

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 14:
God's People Delight in God's Glory**

God's people know there is no one as great as God is. They know how great His love has been for them by giving up His own Son, Jesus, to pay for their sins. They know how perfectly wise His plans are for them and all of creation. They know how mighty is His power to do His will and to care for them. They know how satisfying is His Spirit's fellowship in their hearts. More than anything else, God's people desire for these wonderful ways of God to be known and celebrated by everyone. So they talk about Him and His wonderful ways with other believers. They tell people who aren't believers about Him so that they might join in knowing and celebrating Him, too. They want to live in ways that show how great God is, knowing this is how they can glorify Him with their lives. They do all these things because they delight in God's glory.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 14 Bible Verse: Psalm 66:1-3,5,8,16 ESV

"Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!...Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.... Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard... Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul."

CASE STORY

Acts 6-7

Our story is: The Case of the Slandered Servant.

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

- 1. Who was the Slandered Servant and why were they spreading lies about him?**
- 2. How did glorify God even though he was slandered?**

This story takes place in New Testament times, not long after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

An old widow slowly made her way down the streets of Jerusalem to the place where the Christians gathered. With no husband or children to care for her needs, she had no one to take care of her. If she hadn't become a Christian, she could have gone to the Temple and received help from the Jews. But ever since she had become a believer in Jesus, she had lost their help. No. She would be out on the streets begging for bread or for money if it weren't for the generosity of the other believers. They gave money to provide food each day for this widow and many others.

The church appointed seven men--Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas--as deacons to take care of the needs of these widows. Each day, with gentleness and kindness, these man bought food and served it to these widows. All seven of these men loved God and glorified Him with their lives, but Stephen stood out above them all.

Taking care of the needs of those widows was a huge job, but Stephen did a lot more than just that. Stephen loved to share the good news of Jesus. He wanted more and more people to praise God and give him glory because of Jesus. So Stephen went to the Jewish synagogues, as well as out into the streets, and shared the gospel with all who would listen.

God worked powerfully through Stephen. He helped him boldly tell about Jesus and He did amazing miracles through Stephen, too, as proof that Jesus really was the Savior. Many people listened, saw what God did through Stephen and trusted in Jesus as their Savior. Stephen was so pleased that God was being glorified through him. Nothing was more important to him than that!

But while many listened to Stephen and believed in Jesus, many others listened and did not believe! Many Jews were furious at what Stephen taught. "Jesus is not the Messiah sent to save us and we will prove it to you

from the Bible!" they declared. But no matter why arguments they came up with, God gave Stephen wisdom to prove them wrong. Not even the smartest teacher could ever win against Stephen!

This only made those Jews even more furious. "Perhaps we can't argue as well as Stephen, but we maybe can get rid of him another way. Let's get some bad men to tell lies about him and get him in big trouble with the Jewish leaders," they plotted. "They might even have him killed."

Their plan worked! As lies about Stephen spread through Jerusalem, the Jews became angrier and angrier. "Something must be done about this man!" the Jewish leaders said. "Seize him and bring him to us!" they ordered. Before long, Stephen was dragged to the Temple courts and set in front of the Supreme Sanhedrin, the most important Jewish court in Israel. Here, Stephen's fate would be decided.

Stephen stood in the middle of the Council Chamber. The seventy-one Pharisees and chief priests of the Supreme Sanhedrin sat on one side of room and their students and other Jews sat on the other side. They called one witness after another to speak against Stephen.

"He spoke against the name of the LORD," one said.

"He said Jesus would destroy our Temple!" another said. "I heard him say that Jesus would do away with the customs Moses handed down to us," yet another said.

The men in the Council Chamber looked very concerned. These were very serious charges. If Stephen couldn't prove they were lies, he would face death by stoning. Stephen knew this, but he didn't panic. He delighted in God's glory. He felt certain that God had called him to testify to these important Jews about Jesus. He knew the more he trusted in Jesus even as he faced death, the more God would be glorified. There was nothing more important to Stephen than this.

Now all eyes turned towards Stephen, What would he say and do? But even before Stephen had spoken one word, the Lord was already glorifying Himself through Stephen. The Bible tells us that Stephen's face seemed to radiate God's glory, like the face of an angel.

The high priest came forward and said, "You've heard these witnesses. Are these things true?"

"My fellow Jews, listen to me!" Stephen said. "Long ago the LORD gave us this land, His laws and the Temple that we might love and serve Him. Through the prophets He

urged us to turn away from our sins and to look forward to the Messiah who would save us. But our people sinned against the LORD and resisted His Holy Spirit. Now you are acting just like them! You have betrayed and murdered Jesus, the Messiah! Even now you're disobeying His laws and rejecting the good news of salvation through Jesus!"

Stephen's words only made the Jewish leaders more furious. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus. "Look," he said, "I see Jesus in heaven, standing before God in the place of highest honor!"

This was more than the Jewish leaders could stand! Stephen was saying that Jesus was God. This was blasphemy! He must be silenced! He must be put to death!

"They covered their ears and started yelling loudly. They wanted to drown out Stephen's praise of Jesus. They grabbed Stephen and dragged him outside of Jerusalem. Then they did what they always did to people who dishonored God's name—they threw stones at him to kill him!

How did Stephen take this undeserved punishment? Did he yell back angry, hateful words at them, or plead with them to stop? No, he didn't. Stephen was a man who delighted in God's glory. He knew God was calling him to die for the honor of Jesus' name. He knew that the more courageously and willingly he endured this suffering for Jesus, the more God would be glorified.

Amidst that deadly shower of stones, Stephen prayed: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell down to his knees and cried: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And with those words, he died. Nothing—not even life, itself—was more important to Stephen than the glory of God.

Our Bible Truth is: God's People Delight in God's Glory

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 66:1-3,5,8,16

"Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!...Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.... Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard... Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul."

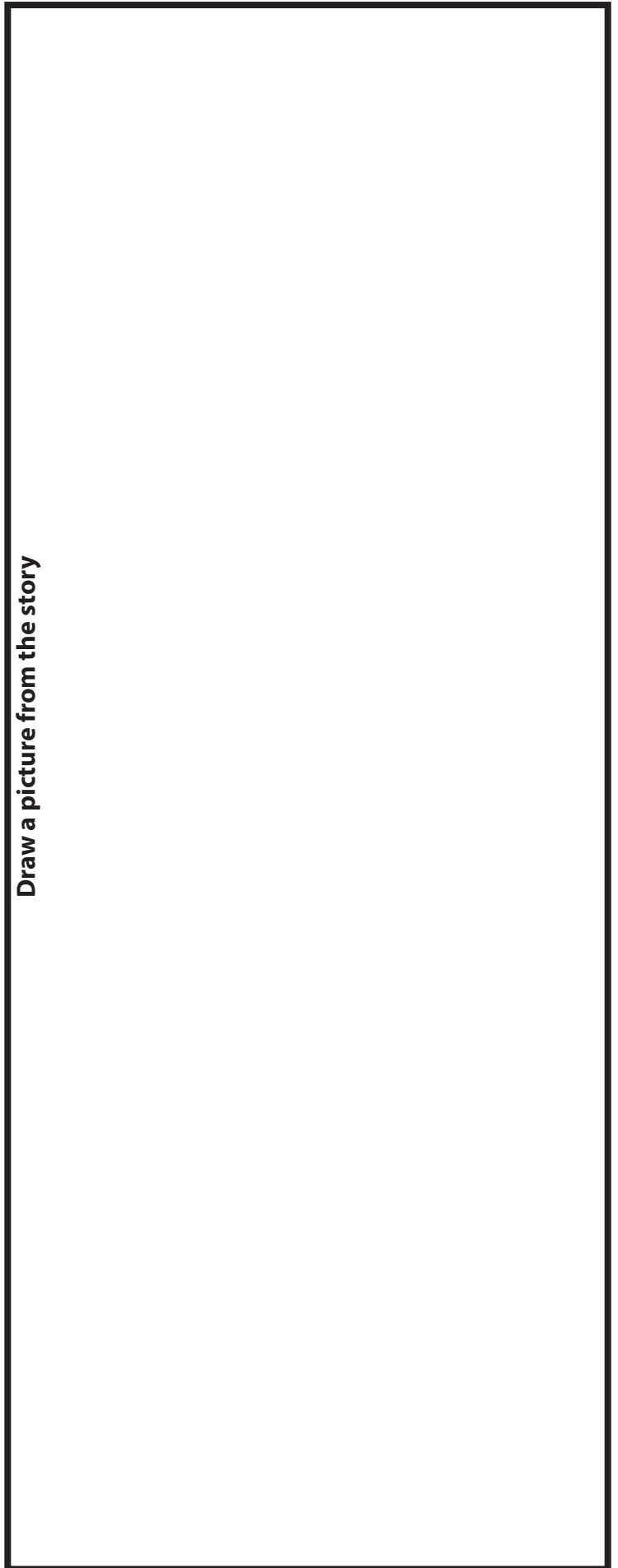
What about God's people today? What is God calling them to do? Like Stephen, He is calling them to selflessly

care for others. Like Stephen, He is calling them to tell new people about salvation through Jesus. And though many of God's people may never face dying for their faith like Stephen did, all will know some kind of sadness or pain from others who reject the good news of salvation through Jesus.

Whatever God calls His people to do, they can know that they are all opportunities to serve Him and others; to serve Him and others, but best of all, they are opportunities to glorify God by reflecting His good ways to the world.

Let's praise God for the perfectly glorious way He is and the perfectly glorious things He does. Let's ask Him to help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to fill us with His Holy Spirit and make us people who daily delight to live our lives so as to bring glory to Him in all we do.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God's people don't think about how they live because they know it doesn't matter to God and His glory.

Answer: False. They care very much to live to please God. They know that living God's good way brings glory to Him.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. Who was the Slandered Servant and why were lies being spread about him?

Answer: Stephen. Angry Jews were trying to get rid of Stephen for preaching that Jesus was God's Son, the Messiah, come to save God's people.

b. How did glorify God even though he was slandered?

Answer: He proved from the Bible that Jesus was the Savior. He didn't stop preaching, even when he faced death. He trusted God with his life and even forgave his enemies as they were killing him.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

Psalms 66: 1-3,5,9,16

___ the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! Say to God, "How a___: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.... Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his ___ be heard... Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul."

Answers: Sing; done; praise.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory

PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 52,53

Verse 1

To God be the glory, great things He hath done;
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the lifegate that all may go in.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!

O come to the Father, thro' Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory,
Great things He hath done.

Verse 3

Great things He hath taught us,
great things He hath done;
And great our rejoicing thro' Jesus the Son,
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our vict'ry, when Jesus we see.
Words: Fanny J. Crosby Music: William H. Doane

We give glory to God for giving us His Son to be the payment for sins. Sinners could never pay for their sins. Only by Jesus giving up His life in the place of sinners could there ever be a way for them to come to the Father.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being worthy of all glory and honor.

C God, we confess that many times we don't think about glorifying God with our lives as Stephen did. Many times we think only about making a big deal about ourselves so others will think about us.. Many times we choose to not do things that might glorify You, but would be hard or no fun to do. We deserve Your punishment! We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for sustaining Your people through even the hardest kinds of sufferings so that they glorify You as You and they want to.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and make us people who daily delight to live our lives to bring You glory in all we do.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Shout with Joy to God

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 54

Shout! Shout! Shout with joy!
Shout with joy to God, all the earth!
Sing! Sing! Sing the glory!
Sing the glory of His name!
Say! Say! Say to God!
Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds."
Come, Come, Come and see,
Come and see what God has done!
I will tell you what He has done for me!
Psalm Sixty-six, one through three, five, nine, sixteen.

*Words: adapted from Psalm 66:1-3,5,8,16 ESV
Music: Constance Dever ©2011*

God's people delight in God's glory. He has been so good to them! He has given His Son to save them from their sins. He has taken care of every other need they have ever had. He has filled them with His Holy Spirit and they have fellowship with Him in their heart. They have never lacked any good thing and they never will their whole life. They want to praise the LORD all the time. They want others to join them in magnifying His name (praising Him) and in knowing Him, themselves. To be one of God's people is the best blessing anyone can ever have.