



ELEMENTARY GUIDE

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GIFTS AT THE *MANGER*

A Christmas Bible Study

NAME

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The Gift in the Manger

Have you ever received a gift that seemed to come with strings attached? Maybe a sibling gave you some candy but then later asked you to clean the bathroom for them. You may have attached some strings yourself when you hoped that giving your friend a really thoughtful present for their birthday would mean they would give you a cool gift for your birthday!

A true **gift** is something given freely and willingly with no expectation of payment in return. Most of us really don't look at gifts this way, though! We give and receive gifts because we want something, not to bless the other person!

In this study, we'll learn about the Christmas story by focusing on the true gifts that were given and why those gifts matter for us! Let's start in the book of Luke.

Read **Luke 2:1-7**. What event do these verses tell about?



The birth of Jesus is the whole reason we celebrate Christmas! Maybe you have been told that "Jesus is the reason for the season," and this is the truth! But it can be easy to forget that Jesus was actually the first and greatest Christmas gift ever given. John 3:16 tells us that God sent Jesus to this world willingly because He loves us!

Read ^{KEY VERSE} **John 1:14**. What do you think this verse is saying?

God's glory is full of

and

God's Word explains to us that Jesus (the Word) became flesh by coming to earth in a physical body as a little baby. Jesus is the Word of God who came to earth, showing us what God is like. **Jesus**, God's greatest gift to us, shined the brilliant light of grace and truth into the dark sinfulness of our world.

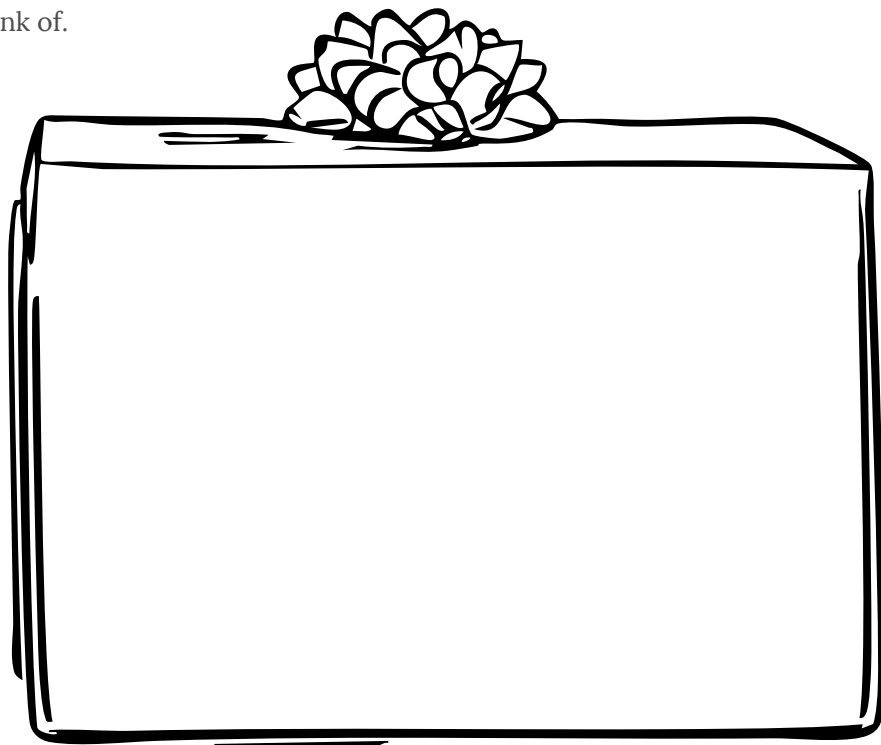
In the Bible, “grace” is kindness shown to someone who does not and could not deserve it. For example, Jesus died for our sins when we did not deserve it. Not only was Jesus the greatest gift ever given, but as John 1:16–17 tells us, it is through Him that we have received countless gifts of grace from God.



God showed us His grace and His goodness by giving us Jesus.

The story of Christmas is stuffed FULL of examples of God’s gracious gifts, and these gifts are what we’ll be learning about every day of this study.

Draw or write down some of the gifts from the Christmas story that you can think of.



Take some time to pray now. Thank God for the gift of Jesus, and ask Him to help you learn more about Him as you work through this study.

*Find today’s JESUS gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4–5.

"Don't move!" my dad called to me across the creek. I froze. I didn't understand why he had said this, but his voice had that sound it got when something was wrong or dangerous. "Okay, now slowly move to your right and get out of the water as quickly as possible."

As I followed my dad's instructions, I realized why he had suddenly become so serious. In a shallow little pool, about six inches away from where my feet had been a moment before, was a momma copperhead with three little babies around her. I was so glad I had listened to my dad even before I had been able to see these extremely venomous snakes. My obedience had saved me from a trip to the emergency room.

Have you ever been asked to do something that was unknown or seemed difficult?



Today we'll get to see how one young girl's obedience in an unknown situation was a gift God used to bless the whole world!

The angel, Gabriel, was sent to speak to Mary, a young woman who lived in Nazareth. We know she was young because she was betrothed, or promised in marriage, to a man named Joseph, but they were not yet married. Another important detail we learn from these verses is that Joseph was a descendant of David, making him part of the royal family of Israel.




Read **Luke 1:29**. How did Mary respond to the angel's greeting?

Read **Luke 1:30-33**. Whose mother would Mary be?

Woah! Mary's life was about to change dramatically. Through a miracle of God's Holy Spirit, she would become pregnant with a child. This son, whom they would name Jesus, would not be Joseph's biological child, but he would be Joseph's legal son and heir. He would be both God AND man.

Read ^{KEY VERSE}  **Luke 1:38**. What did Mary tell the angel?



Mary probably didn't understand all that God was doing through her obedience, but that didn't stop her from willingly giving it! We know that Jesus, whose name literally means, "The Lord is salvation," was the One God had promised to send in order to save His people from their sin. God used Mary's gift of **obedience** to Him in His plan to bring our Savior into the world!

God was able to use Mary in His plan to bring us salvation because she gave Him her obedience.

Draw or write what you would do if God asked you to do something difficult like He asked Mary to do. Would you obey?



Today, praise God for using the gift of obedience in order to accomplish His perfect plan. Ask Him to help you understand the value and importance of this gift.

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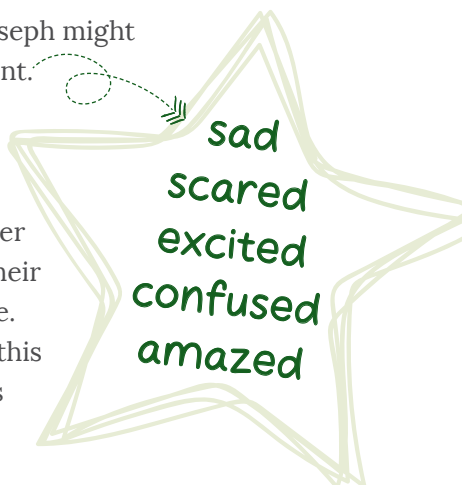
Joseph's Gift

In our last lesson, we saw how Mary's gift of obedience to God is a huge part of the Christmas story. Today, we get to talk about another gift in the Christmas story that you may not have noticed or thought of before. So let's take a look!

Read **Matthew 1:18-23**. What message did the angel give to Joseph?

Circle the words that describe how you think Joseph might have felt when he learned that Mary was pregnant.

Joseph must have been shocked to hear that Mary was pregnant and thought she had been unfaithful to him. He didn't want to embarrass her or ruin her reputation, so he was going to end their engagement quietly and continue on with his life. However, while he was carefully thinking about this decision, an angel came to tell him that God was doing something amazing.



sad
scared
excited
confused
amazed

I'm sure Joseph may have been uncertain, but he was probably also amazed at what the angel had said! As verses 22-23 show us, the angel reminded Joseph of a promise God had made. The Lord had promised to send a Savior named Immanuel, which means "God with us." God Himself would come to save Israel, and Joseph had the opportunity to be part of how God was going to do this.

Read ^{KEY VERSES} **Matthew 1:24-25**. Did Joseph do what the angel commanded?

☐ YES
☐ NO

Joseph didn't wait around, second-guess, or throw a fit. He obeyed God like Mary had. Joseph willingly gave up his reputation and plans to God, giving the Lord his **trust** as he moved forward.

Joseph gave his trust to God by accepting His plan.

Throughout your life, you will also be faced with choices similar to the one Joseph had to make. Maybe it's choosing to obey God even if your friends don't understand or make fun of you. You may have to trust God with an unexpected or difficult situation that you don't see how any good could come from it. You might even wonder at times if trusting the Lord is worth the trouble—He expects obedience, and sometimes obedience is hard!

