

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

Jeremiah 17:7; 29:7; Daniel 1,6

**Our story is: The Case of the Man Who Lived "No."
As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:**

1. Who was the man? What did he say "no" to?
2. Why did he say "no"? Who did he love?

This story takes place in Old Testament times during the times of the last kings of Judah, about 600 years before Jesus lived on earth.

Rest and riches. That's what life in Jerusalem was like during King Jehoiakim's day. And why not? Seated high upon Mount Zion, surrounded by thick, tall walls what enemy could touch Jerusalem? And if that wasn't enough, there was Baal, to protect them. The king, as well as most of the people of Jerusalem sacrificed to him in those days. Everyone knew this mighty god of rain was the one who gave them all the rest and riches they enjoyed, right?

Wrong! The LORD, not Baal, was the giver of the good things the people of Jerusalem enjoyed! They should have been taking their worship gifts to Him, not Baal. Yet all but a few still worshiped the LORD. One of these was a young man named Daniel.

Daniel was from one of the most important families in Jerusalem. He was handsome, rich, and very smart. He served in King Jehoiakim's palace. It would have been easy to worship Baal like the king and the others did, but Daniel never forgot the LORD. Every morning, noon and night, he would face the LORD's Temple and say the words of the Shema, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength," as the LORD's faithful followers had for years. "How can I love you today, LORD?" is how we might say it. But either way, every word was the prayer of Daniel's heart. He truly longed to live out his love for God with all of himself, every day.

The rest and riches of King Jehoiakim was soon to end. The Lord had warned the king through the prophet Jeremiah that unless he and the people stopped worshiping Baal and turned back to Him, that He would send the mighty chariots, the fierce horsemen of Babylon to destroy Jehoiakim and all Jerusalem with him. Jehoiakim refused to listen and King Nebuchadnezzar and his mighty army attacked and destroyed Jerusalem.

They stripped the Temple of all its gold, killed many

people and then took King Jehoiakim and more than 3000 of those who remained alive from the finest families of Jerusalem as captives—including Daniel.

Every morning, every noon, every evening, no matter where Daniel was he remembered to pray “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength’ How can I love You today, LORD? How can I love you even chained like a slave and forced to walk all the way to Babylon. I’ve lost my home, my family, my beautiful things, everything that I’ve ever known.”

Maybe Daniel remembered what the prophet Jeremiah had told them to do: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him.” Jeremiah 17:7 It may take all of his heart, mind, soul and strength to do it, but even on that terrible day as he walked in chains to Babylon, the young man could love the LORD by trusting Him.

After the long, six hundred mile journey across wilderness, the long line of captives came to Babylon. It was a magnificent city with a gigantic temple and ziggurat tower dedicated to the god Marduk with its gigantic temple and ziggurat tower rising hundreds of feet in the air from the middle of the city.

“Ashpenaz, bring in the best of the captured men from Judah,” Nebuchadnezzar ordered his chief court official. “I want only the smartest, best educated, handsomest and strongest young men from the captives. Take them and train them for service in my kingdom.”

“Yes, sire,” Ashpenaz responded. Ashpenaz searched through the captives and handpicked the young men who fit the King’s requirements. And who was among them, but none other than Daniel.

“Congratulations, young men of Judah,” Ashpenaz welcomed the men. “You have been especially chosen to be prepared for the service before the great King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. By his orders you are all to receive a special three-year training to learn to speak Babylonian and learn all about the Babylonian customs, literature and gods. You will get to eat the best of food right from the King’s table. When the three years are up, you will serve before the King in his lavish palace as his advisers.”

What should Daniel do? “These people worshiped terrible idols like Marduk, Anu and Enlil. Was he really supposed to learn about them? How could he be an adviser who is supposed to seek these idols and even do magic,

yet still be loving the LORD? The king ate horse, pig and all sorts of other animals the LORD told them not to eat. How can he do that and still love the LORD?” Daniel wondered.

What was it that the LORD had told the captives to do through the prophet Jeremiah? “Seek the peace and prosperity of Babylon when I send you into exile there,” he had told them. “Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” (Jeremiah 29:7)

“I will love the LORD by not eating the meat, but I will also love Him with all my heart, mind, soul and strength by doing my very best to serve the Babylonians. I will consult the LORD, not their gods or use magic for advise. I will trust that this is what He wants me to do,” Daniel decided.

Daniel did just that: he studied hard and the LORD blessed him. He helped him to understand everything he was supposed to learn. The LORD even gave him a special gift that the advisers wanted most of all: the gift of understanding dreams.

King Nebuchadnezzar was so pleased with Daniel that he made him chief adviser over all—even the advisers from Babylon. For sixty-six long years, Daniel served first King Nebuchadnezzar, then King Darius after him, but never did he forget to love the LORD. Now he was an old man, but still every morning, noon and evening, he would get up and face east, towards where the Temple had been, and say the words of the Shema. “How can I love You today, LORD?”

Daniel’s love for the LORD pleased the LORD, but it angered the king’s other advisers. They wanted to get rid of Daniel and decided to use Daniel’s love for the LORD to do it.

“King Darius, you should be honored most of all. Make a law that everyone should worship only you for the next thirty days or else be thrown to the lions,” they suggested.

The king was pleased and agreed to the idea. The advisers waited and watched for what Daniel would do. To their pleasure, he did exactly what they hoped: he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem and prayed three times a day, giving thanks to the LORD, his God, as usual. Daniel knew these prayers might lead to his death, but if this was how the LORD wanted him to love Him this day, then so be it.

Before long, Daniel had been arrested and thrown to the lions. The king was distressed at what had happened to his chief adviser, but could not break his own law. “May your

God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" the king said to Daniel as a stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the hole. The king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so show this was a law that couldn't be broken. Then he returned to his palace and spent the night doing nothing but worry about Daniel.

At sunrise, the king got up and hurried to the hole with the hungry lions. "Daniel, servant of the living God, whom you always serve, has your God saved you?" he called out.

"O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions," Daniel answered.

The king was overjoyed! "Lift Daniel out of the lions' pit!" he ordered. And sure enough, there was Daniel completely safe without even a single scratch mark on him! He had loved His God and His God had rescued him!

Then King Darius wrote out a new law for all to obey: "Everyone in my kingdom must worship the LORD, for he is the living God and the great king who rules forever. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has even rescued Daniel from the lions."

So Daniel lived well during the rest of reign of King Darius and King Cyrus after him. And he kept on loving the LORD his God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength every day of his life.

Our Bible Truth is:

