

Introduction

Making Wise Choices

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Campers

This is my first attempt at writing the Bible class material for camp and I have given it my best effort. I hope that this topic and the discussions that take place in your classes will make a little bit of a positive impact on your life. I think these are practical lessons that can help all of us to live better Christian lives. Please enjoy camp to the fullest and take your class and devotional time seriously. Show your teachers the respect they deserve. Honor God with your study and devotion to His Word. In the Old Testament, Moses (**DEUTERONOMY 30:19**), Joshua (**JOSHUA 24:14-15**), and Elijah (**1 KINGS 18:21**) all presented God's people with a choice to serve the Lord. This is still the most important choice today. Choose to serve God with all your heart!

Teachers

Thank you for giving of yourselves to study and teach these lessons this summer. What you are doing will have an impact on many lives for years to come. I hope that the lessons are written in a way that will work well for you. I would love to hear from you with ideas for future camp material. God bless you as you teach God's Word!

Personal

There are so many special things that I could write about Maywood Christian Camp. One of the most important things to me, is that my entire family is involved. My wife and I share in this ministry (see lesson 4), with hopes of making a long-lasting impact on the lives of as many as possible. All four of our kids have grown up at Maywood and consider it "home". Our daughter-in-law has also made it an important part of her life and will be there again this year with our two grand-daughters. My new son-in-law knows what Maywood means to us, and I am proud of his involvement with Camp Wiregrass. Of course, it was my wife's parents, Morgan and Charlotte Hester, who inspired this love for Maywood within us as Morgan directed the 4th week and devoted much of his time and energy to camp. I will always be thankful that my parents went one year as cooks, so that their little boy would go and not be homesick (I was 18).

There are many others that have helped with camp over the years and are also considered a part of our family. You know who you are!

Thanks to all who helped with this book, especially to my son Justin for the contributions he made to the lessons. We hope that all who use this book will grow closer to the Lord through their studies.

God Bless You! Let's have a wonderful week!

Lesson #1 - Monday

Choose Jesus First

The word first has double meaning here: all other choices in life should be based on the fact that you have made the choice first to follow Jesus; also, your choice must be to make Jesus first - the priority of your life.

Memory Verses: 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Matthew 6:33

Jesus, The Way to A Better Life

Most people think of the "good life" in terms of material possessions, pleasure, and popularity. They suppose that these things will bring **happiness** and **peace**, which everyone agrees is the goal of the "good life."

Jesus corrects this misconception, teaching us that there is more to life than material possessions, and leading the way to true happiness and peace. (LUKE 12:15)



How does Jesus lead us to the "good life"?

1. He identifies the *cause* of unhappiness in the world. What deprives so many people of peace? It is things like immorality, thefts, murder, coveting, deceit, envy, and pride. Jesus declares the source of these to be the sinful hearts of men.
2. He provides the *solution* to the problem. (TIT 3:3-7) Jesus removes the problem of unhappiness and lack of peace by first removing the cause: Sin!
3. He leads the way to true happiness and peace. Jesus teaches us to seek new goals in life. (MATT 6:19-20)
4. He then gives us things that we do not expect. Material things will be provided (MATT 6:31-33). Jesus also

provides a form of pure pleasure (**JOHN 15:11**). Finally, we will one day have “fame” that is “out of this world” (**COL 3:4**)!

The world sets goals before us which many cannot achieve and often do not satisfy. Jesus gives us goals which **can** be achieved and that **do** satisfy!

Jesus, The Way to Forgiveness

Many people have the *wrong conception* of sin, thinking it is nothing more than a violation of human relationships; that an action is only sinful if it is frowned upon by society or is harmful to someone else.

Such a misconception of sin leads people to a misconception of how sin can be corrected, that it involves nothing more than making things right with other people.



The Bible defines three types of sin.

1. Sin of Commission (**1 JN 3:4**) – For example, where God’s law tells us not to steal, we sin when we steal something.
2. Sin of Omission (**JAS 4:17**) – For example, when I know Jesus tells me to love my enemies, I sin when I do not display love towards them.
3. Sin of Violating Your Conscience (**ROM 14:23**) – In this case, the thing you are doing may be right in and of itself, but if you cannot do it with a clear conscience, you are sinning.

