

CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF EDUCATION AND FORMATION JCL

40 DAYS OF FAST AND PRAYER

AGES 11 – 16 YEARS OLDS

Old Testament Heroes (Men)

Lesson #1: Abraham: Man of Faith

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To educate students on the Old Testament hero, Abraham
2. To inspire all students to live a life of faith
3. To challenge students to be counter-cultural and depend upon God

Topics

Dependability, Faith, Fellowship, Hope, Humility

Scripture Memorization

Hebrews 11:8

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (5 minutes)

Try an activity called the Trust Fall. It's something that definitely requires trust and faith in one another, and serves as a good illustration of faith in God. It's best in same-sex groups, and is macho enough that guys get into it especially. Simply raise a student up on a chair or other raised surface. Have them face away from the group, which stands under them (4-8 people) in two rows, hands connected under the place where the person will fall.

When the faller is ready, the catcher's job is to receive the faller. The faller cannot look and must keep his or her elbows tucked in.

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think it means to have faith?
2. What is the most faith-filled thing you have ever done?
3. What is the most faith-filled thing someone you know has done?

Today we're going to talk about a man who modeled faith in extreme ways. Faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1 as "being certain of what we've hoped for, and sure of what we cannot see." Having that kind of certainty can lead people to do inspirational things. That's certainly true of Abraham.

DIGGING IN (25 minutes)

Abraham was willing to give up everything for what he could not see. He demonstrated that kind of faith more than once in his life. Let's start by reading some Scriptures that reflect upon those decisions.

Read Genesis 12:1-8

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In this passage, God calls Abraham to action. He doesn't give him any reasons or any directions—he just tells him to do something. Filled with faith, Abraham (here still named Abram) simply does what God says.

The journey was around 1,400 miles long through rugged terrain of the Middle East. On foot, that must've taken months.

Discussion Questions:

1. Where does God tell Abram to go? (*To the place He will show Abram.*)
2. What would it have been like to receive instructions like that?
3. If it, were you, do you think you could've gone?

Abraham finally gets to where he is supposed to go. Many things occur which we don't have time to study, but Abraham's life is a lot like ours—lots of twists and turns, highs and lows. In no way was he perfect.

But he demonstrated faith in ways that we can appreciate later in life, too.

Read Genesis 22:1-18

This passage is CRAZY! You're not a parent, but I think you can understand that what God asks Abraham to do is the ultimate sacrifice. Crazier still, Abraham is about ready to go through with it!

Discussion Questions:

1. According to this passage, why was Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac? (*See verse 8...it seems that Abraham was confident God would provide another way.*)
2. Try to put yourself in Abraham's shoes—how would you have felt when God asked you to do this?
3. What did God say to Abraham after this test? (*That Abraham would be blessed.*)
4. Why would Abraham be blessed according to verse 16? (*He did not withhold his son.*)
5. Why would Abraham be blessed according to verse 18? (*Abraham had obeyed God.*)

One of the ways we display faith is by obedience. To believe in God means to obey Him because what He says is true and good. Abraham displays this kind of faith wonderfully.

Abraham's faith was so strong that he became known for it. Even in the New Testament book of Hebrews, we read of his trust in God. Turn to Hebrews 11.

Read Hebrews 11:8-19

Let's go back and list all the things that Abraham did "by faith."

(Below is a list...words may vary depending upon the translation used.)

By Faith Abraham...

- Obeyed (verse 8)
- Went without knowing (verse 8)
- Lived as an alien (verse 9)
- Dwelt in tents (verse 9)
- His wife Sarah had the ability to conceive when she was barren (verse 11)
- Offered His son, Isaac (verse. 17)
- Considered God able to raise men from the dead (verse 19)

That's a lot of stuff. Sometimes we lack the faith to tell someone about Christ or make a difficult decision—how great the faith of Abraham!

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think is the most faith-filled thing Abraham ever did?
2. How can Abraham's faith serve as an example to us?

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MAKING IT REAL (15 minutes)

There is no doubt that God calls us to have great faith—faith like Abraham's. In Hebrews 12, right after the list of great heroes of the faith like Abraham, the author of Hebrews writes...

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart."

Discussion Questions:

1. When you consider the faith of Abraham, how does it inspire you?
2. What do you think it means that Jesus is the "author and perfecter" of our faith? *(That's a tough question, but try it out, you may be surprised with their opinions.)*

The ultimate goal of the faith of others is that we would be encouraged and not grow weary or lose heart (verse 3).

