

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 NIV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4

Unit 1 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 NIV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 7: God's People Do Good Works God Has Prepared for Them

God created all people to be busy at work. He made them with bodies, minds and hearts that are active, like to create and want to be at work. They all have different talents and abilities that they can use. God wants people to use all of these gifts to do good works. That is, to better know, love and obey Him; and, to love and serve others. And, to explore, use and delight in the world He has made, for our good and His glory.

The Bible tells us that ahead of time, God prepared special good works of these kinds for each of His people He wove their good works into His great and glorious plans for the world. God even has work for children to do. He wants them to obey their parents, and love and serve others. He wants them to turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. He wants them to take time to know Him through reading His Word, the Bible and through praying. He wants them to learn about Him and the world He has made.

God has prepared special good works for each of His people. No two will do exactly the same things. But, no matter what the work God has prepared for them, He wants them to do it all as if they are doing it for Him.

God promises to reward His people for whatever good they do. God's people know that they cannot do the good works God has prepared for them on their own. They know that God sends the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and help them do the good works He has planned for them to do.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 7 Bible Verse: Ephesians 2:10; 6:6-8

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do...do[ing] the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does..."

CASE STORY

Luke 24:47; Mark 16:17-28; Acts 9:32-43

Our story is called:

The Case of Peter and the Dead Gazelle

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

1. What changed Peter into a bold man for God? What good works did God use him to do?
2. Who was the dead gazelle? What good works did God use her to do?

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

When Jesus died, Peter and the other disciples hid together in a secret room in Jerusalem, afraid for their very lives. Surely the Romans and Jews who had put Jesus to death on the cross would be soon after them!

But when Jesus rose from the dead, everything changed! Jesus appeared to His disciples and told them: "Now you are to be my witnesses. I will send the Holy Spirit to live in your hearts and give you power to do all I want you to do. Start in Jerusalem and then go into all the world, telling everyone how they can be forgiven of their sins through Me. I will give you mighty works to do in my name that the world may know that I am the Son of God who has conquered sin and death," He told them.

It wasn't long before the Holy Spirit came upon them, just as Jesus promised; and, perhaps no one was more changed than Peter when this happened. In the Temple courts in Jerusalem, over to the rolling hills of Samaria, then down to the town of Lydda, in the fertile, green plains of Sharon, Peter spread the good news of Jesus. He preached boldly to huge crowds of thousands of people. Sick people were brought to him and in the name of Jesus, they were all healed. When arrested and threatened by the Jewish leaders, Peter was no longer fearful. Now he counted it an honor to suffer for Jesus. Everywhere Peter went, many turned from their sins and believed on Jesus as their Savior. The Lord truly had prepared many mighty good works to be done through Peter, that many would be saved.

But mighty good works were not the only important good works the Lord was using to declare the greatness of Jesus' name. Only ten miles down the road from Lydda where Peter was staying, was another equally powerful—though much quieter—witness to the great name of Jesus.

There, in the town of Joppa, by the Mediterranean Sea, lived a woman who loved the Lord and served Him faithfully. Her parents named her "Tabitha", meaning "gazelle." And what a perfect name for her it was. For just like the beautiful, quick-footed animal she was named after, Tabitha was quick to selflessly, quietly serve the other believers in Joppa, just as soon as she heard of a need.

Tabitha especially loved to serve poor widows. These were women whose husbands had died, leaving them in need of food and clothes. Back in those days, women couldn't just go out and get jobs like they can today. There was no help from their government either. Many of these women were forced to rely on generosity of others or beg for their daily needs. If no one helped them, then they went hungry or cold. But the widows of Joppa had Tabitha to help them. And along with a tender heart filled with His love for these needy women, the Lord had given Tabitha skill with needle and thread. With her own money she bought cloth and with her willing, nimble hands, she made the coats and dresses they needed and gave them to them. While Peter had been busy doing mighty works that displayed the power of Jesus to forgive sins, Tabitha had been busy doing quiet works that powerfully displayed the love of Jesus to care for His people's daily needs. How the believers in Joppa loved Tabitha for her generous, selfless service to them!

You can imagine how very sad all the believers in Joppa were when Tabitha suddenly became sick and died. "I can't believe that this is to be how Tabitha's life is to end! How many were her good works! What a wonderful servant she was to us! Now she is gone!" they exclaimed.

"It's true," someone else said. "Why, what would we have done without her selfless service? Think of all the clothes she made for our widows, as well as all the other things she did for us. She was always ready to serve!"

The believers Tabitha had served, now served her. They prepared her body for burial by washing it, as was the custom in those days; and then, they did something very surprising. Instead of burying her body as would usually happen, they took it and laid it in an upstairs room of a house. How odd? Why would they do this? Well, you see, these believers had great faith in God and they were up to something. Perhaps they were thinking they had not yet seen the last of this good friend, Tabitha after all.

