



LESSON 1: THE GOD WHO LISTENS

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: When students experience tough times, they should express their emotions to God in real, honest ways.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: Reconsider the way they communicate with God, challenging them to embrace a more honest dialogue with Him.

Scripture Focus: Matthew 26:36-46

Supporting Scripture: Hebrews 5:7

OVERVIEW: We tell our students that prayer is simply having a conversation with God. However, even as adults we often behave as if we believe there are things we should hold back from telling the Lord. What happens when things get difficult and we are confused, angry, or even blaming God for the tough times? We know we need peace, hope, and to know we are loved unconditionally, but often we can shut down because we don't think we can truly tell the Lord everything. When Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane, He showed us differently. He pleaded with His father and poured out His heart about the way things were, and the way He wished they could be. We learn from Jesus Himself that prayer means many things; one of them is being honest with God about what we're feeling when times are tough.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Tough Times Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Jesus And Tough Times Lesson 1 Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-tough-times-teacher-prep>

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details give you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

THE SETTING

This passage is a part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and comes at the end of what has traditionally been called “the beatitudes,” the series of couplets that start in Matthew 5. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek . . .” and so on. The Sermon on the Mount serves as a sort of in-depth picture of the moral expectations of God's children. Jesus spent the Sermon on the Mount contrasting the current, religious understanding of faith practiced by the Jews of His day, with God's definition of what it means to be a child of God. It would have been revolutionary teaching to His first-century audience.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point we want to make is that in Matthew 26:36-46, Jesus gives everything He is thinking and feeling to the Father. This is the point in time literally only hours before He will complete what He came to earth to complete. We can tend to believe that because Jesus went to the cross “willingly” He didn't struggle. Instead, we see in this passage that His “soul was crushed” about what was to come. It was going to be excruciating and He knew it. He had to talk to the Father about what He was feeling. He told God three times, “I'll do this if it's what you want, but that doesn't make it easy.”

God wants to honestly hear how we are feeling when times are really difficult. Jesus knew God was going to be with Him through it all, we may not always be so sure. It's when we tell Him everything that's on our heart and mind that we genuinely can feel “better.” Circumstances may not change, however, it's not until we give Him everything (including our honest feelings) that we can really deal with what's going on.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD-IN

- **Goal:** To help students begin to know how to be honest with God about what they are feeling.
- **Set-Up:** You will need a large wall and several sticky notes and a pen for each student. This is where you are going to introduce the idea of truly being honest with God.

FIRST, pass out sticky notes, several to each student. Once each student has several and a pen, **ask something like:**

- **Tell me about prayer. What is its purpose? Why do we do it?**
Answers will vary. You want to lead them into the idea that it is simply having a conversation with God. Remember this is not really a lesson on prayer, but more about God wanting us to be honest with Him. You're not looking to spend the time exploring all the elements of prayer. Lead students to see that the focus of this lesson is talking to God when things are going wrong.
- **What about when things are "bad," do you talk to God then? What have your results been like?**
Answers will vary. This is where students may talk about how, "God doesn't answer them when they pray."
- **Have you ever gotten upset with God as you pray? Have you ever told Him you blame Him for something that is going wrong?**
Answers will vary. We are beginning here to lead students into understanding what being honest with God is like. They may never have thought about really telling Him all their feelings. Make sure to tell them that at some point most people question God about the "bad stuff" in our lives.

NEXT, have them take out their sticky notes. Using one note for each thought, **say something like:**

- **Today we're going to talk about what it means to be honest with God about what we feel, especially when things are not going the way we want. It's the first of four lessons on what Jesus has to say about the tough times we all experience. We may suspect we should go to God, but we aren't always sure we can be honest with Him.**
- **Using your sticky notes, write down either a phrase you've been afraid to tell God. (Like I'm mad at you) or emotions you think God doesn't want to see. Use one sticky note for each emotion or idea. When you are done come put them up here on this wall. They are going to totally be anonymous. Try and think honestly about times when you feel you have to "hold back" from God for one reason or another.**

FINALLY, allow the students several minutes to think about this and write some things and put them up. Give them a little time for the activity, but don't drag it out if not a lot of students really know how to respond. This is a hard concept to wrap your mind around. You may need to direct them a little in what you mean. Also, make sure to add your own "sticky notes" to the activity. When they are done talk about some of the things they wrote and put up. Share ways you have felt the same things.

Transition to the Main Event by **saying something like:**

- **Tonight in our small groups we are going to talk about how Jesus himself talked to God when He was upset. He didn't hold anything back, and He even felt like God was silent. Don't be afraid to talk to your leader about ways you have felt in tough times and how you want to talk to God compared to how you do talk to Him.**

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** When students experience tough times, they should express their emotions to God in real, honest ways.
- **Set-Up:** You'll probably want a dry-erase board and something to write with.

FIRST, explain to students that as this is the first lesson of four that look at tough times, you want to make sure you're on the same page about the types of tough times teenagers face. **Ask:**

- **What are some examples of tough times that teenagers go through?**
Answers will vary. Write their responses on the dry-erase board.
- **How do people sometimes feel about God during tough times?**
Answers will vary.
- **Are people always honest with God about the way they are feeling?**
Answers will vary. Try to draw out of them the ways people feel during these times. Try not to gloss over the times when people feel like God has forgotten about them, or other such emotions.

Remember that since we are trying to get students to be honest with God (whom they can't see, touch, or hear audibly) we need to point them back to the understanding that the Lord will love them and take care of them more than we ever can. **Say something like:**

- **God wants us to be honest with the way we feel about things in life. It's really the first place to start when we are trying to talk with God; we need to be truthful about how we are feeling. As a matter of fact, if we are going through a hard time, we need to start by telling God how we are feeling about it. Jesus did this himself when He was trying to work through how He really felt about going to the cross.**

NEXT, have students turn to Matthew 26. While they are searching for it, provide a little context using the Details section of the Bible Background. When you're ready, read or ask a student to read Matthew 26:36-46. Take a moment and explain how we often look at this passage to talk about how the disciples couldn't stay awake. However, today explain that you are going to look at how Jesus talked to God during a really hard time.

Before you really start to talk about the scripture **say something like:**

- **Here we have Jesus just a couple of hours before He is arrested. He had mentioned to His followers several times about how He was going to die. Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus knew all that was about to happen to Him? Earlier that evening at dinner, He had even pointed out that Judas was going to be the one to betray Him. Jesus was God, but He was also a person, and here we see how the "human" part of Him was dealing with all that was coming.**

Then look at verse 38 and read it again. **Ask:**

- **What does Jesus say He is feeling at this point? Why do you think He was in this place?**
Answer: To say your soul is "crushed with grief to the point of death" is strong wording. He tells His friends He needs to go talk to

- the Father about it. He knows what is happening and is dealing with what is coming. He is overwhelmed with how bad everything is.
- **Can you relate? Have you ever felt this way?**

Now look at verses 39-44. **Ask:**

- **What is Jesus really saying to God here?**

Answer: This is not a short prayer. As we have said before Jesus knew everything that was going to happen. He knew the pain both physically and emotionally that He was going to go through, and in truth, He wasn't "liking" the idea of it. He was crying out to God about the way things were going. It was overwhelming, and He was literally laying on His face telling God how He wanted it to be instead.

- **How many times does He go back to talk to God about it?**

Answer: Jesus goes back to talk to God three times about what He is feeling.

- **What does this tell you about what's going on internally with Jesus?**

Answer: He was wrestling. He knows what He must do, and what He will do, however, in His human body, it is not easy.

THEN, read Hebrews 5:7 and **ask:**

- **Now that we have looked at these two passages describe the scene to me of Jesus in the Garden. If you could put it in your own words, how is Jesus talking to God?**

Answers will vary.

- **Would you say Jesus is having a tough time? (Yes) Do you get the sense that Jesus is holding anything back from God? (No) What can we learn from Jesus here?**

Help students see that Jesus is totally and completely honest with God about how He is feeling, the situation, and all that is going on in His heart. Remind them that Jesus tells the Father He will do it the way God wants Him to because it's His will, but He wishes it could be different. Also, remind students that we don't see God the Father responding to Jesus. **Say something like:**

- **From what we see here, the Father heard Jesus, but He didn't say anything. Jesus screamed and cried and God was silent. That didn't mean He didn't hear Him. God heard Him. When we're totally honest with God that's the point He can help our hearts. Sometimes it feels like nothing changes at all, but our hearts have hope and peace.**

FINALLY, ask:

- **Have you ever felt like Jesus did here? Have you ever felt like things are so awful you don't know what to do? How did you talk to God about it or did you? Why or why not?**

Answers will vary.

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into the Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To encourage students to reconsider the way they communicate with God, challenging them to embrace a more honest dialogue with Him.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need paper and pens for every student. If you would like you can purchase small notebooks for each student to encourage them for the future.

FIRST, explain to students that as you begin to wrap up your lesson, you want to give them an opportunity to begin that honest dialogue with God. Pass out the paper (or notebooks).

THEN, tell them this story:

- **There is the story of a man who went to his pastor and told him that he didn't know how to pray. He had read books, and searched the Internet, but he couldn't really figure it out. The pastor told him, "Sometimes we just need to remember that God is always with us, and prayer is nothing more than a conversation. From today forward, I want you to try something: Sit across from an empty chair and close your eyes. Picture that Jesus is sitting in that chair, then talk to Him."**

NEXT, say something like:

- **We forget sometimes that our first steps to understanding how to talk with God is to just talk to Him like we would anyone. Think of the person in your life you trust most with all your feelings. How would you talk to him or her? You probably don't hold much back, because you know he or she can handle it. Jesus knew this about the Father, it's why He talked to Him that way in the garden. It may feel weird for you to talk to God that way, especially since we can't see Him with our eyes.**

THEN, encourage students to take a moment and write God a letter. Encourage them to think about what's something going on in their lives right now that they wish was different. Is there something the blame God for? Remind them that God can handle anything we say or feel and that He can begin to help us work through it. **Say something like:**

- **There is a great verse in Jeremiah 29: 13 that says, "If you look for me with your whole heart you will find me." It may feel silly, but tell Him what you can. If you don't want to write a whole letter, then write a note. If a note is too long, then think, "How would I text God if I could?" This is just between you and God, no one else has to see it.**

Allow students the time to write their letters or notes. Try to keep it a quiet time for those who need to take it seriously. Remember those who are really uncomfortable may get silly or even chatty during this time. Ask students to be respectful of one another.

FINALLY, when students are done with the activity **ask:**

- **How did that activity make you feel? How do you feel about God?**
Answers will vary

Encourage students to do this everyday at least for the next week. If you gave them notebooks tell them this is a place for them to write their notes to God. Encourage them to start talking to God honestly. Follow up next week to ask them how it is going. Remind them that God can handle anything and loves us too much to allow us to stay in despair forever.

Make sure there are no closing thoughts and then close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute devotions 1-3 to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on social media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ...

- ◆ *Do you have questions about a lesson?*
- ◆ *Something that worked particularly well you want to share?*
- ◆ *Something that didn't work you want to bring up?*

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.



LESSON 2: FAITH IN TOUGH TIMES

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: Faith in Jesus and His ability to lead them through trials is what will get them through tough times.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: To express faith in God's ability and desire to help them persevere through tough times.

Scripture Focus: John 11:1-3; 17-27; 38-44

Supporting Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

OVERVIEW: What happens when life is going “wrong?” How are we supposed to react? Each of us on our journey with Christ can shove down our emotions and just pretend that everything is all right. We can tend to run away from God during these times or even blame Him. Our desperation comes in that we think Jesus will take all of the tough times away when we believe in Him. Instead, His promise is to be with us when things are difficult and lead us through those times. This lesson will help your students understand this, and apply it in their own lives.