3. What are some things that you've experienced that have caused you to grow weary in your faith?
4. What challenges do you face that make it hard to depend upon God?
5. How do you think you can overcome those challenges to believe in God?

We're often told that if you depend on others, you are weak, or that you will only feel hurt in the end. That couldn't be any farther from the truth. You need God.

6. Who are some people in movies or on television that seem like they have it all together and don't need anyone in their lives?
7. Do you think this independency is like real life? Why/why not?
8. In what ways is depending on God like the trust fall we did at the beginning? *(We can't see, we don't know where exactly we're going, etc.)*

We have to overcome our arrogance enough to realize that we should depend upon God. We are not strong enough to handle the struggles we face each day without God, struggles with pride, lust and selfishness. Being willing to do anything for Christ is important.

Read Luke 5:1-11

Talk about Peter's reliance upon Jesus for help through the years.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you really think you're less of a person if you depend upon God for strength?
2. In what ways could this actually make you more effective as a future husband or wife/church leader/etc.?

There is no doubt that faith in Christ is the most important decision we'll ever make. Being willing to trust Him no matter what is central to what it means to be a follower of Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

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Old Testament Heroes (Men)

Lesson #2: Job: Man of Perseverance

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To educate students on the Old Testament hero, Job
2. To inspire all students to live a life of perseverance
3. To challenge young men to be counter-cultural and not run from hard times

Topics

Affliction, Difficulties, Endurance, Perseverance, Righteousness

Scripture Memorization

James 1:12

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (5 minutes)

Break into smaller groups. The leader will ask some "Would You Rather" questions. Instruct the youth to decide within their groups, what they would rather do:

Would You Rather

- 1) Run a marathon or wrestle a sumo wrestler?
- 2) Swim across the ocean or walk across a desert?
- 3) Climb a mountain or repel off a cliff?
- 4) Listen to fingernails scraping a chalkboard or hear a fork screeching across a plate?
- 5) Try to stay awake for three nights in a row or do jumping jacks until you pass out?
- 6) Wear shoes that are three sizes too small with a huge blister on your foot or wear a sandpaper shirt with a bad sunburn?

These questions are just for fun, but all of us have done hard stuff before that required perseverance.

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

Discussion Questions

1. What's the hardest thing you've ever done? (a job, a practice, a dare, etc.)
2. Why was it the hardest?
3. While you were doing it, did you ever want to quit? Why?
4. Did you quit? Why?
5. If you didn't quit, what helped you to finish?

Today, we're going to talk about an Old Testament hero who persevered under extreme trials. By looking at who he was, what he went through, and how he handled it, we can learn a lot about our own lives and our ability to persevere.

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DIGGING IN (25 minutes)

- The book of Job is considered a book of poetry.
- Job likely lived about the same time as Abraham, even though his story is told much later in the Scriptures.
- The book of Job has some unique parts, like Satan talking to God in chapter 1, and an apparent reference to dinosaurs (leviathan) in chapter 41, etc.

In Job chapter 1, we learn who Job is. Let's take a look.

Read Job 1:1-5

Discussion Questions:

1. What do we learn about Job in verse 1? *(He is upright and blameless, he feared God and shunned evil, he lives in Us)*
2. What do we learn about Job in verse 2? *(He has lots of kids—7 sons and 3 daughters)*
3. What do we learn about Job in verse 3? *(He has 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys, lots of servants, he was the greatest man among all the people in the East—in other words, he's rich)*
4. What do we learn about Job in verses 4-5? *(He prayed for forgiveness for his children)*
5. Overall, what is your impression of Job? *(Despite great wealth, Job was a man who loved God with all his heart)*

Now let's take a look at what happens to Job. It's pretty crazy stuff!

Read Job 1:13-22

The messages of the servants are catastrophic to his life. Re-read them quickly.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of these events do you think caused Job the most personal grief?
2. When did each messenger give Job the news? *(It was one after the other)*
3. Have you ever experienced a day even remotely as bad as Job's? *(No!)*
4. What was Job's response in verse 21? *(May the Lord be praised!)*
5. Verse 22 says that Job did not sin throughout all of this or with his reaction? Do you think you could respond this way if something that bad happened to you? Why/why not?

