

10 MEN YOU SHOULD KNOW



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

ANSWER KEY

Cover artwork by Anthony W., Crossroads student

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LESSON 1—Lost and Found

1. Answers to this question will obviously vary. In general, most students will probably agree that the story is fairly realistic. A few, however, might wonder about a father who readily gives a rebellious son so much money. Others might have difficulty with a son who comes back to his father with a promise to be nothing more than a servant. Still others might not be comfortable with the concept of free grace. Be alert to the thinking that may lie behind an answer!
2. Most students will probably like the fact that a very foolish and sinful son could still find forgiveness. They will likely also be grateful that the son did not have to earn his father's love. There may be a few, however, who take the story too lightly and even see it as a reason for taking their sins very lightly. They may figure that they don't have to worry too much about how they live, since everything will turn out just fine in the end anyway. Try to pick up what may be going on in the mind of your students and respond accordingly.
3. Some students may be upset (appropriately) over the reaction of the older brother. A few might find that the father wasn't tough enough on his son. Since the son got off so easily, he might just go out and sin again. There may also be some who are concerned that the story itself doesn't tell *why* the father could forgive the son. There is no mention here of someone (Jesus Christ) who paid the penalty for his sin so that he might go free. If students do mention this, remind them that this is only a parable. Parables usually do not tell the "whole" story. This parable emphasizes the freedom and the richness of the father's love and the unwillingness of the older brother to accept it.
4. Interestingly, the Bible itself does not give us a title to the parable—so we should be open to some good suggestions. A few thoughtful students may wish to emphasize something other than the waywardness of the son. They might, for example, suggest that we should call this *The Parable of the Merciful Father*. Others might wish to call it *The Parable of the Older Brother*—or something very creative. Encourage the creativity, but don't let students miss the focus of the parable!
5. Many words could be used to describe the prodigal son. Among them are the following: foolish, sinful, lustful, proud, arrogant, disobedient, profligate, hedonistic, materialistic, repentant, humble, honest, etc. It should be interesting to see whether students emphasize the "bad" or the "good" in the prodigal's life.
6. The father was gracious, kind, loving, forgiving, generous, merciful, patient, good, etc. Students may well add some other positive adjectives of their own. A few students might also mention such negative things as gullible, tolerant, foolish, lenient, partial, unfair, unwise. Respond graciously to those who might see some negatives, but make sure they focus on the positive! Jesus surely did not intend to present the father here in a negative way!
7. The son was clearly responsible for his own foolishness and sins. It's possible, however, that some students might try to implicate the father as a participant in the son's foolishness because he did not correct him or refuse

to give him the money. If this should happen, emphasize that each one of us is fully responsible for the gifts God entrusts to us. We may never let God's generosity and kindness become an excuse for our folly and sin.

8. The son came back home because he was hungry and poor and had no place else to turn. He also came back because he believed that his father would be willing to receive him and give him a place to live.
9. SINNED WORTHY
10. He certainly was serious about it. It's true, of course, that he was looking for something to eat and a place to live, but he knew he had forfeited his privileges as a son and he wasn't about to argue that point. It might be well to remind students that God often uses difficult circumstances to bring people back to Himself. Many people have to hit bottom before they decide to look up!
11. COMPASSION BEST DEAD ALIVE LOST FOUND
12. Students' answers here may well tell you a lot about them. Be patient with those who would feel bitter or angry or jealous. Be sensitive to their answers and respond accordingly.
13. JEALOUS BITTER ANGRY DISGUSTED
14. No. It was not right—though it certainly was understandable. We would like to see him happy, grateful, delighted, and thankful. His brother was lost, after all. And his father *was* very kind. Besides, the day might come when he himself would need some of his father's kindness and love! He should be grateful that they are available!
15. a. Most of us would probably *not* give the money he asked for. In the first place, we are generally not as gracious and generous as our heavenly Father is. But secondly, we might feel that it was better not to give our son everything he asked for. It sometimes is wiser for us to withhold things from our children—especially from wayward children.

So why, then, did the father in the story give him the money? Because this is a parable! And the purpose of this parable is not to emphasize parental discipline but rather the generosity, compassion, love, and kindness of our Father in heaven. (We should not forget, of course, that the parable also emphasizes the improper response of the older brother. In fact, many feel that this latter emphasis is actually the main focus of the parable.)

- b. No. When parents have been reasonably consistent and faithful in bringing up their children to the best of their ability, they should never place blame on themselves for a child's failures. If they have been irresponsible or abusive or drastically inconsistent, their failures may well determine some dimensions of their

child's future. For that they must give account. Even then, however, each child continues to be fully responsible for their own attitudes and actions.

16. Yes. God *usually* lets us go our own way even when He knows the kind of trouble we are going to get into. He does that because He wants us to *willingly* love Him and trust Him and obey Him. He does not *force* us to do so. At the same time, we readily acknowledge that only God Himself can give us the kind of heart that *desires* to do His will. We also recognize that God often graciously keeps us from falling into sin and lovingly protects us from harm and mercifully rescues us from danger. Moreover, we know that many times it is only after we have fallen flat on our faces and ruined everything that we see our need for God.
17. Use your student's answer to this question as an opportunity to get an insight into where they are spiritually. If the answer is something other than what you would like to see, ask why they answered as they did.
18. God can and will forgive us only because His heavenly love sent Jesus into the world to pay the penalty for our sin. When Jesus died on the cross as the Lamb of God, He removed all barriers between the Father and those who put their trust in Him.
19. Each wandering sinner must humbly and sincerely repent of their sin, put their trust in the Lord Jesus as Savior, and begin to live a new life in the power of the Holy Spirit.
20. Rejoice with those who rejoice! Pray earnestly for those who are seeking to find their way back to their Father's house.

LESSON 2—The Enemy Inside

1. Most students will probably mention the story of David and Goliath, since we all like stories where a humble and obscure underdog defeats a haughty and seemingly invincible champion. Beyond this, students will probably choose different elements of the David story. Some may highlight David's humility, repentance and subsequent forgiveness.

Others may actually like the story of David's fall, since they will be able to identify more with his fall than with his victories. Be sensitive to their response. Try to understand what may lie behind unusual answers.

2. Some will probably be unhappy with the fact that David "got away with murder" when he arranged for the death of Bathsheba's husband. David was certainly punished for this, but he didn't lose his position as king and was never incarcerated for it. Look for other interesting responses and try to understand what may have motivated them.

3. B

4. Regrettably, "being saved" is not the same as being sinless. Prisoners, as well as the rest of us, must understand that those who are born again may still have to wrestle with all kinds of weaknesses and temptations. Our old sin nature is "put to death" in Christ when we are born again, but it is not totally eradicated. When we are careless or indifferent or weak, the old nature can temporarily take control over us and lead us into very serious sin. That's why the Bible repeatedly warns us to be on our guard against sinning—a warning which would not be necessary if believers were totally beyond the reach of sin.

5. The answer to Question 4 fits here also. Students might be referred to such passages as Colossians 3:3-10; Ephesians 4:22-31; Romans 6:11-14.

6. David must have known that the "enemy inside" is usually a person's strongest enemy. Even so, in his relaxed and idle state, David let down his guard, made no effort to defeat the enemy, and simply gave in without a fight. Perhaps he thought he was not subject to the same laws other people are—simply because he was a king. Maybe he felt that he was "entitled" to some forbidden pleasure because of all the fighting he had done in the past. For whatever reason, David deliberately chose to disobey God, willingly did what he knew was wrong, and did so without giving much thought to the consequences of his actions.

7. We certainly do. Basically the one "enemy" within each of us is the same—our old sin nature. However, that nature manifests itself in different ways in different people. Each of us has to contend with at least one specific weakness ("the sin that so easily entangles"—Hebrews 12:1) and, probably, with a number of weaknesses. Romans 7:7-20 describes the conflict which many believers understand all too well.

Some students may be very candid and specific in writing about their own “inside enemy,” while others may write in more general terms. Be especially sensitive to those students who trustingly share with you some of their deepest weaknesses and struggles.

8. Among the things which might be mentioned are the following.
 - a. He should have made a deliberate effort to walk away from the scene of temptation (Psalm 101:2-3; Proverbs 27:12).
 - b. He should have called on God to rescue him (Psalm 102:1-2).
 - c. He should have remembered that there is no temptation too strong to resist when God is with us (1 Corinthians 10:13; James 4:7-8).
 - d. He should have stopped to think about the consequences of his actions (Proverbs 2:16-22; Proverbs 6:20-33).
 - e. He should have sought the company and advice of others who could stay with him and counsel him during the heat of temptation (Proverbs 13:14; Proverbs 17:10; Proverbs 19:20).

It is important for us to have our ammunition ready *before* temptation strikes us in all its fury. If we don't, it may well be too late. Temptation has a way of shutting down our minds while intensifying our feelings.

9. C

10. He should have:
 - a. immediately confessed his sin both to God and to those most involved,
 - b. consulted with both Bathsheba and her husband as to what they should do, and
 - c. sought the help of one of God's prophets (such as Nathan).

Covering up our sins or making excuses for them usually leads us into deep and muddy waters and solves nothing.

11.

a.	DARK	DAY	LIGHT
b.	ALL	HIDDEN	SIN
c.	HIDDEN	UNCOVERED	ACCOUNT
d.	INIQUITIES	SECRET	PRESENCE

12. FALSE

13. Most people in the world who believe in God also believe that He knows all things. There is not a problem of knowledge but of obedience. That was David's problem, too. David not only had the five books of Moses which clearly taught about God, but he also had many years of personal fellowship with God. He even wrote some of the Bible's clearest teachings about God's omniscience (Psalm 139:1-12), though he may have written this later in his life. Without a doubt, David knew.

14. When we sin, we are usually being driven by our feelings or emotions rather than by our minds or intellect. It is not so much what we *know* at that moment, but how we *feel*. We deliberately choose to do what gives us pleasure or satisfaction while momentarily ignoring the consequences. Knowledge of God's will is surely important. However, the desire to *do* that will and the commitment to *obey* God's will are far more important than simply *knowing* His will.

15. B

16. As a holy and righteous God, God cannot let sin go unpunished. The sinner must either pay the penalty or have someone else (Jesus Christ) pay it for them. Among the many Scriptures which might be cited are Exodus 34:6-7; Numbers 14:18; Romans 6:23. Many students may present other Scriptures. If they do not, it would be well to share with them one or more of the three passages referred to here – or any other appropriate passages of your choosing.

17. A, C, F

NOTE: Some students might also select 'E' because of Psalm 51:5. If they do, remind them that David is not blaming his mother for his sin but simply stating that he, like everyone else, was born with a sinful human nature.

18. a. PROSPER
b. EVERY HIDDEN
c. DISCLOSED HIDDEN KNOWN
d. SILENT GROANING HEAVY STRENGTH

19. a. SIN CONFESS
b. SINNED TAKEN AWAY DIE
c. CONFESSES RENOUNCES MERCY

20. Answers will obviously vary. You may find it desirable to point out some or all of the following things if students do not mention them:

- a. It is important to be prepared to face temptation.
- b. Even the strongest Christian can fall into great sin unless they are continually walking with the Lord.
- c. God sees and knows all things.
- d. It is better to confess and forsake sin than to try to cover it up or hide it.
- e. God is gracious and merciful and willing to forgive our greatest sins.
- f. Even when God forgives our sins, those sins may still have serious and long-lasting consequences.

LESSON 3—God Meant It For Good

1. COURAGEOUS PATIENT KIND STRONG WISE

Some students may find that Joseph was *foolish* or *weak* for letting his brothers sell him as a slave and for letting his master's wife get away with what she did. If a student selects some words other than the five above, you may wish to ask why. It should be interesting to see what words of their own students offer. You may well get an insight into where they are coming from!

2. Joseph's brothers hated him because he was obviously a very favorite and spoiled son of his father. Also, Joseph gave his father a bad report (probably deserved!) concerning them. Later, his dreams made them hate him all the more (Genesis 37:8).
3. The Bible never gives us a "right" to hate anyone. So Joseph's brothers certainly had no right to hate him. However, they probably had a justifiable reason for not being very fond of him!

If your students think the brothers did have a right to hate Joseph, that could reflect the fact that they themselves hate some people—or are hated by others. If they have committed personal crimes of violence against others, it would be interesting to learn whether they feel their victims have a right to hate *them*!

4. This question is not so much looking for information as it is for "feelings." Since some students may themselves have seriously hurt others along the way, it will be revealing to see how they themselves (might have) felt when they learned about the great hurt they caused.
5. Joseph's master treated him kindly, put him in charge of his entire household, and entrusted to his care everything he owned.

6. YOU ARE HIS WIFE WICKED SIN

7. His courage and strength clearly came from God. It may also be worth noting, however, that Joseph must have had a solid upbringing—in spite of the fact that his father had several wives and that the sexual history of his extended family was certainly not exemplary.
8. 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 4:7-8, 1 John 4:4, and Hebrews 4:15-16 would all seem to indicate that every temptation can indeed be resisted with God's help.

9. A

10. GOD GOOD ENDURE

11. We should follow the example of Jesus. Jesus not only bore our sins on the cross in His own body, but He also did not retaliate when He was mistreated (verse 23).
12. God caused the prison warden to look with favor on Joseph. The warden put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners and made him responsible for everything that was done there. God gave Joseph success in whatever he did.
13. NO. Jesus, Peter, Paul, James and others all suffered for doing what was right without receiving any special “favors” for it. 1 Peter 2:19-22, 1 Peter 4:12-16, and 4:19 all make clear that believers may often have to suffer for doing what is right. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus pronounced those blessed who would suffer for Christ’s sake (Matthew 5:10-12). Paul reminded his converts in Acts 14:22 that *“We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”* He also wrote to Timothy that all who live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). This is the consistent message of the New Testament.

At the same time, we recognize that in His mercy and grace God often gives us far more than we deserve and that He does not always treat us as our sins deserve (Psalm 103:8-10). It certainly is not wrong, therefore, to ask and pray that God will give us His special blessing (and He often does!), though we should not expect it as a routine response to our “goodness.”

14. GOD WISE PALACE SUBMIT THRONE

15. On at least two separate occasions Joseph’s brothers bowed down to him with their faces to the ground—just as Joseph had dreamed.

16. ANGRY SELLING SAVE GOD PRESERVE
LIVES YOU GOD

17. Joseph’s brothers were *fully* accountable for what they had done. We are always accountable for what we do, no matter what circumstances (in the recent or more distant past) may have influenced us and no matter what plans our sovereign God may have made. See, for example, Acts 1:16-18 and Acts 2:23.

18. It appears most likely that Joseph’s brothers were not only afraid of what Joseph might do to them but that they were also sorry for what they had done. They acted with far greater sensitivity in regard to their brother Benjamin and the feelings of their father than they had twenty years before when Joseph was young. See Genesis 42:28; 42:37; 43:8-9; 44:18-34. They also still recognized their guilt for selling Joseph as a slave twenty years before (Genesis 42:21-22 and 44:16).

19. We can find full forgiveness from God only when we sincerely confess our sins and trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

20. The answers of students here will obviously vary. If students do not mention the following items (among others), you may wish to call them to their attention:
- a. It is possible to resist and overcome temptation.
 - b. We should continue to trust God even when our circumstances are difficult and life seems unfair.
 - c. We should believe that God is working out all things for our spiritual good, even when we may not be able to understand or explain what is happening in our lives.
 - d. We should leave personal revenge to the Lord and seek to return good for evil.
 - e. God is in sovereign control in this world, even when it seems that the forces of evil are dominant.
 - f. We should always seek to do what is right in God's sight, even if we may have to suffer for it.
 - g. God still moves "in mysterious ways His wonders to perform."

LESSON 4–The Slippery Slide

1. There is no simple or “right” answer here. Some students will select the words wise, strong, rich, and faithful. Others will select the opposites. The student’s choice will indicate whether they are thinking more about Solomon’s early years of blessing and service or his later years of disobedience and disgrace. The answer may therefore tell you more about the student than about Solomon!

2. WISE DISCERNING WEALTH (or RICHES) HONOR EQUAL

3. A

4. NO OTHER HEARTS OBEY COMMANDS

NOTE: Solomon reminded his people that there is only one true God. He also strongly urged them to obey the Lord’s commands with all their hearts. However, in later years Solomon himself forsook this one true God and personally failed to obey His commands. His failure emphasizes how important it is for us not only to know what is right but also to do it. And it also reminds us how important it is not only to begin well but also to end well.

5. A. A king should not have great numbers of horses for himself.
B. A king should not have many wives.
C. A king should not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.
D. A king should read the Law of God all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord and obey all His laws and decrees.

6. C

7. Many things cause people to wander from God. Among them are the following: love of money and things (materialism); excessive love of sports and pleasure; desire for worldly honor and fame; undue eagerness to be accepted by others; neglect of Scripture reading, worship and prayer; ungodly partners or friends; excessive busyness with earthly things – whether good things or bad; frustrations and disappointments; prolonged sickness; intellectual doubts; disillusionment with the church or church leaders; emotional problems; broken marriages or friendships; etc. You may come up with still other things. Students may too. Be alert to things which may have played an important role in their own lives or in the lives of those close to them.

8. A. TEMPTATION FOOLISH HARMFUL RUIN
B. MONEY EVIL WANDERED FAITH GRIEFS
C. TRULY (or TRUTH) HARD HEAVEN

9. Many students might wish to be become rich and famous for the following reasons:
- a. They may be poor now and may always have been so. It would be nice to be able to get the things they need—and want.
 - b. They may have always been regarded as a “nobody” and would like the opportunity to become “somebody.”
 - c. They may think that having money will keep them from the temptation to use drugs, steal, defraud, etc.
 - d. They may wish to help others in need—such as family, friends, the poor, etc.
 - e. They may wish to make a significant contribution to the work of the church or some other good organization.
 - f. They may just like to live in luxury for a while and do what the “rich and famous” do.

Some students might indicate that they would not like to become rich and famous for the following reasons:

- a. They may realize that riches and fame often produce as many problems as they solve.
- b. They may not wish to have the responsibilities that rich and famous people have.
- c. They may not be telling you what they really feel!

NOTE: There are many students who do not desire wealth or fame. If they did suddenly become wealthy, many of them would unquestionably use their wealth to benefit others rather than (or, as much as) themselves. On the other hand, there are some who might simply consider it more “godly” or “proper” to say that they do not desire wealth or fame—even though they do. The primary desire of these students is to make a good impression on their mentor! Encourage honest answers over “right” answers by modeling honesty in your own responses to the student.

10. To be productive and happy in our work is *wonderful!* Riches and possessions are a splendid gift of God when they are used in good and appropriate ways. Let us rejoice and be glad!
11. a. True
b. True
c. True
d. True

All of these are true if we seek lasting happiness apart from God. It is possible, of course, to have a “good time” without God—and many people do. However, some of the “good” times are temporary, superficial, and sooner or later end in sorrow or even tragedy. Moreover, we must never forget that someday all of us must give an account to God for everything we do (Ecclesiastes 11:8-9).

Do not be surprised if some students say they were a lot “happier” before they became Christians. They were more carefree then and “enjoyed” a lot of pleasures which they no longer pursue. Moreover, they now may at times suffer from rejection, loneliness, persecution, and grief. In some ways non-Christians do have an “easier” time of life when they live carefree, self-centered lives (see Psalm 73!).

It's important that students gain a long-range perspective and do not evaluate the Christian faith solely in terms of their passing feelings or present circumstances. On the other hand, they should never get the impression that God is against fun, joy, laughter, pleasure, recreation, and other good things and good times.

12. People often try to be happy by pursuing pleasure, wealth, honor, fame, and leisure. Each of these may take a different "form" depending on the individual. For example, some people may find pleasure primarily in drugs, sex, alcohol, or things that give a momentary high. Others may find their pleasure primarily in doing good for others, pursuing worthwhile goals, developing their talents, being creative, etc. *Many* things may help make a person feel "happy" if they are pursued in the right measure and in the right way. None of them, however, will give a person lasting happiness if they are pursued with the wrong motive, in the wrong way, or without God.
13. Temporary happiness is a response to passing, positive, pleasant circumstances. It primarily involves the feelings. It certainly is not necessarily "wrong." However, it does not last when the pleasant circumstances change. Moreover, it is often self-centered. True joy (as we understand it from a Christian perspective) involves the total person (more than just the emotions); it does not depend on circumstances; it is not self-centered; it has a "spiritual" dimension—one which relates directly or indirectly to the things of God.
14. A. DELIGHT HUMBLE REJOICE JOY
B. LIFE JOY ETERNAL
C. KEEP (or OBEY) LOVE JOY COMPLETE
15. Solomon surely must have known that he had drifted away from God, since his entire lifestyle was very different from the one he pursued when he was young. In earlier days he had taught many others about the importance of obedience, the dangers of riches, and the power of deception. He worshiped faithfully and joyfully at the temple. His writings in Ecclesiastes also indicate that he realized that his pursuit of life without God was a meaningless failure.
16. One could make a case for the greater danger of either the gradual drift or the definite decision. The gradual drift is dangerous because the drifter often does not even realize how far they have moved from the place where they started. In many cases, they never made a clear and definite decision against God but simply drifted by neglect. They may possibly be rescued when they see what has happened in their life.

The person who has made a definite decision not to serve God may possibly have been influenced by a single incident or situation or problem. If this problem can be resolved, the person may be willing to come back to the Lord. On the other hand, if they have carefully thought through the decision not to follow the Lord, the situation is one of grave danger.

Be sensitive to your student's response. The answer may give you a hint of what has happened in their life so that you will be able to respond more meaningfully.

17. Wake-up calls come in many forms: severe sickness, economic loss, accident, loss of loved ones, loss of a job or friend, or any kind of tragedy. Calls can also come through being challenged by others, sermons, radio messages, music, or in a number of other ways. Sometimes people are awakened by seeing the positive joy of others—even when their circumstances are not externally pleasant. It should be interesting to see how your students look upon the wake-up call. Be sure they realize that calls from God may come in unexpected ways and not simply in ways that they might anticipate.
18. The Bible doesn't clearly answer this question for us. Give thoughtful attention to your student's response. It may tell you as much about them as it does about Solomon.
19. We may not be *willing* to change, since we are enjoying the pleasures of sin too much. We may not think it is *desirable* to change, since a change would be too disruptive for us or our families. We may not think it is *necessary* to change, since life seems to be going along without too many problems. We may not think it is *possible* to change, since we have lived in sin too long. In every case, as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:4, the god of this world is blinding our minds.
20. Look forward to your student's response and then prayerfully respond to whatever they share with you. Each student will respond differently. Please be sensitive to any issues that may arise and respond appropriately. Talk to your pastor if you need additional advice, or feel free to call the Crossroads office.

LESSON 5—One Moment of Weakness

1. RAZOR GOD

2. B

3. It is quite likely that Samson was always far stronger than most people. However, as the four passages indicate, it was especially when the Spirit of God came upon him that he was able to perform those extraordinary feats of strength. It should also be noted, however, that the Bible doesn't always say that the Spirit of God came on Samson when he showed unusual strength. In chapter 16, for example, we never read about the Holy Spirit.

4. C

5. Samson killed one thousand Philistines with nothing more than the jawbone of a donkey—and, of course, the power of God (Judges 15:14).

6. C

7. Each of the Philistines promised Delilah eleven hundred shekels (about twenty-eight pounds) of silver. We don't know how many Philistines there were, but it certainly was a lot of money. (Note that the Philistines brought the silver to Delilah's house even before Samson had his hair cut. See Judges 16:18. They knew that Samson was almost in their hands.)

8. NO. Samson first played his own games with Delilah. He did this three times.

9. The Bible doesn't tell us. However, we may surmise that at this point Samson was still aware of his special relationship to God—and he didn't want to lose it. However, Judges 16:20 seems to indicate that he was at a point where he thought he wouldn't really lose his strength if his hair was cut. Further, the fact that Samson always seemed to play fast and loose with Philistine women (Judges 14:1-3; 16:1; and 16:4) is an indication that he wasn't as committed to the ways of the Lord as he should have been.

10. Samson likely gave in to Delilah because of his passionate lust for her. She must have seemed like too good a prize for him to lose. Besides, she must have been a supremely effective temptress. Even if she promised "not to tell anyone" what Samson told her, he should have known better after the first three times when she did tell. It's hard at this point to make any excuses for Samson. He acted very stupidly, no matter how you look at it.

11. God could easily have kept Samson from falling into Delilah's trap. He sometimes does that kind of thing for His people—something for which we all are very grateful. Usually, however, God does not just reach out and rescue us from temptation whether we want to be rescued or not! This is particularly true when we enter temp-

tation with our eyes wide open—as Samson did and David did and the Prodigal Son did. God usually lets us make our choices and then face the consequences. We should not forget, however, that God is willing to rescue those who sincerely desire to find a way out of temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).

12. At one point Delilah may well have had strong, positive feelings toward Samson. It is doubtful, however, whether she ever truly loved him. If she had, she would not have sold her love for a barrel full of silver. (Do you ever wonder how Delilah felt when Samson was treated so cruelly by the Philistines?)

True love looks out for the lover’s interests as well as his/her own. True love is not based primarily on feelings. True love is ready and willing to sacrifice for the lover. It is most likely that Samson and Delilah both wanted for themselves whatever they could get from the other person. They were more interested in getting than in giving.

13. THE LORD HAD LEFT HIM

14. B

15. The Philistines were led to believe that their idols were stronger than Samson’s God. Samson’s failure thus brought the name of God into dishonor and disrepute.

16. REMEMBER STRENGTHEN TWO EYES

17. T

18. Of course there are. We probably all have examples of our own that we could point to. Your students could likely come up with some very interesting stories if they wished to do so. Be particularly sensitive to any stories of personal failure which they may share with you. Be sure to remind them that foolishness and failure and sin are not the final words for God’s children!

19. Each student will likely find something to like—or to dislike. They may like the stories of Samson’s great strength, courage, and victories. They may also be glad to learn (again) that some of God’s chosen leaders could fall into such foolish and sinful ways. At the same time, the failures of these leaders may be a great disappointment to them. Many of them are eager to be free from failure and foolishness and sin, and they want models to follow—not models to avoid!

20. The following statements are TRUE: B, C, D, F, H, J

LESSON 6—Don't Throw Away the Key

1. King Hezekiah was one of the best kings Judah ever had. There was no king like him. He never failed to follow the Lord and always obeyed His commands. He was successful in everything he did because the Lord was with him.
2. Manasseh rebuilt the altars of the pagan gods, worshiped the sun, moon, and stars, bowed down to idols, sacrificed his own children in the fire, practiced sorcery and divination, consulted mediums and spirits, placed idols in the temple of the Lord, filled the city of Jerusalem with innocent blood, and led God's people astray.
3. Students' answers to this question may reveal something about their own experiences. Many people in prison have had one or more godly parents. Many also learned about the Christian faith in church or Sunday School. Why did *they* go astray? They may well project some elements of their own experience onto Manasseh.

The Bible doesn't tell us why Manasseh went astray, so we cannot say for sure what happened. His father may possibly have neglected him (as Eli and Samuel neglected the training of their sons). His father may not have disciplined him (as David failed to discipline his own children). His friends may have influenced him negatively (as friends often do). He may have been spoiled by his father (since he apparently was born after God told Hezekiah he was going to die). Or he may simply have rebelled against his father precisely because his father was a highly respected, God-fearing person—and Manasseh may have wanted to make a name for himself in his own way.

4. B It is highly doubtful that Manasseh ever fully lost his knowledge of right and wrong. It's true that he didn't care any more, but it doesn't seem that he unknowingly got on a slippery slope like Solomon did. He was arrogant, defiant, deliberate, and intentional in his sinning. Later, when he was in prison, he remembered all the evil he had done—and he knew that it *was* evil.
5. GLORIFIED THANKS DARKENED
6. There may be several reasons for that. We point out three of those possible reasons here, while recognizing that others may add good reasons of their own:
 - a. God has given us a mind to understand His commands and a will that can choose to obey or disobey them. God can (and sometimes does) change our wills, but more often He doesn't. He usually lets us do what we choose to do.
 - b. God wants us to see how terrible and how powerful sin is. If He would continually stop us from sinning, we might not shrink from it or flee from it or fear it as we should.
 - c. God sometimes lets people go because He knows they will never feel a need for Him in their lives until they reach a place where they can find no other way out. They may then turn to God. This low point often

comes when a person is in prison and has to face the reality of what brought them there. It can also come when a person has hit bottom through alcohol abuse or drug abuse, or through some other kind of sinful behavior.

7. They took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon.
8. C
9. Students will present a variety of answers to this question. Each answer, however, should include at least some of the following elements. To be humble before God is:
 - a. To recognize God's holiness and our own sinfulness
 - b. To acknowledge our pride, independence, and arrogance
 - c. To acknowledge that we are unworthy of God's favor and forgiveness
 - d. To confess that we have failed to be all that God wants us to be or enables us to be
 - e. To acknowledge that we have often misused God's blessings and taken advantage of His kindness
 - f. To admit that we can do nothing on our own to merit anything from God or make ourselves right with Him
10. Manasseh certainly was sorry for all the evil he had done. We know this primarily from the way God answered his prayer. If his prayer had not been genuine or sincere, God certainly would not have answered him the way He did.
11. A
12. PERISH REPENTANCE
13. Manasseh was a totally changed person. He got rid of the foreign gods (idols) in the land and removed the image he himself had set up in the temple of the Lord. He also destroyed or tore down the altars he had built for various foreign gods. He restored the altar of the Lord, sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings, and told Judah to serve the LORD their God.
14. A
15. Students who did not expect the story to turn out well may still be thinking of what happened to Solomon. Or they may be thinking of many people they know personally who lived and died in unbelief and sin. Besides, Manasseh was so terribly evil that they might think that there could be no hope for such an evil person. Others may have expected the story to turn out well because they have personally experienced God's grace themselves. Some may have seen God's grace do wonderful things in the lives of others. It should be interesting to read your students' responses.

16. God would certainly be pleased to hear their prayers of repentance! Students have just read 2 Peter 3:9 where we read that the Lord does not want anyone to perish. Moreover, Isaiah 53:6 tells us that God has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all. And even aside from these two passages, most Crossroads students have learned that God delights in showing mercy. He is an incredibly gracious God. If students pray with the same humility and sincerity that Manasseh did, God will surely forgive them. He may not, however, release them from prison. Nor will He necessarily restore them to some position they had before they came into prison. God graciously forgives, but He does not always interfere with the consequences of our sin. Remember David!
17. Look for some interesting responses to this question. Be sensitive to students' answers. Do not quickly jump on any students who believe that God has not been patient with them. At the same time, it may be important to point out to them that God does not (in this life) treat any of us as our sins deserve (see Psalm 103:9-10; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Romans 6:23, etc.). The very fact that He still gives us life, breath, food, drink, shelter, clothing, etc., is an indication of His mercy. We deserve nothing from Him; everything we have is a gift of His grace. God is patient!
18. Some students might not be sufficiently aware that our lives could have been much, much worse if God had not graciously kept us from going even deeper into sin. We may have thought of doing many things which, in fact, we did not do. We might even have desired to do violence to someone, but circumstances (God!) kept us from doing so. Be patient with those who don't (yet) see how God has been merciful to us – but do remind them of it!

It's quite possible that a number of students will express some deep regret over something they have done. Some may simply be sorry for the mess they got themselves into, but others will genuinely regret having sinned against God – and others. Be gracious to any student who shares their heart with you!

19. Revelation 21:8 says that sinners who are not saved will ultimately find their place in the fiery lake of burning sulfur, the second death.

NOTE: There is no mention in this verse of repentance and forgiveness. The assumption is that the sinners mentioned here are those who did not repent, did not seek God, and did not believe in Christ. Make sure that no student believes that there is no chance of forgiveness for murderers, the immoral, liars, etc. – even if they repent and trust in Christ!

20. May you read many accounts of changed lives through God's wondrous grace! And may you be given wisdom to know how to respond to those who indicate that they have not yet accepted Christ's invitation or sought His mercy.

LESSON 7—Forever Faithful

1. The one word we look for here is **FAITHFUL**. However, some students might choose such words as wise, courageous, important, powerful, or even cool (or its equivalent). The word chosen by the student will likely tell you more about the student than about Daniel!

2. A

3. Daniel and his friends were without physical defect, handsome, intelligent, knowledgeable, good learners, and well-qualified to serve in the king's palace. Daniel could also interpret visions and dreams. The king found Daniel and his friends to be ten times better in matters of wisdom and understanding than all his magicians and enchanters. Some students might also note that they were from the royal family and the nobility (Daniel 1:3).

NOTE: Students need not write out all of these things, but they should clearly understand that Daniel and his friends were exceptionally gifted people.

4. FALSE

5. Students' answers will likely give you an insight into how they approach moral and ethical questions. This may serve as a springboard for your own response to them.

It's important for them to recognize that God has established some absolutes in regard to human behavior. Some things, such as adultery, murder, idolatry, etc., are always wrong. Circumstances don't change that.

Moreover, if we willfully and knowingly live contrary to what we believe is God's will, we sin—even if we may be wrong in our understanding of what God's will is. This, too, is an absolute. See Romans 14:19-23, especially verse 23.

We should also recognize that there are certain laws which were not intended to be absolute or universal. Laws concerning the eating of certain foods fall in this category. See Acts 10:9-15; Colossians 2:16-17; 20-22; Romans 14:1-3. However, since Daniel and his friends believed that God did not want them to eat the food and drink the wine offered them by the Babylonians, it was important for them *not* to eat and drink. They would have sinned if they had done so.

6. The wise men could not interpret the king's dream because the king couldn't tell them what the dream was. Daniel could interpret the dream because God told him both what the dream was and what it meant.

7. COURAGEOUS FAITHFUL WISE STRONG TRUSTING

8. God would certainly not have been pleased if they had bowed down to the idol. In God's eyes, idolatry is never negotiable. See Exodus 20:3-5. Faithfulness and obedience in vital matters of right and wrong are far more important to God than whether we live or die. They should be more important to us, too!

Moreover, God would not have received the glory and honor which He did later receive because of the young men's obedience. And the young men themselves would have missed out on the blessing of seeing God's special love and concern for them.

Their obedience led to the glory of God, the strengthening of their own faith, and the possible "conversion" of some of the Babylonians. Their weak and willful disobedience would have led at best to a temporary saving of their lives. See Daniel 3:28.

9. God is never pleased with willful disobedience. He is even more displeased when we are willing to dishonor Him just so that we may escape some discomfort or embarrassment or personal pain.
10. They said that the God whom they served was able to save them even if they were thrown into the blazing furnace. They also said that they were confident that He would somehow rescue them from the king's hand. But even if He chose not to rescue them, they would still not serve the king's gods or worship the golden idol he had set up.

NOTE: This was an extremely courageous thing for these young men to say. They were captives of the mightiest king in the universe at that time and had absolutely no way to get around the king's order. They demonstrated beyond doubt how strongly they trusted in their God to do what was best and right. Again, see Daniel 3:28-29.

11. They all died from the extreme heat and flames of the blazing furnace.
12. The king
- a. praised the God of Daniel's friends,
 - b. praised the friends themselves for their courage and trust in their God, and
 - c. decreed that anyone who said anything against their God should be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble.
13. It would not be surprising if Nebuchadnezzar was somewhat afraid of this miracle-working God of Daniel's friends. However, he almost certainly was sincere in what he said about God's wisdom, power, and might. Moreover, it is most probable that Nebuchadnezzar really believed that the God of Daniel and his friends was a more wonderful God than any other he had ever heard of. See Daniel 3:23-26 and 4:2-3.

If your students are suspicious of the king's motives, it may reflect their own experience with people who made some kind of public commitment to God without being sincere about it. In a few instances it may also reflect insincerity in a commitment they themselves made at one time or another.

14. He praised and glorified God who lives forever. He said that God's dominion is eternal and that His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All people are regarded as nothing in His sight. God does as He pleases and no one can stop Him or challenge Him. Everything God does is right and just. He is able to humble those who walk in pride.
15. How could the king say and do such contradictory things?
 - a. He was brought up as a pagan and lived his early years without a knowledge of the true God.
 - b. He said wonderful things about God later in his life after he had personally witnessed God's wisdom and power in action.
 - c. Even long-time believers continue to wrestle with sin and evil in their lives and therefore do not always live consistent lives of trust and obedience.

NOTE: The purpose of this question is threefold:

- a. to encourage students to look at their own lives and their own motives as well as those of others;
- b. to help them focus on the importance of consistency in their lives; and
- c. to help them recognize that people can and do change and should not be judged solely on the basis of past weaknesses and failures.

Do not leave students with the idea that their failures aren't so serious because others fall, too. Rather, encourage them to be faithful, diligent, and consistent, because temptations to sin can be sudden, enticing, and powerful.

16. Some men were apparently jealous of Daniel and his success. The king was about to promote Daniel to a position over the entire kingdom—and that bothered them greatly.
17. Daniel did what he always did—he prayed to God on his knees with his face toward Jerusalem.
18. Daniel would not have sinned if he had temporarily prayed in secret. However, if he had done that, much more harm than good would likely have resulted from it.
 - a. He would have lost the opportunity to demonstrate his trust in the God to whom he prayed so faithfully.
 - b. He would likely have given his enemies a good reason to try to trip him up later.
 - c. God would not have been glorified through Daniel's secrecy as He was through Daniel's openness.
 - d. Daniel's enemies would likely not have been destroyed but would have lived on to do other harmful and negative things.
 - e. Daniel himself may not have prospered as he now did because of his faithfulness and courage (Daniel 6:28).
19. King Darius decreed that in every part of his kingdom, people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. He praised Daniel's God with a marvelous tribute to His uniqueness and greatness. In verses 26 and 27 we read, *"He is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth."*

20. Students are likely to respond with a variety of answers. They should list at least some of the following—as well as other things of their own choosing:
- a. God often rewards the faithfulness of His people already in this life.
 - b. It is important for us to be faithful to God even if He chooses not to reward us for our faithfulness in this life.
 - c. Our faithfulness may bring glory to God even if it does change our earthly circumstances.
 - d. Non-believers may be brought to an awareness of the majesty and greatness of God through our faithfulness.
 - e. God often works out His purposes in marvelous and mysterious ways.
 - f. God can use and often does use “unlikely people” to proclaim to others the glory of His name.
 - g. God will always be faithful to His promises to us, even though our lives may take unexpected turns or go in unplanned or undesired ways.

LESSON 8—The End of the Beginning

Introductory Notes: The following material is provided for mentors who may wish to know a bit more about the historical setting at the time Jehoiachin lived.

- A. King Jehoiachin (as we refer to him in the story and in these notes) was known by three different names in the Bible: Coniah, Jehoiachin, and Jeconiah or Jechoniah. Though a number of people in the Bible had two different names, having three names was very unusual.
- B. In this story we have used the word “Israel” as a general term to refer to God’s chosen people. Technically speaking, Jehoiachin was king over the smaller kingdom of Judah and not over the ten tribes of Israel. The ten tribes no longer existed as a separate kingdom at the time Jehoiachin lived.
- C. When King Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive, he took many others captive, too. (Daniel and his friends had already been taken captive about eight or nine years before.) He also took many treasures from the temple and from the royal palace, even though he did not actually destroy and burn Jerusalem until the time of King Zedekiah. See 2 Kings 24:8-17.
- D. For a brief description of the fall of Jerusalem and the reasons for that fall, read 2 Chronicles 36:15-21.
- E. King Jehoiachin was the last king in David’s line who was a *direct ancestor* of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:11-12). King Zedekiah, Jehoiachin’s uncle and the last king over Judah, was also in the line of David, but he was not in the line of Christ.
- F. In Matthew 1:11 Josiah is listed as Jehoiachin’s father. Actually, Josiah was Jehoiachin’s grandfather. The Jews often used the word “father” to refer to someone’s more distant ancestors as well as to a biological father. Note, for example, that there are three names omitted between Joram and Uzziah in Matthew 1:8.

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS

- 1. Jehoiachin was not only wicked (2 Kings 24:9), he apparently was also rebellious. We gather that from the fact that God spoke so negatively of him in Jeremiah 22:24-30. In addition, Jehoiachin was probably spoiled (as son of a king), immature, and self-centered. He seemed to have more than one wife and a number of children by the time he was eighteen. See the reference to “children” in Jeremiah 22:28 and the reference to “wives” in 2 Kings 24:15.
- 2. We have already looked at the list of Manasseh’s sins in an earlier lesson. These sins included idolatry, sorcery, mass killings, and child sacrifice—as well as others. In Jeremiah 22:17 we read also of dishonesty, oppression, extortion and the shedding of innocent blood.
- 3. NO. We never have an excuse for our sins. There may be *reasons* why Jehoiachin slid so easily into sin, but reasons are not excuses. It might also be noted that Jehoiachin’s grandfather, Josiah, was a very godly king—and he began to rule when he was only eight! If Jehoiachin was looking for a positive role model, he didn’t have to look very far.

- | | | | | |
|----|---------------|------------|-------|------------|
| 4. | COMPASSIONATE | GRACIOUS | ANGER | LOVE |
| | FAITHFULNESS | WICKEDNESS | SIN | UNPUNISHED |

5. God showed His justice by punishing Jehoiachin, the royal family, and the people of Israel. Jehoiachin was taken into captivity and never returned to his country or served again as king over God's people.
6. God showed His mercy by prompting the Babylonian king to release Jehoiachin from prison and to give him many undeserved favors.
7. C. We know Jehoiachin's punishment was right because it was the punishment God Himself gave him. Besides, Jehoiachin had forfeited any claim to a lighter punishment because of his own sins and the sins of his ancestors. However, if the punishment had been heavier and Jehoiachin had died in prison, the people would not have seen the mercy of God demonstrated in Jehoiachin's release. Moreover, the history of the Davidic kings would then have ended in hopelessness and despair rather than in promise and hope.
8. No. This shows clearly, though implicitly, that God's mercy and grace are not dependent on what we do. God's grace cannot be merited or earned in any way.
9. God can forgive us only because someone else (Jesus Christ) has already paid the penalty for our sins. Jesus came to earth so that he might take our sins upon Himself and die in our place (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). When we express genuine sorrow for our sins and put our trust in Jesus, God forgives our sins because of what Jesus has done for us.

In Old Testament times, God forgave the sins of those who repented and put their trust in God's mercy—even though these sins were left "unpunished" (Romans 3:25). That is, no adequate sacrifice or payment had yet been made to cover those sins. God could do this because in His own sovereign and eternal plan, the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, was already slain from the creation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

10. "Grace" may be defined in various ways. We would define it simply as "the unearned favor of God to sinners." *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Thomas Nelson: 1995) puts it this way—grace is "favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that person deserves."

Some people explain God's "mercy" and "grace" this way: because of God's *mercy* we do not get what we deserve. Because of His *grace* we get what we do not deserve.

11. People in the Old Testament were saved in exactly the same way people in the New Testament were—by grace through faith. No one in either the Old Testament or New Testament could be saved in any other way. See, for example, Galatians 3:6-11; 3:16-18; Romans 4:1-8.

12. It is most probable that Jehoiachin repented of his sins while in captivity – just as Manasseh had done many years before. If he had not done so, God would almost certainly not have released him from captivity and given him (through the Babylonian king) those unusual, unexpected, and undeserved blessings. See 2 Kings 24:3-4.
13. FALSE. Throughout history many believers have died in prison. Many more are likely to do so in the future. God promises to be with us *in* our trials and suffering, but He does not promise to release us *from* all of them in this life. Those who are in prison – justly or unjustly – should not expect that they will automatically be freed simply because they have repented of their wrongdoings and have believed in Jesus. At the same time, we joyfully recognize that God, in His grace, does still sometimes “set the prisoner free” – no matter what they have done or what their sentence is. (However, this question asks what the student thinks, so as long as a reason is given for the answer, there is no need to mark the student incorrect.)
14. YES! A glorious yes! Many people seem to think they are too bad to be forgiven, but, thankfully, that is not true. Everyone who sincerely repents of their sins and turns to Christ in sincere faith will be forgiven. The Bible clearly teaches that, and millions of people throughout history have experienced it.
15. C
16. A person must base their assurance of forgiveness on what the Bible teaches rather than on what they feel or claim to feel. In order to have biblically-based assurance, a person must do four things:
- recognize, acknowledge, and humbly confess their sins
 - sincerely repent of those sins, being sorry that they have broken God’s law, offended His holiness, and (most likely) hurt someone else; sincerely desire and resolve to turn away from sin and not to repeat it
 - place total and sole trust for forgiveness in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice
 - begin to demonstrate the spiritual fruits of repentance
17. The seriousness of our sins should not be gauged by the fact that God forgives them, but rather by how much it cost God to make forgiveness possible. When one considers the fact that God came to earth as a man in the person of Jesus Christ, that He lived a perfect life in spite of facing enormous temptations, that He was rejected and temporarily forsaken both by God and human beings, that He suffered a horrible death on the cross to pay for our sins, and that He was raised again from the dead in an extraordinary demonstration of divine power – then one begins to see and understand the seriousness and significance of our sins.
18. It’s true. The fact that God removes the guilt of our sins from us does not mean that we will automatically be free from all the psychological or emotional consequences of what we have done. Nor should we be! In many cases we will personally see or hear of the terrible hurts that our sins have brought into the lives of others. We may well live with regret over that as long as we live. However, it’s important for us to open our minds and hearts to the mercy of God so that we will also be able to rejoice in our forgiveness and experience the peace and joy that come from being a member of the family of God.

19. Among the things which are mentioned in this passage are the following:
- a. Put off your old, corrupt, deceitful self
 - b. Be made new in the attitude of your minds
 - c. Put on the new self
 - d. Put off falsehood and speak truthfully
 - e. In your anger do not sin
 - f. Do not let the sun go down while you live with unresolved anger
 - g. Do not give the devil a foothold
 - h. Do not steal any longer
 - i. Do something useful so you may be able to give to those in need
 - j. Do not use any unwholesome language
 - k. Use your language to build others up and be of help to them
 - l. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit
 - m. Get rid of bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice
 - n. Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving

It should be interesting to see which items in this list students choose. Their selection may help you understand the moral issues they are particularly concerned about or wrestling with.

20. Each student may have learned something different. Some will have found old truths that stand out in a new way. Others may have learned something they had never seen or noticed or thought of before. Respond appreciatively to everything positive that a student writes. At the same time, make sure no student has missed any of the following truths:
- a. God is truly a God of supreme justice. Sins will be punished—sooner or later, in one way or another, as God sees fit for the carrying out of His divine purposes.
 - b. God is truly a God of great patience. Over the span of many years He had repeatedly foretold the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of His people. He gave His people every possible opportunity to repent and change. He actually held off the threatened punishment for hundreds of years.
 - c. There comes a time when God's great patience reaches an end. It's terribly dangerous to try to play games with Him or to take advantage of His mercy and grace.
 - d. God is incredibly merciful. God Himself had condemned Jehoiachin in the strongest of terms. He had nothing good to say about him. But thirty-six years later, God mercifully released him from prison and let him enjoy a life of blessing and peace.
 - e. God's promises will never fail. Though there may be "interruptions" in the carrying out of His eternal plan, neither demons nor human beings will be able to thwart His sovereign purpose. He is the eternal Lord of heaven and earth.

LESSON 9—Eyes that See

1. It is possible to emphasize either the negative qualities of Paul or the more positive ones. On the positive side, Paul was diligent, intelligent, zealous, well-educated, obedient to the law (at least, externally so), God-fearing, faithful to his heritage, consistent.

On the negative side, Paul was self-righteous, Pharisaical, intolerant, boastful, proud, unloving, merciless, and spiritually blind.

We generally tend to emphasize the more negative qualities of Paul. It should be interesting to see whether your students do the same. Their answers may tell you something about how they view themselves—or others.

2. Paul describes himself as a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent man. He further refers to himself as the worst of sinners.

Was he serious? He probably was. Not only had he been responsible for the suffering and death of many innocent people, but he also tried to get others to blaspheme the name of God. Moreover, he had used the best of his energies to oppose the gospel of Jesus Christ and the coming of His kingdom. Though he acted “in ignorance,” he felt that he had opposed the work of God more strongly and effectively than anyone else. And he did it all while being confident that he was a very righteous person—and that God was pleased with what he was doing!

It should also be noted, however, that Paul was not so much comparing himself with others at this point as he was pointing out the seriousness of his own sins. And even more than that, he was emphasizing that no sinner, no matter how great their sins, is beyond the reach of God’s grace and forgiveness.

3. Paul was extreme in his hatred of Christians. He participated in the stoning death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr; he hounded the Christians who worshiped in the Jewish synagogues; he tried to force believers to blaspheme; he traveled to foreign cities to persecute believers wherever he could find them; he approved of the death penalty for some of those who were given a trial; and he directly persecuted a number of believers to their deaths.

4. YES YES NO

As a Pharisee, Paul sincerely wanted to honor and serve God and do what pleased Him. His own post-conversion writings clearly indicate that. However, God does not “grade” us on the basis of sincerity or good motives. His requirements for obedience, trust, and repentance are totally independent of our own evaluation or understanding of them. See, for example, Leviticus 5:17. At the same time, there are passages in Scripture which indicate that God does also deal with people to a certain extent on the basis of their knowledge and their motives. See, for example, Paul’s statement in 1 Timothy 1:13-14 that “*I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.*” See also Luke 12:48.

5. Yes, Paul had a clear conscience. As a strict Pharisee, he never knowingly or intentionally violated any of God's commands. Regrettably, in his early days Paul did not understand God's requirement that we should serve Him with a pure and undivided heart and not simply with external obedience. He scored very highly on the latter scale (external obedience) but very poorly on the former (a pure and undivided heart).
6. According to Acts 9:2 and Acts 22:5, Paul was planning to find the Christians there — both men and women — and drag them off to prison in Jerusalem.
7. It's hard to describe how Paul must have felt. We know that he was so deeply affected that he could neither eat nor drink for three days. It would not seem inappropriate, therefore, to use such words as amazed, dumbfounded, conscience-stricken, humbled, perplexed, confused, bewildered, and overwhelmed. He could at first not imagine that Jesus was alive, living in heaven, all-knowing, all-powerful, and interested in what Paul was doing. He must also have been overwhelmed at the thought that he was persecuting Jesus Himself when he was persecuting those who believed in Him. It must have been incredibly difficult to learn that the things he believed with all his heart and pursued with all his might were totally and utterly false.
8. Ananias clearly knew what Paul had been doing and why he had come to Damascus. He, as well as the other Christians in Damascus, must have been very afraid of Paul. They certainly did not wish him well! They saw no reason whatsoever why any of the believers should treat him with kindness or help him carry out his wicked purposes.
9. Jesus told Ananias that Paul was His chosen instrument to carry His name before both Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. He also told him how much Paul would suffer for His name.
10. Ananias probably had mixed feelings. Earlier, he could not have dreamed of calling Paul a brother. It is not likely that he ever even dreamed that Paul would become a fellow believer, one with him in Christ. At the same time, Ananias must have been thrilled at the fact that the church's greatest enemy was about to become one of its greatest promoters. So when he called him brother, it must have been done with a sense of gratitude, joy, and intense anticipation.

Paul must have felt both thrilled and humbled to know that Ananias accepted him as a fellow believer. Although he may not have known Ananias by name, he probably knew that Ananias was one of the Christians he was planning to put in prison in Jerusalem.

11. Paul got up and was baptized. He then ate and was strengthened. (Remember, he hadn't eaten for three days!) It may not be appropriate to emphasize that Paul was baptized before he even ate, but it does certainly seem that the spiritual took precedence over the physical at this point in Paul's life. Throughout his life from this point on, Paul always had his priorities straight!

12. Instead of persecuting the Christians, Paul began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. He also powerfully proved to the Jews there that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Christ. Earlier that would have been absolutely unthinkable to him.
13. The people in Damascus, especially the Jews, were both suspicious and amazed. There had never before been such a sudden and dramatic conversion of any of those who had fiercely opposed the church. After some days, Paul apparently convinced many of them that he was sincere in what he was saying. As a result, the Jews, formerly Paul's allies, planned to kill him—just as he himself had earlier arranged for the deaths of many others who trusted in Jesus.
14. NO. The ones who opposed Paul when he first started preaching were the same ones who continued to oppose him for years—namely, the Jews. Besides, Paul was living in the fresh newness of the blessing of the Holy Spirit and was therefore very powerful in his presentation. It's important for new believers to witness "while the fire burns." As Paul himself wrote many years later, "Do not quench the Spirit." As a general rule, it is desirable for new believers to share their faith with someone else as soon as possible. Their testimony will not only be a blessing to others but it will also serve to strengthen their own faith. It will also make subsequent witnessing easier, since they have "already done it."
15. A self-righteous person is one who believes that their life is pleasing to God and that they therefore do not need to repent or be forgiven. Also, because they feel themselves to be morally superior to others, they tend to look down on others while applauding their own behavior. They are usually proud of their alleged obedience and superiority and feel that they do not need the help of either God or other people in regard to their spiritual state or condition.
16. Jesus told Ananias that Paul would suffer many things on account of His name. Paul's life after his conversion was one of immense struggle, intense suffering, extensive persecution, persistent opposition—and wonderful blessing. Paul is still considered by many to be the greatest missionary the world has ever seen. Not only was he very successful as a traveling evangelist, but he also was used by God to bless the worldwide church with many sacred and inspired writings which have been translated into hundreds of languages around the world.
17. Paul answers that question very strongly in Philippians 3:8—*"I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."* And as far as his personal sufferings were concerned, he wrote in Romans 8:18, *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."* Paul never regretted for a moment his decision to follow Christ—even though it cost him everything he had.
18. Paul recognized that all his earlier activities of outward obedience and careful observance of the law were of absolutely no value for his salvation. He looked upon all of them as of no more value than garbage—to be thrown out as utterly worthless. For someone who spent his early years as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, zealous

for the law, extremely careful in external obedience, living with a clear conscience—this was a statement of tremendous significance. As he himself wrote, if there ever was a possible way of being saved by obeying the law—he would have attained it (Philippians 3:4-6). If Paul couldn't do it, nobody could!