God's People Love Him with All of Themselves

Our Bible Verse is: Deuteronomy 6:4-5

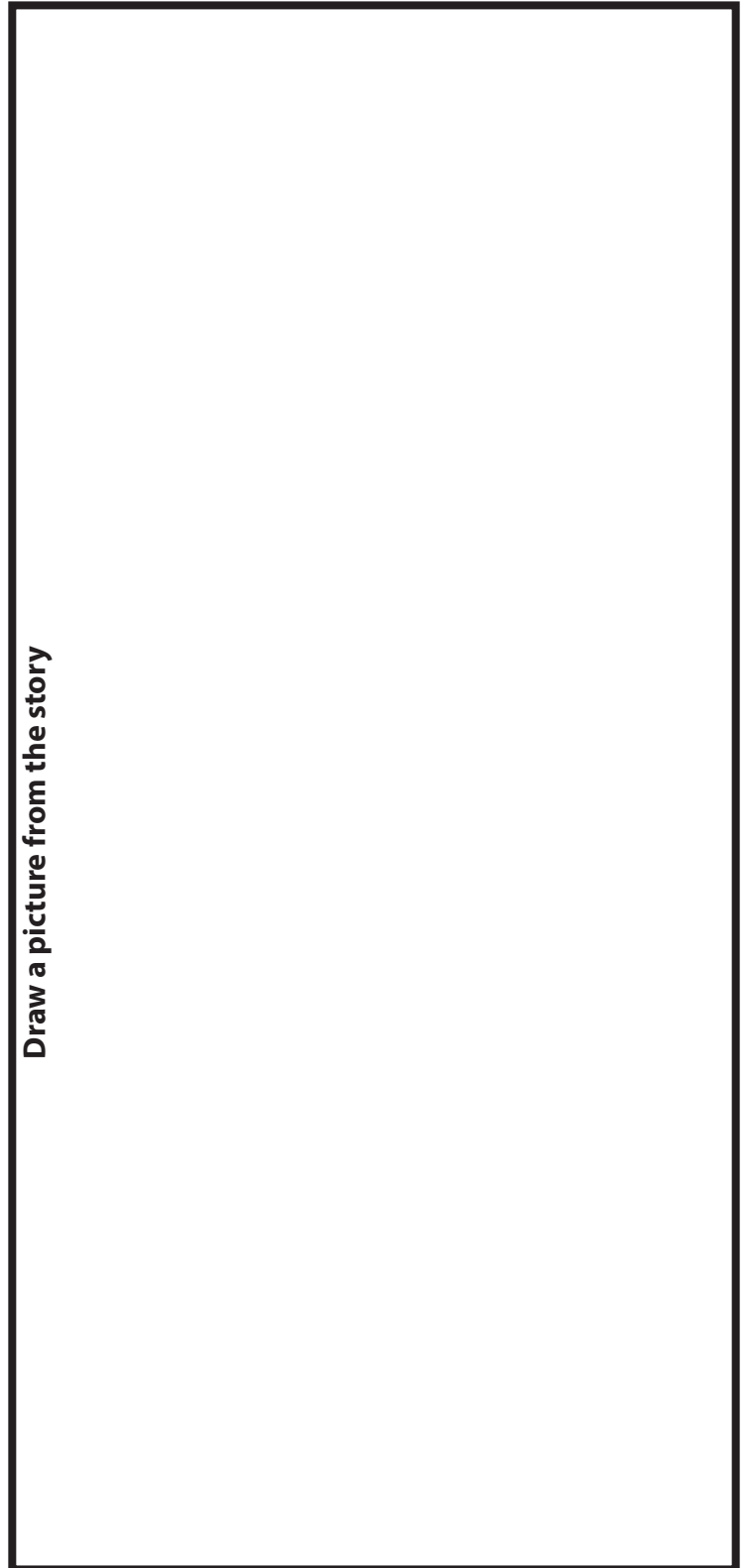
"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

Even though Daniel lived six hundred years before Jesus, he knew God's promises to send a Messiah to save His people, and looked forward in faith to that day. Daniel truly did try to love the LORD his God every day of his life, no matter how difficult it was.

Daniel loved the LORD like that without ever even knowing how Jesus would choose to die on the cross for the sins of God's people! How much more should we, who know the good news of Jesus in full. Don't we have even more reason to love the LORD with all of ourselves? How can we do this? By turning from our sins and trusting Jesus as our own Savior. By asking God's Holy Spirit to live in our hearts and give us more and more love for God. Every

moment of every day is a chance to love Him in everything we think, feel, say and do. Like Daniel, we can ask Him to show us how to love Him and ask Him to help us to.

Let's praise this God who is worthy of all our love. Let's ask Him to help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to help us to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength each day, in everything we do.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: The Holy Spirit lives inside God’s people, helping them love God more and more. Answer: True.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who was the man? What did he say “no” to? Answer: Daniel. He said no to do anything that would be worshiping anyone but the LORD.</p> <p>b. Why did he say “no”? Who did he love? Answer: He knew the LORD was the one, true God. He loved the LORD. He wanted everything he did to show the love he had for Him. He would rather die than stop worshiping and loving the LORD.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 6:4-5 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our ____, the LORD is one. ____ the LORD our God with ____ your heart and with all your soul and with all ____ strength.” Answers: God; love; all; your.</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 the one true God, alone worthy of our worship.</p> <p>C God, we confess that we too many times we choose to not love You when things are hard. We want to please and protect ourselves, instead of pleasing and depending upon You. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for giving Your people the courage to live for You and to love You, even when it is very hard.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to work in our hearts so that we would love and live for You, even when it is very hard.</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>