

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 ESV 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 ESV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

**We're learning... Bible Truth 6:
God's People Obey Him**

Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled in the beginning, all people have chosen to disobey God and His good ways. This disobedience shows in our hearts. Many times, we think we know better than God. We tend to think about ourselves and what we want, most of all. This disobedience also shows up in our lives. We love to get our own way. We choose to say and do things that please us, even if they don't please God. Even if they hurt others.

But God's people seek to be different. They understand that they are sinners and deserve God's punishment. They confess their sins to God and desire to turn away from disobeying Him. (That's what it means to repent of our sins.) They trust in Jesus as their Savior. They want to start a new life of living to please God by obeying Him. God gives them faith in Him and forgives their sins. He gives them a new heart filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps them to love God and please Him. He helps them want to obey God in their heart. He helps them to love God and live to please Him with their lives.

The Bible tells us this is how we can know if we love God: if we are not just trusting in Jesus as our Savior, but are also seeking to obey Him as our Lord.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 6 Bible Verse: John 14:23-24

"Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words."

CASE STORY

Matthew 4-7

Our story is: The Case of the Lazy Listeners. As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who were the lazy listeners? Who were they listening to? How were they lazy?
2. What did they need to do if they were to truly follow God?

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

Walk, walk, walk! Talk, talk, talk! It seemed that was all Jesus and his disciples had been doing lately. Walking up and down hill after hill; on just about every dusty, hot road of Galilee, Jesus had led his disciples, talking about the Kingdom of God and healing every kind of sickness imaginable. Now they were back home in Capernaum again.

Now that Jesus had amazed all of Galilee with his powerful preaching and healing, news spread far and wide about Him. All over Israel and even in the other nearby countries, many were talking about Jesus:

"Did you here about Jesus, the new teacher from Galilee? He teaches like He knows exactly what God thinks—not at all like the other teachers," someone would say.

"Yes, but His healings are what amaze me!" another would answer. "I hear that He heals sicknesses that have never been healed before!"

So they didn't just talk about Jesus, they walked to Capernaum where He was—by the hundreds! They wanted to hear Jesus themselves. They wanted to bring their sick family and friends for healing.

When Jesus saw the crowds, He led them away from Capernaum to Mt. Eremos, a broad, grassy hill that overlooked the sparkling, blue Sea of Galilee. He healed the sick among them and He taught them about God and how He wanted His people to live.

Some of the things Jesus told them were things everyone was pleased to hear and eager to obey: "Don't worry about whether you will have the things you need. Keep seeking God's kingdom and obey Him. He promises to take care of all your needs," Jesus told them. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Everyone who asks, will receive. Whoever seeks, will find; and whoever knocks, the door will be opened... Which of you, if his son asks for

bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you know how to give good gifts to your children, though you are sinners. Then how much more will your perfectly good Heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him?" Jesus told them.

No one minded hearing Jesus teach these kinds of things. They all wanted God to take care of all their needs and that He delighted to answer their prayers.

But Jesus also told them other, difficult things that weren't so pleasant to think about:

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me"—but who wanted to be persecuted?....And He told them, "You've been told it's wrong to murder someone, but I tell you that when you hate someone in your heart, it's like murdering them. Even just calling someone a bad name like a fool, is enough of a sin to make you deserve hell... Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"—were they really to love their enemies, was it really wrong to hate them? ..."If you do not forgive men their sins even though they do not deserve it, God will not forgive your sins"—did they really have to stop hating their enemies, but love and forgive them, instead? No one liked to hear things like these shocking teachings of Jesus.

Walk, walk, walk! Talk, talk, talk! Hundreds of people had walked to Jesus to have Him heal their sick. They listened to Him talk all day. They even loved to talk to each other about what He said. But was that it? Was that all there was to pleasing God? No, it was not! Jesus knew that if someone wanted to truly be one of God's people, they had to do more than walk and talk—they needed to obey. So Jesus told them a story to help them understand. It went something like this:

"Once there were two men, Mr. Wise Man and Mr. Foolish Man," Jesus told them. "Each had decided to build a new house for their families down there near the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Together they found the perfect spot to build.

"Look here, Mr. Foolish Man, at this wonderful spot to build our houses," Mr. Wise Man told Mr. Foolish Man. "Not only is the view of the Sea beautiful, but there is a nice stream near by from which we can get fresh water for our families and animals."

"You are right, Mr. Wise Man. What more could we want than this," Mr. Foolish Man replied. "Let's begin building

right away."

Each man gathered his building supplies—wood, stone, shovel, hammer—then began construction. First the foundation would be laid, then the stone walls, and at last the roof of flax and wood would be put down.

Mr. Wise Man heaved his shovel up and down, working hard to break through the hardened sand on the surface. This was the most difficult part of building a house. It would take days to dig down deep enough and wide enough to make a rock foundation for his entire house. Before long, Mr. Wise Man was covered in sweat from all the hard work. His back and arms ached terribly, too. He wished there was an easier way to build a good house, but he knew that he would be glad that he had laid his foundation upon rock when the strong winter storms came. So on and on he kept digging.

You can imagine the surprise Mr. Wise Man had when he went to check up on Mr. Foolish Man's progress only to find that he was already laying the stone walls of his house!

"What's this? Already finished your foundation and on to building walls? Tell me your secret?" Mr. Wise Man asked Mr. Foolish Man. "How did you ever get through that hard-packed sand so quickly? I would give anything to be done!" Mr. Wise Man exclaimed.