"Peter is in Lydda, only ten miles away!" someone

remembered. "The Lord has used him to display the mighty power of Jesus' name by healing the sick? Isn't the Jesus who heals the sick, also able to raise the dead? Perhaps the Lord might choose to display His mighty power to bring Tabitha back to life through Peter? Let's send for him!" they decided.

Two messengers went to Lydda and told Peter, and Tabitha and urged him to come quickly.

Now if you or I had been asked to hurry ten miles down the road to ask God to raise a dear friend back to life, we would have thought it was an impossible idea. But these were the early days after Jesus' resurrection. The Lord prepared special mighty works for His disciples to do in His name as signs that Jesus was indeed the risen Son of God. Peter knew that perhaps the Lord had allowed Tabitha to die for Him to raise her back to life as a great display of His name to the people of Joppa. So Peter quickly gathered his things and hurried with them to Joppa.

Peter climbed the stairs to the room where Tabitha's still body lay. As he looked down at Tabitha, the widows through sobs and tears, told him about Tabitha's many good works. "Look at these clothes, Tabitha made them for us," they exclaimed as they showed him all the things she had made for them.

"What a wonderful servant Tabitha had been!" Peter thought. While he had been busy doing mighty works that displayed the power of Jesus to forgive sins, this single woman had been just as busy doing quiet works that powerfully displayed the love of Jesus to care for His people's daily needs.

"I would like everyone to leave the room," Peter told the believers gathered. When they had left, he knelt down and prayed to God. He knew that none of the mighty, good works he did were in his own strength. They were only the good works that God had prepared to do through him.

Tabitha would be raised from the dead, only if the Lord raised her. When he finished praying, Peter turned toward the dead woman, and said, "Tabitha, get up."

Peter watched as color returned to Tabitha's face and life returned to her body. Tabitha opened her eyes, looked at Peter and sat up. Peter offered her his hand and helped her to her feet.

"Come in, come in!" he called to all the Joppa believers and widows. With joy, Peter presented them with their dear friend, alive and well.

It did not take long for the news about Tabitha to spread throughout Joppa. Many new people came to believe in Jesus when they heard Tabitha's amazing story. Once more, the Lord had prepared a mighty good work for Peter as a display of the wonderful name of Jesus: powerful to heal, powerful to save.

Our Bible Truth is:

God's People Do Good Works He Prepared for Them

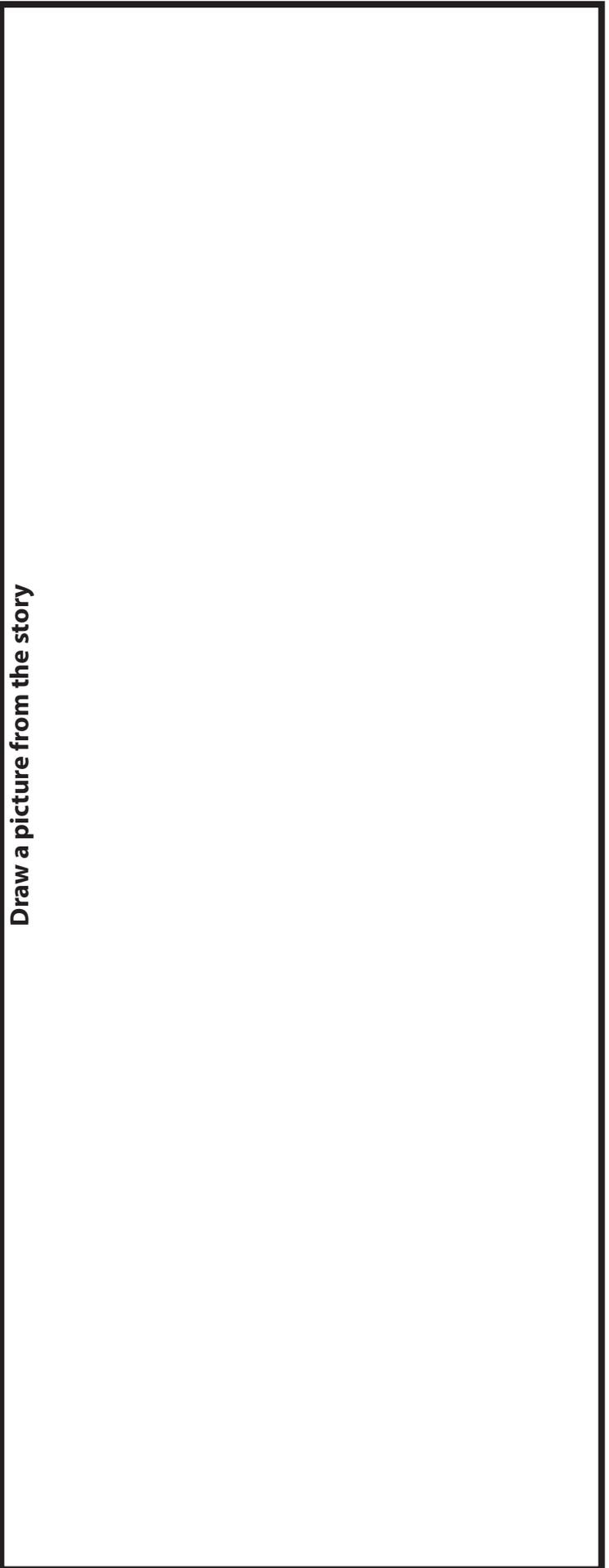
Our Bible Verse is: Ephesians 2:10, 6:6-8

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do...do[ing] the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does..."

The Lord has prepared good works for all of His people. Some might be mighty good works, like the ones the Lord prepared for Peter. Others might be quiet good works, like the ones the Lord prepared for Tabitha. But the important thing isn't really which kind of good works the Lord has prepared for each of His people. It's that He has specially prepared just the right good works for each of them, that they all can be used as a wonderful display of who He is.

What about you and me? Do we want to be God's people and do good works He has prepared? The first step is for us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. When we have done this, God will forgive our sins and make us His people. And we can know that He will have special, custom-made good works prepared for us each and every day—even today! Let's praise God for giving each of His people just the right good works to do for Him. Let's ask Him to help us to turn away from our sins and trust Him as our Savior. Let's ask Him to give us good works to do and help us to do them.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Only adults have good works that God wants them to do. He doesn't care what children do. They are too young.
 Answer: False! God has many good works for children to do, too. Can you name some of them?

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. What changed Peter into a bold man for God? What good works did God use him to do?

Answer: The Holy Spirit changed Peter's heart and gave him boldness. Peter spoke to huge crowds about Jesus; by God's power, he healed many sick people; he joyfully suffered persecution from Jesus' enemies.

b. Who was the dead gazelle? What good works did God use her to do?

Answer: Tabitha. Her name means gazelle. Tabitha served many in her quiet way. She especially helped widows by making food and clothes for them.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Ephesians 2:10; 6:6-8

"For we are ___ workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in ___ for us to do...do[ing] the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not ___, because you know that the Lord will ___ everyone for whatever good he does..."

Answers: God's; advance; men; reward.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Preparer of Mighty and Quiet Works for Your people.

C God, we confess that many times we do not want to do quiet works. Many times we like the thought of doing mighty works that others can see and think that we are a big deal.

T God, we thank You for working in Your people's hearts in such great ways that they would change from being scared to suffer and tell others about Jesus into people who boldly want to tell others about Jesus.

S God, work in our hearts, helping us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit that we might boldly do whatever You want us to do. Use us to do mighty or quiet good works for Your name's sake.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Take My Life and Let it Be

PFI NIV Songs 12, Tracks 20-22

Verse 1

Take my life and let it be
 Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
 Take my hands
 and let them move
 At the impulse of Thy love,
 At the impulse of Thy love.

Verse 3

Take my silver and my gold;
 Not a mite would I withhold;
 Take my moments
 and my days,
 Let them flow in
 ceaseless praise,
 Let them flow in
 ceaseless praise.

Verse 2

Take my feet and let them be
 Swift and beautiful for Thee;
 Take my voice and let me sing
 Always, only for my King,
 Always, only for my King.

Words: Frances R. Havergal Music: Henri A.C. Malan

To consecrate something means to set something apart for a special purpose. Asking God to take your life and consecrating it to Him means to have Him use your life to do something special just for Him. God's people ask God to use their whole lives for His good and perfect purposes. With their feet and hands, they want to serve Him. With all of their silver and gold (their money), they want to do whatever He wants them to do with it. Not a mite of it--not a bit of it--do they want to use for anything other than what He wants. They want every moment, every day of their lives to be lived for Him. And, because they know He has planned good works for them to do, they trust that He will help them do this, giving them the strength they need, by His Holy Spirit at work inside of them.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For We Are God's Workmanship

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 23

For we are, for we are, For we are God's workmanship,
 Created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
 Which God prepared for us in advance to do.
 For we are, for we are, For we are God's workmanship,
 Serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord, not men,
 The Lord will reward ev'ryone for the good he does.
 For we are, for we are, For we are God's workmanship,
 Created in Christ Jesus to do good works.
 Ephesians Two, ten; Six, seven and eight.

Words: Ephesians 2:10; 6:7-8, NIV 1984

Music: Constance Dever ©2012

God has prepared good works in advance for His people to do. It also tells us that God's people are God's workmanship. That means that God is the one that is at work in them, making them like Jesus and helping them to do the good works He prepared for them to do. God's people have so much to rejoice about! Not only has God chosen special things He will do through them, but He will give them the strength and wisdom to do them all. How can they not succeed with God at work in them! We can become God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior!