



# Easter Sunday:

## Don't Passover Easter

*A study by Brian Roberts*

**Lesson Big Idea:** As a celebration of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Easter must remain an important celebration in the Christian's life.

**Scripture Focus:** Numbers 9:9–14

<sup>9</sup>And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>10</sup>Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

<sup>12</sup>They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

<sup>13</sup>But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbearth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.

<sup>14</sup>And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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### The Lesson in Context

On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus directed the Passover meal with His disciples. However, Jesus purposely changed the order of the meal. There was bread, but instead of being broken in remembrance of the night when Israel fled Egypt or the wilderness wanderings, Jesus said the bread was symbolic of His body, and it was meant to be broken and blessed in remembrance of Him (Matthew 26:26).

In addition, in all previous times of Passover remembrance, the wine represented the covenant promises of God (1) to bring out Israel from the yoke of the Egyptians, (2) to rescue Israel from slavery, (3) to redeem Israel with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment, and (4) to show the Lord would take Israel as His own people and be their God. These are covenant promises and normally they would be the focus of remembrance during the drinking of the wine on Passover. However, just as the meaning of the bread was changed, Jesus said the wine would be representative of His blood. Jesus said His disciples should drink the wine in remembrance of Him. He did this because He was initiating a New Covenant (Matthew 26:27).

## Lesson Outline

- A. The Passover is a meal of \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 1. The parts of the meal must be eaten in a certain order because the food itself is symbolic and representative of the first Passover where God delivered Israel from Pharaoh.
    - 2. Each element of the Passover meal carries significant meaning and a \_\_\_\_\_ purpose.
  - B. On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus directed the Passover meal with His disciples.
    - 1. There were no \_\_\_\_\_ during the Last Supper Jesus had with His disciples.
    - 2. Jesus, who is our great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, performed Passover without a nod to the bondage of the past.
  - C. Besides the weekly Sabbath, there are seven major feasts and holy days instituted by God.
    - 1. In the narrative of the Old Testament, the feast days are significant events.
    - 2. These feasts maintain and even grow in significance for the New Testament church.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

- 1. Have you ever eaten a meal with specific rules, such as proper dining etiquette? How are these rules different from the Passover as a feast of remembrance?
- 2. How has the understanding that your sins have been covered by the blood of Jesus changed the way you worship?
- 3. Why was a New Covenant needed?
- 4. Should the Jewish holidays such as Hanukkah and Purim hold the same significance as the seven holy days outlined in the Law? (See Leviticus 23.)
- 5. Why do you think it is important for the church to pay special attention to some of the holy days mentioned in Scripture?

## Daily Discipleship

**DAY 1** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for Your death on the cross.

**Bible Passage:** Numbers 8  Numbers 9

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 2** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for overcoming death through Your resurrection.

**Bible Passage:** Exodus 6  Exodus 7

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 3** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I never want to forget Your sacrifice for me.

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 21  Matthew 22

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 4** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I offer You my worship because my sins have been washed away.

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 23  Matthew 24

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 5** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for the hope of Easter.

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 25  Matthew 26

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 6** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, You are worthy of all praise.

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 27  Matthew 28

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Easter Sunday:

### *Don't Passover Easter*

**Lesson Big Idea:** Faith in Jesus' resurrection gives us power over death.

**Bible Story:** Jesus' resurrection in Luke 24:1–12, 36–49

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Romans 6:9

- What were the reactions to the empty tomb?
- How does Jesus' resurrection give us power?

**Bring It Home:** Today we learned about being empowered by the Holy Ghost. As your child faces difficulties throughout the week, remind your child that Jesus died so we can have the power of the Holy Ghost to help us overcome. Do the activity on the back of the take-home paper together and discuss how God's power helps us overcome.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a night doing something everyone enjoys doing together. During that time discuss how we celebrate Easter. Consider the following questions for discussion:

- Are eggs and easter baskets a distraction from what is really important during the Easter holiday?
- Why is it important that we focus on God during "national holidays"?
- What is the biggest takeaway we have from the Easter experience if we are just looking at the Bible?



# Room for the Resurrection: A Place for Jesus

*A series by Scott Graham*

**Lesson Big Idea:** To experience the resurrection and life Jesus brings, we must make room for Him in our homes.

**Scripture Focus:** Luke 10:38–42

<sup>38</sup> Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

<sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

<sup>40</sup> But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

<sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

<sup>42</sup> But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

Being honest with ourselves, we must admit we all experience times when the important crowds out the essential in our lives. The busy nature of life can consume days and entire weeks with matters that seem vital at the moment but are actually rather insignificant when viewed through the lens of eternity. A thousand years from now, none of us will care if the yard was perfect or the sheets were ironed. We will not give one thought to the size of the house we lived in here nor the car we drive. We will not even care about the economic impact of the COVID-19 virus of 2020. How will any of those matters compare with the glory of our eternal reward? Paul said it this way, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:17–18, KJV).

To experience the full impact of the resurrected life of Jesus Christ in our homes, we must adopt Martha's passion to get Him there and Mary's focus to attend to Him there. When we do so, it becomes abundantly clear why we would want Jesus to abide in our homes, even if it means everything is changed by His presence. The eternal impact of such a visitation is the reason. To sit at His feet and hear His words now is the foundation for our hope of doing so before His throne one day.

## Lesson Outline

- A. Jesus of Nazareth was soon to arrive in their small community.
  - B. We see two sisters very differently occupied.
    - 1. Jesus seemed to be reminding Martha that in enjoying the privilege of having Jesus in our homes, our priorities should be about \_\_\_\_\_ with Him before \_\_\_\_\_ for Him.
    - 2. For any of us to experience an ongoing and abiding presence of the resurrected one in our homes, we must mirror that passion of Martha.
    - 3. Martha's passionate hunger for His \_\_\_\_\_ in her \_\_\_\_\_ is something to emulate.
  - C. Guests affect how we live.
    - 1. Our flesh is certainly more comfortable merely visiting Him at His house a couple of times each week.
    - 2. Martha might have been the one to initiate the visit, but Mary really grasped its importance.
  - D. To experience the full impact of the resurrected life of Jesus Christ in our homes, we must adopt Martha's passion to get Him there and Mary's focus to attend to Him there.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

- 1. Do you remember the first time someone told you about Jesus? What did you think? What were your first impressions? your first questions?
- 2. What are some things that might have to be forfeited if you seek a visitation of Jesus in your home?
- 3. Having an abiding presence of God in our homes will affect how we live. Discuss some areas you see as being primarily affected.
- 4. Why do you believe some resist the change affected by Jesus actively living in their homes?
- 5. According to Luke, Martha was "cumbered about much serving," and Jesus said she was "troubled about many things." As you examine your life, what are the top three things that have the potential to cumber and trouble you to the point you neglect sitting at His feet and listening?

## Daily Discipleship

DAY 1

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I am thankful for the moment I was introduced to You.

**Bible Passage:** Luke 10  Luke 11

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 2

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to serve You with my whole heart.

**Bible Passage:** II Corinthians 4  II Corinthians 5

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 3

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to be a worshiper.

**Bible Passage:** John 3  John 4

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 4

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want You to abide in my house.

**Bible Passage:** John 5  John 6

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 5

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want my home to make You feel welcome.

**Bible Passage:** John 7  John 8

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 6

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I don't want to be distracted by unimportant things.

**Bible Passage:** John 9  John 10

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Room for the Resurrection:

### *A Place for Jesus*

**Lesson Big Idea:** To experience Jesus' resurrection power, we must make room for Him in our homes.

**Bible Story:** Jesus was welcomed into Mary and Martha's house (Luke 10:38–42).

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** John 11:25

- How did Mary and Martha react differently to Jesus' visit to their home?
- How can we make Jesus welcome in our homes?

**Bring It Home:** This week we learned about the time Martha and Mary welcomed Jesus into their home. Mary understood something Martha didn't. When Jesus is in our home, the most important thing we can do is stop everything and listen to Him. Do the activity on the back of the take-home paper together with your child as you make room for Jesus in your home.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a night doing something everyone enjoys doing together. During that time, discuss the importance of making Jesus a priority in our lives and making a place for Him in our homes. In preparation, consider the following:

- What are some practical ways we can make sure Jesus is in our home?
- Are there some things we need to get rid of to make room for Jesus in our schedule?



# Room for the Resurrection: The Resurrection of Lazarus

*A series by Scott Graham*

**Lesson Big Idea:** To experience the resurrection and life Jesus brings, we must believe in Him.

**Scripture Focus:** John 11:25

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

Mary and Martha did not demonstrate faith merely by writing Jesus a letter asking Him to come. Nor did they demonstrate faith simply by expressing their abstract confidence that if Jesus had been there earlier, things would have been different. They did not demonstrate faith by kneeling before Him. Faith was expressed when they obeyed Jesus' command to have the stone removed from the mouth of the tomb.

At that moment, the idea that Jesus had power over death was more than an academic exercise. It was no longer just parlor talk among friends. He was asking them to make themselves vulnerable to hurt, disappointment, and public ridicule. If they obeyed and nothing happened, everyone would be talking about how their actions were foolish and disrespectful to their brother's memory. The smell of his decomposing body would haunt them for years if this were all in vain. At this crossroads of faith, the resurrection power of God was in the balance. Their faith carried the day, and Jesus called forth the ex-dead man.

In almost every crisis in our lives, it is this way. We arrive at a point where our belief in God is no longer just the subject of a book or sermon. It is not a feeling generated by a good choir song. It is not even a collective belief we share with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Faith, in that moment, becomes a very personal choice to obey or not to obey.

## Lesson Outline

- A. Mary and Martha
  - B. Lazarus had been buried for four days when Martha received word that Jesus had arrived at last.
    - 1. Jesus' love for Mary, Martha, and Lazarus was instantly revealed by the expression on His own face.
    - 2. When Jesus lifted His voice, it carried an otherworldly authority and seemed to shake the very soil.
  - C. Perhaps no spiritual element is more foundational to our relationship with Jesus Christ than \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 1. This faith is, of course, manifest in our \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
    - 2. Faith was expressed when they obeyed Jesus' command to have the stone removed from the mouth of the tomb.
    - 3. True faith involves all three elements: the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_, much like courtship and marriage do.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

- 1. What purposes do you believe there can be in having to wait on God's timing to receive an answer to your need?
- 2. Why do you believe Jesus wept in this setting?
- 3. How would you define faith to someone who has never heard the word? Is there a one-word synonym that does it justice?
- 4. Discuss the relationship between faith and works. How are they different? How are they connected? Can you have faith without works? Can you have works without faith?
- 5. Among the mind, the will, and the emotions, which do you believe to be the easiest to get actively engaged in the faith process? Which is the most difficult? Why do you believe this is?

## Daily Discipleship

**DAY 1** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for answering my prayers.

**Bible Passage:** John 11  John 12

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 2** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I believe in Your resurrection power.

**Bible Passage:** John 13  John 14

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 3** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, increase my faith.

**Bible Passage:** Hebrews 11  Hebrews 12

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 4** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I believe in Your promises.

**Bible Passage:** Ephesians 1  Ephesians 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 5** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I surrender my will to Yours.

**Bible Passage:** Ephesians 3  Ephesians 4

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 6** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to believe in You with my mind, will, and emotions.

**Bible Passage:** Ephesians 5  Ephesians 6

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Room for the Resurrection:

### *The Resurrection of Lazarus*

**Lesson Big Idea:** To experience Jesus' resurrection power, we must believe in His resurrection.

**Bible Story:** The resurrection of Lazarus in John 11:1–44

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** John 11:25

- Why did Mary and Martha send for Jesus?
- What expectations did they have when Jesus arrived? What changed those expectations?

**Bring It Home:** This week we learned how Martha and Mary sent a message to Jesus that their brother, Lazarus, was about to die. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus was dead. Jesus explained that He is the resurrection and the life. He called out and Lazarus came back to life. Do the activity on the back of the take-home paper with your child as a review of the lesson.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a special dinner night together. During that time, discuss the importance of our belief and actions of faith. In preparation, consider the following:

- It is easy to say we believe in something, but when we are tested, why is belief harder to live out?
- Do you feel like your faith is great or like a mustard seed?
- What are some ways we can grow in our faith?



# Room for the Resurrection: Mary's Posture of Worship

A series by Scott Graham

**Lesson Big Idea:** To experience the resurrection and life Jesus brings, we must be willing to worship sacrificially.

**Scripture Focus:** John 12:3

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

The spikenard she poured on His feet was an aromatic amber-colored oil derived from a flowering plant that grew in the Himalayas of Nepal, China, and India. For someone to have retrieved that flower and have it transported to Judea would have made it quite expensive. Yet here was Mary, with no regard to the economic impact, pouring the entire contents of her supply on His feet. She was not content with just dabbing a little here and there. She emptied her supply.

That is how worship must be to bring us close to His death and resurrection. There will be cost involved. Abraham could have told Mary this, for he responded to the command of God to take his son, whom he loved fiercely, to the top of a mountain and there offer him as a sacrifice to God. But when Abraham started on the long walk up the face of that mountain, he told his servants to remain behind while he and his son went there to “worship” (Genesis 22:5, KJV).

Mary was not asked to offer anything like that, but she did have a heart to give everything, and so must we. If we desire access to the power for victorious living unleashed by a bloody cross and an empty tomb, we must regularly come into the presence of God bringing our all. The very word *worship* is connected etymologically with the word *worth* or *worthy*. Worship is ascribing honor and reverence to that which we see as worthy of the same.

## Lesson Outline

- A. Jesus was less than a week away from dying on the cross.
    1. Mary
    2. She knelt at the feet of Jesus, opened a container of spikenard, and poured it over His feet.
    3. Judas
  - B. Mary's act of worship attracted the commendation of the Lord in a fashion Martha's cooking and Lazarus's fellowship did not.
    1. Worship draws us close to the heart of God.
    2. Mary's actions teach us that worship is an \_\_\_\_\_ matter.
    3. Worship that is partial is not really worship.
    4. Worship is \_\_\_\_\_.
    5. We should not enter worship lightly, as it often engenders opposition.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

1. Reflect on a time when you engaged in deep, reverent worship. How did it make you feel? How were you better for the experience?
2. What is it about true worship that allows it to be an individual quest?
3. Share a time when your worship cost you something. How did your commitment to worship demonstrate the worth you see in Jesus?
4. Why can pride and worship not exist together in the same heart? What makes one incompatible with the other?
5. Discuss the reasons those who do not worship tend to tear down those who do. What is the proper response to their criticisms?

## Daily Discipleship

DAY 1

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I offer my worship to You.

**Bible Passage:** Philippians 1  Philippians 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 2

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to draw close to You.

**Bible Passage:** Philippians 3  Philippians 4

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 3

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I cannot live without You.

**Bible Passage:** Psalm 95  Psalm 96

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 4

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I need Your presence in my life.

**Bible Passage:** Psalm 97  Psalm 98

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 5

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I will praise You even if others do not.

**Bible Passage:** Psalm 99  Psalm 100

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 6

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, You alone are worthy of worship.

**Bible Passage:** Psalm 149  Psalm 150

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Room for the Resurrection:

### *Mary's Posture of Worship*

**Lesson Big Idea:** To experience Jesus' resurrection power, we must worship Him sacrificially.

**Bible Story:** Mary's sacrificial worship in John 12:1–8

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** John 11:25

- How did Mary worship Jesus?
- How can we worship Jesus?

**Bring It Home:** Today we learned how Mary sacrificed valuable ointment to worship Jesus by anointing His feet. We cannot anoint Jesus' feet, but we can sacrifice in worship. Do the question-and-answer activity on the back of the take-home paper together as a review of the lesson.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a time of devotion. During that time, discuss the importance of sacrifice. In preparation, consider the following:

- What is the importance of sacrifice in the Bible?
- What is the importance of sacrifice when it comes to our money?
- What is the importance of sacrifice when it comes to our time?



# Room for the Resurrection: The Testimony

A series by Scott Graham

**Lesson Big Idea:** To help others experience the resurrection and life Jesus brings, we must openly share our testimony.

**Scripture Focus:** John 12:10–11

<sup>10</sup> But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

<sup>11</sup> Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

Effectively sharing our testimony involves three aspects. These aspects can be remembered easily as before, how, and since.

What was your life like *before* you were saved? You should think in advance about how to share this. What about your life before Christ will relate most to the unbelievers in your circles of influence? What did you trust in? What was your go-to source for significance or happiness and how did those things disappoint you over time?

How were you saved? How and when did you first hear about the New Testament plan of salvation? How did you first respond? If it was in a negative fashion initially, what caused you to become more open to the gospel? What were the final mental hurdles you had to overcome just before obeying His Word? What was the experience like when you were born again of the water and of the Spirit?

What has your life been like *since* being saved? How is your life different now? What has changed regarding your thinking, your attitude, and your outlook on life? What is your motivation in life now? What is important to you now that did not used to be? What is unimportant to you now that used to seem to matter? How do you deal differently now with challenges and disappointments of life?

## Lesson Outline

- A. Lazarus was living proof.
    - 1. They were downright furious at the fame this event had brought to Jesus and His teachings.
    - 2. Whatever the motives, these religious power brokers met with Caiaphas, the high priest, and began to plot how they could kill Jesus.
  - B. A select few will be curious enough about Jesus to seek Him out.
    - 1. Lee Strobel
    - 2. No one can contend with your own account of what Jesus has accomplished in your life and family.
  - C. Ex-blind man (John 9)
    - 1. The leaders summoned the now-seeing man before them and demanded to know what had happened.
    - 2. He merely gave the account of what happened to him.
  - D. Effectively sharing our testimony involves three aspects.
    - 1. What was your life like \_\_\_\_\_ you were saved?
    - 2. \_\_\_\_\_ were you saved?
    - 3. What has your life been like \_\_\_\_\_ being saved?
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

- 1. Consider how quickly his contemporaries could pass by Lazarus, even knowing his story, and no longer be moved by it. Reflect on a miracle of someone in your congregation. Describe the wonder of it once again.
- 2. What was your first contact with the gospel? Did someone share a personal testimony with you? If so, what was your reaction to it?
- 3. Explain in your own words why you believe a personal testimony is such an effective witnessing tool.
- 4. Discuss the value of a testimony over an argument.
- 5. Spend some time preparing your testimony on paper. Jot down key components in your own before, how, and since story.

## Daily Discipleship

**DAY 1** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for every answered prayer.

**Bible Passage:** John 15  John 16

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 2** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for working miracles in my life.

**Bible Passage:** John 17  John 18

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 3** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, there is no one like You.

**Bible Passage:** John 19  John 20

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 4** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I will tell others of Your goodness.

**Bible Passage:** John 21  I John 1

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 5** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, lead me to someone who is hungry for truth.

**Bible Passage:** I John 2  I John 3

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 6** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, send revival to our church.

**Bible Passage:** I John 4  I John 5

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Room for the Resurrection:

### *The Testimony*

**Lesson Big Idea:** To experience Jesus' resurrection power, we must fearlessly share our testimony.

**Bible Story:** The Pharisees plot to kill Lazarus in John 11:45–57 and 12:9–11

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** John 11:25

- Why were the members of the high council so concerned about Lazarus's testimony?
- How can you use your testimony for God?

**Bring It Home:** This week we learned how the priests and Pharisees met and decided they needed to kill Lazarus because he was a living testimony of the resurrection power of Jesus. Do the activity on the back of the take-home paper together and discuss the importance of sharing a personal testimony with others.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a prayer night. During that time discuss the importance of your testimony. In preparation, consider the following questions:

- What would you say is special about your testimony?
- What part of your testimony do others relate to?
- How can we use our testimony to help others cope with their own sinful past?



# Marked: Marked by Salvation

A series by Ryan Bundren

**Lesson Big Idea:** If you humbly present yourself before God as broken and flawed, He will use your testimony to bring salvation to the lost.

**Scripture Focus:** John 20:25

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

Since doubt is common to us all, it seems that faith, or at least the potential to exercise faith, is common to us all as well. The English word *faith* represents the Greek word *pistis* in the New Testament, which embodies the idea of trust and faithfulness. In English the word *faith*, particularly in association to God, has become connected with assent that something exists. Even if one avows that Jesus Christ exists, this is not the idea of faith presented in the New Testament. Biblical faith is what we are resting our lives on. Doubts may challenge our faith, but these doubts do not overcome our faith because our faith is rooted in God's Word and in our personal experience with God.

Sharing our challenges and struggles can be a great opportunity to share our faith with others. Some have bought into the idea that being a Christian means having all the answers about God, the Bible, and the world. That is not true. There will always be a reason to doubt; we cannot have "all the answers." Yet there is always a reason to believe. Perhaps by showing our faith in the face of doubts and challenges, others will see the most genuine presentation of Christ. Similar to how Jesus presented His marks to Thomas, perhaps we can present our marks to others so they can "be not faithless, but believing."

## Lesson Outline

- A. Jesus' ministry was marked by two responses: belief and worship or disbelief and opposition.
    - 1. Joseph believed the angel and accepted Jesus into his care.
    - 2. Upon being chosen as God's vessel, Mary revealed her great faith and worship in her song of praise.
    - 3. Luke made a key point regarding the community of Nazareth's disbelief and opposition toward Jesus.
  - B. Each of the four Gospels introduces Jesus' key opposition, the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. Since we enjoy these experiences, we may fail to recognize that Thomas's disbelief of Jesus' resurrection is fair, and many of us may have also expressed similar disbelief if we had been put in the same situation.
    - 1. Thomas was not the only example of doubt and disbelief among Jesus' disciples.
    - 2. The disciples on the road to Emmaus
    - 3. In the face of Thomas's doubt, pain, hopelessness, and denial, Jesus presented the evidence necessary to believe again by rekindling the faith in Thomas's heart.
  - D. Since doubt is common to us all, it seems that faith, or at least the \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ faith, is common to us all as well.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

- 1. How do you see disbelief and opposition playing out in our society today?
- 2. Do you feel that Thomas was a poor believer because he doubted Jesus' resurrection? Why or why not?
- 3. Have you ever found yourself expressing any incorrect presumptions about Jesus and what He has promised to do? Explain.
- 4. How has God helped you overcome some of the disappointments in your life?
- 5. How can you use your doubts and challenges to reveal who Jesus is to others?

## Daily Discipleship

**DAY 1** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I choose to believe You and not doubt.

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 1  Matthew 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 2** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I will praise You with my whole heart.

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 3  Matthew 4

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 3** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want my life to reflect the ongoing work of salvation.

**Bible Passage:** I Chronicles 1  I Chronicles 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 4** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, rekindle faith in me.

**Bible Passage:** I Chronicles 3  I Chronicles 4

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 5** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, my faith rests on You alone.

**Bible Passage:** I Chronicles 5  I Chronicles 6

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 6** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to encourage others to have faith in You.

**Bible Passage:** I Chronicles 7  I Chronicles 8

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Marked:

### *Marked by Salvation*

**Lesson Big Idea:** If you present your flawed self before God, He will use your testimony to bring salvation to the lost.

**Bible Story:** Conquering Thomas's doubt in John 20:19–29

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 1:13

- Why didn't Thomas believe the other disciples?
- How can our flaws help us reach others?

**Bring It Home:** This week we learned about Doubting Thomas and how despite his flaws of doubt and unbelief, God was still able to use Thomas to lead others to God. Do the activity on the back of the take-home paper together as a family and discuss ways you can share your personal testimony with others.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a night doing something everyone enjoys doing together. During that time, discuss the importance of accepting your past struggles. In preparation, consider the following:

- Have you experienced hurt and disappointment in the past?
- What did you learn from those experiences?
- How has Jesus helped you to overcome those feelings of disappointment?



# Marked: Marked for Calling

A series by Ryan Bundren

**Lesson Big Idea:** If you humbly present yourself before God as broken and flawed, He will cleanse and anoint you to proclaim His Word.

**Scripture Focus:** Isaiah 6:5–8

<sup>5</sup>Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

<sup>6</sup>Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

<sup>7</sup>And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

<sup>8</sup>Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

We only really know ourselves in relation to God. We are created in the image of God. God's fingerprints are literally all over us. We cannot understand the purpose of our lives without knowing who made us. One unique feature that disambiguates humans from other created things is the ability to create. Since we are made like God, the ability to create is something inherent within us from God. Artists, inventors, authors, architects, musicians, performers, directors, and many others are all creators. As creators they determine what they create and, more importantly, why they created it. The answer to the question of why is existential to human life, and the answer may only be fully revealed in God. Upon seeing God, Isaiah understood his own uncleanness and that he was undone, ruined, broken, and deficient.

A brief review of biblical characters indicates this was not the first time this type of story occurred. God told Abraham he would be a father of many nations, but he and his wife were childless and infertile (Genesis 17:1–8). God told Moses to speak to Pharaoh, but Moses spoke poorly (Exodus 6:26–30). God had Samuel anoint David as king, but David was a young boy (1 Samuel 16:1–13). We give our explanations for why we cannot be of service to God, but He is not concerned. He removes our doubts and excuses by anointing us for a special task.

## Lesson Outline

- A. The opening of Isaiah 6 informs readers of Judah's political climate by noting that Judah had suffered a national tragedy: King Uzziah had died.
1. Uzziah became king at the age of sixteen and ruled for fifty-two years.
  2. Isaiah's Vision
  3. It was reassuring for Isaiah to observe God in the \_\_\_\_\_ during a national tragedy.
  4. In this vision Isaiah saw the throne, a symbol of governing authority in the temple, which was the location of religious authority.
- B. In the section of text preceding Isaiah 6, the prophet offered several different woes.
1. When Isaiah experienced the catastrophic events of the temple vision, he announced a new woe—a woe upon himself.
  2. When Isaiah saw God, he noticed God's \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. We only really know ourselves in relation to God.
1. Upon seeing God, Isaiah understood his own uncleanness and that he was undone, ruined, broken, and deficient.
  2. God and the angel recognized there was a wound in Isaiah, and after this process, that wound was healed.
  3. Isaiah's iniquity or crookedness was that he uttered woes denouncing other nations and wickedness, but he failed to understand his own wickedness.

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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

1. How do national tragedies affect people living in those nations?
2. Why is it important to keep our focus on God when things around us seem to be in utter chaos?
3. What can we do when facing the possibility of God's judgment and wrath?
4. Why is it important to see God as present and with us at all times?
5. Why is it important for us to recognize it is Jesus who sits on the throne?

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for peace in the midst of tragedy.

**Bible Passage:** Isaiah 1  Isaiah 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I know You are always with me.

**Bible Passage:** Isaiah 3  Isaiah 4

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I am thankful to be able to experience Your presence in my church.

**Bible Passage:** Isaiah 5  Isaiah 6

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I recognize my sin and need Your grace.

**Bible Passage:** Isaiah 7  Isaiah 8

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**Prayer Focus:** Lord, cleanse my lips and my life.

**Bible Passage:** Isaiah 9  Isaiah 10

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for the calling You have placed on my life.

**Bible Passage:** Isaiah 11  Isaiah 12

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Marked:

### *Marked for Calling*

**Lesson Big Idea:** If you present your flawed self before God, He will cleanse and anoint you to proclaim His Word.

**Bible Story:** Isaiah's calling in Isaiah 6:1–13

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 1:13

- How did Isaiah receive his calling?
- What are some ways you can find your calling?

**Bring It Home:** This week we learned about a vision Isaiah had in which he received his calling from God. We also learned that God has a calling for each of us. As a family, do the activity on the back of the take-home paper together to help your child in the search for his or her personal calling in God's kingdom.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a special dinner night together. During that time, discuss the importance of being bold and willing in sharing the gospel. In preparation, consider the following:

- Do you believe Jesus can change the lives of others if they hear your story?
- Do you ever feel like you are not good enough to help others? Why?
- How do we as Christians fight against feeling small or insignificant?



## Marked:

# Marked for Transformation

A series by Ryan Bundren

**Lesson Big Idea:** If you humbly present yourself before God as broken and flawed, He will transform you and bless your family.

**Scripture Focus:** Genesis 32:28

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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### The Lesson in Context

At some point during the fearful night, a man appeared, and Jacob and the man began wrestling. This wrestling continued into the breaking of day. The images of night and wrestling are quite indicative of Jacob's life. He had spent his life clinging to things to which he felt entitled. Instead of allowing God to lead him, Jacob reproduced the one experience he shared with God as an opportunity to strike a deal. That night Jacob did what he always did. He held on and refused to let go. At daybreak the man demanded to be let go. Jacob replied, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26, KJV). Again Jacob enacted a clear trait of his character, holding on for a blessing, just as he was born grasping his brother's heel.

The man's reply was quite striking. Rather than confirming or denying Jacob's demand, the man asked Jacob a question, "What is your name?" (Genesis 32:27, NIV). If we hearken back to an earlier point in this narrative, we will recall Jacob was asked a similar question by his father (Genesis 27:18–19). Jacob lied about who he was and instead claimed to be his brother, Esau. But this time Jacob answered truthfully. Here the man was asking Jacob to be honest—to own and take responsibility for himself. In response, the man changed Jacob's name from Jacob to Israel. The man also touched Israel's hip, causing him to walk with a limp. Perhaps this was so Israel could no longer run from his problems like he had run from his family of origin, his uncle Laban, and ultimately God. The identity of Jacob had caused him and his family much trouble. By changing his name, God showed it was time for change. Indeed, Israel departed with the understanding that he had met with God (Genesis 32:30) and, as a result, he would prevail.

## Lesson Outline

- A. Before we can own who we are, we must know who we are.
  - B. Through \_\_\_\_\_, the power of sin's influence diminishes within us.
    - 1. Jacob
    - 2. Jacob and his twin brother, Esau, were born to Isaac and Rebekah.
    - 3. Jacob convinced Esau to sell his birthright to him.
    - 4. Jacob, with the help of his mother, tricked Isaac into blessing him instead of Esau, whom Isaac had planned to bless.
    - 5. Jacob was at the mercy of his own \_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. The structure of Jacob's family reveals how the family was dysfunctional.
    - 1. Leah had four children while Rachel had none.
    - 2. Not only Leah and Rachel suffered due to Jacob's decisions; his children also suffered.
  - D. In Genesis 32, readers find Jacob wrestling with a man; Jacob refused to let go until he was blessed.
    - 1. This wrestling continued into the breaking of day.
    - 2. The man asked Jacob a question, "What is your name?"
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

- 1. What is sanctification?
- 2. What is the danger in believing yourself to be someone or something you are not?
- 3. What do people usually do when their past starts catching up with them?
- 4. How is dysfunction like this seen in our world today?
- 5. Why is truth the only thing that can really set us free?

## Daily Discipleship

DAY 1

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to walk with You.

**Bible Passage:** Genesis 27  Genesis 28

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 2

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I desire the work of sanctification in my life.

**Bible Passage:** Genesis 29  Genesis 30

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 3

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I need grace and mercy for my sins.

**Bible Passage:** Genesis 31  Genesis 32

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 4

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, bring healing to the dysfunction in my life.

**Bible Passage:** Genesis 33  Genesis 34

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 5

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I desire You to bless me.

**Bible Passage:** Genesis 35  Genesis 36

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 6

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for the transformation in my life.

**Bible Passage:** Genesis 38  Genesis 39

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Marked:

### *Marked for Transformation*

**Lesson Big Idea:** If you present your flawed self before God, He will transform you and bless your family.

**Bible Story:** Jacob's wrestling match and transformation in Genesis 32:22–32

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 1:13

- How was Jacob's life transformed?
- How can you allow God to work in your life?

**Bring It Home:** This week we learned how God transformed Jacob's life and blessed him. Just as God transformed Jacob because he gave himself completely to God, we can also be transformed and blessed when we give our lives to God. Do the activity on the take-home paper with your child and discuss ways your lives have been blessed.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a time of devotion. During that time discuss commitment to God. Consider the following questions:

- Do you feel like God has changed you in the last year?
- How have you seen your life and attitude changed?
- Have you seen your family blessed because of your good decisions?



# Marked: Marked for Eternity

A series by Ryan Bundren

**Lesson Big Idea:** If you humbly present yourself before God as broken and flawed, His holiness will mark you for eternity.

**Scripture Focus:** Revelation 7:14

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

While we all look forward to this blessed hope, Jesus provided a parable to remind us how we should live in the time between the first and second coming of Christ. In Matthew 22:1–14, Jesus told the parable of the wedding feast. First, Jesus stated that the kingdom of Heaven was like a king who was throwing a feast for his son's wedding. The king sent invitations through his servants, but the guests did not come. Some of the invitees returned to their homes, some focused on their businesses, and some responded with violence to the point of killing the messengers. When the king learned his servants had been killed, he was furious and sent his army to destroy those who had murdered them. The king stated that the feast was ready, but he had no guests. Thus, the king commanded his servants to invite everyone they could. So the servants "went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests" (Matthew 22:10, KJV).

Jesus reminded His audience that His call has gone out to all the world. First to Israel and now to the rest of the world (Acts 1:8). This parable teaches another important truth regarding what obedience to God's invitation of salvation entails: we must don our wedding garment. There are aspects of human sinfulness—what the Bible refers to as iniquity—that may not be expunged during this lifetime. However, just because aspects of the Fall may not be purged does not mean they cannot be diminished. Through responding to the gospel in obedience to Acts 2:38 and cooperating with God's sanctification through a lifestyle of holiness, we may obtain our "wedding garment." Observing the warning provided by Jesus in Matthew 22:13, we understand it is not enough just to hear the word of the Lord. We must allow God's Spirit to progressively transform us now as we look forward to the final transformation at His coming.

## Lesson Outline

- A. Apostle John
    1. According to church tradition, John was the youngest of the twelve apostles and out-lived them all.
    2. In addition to informing the audience about his whereabouts and circumstances, John also enlightened them regarding the intended purpose of this book.
  - B. The events of Revelation 7:9–17 warrant observation.
    1. These individuals are from all over the Earth.
    2. John described the individuals as wearing white robes.
    3. In Isaiah 64:6, Isaiah employed an interesting term to explain sinfulness: *iniquity*.
  - C. While we all look forward to this blessed hope, Jesus provided a parable to remind us how we should live in the time between the first and second coming of Christ.
    1. The parable stated the occasion for the feast was the son's wedding.
    2. Jesus reminded His audience that His call has gone out to all the world.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

1. What is the most difficult part for you in reading and understanding the Book of Revelation?
2. What is a trial or tribulation God has brought you through?
3. Why is it easy for us to stray from God's purposes?
4. What do you think it means that "many are called, but few are chosen"?
5. What are the marks of salvation and sanctification that we bear?

## Daily Discipleship

DAY 1

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for the hope of living in eternity with You.

**Bible Passage:** Revelation 1  Revelation 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 2

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, give me understanding as I read Your Word.

**Bible Passage:** Revelation 6  Revelation 7

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 3

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, send revival all across the world.

**Bible Passage:** Revelation 8  Revelation 9

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 4

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, help me to reach those who are lost around me.

**Bible Passage:** Revelation 17  Revelation 18

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 5

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for saving me.

**Bible Passage:** Revelation 19  Revelation 20

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 6

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I look forward to Your soon return.

**Bible Passage:** Revelation 21  Revelation 22

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Marked:

### *Marked for Eternity*

**Lesson Big Idea:** If you present your flawed self before God, His holiness will mark you for eternity.

**Bible Story:** John's vision of the redeemed standing before God's throne in Revelation 7:9–17

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 1:13

- Who were the people worshipping around the throne?
- How can we be cleansed by Jesus' blood?

**Bring It Home:** This week we learned about the vision of God's throne John had while exiled on the Isle of Patmos. In his vision he saw people in white robes who had come out of great tribulation. They worshiped around the throne of God, calling on the Lamb of God—Jesus Christ. Do the activity on the back of the take-home paper together to review the plan of salvation—the way we are marked for eternity.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a prayer night. During that time discuss what you think Heaven will look like. Consider the following questions for discussion:

- Why will Heaven be full of people who don't look like you?
- Why is it important that our church looks like Heaven: diverse?
- How do we connect with people who we may not have anything in common with?



# THRIVING IN BABYLON: THE RIGHTEOUS CHOICE

A series by DANIEL L. SEGRAVES

**Lesson Big Idea:** Though we live in a world that is hostile toward our faith in Jesus Christ, we must choose to live righteously.

**Scripture Focus:** Daniel 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

If our spiritual ancestors could live out their faith in an unbelieving world, so can we. And by so doing, we too can turn our world upside down.

First of all, we can pray. Prayer is far more powerful than protest. Prayer is more powerful than petitions. Prayer changes things. Complaining does not change things. Criticism does not change things.

Secondly, we can participate. Since we live in a democracy, it is our responsibility to vote. If we will not vote, we have no room to complain. God may even call some of us to serve in some aspect of civil government, like Erastus, the city treasurer (Romans 16:23). If God calls us to do this, we should do it with excellence, bringing our Christian character and values with us to the public square.

Next, we can practice our faith in every dimension of our lives. Jesus did not pray that we would be taken out of the world, but that we would be kept from the evil one (John 17:15). Paul did not tell us to have nothing to do with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters. To do this, he said, we would have to go out of the world. His call to separation was only from those who claim to belong to the family of God but who practice these things. (See I Corinthians 5:9–11.)

## Lesson Outline

- A. We should not be surprised that we do not feel at home in this world.
  - B. Although we hold Heaven's passport, we are now living in metaphorical Babylon.
    1. Much biblical history is the story of people of faith living among the faithless.
    2. Before the first coming of Christ, many people of faith wandered about in sheep skins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented.
  - C. The biblical evidence shows that people of faith can \_\_\_\_\_ the society around them.
    1. Daniel had such profound influence in Babylon.
    2. Esther made her mark in Persia.
    3. When God's will is for us to be in Babylon, we are not to struggle \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_.
  - D. If our spiritual ancestors could live out their faith in an unbelieving world, so can we.
    1. We can pray.
    2. We can participate.
    3. We can \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ in every dimension of our lives.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

1. What are the things that make you feel most uncomfortable in this world?
2. Do you have a regular spiritual practice that helps you keep focused on things of eternal value rather than on the merely earthly realm of life? Explain.
3. Have you ever known anyone who had a transforming Christian influence on others? at work? in a community? at school? Explain.
4. Have you ever considered getting involved with a social event for the purpose of making friends, doing good, and demonstrating what it means to be a follower of Jesus? How could this be a benefit to both you and those you may meet?
5. Do you specifically pray for those in civil government? Do you vote? Would you take advantage of opportunities to pray at the beginning of civic events? Share your thoughts.

## Daily Discipleship

DAY 1

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, this world is not my home.

**Bible Passage:** Daniel 1  Daniel 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 2

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, my heart longs for a city whose builder and maker is God.

**Bible Passage:** Daniel 3  Daniel 4

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 3

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to be filled with faith in the midst of a faithless world.

**Bible Passage:** Hebrews 5  Hebrews 6

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 4

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want my life to transform the world around me.

**Bible Passage:** Hebrews 9  Hebrews 10

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 5

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I submit to Your will.

**Bible Passage:** Romans 14  I Corinthians 5

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 6

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to practice my faith in every dimension of my life.

**Bible Passage:** Jeremiah 29  I Peter 5

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## THRIVING IN BABYLON:

### *The Righteous Choice*

**Lesson Big Idea:** Though we live in a world hostile toward our Christian faith, we must choose to live righteously.

**Bible Story:** Daniel's refusal of the king's meat and his choice to live righteously in Daniel 1:1–21

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Daniel 2:48

- Why wouldn't Daniel and his friends eat the food they were offered?
- What is a righteous choice you can make?

**Bring It Home:** In today's lesson we learned about Daniel and his friends refusing to eat the king's meat because they wanted to follow God. Making right choices is sometimes hard, but when we put Jesus first, we can do it. Do the activity on the take-home paper together and discuss the benefits of making righteous choices.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a night doing something everyone enjoys doing together. During that time discuss what it means to live a life set apart to God. Consider the following questions for discussion:

- How do we guard against sin and temptation?
- What can we spend our time doing to strengthen our willpower?
- Can we ever be totally righteous and holy?



# THRIVING IN BABYLON: Gifted for Greatness

A series by DANIEL L. SEGRAVES

**Lesson Big Idea:** Though we live in a world that is hostile toward our faith in Jesus Christ, we must act in faith and operate in the gifts God has given us.

**Scripture Focus:** Daniel 2:13–16, 25

<sup>13</sup> And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

<sup>14</sup> Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:

<sup>15</sup> He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

<sup>16</sup> Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

<sup>25</sup> Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

God has given you specific gifts to enable you to accomplish His purposes in your life. There are specific things you must do, however, to make this happen.

First, do not neglect your gift. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (I Timothy 4:14, KJV). The Holy Spirit will not force the gifts to work. They are gifts. They are there, waiting for you to yield to the Holy Spirit. But it is possible for you to grieve the Spirit by resisting His promptings. (See Ephesians 4:30.)

Second, stir up the gift. Paul also said to Timothy, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (II Timothy 1:6, KJV). How do you stir up the gift? You do this by acting on the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

God has blessed you with all the equipment you need to accomplish His purposes. It remains only for you to use the equipment He has provided.

## Lesson Outline

- A. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had a dream.
    - 1. He wanted his wise men to tell him the dream and its meaning.
    - 2. They simply could not imagine the content of the dream.
    - 3. Furiously angry, the king commanded all the wise men of Babylon to be destroyed.
  - B. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream, and then Daniel had a vision.
  - C. Nebuchadnezzar's dream illustrated the fakery of those who practice "curious arts."
  - D. The spiritual gifts God has given each of us.
    - 1. \_\_\_\_\_ has received a gift.
    - 2. Some gifts involve speaking.
    - 3. Some gifts are characterized by ministry.
  - E. We must \_\_\_\_\_ the gifts God has given us and act in \_\_\_\_\_ to exercise those gifts.
    - 1. Do not neglect your gift.
    - 2. \_\_\_\_\_ up the gift.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

- 1. Why do you think Daniel wanted his three friends to help him discover Nebuchadnezzar's dream? Is the likelihood of spiritual insight increased if more people are involved? Explain.
- 2. Have you ever participated in any occult activities? If so, how would you explain to a questioner the importance of avoiding them?
- 3. How is it that people of faith could be used in supernatural ministries before the Day of Pentecost?
- 4. Are you interested in spiritual gifts? Are there some gifts that interest you more than others? Have you ever attempted to minister in the realm of a specific gift? What was the result?
- 5. What steps will you take to avoid neglecting your gift? How will you stir up your gift? Would you feel comfortable talking with another believer about the gift you believe God has given you? Explain.

## Daily Discipleship

**DAY 1** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I know You are in control and I trust You.

**Bible Passage:** Judges 13  Judges 14

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 2** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to live the way You have called me to live.

**Bible Passage:** Joshua 11  Joshua 12

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 3** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, help me to see Your hand working through me.

**Bible Passage:** Joshua 13  Joshua 14

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 4** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, help me to be an encourager.

**Bible Passage:** Joshua 15  Joshua 16

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 5** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I need Your grace in my weaknesses.

**Bible Passage:** Joshua 17  Joshua 18

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 6** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, keep me from deception.

**Bible Passage:** Joshua 19  Joshua 20

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## Dan's Promise:

*Gifted for Greatness*

**Lesson Big Idea:** Though we live in a world hostile toward our Christian faith, we must act in faith and operate in the gifts God has given to us.

**Bible Story:** Daniel interprets the king's dream in Daniel 2:1–49

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Daniel 2:48

- How was Daniel able to use his talents for God?
- How can you use your talents for God?

**Bring It Home:** This week we learned about the time Daniel used his talents to interpret the king's dream. We also learned that God has given each of us unique talents that we can use for Him. Do the activity on the back of the take-home paper together and discuss your child's talents.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a night doing something everyone enjoys doing together. During that time discuss spiritual gifts. Consider the following questions for discussion:

- What kinds of talents do you use for church and the Kingdom?
- Have you ever been used in spiritual gifts?
- Have you ever seen or heard of anyone used in spiritual gifts?



# THRIVING IN BABYLON: Standing Strong

A series by DANIEL L. SEGRAVES

**Lesson Big Idea:** Though we live in a world that is hostile toward our faith in Jesus Christ, we must stand for what is right even when we stand alone.

**Scripture Focus:** Daniel 3:17–18

<sup>17</sup> If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

<sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

The exaltation of people of faith to positions of power and influence is not an uncommon theme in Scripture. Names coming quickly to mind include Joseph, Moses, Esther, and Daniel. The Book of Esther tells the story of the Israelites who were taken captive by Assyria in 722 BC. (See also II Kings 17:4–6, 23.) It preserves the account of Israel's captivity in Assyria, a prophesied event due to the idolatry of Israel. But in the midst of this captivity, Esther came on the scene "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14, KJV). Through a miraculous turn of events and due to her willingness to risk her life, Esther became the queen and was instrumental in saving the lives of her people.

Daniel and his three friends were in the Babylonian captivity of 586 BC, due to the rebellion of the people of Judah. Because these four men were willing to risk their lives to keep their faith, they also rose to positions of authority and influence.