But the trials aren't over. In fact, the whole book of Job is filled with his response to these things. His friends come to visit, his wife gives input, but through it all he perseveres. Let's look at a couple of tough situations he finds himself in.

One comes when Job's wife, his only living family member, urges him to curse God. The text is found in Job 2:9

Read Job 2:9

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Job's wife said this?
2. What was his response and what does this response say about Job? *(See verse 10)*
3. According to verse 10, what is Job's situation before God at this point? *(He has not sinned)*

Another tough situation occurs in the text right after this.

Read Job 2:11-13

In these verses, we read that three of Job's friends show up to be with him in his time of need. His

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state of mourning is intense, even by ancient standards. Here we see that they simply sit by his side. They say nothing.

But later in Job (a quick scan of chapter 4, 8 and 11 reveals it), three of his friends come to speak to him and offer him advice: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. I'm sure they meant well, but their advice is not always sound. (Another man, Elihu, speaks to Job in chapter 32)

As we'll talk about in a second, often when we are going through trials, people (who mean well) offer us advice on how to get through it. Usually, they are trying to help. Sometimes, they just don't get it. But for Job, the solution is not found in listening to other people's advice.

MAKING IT REAL (15 minutes)

On these two occasions, Job is offered the wrong way out. In one case, someone (his wife) tells him that the God he is clinging to does not care about him and that he should simply turn his back on God and be judged/die. In the other case, well-meaning friends urge Job to listen to them and heed their counsel. Apparently, their advice is way off base, and they don't offer a solution for Job.

These two situations are not like the situations that we face when undergoing trials. People will tell us that we should turn our backs on God, or people seek to advise us that it doesn't make any sense or fit our particular situation.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you are going through trials, do you ever blame God? Why/why not?
2. Job says that to curse God would be foolish? Why would it be foolish to blame God when you're going through a hard time?
3. How do you feel like your attitude towards God could improve when you are suffering?

His wife's advice is pretty horrible, but he also gets a lot of feedback from his friends. We don't have time to read the entire back-and-forth dialogue between Job and his friends (it takes up several chapters), but the gist of it is that they are trying to convince Job that he did something wrong to deserve it. Job is convinced that this is not the case, and still offers praise to God despite the hardships that have befallen him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What's the worst advice you've ever received when you were hurting?
2. If you were Job, what would you have told the friends in response to their input?
3. Why do you think friends might try too hard to give us advice that ends up being off the mark?
4. When we're suffering, who should we go to for advice? What kind of advice should we listen to?

There is no doubt, when we're going through a hard time, that we should not turn our backs on God.

Read James 1:13

This verse says that God does not tempt us. He's not trying to trick us. He does not desire to trap us. He loves us.

We also should not necessarily listen to those around us who seek to give us advice. Good, godly counsel is always helpful, but that's not always what we get. Be careful to check advice from friends with the word of God.

Instead, we should seek to respond the way Job does. He does not respond to his wife. He does not give in to his friends. Instead, he offers a statement of faith even in the midst of his hard times.

Read Job 13:15

Job says it right there, even if God chooses to kill him, he will trust in God.

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Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think it took for Job to muster up the courage to say that?
2. What does that show about Job's faith?
3. Everyone around Job is trying to get him to do something. Instead, Job says that if God kills him, he'll still trust Him. Could you say that?

Job's great faith pays off in the end. Though he does have an exchange with God that would humble any person (see chapters 38 and following), by the end of the book we see that Job's perseverance has brought upon him great reward.

Read Job 42:7-17

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think of the way God rewards Job?
2. What does this teach us about perseverance?
3. How much of everything does Job have now? (*14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, 1,000 donkeys, 7 sons, 3 daughters*)

Close the lesson with these two passages from the New Testament.

Read James 1:12

These trials really do make us stronger—closer to Christ than we were. Not only that, but a reward awaits those who stay faithful.

Read Revelation 2:10

It seems like the Bible is clear. If we persevere, God will be our help and will reward us. Furthermore, we will have the experience and strength gained from the trial which will help us actually follow Christ better.

I want to challenge you all to commit James 1:12 to memory. This verse can keep you going through trials the same way that Job did—with eyes and heart focused on God, not turning your back to him or playing the blame game, but worshipping Him in spite of the tough times that surround you.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Pray that your students can withstand trials and worship God no matter what.

