dog, “it is time now.” He looked around him once again, and all of a sudden a flash of alarm went through him! Where was Ariel?

“Ariel?” he called. “Come on Ariel, it’s time to go home now.” He waited a moment for the little lamb to show herself, but the restless swish of the wind and the movement of the sheep nearby were the only sounds that greeted his ears.

Could she be hiding? The thought flashed through his mind. She loved to play games . . . it would be just like her. Alex carefully surveyed the scrubby bushes nearby for a hint of her whereabouts, but there was no sign. He walked a few paces to the edge of the clearing where the sheep had been grazing and looked behind the outcropping of rock standing sentinel there.

But there was no sign of Ariel.

When did I see her last? Troubled thoughts raced through Alex’s mind. I remember noticing her running over by that patch of flowers just a bit ago, her sturdy little legs catching the gleam of the late afternoon sun.

“Pasha!” He turned quickly to his sheep dog. “You take the sheep back. I’ve got to find Ariel!” Pausing only long enough to see that the dog understood and was following his directions, he turned and started for the rocky slopes which surrounded the mountain meadow.



KEY
VERSE

JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
— John 10:11

“Ariel!” he called every few steps. “Where are you, Ariel?” Darkness was settling fast, and he had to hold down the anxiety that was rising in him. If it got dark . . . well, he couldn’t think about that.

Alex picked his way down into a shallow ravine, then up the other side, carefully checking by each rock and bush. Perhaps she had just wandered a little out of hearing distance. She was too little to have gone very far. Could she have gotten caught in a thicket somehow? The bushes were thick and awkward to step around and Ariel was so much smaller than he. But surely he would hear her cries for help if this were the case.

On and on Alex went, climbing steadily upward now as the cloak of night settled about him. His breath came in deep gulps, the coldness of the mountain air tearing at his lungs. Once he slipped on a loose stone, and even his shepherd’s crook didn’t save him from landing awkwardly on one knee. But, oblivious to the pain, he climbed on.

At last he reached the crest of the outcropping. Before him, cutting across to the north like a giant wound, ran a deep ravine. Alex moved cautiously along the edge, looking anxiously into the darkness below.

Suddenly . . . what was that noise? Could that be Ariel? Above the whistle of the wind the sound came again. Alex knelt at the edge of the ravine.

There she was! A pale blur seemingly caught in a thicket on a ledge about twenty feet below him. She was still now. Don’t move, Ariel, Alex begged silently. He didn’t dare call out to her, for he might startle her. The sheer drop was so near, so near to the little lamb! Death was waiting on those rocks below.

Moving with utmost speed, Alex untied the rope he kept around his waist. Looping one end around a gnarled tree, he tested it to make sure it would hold. Then he threw the other end over the edge and quickly began to lower himself



toward the still form caught below him. The rough rope tore at his hands but Alex did not feel the pain. He had to reach Ariel in time!

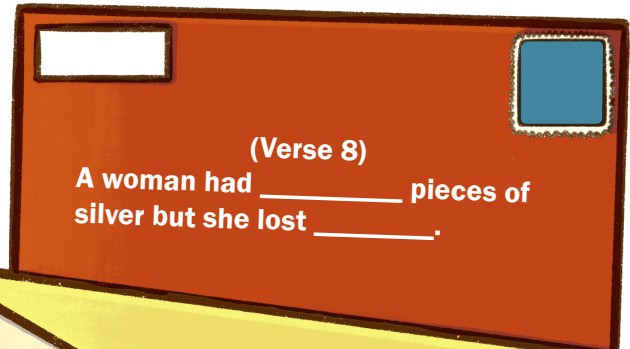
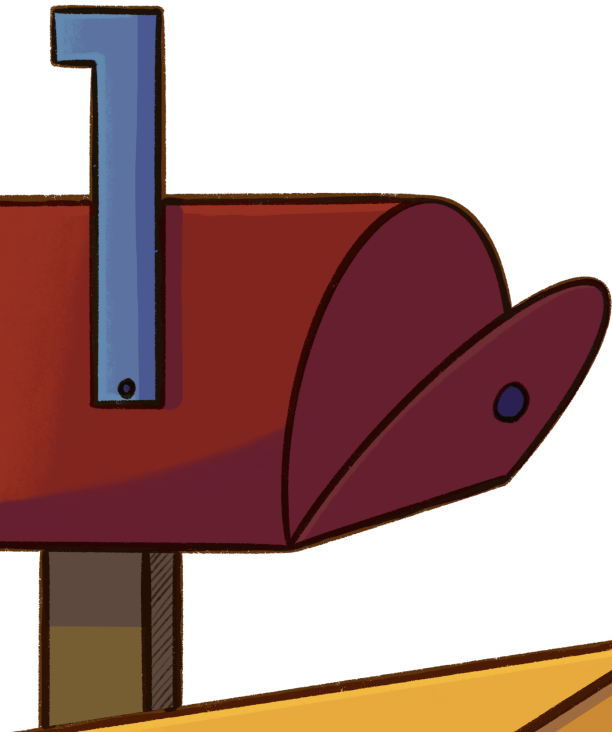
In moments he felt the ledge beneath his feet. Turning from the rock face in front of him, he spoke quietly. “Ariel, I’ve come to take you home. There is nothing to be afraid of now, my little one.”

