

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song: Ephesians 5:1-2

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God's People Grow to Be More Like Jesus

When someone when turns away from their sins and trusts in Jesus as their Savior, they become one of God's people. Not only does God forgive their sins, but He puts His Holy Spirit in their heart to live.

The Holy Spirit works powerfully inside of God's people. He gives them wisdom and helps them understand God's Word. He helps them want to love and please God. He helps them continue to turn away from their old ways of living. He helps them to grow more like Jesus in how they think, speak and act. He is their Helper, their Comforter, their Guide, who will always be with them, at work on the inside.

None of God's people will ever be perfect here on earth. But God, by the power of His Holy Spirit, is growing them, is transforming them bit by bit, for their good and His glory. This is how God helps them to live for Him on earth and prepares them to live with Him in heaven one day.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: 2 Corinthians 3:18

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

CASE STORY

The Book of Philemon

Our story is called:

The Case of the Sneak-Away Slave.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was the Sneak-Away Slave? Why did he sneak away?
2. What happened that caused him to go back?

Our story today takes place during New Testament times, about 30 years after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

Tired and dusty, Philemon arrived in Ephesus. Philemon was a rich man from Colossae, an important city on the Lycus River and in the shadow of great Mt. Cadmus. He had traveled 120 miles up the trade route to the even bigger city of Ephesus to do business. What exactly Philemon planned to sell in Ephesus, we don't know. It might have been wool or purple cloth, since Colossae was famous for these. But whatever it was Philemon had come to Ephesus to get a little richer from selling on that trip, he certainly went home far richer than he could have imagined and from something far different and totally unexpected. From Paul, he came to know what true riches were.

Paul had come to Ephesus to share about Jesus. Every day Paul preached in the Hall of Tyrannus and it was probably here that Philemon heard the gospel. "All people are sinners who deserve God's eternal punishment for their sin," Paul would have said. "But God in His great mercy, sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross as complete payment for the sins of all who would ever repent and turn and trust in Him. Come, repent, come, believe!" he urged the listening crowd.

The Holy Spirit was at work in Philemon as Paul preached. He gave him the gifts of repentance and faith. Here were true riches! To know God and to be forgiven from his sins. Philemon was a new person, with the Holy Spirit living in his heart.

But that was only the beginning of the changes to happen to Philemon. The Holy Spirit was at work, helping him live more like Jesus. Now Philemon wanted to tell others about Jesus and help them live like Jesus, too. When he returned back home to Colossae, he told his wife, Apphia, and his son, Archippus, about Jesus and they became Christians, too. He told many others about Jesus and before long, a whole little church of believers

met each week at Philemon's villa. How happy Philemon and this little church was! Here were true riches! Knowing God and having the Holy Spirit at work in each of their hearts!

And the more the Holy Spirit worked, the more all these believers lived like Jesus-- especially Philemon. He became well-known for his great faith in God and his love for all of God's people. Word even reached Paul, far, far away, about the amazing work of the Holy Spirit in Philemon's life.

But even despite all these wonderful things that were happening, not everyone was happy at Philemon's. A man named Onesimus, in particular was very unhappy. The big reason Onesimus was unhappy was he was a slave. In case you don't know, a slave is a person that is bought by another person and forced to work for them for no money. A few people were slaves by choice. But most slaves were forced to become slaves when the Romans defeated them in war. During Onesimus' time, the Romans bought and sold about 500,000 new slaves a year.

Like many slaves, Onesimus wanted his freedom, but it cost a lot of money and few could ever afford it. And besides, he didn't want to wait year to save up enough money. He wanted his freedom now! He was so unhappy and he didn't do his work well. Onesimus means 'useful' in his language, but 'useless' would be a better name for him.

Onesimus decided to take things into his own hands. "I am tired of this life as a slave! I am going to runaway!" thought Onesimus. And that was just what he did.

"Philemon, Onesimus is missing...and so is some of your money. Sir, I think he's run away," one of the others soon reported.

"Go after him. Try to find him!" Philemon replied.

But Onesimus was nowhere to be found. Onesimus ran and hid. On and on he went, always on the lookout. He knew the penalties for runaway slaves! Perhaps his master had changed and was known far and wide for his love for God and others. Perhaps the Holy Spirit was transforming his heart; but, according to Roman laws, masters had to severely punish their runaway slaves-- even put them to death! Onesimus would take no chances. Onesimus would take no chances. No, there would be no catching him!

Onesimus traveled 1200 miles through the mountains of Turkey, Greece and Italy, until he reached Rome. This was a huge city. He could hide easily here. But even there,

Onesimus never felt free. He was a hunted man. There was always a chance that someone might find out he was a runaway slave and arrest him. "I can't go back, but I can't keep living like this!" Onesimus thought. "How can I get out of this terrible situation?"

