

A HERITAGE OF TRUTH

“Your testimonies are my heritage forever;
for they are the joy of my heart.”
Psalm 119:111

A Heritage of Truth is a set of 120 questions, answers, and memory verses designed to assist parents in the theological education of their children. Based on the Kids 4 Truth curriculum (www.kids4truth.com), these truths will be introduced to our children in Sunday School one truth per week. However, the primary responsibility for teaching them to our children rests on the parents. Handouts like this one are designed to assist you in that process. You will notice that the answers are age-graded to correspond to the varying levels of understanding represented by our children. The memory verse is printed in the ESV, the same translation used in our other children’s discipleship curricula. The additional Scriptures and discussion questions are given to help you stimulate conversation with your family and apply the truth at hand.

Whether you are single or married, a stay-at-home parent or an empty nester, our desire is that *A Heritage of Truth* will so instruct you in the ways and works of God that you grow up into Christ, worship God, and enjoy Him forever.

THEME ONE: The Bible

Truth #1

QUESTION

What is the Bible?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1 st grade:	The Bible is the Word of God.
2 nd – 5 th grade:	The Bible is the inspired Word of God.
6 th grade and up:	The Bible is the only inspired Word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and is above all other books in wisdom, power, and authority.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Peter 1:23 You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding Word of God. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 19

vv. 1-6	God reveals Himself through nature.
vv. 7-11	God reveals Himself through Scripture.
vv. 12-14	Our response to God's self-revelation

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In what ways does David respond to God's Word in Psalm 19?
- What books, magazines, newspapers, and websites do you enjoy reading? Why is the Bible better than all these?
- What difficulties are you facing at school for which you need wisdom from God? What passages of Scripture provide direction for these situations? What passages of Scripture offer hope to you in the midst of these difficulties?
- What practical things can our family do to give God's Word a central place in our home?

THEME ONE: The Bible

Truth #2

QUESTION

How do we know that the Bible really is the Word of God?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1 st grade:	The Spirit of God convinces us that the Bible is God's Word.
2 nd – 5 th grade:	The Spirit of God tells us that the Bible is true and that it is God's Word.
6 th grade and up:	Many things show that the Bible is God's book, but only by the Spirit of God can we know that the Bible is true and that it is God's Word.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

John 14-16	The Spirit teaches us the ways and words of Christ (14:26). The Spirit bears witness to Christ (15:26-27). The Spirit convicts the world (16:8-10). The Spirit guides us into all truth (16:13). The Spirit glorifies Christ (16:14).
------------	---

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do these promises of Christ in John 14-16 help to reassure you concerning the trustworthiness of the Bible (16:1)?
- Why is it to your advantage that Christ has gone away (16:7)?
- Besides the testimony of the Spirit, what corroborating evidence affirms that the Bible is the Word of God? Why is the testimony of the Spirit superior to these other arguments?
- What unbelieving family members, friends at school or work, and neighbors is our family evangelizing? How does 1 Corinthians 2:14 explain why they have not responded to the Gospel? How should this verse affect the way that our family prays for them?
- How should this truth affect the way you read and study the Bible? What can our family do to express our dependence on the Spirit's illumination before hearing the Word taught or preached?

THEME ONE: The Bible
Truth #3

QUESTION

How did God give us the Bible?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 5th grade: God breathed out His words through holy men.
6th grade and up: God breathed out His words through holy men so that what they wrote are the words of God.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Peter 1:21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Transfiguration Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36
Peter's Testimony 2 Peter 1:16-21

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Peter describe the transfiguration of Christ? What was Peter's response to that experience? What was God's response to Peter?
- What does God's corrective word to Peter demonstrate about the relationships between your experiences and God's Word? According to Peter, which is "more sure" (2 Peter 1:19)?
- Describe some of your greatest spiritual experiences (e.g., mission trips, summer camps, etc.). How does God's Word shape your evaluation of those experiences?
- How has God providentially arranged circumstances to make you depend on Him? What verses, passages, and biblical accounts instruct and encourage you? Identify two or three creative ways to remind yourself of these Spirit-given words of God throughout the day.

THEME ONE: The Bible
Truth #4

QUESTION

Does the Bible teach any lies?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: No. God can only tell the truth.
2nd – 5th grade: No. God's Word is true because God can only tell the truth.
6th grade and up: No. God's Word is true and without error because God can only tell the truth.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalms 119:160 The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

This week's truth deals with an important doctrine called the *inerrancy* of Scripture. That simply means that the Bible is without error in all that it teaches. There are some, however, who disagree with this doctrine. They affirm that the Bible is without error only when it speaks of theology, but that it is prone to error when it speaks of history or science. The implications of this line of thinking are far-reaching, since it allows people to deny the historical accuracy of biblical events like the Garden of Eden, the Flood, and the crossing of the Red Sea. Gleason Archer has written a helpful article entitled, "The Witness of the Bible to Its Own Inerrancy." You can access it at this website: http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_witness_archer.html. Archer compiles a thorough list of biblical references and then answers the critics' arguments. His work will encourage you as you meditate this week on the truthfulness and accuracy of God's Word.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do the following passages teach us about Jesus' view of the inerrancy of the Old Testament? Matthew 5:18; 12:40; 19:4-5; 23:35; 24:38-39; John 10:35.
- What implications does the doctrine of inerrancy have for the current debate between creationists and evolutionists?
- Archer writes, "Not only are [the Scriptures] free from all error; they are also filled with all authority, and they sit in judgment on man and all his intentions and thoughts" (95). What thoughts and motivations did you have today that failed to measure up to God's authoritative Word? What particular verse or passage did the Spirit use to convict you? How did you respond to His convicting work?

THEME ONE: The Bible
Truth #5

QUESTION

What does the Bible teach?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 5th grade: The Bible teaches us what to believe and how to live.
6th grade and up: The Bible teaches us who God is, what He wants us to believe, and how He wants us to live.

MEMORY VERSE

Ecclesiastes 12:13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

In order to teach your children that the Bible teaches us who God is, what He wants us to believe, and how He wants us to live, take time this week to do a case study on one book of the Bible: Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Read through Ephesians together one chapter each day. On a separate sheet of paper, draw three

columns and label them "Who God Is," "What We Must Believe," and "How We Must Live." As together you read your chapter for the day, stop after each paragraph division and ask each other what information from those verses you can add to the three columns. You may go an entire chapter without having something for one or more of the columns; that's okay. But remember: the Bible is God's revelation of Himself. Whether or not it is explicitly telling us what to believe or how to live, we can be assured that it is always telling us something about the glory of the Triune God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Summarize in one sentence what God is seeking to reveal about Himself through the book of Ephesians.
- What chapters in the book of Ephesians emphasize what we must believe? What chapters in the book of Ephesians emphasize how we must live? What does Paul's arrangement of doctrine and application teach us about the role of theology in our sanctification?
- What other passages of Scripture are you reading, memorizing, or contemplating? What do they teach you about who God is, what you must believe, and how you must live?

THEME ONE: The Bible
Truth #6

QUESTION

Can we be sure that what the Bible teaches
is still good and true for us today?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: Yes.
2nd – 5th grade: Yes. God's Word is forever; it never changes.
6th grade and up: Yes. Since God's Word is forever and never changes, we can rely on it as though God had spoken directly to us.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:18 For truly I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Biblical Images of the Word

Psalm 119:105, 130	The Word as light	Luke 8:4-15	The Word as seed
Isaiah 55:6-11	The Word as rain and snow	Ephesians 5:26	The Word as water
Jeremiah 20:9	The Word as a burning fire	Hebrews 4:12	The Word as a sword
Jeremiah 23:29	The Word as a hammer	James 1:22-25	The Word as a mirror
Matthew 7:24-27	The Word as a foundation		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Whenever you encounter imagery in the Bible, you need to identify the *topic* (what is under discussion), the *image* (what the illustration is), and the *point of similarity* (the way in which the image shows something about the topic). For each of the passages above, the topic is the Word of God and the image is given. As a family, think through each of these images and determine what these illustrations teach us about the Word. How do these images demonstrate the relevance of the Word?
- What does the unbelieving world say about the truthfulness of God's Word for today? How would unbelievers modify the question and answer above? How can you help unbelievers understand the truth?
- The *Catholic Encyclopedia* argues, "In modern Protestantism the Bible has decidedly fallen from the primacy which the Reformation had so loudly conferred upon it" ("Inspiration of the Bible"). In what ways is that statement true? How should we live as a family to demonstrate the centrality and practicality of the Word? As a church?

THEME ONE: The Bible
Truth #7

QUESTION

Why do we need the Bible?

ANSWER

The Bible leads us to believe in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Timothy 3:15 And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Luke 24:13-35 Jesus' discourse with the men on the road to Emmaus
Luke 24:36-49 Jesus' discourse with the eleven disciples
John 5 Jesus' discourse with the Jewish leaders

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Each of the three passages above contains a verse that makes an important point about the relationship between the Old Testament and Jesus. What are those three verses? How should this alter the way that you understand stories like the sacrifice of Isaac, the battle of Jericho, and David and Goliath?
- According to 2 Timothy 3:15, what should characterize how parents disciple their children (see also 1:5)? How are you as parents trying to accomplish this in the home? Ask your children if they can think of things that you can do to accomplish this goal.
- According to 2 Timothy 3:14, is it enough for a grown child to have enjoyed a strong emphasis on Scripture while growing up? What further responsibility does he or she have? How can you (as parents) help your children obey verse 14?

THEME ONE: The Bible
Truth #8

QUESTION

Can we truly know God without the Bible?

ANSWER

No. We cannot know God apart from the Bible.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 1:16-17 God's revelation of Himself through the gospel.
Romans 1:18-20 God's revelation of Himself through nature.
Romans 1:21-23 Humanity's response to natural revelation.
Romans 1:24-32 God's three-fold turning over of humanity to its sinfulness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- According to Romans 1:20, what specific attributes of God can and should be universally known through natural revelation? Does this verse teach that the gospel can be known through natural revelation alone?
- From these verses, list the ways that humanity has responded to the natural revelation of God. (Note: not all of them are in verses 21-23.) How does this help answer the question why God went beyond natural revelation and revealed Himself verbally through the Bible?
- For an excellent discussion of the relationship between the revelation of God in nature and in Scripture, see John Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, pp. 22-26.
- If the Bible is the chief means by which we come to know God, what should be the primary thing you're looking for in your Bible reading? As a family, develop a worksheet to use in your devotional time to help you intentionally look for the attributes and works of God as you read. If you have older children, assign each member of your family to put together such a worksheet on his or her own, and then compare everyone's work before developing one master worksheet that incorporates the variety of ideas represented.

THEME ONE: The Bible
Truth #9

QUESTION

What authority does the Bible have over me and others?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: The Bible is the most important rule for faith and life.
2nd grade and up: The Bible is our highest and final rule for what we should believe and how we should live.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Esteeming God's Word as the final authority for faith and life

Deuteronomy 4:2	The Command	Galatians 1:6-10	A Negative Example: The False Teachers
Jeremiah 23:16-32	A Negative Example: The Lying Prophets	1 Thess. 2:13	A Positive Example: The Church at Thessalonica
Acts 17:10-11	A Positive Example: The Church at Berea	Revelation 22:18-19	The Warning

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does the phrase "highest and final rule for life" mean?
- What would an atheist (someone who doesn't believe in the existence of God) say is the highest and final rule for life? Why is the Bible supreme to this way of thinking?
- What would a Muslim say is the highest and final rule for life? Why is the Bible supreme to this way of thinking?
- What would a hedonist (someone who is devoted to the pursuit of pleasure and self-gratification) say is the highest and final rule for life? Why is the Bible supreme to this way of thinking?
- What would a nominal Christian (someone who is a Christian in name only) say is the highest and final rule for life? Why is the Bible supreme to this way of thinking?

THEME ONE: The Bible
Truth #10

QUESTION

How does God want us to respond to the Bible?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: He wants us to love it and believe it.
2nd grade and up: He wants us to love it, enjoy it, believe it, and desire to obey it.

MEMORY VERSES

Psalm 119:97 Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day! ESV
Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 119 is well-known for its length and for its emphasis on God's Word. Read through the psalm this week, four sections each day. As you read, be on the lookout for two things: nouns and verbs. First, record all the nouns that refer to the Word of God. For example, in verse one God's Word is described as His *law*; in verse two it is His *testimonies*. Second, look for the verbs that describe the psalmist's actions with reference to God's Word. The psalmist *walks* according to God's Word (v. 1), *keeps* it (v. 2), and so forth. This exercise will help to expand the brief answer to the question for this week.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Looking over the list of verbs used in Psalm 119, which ones would fall under the category of *loving* God's Word? Of *enjoying* it? Of *believing* it? Of *desiring to obey* it?
- One of the great dangers for second generation Christians is that they are susceptible to treating the incomprehensible truths of God as though they are commonplace. Consequently, biblical knowledge becomes compartmentalized in a tidy, academic package, and has little effect in engaging the heart and creating a genuine follower of Christ. According to Matthew 7:24-27 and James 1:19-25, what dangers befall the one who hears but does not obey the Word of God? How can our family (individually and collectively) develop a genuine love for God and His Word?

As a family, take time to pray that God would cause your love for His Word to grow and expand. Use Paul's words in Ephesians 1:15-23 to help guide your prayer.

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #1

QUESTION

Is God greater than we are?

ANSWER

Yes. God is greater than anyone.

MEMORY VERSES

Isaiah 55:8-9 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

God's speeches to Job

Job 38:1-40:2

God is sovereign over nature.

- All of creation (38:4-15)
- The oceans (38:16-18)
- The heavens (38:19-38)
- The animals (38:39-40:2)

Job 40:6-41:34

God is sovereign over morality.

- Argument stated (40:8-14)
- Illustration of Behemoth (40:15-24)
- Illustration of Leviathan (41:1-34; cf. Isaiah 27:1; Revelation 12:3)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is Job's response to God's declaration of His greatness (42:1-6)? What can we learn about genuine repentance and humility from these chapters?
- If you are a parent of elementary-age children, take time to talk about God's greatness in the natural world, even as God expressed it in His first speech to Job. Ask them what they are learning in their science class (e.g., the five senses, motion, plants, the sky, etc.). How does God show His greatness in those things?
- Kids4Truth has some helpful resources on its website that extol God's greatness in a way that children can understand and appreciate. One such resource is the Creation Dynamation, which you can find at www.kids4truth.com/creation.htm.
- Take time to pray through Job 38-41, ascribing to God the greatness that He claims for Himself in these chapters.

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #2

QUESTION

What is this great God like?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade:

God knows all, sees all, and has all power.

2nd grade and up:

This great God is invisible, has always been alive, has all power, knows everything, and is everywhere at the same time.

MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 18:11a

Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

The five parts of this week's answer define five of God's natural attributes. They are listed below with key Scriptures that teach us these truths.

Immateriality	John 1:18; 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16
Eternality	Psalm 90:1-2; Isaiah 44:6; Jude 25
Omnipotence	Psalm 115:3; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26
Omniscience	Psalm 147:5; Proverbs 15:3; Romans 11:33; Hebrews 4:13
Omnipresence	Psalm 139:7-12; Acts 17:24-25

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does God's immateriality (that He doesn't have a body) explain His reasoning behind the Second Commandment (Exodus 20:4-6; cf. Deuteronomy 4:15-18)? How did the children of Israel violate that very command in the incident with the golden calf (Exodus 32)? What do these passages teach us about the way we worship God in the New Testament era?
- How does pondering God's eternity bring genuine humility to your heart?

If God is omniscient, then why do we pray? For help in answering this question, see Psalm 139 (esp. vv. 23-24) and Matthew 6:7-15 (esp. vv. 8-9).

Another helpful resource is chapter three of *The God Who Hears* by W. Bingham Hunter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986). The chapter is entitled "All-Knowing: What is There to Tell Him?"

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #3

QUESTION

Did God have a beginning?

ANSWER

No. God is eternal and has always been alive.

MEMORY VERSE

Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 90

- vv. 1-2 The eternal nature of God
- vv. 3-11 The brevity of our lives
- vv. 12-17 The prayerful response of God's people

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In the last section of Psalm 90, Moses prays that God would do seven or eight specific things for him. How does meditating on God's eternity inspire Moses to pray each of these requests?
- What names of God emphasize His eternal nature?
- When we say that God is eternal, are we referring only to the Father, or to the Son and the Spirit as well? What biblical evidence supports the eternity of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit? What difference does this make for the doctrine of salvation?
- This week's truth carries the potential for your children to ask the age-old question, "Where did God come from?" A. W. Tozer has some helpful thoughts: "The child by his question, 'Where did God come from?' is unwittingly acknowledging his creaturehood. Already the concept of cause and source and origin is firmly fixed in his mind. He knows that everything around him came from something other than itself, and he simply extends that concept upward to God. The little philosopher is thinking in true creature-idiom and, allowing for his lack of basic information, he is reasoning correctly. He must be told that God has no origin, and he will find this hard to grasp since it introduces a category with which he is wholly unfamiliar. . . . The human mind has an understandable uneasiness about the Uncreated. . . . This requires a great deal of humility, more than most of us possess" (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, 32-33).

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #4

QUESTION

Does God ever change His mind, get tired, or weaken in any way?

ANSWER

No. The Lord God is unchanging and all-powerful.

MEMORY VERSE

Malachi 3:6 For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 102

- vv. 1-11 The psalmist's distress
 - Prayer for divine intervention (1-2)
 - Admission of weakness and sorrow (3-11)
- vv. 12-28 The psalmist's hope
 - Anticipation of God's redemption (12-22)
 - Acknowledgment of his own distress (23-24)
 - Praise for God's changelessness (25-28)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- It is quite common for children reared in a Christian home to struggle with doubts concerning their own salvation. According to Psalm 102:28, how should we as children of God respond to the truth that God is unchanging? How does this truth help reassure you that God will fulfill His promises to you?
- The doctrine of God's immutability (changelessness) is the foundation of the doctrine of God's faithfulness to His children. Why is that so? How has God demonstrated His faithfulness to our family this week?
- What does the term *anthropomorphism* mean? When the writers of Scripture use an anthropomorphism to describe God, what are they trying to do? How does this help us understand statements in Scripture that seem to suggest that God does change (for example, that He changes his mind)?

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #5

QUESTION

Does God have a body like we do?

ANSWER

No. God is an invisible spirit.

MEMORY VERSE

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. ESV

FURTHER STUDY

The KJV reads, “God is a Spirit,” but this doesn’t quite capture the sense of the original. Christ is not saying that God is one of many spirits, but that God’s nature is essentially spiritual, not physical. This explains why newer versions read like the ESV (see NKJV and NASB, for example). There are three implications of this truth: (1) God is a *personal* being. He is not simply a divine force or a cosmic energy; He is personal and therefore relational. (2) God is a *unified* being. He is not composed of parts. His attributes are not divisions of His being that somehow compete against one another. Instead, all that He is takes part in all that He does. (This is sometimes called the doctrine of God’s simplicity.) (3) God is a *non-corporeal* being. He has no physical body, and the properties of matter do not apply to Him. He is essentially spiritual, not material.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In John 4, the particular application that Jesus draws from God’s spirituality has to do with worship. According to verse 24, what is that application?
- With the phrase “in spirit,” Christ releases us from thinking that we must be in a specific geographic location in order truly to worship. But at the same time, He lays a different responsibility at our feet. What is that responsibility? What practical steps can we take to ensure that our hearts are engaged in worship? How can we resist the temptation of thinking that God accepts our worship simply because we say the right words, use a particular style, or engage in mere formalities?
- The phrase “in truth” defines both the boundaries and the fuel of our worship. Why is it so important that worship be governed by truth? What kinds of truths ought to govern our worship? What sorts of things would violate this principle? If truth is the fuel of our worship, then how do we grow to worship God more both individually and corporately?
- The wonder of the Incarnation is that the Second Person of the Godhead, who had existed from eternity past without a physical body, took on human flesh. Hebrews 2:5-18 lists at least six purposes of the Son of God becoming man. Read the passage, discuss those purposes, and then take time to praise Christ for all that He accomplished through His first advent.

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #6

QUESTION

How powerful is God?

ANSWER

God is all-powerful.

MEMORY VERSE

Jeremiah 32:17 Ah, Lord GOD! It is You who has made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for You! ESV

FURTHER STUDY

Daniel 4

vv. 1-3	Nebuchadnezzar’s Proclamation	vv. 28-33	Nebuchadnezzar’s Humiliation
vv. 4-18	Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream	vv. 34-37	Nebuchadnezzar’s Praise
vv. 19-27	Daniel’s Interpretation		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In Daniel 4, what name of God is most often repeated? What significance is there to this?
- According to verses 17, 25, and 32, what was the purpose of Nebuchadnezzar’s humiliation? What hope does that offer American Christians concerning the current political situation? What about Christians in China and the Sudan? How does this truth affect the way we pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in nations like these?
- According to verse 35, among whom does God accomplish His will? What hope does that offer you when you are tried by difficult circumstances and even sinning people?
- According to verse 37, what is the right response to God’s omnipotence (i.e., that He is all-powerful)? Take time to humble yourselves as a family before the Most High God and to praise and extol Him for the rightness of His works and the justice of His ways.

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #7

QUESTION

What does God know?

ANSWER

God knows all things, even the secrets of our hearts.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 147:5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; His understanding is beyond measure. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Lord, Thou Hast Searched Me”

**Texts and tunes for suggested hymns may be found at www.cyberhymnal.org.*

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 139

vv. 1-6	God’s knowledge is unlimited	vv. 17-18 Praise for God’s omniscience
vv. 7-12	God’s presence is everywhere	vv. 19-22 Plea for God’s justice
vv. 13-16	God’s creative work is individual	vv. 23-24 Request for God’s inspection

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does God’s complete knowledge of David (Psalm 139:1-6) cause the psalmist to respond (Psalm 139:23-24)? Is God’s complete knowledge of you a comforting thought or a convicting thought?
- If God knows all things, then is there anything that happens in life that surprises Him? What hope does this give you in the face of trying circumstances?
- A growing number of professing Christians are questioning this doctrine. Espousing a view called Open Theism, they argue that God does not know the future. What biblical evidence refutes this idea? How dangerous is this notion to the entirety of the Christian Faith? For a helpful overview of Open Theism and a biblical response, see John Frame’s article “Open Theism and Divine Foreknowledge.” You can access it at http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/2001OpenTheism.htm.

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #8

QUESTION

Where is God?

ANSWER

God is present everywhere all the time.

MEMORY VERSE

Jeremiah 23:24 “Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“This is My Father’s World”

FURTHER STUDY

Key Theological Terms

Immensity	God is not subject to the limitations of space.	Transcendence	God stands uniquely above all creation.
Omnipresence	God fills all space and thus is everywhere at once.	Immanence	God stands near to creation in His sustaining providence.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the biblical doctrine of God’s omnipresence and immanence differ from the pagan notion of pantheism (i.e., that the universe is God)? What biblical evidence stands against pantheism?
- How is God’s presence different for His children than for the rest of creation? Can you think of any verses that teach a special presence that God has with believers? What hope does this bring you?
- Pray together the following prayer from A. W. Tozer: “Our Father, we know that Thou art present with us, but our knowledge is but a figure and shadow of truth and has little of the spiritual savor and inward sweetness such knowledge should afford. This is for us a great loss and the cause of much weakness of heart. Help us to make at once such amendment of life as is necessary before we can experience the true meaning of the words ‘In Thy presence is fullness of joy’” (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, 80).

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #9

QUESTION

Is there anything or anyone even close to God in His perfect greatness?

ANSWER

No. God is much greater than anything.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Timothy 1:17 To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

FURTHER STUDY

Isaiah 40

vv. 12-14 God’s greatness expressed in His works
vv. 15-17 God’s greatness over the nations
vv. 18-20 God’s greatness over idols

vv. 21-22 God’s greatness over the universe
vv. 23-24 God’s greatness over humanity
vv. 25-31 Our response to God’s greatness

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In Isaiah 40:25, 27, and 28, God asks His people three questions, challenging what they think about Him. What deficiencies in their thinking does each of these questions reveal? How do the same deficiencies express themselves in the way you think and live? How should these words from God transform the way you think and live?
- One beautiful feature of Isaiah 40 is its melding of the themes of God’s greatness with His grace to His children. Read vv. 1-11 and vv. 29-31. How does the greatness of God make the grace of God even more glorious than if He were not uniquely great? Take time to praise the Lord for His greatness and His grace.
- When applied to God, the term *holiness* fundamentally communicates His separateness from all creation. Why is it so important to maintain God’s uniqueness? What implications does this doctrine have for your evangelistic efforts? What implications does this doctrine have for your own struggle with sin?

THEME TWO: The Greatness of God

Truth #10

QUESTION

How should you respond to truths about how great God is?

ANSWER

These truths should make me humbly depend on God.

MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 15:11 Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“O Worship the King”

FURTHER STUDY

Responses to God’s Greatness

Moses Exodus 34:1-9
Isaiah Isaiah 6

Ezekiel Ezekiel 1
John Revelation 1:9-20

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What similarities do you see in these four responses to God’s greatness? How should these responses mold our responses to God’s greatness?
- Over the past few weeks, we have been studying God’s incomparable greatness as demonstrated in His eternity, immutability, invisibility, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. As a family, review what each of these terms mean, what Scriptures teach these truths, and why each of these should teach us to depend humbly on God.
- How do you express humble dependence on God? How does your time spent in the Word and in prayer reflect the degree to which you are consciously dependent on God—and consequently the degree to which you are awestruck by the greatness of God? Take time to pray that God would continue revealing His greatness to you and your family so that you might respond with humble worship.

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God

Truth #1

QUESTION

What does it mean for God to be good?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: God is perfect in all He is and all He does.
2nd – 5th grade: Our good God is perfect in all He is and all He does: holy, loving, truthful, faithful, and generous.
6th grade and up: Our good God is perfect in all He is and all He does: holy, righteous, loving, gracious, forgiving, truthful, faithful, just, generous, patient, and providing; a God of peace who hates all sin.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Sing Praise to God”

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 145

As your family considers God’s goodness this week, take time to meditate on Psalm 145. This is a beautiful expression of what it means for God to be good. To help you in your study, take a piece of paper and draw three columns. Label the columns as follows: “Attributes of God,” “Acts of God,” and “Our Responses.” Comb through these verses, unearthing the biblical statements that fall into each of these categories.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As the answer above demonstrates, God’s goodness may refer either to His moral rightness (e.g., holiness, justice) or to His benevolent disposition (e.g., loving, gracious). Why is the adjective *good* an appropriate designation for both of these categories of attributes? What implications does this have for our own sanctification?
- What would happen to the universe if God were great but not good? What if He were good but not great? Why are both necessary for a biblical understanding of the fall of humanity, the person and work of Christ, and the doctrine of salvation?

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God

Truth #2

QUESTION

Who gives us all good things?

ANSWER

God gives us all good things.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Ye Humble Souls, Approach Your God”

**Texts and tunes for suggested hymns may be found at www.cyberhymnal.org.*

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 107

vv. 1-3	A Call to Worship	vv. 17-22 Foolish Choices and the Goodness of God
vv. 4-9	Physical Affliction and the Goodness of God	vv. 23-32 Fear of Death and the Goodness of God
vv. 10-16	Human Rebellion and the Goodness of God	vv. 33-42 A Summary of God’s Good Works
		v. 43 A Call to Meditate

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- After the first three verses set out the theme for this psalm—the goodness of God and our response of praise—the next four sections each follow the same pattern: distress, prayer, deliverance, and praise. As a family, locate this pattern in each section.
- Does the goodness of God toward the believer mean that Christians will never experience trouble? Do some of our troubles arise from our own sinfulness? Note vv. 10-11, 17-19. Do some of our troubles arise even when we are not rebelling against God? Note vv. 4-5, 23-27. How should these truths cause us to respond to God when trouble comes? How should it change the way we speak of God’s goodness?
- This psalm clearly illustrates for us that our praise is fueled by a conscious consideration of the many acts of God’s goodness and steadfast love (note v. 43). As a family, take time to recount the ways that He has shown His goodness to you, remembering that even the troubles of life are manifestations of God’s goodness to His children.

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God

Truth #3

QUESTION

Is God perfectly good?

ANSWER

- 4-years-old – 5th grade: Yes. God is holy, and this means He is perfectly good.
6th grade and up: Yes. God is holy, and this means He is the only One who is absolutely pure in His goodness, set apart from all sin, and committed wholly to His own glory.

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 6:3 And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Be Thou My Vision”

FURTHER STUDY

- Isaiah 6 vv. 1-4 Isaiah’s Vision of God’s Glory
 vv. 5-7 Isaiah’s Confession and God’s Grace
 vv. 8-13 God’s Call and Isaiah’s Response

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Every phrase of the first four verses contributes to the overarching message: God is perfectly holy. What does it mean for God to be holy? How does each statement show that the angels’ response is the only right one? If the whole earth is filled with His glory, what is the real purpose of studying science or taking a trip to the mountains?
- What prompts Isaiah’s confession (v. 5)? How should this dynamic affect the way that you confess your sins to God? What practical things can you do to see God’s glory and consequently turn from your own sin?
- What does the burning coal symbolize (v. 7)? (For assistance, you may wish to consult commentaries by Matthew Henry, J. Alec Motyer, or E. J. Young.) On what basis did Isaiah’s forgiveness ultimately rest?
- Why is Isaiah so ready to be sent by the Lord (v. 8)? What is the content of the message that he is to deliver? Does it sound like God is calling Isaiah to what we might call a fruitful ministry? Is it wise for you to evaluate church planters, missionaries, and pastors on the basis of apparent fruitfulness? On what basis should you evaluate them?

This passage opens a great door for you to speak to your children about your desire for the direction of their lives because it illustrates the pattern of vision—confession—forgiveness—service. As a parent, do you want your children to be sent by the Lord wherever He wants them to go? If so, how can you be part of God’s sanctifying process to bring them to that point? Since you cannot force them to serve God, cannot atone for their sin, or confess their sins on their behalf, what part of this pattern is left for you to do? What steps can you take to accomplish this?

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God

Truth #4

QUESTION

Does God ever do things in a wrong or sinful way?

ANSWER

- 4-years-old – 1st grade: No. God does everything right.
2nd – 5th grade: No. God is completely righteous.
6th grade and up: No. God is completely righteous, He never acts wrongly toward His creation, and everything He does is right.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His works. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Rejoice in the Lord”

FURTHER STUDY

- Habakkuk
1:1-4 Habakkuk’s first prayer 2:2-20 The Lord’s second response
1:5-11 The LORD’s first response 3:1-19 Habakkuk’s prayer of praise
1:12-2:1 Habakkuk’s second prayer

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In Habakkuk’s first prayer the prophet asks God why He is allowing His people to continue in their sin without correction. How does the LORD respond to Habakkuk’s prayer? Whom will He use to bring about His discipline (v. 6)?
- Habakkuk’s second prayer is a complaint against God for using unrighteous pagans to be a tool of God’s discipline against His children. What attributes of God does the prophet use to defend his complaint? How does the LORD respond to this prayer? Was Habakkuk’s reasoning correct? How does the LORD correct him?
- In his last prayer, how has Habakkuk’s attitude toward God changed? What attributes of God are now on his mind? What conclusions does he draw from these attributes?
- The last three verses of the book are a joyful, confident expression of Habakkuk’s faith in God. How does the prophet express that circumstances will not affect his joy in the LORD? What situations today would parallel the situations he mentions (v. 17)? What is true about God that causes genuine joy in Him in the midst of unimaginable difficulties (v. 19)?

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God
Truth #5

QUESTION

Does God ever lie?

ANSWER

No. God cannot lie because He is always truthful.

MEMORY VERSE

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“A Mighty Fortress”

FURTHER STUDY

Aspects of the God of Truth

True God

Jer. 10:10-11; John 17:3; 1 John 5:20

True Words

Deut. 32:4; Rom. 3:4

True Knowledge

Job 37:16; 1 John 3:20

True to His Promises

Num. 23:19; Ps. 25:10; Heb. 6:18

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The definition of *truth* is that which conforms to reality. Since God is the supreme reality in the universe, it follows that He defines what is true. How do unregenerate people try to deal with the reality of God? What types of false realities do they contrive in order to explain away the God of truth? How do professing believers do the exact same thing?
- Is this week’s truth a fundamental presupposition of our entire faith system? In other words, if this truth were not so, would the rest of what we believe be reliable? How do these passages reassure you that Christianity is true?
- This week’s hymn speaks of God’s truth triumphing through us. What did Luther mean when he wrote those words? To what end (or, for what purpose) does God use fallen yet redeemed sinners to cause His truth to triumph in the world?
- What hope does God’s faithfulness to His promises give you? As a family, rehearse some particular passages on which you are resting your hope of eternal life.
- How should you respond to God, knowing that He is the God of truth? See Ex. 20:16; Ps. 15:2; 19:14; Prov. 4:24; 13:5; 2 Cor. 4:2; Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9-10.

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God
Truth #6

QUESTION

Does God give to everyone good things that they do not deserve?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 5th grade:

Yes. God gives to all because He is a gracious God.

6th grade and up:

Yes. God is a gracious God who delights in freely giving good things to His creatures.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 145:8-9 The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and His mercy is over all that He has made. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above”

FURTHER STUDY

Common Grace

Matthew 5:43-45

God loves His enemies.

Acts 17:22-31

God gives life to all humanity.

Acts 14:15-18

God gives good things to those who do not know Him.

Romans 1:18-23

God reveals Himself to all humanity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Common grace refers to God’s goodness and kindness shown to all humanity, whether redeemed or not. According to Christ, what command is the necessary application of God’s common grace (Matthew 5:43-45)? Why do *God’s common grace* and *loving our enemies* go hand-in-hand? What enemies do you have right now that God is calling you to love? How can you show love to them?
- In Acts 14:15-18, what were the people of Lystra doing that Paul was trying to stop? Why does Paul use the truth of God’s common grace in his attempt to discontinue their practice? Why do *God’s common grace* and *appropriate worship* go hand-in-hand?
- In Acts 17:22-31, what were the people of Athens doing that Paul was trying to change? What command does Paul give on the basis of God’s common grace (v. 30)? Why do *God’s common grace* and *repentance* go hand-in-hand? How can you encourage your unbelieving family and friends to repent on the basis of God’s common grace (cf. Rom. 2:4)?
- In Romans 1:18-23, Paul identifies God’s revelation of Himself to all humanity as an evidence of common grace. What happens to those who reject God’s self-revelation? What then is the practical consequence of common grace for the unregenerate? Why do *God’s common grace* and *humanity’s defenselessness* go hand-in-hand?

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God
Truth #7

QUESTION

Would God rather punish or forgive?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: God loves to forgive.
2nd – 5th grade: God loves to forgive and to show us mercy by withholding judgment.
6th grade and up: God loves to forgive and to show us mercy by withholding the judgment we rightfully deserve.
**Question and answer provided by Kids4Truth (www.kids4truth.org).*

MEMORY VERSE

Ezekiel 18:23

“Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked,” declares the Lord GOD, “and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?” ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“I Hear the Words of Love”

FURTHER STUDY

Ezekiel 18

vv. 1-4	Israel’s Complaint	vv. 14-29	The Lord Judges Rightly
vv. 5-9	The Righteous Will Live	vv. 30-32	A Call to Repentance
vv. 10-13	The Unrighteous Will Die		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- According to vv. 5-9, what standard does God set for your conduct? Are you capable of keeping this standard perfectly (cf. Rom. 3:9-20)? How do you fail to keep God’s law?
- Has anyone ever kept God’s law perfectly? Why is it so important that Jesus kept the law perfectly and therefore earned righteousness (cf. Rom. 5:19; Heb. 5:8-9)? What hope does the imputed righteousness of Christ have for you today?

God’s delight to forgive sins is powerful evidence that He is good. Take time to praise Him together for His gracious pardon. You may wish to include some of the following passages in your prayers of thanksgiving: Ps. 103:8-14; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Jn. 1:5-2:2.

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God
Truth #8

QUESTION

Who is the source of all love?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: The Lord God is the Source of all love.
2nd grade and up: The Lord God is the Source of all love, and without Him there would be no love.

MEMORY VERSE

1 John 4:8

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”

**Text available at www.inchistalone.org/How%20Deep.html*

FURTHER STUDY

1 John 4:7-21

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In 1 John 4:7-21, how many different ways does John teach you that God is the source of love? How do you know that God loves you (cf. vv. 9-10)?
- What is the difference between the statement “God is love” and the statement “love is God”? In what ways does the godless culture around us attempt to preach the latter to us? How does the concept “love is God” undermine the very meaning of the word *love*?
- A key theme in 1 John is the assurance of our salvation. The apostle often connects our assurance with the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. How does he do that in this passage (cf. vv. 7-8, 12-13, 16-17, 20)? Why then is it so important that you love one another?

In light of God’s great love for you, how should you then live? In other words, what commands does John give on the basis of the love of God (cf. vv. 7-8, 19-21)? How can you practically demonstrate the glory of God by loving those around you?

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God

Truth #9

QUESTION

Does God look the other way when we sin?

ANSWER

No. God hates all sin because He is completely good.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“My Song”

**Available in Majesty Hymns or at www.sermonaudio.com/hymnlist.asp*

FURTHER STUDY

1 John 1:5-2:2

John begins this section by stating his thesis in verse 5: *God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*. What follows are six hypothetical statements, each beginning with the word *if*. These can be broken down further into three groups, each with an erroneous assertion (identified by the phrase *if we say*) followed by a biblical corrective. The first group includes verses 6 and 7, the second consists of verses 8 and 9, and the third contains verses 10 and 2:1.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- For each group, identify the erroneous assertion. What elements are similar in each of these assertions? Why does John say that these assertions are wrong? How are we guilty of making these kinds of assertions? What does it say about our own view of our sin when we fall into this kind of thinking? What does it say about our view of God?
- For each group, identify the biblical corrective. What elements are similar in each of these assertions? Where does John point us to find relief from our sinfulness? Why can we not find redemption in our own attempts to be sinless? For the one who acknowledges his sin to the Lord, how many sins does the blood of Jesus cleanse him from (v. 7)? What is the basis for our forgiveness (v. 9)?
- The reality of God’s ever-present observation of our lives can bring about a holy sense of dread. But our depraved hearts can twist this truth and lead us to turn away from the only source of forgiveness and salvation—this same holy God. (See Robert Murray McCheyne’s *Personal Reformation*.) As a family, confess your faults to the Lord and rejoice in His free grace and powerful blood that cleanses you from all your sin.

THEME THREE: The Goodness of God

Truth #10

QUESTION

How should you respond to the truth of God’s goodness?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: I should love and trust Him.

2nd grade and up: I should love Him more than anyone or anything else and trust Him alone for all my needs.

MEMORY VERSE

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“I Worship Thee”

**Available in Majesty Hymns*

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In Psalm 27, David describes the goodness of God by speaking of His attributes and declaring His works. Read through the psalm as a family and identify the different ways in which the psalmist identifies the goodness of God. Take time to praise God together for the ways in which He demonstrates His goodness.
- Beginning in verse seven, the psalmist makes at least ten specific requests of the Lord. What are they? How does the goodness of God offer David hope that God will answer His requests? What are you praying for as a family? How does the goodness of God offer you hope?
- Our response to God’s goodness can be summarized by the words *love* and *trust*. How does the psalmist express his love for God (v. 4)? How does the psalmist express his trust in God (v. 14)? What acts of God’s goodness can your family ponder that would cause you to respond in love for Him and trust in Him?

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #1

QUESTION

What does it mean when God is called the Trinity?

ANSWER

- 4-years-old – 1st grade: There is one God Who lives in three Persons, each of Whom is God.
2nd – 5th grade: The word *Trinity* means that there is one God Who has always existed in three Persons, each of Whom is fully God.
6th grade and up: The word *Trinity* means that there is one God Who has always existed in three Persons, each of Whom is fully God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 1:1-3 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Come, Thou Almighty King”

FURTHER STUDY

Genesis 1:1-3

The first three verses of Scripture implicitly teach the concept of the Trinity: the Father (v. 1), the Spirit (v. 2), and the Word (v. 3; cf. Ps 33:6; Jn 1:1-3).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do the first three verses set the stage for the rest of biblical revelation? You may want to refer to Pastor Brooks’ sermons on the early chapters of Genesis for assistance.
- The word *Trinity* never occurs in the Bible. Do you think that it is legitimate to use this term as a biblical designation for God? Can you think of other extrabiblical words (i.e., words not used in the Bible) that help summarize theological truth for believers?
- For a fuller study on the doctrine of the Trinity, you may wish to consult James White’s *The Forgotten Trinity* (Bethany House, 1998) or Bruce Ware’s *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (Crossway, 2005).

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #2

QUESTION

Has God always been a Trinity?

ANSWER

- 4-years-old – 1st grade: Yes. God has always been one God in three Persons.
2nd grade and up: Yes. Since God is unchanging, He has always existed as one God in three Persons.

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 48:16 “Draw near to Me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there.” And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“We Give Immortal Praise”

*Available at www.cyberhymnal.org. Sing to the tune “Rejoice, the Lord is King.”

FURTHER STUDY

The Eternal Existence of the Three

The Father	Psalm 90:1-4
The Son	John 8:48-59
The Spirit	Hebrews 9:11-14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week’s memory verse is one of the OT allusions to all Three Persons of the Godhead. Who is the One speaking? Who has sent the Speaker? How is the Other Person of the Trinity revealed?
- In Psalm 90:1-4, how does the psalmist express the eternal existence of God? What does he contrast with God’s eternity (vv. 3-4)? How does reflecting on your mortality change your attitude and perspective on life?
- What was Jesus teaching about Himself in John 8: 58 (cp. Ex. 3:14)? How did the Jews respond to His teaching? Why did they respond this way?
- What role does the Spirit’s eternity play in the work of Christ in our behalf (Hebrews 9:14)?
- Why is it important that all Three Persons of the Trinity (and not merely the Father) exist eternally? If the Son and the Spirit were not eternal, could they rightfully be called God? Why would redemption be impossible if Christ were not the eternal Son of God (cf. John 14:9; 1 Timothy 2:5)?

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #3

QUESTION

Why do we believe in the Trinity?

ANSWER

We believe in the Trinity because the Bible tells us:

- There is one God.
- This one God exists in three Persons.
- Each Person is totally God.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 3:16-17 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him, and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians 1:3-14

vv. 3-6 The Work of the Father
vv. 7-12 The Work of the Son
vv. 13-14 The Work of the Spirit

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Note: The next few weeks focus on each one of these three reasons. For that reason, this week's study does not correspond exactly to this week's answer. Instead, the Scripture study focuses on the work of each Person of the Godhead in the outworking of our redemption as revealed in Ephesians 1.
- What works does the Father perform in order to accomplish our redemption (vv. 3-6)? (A simple way to answer this question is to underline all the verbs in these verses.) What response does this bring about in Paul (note esp. v. 3)? How does reflecting on the Father's works bring about this kind of response?
- What works does the Son perform in order to accomplish our redemption (vv. 7-12)? How do the Son's works go on into the future? What will the Son ultimately accomplish? How does the success of the Son's plan give you hope for today?
- What works does the Spirit perform in order to accomplish our redemption (vv. 13-14)? What hope does v. 14 give you as you persevere in faith and obedience?
- What refrain does Paul repeat at the end of each section (vv. 6, 12, 14)? Why is that statement so important that the apostle wrote it three times? Take time as a family to give praise to God for His glorious grace.

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #4

QUESTION

Does the Bible teach that there is only one God?

ANSWER

Yes. The Bible is clear that there is only one living and true God.

MEMORY VERSE

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"We Believe in One True God"

**Available at www.cyberhymnal.org. Sing to the tune "Rock of Ages."*

FURTHER STUDY

Isaiah 45:1-7

v. 1	God's Choice of Cyrus	vv. 4-5	God's Purpose for His People
vv. 2-3a	God's Plan for Cyrus	vv. 6-7	God's Purpose for the World
v. 3b	God's Purpose for Cyrus		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Over one hundred years before Cyrus ruled the Medio-Persian empire (cf. Daniel 5:30-31; 6:28), the Lord predicted through Isaiah that He would raise up Cyrus as an instrument to accomplish His purpose. What descriptions does God use of this pagan king (Isaiah 44:28-45:1)? What does this teach you about God's ability to use unbelievers to accomplish His purposes? How should this truth alter the way you respond to unfavorable situations at work or with your extended family?
- What are the five things that God promises to do for Cyrus (vv. 2-3a)? What purpose does the Lord have in mind for Cyrus (v. 3b)? How does God intend to use earthly success to expand our view of His greatness?
- What is God's purpose for His people through His use of Cyrus (vv. 4-5)? What is God's purpose for the world (vv. 6-7)? Compare these three statements of purpose. Are they similar or dissimilar? What does that teach you about God's purpose for what is happening in your life today?
- The statement in v. 7 ("I create evil," KJV) does not make God the author of sin. Instead, it emphasizes that God is sovereign over trouble and calamity. Why is it hard for us to acknowledge the sovereignty of God when tragedies strike? Why does God have no problem emphasizing His sovereignty precisely at those times? What does this teach you about the uniqueness of God?

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #5

QUESTION

Who are the three Persons of the Trinity?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 5th grade: The three Persons of the Trinity are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
6th grade and up: The three distinct, eternal Persons of the One True God are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Eternal Father, Strong to Save”

FURTHER STUDY

The Three Persons in Individual Passages

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 The same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God.
2 Corinthians 13:14 The Lord Jesus Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit.
Ephesians 4:4-6 One Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father.
1 Peter 1:2 God the Father, the Spirit, Jesus Christ.
Jude 20-21 The Holy Spirit, God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In these five passages, can you identify the three Persons of the Godhead? What does the combination of these Three in passages like these contribute to the doctrine of the Trinity?
- Is the doctrine of the Trinity simply a human creation? Is it a uniquely Pauline doctrine (i.e., is Paul the only one to teach it)? Who wrote the five passages listed above? How does the authorship of these books help us recognize that this doctrine is not simply a human creation?
- How does the interrelationship among the Members of the Trinity make it possible for redeemed humanity to relate to God? In other words, why would humans (saved or not) be unable to enjoy a relationship with God if He were merely a “blank unity,” such as the Unitarian and Islamic views of God? (For a helpful discussion of this question, see John Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, 46-50.) Take time to praise God for the relationships among the Three and for their initiative in starting a relationship with you.

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #6

QUESTION

What works do all Three Persons perform that only God can do?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: All Three Persons of the Godhead are involved in creation and redemption.
2nd grade and up: In addition to many other works, all Three Persons of the Godhead are involved in creation and redemption.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“You are the LORD”

* *The text and tune are available at www.heritagebiblechurch.org under A Heritage of Truth.*

FURTHER STUDY

	Creation	Redemption
God the Father	Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:24	Romans 3:25-26; Ephesians 2:4-7
God the Son	John 1:3; Colossians 1:16	Romans 3:24; Titus 2:14
God the Holy Spirit	Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30	John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it significant that all Three Members of the Trinity participated in creation? What does it say about the existence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Take time to praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the genius and beauty of creation.
- Why is it significant that all Three Members of the Trinity participated in redemption? What role does each Person play in the plan of redemption? How does the Son’s willingness to obey the Father’s plan refute the argument that the God of the OT was a God of wrath but the God of the NT is a God of love? Take time to praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the love and grace of redemption.
- Some theologians reject the doctrine of the Trinity, arguing instead that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are simply different *manifestations* of God, not different *Persons* in the Godhead. (A current example of this belief is Oneness Pentecostalism.) Why is that such a dangerous error? How do the truths and verses above help to refute this notion? For a helpful article that addresses this question, please visit www.aomin.org/PCD.html.

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #7

QUESTION

Does the Bible clearly teach that the Father is God?

ANSWER

Yes, the Bible clearly teaches that the Father is fully God.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 8:5-6

For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Children of the Heavenly Father”

FURTHER STUDY

Distinguishing Features of God the Father.

** The following outline is from Pastor Greg Stiekes’ message on God the Father at the 2007 HBC Bible Conference.*

God the Father is the Decision Maker.

* God’s decree is the Father’s prerogative (Eph. 1:11).

- His work in creation (1 Cor. 8:6).
- His work in redemption (Eph. 1:2-14).

God the Father is the Authority.

* The Father lovingly governs the other Two.

- He governs the Son (Jn. 7:16; 8:26, 29; Rom. 8:32).
- He governs the Spirit (Jn. 15:26; 16:13).

God the Father is the Ultimate Object of Offense.

* The Father represents the Three when God’s right is violated.

- Sinners need to be at peace with Him (Rom. 5:1).
- Sinners need to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:18-20).
- Sinners need to have His wrath appeased (1 Jn. 2:1-2).

God the Father is the Ultimate Object of Worship.

* The Father is the highest object of praise.

- He receives glory from the work of Christ (Jn. 12:27-28).
- He receives glory from our redemption (Col. 1:11-14).

He receives glory into the ages (1 Cor. 15:28).

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #8

QUESTION

Does the Bible clearly teach that Jesus is God?

ANSWER

Yes, the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is fully God.

MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 1:8 But of the Son He says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.” ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

FURTHER STUDY

The Deity of Christ

Asserted by Christ Matthew 5:21-22; John 8:58; 10:30; 11:25

Acknowledged by Christ Matthew 16:16; John 20:28

Affirmed by John John 1:1-3, 18; 20:31; 1 John 5:20

Affirmed by Paul Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:5-11; Titus 2:13

Affirmed by Peter Acts 2:32-36

Affirmed by Matthew Matthew 3:3; compare with Isaiah 40:3

Affirmed by Hebrews Hebrews 1:2, 6, 8

A RESOURCE

One of the key historical statements on the deity of Christ is the Chalcedonian Creed. Adopted in 451, this confession affirms the biblical teaching that the incarnate Christ is one unified Person with two distinct natures. The writers identified four “fences” of this doctrine: Christ possess both the divine and the human natures “without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation.” To read the entire document, go to www.theopedia.com and look up “Chalcedonian Creed.” For a summary of its significance, go to www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.iv.iv.html.

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #9

QUESTION

Does the Bible clearly teach that the Holy Spirit is God?

ANSWER

Yes, the Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is fully God.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Corinthians 3:17

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Spirit of the Living God”

FURTHER STUDY

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

Identified as Jehovah Jeremiah 31:33 & Hebrews 10:15; Isaiah 6:8-9 & Acts 28:25-26

Identified as God Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19

Possesses Explicitly Divine Attributes

- Omnipotence Luke 1:35; Romans 15:19;
1 Corinthians 12:11
- Omniscience Isaiah 40:13-14; John 16:13;
1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 1 John 5:6
- Omnipresence Psalm 139:7-8
- Eternality Hebrews 9:14

Performs Explicitly Divine Works

- Creation Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4;
Psalm 104:30
- Inspiration 2 Peter 1:10-21
- Miracles Acts 8:39-40
- Conviction John 16:8
- Regeneration John 3:5-6; Titus 3:6

THEME FOUR: The Trinity

Truth #10

QUESTION

How should knowing about the Trinity cause you to respond to God?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 5th grade: I should recognize how small I am in comparison to this great God.

6th grade and up: I should recognize how small and insignificant I am in comparison to this great God, knowing that He is beyond my comprehension.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Samuel 7:22

Therefore You are great, O LORD God. For there is none like You, and there is no God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Be Thou Exalted”

FURTHER STUDY

Responding to the One True God

Responding to the Father Philippians 2:5-11; Revelation 4

Responding to the Son Psalm 2; Revelation 5

Responding to the Spirit John 16:7-15; Ephesians 4:30

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- According to the passages above, how should you respond to God the Father? God the Son? God the Spirit? Take time together to write down the works of the Three and what responses they should generate in you.
- What characteristics of fallen humanity does the doctrine of the Trinity challenge? How does such a truth humble you before God?
- The relationship among the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is one of *ontological unity* (each Person is fully God) and yet *functional subordination* (the Son submits to the Father and the Spirit submits to the other Two). Can you think of any human relationships that mirror this aspect of the Trinity? In other words, what relationships among people acknowledge the full personhood of the individuals involved and yet call for the submission of one to another? How do these relationships magnify the glory of the Triune God?

THEME FIVE: God's Creation
Truth #1

QUESTION

What does the Bible teach about creation?

ANSWER

In six days, God created all that is for His pleasure and glory.

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"O Give Thanks to Him Who Made"

*Available at www.cyberhymnal.org

FURTHER STUDY

Genesis 1-2

1:1-2:4 An Overview of the Seven Days
2:5-25 An Extended Recap of the Sixth Day

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The fact that God is the Creator of all things means that He has earned the right to do whatever He pleases with His creation. This is what we mean when we say that God has Creator's Rights. How does this truth bring comfort to you? How does this truth challenge your sinful, self-centered heart?
- If evolution were correct in its rejection of God as the Creator of all things, what implications would that have for the value of human life? What would be the basis for valuing anyone's life? How does the theory of evolution affect one's view on abortion and euthanasia?
- If evolution were correct in its rejection of God as the Creator of all things, what implications would that have for human sexuality? Would there be any basis for affirming one type of lifestyle (monogamous, heterosexual marriage) over another? What do sinful sexual practices (e.g., marital infidelity, homosexuality, premarital relations) demonstrate about one's view of God? How can you lovingly demonstrate the glory of Christ to someone involved in sins like these?

THEME FIVE: God's Creation
Truth #2

QUESTION

Who created you, the world, and everything in the world?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: God did.
2nd – 5th grade: God created me, the world, and everything in the world.
6th grade and up: The Almighty God alone created me, the world, and everything in the world.

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 45:18

For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is God!), who formed the earth and made it (He established it; He did not create it empty, He formed it to be inhabited!): "I am the LORD, and there is no other." ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"All Creatures of Our God and King"

FURTHER STUDY

Creation *Ex Nihilo* (Out of Nothing)

Psalm 90:2
Romans 4:17
Hebrews 11:3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is important for a number of reasons. The existence of everything that is not God had a starting point and is therefore not eternal. How does this truth challenge the idols of your heart (e.g., good grades, social status, material goods)?
- Many philosophers believe in creation *ex materia* (that is, creation from matter), viewing matter as eternal. Some believe that God created out of preexisting matter (e.g., Plato), while many atheists deny God's existence and believe merely in the eternity of matter (e.g., Karl Marx, Isaac Asimov). How does the notion that matter is eternal challenge God's sovereignty? God's independence? God's glory?
- How does creation *ex nihilo* challenge the Mormon doctrine, "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become"?

THEME FIVE: God's Creation

Truth #3

QUESTION

Is God's creation evil or good?

ANSWER

Although creation has been marred by sin,
God created all things good.

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 1:31a And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

FURTHER STUDY

He Saw That It Was Very Good

Day One	Genesis 1:4
Day Three	Genesis 1:10, 12
Day Four	Genesis 1:18
Day Five	Genesis 1:21
Day Six	Genesis 1:25
Conclusion	Genesis 1:31

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Did creating the universe make God so tired that He had to rest on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2)? If not, then what was the purpose of His resting on the seventh day? What implications, if any, does this have for our family's practices on the Lord's Day? (To understand why the day of worship for God's people changed from the seventh day of the week to the first, see Matthew 28:1; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10.)
- How does the doctrine of the goodness of God's creation affect our study of the fine arts? science? literature? environmental issues?
- How does the doctrine of the goodness of God's creation help us to avoid an unbiblical kind of asceticism? How did Paul deal with the ascetics of his day (1 Timothy 4:1-5)?
- How does the doctrine of the goodness of God's creation affect our use of money (cf. 1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17-18)?

THEME FIVE: God's Creation

Truth #4

QUESTION

Why did God create the world and everything in it?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: For His pleasure and glory.
2nd grade and up: God created the world, and everything in it, for His pleasure and His glory.

MEMORY VERSE

Revelation 4:11

"Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created." ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Sing Praise to God"

FURTHER STUDY

All for His Glory

Psalm 19:1-2	The Heavens for His Glory
Isaiah 43:7	His People for His Glory
Ephesians 3:8-10, 20-21	The Church for His Glory
Colossians 1:15-20	All Things for His Glory

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- According to Jeremiah 10:10-16, what attributes of God does His creation reveal? How do God's actions differentiate Him from all other gods? Take time as a family to rejoice that the One True God has opened your eyes so that you might know, love, and worship Him.
- Did God need to create anything? Does God need anything at all, or is He sufficiently happy in Himself (cp. Acts 17:24-25)? Knowing creation is an entirely free act of God, what response should this generate in your heart? Take time as a family to humble yourselves before this Great God and to extol Him for His condescending kindness to you.

THEME FIVE: God's Creation

Truth #5

QUESTION

How long did it take for God to create the universe?

ANSWER

God created the universe in six days.

MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 20:11a For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"My Song Shall Bless the Lord of All"

**Available at www.cyberhymnal.org. Sing to the tune of "Jesus Shall Reign."*

FURTHER STUDY

In Six Days

The Creation Account	Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31
The Testimony of the Law	Exodus 20:8-11
The Testimony of Christ	Mark 10:6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- A variety of views exists among Christians concerning the meaning of the word *day* in Genesis 1. You may wish to refer to this synopsis of four prevalent views: <http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/4viewsofcreation.shtml>. How do these positions explain the Genesis account? What practical differences emerge from these four views?
- How does the repeated phrase "evening and morning" (Genesis 1) support the view that God created the universe in six literal days?
- How does the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) support the view that God created the universe in six literal days?
- How does Christ's statement that Adam and Eve were formed at "the beginning of creation" (Mark 10:6) support the view that God created the universe in six literal days?

THEME FIVE: God's Creation

Truth #6

QUESTION

How did God create the world?

ANSWER

He spoke, and it came into existence.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalms 33:6, 9

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Songs of Praise the Angels Sang"

**Available at www.cyberhymnal.org.*

FURTHER STUDY

The Power of His Word

Genesis 1:3	The Creative Power of the Spoken Word
Psalms 33:6-9	The Sustaining Power of the Spoken Word
John 1:1-3	The Creative Power of the Incarnate Word
Hebrews 1:1-4	The Sustaining Power of the Incarnate Word

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Notice how closely the New Testament authors connect the spoken word to the Incarnate Word. Why does John specifically refer to Christ as the Word? What significance does this title have?
- What is the right response to the power of God's word? To help you answer this question, see Hebrews 11:3. (In the statement "what is seen was not made out of things that are visible," the latter does not refer to atoms or molecules, protons or electrons. It refers to the spoken word of God.)
- How do the unregenerate respond to the power and authority of God's creative word? To help you answer this question, see 2 Peter 3:1-7. Is their rejection of God's word unintentional or deliberate (v. 5)? How does their purposeful rejection of God's past work affect their view of Christ's future return (v. 4)? How should these realities affect the way we seek to win them to Christ?
If God's word—spoken and incarnate—is so powerful that it spoke the universe into existence, then what is the basis for our confidence in God's written word? In the contemporary debate between creationism and evolution, is our confidence in God's record defensible? Why?

THEME FIVE: God's Creation

Truth #7

QUESTION

How do we know that the world was created by God?

ANSWER

4-years-olds-5th grade: We know by faith that God created everything.
6th grade and up: Only through faith can we be fully assured that God created the world and everything in it.

MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“The Spacious Firmament on High”

**Available at www.cyberhymnal.org.*

FURTHER STUDY

Hebrews 10:32-39 The Persevering Nature of Saving Faith
Hebrews 11 OT Examples of Saving Faith
Hebrews 12:1-3 An Exhortation to Perseverance

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Consider the context of Hebrews 10:32-12:3. When the author lists these OT examples of faith in chapter 11, is his purpose to show incredible faith that only some believers enjoy, or is his purpose to show the kind of faith that all genuine believers have? In light of this, is it legitimate to refer to Hebrews 11 as “The Hall of Faith”?
- If faith is the means by which we ultimately know that the universe was created by God, then is the unbeliever correct in asserting that the debate concerning creation and evolution is one of faith vs. reason? How is it that the debate is actually between faith in God’s Word and faith in human reason?
- If faith is the means by which we ultimately know that the universe was created by God, then what is the place of apologetic discussion with unbelievers concerning the existence of God or the creation-evolution debate?

THEME FIVE: God's Creation

Truth #8

QUESTION

What does God’s Creation teach us?

ANSWER

4-years-olds-5th grade: God’s Creation teaches us that there is a God who is great and good.
6th grade and up: God’s Creation teaches us that there is a God, that He is great and good, and that He deserves to be worshipped above all else.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 1:20 For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Sovereign Ruler of the Skies”

**Available on HBC website. Sung to the tune of “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come.”*

FURTHER STUDY

Lessons about God from General Revelation
Psalm 8:3-4
Psalm 19:1
Psalm 29:4
Psalm 93:2
Psalm 104:24
Acts 14:15-17
Acts 17:23-27
Romans 1:19-20, 32
Romans 2:15-16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The passages above teach us what humanity should know about God through general revelation. As a family, take time to study these passages and identify all the attributes and works of God that His creation teaches us.
- According to the passages above, can someone know the Gospel (i.e., that the Son of God came from heaven, fully obeyed God’s Law in our place, died a vicarious death for sinners, rose again from the dead, and now is seated at God’s right hand interceding for God’s children) through general revelation? How does this impact our view of global evangelism? As a family, take time to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth Gospel-saturated laborers into His harvest (Matthew 9:35-38). Ask God to give your family the grace to be willing to follow Him wherever He desires to lead you.

THEME FIVE: God's Creation

Truth #9

QUESTION

Did God create the things that we cannot see?

ANSWER

4-year-olds-1st grade: Yes. God created the unseen world.
2nd grade and up: Yes. God created all things, visible and invisible.

MEMORY VERSE

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”

FURTHER STUDY

Creation of the Unseen

The Spiritual Universe Nehemiah 9:6; Acts 4:24; Revelation 10:6
Time Job 36:26; Psalm 90:2, 4; John 8:58;
2 Peter 3:8; Revelation 1:8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- God gives us glimpses into the unseen spiritual world whenever He mentions angels, demons, or Satan. What purposes does God have for the angelic hosts (cf. Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 34:7; 91:11-12; Hebrews 1:14)?
- How does Christ describe Satan's fall (Luke 10:18) and character (John 8:44)? Does Satan exist outside the control of God (Job 1:6-12)? How does knowing Satan's limitations give us confidence and hope as we wrestle against “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12)?
- If God created time, then is time a threat to Him? How does this help us to understand why God is so patient and longsuffering (Exodus 34:6-7)? How should this truth cause us to respond to God (Psalm 27:13-14; 40:1-3) and others (1 Corinthians 13:4)?

THEME FIVE: God's Creation

Truth #10

QUESTION

How should you respond to the truth that God created everything?

ANSWER

4-year-olds-1st grade: I should live for His glory.
2nd-5th grades: I should enjoy God's creation and live for His glory.
6th grade and up: I should enjoy God's creation and live for His glory, realizing that He has the right as the Creator to hold me accountable for the way that I live.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 14:12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“God, All Nature Sings Thy Glory”

**Available on HBC website. Sung to the tune of “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee.”*

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 1:16-32

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Notice the contrast between “the righteousness of God [that] is revealed” (Romans 1:17) and “the wrath of God [that] is revealed” (Romans 1:18). According to verses 16-17, where is the righteousness of God revealed? Against what is the wrath of God revealed?
- Why does Paul say that God pours out His wrath on humanity (vv. 19-21)? What did God reveal about Himself through creation? How does God expect us to respond to Him through what we see about Him in creation (vv. 21)? As a family, take time to pray, acknowledging God's greatness as Creator, honoring Him as God, and giving thanks to Him.
- If God created all things to be very good, then we are to enjoy His creation and live for His glory. What impact then does the doctrine of God's good creation have on your piano lessons? your art project? your science class?

THEME SIX: God's View of You

Truth #1

QUESTION

Where did humanity come from?

ANSWER

God created humanity out of the dust of the ground.

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 8

vv. 1-2	Praise-Filled Theme of the Psalm
vv. 3-4	God's Grace to Humanity
vv. 5-8	The Dignity of Humanity
v. 9	Restatement of the Theme

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Scripture repeatedly affirms both the lowliness and dignity of humanity. For example, we were created out of the dust of the ground, yet God has given us dominion over His creation. As a family, think through the different ways that the Bible stresses our lowliness and dignity.
- Genesis 2:4-25 is a fuller explanation of the sixth day of creation, initially described in 1:26-31. In what ways do these passages emphasize that both men and women stand equally as humans before God? In what ways do these passages emphasize that God has called men to be loving leaders in their relationships with women?
- In Psalm 8:3-4, what is it about God that causes David to stand in wonder at His grace to humanity? Job uses a similar expression in 7:17-18, but in a very different way. In that chapter, Job is complaining about what God is doing and expresses his wish that God would leave him alone (v. 16). How can the awareness of God's ever-present watchfulness produce awe and wonder in one believer but bitterness and complaining from another? How aware are you of God's ever-present watchfulness? Is that producing praise or agitation in your heart? Take time to ask God to give you grace so that your awareness of His watchfulness would bring joy and delight to your heart.

THEME SIX: God's View of You

Truth #2

QUESTION

What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 5th grade: We are the part of creation that most resembles the Creator.

6th grade and up: We are “an expression of the eternal, incorporeal Creator in terms of temporal, bodily, creaturely existence.”

*Quoted from Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, 51.

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“On Man, In His Own Image Made”

* Available at www.cyberhymnal.org. Sing to the tune of “I Sing the Mighty Power of God.”

FURTHER STUDY

The Image of God in Humanity

Image Created	Genesis 1:26-27
Image Marred	Genesis 9:6; Ecclesiastes 7:29; James 3:9
Image Restored	Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- There are some who think that God is so radically different from us that it is impossible for us to relate to Him, think about Him, or talk about Him rightly. How does the fact that God created us in His image debunk that notion?
- God specifically connects this truth with the sin of murder (Genesis 9:6). Why is this so? How does the fact that God created us in His image cause us to value human life? How should we treat people—believers and unbelievers—in light of this reality?
- The image of God was not lost in us when Adam fell into sin. It has, however, been marred. How does Ecclesiastes 7:29 describe the way in which we run our own way? What “schemes” are you pursuing to find your satisfaction in something other than God?
- One of the beauties of our salvation is that God is progressively restoring His image in the lives of His children—something we refer to as “sanctification.” According to Romans 8:29, whose image is being restored in us? What glory does He receive by our sanctification? According to 2 Corinthians 3:18, which member of the Godhead is transforming us into Christ's image?
- Consider these words from the Christmas hymn “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”: “Adam's likeness now efface; stamp Thine image in its place. Second Adam from above, reinstate us in Thy love.” Take time as a family to thank Christ for living in your place, to praise the Spirit for His transformative work, and to ask God to continue restoring His image in you.

THEME SIX: God's View of You
Truth #3

QUESTION

Why did God create humanity?

ANSWER

God created us for His own glory.

MEMORY VERSE

Daniel 4:35

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and He does according to His will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and no one can stay His hand or say to Him, "What have you done?" ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Come, Christians, Join to Sing"

FURTHER STUDY

Isaiah 43

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In Isaiah 43, God declares that He is unique in His saving work. As you read through this passage, note every time that the Lord affirms the centrality of His glory as His motivation. For example, pay attention to phrases such as "for my glory" and "for my own sake." Take time as a family to praise God for His work in your behalf for His glory.
- Scripture affirms that God's redemption of His people brings Him glory in a unique way. Consider the following passages: Isaiah 43:6-7; Ephesians 1:3-14; Revelation 5:9-10. How should your life change in light of God's plan to bring Himself glory through you?
- Notice the last phrase of the first stanza to this week's hymn. It reads, "Praise is His gracious choice." What does this phrase mean? Why is praise His gracious choice? What other options did God have to bring Himself glory through you? Take time to praise Him for His grace to you.

THEME SIX: God's View of You
Truth #4

QUESTION

What is the chief end of man?

ANSWER

To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

MEMORY VERSE

Revelation 4:11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created." ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"To the Praise of His Glorious Grace"
Available at www.heritagebiblechurch.org

FURTHER STUDY

Glorify God	Enjoy Him Forever
Psalm 86	Psalm 16
1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31	Psalm 144:15
Revelation 4:11	Luke 2:10-11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The term *glory* in the New Testament refers to a thought or opinion. Glorifying God always starts in the mind: what do we think of when we think of God? On a piece of paper, draw a two-column chart with the headings "God's Greatness" and "God's Goodness." As a family, list as many attributes of God (e.g., His mercy, His justice, His faithfulness) as you can and write them in either one or the other column.
- Glorifying God always starts in the mind, but it does not end there. To glorify God, we must not only *think* right thoughts about God; we also must *express* right thoughts about God. These expressions may come through our words ("the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name") or through our actions ("whether you eat or drink"). Look through the list of attributes you made. How can you express these attributes of God's greatness and goodness through your words and actions?
- Nehemiah reminds us, "The joy of the Lord is our strength" (8:10). It is not merely the joy *from* the Lord that it is our strength; it is our joy *in* the Lord. You experience this every time your heart soars while you sing a favorite song, every time your soul draws comfort from a favorite biblical passage, every time your strength is renewed like the eagle's while you wait on God. Ask God to continue giving you grace that you might find your joy in Him. Ask Him to "satisfy you every morning with His steadfast love that you may rejoice and be glad all your days" (Psalm 90:14).

THEME SIX: God's View of You
Truth #5

QUESTION

What were Adam and Eve like when God created them?

ANSWER

God made them holy and happy. God was close to them, and they were close to God.

MEMORY VERSE

Ecclesiastes 7:29 See, this alone I have found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"God Made Me for Himself"

* Available at www.cyberhymnal.org. Sing to the tune of "Abide with Me."

FURTHER STUDY

How God Created Us

In His Own Image	Genesis 1:27
In Righteousness and Holiness	Ephesians 4:24
With God's Law on Our Hearts	Romans 2:14-15
With the Capability of Falling	Genesis 3:6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- It is hard to imagine a time when sin did not affect the thoughts, words, and actions of humanity. Sin has become such a part of our nature that it is difficult to contemplate what it would like to be free from it. Take time together as a family to think about what it would be like for Adam and Eve to carry out their responsibilities (Genesis 1:28) without the oppressive burden of sin. Let your meditation lead you to a time of repentance for the treachery of your own way.
- Why did God create humanity with the capability of sinning? What reasons come to mind? How do passages such as Romans 11:36 and Revelation 4:11 provide the ultimate answer to this question?

THEME SIX: God's View of You
Truth #6

QUESTION

How did Adam's sin affect the rest of the human race?

ANSWER

4-year-olds-1 st grade:	We all became sinners.
2 nd -5 th grades:	Adam's sin made all of his descendants sinners.
6 th grade and up:	Everyone descended from Adam by ordinary means sinned in him and fell with him in his first sin.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"And Can It Be"

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 5:12-21

vv. 12-14 The Reason People Die
vv. 15-17 The Contrast of Sin and Grace
vv. 18-21 The Contrast of Adam and Christ

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- According to Romans 5:13-14, what is the reason that people die? What does it mean for sin not to be counted against people when there is no Law (v. 13)? If sin is not counted against people without Law, then why do they still die (v. 14)? How does that prove that all humanity sinned in and fell with Adam?
- To understand vv. 15-17, draw a chart with two columns. Over one column, write Transgression; over the other, write Free Gift. Slowly think through these verses and identify the points of contrast that Paul identifies. In one sentence, how are Adam's transgression and Christ's free gift different? Take time to praise God for His grace to you in Christ.
- How is Adam a type of Christ (vv. 14, 18-19)? Why is it so important for us to understand and believe that Adam's sin made everyone a sinner? What is the parallel of that truth as it relates to Christ and the justified?

THEME SIX: God's View of You
Truth #7

QUESTION

What is sin?

ANSWER

4-year-olds-1st grade: Sin is disobedience against God.
2nd grade and up: Sin is any lack of conformity to or transgression of the law of God.

MEMORY VERSE

I John 3:4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ”

*Available at www.cyberhymnal.org

FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 5:17-48

vv. 17-20 The Requirement of Righteousness
vv. 21-26 Righteousness and Murder
vv. 27-32 Righteousness and Adultery
vv. 33-37 Righteousness and Oaths

vv. 38-42 Righteousness and Kindness
vv. 43-47 Righteousness and Enemies
v. 48 The Requirement of Perfection

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Take time to unfold these verses to your family. What is Christ doing with these words? Is He reassuring people that righteousness is attainable on their own? How do Christ's words cause us to recognize and confront our own sinfulness? As you talk through these verses with your family, be sure not to water down Christ's requirements. Let the full weight of our sinfulness fall on each one so that this passage takes us where Christ intends. Take time to repent of your sins together.
- How does Christ articulate our need of righteousness in verse 20? How does Christ articulate our need of righteousness in verse 48? What is our only hope to attain to that righteousness?

THEME SIX: God's View of You
Truth #8

QUESTION

What happened after the first sin?

ANSWER

4-year-olds-1st grade: Adam and Eve lost their relationship with God and earned death.
2nd -5th grade: Adam and Eve and all their descendants lost their relationship with God and earned death.
6th grade and up: Instead of being holy and happy, Adam and Eve and all their descendants lost their relationship with God, died spiritually, and must face eternal judgment in Hell.

MEMORY VERSE

I Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Adam, Our Father and Our Head”

*Available at www.cyberhymnal.org. Sing to the tune of “Sweet Hour of Prayer.”

FURTHER STUDY

The Effects of Adam's Sin

On our nature Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 2:3; Titus 1:5
On our actions Isaiah 64:6; John 8:34; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When we think about the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden, we sometimes wonder why they would transgress and even think that we wouldn't have sinned if we were in their position. How does both Scripture and our own experience prove that this is not true?
- What does it mean that “all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment” (Isaiah 64:6)? What hope does this offer us that we can reach God on our own merits? Take time with your children to help them understand the gravity of their sin and the consequent hopelessness of their position apart from Christ's free grace.
- Consider this week's hymn. How does it highlight the contrast between Adam's disobedience being imputed to all his descendants and Christ's obedience being imputed to all who believe? Take time to rejoice in Christ's righteousness credited to your account.

THEME SIX: God's View of You
Truth #9

QUESTION

Does God leave all people to die in their sin, guilt, and eternal judgment?

ANSWER

No, but in great mercy God pursues sinners to save them from sin, guilt, and eternal judgment.

MEMORY VERSE

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Grace is Flowing"

**Available in Majesty Hymns.*

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians 2:1-10

Our Fallen Condition	vv. 1-3
God's Saving Intervention	vv. 4-10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read through Ephesians 2:1-3 and list all the ways that Paul describes humanity apart from God. Teach your children what each of these words or phrases means (e.g., "dead in sin," "in which you walked," etc.). Show them how they stand objectively guilty before God. Take time together to confess your fallen condition before God.
- Hope enters with the first words of verse four: "But God." Who is the initiator of our redemption? How do these words prove that God pursues sinners? In what ways do we act as if our redemption hinges on us?
- Read through Ephesians 2:4-10 and list all the ways that Paul describes God's saving intervention. Take time to praise God for each one of these ways. You may want to take turns praying, each person taking one phrase to exalt God for his mercy.

THEME SIX: God's View of You
Truth #10

QUESTION

How has Adam's sin affected you?

ANSWER

4-year-olds-1 st grade:	I am a sinner by nature and by choice.
2 nd grade and up:	I am a sinner by nature and by choice. Unless God redeems me, I will suffer the penalty of sin forever.

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 2:3 Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Ye Sons of Adam, Vain and Young"

** Available at www.cyberhymnal.org. Sing to the tune of "Just As I Am."*

FURTHER STUDY

Revelation 20:11-15

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Our study for this week takes us into a most solemn contemplation: the doctrine of eternal punishment. As a parent, you will need great wisdom and grace from God to know how to teach your children this truth in a way that considers their age and spiritual condition. Your goal is not to frighten them, but to state to them in an age-appropriate way what the Scripture teaches. Our sin is so grievous and so worthy of wrath that an eternity is required for us to pay for it ourselves. While this truth is sobering, it magnifies God's grace to us expressed in the cross of Christ. Consequently, your children need to understand the doctrine of eternal punishment so that they might adore the person and work of Christ all the more. Take time to ask God to give you the wisdom and grace you need to address these matters with your children.
- Why does our sin demand an infinite punishment? What does it say about the nature of the One who has been sinned against?
- Is God right to be angry with sin (e.g., Romans 1:16)? Why?
- Scripture speaks of Christ being our *propitiation* (e.g., Romans 3:25). That term means "the satisfaction of God's just wrath." What hope does this offer the believer? Take time to praise God for His great mercy in pouring out His wrath on Christ for you.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law

Truth #1

QUESTION

What did Jesus say was the sum of all the Law?

ANSWER

4-year-olds-5th grade: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37, ESV).

6th grade and up: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40, ESV).

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 22:37-40 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"A Passion for Thee"

* Available in Majesty Hymns.

FURTHER STUDY

Two Great Commands

Love God (Matthew 22:37) Exodus 20:1-11

Love Others (Matthew 22:39)Exodus 20:12-17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The first four commandments (Exodus 20:1-11) are often referred to as the First Table of the Law. How do these commands begin to give shape to the command to love God? What distinction is God making between the first (Exodus 20:3) and the second (Exodus 20:4-6) commandments?
- The last six commandments (Exodus 20:12-17) are often referred to as the Second Table of the Law. How do these commands begin to give shape to the command to love others? Are you surprised by any of the six commands that God chose to include? Are there commands that you would have expected God to include in the Second Table? What does the inclusion of these six commands teach us about God and His demand that we love others?
- Meditating on the Law always reminds us of how far short of the glory of God we fall. Take time to repent of your failure to love God and others as you ought. As parents, model for your children the kind of repentance and faith in the Gospel (Mark 1:15) that you want them to demonstrate.
- Meditating on the Law should also remind us of what Christ has done in our place. Take time to praise the Lord Jesus for His humble incarnation and His righteous life that gives you the righteousness that you so desperately lack.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law

Truth #2

QUESTION

What are the first four of the Ten Commandments?

ANSWER

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>4-year-olds-1st grade:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Worship God alone. 2. Worship God in God's way. 3. Treat God's name with reverence. 4. Rest and worship on the Lord's Day. | <p>2nd grade and up:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You shall have no other gods before me. 2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image. 3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. 4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy |
|---|--|

SUGGESTED HYMN

"I Love You, Lord"

FURTHER STUDY

The First and Second Commandments (Exodus 20:3-6)

The first commandment (v. 3) teaches us that we are to love God by valuing Him above all else. The phrase "before me" means that nothing is to stand alongside of or be preferred above the One True God in our affections or adoration. God is to be worshiped exclusively. The second commandment (vv. 4-6) teaches us that we are to love God by viewing Him accurately. The point is not merely that the Israelites were not to worship graven images; they were not to worship graven images *that represented the LORD* (cp. Exodus 32:1-5, esp. v. 5). In other words, the first commandment tells us that we must worship the One True God, and the second commandment tells us *how* we are to worship Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does the first commandment teach us about the character of God? To help you answer this question, read 2 Kings 17:35-39; Psalm 96:4-5; and Jeremiah 7:6. What does this command teach us about fallen humanity? What people or things do you value above the One True God? Take time to repent of this sin and rejoice in Christ's perfect obedience to this commandment for you.
- Read Exodus 32. By what name did Aaron refer to the golden calf (v. 5)? How did this faithless act demonstrate the Israelites disobedience to the second commandment? How does God demand that we worship Him? To help you answer this question, read Psalm 95:1-2; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2; John 4:23-24; and 1 Timothy 4:13. How does your innovation (Leviticus 10:1), disobedience (1 Samuel 15:20-23), or reluctance (Malachi 1:13) in worship demonstrate your failure to worship God as He prescribes? Take time to repent of this sin and rejoice in Christ's perfect obedience to this commandment for you.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law

Truth #3

QUESTION

What do the first four commandments teach you?

ANSWER

The First Table of the Law teaches me what it means to love God.

MEMORY VERSE

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"I Love Thee, Lord Jesus"

FURTHER STUDY

The Third and Fourth Commandments (Exodus 20:7-11)

The third commandment (v. 7) teaches us that we are to love God by revering His name. The term *name* is more than a word by which we identify an individual. In the OT, names signify the character of that person. God's name is Yahweh (Ex. 6:2-3), translated in our versions as the LORD. This name emphasizes His independence (that is, He needs nothing in order to maintain His existence, Ex. 3:13-14) and His immutability (that is, He never changes and is always faithful to His promises; Ex. 6:4-8). Such magnificent revelation about our God demands that we treat His name respectfully. The fourth commandment (vv. 8-11) teaches us that we are to love God by resting and worshipping Him. The term *sabbath* simply means ceasing or stopping. God's rest on the seventh day of creation sets the pattern for us: He stopped working in order to enjoy His works. This is what we do on the Lord's Day.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The third commandment does not forbid us speaking the name of God, as the Jews eventually came to believe, but it does forbid a person taking His name lightly. How does Leviticus 19:12 apply this command? How would a statement like "as God is my witness" relate to this passage? How does the flippant use of "Hallelujah" demonstrate one's irreverence for God? Take time to confess any ways in which you fail to treat God's name with the respect it deserves. Why does God swear an oath by His own name (Heb. 6:13-18)? Take time to rejoice in His gracious determination to bless you, even when you fail.
- The fourth commandment was not given to bind God's children into a legalistic practice, but was made for our good (cf. Mk. 2:27). Why do we worship on Sundays instead of Saturdays (cf. Matt. 28:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10)? How did Christ fulfill this command for us (cf. Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 4:8-10; Rev. 14:13)?
- The first-century Jews multiplied Sabbath observances, creating a self-righteous, legalistic standard for everyone to follow. Christ's fulfillment of the Sabbath command, however, gives believers freedom to apply the principles of rest and worship differently from one another (Rom. 14:5; Col. 2:16-17). As a family, take time to consider how you should apply this principle in your home in order to reflect the rest that Christ has won for you.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law

Truth #4

QUESTION

What are the last six of the Ten Commandments?

ANSWER

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Honor your father and mother. | 3. You shall not commit adultery. | 5. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. |
| 2. You shall not murder. | 4. You shall not steal. | 6. You shall not covet. |

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Breathe on Me, Breath of God"

FURTHER STUDY

The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Commandments (Exodus 20:12-14)

The fifth commandment (v. 12) is the first that relates directly to our relationship with other people. We are called to love our neighbor by honoring our parents. *To honor* means to give weight to something or to esteem something as valuable. The Lord calls all of us—children in the home and adults out of the home—to treat their parents with respect, since the God who gave this command is the same God who gave us our parents. The sixth commandment (v. 13) teaches us to love our neighbor by valuing his life. The sin of murder rises from a heart of hatred, an attitude that Christ condemns and treats as equivalent to murder itself (Matthew 5:21-22). Scripture offers two reasons for this command: life is a gift from God (John 5:26; Acts 3:15; 1 Timothy 6:13) and humanity bears the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6). The seventh commandment (v. 14) teaches us to love our neighbor by maintaining moral purity. Humanity without God treats sexual immorality as though it were the quintessence of love—and regards sex within His boundaries as puritanical, boring, and unfulfilling. Our God teaches us, however, the exact opposite: sexual relations are an expression of love only in keeping with His good design.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it hard for us to esteem our parents as valuable? (Parents, as you discuss this with your children, answer this question yourself as it relates to your parents. If you have not honored your parents recently, take time to acknowledge your sin and confess it to the Lord.) What hope do we have from the life of Christ that we can honor our parents (cf. Luke 2:41-52)? How does His obedience in your place make your standing before God the Father unchanging?
- What Scripture passages help us understand that the sixth commandment does not include capital punishment? eating meat? war? killing in self-defense?
- Parents, if you have a pre-teen or teenager, this week's truth can open great opportunities for conversation about the nature of sex as God designed it. What is God's verdict on the world's notion that sex within God's boundaries is puritanical, boring, and unfulfilling (Proverbs 5:15-19)? How do Christ's words intensify the meaning of the seventh commandment (Matthew 5:27-30)? Are there any ways that you are seeking illicit sexual fulfillment? Take time to repent of the waywardness of your fallen heart and ask God for grace to follow Him.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law

Truth #5

QUESTION

What do the last six commandments teach you?

ANSWER

The Second Table of the Law teaches me what it means to love my neighbor.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 7:12 So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Blest Be the Tie that Binds”

FURTHER STUDY

The Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments (Exodus 20:15-17)

The eighth commandment (v. 15) teaches us to love our neighbor by valuing what is his. Far from taking other people's things, God calls us to give our possessions to meet the needs of others (2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Ephesians 4:28). The ninth commandment (v. 16) teaches us to love our neighbor by lovingly speaking the truth. The phrase *bear false witness* literally refers to answering with false testimony. Specifically, it refers to perjury, but the general prohibition is against lying. The tenth commandment teaches us to love our neighbor by trusting Providence. Since the Lord is the One who is shepherding us, we suffer no lack (Psalm 23:1). Consequently, coveting other people's possessions reflects a lack of trust in our good and wise God who has given us what we have.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- According to Paul, what is so dangerous about the love of money that he would call it a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10b)? In what ways do you struggle with the love of money? How does our giving to those in need reflect the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 8:9)? As we approach the Christmas season, take time as a family to think of needy individuals and/or families and create ways that you might be able to help them this year.
- The book of Proverbs offers many different categories of words that are off-limits: lying (6:17; 12:17; 14:25), deception (4:24; 12:5), perversity (8:13; 10:31-32; 15:4), gossip (16:28; 17:9; 26:20), harsh words (15:1), violent words (10:11; 12:6), and many words (10:19; 13:3). Take time to think through these categories and ask God's Spirit to reveal where you have fallen in any of these ways. Rejoice in Christ's being the Faithful Witness who lovingly speaks the truth in your place (1 John 2:1-2; Revelation 1:5).
- How does the tenth commandment demonstrate the OT Law was not merely concerned with external behavior but with internal sins of the heart? How does it serve as a bookend to the Decalogue when compared to the first commandment (cp. Ephesians 5:5)? What warning does Paul give in Ephesians 5:5 to the covetous person? Take time to repent of any covetousness in your heart and ask God for the grace to trust Him to know what is best for your life.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law

Truth #6

QUESTION

Why did God give us the Law?

ANSWER

To convict us of sin, to drive us to Christ, and to instruct us in life.

MEMORY VERSE

Galatians 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Before the Throne of God Above”

**text available at www.cyberhymnal.org.*

FURTHER STUDY

God's Purposes for the Law

To Convict Us of Sin	Matthew 5:48; James 2:10; Deuteronomy 30:15-18; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:19-20
To Drive Us to Christ	Romans 3:21-26; 5:18-21
To Instruct Us in Life	Romans 7:13-25; 8:3-4, 9-11, 28-30

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The Jews during the time of Christ identified 613 different commands in the Old Testament. Yet during Christ's earthly ministry, He said that all of the Old Testament laws could be summarized in two. What are those two great commands (Matthew 22:36-40)? Since the command to love summarizes God's moral will, what do we learn about the character of God from these two commands?
- God demands perfect obedience to His law (Matthew 5:48). What penalty awaits those who fail to keep His law perfectly (Deuteronomy 30:15-18; Galatians 3:10)? Is it possible for you to live up to this standard?
- Since you are a lawbreaker, what hope do you have of avoiding God's penalty (Romans 3:21-26)? What does the term *propitiation* mean (v. 25)? For whom has God's wrath been satisfied (Romans 3:26)?
- Even though Christ has taken our punishment, God could not consider us righteous unless Someone had lived in our place. Notice the contrast between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:18-19. On what basis are believers considered righteous?
- As a family, take time to rejoice in Christ's life of perfect law-keeping as well as His sacrificial death, both of which He did in your place.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law

Truth #7

QUESTION

What did Jesus' perfect obedience accomplish for us?

ANSWER

Because Jesus obeyed the Law perfectly, all who believe in Him are counted righteous before God.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 5:19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness"

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 4:1-8

- | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| vv. 1-3 | The Example of Abraham |
| vv. 4-5 | The Justification of the Ungodly |
| vv. 6-8 | The Example of David |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- One classic definition of *justification* affirms that it is "that act of God's free grace whereby He pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone" (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 33). You'll notice there are five parts to that definition. As a family, take time to locate Scriptural passages that affirm each part of that definition of justification.
- Why does Paul bring up the example of Abraham (Romans 4:1-3)? How do we know that Abraham was justified by faith, not by works? What Old Testament passage does Paul cite in his defense (v. 3)? Since we are justified by faith and not by works, what response does that exclude (v. 2)? Take time humbly to confess your thanksgiving to God for justifying you by faith and to repent of any boasting you may have in your own self-righteousness.
- Notice the contrast between the person in verse four and the person in verse five. How is their activity different? How is their result different? This passage offers you a great opportunity as a parent to ask your children individually which category of people they fit into. Take time this week to do so.
- Why does Paul bring up the example of David (Romans 4:7-8). How does David describe the one who is justified by faith? What Old Testament passage does Paul cite in his defense (vv. 7-8)? Take time to rejoice in the blessing of forgiven sins and imputed righteousness.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law

Truth #8

QUESTION

Can we get to heaven by trying really hard to obey all of the Ten Commandments?

ANSWER

No. Since we cannot obey the Law perfectly, no one can earn heaven by keeping the Law.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 3:20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Rock of Ages"

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 3:9-18

In this passage, the apostle Paul reaches his conclusion regarding human nature: we are all sinners, our religious background notwithstanding. Beginning in verse ten, he strings together a series of quotations from the Old Testament that verifies his thesis. Using a good reference Bible or a resource like *The Treasure of Scripture Knowledge*, take time as a family to identify the location of these quotations. Then, look up the Old Testament references, read the surrounding verses, and identify what truths about human nature each passage teaches.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Many of our unbelieving friends are similar to the Gentiles that Paul talks about in Romans 1:18-32. They have little to no knowledge of God, care little about His Word, and live lives marked by reckless self-centeredness. What keeps such people from turning from their sin to God? Considering Paul's example in Romans, how can we present the Gospel to them in such a way that they are attracted to Christ?
- Other unbelievers we know are similar to the Jews that Paul talks about in Romans 2. They are very religious, seem to possess some measure of knowledge about God, and are law-keeping, moral, upstanding people. What keeps such people from turning from their sin to God? Considering Paul's example in Romans, how can we present the Gospel to them in such a way that they are attracted to Christ?
- Of those two categories (religious and irreligious), which is the likelier danger for your children? What steps can you as parents take to confront their self-righteousness and urge them to set their hope in Christ alone?

THEME SEVEN: God's Law
Truth #9

QUESTION

Does God give us the Law to keep us from enjoying life?

ANSWER

No. God gave us the Law for our good.

MEMORY VERSE

Deuteronomy 6:24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as we are this day. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Break Thou the Bread of Life”

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 119

The message of Psalm 119 is the blessings of the Word of God. Almost every verse teaches us something about His revelation to humanity. With your family this week, take time to read through the psalm and identify the promised blessings that come through God's Word. As you list these promises, teach your family the truth of Deuteronomy 6:24, that the Lord gave us His Word for “our good always.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was the first law (command) ever given? How did Satan tempt Adam and Eve to think about this law? How does Satan try to get us to think that God's laws are for our detriment, not our benefit? Parents, think through this question carefully for yourselves and answer it transparently for your children. This may open up some wonderful opportunities to disciple them.
- What specific commands of God are you struggling with? How are you thinking that these commands are designed to kill your pleasure rather than increase your joy? Take time to repent of thinking that God is not good and ask God to help you see His goodness reflected in His commands.

THEME SEVEN: God's Law
Truth #10

QUESTION

What should be your attitude toward God because He has given the Law?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: I should be thankful that God has revealed Himself to me.
2nd-5th grades: I should be thankful that God has revealed Himself to me through the Law.
6th grade and up: I should be thankful that God has revealed Himself to me through the Law, broken over my own sinfulness, and joyful because of the provision of Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 119:97 Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Nothing But the Blood”

FURTHER STUDY

Since this is the last week of our study on God's Law, take time to review what you have learned. Return to Exodus 20 where Moses records the Ten Commandments. Think through the First Table (first through fourth commandments) and the Second Table (fifth through tenth commandments) of the Law. Remind yourself how these are the first-level applications of the two great commands (Matthew 22:34-40). Consider Paul's words in Romans 5:12-20 about the role of Christ's righteousness in the believer's salvation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The Law is intended to convict you of sin. As you look over the Ten Commandments, what particular areas of weakness do you see in your own life? How do these sins of your heart manifest themselves in real life? Take time to acknowledge your sin to the Lord, agreeing with God about the nature of your sin, and asking for His merciful forgiveness.
- The Law is intended to drive you to Christ. Look at the Ten Commandments again. How did Christ fulfill each of those commands? Take time to rejoice in His righteousness credited to your account.
- The Law is intended to guide you in life. Look one final time at the Ten Commandments. What practical steps can you take to live out the Law of God that has been written on your hearts (Hebrews 8:5-13)? Ask God to give you the grace to demonstrate in practice what you already are in Christ.

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #1

QUESTION

Who is Jesus Christ?

ANSWER

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God become man.

MEMORY VERSE

John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

FURTHER STUDY

John 1:1-18

vv.1-2	Before Creation	vv. 6-8	The Ministry of John the Baptist
vv. 3-4	Creation	vv. 9-18	The Incarnation of Christ
v. 5	The Fall		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The first eighteen verses of John offer a sweeping overview of thousands of years. Beginning with the relationship of Father and Son in eternity past, the apostle unfolds the person and work of the Son in remarkable terms. Take time to meditate prayerfully on these verses and jot down every truth about Christ that you find.
- The three phrases of John 1:1 reveal three different attributes of the Son of God. What are those three attributes? (For additional help, you may wish to listen to Kevin Bauder’s sermon, “O Come Let Us Adore Him.” Dr. Bauder is the president of Central Baptist Seminary in Minneapolis. This sermon is available at <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=8306131727>).
- Given that these things are true about the Son, why is it so remarkable that He became a man? (See also Philippians 2:5-8.) Take time to worship Christ for His humble condescension to us.

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #2

QUESTION

Who is the only Mediator between God and man?

ANSWER

Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and man.

MEMORY VERSE

I Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“There is a Redeemer”

FURTHER STUDY

The Covenants in Scripture

Adam	Genesis 3:14-19	Jacob	Genesis 28:10-17
Noah	Genesis 9	Moses	Exodus 19:1-6
Abraham	Genesis 12:1-3; 15; 22:15-18	David	2 Samuel 7:1-17
Isaac	Genesis 26:1-5	The New Covenant	Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The covenants in Scripture are not random promises that God made with people over the years. They are a progressive unfolding of the person and work to be fulfilled in the Messiah. Take time to read through each of these passages. Pay careful attention to any descriptions of Christ that they reveal.
- Genesis 3:15 is often called the protevangelium, or the first mention of the gospel. What is revealed about the Coming Messiah? What does this passage teach us about the nature of the atonement? In particular, was the hope of Old Testament believers to be placed in a person or the sacrificial system? How should this truth impact the way we read the Old Testament?
- As you read through Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8, list all the blessings that Christ has won for us because of His perfect work as the Mediator of the New Covenant. Knowing that you could never stand before God because of your sin, take time as a family to praise Christ for representing you before the Father.

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #3

QUESTION

Is Jesus Christ God?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: Yes.

2nd grade and up: Yes. Jesus Christ is the uncreated, eternal, loving God.

MEMORY VERSE

Titus 2:13 Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

FURTHER STUDY

John 8:12-59

“I am the Light of the World” (v. 12)		
Verses	The Jews’ Argument	Jesus’ Response
13-20	Jesus’ self-testimony is insufficient.	The Father testifies to Me.
21-30	Jesus acts on His own authority.	The Father gives Me authority.

“The truth will set you free” (vv. 31-32)		
Verses	The Jews’ Argument	Jesus’ Response
33-38	We are already free.	You are a slave to sin, just like your father.
39-47	Abraham is our father.	The devil is your father.
48-51	You have a demon.	Keep My Word, and you will not die.
52-58	Are you greater than Abraham?	Before Abraham was, I am.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Carefully follow the discourse in John 8. This is one of the strongest passages in the Gospels where Jesus affirms that He is God. How does the Jews’ reaction (v. 59) demonstrate that Jesus’ statement (v. 58) was an affirmation of deity?
 - Consider the words to the familiar Christmas hymn, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” As a family, try to identify every affirmation of Christ’s deity that Charles Wesley makes. Read the hymn a second time and answer this question: since Jesus is God, what benefits was He able to procure for us? Take time to praise Christ for His deity and for His work on your behalf.

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #4

QUESTION

Is Jesus Christ a man?

ANSWER

Yes. Jesus Christ is the only sinless Man Who has ever lived.

MEMORY VERSE

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“All My Heart This Night Rejoices”

**Available at www.cyberhymnal.org*

FURTHER STUDY

Hebrews 2:10-18

Christ entered into our suffering (vv. 10-13).

- His saving work (v. 10)
- His sanctifying work (v. 11a)
- His assuring work (vv. 11b-13)

Christ entered into our humanity (vv. 14-18).

- To destroy Satan (v. 14)
- To liberate us (vv. 15-16)
- To propitiate God (v. 17)
- To help us (v. 18)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In Hebrews 2:11b-13, the author cites three Old Testament prophecies. Where in the Old Testament are those prophecies found? What is the context of each one? How do those quotations reassure us that Christ is not a reluctant Savior, but joyfully stands as our Elder Brother? Take time to rejoice in Christ’s willingness to be identified with you.
- According to verse 17, was Jesus’ full humanity necessary to His redemptive work? Why?
- Does Jesus’ sinlessness make Him less human than fallen humanity? Or, to put it another way, is it true that “to err is human”? Consider especially verse 18 as you wrestle with this question. What impact does this knowledge have on our understanding of the image of God in man (Genesis 1:27)? the doctrine of sanctification (2 Corinthians 3:18)? our hope of glorification (1 John 3:2)?
- Is Jesus still both God and man? As you think through this question, consider Hebrews 7:23-26 and the doctrine of the resurrection. What difference does this fact make for our salvation?

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #5

QUESTION

What kind of death did Christ die?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: Christ died a painful, shameful death on the cross.
2nd grade and up: Christ was nailed to a cross for our sins, and His blood was shed. The death of the cross was both painful and shameful.

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“O Sacred Head Now Wounded”

FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 26:47-27:61

26:47-56 The Betrayal
26:57-68 The Trial before Caiaphas
26:69-76 Peter’s Denial
27:1-10 The Conspirators

27:11-26 The Trial before Pilate
27:27-56 The Crucifixion
27:57-61 The Burial

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week’s study forces us to consider the darkest chapter in human history: the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. As you prepare to read through Matthew’s account, take time as a family to pray that the Lord would open your eyes and soften your hearts as you consider the magnitude of what He did on your behalf.
- As you study this passage, jot down the ways that the Scriptures teach the following things: Christ’s shed blood, Christ’s pain, Christ’s shame, Christ’s real humanity, Christ’s real deity.
- Why did Jesus have to die (1 Peter 3:18)? Take time to praise Him for humbling Himself, coming to earth, and dying for your sins.

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #6

QUESTION

Did Jesus rise from the dead?

ANSWER

Yes. Jesus’ bodily resurrection is at the heart of the Gospel.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Christ the Lord is Risen Today”

FURTHER STUDY

1 Corinthians 15:1-10

vv. 1-2 Descriptions of the Gospel
vv. 3-4 Definition of the Gospel
vv. 5-8 Attestations of the Gospel
vv. 9-10 Paul and the Gospel

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Try to identify the four phrases that Paul uses to describe the Gospel in verses 1-2. How should the first phrase affect a pastor’s philosophy of ministry? How should the second phrase affect your understanding of conversion? How should the third phrase affect your understanding of assurance? How should the fourth phrase affect your understanding of sanctification? In the middle of verse 2, what responsibility does Paul place on you? Why is this responsibility so important?
- Paul speaks of the Gospel in terms of three works of Christ (vv. 3-4). What are those works? Why are these matters “of first importance” for the Christian faith?
- Why does Paul offer a litany of individuals who saw Jesus after His resurrection (vv. 5-8)? How does this kind of attestation substantiate the claims of Christianity? How does the vast number of testimonies demonstrate the importance of the resurrection to Paul?
- Why did Paul refer to himself as “one untimely born,” “the least of the apostles,” and “unworthy to be called an apostle” (vv. 8-9)? What attribute of God overcame Paul’s sinfulness and brought him to Christ (v. 10)? Take time as a family to rejoice in the grace of God for you. Acknowledge your sinfulness and unworthiness and offer praise to God for His saving intervention in your lives.