We see that sin is a serious matter that involves God and His Will. How serious and terrible is sin? As Paul wrote in the book of Romans: **“FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH” (6:23)**

God’s supreme *holiness* cannot tolerate sin, so sin separates man from God (**ISA 59:2**). God’s supreme *justice* demands that sin be punished accordingly (**LEV 10:1-3**).

God, in His love, has provided the way to forgiveness by offering Jesus (**1 JN 4:10**). Christ suffered the punishment

that was due for our sins. Through Jesus' death on the cross we can be forgiven and come back to God (EPH 1:7).

Jesus, The Way to Eternal Life



Why is Jesus the way to eternal life?

1. Jesus prepares a place for us. (JOHN 14:2-3)
2. Jesus will come for us. (1 THES 4:15-17)
3. Jesus is the One who will judge as to who will enter eternal life. (MATT 25:31-34)
4. Together with God, Jesus is what makes heaven (eternal life) so wonderful. (REV 22:1-5)

Eternal life is "a prepared place for prepared people." We cannot stumble into it by "accident" (MATT 7:14). Jesus taught several parables to stress preparation to enter eternal life. (MATT 22:11-14; 25:1-13)

We make preparation for eternal life by doing the Father's will, which requires *diligence* on our part. (2 PET 1:10-11)

Jesus also taught something else about eternal life: the only alternative is eternal *condemnation* in hell! (MATT 25:41) Many will go into the way that leads to destruction simply because they follow the crowd, making no effort to know God and to obey the gospel of Christ. (2 THES 1:7-9)

In order that "eternal life" in heaven might be our destiny, God has provided the most precious thing to Him as the *mediator* between sinful man and Holy God: **Jesus Christ** – His Beloved Son.

Jesus is the Way

Jesus is the Only Way



ACTS 8:26-40 – An Ethiopian Chooses Jesus



The Story

1. Philip is sent to the Eunuch – This man worked for Queen Candace, so he knew the “good life.” However, he had been to worship and was now reading scripture.
2. Philip preaches Jesus to him – The eunuch asked for help to understand what he was reading, and Philip began at that Scripture to teach Jesus to the man.
3. The Eunuch is baptized – In hearing about Jesus from Philip, the eunuch believed. Immediately upon reaching some water, he confessed his faith in Jesus and was baptized.



Some Observations

1. Prospects for the Gospel – The eunuch was a good man who was already seeking God’s will. However, although he was good, he was still lost until he chose to obey the gospel of Jesus. Good people are often more open to God’s Word, but the gospel can convert anyone.
2. What it means to preach Jesus – From the Scripture they read, we know it includes how Jesus died for our sins and how Jesus has been exalted by God. From the eunuch’s question, we know it stresses the importance and immediacy of baptism. From Philip’s qualification, we know it requires explaining the necessity of whole-hearted faith in Jesus.
3. Observations about baptism – It involves a burial in water, which is how Paul later describes it in **ROM 6:3-4** and **COL 2:12**. It is obviously not a public confession of one’s faith, as this was certainly not done publicly. It is for salvation from sin (**ACTS 2:38**).



Conclusions

1. Preaching Jesus is not complicated.
2. The gospel is God’s power to save (**ROM 1:16**).
3. Choosing Jesus includes obedience to the gospel.

For the Senior Campers (Teens)

Choosing Jesus first is the most important lesson of the week. When you choose to be a whole-hearted Christian, other choices will be based on Christian values, and the Lord will help with your choices (PROV 3:5-6). Choosing Jesus will also lead to one of your most important tasks as a Christian, which is to seek and save the lost just as He did (LUKE 19:10). When you choose Jesus, one of your main goals is to help others to see the importance of choosing Jesus also.

*Sometimes before we decide to choose Jesus, we make bad choices. These choices may lead to terrible consequences for us, even to the point of despair in the sinful condition that we find ourselves. People often think that Jesus is not a choice for them until they can dig their own way out of the mess in their lives. The truth is that you **can** choose Jesus, and He will help you out of your problems. You will also have help from others who have chosen Jesus. Some of your teachers and counselors can tell you about how this has happened in their lives.*

For the Junior Campers (Pre-Teens)

Choosing Jesus when you are young is the best choice you can make! It shows in your life by your actions toward others. When you choose Jesus, you have love and respect for parents, teachers, friends, and everyone around you. You give your best in all things, especially in studying God's Word. Don't be afraid to ask for help from a teacher or counselor so that you can understand God's Word better. The Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip to explain the Scriptures to him, and he learned what he should do to be saved. He "went on his way rejoicing" (ACTS 8:39).

Things to Think About – Lesson 1

What is the most important choice in life?

How can you help an “unhappy” person to find happiness and peace?

Why is God’s forgiveness so important? How about our forgiveness of one another?

What is the most important thing that we gain by choosing Jesus?

What are some things we might lose by choosing Jesus?

*Can other people tell if you have chosen Jesus?
How?*

Lesson #2 - Tuesday

Choosing Friends

Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends? - Abraham Lincoln

My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me - Henry Ford

*These quotes bring out very important points regarding friends. We should be a friend to all. However, when it comes to choosing our closest friends, there are **Biblical principals** that we should use.*

Memory Verses: Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; Proverbs 27:17

Selectivity – it is your choice

The first principle is the wise selection of our friends. The Proverbs remind us that not everyone can be or should be a close friend (**PROV 18:24**). Quality certainly trumps quantity, when it comes to friendship. We should select friendships carefully because wrong friends bring harm (**PROV 13:20**).



Keep in mind when selecting friends.

1. Jesus – Remember you have chosen Jesus first.
2. Faithfulness – Your faith, as well as your friend's faith, should grow because of your friendship.
3. Growth – As our memory verse says, friends should sharpen one another, becoming better in every way. (**PROV 27:17**)
4. Speech – A good friend will encourage, speak the truth, say things in love, and pray with you and for you.
5. Hope – Have a shared hope in Jesus Christ.

Proximity – gain strength through closeness

Distance makes friendship more difficult. You need friends who live close to you (**PROV 27:10**). When friends don't spend time together, they will inevitably grow distant. Your life is influenced the most by the people you spend the most time with (obviously!).

On the other hand, Proverbs also teaches the principle of boundaries. Learn when to give your friends space and know when to leave them alone. Be careful always to be kind and respectful to the parents and siblings of your friends.

Mutuality – a two-way street

In any true friendship, both persons contribute and each person benefits. To have a friend, you must be a friend. Deep friendships are built on shared interests - having some common ground. Best friends are the ones who not only share your interests but challenge you in meaningful ways. They sharpen your thinking, expand your interests, balance your weaknesses, and urge you to better character.

Respect – the foundation of relationships

Friendships require respect. One of the main ways we show respect is in how we talk about our friends when they are not around (**PROV 25:9-10**). Don't expect to keep friends if you talk about them behind their backs.

Where there is mutual respect, friends will listen to one another, show gratitude to one another, forgive one another, and remember things that are special to one another.

Don't forget that respect is shown by both actions and words. Respect, as well as disrespect, is magnified when shown in front of others.

Candor – being open and honest

As the church is to “speak the truth in love” in order that it may grow (**EPH 4:15**), so too should friends be open and honest with one another. It is important that friends accept this type of correction from one another. As Oscar Wilde said, “A true friend stabs you in the front.” Find friends who will be honest with you to help you be better. (**PROV 27:5-6**)

Flattery, while it might boost your ego, is a flimsy foundation for friendship (**PROV 28:23**).

Forgiveness – the key to long-lasting friendship

No friendship can last without forgiveness (**PROV 17:9**). Friends should be generous in extending the gift of forgiveness. Shakespeare wrote, “A friendly eye is slow to see small faults.” True friendship is too valuable to throw away over petty differences.



Other benefits of forgiveness. (*Mayo Clinic*)

1. Improved mental health
2. Less anxiety, stress and hostility
3. Lower blood pressure
4. Fewer symptoms of depression
5. A stronger immune system
6. Improved heart health
7. Improved self-esteem

Constancy – at all times

The heart of friendship is a constant love (**PROV 17:17**). The greatest test of love is sacrifice (**JOHN 15:13**). This was taught by the greatest friend, Jesus Christ, the friend of sinners, whose forgiveness never ends, whose love never fails.



DANIEL 3:1-30 – Faith in the Face of Fire



The Story

1. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – They were friends who shared faith in God, which led them through trials and triumphs.
2. Trials – By obeying God rather than the king, they would lose their prominent position as well as their lives.
3. Testimony – They demonstrated faith in the power of God to deliver them and in the will of God. Even if it was not God's will to deliver them, they would still not worship other gods.
4. Triumphs – They were saved in the fiery furnace and the king was led to bless the true God. They were promoted to even higher positions.



Some Observations

1. Power in numbers – The young men decided together to obey God instead of the king. Their mutual encouragement caused their faith to remain strong.
2. Similar trials today – If saving our popularity at school or position at work requires something illegal, unethical or immoral, will we obey God as they did?
3. Freedom – Their bonds were removed in the fire.
4. Fellowship – Trials can bring us closer to God. Remember, there was a fourth person in the fire!
5. Protection – The fire had no power over them, they did not even smell like smoke.
6. Influence – Demonstrated faith can cause others to see God and might just lead to their salvation.



Conclusions

1. Find friends who will share your faith in trials and in triumphs.
2. Faith in the face of fire can lead to greater things.
3. God can deliver me through any trial... Even if He doesn't, I will still worship and obey Him!

For the Senior Campers (Teens)

Between ages 13 and 18 you will be entering high school, driving, perhaps dating, and nearing graduation. Choosing your friends becomes a very critical part of your life during these years. You and your friends will have a bigger influence on one another's lives as you become more independent. Choose friends who love Christ, so that together your faith can grow and defeat the trials in life like our story in Daniel 3.

What about the people who are not following Christ? You need to be friendly to them and share Jesus with them. Until they obey the gospel, being close friends could be a danger to your eternal soul.

Realize the difference that you can make with Christian friends who draw strength from one another. Your shared faithfulness can bring about great things for the Kingdom of God (DAN 3:28-30).

For the Junior Campers (Pre-Teens)

You may not have much choice about whom you get to be around, but you do get to choose who your friends are. Be the kind of person people want as a friend. Choose friends you can trust, who will be an encouragement.

Don't be friends with someone just to gain popularity, and certainly don't associate with someone that would bring harm to you or others. Make friends with those who will be willing to stand in the way of that harm and be willing to do the same for them. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (JOHN 15:13). Jesus is the greatest friend of all. Try every day to be like Jesus and choose friends who are trying to be like Jesus.

Things to Think About – Lesson 2

What are some things that you can do for your friends that will increase their faith?

Which of the principles discussed do you need to work on to be a better friend?

In the friendship of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, what was the importance of the fourth friend that walked in the fire with them?

When you develop qualities that will make you the right kind of friend, how does it help in your family?

What do you like to do with your friends? What other things could you start doing together that will improve your friendship?

How did Jesus show friendship?

Lesson #3 - Wednesday

Choosing a Career

As you progress through elementary school, middle school and high school, you gain knowledge and skills which will help throughout your life in the career that you choose. There are principles in God's Word that not only help with the choices that we make regarding work, but also help us to be the best at whatever we choose.

Memory Verses: Colossians 3:22-24; Proverbs 16:3

Do Not Put Your Career Above God's Work

Though work is important, it is not the center of the Christian's life. Work should support our mission of serving God. Christians have a job that has nothing to do with the workplace (ECCLES 12:13). The kingdom of God is our primary occupation (MATT 6:31-33).

Christian men are commanded to provide for members of their households (1 TIM 5:8). Our careers should also support godly service, as seen in the example of the Macedonian brethren (2 COR 8:1-5). Notice that they gave *themselves first to the Lord* and then to others.



Paul's examples and teachings (2 THESS 3:6-13)

1. He was not idle – told others to imitate this (vs 7)
2. Paid for his food – even if it meant toiling night and day (vs 8)
3. Avoid the idle – those who will not work (vs 6)
4. The idle should repent and work (vs 11-12)
5. Don't grow weary – it is good when you work (vs 13)

Satisfaction and Enjoyment through Well Done Work

Servants of God can find some contentment by serving God, enjoying their family, being satisfied with the fruit of their labor, and doing work they enjoy (**ECCL 5:18-20**). There is nothing wrong with desiring a job that does not put you at the top of the corporate ladder. Success should be measured by your own goals toward accomplishing the job God wants you to do.

You should choose a career that will be enjoyable and will allow you to serve God. Wise people have said, "choose work that you enjoy, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

Let Your Light Shine in the Workplace

A mature person works when it's not fun, and when there is temptation to goof off. We are rewarded for work, not for laziness (**PROV 12:11**). Talking about work accomplishes nothing; doing the work has profit (**PROV 14:23**).

Your career is built with each job you have, no matter how different the work is compared to what you ultimately want to do. Flipping burgers, cleaning restrooms, sweeping floors, or stocking shelves are steps upon which you can build a successful career. Doing these jobs well helps you to build up to greater responsibilities and more pay. Christians should have a reputation for responsible and diligent work, doing our best at whatever we do (**ECCL 9:10**).

We should always give our best efforts even when working for and/or with difficult people. As our memory verse says: don't just work hard when the boss is watching but work as if Jesus were your boss (**COL 3:22-24**). It is doing the little work effectively that paves the way for you to be given greater work (**LUKE 19:16-19**). Ultimately our eyes are on our

heavenly Boss for true rewards and His eyes are on us watching our quality of work.

Challenges on Your Career Path

As you begin to make decisions about your career, you will find that advice may come from many people. While this usually means that they are wanting the best for you, it does not mean that their advice is the best thing to do. Investigate career paths for yourself and learn what you must do to succeed.



Is this good advice? (*maybe... maybe not!*)

1. "Back in my day..." – People may advise a career based on information that is outdated. Make sure that your investigation includes up-to-date information.
2. Whose dream is it? – Sometimes you may be driven to fulfill the dreams of your parents or other relatives. If it interests you, this could work out great, but don't be afraid to discuss your own career dreams with your parents.
3. "That career doesn't pay well" – Perhaps it doesn't, but if you can conform your life to live within that pay, then you will be successful.
4. "You would be good at this" – Just because you are good at something doesn't mean that you want to do it all the time.

Honor God with Your Work

You may choose to honor God by having a career that is directly connected to serving Him. You also can honor God in another career by giving your best and letting your light shine as you provide for your family. We are reminded in Proverbs to honor God with our possessions and our income (**PROV 3:9-10**).



ACTS 16:11-15; 25-40 – Two Careers in Philippi



The Stories

1. Lydia was a successful business woman as well as being very religious – A seller of purple, suggesting her wealth; a worshipper of God.
2. She heard the gospel and obeyed – Faith comes by hearing (**ROM 10:17**); she and her household were baptized.
3. The jailer asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” – Having already been saved from physical death, he questioned concerning a greater need.
4. He also was taught the gospel and obeyed – His obedience was shown through his repentance and baptism.



Some Observations

1. Religious people need saving – Throughout Acts, the gospel was proclaimed to religious people. It is not enough to be religious; we need Jesus Christ as our Savior!
2. Baptism occurred quickly – When Jesus was preached, baptism was preached and was done immediately.
3. They involved their entire households – Although they were both working people, they cared for and took care of their families.
4. The beginning of the church at Philippi – The church may have met in Lydia’s home (**ACTS 16:40**). They began immediately to put God first, ahead of their careers.



Conclusions

1. Both began to let their light shine – Lydia used what wealth she had to show hospitality to other Christians; the jailer began immediately to clean their wounds.
2. The jailer happily reported to Paul that they would be released.
3. Upon their release, Paul and Silas visited again with Lydia before they went on their way.
4. At the writing of Philippians, the church there had grown tremendously (**PHIL 1:1**).

For the Senior Campers (Teens)

Some of you already have a “real job,” and the rest of you will join the workforce soon. There may be pressure placed on you as you decide what type of work you will do. The things studied in this lesson should help in making these decisions.

Work hard in what you are doing now. Gain experience through part-time jobs, working for parents or grandparents, doing work at church, or doing other work as a volunteer. Many people today, both young and old, think they must be entertained all the time. Ridding yourself of that attitude will make your life happier and more rewarding.

As you decide your field of work, talk to adults at church in addition to your teachers and guidance counselors. The advice you can gain from the wisdom of older Christians is priceless as is the encouragement of people who want you to succeed.

For the Junior Campers (Pre-Teens)

You have great opportunities ahead of you that begin with what you are doing now. Approach your schoolwork and your chores at home with a good Christian attitude, and always do your best. Learn to serve by looking for things to do that will be a help and a blessing to others. These simple things will lead to great success in your life.

Inquire about different careers from your parents, teachers, and people at church. Be searching for the career that will make a good, happy life for you and will bring glory to God.

Things to Think About – Lesson 3

What are some things that all Christians can do in the kingdom of God, regardless of their occupation?

What are some things we should consider when we are deciding what type of career we will have?

What can we do at work to let our light shine for Jesus Christ?

Are there some jobs that a Christian should stay away from?

What are advantages of having Christians with diverse backgrounds and careers (like Lydia and the jailer)?

What careers are you considering, and have you given thought to how your career will help you to serve the Lord?

Lesson #4 - Thursday

Choosing Your Mate

The first choice when it comes to marrying is simply yes or no. Some will choose to remain single, as did Paul. Concerning “the present (or impending) distress”, he gave advantages and disadvantages to being single (1 COR 7). Our lesson is geared toward those who will choose to marry and will try to help them choose God’s way.

Memory Verses: Mark 10:6-9; Ephesians 5:25

Choose with Love

The love that God and Christ have for us is the kind of love God wants us to have for our mates (**EPH 5:25-28**). If you don’t marry a godly person, what is the chance you will be loved in this way? Love is the fruit of the Spirit, and the only ones who can love in this manner are people who have the Spirit of God living in them.



Love – as defined by God

1. Love is a matter of choice. – The Bible says we “put on” love in the same way we put on our clothes. (**COL 3:14**)
2. Love is a matter of conduct. – Love is a verb; it requires action and hard work. (**1 JOHN 3:18**)
3. Love is a matter of commitment. – We love our mates through better or worse. Our commitment is a mirror of God’s commitment to us. (**ROM 8:38-39**)
4. Love is a matter of covenant. – Covenant with your mate is as God’s in **HEB 13:5** “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

Choose with *P*atience

Patience is certainly a quality that is needed throughout a marriage by both partners. Patience is also a fruit of the Spirit that is beneficial to use as you choose your spouse. A lifelong commitment is not something to rush into. Working to make a good marriage begins well before the ceremony.

If you will continue to be a godly person, then the “right” godly person will come along for you (**GAL 6:9**). God knows how to make a person suitable for you, that will be your helper in His work (**GEN 2:18**).

When you find that person, patience is also helpful as you get to know one another. Studies of marriages (both in and out of the church) show that longer periods of dating lead to longer marriages. Knowing that your marriage is a lifetime commitment will help you to be patient.

Choose with *S*elf-Control

Another fruit of the Spirit which is vital in choosing a godly mate, is self-control. The sin of selfishness is one of the biggest problems in the world today. Self-control doesn't just happen; we must deliberately add it to our lives and work on developing it (**2 PET 1:5-8**). Selfish physical or emotional desires lead to poor choices. Dangers and difficulties will always come when we become lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (**2 TIM 3:1-5**).



What self-control does

1. Contributes to relationship fulfillment – You have a clear sense of relationship needs when desires are in control.
2. Makes you more self-assured – You are more comfortable in social situations if you can control what you say and do.
3. Makes you healthier – Monitoring your thoughts and actions keep both your relationships and your body healthier.
4. Earns the respect of others

Choose God's Plan (GENESIS 2:24)

Leave - a man shall leave his father and mother

There must be a severance of both husband and wife from their parents. This is not an abandonment. We know from other Scriptures that we must always honor them. The principle is this... *absolutely nothing on earth is to take precedence over your relationship with your spouse.* Marriage is the beginning of a new home.

Cleave - and be joined to his wife

The word "cleave" means "to cling or glue to something; to keep close to something and remain bonded to it." Marriage is a permanent bond made by God. In the eyes of God, cleaving means wholehearted commitment – spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical.

Weave - and the two shall become one flesh

A husband and wife are to weave themselves into each other's life, and that is a process – not an instantaneous event. This unity begins on their wedding day, and the process continues as they share the events of life – both good and bad – with each other.



Elements necessary for weaving two lives

1. A Vow – a covenant to cleave together as a team
2. Time – make room in your life for your mate
3. Hard Work – the hardest task you will ever attempt
4. Forgiveness – you will be hurt, disappointed, and offended by your spouse; commit now to granting forgiveness
5. Avoid Criticism – in football terms, "you don't tackle the guys who wear the same color uniform"; your spouse is your teammate
6. Prayer – with and for one another
7. Ministry Task – have a ministry where you are serving together
8. Fun – do things that are fun; laugh together; enjoy life

All marriages face times of breakdown, doubt, disillusionment, anger, distress and conflict; but they can still work! Don't be shocked when problems come along. Realize that success is not so much in finding the right mate as it is in being the right mate.



ACTS 18:18; 24-28; 1 COR 16:19 – *Partners*



The Story

1. Aquila and Priscilla – A married couple who met Paul in Corinth and travelled with him to Ephesus.
2. Paul lived and worked with them. – They shared the same occupation (tentmakers) and were always hospitable.
3. Taught Apollos more accurately – They took him aside to explain the way of the Lord, specifically concerning baptism.
4. Church in their house – They are mentioned in three of Paul's letters as they continued to work together for God.



Some Observations

1. Did what was needed – they learned the way of the Lord so that they would be able to teach others.
2. Went where they were needed – they had come to Corinth from Rome but went to Ephesus to do God's work.
3. Gave what was needed – their house was used for the church to meet; all the churches of the Gentiles were thankful for them (**ROMANS 16:3-5**).
4. Said what was needed – in such a way that Apollos accepted and learned from their knowledge.



Conclusions

1. A couple who each put God first and thus have the same purpose in life, become closer to one another through their common ministry.
2. Aquila and Priscilla helped to support both Paul and Apollos, thereby assisting in leading countless souls to the Lord. Their work is still having an effect today through Paul's letters in the New Testament.
3. Similar things can still happen today if couples will follow their example of making God the priority and having a shared ministry in the Lord's church.
4. A seemingly small ministry (helping a missionary or explaining God's Word) can do great things!

For the Senior Campers (Teens)

There are two equally important things at the top of the list for choosing the person you will marry. The first is for you to put God first and be the person that He wants you to be. Prepare yourself to be the husband or wife as described in God's Word. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second thing is to find a person that loves God and is trying to be the person God wants.

Physical attraction is natural and is, of course, a factor in whom you choose to date and eventually marry. DO NOT make physical attraction (or any other reason) more important than the love and obedience that both of you have toward God.

Some of you are in relationships that need to change, and it will be very difficult. Through God's Word and the help of good Christian friends, your relationships can be what they should be.

For the Junior Campers (Pre-Teens)

The most important thing that you can do for your future family is to put God first. Grow in the fruit of the Spirit and other good Christian qualities that we learn in the Word of God. Be a productive and supportive part of your family.

Very few families, if any, get everything right. If your family has problems, you are certainly not alone. God loves you and your family, even with the problems. God's Word has the solution. A good church family can help us to have better families and can help you through any difficult times that you may be having.

Things to Think About – Lesson 4

What are some advantages of staying single, and some advantages of being married?

What is the importance of the “fruit of the Spirit” (GAL 5:22-23) in choosing a mate and in living a married life?

In God’s plan (leaving and cleaving), what are some things that you can still gain from parents?

What are some things that a married couple should do together?

What were some good qualities that we see in the marriage of Aquila and Priscilla?

What are the most important things that you will be looking for in a mate?

Lesson #5 - Friday

Choosing a Location

Many things might affect where we choose to live. We may move to a certain city because of a job, or to a neighborhood because of a school, or for financial reasons. Choosing the place we live is an important decision as we will see in our Bible story. However, where we live is not as important as what we are doing there.

Memory Verses: Deuteronomy 11:8-9; Genesis 13:10-13

How Christians Should Live

The Bible gives many instructions on how we are to live as neighbors and citizens. Paul gave simple instructions on how we should live in this world (**1 THESS 4:11-12**). You always influence others – be an influence for good.



Paul's simple instructions

1. Live quietly – We should be humble, not loud and boisterous; be a person who is easy and fun to be around.
2. Mind your own business – If we are busy with our own things, we will not be busybodies in other people's things, as we are warned against in **2 THESS 3:11-12**.
3. Work with your hands – We should all work as we are able with the abilities the Lord has given us.
4. Walk properly towards outsiders – We should always be honest in our business with our Christian brethren and with those who are not Christians. This is a large part of our influence toward saving their souls.

Good Neighbors

Jesus teaches us to be kind and compassionate to everyone we meet, and in the story of the good Samaritan, He tells us how to be a good neighbor (Luke 10:25-37). The following suggestions are ways we should act toward those who live in our community.

Associate - be separate, but not isolated

Jesus gave us a living example of His teaching as He associated with the Samaritan woman at the well (**JOHN 4**). Withdrawing ourselves from those who have not heard the gospel is contrary to the will of God. We have many opportunities all around us for positive social contact, no matter if we are old or young.

Live in Peace - so far as it depends on you

Paul tells us in **1 COR 10:32-33** to be careful not to offend anyone. The reason he gives is for the benefit of our neighbors, so that they might be saved.

Show Hospitality - out of love and compassion

We shouldn't show kindness hoping to receive something in return other than growing closer and getting to know one another.

Use Time Well - good example at all times

Our speech with our neighbors should always be a good example of our Christianity. (**COL 4:5-6**)

Do Good Things - showing our example

We should not only do good things for our neighbors, but they should see that we do good for others as well (**MATT 5:16**). They should know that Christians are good and honorable people by seeing the things that we do.

All these things are done to convert people to Jesus Christ. We should always have this in mind whenever we interact with people in our everyday lives.

Duty as Citizens

It is written in **HEB 11:8-10** that Abraham, as he journeyed and lived in different lands, was looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. **VERSE 16** says that God has prepared that city. We too are looking for a city which is to come (**HEB 13:14**), promised by Jesus to those who overcome (**REV 3:12**).

Until the day that this permanent city has come, we are sojourners in this world as Abraham was. To sojourn means "to stay for a time in a place; live temporarily." While we are on earth, we are citizens who have duties given to us through the Word of God.

Obey Authority - be subject to rulers

For the most part, governing authorities are in place to punish those who do evil and reward those who do good (**1 PET 2:13-14**). We have a duty to obey their laws unless they conflict with God's law (**ACTS 5:27-29**).

Give Honor and Pay Taxes - all that is owed

We are to honor all, including those in government (**1 PET 2:17**). This means paying what is due (**ROM 13:6-7**) even when it seems too much.

Pray for Rulers - all who are in authority

We should pray that they will rule with wisdom and kindness. We should also pray for their souls, that they will believe in the Lord and be saved (**1 TIM 2:1-4**). We should pray with faith that our city, our nation, and the whole world be a better place.

Living in our community is a wonderful opportunity to be a positive influence on our friends and neighbors, and to be a blessing to our country. Christians are a valuable asset for any country in which they live, not only by their obedience and prayers, but by sharing the gospel to reach others for Jesus Christ.



GENESIS 13:1-13; 14:11-16; 19:1-38 – Lot



The Story

1. Lot was Abraham's nephew. – He journeyed with Abraham from their home in Haran.
2. Both became very wealthy. – Because of the combined wealth of Abraham and Lot, they were forced to separate.
3. Lot made some choices. – He chose the well-watered land of the Jordan Valley and then chose to live in Sodom, which was already known for its wickedness.
4. Lot suffered. – As a result of these choices, he experienced war, kidnapping, oppression and torment, loss of possessions, death of his wife, and shame from his daughters.



Some Observations

1. His choice of land seemed good. – The area that he chose looked like a good financial decision.
2. His choice was made quickly. – We are not told that he prayed to God about it, or that he consulted with Abraham or anyone else. God's Word and good advice from others are important in choices that we make.
3. Lot heeded God's word to flee. – We are never told that Lot stopped trusting in God. In fact we are told that he was a righteous man (**2 PET 2:7-8**). His problem was that he got too close to sinful things.



Conclusions

1. There are choices we will make that will affect us more than it appears that they will.
2. The right choice is more likely if we will consult God through prayer and Scripture, seek advice from mature Christians and remember that our first choice is Jesus!
3. When we realize we have made a wrong choice, there are some things we can do: follow God's Word, repent if sin is involved, resolve to serve the Lord, accept forgiveness, and live for the Lord.

For the Senior Campers (Teens)

We live in an area that is full of opportunities to do great things. Wherever you live throughout your life, strive to make a difference around you by your example and your deeds. Make choices in your life based on God's Word and the things you have studied in these lessons. I hope and pray that you choose to make Jesus first in your life. All other choices will be more likely to work out for the best if Jesus remains as your top priority.

Please continue to be a good example for those who are younger than you. As you get older, you will be helping others with their choices. Please see the great opportunities around you. Be a friend to those who need you and always be a servant of the Lord.

May God bless you and help you to make wise choices.

For the Junior Campers (Pre-Teens)

Being a good neighbor and a good citizen starts with honoring and obeying your parents, teachers, and other people in authority. Doing this brings honor and glory to God. Showing kindness and serving others is the way that Jesus taught us to be good neighbors.

As you begin making more choices in your life, always choose to follow Jesus, and allow God's Word to guide you in your decisions.

May God bless you and help you to make wise choices.

Things to Think About – Lesson 5

What are important things to consider when we are choosing where we will live?

What are some simple things we can do to make a good impression on our neighbors?

How can we be involved in our community to be a positive influence for Christ?

What are some things that can help us in making better choices?

What are specific things that we can pray about concerning the place where we live?

How can choosing Jesus first help us in some of the seemingly small choices that we make every day?