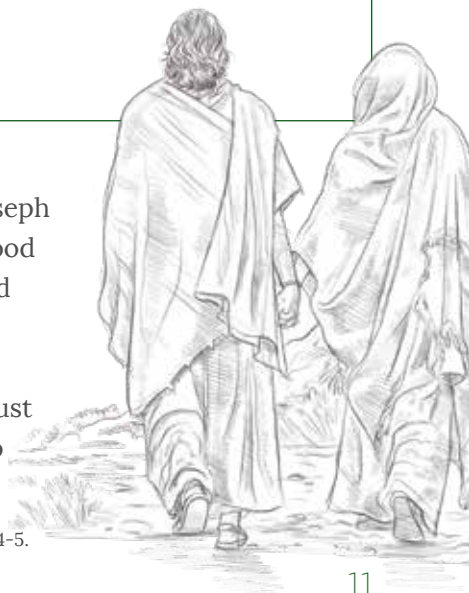
What is one way you can give your trust to God today?



Though Joseph didn't know the end of the story, we do! We get to see how God used the trust Joseph gave to the Lord to continue working out His good plan. We can trust our lives to the very same God Joseph trusted. Isn't that amazing?

As you pray today, tell God what you want to trust Him with. Thank Him for being a good God who we CAN trust with our whole lives.

*Find today's TRUST gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.



From Angels to Shepherds

Have the gifts given in the Christmas story that we've discussed so far surprised you? Well, today we'll get to talk about two more gifts you might not have noticed before! First, let's refresh our memories on the events that took place leading up to and on that night when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Read **Luke 2:4-7**. What details about Jesus' birth are different from what might be common in present-day births?









From the beginning of Jesus' life, we see how He was humbled in coming to this earth. Jesus was the Messiah! Yet He was born where the animals were kept and fed.



Read **Luke 2:8-11**. Draw what happened to the shepherds.

This **good news** is the first gift we see in our passage today. Quickly, the shepherds went to the manger to find Jesus.

Read  **LUKE 2:16-20**. What did the shepherds do next?

Those shepherds, their parents, and all their ancestors had prayed and longed for the Messiah their whole lives. Now He was HERE!

The shepherds left Mary, Joseph, and the baby while giving the second gift we see in this passage: **praise and worship** to God for what He had done.



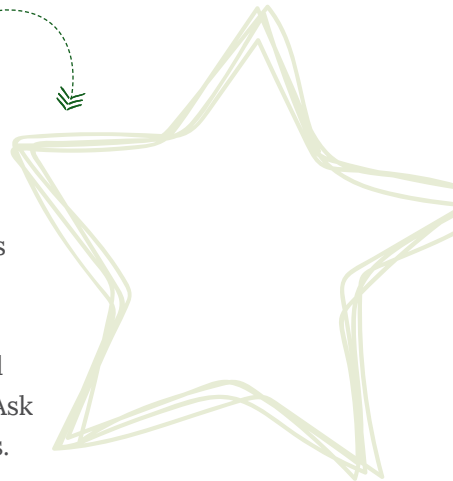
After receiving the angel's gift of good news, the shepherds gave the gift of praise and worship to God.

How can you worship Jesus?

Like the shepherds, you can worship by telling other people about Jesus. You can also worship by honoring Jesus as your King and obeying His commands. There are so many ways to give Jesus the gift of your worship.

Today, thank God for revealing His truth to us and giving us the opportunity to respond in worship. Ask Him to make your heart tender like the shepherds.

*Find today's WORSHIP gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.



The Gifts of the Wise Men

Have you ever put a lot of thought and effort into choosing just the right present for a friend or a family member?

Usually, giving gifts to our close friends or family members is easier than giving gifts to strangers because we **KNOW** our friends and family! We know what colors they like, which books, games, or shows are their favorites, and what activities or hobbies they do. Because we have this knowledge, we can give them gifts that will delight them and reflect the truth about who they are.

Today, let's look at three gifts that help us understand the truth about who Jesus is. As it turns out, the shepherds weren't the only ones who recognized the truth about Jesus and came to worship Him!

Read **Matthew 2:1-2**. What happened after Jesus was born?

Read **Matthew 2:9-11**.

What did the wise men give Jesus?

» _____

» _____

» _____



When they found Jesus in Bethlehem, the wise men were so excited that they fell down in front of Jesus and worshiped Him. Then, they opened the gifts they had brought for this king—**gold, frankincense, and myrrh**.

While these seem like pretty strange gifts to give a child, they make perfect sense for Jesus! We don't know how much the wise men understood about who Jesus was and what He had been born to do. Yet, these gifts symbolize the truth perfectly. Gold is a precious metal associated with kings and royalty.

Frankincense is an incense that the priests would burn in the temple as a sign of God's presence, and myrrh is a perfume that was used in preserving and burying those who had died.

According to the descriptions of each gift you just read, match them to the truth about Jesus they symbolize.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Frankincense • | • Jesus is the King of kings. |
| Myrrh • | • Jesus came to earth to die for our sin. |
| Gold • | • Jesus is God with us. |

The wise men gave gifts that symbolized the truth about who Jesus is.

Read **Matthew 2:12-18**. What was King Herod's reaction to the truth?

While the wise men wanted to worship and honor who Jesus was, Herod wanted to destroy Jesus because of who He was. He didn't want another king challenging his authority, so he wickedly commanded that all male children in Bethlehem two years and younger be killed.

Who had the right response to the truth about Jesus?

Pray for God to help you love the truth about Jesus. Thank Him for giving you His Word so you can understand and know the truth for yourself.

*Find today's TRUTH gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

So far, we have studied the events in Matthew and Luke that usually come to our minds when we think of the Christmas story. But the Christmas story began long before the angel told Mary she would have a baby and continued many years after the wise men presented their gifts to Jesus. So now, let's investigate how God has been giving us good gifts and teaching us the Christmas story since the beginning of time!

When God created this world, He made it absolutely perfect and good. Sadly, it didn't stay that way. Adam and Eve rebelled against God, plunging not just themselves, but the entire world into the darkness and slavery of sin. Despite this, God had a good plan that He was working out perfectly. In fact, God told the serpent in the garden, Satan, what the future would hold.

Read **Genesis 3:15**. What did God say to the serpent?

This verse is God's first recorded promise to send Jesus to be our Savior!

God wanted His people to know that He was caring for them from the beginning of the world and that He would always keep His promises. Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, God continued to describe the Messiah.

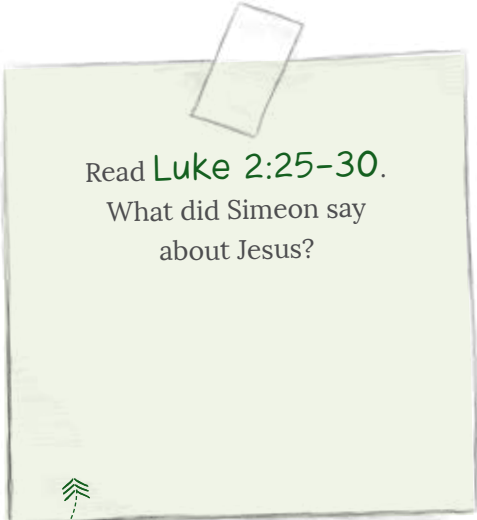
Read ^{KEY VERSE} **Isaiah 7:14**. What important details are in this promise that were not in God's first promise in Genesis?

God was making His promise even clearer and easier to recognize!

For many years, God continued to speak to His people through prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah, promising them the Messiah would come.

Then God fell silent. For about 400 years, there were no prophets reminding the people of the promises God had made. Many of God's people started to lose hope that God would keep His promise to send a Savior.

However, not everyone in Israel lost hope. Simeon and Anna were two faithful people who held on to the promises of God their entire lives without losing hope that He would keep His word (Luke 2:25-38).



Read **Luke 2:25-30**.
What did Simeon say
about Jesus?

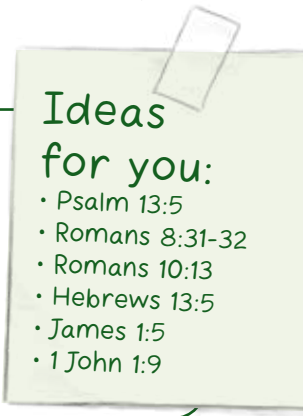
Simeon and Anna both believed that God would keep His promise, and they saw it with their own eyes. Like the shepherds, Anna went out to share the good news with those who were waiting for the Messiah. God had not failed Israel; He had been faithful!

God gives us hope because He
ALWAYS keeps His promises.



God kept His promise to Israel, and He is still keeping His promises today. This is how God gives the gift of **hope** to our hearts!