You might also ask what trials they are going through, and have them pray for one another individually for those trials.

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Old Testament Heroes (Men)

Lesson #3: Joseph: Man of Humility

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To educate students on the Old Testament hero, Joseph
2. To inspire all students to live a life of humility
3. To challenge youth to be counter-cultural, not arrogant

Topics

Attitude, Behavior, Character, Humility, Integrity

Scripture Memorization

Proverbs 11:2

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (5 minutes)

Have a good old fashioned limbo contest. Line students up in a straight line, get 2 volunteers to hold a broomstick, curtain rod, or any other "bar" you have handy, and play some festive music.

Start at a level everyone can go under, and each time the line goes through, lower the bar an inch or two. Keep going until you have a limbo champ (remember, no hands, knees, or anything but feet can touch the ground as you go under). Surprise the group and take a turn yourself. Who knows, you might win!

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

Discussion Questions

1. How many of you thought you'd do better than you did?
2. How many of you went way farther than you thought you would?
3. When did it really start getting hard for you?

The limbo is a great example of what we're going to talk about today. As we've gone through the Old Testament in the past couple of weeks, we've seen great examples of faith and perseverance. Today we're going to look at the life of a man named Joseph, and we're going to ask how low he can go.

Joseph is a great example of a person with humility.

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

In Genesis 37, we meet Joseph as a young man of 17, not much older than most of you.

Read Genesis 37

Discussion Questions:

1. Does Joseph seem very humble here to you? Why/why not?
2. Do you think it is easier for young people to be more arrogant? Why/why not?

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3. Why do you think Joseph's brothers did what they did to him?
4. If you were Joseph, how would you be feeling at the end of the chapter?

Joseph is about as low as you can go, having been beaten and betrayed by his own family and sold to a foreign people. But when we flip the page to Genesis 39, we see Joseph's fate starting to change.

Read Genesis 39:1-6

Discussion Questions:

1. Who bought Joseph from his captors? (*Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's bodyguards.*)
2. According to verse 2, who is with Joseph? (*The Lord.*)
3. According to verse 3, who began to respect Joseph? (*His Egyptian master.*)

So, by verse 6 of chapter 39, Joseph goes from being betrayed and sold into slavery to being the overseer of the entire estate and Egypt's second-in-command.

Discussion Questions:

1. If in the next 30 days you went from where you are today to one of the wealthiest, most powerful people in your country, how do you think you would change?
2. Do you think it would be easy to be humble in this circumstance, or would it be difficult to stay grounded? Why?

In the rest of verse 39, we read a familiar story. Potiphar's wife was attracted to Joseph and tried to get him to have an affair with her. Joseph's line in 39:39 is a great window into the heart of this man.

Read Genesis 39:39

Despite his position, Joseph did not succumb to the pressure before him. Instead, he humbled himself before God and refused her continued attempts. However, she falsely accused him, and he was sent to prison.

Read Genesis 39:20-23

Discussion Questions:

1. If in one day you went from one of the most powerful people of your country, with great wealth and fame, to a common prisoner, how would you feel? Why?
2. Even in prison, Joseph's integrity caught the eye of those above him. Who does verse 23 say was with Joseph?

Even in jail, Joseph seems to depend upon the Lord. He doesn't pull rank or attempt to convince people of his innocence. He doesn't try to sneak or buy his way out of jail. Day after day passes, and Joseph simply lives life humbly.

From the pit of this dungeon, Joseph is about to enjoy yet another meteoric rise—this time at the hands of Pharaoh himself.

Read Genesis 41:14-44

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Pharaoh say will not happen without Joseph's consent in verse 44? (*No one should raise his hand or foot.*)
2. If in 30 days you went from a dungeon cell to in charge of an entire country, how would your attitude change?
3. How do you think Joseph managed to remain humble through all of these changes in his life?

There is no doubt that Joseph's stability and his humility stick out in this text. No matter the situation, from the pit his brothers threw him into, to his captivity, to his rise to power in Egypt, to his false accusing, to his imprisonment, to his second rise to power he seems to rely simply on God.

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MAKING IT REAL (10 minutes)

Discussion Questions:

1. When you think of humility, what comes to mind?
2. Who is the humblest person you know?
3. Who are some famous people you can think of that don't seem very humble?

There's a passage of scripture in Proverbs which summarizes humility very simply.

Read Proverbs 11:2

This is a verse we could all memorize, for sure. It states simply that humility leads to wisdom and pride leads to dishonor.

Read Proverbs 18:12

These states something similar: humility is a path to honor; whereas, pride leads to destruction.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you see life playing out like this; with arrogant people being destroyed and humble people being lifted up? Why/why not?
2. If humility doesn't earn you riches and fame in this life, what could these verses mean?
3. How does God feel about the proud? (He opposes them.)
4. Why do you think God opposes the proud?

God is the ultimate authority. Pride is thinking you are better than everyone. Pride is thinking of yourself as a little God. Pride is what got Satan kicked out of Heaven. Being prideful is counter-Christian.

Our glory is not in this life (that would defeat the purpose of being humble). The promise of Scripture for those who are humble is that even if we don't get our reward in this life, eventually our reward will be with Jesus in Heaven.

Being humble is counter-cultural. These days the message for people is to feel "empowered," to have high self-esteem, and to do anything we want. Jesus said to be humble, and Joseph provides an excellent example of this.

Read James 4:10

The question I want to leave you with is this:

Why try to boost yourself up, when if you would just humble yourself, the God who made you will lift you up?

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

(Challenge students to assume the humblest position they can; kneeling, lying flat on their faces, etc.)

Have the students repeat this prayer with you out loud?

Dear God,
I am not You.
I am not God.
Help me to be humble.
I am a human.
I am so small.
Humble me.
Amen.

Old Testament Heroes (Men)

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Lesson #4: Moses: Man of Willingness

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To educate students on the Old Testament hero, Moses
2. To inspire all students to live a life of willingness
3. To challenge young people to be counter-cultural and unselfish

Topics

Availability, Faith, Guidance, Listening

Scripture Memorization

Philippians 2:3

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (5 minutes)

Play, "Would You Be Willing." The idea is to get the students thinking about what they would be willing to do in a given situation. Encourage them to be honest. These are silly examples, but a more serious form of the game follows.

1. Would you be willing to run into traffic to try and save a deaf puppy?
2. Would you be willing to tell the truth about a friend even if it meant getting him or her in trouble?
3. Would you be willing to swallow 10 goldfish for \$1,000?
4. Would you be willing to stay up all night to finish your homework if it meant skipping a friend's sleepover?
5. Would you be willing to re-enter a burning building to find a missing sibling?

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

Play, "Would You Be Willing," again, but this time, ask questions about what students would be willing to do for God. Remind them that they need to be honest in answering. Encourage not to answer in a way they know they should, but in a way that reflects what they would actually do if the situation came up.

1. Would you be willing to stare an atheist in the eye and profess your faith in Christ?
2. Would you be willing to stand up for an outcast at school if it meant your reputation suffering?
3. Would you be willing to stay up all night praying for a friend who doesn't know Jesus?
4. Would you be willing to confess that Jesus is the Christ if it meant that you would be killed?
5. Would you be willing to confess that Jesus is the Christ if it meant that someone you loved would be killed?

As we're about to see, one Old Testament hero was willing to do all of this and more.

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

The life of Moses could be studied in a variety of different ways. Compared to the other Old Testament figures we've studied so far; Moses seems to stand out Bible-wide. For instance, Joseph is mentioned

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only about 240 times in the Scripture, mostly in Genesis. Job is mentioned only 55 times, almost exclusively in the book which tells his story.

Moses, on the other hand, is talked about a whopping 829 times in the Bible and almost 100 of those are in the New Testament. It seems like his story has far-reaching effects and is worth studying, and that's what we're going to do today.

But we're really going to key in on one event, his encounter with God at the burning bush. This story is recorded in Exodus 3. Everyone turns there.

We're going to read this chapter in chunks. I need three volunteers.

Read Exodus 3:1-22 *(Have one person read Exodus 3:1-12, have someone else read 3:13-22. The reading process could take a long time, but be patient. Then, move on to the questions.)*

Discussion Questions:

1. What was Moses doing when he saw the burning bush? *(Tending sheep.)*
2. If you saw a bush that was burning but not being burnt up, and then a voice came from within it, what would you have done?
3. When Moses realized it was God, why do you think he hid his face?
4. What was going on in verse 7-10? *(In case your students need help, remind them that Moses was raised in Egypt, that the Israelites were in captivity there, and that Moses was very familiar with their plight. He had left Egypt 40 years prior after killing one of their captors. God was about to ask him to go back into hostile territory.)*
5. At first, Moses does not express any willingness. Look at how he responds in verse 11. Would your response to God's request been the same or different? Why?
6. What is God planning to do for His people? *(See verse 17. He's going to save them and bring them to their own land.)*
7. Did God anticipate Pharaoh's cooperation? *(See verse 19. No, God knew Pharaoh would not cooperate.)*
8. What was He planning to do in response? *(See verse 20. Send plagues.)*

Read Exodus 4:1-20

By the time we get to chapter 4, Moses is already cooking up excuses. But by the end of the passage that we read, we see that he is on his way to Egypt.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is Moses's first argument in verse 1 of chapter 4? *(That they may not believe him.)*
2. What does God give Moses as a sign to the people? *(A staff.)*

Let's not ignore what happens in verses 2-5. Moses throws down a stick and it becomes a snake. God tells him to grab it by the tail—something most people are not willing to do. Yet God tells him to do so, and he does. This is another small way we see willingness in Moses's life.

3. What another sign does God give Moses? *(See verses 6-9. God made the skin of Moses's hand leprous, then cured it.)*
4. Moses comes up with more excuses. What is his second argument in verse 10? *(That he is not a good speaker.)*
5. What is God's response? *(That God will take care of it by sending Aaron to help him.)*
6. In verse 18, we see that Moses returns to his father-in-law and asks permission to return to Egypt. What do you think convinces Moses to go?
7. What do you think Moses is feeling as he sets off for his old stomping grounds in verse 20?

Verse 20 is worth re-reading.

Read Exodus 4:20 (again)

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In a short time, Moses goes from a shepherd to a messenger of God. He's leaving his home to return to a land where his people are held captive by a powerful government, he's wanted for killing one of the captors, the leader of the oppressing government is guaranteed to oppose him, and his life is at stake. The fact that verse 20 is even recorded—that Moses is even willing to do what God asks him to—is pretty amazing.

As you know, he goes. He's opposed. There are plagues. There are promises from Pharaoh that are broken. Finally, after God judges Egypt by wiping out all of their firstborn sons, Moses leads his people (most likely in excess of 2 million), out of that land. Even then Pharaoh and his army pursue them. Only at the Red Sea are the Israelites spared from slaughter. After 40 years of wilderness wandering, obedience and disobedience, manna from Heaven, and many other events, the Israelites are at the Promised Land. But it all traces back to a single day on a hillside when a shepherd comes face to face with God and is willing to do what He asks.

Moses was willing to approach the bush, he was willing to listen to the voice inside, he was willing to believe it was a face-to-face meeting with the God of the universe, and he was willing to do what God said. That's willingness!

MAKING IT REAL (10 minutes)

Discussion Questions:

1. Be as honest with yourself as you can. If you were Moses, could have done any of this?
2. Where would you have thrown up your hands and given up?
3. If you could've done it, what would have been your motivator?

We, too, are called to be willing instruments of God.

The story of Isaiah comes to mind.

Read Isaiah 6:1-8

In this passage, God is looking for someone to help him. The reply of Isaiah is inspiring when he says, "Here I am! Send me, God! I'll go!"

To consider what God wants should be natural for us as Christians, but often we're instructed to only consider our wants. Images saturate our society; images of fame, wealth, sex, strength, etc. But I want you to know it takes a real man or woman of God to bow his or her knee before Jesus and pray what Jesus prayed in the Garden "not my will, but Thine."

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think it is so hard for us to consider the needs of others?
2. Honestly, do you get excited when you think about helping God?
3. What does God tell you to do that does excite you?
4. What does God tell you to do that you are unwilling or find hard to do?
5. How do you think you can become a more willing vessel for God to use?

Do you know of anyone who is really good and willing to serve God? Maybe you can get to know people like that better. Ask them about their faith, and what inspires them to do what God asks.

Also, consider this Scripture:

"A generous man will prosper, he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." Proverbs 11:25

And don't forget the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2

"Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
Philippians 2:4

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40 DAYS OF FAST AND PRAYER

We should be willing to help others. We should be willing to help God. Though this world gives the idea that a man should only look out for himself, the Bible paints an entirely different picture.

Isaiah is excited to help God.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

It is hard to be willing. But Moses was willing to go. We need to pray that, like him, we would find the courage to do what God asks us to do. I don't know what that is for you, but let's pray for those things we named that we find it hard to be excited about. Let's pray silently that God will change our hearts so we will enthusiastically do whatever it is He asks of us.

Old Testament Heroes (Men)

Lesson #5: David: Man of Passion

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To educate students on the Old Testament hero, David
2. To inspire all students to live a life of zealously and a passion of living for Christ
3. To challenge young people to be counter-cultural and direct their zealously toward Jesus

Topics

Believing, Boldness, Courage, David, Endurance, Stand Firm, Trust, Zealously

Scripture Memorization

Psalm 119:10

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

Discussion Questions:

1. What if Joseph thought what harm could come from one kiss?
2. What if David thought what's wrong with letting Goliath name call?
3. What if Moses decided to blend in with the crowd and mumble against God like all the others?
4. What if Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego thought it wouldn't hurt to bow down to an idol, especially if they didn't "really" mean it?
5. What if Abraham thought God's request to sacrifice his son was just a little too radical?
6. What if the disciples were politically correct?
7. What would happen if we had a greater passion to follow God?

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DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

David's ascent to power in Israel was somewhat slow. From the time he slew Goliath—one of his most famous accomplishments—to the time he officially became king was probably about 15 years. Yet, his passion for God was evident from an early age.

1 Samuel 17:41-51

This is a well-known story that many of you have probably heard. But let's hone in on a verse and get to know David's heart even at this young age (He was probably a teenager, certainly not more than 20).

Re-read 1 Samuel 17:45

Discussion Questions:

1. With what weapons is Goliath armed? (*A javelin, a sword, a spear.*)
2. What does David say will be his defense? (*The name of the Lord.*)
3. What does this type of statement—given by a teenager—say about his passion for God?

The importance of this event is not how big Goliath was or how overmatched David was. The significance is not in how David defeated the giant. Instead, we should be inspired by the passion that is obvious in David's life. When so many cowered in fear, David would not allow God to be mocked.

Passion can be described a lot of ways. Unfortunately, in our society, it almost always carries a sensual connotation. But you can be passionate about anything. To be passionate means that you are intensely compelled to and fervently desirous of something.

David is known for his passion. In the Bible, he is called a "man after God's own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14) Is there any greater description of being passionate for God?

- How do you think David managed to have this much passion?
- Are there other people in the Bible whose passion for God rivals David's? Who can you think of?

This passion continues to fuel David's life. From this first event to his time on the throne in Israel, passion is an identifying characteristic of who he is. Let's look at a few more passages:

Select several students to read the following passages out loud:

Samuel 23:1-5

Samuel 30:1-17

Samuel 5:19-25

Samuel 12:13-20

Discussion Questions:

1. What did David do in these passages? Why did he do these things?
2. How did David interact with God as he did these things?
3. What was the result of each of these events?
4. How do David's actions demonstrate his passion for God?
5. What phrase connects all of the passages? (*David "inquired of the Lord."*)

Even when David made a mistake, he was passionate about God. In 2 Samuel 12:20, he worshipped despite the fact that his son had just died. That's passion. No matter what happened, David was passionate concerning the things of God.

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MAKING IT REAL (10 minutes)

In our society, it's not being passionate that is the problem. Instead, it's directing our passion at the right things.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some things that you are really passionate about?
2. On a scale from 1-10, if you're being honest, how would you rate your passion for God?
3. How do you think you can increase your passion for God?

One of the ways it seems like David stayed tapped in to God is by "inquiring of him." There are 7-8 times in Scripture when David is said to have done this.

Jeremiah 29:13 and Matthew 7:7

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think it means to inquire of God?
2. How can you inquire of God more?
3. When you inquire of God, what should you expect in return?

The Bible says that if we seek God, we'll find Him (see Jeremiah 29:13). If we listen, we'll hear. Jesus promises in Matthew 7:7 that if we ask, it will be given. God seems just as passionate about us as we should be about Him, don't you think?

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Let's inquire of God right now. Wherever your passion is right now, let's pray individually that it will increase. Let's make sure we're inquiring of God more than we ever have.

Next week when we get together, I'm going to ask you if you've been asking God for more passion. Remember, if we ask for it, it will be given.

(Lead your group in prayer after allowing them some quiet time for individual prayer.)