Then, ever so tenderly, the tired shepherd gently freed his little lost lamb and gathered her into his arms.

SEEKING THE LOST

This activity is about lost things.

Below are several messages about the parables Jesus told, but part of each message was lost in the mail. Read the Bible text for this lesson and try to find the lost parts, then write them where they belong.



(Verse 8)

A woman had _____ pieces of silver but she lost _____.



(Verse 4)

A shepherd left _____ sheep behind to go and search for the lost one.



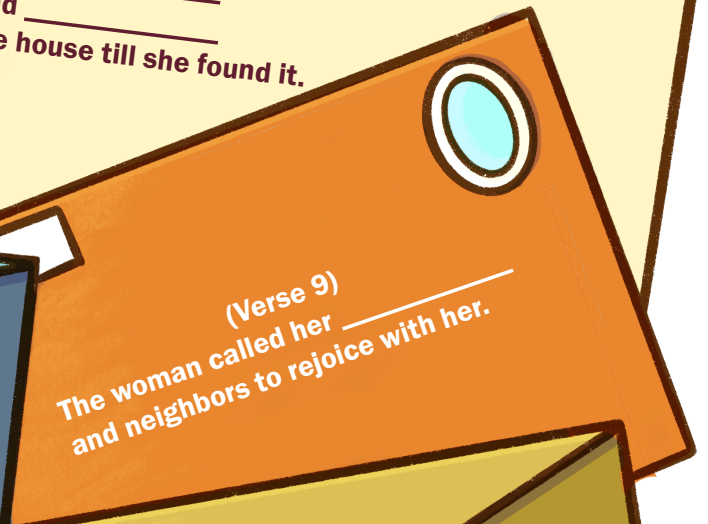
(Verse 8)

The woman lit a _____ and _____ the house till she found it.



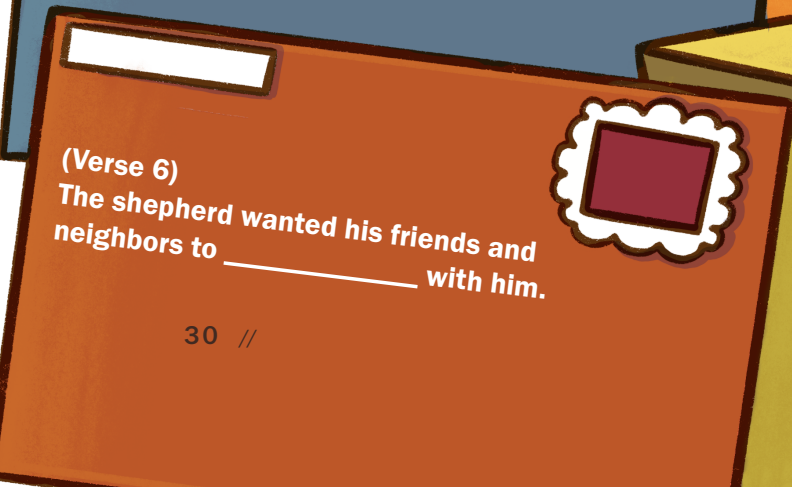
(Verse 5)

When the shepherd found the sheep he laid it on his _____.



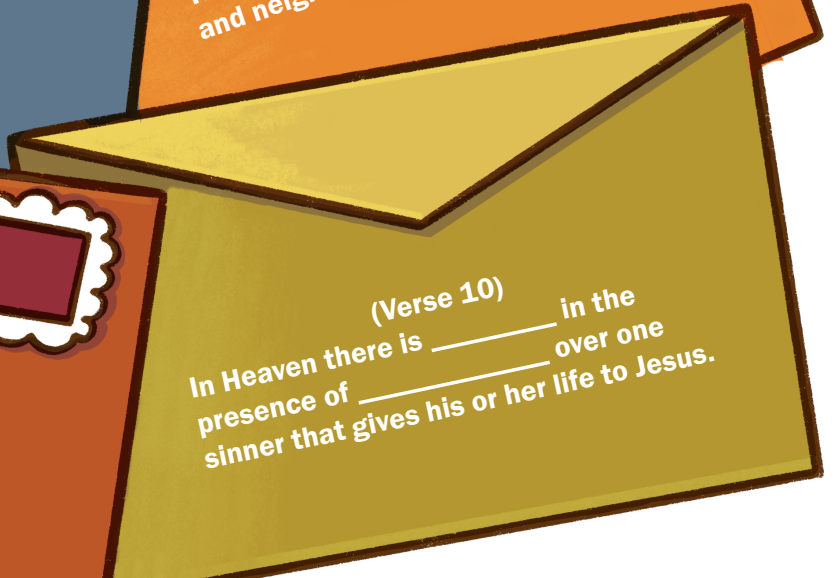
(Verse 9)

The woman called her _____ and neighbors to rejoice with her.