What promises of God give you a reason to hope today? —



**Ideas
for you:**

- Psalm 13:5
- Romans 8:31-32
- Romans 10:13
- Hebrews 13:5
- James 1:5
- 1 John 1:9

Today, take time to thank God for always keeping His promises. Ask Him to help you remember the hope you have in Him.

*Find today's HOPE gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Mary and Joseph welcomed Jesus into the world as a baby. But Jesus didn't stay a baby! Jesus grew and learned in a way that pleased both God and man (Luke 2:52). Before Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin, He spent about three years teaching the truth, healing sick and disabled people, and fulfilling God's promises. Today, we'll learn one of God's gifts that Jesus taught about!

Read **Matthew 9:10**. What two types of people was Jesus eating with?





Tax collectors were hated by the Jews and viewed as traitors to Israel because they worked for Rome, the empire that was ruling Israel at this time. Not only was Jesus—a Jew—associating and eating with THESE people, but this verse also tells us there were people at this dinner who were known for their sinful lifestyle.

Matthew 9:11 says that during the dinner, the Pharisees asked the disciples why Jesus would eat with these people. The Pharisees were known in Israel for carefully keeping the Law of God. In fact, they took it so seriously that they even made up extra rules to keep so that they would never get close to disobeying the Law.

Imagine your parents gave you a lights out time of 9 p.m., but you turned off your light at 8:30 p.m. and made your sibling or friend follow your rule of 8:30 p.m. as well. In a way, this is what the Pharisees did. They didn't just keep the Law—they added to it and tried to make sure everyone else obeyed their rules too.

Read **Matthew 9:12**. What do you think Jesus' response to the Pharisees meant?



At first, Jesus' reply doesn't seem to answer the question the Pharisees asked. They wanted to know why Jesus was eating with sinners, not hear about sick people! But Jesus understood their hearts and got straight to the true issue. Just like sick people are the ones who need a doctor, it was sinful people who needed Jesus to save them.

Read ^{KEY VERSE} **Matthew 9:13**. What did Jesus want instead of sacrifices?

I desire _____ and
not _____.

Jesus explained that He desired to show **mercy** to sinners who came to Him for salvation. The sacrifices of the Pharisees meant nothing if they didn't have the same merciful attitude toward sinners like Jesus Himself had.



Through Jesus, God gives us
mercy despite our sin.

Have you ever admitted your need for Jesus and accepted God's gift of mercy?

☐ YES
☐ NO

Sometimes even we who have accepted God's gift of mercy can forget how much we need it. Maybe we act like the Pharisees, making impossible rules for our friends or siblings to follow and refusing to give mercy like we've been given.

What can you do to show mercy and kindness to someone this week? _____

Today, thank God for the mercy He gives us through Jesus. Ask Him to help you have a merciful heart toward those around you.

*Find today's COMPASSIONATE MERCY gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Lasting Peace

On Day 4, we read that one thing the angels announced to the shepherds was peace on earth (Luke 2:14). When we look around us though, we don't see much peace, do we? We see squabbles with siblings, friends who refuse to speak to each other, children arguing with their parents, and wars across the world. We feel fear in our hearts, uncertainty about the future, and anger towards those who hurt us.

What specific things do you see around you that are opposite of peace on earth?

The shepherds weren't living in particularly peaceful times either. The Roman Empire had taken over Israel, requiring them to pay taxes and report to their hometowns for a census like Mary and Joseph had to do. Rome also put their own people in charge of Jewish cities and provinces and took over law enforcement and punishment.

Read **Isaiah 9:6**.

What names of Jesus does this verse tell you about?

It would make sense that when Jesus, the Prince of Peace, finally came, people thought He had come to bring political or societal peace. Many Jews believed Jesus would take the throne of David in order to overthrow the Romans and make Israel a powerful, united nation once again.

Read **ROMANS 5:1-2**. What kind of peace did Jesus bring?

Peace with _____

Jesus didn't bring peace to all the conflicts in the world the first time He came to earth. He didn't fix every misunderstanding or demolish every bit of injustice or evil threatening His people. Jesus brought peace that is greater than any peace ever known—**peace** with God.

Read **Romans 5:8-11**. Why do we need the peace with God that Jesus brought?



The sin in all of our hearts actually makes us enemies of God who are at war with Him rather than at peace with Him. We needed Jesus to bring us peace because without Him we are slaves to sin!

Through the salvation Jesus brought, we can be reconciled—have a restored relationship—to God! Only this reconciliation can bring us peace that lasts.

**Jesus reconciles us to God, giving us
lasting peace that nothing can take away.**

Do you ever still feel like you don't have peace?

☐ **YES** ☐ **SOMETIMES** ☐ **NO**

Once we have been saved and reconciled to God through Jesus, nothing can take away that peace! The key to lasting peace is to keep our minds focused on God, trusting Him and thanking Him for being in control. The TRUTH is that we have peace with God, so we can have peace in our hearts no matter what we face in our lives here on this earth.

Today, thank God for sending Jesus to give you the gift of peace with Him. Ask God to help you keep your mind fixed on Him even when things are scary, confusing, or unpeaceful.

*Find today's LASTING PEACE gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Bursting Joy

Have you ever felt so happy that you thought you might burst? Maybe you really got the Christmas gift at the top of your wishlist or your grandparents surprised you for your birthday.

Even if you have experienced extreme happiness at some point, those feelings don't stay forever. Every feeling of "joy" like this eventually fades and ends up forgotten.

Read **Isaiah 55:6-7 and 10-11**. Instead of looking for things to satisfy us, what does Isaiah call us to do?

We must repent of our sins and seek after God! He is wiser than us, and His ways are above our understanding. In the same way, God's Word comes into our lives and produces eternal and spiritual fruit in us!

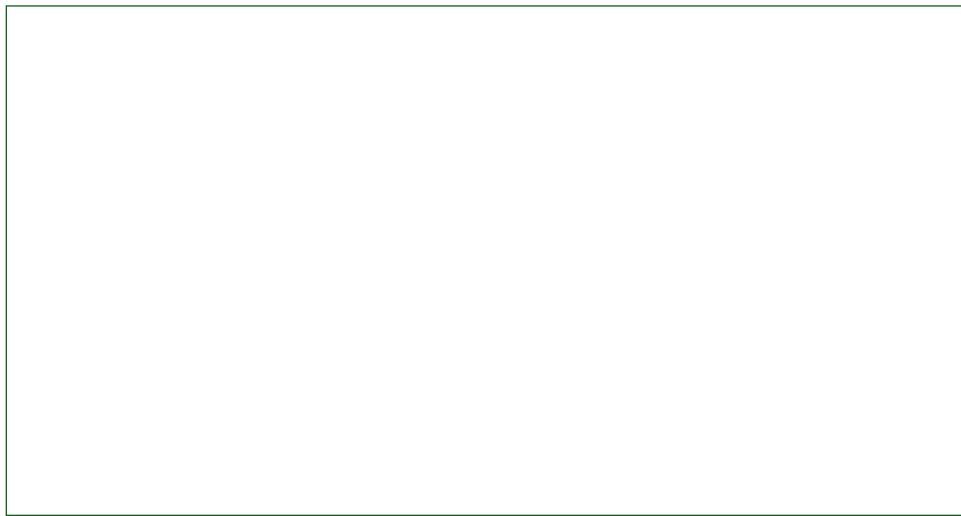
Read ^{KEY VERSE} **Isaiah 55:12**. What fruit does the Word of God produce in those who seek and accept it?



This verse uses the pictures of life bursting into song and rejoicing to help us understand how powerful, deep, and satisfying the joy that comes from God is. When we seek joy in the things around us, we will always be frustrated and disappointed. But when we seek God, HE gives us **joy** that is overflowing and abundant! We will not only be satisfied, but we will burst with joy!

God gives us joy that could never come from ourselves.

Write or draw about something that you thought would always make you happy, like a favorite toy, that doesn't make you happy anymore.



Especially around the Christmas season, we expect things to fill us with joy. We hope that Christmas music will lift us up with excitement, that seeing friends and loved ones will fill our hearts with satisfaction and love, and that people give us gifts we really want instead of socks or trinkets that break immediately.

But the joy you are searching for only comes from seeking God above all else.

What things can you do to seek God today?

» _____

» _____

» _____

Today, thank God for the joy HE will give to you when you seek Him. Ask Him to help you want to seek Him and know Him better each day.

Ideas for you:

- read your Bible
- talk to a parent or pastor about questions you have about the Bible or God
- listen to Scripture-based music
- pray
- listen carefully in church

*Find today's BURSTING JOY gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Especially around the holidays, when many people gather together with family and friends to celebrate, loneliness and sadness fill the hearts of others. Many people—maybe you included—don't have much family or can't travel to visit them. Then there are other times when, even in a huge gathering of people, we can still feel alone, unseen, and unloved.

Whether this is a feeling you've never felt before or one you feel almost every day, you need the gift we're looking at today! Just like all the gifts God gives us, this gift is connected to specific truths about who God is.

Read **Micah 7:18–20**. What truths do these verses tell you about God?

Micah points us to specific actions of God that reveal His character. There is no other god like our God! Micah used the names Abraham and Jacob to refer to the nation of Israel because they were the fathers of that nation. So now, let's take a closer look at how God truly showed faithfulness and steadfast love to Abraham, Jacob, and the whole nation that came from their family!

Read **Genesis 12:1–3 and 28:10–15**. What promises did God make to Abraham (Abram) AND his grandson, Jacob?

These men did not have easy lives where God's love and faithfulness were overwhelmingly clear to them all the time. God called Abraham to leave his relatives and home in order to live alone with his wife and servants in the land God would give to his descendants one day. Jacob's life was full of broken situations where deception and pride, including his own, hurt his family over and over again.

Eventually the descendants of these men, the Israelites, were indeed a HUGE nation of people. But their lives weren't easy either. From Abraham to today, God's people have been tempted over and over to doubt God's faithfulness and love.

Read ^{KEY VERSES} **Lamentations 3:21-25**. What is true no matter what we feel or think?



God's steadfast love _____ ends.

No matter how we feel or what is going on in our lives, we have hope because the Lord's steadfast love NEVER ceases or comes to an end. This gift of **steadfast love** is infinite and backed up by God's perfect faithfulness.

Read **John 3:16**. Why did God send Jesus, His one and only Son?

Did you realize that Jesus was proof of God's faithfulness in His promises to Abraham and Isaac? Jesus came from the family of Abraham, and Jesus' dying for our sins provided the blessing to all nations that God promised would come through Abraham! Our God has given us His eternal, steadfast love in Jesus and continues to prove His love every day of our lives.

**God gives us His steadfast love to help us
in times that we feel alone or forgotten.**

When you feel alone, what can you think about to help you remember that God loves you?



Praise God in prayer for His steadfast love. Ask God to help you remember the truth about His faithfulness and love when you feel alone or unloved.

*Find today's STEADFAST LOVE gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Remember the Pharisees from Day 7?

The Law was meant to show the Israelites their need for God's mercy, but the Pharisees viewed the Law as a list to follow in order to perfectly please God on their own. Instead of delighting in God's Law as a way of obeying and knowing Him, they had made it a heavy, tiring burden. They desperately needed the gift we will talk about today, but sadly, many of them were too proud to accept it.

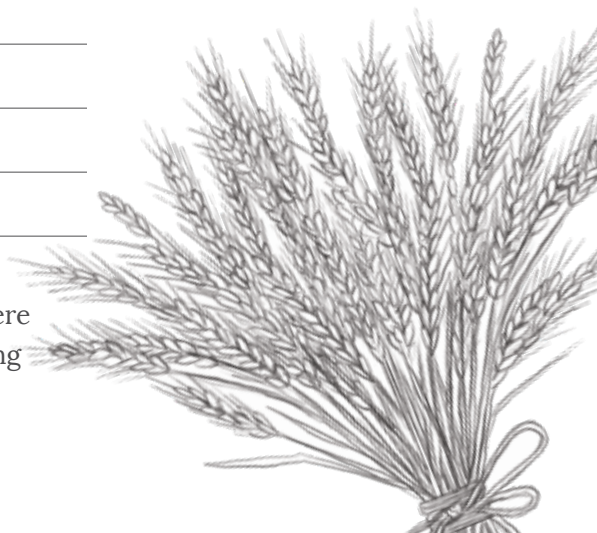
Read **Matthew 12:1-2**. Why were the Pharisees upset with Jesus and His disciples this time?

The Pharisees took God's original design for the Sabbath—a day of rest—and twisted it to be a day of following many rules that did not allow people to truly rest. There were strict limits on gathering food to eat and even on how many steps the people were allowed to take!

While the disciples were hungry and picking grain for themselves, the Pharisees told Jesus that they were acting unlawfully by working on the Sabbath.

Read **Matthew 12:6-8**. What did Jesus say about the Sabbath?

Jesus explained that the Pharisees were saying He and His disciples were doing wrong, but that was impossible!



Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. He made it and rules over it. Instead of enjoying the blessing of rest that God created, the Pharisees were making their rules for the Sabbath a burden to everyone.

Read ^{KEY VERSES} **Matthew 11:28-30.**

Who does true rest come from? » _____

Jesus says that to have rest from our heavy burdens, we have to come to Him! The Pharisees failed to find rest and actually created burdens for themselves by trying to DO all the right things. All they really needed to do was repent of their proud self-righteousness and come to Jesus. Then, He would give them what they could never obtain by themselves—**rest**.

In Jesus, God has given us true rest.

What is a burden or heavy thing that keeps you from finding rest?

Jesus says that all you have to do is come to Him! Though we do seek to obey Jesus, He doesn't require perfection from us because He already lived a perfect life and died in our place. He requires you to bring your burdens and lay them down at His feet. Then, you can experience true rest in Him!

Today, tell God about the burdens you feel in your life. Thank Him for giving you true rest when you come to Him.

*Find today's TRUE REST gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

The Final Sacrifice

We've talked a good bit about the Pharisees and how they missed the point when they rejected Jesus. But the Pharisees weren't the only people who had to struggle with who Jesus was and what He had come to do. God's promise to send a Messiah looked very different from what many people in Israel thought their salvation would look like. Let's learn about this today.

Read **Hebrews 10:1-4**. What truth about the Old Testament sacrifices do these verses tell us?



The Law that God had given to His people involved offering sacrifices of animals in the temple to pay for sin. However, the blood of these animals never actually paid for the sin of the people! The temple sacrifices were only a “shadow”—a picture of the truth. Unfortunately, many Israelites didn't understand that the animal sacrifices were only a picture of what was to come.

Verse 1 tells us that the lawful sacrifices offered year after year could never make us “perfect” or right with God!

What do you think was the purpose of the sacrifices?

While they served as a reminder to the people that sin has consequences and requires payment, the sacrifices hadn't solved the problem! This is why God sent Jesus to earth in a physical body to live a perfect, sinless life in our place. Jesus' body would be the sacrifice that COULD pay for sin.

God promised that He would one day provide a new covenant or promise where God's Holy Spirit would give His people new hearts willing to obey Him. In order to be part of this covenant, the people had to accept Jesus and believe His sacrifice paid for their sins.

Read ^{KEY VERSES} **Hebrews 10:11-14**. How many times did Jesus have to sacrifice in order to forgive our sins?



While the animal sacrifices for sin were made every year, over and over, Jesus made one sacrifice that put an end to sacrifices forever! After Jesus gave His life as the **final sacrifice**, no more sacrifices were needed because Jesus completely paid our sin debt in full. Nothing more is owed on our part, and Jesus' work was accomplished.

Jesus' sacrifice was the final sacrifice given for our sin.

We are now under a new covenant of grace where Jesus' blood covers our sin when we place our faith in Him for salvation.

Read **Hebrews 10:19-25**. What should our response be since Jesus has paid for our sin?



There is no debt left for us to pay and no sacrifices for us to make in order to pay for our sin and secure God's forgiveness—it is finished! Because this is true, we are called to draw near to God in faith, hold tightly to this hope Jesus has given us, encourage other believers to live for God as well, and share this hope with those who have never heard it.

Today, thank God for giving Jesus as the perfect sacrifice to take away our sin. Ask Him to help you encourage others with the hope you have found in Jesus.

*Find today's SACRIFICE gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Have you ever thought about just how much is possible if you work hard enough? If you work long and hard enough, you can earn just about anything—a car, house, trip around the world, or even a ride to Mars! For the most part, if you're willing to put the work in, NOTHING is out of your reach.

Because so many of us think this way, it's hard to accept the truth that our greatest need in this world cannot be bought or earned.

Read ^{KEY VERSES} **Ephesians 2:8-9**. What gift could we never work hard enough to earn?

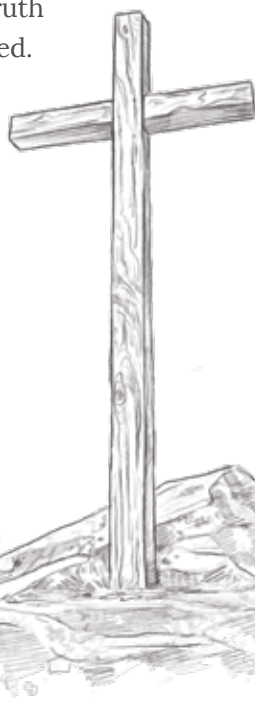


Anything in this world can be obtained if you have enough money or time, but **salvation** can only be obtained through the grace of God. It is a gift far too costly for anyone to buy, too undeserved for anyone to earn, and yet offered freely to those who place their faith in Jesus.

It's hard to imagine how this is possible and why God would offer us salvation when we are so undeserving and powerless.

Romans 3:21-26 says that we need salvation because God is righteous, or everything He does is right. God is holy, which means He is set apart from sin—He cannot sin or allow sin in His presence. We have all sinned and cannot meet the standard of God's holiness.

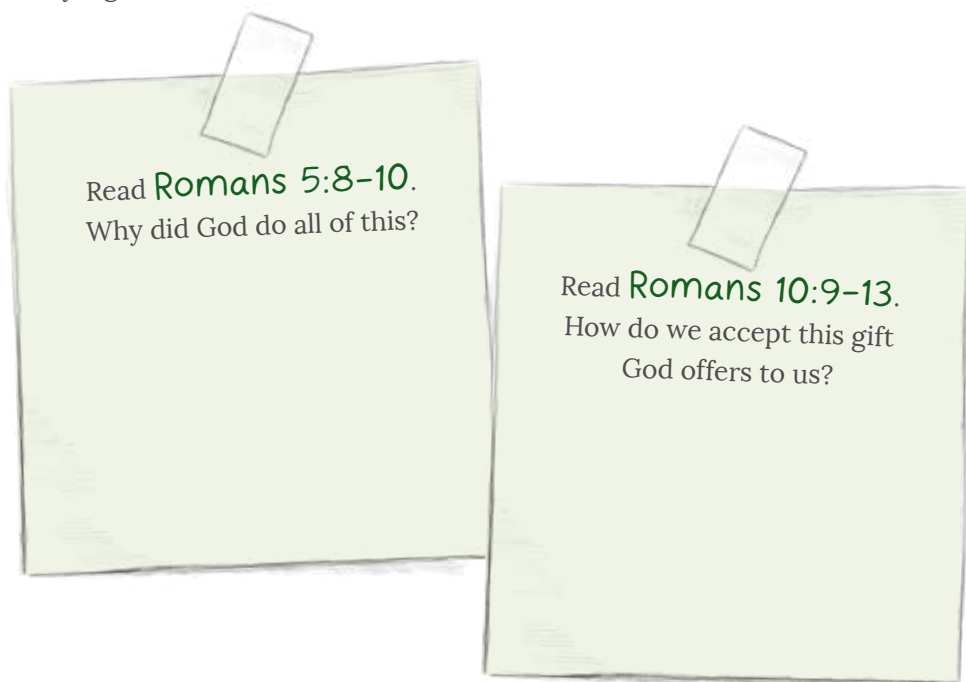
What are some examples of how you have fallen short of God's standard of holiness and perfection?



The penalty for our sin is death and separation from God, but God doesn't want this to happen to us. Since Jesus paid for our sin, God can justly and righteously offer us salvation!

Salvation is the
free gift of God to us that
we accept through faith.

God provided the way for us to be right with Him even though we could never be good enough to deserve it or work hard enough to earn it. Salvation is truly a gift!

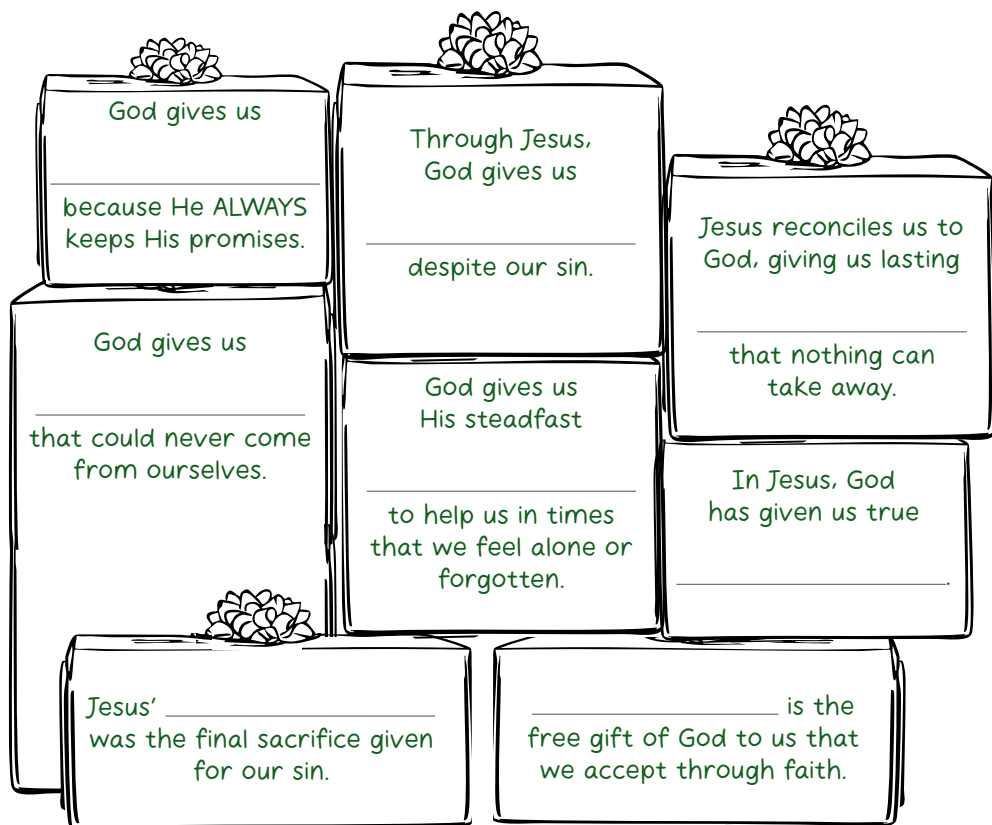


It's that simple—confess that Jesus is Lord, believe in Him as your Savior from sin, and you will be saved. Nothing else is required. Praise God for His kindness to us!

Today, thank God for offering salvation to you as a gift. Ask Him to help you remember His love for you.

*Find today's SALVATION gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

We have talked about so many gifts God has given us through Jesus! Let's review just a bit before we continue looking at more of the many gifts God has given to us. Fill in the gift of God that completes each key truth from Days 6–13.



Great work! Now, let's continue learning about the gifts God has given us.

Read **Hebrews 1:1–2**. What has God done according to this passage?

In this study, we have looked at several passages of Scripture that were messages God gave His people through prophets He sent to them.

These prophets served God and the people for a time, but they were pointing God's people to an even better Word to come. Verse 2 tells us that now, God has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus!

Read ^{KEY VERSE}  **John 17:17**. What did Jesus pray that God would do?

Before Jesus went to the cross to die for our sin, He prayed for us. That's right! Jesus prayed that God would preserve and help all believers. But then Jesus also prayed that we would be sanctified through the truth—God's Word. Sanctification is a big word for the way we grow once we are saved! We are sanctified as we learn the truth about God and become more like Jesus. This change continues to happen throughout our whole lives as we follow Jesus and seek to do His will. God's true Word is where we learn how to grow and become more like Him!

God has given us His Word to help us grow
and become more like Jesus.

Read **2 Timothy 3:16–17** and fill in the blank.

_____ Scripture is profitable for us.

There is not one verse in the Bible that is unimportant or unnecessary. **God's Word** is an extremely valuable gift because it shows us who God is and why He matters to us.



Why are you thankful that God has given us His Word?

★ _____

Today, ask God to help you remember that the Bible is one of His gifts to you. Thank Him for revealing Himself to you in this way.

*Find today's HIS WORD gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Have you ever forgotten that you had something, like a favorite toy or shirt, until you found it in the bottom of the drawer or under the bed?

God has graciously given us many wonderful gifts, but sometimes we forget we have them. If we forget that we have His love, joy, and peace, we can't live like Jesus!

Read **Romans 8:1-4**. What is true of all believers in Christ Jesus?

We are free from

_____ and

_____.

Those who have accepted God's gift of salvation in Christ Jesus are forgiven and right with God! This passage teaches us something else, too. One of God's gifts to us is the **Spirit of God** in our hearts. We call Him the Holy Spirit! As a believer, the Holy Spirit reminds you of the truth you have learned to help you make a decision to do the right thing.

Write or draw about a time when the Holy Spirit helped you make the right decision about something.



Read ^{KEY VERSES} **Romans 8:15-17**. What else does the Spirit do in our hearts?

The Holy Spirit does NOT produce fear in us. If you ever are feeling fearful or insecure, it is never because God's Spirit is putting that in your heart. In fact, one of the Spirit's jobs is to remind us that we are LOVED whenever we forget!

In John 14, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is our Helper! When we aren't sure what is true, the Spirit helps us know. If we need wisdom, we can pray for help, and the Spirit will guide us. At times when obeying God is hard, the Spirit gives us strength to do right. When our hearts are afraid, worried, unsure, or overwhelmed, the Spirit is there to remind us how much God loves us.

What things do you need the Holy Spirit to help you with today?



The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us to assure us of His love and strengthen us to live for Christ.


Today, thank God for the gift of His Holy Spirit. Ask Him to help your heart remember and believe what you know to be true.

*Find today's HIS SPIRIT gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Imagine it's Christmas morning, and you're finally opening gifts you've been staring at for days and weeks. There's one particular present you're confused about because it's not the shape of anything you asked for. When you rip off the wrapping paper, you are surprised to find a vacuum cleaner!

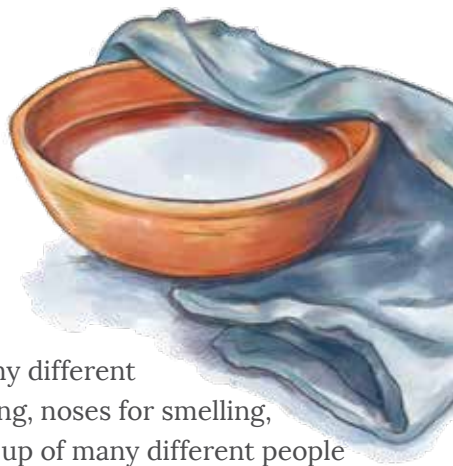
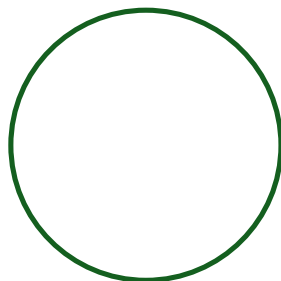
Draw a face on the circle to show how you would feel if you were given a vacuum cleaner for Christmas.

A vacuum isn't for you—it's really for the people around you who benefit when you keep the floors clean. A gift like this assumes you're not only using it just for yourself, but also serving others.

Read  **Romans 12:5-8**. What does this passage tell us is true about all Christians?

When we become Christians, we become part of God's family, the church. Just like a body has many different parts that serve a specific purpose—eyes for seeing, noses for smelling, feet for walking, and so on—God's family is made up of many different people with different purposes, or gifts. We often refer to these gifts as **spiritual gifts** because they are given to us by God and look a little different than other gifts we've been given.

Look back at verses 6-8. What are these gifts for?



These gifts have been given to us, not for our own uses or desires, but to SERVE the rest of the body that we are a part of! Your legs can't just decide to take the day off—then your body wouldn't be able to function well. In the same way, we have to use the gifts we're given because the body of Christ works and functions correctly when we're all using what God has given us.

God has given us spiritual gifts
which we get to use to bless others and
encourage them to grow.

Read **John 13:3-5 and 12-17**. What lesson did Jesus teach His disciples?

Jesus did this in order to give us an example. Jesus is our Master and Lord, and He served. Because of this, part of following Jesus and being a Christian is having this attitude of love and service toward others.

It might be difficult at first to know how to serve or what serving others looks like, and that's okay! It's all part of the process. It is only by learning to serve in many different ways that we can learn the specific ways God has gifted us to serve and show love to others.

What ways can you serve others in your home or at your church? (If you're not sure, talk to a parent, teacher, or pastor about service opportunities that would be open to you!)

- » _____
- » _____
- » _____

Today, thank God for giving you spiritual gifts to serve and love others with. Ask Him to give you a servant's heart like Jesus.

*Find today's SPIRITUAL GIFTS gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Eternal Life With Him

One of my favorite Christmas carols is “In the Bleak Midwinter.” Take a look at the lyrics of this beautiful song. »»»

These words create a picture in our minds that can help us understand our spiritual situation before Jesus came and made so many good gifts from God available to us.

In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone:
Snow had fallen,
Snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter,
Long ago.

We saw on Day 6 that the sin of Adam and Eve plunged the entire world into sin. We no longer live in the perfect paradise God created. Instead, we live with brokenness all around us and even inside us. The Christmas hymn, “In the Bleak Midwinter,” can help us see this!

Read **Romans 5:12**. What came into this world because of sin?

Sin brought _____.

Christmas is not usually the time when we want to think about death. But, as the song at the beginning of this lesson reminds us, there are many symbols of death surrounding us during the Christmas season. In winter, many plants freeze and wither away, the darkness lasts longer than the light, and even our Christmas trees dry out and drop browned needles all over the floor. Still, all of these things point us to the hope we have despite death and darkness.

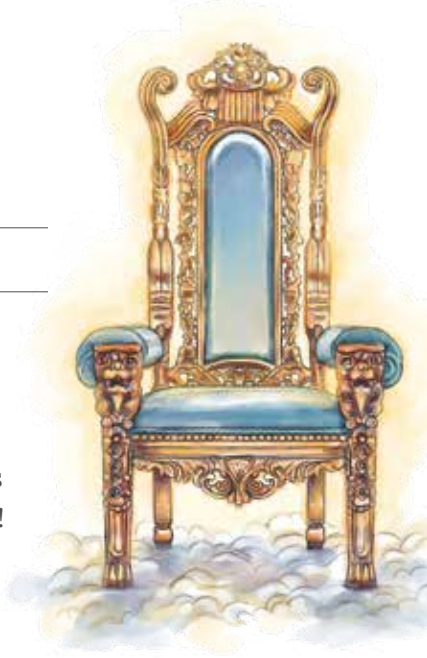
Read **Romans 5:18–21**. If sin leads to death, what does grace lead to? (Hint: Look closely at the end of verse 21.)

»»» _____

Christmas is a time when believers get to remember the freedom from death that Jesus won for us! We no longer have to pay that penalty for our sin because of God’s free gift of righteousness to us through Jesus. In fact, this righteousness we have in Jesus leads to **eternal LIFE!**

Read ^{KEYVERSES} **1 Corinthians 15:20-22**. Why is Jesus Christ's resurrection good news for us?

If Jesus had not risen from the dead, we would be stuck in an eternal winter of darkness, sin, and death. The good news is that, just like Adam brought death to all mankind through his sin, Jesus brought life for all who believe in Him for salvation! When Jesus died, He didn't stay dead. Jesus was raised from the dead, and one day, we will be too.



**Through Jesus, God gives us life
with Him that will never end.**

Though our bodies will experience death on this earth, the souls of those who have trusted Christ for salvation will go to be with God for all eternity. 1 Corinthians 15:50-57 tells us that one day when Jesus returns, He will raise our bodies and change them to be like Him, and we will spend eternity with our ruling Lord. What an amazing gift!

Write or draw what you imagine eternity in heaven with Jesus will be like.

Today, thank God for the gift of eternal life through Jesus. Ask Him to keep you from living in fear or dread of death, but to be joyful and encouraged because He has given you victory.

*Find today's ETERNAL LIFE gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Does your family get crafty at Christmas? I've made so many Christmas crafts, from coffee filter angels to toilet paper tube snowmen. The problem I always run into with crafts is not having a good example to follow. I can read instructions about how to put together a craft, but if I don't have an example to look at and follow, I'm almost certain to fail.

Read ^{KEY VERSE} **Philippians 4:9**. What did the Apostle Paul want the Christians in Philippi to do?

» _____

Paul was writing to these believers to encourage them in their faith. Paul had been following Jesus faithfully, and because of this, he was a great example for them to follow!

Did you realize that God gives us examples in Scripture to follow too? It's true! Let's check out a passage that tells us about some.

Read **Hebrews 11:4-7**. Who do these verses tell us about, and what did they do that's an example for us?

PEOPLE

WHAT THEY DID

_____ » _____

_____ » _____

_____ » _____

Now, these people were not perfect—they lied, cheated, stole, forgot God's faithfulness, and rebelled against His plan at times. Yet they are **examples** to us because they repented of their sin, believing God would forgive as He promised and still use them, and because they had faith to obey God's commands.



What other examples of people in Scripture can you think of whose stories are an example to us?

God has given us
examples of godliness
to encourage us as we
live for Him.

Read **Hebrews 12:1-2**. Who is the ultimate example we look to and follow?

» _____

The greatest example of faithfulness and obedience God ever gave to us was Jesus Himself! Jesus obeyed God the Father in coming to earth to die for our sins. This is why we look to JESUS as we seek to live this life for God's glory.

What about Jesus' example encourages you to obey and submit to God?

Today, thank God for the godly examples He has gifted us with. Ask Him to help you be faithful to Him in your life.

*Find today's GODLY EXAMPLES gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

As we have already learned, true gifts are undeserved and unpaid for, which makes them extremely valuable and worthy of appreciation. When we receive gifts, it is right and appropriate to thank the person who has shown us kindness in this way. Maybe your parents have taught you that after opening a gift, you should look the giver in the eyes and thank them.

We have learned so much about the gracious gifts God has given us! So what should our response be to these wonderful things? How do we show our gratitude and thanks to God for the wonderful, kind gifts He has given to us?

Read **Colossians 3:12-14**. What are some of the things we should put on as God's children?

» _____ » _____

» _____ » _____

Just like we put on clothes that are appropriate for our activities for the day, we should “put on” characteristics and attitudes that are appropriate for our lives as children of God. We have been given the gifts of salvation, love, forgiveness, rest, joy, and peace! We should interact with other people with compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and love.

Read KEY VERSES **Colossians 3:15-17**. What should our attitude towards God be?

The _____ of Christ should rule in our hearts
and we should be _____.

For Christ to rule in our hearts, we must give Him the leadership of our **hearts** and trust that He will lead and defend us. In allowing Christ to rule our hearts with His peace, we are surrendering the deepest part of ourselves to Him. This is not only a gift we can give back to God in thankfulness, but it is also a comfort to us!

One gift we can give to God is our hearts—the center of who we are.

So why should we surrender our hearts to Christ's leadership and protection? Let's consider the words of Samuel, an Old Testament prophet, to God's people.

Read **1 Samuel 12:24**. Why did Samuel encourage the people to serve God with their hearts?



In this passage, the people of Israel were repenting of sin and asking Samuel to pray for them because they had rebelled against God. Samuel assured them that God would not forget or leave them because He had made them His people and promised to love them. Then, Samuel tells them to simply turn from following their sin TO following God with all their hearts because of the great things God had done for them.

Now think about that for a minute. Has God done anything great for you? I don't know anything about you, yet I KNOW God has done great things for you. That's just who He is!

What great things has God done for you? (*Hint: Think back through the gifts He has given you!*)

Today, thank God for all the great things He has done for you. Ask Him to help you show gratitude through your commitment to Him in your heart and life.

*Find today's OUR HEARTS gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Have you ever tried to train an animal to obey commands? Maybe you've tried to teach your dog to come when you call. The training that goes into teaching this obedience takes a lot of time and patience because you're not just teaching the animal to obey—you're gaining their trust and loyalty. Once you have established trust, it's much easier to train an animal in other aspects of obedience as well. Their obedience naturally follows their loyalty to you.

This is similar to the way our hearts work. What we give our hearts to receives our loyalty, trust, and devotion. When our hearts are devoted to something, our actions and desires will go after that thing as well. Let's see what God's Word teaches us about this!

Read **Matthew 7:24–27**. What was Jesus teaching about?

In these verses, Jesus tells a **parable** to help us understand what it looks like to accept or reject His true teaching.

Who does the wise man represent in this parable?

» _____

Who does the foolish man represent?

» _____

Parable:
An earthly story
that teaches
heavenly truth



We have two options when we learn the truth about Jesus. We can accept the truth, give our hearts to God, and build our lives on the foundation of what He says, or we can reject the truth and build our lives on the unstable, shifting sand of our own ideas and desires.

Money, sports, selfishness, hobbies, and even friendships can all be things we build our lives on instead of truth. If we have chosen to pursue or love anything more than God in our lives, that could be the shifting sand we're building on.

What kinds of problems do you think could come from building your life on anything other than God's truth?

If we're building our lives on anything other than God, we haven't truly given our hearts to Him like we discussed in the last lesson! This is because when we give our hearts to God, everything else goes with it—our loves, desires, goals, plans, loyalty, and our **obedience**.

When we give our hearts to God,
our obedience naturally follows.

Read ^{KEY VERSE} **James 1:22**. What command does this verse give us?

We can read our Bibles every day, and tell everyone that Jesus is the reason for the season without ever truly obeying God! This happens when we are “hearers” and not “doers.” The good news is, if Christ truly rules our hearts, we will WANT to obey Him and build our lives on His Word.

Circle the things you can do to obey God's Word.

obey parents SHARE lie read the Bible
COMPLAIN be kind TELL THE TRUTH

Today, thank God for offering you a firm foundation for your life in His Word. Ask Him to help you be an obedient doer and not just a hearer.

*Find today's OUR OBEDIENCE gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Our Worship

The Christmas story involves a lot of worshiping! The shepherds, wise men, Simeon and Anna, and even other stories we haven't looked at in this study describe people worshiping Jesus or worshiping God the Father because of Jesus. We hear about worship in church, hold worship services at church, and maybe even have family worship time at home. With all these examples of worship and opportunities to participate in it, sometimes we still don't quite know what worship is or why we do it. So today, let's find out!

Read **Mark 7:1-7**. What did Jesus point out as vain or worthless worship?

While following the Law was not a problem, Jesus was pointing out that this was not what mattered.

The Jews were following the commands of the Law and seemed like they were honoring Jesus in their actions, yet their hearts were far from Him. They were honoring and serving their own man-made rules. This, Jesus said, was worthless and meaningless worship.

Read KEY VERSES **John 4:23-24**. What did Jesus describe as true worship?



True **worship** is directed to God in spirit and truth. All of us have a soul which the Bible also refers to as our spirit. This idea of worshiping God “in spirit” involves our hearts and souls! It's not just our outward actions, words, or singing that are worship—it's honoring and respecting God in our attitude, loves, desires, and thoughts as well.

In order to worship God in truth, we have to agree with God’s true revelation of Himself in His Word. If we’re worshipping a version of God that disagrees with Scripture, we’re not worshipping God in truth.

Read **Hebrews 12:28–29**. Why should we worship God correctly?

We must give acceptable worship—worship that comes from our hearts and is informed by truth—to God because of who He is! This is true worship that honors God.

**Giving our worship to God means honoring Him
in our hearts as well as our lives.**

What truth about God can you worship Him for in your heart and actions today?

Today, thank God for telling us the truth about Himself in His Word. Ask Him to help you worship Him by honoring Him in your heart and believing the truth about Him.

*Find today’s OUR WORSHIP gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4–5.

Have you ever felt like you couldn't trust someone? Maybe you've overheard someone talking about information you had asked them to keep private or someone told you a story you later found out was not entirely true. It doesn't feel good to realize someone is unworthy of our trust.

While there are times that we learn someone is untrustworthy, there are also times when we see that our trust in someone is well placed. Maybe your friend helped you like they promised or your sibling kept your secret about the Christmas gift you got for your parents. In these situations, we feel pleased and at peace that we gave our trust to these people.

Read KEY VERSES **Proverbs 3:5-6**. What do these verses say about our trust?

Trust in the Lord with _____ your heart.

We should give our **trust** unreservedly to God. There is no need to withhold any trust or keep back any part of ourselves. Instead of relying on our own understanding or wisdom, we should look to God. When we do this, we can be sure that He will guide and direct us.

Read **Hebrews 13:8**.
What is one big reason we
can trust God?



Jesus never changes! He is faithful when others fail, true when people are false, and steadfast when others waver or falter. He has saved us and given us certain hope, and this is why we can trust Him in every part of our lives. There will be times when you're tempted to doubt God instead of trusting Him.

Whether it's losing someone you love, the betrayal of a friend, or some other circumstance you would never choose for your life, we all go through times of doubt when we don't know if we believe in God's goodness or control in our lives.

Romans 8:28 says that God works ALL things together for the good of those who are His children! His presence and love are with us no matter what, and we can place all our trust in His ability to work all the hard, sad, and scary things together for our good and His glory.

When we give our trust to God,
we acknowledge His goodness and
control in our lives.

What God is doing in our lives is always good because He is making us more like Jesus! This is why we can be joyful through hard times or in circumstances we don't understand. When we trust Him in these things, our faith grows, and we become more like Christ.

What can you trust God with today?

Today, thank God for His goodness and love. Ask Him to help you trust in these truths and depend on Him in every part of your life.

*Find today's OUR TRUST gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Who are the people you love? Who are the people that love you? Maybe those two groups overlap a bit and the same names would appear on both lists. It probably doesn't surprise you to know that love is a gift we can give and receive.

What are some reasons that you love people?

» _____ » _____

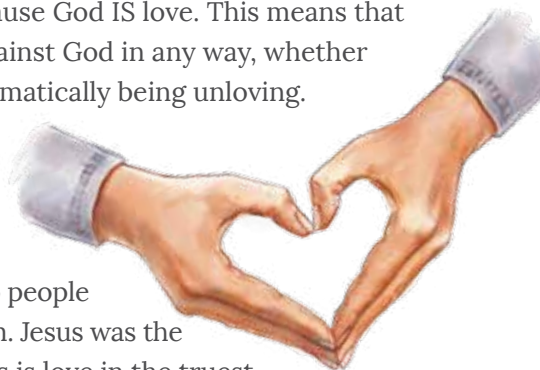
Read **Matthew 22:37-40**. What are the two greatest commandments?

