

**Unit 12: God's People Live for Him**

**Unit Big Question (and Answer):** How Should God's People Live? They Should Live Like Jesus!

**Unit Bible Verse:** "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." --Ephesians 5:1-2

**Bible Truth 2 Concept: They Should Live Like Jesus... By Loving God Most of All!**

Jesus loved God most of all. Jesus' love was more than a nice feeling inside His heart. Jesus lived out His love for God. He lived it out by loving God with the thoughts in His mind. He lived out His love with every word He spoke. He lived it out by always obeying God's laws in all that He did.

God wants His people to love Him like Jesus did, too. He wants them to love Him more than anyone or anything else. He wants them to love Him in their thoughts and their words. He wants them to love Him by obeying His good laws in all that they do, too.

God's people know that they can never love God perfectly like Jesus did. They are sinners. He is the perfect Son of God. But, they know that God promises to help them love Him most of all, by His Holy Spirit living in their hearts. We can become God's people, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Then, God will help us love Him most of all, too.

**Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 6:4-5**

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength

**Learn a Little:** "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength."

**Meaning**

These verses tell us that the LORD is one--He's the one, true God. Moses first spoke these words to the people of Israel, but they are true for us all. God wants everyone to love Him most of all. He wants us to love Him with all our heart, soul, and strength. That's every bit of us! The best, first step to loving God most of all is to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This is how we become God's people.

**Bible Truth 2 ACTS Prayer**

- A** God, we praise You for giving us Jesus so we can know how we should love You.
- C** God, please forgive us for not loving You most of all. Too often we choose to love other people, things, and even ourselves, more than we love You. We need a Savior!
- T** Thank You, God, for promising to help us live like Jesus. You can help us to love You the way You want us to.
- S** God, please work in our hearts. Help us turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Make us Your people. Help us to love You and live like You want us to live. Help us to love You most of all.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**Bible Truth 2 Story**

**The Case of the Man Who Left His Money** *Matthew 9; Mark 2; Luke 5*

**Songs Used in Bible Truth 2**

Big Q & A 12 Song

Big Question 12 Song: How Should God's People Live?

Big Question 12 Bible Verse Song: Live a Life of Love Ephesians 5:2, NIV 1984

Big Question 12 Hymn: Trust and Obey, v.1

Big Question 12 Praise Song: I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse Song: Hear, O Hear Deuteronomy 6:4-5, NIV 1984

*Bible Truth 2 Extra Bible Verse: Your Love Is Better than Life Psalm 63:3-4, NIV 1984*

*listen to or download songs for free at <https://praisefactory.org>: Deep Down Detectives Music page*

**The Case of the Man Who Left His Money***Matthew 9; Mark 2; Luke 5***Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and prepare storyboard figures/story scenes, if using. (In Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard pictures, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues/hold up storybook scenes as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

**INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS**

**"Our story is called: The Case of the Man Who Left His Money. Here is your listening assignment."** Read from Detective Dan's Listening Assignment signs, but questions are summarized below:

**Detective Dan's Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:**

I need to know:

1. **Who was the man who left his money? Why did he leave it behind?**
2. **Who did he decide to love even more than his money?**

**Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:****Our Bible Verse is Deuteronomy 6:4-5:**

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

I need to know:

1. **Who loved money and the nice things in this world more than God?**
2. **Why did he leave his money and nice things behind?**

**Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:**I found six clues, but two of them are **NOT** in the story.

They are: a bag of money, a camel, a pineapple, a town person, a little tax house, and a truck.

*Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.*

I need to know:

1. **Which four belong in the story and which two don't?**
2. **Who turned away from their sins and trust in Jesus in the story? What did he do that showed he was a changed man and wanted to instead, love God most of all?**

**Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,**

"Ok, Deep Down Detectives! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan's questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions."

*Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.*

*Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.*

**The Case of the Man Who Left His Money** *Matthew 9; Mark 2; Luke 5*

*Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)*

**Jesus had good news to tell everyone. "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Jesus told them.**

**"The kingdom of God is NEAR? What does THAT mean? What IS this kingdom of God? How can we be part of it?" many wondered. They gathered around Jesus to hear what He would say.**

**"The kingdom of God is so wonderful. It's worth giving up everything to be a part of it. It's knowing and enjoying God as His people. It's loving God most of all and living for Him," Jesus taught the people.**

**"But WHERE is this kingdom of God, and WHEN is it coming?" the people wanted to know. The other teachers taught that God's great Messiah-King would come soon and get rid of God's enemies. He would rule in the land of Israel. Now, they wanted to hear what Jesus had to say.**

**Jesus amazed the people with His different teaching. Jesus taught them that the kingdom of God is ALREADY in HEAVEN with God. It's a place where everyone loves God most and lives for Him always. It's where God's people go to live with God when they die.**

**And, the Kingdom of God is COMING to EARTH, Jesus promised. One day, He, God's great Messiah-king, will come back to end sin and death. He will be king forever over God's people in the new earth God promised to make.**

**But most amazing of all, Jesus told them, "God's kingdom can be in your HEART—TODAY! Repent --turn away from your sins. Believe -- trust in Me as your Savior," He said.**

*Where did Jesus say God's kingdom can be inside of us? Can you tell me?*

**"This is the gospel, the good news I've come to tell you! Come! The kingdom of God is NEAR! It's NOW!" Jesus exclaimed.**

**Wow! Jesus' good news was the BEST news the people had ever heard! They didn't have to wait for heaven or even until Jesus came back. They could be part of God's kingdom that very day!**

**But as BIG and as GOOD as this news was, it wasn't EASY news to live out. Why? Because our hearts are sinful. We find other THINGS to LOVE more than God. We choose other WAYS to LIVE instead of God's good way. There are so many things that we must STOP loving and STOP doing if we are to love God most of all. That can be so very, very hard! Oh, how the sin in our hearts gives us trouble!**

*Do you ever want something that God has said "no" to in His good laws? I do!*

*Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)*

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**A man named Matthew knew this. Matthew did NOT love God most of all. He loved money and the nice things he could buy, instead.**

**And, while Matthew had grown up learning about God and His good laws, he had chosen NOT to obey them. Matter of fact, Matthew had chosen to do the very opposite: He had chosen to break God's good laws to get more money and more nice things for himself.**

**For like Zacchaeus (who we learned about a few stories earlier), Matthew was a tax collector who gathered money for Caesar, the big, Roman king who had taken over the land of Israel. And like Zacchaeus, Matthew did many bad things to make people give him lots of money, so he could be rich, rich, rich!**

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**Day after day, Matthew sat in his tax house on the road near the Sea of Galilee and the town of Capernaum. "Stop! Pay your taxes," Matthew would say to the people loaded down with things to sell.**

**He looked over their loads and told them how much to pay. The more stuff, the more taxes they owed. Matthew always made them pay enough to make big, King Caesar happy, plus a lot more to keep for himself.**

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**Matthew squeezed lots of tax money from the people of Capernaum, too. He did whatever it took to get enough for Caesar, plus a lot more for himself. The people hated Matthew. They wanted nothing to do with him. They wouldn't even let him in the worship place to worship God. Perhaps Matthew had a big house, lots of nice things, and loads of money, but he had lost many friends. He had broken his friendship with them by the mean, greedy things he had done.**

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**But Matthew's bad life had broken his friendship with SOMEONE ELSE, too. Someone far more important than the people in Matthew's town. Can you guess who?**

Can you guess?

**It was God! Matthew had chosen to love money and nice things most of all. He had chosen to break God's good laws, and he refused to repent. Oh, how very broken was Matthew's friendship with God! Oh, how very sinful was his heart! Surely there was no hope for him to ever be right with God again. Wherever God's kingdom was. Whenever it could come. Matthew certainly would not be a part of it.**

*Was there really no hope for Matthew? What do you think?*

**But there WAS hope for Matthew... and that hope came through Jesus!**

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**Jesus came to Matthew's town and began to teach. "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Jesus told Matthew and many others.**

**As Matthew listened to Jesus, the Holy Spirit began to work in his heart and change it. No longer did Matthew want to love money and nice things most of all. Matthew wanted to love God most of all. He wanted to be one of God's people and have the kingdom of God be in his heart. Could God really make such a big change inside a man like Matthew?**

*Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)*

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**Yes, He could. Jesus knew what was happening inside Matthew's heart. He went to Matthew at his tax house, and said to him, "Matthew, follow Me! Come be one of my disciples, one of my close friends who lives with Me and learns from Me each day."**

**"Yes, Jesus, I will," Matthew told Jesus. Matthew left his tax house and followed Jesus, right then and there. He trusted in Jesus as his Savior. Matthew had become one of God's people. The kingdom of God had begun its rule in his heart, that very day! Matthew was turning away from loving money and lots of nice things most of all. Now, he would seek to love God most of all and live to obey Him.**

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**What happened to Matthew after that? Did he ever go back to loving money most of all?**

*What do you think?*

**No, he did NOT! For the rest of his life, Matthew followed Jesus and sought to love God most of all. And did you know that Matthew even wrote down one of the books in the Bible? Can you guess what that book is called?**

*Can you guess?*

**It's called the Gospel of Matthew!**

**What a perfect name for Matthew's story about Jesus. "Gospel" is a Bible word that means "good news." And that's exactly what Matthew's story was. For though it wasn't always easy for Matthew to follow Jesus and live God's way, it was always good. Jesus said that being one of God's people in God's kingdom was worth giving up everything. Matthew knew this was right. There really was no one more wonderful to know, love, and obey than God!**

**Cracking the Case:** (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

**Detective Dan's Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:**

I need to know:

- 1. Who was the man who left his money? Why did he leave it behind?** Matthew did. The Holy Spirit worked in his heart as he listened to Jesus teach. He helped Matthew turn away from his old life of loving money and nice things, and love God and live for Him, instead.
- 2. Who did he decide to love even more than his money?** God!

**For You and Me:**

Matthew had a lot of money and he loved nice things, but he learned that God was better than even the world's best things. There are many nice things we may enjoy in this world, too. But we will never find anything that is better than loving God and being one of God's people. We can become one of God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Ask God to help you. He loves to answer this prayer.

**Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:****Our Bible Verse is Deuteronomy 6:4-5:**

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

I need to know:

- 1. Who loved money and the nice things in this world more than God?** Matthew did.
- 2. Why did he leave his money and nice things behind? Who did he find was even better to love?** The Holy Spirit worked in his heart as he listened to Jesus teach. He helped Matthew turn away from his old life of loving money and nice things, and love God and live for Him, instead.

**For You and Me:**

Matthew had a lot of money and he loved nice things, but he learned that God was better than even the world's best things. There are many nice things we may enjoy in this world, too. But we will never find anything that is better than loving God and being one of God's people. We can become one of God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Ask God to help you. He loves to answer this prayer.

**Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:**

I found six clues, but two of them are **NOT** in the story. They are: a bag of money, a camel, a pineapple, a town person, a little tax house, and a truck.

*Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.*

I need to know:

- 1. Which four belong in the story and which two don't?** The bag of money, the camel, the town's person and the little tax house belong. The pineapple and the truck do not.
- 2. Who turned away from their sins and trust in Jesus in the story? What did he do that showed he was a changed man and wanted to instead, love God most of all?** Matthew. He left his tax house and all the money and nice things he had loved most of all. He started to live for God, instead.

**For You and Me:**

God delights to help you and me to love Him, too. If we ask Him, He will work in our hearts and help us to love Him most of all. He will help us to turn away from disobeying Him and trust Jesus as our Savior, And as His people, God will gladly go on helping us to love Him most of all, ALL the rest of our lives!

**The Gospel** (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****How Should God's People Live?****They Should Live Like Jesus...****By Loving God Most of All!**

How should God's people live each day? They should live like Jesus... by loving God most of all! God's people ask God for His help, knowing that He will help them. After all, He has already helped them in the biggest way: by sending Jesus to save them! Even while they still were choosing to disobey Him, God chose to help His people by sending Jesus to save them. How much more, now that they have said "no" to disobeying God and trusted Jesus as their Savior, do God's people know that He will help them to love Him most of all.

God delights to help you and me to love Him, too. If we ask Him, He will help us love Him most of all by turning away from disobeying Him and trust Jesus as our Savior, He will gladly save us! And as His people, He will gladly keep helping us to love Him most of all, ALL the rest of our lives!

*Close in prayer.*

**Closing ACTS Prayer**

- A** God, we praise You for giving us Jesus so we can know how we should love You.
- C** God, please forgive us for not loving You most of all. Too often we choose to love other people, things, and even ourselves, more than we love You. We need a Savior!
- T** Thank You, God, for promising to help us live like Jesus. You can help us to love You the way You want us to.
- S** God, please work in our hearts. Help us turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Make us Your people. Help us to love You and live like You want us to live. Help us to love You most of all.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

***Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.***