

Name: _____



FAKE NEWS

A Six-Week Series

4G Series - 2022 - cbcfamily.net/4g
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Introduction to the series: *Fake News*

It seems our headlines lately are full of accusations about Fake News. But historically, there has always been plenty of “truths” that were later disproved. There was a time when some sicknesses were believed to be caused by evil spirits and doctors would drill a hole in the patient’s skull to release them. Tapeworms were once sold as a means for weight loss. The trouble is this – the “truths” that we as humans create are often flawed and constantly changing.

On the other hand, God’s truth never changes, it remains true through all time. God’s truth provides a strong and stable foundation upon which to build our lives. Join us for this “Fake News” series as we explore the lies the world tells us, and how they differ from God’s Truth.

Bishop Helsley,
4G Guide Contributor

Introduction To The 4G Guide

GATHER – GOD – GROUP – GIVE

It's important that we *GATHER* each week as a church family. Still, God has so much more for us! He wants us to take what He's teaching and apply it to our lives. This is the heart of the 4G Guides. These guides are written to encourage you in your personal *GOD TIME* and in your small *GROUPS*. They are designed to help you understand what God is teaching and apply it to your daily life. Understanding and application allows you to then take what God is teaching and *GIVE* it to others.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the *Christian Standard Bible* (CSB Text Edition: 2020).



USING THE 4G GUIDE

Each week is divided into four sections:



Gathering Time

On Sunday mornings we gather (in person or online) to worship, hear God’s message, and be challenged to apply His word. You’ll find the weekly Gathering Time sermon outlines in this booklet.

If you need to join us online, go to cbcfamily.net and click “Watch Live”



Group Time

We learn from one another! 4G Groups meet to dig deeper into the weekly material. Group Time outlines are simple enough for anyone to facilitate. In addition, links to short video guides, sermon recaps, and other helpful resources are posted on our 4G web page.*



God Times

Personal worship is vital to the Christian walk, so we’ve provided five daily devotionals for each weekly topic. This is your time to meet with God one-on-one in a guided devotional format. Once your God Time is finished, pray, seeking direction for the day.



Family Time

Family worship glorifies God. To help, we have created simple Family Time devotionals. In addition, to help get the conversations flowing, video or story guide links may be posted on our 4G web page.*

* 4G web page: CBCFamily.net/4g





Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Fake News ... I Am A Good Person

I Am A _____

Is My Good Enough _____?

Mark 10:17-22

Matthew 19:21



We Are Not As _____ As We _____ We Are

• We All Fall _____

Romans 3:12

Romans 3:23

• Then Jesus _____ Up

Romans 6:23

Romans 5:8

• _____ And _____

Romans 10:9-10

Don't _____ Up, _____ Up!

Lined area for gathering notes.



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page for 64 for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

LOOK BACK:

Point: A saved life should be an obedient life.

- Which character in Luke 7:36-50 did you identify with? Why?

Question: Think back to a time when you participated in a competitive season (sport or otherwise). How motivated would you have been if your coach told you your performance was “good enough?”

LOOK UP: Watch this week’s video on the 4G web page.

Recap: While we may not profess to be perfect, most people think they are a good person. The problem with that is, in human terms, it’s a relative scale. We can always find someone worse, but we can always point to someone better. So when it comes to heaven, where is the line? Is our perceived good, good enough?

The truth is, on our own, the line is unobtainable. This is what Jesus is trying to explain to the Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10:17-22. Based upon the basic rules for human interaction (Commandments 5-10), the young man was performing above the line. His performance was “good enough.” But unfortunately, his performance for godly interaction (Commandment 1) was below the line. His stuff was more important than his relationship with, or humility to, God.

LOOK IN: Discussion

If you’ve learned the *Three-Circles* evangelism tool, you know it defines sin as, “choosing our way over God’s ways.” Another tool is the *One-Verse* tool. Watch this *One-Verse* video and then practice sharing it with one another. (CBCFamily.net/go2)



- How does One-Verse define sin? Is anyone “good enough?”

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: We are not as good as we think we are. We all fall short.

Don’t Measure Up, GIVE UP

Continue the story of the Rich Young Ruler. Read Mark 10:23-26.

In the first century, wealth was seen as a result or measurement of someone’s blessings. And blessings a result of being “good enough” to be saved. Do we still have this view today? Give an example.

Continue further; read Mark 10: 27-29.

How high is the Jesus-bar for “good enough?”

What are the promised blessings for following Jesus?

Memorize the “Romans Road”

- Romans 3:12: *All have turned away; all alike have become worthless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.*
- Romans 3:23: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
- Romans 5:8: *But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
- Romans 6:23: *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- Romans 10:9-10: *If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.*

God Time Day 1: I Am a Good Person



Read Romans 3:23.
For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Most people believe they are a good person. This assumption is typically made by comparing ourselves to others. But if God is the one who judges sin, then we should be living according to His standards. Let's give it a try.



- Have you ever told a lie? If so, that makes you a liar.
- Have you ever stolen something, no matter how small? Doesn't that make you a thief?
- Have you ever looked at someone with lust? According to Jesus, to do so makes you an adulterer.
- Have you ever treated anything or anyone as more important than God? Doesn't that make you an idol worshipper?

Do you still believe you are a good person?



Pray for God's mercy and give thanks for His forgiveness.

God Time Day 2: Is My Good Enough Good Enough?



Read Mark 10:17-18.
¹⁷ As [Jesus] was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone."

Let's look at that last statement by Jesus.

Underline the answer: who does Jesus say is good?

Circle the answer: according to Jesus, who is the standard by which we should compare ourselves to judge if we are good or not?



So, if you compare yourself to God (since He is the standard), do you still believe you are a good person?

We need to realize that our good is not good enough, yet God still loves us and has provided "good news" for us.

God Time Day 3: We Are Not As Good As We Think We Are



Read Mark 10:19-21.
¹⁹ You know the commandments: Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother." ²⁰ [The man] said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth." ²¹ Looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, "You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

In this conversation, Jesus lays out some basic expectations of goodness that everyone should follow. Based on the man's response, he would probably be considered a good person. But according to Jesus, there was still a problem.



What three things did Jesus ask the man to do in verse 21?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now, read the man's response in Mark 10:22.
But he was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

Underline the man's reaction.

This man was a great follower of the law, but his possessions were his god. Remember the First Commandment: "Do not have other gods besides me." (Exodus 20:3)

Many people can follow the rules, and Christians do not have a monopoly on acts of kindness, charity, and compassion. We might think, it would be so easy if God would simply give us a checklist of dos and don'ts.

But God is calling us to more than being a follower of rules. God asks us to follow Him by having a relationship with Him, allowing Him to guide, lead, and grow us into being His people.



When we surrender to God's will and allow Him to be Lord over our lives, we end up following the rules for the right reasons.

God Time Day 4: Hope for the "Not Good Enough"



For the past few days, we have been taking an honest look at the fact that none of us are good enough. If we are going to find a solution, we must fully understand the problem.



Read Romans 3:12.
All have turned away; all alike have become worthless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.

So, the problem is sin. The problem is that no one is good enough. No matter how nice of a person we are, and no matter how well we follow the rules, everyone has turned away from God at some point. So, what is the solution?



Read Romans 5:8.
But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Accepting the truth that we will never be good enough can make us feel helpless. AND THAT IS THE POINT. While we could never be good enough, God gave us Jesus to live the life we could not. Jesus was good enough for us all.

So, if Jesus saves us, what is asked of us?



Read Romans 10:9-10
⁹ *If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
¹⁰ *One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.*

The salvation we have in Jesus is a gift from God.

Accepting that gift takes two steps:

- 1) **Confession:** Admit your sin and failures to God, and publicly admit your relationship with God.
- 2) **Belief:** Trust that Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient and trust in God's will for your life.



Have you decided to accept the gift of salvation and follow Jesus? If not, you can watch this to find out more.



God Time Day 5: Don't Measure Up, Give Up



The story of Easter is not about cute bunnies, eggs, or decorated baskets. The Easter story is all about this truth:

We are all sinners and incapable of saving ourselves. So, God sent Jesus to live the life we could not. He died on the cross and rose from the grave defeating death. And if we trust Him, put all our faith in Him, He gives us a new life.

A struggle many people have with the gift of salvation is that it seems too easy. We want God to give us a to-do list so that we can earn our salvation – because that allows us to feel in control. But let's be honest, when we are in control, we tend to make a mess of things.

God asks us to do just one thing: Surrender control to Him.



Read Proverbs 3:5-6.
⁵ *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding;* ⁶ *in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight.*

When we surrender to God, we give up trying to be good enough, we give up trying to be in control, and we give up living our lives in the ways that have led us into sin. When we give up, we surrender to God's will for our lives and trust Him to lead us into new life.



Write down two areas in your life where you struggle to surrender total control to God.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

If you have asked Jesus to be Lord of your life, write down two things God is asking you to do in obedience to His will.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

If you have not asked Jesus to be Lord of your life, watch this three-minute video.



What is God asking you to surrender?



Family Time



Main Idea:

Jesus Is Who Makes Me Good



Key Verse: Deuteronomy 6:5

Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.



Set it Up:

If someone showed up to our house with one of those super big checks and told us we just won \$50,000, what do you think we should do with the money? (Take turns answering this question.)



Family Discussion:

Ask: “If the center of the home is where we hang out the most, where is the center of our home?”

Ask: “What is your favorite place in our house? Why?”

When we are together as a family, we should treat each other the same way we are told to love God. What does the key verse say about how we are to love God? Is it always easy to love each other this way?

If we love God completely, then it will show in how we treat one another, in the way we talk to each other, and in the way we do things for each other.

The only way we can do this is by living for Jesus. Jesus is the only one who can make us good enough to do these things.



Activity:

Get out a piece of butcher paper (regular copy paper will also work). You will also need pencils, rulers, and crayons or markers.

Say: “Each of us is going to design our dream home. It can be anything you want it to be, but you only have four minutes to draw a picture of it. Everyone ready? Go.”

When the time is up, say: “You now have thirty seconds to describe your dream house to the rest of the family.” Take turns describing your drawing.

What makes a house become a home? (List things like love, patience, joy, happiness, respect, etc.)

Living for Jesus demands all those things of us and more. We need to remember that we cannot do these things on our own. We need to focus on Jesus and love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind.





Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Fake News ...
Follow Your Dreams To Happiness

_____ God To Your _____

Numbers 14:1-5

- Your _____ Will Always Lead You To A _____

- _____ Are An _____ For _____ To Grow

Numbers 14:11

- _____ Leads To The _____

Joshua 1:6-7

_____ God To His Promised Land

Matthew 6:33-34

- _____ To God _____

- _____ In This _____

- Know _____ You Are

- _____ When He Says _____



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page for 64 for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

LOOK BACK:

Point: We are not as good as we think we are. We all fall short.

- Share the Romans Road.

Question: When you were in grade school, what did you want to be when you grew up? Why do you think you wanted to be that?

LOOK UP: Watch this week’s video on the 4G web page.

Recap: We may have been convinced by Disney that if we just “wish upon a star” our dreams will come true. Successful celebrities keep telling us to, “just follow your dreams.” But the reality is that any pursuit of a dream takes work and is going to require overcoming obstacles/giants along the way. But here’s the kicker: even if we achieve our dreams, it doesn’t mean we’ll be happy.

The key is not to follow our dreams, but to follow God to the dreams He has for us. The giants will still come, and when they seem undefeatable, they are an opportunity for our faith to grow and for us to rely on God. Such faith will lead us to the ultimate success and place of eternal happiness – God’s promised land (eternity with Him). To do this we must look to God first, trust Him in the moment, know who we are, and go when God says go!

LOOK IN: Discussion

Read Matthew 6:25

- What do people stress or dream about having today that they might consider essential, essential as food and clothing?

Read Matthew 6:33

- What does it mean for us to “seek first the *kingdom of God and his righteousness*?” How would you explain it to a new believer?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: Happiness doesn’t come by pursuing our dreams – it comes by pursuing God’s.

Pursue God To His Promised Land

1. Look to God first!

Are you giving God your best or are you holding back? How could you step up your game?

- Daily: _____

- Weekly: _____

- Monthly: _____

2. Trust in the moment.

What is one worry you need to let go of right now and just trust God for both where you are and what you are called to do?

3. Know who you are.

What gifts, talents, and resources do you possess that you could be using for God’s kingdom?

Need help? Download the *Personality and Spiritual Gifts Assessments* from our website’s Go2 page or pick up a *Remarkably and Wondrously Made* booklet at your campus Foyer.



4. Go when God says Go!

God Time Day 1: Don't Follow Your Dreams, Follow God



This "Fake News" series is about things we are told, and often believe, that are not true. We began last week by looking at the lie, "I am a good person." This week, we look at yet another lie.

We have all heard some saying related to this, "Follow your dreams." You may have been told, "You can be anything you want if you just work hard and pursue your dreams." It sounds nice when you're a child. Who hasn't dreamed about being a famous singer or sports star, only to discover that a lack of singing ability or physical talent is a rather large obstacle to overcome? (Ever watched American Idol auditions?)

But, while OUR dreams can be flawed, mistaken, or wrong, following GOD'S dreams for our lives is always a good idea.

Take the nation of Israel for example. The Hebrew people lived in Egypt for 400 years, the last 100 years as slaves. The people cried out to God for deliverance, and God answered. He unleashed plagues on Egypt, and the Hebrew people were set free. God blessed the people with miraculous assistance along their journey, and after a few months, they arrived at the land God promised to them.



But the land was occupied by giants.

Read Numbers 14:2-4.



² All the Israelites complained about Moses and Aaron, and the whole community told them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to die by the sword? Our wives and children will become plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴ So they said to one another, "Let's appoint a leader and go back to Egypt."



Here is the true news: Following God's will does not mean there will be no obstacles (giants) along the way. Write down two big obstacles you have encountered in your life.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

God Time Day 2: Giants and Growing Faith

Reread Numbers 14:2-4 from yesterday.



So, the Hebrew people are led out of slavery in Egypt, struggle through the desert, see miracles of all types along the way, and when they arrive at the Promised Land, they give up. Sounds silly, but the truth is that many of us do this all the time. We face trials of all kinds, but the moment we encounter an obstacle that seems too big to overcome, we want to escape back to our former life. After all, it may not be good or healthy, but at least it is familiar.



Read James 1:2-4.

² Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

Underline the word "trials."

Circle the word "joy."



According to verse 3, what does "the testing of your faith" produce?

Too often, people ask the question, "Why does God let bad things happen to me?" Unfortunately, the question is flawed. There are times when things we experience in life may be painful, uncomfortable, and possibly require a great deal of effort to go through, but that doesn't mean that the experience is "bad."

As we go through life, we are going to experience trials and hardships of all kinds. If we spend our time and energy hiding away from or avoiding these experiences, then whenever we encounter an obstacle that cannot be avoided, our faith will be too weak to carry us through.



Share with someone about a struggle you've experienced that ended up deepening your faith and trust in God.

WEEK 2: FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS TO HAPPINESS

God Time Day 3: Faith Leads to the Promised Land



After that first incident at the Promised Land (reread Numbers 14:2-4 from Day 1 as a reminder of the first attempt to enter the land), the Hebrew people wandered in the desert for 40 years. An entire generation has died off, and with Joshua in charge, God is now leading the people back into the Promised Land a second time. He gives the people these instructions.



Read Joshua 1:6-7.

⁶ *“Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their ancestors to give them as an inheritance. ⁷ Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go.*

Underline both times it says to be *“strong and courageous.”*



Share with someone today about a time when you trusted God and experienced a blessing for it.

God Time Day 4: Pursue God to His Promised Land



There are people who will tell you that if you are faithful to God, He will bless you with whatever you want. Fake News or truth?



Read Matthew 6:33-34.

³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. ³⁴ Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Underline what we are supposed to seek in verse 33.

Seeking first God’s kingdom and righteousness means that our desires and dreams will be for God’s will to come true in our life.



The truth is, if you are faithful to God, He will bless you with whatever you want, because what you want is what He wants: more of His kingdom and righteousness.

God Time Day 5: Four Practical Ways to Follow God



God calls us into a relationship with Him. That relationship is intended for God to be our Lord and for us to follow Him. Therefore, troubles come when we pursue our dreams and then expect God to follow our lead by flexing His divine muscles to give us what we want.

Here are four practical steps you can take to help you follow God’s will and pursue His desires:

1) **Look to God First:** Reread Matthew 6:33 from Day 4.

Begin by asking God to reveal His will to you and trust that He will answer. While you wait, give Him your best and trust that He will use your efforts for His purposes.

2) **Trust In This Moment:** Reread Matthew 6:34 from Day 4.

We are going to experience ups and downs in life. Too often we make plans for some distant, imagined future only to be filled with anxiety when life does not go according to our plan. Even if you don’t know how, simply trust and know that God is in control and will guide you as you need.

3) **Know Who You Are:**

Psalm 139:14. *I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well.*

God has given you gifts, talents, abilities, and experiences. Trust God use them for His kingdom. Take the Spiritual Gifts Survey!



and

4) **Go When He Says Go** (or Stop When He Says Stop):

Listen intently to God’s voice and be prepared to respond and adjust when you hear it.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*



Family Time

Main Idea:

Following Our Dreams To Happiness Will Not Bring True Happiness



Key Verse: Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.



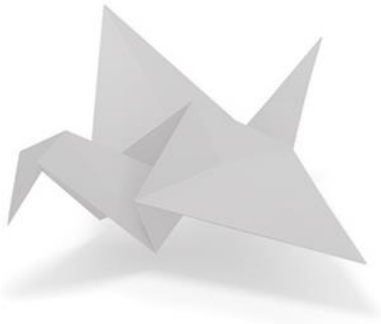
Set it Up:

You will each need a piece of paper before watching the video. Say: "Today we are going to watch a video that shows us how to make a paper crane. Make sure to follow the directions really well." Show video.



Watch: Week 2 Video

This week's video is on the Playlist of the CBC YouTube channel or go to cbcfamily.net and click on 4G Guides for the video link.



Talk about it:

How did everyone's crane turn out? Do you think we all followed the directions given to us by the video?

If we missed a step on the video, we were not able to complete the crane properly.

Some people think that our faith in God is like watching a video and thinking we can make something perfect the first time. We try doing it and hope that it is going to work out. But God is like the guy who is leading the video. He has done it so many times it is easy for him to make the crane. God knows how to get the best out of our faith.

Read Hebrews 11 to hear about many different people who completely trusted God.



Activity:

Grab a chair and have one of the kids hover just above the chair as if they are trying to sit, but afraid to put any weight on it.



Would it be hard to stay in this position after a while?

As hard as it is to "half-way" trust in the chair, we cannot halfway trust in God.

Having faith in God means we completely trust Him to lead us in the right direction. It goes beyond just believing with our minds; it means being willing to pray to Him and trust Him to do what is right.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Fake News ...
Only God Can Judge Me

Our _____ Reveals Our _____

John 15:5-6

_____ At Your _____

Galatians 5:19-25

_____ Your _____

- Start _____
- _____
- Live _____

WEEK 3: ONLY GOD CAN JUDGE ME



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page for 64 for directions)

Y / N Y / N _____

_____ _____

LOOK BACK:

Point: *Happiness doesn't come by pursuing our dreams – it comes by pursuing God's.*

- What dream is God calling you to? Can our group help?

Question: Ever heard the saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree?" Was it used positively or negatively?

LOOK UP: Watch this week's video on the 4G web page.

Recap: In Genesis chapter one, we learn one of nature's truths: things beget their kind. As Jesus teaches His disciples in the upper room, the same is true in the spiritual world. Jesus tells us that if we remain in Him, we will bear His fruit.

But how do we know we are "in" Him? He tells us we will know by looking at our fruit, and Paul gets pretty specific about what that looks like in Galatians chapter five.

So, what can we do to bear good or better fruit? Start pruning yourself of anything leading to bad fruit. Repent of bad habits and bad choices that move us away from Jesus. Start living the way God intended us to live. Make new choices and start new habits that move us closer to Jesus.

LOOK IN: Discussion

Read Galatians 5:19-21. Make a list of these "works of the flesh." Then go around the group and share instances you've seen of any of these in the last 24 hours, in person or on any type of media.

Read Galatians 5:22-23. Make a list of the "fruit of the Spirit." Then go around the group and share instances you've seen of any of these in the last 24 hours, in person or on any type of media.

Where should we be spending our time?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *Stop filling your life with fruit killers and start bearing good fruit.*

Your Fruit Reflects Your Heart

Read John 15:1-8

Verse 1: What does Jesus mean when He says, "I am the true vine?"

Verse 2: How might God prune us? What is the purpose of pruning?

Verse 3: How has Jesus made you clean?

Verse 4: How do we remain in Jesus.

Verse 5: Write this verse in your own words.

Verse 6: Do you think Jesus is speaking figuratively or literally? Why?

Verse 7: If we remain in Jesus, what will we ask for?

Verse 8: Based upon this verse, how would you define a disciple?

God Time Day 1: Our Fruit Reveals Our Vine



You may have heard the saying, “Only God can judge me!” You may have even said it yourself. But is it entirely true? Why do people say it?

The truth is that this news is mostly fake. Yes, only God can indeed judge our value and eternity. But it’s also fake news because what we do (our fruit) is on display for all to see.



Read Jesus’ words in Luke 6:43-44
⁴³For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴For each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs aren’t gathered from thornbushes, or grapes picked from a bramble bush.



What are you “known by?” Do people see only good fruit?

God Time Day 2: Who is Your Vine?



Read John 15:5-6
⁵I [Jesus] am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Underline the word “remain/s” each time it is used.

Circle what the branch (person) does who *remains* in Jesus.

Draw a ~~line through~~ what happens to the branch (person) who does not *remain* in Jesus.

The word “*remain*” means “close relationship to.” Jesus is challenging our usefulness. Only through a close relationship with Him can we be used by Him to produce good fruit in ourselves and others.



How do you, or can you, “*remain*” in Jesus?

God Time Day 3: Look at Your Fruit: Works of the Flesh?



Read Galatians 5:19-21
¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things — as I warned you before — that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Look carefully at the sins (“works of the flesh”) listed above. Which sin do you think is the worst? That’s a “trick question,” so don’t answer it!

The fact is all are bad; Jesus died to cover all sin. While some sins may have greater social, personal, or spiritual impact, all sin is bad.

Look again at the last half of verse 21.

Underline the words “those who practice such things.”

Circle what they “will not inherit.”

The words “practice such things” means living in a sinful pattern without ever being sorry for what you do. Sadly, sometimes those who call themselves Christians don’t act much different. And we should!

Grab a piece of paper. On the left side write a downward list of all the sins listed above. Then draw an arrow from each and write a word or words that are the opposite of that sin. (Use the antonyms in a dictionary or thesaurus if needed.)

Examples:

Sexual Immorality	→	Sexual Fidelity
Hatred	→	Love
Drunkenness	→	Sober Mindedness

Circle the ones on your paper you need to work on.



Confess your sins to God and ask Him to help you do the opposite things!

God Time Day 4: Look at Your Fruit: Walk with Jesus!



Read Galatians 5:22-25
²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. ²⁴Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

If you haven't, consider memorizing Galatians 5:22-23.



Whose fruit is this? (Hint: the beginning of verse 22.)

Underline the "fruit of the Spirit" listed above.

When we become Christians, God's Holy Spirit comes to live in us. As we submit to God, obey Him, and draw nearer to Him, the Spirit grows fruit in us that we bear for God's glory.

Look at the "opposites" list you made yesterday. On the arrow for each pairing, list an aspect of the fruit from the list above that will help you move from left to right.

Example:



While we may show more of one aspect of fruit than another, and we may not show any of the aspects perfectly, they are in us and will grow more and more by the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

But verse 25 is the key.

Spiritual growth and maturity is about keeping "in step with the Spirit" (walking with God).



What can you do to better "keep in step with the Spirit?" (E.g., read my Bible, pray more, confess and repent, etc.)



Be a bearer of good fruit. Let the Holy Spirit become the most influential person in your life!

God Time Day 5: Change Your Fruit



When we evaluate our fruit and find it lacking, we may need to "change our fruit."



Read Ezekiel 18:30-31b
³⁰*"Therefore, house of Israel, I will judge each one of you according to his ways." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn from all your rebellious acts, so they will not become a sinful stumbling block to you. ³¹Throw off all the transgressions you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit..."*



What does God tell His people to do in the passage above?

There are some powerful images in the verses above. *Repent, turn... so sin won't be a stumbling block. Throw off transgressions. Get a new heart and spirit!* (I.E., Become and behave like God's people.)

Essentially, God is telling His people to change their fruit and follow Him. Here are three ways you can do the same:

- 1) Start pruning. What things do you need to cut out of your life? (What transgressions do you need to throw off?) What do you need to stop doing? Pruning allows the good fruit to grow. This means that we must stop filling our lives with "fruit killers."
- 2) Repent. What will you repent of today? Repentance simply means telling God you are sorry and then turning 180 degrees away from sin and towards God.
- 3) Live Clean. What clean-living choices will you make? Is there something you need to start doing? Like the people in the passage above, we must choose to behave like God's people.

Remember:



While only God can judge your eternity, your fruit is on display for all to see. Let them see God's Spirit in you!

Family Time



Main Idea:

What Fruit Are You Bearing?



Key Verse: Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.



Set it Up:

With your cell phone camera, take 8-10 photos of packaged food ingredient labels. Do not let the photo give away the food item.



Game:

Give out a piece of paper to each family member and have them number the paper 1 to 8 or 10 (depending on the number of photos you took).

Show the photo to everyone and have them write down what food item they think each ingredient label is from.

After you have gone through all the photos, you can then reveal the food identity of each label.



Talk:

Packaged foods often contain additives and chemicals that prevent spoilage or enhance the flavor.

Were there any surprises to what ingredients it takes to make a certain food?

Were there more ingredients or fewer ingredients than you expected?



Discussion Questions:

- 1) What would happen if we removed one ingredient from the label? (*The food would not be the same. Every ingredient helps make the food what it is supposed to be.*)
- 2) Write down the ingredients that make up a Believer in Jesus
- 3) Re-read Galatians 5:22-23.
God gives every Believer fruit of the Spirit. What things does this verse say should be a part of our ingredient label?
- 4) What would happen if we removed one part of the Spirit's fruit from our life? (*We wouldn't be all that God wants us to be.*)



Pray to God and ask Him to help you and your family to show the fruit of the Spirit.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Fake News ...
My Life Is Not That Important

God Loves To Do The _____
Through The _____

When I Can't _____ God's _____

Ruth 1:8-9

Ruth 1:16-17

- _____
- _____

A _____ Lived For Jesus Has _____ Value

- Do You _____ What Really _____?
- Are You _____ Where You _____?



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page for 64 for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

LOOK BACK:

Point: Stop filling your life with fruit killers and start bearing good fruit.

- Share how you wrote John 15:5 in your own words.

Question: Ever been to a family or social gathering where there was the one set of parents who could find no fault in their child, even though everyone else saw many?

LOOK UP: Watch this week’s video on the 4G web page.

Recap: We live in a world where almost everyone is told, at least in the Western world, that they are special, that they are extraordinary, even when they and mostly everyone else knows it’s not true. In a world of nearly eight billion people, very few are going to be extraordinary. But there’s good news for us ordinary ones; God loves to do the extraordinary through the ordinary.

God does have a great plan for us to follow, but what happens when we can’t see God’s great plan? It becomes a test of faith and focus – having *faith* that God has a plan for us and putting our *focus* on what we do right now and what our next step needs to be. This comes from relationship with Jesus and knowing that lives lived for Him have eternal value. When we are faithful in the moment, God will work out His plan through us, even when we can’t see it.

LOOK IN: Discussion

- In a world that measures special and extraordinary on likes and followers, how do you (or have you, or would you) make your child feel valuable, but at the same time teach them humility and to embrace their ordinariness?
- How would you teach a child to know what really matters?
- How would you teach a child to be faithful in the moment?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: A life lived for Jesus has eternal value.

Know What Really Matters

How are you going to live out God’s plan over the next 90-days?

Be specific. Include dates, times, and names. Be prepared to share your 90-day plan with your group at the next meeting.

WEEK 4: MY LIFE IS NOT THAT IMPORTANT

God Time Day 1: God Does Extraordinary Things



God used an ark to save a family during a worldwide flood. He parted the Red Sea for His people to walk through. He healed lepers, made the lame walk, and gave the blind their eyesight. He loves to do extraordinary things!



Read Luke 18:27

He replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."

What have you experienced God do that was absolutely extraordinary? How did it affect your life?



Who can you share that good news with?

God Time Day 2: Extraordinary Things Through Ordinary People



Read Ruth 1:1-5

¹During the time of the judges, there was a famine in the land. A man left Bethlehem in Judah with his wife and two sons to stay in the territory of Moab for a while. ²The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife's name was Naomi. The names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the fields of Moab and settled there. ³Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴Her sons took Moabite women as their wives: one was named Orpah and the second was named Ruth. After they lived in Moab about ten years, ⁵both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was left without her two children and without her husband.

Talk about hard times—famine, death, widowhood, loss of provision, and loss of protection. But God was about to do something extraordinary.



If you are facing something very hard, begin asking God to do something extraordinary!

God Time Day 3: When I Can't See God's Plan?



Naomi decides to leave the land of the Moabites and return home. She sends off her daughters-in-law with this blessing:



Read Ruth 1:8-9

⁸Naomi said to them, "Each of you go back to your mother's home. May the Lord show kindness to you as you have shown to the dead and to me. ⁹May the Lord grant each of you rest in the house of a new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly.



Who does Naomi pray will show kindness to the young women? _____

Who does she pray will grant them rest (security)? _____

As Moabites, these young women wouldn't have known the Lord. But Naomi shared her faith with them, and God used her to do something special. Look at Ruth's reply.



Read Ruth 1:16-17

¹⁶But Ruth replied: Don't plead with me to abandon you or to return and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me, and do so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.

Underline the second sentence in verse 16.

This is Ruth's strong declaration of commitment to both Naomi and God. Ruth may not seem that special; this young, new Believer's life is empty and broken. But God thinks she is important, and He will fill her life again.

Naomi's life, too.

The true news is that sometimes we can't see God's plan, but He still has a great one!



Continue praying for God to do something extraordinary in your life.

WEEK 4: MY LIFE IS NOT THAT IMPORTANT

God Time Day 4: Staying Faithful and Focused



When Ruth said “yes” to staying with Naomi (and following God), she showed that she was faithful and focused.



Reread Ruth 1:16b

For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

Imagine the faithfulness that it would take to say something like that! Ruth was about to follow Naomi (and God) back to the land of the Israelites. She was going to move away from her family, her community, and everything she ever knew. ...all because she was committed to Naomi.

But she wasn't only committed to Naomi. Ruth also stayed focused on God. She was willing to follow this God who was foreign to her — and follow Him into the unknown.

God gave her a redeemer, a second husband, Boaz, who would provide for Ruth and Naomi. Boaz and Ruth had a child who would be the grandfather of King David. That means that Ruth was chosen by God to be in the lineage of Jesus Christ!

God does extraordinary things through the ordinary!



Many things can make us feel unimportant. Mundane lives, loss, broken relationships, social media, the comparison trap, poverty, tireless serving, etc. What is one thing that makes you feel like your life isn't that important?

When you are tempted to feel this way, remember God wants to be your Redeemer; He'll take you in, provide for you, and invite you to participate in His great plans!



Who can you invite to join you? By doing so you become a part of their spiritual lineage.

God Time Day 5: A Life Lived for Jesus Has Eternal Value



Ruth and Naomi had no idea that God planned to use their story to bless the entire world. By being in the direct lineage of Jesus, Ruth was important. But the fact is, we are all important because we are all God's workmanship and can be a part of the lineage of others being saved by Him.



Read Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

What does the verse above say we are created in Christ Jesus to do?

These “good works” don't save us. Instead, they are just what saved people do. They are part of His great plans and things He does through us. These good works have eternal value!



Read Matthew 6:20

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal.

There will come a time when we'll get to see how God worked through us and how valuable our lives are now. It may not be on this side of heaven, but we'll certainly see it someday.

Here are two things that will help us stay on track while we're living life, waiting for the day that all is revealed:



- 1) Ask God: What should I be living for? What matters most in my life? (Then ask yourself: What do my actions show that I'm living for?)
- 2) Evaluate: Am I being faithful where God has me now? (As a parent, in my career, serving at church, etc.?)

Remember:



God sees you where you are. Faithfully follow Him to become the person He wants you to be!

Family Time



Main Idea:

In The Hands Of God Your Life Has Eternal Value



Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!



Set it Up:

What does the word identity mean? (The fact of being who or what a person or thing is.) We all have different identities. What are identities that each of us have? (i.e. Dad, mom, son, daughter, friend, loved. etc.)

Let's watch this video together and see what our identity in Christ is all about.



Watch: Week 4 Video

This week's video is on the Playlist of the CBC YouTube channel or go to cbcfamily.net and click on 4G Guides for the video link.

providing
identity. now
being who
being the



Game:

Say: Today we are going to play a game where we are going to guess the identity of a famous person. I am going to announce a category of famous people that you all know (historical figure/presidents, TV personalities, cartoon characters, singers, animal, etc.)

One at a time we will pick a person from that category, but you can't tell anyone who you have picked. The rest of us are going to ask yes and no questions to try and figure out the identity of the person you have chosen.

Play the game as many rounds as you would like to.



Talk:

Re-read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

When a person accepts and follows Jesus, he is a new creation. He/she has a new identity. You do not get a new name or a new body, but you are different on the inside. God forgives your sin and makes you a part of His family. We are to live in ways that honor God and our new family.

We now have an eternal value in the hands of God. The old ways we acted are gone and now we focus on being faithful to God wherever we are.





Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Fake News ...

God Won't Give Me More Than I Can Handle

The _____ Of The _____

Exodus 14:11

2 Corinthians 1:8-9

Exodus 14:15-17

Too Big For Me _____ The _____ Of God

Exodus 14:18

2 Corinthians 1:10

When You Are _____ With More Than You Can _____

• _____ Into The _____

• _____ Your _____

Horizontal lines for gathering notes.

WEEK 5: GOD WON'T GIVE ME MORE THAN I CAN HANDLE



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page for 64 for directions)

Y / N Y / N _____

_____ _____

LOOK BACK:

Point: A life lived for Jesus has eternal value.

- Share your 90-day plan with the group. How can the group help?

Question: What is your favorite, or least favorite, Christian cliché or platitude? (It's OK to look some up to get your thoughts flowing.)

LOOK UP: Watch this week's video on the 4G web page.

Recap: Platitudes are sometimes a nice way to get conversations going, but they are an extremely poor way to minister, especially when reality seems to be proving them to be Fake News. The truth is, we will at times be confronted with more than we can handle on our own. That is why God gave Himself to us, and why we are meant to live in relationship with Him.

When life becomes too much for us to handle it is an opportunity for God to reveal (for us to witness) His greatness and majesty. It doesn't mean all will be well, but it does mean that our faith will be for His eternal glory. When we are faced with more than we can handle, we need to trust God, humble ourselves, and praise Him.

LOOK IN: Discussion

Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-10. Try to put it into context. Is Paul referring to more than one type of death? Is he referring to more than one type of deliverance?

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19, 5:1-7

- What major *cares* are you dealing with currently?
- What does or would it look like to *humble* yourself in this?
- Are you OK in knowing that the *proper time* may not be now?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: Things "too big for me" reveal the greatness of God.

Don't Run. Surrender and Praise

Make a list of your group members and the major care(s) they are dealing with. Humble yourself and commit to pray for each of them daily. Let them know you are praying.

Name	Care
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

God Time Day 1: God Won't Give Me...



Read 1 Corinthians 10:13
No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it.

Underline the statement after “But God is faithful.”

While this passage addresses temptation, many people have misused it to apply to any kind of difficulty. The truth is that God often gives us more than we can bear on our own, so that we must rely on Him.



Tell God how you feel about this true news. Remember that His plans are always for your good. What was the result of this prayer time?

God Time Day 2: Paul's Despair



Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9
⁸ We don't want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of our affliction that took place in Asia. We were completely overwhelmed—beyond our strength—so that we even despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.

Circle the last six words of verse 8.

Does this description of Paul's difficulty sound like it was more than he felt he could bear?

Underline the last half of verse 9.



In your own words, write why God allows such trials:

God Time Day 3: The Banks of the Red Sea



Read Exodus 14:10-14
¹⁰ As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians coming after them! The Israelites were terrified and cried out to the Lord for help. ¹¹ They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Isn't this what we told you in Egypt: Leave us alone so that we may serve the Egyptians? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” ¹³ But Moses said to the people, “Don't be afraid. Stand firm and see the Lord's salvation that he will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. ¹⁴ The Lord will fight for you, and you must be quiet.”

Just imagine these former slaves in the grip of fear as they are about to be recaptured! They had already suffered great punishment for even asking to leave and now – how much worse will it be for actually leaving?

Read again what they say in the second sentence of verse 12.



Does that sound like they trust God very much? _____

In verse 13, who will bring about their salvation? _____

In verse 14, is there any effort they must make? _____

When we face seemingly overwhelming challenges, a false sense of security in worldly things like a regular income, social acceptance, or feelings of self-accomplishment is stripped away. We can then choose to be just like the Israelites: ready to go back to our old ways, or choose to risk moving forward with God.

Knowing that sometimes God does give us more than we can bear for His good purposes is important news to know so that we can choose to respond in faith instead in fear.



Write an affirmation (good news) of God's faithfulness on a notecard and put it where you can see it daily.

God Time Day 4: The Greatness of God



The whole point of rejecting the fake news that God will not give us more than we can handle is to affirm our confidence in the greatness of God rather than our abilities. Read the following passages explaining God's greatness when we are facing great challenges:



2 Corinthians 1:9b - *...so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.*

Exodus 14:18 - *The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I receive glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

Exodus 15:11 - *Lord, who is like you among the gods? Who is like you, glorious in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders?*

Psalms 35:10 - *All my bones will say, "Lord, who is like you, rescuing the poor from one too strong for him, the poor or the needy from one who robs him?"*

Psalms 71:19 - *Your righteousness reaches the heights, God, you who have done great things; God, who is like you?*

Romans 8:15 - *For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father!"*

Romans 8:31 - *What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?*



Rewrite the passage which best speaks to you.



Anytime you begin to feel anxious and overwhelmed, remind yourself of this good news: there is nothing greater than God's faithfulness and His love for you.

God Time Day 5: Step in the Water; Raise Your Hands



When the Israelites were terrified of the Egyptian army catching up to them at the shores of the Red Sea, God commanded them to pack up and start walking towards the water. He told Moses to lift his staff and stretch out his hand over the sea. In the same way, rather than becoming paralyzed with fear, we need to take active steps toward the good God has promised so that our faith can be realized.



Read 2 Corinthians 1:10-11

¹⁰ *He has delivered us from such a terrible death, and he will deliver us. We have put our hope in him that he will deliver us again* ¹¹ *while you join in helping us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gift that came to us through the prayers of many.*

Underline how the Christians in Corinth would help Paul face his challenges (beginning of verse 11).



Read Hebrews 10:39 (CEV)

We are not like those people who turn back and get destroyed. We will keep on having faith until we are saved.

What is the opposite of turning back?



Read 1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶ *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time,* ⁷ *casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.*

Put a **box around** the attitude we need to adopt in verse 6

Circle the action Peter then tells us to take in verse 7.

As you face challenges, commit to press forward the difficulty and raise your hands to God.



Surrender yourself to God's faithful care and praise Him His greatness. That's good news.



into

for

Family Time



Main Idea:

We Must Persevere Through The Hard Times



Key Verse: Exodus 14:13-14

¹³ But Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid. Stand firm and see the LORD's salvation that he will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you must be quiet."



Set it Up:

Fill a box with books, and tape it shut. (Make sure that no one knows that you have put books in the box.)

Place the box on the floor and ask the question: "What will happen if I stand on the box?"

After the family members answer the question, tell them that the box will not cave in and ask them to trust you, to believe that you are telling the truth. Invite someone in the family to stand on the box.

Why didn't the box cave in? Show them the books inside that were holding them up. Say: Even though you did not know there were books in the box, you trusted me.



Read:

Exodus 14:15-28



Talk it out:

The Lord protected the Israelites to make sure the Egyptians could not come any closer. And then the people saw the power of God as Moses stretched out his staff over the water. The water parted, and all of Israel walked straight across. What an experience it must have been!

The Lord not only saved His people, but He also displayed His glory before the world. They would stand in awe of God for centuries to come because of what God did that day.

Today, we can trust that God will still act on behalf of His people. He will make a way where there is no way, and He will do it in such a way as to show His power and glory.



Ask:

1. How do you think the people felt when they first saw the sea in front of them and the Egyptians behind them?
2. How did God display His glory for the world?
3. Why should the story of the Red Sea encourage us when we are going through tough times?



Pray:

Thank you, God. Thank you that you are a God of power and might. Help us to trust You even when we can't see a way forward.



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Fake News ...

If I Have Enough Faith God Will Make Life Easy

In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted – 2 Timothy 3:12

God _____ You Enough To Let You _____

2 Corinthians 12:6-8

_____ Leads To _____

2 Corinthians 12:9

- _____ Grace
- _____ Power
- _____ Purpose

When _____ Is Not _____

- Pray That God _____ The _____
- _____ His Answer At The _____
- Let _____ Work _____ You



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See page for 64 for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

LOOK BACK:

Point: Things “too big for me” reveal the greatness of God.

- Did God reveal anything during your prayer time?

Question: What is the definition of *faith*? Look up the Merriam-Webster definition. Would you classify *faith* as more passive or aggressive, as active or reactive?



LOOK UP: Watch this week’s video on the 4G web page.

Recap: While the Bible promises many blessings for those who seek after God and obey His commands, it is also clear that this life won’t be easy – for example, read what Jesus promised His first disciples in Matthew 10:16-22. If it was easy, everybody would be doing it, but God loves us enough to allow us to exhibit our faith and perseverance when it’s not easy. It is in these times that we fully experience His power and glory.

But what about when that not easy time is painful and scarring? It then becomes an opportunity to experience and testify of God’s grace, His power, and His purpose for us and others. Yes, pray for the pain to subside and scars to heal, but also trust Him in the moment and allow Him to work His eternal plan through each of us.

LOOK IN: Discussion

- In the context of 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, what is a *thorn*?
- Though it’s not known for certain, some speculate that Paul’s thorn was the guilt he carried from his pre-conversion persecution of Christians (leading to many of their deaths). What are some “*thorns*” that people wrestle with today?
- How have you, or others you’ve known, used something painful (a thorn) to minister to others?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: Life’s pain points us to God’s power.

Often Your Greatest Pain Points To Your Greatest Need

- Name a few of your thorns. Are they a distraction from God’s grace or do they help you focus on God’s grace? How so?

(To receive help in accepting God’s grace in your pain, contact our staff or office today.)

- How can you use your experience as a testimony of God’s grace?
- How can you use your experience to help others work through the pain and heal the scars of their thorns?

WEEK 6: IF I HAVE ENOUGH FAITH GOD WILL MAKE LIFE EASY

God Time Day 1: God Loves You Enough To Let You Hurt



The Apostle Paul fully dedicated his life to spreading the gospel. Many of the books in the New Testament were written by him. One might think that God would give him an easy life for his heroic efforts, but – in fact – the opposite was true. He suffered a lifetime of persecutions. And, as if that was not enough, the Bible tells us that he had another struggle – a secret “*thorn in the flesh*” which was meant to torment him.



Read 2 Corinthians 12:7b-8
7b Therefore, so that I would not exalt myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to torment me so that I would not exalt myself.⁸ Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me.

Underline the source of this “*thorn.*”

Even though Paul pleaded with God to relieve him of this torment, God allowed it. Why?



Rewrite the first eight words of verse 7b.

Paul obviously had an issue with pride (don’t we all) and God needed him to be focused on the mission – so that God’s good purposes could be fulfilled in Paul.

When God refuses to take away our deepest pain, we might begin to question if He is really good, if He is really there, or if He is really able to save.

The truth is that God’s purpose is not to make your life “easy.” It is to expand His kingdom. Struggle keeps us from becoming proud and compassionless; pain keeps us from pretending that we can handle life on our own. Struggles and pain force us to choose whether or not to follow the path Jesus took when He accepted the cross as God’s will.



What thorn are you facing right now? It’s OK to plead with God for relief, but start preparing to use it for His glory.

God Time Day 2: Sustaining Grace



Our world applauds the people who make it big because of how hard they work and reveres those who achieve great things by sheer willpower. But it despises those who seem helpless to change their situation. We even hear fake news like, “God helps those who help themselves.”

The story of Paul’s “*thorn in the flesh*” reveals this false way of thinking. God deliberately let Paul struggle with “*torment*” from this “*messenger of Satan*” because He had a higher purpose. This thorn pricked Paul’s pride. He said, “*so that I would not exalt myself.*” And God told Paul that “*My grace is sufficient (enough).*” The thorn in the flesh would not be Paul’s undoing, but instead an important part of his sanctification (spiritual growth towards holiness).

God did something better for Paul than removing his “*thorn in the flesh.*” God showed Paul that His grace is enough.

Reread yesterday’s verses and then read God’s response to Paul’s pleading.



Read 2 Corinthians 12:9
But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.”

Underline what God said about His power.



Explain in your own words what you think God means by “*my power is perfected in weakness.*”

We cannot know the full extent of God’s grace and kindness until we find ourselves helpless and weak. God promises that in such moments we will see the perfection of His power to accomplish His purposes in us.



How is your thorn forcing you to surrender to God’s grace and allowing Him to exhibit His power?

God Time Day 3: Perfect Power



In the Book of Judges, God deliberately thins out the Israelite army to ensure that they would know victory wasn't through their military strength, but His power.



Read Judges 7:2
The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many troops for me to hand the Midianites over to them, or else Israel might elevate themselves over me and say, 'I saved myself.'

Then God gave Gideon instructions to whittle down the army from 22,000 to 10,000, then down again to a mere 300 to fight against an army whose camels were "as numerous as the sand on the seashore." He was serious about making sure it was clear whose power was at work.



For God's power to work through you today, how can you set aside reliance on your own strength and abilities?

God Time Day 4: Eternal Purpose



Like we've seen with Paul, sometimes God is at work in the pain. We don't always know why, but in times like these, it helps to remember that we are not the only ones.

Chapter 11 of the Book of Hebrews includes a well know list of "Heroes of Faith." These Heroes saw amazing miracles and victories. But check out this lesser-known list of heroes:



Read Hebrews 11:36-38a
³⁶ Others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. ³⁸ The world was not worthy of them.

It's vitally important to remember that you are not alone, and your struggle can be both a witness and a ministry.



How can you use your struggle, your thorn, to minister?

God Time Day 5: When Life is Not Easy



This week has made clear that a Godly life is not promised to be an easy life. How we manage when life is hard, and it hurts, is important to our witness and ministry.

In addition to remembering that God's grace sustains us through our suffering, God's power is made perfect in our weakness, and God has an eternal purpose for our struggles and pains, there are some practical things we can do:

- Pray – Like Paul, we can and should ask God to remove the torment. What parent would be angry with their child for asking to make the pain stop? God wants us to "cast all our cares" on Him, and sometimes He does change the situation and give us relief.
- Listen – When the answer to our prayers is not what we want, we should listen and trust His answer for the moment. Sometimes God is saying "not yet" instead of "no." It may be that it will take some time before His purpose is accomplished.
- Yield – Even if nothing changes, we can still allow God's power to be revealed through us. By praising Him in the midst of pain and hardship we witness His glory to others and minister to those in similar circumstances.



Read Ecclesiastes 3:11 (CEV)
God makes everything happen at the right time. Yet none of us can ever fully understand all he has done, and he puts questions in our minds about the past and the future.

When everything has been said and done, it all boils down to one question: will we trust that God knows best?

Look back at the note card you wrote from Week 5, Day 3 and the verse you rewrote on Week 5, Day 4.



How have they it impacted your understanding of God's faithfulness in times of struggle or suffering?

Family Time



Main Idea:

Faith Means I Want What God Wants



Key Verse: Hebrews 11:1

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



Set it Up:

God wants us to make choices that reflect our relationship with Him. We are going to watch a short video that will help us understand how our life can look when we choose to make the choices God wants us to.



Watch: Week 6 Video

This week's video is on the Playlist of the CBC YouTube channel or go to cbcfamily.net and click on 4G Guides for the video link.



Activity:

Say: God is everywhere we go even if we can't see Him or feel Him.

(You'll need a water bottle, the juice from a lemon, a balloon, and baking soda for this next part.)

Here is an easy experiment that we can do to show how this works. Grab a water bottle and fill it with ¼ cup of water. Sprinkle 1 tsp. of baking soda into the bottle and stir it with a straw. Pour approximately the juice of one lemon in the water and quickly put a balloon on the mouth of the bottle.



Talk it out:

Say: We don't "see" anything inside the bottle that could make the balloon inflate. But we can have faith that there is something in there.

Watch as the balloon inflates.

We can't see the gas, but we know that it is there.

This is like how we can have faith that God is everywhere and that He knows what is best for us.

Since He knows best, it's important for us to want what God wants.



The 3-Step "1-on-1 Encouragement" Process

Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:23-25

1. Partner-up: Partners should be of the same gender. If there is an odd number, three is OK, but work swiftly.
2. Partners ask each other these five questions:

	1) Did you spend specific personal time in the BIBLE <u>each day</u> this past week?	These are "Yes" or "No" questions.
	2) Did you spend specific time in PRAYER <u>each day</u> this past week – not just for meals?	Any hesitations or "Well..." responses are circled "No."
	3) Did you do something specific to show Godly LOVE to someone this past week?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, the partner briefly shares the encounter(s) with their partner and, on the provided line, writes the name(s) of the person(s) they showed love to, shared the gospel with, or disciplined. • If not, leave the line blank.
	4) Did you intentionally share the GOSPEL with anyone this past week?	
	5) Did you DISCIPLE anyone this past week? (Ex: Sharing with others from any of the Gathering, God, Group, or Family Times)	

3. Each partner prays for the other: No matter how or what the partner has done over the past week, this is an intentional prayer of **encouragement** for the coming week!