Onesimus didn't know the answer, but the Lord did. The Lord loved Onesimus and all along had a plan for rescuing him using the same man who had shared the good news of Jesus with Philemon, his master--the apostle Paul!

Like Onesimus, Paul wasn't in Rome as a free man. He had been arrested in Jerusalem and sent to Rome to face trial. He was being carefully guarded by Roman soldiers but had been allowed to live in a little house instead of in a prison cell.

When Onesimus heard that Paul was in Rome, he got an idea: "I will go to Paul and ask him for help. Perhaps there is something he can do for me."

Onesimus went to Paul and said, "Sir, my name is Onesimus. I am Philemon's runaway slave. You helped him. Perhaps you can help me, too?"

Paul listened to Onesimus' story. "I believe I can help you, but perhaps in a different way than you were thinking. Your real problem is much bigger than being a runaway slave. Your real problem is your sin. You need to repent of your sins. You need to believe in Jesus as your Savior," Paul told him. "In Him you will find true freedom you really are looking for."

The Holy Spirit was at work in Onesimus' heart as he heard about Jesus. He repented of his sins and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. Now it was Onesimus who was a changed man. He was free at last from the worst kind of slavery in his life: the slavery of sin.

The Holy Spirit began to work the same kind of changes He had worked in Philemon's heart. Now Onesimus began to love God. Now he wanted to live a different life. He wanted to live like Jesus did. Onesimus began to live up to his name "useful." He stayed in Rome and served Paul every way he could, and Paul taught him more about Jesus. Soon Paul loved Onesimus as if he were his very own son.

But as the Holy Spirit worked in his heart, it became clear to Onesimus that he had wronged his master. He knew he must go home and take whatever punishment he deserved. That was what would please God. Paul agreed that this was what Onesimus must do, even though it might be very hard and he might face great punishment.

"I've written a letter to Philemon so that he can understand everything that has happened to you, Onesimus. I've told him that I will pay him back for anything that you took from his house and have asked him to set you free," Paul said. "I am sending Tychus to go with you on your journey, to carry this letter and give it to Philemon. I will be praying for you. But Onesimus, remember that whether Philemon releases you or not, you are always to live for God for you do not just serve an earthly master, but God who is in heaven."

They said goodbye, then Onesimus was on his way.

We don't completely know what happened when Onesimus went home, but surely the Holy Spirit was at work in each man's heart. Some say that Philemon freed Onesimus and that Onesimus went on to become the pastor of the church in Ephesus. It was there, when told to choose to stop following Jesus or die, that Onesimus chose death. He could never turn away from His Savior who had died on the cross to bring him true freedom--freedom from sin.

Our Bible Truth is:

