

How God Reveals God

The Big Idea: How we find and know God.

Lesson Objective: At the end of this lesson we should be able to list the three ways God reveals Himself. This study should also increase our awareness and worship of God as found in creation, Scripture and Christ.

Teacher's note:

Review and study this lesson before your Home ABF meets. You will want to practice using the DVD so you are acquainted with how the lesson as a whole works together. Have your TV and DVD set up so that you only need to press "play" when you're ready to start. Remember the lesson's objective and "big idea" as you are leading your group through it. You're going to do a great job!

LESSON

Seat everyone and open in prayer.

Ask everyone to introduce themselves and tell what is their favorite topping on pizza.

Scene One: Introduction

Once everyone is done, tell them Knute Larson is going to teach tonight and start the DVD.

When Knute's first scene is over, questions will appear on the screen. These will stay on the screen until you press "play" for the next part of the lesson. Discuss the questions.

Question #1: What are the different ways people learn about God?

Question #2: What is the most offbeat fact you learned?

Scene Two: Creation

Press "play" and watch the next video clip. Ask the questions.

Question #1: What do you love most about creation?

Question #2: What are some truths you learn about God by looking at creation?

(Possible answers: He's creative. He loves variety. He is smart. He is consistent—like the laws of nature. He's immense, etc.)

Question #3: Why is this source of truth not enough by itself to help us with life?

(Possible answers: We don't know for certain who He is or what we should do. We might think He's distant or harsh. We might worship creation instead of the Creator.)

These two passages can be read for further highlighting:

Ps. 19:1-3 *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.”*

Rom. 1:20 *“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

Scene Three: The Bible

Watch the next part and dig into these questions.

Question #1: How is Scripture different from our first source?

Question #2: Why is this source so important when it comes to right and wrong?

Question #3: Why are some truths in the Bible so hard to embrace or do?

These passages will help make it clear.

2Tim. 3:16-17 *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

Ps. 89:1-2 *“I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.”*

Ex. 34:6-7 *“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”*”

Heb. 4:12 *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*

Scene Four: Christ

View the next portion of the DVD on Christ.

Question #1: Share what you like about God, as revealed in Jesus.

Question #2: What does the cross tell us about God?

(Possible answers: He cares, He’s holy, creative, just, self-sacrificing)

Helpful texts

John 1:1-3 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”*

John 1:14 *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

John 1:18 *“No one has ever seen God, but that One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”*

John 14:8-9 *Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

Heb. 1:1-3 *“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his*

powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

Final Scene: **Summary**

Play the next clip and work through these questions.

Question #1: Which one of these sources do you rely on most? Why?

Question #2: How will you seek to know God better this week through creation, scripture and Christ?

I will

What Is Salvation?

The Big Idea: How we are saved.

Lesson Objective: Upon completion of this lesson you should be able to explain the four terms that explain salvation. You should also be able to confess Jesus as Lord and Savior.

LESSON

Gather everyone together and open in prayer.
Ask folks to share about their favorite elementary school teacher.

Scene One:

A. Introduction

Start the DVD and watch Knute's opening sequence.
At the end of the clip the first question to discuss will appear on the screen:

Question #1: What do other people say are the turnoffs about salvation or Christianity?

Scene Two: Atones

Watch the next part of the DVD. The key text throughout this whole lesson is Romans 3:20-26.

Teacher's note: Knute points out here that we are held guilty because of creation, our conscience and the law. None of us will be found innocent before God. The Day of Atonement is found in Leviticus 16.

Question #1: Many would rather God say, "Aw, sin is no big deal." Why can't He?

(Possible answers: because of His love and justice.)

Example: How would a property owner feel if someone burned down their property? Would they just say, "No big deal. Don't worry about it"? No, they would want justice to be done. Likewise, God can't overlook our sins, because

they have offended Him and hurt those He loves. There must be a penalty because of His character and because of His love for the offended party.

Question #2: What is the word Knute described?

(Answer: Atoned)

Question #3: What are some important issues surrounding atonement?

(Possible answers: Our guilt from what we know from Creation, our Conscience and the Law. We are covered by Christ's blood. Christ's blood satisfies God's wrath against our sin.)

Teacher's note: One great illustration Knute uses is the "35mph speed limit." His point is—does a speed limit sign change the way we drive? For many the sign doesn't change anything. They keep speeding. Likewise, the Law does not change our behavior. It simply points out that we are all violators. We are all guilty. Your group may find this illustration helpful.

Scene Three: Justifies and Redeems

Teacher's note: "Justifies" means that we are declared righteous. It is a legal term. "Redeem" is about being released, set free. Slaves were redeemed or freed for a price.

Question #1: What impressed you about these last two words—justifies and redeems?

Question #2: What did you learn about salvation from the locations where the video was filmed?

Question #3: Why is it so hard to see forgiveness as a free gift?

(Possible answer: We are used to earning everything we get.)

Teacher's note: Knute uses another helpful illustration during this clip. He says that if we look at our life and sin as a bank account, we start with a balance of negative \$7,000,000, but the cross gets us up to a zero balance. This is similar to what happens with our Atonement. But there's more good news. The cross also justifies us. It gets us from a zero balance to \$ trillions. That's wonderful! Help your people rest in the finished work of Jesus.

Scene Four: Believes

Key verses for this section are John 1:12 and Ephesians 2:8-9. Pray as you watch this portion of the DVD. Some people in your group may be just moments away from making a commitment to Christ.

Question #1: Which one of the following are you? (*answer silently*)

- A) Sure of this. Eternally.
- B) Making sure right now.
- C) Asking God to help me know if this is true.
 - a. See John 7:17

Challenge the group to embrace the truth from this diagram. Memorize Romans 3:21-24.

Scene Five: **Knute's Summary**

You'll need to get a sense from the group whether you should continue to discuss these questions or move on to the final wrap-up from Knute. You may want to forgo watching his summary.

Finish your night with prayer for each other. Be sensitive to those that are still considering the faith. Encourage them to seek, but don't allow them to be pushed. The Holy Spirit will make it evident to them when they need to take the next step.

Great JOB!

How Does A Christ-Follower Grow?

The Big Idea: Maturing as a follower of Christ

Lesson Objective: The end result of this lesson is to be able to articulate and apply the three areas that enable us to grow as believers.

Introduction – The phenomena of growth

Scene One:

- How do little seeds turn into huge plants?
- How did Mrs. Cole become such a godly lady?
- The goal of the Christ-follower's life is to go from spiritual childhood to adulthood.
- But how do you get there? How does a Christ-follower grow in his faith-walk?

1. The Scriptures are the means of growth for the Christ-follower

- Just like these plants need proper watering and good soil – so the Christian believer needs the proper means for spiritual growth.
- Our spiritual growth is directly related to exposure and intake of God's Word.
- Listen to what the Apostle Peter says in I Peter 2:2
- Notice several things we're to do
 - ✓ To have an enthusiasm for the Word (like a newborn baby)
 - ✓ To have a hunger for the Word (craving spiritual milk)
 - ✓ The aim of the Word (our Spiritual growth)
- **II Tim 3:16-17**
- As we read the Bible and are taught, rebuked, corrected—even trained in righteousness—the Christ-follower is equipped for good works!

- As we listen to the Bible and respond, it will begin to work in our lives and change us from the inside out (read James 1:22-27)

Question #1: What grew well in your yard this summer?

Question #2: How have you seen the Scriptures speak into others' lives?

Question #3: Has there been a verse that has impacted you recently?

Question #4: Have you craved the Scriptures like a newborn baby craves milk?

Scene Two:

The Holy Spirit is the Agent of Growth for the Christ-follower

- Now, you need to know... that invisibly in each of these plants—even in their seeds—is a DNA, a power source that enables growth to take place...
- So also the follower of Christ has been given an internal, invisible power source as the spiritual growth agent.
- The first century Christians were the first to receive the Holy Spirit, and as they did, they received God's power (Acts 1:6)
- Now too, every Christ-follower is called to allow the power and control of the Holy Spirit to dominate his life (Ephesians 5:15-18)

Question #1: Picture someone who is spiritually mature like Howard. How did they get there?

Question #2: How do people behave differently when under the control of alcohol?

Question #3: Read Galatians 5:16-18. Describe the effects of the Spirit's control.

Scene Three:

The partnership of spiritual growth – God and me (Phil 2:12-13)

- We have said....
- The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit – are the means and agency of our growth...

- Now it's not just a sit back and "let go and let God" nor is it all up to me – it's God and me working together (Read Phil 2: 12-13)
- Notice the spiritual life
 - ✓ is internal not external
 - ✓ is not based on knowledge but obedience
 - ✓ and is not automatic (no more than these plants) but must be cultivated
- A partnership between God, me, and others – with His Word and Spirit playing the key roles.
- Spiritual growth – a progressive divinely "wrought" character change from sinful ways to Christ-like virtues and habits.

Question #1: What did Paul Sartarelli say were the ways to grow?

Question #2: How do others contribute to or hinder your growth?

Question #3: How has someone else helped you to grow?

Question #4: Do you feel that you are weak in any of these areas of growth?

Question #5: How can the group provide an environment that enhances spiritual growth?

Uniqueness of Christ

The Big Idea: Christ is different than any other religious figure.

Lesson Objective: A student should be able to articulate the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. He or she should also be moved to worship Christ with one of these aspects.

Scene One:

A. Introduction – A world of many gods

Seven statements about the person and work of Jesus Christ... that declare His uniqueness and call for our worship.

B. Pre-existence – Christ is eternal

Meaning: Christ existed before His birth in Bethlehem. As a matter of fact He existed before time. He always was!

Scripture: “In the beginning was the word...” (John 1:1) At whatever point you call the beginning, Jesus already was.

Implications: Jesus is eternal, divine, creator. “Father of eternity” as Isaiah put it.

Question #1: What are the benefits of being old?
What does eternal mean? Why does it give us hope?
How did Paul explain eternal?

Question #2: In learning about Christ, what do you know better about God?

Scene Two:

A. Birth – Virgin

Meaning: The means of the eternal Son of God becoming a human being was through a virgin conception—an obvious sign of this One’s uniqueness.

Scripture: Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23

Implication: God is His Father. This man is important.

B. Life – Sinless

Meaning: Jesus Christ never did anything contrary to God's moral law and had no sin nature residing in Him.

Scripture: II Cor 5:21; I Peter 1:19

Implications: ✓ He provided an acceptable sacrifice for our sins
✓ He revealed God to us

Question #1: Emmanuel means God with us. Why does that help us today?

Question #2: What would it have been like to be around a sinless person?

Question #3: Since Jesus knew nothing of sin, how can He sympathize with us? (Heb 4:15-16)

Scene Three:

A. Death – Substitutional

Meaning: Christ suffered and died as a substitute for our sins.

Scripture: Romans 5:8

Implications: Our doom, the divine result of our sins, has been taken by Christ. Life, not death, is our gift!

B. Resurrection – Physical

Meaning: Jesus Christ bodily rose from the dead three days after dying from crucifixion wounds.

Scripture: Matthew 28:6 et al

Implications: ✓ He is unique and whom He said He was
✓ We too will be raised someday!

Question #1: What was the greatest sacrifice your parents made for you?
How does that impact you today?

What motivates people to die for something / someone?

Why did Christ's substitutional death make a difference?

Question #2: What is the proof of God's love?

What does the verse *not* say about God's love?
(*doesn't say it's dependent on a perfect life / financial success*)

How did Paul describe what happened at Christ's resurrection?

What is wrong with an understanding of Jesus' resurrection being only a spiritual one?

Question #3: Why is so much emphasis placed on the resurrection?

Scene Four:

A. Indwelling: – Spiritual

Meaning: Either immediately or through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Christ indwells all believers.

Scripture: Ephesians 3:17

Implications: We are not abandoned. Through Christ we can know the depth of God's love for us.

B. Return – Promised

Meaning: Christ will come back to earth to judge the living and the dead

Scripture: I Cor 15:52; I The 4:16

Implications: Regardless of life's difficulties, we can be hopeful. Since He will return, we should consider how we behave!

Question #1: What would it be like to be an orphan? What is it like to be alone?

What can all Christians believe about the future?
(Jesus will return.)

Question #2: What will Jesus do when He returns?
(judge the living and the dead. Acts 1:6)

Question #3: How does the resurrection strengthen our hope?

Closing questions:

We listed seven qualities in Christ. Which is the most powerful to you today?

How will this truth make a difference in your life?

Prayer

The Big Idea: Prayer is hard, but necessary.

Lesson Objective: Participant will be encouraged to take new steps in their prayer life by using the acronym P-R-A-Y. They will also understand the ways God answers prayer.

Teacher's Note:

The following are Pastor Larson's notes as he prepared for the video. As you'll see, he has personally dealt with this issue. Pastor Larson's teaching on prayer isn't just theological as he also reveals his own struggles through the Lord's answers to prayer.

Before the video starts ask:

How did your family pray when you were growing up? When did you pray? What was the content of those prayers?

Scene One:

A. Introduction:

- Admission...
 - prayer is hard,
 - but necessary
 - and sometimes we wonder why God doesn't answer.
- Frustrations with prayer
 - Time ...too busy. When can I do it?
 - Ability ... I don't know what I should pray about. I can't pray as well as others.
- Questions we have about prayer
 - Why does He not answer?
- Misconceptions of prayer
 - No is an answer.
- "Let's try to honor our Lord by learning to pray." Knute Larson

Question #1: Why do parents like it when their children talk to them?

Question #2: What are some frustrations about praying?

Scene Two:

B. Biblical Prayers

- Call to prayer... Isaiah 40:28–31
 - “Those who wait upon the Lord”
 - Waiting is a big part of prayer
- Use the Prayer Book Pray from Scripture
 - Psalm 100
 - “Shout for joy to the Lord”
 - Praise and Thanksgiving
 - Psalm 102
 - “Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry for help come to you.”
 - Desperate need
 - Every emotion comes out in the Psalms: Joy, Pain, Sadness, Thanksgiving, Adoration, and more.
- P-R-A-Y
 - Praise – God for who He is and what He has done.
 - Repent – We confess our sins. Isaiah 6:5
 - Ask – The Lord wants us to ask Him. John 15:7
 - Yield – “Thy will be done.” Matthew 6:10

Question #1: Which aspect of P-R-A-Y is more natural for you? Which is harder?

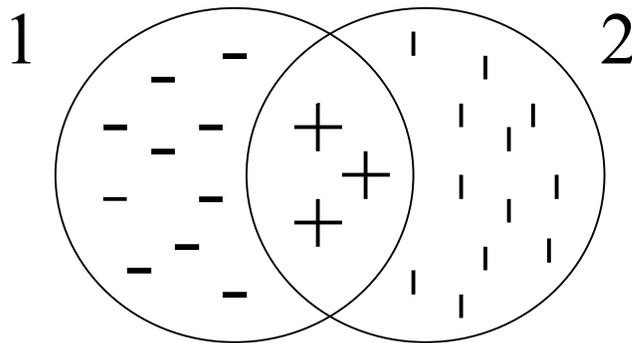
Question #2: Should we focus more on praying for character or for healing of sickness?

Question #3: How honest should we be when praying?

Scene Three:

C. Why prayers are not answered.

Read James 4:1–3 again.



Circle 1: Our desires or needs. The things we want done, our will.
Sometimes we ask with wrong motives. James 4:3

Circle 2: God's will. The actions He is willing to do. His will.
In this part of this circle are the character qualities that God desires to instill
in every believer. James 1:5

The Intersection: Answered prayers. Where our prayers and God's
desires meet. John 14:13

Question #1: Could you explain this diagram to someone?

Question #2: What part of this diagram helps you?

Question #3: What do these prayers have in common?

- Ephesians 3:14–21
- Philippians 1:9,10
- Colossians 1:9–14

Scene Four:

D. Application

- Luke 11:1 “Lord teach us to pray”
- 1Thessalonians 5:17 “Pray continually”
- Develop the habit of prayer in your life.
- Use P-R-A-Y
- Use the Lord's Prayer
- Colossians 1:9–14 is a great example of prayer.

Question #1: In what ways could this group help you with praying?

Question #2: What should you do differently in your prayer life?

Take time now as a group to practice P-R-A-Y. Put bookmarks in each of these passages, so you can quickly turn to them. Or you may ask four people to look them up and read them as you pray.

- **Praise:** Read Psalm 100:1–5 as a prayer.
Encourage your group to praise God for who He is and what He's done.
- **Repent:** Read Psalm 32:1–5
Take some time to silently confess your sin before God.
- **Ask:** Read John 15:7
Pray for the character of the person next you.
Pray also for other specific needs.
- **Yield:** Read Luke 22:42
Have your people pray yielding prayers to God.

Worship, Community, Mission

Big Idea



Without a navigational instrument to guide us, we can end up anywhere

Illustrations:

Option 1:

With the group, make a list of things that give us direction or guidance (e.g., compass, map). Why are these helpful? When do they help us?

Illustration wrap-up: What will guide us and keep us on track as a church?

Option 2:

The Hubble telescope has given us unprecedented views deep into space. This precise machine provides amazing pictures of the farthest galaxies.

For pictures and additional info see:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubble_Space_Telescope#Servicing_Mission_1

One of the reasons Hubble can take such accurate pictures is that gyroscopes give it stability. They maintain the telescope and keep it from wobbling in space. According to Wikipedia, "A gyroscope is a device for measuring or maintaining orientation, based on the principle of conservation of angular momentum. The essence of the device is a spinning wheel on an axle. *The device, once spinning, tends to resist changes to its orientation* due to the angular momentum of the wheel. In physics this phenomenon is also known as gyroscopic inertia or rigidity in space." Basically, these gyroscopes keep Hubble steady and in the correct direction.

Illustration wrap-up: We want to thoughtfully do the right things as a church. We can do things that don't keep us on track with God's ways. What values will guide us as a church? Our five values of: Grace, Worship, Community, Mission, and Integrity. Tonight we will look at three of them. We call these our Action Values.

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Section One: *Worship*

1. For what things should a believer worship God?

2. Read Romans 12:1–2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Why is the “spiritual act of worship” an important phrase?

Compare and contrast a living sacrifice with the former ones in the Old Testament. For further development, look at these two passages: Leviticus 4:3–12 and Hebrews 10:19–23.

3. So our worship is not just on Sunday but also _____ (fill in the blank). How many ways to worship can your group find?

Worship is much more than music—although that is an important part. What kind of worship music does God like best? What kind of worship music do you like best?

God wants worshippers who will worship in spirit and truth—style is window dressing. Why do we get into arguments about it?

Section One wrap-up

Worship is...responding to God as creator and redeemer.

We want this phrase to guide us. What are the important aspects here?

How well do you think we are doing as a church in worship? How are you doing it?

What is one thing you need to do this week regarding worship?

.....
Section Two: Community

1. How does our culture positively portray community?
Why do some not engage in community?
How do these phrases Paul used speak to us as a culture?
 - “Not going it alone”
 - “Not a face in the crowd”
 - “Not a spectator”
 - “Not a lone ranger”

2. Read Acts 2:42–47
They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

3. Name some specifics of this fellowship-community.

4. What is exciting about this picture of community?

5. Discuss how this HABF and our all-church experience can emulate this text.

6. At The Chapel, our Campus and Home ABFs are built upon three components: to equip, to care, and to have outward focus. Where do you see these in Acts 2?

Section Two wrap-up

Community is...loving and equipping as one body.

How will the ideas in this value shape what we do?

What is one way you can impact your community-group for the good?

.....

Section Three: *Mission*

1. What changed Douglas Hyde's approach to communism?
[He went from being in a communist commune to "evangelizing" others to communism.]

What keeps Christ-followers from sharing their faith?

2. Read Matthew 5:13–16 and Matthew 28:18–20.

Matthew 5:13–16

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 28:18–20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

3. Compare and contrast these two compelling verses on mission.

What aspects about mission are seen in these verses?

What is the difference between personal and church-wide mission?

Section Three wrap-up

Mission...being Christ's body everywhere.

How are you personally being challenged to engage mission?

Application

- ✓ Have your group finish the following phrases:

Worship is..._____

[responding to God as creator and redeemer.]

Community is..._____

[loving and equipping as one body.]

Mission is..._____

[being Christ's body everywhere.]

- ✓ Which of the action values do you gravitate most to?
- ✓ Is there an action value you think you could do better?
- ✓ What one thing could you do to incorporate these values into your life, into your HABF?
- ✓ How can you join others at The Chapel to strengthen our values of worship, community, and mission?
- ✓ Pray for the person on your left this week as he or she works to improve one of these values.

Grace and Integrity

Big Idea

→ Understanding God's unmerited favor impacts our behavior

Illustrations:

Option 1

1. Relate a time from your childhood when you were punished for misbehaving.
2. Was there a time you were shown mercy?

Illustration wrap-up: We can all think of times we deserved to be punished. And there have been times when someone cut us some slack. This video will show us God's unending kindness and how that leads us to wanting to live a life of integrity.

Option 2

1. Remember what it was like in Junior High when kids show so little grace to each other? Because of a birth defect that left him physically different, Christian author Frank Peretti endured many years of taunting and bullying in school. He's written a compelling book about it called *The Wounded Spirit*. He makes this strong point: *God has created us in His image and put each of us here on earth for specific purposes. That means every human being has intrinsic value, preciousness, meaning, and dignity. Why? Because we matter to Almighty God! Moreover, not only is it wrong for me to devalue another person, to belittle, to bully, or to abuse another person created in God's image, I must do what I can to defend those who cannot defend themselves against such abuse.* What are some of the consequences in people's lives because they were ruthlessly picked on and bullied?
2. Was there someone in your life who showed you grace and kindness? Share a bit of how that impacted you.
3. Why do we never graduate from needing grace to be shown all areas of our lives?

Illustration wrap-up: Let's look at how God shows grace to all. And how we should show grace to others and live with all integrity.

Section One: Grace

Common Grace: God's general blessings, extended to all people regardless of spiritual condition.

1. Read Psalm 145:9.
2. What do we learn about God because of common grace?
3. Did God need to be good to all?
4. Generally we're kind to our friends and less thoughtful to those we don't care for. Why is God's common grace amazing?

Saving Grace: God's redeeming favor for all those who trust Christ as Savior.

1. As you read Ephesians 2:1–9, identify the need for grace and discuss your insights.
[See vv 1–3, 12]
2. Write down what you pinpoint as the solution God provided. Then have a few share their answers.
[See vv 4–9]

Living Grace: God's empowered calling for Christ-followers to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the saving grace they received.

1. Read the result of living grace in Ephesians 2:10.
2. Describe the works mentioned in this passage.
[Here are a few additional thoughts on works. Purpose of good works → Mt 5:14–16, Source of good works → Jn 15:1–5, Motivation of good works → 2 Cor 5:9–10]

Section One wrap-up

1. Paul S. defined grace as: “The understanding and application of the unmerited favor.”
2. How would you define it?
3. Paul went on to define integrity as: “Walking from the inside out with uprightness.”
4. How are these two values connected?

Section Two: *Integrity*

1. What did Paul say an integer was?
[A whole number]
2. What is the point of this illustration?
[We, like “whole numbers,” are whole people. Therefore, as whole people, we will have congruity starting from our hearts, to our motives, to our actions.]
3. Who in your life has exemplified integrity? Why did you look up to him or her?
4. Read Ps 25:19–22. David prays that integrity and uprightness protect him.
How can integrity protect someone?
[See also Pr 2:7–8, 10:9, 11:3, and 13:6]
5. Read Ps 78:70–72.
 - a. What does it say about a God who scans the landscape to find a person of integrity to fulfill His purposes?
 - b. How do you think Israel benefited from David’s integrity?

Application

- ✓ These are challenging issues for us to apply in our lives. Read the following excerpt from *The Hiding Place* p 238.

It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there – the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie’s pain-blانched face. He came up to me, as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. “How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein” he said. “To think that as you say, He has washed my sins away!” His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side. Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

I tried to smile; I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness. As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

- ✓ What can we learn from Corrie Ten Boom about living graciously?
- ✓ What are the advantages for a church to live out these values of grace and integrity?
- ✓ Review God’s goodness to you found in the three graces. Christ asks us to live like He did. “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” Jn 13:34 (Also see Mt 18:32–35; Lk 7:36–47.) How can you do likewise in your relationships?
- ✓ On 3x5 cards, write down your name and one way you want to live with more grace or integrity. Exchange cards with another in the group and pray for him or her this week.

The Will of God

Big Idea



How I can know God's Will

Illustration:

Play a word association game.

1. Send four people out of the room (two female, two male).
2. Have someone write down the first thing that comes to mind on the following:
Red -- Tree -- Men -- Women -- Will of God -- Pizza
3. Bring the others in one at a time. Have them give their own answers.
4. Laugh about the answers together, then focus on the answers for will of God. What do we learn about His will from these answers?

Illustration wrap-up: Today we will look at this controversial topic.



Section One: *Introduction to Will of God*

1. What do you think of when you hear the phrase “the will of God”?

What different views have you heard?

[1. God speaks to me. 2. Coincidences. 3. Situations. 4. Putting out a fleece. 5. No way of knowing.]

2. How would you respond if you knew exactly what God wanted you to do? What if God really did work like a GPS navigational system?
 - a. What would be beneficial about that?
 - b. What would be negative about that?

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Section Two: *Sovereignty*

1. Read Psalm 31:14–15. What is Knute’s key point about this verse?
[Trust. “Our times are in His hands...”]
2. Discuss the significance of the ship metaphor.

[God’s will is the ship. It goes where He wants. However, the passengers are free to do whatever they want on the boat—even if that means sinful things. That is man’s free choice.]
See Ephesians 1:11.

3. Finish the sentence. Because God is sovereign, we should _____.

[1. We should trust Him. 2. We need to remember that He is good.
3. Some things we won’t figure out.]

- a. How hard is it to come to terms with these three truths? See Job 30:16–23 to hear about this struggle.
- b. How can we get to the place where we can agree with what Job finally concluded in Job 42:2–6?
- c. In what specific ways do we not think like God?
- d. Why is He hard to understand?

Section Three: *Moral Will*

1. Read Romans 12:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 5:16–18.
2. What do these verses say about God’s will?

[God desires obedience. God will not tell us to violate His will revealed in the Bible. Emotions, situations don’t usurp His will. If someone doesn’t “feel” in love anymore, this doesn’t give him or her the right to abandon the marriage.]

- a. What does sanctified mean?
[Set aside for holy use, or the process of becoming more like Christ]
 - b. What does Knute’s metaphor of the ship teach us about God’s moral will?
3. Discuss Mark Twain’s famous statement: “Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand.”

[It’s harder to apply parts of Scripture we know. See James 1:22–25.]

Section Four: *Shepherding Will*

1. How did Knute describe shepherding will?
2. Which is easier? Seeing how God’s shepherding will has guided us in the past, or trying to figure out what He wants us to do in the future?
3. Discuss how we make godly choices.

[Seek wisdom. Make wise choices. See James 1:5.]

Application

- ✓ Summarize and give a basic definition to the following:

God's sovereignty [Trust our loving Father.]

God's moral will [Known through the Bible. Study and obey it.]

God's shepherding will [Seek wisdom based on absolute truth/principles.]

- ✓ It is difficult at times to know to follow God's will. Read this story from the life of Corrie Ten Boom. She endured a Nazi concentration camp because she was hiding Jews from the Germans.

"Corrie!" she said excitedly. "He's given us the answer! Before we asked, as He always does! In the Bible this morning. Where was it? Read that part again!" I glanced down the long dim aisle to make sure no guard was in sight, then drew the Bible from its pouch. "It was in First Thessalonians," I said. We were on our third complete reading of the New Testament since leaving Scheveningen. In the feeble light I turned the pages. "Here it is: 'Comfort the frightened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. . . .'" It seemed written expressly to Ravensbruck. "Go on," said Betsie. "That wasn't all." "Oh yes: '. . . to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus—" "That's it, Corrie! That's His answer. 'Give thanks in all circumstances!' That's what we can do. We can start right now to thank God for every single thing about this new barracks!" I stared at her, then around me at the dark, foul-aired room. "Such as?" I said. "Such as being assigned here together." I bit my lip. "Oh yes, Lord Jesus!" "Such as what you're holding in your hands." I looked down at the Bible. "Yes! Thank You, dear Lord, that there was no inspection when we entered here! Thank You for all the women, here in this room, who will meet You in these pages." "Yes," said Betsie. "Thank You for the very crowding here. Since we're packed so close, that many more will hear!" She looked at me expectantly. "Corrie!" she prodded. "Oh, all right. Thank You for the jammed, crammed, stuffed, packed, suffocating crowds." "Thank You," Betsie went on serenely, "for the fleas and for —" The fleas! This was too much. "Betsie, there's no way even God can make me grateful for a flea."

Later on, Corrie was able to thank God even for the fleas when she found out that they had such great freedom in the barracks because the Nazis refused to enter on account of the bugs. Joyfully following the Lord's will is possible!

- ✓ Pray that your HABF can live that kind of submitting-lifestyle like Corrie and Betsie. Pray for each other using some of the Scripture texts from this lesson and the three areas of God's will Knute shared.

The Holy Spirit

Big Idea

→ We are not orphans because the Holy Spirit empowers us for godly living.

Illustrations:

Option 1

1. What was it like to be given a timeout or put in the corner as a child?
2. Prisoners of war face a more difficult challenge in solitary confinement. What is the purpose of this type of incarceration? [To break the prisoners, change their behavior; isolate them to weaken their resolve]

Read this excerpt from May 14, 1973 US News & World Report, "How the POWs Fought Back" By John S. McCain III after he spent five and half years as a POW. He and many other Americans suffered torture in the famous "Hanoi Hilton."

I remained in solitary confinement from that time on for more than two years. I was not allowed to see or talk to or communicate with any of my fellow prisoners. My room was fairly decent-sized-I'd say it was about 10 by 10. The door was solid. There were no windows. The only ventilation came from two small holes at the top in the ceiling, about 6 inches by 4 inches. The roof was tin and it got hot as hell in there. The room was kind of dim-night and day-but they always kept on a small light bulb, so they could observe me. I was in that place for two years. As far as this business of solitary confinement goes-the most important thing for survival is communication with someone, even if it's only a wave or a wink, a tap on the wall, or to have a guy put his thumb up. It makes all the difference. ... The story of Ernie Brace illustrates how vital communication was to us. While I was in the prison we called "The Plantation" in October, 1968, there was a room behind me. I heard some noise in there so I started tapping on the wall. Our call-up sign was the old "shave and a haircut," and then the other guy would come back with the two taps, "six bits." For two weeks I got no answer, but finally, back came the two taps. I started tapping out the alphabet-one tap for "a," two for "b," and so on. Then I said, "Put your ear to the wall." I finally got him up on the wall and by putting my cup against it, I could talk through it and make him hear me. I gave him the tap code and other information. He gave me his name-Ernie Brace. About that time, the guard came around and I told Ernie, "O. K., I'll call you tomorrow." It took me several days to get him back up on the wall again. When I finally did, all he could say was, "I'm Ernie Brace," and then he'd start sobbing. After about two he was able to control his emotions, and within a week this guy was tapping and communicating and dropping notes.

3. Why was communication so important for these prisoners?

Option 2

1. Watch the video clip from *Vanilla Sky* on the DVD.
2. Why was this character so agitated?
3. How do people react to being alone for too long?

Illustration wrap-up: We, too, need to remember we are not alone. Jesus promised in John 14:18: “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” Wow! That is powerful news as we face spiritual battles. Today we will look at how Jesus’ words are true. We are not orphans!

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Section One: *Who is He?*

1. Initially, Mike was spooked by the Holy Spirit. How have you seen others react to the Spirit?
2. What are Mike’s points about the Spirit?
[He is a person. He is called our Comforter, our Advocate.]

- a) See John 14:15–17,20.

If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you... On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

The Counselor ➔ “Paraclete”

Paracletos

1. *one who pleads another’s cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant; an advocate*
2. *universally, one who pleads another’s cause with one, an intercessor*
3. *in the widest sense, a helper, succorer, aider, assistant; so of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles.*

- b) See also 1 John 4:4 – the Spirit is a person.
3. Read some of the following Scripture: Lk 3:22, Jn 14:26, 1 Cor 6:19, 1 Thess 1:6, Heb 10:15. Discuss characteristics of the Holy Spirit and how they mirror characteristics of God.

Section Two: *What does He do (initially)?*

1. Review the chart on the Spirit.
2. Can you find the ministries of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the video?

CONVICTION - 📖 Jn 16:7,8

Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.

REBIRTH - 📖 Jn 1:12 [Children born of God]

BAPTISM - 📖 1 Cor 12:13 [Rm 8:9 ➔ No Spirit, no belong]

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

- To be immersed in Him.

SEALED - 📖 2 Cor 1:22

He set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

- Like having placed your money in a bank.

3. Which of these roles encourage you?
4. Read Romans 12:4–7. Where has God gifted you?

Section Three: *How do we respond to Him?*

FOUR CLEAR COMMANDS

1. Read: 1 Thess 5:19; Eph 4:30; Eph 5:18; Gal 5:16.
2. How would you describe the commands in each verse?
 - **Do not Quench** (put out the Spirit's fire)
1 Thess 5:19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire.

- **Do not Grieve**

Eph 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

CONTEXT ➔ How we treat one another (rage, anger, brawling, slander). Instead, treat each other with kindness and forgive one another as Christ forgave you.

- **Be Filled**

Eph 5:18 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

- **Walk by the Spirit**

Gal 5:16 *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

Application

- ✓ Which of these four commands can you put into practice?
- ✓ Take time this week to review the chart on the Holy Spirit. Get acquainted with His ministry.
- ✓ Give thanks together in prayer for the supportive work of the Holy Spirit.

Sacrifices of a Priest

Big Idea

As New Testament priests, we are to offer sacrifices

Illustration:

Option 1

Tell a story from your childhood when you acted selfishly. How did you break selfish habits? Why is it hard to rid yourself of selfishness?

Option 2

Is there someone in your life who gave sacrificially? Has it changed who you are today?

Illustration wrap-up: As followers of Christ, we must move on from self-focus to being a servant and being sacrificial. Today's lesson will help us to know how we, like OT priests, are to offer sacrifices.

Section One: *We are now the priests...*

1. What images do you have of a priest?
2. Knute explained that there are two kinds of sacrifices in the OT. What were they? (See Lev 6:24–30 and 7:11–15) Why are they important? How are these OT sacrifices paralleled in the worship services today?
3. Read 1 Peter 2:4,5,9,10. Name some aspects of our priestly roles. How does it feel to be a priest?
4. In the student guide, have your group write the difference Christ's death made for us. Have them share what they wrote. What is the one phrase Knute emphasized? [Once for all.] (See Hebrews 10:1–14, esp. 11–14)

Section One wrap-up

We cannot accomplish what Christ did on the cross, but here are five ways in which we can participate and be a priest.

Section Two: *...to offer sacrifices.*

1. Read Romans 12:1. What is the sacrifice mentioned here?
2. How is it different from the OT sacrifices? What does it mean to offer your body? How is presenting yourself the starting point for the other sacrifices?
3. Why is it so hard for people to offer themselves sacrificially?

Section Two wrap-up

Let's look at the other four Knute shared.

Section Three:

1. Read Heb 13:15, 16 and Rom 15:16.
2. What are the spiritual offerings in these verses?
3. How many practical ways can we apply these? Make a list of possibilities.

Section Three wrap-up

We've gotten our five duties from Scripture—our job description of a NT priest.

Now, let's evaluate what kind of priests we are.

Application

- ✓ Leviticus 10:1–3 paints a picture of two priests. What is powerful about the outcome of their actions? What does God ask of His priests?
- ✓ Now compare that to the way Jesus finished His ministry.
- ✓ Evaluate yourself. One, being the lowest—four, being the highest.

Sacrifice	Grade
Self	1—2—3—4
Praise	1—2—3—4
Do Good	1—2—3—4
Give	1—2—3—4
Converts	1—2—3—4

- ✓ How can you finish well?
- ✓ What factors will make a difference?
- ✓ Which of the sacrifices need to be strengthened in your life?
- ✓ Ask the person on your right which of the sacrifices they want to do better, and then pray for him or her in that area.

Evangelism

Big Idea



Our role in evangelism

Illustrations:

Option 1

1. Ask for a volunteer. Tell them that they'll have to leave the room and when they return they will be given a bag with a product inside. They'll have to sell it to the group. They can do anything to sell the group on the idea. The only exception is that they cannot actually look inside the paper bag to see what the product is.
2. Give the person a few minutes to think about it in another room where they cannot hear. Show the group what is in the bag: a roll of toilet paper.
3. Bring the person back in to the room and let them work their magic on the crowd.

Illustration wrap-up: Sometimes we feel like salespeople for God when we are sharing His good news. Today we will look at some important principles to do evangelism God's way.

Option 2

1. Show movie clip from *Amazing Grace*.
2. Background: This movie chronicles the life of William Wilberforce, an 18th century member of England's Parliament. He fought for two decades to end the slave trade. This scene reminds us that all men are equal. All should be presented with the opportunity to accept Christ. We often miss the stench of eternal death that is all around us. Those outside of Christ are perishing (and they don't even know it). They are enslaved to sin (and they don't even know it). As believers, we can't ignore our responsibility to do something.

Illustration wrap-up: If we take the reality of eternal separation from God for those outside of Christ seriously, then we will take our role as evangelists seriously. Let's look at some practical ways we can do this.

Option 3

Relate this story from Leighton Ford, former Vice President of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association: *I was speaking at an open-air crusade in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Billy Graham was to speak the next night and had arrived a day early. He came incognito and sat on the grass at the rear of the crowd. Because he was wearing a hat and dark glasses, no one recognized him.*

Directly in front of him sat an elderly gentleman who seemed to be listening intently to my presentation. When I invited people to come forward as an open sign of commitment, Billy decided to do a little personal evangelism. He tapped the man on the shoulder and asked, "Would you like to accept Christ? I'll be glad to walk down with you if you want to." The old man looked him up and down, thought it over for a moment, and then said, "Naw, I think I'll just wait till the big gun comes tomorrow night." Billy and I have had several good chuckles over that incident. Unfortunately, it underlines how, in the minds of many people, evangelism is the task of the "Big Guns," not the "little shots."
Leighton Ford, *Good News is for Sharing*, 1977, David C. Cook Publishing Co., p. 67.

Illustration wrap-up: It's not just up to Billy Graham, pastors, and church leaders to preach the gospel. We have just as big of a responsibility in our role to evangelize to those in our circle of influence. Let's learn some practical principles of evangelism.



Section One: *Two wings*

1. What are the two wings of the church?

Left wing = Come and see
[Sundays and programs offered here]

Right wing = Go and tell
[Sharing the good news out in our world]

2. Repeat Bill Hull's important statement.
"When is the church most effective? When the pews are empty, the lights are off, the cars are gone."

God strategically scatters the church "out there" where believers live, work, and play.

In what way is the church most effective "out there"?

How should that look?

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Section Two: *Live among them*

1. Read 1 Thess 1:5. Paul's amazing ministry in Thessalonica was built on "We lived among you for your sake..."
2. Ask your group to write down their networks. These are the places they work, their neighborhoods, where they work out, where they shop, their kids' school.
3. In the student guide, list as many of the God-given, natural, relational networks God has provided for you. Share these with the group.
[This provides a picture of where the church is located Mon. thru Sat.]
4. Next, specifically write down names of people you know who belong to each of your personal networks. Share some of the first names in the group.
5. What does this exercise help you realize?

What an exciting opportunity it is to have that many people on the list! Wow. Thank God for those relationships.

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Section Three: *Our private evangelism efforts*

1. Read Colossians 4:2–6 again.
[Verses 2–4 represent our private evangelism efforts. Often we overlook the most obvious way to begin our efforts in evangelism. Prayer. But, this is an important place to begin because we recognize the need for God’s intervention.]
2. What are the three things to pray for?
 - Pray for an open door
 - Pray to be bold
 - Pray to be clear
3. What is harder for me?
 - a. Finding open doors to serve, love, and tell.
 - b. Being bold, actually saying something about Jesus.
 - c. Being clear about what I believe, helping someone look at and understand the Bible.

What does the companion verse, Eph 6:19, seem to suggest about speaking up for Christ? (Notice the context)

4. Have your group fill out the “Circle of 3” card.
Where is the best place to keep your prayer guide?
Encourage them to put it in a place they will use it most often.

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Section Four: *Our public evangelism efforts*

1. Reread Col 4:5,6.
2. Three principles seem to ring clear from this passage:
 - ❶ **Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders.**
Be smart in the way you live out your Christian life around those who are not followers of Christ. People watch Christians, and one of the major reasons people reject Christ is because of hypocrisy. People don’t want perfection—but they want authenticity. Are you really serious about your faith and does your life match what you say you believe?
 - ❷ **Make the most of every opportunity.**
Literally, “buy up the time” you have with outsiders.
 - (a) Some pray, “Lord, please give me opportunities with unbelievers.” Good prayer, but a better one is this....

(b) “Lord, show me the opportunities that are already all around me.”

(c) Don’t look at people as interruptions but as opportunities.

③ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt.

If I want someone to hear my answer or understand a point I am trying to make, I should be kind and gracious. Never be argumentative; never be defensive.

3. Is there someone in your life who is good at evangelism? What does he or she do (or not do) that brings effectiveness?
4. How would you define evangelism?

Application

- ✓ Pray out loud, by first names, for the people on your “Circle of 3” cards.
- ✓ Put it in a visible location and commit to see how the Lord provides opportunities.