

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 1 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 7: God's People Do Good Works God Has Prepared for Them

God created all people to be busy at work. He made them with bodies, minds and hearts that are active, like to create and want to be at work. They all have different talents and abilities that they can use. God wants people to use all of these gifts to do good works. That is, to better know, love and obey Him; and, to love and serve others. And, to explore, use and delight in the world He has made, for our good and His glory.

The Bible tells us that ahead of time, God prepared special good works of these kinds for each of His people He wove their good works into His great and glorious plans for the world. God even has work for children to do. He wants them to obey their parents, and love and serve others. He wants them to turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. He wants them to take time to know Him through reading His Word, the Bible and through praying. He wants them to learn about Him and the world He has made.

God has prepared special good works for each of His people. No two will do exactly the same things. But, no matter what the work God has prepared for them, He wants them to do it all as if they are doing it for Him.

God promises to reward His people for whatever good they do. God's people know that they cannot do the good works God has prepared for them on their own. They know that God sends the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and help them do the good works He has planned for them to do.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 7 Bible Verse: Ephesians 2:10; 6:6-8

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do...do[ing] the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does..."

CASE STORY

Ruth 1-4

Our story is called:

The Case of the Barley and the Bitter Woman.

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

1. Who was the bitter woman? Why?
2. What good works did God plan to do through the barley?

This story takes place during Old Testament times, in the times of the Judges, about 1000 years before Jesus lived on earth.

Naomi with her husband, Elimelech and her two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, stood at the edge of the barley fields taking one last glance at the rows of dead, withered stalks standing lifelessly in the parched soil.

"Look at these crops!" Elimelech exclaimed. "The famine has taken our food for this year. We have no choice but to leave Bethlehem and find better land until the famine ends."

Sadly, the little family said good-bye to their friends and set off across the eastern mountains for the land of Moab. It was risky to leave one's land and people and settle in another country, but with Elimelech and his two sons to work hard for them, surely they would be able to grow all they needed.

They were right. Crops grew well in Moab. Elimelech and his family stayed there for ten years. Elimelech's family enjoyed the good food of Moab, but other troubles struck. Elimelech died; then both of the sons! Poor Naomi was left with nothing but the two Moabite wives of her sons, Orpah and Ruth. What was she to do?! There were no jobs for women to earn money in those days. There were no banks to loan you money. Women relied upon their husbands and sons to provide for their needs. Now Naomi had neither!

But Naomi wasn't all alone. the LORD was with her. He had provided for her all along through her husband and sons. He would go on providing for her. He had even prepared in advance the good work of providing for Naomi. And He would do it in His perfect way and in His perfect timing.

News soon reached Naomi that the famine in Judah had ended. She knew just what to do. "I will go back home. It will be best for me to be back in my own land with my

own people," she decided.

Orpah and Ruth helped Naomi prepare for the long trip home over the mountains. "Go back, to live with your parents. They will provide for you and hopefully you will soon get married again," Naomi told the two women, kissing them goodbye.

"No, We will go back with you to your people," they replied.

But Naomi said, "I have no sons to give you as husbands. Go start a new, good life for yourselves. Don't stay with me. The LORD is against me and my life is bitter," and the three women wept together again.

Naomi was right to be sad. She had lost her husband and her sons. But Naomi was not right to be bitter or hopeless. Was not her God the LORD, the One who ruled over all, who worked out all things according to His marvelous plans? Wasn't she one of His people? Didn't He love her? The LORD was calling Naomi to the good work of joy. She was not be bitter but put her hope in Him. For even though she was acting like all was hopeless, it was not. The LORD had prepared in advance good works for others to do for Naomi so that she would be well taken care of, as He was soon to show her.

Orpah kissed Naomi good-bye and started home, but Ruth wouldn't leave.

"Orpah is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her," Naomi told Ruth.

But Ruth replied, "Don't make me leave. I will go where you go. Your people will be my people, and your God my God. Nothing but death is going to separate you and me."

When Naomi saw that nothing she could say would change Ruth's mind, she and Ruth set off through the mountains of Moab for Bethlehem.

What a wonderful sight for Naomi's eyes were the golden stalks of barley swaying in the fields as they neared Bethlehem! News of Naomi's return spread quickly through the village.

"Can this be Naomi?" the women exclaimed as they looked at her. Naomi had left Bethlehem happy and full of life. Here she was sad and worn out.

"Yes, it is me," Naomi told them. But don't call me Naomi anymore. Naomi means "pleasant." Call me "Mara." It means bitter. "The Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. He have given me these hard times."

Naomi was acting like all was hopeless, but she was wrong. Hadn't the LORD already begun to show her that He had prepared in advance good works for others to do for her so that she would be provided for? Hadn't He given provided her with Ruth who promised to work and care for her all the days of her life? The LORD was calling Naomi to a good work, too. The good work of joy. She was to put her hope in Him.

Ruth set to work, caring for Naomi. Somehow she must get them food. With no money and no crops of their own, Ruth went down to gather up leftover grain in the fields of others. God's law commanded that farmers were to let the poor people do this, but many gave them a hard time. Ruth was not even an Israelite—she was from Moab, an enemy country! She would have to be brave and maybe even suffer to get food for them, but she was willing to do this for Naomi.

Things went much better than Ruth could have dreamed. For the same God who had prepared Ruth to do the good work of taking care of Naomi, had also prepared someone for good works to take care of Ruth. This someone was a godly, important man from Elimelech's own family. A man named Boaz. So, on the first day when Ruth courageously headed for the barley fields, the LORD led her straight to none other than then barley fields of Boaz.

All day under the hot, dry sun, Ruth looked for little barley grains among the dry stalks.. Slowly her basket began to fill up. Ruth could have complained of the heat and the ache in her back, but instead she was grateful for the food and happy to serve Naomi.

When Boaz came out to inspect the harvesters' work he noticed Ruth. "Who is that?" he asked the foreman.

"She's the Moabite woman who came with Naomi. She asked to gather grain in the field and has worked with hardly a break all day," he replied.

"Come here so I can talk with you," Boaz said to Ruth.

Ruth worried that Boaz was mad that she was gathering barley in his fields, but she was wrong. The LORD had sent Boaz to do the good work of caring for her.

"Stay and gather grain in my fields along with my servant girls. I won't let anyone harm you and when you are thirsty, drink from our water jars," Boaz told Ruth.

Ruth bowed with her face to the ground in thanks. "Why are you being so kind to me," Ruth asked Boaz.

"I've heard what you've done for Naomi. You left

everything to serve her here, far away from your own country," Boaz replied. "The LORD bless you for all you have done and for choosing to trust in Him."

At mealtime Boaz gave Ruth bread dipped in wine vinegar and roasted grain to eat. Ruth couldn't believe Boaz's kindness to her!

Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. She threshed the barley she had gathered and carried it home.

Naomi was amazed at how much Ruth had. "Who let you collect all this grain from their field?" she asked.

"It was the field of Boaz," Ruth replied. And for the first time in a very long time, Naomi praised God for His care of her. "The LORD has done this for us! Of all the fields you could have worked in, He led you to work in Boaz', my husband's relative!"

Each day, Ruth went out to work in Boaz' fields. Each night, she brought home all the grain they needed and more. Day after day Boaz made sure that Ruth was taken care of. How good the LORD was to Naomi! He prepared good works for Ruth to do to take care of her. How good He was to Ruth, too. He had prepared good works for Boaz to do to help her, too.

This would be only the first of many good works God prepared for Boaz to do for Naomi and Ruth. Boaz bought back Elimelech's fields with his own money and gave them to Naomi. He married Ruth and took both her and Naomi into his house to live. He provided for all their needs the rest of their lives. And who should the LORD give Ruth for a child and to Naomi as a grandson? None other than Obed, the very grandfather of King David...and the great, great, great, great...etc. grandfather of Jesus. How richly the LORD honored Ruth for her good works in His service! How wonderfully He had provided for Naomi—to even become the great, great, great, etc. grandmother of Jesus, Himself!

Our Bible Truth is:**God's People Do Good Works He Prepared for Them****Our Bible Verse is: Ephesians 2:10, 6:6-8**

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do...do[ing] the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does..."

Naomi, Ruth and Boaz to do. Naomi's good work was to trust and rejoice in the LORD even in her sadness. Ruth was to leave behind her family and country and serve Naomi. Boaz' was to graciously care for Ruth and Naomi. Boaz and Ruth did their work well, while Naomi struggled with hers. I wonder if Naomi ever looked back and regretted that she had chosen not to rejoice and trust in the LORD in her sadness? I wonder if she wished she had done better the works the LORD had given her to do?

What about you and me? Like Boaz, Naomi and Ruth, we can become God's people. How? By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior. When we do this, not only will God forgive us our sins and make us His dear people, but He will have good works prepared for us, too. Let's praise God for offering us forgiveness of our sins. Let's praise Him for the good works He has prepared for His people. Let's ask Him to help us to trust in Jesus as our own Savior and give us good works to do that He has especially prepared for us to do in His service. Let's ask Him to help us know what those good works are each day and to help us to do them the best we can.

The LORD had prepared in advance good works for

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Work is something we have to do. It is a bad thing.

Answer: False. Work is a good thing! God created each of us to work and to enjoy it.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the bitter woman? Why?

Answer: Naomi. She was bitter because she lost her husband and sons and thought God had turned against her.

b. What good works did God plan to do through the barley?

Answer: God planned to provide food for Ruth and Naomi as well as a husband/son-in-law to take care of them. Through this family, Jesus would even come many years later.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Ephesians 2:10; 6:6-8

"For we are God's ____, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do...do[ing] the ____ of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the ____, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward ____ for whatever good he does..."

Answers: workmanship; will; Lord; everyone.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the provider for Your people even when it looks impossible.

C God, we confess that we, like Naomi, look at difficult situations and do not trust that You will be faithful. Instead, we become bitter or fearful. We all need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for Your great patience with Your people and Your great love for them, even when they doubt Your power and goodness.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Give us good works to do and to help us to take joy in You, even in the hardest times.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Take My Life and Let it Be

PFI NIV Songs 12, Tracks 20-22

Verse 1

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my hands
and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love,
At the impulse of Thy love.

Verse 3

Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my moments
and my days,
Let them flow in
ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in
ceaseless praise.

Verse 2

Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee;
Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only for my King,
Always, only for my King.

Words: Frances R. Havergal Music: Henri A.C. Malan

To consecrate something means to set something apart for a special purpose. Asking God to take your life and consecrating it to Him means to have Him use your life to do something special just for Him. God's people ask God to use their whole lives for His good and perfect purposes. With their feet and hands, they want to serve Him. With all of their silver and gold (their money), they want to do whatever He wants them to do with it. Not a mite of it--not a bit of it--do they want to use for anything other than what He wants. They want every moment, every day of their lives to be lived for Him. And, because they know He has planned good works for them to do, they trust that He will help them do this, giving them the strength they need, by His Holy Spirit at work inside of them.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For We Are God's Workmanship

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 23

For we are, for we are, For we are God's workmanship,
Created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
Which God prepared for us in advance to do.
For we are, for we are, For we are God's workmanship,
Serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord, not men,
The Lord will reward ev'ryone for the good he does.
For we are, for we are, For we are God's workmanship,
Created in Christ Jesus to do good works.
Ephesians Two, ten; Six, seven and eight.

Words: Ephesians 2:10; 6:7-8, NIV 1984

Music: Constance Dever ©2012

God has prepared good works in advance for His people to do. It also tells us that God's people are God's workmanship. That means that God is the one that is at work in them, making them like Jesus and helping them to do the good works He prepared for them to do. God's people have so much to rejoice about! Not only has God chosen special things He will do through them, but He will give them the strength and wisdom to do them all. How can they not succeed with God at work in them! We can become God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior!