

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 3:

God's People Love Others

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 3 Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

"Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

CASE STORY

Matthew 18:21-35

Our story is called:

The Case of the Man Who Needed to Multiply.

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

1. To multiply means to make something get a lot bigger, just like in math we multiply numbers together to get big numbers quickly. Who was the Man who needed to multiply? What did he need to multiply?
2. Who told him to multiply? How many times? Why was this so important?

This story takes place in Capernaum, in New Testament times, when Jesus lived on earth.

Capernaum: an important fishing town on the north side of the great Sea of Galilee that was the hometown of Jesus' three closest disciples, Peter, James and John.

Walking, teaching, and healing. That's what Jesus had been doing for the past six months, His disciples following along. Not only around their hometown, Capernaum, but far to the north in the foreign lands of Tyre, Sidon, and Caesarea Philippi. It was spring when they left. Now it was autumn and surely it felt good to be home!

The desert winds of September swept down the hills and across the Sea of Galilee, ripening the dates, figs, pomegranates, and juicy clusters of grapes. Harvest time! It was a wonderful time of year!

But while the autumn air was full of dry, desert heat, there was perhaps something more like a chill in the heart of Peter that day. Jesus had been teaching his disciples about what to do when someone sins against you and Jesus' words stirred up something inside of Peter.

"Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?" Peter asked Jesus. Was Peter's question just a question of a curiosity or was it more? Had someone--maybe even one of the other disciples--wronged Peter so many times that he didn't want to forgive them? We don't know. But whatever the reason for the question, Peter wanted to know Jesus' answer.

"Lord, the rabbis (Jewish teachers) say that after forgiving someone three times for the same thing, you don't have to forgive them any more. What do you say? Would seven times be enough?" Peter asked Jesus.

"Seven times! Far from that!" Jesus answered, "Seventy-seven times would be more like it! There should never be an end to how much you forgive someone!"

Jesus could see that Peter still had so much to learn about love. God's love was a patient, enduring, kind of love that cared for others. A love that was not easily-angered or kept a record of wrongs. A love that treated others better than they deserved, even when they have sinned against Him again and again. It forgave others completely, from the heart. And God's people were to love each other like this, too.

"Let me tell you a story about the kingdom of heaven, Peter. What life looks like when people love God's way," Jesus told him.

"Once there was a king," Jesus began, "who had servants who collected tax money for him. From time to time he would call them in and have his bookkeepers check that they had really collected and turned in the money for him that they were supposed to. As each of the servants' records were checked, it was found that one of the servants had failed to give him millions of dollars that he had collected.

"Bring this thief to me!" the king ordered.

Soon the servant was dragged in, and stood trembling before the king. He knew he had done terribly wrong and deserved a terrible punishment," Jesus told.

"Where are the millions of dollars you collected for me?" the king demanded. "You must pay me back! Guards, go to this man's house, take everything he has and sell it. Then take this man—even his wife and children—and have them all thrown in jail! Keep them there until all of his debt to me has been paid off or until the day they die!" he ordered.

The servant fell to his knees before the king and said. "O king, be patient with me. I will pay back everything I owe you, just give me time."

The king knew this was impossible. This servant could work every day of his life and still not pay back all the money. But this king was a loving king. He had a patient, enduring kind of love that cared for others. A love that was not easily-angered or kept a record of wrongs; love that treated others better than they deserved, even when they had sinned against him again and again. It forgave others completely, from the heart. So he said to the servant, "You deserve punishment, but I have decided to forgive you. You never have to pay me back the money you owe me. You and your family don't have to go to jail. You don't even have to sell your things. You are completely forgiven. Now

go. Your debt is canceled," he told the man.

The tax collector could hardly believe his ears. Could it really be that the king would forgive so large a debt as his? What king had ever acted so mercifully as this! "Thank you, thank you, sire," the grateful servant said. and left the king's throne room rejoicing.

Yet hardly had that servant left the presence of the king when he ran into another servant who owed him some money. "Hey, you! I've been looking for you! Do you remember those thousands of dollars I loaned you? It's long past time that you pay me back. Give it to me, now!" the servant demanded as he grabbed the other man by the neck and began to choke him.

"I can't! I don't have it yet!" the servant fell to his knees and pleaded. "Please be patient with me. I will pay you back as soon as I can. I promise."

Hadn't these been the very words the servant had spoken to the king? He had asked the king for patience and the king had shown him mercy and forgiven his debt.

Would this man remember to be like his king who had treated him so lovingly? Would he have a patient, enduring, kind of love that cared for others? A love that was not easily-angered or kept a record of wrongs? A love that treated others better than they deserved, even when they had sinned against him, that forgave others completely, from the heart?

No, he would not! The king had just forgiven him that huge sum of money; yet all that greedy, selfish man could think about was the much smaller amount of money that this servant had not paid him.

"Why should I show you mercy? You will get what you deserve for how you've treated me. The money is due now and you can't pay it. You know the punishment. It's off to prison for you. And there you will stay until you can pay me back every bit that you owe me. Guards, throw this man in jail!" And so they did.

News of what happened reached the king and he was furious! Once more, the king's men dragged this servant before the king, but things didn't turn out as they had the first time.

"You wicked servant," the king said. "I canceled your huge debt because you begged me to. How could you forget that? You should have shown mercy on your fellow servant for the little debt he owed you!"

'Guards, take this man to the prison. He is to be punished

and left in prison until he has paid back every penny he owes me!’ The guards grabbed the tax collector and carried him away.”

As Jesus finished the story, He looked at Peter and said, “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

Now Peter could see. Like the first servant, we have a huge debt that we each owe to God, our great King. It is even worse than a huge debt of money: it is a huge debt of sin. And it is a debt so big that we can never pay it off. As a punishment for our sins against God, we deserve a punishment even worse than being thrown into jail with our families and having all of our things sold. We deserve to receive eternal punishment in hell.

Yet God, like the king in the story, has chosen to treat all who confess their sins to Him with love and forgiveness. He calls His people to be like Him, loving others far better than they could ever deserve.

“If I don’t keep forgiving someone who wrongs me, then I am being just like that wicked servant!” Peter thought. “God has forgiven me my sins, Now I must love others the same way that God has loved me: with unending mercy and patience, kindness and forgiveness, even if they treat me badly over and over.” Peter understood Jesus’ lesson. Now he would need to go and live it out.

Our Bible Truth is: God’s People Love Others

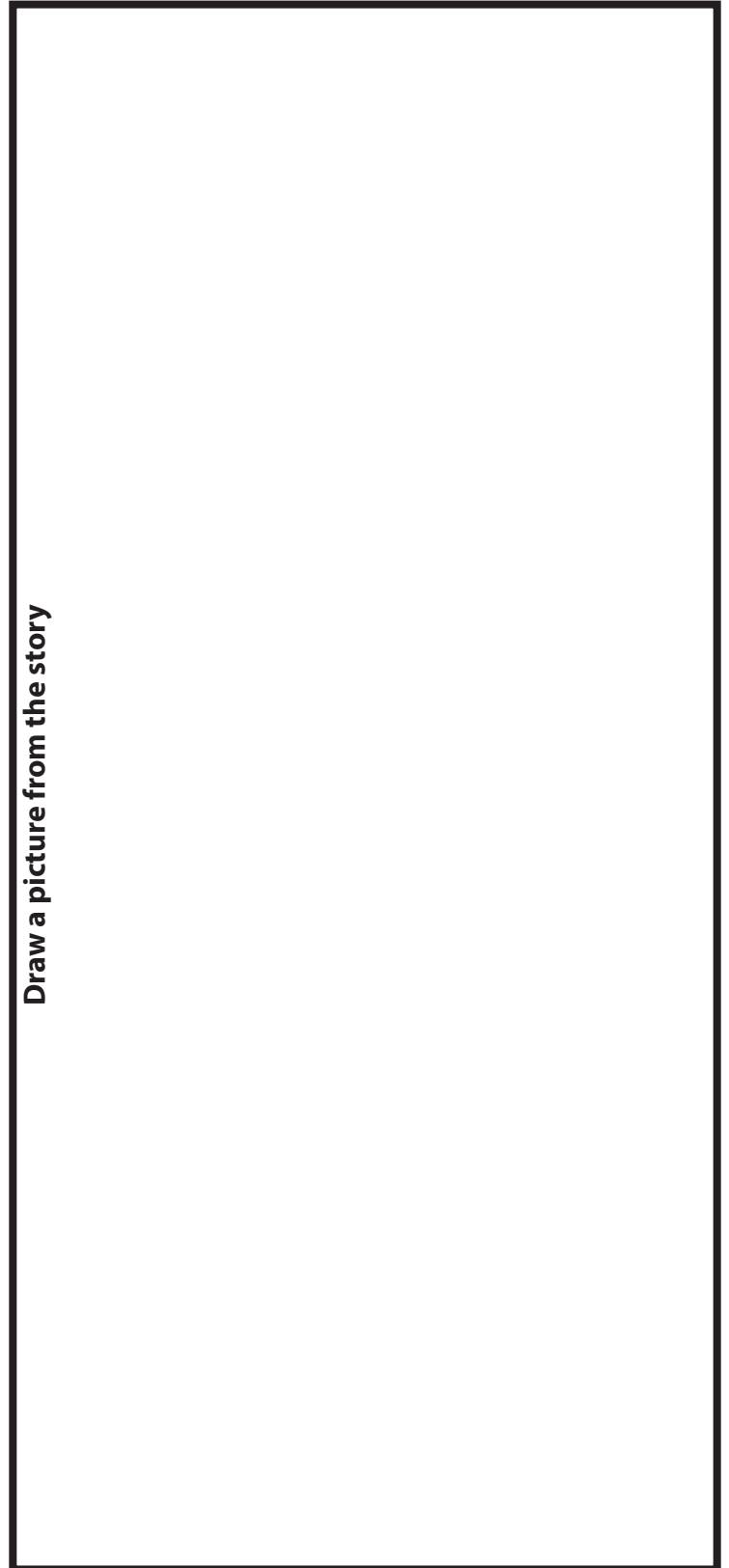
Our Bible Verse is: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

“Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

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

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God only is loving towards His people.

Answer: False! God is loving in so many ways to all people, even His enemies. But, He does have a special love for His people.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. To multiply means to make something get a lot bigger, just like in math we multiply numbers together to get big numbers quickly. Who was the Man who needed to multiply? What did he need to multiply?

Answer: Peter. He was to multiply (greatly increase) the number of times he forgave someone who wronged him.

b. Who told him to multiply? How many times? Why was this so important?

Answer: Jesus told Peter to forgive someone seventy-seven times, not just seven. He meant to not stop forgiving someone. He said that we need to forgive others, if we want God to forgive us.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

“Love is _____. Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not _____, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always _____, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never _____.”

Answers: patient; self-seeking; patient; fails.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being so merciful to sinful people. We praise You for being the Forgiver of Your people’s sins.

C God, we confess that like the first tax collector in the story, we often do not forgive others as You want us to. We all need a Savior! We need You to help us forgive, too!

T God, we thank You that Your forgiveness is so great that even the worst of sinners can receive Your forgiveness. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to live in Your people’s hearts so that they can forgive others as You want them to.

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 and help us to forgive others as You want us to.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 10

Verse 1

Blest be the tie that binds,
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred
minds,
Is like to that above.

Verse 2

Before our Father’s throne,
We pour our ardent pray’rs;
Our fears, our hopes,
our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

Verse 3

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for
each other flows,
The sympathizing tear.

Verse 4

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be
joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

Refrain:

Blest be the tie, Blest be the tie,
Blest be the tie that binds,
Blest be the tie, Blest be the tie,
Blest be the tie that binds.

Words: John Fawcett. Refrain & Music: Constance Dever

Just like a tie (string) tied around a bundle of things hold them together, there is a special fellowship that binds God’s people together. They know who God is and love Him. They love sharing about Him together. In their hearts they each have His Spirit at work, helping them to love Him and each other more. God’s people are to love everyone, but they have a special love for each other, since they are like brothers and sisters in God’s family. They show this love by praying for each other, listening and caring about each others problems, and looking forward to meeting together again when they part This is a fellowship of love and each other that holds them together as part of God’s family here on earth. It is a little taste of the perfect fellowship and love they will know up above in heaven one day.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Love Is Patient

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 11

Love is patient, love is kind,
Love doesn’t envy, It does not boast,
Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.
Love keeps no record of wrongs, It is not easily angered,
It always protects, it always trusts and hopes,
It always perseveres.

Love never fails, love never fails,
love never fails, love never fails!
First Corinthians Thirteen, four through eight.

Words adapted from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Constance Dever © 2011

These verses tell us how God wants His people to love others. This is how He has treated them through Jesus. He wants them to be like Him and go and love others this way, too. God’s Holy Spirit helps them love in these ways. He helps them love even when it is very hard.