📖 _____ 📖 _____

Love is not an option, it's a matter of obedience!

1 John 4:7-8 says that love is not something we produce in ourselves or just feel randomly. Love comes from God because God IS love. This means that all God does is loving, and when we go against God in any way, whether it's acting or thinking sinfully, we are automatically being unloving.

Have you been unloving to anyone this week?



1 John 4:9-10 tells us that God sent Jesus to people who did not love Him in order to save them. Jesus was the proof of God's great love for this world. This is love in the truest sense—Jesus came to people who did not love Him, loved them anyway, and experienced both acceptance and rejection.

Read **1 John 4:11-16**. Why should we love others?

Not only have we been commanded to love, but we have also received the amazing love of God towards us.

We give our love to God and others as a grateful response to the love He showed us.

Read  **1 John 4:19–21**. What must be true if we love God?

If we claim to love God, our lives should also show that we love Christians specifically. In fact, these verses tell us that if we don't love them, there's no way we love God. When we love God, we will love other people. It's just the way it works.

Circle the ways that you, with God's help, can selflessly love others.

HELP CLEAN UP A MESS

leave a mess for someone else to clean up

SHARE A TOY push to the front of the line

LET SOMEONE ELSE GO FIRST

give someone else a turn take the biggest cookie

ask parents how you can help

When we decide to obey God and love people, it's amazing what He does in our hearts! Just wait—when you begin selflessly serving others, you'll see that the feelings of love will follow. This is not our own doing, but the work and grace of God in our hearts.

Today, ask God to forgive you for the ways you have been unloving to specific people. Thank Him for His gift of love to you and for helping you give that gift of love to Him and others in return.

*Find today's OUR LOVE gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

We talked in our last lesson about how selfless love means sacrifice. While we discussed what that might look like when we're loving the people around us, it's harder to imagine what sacrifices God could possibly desire from us. He doesn't need anything!

Read ^{KEY VERSE} **Romans 12:1**. What kind of sacrifice does this verse talk about?

A _____ sacrifice.

The author of Romans, the Apostle Paul, strongly urges us to give our bodies, and therefore, our **lives**, to God as a living sacrifice! What does this mean? Since Jesus died for us, we are called to LIVE for Him. As Paul says, this is part of our worship of God!

The gift of our physical bodies in service to God
is an appropriate and right sacrifice for us.

Read **Romans 12:2**. What needs to happen in our minds so that our bodies are acceptable sacrifices to God?

We must _____ our minds
and be _____ into God's image.

The idea of being conformed to the world is like pressing soft clay into a mold. The clay becomes the shape of whatever you press it into! In the same way, if we allow our minds to be pressed into the world's way of thinking, our minds become conformed to the sin, lies, and selfishness of the world. This is a warning to us!

What is something the world says that goes against God? (Hint: Think about a sign or commercial you've seen or what you've heard in a song or movie.)



The world tells us things like “follow your heart” which makes us believe our feelings matter more than God’s truth. The world will try to teach you that your happiness is most important, even if you have to be selfish, unkind, or untruthful to get it.

Instead of being squished and molded into the shape of the world, our minds need to be transformed and renewed by God’s Word. When our minds are shaped and formed by the Bible, the ways we use our bodies and lives will follow the good will of God for us.

Read **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**. Why does it matter what we do with our bodies?

Our bodies are not ours to do with as we please! Jesus saved our souls, but He has also redeemed and paid for our physical bodies. The Holy Spirit lives within all believers, and therefore, our bodies are temples—places of worship and reverence. This is why what we do with our lives and bodies matters! We should glorify God in our bodies by living according to His truth.



What are some ways to use your body to honor and worship God?

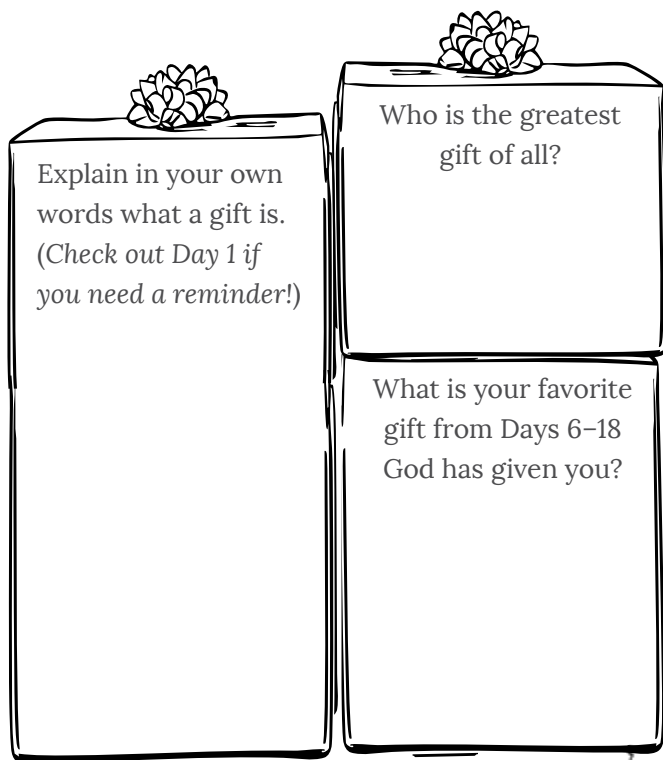
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Today, thank God for redeeming your soul AND body through Jesus’ sacrifice. Ask Him to help you live for and honor Him in your body.

*Find today’s OUR LIVES gift sticker and add it to the manger on pages 4-5.

Merry Christmas! You have faithfully worked through this study, and now it's time to celebrate all the knowledge you have gained and truth you have learned. Before you finish this study, though, let's review the gifts we discovered in the Christmas story!



Let's look at one more truth you can take with you as you live your life for God's glory, not only at Christmas but also throughout the year.

Read ^{KEY VERSES} **Romans 11:33-36**. What truths do these verses teach us?

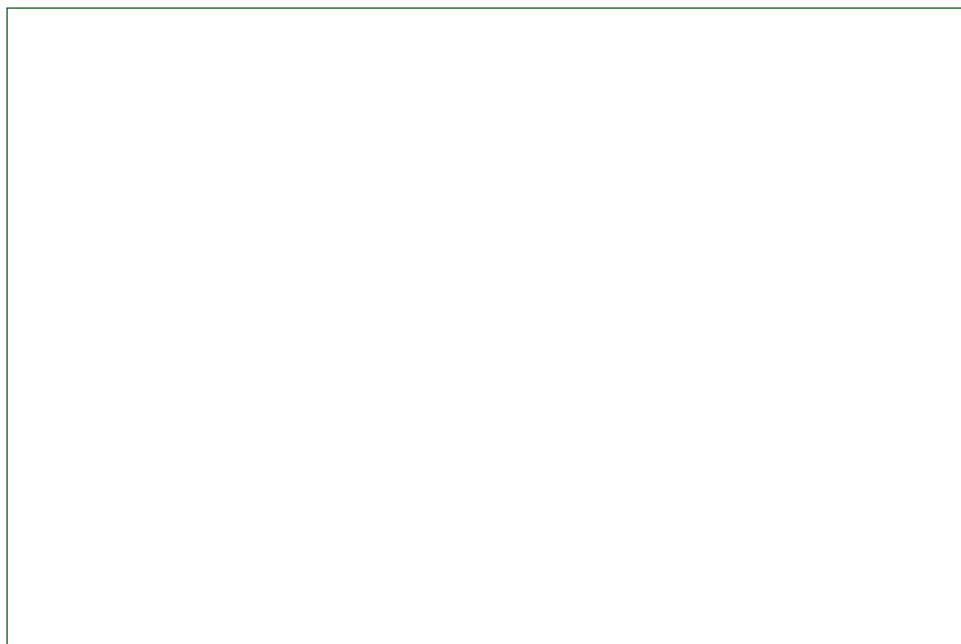
There is no gift great enough to repay God's overwhelmingly kind and good gifts to us.



All we see and know have come from God, the Creator, who made everything and keeps it all going. He gives us the breath in our lungs and the salvation of our souls.

Instead of trying to “pay God back” in some way, which isn’t possible anyway, we get to live our lives in gratitude and thankfulness to Him. We can serve Him with our lives and share the good news of the free gift of salvation with others!

What can you do to spread this good news right now and in the coming year?



As you celebrate Christmas, I hope you rejoice in the Christmas story—the proof of God’s infinite love for us.

Today, thank God for His kindness and grace to you. Ask Him to help you serve Him with your life and always be thankful for the gifts He has given you.

