

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI NIV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song: Ephesians 5:1-2

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God's People Love Him with All of Themselves

God calls His people to love Him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength-- and, oh, they want to do this! Why wouldn't they? Didn't God love them before they loved Him? Didn't He freely give His own Son as the sacrifice for their sins? And doesn't He promise to always love them and do what is best for them? Why wouldn't they want to love God most of all, in everything they do?

But loving God and living for Him is not something God's people will ever do perfectly here on earth. Yes, their sins have all been forgiven by God and they will be God's people forever, but they still struggle with sin. Their hearts are still tempted to love other things. Their lives show that they still want to live for themselves. It will be this way until they go to live with God in heaven. There, God will make them perfect; and at last, they will live and love perfectly.

Until then, God's Holy Spirit lives in their hearts and helps them love God more and more. He grows love in their hearts for God and His good ways. He works in their minds to understand God better and to delight in His ways. He gives them strength to act out their love for God and fulfill His good plans in all that they do.

God's people are grateful to God for helping them live for Him now, but they look forward to the day when they go to heaven and will truly love Him with all of themselves.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 6:4-5

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD our God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

CASE STORY

Mark 16; Luke 5,9,18,22; John 21

Our story is called:

The Case of the Three Questions.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. What were the Three Questions? Who asked them?
2. Who answered the questions? How did he show his answer with his life?

This story takes place during New Testament times when Jesus lived on earth.

Peter, James, John and the other fishermen left their boats and headed for shore with their fishing nets. All night they had thrown out and heaved those heavy nets, but they hadn't caught even one, measly fish! Now they had to clean the nets and inspect them for tears before putting them away and heading home to sleep. It was the last thing those weary, discouraged men wanted to do, but they knew they had to do it.

As the fishermen worked on their nets, Jesus and a crowd of people came down to the shore. Jesus climbed into Peter's boat and sat down.

"Would you push the boat out from shore a little way?" he asked Peter. Peter did as Jesus asked, then Jesus began to preach to the crowd. Peter and the other fishermen listened as they worked.

"This Jesus is something special! He talks about God like no other teacher we've heard!" they thought.

When Jesus had finished preaching, He told Simon, "Take your boat out into the deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

What was Jesus thinking? Didn't He realized they had just finished cleaning their nets? They would have to clean them again if they did as He asked! Besides, every fisherman knew that you fish at night, not during the day! "We've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything," Peter told Jesus, "but I will do what you ask."

They cast out their nets and immediately they were filled with so many fish that the nets began to break. The other fishermen scrambled out to help them and soon both boats were filled so filled that they were about to sink!

Peter knew this wasn't just a lucky catch! This was God at work! He fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

But Jesus didn't go away. He had plans for Peter and

his partners. "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men," Jesus told them. "Come, follow me."

What? Leave behind their way to make money and be Jesus' disciples? It would cost them everything! But that was just what they did. They pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed Him.

For three, whole years, Peter and the others followed Jesus, With amazement they watched Him calm stormy seas, give sight to blind people, even raise the dead to life. And, oh, how they loved to listen to Him speak! He spoke with authority the very words of God. What power, what wisdom, what love!

"Jesus is no ordinary teacher, He is the Messiah, the Son of God," Peter confessed. And the more he saw, the more he believed and the more he loved Jesus.

But life with Jesus was not going to always be like this. Jesus' love for God's people was taking Him to the cross to suffer and die for their sins. The disciples' love for Him would waver. "One of you will betray me and hand me over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will arrest me and you will all leave me. Then they will kill me. But, on the third day, I will rise," Jesus told them as they sat together eating the Passover Feast the night before Jesus was to die.

Peter disagreed. He loved Jesus and believed He was God's Son. "No, Lord. Even if everyone else leaves you, I won't. I will die with You!" he insisted.

But Jesus knew better. "Peter, your love for Me is not what you think it is. By the time the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny you even know Me three times!" Jesus warned.

Later that night, everything began to happen just as Jesus said it would. Judas Iscariot--one of the twelve disciples--led Temple soldiers to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. As the soldiers grabbed Jesus, the disciples ran away. Peter was braver than most of the others. He followed secretly behind and waited in the courtyard to see what happened to Jesus. But by the time the rooster crowed in the morning, even Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times.

How Peter cried over his weak love for Jesus, then cried even more as Jesus was crucified later that day.

But on the third day, the weeping changed to rejoicing when Jesus appeared to Peter and the others. He had risen from the dead in victory over sin and death for God's

people!

Yet even as Peter rejoiced and worshiped Jesus, something wasn't right. He couldn't forget what he had done: "I knew He was the Messiah, the Son of God. I boasted that I loved Him so much that I would die for Him; yet, I left Him when He was arrested. How could my love for Jesus have been so weak?" Peter thought.

But Jesus wasn't finished with Peter. He knew all about the poor love of his heart and He had plans for Peter. "Tell the disciples and Peter to go to Galilee and I will see them there," Jesus had told the women, the day He rose from the dead.

So that's what they did. They went back up to the Sea of Galilee and waited. One night they decided to go fishing, like they did in the old days. Surely it was nice to throw out the nets and hopefully pull it in, full of flip-flopping fish.

But the nets came in empty each time, just like they had on that strange night three years earlier. Just as they were about to give up for the night, a man called to them from the shore: "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

"No," they shouted back.

"Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some," the man said. They cast out their nets and caught so many fish that they didn't even have strength to haul them in!

Immediately Peter, James and John knew who the man was. "It's the Lord!" John exclaimed.

Simon Peter jumped into the water and swam towards Jesus standing on the shore. The others followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish.

Waiting for them was bread and a fire with fish cooking on it. "Bring some of the fish you have just caught," Jesus told them.

So Simon Peter went to the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.

"Come and have breakfast," Jesus invited them, taking the bread and fish and giving it to them.

After eating breakfast, Jesus pulled Peter aside. It was time to talk. "Do you truly love Me more than these?" he asked Peter.

"Yes, Lord," he said, "You know that I love You."

"Feed my lambs," Jesus told him. (Lambs was Jesus' name for all who would trust in Him as their Savior.)

"Peter, do you truly love me?" Jesus asked again.

"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you," Peter replied.

"Then take care of my sheep, God's people."

A third time Jesus asked, "Peter, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus had asked him three times, but he understood. He had denied Jesus three times, now Jesus was giving him three chances to tell he loved him. "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you," Peter replied.

"Then feed my sheep," Jesus told him.

Perhaps Peter's love for Jesus had been weak, but even so it was true love for Him. And nothing would please him more than to live the rest of his life taking care of the new believers in Jesus.

Do you wonder what happened to Peter after that day on the beach? Did he take care of Jesus "sheep", His new followers, or did he deny Jesus again?

The Bible tells us that with the help of the Holy Spirit, Peter did take care of the new believers in Jesus. Many times he chose to suffer rather than to give up living for Jesus and loving His people. And do you know how many say Peter died? They say he was crucified as punishment for believing in Jesus. But because he did not think he deserved to die just as Jesus did, he asked to even be crucified upside down! Here was a man who God had helped to love Him with all of himself!

Our Bible Truth is:

God's People Love Him with All of Themselves

Our Bible Verse is: Deuteronomy 6:4-5

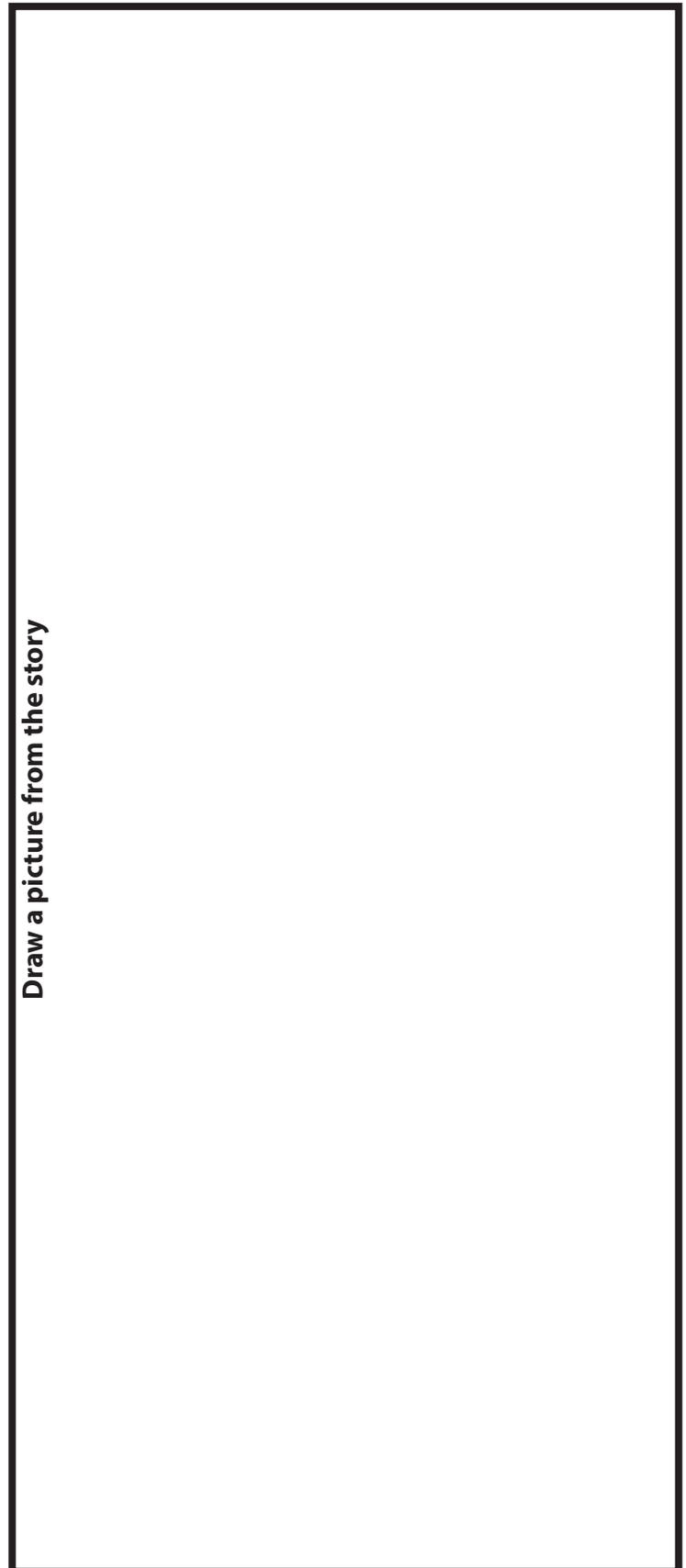
"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD our God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

What about you and me? Can we ever love God with all of ourselves? Never on our own! There is only one way we can even begin to love God as He calls us to: by turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior. When we do, God will give us a new heart, filled with His Holy Spirit. He will work powerfully in our hearts, helping us to love Him more and more.

But what a wonderful day it will be when God's people live together with God in heaven. For then, they will be completely changed and will truly love Him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength forever.

Let's praise God for sending Jesus to save sinners like us and like Peter. Let's praise Him for promising to send

the Holy Spirit into the hearts of His people, helping them to love God as He wants them to. And let's ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts so that we might love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God has loved His people so deeply. He loved them before they loved Him. He saved them through Jesus. Oh, how His people want to respond to Him by loving Him with their whole life! <i>Answer: True!</i></p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. What were the Three Questions? Who asked them? Answer: Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him three times. b. Who answered the questions? How did he show his answer with his life? Answer: Peter told Jesus he loved Him, even though he had denied he knew Him before He was crucified. Peter showed that he really did love Jesus by boldly telling others about Him and dying for the sake of His name.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: The ___ our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD our ___ with all your heart and with all your ___ and with ___ your strength." Answers: LORD; God; soul; all.</p>	<p>When I Survey the Wondrous Cross <i>PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 8</i></p> <p>Verse 4</p> <p>Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.</p> <p>Words: Isaac Watts Music: Lowell Mason</p> <p>God's people want to love God most of all. They want everything that they are and they have to be a gift of love back to Him. Even if the whole realm of nature--that is, the whole world--was theirs to have and to give, it would be too small a gift of love to give back to Him for all He has done for them. He loved them while they were still sinners. He loved them enough to send His own dear Son to suffer and die for their sins. Nothing less than their soul, their life, their all, is a big enough present to offer back to Him in thanks!</p>
AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY	BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being so worthy of all our love.</p> <p>C God, we confess that like Peter, we are tempted to avoid doing hard things for You, instead of loving You as we should. We all need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You that Your forgiveness is so great that would even forgive Your people when they choose to avoid doing hard things for You. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to work inside Your people, giving them greater love for You and courage to do hard things for You.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts, giving us love for You and helping us to do even very hard things for You.</p>	<p>Hear, O Hear <i>PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 9</i></p> <p>Hear, O hear, O Israel, Hear, O hear, O Israel, The LORD your God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD our God with all your heart, Love the LORD our God with all your soul, Love the LORD our God with all your strength. Deuteronomy Six, verses four through five.</p> <p>Words adapted from Deuteronomy 6:4-5 Constance Dever © 2011</p> <p>These verses tell us that the LORD is one--He's the one, true God. Moses first spoke these words to the people of Israel, but they are true for all who want to be God's people. He wants His people to love Him with their heart, soul and strength--that means all of themselves.</p>