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THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Gospel of John was written by John, son of Zebedee, a fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus. John also penned the book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- **Purpose:** John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

THE SETTING

Jesus has reached the point in His ministry when He is beginning to collect enemies. He is no longer viewed as harmless by the religious establishment. He is seen as a threat. By Chapter 11 in John's Gospel, Jesus has already had some serious run-ins with the Pharisees. Has gone back to the area surrounding the Jordan River to meet with the large number of people who flocked to Him. This is where he gets the message from Lazarus' sisters that their brother was dying.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is that faith in Jesus and His ability to lead them through trials is what will get them through tough times. John 11:1-3; 17-27 & 38-44 tells the story of the death of Lazarus, the reaction of Mary and Martha (his sisters), and how Jesus met this family during this time. Jesus is told that His close friend Lazarus is very ill, and yet He does not run to Bethany to help him. When Jesus finally comes to town, Lazarus has been buried for four days. Martha comes running to meet Jesus wondering why He didn't come more quickly.

Jesus wants Martha to know that no matter what, He is the one that will be with her and Lazarus. In the end, Jesus is moved by sorrow and compassion for this family and does bring His friend out of the grave. Jesus pushes Martha to see that all she needs to do is have faith that He is whom He says He is and that He won't leave her. This is still the case for every believer today. Our focus cannot be on our troubles that last only a moment; we need to focus on Christ who is with us.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD-IN

- **Goal:** To aid students in understanding that while their problems don't always go away, Jesus is with them through the tough times.
- **Set-Up:** You will need rolls of paper towels (preferably the "select a size"), a large bowl or bucket of water (maybe more than one depending on your group size), and washable markers for each student. The bowl/bucket of water should be at the front of the room that each student can access.
- (**Alternate Option:** If you don't want your students to do this as individuals, you can do it like an object lesson. All you would do is simply talk about tough times as you write an example on the paper towel. As you talk about how Jesus has the ability to lead us through tough times, helping us deal with our emotions, dip the towel in the basin of water. Then, transition to the discussion at the end of the activity.)

FIRST, remind students that this is the second of four lessons that look at what Jesus had to say about the tough times we all experience. As you're saying this, pass out markers, and one paper towel to each student. **Say something like:**

- **Last week we talked about talking to God and being honest with Him about the way we are feeling in the tough times. What we're going to see today is that it doesn't just stop with talking to God about our feelings. We need to learn how to lean on Him when things go wrong. When we have faith in Him, we begin to believe He will help us get through our hardest times.**

THEN, ask something like:

- **Think about people around you that have gone through tough times. Think of your own experience. What have you observed about people going through tough times? Do they tend to have faith in Jesus when things are tough? What about you? Why or why not?**

Answers will vary. We can have faith in Jesus when we understand we are His, and He cares for us. Often, however, we can get so focused on the bad circumstances that we lose sight of Jesus, and we don't put our faith in Him. It's easy to blame Him for everything going wrong. Sometimes this is because we think He is supposed to change the circumstances. When this doesn't happen, we think He has let us down.

Have students take out their piece of paper towel and markers. **Then say something like:**

- **Today we are going to take a look at what it means to have faith in Jesus when things are not going the way we want. Things can get tough, and it can be hard to really trust in Jesus. We need to know He is the one that is going to help us get through the hardest of times.**

NEXT, explain that everyone has a piece of paper towel and a marker. Encourage students to take a few moments and write something tough that's going on in their lives right now. It can be anything big or small. If they can't think of something right now, encourage them to write something recent that's gone on. Explain that if it's too private, they can always write initials or abbreviations.

THEN, instruct students to fold their paper towel in half, silently make their way to the water upfront, and place their towel in the water. Instruct them to watch as the water washes the ink away. Encourage them to imagine what it's like to give the emotions and the stress of their tough time away to God.

Once every student has gone forward lead students in a brief discussion. **Ask:**

- **How did this activity make you feel?**
Answers will vary.

- **What did you notice when you put the towel in the water?**

Answer: The paper towel doesn't dissolve or sink. Your "problems" that you wrote down didn't disappear, but they did run and bleed. They changed. And this change symbolizes how Jesus takes our tough times and leads us through them, helping us deal with the emotions they cause. This is what it's like when we put our faith in Jesus during the hard times.

FINALLY, transition to the Main Event by **saying something like:**

- **Today we're going to talk about this idea of Jesus helping us get through the tough times. Let's get started.**

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** That students would understand that faith in Jesus and His ability to lead them through trials is what will get them through tough times.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

FIRST, lead students in a brief review if you haven't already. Ask students if they can remember the main points from last week's lesson. Use the following bullet point to help you as a guide:

- **When we experience tough times, we should express our emotions to God in real, honest ways, embracing a more honest dialogue with Him.**

If you want to go a little deeper, ask students about their time with God this past week. **Ask:**

- **Did you feel like you were more open and honest with your feelings with God? Why or why not?**
- **Did you take the chance to write to Him like we talked about?**

Consider bridging the gap from last week to this week by **saying something similar to the following:**

- **Many people struggle with the fact that even when we are honest with God, He doesn't take our problems away. We give Him our struggles and He helps us, even if the circumstances sometimes do not change. During these times we can even tend to blame God for causing the problems, or not doing enough to help us. Let's take a look at a story where this happened.**

THEN, instruct students to turn to John 11. While they're turning, see if they can remember some of the details of John's life. Fill in the rest of the context for the book by using the Details (and the Setting) section of the Bible Background. When you've finished setting the context for the passage, read or have a student read John 11:1-3. When the student has finished, make sure everyone is on the same

page with what's happening. Then, read or have a student read verses 17-27. When you've finished, lead students in a short discussion.

Ask:

- **What is the first detail you notice in verse 17?**

Answer: Lazarus is dead and has been for four days.

- **Look back at verses 1-3 and read it again. What do we know about Jesus' feelings toward Lazarus?**

Answer: We know that Jesus loved him.

- **Now, read verse 6. What do you think about this? And how does this flavor our expectations about Jesus**

Answer: It can be difficult for us to accept that Jesus had a bigger plan here than making Lazarus well. If I sent a message to Jesus that said, "This person that is important to you is really sick," I would have expected Him to come right away. But this speaks to how Jesus views our tough times. Making tough times go away isn't always Jesus' goal. Helping us through a tough time seems to be more important to Jesus.

- **What does Martha say in verses 21-22?**

Answer: She pretty boldly told Him that if He would have been there, He could have saved her brother. Martha is very honest with Jesus. She wants to know why He didn't come immediately when He learned that Lazarus was sick. Then she begs Him to do something. She has faith in who Jesus is, even if the circumstances seem bleak. We also see that Martha doesn't fully understand what Jesus is saying to her when He talks about bringing Lazarus back from the dead. This is a great example of how we can say anything to Jesus, "Why weren't you here?" while at the same time believing that He is the one who can take care of us.

- **Does this seem like pretty open and honest communication with Jesus in the midst of a tough time? (Yes) What was Jesus' response?**

Answer: It's important to show students that Jesus didn't rebuke Martha, or punish her. She makes a sort of veiled accusation out of a place of deep hurt. Jesus accepts her honesty and responds in a teachable, faith-building way.

Take a moment and explain to students that Jesus wanted Martha to know more about who He was than what He would do for her.

Say something like:

- **Sometimes when things are tough, we forget the point is to trust in who Jesus is, and that He will be with us. Instead, we sometimes have an attitude that says, "What can you do for me?" Then we are angry when things don't go the way we wanted. Jesus wants Martha to know that regardless of the situation He is the one that brings life. He is the one that is bigger than anything.**

Ask:

- **What about you? Do you accept Jesus' desire to walk beside us during tough times? Or do you blame Him for what He does or doesn't do for you?**

Answers will vary. However, make sure to share your own story of times when you would rather trust in what Jesus will do, instead of the reality of having faith in who He is.

NEXT, have students read verses 38-44. Continue your discussion. **Ask:**

- **What does Jesus do? Why do you think He did this?**

Answer: We see that Jesus is upset over the fact that Lazarus is dead. It's possible that neither Mary or Martha expected Him to show such great power in what happened next!

- **Take a sneak peek at verse 35. What can we learn from Jesus' tears?**

Answer: That He grieves with us. God is not detached from our suffering. If we believe, as those who have been saved by faith in

Christ's person and work on the cross, that God's Spirit is truly with us, we have to believe that God is present in our suffering. Jesus hurt because He loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. HE hurt because they hurt. He hurts for and with us as well.

FINALLY, have students look at 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. When you've read it, **ask**:

- **Paul is talking here about the struggles we all face in the course of living out the life of a Christ-follower. He engages in a little paradox shift here, calling the very real, very troubling problems we all experience "light and momentary." What perspective allows Paul to say this? How could he call our tough times "light and momentary"?**

Answer: Paul can say this because he is speaking with eternity in mind. Paul knows that our time on this earth is not the ultimate goal or experience. Our time in eternity in heaven with God is what we were made for. When you take this perspective, even the really tough problems become no big deal.

- **What does Paul mean when he tells us to fix our eyes on the "unseen" instead of the "seen"? How do we see Martha modeling this in her initial response to Jesus in verse 24?**

Answer: The "seen" refers to the things of this earth. The things that are temporary and don't last. The "unseen" is the eternal. It is the "heavenly," the lifetime of relationship with God we have waiting for us after this life. Martha could make sense of her brother's death, and her frustration with Jesus, because she took an eternal perspective.

- **How does this verse give us the strength to deal with tough times?**

Answer: There is a life waiting for us that is perfect, with no suffering, sadness, or loss. This life, while awesome and full of God's rich blessing, is a shadow of what's to come. When we keep this perspective, we can deal with tough times.

FINALLY, close by saying:

- **At the end of the day, Jesus never promised to take away our troubles. If this were Jesus' main motivation, He wouldn't have waited and allowed Lazarus to die. When sin entered the world, death and suffering did too. And though God is constantly and miraculously intervening to stop pain and suffering, He does not stop it all. God allows us to experience tough times, in part, because during those tough times, we learn more about God and our faith. We experience God in deeper, more profound ways. God is always with us in the midst of our pain. And we can always trust Him to see us through.**

Ask if there are any questions or thoughts. Then transition into the Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students express faith in God's ability and desire to help them persevere through tough times.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need pens and large Band-Aids for every student.

FIRST, explain to students that as you begin to wrap up your lesson, you want to give them an opportunity to start to express their faith in who Christ is, and that He will be with them no matter what during the toughest of times.

THEN, give each student a Band-Aid and a pen. **Say something like:**

- **Each of you has a Band-Aid and a pen. Sometimes we need to be reminded of God being with us during our tough times. On the outside of the Band-Aid wrapper, write one word that represents your tough time write now.**

When students have finished, **say**:

- **Now take the Band-Aid out of the wrapper and put it on your finger. This is a reminder that God is with you during this time. Take a moment to just talk to Jesus and ask Him to help you have faith in who He is.**

FINALLY, allow a silent time for prayer. Then, **ask:**

- **What have you learned in this lesson that will help you have faith that Jesus will be with you during your toughest of times?**

Answers will vary.

- **How can we start to believe that our problems for today are “temporary” and focus on Jesus and His provision?**

Answers will vary

Close by **saying something like:**

- **We can't trust someone we don't know. Sometimes we merely wait for what Jesus can do to “solve” our problems because we don't know Him well enough to trust in who He is. Take the time this week to continue to get to know Him so you can trust He is whom He says He is. Every time you look at the Band-aid this week, talk to Him and ask Him to be with you during this time.**

Make sure there are no closing thoughts and then close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the student devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Social Media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ...

- ◆ *Do you have questions about a lesson?*
- ◆ *Something that worked particularly well you want to share?*
- ◆ *Something that didn't work you want to bring up?*

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LESSON 3: COMFORT IN TOUGH TIMES

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: Jesus stands ready to offer comfort to them in the midst of their tough times.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: To commit to turning to Jesus and accepting the comfort He offers, trusting that He will keep His promise of peace and rest.

Scripture Focus: John 14:25-27, John 16:33, Matthew 11:28-30

Supporting Scripture: Romans 15:13

OVERVIEW: Peace and comfort from the Lord are two things that can elude us in the midst of tough times. He is not always the first person we turn to when things are going wrong. Instead, the first people we run to are often our friends or family. Yet, when Christ physically left this earth, He let us know the Holy Spirit is with us always to remind us of the truth. He can keep us from getting overwhelmed because His peace is stronger than anything this world can provide. We are going to have trials they are going to come. However, one thing you can assure your students is that they can rest in the knowledge that God is greater. This lesson will help you teach your students that no matter how “heavy” the load they carry, the Lord wants to carry it for them. They can seek Him during tough times and receive comfort. A comfort that only God can give.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Tough Times Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your “Jesus And Tough Times Lesson 3 Teacher Prep Video,” click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-tough-times-teacher-prep>

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details give you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

John

- **Author:** The Gospel of John was written by John, son of Zebedee, a fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus. John also penned the book of Revelation as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- **Purpose:** John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

Matthew

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is to learn that when we face tough times we can turn to Jesus and be comforted. We would love for there to never be a hard time. However, Jesus tells us himself in John 16:33 that we will face trials of many kinds. With the difficulties of this world the Lord also gives us several promises. He will be with us. He will comfort us. The peace He gives is unlike anything the world can offer. He knows the burden we bear is too much for us to carry on our own. Instead, He carries it for us. We can't keep the hard times from coming, but we can hold tight to the One who can let us know everything is going to be OK in the end.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD-IN

- **Goal:** To aid students in understanding we can (and should) turn to Jesus during the hardest of times.
- **Set-Up:** Create an account on iamsecond.com. You'll need to be prepared to show one of the following two videos:
- **Video One:** Lee Lucas <http://www.iamsecond.com/seconds/lee-lucas/>
- **Video Two:** Bethany Hamilton <http://www.iamsecond.com/seconds/bethany-hamilton/>

FIRST, explain that you're about to show a video. Set up the video by **saying something like:**

- **Last week we talked about how to have the faith to really go through the tough times. Yet, even when we're learning to place more faith in God, we can still think we need to "be strong," or have an attitude of "I can do this." Today we're going to talk about how to turn to Christ for comfort during these hard times. We're going to watch a video of a person who went through a difficult time and how they turned to Christ and what happened.**

THEN, show the video. When you've finished, lead students in a brief discussion. **Ask something like the following:**

- **What stood out to you from their story?**
Answers will vary
- **How do you see the way Christ comforted them in their story?**
Answers will vary based on the video and what they hear. Try to point them to the way they talk about not knowing if they could have made it without the peace and comfort God gave them.
- **Even though Christ brought them comfort, does this mean everything was "wonderful" at the end of their story?**
Answers will vary: Bethany Hamilton still doesn't have an arm. Lee Lucas still has burned skin over much of his body.
- **When things are hard, do you turn to Jesus for comfort? Who or what gives you comfort in the difficult times?**
Answers will vary.
- **Does relying on God to give us peace mean we will always "feel good" about everything?**
Answers will vary. Asking God to love us and be with us means we are not alone during the hard times. The unique piece about the story we watched was that they allowed God to use it for something more. There are times when things are going wrong and it's hard to know how to rely on God. That's alright. The question really is if we will allow Him to love us. He loves us no matter what, will we allow that love to comfort us.

Help students see that though the circumstances might remain tough, God gives peace to help us carry on through the tough times. And that is what this lesson is about. **Say something like:**

- **In this lesson we're going to talk about this idea of seeking out comfort from God during the hard times. We think we can "make it" on our own. Perhaps we can. Yet, there are moments when things just are not easy and perhaps we just need to feel some comfort. We're going to take a look at what God says about comfort when things are not going well.**

Transition to the Main Event.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students see that Jesus stands ready to offer comfort to them in the midst of their tough times.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

FIRST, take a moment and review the last couple of weeks. Remind students this is the third lesson that looks at what Jesus had to say about tough times. Ask if anyone can remember what the last two lessons were about. Use the following bullet points to help you review:

- **Lesson 1:** When we experience tough times, we should express our emotions to God in real, honest ways, embracing a more honest dialogue with Him.
- **Lesson 2:** Faith in Jesus and His ability to lead them through trials is what will get them through tough times.

Ask students about how the last couple of weeks have gone personally, how they are applying what they're learning in their relationship with God. **Consider asking something like:**

- **Are you putting your faith in the Lord to help you get through tough times?**
- **Are you still being honest with God about the way you are feeling?**
- **What's changed about your spiritual life as a result of the last few weeks of engaging with God?**

Once you've finished, ask students the following question to help set up your time of Bible study. **Ask:**

- **What does the word 'comfort' mean to you? Define it in your own words.**
Answers will vary.
- **Was there something that you turned to as a little child that brought you comfort when you were upset?**
Answers will vary. Students may have had a blanket, pacifier, or even sucked their thumb as a child.
- **Why do babies or toddlers turn to these little trinkets? What purpose do they serve?**
Answer: It's something to hold on to feel better when we are upset. It's a way to soothe themselves when things are scary or uncertain.

Explain that when times get tough, we all look for comfort. You're about to see what Jesus has to say about where to seek out true comfort.

NEXT, instruct students to turn to John 14. While they're doing so, see if anyone can provide any details about John and his gospel. Supplement their answers by providing the context using the Details from the Bible Background. Explain to students that Jesus is nearing His final moments with His disciples. What they are about to read are some of Jesus' last words on this side of the cross. Once they've located the passage, read or have a student read John 14:25-27. **Then say something like:**

- **In this passage, Jesus knows He is going to suffer and die for our sins. He also knows when He is raised from the**

dead He will not physically stay on the earth with us. He wants His disciples to know they will not be alone. God is going to be with them completely, however just in another way.

THEN, lead students in a short discussion. Ask something similar to the following:

- **Who does Jesus say will be with us now that He has physically left the earth? Tell me what you know about Him.**
Answer: The Holy Spirit or the “Advocate.” In other passages, He is called our “Helper.” We can sometimes think of the Holy Spirit as a “what,” like a ghost in a paranormal movie. However, He is very real and very much God. When we have a relationship with Christ He is the one who speaks to our heart and lets us know that everything is going to be all right. He is the one who reminds us of Christ’s words of truth. It’s easy to forget and focus on the “bad” when things are going wrong. Jesus wanted to make sure we knew that God is always with us and not far away.
- **How is God’s peace, the peace that’s different from the world, a gift?**
Answer: God gives us peace that is different from anything else the world can offer. Anything else we do or go to for comfort can go away. To know that we can have peace, or that feeling that it really is going to be OK is a huge gift.
- **Why do you think Jesus tells us not to be troubled or afraid?**
Answer: When we know we can turn to Jesus for peace, and that God is always with us, we can know always that we are never alone. Often the hardest thing about something horrible is thinking we must deal with it on our own. We want to know someone can hold us. God is saying that no matter what happens He is with us.
- **Do you understand what it means when it talks about this kind of peace?**
Answers will vary.

NEXT, have students flip over to John 16:33. Read it aloud and then lead students in a discussion. **Ask:**

- **Where does Jesus say we find our peace?**
Answer: Jesus tells us clearly that our peace is in Him. It isn’t just a feeling that will go away. It’s deeper than that.
- **What does Jesus say here about tough times?**
Answer: He tells us here that we will face trials. There is sin and things that happen we will never understand. However, God is bigger than all of it. When we know our peace is in Him, then we are reminded that someone bigger, who conquered it all, has our back.

THEN, look at the last passage of the lesson, Matthew 11:28-30. Read it aloud and then, lead students in a discussion. **Ask:**

- **Have you ever had to literally pick up something that’s so heavy you can’t really handle it? Tell me about it.**
Answers will vary.
- **What is Jesus talking about here as far as being tired and carrying burdens?**
Answer: These are the bad things that happen in our lives that feel literally like something we have to carry. Our problems and troubles can feel just like those things we try to really pick up. Our arms ache and we can’t handle it. Saying He will give us rest is another way of saying, “Hand it over and I will carry that for you.”
- **What is Jesus talking about in taking on His “yoke?”**
Answer: Jesus isn’t talking about eggs. A yoke is something that they put on two cattle to keep them working together to plow a field. We can feel like we are so “tied” to the bad stuff in our lives that we can’t do anything. In this way, the yoke of our tough times is heavy. Jesus tells us that if we literally “hitch” ourselves to Him we can put all of that stuff down and take on a burden much lighter. He

will literally give us a light at the end of the tunnel. He gives us the peace to lay it all down and let him carry it instead.

FINALLY, ask:

- **We have looked at several different passages that talk about God giving us peace, comfort and rest. How do we begin to apply this in our lives? How do we begin to make the leap from head knowledge to heart knowledge? Answers will vary.** Hearing this may not be new for some of the students. However, how can they believe in this in a practical way? Don't be afraid to answer the hard questions and let them wrestle with this idea.

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into the Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students commit to turning to Jesus and accepting the comfort He offers, trusting that He will keep His promise of peace and rest.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a marble or small rock, pen, and piece of paper for every student.

FIRST, explain to students that as you begin to wrap up your lesson, you want to give them to feel what a "burden" can be when it weighs them down. Then give each student a rock, pen, and paper.

NEXT, say something like:

- **Each of you has a rock, pen and paper. Hold the rock in the hand you write with. Now pick up the pen and write how you would define peace on the paper. You must hold the rock while you write.**

Give them a few moments to perform the task, then **ask:**

- **Was it easy to write while holding the rock? What stood out to you?**
Answer: It was not easy. It was cumbersome and a pain. At best you were distracted. You may have even figured out how to work with it, but it wasn't the best way to be able to write anything down.

Then **say something like:**

- **Now let's try the exercise again. This time put the rock down, and write your definition of rest and peace.**

Give them a few moments to finish up and **ask:**

- **Was it easier this time? Why?**
Answer: They weren't "burdened" in any way. They could just perform the task without hindrance.
- **Tell me what were some of your definitions based on tonight of comfort, peace and rest?**
Answers will vary. Let them share.
- **If holding the rock is like us trying to deal with tough times without Christ, and putting it down is like giving our burdens to Jesus (and He replaces it with His burden), what does this tell us about the way He gives us comfort, peace and rest from the tough times?**

Answers will vary.

FINALLY, finish up by **saying something like**:

- **God replaces our burdens with His peace. Sometimes it doesn't mean everything goes away. Even though you weren't holding the rock anymore, it was still there. You could see it, touch it and feel it. However, you didn't have to hold on to it. Jesus gives us comfort, peace, and rest even when things go wrong. All we must do is rely on Him and know He is that peace. Keep your rocks this week, you will need them for your devotional tomorrow.**

Make sure there are no closing thoughts and then close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Social Media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

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LESSON 4: WHAT TO DO WHEN IT'S OVER

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: When Jesus delivers them from tough times, or provides them with the strength to persevere, their response should be thankfulness and praise.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: To acknowledge a time when God either removed a tough time from their lives, or helped them persevere through one, and to communicate a message of thanks and praise to Him as a result.

Scripture Focus: Luke 17:11-19

Supporting Scripture: Psalms 28:7

OVERVIEW: You have spent the last several weeks discussing what to do when your students are in the midst of hard times. However, we must remember that truly there is always a “light at the end of the tunnel” as they say. God really does give us the strength to persevere, and eventually, He brings us to the other side of our difficult times. When this happens what is our response? Do we just go on with our lives without noticing? Do we focus on what could be the next hard time ahead? Or, do we stop and thank God for what He has done to get us through? Luke tells us the story of a time when Jesus healed 10 lepers. Nine of them just went away without acknowledging what God had done for them. One, a man who wasn't a Jew, and who shouldn't have even been associating with Jews, fell at Christ's feet in humble gratitude. This lesson will help you lead your students to an understanding that this should always be their response when a tough time gets better. You'll challenge them to remember that it is God who brought them through and to praise Him with all they have.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Tough Times Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your “Jesus And Tough Times Lesson 4 Teacher Prep Video,” click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-tough-times-teacher-prep>

BIBLE BACKGROUND

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- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian, and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God, and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

THE SETTING

Luke chapter 17 comes in the midst of a huge block of writing that contains a great deal of Jesus' teachings. In chapter 15, Luke shows Jesus addressing the Pharisees with the parables of the lost things, which, of course, ends with the parable of the prodigal son. Chapter 16 sees Jesus leveling His sights at the Pharisees, teaching on such topics as love of money, divorce, and mercy to the poor. The story you'll look at today comes as Jesus has left where He was teaching to travel to a different city. He encounters and subsequently heals the 10 lepers.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is to remember to thank and praise God when He brings us through the tough times. Jesus comes upon the border of Galilee and Samaria. You may remember that the Jews hated Samaritans as they were considered, “half-breeds,” a group of people that came about when the Jews intermarried with pagan Gentiles. Jews would go out of their way to even avoid the shadow of a Samaritan touching them.

At a distance, a group of 10 lepers stood calling out for Jesus. Leprosy was a horrible skin disease that was considered “unclean” according to Jewish culture. Lepers were only allowed to touch or live with other lepers. They had to stay away from family and friends in a lonely life. This stage is set as a group of people who Jesus should have ignored for several reasons. Instead, Jesus miraculously heals them. Out of the 10, only one comes to thank Christ for what He has done. The one who returned was the Samaritan.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD-IN

- **Goal:** To help students understand that when God brings us through hard times our response should be to praise Him.
- **Set-Up:** You will need a large whiteboard, or several large pieces of paper hung on the wall for brainstorming, and then paper and pens for every student. Make sure students have paper and pens at the start of the activity, although they will not need them until later. Tell students when you pass it out, to just save it until the end of the activity.

FIRST, set up the time with students by saying something like this.

- **We've spent several weeks talking about what to do when the tough times come. We talked about how to be honest with God about how we are feeling. Then we learned that He is the one that gives us the strength to get through the tough times. Finally, we talked last week about how God promises to comfort us during our hardest times. This week we want to talk about when God gets us through, what is our response? Our tendency can be to just go on with our lives and move on to whatever is "next." It's important we remember to stop and thank God for He is the one that has been getting us through these times.**

THEN, explain to students that you're going to take a little time to brainstorm some different things about who God is and what He does so you can remember how to thank Him. Explain that you're going to ask some questions, and you want students to simply shout out their answers. Explain that you're going to write them on the board in large letters so everyone can see.

NEXT, ask something like:

- **What are some words we can use to describe who God is?**
Answers will vary. Have students shout out words that describe the attributes of God. Is He compassionate, loving, faithful, kind? You may want to write a heading like, "Who God Is" at the top of this paper.
- **What are some words or phrases we can use to describe how God helps us during the tough times?**
Answers will vary based on what they have been seeing happen in their own lives and what they know of God from Scripture. If they need help you can start them out with something like, "peace, comfort, love, He is always with us." You may want to put a heading on this that says, "How God Helps Us."
- **What are some things God has helped you with that you are thankful for?**
Answers will vary. For this one you can choose to let students shout out answers or come forward and write them down. This heading should read, "I Am Thankful For."

FINALLY, when you've finished compiling your list, transition by **saying something like:**

- **Today we're going to talk about remembering to thank God when He helps us through hard times. It may be that circumstances changed, like we were sick and now we are well. It could be that things were difficult and God helped us have peace during those times. Either way, it is God who helped us. What we just did on the board helps us set the stage for remembering who God is and how He has interacted in history and our lives. We can know**

God and we can express our thanks and praise to Him. We are going to talk about a group of people who didn't understand what that meant, and one who showed God praise in a radical way.

Transition into the Main Event.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students understand that when Jesus delivers them from tough times, or provides them with the strength to persevere, their response should be thankfulness and praise.
- **Set Up:** You will need the notes from brainstorming.

FIRST, ask students how it has been to go through this series in talking about where God is during the tough times. What are some things they have learned?

Answers will vary

If you feel like you didn't review enough in the opening paragraph, use the following bullet points to review what you have covered over the last three lessons:

- **Lesson 1:** When we experience tough times, we should express our emotions to God in real, honest ways, embracing a more honest dialogue with Him.
- **Lesson 2:** Faith in Jesus and His ability to lead them through trials is what will get them through tough times.
- **Lesson 3:** Jesus stands ready to offer comfort to us in the midst of our tough times.

NEXT, say something like:

- **Some of you may still be going through a tough time right now. We are talking about how to react when the tough time is "over," but no one expects everyone to be over his or her hard times today. Yet, there will come a time when we will get through it. This might mean things have changed and get better. It could also mean we are just starting to persevere through it. What does it really mean to persevere?**

Answer: Persevering isn't just surviving something; it's really conquering something. It means that you know that although the situation you are in stays the same, you have courage and peace that comes from God to get through it.

- **It's easy to forget God when things change for the good. Why do you think that is?**

Answers will vary.

Say something like:

- **When we are amid tough times, sometimes we cling to God because it feels like He is all we have. We are desperate for help and comfort and so we ask the one we know can and will change things. Then when it does start to lift, we feel so much better we forget to say thank you. We are going to meet some people who did that very thing with Jesus.**

THEN, have students turn to Luke 17. While they are finding the passage, provide a little context using the Details and/or Setting sections of the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read, Luke 17:11-19. **Then say something like:**

- **Let me tell you some details that might be important to this story. In this passage, Jesus comes upon the border of Galilee and Samaria. The Jewish people typically hated Samaritans as they were considered, "half-breeds," a group of people that came about when the Jews intermarried with "pagans." Jews would go out of their way to even**

avoid the shadow of a Samaritan touching them. They typically would walk around the whole country just to avoid interacting with a Samaritan. At a distance, a group of 10 lepers stood calling out for Jesus. Leprosy was a horrible skin disease that was considered “unclean.” Lepers were only allowed to touch or live with other lepers. They had to stay away from family and friends in a lonely life. They were never allowed to go to church or ever talk to a priest to deal with their sin. They were “stuck” diseased and hated.

Ask:

- **Learning that, what stands out to you about the 10 lepers calling out for Jesus to heal them?**

Answer: They were desperate, just like we are during our hardest times. They wanted to be healed so they could be “clean,” move back with their families, and finally be able to live with people again. They also obviously knew who Jesus was and what He could do for them, that is why they called to Him. However, they also knew not to come close.

- **In verse 14 what is Jesus’ reaction? What is the lepers’ reaction? What happens?**

Answer: Jesus tells them to go talk to the priest. Then they immediately go. On their way there they are healed. Jesus had compassion on them regardless of who they were or the type of sickness they carried. They obviously trusted Jesus because they weren’t healed immediately, it wasn’t until they started “going” they were healed. They didn’t know how He would do it, but these 10 trusted Jesus would make them well.

- **When they realize that they have been healed, what happens? (Look at verses 15 & 16)**

Answer: Nine of them just keep going. Excited they are healed, they are so focused on that they don’t even think about Jesus. One realizes who has done this for him, turns around screaming praise to God, and throws himself at Jesus’ feet.

- **What was unique about the man who thanked Jesus, and what was Christ’s reaction?**

Answer: He was a Samaritan. The one that shouldn’t have known who Jesus was is the one who is grateful. Jesus recognizes this. He reminds the man it is his faith in Jesus that made him well. This doesn’t mean He took the healing away from the other 9. No, they were healed still. However, this was different.

- **How do you think the man’s second interaction with Jesus (after his healing) changed him forever?**

Answers will vary: This man had a personal interaction with Jesus. Christ made sure to let the man know he was healed for believing in who Jesus was. The other 9 remained healed, but they did not have the time to hear from Jesus. It was like Jesus said to this one, “You know me, and who I am, remember that.” I believe the next time something difficult happened, he would remember it wasn’t WHAT God could do for him, but WHO God is that matters.

- **Do you know the difference between what God does for you and who He is?**

Answers will vary: It’s important for us to be thankful for the stuff the Lord does for us. However, there will be more hard times to come. In the book of James, we are reminded how to react when we face “trials of many kinds.” There are going to be different things that happen to us all through our life. When we remember to be thankful for who God is, it’s easy to praise Him for what He does.

FINALLY, read or have a student read aloud Psalms 28:7. When you’ve finished, **ask:**

- **Can you see the way the person who wrote this Psalm is feeling about God?**

Answer: This psalmist knows who God is for him. God protects him, takes care of him, and he trusts him with his whole heart. God helps him and this person is totally filled with joy.

- **When is the last time you really thanked God for helping you? Have you ever “burst out in song?”**

Answers will vary.

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into the Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students acknowledge a time when God either removed a tough time from their lives, or helped them persevere through one, and to communicate a message of thanks and praise to Him as a result.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need another sheet of paper and something to write with.

FIRST, ask students the following question:

- **Who can tell me what a psalm is?**

Answer: A psalm was literally a song that various people wrote to express their love and thanks to God. Often Psalms would start with something tough that was going on, and then end with thanking God for being with them during hard times.

THEN, explain to students that you want them to take a few minutes and write one verse to their own "psalm." Have them think a moment of a way God has helped them personally during a hard time. **Say something like:**

- **How did God bring you through? This is the subject of your psalm. You can either use your own words or use some of the ones we brainstormed at the beginning of our time for inspiration. Remember, these are not about being perfect or anything that is "right" or "wrong," this is about you remembering God has been with you and helped you through a hard time.**

Allow students a few moments to do this. If there is time, ask a couple of students to share.

NEXT, say something like:

- **If we are honest, most of us don't go around just "bursting" into song because we are so overwhelmed with thanks for God. We may sing at the top of our lungs in church groups or at camp, but walking down the hall at school and shouting, "I LOVE JESUS, HE HELPS ME THROUGH THE TOUGH TIMES!?" It just doesn't happen. The question is, why don't we do that?
Answers will vary.**

Ask them to take out the Psalm they wrote at the beginning, and look back at Psalm 28:7. **Then say something like:**

- **Take a few moments and look at Psalm 28:7. Rewrite this verse in your own words, on the same paper you just wrote your psalm. But instead of using the word "my" or "mine" put your name in the verse. So you might say, "The Lord helps Jane." If you wouldn't say, "God is my shield," what is He to you? How would you write this?**

THEN, after a few moments of them rewriting the verse, then **say something like:**

- **What is something God has done just for you, and you know it? You may need to think about that for a moment. Write that down next. What did He do and why are you thankful?
Answers will vary.**
- **How does it feel to stop and thank God for all He has and is doing to help you?
Answers will vary.**

FINALLY, close by **saying something like:**

- **Just like the leper who remembered to go back and say thank you, our gratitude changes us. It reminds us to not only think about ourselves but to truly know we cannot get through anything on our own. Being thankful is one of the things that will help us the next time something hard comes along. Look at your paper. This is your psalm of praise. This is your first step in being grateful for who Jesus is. Take it home with you, as you'll need it for your devos this week.**

Make sure there are no closing thoughts and then close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Social Media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ...

- ◆ *Do you have questions about a lesson?*
- ◆ *Something that worked particularly well you want to share?*
- ◆ *Something that didn't work you want to bring up?*

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.