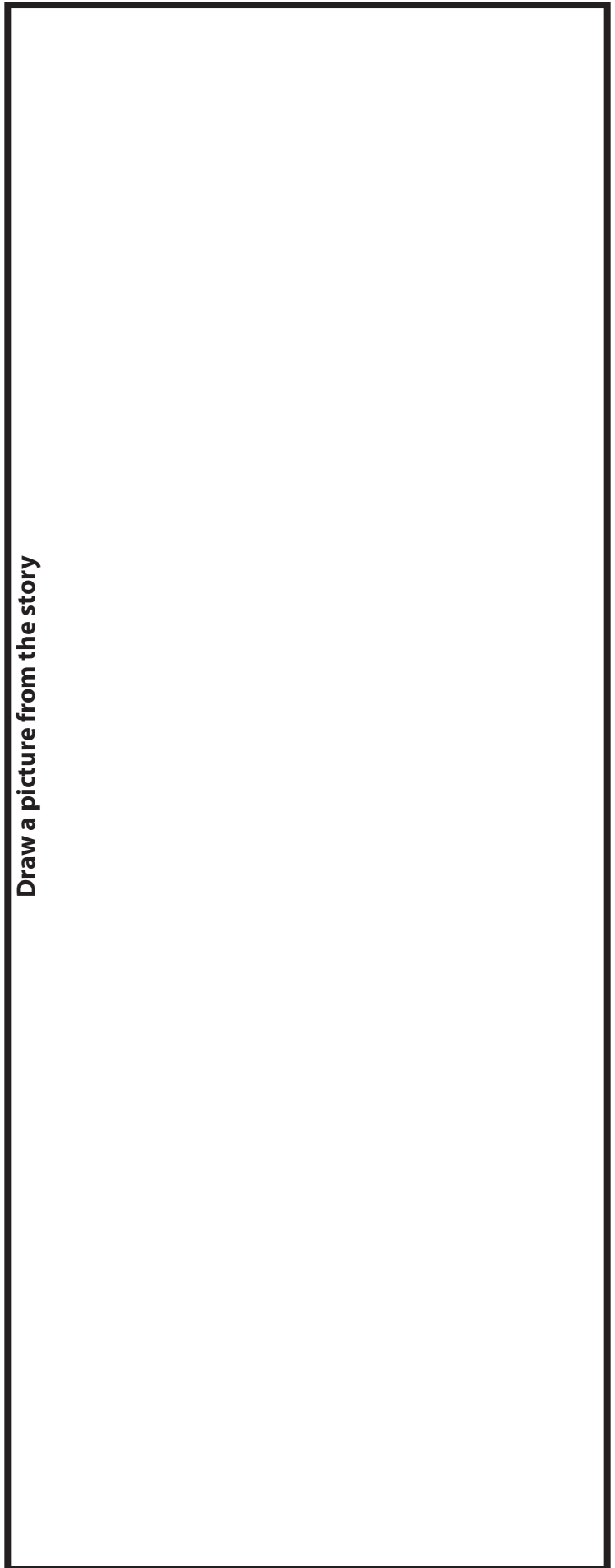
God's People Grow to Be More Like Jesus

Our Bible Verse is: 2 Corinthians 3:18

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

What about us? Can the Holy Spirit do this kind of work in us? Yes, He can! If we confess and turn away from our sinful lives and trust in Jesus for forgiveness, the Holy Spirit will cleanse our hearts. Then He will begin to transform our hearts so that we will love Him and live for Him more and more. Let's praise this God who does not just save His people, but who keeps working in their hearts by the Holy Spirit; and let's ask Him to do that work in us so that we will become more and more like Him.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, we become one of God’s people. God forgive our sins and He puts His Holy Spirit in our heart to live. Answer: True!</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. Who was Sneak-Away Slave? Why did he sneak away? Answer: Onesimus. He did not want to be a slave.</p> <p>b. What happened that caused him to go back? Answer: Paul shared the gospel with him and he became a Christian. He went back home because as he grew as a Christian, he knew this was the right thing to do.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: 2 Corinthians 3:18 “And we all, with unveiled ____, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same ____ from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the ____ who is the Spirit.” Answers: face; image Lord.</p>	<p>The Church’s One Foundation <i>PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 7</i></p> <p>Verse 1 The Church’s one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord; She is His new creation, By Spirit and the Word: From heav’n He came and sought her To be His holy bride, With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.</p> <p>Words: Samuel J. Stone Music: Samuel S. Wesley</p> <p>Church is the Bible word for all of God’s people. Jesus Christ is the Church’s foundation because He is the only one who could save His people. Without Him, no one could ever be forgiven their sins and come to know God. He bought all of God’s people by paying for their sins with His own blood when He died on the cross. The Holy Spirit works in each of God’s people, helping them turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior when they hear God’s Word. He gives them a new heart that knows and loves God and want to serve Him. One day the whole Church will be together with Jesus. The Church will be like His bride whom He loves and delights in forever. And how the Church will love Jesus! Like a bride loves her new husband, but far, far more!</p>
AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY	BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the Freer of People from their slavery to sin.</p> <p>C God, we confess that like Onesimus and Philemon we are sinners. Like Onesimus, we want to live life our own way and are willing to do things the wrong way to get what we want. Like Philemon, we think a lot about the good, rich things we enjoy more than You. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You that Your forgiveness is so great that even the worst of sinners can be forgiven by You. Thank You for working out Your good plans to save Your people, even when they least expect it.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to change our hearts so that we love You and live to please You with our lives, more and more.</p>	<p>We All with Unveiled Face <i>PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 8</i></p> <p>We all with unveiled face, Beholding the glory of the Lord, Are being transformed, Into the same image, From one degree of glory to another, For this comes from the Lord, The Lord, who is the Spirit. For this comes from the Lord, The Lord, who is the Spirit. The Lord, who is the Spirit. Second Corinthians Three, eighteen.</p> <p>Words: 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011</p> <p>Long ago, Moses met with the LORD and sometimes would actually glow with God’s glory. Sometimes he would wear a veil that would cover up God’s glory when he was with the people. Moses’ face may have sometimes shown with God’s glory, but God’s people have His Holy Spirit inside them. God doesn’t want them to hide His glory--they are not to veil His work in their lives, but show it to all. The Holy Spirit works inside them and transform them. He helps them to love God and live holy lives that reflect Him.</p>