## Lesson Outline

- A. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego would not \_\_\_\_\_ Nebuchadnezzar's gods or \_\_\_\_\_ the golden image he had erected.
1. The three "Hebrew children" were cast into the fiery furnace.
  2. For the accounts of fiery trials to be meaningful for today's believers, there first had to be bold people of faith willing to risk all to demonstrate the genuineness of their commitment to God.
- B. In Shirabad, Persia, Urshan's ministry created such a stir that Greek Catholic priests presented a petition to the government requesting he be sent back to America.
1. Since Urshan was a citizen of the United States of America, he considered returning to America in order to escape death.
  2. Urshan sensed the Lord directing him to Geogtapa.
  3. The account of Urshan's ministry in Geogtapa ends with the words, "And then the massacres came."
  4. With about seventy-five people, Urshan left Geogtapa.
  5. Having expected martyrdom and the opportunity to see the face of Jesus after sealing his testimony in his blood, Urshan was "a little disappointed, having missed the privilege of dying for [his] precious Lord and Saviour."
- C. Nebuchadnezzar realized the God of the Hebrews was the only true God.
- D. The exaltation of \_\_\_\_\_ of faith to \_\_\_\_\_ of power and influence is not an uncommon theme in Scripture.
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

1. Do you personally know anyone who has suffered the threat of death for his or her faith? Explain.
2. Can you remember when you first heard the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? Was it in Sunday school? How did you respond? Have you ever told the story to Sunday school children? Explain.
3. How do you think someone's faith can be so strong while facing persecution?
4. In October 2019, the United States House of Representatives voted to recognize the Armenian genocide of a century ago. Why do you think it took so long for this to be done?
5. If you came to faith in Christ in a hostile environment, what were the consequences?

## Daily Discipleship

DAY 1

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I will serve only You.

**Bible Passage:** Esther 1  Esther 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 2

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I will worship only You.

**Bible Passage:** Esther 3  Esther 4

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 3

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for bringing me through every test and trial.

**Bible Passage:** Esther 5  Esther 6

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 4

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I know You will stand with those who stand with You.

**Bible Passage:** Esther 7  Esther 8

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 5

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I pray others will see You through me.

**Bible Passage:** Esther 9  Esther 10

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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DAY 6

**Prayer Focus:** Lord, I trust You to supply and provide during every circumstance I face.

**Bible Passage:** Job 1  Job 2

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## THRIVING IN BABYLON:

### *Standing Strong*

**Lesson Big Idea:** Though we live in a world hostile toward our Christian faith, we must stand for what is right, even when we stand alone.

**Bible Story:** The three Hebrews and the fiery furnace in Daniel 3:1–30

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Daniel 2:48

- What choice did the three Hebrew boys make when the music sounded?
- How can we stand up for what is right?

**Bring It Home:** Today we learned the importance of standing up for what is right. The three Hebrew boys stood up for what they believed in, even while risking death. Do the activity on the take-home paper to reinforce the importance of standing up for what is right.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a prayer night. During that time discuss loneliness. Consider the following questions for discussion:

- Have you ever felt lonely or depressed?
- How did you cope with those feelings?
- How can we help fight against feeling alone and see that God is with us always?



# THRIVING IN BABYLON: Consistent Commitment

A series by DANIEL L. SEGRAVES

**Lesson Big Idea:** Though we live in a world that is hostile toward our faith in Jesus Christ, we must remain consistent in our commitment to God.

**Scripture Focus:** Daniel 6:10

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforesaid.

**Key words and Ideas that stand out to you from the Scripture Focus:**

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## The Lesson in Context

What insights do we gain from this account of biblical history? Those who wished to destroy Daniel were certainly hostile toward his faith in the true God. They were willing to scheme, to conspire, and to manipulate the king into making an unwise decision. But because he was unswerving in his faith in the true God and willing to face any temporal consequence of that faith, Daniel not only survived the attempt against him, but he *prospered*. In addition, he was instrumental in bringing Darius to recognize the true God and to spread the news of his conversion throughout his entire kingdom.

Stories like these are not unusual in Scripture. There is a principle at work here that is reduced to a brief statement in the Book of Proverbs: "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him" (Proverbs 26:27, KJV).

*The person who plans danger and harm for another actually sets in motion a chain of events that will result in his own destruction. The drama of Mordecai and Haman in the Book of Esther illustrates this truth perfectly. Jesus said, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). (Apostolic Study Bible, note for Proverbs 26:27)*

## Lesson Outline

- A. When Darius, king of Media, succeeded Belshazzar, he organized his kingdom by appointing 120 princes to rule.
    - 1. Darius preferred \_\_\_\_\_ over all the princes.
    - 2. In an attempt to thwart Daniel's promotion, the princes and presidents conspired to find something with which to charge Daniel.
  - B. Darius signed the necessary documents to establish this ill-advised decree.
    - 1. With no alternative, Darius commanded that Daniel be thrown into the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 2. The fate of those who had attempted to interfere with the king's plan to promote Daniel was not so pleasant.
  - C. Rather than Daniel losing his position of influence, he "prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (Daniel 6:28, KJV).
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## Reflection Questions from Lesson

- 1. What do you think was the motive behind those who wished to prevent Daniel from being promoted?
- 2. Why did you think Darius did not see through the conspiracy of those he had appointed?
- 3. The phrase "because he believed in his God" reveals the reason for Daniel's deliverance. How has faith and trust in God brought you deliverance?
- 4. How has God honored consistent commitment in your own life?
- 5. Do events like Daniel's episode with the den of lions happen among believers in today's world? Explain.

## Daily Discipleship

**DAY 1** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I want to be more consistent in prayer.

**Bible Passage:** Proverbs 22  Proverbs 21

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 2** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I pray I would find favor with those in my life.

**Bible Passage:** Proverbs 22  Proverbs 23

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 3** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, silence those who try to speak against me.

**Bible Passage:** Proverbs 24  Proverbs 25

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 4** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, my future is in Your hands.

**Bible Passage:** Proverbs 26  Proverbs 27

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 5** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, I lean on You in all things.

**Bible Passage:** Proverbs 28  Proverbs 29

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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**DAY 6** **Prayer Focus:** Lord, thank You for deliverance.

**Bible Passage:** Proverbs 30  Proverbs 31

What is something God is speaking to you through prayer and His Word today?

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# Family Connection

## THRIVING IN BABYLON:

### *Consistent Commitment*

**Lesson Big Idea:** Though we live in a world hostile toward our Christian faith, we must remain consistent in our commitment to God.

**Bible Story:** Daniel in the lion's den in Daniel 6:1–28

Use the conversation starters below to help create spiritual discussions with your family.

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## Children

**Memory Verse:** Daniel 2:48

- What was the king's message for Daniel when he entered the lions' den?
- How can we show our commitment to God?

**Bring It Home:** Today we learned what it means to serve God consistently. Daniel was consistently faithful to God and was rewarded for his faithfulness. Do the activity on the back of the take-home paper to help your child identify ways your family serves God consistently.

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## Youth

This week, your family is encouraged to plan a time of devotion. During that time discuss consistency. Consider the following questions:

- What are some things you are consistent with every week?
- What are some things you are not consistent with every week?
- What area do you feel like you need to put more work into to be a better Christian?