19. Generally speaking, those who are self-righteous see no need for a Savior and consequently neither seek Him nor find Him. Obviously, there are many exceptions to that—and Paul is probably the greatest and most wonderful example. However, Scripture clearly seems to present the self-righteous as being in the greatest danger. Jesus Himself said that He did not come to call the “righteous” but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:31-32). He also focused His ministry on reaching those in greatest spiritual need—earning for Himself the scorn and rebuke of those who did not approve of His eating and drinking with “sinners.” The Bible has many stories of people who repented after falling into great sin but few stories of the conversion of the self-righteous.
20. Some students will possibly select some of the passages referred to in the lesson. Not only are these ready at hand, but they are clearly among believers' favorite Scriptures. Some students might surprise you, however, with the texts they select. Be appreciative and positive as some students reach deep into their hearts to share their favorite texts with you.

LESSON 10–The King from Heaven

1. GREAT SON MOST HIGH DAVID
FOREVER END
2. Yes. Isaiah clearly foretold in Isaiah 7:14 that *“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”* (This is the same child who is spoken of in Isaiah 9:6 where He is called *“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”* Concerning this child, Isaiah 9:7 says, *“Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom...forever.”*)
3. The baby was to be called *Jesus* because He was going to save His people from their sins. The name *Jesus* means *“Savior.”* (*Jesus* is the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew name *Joshua* or *Jehoshua*, which means *“Jehovah is salvation”* or *“the Lord is salvation.”*)
4. Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem to be registered in the hometown of their ancestor David (just as all other descendants of David’s family did). While they were there for the registration, the time came for *Jesus* to be born.
5. There may have been several reasons, though all of these are somewhat conjectural, since the Bible never tells us.
 - a. The shepherds may have been watching over the sheep that were going to be used in the temple sacrifices in Jerusalem. It was appropriate, therefore, that God directed them to the true Lamb of God.
 - b. *Jesus* considered Himself a shepherd of His people (John 10:12-18) but never served as a leader or ruler of the people of His day. He could identify with the shepherds, therefore, more than with the rulers.
 - c. For the most part, the leaders and rulers rejected *Jesus* as their Savior and King, whereas the *“common people”* gladly listened to Him and followed Him.
 - d. God did not want the people to misunderstand the true role that *Jesus* was going to play as a king. If the earthly rulers knew early on that *Jesus* was the King from Heaven, they might have tried to *“groom”* Him to be the kind of king they wanted Him to be.
6. B. (A and C are also true, but they do not adequately answer the question.)
7. *Jesus* meant that His Kingdom was not to be like other kingdoms with geographical boundaries, earthly goals, earthly organization, and earthly glory. His Kingdom would fundamentally be a matter of ruling over the hearts and minds and lives of His followers. He Himself was a servant and He expected His *“royal subjects”* to be servants also. Those who served Him as King would clearly demonstrate their loyalty to Him by serving and obeying Him in this world, but they would not do so for personal gain or glory.
8. The disciples clearly did not understand *Jesus* in the beginning. Consequently, they desired to have places of honor in His Kingdom and frequently argued about which of them would be the greatest [in *Jesus’* Kingdom].

They did not understand how Jesus could suffer and die or be rejected by the leaders. Even after Jesus' resurrection, the disciples still did not fully understand what Jesus' Kingdom was all about. It was not until after the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost that they really began to understand what Jesus had tried to teach them. [For additional references, see Mark 9:32-34; Luke 9:46-48; Luke 22:24-26; John 12:16; John 16:18; Acts 1:6.]

9. Jesus demonstrated that the Kingdom of God had come both through the messages He brought and through the life that He lived—a life of holiness, compassion, and power. He spoke often about the Kingdom of God—both in parables and in His other messages—and described how a citizen of that Kingdom should live. His parables demonstrated that His Kingdom was present and powerful, but not yet present in all of its fullness. He continually stressed the importance of a relationship to God based on faith, repentance and obedience. He taught the true meaning and purpose of God's Law and indicated that He fulfilled both the Law and the prophets. He performed mighty miracles of Kingdom power and publicly forgave the sins of repentant sinners. He brought the blessings of joy, love, peace, and victory over sin—all vital dimensions of life in the Kingdom of God. Finally, He won a mighty victory over sin and death and hell through His death on the cross and His subsequent resurrection (Colossians 2:15).

You should not expect each student to include all these elements in their answer. However, in some way or other they should recognize that the Kingdom came both in word and in deed as Jesus established His rule in the hearts and lives of those who trusted and obeyed Him.

10. The Jews were looking for an earthly king who would defeat their earthly enemies and rule in earthly glory. They did not understand that the King from Heaven was primarily concerned about a spiritual Kingdom of righteousness, holiness, and peace with God. Their concern with the temporary, political, and material blinded them to the presence and potential of the spiritual Kingdom of eternal values that Jesus came to establish.
11. Though people today do not have the same aspirations as the Jews of Jesus' day, they also often have a compelling or overriding interest in things material, present, and pleasing. Many of them have a "this world" mindset and are but little interested in the true values of the Kingdom of God. As 2 Corinthians 4:4 indicates, *"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ."*
12. Rulers and kings usually expect to be served by their subjects (Luke 22:25). Those who are ruled are even expected to be willing to give their lives for the sake of their King. King Jesus, however, came for the specific purpose of laying down His own life for the sake of His people (John 10:15-18). If He did not do so, there would be no kingdom at all. The values in His Kingdom would be the opposite of most of those in worldly kingdoms. Greatness would come through service. The first would be last, and the last would be first.

Jesus showed His great love for His people by laying down His life for them (John 15:13). He also gave His disciples an example of humble, selfless service when He washed their feet. This act of service was intended to serve as a model or example for those who would follow Him (John 13:12-17). The example is important for all

of us, but was particularly important for Jesus' disciples who were always looking for positions and places of honor and glory. If they were someday to take up positions of authority in Jesus' Kingdom, they would first have to learn the measure of true greatness.

13. Aramaic was the language spoken by most of the Jews living in Israel at that time. Latin was the official language of the Romans—including, thus, those in authority in Israel. Greek was the language of culture, commerce, and scholarship. Almost everyone who was in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' death could read or understand at least one of these three languages. Since Jesus was King of kings and Lord of lords, it was appropriate that everyone, no matter of what place, background, or circumstance, should know who Jesus was.
14. God forgives the sins of people in the Old Testament because of their faith. God could forgive the sins of people in Old Testament times only because of the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ which would later take place. Without His substitutionary death for sinners, there could never be forgiveness for anyone. See Hebrews 9:12-14; Acts 4:12; John 14:6.
15.
 - a. *"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*
 - b. *"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."*
 - c. The criminal's faith was without parallel. He was the only one to recognize Jesus as King when it seemed that Jesus had failed in His purpose and had been unable to complete His mission. He alone recognized and acknowledged that Jesus' Kingdom was not of this earth. He alone saw that death would not mark the end of Jesus' mission but that it would be the gateway into a new dimension of the Kingdom He came to establish. His faith was truly remarkable.
16. Jesus said, *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*
17. After His ascension, Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. He was given a position far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion in the entire universe. God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church.
18. Answers here, as well as in questions 19 and 20, will probably vary considerably. Among the things which might possibly be mentioned here are the following: Christ's lordship gives us hope, courage, comfort, confidence, joy, and humility. It enables us to face trials with patience, hardships with perseverance, successes with humility, and triumphs with gratitude. Also, it enables us to face obstacles with courage, challenges with confidence, disappointments with equanimity, and problems with hope. Further, Christ's universal lordship should create within us an eagerness to share the gospel with everyone we can, since we know (a) that He is worthy of all praise and (b) that His eternal Kingdom will be glorious beyond imagination.
19. Others should be able to tell that Jesus is our Lord in many ways. Among them will be the following: we should be people of joy, graciousness, compassion, obedience, love, patience, gentleness, faithfulness, holiness, kind-

ness and humility, with a willingness to serve and an eagerness to share the message of Christ with anyone who is willing to listen. Or, more simply: we should be like Jesus Himself.

20. Your students' answers here will in most instances be interesting, enlightening, and encouraging. It is not very likely that students will have come this far in their studies without making a commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives. You may wish to write down some of their statements for your own inspiration—and for the inspiration of others. Do remember, however, to keep confidential that which should not be shared with others. Rejoice!



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