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #7

QUESTION

What is Jesus Christ doing right now?

ANSWER

4-years-old – 1st grade: He is at God the Father's right hand.
2nd-5th grades: He is seated at God the Father's right hand, interceding and preparing a place for all God's children.
6th grade and up: He is seated at God the Father's right hand, interceding and preparing a place for all God's children, and governing the universe for the glory of God and the good of His people.

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 22:69 But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Look, Ye Saints! The Sight is Glorious"

FURTHER STUDY

Hebrews 1:1-4	v. 3	The Reflection
v. 2		The Imprint
The Heir		The Sustainer
The Creator		The Priest
		The King

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As you consider Hebrews 1:2-3, help your family see the work of Christ throughout time and eternity by drawing a timeline. Mark the beginning of time, the end of time, and (in the middle of history) the cross. Think through each one of the seven works of Christ above and plot them on your timeline. (Hint: you should end up with two before time, one at the beginning of time, one throughout time, one at the cross, one immediately after the cross, and one at the end of time.)
- The theological term for Jesus' "sitting down" (v. 3) is His session. Why is Jesus' session so important that the writer of Hebrews mentions it in this list of His works? Or, to put it another way, what does His sitting down signify?
- Hebrews 7:25 teaches us that Jesus is praying for His people. According to the first part of this verse, what is the result of His always living to make intercession for us? Take time to praise Christ for His faithful work today for you.

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #8

QUESTION

Why is it so important that we believe Christ rose from the dead?

ANSWER

If Christ had not risen from the dead, we would still be in our sins.

MEMORY VERSE

I Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"

FURTHER STUDY

1 Corinthians 15:12-28

vv. 12-19 If Jesus Had Not Risen
vv. 20-28 But Jesus Has Risen

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week's question has many more answers than just the one given above. Read through 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 and list all the conclusions Paul reaches if it is true that Christ had not risen from the dead.
- Why is it that "we are of all people most to be pitied" if there is no resurrection (v. 19)? After discussing this question, consult some reliable commentaries for further guidance (e.g., Matthew Henry, Charles Hodge, Gordon Fee).
- Verses 21-22 are some of the clearest that depict all humanity as either "in Adam" or "in Christ" (cf. Romans 5:12-21). Compare these two passages and then contrast those who are in Adam with those who are in Christ.
- Why does Paul call Christ "the firstfruits" (v. 23)? How does this term help us understand the importance of Christ's resurrection for our own eternal destiny?

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #9

QUESTION

Does Jesus love people?

ANSWER

Yes, He wept for people, prayed for people,
and gave His life for people.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 9:36 When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“O, the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus”

FURTHER STUDY

Jesus' Compassion

Matthew 9:35-38	Compassion on the Helpless and Harassed
Matthew 14:13-21	Compassion on the Sick and Hungry
Mark 9:14-29	Compassion on the Demon-Possessed
Luke 7:11-17	Compassion on the Grieving

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In each of these four stories, Jesus had compassion on people, a compassion that moved Him to action. As you read these passages, consider what actions Jesus took for the individuals in need. Take time to rejoice in Christ's great compassion on you and His willingness to be moved to action on your behalf.
- Romans 8:31-39 is a passage that particularly underscores God's great love. Look especially at v. 32, where God's giving of His own Son is cited as evidence that He will love us until the end. Take time to consider these words, perhaps committing them to memory as a family.
- Christians are often tempted to doubt the love of Christ for them because of their sin. Richard Sibbes, an early seventeenth-century pastor, addressed this matter in a book entitled *The Bruised Reed*. He writes, “When we are troubled in conscience for our sins, Satan's manner is then to present Christ to the afflicted soul as a most severe judge armed with justice against us. But then let us present him to our souls as offered to our view by God Himself, holding a sceptre of mercy, and spreading His arms to receive us” (62). Take time to repent of your sin and return to the merciful arms of your Savior.

THEME EIGHT: Jesus Christ

Truth #10

QUESTION

How should these truths about Jesus Christ affect you?

ANSWER

I should repent of my sin, believe in Him, and rejoice that He has made His gospel known to me.

MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 13:15 Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“A Debtor to Mercy Alone”

FURTHER STUDY

Responses to Jesus

Simeon	Luke 2:25-35
Anna	Luke 2:36-38
John the Baptist	John 1:29-34
Nicodemus	John 3:1-21; 7:45-52; 19:38-42
The Samaritan Woman	John 4:1-42

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week's study consists of five passages where God records what happened to five different people when they met Jesus. Take time to read these stories and write down the various responses you discover. How does Christ intend to bring about those same responses in you?
- One cannot meet Jesus without being confronted by one's own sin. Consider Peter's reaction in Luke 5:8 and the reaction of the woman at the well in John 4:39. If you are harboring sin in your heart unrepentantly, you are hiding from Christ and the light of His Word (1 John 1:5-7). Take time to consider your sin in light of the Savior, confess your sin, and turn away from it.
- The apostle John instructs us that meeting Jesus demands that we respond either in faith or disbelief (John 3:16-18; 20:30-31). Everyone who is confronted with the reality of who Jesus is must decide whether He is or is not trustworthy. As you interact with your family this week, take time to ask your children why Jesus is worthy of being trusted. Guide them to a fuller confidence in who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for them.
- Those who respond to Jesus with repentance and faith cannot help but be glad in the gospel of Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:6). As a family, select some of your favorite songs about the work of Christ on your behalf and rejoice in His grace to you.

THEME NINE: God's Gift–Salvation

Truth #1

QUESTION

What is salvation?

ANSWER

- 4-year-olds – 1st grade: Salvation is the gift God gives to all who believe in Jesus.
2nd-5th grades: Salvation is the gift God gives to all who believe in Jesus, whereby they are born again and forgiven of their sins.
6th grade and up: Salvation is the gift God gives to all who believe in Jesus, whereby they are born again, forgiven of their sins, declared righteous by God, transformed into Christ's image, and finally glorified to live with Christ forever.

MEMORY VERSE

Jonah 2:9b Salvation belongs to the LORD! ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Complete in Him”

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 5:6-11

vv. 6-8 The reason for Christ's death

vv. 9-11 The benefits of Christ's death

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- We begin a ten-week study of soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. Our question, answer, hymn, and Scripture passage all include various blessings under the umbrella term *salvation*. It is easy for us to gloss over words like *justified*, *redeemed*, and *forgiven* without giving attention to what we are reading. As you meditate on this week's truth, take time to think about the blessings God has given you in salvation. In order to help your meditation, you might consider referencing a book by Alan Cairns entitled *A Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald, 2002).
- Notice Paul's argument in Romans 5:6-8. What is the main thought of verse six? According to verse seven, how typical is it for one person to die for another? Under what circumstances is it more likely that one would die for another? How does the truth of verse seven magnify the greatness of God's love (v. 8)?
- In verse nine, Paul identifies one action that God did for us in the past and one action that God will do for us in the future. What are those two actions? On what basis is Paul confident that the future action will take place? In verse ten, Paul identifies one action that God did for us in the past and one action that God will do for us in the future? What are those two actions? On what basis is Paul confident that the future action will take place? Take time to address the matter of assurance of salvation with your children. They *will be saved* because they *have been justified* (v. 9). They *will be saved* because they *have been reconciled* (v. 10).

THEME NINE: God's Gift–Salvation

Truth #2

QUESTION

In Whom must we trust to forgive our sins and to make us fit for heaven?

ANSWER

We must trust the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

MEMORY VERSE

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“The Solid Rock”

FURTHER STUDY

Acts 4

vv. 1-4 The Arrest of Peter and John

vv. 5-12 The Testimony of Peter and John

vv. 13-22 The Decision of the Religious Rulers

vv. 25-31 The Prayer of the Believers

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Skim through Acts 3. What events transpired that set the context for chapter 4? In one sentence, how would you summarize Peter's sermon (3:12-26)?
- Why were the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees angry with Peter and John (4:2)? What line of questioning did the religious leaders take with Peter and John (4:7)? How does Peter's answer show the exclusivity of Christ (i.e., that there is no one like Him)? Take time to apply the truth of Acts 4:12 to your children. Explain that there is no one else in the world (whether politician or religious leader or friend) in whom we can ultimately place our trust or hope for anything.
- The religious leaders noticed that Peter and John were not educated according to worldly standards. What did they recognize about them (4:13)? Take time to emphasize to your children the importance of spending time with Jesus.
- The work of Christ should always drive us to prayer, even as it did for the believers in Acts 4. Take time to pray together as a family. Commit yourself to the trustworthy hands of this Sovereign (vv. 24-28) and ask Him to work mightily on your behalf for the sake of His name (vv. 29-30).

THEME NINE: God's Gift--Salvation

Truth #3

QUESTION

What must we do in order to have our sins forgiven and receive eternal life?

ANSWER

We must be converted by repenting from sin and trusting in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

Mark 1:14-15 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"

FURTHER STUDY

Repentance and Faith

Repentance and faith have often been described as two sides of the coin of conversion. *Repentance* emphasizes turning away from sin, while *faith* emphasizes turning toward God. The two are often connected in Scripture (e.g., Isaiah 55:6-7; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- One cannot read the New Testament without recognizing the role of faith as the means by which Christians are saved. Lead your family through the following familiar passages: John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:8-9. In each passage, what is the object of saving faith?
- Saving faith is more than agreeing that something is true. In Scripture, it includes *knowledge* of the person and work of Christ (Romans 10:14), *assent* to those truths about Christ (John 3:2; Acts 26:27-28), and *personal confidence* in Christ to save me (John 1:12; 6:37). Take time with your family to ask if they not only know and assent to certain truths about Christ, but if they are staking their own hopes for eternal life in Christ alone.
- The importance of repentance in the New Testament is no less significant. After His resurrection, Christ expected to proclaim the message of "repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Luke 24:46-47). And this is precisely what they did (Acts 3:19; 5:31; 17:30). Paul also emphasizes repentance as that which "leads to salvation" (2 Corinthians 7:10; cf. Romans 2:4). As you meditate on these passages, consider your own attitude toward sin. Do you sense an inner hatred for it, or are you content to dabble in sin without much pang of conscience? Are you actively turning from your sin whenever the Spirit points it out, or do you silence the Spirit's convicting work and go on in your sin? It has been rightly said that genuine Christians are "once saved, always repenting." Take time to repent of your sin and refresh your heart in the saving grace of Christ.

THEME NINE: God's Gift--Salvation

Truth #4

QUESTION

What is saving faith?

ANSWER

- 4-year-olds – 1st grade: Saving faith is a gift of God that makes us trust in Christ.
- 2nd-5th grades: Saving faith is a gift of God that makes us trust in the person and work of Christ alone for salvation.
- 6th grade and up: Saving faith is a gift of God's grace by which the believer knows, assents to, and rests in the person and work of Christ alone for the forgiveness of one's sins and the hope of eternal life.

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"In Christ Alone"

FURTHER STUDY

James 2:14-26

- False Faith vv. 14-20
- Saving Faith vv. 21-26

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week's study has perplexed believers over the centuries. The question that arises in believers' minds is this: do the words of James contradict Paul's teaching in Romans 3:21-28? Even the great Reformer, Martin Luther, wondered whether the Roman Church sabotaged the canon of Scripture by including James in the New Testament. (Eventually he concluded that James was, in fact, rightly included in the New Testament and included it in his German Bible.) The question can be answered by carefully studying James's inspired words.
- Note the phrase "that faith" (v. 14b). The apostle is referring to a certain type of faith. How does he describe this kind of faith (vv. 14a, 15-17)? How is this kind of faith similar to the faith of demons (v. 19)? Why is the description "False Faith" (see above) appropriate for this kind of faith? What is the danger of false faith? Take time to consider whether you or anyone in your family fits this description.
- Verses 21-22 demonstrate that a saving faith is a faith that ultimately produces works in keeping with one's profession. Notice in verse 21 that James refers to a scene in Abraham's life when he was no less than 105 years old (Genesis 22). When Paul uses Abraham to defend justification by faith alone in Romans 4:1-3, he points to a scene in Abraham's life when he was about 75 years old (Genesis 15). James's point, then, is that the faith that saved Abraham eventually produced good works. His works did not save him, but they proved that his faith was genuine and saving. Again, take time to consider whether your profession and that of your family is producing works in keeping with your stated belief. This could be a great opportunity for you to challenge your children to holiness.

THEME NINE: God's Gift--Salvation

Truth #5

QUESTION

What is repentance?

ANSWER

4-year-olds – 1st grade: Repentance is a gift of God that makes us turn from sin.
2nd-5th grades: Repentance is a gift of God that makes us turn from sin and turn to Christ.
6th grade and up: Repentance is a gift of God that changes our thoughts, desires, and feelings toward sin so that we turn from it and turn to Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“I Hear Thy Welcome Voice”

FURTHER STUDY

What Repentance Changes

Changed Thoughts	Isaiah 55:6-7
Changed Feelings	2 Corinthians 7:8-11
Changed Desires	1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The New Testament term for *repent* refers to a change of mind. Thus we should not be surprised when Scripture speaks of repentance as changing our thinking concerning sin. How does Isaiah 55:6-7 emphasize this truth? What is the “way” or the “thoughts” that we must forsake? How does this passage help us understand Proverbs 3:5-6?
- To define *repentance* as nothing more than a change of mind is not sufficient, since the New Testament describes an emotional aspect of repentance as well. Carefully read 2 Corinthians 7:8-11. What evidence is there that repentance involves a change of emotions (a change of heart, so to speak)? What particular emotion produces repentance? Why would Paul identify that emotion as it relates to our sin?
- Simply grieving over the consequences of sin is not the same as repentance. Consider the sad testimony of Esau in Hebrews 12:15-17. How does this text prove that one can be changed emotionally, and yet not repent?
- Just as repentance changes one’s mind and emotions, it changes one’s will as well. That is, the change of mind and heart that one has concerning sin causes that person to turn from it. This is the teaching of 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10. How did the change of direction manifest itself for the Thessalonian believers? How has this kind of repentance demonstrated itself in you and your family? Take time to rejoice in your repentance as a gift of God to you (2 Timothy 2:25) for your ultimate salvation.

THEME NINE: God's Gift--Salvation

Truth #6

QUESTION

What is the Gospel?

ANSWER

4-year-olds – 1st grade: The Gospel is the good news that Jesus lived, died, and lives again for me.
2nd-5th grades: The Gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death, and lives again to save those who draw near to God through Him.
6th grade and up: The Gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life in our place, died a substitutionary death in our place, and lives again to save those who draw near to God through Him.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 15:3b-4 That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“God in the Gospel of His Son”

FURTHER STUDY

Paul’s Experience of the Gospel

In 1 Timothy 1:12-17 Paul shares his testimony of how God converted him from a Christian-hating persecutor of the church to a Christ-loving apostle for the church. He introduces his testimony by speaking of “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (v. 11). Verses twelve through seventeen share Paul’s experience with this glorious gospel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does Paul describe his state before he was saved (1 Timothy 1:13, 15)? List and define the various terms he uses. Compare this passage with Philippians 3:4-6, another place where Paul describes his former life. Do these two testimonies contradict one another? How do the two passages help to define one another so that we are left with a fuller picture of Paul’s pre-conversion state? Consider your own situation. How is your self-righteousness (like Paul’s in Philippians 3:4-6) really a kind of blasphemy (like Paul’s in 1 Timothy 1:13)? Challenge your family to recognize the deceitful, deadly nature of our self-righteousness.
- How does Paul describe the character and work of God in every verse of the 1 Timothy passage? List and define the various terms he uses. Take time to rejoice in God’s gracious work to turn you from your sin, overwhelm you with His mercy, and transform you into His child.

THEME NINE: God's Gift–Salvation

Truth #7

QUESTION

Why does God save us from our sin?

ANSWER

To showcase His glory by redeeming a people for Himself.

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 43:25

I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Great God of Wonders”

FURTHER STUDY

The Glory of God on Display in Salvation

Romans 3:26 His righteousness

Romans 9:22-24 His wrath, power, and the riches of His glory

Ephesians 2:7 The surpassing riches of His grace

1 Timothy 1:16 His perfect patience

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Christians often teach the great blessings that we receive because of salvation, and well we should! The free forgiveness of sins, the right to be sons and daughters of God, the prospect of eternity with Him—all these and much more give us great cause to rejoice in what God has done for us in salvation. But Scripture teaches that God not only works for our good; ultimately God works for His own glory. In redeeming fallen humanity God puts His own greatness and goodness on display for all to see.
- Consider Romans 3:26. What is so amazing about God being both “just and the justifier” of those who believe in Christ? What did God have to do in order to be the justifier? What did He have to do in order to maintain His justice? Take time to praise God for demonstrating His perfect righteousness in your salvation.
- Read Romans 9:22-24. These verses teach us difficult truths. What does God display about Himself in the condemnation of the lost? What does God display about Himself in the redemption of the saved? Take time to pray for unbelievers, asking God to be gracious in their lives so that they might glorify Him by their eternal salvation.
- 1 Timothy 1:16 gives us Paul’s testimony about his own salvation. Why is Paul’s life a good example of Christ’s perfect patience with sinners? Take time to rejoice in Christ’s patient dealings toward you.
- Finally, consider Ephesians 2:7. This verse shows us that the Lord will use the redeemed to demonstrate one aspect of God’s glory forever. What is God displaying? Set your hearts on the hope that lies before you: the prospect of glorifying and enjoying God forever.

THEME NINE: God's Gift–Salvation

Truth #8

QUESTION

Can anyone ever lose true salvation?

ANSWER

No. Nobody who is truly saved can lose his salvation.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Blessed Assurance”

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 8:18-39

vv. 18-25 Awaiting Final Redemption
vv. 26-30 Aided by the Spirit’s Help
vv. 31-39 Assured by the Love of Christ

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week’s truth reminds us of the faithfulness and love of our God. Romans 8 is a tremendous passage to consider along these lines.
- In verse 32 Paul argues from the greater to the lesser. What is the greater thing that God has done for us? What does Paul conclude based on that fact? How does this bring confidence to our hearts when we are tempted to doubt Him in the face of great need?
- In verses 33-34 Paul asks two questions. What are those questions? What are his answers? Why do you think his answers refer to God’s work and not ours? How does this bring confidence to our hearts when we are tempted to doubt Him in the face of our own sin?
- Consider the list of opponents we face in verses 38-39. Paul uses a technique called *merismus*, linking two terms that are polar opposites (e.g., life and death) in order to designate the whole. List the couplets that Paul uses. What kinds of challenges confront us in these areas of life? What hope does Paul offer us? How does this bring confidence to our hearts when we are tempted to doubt Him in the face of extreme adversity?

THEME NINE: God's Gift–Salvation

Truth #9

QUESTION

How can God justly declare sinners righteous?

ANSWER

4-year-olds – 1st grade: God accepts all who believe in Jesus as righteous in His sight.
2nd grade and up: Having poured out His wrath for sin on Christ, God accepts all those who believe in Jesus as righteous in His sight.

MEMORY VERSE

Philippians 3:9 [May I] be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“I Stand Amazed in the Presence”

FURTHER STUDY

Philippians 3:2-11

vv. 2-3	Paul's Warning
vv. 4-6	Paul's Self-Righteousness
vv. 7-11	Paul's Changed Desires

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In this week's passage Paul confronts Judaizers who sought to add works of righteousness (e.g., circumcision) to the gospel of grace. His statement in verse three, “We are the real circumcision,” directly challenges these false teachers. What are the three defining characteristics that differentiate “the real circumcision” from the Judaizers (v. 3)? How do the Judaizers fail on all three accounts?
- Verses 4-6 detail Paul's reasons for self-confidence. Consider each of these characteristics. Do you see any parallels between Paul's life and your own? In what ways is Paul's self-righteousness no different than yours? Do you place confidence in your upbringing, your zeal, and your blamelessness? How does this self-confidence destroy worship by the Holy Spirit and diminish your glorying in Christ Jesus (v. 2)? Take time to repent of your self-righteousness.
- Paul's conversion is remarkable (vv. 7-11). The very things he used to consider beneficial (e.g., his upbringing, his zeal, his blamelessness) had now become things he counted as “loss” and “rubbish” (vv. 7-8). What changed about Paul's desires? List all the things in vv. 7-11 that Paul says he now wants. Take time to praise God for His work of grace that has changed you so that you have repented of your self-righteousness and rejoice in Christ's work on your behalf.

THEME NINE: God's Gift–Salvation

Truth #10

QUESTION

Why do you need to be saved?

ANSWER

I was born dead in my sins, loving my own way, and destined for God's wrath.

MEMORY VERSE

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Jesus Paid It All”

FURTHER STUDY

Acts 8:26-40

Our passage this week is the story of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. As we conclude our study of salvation this week, you have a wonderful opportunity to summarize the work of Christ and invite your children to repent and believe the gospel. This is exactly what Philip did for the Ethiopian eunuch, so he provides an excellent model for you this week as you talk with your family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Philip began his conversation with the Ethiopian eunuch by meeting him where he was and then asking a simple question. Philip did not come with a pre-packaged gospel presentation; he entered the eunuch's world at a natural point of entry, namely, what the eunuch was reading. Discuss with your spouse where your children are right now. How does their current context provide a natural point of entry through which you can lead them to the gospel of Christ? In God's good providence, the Ethiopian eunuch was reading Isaiah 53 when Philip entered his world. Be on the lookout for God's providence in your children's lives that will provide you natural opportunities to show them the glory of Christ.
- Again, see how Philip did not force a pre-packaged gospel presentation on the Ethiopian eunuch. This is not to say that such presentations (e.g., Two Ways to Live) are unhelpful. But these methods are helpful only inasmuch as they do what Philip did: “beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.” What is the good news about Jesus? Can you articulate this clearly and succinctly? You may wish to study something like Two Ways to Live in order to gain confidence in sharing the gospel. But remember that it is far better to meet people where they are than it is to force a pre-packaged presentation on them.
- Finally, notice that Philip's job was not done once he had presented the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch. The task of the Great Commission is not to make converts but to make disciples. And one of the first steps in following Christ is to be baptized. If you have children who are repenting and believing in Christ, take time to talk with them about the importance of baptism as an external testimony to the internal work of the Spirit in their hearts.

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #1

QUESTION

What is God's main purpose for His children?

ANSWER

4-year-olds-1st grade:

To bring glory to Him.

2nd grade and up:

To bring glory to Him by becoming more and more like Jesus Christ in their words, actions, and thoughts.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:29

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Jesus Calls Us"

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians 1:3-14

vv. 3-6

In Eternity Past

vv. 7-12

At the Cross and In the Consummation

vv. 13-14 At Our Conversion

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- We studied this passage many months ago as we considered the doctrine of the Trinity. This time, however, we are going to look at this text afresh in order to focus on the purpose for which God has worked in the past, present, and future.
- According to verse six, for what purpose has God blessed us in the heavenly places with every spiritual blessing (v. 3)? For what purpose has He chosen us before the foundation of the world (v. 4)? For what purpose has He lovingly predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ (v. 5)? Take time to praise His glorious grace, with which He has blessed you in the Beloved.
- According to verse twelve, for what purpose has God redeemed us through Christ's blood (v. 7)? For what purpose has He lavished the riches of His grace on us (v. 8)? For what purpose does He plan to unite all things in Christ (v. 10)? For what purpose has He given us an inheritance (v. 11)? Take time to praise His glory that has caused you to hope in Christ.
- According to verse fourteen, for what purpose did God seal us with the promised Holy Spirit (v. 13)? For what purpose is the Spirit the guarantee of our inheritance until we receive it (v. 14)? Take time to praise His glory that has brought you to a saving understanding of the gospel.
- From these passages we should learn that God has saved us not only so that we might be spared punishment in hell (praise the Lord for that!), but especially so that we might bring glory to Him. Take time to thank Him for working all things for His glory and for your good.

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #2

QUESTION

What is sanctification?

ANSWER

Sanctification is the process whereby the Holy Spirit transforms believers to become more and more like Jesus Christ.

MEMORY 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. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart"

FURTHER STUDY

The Work of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week's study focuses on a single verse that is very helpful in understanding the doctrine of sanctification. Near the beginning of 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul says that we have "an unveiled face." To understand what he means by this phrase, read verses 12-17. Whose minds/faces are veiled? What can they not see because of their veil? When is that veil taken away? Take time to rejoice in the gracious work of the Spirit to remove this veil from your eyes.
- In the process of sanctification, what are believers supposed to behold? What does that mean? Where can the glory of God be seen? How should this change the way you read the Bible or listen to preaching?
- Paul argues that, as we behold the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed. Grammatically, this verb is present, progressive, and passive. What is significant about each of these three descriptions? How does that help us understand the Spirit's work of transformation in our lives?
- What is the Spirit transforming us into? (Note the connection between "the same image" and "the glory of the Lord.") Does He do this work at one time in the life of the believer, or does He do this progressively over the lifetime of the believer? How should this truth encourage you in your struggle for holiness?
- From this passage, how do we know that the Spirit is the One who is effecting our transformation? Take time to submit to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in your life. Ask God to give you grace so that the Spirit may have free course in your heart.

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #3

QUESTION

How does the Spirit enable us to pursue holiness?

ANSWER

The Spirit enables us to pursue holiness by His grace alone.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Christ, of All My Hopes the Ground”

Available at www.cyberhymnal.org

FURTHER STUDY

Titus 2:11-14 Grace Saves (v. 11)

Grace Teaches (v. 12)

Grace Prepares (vv. 13-14)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Christians often assume that we are saved by grace alone, but that the way we are sanctified is by our works. While we may not state it in those exact terms, this notion is expressed when we place more emphasis on our dutiful obedience than on God's enabling power, or when we are driven to holiness by guilt and fear rather than by love and joy, or when we view God's love as conditional rather than permanent because of our union with Christ. How does this passage combat the idea that we are sanctified by our works? What difference does it make that the grace that saves is the grace that sanctifies?

- Parents, in each of the three areas mentioned above, we have a sober responsibility to rear children who are driven to holiness out of gratitude for God rather than mere obligation. Discuss with your spouse what practical steps you need to take in order to shepherd your children this way.
- Verse twelve informs us that there are negative and positive aspects to the instruction of grace. What does grace teach us to renounce? What do the words *ungodliness* and *worldly passions* mean? (You may wish to consult a concordance or a Bible dictionary for assistance.) How does grace teach us to live? What do the terms *self-controlled*, *upright*, and *godly* mean?
- Clearly sanctification is both a work of God and a work of ours. Grace teaches us to renounce the old lifestyle and to live as Christ did. We respond to grace by actually renouncing the old and living like Christ. Because both of these are true, we are in danger of two opposite errors. On the one hand, we may be tempted to think that sanctification is God's responsibility alone, leading us to be lazy about the pursuit of holiness. On the other hand, we may be tempted to think that sanctification is our responsibility alone, leading us to be guilty, dutiful, and/or self-righteous in our pursuit of holiness. We must recognize that *neither of these glorifies God*. Take time to repent of any way that you have fallen into either error.

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #4

QUESTION

What are the means of grace?

ANSWER

The means of grace are the Word, prayer, and fellowship.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Timothy 2:1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Grace! 'Tis a Charming Sound”

FURTHER STUDY

The Means of Grace

The Word

Acts 20:32

Prayer

Hebrews 4:16

Fellowship

1 Corinthians 12:7

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The phrase *means of grace* refers to the different ways through which God has ordained that we receive enabling grace from Him. One might summarize the means of grace this way: in the Word, God speaks to us; in prayer, we speak to God; and in fellowship, we speak to one another about God.
- Acts 20:32 describes the Bible as *the word of His grace*. God's grace through the Word is first communicated to us in our salvation. Consider 1 Peter 1:22. What is the means whereby we have been born again? How does this truth bring assurance to our hearts? After our initial conversion, God's grace continues to flow to us through the Word in our sanctification. Look up John 17:17. What is the means by which we are sanctified? If Scripture is the means by which we are made holy, what practical steps should we take in order to ensure that we are regularly feeding our hearts on the Word?
- When we pray, we are approaching *the throne of grace* (Hebrews 4:16)? On what basis do we have the right to approach the presence of the Thrice-Holy God? (Consider Hebrews 4:14-15 as you ponder this question.) Why does God call His throne “the throne of grace”? What do we receive when we approach God in prayer? Take time to rejoice in the work of Christ that has given you access to the Omnipotent One.
- The third means of grace, fellowship, encompasses many things. Corporate worship, small-group Bible studies, one-on-one discipleship and mentoring, mercy ministry, godly friendships, accountability partners—these are but a few of the ways in which we minister grace to one another. Read Hebrews 3:12-13. What responsibility does God give us in relation to our brothers and sisters in Christ? To *exhort* means to come alongside another and speak words of grace. How often are we to do this? Have you exhorted someone today? Take time to ask God to give you such a love for fellow believers that you daily speak words of grace to them.

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #5

QUESTION

What is the goal of sanctification?

ANSWER

4 year-olds – 1st grade: To be like Christ
2nd-5th grades: The goal of sanctification is to be like Christ.
6th grade and up: The goal of sanctification is to bring glory to Christ by being transformed into His image.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Peter 1:15-16 But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Take Time to Be Holy"

FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 22:34-40

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- We have considered this passage in a previous study about God's Law. This week, let's consider it in a new light. Read this text to re-familiarize yourself with the words of Christ here.
- Since Christ is the One who fulfilled the Law in our place, He is the One who has perfectly loved God with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength. As a family, think through the life of Christ on earth. What scenarios come to mind that show Christ's perfect fulfillment of the first great commandment? Write down as many as you think of. Take time to praise Christ for His obedience in your place.
- Christ is also the One who has perfectly loved His neighbor as Himself. Again, consider Jesus' life on earth. How did His love for others manifest itself? Make a list of all the stories and situations that come to mind. Again, take time to praise Christ for His obedience in your place.
- If Christ loved God and others, and if God intends to make us like Christ, then it follows that God intends for us to be people who love God and others even as Jesus did. How can you grow in your own love for God? In what ways have you failed to love others this past week? Take time to ask God for grace that you might become more and more like Christ.

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #6

QUESTION

What about Christ must we emulate?

ANSWER

His holiness, His love, and His good works

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"I Will Follow"

Available in Majesty Hymns

FURTHER STUDY

A Paradox

Imitate God	1 Corinthians 11:1; Ephesians 5:1
Do Not Imitate God	Genesis 3:4-5; Isaiah 14:14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week's truth introduces us to one of the paradoxes of Scripture. We are called to emulate God while at the same time warned not to make ourselves like God. On the one hand, Paul exhorts us to be imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1). On the other hand, the very first temptation in the Garden of Eden involved Adam and Eve's becoming "like God" (Genesis 3:5). How are we to resolve this apparent contradiction? One way is to consider the question in terms of God's incommunicable and communicable attributes. We cannot and should not imitate the former, but we must mimic the latter.
- God's *incommunicable* attributes are those characteristics of God that He does not share with His creation. For example, God is independent, unchangeable, and sovereign. None of these things are true of His creation, not even of us who are created in His image. Think through the attributes of God. What other attributes would be categorized as incommunicable? Since these attributes of God are not shared with humanity, should we attempt to be like God in these ways? Why or why not?
- God's *communicable* attributes are those characteristics of God that He shares with humanity. For example, God is loving, wise, and merciful. Since He has shared these with us, we can and must imitate God in His communicable attributes. Think through the attributes of God again. What other perfections would be categorized as communicable? How can we grow in our mimicking of these characteristics of God?

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #7

QUESTION

What does it mean to be holy?

ANSWER

To be holy is to be set apart from sin for God.

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All"

Available at cyberhymnal.org

FURTHER STUDY

Leviticus 19

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Leviticus 19 is often referred to as the Holiness Code because of the repetition of the word *holy* and the phrase *I am the LORD*. Note in particular verse two: "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.'" The rest of the chapter details many practical implications of this overarching principle.
- On a separate sheet of paper, draw two columns. Over one, write the words "Relationship to God"; over the other, write "Relationship to People." Carefully read through the chapter looking for every command. With each command, ask yourself, "Does this teach me how to relate to God or others?" When you have your answer, write the command on your paper in the appropriate column. Once you have finished the entire chapter, consider all of these specific imperatives. What does holiness in relation to God and one's neighbor practically look like? What practical applications do you need to make?
- Obviously some of these commands were applicable to the nation of Israel but do not apply to believers today. Take a red pen and put an X next to any commands that you think are no longer applicable for the people of God. On what basis can we rightly say that these commands no longer apply?
- Consider the fact that Jesus perfectly kept all of these laws. He was the Holy One, not only by virtue of His deity, but also by virtue of His perfect obedience. Take time to rejoice in Christ's righteousness credited to you.

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #8

QUESTION

What does it mean to love God and others?

ANSWER

To love God is to treasure Him above everything else; to love others is to value them above yourself.

MEMORY VERSE

Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"One There Is, Above All Others"

Available at cyberhymnal.org

FURTHER STUDY

Philippians 2:3-11

vv.3-4	The Command
vv. 5-8	Christ's Humiliation
vv. 9-11	Christ's Exaltation

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Philippians 2:5-11 is one of the most important Christological passages in the New Testament. What we learn about Jesus' humiliation and exaltation in this text is a huge contribution to our understanding of His person and work. Notice, however, that the reason Paul writes about Christ's humiliation and exaltation is quite practical. The command of humility and others-mindedness in verses 3-4 leads Paul to rehearse Christ's humility and others-mindedness, the supreme Example of loving God and others.
- What does it mean to do something out of rivalry (v. 3)? List five or six ways that you are motivated by such selfish ambition. What does it mean to do something out of conceit (v. 3)? Again think of five or six ways that you act out of an exaggerated self-image. Take time to repent of this sin.
- What heart attitude is necessary in order for you to count others more significant than yourself (v.3)? How do we develop such genuine humility? You may wish to consult C. J. Mahaney's book *Humility: True Greatness* in which he identifies a number of ways that we can grow in our humility.
- Give your family some time to think of ten ways that each can demonstrate that others are more significant than himself or herself.
- According to verse four, is it wrong to look on your own interests? What is Paul commanding here? Take time to think through the other people in your life. What are their interests? How can you show concern for their affairs?

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #9

QUESTION

What does it mean to do good works?

ANSWER

It means obeying God's Law for the glory of God and the good of others.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Take My Life, and Let It Be"

FURTHER STUDY

Good Works in the Pastoral Epistles

1 Timothy 2:10	The Adornment of Godly Women	Titus 2:7	The Example Pastors Must Set
1 Timothy 5:10	The Mark of Godly Widows	Titus 2:14	The Purpose of Christ's Redemption
1 Timothy 5:25	Their Public Witness	Titus 3:8	The Responsibility of All the Redeemed
1 Timothy 6:18	The Responsibility of the Rich	Titus 3:14	The Responsibility of All the Redeemed

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The phrase *good works* occurs more frequently in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus) than the rest of the New Testament combined. These eight references help us understand how God intends for us to live.
- Consider 1 Timothy 2:10 and 5:10, two references that talk about women and good works. Look at the context of those verses. What other kinds of activities are coupled with the concept of good works? How does this flesh out the meaning of the phrase *good works*? If you have daughters, take time to pray that God would make them this kind of woman.
- Besides doing good works, what responsibilities does God place on the rich (1 Timothy 6:18)? Look also at Paul's instruction to all believers in Titus 3:14. How does this help us understanding what it means to do good works?
- These passages make it clear that *good works* specifically refers to performing acts of kindness towards other people. These things, Paul says, cannot remain hidden (1 Timothy 5:25). Think about this week's memory verse (Matthew 5:16). Why do you think God created the world in such a way that good works are conspicuous? Is He creating a venue for you to show everyone how great you are? According to Matthew 5:16, who gets the glory when your good works are on display? Take time to give praise to God for using you to magnify His great name.

THEME TEN: God's Purpose for His Children

Truth #10

QUESTION

How should you respond to the Holy Spirit's work in your life?

ANSWER

I should submit to Him as my Lord.

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Come Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove"

**available at cyberhymnal.org*

FURTHER STUDY

Sins against the Holy Spirit

Resisting Him	Acts 7:51-52; 1 Peter 1:10-12	Insulting Him	Hebrews 10:26-31
Quenching Him	1 Thessalonians 5:19	Blaspheming Him	Matthew 12:22-32
Grieving Him	Ephesians 4:29-32		

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- It is sadly easy for Christians to minimize the importance of the Holy Spirit. We speak often of the Father and the Son, but our immature understanding of the Spirit keeps us from thinking or talking too much about Him. Perhaps the misplaced emphasis on the Spirit among some Christians has caused others to run the other way, consequently failing to give Him the prominence He deserves. Looking over the previous list of sins is sobering. Sinning against the Holy Spirit is not unimportant to God.
- In Stephen's sermon (Acts 7), the church's first martyr publicly charged the Jewish leaders with "resisting the Holy Spirit." Read the context of the passage. What did he mean by this? Look at 1 Peter 1:10-12. What role did the Spirit have in Old Testament prophecy? How could one resist His word?
- What image does the verb *quench* bring to mind (1 Thessalonians 5:19)? What would it mean to quench the Spirit? How do believers sin this way?
- How do professing believers insult the Spirit (Hebrews 10:26-31)? What future awaits those who do? What does this say about their profession of faith in Christ?
- The unpardonable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32). It is the sin of attributing the works of the Spirit to the Devil and his cohorts. Why is such a sin unforgiveable? How should we respond to the Holy Spirit's work in our lives?

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present
Truth #1

QUESTION

When did God plan the things He would do?

ANSWER

God knew before He created the world all the things He would do.

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose." ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

**available at cyberhymnal.org*

FURTHER STUDY

Isaiah 46

vv. 1-7

The Folly of Idolatry

vv. 8-13

The Sovereignty of God

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Isaiah 40-48 is perhaps the longest section in the Old Testament dedicated to declaring the uniqueness of the One True God. Scan through these chapters looking for statements affirming that there is no one like God.
- Read through Isaiah 46:1-7. For what reasons is idol worship foolish? Think through the things that you own that correspond to this description (e.g., made out of gold, cannot move by itself, does not answer). Have any of these things become idols to you? (Hint: You'll know something has become an idol if you think you can't live without it.) Take time to repent of any idolatry the Spirit convicts you of.
- On what basis does God call His people to listen to Him (vv. 3-4)? Take time to rejoice in His gracious work on your behalf.
- What does it mean for God to "declare the end from the beginning" (v. 10)? According to verses ten and eleven, is God merely aware of what the future will hold, or is God sovereignly unfolding His plan according to His predetermined choice?

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present
Truth #2

QUESTION

Does God sustain all things?

ANSWER

Yes. God actively works within His Creation to sustain all things.

MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 1:3

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Sometimes a Light Surprises"

**text available at cyberhymnal.org*

FURTHER STUDY

The Doctrine of Preservation

Colossians 1:17

Hebrews 1:3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In the eighteenth century, a theological system arose that gained much popularity. Called Deism, the view was that God was the Creator of the universe, but that since creation He has had little to no interaction with the universe. On the contrary, God has merely sat back and watched to see how everything would turn out. Does this idea square with the Bible? How do this week's study verses counteract that view?
- Paul affirms that Christ is not only the agent of creation (Colossians 1:16), but that He is also the One in whom all things hold together (Colossians 1:18). Look around the room and see all that is there. Think about the animals at the zoo. Consider the rainforest jungles and arid deserts. Imagine the vastness of the universe. All of these hold together because of Christ. Take time to rejoice in the sustaining work of the Son.
- The writer of Hebrews says that Christ "upholds all things with the word of His power" (1:3). This truth has tremendous implications for daily living. Take, for example, relational issues that you are dealing with. Based on Hebrews 1:3, why do those people continue to exist? What is God doing in your life by sustaining people who annoy, frustrate, or even sin against you? Ask God for grace to deal with your current situation in a way that would bring glory to Him.

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present
Truth #3

QUESTION

Is God always in control of things that happen?

ANSWER

Yes. God is always in complete and ultimate control of all things.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalms 103:19 The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Mighty God, While Angels Bless Thee”
**text available at cyberhymnal.org*

FURTHER STUDY

Genesis 39-50

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This week's study focuses on the life of Joseph. But really our study is not about Joseph, but about Joseph's God. Take time throughout this week to read Genesis 39-50, not focusing on Joseph and his works, but on God and His works. Circle every occurrence of God's names and activities in these chapters. Keep a running list of the things God reveals about Himself through this section of Scripture.
- Four times in Genesis 39, Moses records that “the LORD was with” Joseph (vv. 2, 3, 21, 23). Whenever you see a repeated statement like this, it is a clue for the reader that this is one of the author's major themes. What does it mean for the Lord to be with a person? Is it possible for someone to twist God's arm so that He would be with him or her? Or is God's being with someone simply His own choice? What were the results of the Lord's being with Joseph?
- The climax of the story contains the most significant revelation about God (45:5-8). What three statements does Joseph make about God? According to Joseph, did the brothers send him to Egypt? If God sent him to Egypt, were the brothers no longer responsible for their sin? Consider also 50:20. What is the relationship between people's sinful choices and God's sovereignty?
- Take time to rejoice that God is sovereign over all things at all times. Praise Him for the hope that this brings to us.

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present
Truth #4

QUESTION

Is God sovereign over sin and Satan?

ANSWER

Yes, God is sovereign over sin and Satan, but He is not culpable for evil.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalms 92:15 To declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“A Mighty Fortress”

FURTHER STUDY

Job 1

vv. 1-5 Job's Life
vv. 6-12 Satan's Challenge

vv. 13-19 Job's Suffering
vv. 20-22 Job's Response

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Once the author has set the context (Job 1:1-5), he introduces us to something that seems like a regular occurrence: the Lord calls the angelic hosts—both good and evil—to account. What is so significant about the Lord's calling Satan to account? What does this teach us about Satan's ability and God's sovereignty?
- How do Satan's words (vv. 7, 9-11) demonstrate the evil and rebellion in his heart?
- Even though Job's response to his suffering is quite familiar (vv. 21-22), take time to put yourself in Job's shoes and imagine what it would have been like. What impresses you about his response? How does he express an eternal perspective? How does he communicate his faith in God's sovereignty over sin and Satan?
- The bulk of the book of Job focuses on the question “Why?” Job, his three friends, and Elihu all seek to answer that question. When God appears in chapter 38, however, He never explains why this happened. God doesn't relate the story of His conversation with Satan. Instead, God answers the question “Who?” and asserts His right to do whatever He wants. Take time to think deeply about the significance of the book's concluding chapters. There is no greater example of God's complete sovereignty over sin and evil. What difference does this truth make to your life? Take time to extol God for His sovereignty over all things.

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present

Truth #5

QUESTION

What is the message of the Old Testament?

ANSWER

God prepared the world for the coming Messiah by choosing a people for His own glory.

MEMORY VERSE

Jeremiah 13:11 I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to Me, declares the LORD, that they might be for Me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

FURTHER STUDY

The Structure of the Old Testament

<u>Section</u>	<u>Books</u>	<u>Need</u>
Pentateuch	Genesis-Deuteronomy	A perfect priest and a perfect sacrifice
History	Joshua-Esther	A perfect king
[Poetry	Job-Song of Solomon	Description of the perfect king]
Prophets	Isaiah-Malachi	A perfect prophet

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are full of stories, prophecies, proverbs, songs, and many other different types of literature. But at its core, all of those books are carrying along a single storyline: the plan of God to bless the world through the promised Messiah. It is easy to forget this when you are reading a small section of Scripture. This week's study aims to help you keep the big picture in view.
- There are four basic sections of the Old Testament: Pentateuch, History, Poetry, and Prophets. Besides the section of poetry (which describes what the Messiah will be like), the other three sections identify humanity's great needs, as the chart shows. Think through the five books of the Pentateuch. How do they set forth our need to have a perfect priest? How do they demonstrate our need to have a perfect sacrifice? What have we done that makes a sacrifice necessary? Try to think of specific verses in the Pentateuch to answer these questions.
- Consider the long line of leaders and kings from Joshua through Esther. Name some of the best kings of Israel or Judah. What were their good qualities? Were any of them perfect? In what ways did they reveal that they were sinners? How did their failures actually increase the anticipation for the perfect king who would come?
- The main subject of the prophetic writings is not end-times events, but Christ. How do the prophets prepare God's people for the coming Messiah? Take time to read some of the shorter (often called minor) prophets and look for ways that the authors reveal Christ. Take time to rejoice that the Messiah has come.

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present

Truth #6

QUESTION

What is the message of the New Testament?

ANSWER

God glorifies Himself by redeeming people through Christ from every nation for His own glory.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Jesus Shall Reign”

FURTHER STUDY

The Structure of the New Testament

<u>Section</u>	<u>Books</u>	<u>Need</u>
Gospels	Matthew-John	Introduction to the Person and Work of Christ
History	Acts	Proclamation of the Person and Work of Christ
Epistles	Romans-Jude	Explanation of the Person and Work of Christ
Prophecy	Revelation	Consummation of the Person and Work of Christ

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Just as the structure of the Old Testament prepares the world for the Messiah, so the New Testament unfolds His work from His incarnation through the time He will reign on the earth. Again, notice how the twenty-seven books of the New Testament all point to one grand storyline: the person and work of Christ. Everything you read in the New Testament is connected back to that theme.
- In the Gospels, the four authors introduce readers to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Three of these books are very similar to one another, while one is quite different. Which three are similar? Why did God inspire three books that are so similar to one another? Why did God inspire one book that is so different? How do the multiple perspectives give us a fuller picture of Christ?
- Unlike the Old Testament which includes many historical books, the New Testament has only one: Acts. The book unfolds according to Christ's words in Acts 1:8. What does this verse say? How does this verse create an outline for the book? Read Acts 28. What strikes you about the way this book ends? Why does it not have a tidy conclusion like most other books of the Bible? What does that say about the ongoing work of Christ?
- The key to understanding the person and work of Christ is found in the Epistles. Most of these have extended sections explaining what God has done in Christ (e.g., Romans 1-11; Ephesians 1-3; Hebrews 1-10). Why do you think God included so much explanation of Christ's work? What should we conclude about the notion that “only the words printed in red” are authoritative?

The last book of the Bible is not merely a revelation of the future; it is primarily a revelation of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:1). What does the Revelation teach us about Him?

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present

Truth #7

QUESTION

What is the family?

ANSWER

- 4 years-1st grade: The family is made up of a husband, a wife, and any children they may have.
- 2nd-5th grades: The family is the first institution that God designed, and it is made up of a husband, a wife, and any children they may have.
- 6th grade and up: The family is the first institution that God designed, and it is made up of one man and one woman who have been legally married and any children they may have.

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 5:31 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

FURTHER STUDY

Genesis 2:18-25

vv. 18-20 Man's Incompleteness

vv. 21-23 God's Solution

vv. 24-25 Moses' Conclusion

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Compare Genesis 2:18 with Genesis 1:31. What difference do you see between these verses? What do you think is the significance of God saying that man's aloneness is “not good”?
- In Genesis 2:18 God announces His plan to create for man “a helper fit for him.” The word *fit* refers to something that corresponds to or completes another. In what ways does a woman complete a man? The word “helper” begins to define the relationship between a man and a woman. Is it demeaning for a woman to be called to be her husband's helper? As you think about this question, consider the statement in Psalm 54:4, where the same Hebrew term is used. How can a wife demonstrate an aspect of the glory of God through the way she relates to her husband?
- The parade of animals in Genesis 2:20-21 is not so much about naming the animals as it is about Adam learning that there is no helper fit for him. (This is why Adam says, “At last!” in verse 23.) Why did God want Adam to feel a sense of his own incompleteness? How did this prepare him to receive his new bride? In what ways has God made you sense your own inadequacy? Take time to praise Him for His grace to you even in this way.

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present

Truth #8

QUESTION

What is a church?

ANSWER

- 4 years-1st grade: A church is a group of believers who meet to worship the Lord.
- 2nd-5th grades: A church is a group of baptized believers who commit together to worship the Lord, love one another, and reach the unsaved.
- 6th grade and up: The local church is an expression of the universal church, consisting of a group of baptized believers who commit together to worship the Lord, love one another, and reach the unsaved.

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 5:25-26 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“The Church's One Foundation”

FURTHER STUDY

Acts 2:40-47

Reach the Unsaved (vv. 40-41)

Love One Another (vv. 42-45)

Worship the Lord (vv. 46-47)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The history of the early church records for us in broad terms a pattern for other local churches to follow. In Acts 2 we read the story of the first day of church history. In it we find three main purposes for the church. Take time to think through Acts 2:40-47 and see how God accomplished these purposes for those first believers. Ask God to be at work here at Heritage, that He would give us grace so that those very purposes might be fulfilled here through us.
- Heritage's mission statement reads: *For the glory of God Heritage Bible Church is committed to equipping the saints and gathering disciples from all peoples to the end that they might grow up into Christ, worship God, and enjoy Him forever.* As a family think through each phrase of this statement and ask yourselves what Scriptures teach that truth.
- Our church has committed itself to seven priorities of ministry: worship, prayer, discipleship, evangelism, mercy, fellowship, and stewardship. As a family think through each of these priorities and ask yourselves what Scriptures teach that truth.

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present
Truth #9

QUESTION

What is government?

ANSWER

4 years-1st grade:

Government is the leaders of a city or country. These rulers receive their power from God.

2nd-5th grades:

Government is a group of people who rule locally and over countries. These rulers ultimately have received their authority from God.

6th grade and up:

A government is a system through which certain people rule and keep a city, county, state, or country running decently and in order. Government leaders get their authority from God and His Word.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"God of Our Fathers"

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 13:1-7

The Source of Government Power (vv. 1-2)

The Purpose of Government Power (vv. 3-4)

Our Response to Government Power (vv. 5-7)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The Bible recognizes that there are different levels of government authority, some national and some local (1 Peter 2:13-14). What different levels of government do we answer to? What are the names of those holding offices in these different levels?
- Romans 13 mentions a specific action we owe government—payment of taxes. How might we obey the other requirements of v. 7, to show respect and honor? Encourage each family member to consider specific actions that are appropriate to him or her.
- Are there times when we should *not* obey a government command? Where in the Bible do people disobey their civil authority with God's stated or implied blessing? What made their actions acceptable to God?

THEME ELEVEN: God's Plans Past and Present
Truth #10

QUESTION

Does God exercise any special Providence over those who are saved?

ANSWER

Yes, God causes all things to work together for good for His children.

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

**text available at www.cyberhymnal.org*

FURTHER STUDY

Esther

God is never mentioned in this book, but His providential hand appears in every action. Read the entire story, looking for God's interventions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have each member of the family think of a person in Scripture who was clearly directed by God at a significant point in his life. Extra credit for examples that do not involve God revealing Himself directly; for example, when God directs Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22), He reveals that directly to Abraham; but when God directs Paul to Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:13-15), He does so through circumstance.
- How has God directed your family into the place of His will for you? What doors has He opened and closed?
- If God directs in these ways, how should we respond when a door closes or we face disappointment in carrying out our plans? What questions should we ask?

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #1

QUESTION

Where do the souls of people go right after they die?

ANSWER

4 years-1st grade: The soul goes either into the presence of the Lord, or to hell.
2nd-5th grades: After death, a soul goes into the presence of the Lord, or to hell to await eternal punishment.
6th grade and up: After death, the soul of a Christian goes into the presence of the Lord. The soul of an unbeliever goes to hell to await eternal punishment.

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 16:22-23 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Abide with Me"

FURTHER STUDY

Luke 16:19-31

Status in life (vv. 19-21)

Status in death (vv. 22-31)

Lazarus: "Abraham's side" (v. 22a)

The rich man: "Hades" (vv. 22b-31)

"Far off" (v. 23)

"In anguish" (v. 24)

Conscious (v. 25)

Confined (v. 26)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Did Paul teach that he would be conscious or unconscious after he died? See 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.
- What does this passage say will happen to our bodies after we die?
- Did Paul say he would be alone or with someone else at that time? See also Philippians 1:23-24.

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #2

QUESTION

What is meant by the phrase "The Return of Christ"?

ANSWER

It is the time when, in the plan of God, Christ will return for His people and judge the world.

MEMORY VERSE

Acts 17:31 Because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"He Is Coming Again"

FURTHER STUDY

1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11

Comfort for God's People (4:13-18)

Wrath for God's Enemies (5:1-11)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Though it is not a term the Bible uses, we sometimes refer to the Return of Christ as His "Second Coming." What other terms does the Bible use for this event? See 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:1.
- Christ told His disciples to "stay awake" (Matthew 24:42), or to be alert, as they waited for His coming. In one of Christ's parables about the Second Coming, the master told his servants to "engage in business until I come" (Luke 19:13). What are some ways we can do this? What kind of "business" should we be engaging in as we wait for Christ to return?
- God has intentionally made biblical prophecy difficult to understand until it is fulfilled (Daniel 12:8-9; 1 Peter 1:10-12). Christians have many different ideas about how the return of Christ will work out. Should we argue with one another about these differences? Why or why not?

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #3

QUESTION

Will our bodies ever come back to life once we die?

ANSWER

Yes. On the Resurrection and Judgment Day, God will raise our bodies, for either eternal life or eternal death.

MEMORY VERSE

John 5:28-29 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder”

FURTHER STUDY

1 Corinthians 15

Basis for Our Resurrection: the Resurrection of Christ (vv. 1-34)

Manner of Our Resurrection (vv. 35-57)

From “Natural” to “Spiritual” (vv. 35-49)

Instantaneous (vv. 50-57)

Waiting for Our Resurrection (v. 58)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Both Paul (Philippians 3:21) and John (1 John 3:2) say that our resurrected bodies will be like Christ’s post-resurrection body. Read the Gospel accounts of Christ’s post-resurrection activity (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21). What are some of the characteristics of Christ’s resurrected body?
- The Bible discusses the eternal physical life of both the righteous (Revelation 21-22) and the wicked (Revelation 20). What can we conclude about our resurrected bodies from these passages?
- What difference will the fact that we have eternal physical bodies make to our worship of God?

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #4

QUESTION

What will happen when the Lord Jesus returns?

ANSWER

4 years-1st grade:

Everyone will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ.

2nd grade and up:

All those who are dead will be resurrected to life, those who are still alive will be changed, and all will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Timothy 4:1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“There’s a Great Day Coming”

FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 25:31-46

The Judge: Christ (v. 31)

The Judged: All Peoples (v. 32)

The Basis of Judgment: Righteousness (vv. 33-45)

The Consequence of Judgment: Eternal Life or Death (v. 46)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In Matthew 25:37, the “sheep” are called “righteous.” How does a person become righteous? By doing good things? (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:10). Or is there some other way? (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Are the people “sheep” because they have been kind, or have they been kind because they are “sheep”? (Romans 3:20, 28; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 1:16; 2:14; 3:8; James 2:17).
- What determines whether you will be a “sheep” or a “goat” at the judgment?

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #5

QUESTION

How will believers be judged?

ANSWER

4 years-1st grade: Believers will stand before Christ, and their works will be reviewed.
2nd-5th grades: Believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the works of their lives will be reviewed.
6th grade and up: Believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the works of their lives will be reviewed to see whether they glorified God and whether they are worthy of rewards.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“Must I Go, and Empty-Handed?”

FURTHER STUDY

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

The Works (v. 12)
The Testing (v. 13)
The Outcome (vv. 14-15)
 Reward (v. 14)
 Loss (v. 15)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Paul says that some works will survive the fire of God's judgment, while others will not. What determines this outcome? (2 Corinthians 5:10).
- Can you think of some persons in the Bible who did “good” works for bad reasons? (Matthew 23; Acts 5)
- What are some bad reasons that you might be tempted to do “good” works?
- What is the best reason to do good works? (1 Corinthians 10:31).

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #6

QUESTION

By what will Jesus judge unbelieving people at the Great White Throne judgment?

ANSWER

Christ will judge unbelievers by the Word of God.

MEMORY VERSE

John 12:48

The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

“On That Great Day of Judgment”
available at www.cyberhymnal.org

FURTHER STUDY

Revelation 20:11-15

The Glory of the Judge (v. 11)
The Basis of the Judgment (vv. 12-13)
The Outcome of the Judgment (vv. 14-15)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Revelation 20 reports two different kinds of books, each one involved in determining the outcome of the judgment. What are the two criteria by which the lost are judged?
- Why do these criteria not contradict what Jesus said in John 12:48? To what “word” is Christ referring?
- How does a person get his name written the Book of Life?
- Will you appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ or at the Great White Throne? How do you know?

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #7

QUESTION

Will the faith of God's children last until the day of resurrection and judgment?

ANSWER

Yes. The faith that believers have in God lasts, because it comes from Him and not from them.

MEMORY VERSE

John 10:28-29

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"We Have an Anchor"

FURTHER STUDY

2 Timothy 1:8-14

Our Future Planned by God (vv. 8-9)

Our Future Ensured by Christ (vv. 10-12)

Our Future Guarded by the Holy Spirit (vv. 13-14)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does the fact that God has chosen us (v. 9) demonstrate that we will endure to the end?
- When does verse 9 say this choice took place?
- When God made His choice, did He know whether we would endure?
- Is Paul trusting for his endurance on his own ability to endure or on God's promise to keep him (v. 12)?
- How should we respond to this confidence (vv. 13-14)? Since our future is assured, does that mean we should relax?

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #8

QUESTION

When will Jesus return, and when will the day of resurrection and judgment begin?

ANSWER

4 years-1st grade:
2nd grade and up:

No one knows when Jesus will come back, but all are commanded to watch and pray.

No one knows when Jesus will come back, but all are commanded to watch and pray. We should be ready to say, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

MEMORY VERSE

Mark 13:35-36

Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Christ Returneth"

FURTHER STUDY

Mark 13:32-37

The Timing Is Unknown (vv. 32-34)

The Return Is Certain (v. 35)

The Servant Is Responsible (vv. 36-37)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Should we try to figure out when Christ will return? Why or why not?
- Jesus compared Himself to a master who went away and left his servants with work to do (v. 34). What kinds of work has our Master left for us to do? (See, for example, Matthew 28:18-19; Ephesians 4:11-32.)
- How, then, do we "watch" for His coming?

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #9

QUESTION

What is God's final plan for the future?

ANSWER

4 years-1st grade: In eternity, God wants all of His people to be gathered together and to serve, love, and glorify Him forever.
2nd grade and up: God's final plan for the future is for all of His redeemed to be gathered together in the place where Christ is – to serve, love, enjoy, and glorify Him forever and ever.

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 3:21

To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"For All the Saints"

FURTHER STUDY

Revelation 5:11-14

Who Is Worshiping (vv. 11, 13)

How They Are Worshiping (vv. 12-14)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If we will worship God forever, what should be our attitude toward worship today?
- If we will serve God forever, what is the purpose of our serving Him today? How, then, should we serve?
- If we will gather with all of God's people to worship Him, what should be our attitude toward His people today?

THEME TWELVE: God: The Hope of the Future
Truth #10

QUESTION

How should biblical truth about the future make you live?

ANSWER

4 years-1st grade: I should be waiting and watching for the return of Christ, and I should live my life for the glory of God.
2nd grade and up: I should wait and watch for the return of Christ – living my life for the glory of God and doing all I can to spread God's truth – knowing that my Master may come at any instant.

MEMORY VERSE

I Thessalonians 5:6

So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ESV

SUGGESTED HYMN

"Will Jesus Find Us Watching?"

FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 25:1-13

The Wise Virgins Prepared (vv. 1-7)

The Foolish Virgins Were Careless (vv. 3, 8-13)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The lamps in Matthew 25 represent what we should be doing to get ready for Christ's return. What can you do specifically to show that you are waiting eagerly for Christ to return?
- Is "living [your] life for the glory of God" something you do on the outside or on the inside? Can you give an example of a difference it would make in your actions? a difference it would make in your heart even if your actions were the same as someone not looking for Christ's return?
- What have you done this week that you would not want to be doing at the moment Christ returned? Take the time to confess and repent of those things now.