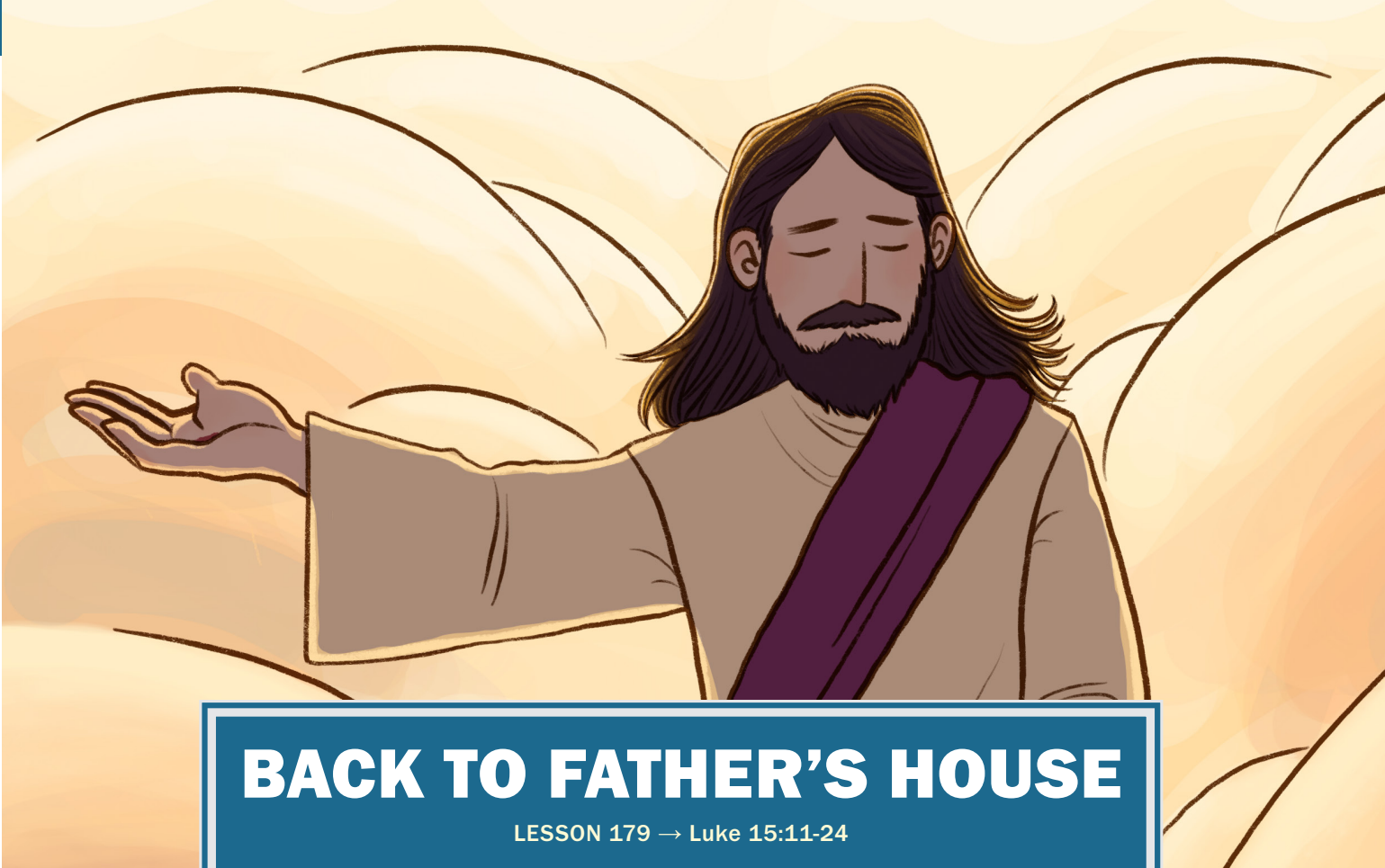
(Verse 6)

The shepherd wanted his friends and neighbors to _____ with him.



(Verse 10)

In Heaven there is _____ in the presence of _____ over one sinner that gives his or her life to Jesus.



BACK TO FATHER'S HOUSE

LESSON 179 → Luke 15:11-24

*Stories of three young men who finally turned
from their sin and rebellion.*

Are the stories we read in the Bible only about things that happened long ago? No, they're not! The very same kinds of things happen in our day. I'm going to tell you three stories that are a lot like the one we read in the Bible text for this lesson.

* * * * *

There was a knock at the door of the ramshackle garage that Peter called "home." He climbed off his little cot and made his way to the door.

It was his dad.

"How did you find me?" Peter asked. He had known that his father would invite him to come back to church if he located him, so he had been hiding away.

The drugs had seemed so much fun at first. He had tattoos on his shoulder to show that he really was a "man." It wasn't until his friends

turned on him and he felt his very life was in danger that he realized just how far in the wrong direction he had gone.

This teenager had been brought up to attend church and Sunday school. But now, when he looked in a mirror, he saw a skinny face with a scraggly beard, long hair, and a safety pin stuck through his ear so everybody would know how tough he was. The mirror didn't show the aching despair in his heart, though.

Was he ready to return home with his father?

"Take me to the county drug clinic. Maybe they can help me," was his answer. But even that didn't help Peter.

He had reached the end of his own resources, and just a short time later Peter did what he had always known he should do. He knelt and asked the Lord to save him.



KEY VERSE

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER LOVES US.

Come, and let us return unto the LORD. — Hosea 6:1

* * * * *

Cliff knew exactly what he wanted to be—a rock star. His goal was to be famous, with lots of friends and more money than he could ever spend. So, he left the church and home. He put everything he had into his new career. He spent hours practicing chords on his guitar, and made up his own rock songs.

It was strange, then, that he should end up playing in a greasy bar and shooting his veins full of drugs to keep going. Little by little, the money he was earning just seemed to disappear through his fingers.

After a while, even the people he thought were his buddies, the members of his rock band, told him to get lost. They didn't want him around anymore.

He found himself on the road with a suitcase, a guitar, a drug habit (which he didn't even have the money to support), and memories! Memories of where he could turn when there was no other way to go. He headed back home to Dad and Mom—and to the God of his childhood!

* * * * *

Ron's mother tried to keep him from going out that evening. So he knocked her down and stepped over her as he headed out the door. The world out there looked so much more exciting than going to church and Sunday school all the time.

It was great for a while. He ended up thousands of miles away from home, with a good job and friends who thought he was wonderful. There were parties, liquor, and always the drugs.

How was it, then, that he ended up finding himself down and out, pushing drugs to school kids to keep up his own habit? Moving around didn't help, he just couldn't get that "fresh start" he wanted—not until one night when he looked up into the starry sky and asked Jesus if He would please do something for him.

* * * * *

Made-up stories? No, they are all true.

Something I got out of a book or the newspapers? No, these are all people I know personally, and I could tell you about more.

These are happy stories. Why? Because Peter, Cliff, and Ron each finally realized the mistakes they had made and returned to the God they had turned their backs on, over and over again.

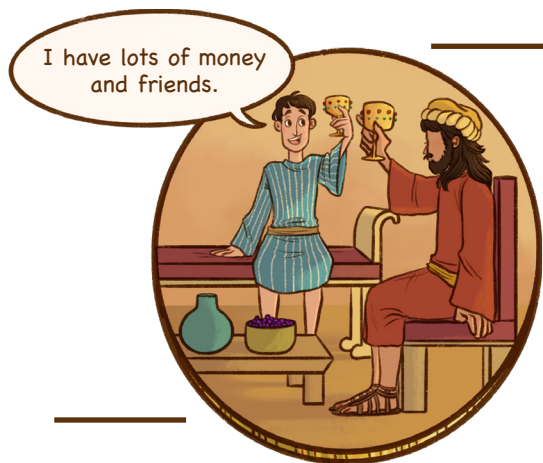
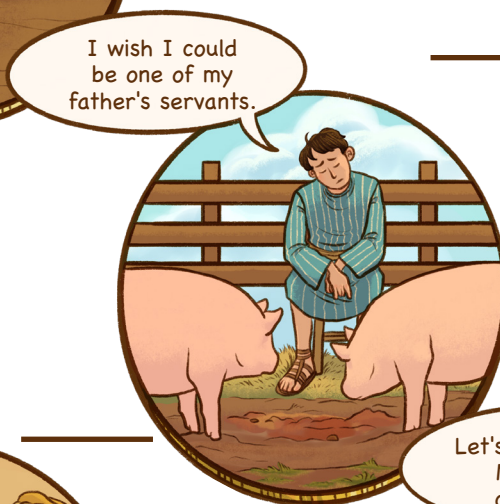
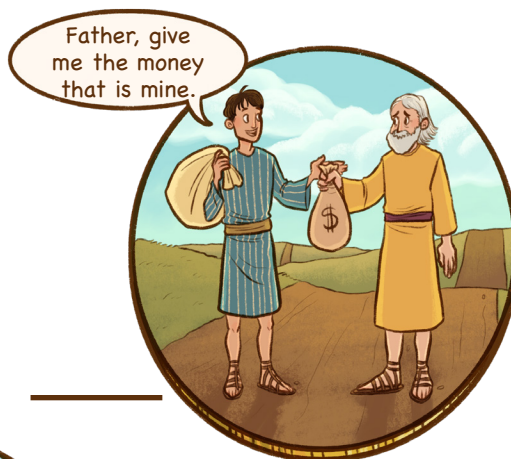
On the streets of major cities across our nation, you can find hundreds of runaway children who have no good direction in life. There are many different reasons young people can end up on the streets, but in every case, they desperately need help. I also know that Jesus offers hope for each of those young people, for you, for anyone who will turn to Him.

Jesus didn't tell the parable of the Prodigal Son just for the few people listening to Him that day, centuries ago in Jerusalem. He knew that in our day, too, the devil would still be telling boys and girls, "You don't know what you are missing! Forget about church and Sunday school. Go out and see what the real world is all about. Have some fun!"

If you could talk to Peter, Cliff, or Ron, they would tell you that was the same lie they fell for. It could have cost them their lives.

WE NEED JESUS

The coins below show the story of the Prodigal Son but they are not in the correct order. Read the Bible text (Luke 15:11-24), then number the pictures in the order they happened. There is a line beside each coin for you to write the number on.



"AND HE SPAKE
A PARABLE . . ."

WHICH PRINCE SHOULD BE KING?

LESSON 180 → Luke 16:1-13

Gawain and Merek had raced before, but this time their competition centered on a critical question.



A covey of quail scurried to higher ground as the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by the two princes racing on foot over the meadow, yelling and shouting like children as they went. The winter sun chased them into the woods where their shouts ceased as the brothers slowed and each caught his breath.

