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DOCTRINE OF GOD

Natural Attributes of God—Part 1 (Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence)



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that the Omniscient God knows all our needs
- To show that the Omnipresent God is able to give us His total attention and care
- To teach that nothing is impossible for our Omnipotent God



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Ps. 139 (Omniscient/Omnipresent/Omnipotent God)



MEMORY VERSE

Eph.3:20: Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us

Materials Needed: Laptop (to play the Video Clipping)



INTRODUCTION

Today we will learn about what God is like. He has many natural attributes, and today we will learn about three of them-His Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence.

Omniscient means that God knows all things.

- He already knows what we need, even better than we do

Omnipresent means that God is everywhere

- He is with each of you, every moment and gives each of you His total attention and care

Omnipotent means that God has the power to do all things

- He is able to accomplish His purposes for your life, even if you regard yourself as being weak and untalented



ATTENTION GETTER

Divide the children into three groups and ask them to read Ps.139:1-18

- The first group must identify the verses that describe the Omniscience of God and explain to the rest of the class what the verses say.
- The second group must identify the verses that describe the Omnipresence of God
- The third group must identify the verses that describe the Omnipotence of God



TEACHING CONTENT

Omniscience of God

Because God is all-knowing, **He already knows what we need better than we do; and so we can trust Him without worrying.**

This is why Jesus says: Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what He wants. Then the other things will be yours as well **(Mt.6:31-33)**.

If we focus on following God and living for Him, He will take care of every one of our needs because He already knows about them.

This is why Phil.4:6-7 says, "Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts, offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel."

It's foolish to worry when we have an Omniscient God who already knows our needs. If we make a conscious choice not to dwell on our problems or keep on worrying about them, the Lord promises that He will fill our hearts and minds with His divine peace (so that we won't feel upset, scared and agitated anymore).

The choice is ours. We can choose to continue worrying. Or we can choose to let God fill us with His peace.

Omnipresent God

Moreover, we can have further assurance because God is not only Omniscient but also Omnipresent. He not only knows our needs beforehand, but He can also exclusively devote His time to us in taking care of those needs.

Because God is everywhere, we can have His total attention when we need Him. At that moment of need, He relates to us as though we are the only person on earth and there are no other concerns to distract Him.

So I don't need to worry that God is too busy helping other people, and can't come to me to attend to my specific needs. Because He is present everywhere, He can give me His total attention even when He is with someone else, giving them total attention as well.

Omnipotent God

Because the Lord is Omnipotent, He is able to accomplish His purposes for your life, even if you regard yourself as being weak and untalented.

Mt.19:26 : Jesus looked straight at them and said, "There are some things that people cannot do, but God can do anything."

So it doesn't matter how big God's purposes for our lives really are. For instance, He may have plans for you to

become a politician who'll stand up for God! You may think that's impossible in our Indian setup, but nothing is impossible for God. Therefore, through the power of God, we can accomplish everything that we're meant to.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuU6nesTwrQ>

Duration: 54 seconds

DISCUSS:

Judg.1:19 says, “And the LORD was with Judah; and **he** drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.”

According to the Video, the ‘he’ refers to the tribe of Judah, and not to God (The tribe of Judah was not able to defeat the enemies with iron chariots—NOT God). Would you agree with this argument?

[Yes/No]

It's true enough that it was the tribe of Judah that was not able to defeat the enemies. However, the primary question is: ‘Why’ didn't God help them if He is Omnipotent? What do you think was the reason?

[Background Story:

God allotted a specific portion of territory to each tribe in the Promised Land. The people of each tribe were supposed to defeat the locals occupying their territory and take control of their allotted land.

In this regard, the twin tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh complained that the portion given to them was too small (Jos.17:14). However the truth is that they had received a large territory. But they were afraid to fight with the Canaanites in certain areas of their territory, because these people owned iron chariots that are difficult to overcome (Jos.17:16). So they were trying to adjust in the areas not occupied by these powerful Canaanites.

However, Joshua encouraged them to go ahead and conquer these areas, as the Lord is able to defeat even iron chariots (Jos.17:18). But in the end, we see that the twin tribes failed to defeat the Canaanites of these areas (Jud.1:27).

Judg.1:19

It looks like the tribe of Judah faced the same problem. They too could not defeat the Canaanites who owned iron chariots.

So the main reason why the Omnipotent God couldn't help the Israelites was 'FEAR' and 'UNBELIEF.' The Israelites failed to trust God; so God couldn't help them]

Was FEAR the only reason why the Israelites couldn't defeat the iron chariots? Or is it that God is helpless against. Iron chariots?

[To answer this question, we have to look at another passage in Judges Chapter 4. In this passage, the Lord specifically promised Barak that he would help him defeat an army of 900 iron chariots (Jud.4:7).

However, just like his ancestors, Barak too was terrified at the idea. Deborah, the prophetess was displeased with his attitude and scolded him for it (Judg.4:9). Finally, under Deborah’s leadership, Barak reluctantly agreed to do it; and the Lord helped him wipe out every single soldier of the 900 iron-chariot-army! (Jud.4:16).

This clearly shows that God is not helpless against iron chariots. It’s our fear and unbelief which stops us from gaining victory].

What if God has plans for my life that are too big? Will I be able to accomplish them?

[If, like the Israelites, I give in to my fears and doubts, I may not be able to accomplish the great plans that God has for me.

However if I trust Him completely, and I’m willing to obey Him even when He asks me to do impossible things, then the Lord will definitely help me to accomplish them.

This is why it says in Eph.3:20, “His power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine”]



APPLICATION

This week, you’ll encounter problems just like everybody. However, choose to approach your problems with a different attitude:

Remember that **God is Omniscient.**

He already knows what problems you'll be facing this week. And He has already made provisions for them. So, He'll take care of you if you give up all fear and unbelief, and choose to trust Him.

Remember that **God is also Omnipresent**

He will not neglect you or leave your side for even a moment. He will stay with you and give you hundred percent attention in solving your problems.

Remember that **God is also Omnipotent**

The problems you face next week may be impossible to solve. However, "with God nothing is impossible" (Mt.19:26). So choose to give up all fear and unbelief. And the Lord will solve even your seemingly impossible problems.

Next week, make sure that you come with a testimony of how the Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent God changed your life.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



DOCTRINE OF GOD

Natural Attributes of God—Part 2 (Unchanging, Self-Existent and Self-Sufficient God)



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that the All-wise God knows how to take care of every situation in our lives
- To show that the Sovereign God has given us freedom of choice and we must use it wisely



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Isa.55:8-9; Ps.131 (All-wise God)

Daniel Chapter 4 (God's Sovereignty in Nebuchadnezzar's Life)



MEMORY VERSE

Isa.55:8-9: For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.

Materials Needed:

- Laptop (to play the Video Clipping)
- Pathway Chart; Cotton ball



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- How did the Omnipotent God help you throughout this week? Give examples.
- What three factors can stop God’s Omnipotent power from working in our lives? (Fear, Unbelief, Sinful lifestyle)
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Eph.3:20)



INTRODUCTION

Last week we learnt about three important natural qualities of God—His Omniscience, Omnipresence and Omnipotence. Today we will learn about another two natural qualities of God – His Wisdom and Sovereignty.



ATTENTION GETTER

Prepare beforehand:

On Chart Paper, draw a wide pathway with many twists and turns. Mark the starting point and the ending point. Also take a small ball of cotton with you.

Activity:**Helping Bro.Cottonball**

Place the Chart paper on a table or on the floor.

The goal is to help the little cotton ball (Brother Cottonball) in traveling from the starting point to the ending point without going off the pathway. The volunteer must blow air with his/her lips, to help Brother Cottonball advance along the path. However, the volunteer's hands will be tied behind the back during the activity.

If Brother Cottonball strays off the pathway, then the volunteer loses. Someone else can then come forward and try.

Ask:

Why did X (name of volunteer) find it difficult to keep Bro. Cottonball on the pathway?

(Allow the children to freely express their opinions)

Observe:

- X had the wisdom needed to lead Bro.Cottonball safely down the pathway. He/she knew exactly how it must be done.
- However, X was helpless to assist Bro.Cottonball properly because his/her hands were tied. With tied hands, he/she was unable to lead Cottonball down the path.

So it's not enough even if God, in His great wisdom, makes beautiful plans for our lives. He also needs to be in a position where a higher force or an unanticipated circumstance can't tie up His hands. No one and nothing should be able to prevent Him from ultimately accomplishing His purposes.

The God of the Bible has both these qualities. Not only is He All-wise, He is also Sovereign. God owns, sustains and directs all of creation, and none can stand in His way.



TEACHING CONTENT

GOD IS ALL-WISE

- 'Knowledge' is an understanding of things; it's knowing a lot of information regarding something.
- On the other hand, wisdom is the application of this knowledge in the most suitable way.

For instance, my great understanding of the internal functioning of a computer would be called 'knowledge.'

On the other hand, 'wisdom' would be the ability to use this information in the best way possible to deal with a computer malfunction. The more cleverly I'm able to apply my information in solving the problem, the greater would be my 'wisdom.'

- God has an all-inclusive understanding of EVERYTHING!
- Moreover, God applies this knowledge PERFECTLY, in every situation.

This is why He is considered All-wise.

Our Response to the All-wise God

I may not understand why God has made me the way I am. I may not like it that I'm not as talented at sports as the next person. But I choose to accept that this is best for me, because the Lord is All-wise, and He has prepared the best plans for my life.

The Lord says, "My thoughts and My ways are not like yours. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, My thoughts and My ways are higher than yours." (Isa.55:8-9)

So I must not complain against God and say, "Why didn't you make me a genius at Maths?"

God has already pre-planned what goals he wants me to reach, and He will help me reach them, irrespective of the limitations I face. God is All-wise and knows how to do this for me.

The Attitude of a Weaned Child

Ps.131 beautifully explains the attitude we need to have toward the All-wise God.

A baby trusts his mother only to a limited extent. If she delays in feeding him, he will begin to cry as though he has been totally abandoned. He doesn't understand that his mother knows how and when to feed him.

However, a weaned child, who is more grown up, trusts his mother much more. He doesn't panic when he starts to feel

hungry. He calmly informs her that he wants something to eat, and he knows that his mother will meet his need.

Ps.131 teaches us to be like the weaned child and trust in the wisdom of our Father.

Read aloud:

Ps.131:1: My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

Explain:

I must not proudly question God and say, “Why are you not meeting our financial needs yet? Shouldn’t you stop delaying?”

God is All-wise, and He will provide when the timing is appropriate and perfect.

Also I must not judge God haughtily saying, “I’ve been watching You Lord, and You’re too slow. My friends are treating me badly every day, and you haven’t lifted a finger to help me.”

God is All-wise, and He will use his own methods to work things out in your life.

Read aloud:

Ps.131:2: But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.

Explain:

Instead of judging God's methods in a proud and haughty manner, I must humbly quiet myself.

I must say, "Lord I don't understand why You're delaying in solving our family crisis. But I'm going to stay calm because I know You will help us in Your perfect way, in Your perfect time."

Read aloud:

Ps.131:3: Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore.

Explain:

I must say to the Lord, "You're All-wise, Lord. So even though I'm facing a lot of pressure at school, I know You'll begin to solve things for me in Your own perfect way. So I'll wait patiently for You to act, instead of screaming and complaining like a little baby."

GOD IS SOVEREIGN

God is not only All-wise but also Sovereign. He is the supreme authority. He is not subject to any power or law which could be conceived as superior to or other than Himself. God clearly demonstrated this Sovereignty in the life of Nebuchadnezzar as an Object Lesson to all of us.

Nebuchadnezzar was one of the most powerful kings of Old Testament times. He began to think that nobody could take his kingdom away from him, as he was so powerful. Because

of his great pride, God reduced him to the condition of an animal, and for seven shocking years this powerful king roamed around in the wild, eating grass and sleeping in the dirt.

Finally, after coming to his senses, Nebuchadnezzar humbly admitted that:

"To [God] the nations are far less than nothing; God controls the stars in the sky and everyone on this earth. When God does something, we cannot change it or even ask why... Praise and honor the King who rules from heaven! Everything He does is honest and fair, and He can shatter the power of those who are proud" (Dan.4:35,37)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

If God is Sovereign, then nothing can happen without God's PERMISSION. If this is so, then why does God GIVE PERMISSION for evil things like murder, robberies and corruption?

(Allow the children to freely express their opinions).

Video Presentation

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rfd_1UAjeIA

Duration: 1 minute 46 seconds

Explain:

The Video says:

- God is responsible for the Fact of freedom
- Humans are responsible for the Acts of freedom

In His Sovereignty, God chose to give us the Freedom of Choice.

- If we use this freedom to choose the things of God, we will enjoy His protection and blessings (And we will also be a blessing to those around us).
- If we use this freedom to choose the things of Satan, we will ‘enjoy’ Satan’s destruction and curses (And the people around us will have to suffer too, because of our wrong choices. For instance, if I get caught copying in the final exam and I’m not promoted to the next class, my parents will have to suffer shame even though they have not done anything wrong).

Does this mean that we must constantly suffer because of other people’s wrong choices. Will God not help us in any way?

[Due to the wrong choices of other people we will experience suffering and loss in our lives from time to time. But the Sovereign God deals with this in three different ways:

- Sometimes the Sovereign God will STOP the suffering or loss from taking place. For instance He stopped Laban from attacking Jacob (Gen.31:24)
- However, sometimes He will lead us through the suffering and loss, to show us how to overcome and

crush Satan. For instance, he allowed Joseph to be sold into slavery. But he also showed Joseph how to crush Satan, so that Joseph would never become bitter against God or betray him. So, even in slavery, Joseph lived a life of joy and victory.

- Also, when God *allows* the suffering instead of *stopping* it, he “**works in**” the negative events (Rom.8:28) to bring good out of them. For instance, he used Joseph’s negative circumstances to preserve the life and future of the entire family (Gen.50:20).

Therefore God may allow suffering and loss for a temporary period of time. But it’s always ‘temporary’—meant only for a short while]



APPLICATION

This week, you’ll again encounter problems, just like everybody. Last week, we learnt that we must face these situations with the knowledge of the Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent God.

This week, we can learn to face these situations knowing that God is also All-wise. He knows how to take care of each of our problems. So we must NOT:

- Worry
- Grow angry and bitter against God
- Grumble or complain against him
- Lose hope or give up praying

Rather, we must:

- Trust that the All-wise God will help us
- Wait patiently for Him to act
- Praise and thank Him every day for the answer that is on the way

Next week, make sure that you come with a testimony of how you chose to trustingly rely on the All-wise and Sovereign God, rather than worry and grumble.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



DOCTRINE OF GOD

Moral Attributes of God—Part 1 (Loving and Just)



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show the amazing Justice of God which made him punish himself—instead of us
- To teach that God will not force us to stay within his Perfect Love if we choose not to



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Heb.12:5-13 (God Disciplines out of Love)

Rom.6:23; Mt.7:21-23 (God Punishes because He is Just)



MEMORY VERSE

Heb.12:5-6: And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes

you, because the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and He chastens everyone He accepts as his son.”

Materials Needed: Laptop (to play Video Clippings)



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What should be our attitude toward the All-wise God (especially when things don't go the way we want them to)?
- Why does our Sovereign God permit evil things like murder, robberies and corruption?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (**Isa.55:8-9**).



INTRODUCTION

Last week we learnt about two important natural qualities of God—His Wisdom and Sovereignty. Today, we will learn about two moral qualities of His—His Love and Justice.



ATTENTION GETTER

Ask:

Let's assume that Benita is standing out in the sunlight on a bright and sunny day.

How much sunlight will she receive if she stands out in the open grounds? On a scale of zero to 100%, how much sunlight would she receive?

[100% sunlight, as nothing is blocking the sunlight from reaching her].

How much sunlight will she receive if she stands under a tree?

[Approximately 50% sunlight, as the tree shades her].

How much sunlight will she receive if she stands in a room with a large window?

[Approximately 25% sunlight, as there is only one window].

How much sunlight will she receive if she stands underground in a basement that is completely closed?

[She may not receive any sunlight. But she will experience some of the warmth of the sunlight, if it has heated up the basement].

Explain:

God's love represents the sun.

It is our actions that take us out of the light. God's love is always there and always the same, and always available. My actions make it so I feel God's love less. I move, not God.

So it's important not to allow sin into my life. Sin blocks out the light and warmth of God's love. The deeper I get into sin, the less I'm able to experience and enjoy His love in my life.



TEACHING CONTENT

GOD IS LOVE

Because sin blocks God's love from our lives, the Lord disciplines us.

So God doesn't discipline us to hurt us. Rather, He does it to bring us back into the light and warmth of His love.

This is why Paul explains in Heb.12:5-13:

"... the Scriptures say to God's children, "When the Lord punishes you, don't make light of it, and when He corrects you, don't be discouraged. The Lord corrects the people He loves and disciplines those He calls His own."

Be patient when you are being corrected! This is how God treats His children. Don't all parents correct their children? God corrects all of His children, and if He doesn't correct you, then you don't really belong to Him. Our earthly fathers correct us, and we still respect them. Isn't it even better to be given true life by letting our spiritual Father correct us?

Our human fathers correct us for a short time, and they do it as they think best. But God corrects us for our own good, because He wants us to be holy, as He is. It is never fun to be corrected. In fact, at the time it is always painful. But if we learn to obey by being corrected, we will do right and live at peace.

Now stand up straight! Stop your knees from shaking and walk a straight path. Then lame people will be healed, instead of getting worse.

Explain:

We can choose to respond to God's loving correction in two ways:

- We can repent and make the necessary changes in our lifestyle. Then, we will be spiritually healed and enjoy God’s blessings, OR
- We can choose to ignore God’s discipline. We will then grow more and more spiritually lame, until our lives are horribly crippled and messed up



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

GOD IS JUST

Because God is perfectly just, he cannot tolerate even a little sin. Rom.6:23 clearly teaches that, “When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death... “(CEV).

So Perfect Justice requires that I suffer eternal death in hell, if I commit even one little sin during my lifetime.

Video Presentation 1

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOGK0KHttQ0>

Duration: 2 minutes 46 seconds

Discuss:

According to this Video, a loving God would never send the people He loves, to hell. So did God lie when He said that He loves everyone?

[God cannot ignore sinfulness just because He is loving. He is perfectly just, and justice demands that sinfulness be punished. Therefore God punished sinfulness... by taking the punishment upon Himself.

So, if hell is like a pit in the middle of the road (as the Video depicts it)—then God did fill up this hole.

But He didn't just fill it up with mud and concrete. Rather, He allowed Jesus, His own Son, to die on the Cross and take the punishment for our sins. In other words, the Judge put the punishment on Himself rather than putting it on the criminal!

As a result, today, if even the worst sinner repents of the sinful things he has done, and commits to follow Jesus for the rest of his life, the Lord will grant him salvation, and take him to heaven after death.

So God didn't just stand on the sidelines and warn about the danger of hell (as the Video accuses God of doing). He got actively involved by coming down to the earth, and doing everything needed to close the hole (by sacrificing Himself).

In spite of this, if we still choose not to trust Jesus... if we still choose to follow Satan rather than follow Jesus, then hell becomes our Personal Choice].

Video Presentation 2

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scJgQclzcW8&feature=related>

Duration: 3 minutes 5 seconds

Discuss:

How must we understand this second video? It suggests that God doesn't allow people into His heavenly home unless he 'KNOWS' them. If God is All-knowing, doesn't he know all of us already?

[In Mt.7:21-23 Jesus says, ““Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name drive out demons and in Your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!’

In these verses, Jesus isn't suggesting that God is unaware of the existence of some people. He is simply saying, “These people never came to Me, to develop a personal relationship with Me. They were not interested in spending time with Me and getting to know Me, so they're strangers to Me. In this sense, I don't KNOW them.”

This is similar to my seeing a person at church every Sunday. But that person never comes to me nor tries to make friends with me.

So I don't KNOW that person. And therefore, I'll probably not allow that person to start living in my house].

The Video also says that if I meet God only on Sundays at church, He won't know me very well. Does this mean if I read the Bible every day, then He'll get to know me better, and will then allow me into heaven?

[This would be similar to my seeing a person at church every Sunday, as well as on the school bus during the rest of the

week. This person sees me every single day; he/she spends a lot of time observing me and knows many things about me.

But the person is still not a friend, because he/she never made any attempt to come to me and make friends with me.

I still don't KNOW the person. And I still would not allow him/her to start living in my house.

Similarly, God still doesn't know me personally if I spend time reading about Him every day. There is still no personal relationship between us.

Even if I attended church every single day, and read my Bible every single day, God would still not KNOW me. He wouldn't KNOW me as His personal friend because I never made any attempt to develop a personal relationship with Him].

If church and Bible reading can't get me into heaven, what must I do? How can I get close enough to Jesus that He will acknowledge me as His friend, and allow me into heaven?

[The Video says, "Jesus died so we could be close to God again." It's possible to become a personal friend of God only through Jesus.

'Friends' are people with whom you have something in common. You probably enjoy the same activities and think alike about a whole lot of things. And you 'understand' each other quite well.

We become 'friends' of Jesus when we have things in common with Him.

However, it's difficult for humans to have anything in common with Jesus because He loves holiness and godliness, while humans love sinfulness.

We may try very hard to act holy and godly, but our inner feelings don't always match our outward actions:

- We may try to avoid fighting, but we have no control over the anger and hatred that we feel inside.
- We may try to avoid watching immoral things on TV, but we have no control over the lustful thoughts inside our minds.
- We may avoid copying in the exam, but we may do it out of a fear of getting caught... NOT out of a deep love for God.

Jesus looks at these inner thoughts and feelings, and knows how sinful they are. And He sees that we have nothing in common with Him. We constantly lean towards sin, while He constantly leans towards holiness. As a result, any friendship between God and us becomes impossible.

So, Jesus chose to die on the Cross for us, to take the punishment for all our sins... both the sinful things hidden inside our hearts and minds, as well as the sinful acts that are done on the outside. When we walk up to Jesus and ask for His forgiveness and commit to follow Him in future, He **CHANGES** us.

Jesus takes away our sinful hearts that love to sin, and gives us a new heart that will choose to love Him and follow Him. As a result of this, we begin to experience new

desires—desires to please Him and bring Him joy. Also, our attitude toward sinful things begins to change. We begin to dislike these things, and we don't wish to have anything more to do with them.

In this way, we start becoming like Jesus. And He talks to us deep in our spirit, and tells us what to do and what not to do. In this way, we become Personal Friends.

As a result, after death, Jesus takes us to His home to live with Him forevermore.

So, we cannot KNOW Jesus personally simply by attending church or reading the Bible. We become His Personal Friends only when we have a new heart within us that makes us long to be Christ-like—a heart that is losing interest in sinful things and longs to please God alone].



APPLICATION

Examine yourself to see where you stand:

- Do you enjoy sinful things greatly?
- Do you find the things of God dull and boring?
- Do you succumb to temptation most of the time?
- Do you rarely hear God speaking to you in your heart, during your personal bible reading time?

If this is the case with you, then maybe you never truly became a Personal Friend of God. Maybe you said a salvation prayer, but never experienced true salvation.

True salvation is an awesome experience in which your sinful heart is taken away, and you're given a new heart—a heart that has a lot in common with God and longs to please Him.

If you haven't had this experience, then know that you're in danger of going to hell. Even though God is Loving and loves you absolutely, He is also a Just God. If you refuse to make Jesus your Lord and Master, as well as your Savior, He cannot welcome you into heaven.

Explain the Salvation Plan:

If some of the children realize that they have not truly made Jesus Lord of their lives, explain to them Jesus' salvation plan.

1. Admit you are a sinner.

“All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.”

(Romans 3:23)

2. Be willing to turn from sin (repent).

“... you can be sure that if you don't turn back to God, every one of you will also die.” (Lk.13:5)

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you, was buried and rose from the dead.

“God loved the people of this world so much that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who has faith in Him will have eternal life and never really die.

(John 3:16)

4. Through prayer, invite Jesus into your life to become your Lord and Saviour.

“So you will be saved, if you honestly say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and if you believe with all your heart that God raised Him from death. God will accept you and save you, if you truly believe this and tell it to others.
(Romans 10:9-10)



CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Lead the children in prayer as they recommit their lives to a loving and just God. Also pray with those who’re making a commitment to follow Jesus for the first time.

DOCTRINE OF GOD

Moral Attributes of God—Part 2 *(Righteous and Jealous)*



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that true righteousness involves avoiding both Sins of Commission and Sins of Omission
- To show that the Lord's jealousy requires us to be holy



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Hab. 1:13; Isa.45:21 (Righteous God)

Jam.4:4-5, 17; 2 Cor.6:14-15 (Jealous God)



MEMORY VERSE

Hab.1:13: Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.

Materials Needed :

Laptop (to play Video Clippings)



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- If God loves all of us equally, why do some of us experience more of His love while others experience less?
- If God is loving, then why does He send some people to hell? Doesn't He love those people?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Heb.12:5-6).



INTRODUCTION

Last week, we learnt about two important moral qualities of God—His Love and Justice. Today, we will learn about another two special qualities—His Righteousness and Jealousy.



ATTENTION GETTER

Prepare beforehand: Paste three to four long hairs on a slice of bread. Also take along another slice of bread that is completely clean

Activity:

Hairy Experience

Ask:

I have two slices of bread with me. One has a few strands of hair stuck on it, but the other one is clean. Which one would you prefer to eat?

Discuss:

- Why do we find the ‘hairy’ slice of bread so disgusting? Why should three or four strands of hair matter so much? The rest of the bread is completely clean, isn’t it?
- What if I removed the hair from the bread? Would you be willing to eat it then?

Observe:

We find hair in our food unbearably repulsive. Even if someone offers to get rid of the hair, we don’t wish to touch that food.

This is exactly how God feels about ‘sin’. He finds it so repulsive that He can’t adjust to even a little bit of it. This is why Hab. 1:13 says, “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.”



TEACHING CONTENT

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

We cannot say to God, “Lord I only have a few pet sins in my life. So I’m sure you won’t mind.” It’s like me saying to all of you, “This slice of bread has only a few hairs stuck on it. So I’m sure you won’t mind enjoying it.”

The same way you find even one little strand of hair in your food utterly repulsive, God finds even one little sin in your life utterly repulsive. The Lord is completely righteous—the very essence of moral goodness. He cannot tolerate any wrong!

He says in Isa.45:21, "... there is no God apart from Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but Me."

Sin:

When we think of 'sin,' we usually think in terms of the wrong things that we do. These are called the "sins of commission" (including lying, stealing, murder, etc.)

However, sin involves more than just these **wrong things that we do**. It also includes the **right things that we DON'T do**. These are the "sins of omission."

- For instance, if someone I personally know desperately needs help (and I have the ability to help that person), if I still refuse to help the person, it becomes a sin of omission.
- Likewise, if I receive a very good opportunity to share the salvation message with someone, but refuse to do it out of fear, this too would be a sin of omission.
- Similarly, if I give a certain amount of money to the church and ministries (even though I know that I have the ability to give much more), but I'm not willing to increase my giving, it becomes a sin of omission.
- Likewise, if I don't pray and intercede for my unsaved relatives and friends, it would be a sin of omission.

Because God is completely righteous, He expects us to be completely righteous too. James says, "If you don't do what you know is right, you have sinned" (Jam.4:17).

Therefore, we must not only refrain from doing wrong things, but also make an effort to **actively do** the right things.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

GOD IS JEALOUS

Because God is completely Righteous, His righteousness makes him a Jealous God.

The Bible teaches again and again that jealousy is a sinful and ugly thing. Yet the Bible also openly declares that God is a Jealous God.

Kindly watch the following video and explain what you understand about the ‘Jealousy’ of God through this video

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGX8OIJNyII&feature=related>

Duration: 50 seconds

[We notice the following things in the video:

- God’s jealousy made Him shed His own blood for us —to take the punishment for the sinful things that we have done.
- God’s jealousy made Him hang naked on the Cross, so that we could be clothed in the holy robes of His righteousness.

- His jealousy was so strong that not even death could keep Him away from us].

In what way is God’s jealousy different from ours?

[God’s jealousy is a holy jealousy:

- Our jealousy makes us harm others. God only harmed Himself—by sacrificing His Son for us.
- Our jealousy is selfish; we only think of personal gain. But God’s jealousy is completely selfless—He was willing to harm Himself for our personal gain]

Jam.4:4-5: Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?”

What do these verses say about God’s jealousy?

[God longs to be close friends with us. The friendship mentioned here is not the kind of casual friendship that exists between most friends. Rather, it talks about the kind of deep friendship that is supposed to exist between a husband and wife—where they’re so close to one another that they almost act like one single person in their thinking, their speech and their choices, and actions.

When a couple has this kind of close friendship, they would obviously find any form of disloyalty painful. For instance, if the wife were to start forming a close friendship with another man, the husband would feel deeply hurt. In fact, God would call the wife an ‘adulteress’ because of her close friendship with another man.

This is how God feels about us. He wants a level of friendship where we're so close to Him that we think like Him, speak like Him, and act like Him.

Instead of doing this, if we start getting close to the "sinful world" and think, speak and behave like it, the Lord feels very hurt. He feels as though we have betrayed Him... just like an adulteress betraying her husband.

So the jealousy of the Lord is based on the sacrifice he has made. He loved us enough to die for us. In spite of this, if we still choose to run after the "sinful world," the Lord treats it as a bitter betrayal].

**Is it possible to be friends with both God and the world?
Is it okay to do a few worldly things as long as we're quite spiritual?**

[Have you ever tried to be best friends with two persons who absolutely hate each other? Both of them will be upset with you... because you made friends with their enemy.

Also, you'll face many practical problems. One friend may want you to go to the Mall during the weekend; but the other may lovingly invite you to their home during the same timing. You cannot be in two places at once. So you'll end up doing one of two things:

- First, you'll attempt a compromise. You may ask one of them to change their timings... so that you can visit the mall as well as accept the other invitation.
- Second, if a compromise is not possible, you'll make a choice. If both friends refuse to change their minds, you'll be forced to decide whom you're going to please.

You will reject the offer of one friend and choose the other, based on whom you love more.

When we try to make friends with both God and the world, the same thing happens.

- We end up making compromises. For eg., I may say to God, “Lord, I badly want to go for that movie with my friends even though it’s not a clean movie. But I promise to spend three hours reading the Bible and praying, to make up for it.
- The compromise automatically shows that we love the world more than God.

There can be no adjustment between God and Satan. They utterly hate each other. So, you cannot say that you’ll be friendly with both of them. You’ll end up choosing one over the other].

2 Cor.6:14-15: Stay away from people who are not followers of the Lord! Can someone who is good get along with someone who is evil? Are light and darkness the same? Is Christ a friend of Satan? Can people who follow the Lord have anything in common with those who don't?

- Does this verse indicate that we mustn’t make friends with non-Christians?

[Very close friendships with Non-Christians is not possible if you’re a committed Christian, committed to pleasing the Lord alone.

- If you’re very close to a Non-Christian friend, and he/she invites you for their puja, then what will you do?

Will you choose to please your friends, or choose to please God?

- If your Non-Christian friend invites you for a movie that Jesus wouldn't like, then what would be your response? Will you choose to ignore Jesus?
- What if your friends are discussing a TV serial each week, and you can't join in the discussion because you don't watch it. Would you start watching it even though the serial promotes unbiblical values?
- What if your friends ask you if "only Christians" will go to heaven? Will you be willing to speak out the honest truth, or will you compromise?
- What if your friends ask you to show your answer sheet during the exam? Will you be willing to stand up for God and say 'No?'
- What if your friends are excitedly discussing their star signs and ask about yours? Will you pretend that astrology is okay for a child of God?
- What if your best friend cracks a cheap joke and everybody laughs? Will you join in the laughter, thereby supporting that cheap, immoral talk?

When we get into close friendships with Non-Christians, it leads to so many complications! We may end up choosing to please our Non-Christian friends rather than pleasing God. So it's better not to form close bonds with Non-Christians.

Be pleasant towards them, but don't get too close. This will make it easier for you to take a stand for Jesus].

In school, almost every student is a Non-Christian. Does this mean we can never have any close friends?

[Ecc.4:9-12 says, “You are better off to have a friend than to be all alone... If you fall, your friend can help you up. But if you fall without having a friend nearby, you are really in trouble... Someone might be able to beat up one of you, but not both of you. As the saying goes, ‘A rope made from three strands of cord is hard to break.’”

The Bible teaches that we NEED friends. And the Bible also teaches that God will meet all our NEEDS.

Mt.6:32-33 says, “Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what He wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.”

According to these verses, when we put God first and choose to please Him, He will provide us with the friends we need.

So ask the Lord for spiritually strong friends that you can form close friendships with. He may provide these spiritual friends right in your school itself. Or He may provide them at church or in your neighborhood. The Lord will definitely meet your need for godly friends, if you ask Him specifically].



APPLICATION

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

As we learnt earlier, because God is completely righteous, He expects us to be completely righteous too. Therefore,

we must not only refrain from doing wrong things, but also make an effort to **actively do** the right things.

Usually three things keep us from doing the things we know we should do

- Fear (e.g., fear of sharing the gospel with a friend).
- Indifference (e.g., not helping a classmate because you don't care about that person's problems)
- Laziness (e.g., ignoring the command to pray and intercede for people because it takes too much effort).

Make a resolution this week—that you will not allow fear, indifference or laziness keep you from doing all the things that you know you should. Choose to be completely righteous by avoiding both “sins of commission” and “sins of omission.”

Challenge: This week, promise God to give up one specific Sin of Omission that the Lord is reminding you about.

GOD IS JEALOUS

Also, this week remember that:

Every time you choose to participate in a worldly, sinful deed, you're saying to God, “Lord, I HATE you. You died for me, but I HATE you.”

(Because in God's eyes: Friendship with the World = Enmity with God).

Every time you choose to form a close friendship with a Non-Christian, you're in danger of making compromises to

please your friend. In other words, you say to God, “Lord you died for me. But I love my friend more than you, and I’d rather please him/her than you.”

Challenge: This week, PROVE to God that you truly love Him, by choosing to avoid worldly things. Also, begin to pray for spiritually strong friends who will bring great joy and fun into your life.

Next week, make sure that you come with a testimony of how you consciously avoided sins of omission, and how you PROVED to our Jealous God that you love Him with a genuine love.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER

DOCTRINE OF GOD

Jehovah Ezer—The Lord My Help



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that the Lord will always help—even when he appears to be silent
- To show that unbelief and doubt block God’s help from reaching us



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Ps.33:20; Deut.33:26; Mt.15:25-28; Psalm 22 (The Lord My Helper)



MEMORY VERSE

Ps.33:20: We wait in hope for the Lord; He is our help and our shield.

Materials Needed:

Laptop (to play Video Clippings)



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Name some Sins of Omission that we must choose to avoid, if we love God.
- In what way is God’s jealousy different from human jealousy?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Hab.1:13).



INTRODUCTION

Last week we learnt about two important moral qualities of God—his Righteousness and Jealousy. Today we will look at a significant name of God—Jehovah Ezer.

‘Jehovah Ezer’ means “Lord My Help.” God is eager to help us. He loves us so much that He doesn’t want us to go through any trial alone.



ATTENTION GETTER

Observe:

‘Help’ is the word we use when we need assistance. But depending on the way we say the word, the urgency of the word changes.

For instance, if I needed a pen, I’d say, “Help me. I need a pen.”

And I’d use an ordinary tone of voice to say it.

Ask:

How would I say the words ‘help me’ if I’m in a big hurry and needed the pen urgently?

(Voice the word in an urgent tone)

How would I say ‘help me’ if I saw a cobra under my chair?

(Voice the word in a terrified tone)

How would I say ‘help me’ if I’m a beggar begging for money?

(Voice the word in a pleading tone)

How would I say ‘help me’ if I’m lying on the road injured, after an accident?

(Voice the word with a lot of pain)

Explain:

Though we use the same word ‘help,’ we use it differently on different occasions, depending on the urgency of the situation.

The original Bible, written in Hebrew and Greek, contains many different words for ‘help,’ conveying different degrees of urgency and need. ‘Ezer’ is one of the more common words used in the Old Testament for ‘help.’



TEACHING CONTENT

The term “Jehovah Ezer” is mentioned in Ps.33:20 which says, “We wait in hope for the Lord; **He is our help** and our shield.”

HOW He helps us is beautifully described in Deut.33:26 which says, "... no other god is like ours-- the clouds are His chariot as He rides across the skies to come and help us."

This verse indicates that God races across the skies to come to our rescue. He doesn't delay; He hurries to us when we call out to him.

Case Study: Syrophenician Woman

A Syrophenician woman came to Jesus seeking help because her daughter was demon possessed. However, the Lord deliberately delayed replying to her because He wanted to test her.

Rather than give up, the woman continued to trust that Jesus would help her. She knelt down and begged, "Please help me, Lord!" (Mt.15:25).

The word 'help' which she used was "Boétheia." She could have used many other words, but she chose to use this specific word.

This word carries the meaning of a person running to provide assistance when someone calls out for help. It's the same word used in Deut.33:26 (in the Greek translation of the Old Testament). It depicts a picture of God racing across the skies, to rescue a person urgently crying out for help.

Jesus responded to her desperate cry by saying, "I was sent only to the people of Israel! They are like a flock of lost sheep... It isn't right to take food away from children and feed it to dogs" (Mt.15:24,26).

In other words, Jesus was essentially saying, "What makes you think I'll come running to help you? I have been sent to feed the lost sheep of Israel, and you are not an Israelite."

Even this failed to shake the woman's trust in Jesus. She boldly replied, "Lord, that's true... but even dogs get the crumbs that fall from their owner's table" (Mt.15:27).

In other words, she said to the Lord, "It's true that the Israelites think of us as dogs. But even if I were a dog, you'd still help me. After all, if a man is willing to throw crumbs to a mere dog, will you not obviously give me much more?"

Jesus was so amazed at her confidence in Him that he exclaimed, "Dear woman, you really do have a lot of faith, and you will be given what you want" (Mt.15:28).

The Lord ran to her rescue because she trusted Him completely!

Encourage:

Are we willing to trust the Lord in the same way that the Syrophenician woman did?

The Lord is willing to come running to our rescue when we desperately cry out to him. But are we willing to trust Him, and hold on till the answer arrives? Or do we give up hoping for help after a few days of praying?

Jehovah Ezer is willing to be 'My' helper. But I must firmly hold on and trust Him until the answer comes.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnxpNKYPOU0>

Duration: 3 minutes 19 seconds

According to the Video, sometimes even the silence of a person ‘speaks.’ How does God’s ‘silence’ speak to us?

[When we know a person very well, we can sometimes guess what they’re thinking, even if they don’t say anything.]

- For instance, if I see my mother looking at the clock in the morning, even though she hasn’t said a word, I would know that she is anxiously waiting for the maid.
- At school, my friend and I may exchange looks when the teacher announces a math test. Even though neither of us has said a word, we both know exactly what the other is thinking
- Similarly, when my brother comes to the breakfast table and sits down, without his saying a word, I know whether to pass him the butter or the jam. I know which one he loves and which one he hates.

Because we spend a lot of time with family and friends, we sometimes automatically know what they’re thinking

In the same way, if I know God very well, His silence will speak to me loudly and clearly.

- In a time of deep need, I will know that He is thinking loving thoughts towards me—even though He hasn't said anything audibly.
- I can sense it immediately when He doesn't approve of something that I'm doing.
- When I pass by the beggar near my house, I'll automatically know what the Lord wants me to do. And in obedience, I'll stop a moment to exchange a few friendly words with the old beggar.

The more closely I know God, the better I will know the thoughts in His mind. So, I won't feel scared or abandoned when a crisis hits. Even though I don't hear God's audible voice, deep inside my spirit I will know that He is doing everything needed to help me.

According to the Video, King David complained that the Lord wasn't listening to his cry for help. What made him change his mind and swallow his words of complaint?

[King David:

At one point of time, King David desperately needed help and prayed for assistance. However, the Lord remained silent and didn't come to his rescue immediately.

In desperation David cried out, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me? Why are you so far away? Won't you listen to my groans and come to my rescue?" (Ps.22:1)

However, he began to reflect on all the times in the past when the Lord helped him and his people. He admitted to God, "Our ancestors trusted You, and You rescued them.

When they cried out for help, You saved them, and You did not let them down when they depended on You.” (Ps.22:4-5)

This boosted up his hopes and made him realize that God would help him once again—just as He had always done in the past. With confidence he concluded, “The LORD doesn't hate or despise the helpless in all of their troubles. When I cried out, He listened and did not turn away... The poor will eat and be full, and all who worship You will be thankful and live in hope.” (Ps.22:24, 26)

Jesus:

God knew exactly how David felt. When He chose to become a human, He experienced the same kind of loneliness and desperation that David did.

He was hanging on the Cross in unbearable pain, and nobody was helping Him. All His friends had deserted Him and run away. Finally, once the dirty sins of the whole world were laid on His innocent shoulders, the holy and pure Father turned away from Him too—because God cannot tolerate sin and must punish it.

In great pain, feeling completely abandoned by everyone, Jesus cried out the words of David, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?” (Mt.27:46)

The rest of the Psalm must have gone through Jesus' mind as He continued to hang on the cross...

- Everyone who sees me makes fun and sneers. They shake their heads, and say, "Trust the LORD! If you are His favorite, let Him protect you and keep you safe" (v.7-8).

- All my bones are out of joint; my heart is like melted wax. My strength has dried up like a broken clay pot, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You, God, have left me to die in the dirt (v.14-15).
- I can count all my bones, and my enemies just stare and sneer at me. They took my clothes and gambled for them (v.17-18)

And then Jesus must have thought of the concluding verses of the Psalm:

- The Lord doesn't hate or despise the helpless in all of their troubles... (v.24).
- The poor will eat and be full, and all who worship You will be thankful and live in hope (v.26).
- In the future, everyone will worship and learn about You, our Lord. People not yet born will be told, "The Lord has saved us!" (v.30-31)

David had spoken these last few verses with great hope, because he knew that "The LORD doesn't hate or despise the helpless in all of their troubles" (v.24). And Jesus knew that these words would remain true only if He sacrificed Himself on the Cross. So Jesus chose to die on the Cross, so that through Him, those who cry for help will always "be thankful and live in hope" (v.26)].

Sometimes why does God stay silent when we cry for help?

[The Lord has already clearly shown us on the Cross:

- How he feels about us
(Loves us enough to have died for us).

- What He intends to do about our trials and problems (Was willing to die on the Cross, so that we can have victory over every problem and situation).
- The extent of His ability to actually help (He defeated death itself, and came back to life! Nothing is impossible for Him).

He demonstrated these things to us through His actions on the Cross (not through mere words).

So, when we're in deep trouble and cry out for help, we may not hear a voice from heaven saying, "I care about your problem," or "I have the ability to help. So don't worry."

Instead of saying these things, He'll probably just remind us of the Cross.

This means we should continue to trust Him even if there's silence. We must continue to believe that He will help us, even if he doesn't answer for many months. Because, He **PROVED** His *love and concern* on the cross... because, He **PROVED** His *power to help* on the cross... we must patiently wait till help comes.

When there is a delay in receiving the answer, we must remember Rom.8:32, which says, "God did not keep back His own Son, but He gave Him for us. If God did this, won't He freely give us everything else?"

The God who was willing to sacrifice even His Son for us, will definitely not deny us the help that we need in times of trouble!].

According to the Video, while we're waiting for God's help to arrive, what will be our main source of help and strength?

[The Word of God! The Lord will remind us of specific Scriptures that promise His help.

As long as we believe these promises and hold on to them, we will remain strong.

But if we listen to the doubts that Satan sows in our minds, and begin to doubt these promises, we may end up not receiving our answer due to lack of faith].

Does God help us, depending on the level of faith we have in him?

[God may help us even if we don't trust him. But usually our lack of faith blocks His help from reaching us.

Jesus usually helps us according to the faith that we place in Him. He says, "According to your faith let it be done to you" (Mt.9:29).

- If I believe deep inside that God will not help me, he may be unable to... because my unbelief obstructs Him.
- If I believe that God will help me only partially, He may be able to help me only a little bit.
- If I believe that He will help me hundred percent—even if there is a long delay—then He will help me spectacularly, way beyond my imagination!

According to my faith in Him, it will be done to me.

Mk.6:5-6 says, “Jesus could not work any miracles there [i.e., in His hometown], except to heal a few sick people by placing his hands on them. He was surprised that the people did not have any faith.”

Because the people in His town lacked faith, He couldn’t help them. So, it’s very important to have faith in God if we want to fully enjoy His help].

How can we strengthen our faith in God, so that we don’t lose out on His help?

[Faith comes through hearing and believing the Word of God. Rom.10:17 says, “... faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word about Christ.

If we don’t know what the Word of Christ teaches about the trustworthiness of God, then we can’t have any faith. We will only get to know about these Scriptures if we read the Bible daily. Then, God will begin to speak to us through the verses that we’re reading, and faith will grow.

Also, the verses that we read get stored inside our hearts. Then, during a time of need, the Holy Spirit will remind us of these verses and stir up faith inside us.

So it’s difficult to increase in our faith if we barely read the Bible].



APPLICATION

This week, make a resolution to read the Bible daily. Spend at least 10 minutes reading and spend the next 10 minutes reflecting on what you have read. In a book/journal write

down whatever God has taught you through the Bible passage that you read.

Also, write down the verses that God has specifically spoken to you. These verses may help you win great spiritual battles in future.

Next week, make sure that you come with a testimony of how Jehovah Ezer, Your Helper, spoke to you through His Scriptures, and helped you through your difficulties



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



DOCTRINE OF GOD

Jehovah Nissi—The Lord Is My Banner



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that victory comes from Submitting to His Voice
- To show that victory is not possible when we choose to wallow in temptation



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Exo.17:8-16 (The Banner that Defeated the Amalekites)



MEMORY VERSE

1 Cor.10:13: No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Materials Needed:

Laptop (to play Video Clippings)



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- How did Jehovah Ezer help you this week? Give examples.
- Why can't God help us when we lack faith?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Ps.33:20).



INTRODUCTION

Last week we studied an important name of God, Jehovah Ezer. This week, we will be learning another significant name of God, Jehovah Nissi.

'Jehovah Nissi' means "The Lord Is My Banner." A banner or flag marks victory. When we live under the banner of Jesus, we enjoy victory in our lives.



ATTENTION GETTER

A Sign Post gives us Information. It tells us what to expect.

- What would you do if you saw a large sign saying "Free Snacks" at a Carnival?
(Ask the children for their responses).
- What if you were cycling to school and you see a banner saying, "Road Under Construction?" What would you do?

- What if you're searching for a Dentist's Clinic and you see a signboard saying "Hair Saloon?" Would you walk in or would you continue searching?
- What if the sign on the gate said, "Beware of Dog?" Would you open the gate and barge inside?

Observe:

We usually take action based on what a particular signboard says.



TEACHING CONTENT

Ask:

When Satan looks at you, what signboard does he see you holding up?

Does he see you holding up a banner that says:

- "Jesus is My Victory" or
- "I'm a Loser" or
- "Through Jesus I will succeed" or
- "Satan is too powerful for me"

What does your Banner say?

Depending on the banner that you're holding up, Satan will treat you in a particular way. In fact, even heaven will respond to you on the basis of what you're holding up.

The Banner that Defeated the Amalekites

Amalek came and fought Israel at Rephidim. Moses ordered Joshua: "Select some men for us and go out and fight Amalek. Tomorrow I will take my stand on top of the hill holding God's staff."

Joshua did what Moses ordered in order to fight Amalek. And Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. It turned out that whenever Moses raised his hands, Israel was winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, Amalek was winning. But Moses' hands got tired. So they got a stone and set it under him. He sat on it and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on each side. So his hands remained steady until the sun went down. Joshua defeated Amalek and its army in battle.

GOD said to Moses, "Write this up as a reminder to Joshua, to keep it before him, because I will most certainly wipe the very memory of Amalek off the face of the Earth."

Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. He said, "Because hands were lifted up [to] the throne of the LORD, the LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation" (Exo.17:8-16).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Why do you think the Israelites started losing every time Moses lowered the staff that he was holding?

[As long as Moses held up the staff, he was symbolically saying, “We’re fighting under the staff of God—**under** His direction and **through** His strength.”

However, when he lowered the staff, he seemed to say, “We’re in a good position now and the battle is going well. We can now manage the battle under our own direction and in our own strength.” However their strength wasn’t enough, and they would begin losing.

God insisted that Moses hold up the staff continually to teach the Israelites a very important lesson. They needed to understand that under their own direction, they’d never win. He wanted them to realize that their strength would never be enough to win a single battle. Through this “object lesson” God taught them that they must completely submit to Him if they wished to enjoy victory in their lives.

Moses sat on the hill the entire day, and he clearly noticed that even if he lowered the staff for five minutes, the Israelites would begin to lose. So he understood the “object lesson” very clearly.

This is why he built an altar immediately after the battle, and named it “The Lord is My Banner.” He now understood that:

- As long as they stayed under the Banner of God, and obeyed his direction and leading, they’d win.
- As long as they stayed under Him, they’d be given strength to defeat their enemies.

- But if they chose to make someone or something else their banner, then they'd lose].

How can we make the Lord our Banner? What must we do?

[To use an example from Indian history, Alexander fought a tough battle with the Indian king Porus. During the battle, the Greek soldiers fought under the flag of Alexander. This technically meant that they chose to obey whatever Alexander ordered them to do.

What if one of the Greek soldiers had chosen to disobey Alexander's orders? He would have earned the label of 'traitor', and technically speaking, he would no longer be 'under' the flag of Alexander.

Such a soldier would be on his own. He would receive no help from Alexander even if he was attacked by an Indian. Alexander would no longer protect him, because he had chosen to step outside of the flag of Alexander.

So if we say that the Lord is our banner, we must be **Willing to Submit** to His leading and direction. We must go where He says to go, and do what He says to do.

When we do this, He will give us the strength to fight against Satan. We won't need to depend on our inadequate human strength].

Video Presentation

Video Link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aY-d1z5qRBQ&feature=related>

Duration: 4 minutes 15 seconds

According to the Video, Odysseus’ men blocked their ears with wax, so that they wouldn’t hear the Sirens’ song. What would be the Christian equivalent of this? How can a Christian try to block his ears with wax?

[If a Christian wants to “block his ears” from temptation:

- He must avoid all people, because they may teach him sinful values.
- He must avoid all media (no TV, no music, no movies, no magazines, no newspapers and so on).
- He must even avoid his family (because the things they say may tempt him into losing his temper).

In other words, it would help a lot if he vanished into the Himalayas at a very early age, and didn’t communicate with anyone or anything.

However, even then, he’d still have to deal with the sinful voices within his own heart that urge him toward pride, self-centeredness, self pity and so on.

So not even the ‘wax’ of the Himalayas can shut out the voices of temptation].

If we can’t escape temptation even in the Himalayas, then how can we ever have victory?

[We can enjoy victory even when surrounded by temptations, if we stay under the “Lord Our Banner.” As we saw earlier, this basically means that we choose to SUBMIT to the Lord. And we submit by obeying the still small voice of God deep in our spirits.

1 Tim.1:19 says, "... Some people have made a mess of their faith because they **didn't listen to their consciences.**"

We will stay under the Banner of the Lord as long as we submit to the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through our conscience. But if we choose to listen to the voices of satan and the world, we will lose].

How does submitting to the Lord's voice bring victory?

[Submitting to the Lord's voice **releases His divine power** into our lives].

Example:

Let's assume that a close friend at school says, "One cigarette smoked just for fun won't make you an addict"?

Remember: the voice of temptation sounds very logical and convincing. The voice will point out some key specifics:

- It is definitely fun to do stuff with friends, whether it's roller-skating or smoking.
- It's also probably true that smoking one cigarette won't make a person an addict.
- There's the logical danger of antagonizing and losing your entire circle of friends.
- There's the even greater danger of getting labeled a 'coward' for not having the guts to break rules (This is dangerous in the sense that classmates won't respect you anymore, and may even make you the butt of their jokes).

On the other hand, the Lord your Banner will whisper other key specifics into your heart. He will point out that:

- The key point is NOT whether you'll get addicted by smoking one cigarette... Rather the key point is that even one cigarette would dishonor God.

God makes rules specifically for our own personal benefit.

- Obedience leads to blessings... while disobedience opens the doors wide for satan to start destroying your life.

If you choose to submit to the Voice of God, the following things will happen:

- Even if the voice of temptation is very strong, you'll be able to overcome it. Divine power will be released into you by the Lord Your Banner, and you will be able to stand firm.
- When the next temptation comes, you will be able to hear God's voice more clearly (because your ears are now more sensitive to His voice). And it will be easier for you to resist the temptation].

However, if you choose to submit to the voice of temptation, the following things will happen:

- You may get caught and punished... or you may escape.
- Your friends will spread the word that you're COOL.
- You'll find yourself coming under more and more temptations—and you'll find it extremely difficult to resist them.

- Your interest in the things of God will begin to fade.
- You'll become an excellent hypocrite. You'll become very good at pretending to be holy while living a sinful lifestyle.
- You'll convince yourself that you're not a bad person, and satan will help you believe that more and more.
- Gradually, things will start getting messed up in your life. You'll discover that your sins are blocking your prayers, and making your life miserable].

Why do many Christians struggle to submit to the Lord's banner and gain victory?

[It's because they don't stay far away from temptation, but try to play with it.

In the video, what if Odyssey's crew had blocked their ears with wax, and then gone as close to the Sirens' island as possible?

In spite of the wax, they'd have heard the Sirens (because they had approached so close), and they would have been shipwrecked. But they used their brains and chose to stay as far away as possible.]

Point One: Actively avoid temptation

Some Christians don't use their brains. They go as close to the temptation as possible, and then hope that they won't fall into the temptation.

- They hang out with friends who're indulging in sinful things, and hope they won't get tempted.

- They watch programs on TV that have immoral overtones and hope they won't get tempted.
- They get into arguments instead of making peace, and then hope they won't lose their temper.
- They get into situations where they may need to lie to escape, and then hope that they won't lie.

The Lord Your Banner will help you overcome temptation if you truly desire to avoid sin. But if you deliberately choose to hang out with people in places where you'll be tempted, this seems to indicate that you ENJOY sin. In such a case, the Lord Your Banner will not come to your rescue.

Point Two:

Spend time and Get close to God

Some Christians barely know God. They know lots 'about' God because they attend church every Sunday. But they have never spent time with Him in Bible study or prayer.

So because they barely know Him, their love for Him is very shallow. And it's difficult to follow someone that you don't care about.

However, those who know God personally will long to please Him. And because they're so eager to please him, **the Lord will release His divine power into them** and help them to overcome temptation.

Point Three:

Allow the Bible to Renew your Mind

Those who know God closely, will begin to think like him. They will find sin disgusting, and long to overcome it. They will believe what the Scriptures say rather than what the voice of temptation is saying.

But those who have no time for God, will not develop His kind of thinking. Because they barely study the Scriptures, God can't speak to them through the Bible and renew their minds. So their sin-steeped minds will continue to love sinful things more than godly things

Point Four:

Find Friends who'll Support you

Some Christians try to do everything alone. But it's good to have mature Christian friends as Accountability Partners. They'll uphold you in prayer, so that you don't yield to temptation. They'll also regularly check on you, to make sure you're spending time with God, and to encourage you in staying far away from the things that tempt you. Even Moses was able to hold up the staff of God only with the assistance of two friends.



APPLICATION

Remember: The banner I'm holding up determines whether I'll have victory or defeat.

- If the banner in my heart reads, "Satan is too powerful to resist," he'll take advantage of this defeatist attitude, and I'll rarely overcome temptation.

- But if the banner in my heart reads, “I’ll ALWAYS SUBMIT to the Lord who gives me victory,” the Lord will release more and more victory into my life.

1 Cor.10:13 says, “You are tempted in the same way that everyone else is tempted. But God can be trusted not to let you be tempted too much, and He will show you how to escape from your temptations.”

The more willing you are to hear God’s voice and submit, the more clearly he’ll show you ways and methods of resisting difficult temptations.

He’ll also bring to your mind certain people who can help you in your walk with God. Make a conscious effort to become friends with such people, so that you can encourage one another and pray for one another.

Challenge:

Today, we discussed many things regarding overcoming temptation.

- Reflect and pinpoint one or two specific points that touched your heart the most (Ask a few children to share their points with the class).
- Ask yourself, “How can I use these learnings to overcome the temptations that tempt me the most?”
- Also ask God’s help in finding accountability partners, so that you can support each other in resisting temptation.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER

DOCTRINE OF GOD

Jehovah Rapha—The Lord My Healer



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show that Jesus won both Salvation and Healing for us on the Cross.
- To teach the importance of following God's directions in receiving our healing.



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Exo.15:26; Lk.5:17-26; Isa.53: 3-12; 2 Cor.5:21 (The Lord My Healer).



MEMORY VERSE

Isa.53:5: But he was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

Materials Needed:

- Laptop (to play Video Clippings)
- Set of blank Greeting Cards



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- How did Jehovah Nissi help you this week in overcoming temptation? Give examples.
- What happens when we submit to God's Voice instead of the voice of temptation? (Divine Power is released into us to overcome the temptation).
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (1 Cor.10:13)



INTRODUCTION

Last week we studied an important name of God, Jehovah Nissi. This week, we will be learning another significant name of God, Jehovah Rapha.

Throughout the Scriptures, the word 'rapha' conveys the idea of restoring something to its "normal" or useful state. Jehovah is the Great Physician who heals the physical and emotional needs of His people, so that they can become normal and useful once more.



ATTENTION GETTER

Activity:

Get Well Cards

Give each child a blank Greeting Card (Inexpensive greeting cards, with no wording inside, are easily available in gift stores).

Explain:

Let's assume that you're giving this card to a close friend who is sick. If this were a Get Well Card, what wording would you write inside? And what Bible Verse would you include?

(Give the children five minutes to compose the wording on a rough sheet of paper. Also ask them to identify the Bible Verse which they would use. After the class, they can neatly write the wording and verse inside their Cards).

Share:

Ask a few children to share with the class, the wording they've composed, and the Bible verse they've chosen.



TEACHING CONTENT

The term "Jehovah Rapha" is mentioned in Exo.15:26. The Lord says, "If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in His eyes, if you pay attention to His commands and keep all His decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am **the Lord, who heals you.**"

To understand Jehovah Rapha better, we will look at the familiar story of the Healing of the Paralytic.

Healing of the Paralytic

One day as Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and religious teachers were sitting around. They had come from nearly every village in Galilee and Judea, even as far away as Jerusalem, to be there. The healing power of God was on Him.

Some men arrived carrying a paraplegic on a stretcher. They were looking for a way to get into the house and set him before Jesus. When they couldn't find a way in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof, removed some tiles, and let him down in the middle of everyone, right in front of Jesus. Impressed by their bold belief, He said, "Friend, I forgive your sins."

That set the religious scholars and Pharisees buzzing. "Who does He think He is? That's blasphemous talk! God and only God can forgive sins."

Jesus knew exactly what they were thinking and said, "Why all this gossipy whispering? Which is simpler: to say 'I forgive your sins,' or to say 'Get up and start walking'? Well, just so it's clear that I'm the Son of Man and authorized to do either, or both..." He now spoke directly to the paraplegic: "Get up. Take your bedroll and go home." Without a moment's hesitation, he did it—got up, took his blanket, and left for home, giving glory to God all the way. The people rubbed their eyes, incredulous—and then also gave glory to God.

Awestruck, they said, "We've never seen anything like that!" (Lk.5:17-26).

Discuss:

Luke starts off the Story of the Paralytic with the words, "...the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick" (Lk.5:17). Why does Luke specifically mention these words? Isn't it general knowledge that Jesus possesses the power to heal?

[Jesus was sitting in that room with the power of healing upon Him. But we don't know if anyone in that room made use of this power that Jesus was offering them.

However, some other people **who weren't even present in the room**, decided that they would benefit from it. They would have to put in a lot of extra effort to reach Jesus. But they were willing to do it because they were totally confident that Jesus had the power to heal].

Encourage: Even today, Jesus is present in our class right now, with the power to heal. However, whether or not we benefit from this power is entirely up to us.

Non-Christians from outside are coming to Jesus and receiving their healing. But people within the family of Jesus seem so reluctant to believe in His healing power. Let us not foolishly ignore what the Lord is freely offering us today.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Let's assume for a moment that I have an incurable disease, and the doctors have given up on me. What must I do to receive healing from Jesus?

[The four men in the story didn't perform any special rituals. They simply brought their friend to the Lord, fully trusting him to heal the man.]

All I need to do is come to the Lord in prayer and request him to heal me].

What if I pray sincerely for a month and nothing happens? Does this mean God doesn't want to heal me?

[Allow the children to express their opinions freely].

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjpAYc4PBMA&feature=related>

Duration: 4 minutes 36 seconds

According to the Video, when Jesus saw how strongly they believed in His ability to heal, what did He say to the paralytic?

[Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven"].

In the Video, Franky says, "I thought the man couldn't walk. Why did Jesus forgive his sins?" Why do you think Jesus talked about forgiving sins rather than about the healing? Do you think the man had committed some terrible secret sin?

[Allow the children to express their opinions freely].

In the Video, Mr. Scott explains that getting forgiven and going to heaven is better than being healed. This is why Jesus first forgave the man. Do you think this is a good explanation? Why not?

[Allow the children to express their opinions freely].

Read Aloud

Isa.53:3-12:

He was hated and rejected; His life was filled with sorrow and terrible suffering. No one wanted to look at Him. We despised Him and said, "He is a nobody!" He suffered and endured great pain for us, but we thought His suffering was punishment from God. **He was wounded and crushed because of our sins; by taking our punishment, He made us completely well.**

All of us were like sheep that had wandered off. **We had each gone our own way, but the LORD gave Him the punishment we deserved.** He was painfully abused, but He did not complain. He was silent like a lamb being led to the butcher, as quiet as a sheep having its wool cut off. He was condemned to death without a fair trial. Who could have imagined what would happen to him? His life was taken away because of the sinful things My people had done.

He wasn't dishonest or violent, but He was buried in a tomb of cruel and rich people. **The Lord decided His servant would suffer as a sacrifice to take away the sin and guilt of others.** Now the servant will live to see His own descendants. He did everything the LORD had planned. By suffering, the servant

will learn the true meaning of obeying the Lord. Although He is innocent, He will take the punishment for the sins of others, so that many of them will no longer be guilty. The Lord will reward Him with honor and power for sacrificing His life. Others thought He was a sinner, but He suffered for our sins and asked God to forgive us.

2 Cor.5:21 too says, “Christ never sinned! But God treated Him as a sinner, so that Christ could make us acceptable to God.”

Explain:

The verses we have read establish Three Basic Facts:

Our sinfulness attracted Two Results:

- entry of sickness and disease into the world leading to decay and death (Adam and Eve began to experience diseases like cough, fever and weakness of old age).
- eternal punishment in hell after death.

But Jesus took our sinfulness upon Himself. When he did this, two things happened:

- He took the Punishment for our sins—which we should have actually got. As a result, we don’t have to bear the punishment of hell anymore.
- He took the Consequences for our sins—which we should have actually got (including sickness and disease). As a result, we don’t have to bear the suffering from sickness anymore.

- Jesus didn't stay dead. He defeated sickness and death and came back to life. If we choose to live 'in' and 'through' Jesus, we too can defeat sickness and death.

Discuss:

Let us now go back to my earlier question. What if I pray for healing for an entire month and nothing happens? Does this mean God doesn't want to heal me?

[When Jesus died on the Cross for the sins of the whole world, He died for my sins too. So, when I confessed and repented of my sins, and committed myself to live under His Lordship and Covering, He forgave ALL my sins—my past, present and future sins.

Now, as a result of what Christ did on the Cross:

- Hell can't have a hold on me anymore. When I die, I'll go to heaven to be with Jesus.
- Sickness and disease can't have a hold on me either. Jesus already took all of my sicknesses (including my incurable disease) upon the Cross, and DEFEATED them.

So the simple Biblical truth is that Jesus got me both Salvation and Healing through His victory on the Cross. If I believe that Jesus wants me to have Salvation, I must also believe that He wants me to have Healing.

It would be foolish for me to **accept Jesus' salvation** and **reject Jesus' healing**. He got me **BOTH** on the cross. Why should I reject one of them?]

Discuss:

If it's true that God wants to heal me of my incurable disease, what should I do? What if I pray for two months, and still nothing happens? Should I give up?

[When we're not willing to give up on our Salvation, why must we give up on our Healing? Jesus got me both Salvation and Healing through His victory on the Cross. So I must trust God and hold on, even if the healing is delayed].

Discuss:

When it comes to healing, why is it so important to hear from God clearly?

[Maybe there are some specific things that God wants me to do, to receive my healing. But if I can't hear His voice directing and leading me, then I'll not know what to do.

The Lord will patiently wait until I start making time for Him—time for Bible Study, Worship and Prayer. Even as I spend more time with Him, I'll start to recognize His still, small voice deep within my spirit.

God speaks differently with each person, because each person's case is unique:

- To some people, God may reveal that the **right time has not yet come**. He will give them specific verses which will strengthen them, and help them to hold on in faith until the healing comes.
- To some people, God may reveal that there's **unbelief hidden deep inside**. He will give them specific verses that will build up their faith, so that the unbelief will not block the healing any longer.

- To some people, God may reveal that a curse is blocking the healing. The curse may have been put upon the person by someone else or even by themselves! Such people can seek ministry from the elders of the church, so that the curse can be broken.
- To some people, God may reveal that they have **put their trust in the wrong person or wrong thing.**
- The person may be thinking, “My pastor is laying hands on me and praying every week. Because he is so powerful, I’ll definitely be healed.” If this is so, the person’s faith is in the pastor, not in God.
- Or, the person may be thinking, “I’m anointing myself with prayer oil which I bought in Israel. Because this oil has come all the way from the Holy City, I’ll definitely be healed.” If this is so, the person’s faith is in the Israeli oil, not in God.

Our teacher, the Holy Spirit, will teach the person to put their trust in God alone, and they will be healed.

- To some people, God may reveal that there’s a hidden, unconfessed sin in their life. Once they confess it’s a sin, and commit to renounce it forever, the healing will begin to flow into their lives.
- To some people, God may reveal that there’s unforgiveness in their hearts. Through the divine help of God, once they forgive completely, they’ll be healed.

- To some people, God may reveal other things not mentioned here. God speaks to each person uniquely, depending on their particular case.

So we need to spend time with God and learn to hear His voice. Only then can the Lord begin to remove the obstacles that are obstructing our healing]



APPLICATION

If you're suffering from some sickness, apply these teachings to your life, and experience God's healing.

If you know of a close friend, relative or family member who is suffering from sickness, make a commitment to start praying for them. Also, share these Biblical truths with that person, so that they too can enjoy God's healing.

Next week, make sure that you come with a testimony of how Jehovah Rapha, Your Healer, delivered you or a loved one, from some sickness or ill-health.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER

