

Unit 15: God's People Gather Together

Unit Big Question (and Answer): Why Do God's People Go to Church?

To Worship God and Love One Another!

Unit Bible Verse: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together." Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV

Bible Truth 2 Concept: To Worship God and Love One Another... By Learning from God's Word, the Bible

God's people gather together to learn from the Bible. There is no other book like it. It alone is God's Word. It is the best place to find out about God and how to obey Him. But that's not all! The Bible is not just words that God's people listen to and learn from. God's Word is powerful! The Holy Spirit works inside of people as they hear God's Word. He uses it to help them turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. This is how we become God's people. (The big, Bible word for this is "conversion.") And, He uses it to help us to know God better, to give us hope, and to obey Him. This is how we live as God's people. (The big, Bible word for this is "discipleship.")

Sometimes God's people learn from the Bible in little groups. (You are probably learning about the Bible in one of these right now!) But the most important way God's people learn from God's Word is when they all gather together as a congregation and listen to a godly man preach from the Bible. The Bible calls these men, pastors (or elders). God has called them to preach God's Word and to lead God's people in living for Him. What a great gift they are to God's people!

The pastor stands in front of the congregation (God's people gathered together). He reads to them from the Bible and explains what it means. He helps them understand how to live it out. (The big, Bible word for this is "expositional preaching.") The Holy Spirit helps the pastor and the congregation as they study God's Word together.

It is very important for God's people to hear the Bible when they gather together. God uses it to work powerfully in their lives. We can be God's people, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. God can use His Word to work powerfully in our lives, too.

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: 1 Timothy 4:13, ESV

"Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching."

Learn a Little: "Devote yourself to the reading of Scripture."

Meaning

God's people gather together to worship God and love one another. And what book tells them how to do this best of all? God's Word, the Bible! The Bible helps God's people know how God wants them to live; and, it is powerful to help them live that way. No wonderful God's people devote themselves to the Bible. They want their leaders to read it to them and to teach them what it means when they gather together. It alone is God's Word! We can become God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. God can use His Word to work powerfully in our lives, too.

Bible Truth 2 ACTS Prayer

- A** We praise You, God, for saving Your people, the Church. We praise You for giving us the Bible and godly leaders to teach it to us.
- C** God, sometimes we don't want to learn from the Bible. Sometimes, we don't want to listen to the pastors preach from Your Word. There are other things we would rather do. We need a Savior!
- T** God, thank You for not leaving us on our own, but giving us Your Word, the Bible, to learn from and to live by. Thank You for all the people in church who help us understand Your Word and live it out. Thank You for our pastors and teachers.
- S** God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to love Your Word and learn it. Help us live it out. Help our pastors and teachers to teach us well about You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Bible Truth 2 Story**The Case of the Faithful Leader**

Acts 16:1; 1 & 2 Timothy

Songs Used in Bible Truth 2

Big Q & A 15 Song

Big Question 15 Song: Why Do God's People Go to Church?

Big Question 15 Bible Verse Song: Stir Up Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV

Big Question 15 Hymn: Brethren, We Have Met to Worship, v.1

Big Question 15 Praise Song: Praise the Lord Together

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Devote Yourself 1 Timothy 4:13, ESV

Bible Truth 2 Extra Bible Verse: An Overseer Must Be Titus 1:6-9, ESV

Bible Truth 2 Extra Bible Verse: Open My Eyes Psalm 119:18,72-73, ESV

Bible Truth 2 Extra Bible Verse: I Have Stored Up Your Word Psalm 119:11,15-16, ESV

Bible Truth 2 Extra Bible Verse: If Anyone Loves Me John 14:23, ESV

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

The Case of the Faithful Leader*Acts 16:1; 1 & 2 Timothy***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 figures/Story Scenes, 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 Story 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 Faithful Leader. 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 pastor chosen to care for the believers in Ephesus?
2. What did Paul tell him to be faithful to do for those believers?

Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is 1 Timothy 4:13, ESV**

"Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching."

I need to know:

1. Whom did Paul write to when he was in prison and about to die?
2. What did Paul tell this person to be faithful to do for the believers in Ephesus?

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

They are: a cake, Paul, a car, a letter, a coat, and God's Word.

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 did Paul thank God for? What did Paul asked God to help this person do?

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 Faithful Leader *Acts 16:1; 1 & 2 Timothy*

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

Paul was an old man who was about to die. His enemies had put him in jail for telling people about Jesus, and now they planned to kill him. Paul sat in his cold cell making the best of the little time he had left. Even in jail, Paul found ways to love God and His people.

Can you think of what he could do?

Paul prayed. He shared the good news of Jesus with the soldiers who guarded him and with many others. And, he wrote letters to the little churches of believers in many places.

Paul's life in jail was very different from what it used to be. Paul had been a missionary. He travelled to many faraway places, preaching the good news of Jesus to all who would listen. Many people turned away from disobeying God and trusted in Jesus as their Savior when they heard Paul preach. Soon, there were little churches of these new Christians all over. They gathered together each week to worship God and love one another.

Godly leaders were chosen to take care of the members of each little church gathering. Some of these leaders were called "deacons." They were used by God to serve their little church in a special way. They spent their time caring for the needs of others in the church. Men like Stephen made sure everyone had enough to eat. Women like Phoebe spent her life serving the believers, too.

Other godly leaders were men called "pastors" or "elders. These men were used by God to serve their little church by teaching God's Word and leading everyone in loving God and living for Him. Sometimes, these pastors brought words of comfort to those who were discouraged. Sometimes, they warned those forgetting to live for God and urged them to turn away from their sins. They prayed for God to help them all. And, they preached God's Word when the Christians in each little church gathered together.

A young man named Timothy would become one of these godly pastors.

Paul met Timothy on one of his traveling trips and asked him to be his helper. Mile after mile, Timothy walked with Paul. Up mountains and down valleys. Over land and over sea. Through every kind of weather. To every kind of people.

There were happy, friendly people who wanted to hear about Jesus, and welcomed them. And, there were angry, fierce people who hated Paul, and wanted to make him stop telling about Jesus. They hurt Paul, and sent him to live in cold, prison cells. Timothy stayed by Paul through it all.

But most of all, it was the love in Timothy's heart that made him such a good helper for Paul. Timothy had a heart devoted to God and His good plans. Timothy loved God's Word and knew it well. He loved God, and Paul, and God's people so much, that he put them first, instead of himself! So, you can see why Paul loved Timothy so much, and why Timothy was such a good helper for Paul. After a while, Paul treated Timothy not just as a helper, or even a very good friend, but like Timothy was his very own son.

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

Yes, Timothy was a big help to Paul, but did you know that Paul was a big help to Timothy, too? As Timothy travelled with Paul, he was listening and learning. He listened to Paul preach from God's Word and share the good news of Jesus. He saw many people turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Timothy listened to Paul teach these new believers how to live as Jesus' disciples. Paul taught them how to love God and live for Him their whole lives. Timothy listened to Paul use God's Word to comfort sad people and to warn others who had stopped living for God. Timothy watched Paul pray for the little churches to stay faithful and grow.

And as Timothy listened and watched, God was preparing him for His plans for him. Can you guess what God planned for Timothy to be?

Can you guess?

A pastor, himself!

One day, Paul and Timothy came to city of Ephesus. They had come to check up on the little church of believers there. Uh oh, Paul could see there was a problem! This little church of believers needed a good pastor. Who could help them? Who knew God's Word well enough to help them grow to worship God and love one another the way God wanted them to? None of the new believers in the little Ephesus church could do this yet.

Perhaps there was no one in the little church who could be their pastor, but there WAS someone with Paul who could stay and lead them. Can you guess who?

Can you guess?

It was Timothy!

"Timothy, would you stay and care for this little church of believers?" Paul asked Timothy. "You are young, but I know that God will help you do a good job preaching the Bible and leading them," he said. Timothy agreed to stay. He would miss Paul, but he was happy to help. The little church in Ephesus was happy, too. Now, they had a godly pastor who could help them love God and live for Him. Paul was so glad that he could leave the little church in Ephesus under Timothy's care.

But now, so many years had passed since Paul left Timothy in Ephesus. What a lot of journeys Paul had taken since then. What a lot of people got to hear the good news of Jesus and trusted in Him as their Savior! Little churches of new believers gathered every Sunday, where there used to be none. God had filled Paul's years with good things.

But, oh, what troubles had come to Paul along with those blessings! Preaching the good news of Jesus was no easy thing. It was why Paul was in jail in Rome, alone, shivering in the cold, and soon to die.

Paul longed to see that dearest, closest friend of his. What was his name?

Can you tell me?

Timothy! Paul missed his dear Timothy so very much! Paul wanted him to come and care for him. Paul wanted him to bring him his heavy cloak to keep him warm, and his books and papers, so he could study.

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

Paul wondered if he would get to see Timothy again before he died. He hoped he would. But Ephesus was so far away from Rome! And there were no telephones or even postmen back then. How could Paul tell Timothy he needed him? What could Paul do?

Can you think of what Paul could do?

Paul could write to Timothy and find someone to take it to him. And even if Timothy could not get to Rome before he died, at least Paul could give him one last message. And so, that's what he did.

Before long, a messenger was on his way to Ephesus with Paul's letter. Walk, walk, walk, he went. At last, after many days, he handed the letter to Timothy to read. Timothy was so happy to hear from Paul. How he missed Paul and loved him! Here was news, at last!

Timothy eagerly opened the letter and read.

"Timothy, my dear son," Paul started. "I thank God every time I think of you. I long with tears to see you. Do your best to come to me soon."

"Here are some important things I want you to remember that will help you lead the little church in Ephesus," Paul wrote. "You were my helper for many years. You watched me preach about Jesus from the Bible. You watched people try to get me to stop talking about Jesus by hurting me," Paul wrote. "You saw how God gave me strength to keep on preaching, and loving, and caring for all the Christians in the little churches we went to. Don't forget what you saw me do! Do these same things for the people in your little church."

"Keep on learning God's Word! Keep on preaching God's Word!" Paul told Timothy. "Sometimes this will be really hard. Sometimes people won't want to hear what the Bible says. But keep on teaching it to them, no matter what!" Paul urged Timothy. "Only the Bible is God's Word. It makes God's people ready for everything God wants them to do."

"Don't forget these things, and please, come see me soon --before winter comes. Paul."

Did Timothy ever make it to see Paul before he died? We don't know. But we DO know that Timothy did what Paul wanted him to do most of all: be a good pastor for the little church in Ephesus and teach them God's Word.

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 pastor chosen to care for the believers in Ephesus? Timothy.

2. What did Paul tell him to be faithful to do for those believers? Paul told Timothy to be faithful to preach God's Word to them and help them keep on loving God and living for Him.

For You and Me:

Paul encouraged Timothy to be faithful to teach God's Word to the believers who gathered together as a little church in Ephesus. By being faithful like this, God could use Timothy powerfully. Timothy could help the believers know how to keep on loving God and living for Him. When we go to church and listen to faithful teachers tell us about God's Word, God can use it to help us to love Him and live for Him, too. And the very first thing that every faithful teacher hopes and prays that you will do when you hear God's Word is to turn away from your sins and trust in Jesus as your Savior. This is how we become God's people. It is the best, first step in loving God and living for Him.

Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is 1 Timothy 4:13, ESV:**

"Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching."

I need to know:

1. Whom did Paul write to when he was in prison and about to die? Timothy.

2. What did Paul tell this person to be faithful to do for the believers in Ephesus? Paul told Timothy to be faithful to preach God's Word to them and help them keep on loving God and living for Him.

For You and Me:

Paul encouraged Timothy to be faithful to teach God's Word to the believers who gathered together as a little church in Ephesus. By being faithful like this, God could use Timothy powerfully. Timothy could help the believers know how to keep on loving God and living for Him. When we go to church and listen to faithful teachers tell us about God's Word, God can use it to help us to love Him and live for Him, too. And the very first thing that every faithful teacher hopes and prays that you will do when you hear God's Word is to turn away from your sins and trust in Jesus as your Savior. This is how we become God's people. It is the best, first step in loving God and living for Him.

Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found six clues, but two of them are **NOT** in the story. They were: a cake, Paul, a car, a letter, a coat, and God's Word. *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? Paul, the letter, the coat and God's Word belong. The cake and the car do not.

2. Who did Paul thank God for? What did Paul asked God to help this person do? Paul thanked God for Timothy. To keep being a good pastor to the people in Ephesus, but also to come and comfort him before he died.

For You and Me:

Paul thanked God for giving him Timothy. Timothy had been such a good helper to him; and, Timothy now was a faithful leader to the believers in Ephesus, who Paul cared about so much. We, too, should thank God for the faithful leaders he gives us. They help us know God's Word and know how to live it out. We can ask God to help those leaders teach us well. And, we can ask God to work in our hearts as we listen to the leaders at our church teach from God's Word. We can ask God to use these leaders and His Word to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. That's how we can become God's people, too.

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****Why Do God's People Go to Church?****To Worship God and Love One Another...****By Learning from God's Word, the Bible!**

Why do God's people go to church? To worship God and love one another... by learning from God's Word, the Bible! God's people love the Bible. Each time they gather together, they want to learn more from it. The Bible is how they learned they were sinners who deserved God's punishment for disobeying Him, and of God's rich mercy in sending Jesus to be our Savior. It tells how Jesus lived a perfect life and offered it on the cross as the full payment for the sins of God's people. And, how He rose from the dead on the third day, beating sin and death for them. The Bible tells us how we can become God's people by turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior. And, how we can know and love God better, and live for Him. Ask God to use the Bible to teach you and help you do these things, too. He loves to answer this prayer!

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** We praise You, God, for saving Your people, the Church. We praise You for giving us the Bible and godly leaders to teach it to us.
- C** God, sometimes we don't want to learn from the Bible. Sometimes, we don't want to listen to the pastors preach from Your Word. There are other things we would rather do. We need a Savior!
- T** God, thank You for not leaving us on our own, but giving us Your Word, the Bible, to learn from and to live by. Thank You for all the people in church who help us understand Your Word and live it out. Thank You for our pastors and teachers.
- S** God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to love Your Word and learn it. Help us live it out. Help our pastors and teachers to teach us well about You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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