"I beat you!"

"Yes," gasped Gawain. "Yes, somehow you did, Merek. But next time it'll be different, you wait and see!"

Giving his brother a good-natured thump on the back, Gawain headed back toward the castle and his brother followed. Halfway, they mounted their horses, which had been tethered at the side of the meadow, and their conversation turned to the coming evening.

"What do you think Father wants to talk to us about?"

"Merek, I feel that he knows he is not long for this world. As sick as he's been the last three months, maybe . . . well, maybe he wants to make sure you're ready."

Merek stopped and looked at his brother, "You mean ready to be king, Gawain?"

"Of course, there are only the two of us, and you're a few minutes older than I. That's another race I didn't win!" The two princes laughed and continued the short ride to the castle which was home to them.

After dinner that night their father called them to his private chambers in the west tower.

"Well, my sons, no doubt your young minds have been very busy today trying to determine what it is I wanted to talk to you about." He paused and coughed deeply before continuing. "You're not unaware that I have been very sick, so sick in fact that I feel it necessary to set a few things in order so that my nobles will know how to proceed in the event of my death."

"I had assumed that you, Merek, as the first born, would receive the crown rather than your brother, even though you're but a few moments older than he. It was, however, brought to my attention recently that in the by-laws of the kingdom a different process may be followed in the case of twins. After making this a matter of great thought and prayer, I



KEY VERSE

JESUS, HELP ME TO DO MY BEST!

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
— 1 Corinthians 4:2

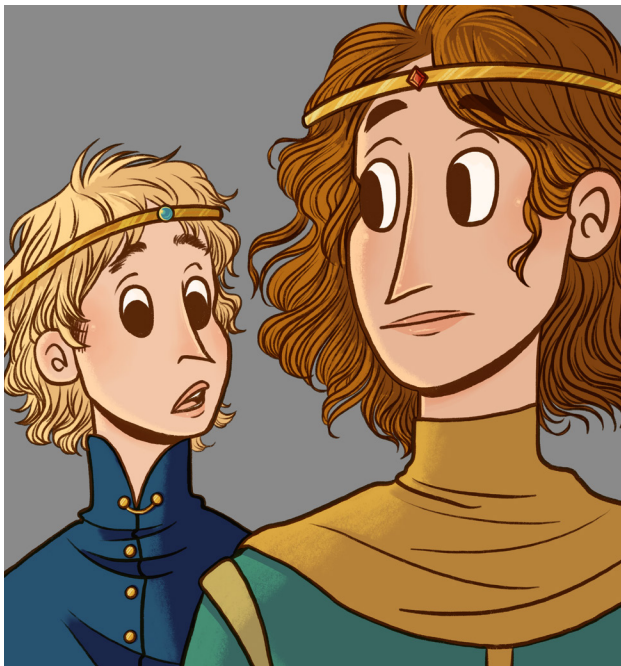
have elected to proceed according to this alternative course.”

The two young men looked briefly at each other and then back at their father.

“As king of this vast realm, one must bear tremendous responsibilities and much wisdom is needed. Therefore, in order to discover which of you is better fitted for the throne, I am going to ask a single searching question and then give you ten days to arrive at an answer. Your answers will be given in the council chambers before the five justices who must decide who will reign. The question, my sons, is this: What would be the guiding principle which would direct your ruling of the kingdom? Consider this question carefully.”

In the days that followed, Merek determined to talk to the people of the kingdom about what he could best do in order to please them and be an effective ruler. On this, he concluded, he would base his response to the question.

Meanwhile, Gawain kept to his room, spending a great deal of time consulting God in meditation and prayer.



The tenth day finally arrived and the princes’ written answers were delivered to the justices and the king who were waiting in the council chambers. Sending word that their decision would be delivered to the people of the realm on the following day at high noon, they began their deliberation. The chief justice stood and read aloud the two responses to the question.

“Prince Merek’s response: ‘The guiding principle which would direct me in the ruling of this kingdom would be that I must try to please the people. I have determined that as ruler, I would have no right to live for myself, but rather for the good and betterment of the people over whom I would reign.’”

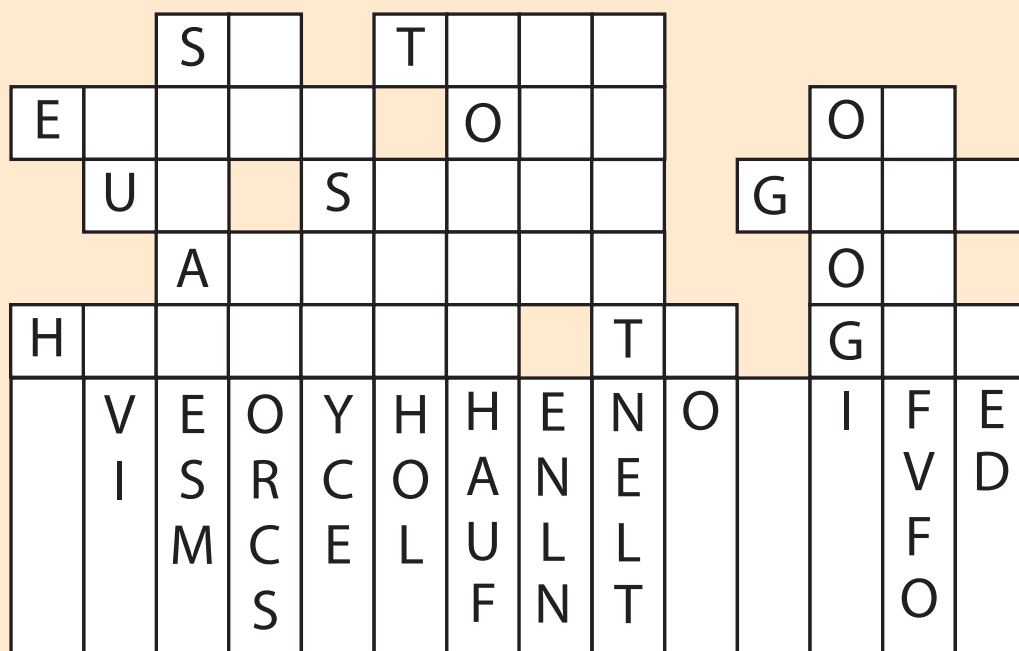
“Prince Gawain’s response: ‘The guiding principle which would direct me in the ruling of this kingdom would be that I am accountable to God for the privileges and responsibilities He has seen fit to give me. As a ruler, I would purpose to conduct all the affairs of the kingdom in a manner that would please Him and bring honor to His Name.’”

The next day, when the appointed time was come, an expectant hush came over the crowd gathered in the castle courtyard. The king, accompanied by his two sons who had not yet been told the decision, greeted his subjects. He spoke solemnly. “I know you have been awaiting the decision about to be announced. I hereby proclaim that it is the decision of the justices that Prince Gawain shall ascend the throne before his brother. His answer reveals that he understands that to both rich and poor, small and great, are given short life spans in which we are to labor carefully and obediently before our Creator, before the One we shall all someday give an account for the blessings given us.”

Merek managed a smile and then spoke in his brother’s ear, “Well, little brother, you were right. You won the next race.” He bowed to his brother, and then they gave each other a hug and stepped forward to greet the people waiting to hail their future king.



WE WANT TO _____ GOD.
(LASEEP)



THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTION

LESSON 181 → Luke 20:9-19

The officials chose to discredit the messenger rather than heed the warning.



Amelia, here's an article you might be able to use in your Social Studies class. Didn't you say it had to be related to nuclear energy?"

Amelia looked up from the computer and nodded. "Yes, what did you find, Dad?"

"Well, the headline reads, 'Rayburn Claims Warning Given of Potential Nuclear Disaster.' I didn't read the whole article, but apparently the physicist Rayburn says that some weeks before the nuclear explosion at that plant in Maryland last week, he had warned the officials in charge, of the potential danger."

Amelia looked interested. "That seems hard to believe. If they had been warned, surely they could have done something so the explosion wouldn't have happened."

Her dad nodded in agreement. "You would certainly think so. Anyway, here's the article. Why don't you skim through it and see if it would do."

Amelia took the laptop from her dad and scrolled further down the article. She read:

"Noted physicist, Dr. Daniel Rayburn, revealed at a press conference Wednesday in Washington, D.C., that he had discussed with top-level officials the potential danger of an explosion at the Maryland Nuclear Power Center. The discussion reportedly took place some weeks prior to the violent blast last week at the center which left eighteen dead and fifty-four injured.

"The possible danger was first brought to my attention by a group of engineers who had been consulted regarding a considered expansion of the plant,' Dr. Rayburn announced to a group of reporters gathered in his hotel lobby. 'They informed me that two representatives of their group had spoken with top officials regarding what they saw as a hazard. Both of these



DON'T TURN HIM AWAY!

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. — John 1:11

representatives were severely reprimanded and their findings ignored.

“The engineers appealed to me to go before the officials at the project, and once again attempt to present their findings. Upon examining their report, I concluded there was indeed grave danger and agreed to do what I could.

“However, my efforts proved less than fruitful. Not only was the presentation rejected, but the officials made an attempt to discredit me. They contacted Dr. Geoffrey Gorton, presiding officer of the President’s Council on Nuclear Energy, and demanded that I be removed from my position on the council. An investigation is still being held regarding their accusations.”

Amelia looked up from the laptop. “Dad, this is absolutely incredible! I can’t believe that intelligent men would actually ignore the warnings of an expert. Why, because of his position on the Council on Nuclear Energy, Dr. Rayburn had a right to go in there and inform them of the danger. He actually had a responsibility to do so!”

Her dad nodded soberly. “I agree with you, Amelia. Possibly they rejected his warning because they felt the engineering error he pointed out was in some way their fault.”

Amelia printed the article. “Well, for sure I’m going to take this article to class tomorrow. I’d like to hear what Mr. Williams has to say about it. We always spend a little time discussing the articles brought to class, and this one is just unbelievable.”

Amelia’s dad regarded his daughter thoughtfully. “You know, I was thinking while you read that article how much this incident is like a parable that I read in the Bible just last night. Do you remember the story about the wicked husbandmen? They rejected the servants of the master who came to receive the fruit of the vineyard. When the man who owned the vineyard sent his own son, they actually killed him!”

“Yes, I remember that story,” Amelia said.

Rayburn Claims Warning Given of Potential Nuclear Disaster

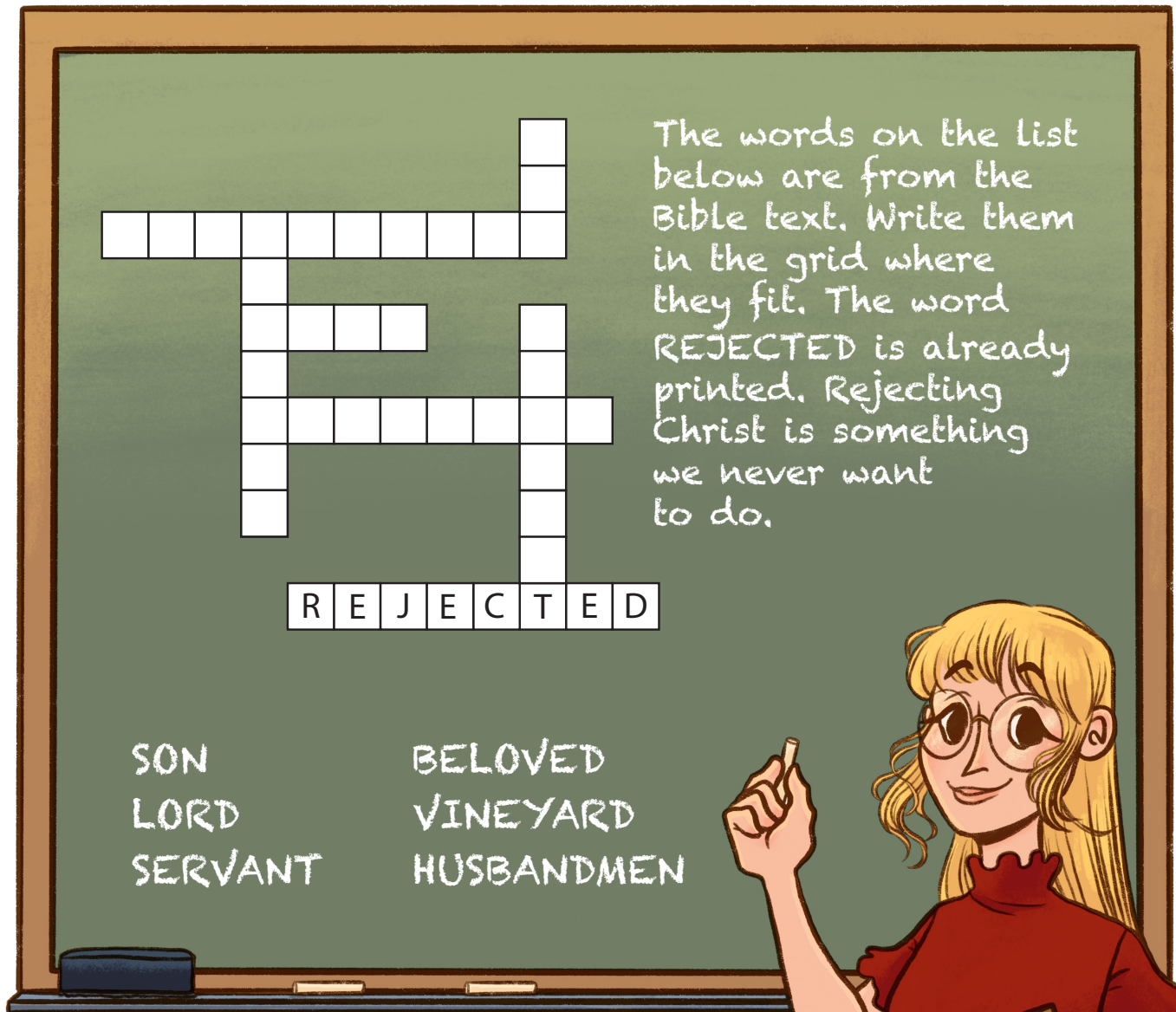
Noted physicist, Dr. Daniel Rayburn, revealed at a press conference Wednesday in Washington, D.C., that he had discussed with top-level officials the potential danger of an explosion at the Maryland Nuclear Power Center. The discussion reportedly took place some weeks prior to the violent blast last week at the center which left eighteen dead and fifty-four injured.

“That Bible parable illustrates the fact that God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to this world. Jesus brought a way for the people to find peace and forgiveness for their sins. But was He accepted?”

“No,” Amelia answered quietly. “He was rejected too. And they even killed Him.” She paused, then continued, “I guess it never made the headlines when Jesus was rejected. This nuclear disaster is awful—eighteen people dead and fifty-four injured—but the effects of the rejection of Christ were a lot more lasting.”

In the quietness of the living room, Amelia’s dad nodded his agreement. “You’re right, Amelia. You’re right.”

**DON'T TURN HIM
AWAY**



QUARTER REVIEW

LESSON 182 → Review Quarter Texts

I *Imagine for a moment that you are deep in the jungle, far away from civilization as you know it. Seated around you in the flickering firelight is a group of natives—people who have no understanding or knowledge of your way of life. But they are fascinated with every detail concerning it.*

“Tell us, Teacher!” they say again and again. “Explain to us. Teach us about your way of life. Help us to understand.” But how can you explain an electric light to one who has never seen a light bulb? How can you describe a car to one whose only way of travel has been a crude cart pulled by a water buffalo?

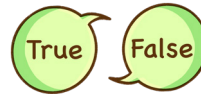
You find the solution in a parable. You compare the unknown light bulb to the wooden torches they hold in their hands. You liken a car to a cart which moves without any animal to pull it. And little by little, they form a picture in their minds. They begin to understand.

Jesus chose to teach by parables—a comparison between earthly things which men knew of and spiritual things with which they were not so familiar—so the people who heard Him and wanted to know the truth would understand. Our lessons this quarter have covered some of the illustrations He gave.

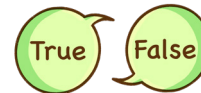
Circle “True” if the following statements are correct. Circle “False” if the statements are incorrect.



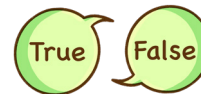
The creditor had two debtors who owed him different amounts.



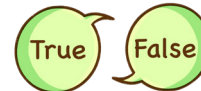
The one knocking did receive even though he kept on knocking.



The parable about the choice of rooms at a wedding feast illustrated the importance of humility.



The shepherd rejoiced over finding the one sheep that was lost.



When a servant came to the owner of the vineyard, he was beaten.

Pretend that you are the father of the Prodigal Son. Write the opening paragraph of a letter to your son.



JESUS' PARABLES HELP ME UNDERSTAND.

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them. — Matthew 13:34

Draw a line between the parable in the column on the left and the key word of that parable in the column on the right.

Two Debtors

Receptivity

Sower and Seed

Excuses

Fig Tree

Repentance

Great Supper

Rejection

Prodigal Son

Forgiveness

Wicked Husbandmen

Fruitfulness

Complete the following sentences.

_____ are those servants whom the Lord finds watching when He returns.

It is impossible for a man to serve _____.

The seed that fell on _____ withered away.

The man who planted a vineyard looked for fruit for _____ years on his fig tree.

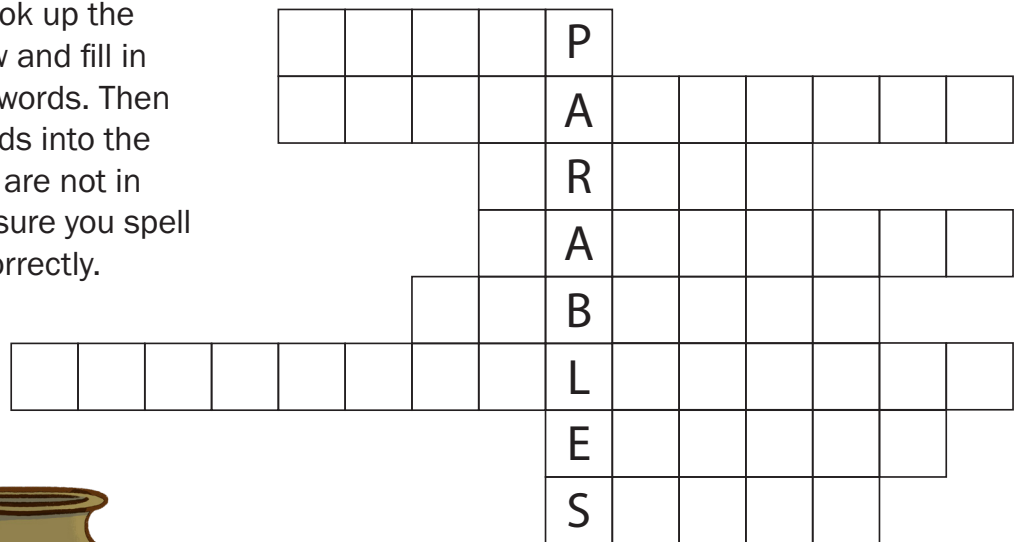
One man who was invited to the great supper said he had bought a piece of ground; another said he had bought _____.

Read the following summary. Then fill in the blanks by unscrambling the words after each line.

The _____ (shaPreies) and scribes complained because Jesus ate with sinners. So He told them the parable of a man who had one _____ (dherund) sheep. When he discovered that one was lost, he went into the _____ (dersnwisle) to look for it. When he found it, he laid it on his _____ (huldsoers) and carried it home. Then he called his friends and _____ (bsnorgehi) and told them to _____ (cijeroe) with him because the lost sheep was _____ (dofun).

QUARTER REVIEW

Christ spoke in parables so that people who heard Him could understand him better. The acrostic to the right is about parables. Look up the verses below and fill in the missing words. Then fit those words into the puzzle. They are not in order so be sure you spell the words correctly.



“Give an account of thy _____.” (Luke 16:2)

“There was a certain creditor which had two _____.” (Luke 7:41)

“For I have found my _____ which was lost.” (Luke 15:6)

“A _____ went out to sow his seed.” (Luke 8:5)

“I will avenge her, lest by her _____ she weary me.” (Luke 18:5)

“Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find _____.”
(Luke 12:37)

“And if it bear _____, well.” (Luke 13:9)

“And they all with one consent began to make _____.” (Luke 14:18)



Unroll the pages of history . . .

. . . and meet some
famous Bible characters.

READ *THE ANSWER* NEXT QUARTER!

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