"Well," answered Mr. Foolish Man, sort of ashamed, "the truth is, I started to dig down through that sand, just like you, but it was such hard work I could hardly stand it. And then it hit me: 'Why are you killing yourself by digging down to the rock. This ground here is every bit as hard. Why shouldn't it support my house just fine?' So I started laying my wall stones and look here," he said proudly pointing to his house, "My house is nice and sturdy, as you can see. I shall be finished in no time at all. Why break your back, my friend. Build your house on the sand like me. Save yourself the backache!"

Mr. Wiseman looked back over at the puny start he had made on his house and was discouraged. "What a long way I have to go. Why, it will take me days just to clear the sand off the rock," Mr. Wise Man thought. "Then I have all the building to do after that! Perhaps I should listen to my neighbor here. But what will happen in winter when the rain and winds come? Will this sand really stay as solid, as it is now?" he wondered.

"Well, Mr. Foolish Man, it sure would be nice to not to

have to dig down through this hard sand any more. But, this is how all the wise builders have built their houses, so I think I shall keep at it," he finally told his neighbor.

Soon Mr. Foolish Man had finished building his house. and happily settled his family in their new home. But Mr. Wise Man kept on working and working.

It wasn't until much later that tired Mr. Wise Man finally put the finishing touches on his house. It had taken him such a long time to do things the Wise way, but at last the job was finished. Mr. Wise Man proudly led his family to their new house near the Sea and settled in, just as Mr. Foolish Man had done with his family.

Before long the hot, dry days of summer turned windy and rainy. Mr. Wise Man and Mr. Foolish Man awoke one morning to the sound of the rain beating down on their roofs and the wind blowing hard against their walls. All day long the storm beat down on the houses. The friendly, little stream that had given fresh water to their families now turned into an angry, roaring flood. It swept over its banks and swirled over the land and even rose up the walls of the houses of Mr. Wise Man and Mr. Foolish Man. And all the time, it soaked deeper and deeper into the dry, hard sand, softening it up into a sloshy, wet mush.

Mr. Wise Man and his family slept dry and safe in their house all night long. No wet sand or strong winds could shake that house off its stone foundations. But it was an entirely different story for Mr. Foolish Man and his family. His house tumbled down with a crash in flooding waters and gusty winds, for the mushy sands were no real foundation at all, and he lost everything."

When Jesus finished his story, he looked around at the crowds listening and said, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. If someone is truly one of God's people, it will show in his or her life. Many people might say they are God's people, but only those who obey really are."

"Don't be the kind of person who just walks here to have Me heal your sick; or talks about what he heard Me say," Jesus told them. "Be the kind of person who obeys My words," Jesus told them. "Live your lives according to what I've told you. If you do, will be ready for whatever hard things happen to you in this life—just like the house built on the sturdy rock could last through the storm."

Our Bible Truth is: God's People Obey Him

Our Bible Verse is: John 14:23-24

"Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words."

Walk, walk, walk. Talk, talk, talk. All the crowds walked home, healed and talking about all they had seen and heard. I wonder how many of them went home and, like the wise man in Jesus' story, chose to build their lives on the only thing that would stand against anything that happened to them--obedience to Jesus' words? How many remembered to pray, to seek God's kingdom, to love and forgive their enemies? Or how many simply went home enjoying their healed bodies, but forgetting to obey Jesus' words, just as the foolish man chose to build his house in the sand? The Bible doesn't tell us.

But what about you and me? We've heard Jesus' words and we have listened to stories of his amazing healings. Who will we be like: the wise man or the foolish man? Let's praise God for giving us His words so we can know how to obey Him. Let's ask Him to help us to not just listen to His words, but obey them. Let's ask Him to help us to turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to fill us with His Holy Spirit to give us the desire and strength to obey His good words.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God's Holy Spirit helps God's people to please Him by obeying Him.

Answer: True! We can be God's people, too, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who were the lazy listeners? Who were they listening to? How were they lazy?

Answer: Some of people in the crowds who followed Jesus. They were listening to Jesus. They liked to hear what He had to say, but did not necessarily obey God's Word.

b. What did they need to do if they were to truly follow God?

Answer: They needed to remember God's Word and obey it, not just listen to it and forget it.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

John 14:23-24

"Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will ___ my word, and my ___ will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not ___ me does not ___ my words."

Answers: keep; Father; love; keep.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Take My Life and Let it Be

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 22

Verse 4

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Words: Frances R. Havergal

Music: Henri A.C. Malan

Obedience to God means choosing to have our wills and our hearts be guided by God's good ways instead of following our own sinful ways. This is not something we can do in our own strength. We have to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. We must ask Him to take our wills and our hearts and make them want to joyfully obey His good ways. God delights to answer prayers like these! He promises to answer them!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Giver of Your Good Word and the Giver of Strength to Obey It.

C God, we confess that many times we have heard Your Word but do not want to obey it. We want to live life our own way. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for giving us Your Word so that we can know how to obey You. Thank You for the Holy Spirit who lives inside Your people and help them have faith in Jesus and to obey Your Word.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Fill us with His Holy Spirit that we would be those who keep on obeying God's Word all their lives.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

If Anyone Loves Me

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 23

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,
If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,
And my Father will love him, and we'll come to him,
And make our home with him.
If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,
If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,
And my Father will love him, and we'll come to him,
And make our home with him.
John Fourteen, twenty-three.

Words: John 14:23 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2015

In these verses, Jesus teaches that love for God is more than just a good feeling in our hearts or saying that we love Him. True love for God shows itself by obeying Him. This is the kind of person who gets to know the wonderful fellowship of God through His Holy Spirit living in their heart.