



**Unit 7 Prontos--NIV
The Law-Giving God**

Constance Dever ©2015



Curriculum for preschool and elementary age children,
training tools, music and other Resources
are available for download or to order at:
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About PFI Prontos	5
Other Praise Factory Resources	5
Unit 7 Prontos	7
BIBLE TRUTH 1: God’s Laws Are Written in the Bible	
The Case of the Invisible Hand <i>Genesis 15:12-19; Exodus 19-24 OT</i>	9
The Case of the Clever Cloth Cloister <i>Story of the Saints</i>	13
The Case of the Lousy, Little Laws <i>Matthew 14-15; Mark 7 NT</i>	17
Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21	
BIBLE TRUTH 2: God Created Us as Perfect Law Keepers, But We Are All Lawbreakers	
The Case of the Great Griever <i>OT</i>	21
<i>Genesis 1-2, 6-9; Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:10; 2 Peter 3:3,4</i>	
The Case of the Hole Under the Stairs <i>Story of the Saints</i>	25
The Case of the Tiny Terror <i>Luke 18:35-19:11 NT</i>	29
Bible Verse: Psalm 14:2-3	
BIBLE TRUTH 3: God Gave Us His Laws to Convict Us of Our Sin, That We Might Be Saved	
The Case of the Colossal Clean-up <i>OT</i>	33
<i>Exodus 20, 24; Leviticus; 2 Chronicles 28-30; 1 Kings 6-7; 2 Kings 16-18; Isaiah 7-9</i>	
The Case of the Robber’s Riches <i>Story of the Saints</i>	37
The Case of the Convicting Convict <i>Matthew 3,4,5,14; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 3,2 NT</i>	41
Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:6-7	
BIBLE TRUTH 4: Jesus Kept God’s Law Perfectly So By His Grace He Could Save God’s People	
The Case of the Torn Curtain <i>Exodus 25-31, 35-40; Leviticus; Numbers OT</i>	45
The Case of the Persistent Snowstorm <i>Story of the Saints</i>	49
The Case of the Goat-Lamb Man	53
<i>Leviticus 16; Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 2:8ff;23; John 19; Hebrews NT</i>	
Bible Verse: Romans 3:19-24	
BIBLE TRUTH 5: The Heart of God’s Law Is Love	
The Case of the Two-faced Lover <i>Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi OT</i>	57
The Case of the Bold Bridge-Builder <i>Story of the Saints</i>	61
The Case of the Shema and the Scribe <i>Luke 10:24-37 NT</i>	65
Bible Verse: Matthew 22:36-40	

The PFI Companion Resources

While all the PFI Resources are available for download at praisefactory.org, many of the Resources are available for purchase as hard copies, too.

There are three companion Resources for each of the sixteen PFI units:

PFI Core Curriculum Book (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Core Curriculum book contains the curriculum introduction, the lesson plans, stories and the activities for each Bible Truth in a unit. There are three stories and Resources per Bible Truth: an Old Testament, New Testament and church history/missions story. All three reinforce the key Bible truth concept.

PFI Song Book (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Unit Song Book provides lead sheets and sign language for every song used in the unit. The audio music is available online for download.

➔ PFI Prontos (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Prontos book provides all of the unit's take home sheets. They are offered separately from the rest of the curriculum because they are usually photo-copied. These take-home sheets include the key concepts, lyrics to the songs, the session story, some review questions, a prayer and an activity sheet.

All of these materials may be photocopied for non-commercial church, classroom or school use by licensed users.

About the PFI Prontos

The PFI Prontos are the take-home devotionals for each session of PFI.

They include the Bible Truth, its related Bible verse, the lyrics and meaning blurb for the hymn and Bible verse song, three quiz questions, a prayer and two activity sheets for every story in the curriculum.

While the Prontos are designed as a reinforcement tool for parents to use with their children after session, the Resources are so substantial as to be used as a curriculum by themselves. Additional activities can be downloaded online with each Bible truth.

Other Praise Factory Resources

PFI: Praise Factory Investigators is the third in a family of three, inter-related curriculums:

- Hide 'n' Seek Kids (focus group: ages 2-4; adaptable range: ages 2-pre-K 5's)
- Deep Down Detectives (focus group: ages 4--6's; adaptable range: ages 3-2nd grade)
- PFI: (focus group: grades K-5th grade; adaptable range: pre-K 5's-6th grade)

Each curriculum teaches the same biblical themes, but are presented in greater depth as the children grow and develop. Together, the curriculums work like an expanding spiral of truth that returns to reinforce the same truths with each curriculum, yet leading the children to deeper understanding with each step up.

Learn more about these curriculums as well as other Resources and ideas for reaching children with the gospel at: www.praisefactory.org.



Unit 7 Prontos

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God's Laws Are Written in the Bible

A law is something we are told to do or not to do by someone in authority over us. God is our Maker and the King over everything. He has authority over all. He has given us all His laws to obey. They show us how to live lives that please Him: lives that show His holiness and are filled with love for Him and for each other.

God gave the Ten Commandments and many other laws through Moses. Some of those laws were special laws God gave to the Israelites to follow until Jesus came. But many of them were laws that God gave to all people, in all places and all times to obey. Later, God gave us more commandments to live by through His prophets, through Jesus and through Jesus' first followers, the apostles.

We should all learn God's laws. They are written in the Bible, God's perfect Word, for us to learn and obey. God's laws are unlike any other rules. They are always perfect and good. They always show us the best, most loving and God-pleasing way to live.

God's laws are perfect, but we are not! We are sinners. No matter how hard we try, we will never keep God's laws perfectly. We can never please God with just our good works--only Jesus could do that. That's why God offers us forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus, when we turn from our sins and trust in Him as our own Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them...I am the LORD, your God...You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything...You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God...Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... Honor your father and your mother...You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet ...anything that belongs to your neighbor."

CASE STORY

Genesis 15:12-19; Exodus 19-24

Our story is called:

The Case of the Invisible Hand.

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

1. Whose hand was invisible?
2. What did the invisible hand do and what did that have to do with the Israelites and what does that have to do with us?

Our story takes place in Old Testament times, about 1400 years before Jesus lived on earth.

The hot rays of the sun had hardly begun to warm the desert sands of Egypt, when the sounds of a huge crowd of people talking and walking filled the air. It was Exodus Day! This was happy day when the hundreds of thousands of Israelites left behind slavery in Egypt and headed for new life in the Promised Land.

Ah, the Promised Land! A land so full of good things that they called it "the land of milk and honey." God had promised the Israelites that He would lead them to that wonderful land to live as His special people, His treasured possession. Gladly they left the great cities of Egypt and they followed Moses out into the desert-like wilderness, where little grew or lived. They knew their wonderful new home was just a few days' journey to the north. They could handle this!

But wait! Something was wrong! Moses wasn't leading them north to the Promised Land at all! He was leading them south, further and further into the desert! What was going on?! Why were they going south? Was Moses lost? Had the LORD tricked them?

No, Moses wasn't lost. No, the LORD hadn't tricked them. He was preparing them to be His people. For years they had been distant from the LORD. They had gotten used to the gods of the Egyptians--and they weren't anything like the LORD. They needed to know Him and trust Him. They needed to learn how to live holy lives that pleased Him. They needed His laws. So, further and further south they traveled, until they came to broad plain at the base of the big mountains called Sinai. It was here where the LORD teach them His laws and would make His covenant promise with the Israelites to be their God.

As the Israelites set up camp in the plain, Moses was busy going up and down the steep, rocky slopes of Sinai, receiving instructions from the LORD. "Tell the people: 'I have brought you here to make a covenant with Me,' the

LORD told Moses. "Tell them: "You have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you away to safety. If you obey Me and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, to show the rest of the world what I am like and bring them to Me, too," He promised them.

The seventy elders spoke for all the people when they heard the LORD's message: "Moses, tell the LORD we will do everything He has said." They wanted to be God's covenant people.

Then the LORD told Moses: Gather the people together at the base of Mt. Sinai in three days. I, Myself, will come down the mountain to them in a dense cloud with fire and smoke. I will let them hear Me speak with you, Moses, so they will trust that you are My messenger. Then I will tell them the laws the covenant I will make with them. They will hear Me speak them with their own ears. They will see My majesty and power with their own eyes. I will do this that they might fear and obey Me always.

The LORD gave the people some special preparations to do before their meeting with Him. He was the holy God and they were sinful people. Everything must be just right to meet with Him. "Moses, tell the people to consecrate themselves. Have them wash their bodies and their clothing as signs of wanting to turn away from sin and humbly worship Me," the LORD told Moses. "Have them put limits around the mountain and tell them, 'Don't go up on the mountain! Not even the foot of it! Whoever does--whether animal or person--must be put to death,'" He warned. "I am the LORD, the holy God. When My presence is upon the mountain, even its very rocks are too holy for sinful people to touch. Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain," the LORD told Moses.

So the people prepared to meet the LORD. They washed their bodies and clothes. They put limits around the mountain and waited for the third day.

At last the third day came. Instead of the usual cloudless, blue sky, there was thick, dark cloud that covered the mountain. Something like streaks of lightning flashed in the cloud and the air was filled with great rumbles of thunder. The blast of a loud trumpet suddenly filled the air and got louder and louder. The time was here! The LORD was coming! Everyone in the camp trembled with fear as

clouds of smoke filled the air and the whole mountain trembled violently, as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder.

Moses spoke to the LORD and the people heard the very voice of the LORD answer him. "Come up to the top of the mountain for Me to speak to you," the LORD told Moses. The people watched in awe as Moses bravely set foot on the quaking mountain and straight into the cloud, billowing smoke and fire.

"I am about to descend on the mountain and speak the words of My laws to the Israelites," the LORD told him. "Make sure they stay off the mountain," He urged Moses again.

So down Moses went to the base of the mountain again to warn the people one last time; then, the LORD descended upon the mountain and with a loud voice He said to them: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I have saved you. Worship Me as God alone. Don't make any idols out of anything I have created in heaven or in earth. Don't worship them as gods. I alone am God. I don't want you to share your worship with anything else. My Name reflects My holiness. Do not misuse it. Keep the Sabbath day as a day for resting and for worshiping Me. I give you six days each week to do your work, but the seventh day you are to rest and worship Me. Honor your father and your mother. Listen to their wise words. They will teach you My good ways that your life may go well and you many live long in the land that I, the LORD your God, am giving you. Do not murder anyone. Don't share the special love you should only have for your husband or wife with another man or woman. Be faithful to your own husband or wife. Don't steal. Don't tell lies about others. Don't crave what others have, but be content with what I give you. These are the Ten Commandments of My covenant promise that you are to keep," the LORD told them.

The people heard the thunder and the trumpet. They saw the lightning and the smoky mountain, and they trembled with fear! They were so overwhelmed at the holiness and power of the LORD that they didn't think they could bear to hear speak anymore. "Speak to us yourself and we will listen," they pleaded with Moses. "But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

But Moses said, "Don't be afraid. God has come to help you understand that He is the Holy God, so that your fear

Him will help keep you from sinning against Him. You will want to keep His good laws and honor Him," he reassured them. "But now, I will go up to the LORD and receive the rest of the covenant laws and promises for you," he told them. So Moses went into the thick darkness where God was on Mount Sinai.

On the mountain, the LORD continued giving His laws to Moses. He gave them laws to help them know how to live out the Ten Commandments in their everyday lives. He promised to give them the Promised Land and bless them with many good things, if they would obey His good laws. When the LORD finished telling Moses all of the laws and promises of the covenant, Moses went back down the mountain and told the people everything the LORD had said.

And what did the people think about the LORD's covenant? They were amazed! Never in the world had such wonderful laws been made. They were good, just and perfectly holy, just like the LORD. And how wonderful the blessings He promised to them if they would keep His laws! Together they said to Moses, "Everything the LORD has said we will do. We are ready to make a covenant with Him.

So Moses went and wrote down God's words in "The Book of the Covenant." The next morning, he built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He set up twelve stone pillars, for the twelve tribes of Israel. Worship offerings were made and prepared to seal their promises with God with bull's blood. Moses sprinkled half the blood on the altar. Then he read the Book of the Covenant to the people. They listened and promised, "We will obey everything the LORD says." So Moses took the bull's blood and sprinkled it on the people. "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you," He told them. And it was done! The covenant was made!

Then the LORD called Moses, Aaron, Aaron's two sons Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy leaders (elders) of the Israelites up to the edge of the mountain to share in a meal from the animals used in the worship offering and... to see Him!

What did they see? The Bible tells us very little. It only says that under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. Could those feet have been the feet of Jesus in all His glory? Did they see no more than His feet because they bowed their heads down

in worship before the glory and holiness of God? We do not know. But God in His mercy allowed these leaders of the Israelites, even though they were sinners, stand in His holy presence and live.

When they had all finished eating, everyone went back down the mountain except Moses. "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here," the LORD told them, and I will give you tablets of stone with My laws written on them." So Moses and Joshua, his assistant, went up Mount Sinai, all ablaze on top with the glory of the LORD. Like a great, consuming fire. He stayed there forty days and nights, receiving the two copies of the Ten Commandments on stone tablets, written on both sides by God, Himself; and learning many other things to tell the Israelites. There was much to know and obey if they were to be the LORD's holy nation, a kingdom of priests, a dazzling display of His holiness that the nations might see His glory, turn from their sins and trust Him as their Savior.

Our Bible Truth is: God's Laws Are Written in the Bible

That day at the base of Mount Sinai the Israelite's received these laws: God's Ten Commandments. They made a covenant to be God's special people; but what about you and me? Were those commandments just for the Israelites? No, they were not. They are the laws God has revealed to all of us, if we want to live holy lives that honor Him. They are for us to keep, too.

And was it just the Israelites God intended to be a holy nation of people, a kingdom of priests? No, He did not. The Israel's were to be the ones to teach everyone else about Him, how He wants us to live, and how we might be saved by faith in Him. The Israelites weren't to be the end of God's people. They were to be just the beginning. For to all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as Savior, God promises to forgive their sins and make them part of holy nation that reflects His holiness with their holy lives. They get to be part of the kingdom of priests to go out and tell others about Him.

Let's praise the LORD for giving us Him holy laws and for calling us, too, to be part of His holy nation. Let's ask Him to give us the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts that we would turn away from our sin and by faith trust Him as our Savior. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts and help us to obey God's good laws, that we would reflect His holiness by keeping His laws.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God is our maker and king, but He doesn't care how we live.

Answer: False! He is our maker and king, but He very much cares how we live. That's why He gave us the Ten Commandments.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Whose hand was invisible?

Answer: The LORD's hand.

b. What did the invisible hand do and what does that have to do with us?

Answer: He wrote down the Ten Commandments of His law. Those laws were for the Israelites to obey, but they are also for us all to obey. They tell us how God wants us all to live.

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

Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and ___ I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them...I am the LORD, your God...You shall have no other ___ before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything...You shall not ___ the name of the LORD your God...Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... Honor your father and your ___...You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false ___ against your neighbor. You shall not covet ...anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Answers: laws; gods; misuse; mother; testimony.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Giver of Perfectly Good Laws.

C God, we confess that we break the good laws You gave us to live by. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for not just giving us Your good laws, but sending Jesus to save all who turn away from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to keep Your good laws so that we love You and love others as You want us to.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The God of Abraham Praise

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 6

Verse 2

His Spirit floweth free,
High surging where it will:
In prophet's word He spoke of old,
He speaketh still.
Established is His law,
And changeless it shall stand,
Deep writ upon the human heart,
On sea or land.

Words: Daniel ben Judah Dayyan, Translated by Newton Mann

Music: Meyer Lyon

God's Holy Spirit works powerfully, doing everything God wants Him to do. Long ago, in the days of the prophets, God's Spirit spoke to them and gave them His words to speak to God's people. The prophets spoke them to the people, but also, they wrote them down in the Bible. Sometimes, God's words were laws He wanted His people to keep. Sometimes they were words of comfort or warning. Other times, they were words about the future. God's Holy Spirit helped the prophets say God's words just right...and He helped them write them down just right. Even now, we can read God's words that the prophets wrote down when we read the Bible. God can use them to "write" His truth deep upon our hearts. That is, He can use them to teach us His ways and how He wants us to live. He can use them to help us to know Him and obey Him.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Hear, O Israel

PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 7,8

Refrain:

Hear, O Israel, the decrees and the laws I declare,
Learn them and be sure to follow them,
be sure to follow them.

You shall have no gods before Me,
You shall not make an idol,
You shall not misuse the name of the LORD,
Observe the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy,
Honor your father and your mother. *Refrain*

You shall not murder,
You shall not commit adult'ry,
You shall not steal,
You shall not give false testimony,
You shall not covet anything. *Refrain*
Deuteronomy Five,
Verses one, six through twenty-one.

Words: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

Long ago, the LORD gave the 10 Commandments and many other good laws to the people of Israel. The Israelites agreed to keep them. He would be their God; they would be His people. He would bless them and take care of them. These verses are the Ten Commandments (laws) that God gave them. But even though God gave them to the people of Israel that day, they are laws for all of us to keep. They tell us how God wants us all to live.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God's Laws Are Written in the Bible

A law is something we are told to do or not to do by someone in authority over us. God is our Maker and the King over everything. He has authority over all. He has given us all His laws to obey. They show us how to live lives that please Him: lives that show His holiness and are filled with love for Him and for each other.

God gave the Ten Commandments and many other laws through Moses. Some of those laws were special laws God gave to the Israelites to follow until Jesus came. But many of them were laws that God gave to all people, in all places and all times to obey. Later, God gave us more commandments to live by through His prophets, through Jesus and through Jesus' first followers, the apostles.

We should all learn God's laws. They are written in the Bible, God's perfect Word, for us to learn and obey. God's laws are unlike any other rules. They are always perfect and good. They always show us the best, most loving and God-pleasing way to live.

God's laws are perfect, but we are not! We are sinners. No matter how hard we try, we will never keep God's laws perfectly. We can never please God with just our good works--only Jesus could do that. That's why God offers us forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus, when we turn from our sins and trust in Him as our own Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them...I am the LORD, your God...You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything...You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God...Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... Honor your father and your mother...You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet ...anything that belongs to your neighbor."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Clever, Clothes Cloister.

1. A cloister is a word we use for a place that is hidden away from sight. How was cloth used as a cloister?
2. Who used came up with the idea to use the cloth as a hiding place? What very important thing did it hide? What did God use the hidden things to do?

This story is not in the Bible. It is a true story about God's people who lived in England in the early 1500's.

Tutor William Tyndale and his two students, Harry and Richard Walsh, closed their books. School was over at Sodbury Manor for the day. It was time for dinner. They joined the others and entered the beautiful, oak-paneled dining room and sat down at the big banquet table. Dinner was a grand affair at Sodbury Manor, home of Sir John Walsh. He was a very important knight and very close to the royal family.

Many evenings, Sir John hosted many other powerful and well-educated men and discussed the exciting happenings of their day. They talked about the great explorer Bartholomew Diaz 's discovering Africa to the south and Christopher Columbus's discovering a New World to the west. Vasco Da Gama had sailed all the way around Africa and uncovered the land of India with her delicious spices. Some were beginning to even believe that the world was round, not flat! Copernicus made a powerful telescope and discovered the earth revolved around the sun. And thanks to William Caxton's newly-invented printing press, many could buy books to read about all of these amazing things. Yes, indeed! There was lots for these well-educated men to talk about at dinner!

As only a tutor—a hired teacher for children-- William Tyndale certainly was poorer and younger than most who gathered around Sir John's dinner table. But he was a priest and just as well educated as any of them. He had gone to both Oxford and Cambridge University, the two finest universities in England. He followed the dinner conversation carefully and gave his opinion at time.

William enjoyed discussing these discoveries, but there was other news that was shaking the world that he cared about even more. And in the end, he cared about it so much, that he would die for it. What was this thing he cared so much about? It was salvation --that is, what we must do to be saved from our sins.

Many of the men who joined Sir John for dinner were priests in the Catholic Church. They believed, like most in those days, that the Christians should follow the ideas—called traditions—made up by the Pope, the powerful church leader who lived in Italy. They believed God spoke His will through the Pope and his ideas should be obeyed just like the words in the Bible. One of the ideas—traditions—that the Pope taught was that people had to do certain good works to be saved. And, if people didn't do enough of these good works, he said they could pay money to the Church to help take away some of God's punishment for their sins. The Pope even taught that people could pay money to take away punishment of other people's sins... even dead people's sins! These certainly were ideas not in the Bible!

The Pope also taught that the Bible should only be printed in Latin, a language most people couldn't read. He thought only the church leaders should have Bibles because common people didn't know enough to understand it properly.

William disagreed with these men. He had spent years in university reading the Bible for himself and learned that the Pope's traditions weren't like God's laws at all. He agreed with Martin Luther—a priest from Germany: the Bible says our own good works can't save us and no amount of money could ever buy it for us. Salvation is the free gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ. And, William thought everyone should have the Bible in their own language to read. Why, God gave the Ten Commandments in the language of the Israelites, so they could learn and read it themselves. Jesus and the apostles spoke and wrote in the language of the people of their day, too. Why would God want it to be any different now? William thought.

William was upset. He knew that millions of people were dying in their sins because they believed in the Pope's traditions instead of God's Word. They needed to read God's Word themselves and learn what it really said. Then they could turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

William wanted this so badly that he decided to do something about it...right then! He began challenging the priests gathered around the Walshes' dinner table and proving them wrong. How angry these men became!

Then one night came the conversation that was to change William's life. "The common people don't need the

Bible in their own language. It is enough if the priests read it," a church leader named Hampton said.

"But the priests are either too lazy or don't know enough to understand it themselves!" William argued. "Why, right here in our area, half of the priests cannot rightly speak the Ten Commandments!"

But Hampton stood up for the Pope and his decisions. "Better the people have the traditions of the Pope than the commandments of God, I say!" he said.

William could not believe his ears! This man was setting the Pope and his traditions above God and His laws. That was idolatry! "Listen to me," William vowed that night, "This one thing I do! If God spare my life, before many years I will cause a boy that drives the plough out in the field to know more of Scriptures than you know!" Right then and there, William had made a choice. He would leave his easy life as a tutor and translate the Bible into English himself.

No sooner had William started his translation, then he made powerful enemies. Cuthbert Tunstall, the Archbishop of Canterbury (a very important church leader in England), refused to give permission to translate the Bible into English. This meant William could be killed if he kept up his work! Did this stop William? No, it did not. "This one thing I do!" William resolved. "I will not stop until I get the Bible translated into English, even if I die at the stake!" he vowed.

William was forced to England or die. He went to Germany, where Martin Luther lived. He would translate the Bible there, then smuggle it back to England.

At first things went well. By the end of the first year, he had translated all of the New Testament into English and had sent it to the printing press to be copied.

Before long, trouble arose. William looked up from the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts piled on his desk as Roye, his assistant burst into the room. "Sssh! Master Tyndale," said William's friend, carefully locking the door. "We're found out! We must run for our lives," he exclaimed.

"Found out! How? By whom?" William asked.

"Our enemy, John Cochlaeus, overheard some of the printers' men talking about the English Bible. Soldiers are coming to stop the presses, destroy your work and arrest you!" Roye told him. "There is just time for you to escape! Hurry!"

William and Roye quickly gathered up the pages of the English Bible, hid them under their coats, then slipped away down a dark street and out of the city. By morning,

they were well on their way to Worms (pronounced "Vorms"), carrying their heavy but precious burden with them.

In Worms, William found another printer to print his precious English New Testament. At last 6000 were ready to go out. William found cloth merchants who agreed to slip the Bibles into their bundles of cloth bound for England and get them into the hands of the common people. Their dangerous plan worked! People everywhere were reading God's Word for themselves for the first time! They read God's laws and knew they were sinners. They read the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus, trusted in Him and were saved!

William was delighted! This was what he hoped for! But Archbishop Tunstall and many others were furious! "This man must be stopped! The people must not read this book!! Gather all of the New Testaments you can and burn them up right outside of St. Paul's Cathedral in London," he ordered.

Did this stop William? No, it did not! "This one thing I will do!" was his motto and he would see that the English people had their Bible. He printed more New Testaments and smuggled them in. Then William and his new assistant, Coverdale, began work on the English Old Testament.

William's enemies weren't finished either. They hired a man named Henry Philips to make friends with William and then capture him and his English Bible. Philips did his job well. Soon William trusted him and shared with him his dream for the English people to have the whole Bible in English. How important it was for them to have all of God's laws, all of God's Word to know and live by!

William soon had given his enemies all the information they needed. They set their final trap and captured him and his English Bible. They destroyed his papers and sentenced William to death. He was hung, then his body burned at the stake.

Even as he died, William was still thinking of the "one thing" he would do. "Lord, open the King of England's eyes," he prayed as the flames leapt up around him. William knew that God could change the king's heart and approve the English Bible.

The Lord answered William's prayer in just nine short months. Coverdale, his assistant, kept working on the Old Testament until it was completely translated into English. And not long afterwards, King Henry the VIII of England

commanded that the finished English Bible should be printed and read freely throughout the land. Within three years, the King made it law that every church in England make a copy of the English Bible available to its members. And perhaps you have heard of: the King James Bible or even have one? If you want to hear what William's translation of the Bible sounded like, have someone read some of the King James Bible to you, for it is almost entirely taken from William Tyndale's original translation.

"This one thing I do," said William Tyndale, even to his last ounce of strength. With the help of God, that one thing he did!

Our Bible Truth is: God's Laws Are Written in the Bible

How wonderful it is that we get to hear these Ten Commandments and all of God's other laws in English, our own language! Next time you hold an English Bible in your hands or hear the Bible read to you in English, take time to thank God for His brave servant, William Tyndale, who gave his life that you and I might know the wonderful difference between the traditions of the Pope and laws of God. Because of his sacrifice we can read that all of us are lawbreakers, deserving God's eternal judgment for our sins; yet, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we can receive God's free gift of salvation. William Tyndale made it the one thing he would do to make this Bible available to people who read and speak English like us. Shouldn't we make it our one thing to read it?

Let's praise God for giving us His laws in the Bible and letting us read them in our own language! Let's ask God to work in our hearts as we read His laws, that we might live holy lives that reflect His own holiness for others to see and to bring glory to His name.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God gave the Ten Commandments through Moses. He gave us more good laws through the prophets, through Jesus and through Jesus' first followers, the apostles.

Answer: True!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. A cloister is a word we use for a place that is hidden away from sight. How was cloth used as a cloister?

Answer: Bundles of cloth were used to hide copies of the New Testament that were being smuggled into England.

b. Who used came up with the idea to use the cloth as a hiding place? What did God use the hidden things to do?

Answer: William Tyndale. God used these New Testament to give the people of England a Bible they could read and learn themselves.

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

Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I ___ in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to ___ them...I am the LORD, your God...You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything...You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God...Observe the ___ day by keeping it holy...Honor your father and your mother...You shall not ___. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not ___ ...anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Answers: declare; follow; Sabbath; murder; covet.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being completely powerful to complete Your will, even when strong enemies oppose it.

C God, we confess that we have Your laws to read in English, thanks to William Tyndale's work, and they show us that we are lawbreakers. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for giving us the Bible to read in English, that we can read it ourselves and know the good news of Jesus.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to read and love His Word. Give us courage to do great things for the sake of the gospel, just like He did in William Tyndale.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The God of Abraham Praise

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 6

Verse 2

His Spirit floweth free,
High surging where it will:
In prophet's word He spoke of old,
He speaketh still.
Established is His law,
And changeless it shall stand,
Deep writ upon the human heart,
On sea or land.

Words: Daniel ben Judah Dayyan, Translated by Newton Mann

Music: Meyer Lyon

God's Holy Spirit works powerfully, doing everything God wants Him to do. Long ago, in the days of the prophets, God's Spirit spoke to them and gave them His words to speak to God's people. The prophets spoke them to the people, but also, they wrote them down in the Bible. Sometimes, God's words were laws He wanted His people to keep. Sometimes they were words of comfort or warning. Other times, they were words about the future. God's Holy Spirit helped the prophets say God's words just right...and He helped them write them down just right. Even now, we can read God's words that the prophets wrote down when we read the Bible. God can use them to "write" His truth deep upon our hearts. That is, He can use them to teach us His ways and how He wants us to live. He can use them to help us to know Him and obey Him.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Hear, O Israel

PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 7,8

Refrain:

Hear, O Israel, the decrees and the laws I declare,
Learn them and be sure to follow them,
be sure to follow them.

You shall have no gods before Me,
You shall not make an idol,
You shall not misuse the name of the LORD,
Observe the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy,
Honor your father and your mother. *Refrain*

You shall not murder,
You shall not commit adult'ry,
You shall not steal,
You shall not give false testimony,
You shall not covet anything. *Refrain*
Deuteronomy Five,
Verses one, six through twenty-one.

Words: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

Long ago, the LORD gave the 10 Commandments and many other good laws to the people of Israel. The Israelites agreed to keep them. He would be their God; they would be His people. He would bless them and take care of them. These verses are the Ten Commandments (laws) that God gave them. But even though God gave them to the people of Israel that day, they are laws for all of us to keep. They tell us how God wants us all to live.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

**We're learning... Bible Truth 1:
God's Laws Are Written in the Bible**

A law is something we are told to do or not to do by someone in authority over us. God is our Maker and the King over everything. He has authority over all. He has given us all His laws to obey. They show us how to live lives that please Him: lives that show His holiness and are filled with love for Him and for each other.

God gave the Ten Commandments and many other laws through Moses. Some of those laws were special laws God gave to the Israelites to follow until Jesus came. But many of them were laws that God gave to all people, in all places and all times to obey. Later, God gave us more commandments to live by through His prophets, through Jesus and through Jesus' first followers, the apostles.

We should all learn God's laws. They are written in the Bible, God's perfect Word, for us to learn and obey. God's laws are unlike any other rules. They are always perfect and good. They always show us the best, most loving and God-pleasing way to live.

God's laws are perfect, but we are not! We are sinners. No matter how hard we try, we will never keep God's laws perfectly. We can never please God with just our good works--only Jesus could do that. That's why God offers us forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus, when we turn from our sins and trust in Him as our own Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them...I am the LORD, your God...You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything...You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God...Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... Honor your father and your mother...You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet ...anything that belongs to your neighbor."

CASE STORY

Matthew 14-15; Mark 7

Our story is: The Case of the Lousy, Little Laws.

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

1. Who loved the lousy, little laws? Who did not?
2. How were the laws different from God's laws?

"Did you wash your hands?" Isn't that the question your parents ask you before sitting down to eat? Why do they want you to wash your hands? Because of that nice collection of germs on them that might just get on food you touch, into your body, then make you sick. Your parents have you wash your hands to keep that from happening.

This story is about some people who lived back in New Testament times, when Jesus lived on earth; and, who cared a lot about hand washing, too. They were the Pharisees and teachers of the law. But these men didn't just care about IF you washed your hands. They cared about HOW you washed your hands. They had a special name for the right way to wash hands. It was called Netilat Yadayim—ceremonial washing. They believed that Jews should only wash their hands with cleansing water kept in special jars. Before Jews ate, they were supposed to hold their fingertips up, pour at least an egg shell and a half of this special water out of a special washing cup onto their fingertips, then let it run all the way down over their wrists. After they ate, they were to wash again. They took another egg shell and a half of the special water, but this time they were to hold their hands with fingertips down, pouring the water onto their wrists and letting it flow down off their fingertips. They were supposed to wash their hands exactly like this or they weren't really considered washed. And what would happen if they didn't do it just right? This is the most incredible thing of all. These men believed that Jews who didn't do wash their hands just right should be cut off from God and His God's people. That means going to hell! Wow!

Now let's get something straight. Nowhere in the Bible, does God give a law like this. Nowhere does it say that God's people will go to hell if they don't wash their hands right. But if God's law doesn't say this, then where in the world did these Jews get this crazy idea?

Well, it happened over a lot of years. The greatest Jewish teachers—called the elders—began to pass down their own ideas about how the Ten Commandments and the other laws that God gave them should be carried out in everyday life. Sometimes, they came up with very good

ideas. But, I'm sad to say, all too many times, these teachers came up with new itty, bitty rules that really had nothing to do with God's laws at all. After a while, people began to think that the elders' ideas were just as important as God's laws written in the Bible. These rules about hand washing were some of those itty, bitty rules. And that's how, by Jesus' day, the Pharisees and teachers of the Law had come to think that not washing your hands according to Netilat Yadayim, deserved the punishment of hell. Nobody wanted that, so most did just as their teachers told them to and carefully washed their hands according to Netilat Yadayim.

Then along came Jesus. He wasn't like any other teacher the people had ever known. He taught so powerfully about God. He healed every sickness. He calmed great storms with just His words....and....He didn't wash his hands according to Netilat Yadayim! Before long the Pharisees and teachers of the law in Jerusalem heard about everything this new teacher Jesus up in Galilee. And while they should have been amazed at his teachings and his healings, instead they were furious that Jesus didn't wash His hands properly. And, to make matters worse, He didn't teach His disciples or the huge crowds who followed Him to wash their hands either! One day Jesus used five loaves of bread and two fish to feed thousands of people, but did He make them wash their hands first? Not as far as we know. Yet they all ate, just the same. How shocking!

"We must go see this Jesus, ourselves," the Pharisees and teachers of the law in Jerusalem decided. "We must find out what He is up to. We can't let Him encourage the people not to follow the teachings of the elders. This Jesus is breaking all the itty bitty rules and He must be stopped." So off the Pharisees and teachers of the law went on the long journey to Galilee...looking for Jesus.

Somewhere in Gennesaret, along the west side of the Sea of Galilee, they found Jesus. He and His disciples had just sailed there and already a huge crowd swarmed around Him, eager to hear Him teach and heal their sicknesses. The Pharisees and teachers of the law joined the crowds. They listened to Jesus teach. They watched Him heal sick person after sick person. Why, Jesus was so filled with God's power, that if a sick person just touched the hem of His cloak, they would be healed! This Jesus was amazing, these teachers couldn't deny it. But was His power from

God or the devil? A man from God would keep God's laws AND the teachings of the elders, they believed. A man from the devil wouldn't. Which kind of man was Jesus? That's what they had come to find out.

They didn't have to wait long to find out. They watched in disgust as Jesus and His disciples picked up their food and ate it without washing their hands. No Netilat Yadayim! How outrageous!

"Jesus, why don't your disciples live according to the traditions of the elders? Why do they eat their food with unclean hands?!" the Pharisees demanded to know. "Here you set yourself up as a teacher of the people, yet you are letting them commit this terrible sin! Don't you care that the elders say they are in danger of hell if they don't wash their hands properly?"

But Jesus saw things completely differently. It was the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who were sinning by making their little, itty bitty traditions just as important as God's laws. They were the ones leading people into sin, not He. Jesus said to them, "The prophet Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding onto the traditions of men," Jesus told them.

"You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!" Jesus continued. "God's Law says, 'Honor your father and your mother,' showing them respect and taking care of their needs when they are old. But you say that a man can dedicate the money he would have used to help his old parents to the Temple and then he can't help them out anymore. You do away with the Word of God by your traditions the elders have handed down to you. And you do many other things like this. You accuse me of doing wrong by breaking the elders' traditions, but you are the ones who sin by breaking the laws of the Lord."

Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'"

Jesus' disciples could hardly believe Jesus' bold correction of these powerful men. They were the leaders of the Jewish people! No one talked to them like this! They watched the

Pharisees storm away. After the Pharisees and teachers of the Law had gone, the disciples asked Jesus, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

"Those men are supposed to be the teachers of Israel who study God's Word and lead His people in keeping His laws," Jesus told them. "But they have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men. Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit. In the same way, if you follow the teachers of the Law, they will lead you to destruction."

Jesus had given them much to think about. Were the teachers really the ones who misunderstood God's laws? Was Jesus really telling them to stop keeping the elders' itty-bitty rules? Would they really NOT go to hell, if they didn't keep them? And what exactly did Jesus mean when He said "nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'"? Peter just had to know. After the crowds had gone he asked Jesus, "Teacher, tell us what your parable means," Peter asked Jesus.

"Don't you see," Jesus explained, "whatever enters the mouth—that is, what you eat-- goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth—things you say-- come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean,'—sinful before God. For out of a sinful heart come the evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander--the things that break God's Ten Commandments. These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

Our Bible Truth is:**God's Laws Are Written in the Bible****Our Bible Verse is: Deuteronomy 5:1, 6-21**

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them... You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God... You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God... Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... Honor your father and your mother... You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet ... anything that belongs to your neighbor."

The little rules of washing cups and hands seem very different from these Ten Commandments of God, don't they? The Pharisees had left behind the main point of God's

Laws: to love God and to love others. These men studied God's laws every day and washed their hands thinking they were pleasing God,, but they had such hard, unclean hearts. They stubbornly held onto to their traditions and would one day even choose to break God's command not to murder by nailing Jesus, the very Son of God, to the cross.

But what about you and me? Perhaps it seems silly to think that washing your hands before eating your food was more important than keeping God's laws, write in the Bible. But let's look closer at ourselves. Are we really so different from the Pharisees? The Pharisees chose to keep lots of little itty-bitty rules that looked good on the outside, but did not have anything to do with the sin in their heart and lives that broke God's good and holy commands He wrote down in the Bible. Aren't we often perfectly happy to look good on the outside and never deal with the sin inside, just like those Pharisees? Just like them, we are lawbreakers who deserve God's punishment. We need a Savior! And to all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus, God will save!

Let's praise God for giving us His perfect laws that show us how to live holy lives. Let's ask Him to give us hearts that remember His commands and lives that are "clean" with His holiness. Let's ask Him to help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God has given us His laws and He expects His people to keep them without any help.

Answer: False! God promises to give the Holy Spirit to all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. He gives them His Holy Spirit to help them obey His laws.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who loved the lousy, little laws? Who did not?

Answer: The teachers of the law loved the little laws. Jesus did not.

b. How were these laws different from God's laws?

Answer: These laws were made up by men, instead of by God. These laws weighed down people and did not point them to God or help them love Him. These laws only made it harder to follow God's good and right ways. But God's laws DO point people to God and help them love and obey Him. They are God's good and right ways to live.

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

Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. ___ them and be sure to follow them...I am the ___, your God...You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything...You shall not misuse the ___ of the LORD your God...Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... ___ your father and your mother...You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not ___. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet ...anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Answers: Learn; LORD; name; honor; steal.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being for being the Giver of Perfectly Good Laws.

C God, we confess that we break the good laws You have given us to live by. Like the Pharisees, it's much easier for us to keep itty, bitty rules and not look at our sinful hearts and how we fail to keep your laws. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for not just giving us Your good laws, but for sending Jesus to save all who turn away from their sins and trust in You as their Savior.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to live inside us and help us love You and obey Your laws.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The God of Abraham Praise

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 6

Verse 2

His Spirit floweth free,
High surging where it will:
In prophet's word He spoke of old,
He speaketh still.
Established is His law,
And changeless it shall stand,
Deep writ upon the human heart,
On sea or land.

Words: Daniel ben Judah Dayyan, Translated by Newton Mann

Music: Meyer Lyon

God's Holy Spirit works powerfully, doing everything God wants Him to do. Long ago, in the days of the prophets, God's Spirit spoke to them and gave them His words to speak to God's people. The prophets spoke them to the people, but also, they wrote them down in the Bible. Sometimes, God's words were laws He wanted His people to keep. Sometimes they were words of comfort or warning. Other times, they were words about the future. God's Holy Spirit helped the prophets say God's words just right...and He helped them write them down just right. Even now, we can read God's words that the prophets wrote down when we read the Bible. God can use them to "write" His truth deep upon our hearts. That is, He can use them to teach us His ways and how He wants us to live. He can use them to help us to know Him and obey Him.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Hear, O Israel

PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 7,8

Refrain:

Hear, O Israel, the decrees and the laws I declare,
Learn them and be sure to follow them,
be sure to follow them.

You shall have no gods before Me,
You shall not make an idol,
You shall not misuse the name of the LORD,
Observe the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy,
Honor your father and your mother. *Refrain*

You shall not murder,
You shall not commit adult'ry,
You shall not steal,
You shall not give false testimony,
You shall not covet anything. *Refrain*
Deuteronomy Five,
Verses one, six through twenty-one.

Words: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

Long ago, the LORD gave the 10 Commandments and many other good laws to the people of Israel. The Israelites agreed to keep them. He would be their God; they would be His people. He would bless them and take care of them. These verses are the Ten Commandments (laws) that God gave them. But even though God gave them to the people of Israel that day, they are laws for all of us to keep. They tell us how God wants us all to live.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God Created Us Perfect Law-Keepers, But We Are All Lawbreakers

God created Adam and Eve without sin. They kept God's laws perfectly. They loved Him as they should; and, they loved each other as they should. They pleased God with their "works." That is, they pleased God with how they lived because they loved Him perfectly in their hearts, and they obeyed Him and His good laws perfectly in their lives.

But when Adam and Eve rebelled against God, their hearts and lives became sinful. No longer could they please God with their works, because no longer could they live perfectly. They were spoiled with sin.

Sin didn't stop there. It spread down to all of Adam and Eve's children, too. It even spreads down to us, too. Yes, just like Adam and Eve, we have sinful hearts. We break God's good laws with our thoughts, words, and actions.

God is good and He hates sin. God would not be good if He did not hate it. But, oh, how terrible is God's fair punishment for breaking His laws! It is death: separation from Him and His good ways forever! This is what we all deserve.

Yet, God is so merciful to sinners like us! He sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life here on earth and offer it up as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. Because of Jesus, our sins can be forgiven and we can have eternal life with God!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Psalm 14:2-3

"The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one."

CASE STORY

Genesis 1-2, 6-9; Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26;

Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:10; 2 Peter 3:3,4

Our story is called:

The Case of the Great Griever.

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

1. Who was the Great Griever? What sadness caused him to grieve?
2. Who deserved punishment for this sadness? Who received mercy instead? Why?

This story is an Old Testament story that starts out at the beginning of time.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He filled them with an amazing variety of creations. Light, darkness, sun, moon, stars. Seas filled with sea creatures. Skies filled with birds. The earth filled with plants and all sorts of animals. And most special of all, God made humans.

What was special about these humans? The LORD created them in His own image, with an spirit to love Him and each other perfectly. A spirit that would never die. He gave them the whole earth lovingly rule over.

"I give you the earth to fill and subdue," the LORD told Adam and Eve.

What a wonderful present! And oh, how wonderful life would be in God's world, under God's good rule! If they obeyed God's commands, they would live there happily forever, caring for it, exploring it and filling it until the whole world was like one big Garden of Eden. Filled with special beauty and with their children, and with close fellowship with God, life would be perfect!

But that's not how things turned out, is it? Adam and Eve rebelled against God. They ate from the one tree the LORD told them not to eat from and sin entered their perfect world. Out from their hearts went perfect love for God and each other, too. Now they were sinful and selfish. Out went perfect health from their bodies. Now they would die. And out of the Garden and into the wilds of the world, God sent Adam and Eve. They could no longer live in special closeness with Him. He was the holy God and they were sinful lawbreakers. They could no longer stand in His presence by their own pure lives. Oh, how life changed when Adam and Eve rebelled against God!

Yet God was full of mercy even then to those lawbreakers. He allowed Adam and Eve to live, instead of punishing them with death right then, as they deserved. He even

He even promised to send a Savior, one day. He would come and crush the Evil One who had tempted them to sin. By faith, Adam and Eve looked forward to that day.

Life went on outside the Garden. Adam and Eve carried out God's plan to subdue the earth and to fill it, but because of sin, nothing was like it would have been in the Garden. Yes, Adam and Eve worked the soil and raised animals, but they suffered with bad crops and sickly animals. Yes, Adam and Eve worked the soil and raised animals, but they suffered with bad crops and sickly animals. Yes, Adam and Eve had children and filled the earth with them, but the children were every as sinful as they were. There should have been cities of people filled with love for each other and for God. But instead, there were cities full of sinful people. Murder, idol worship, thieving, envy, hatred, sickness and death was everywhere. And even though the promise of the Savior had been passed down through the years, fewer and fewer people looked forward in faith to the day He would come. It seemed as if there was no one who chose to struggle against the sin and tried to please God.

The LORD saw how corrupt and full of violence the earth had become. He saw how people's hearts, once full of love for Him and for each other, were now so wicked that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts were only evil, all the time. And the LORD was grieved that He had made [people] on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain.

What does it mean for God to grieve of making the world? Does it mean that He thought it was all a mistake? No, it does not, for God doesn't make mistakes. From before the creation of the world, God knew what would happen and chose it. He knew people would rebel and how terribly painful it would be when they broke the wonderful, close fellowship they had with Him. He knew how awful their sins would be to Him. And He always knew He would suffer far more than any of them to save them through the death of His Son. Yet God's glorious plan to save these sinful lawbreakers, far outweighed the pain He would feel. Yes, from before the beginning, God chose the pain rebellious people would give Him. But chosen pain hurts no less than any other pain. The LORD grieved when they rebelled. He hated their sin, yet He patiently endured it for hundreds of years, as it grew worse and worse. But at last, came the time for judgment.

The LORD said, "I will send a flood to destroy all the

creatures of the earth for I am grieved that I have made them." Well, not quite all. For God had promised to send a Savior to crush the Evil One and save His sinful people. He would never break His promise. He chose to save one Noah and his family through whom would come the Savior one day. How amazing is the LORD! People deserve His punishment, but He still shows them mercy!

Why Noah? Wasn't he a sinner just like everyone else? Yes, he was. But unlike the other people, Noah was a righteous, blameless man. He loved the LORD and lived his life to please Him. He looked forward in faith to the promise of a Savior. God counted Noah righteous and blameless not because he was a perfect law keeper, but because of Noah's faith in Him. So Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD.

God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. Make an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. Build it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth. All the creatures will die, but I am making a covenant with you. Enter the ark, taking with you seven pairs--male and female-- of all the clean animals (animals that could be eaten and sacrificed as worship offerings) and two pairs of every other kind of creature. Take enough food for you and all the creatures to eat," the LORD told Noah.

Noah did everything just as God commanded him...and that is saying a whole lot! There were no stores to go and get the supplies he needed to make this huge ship. They had to cut down and saw hundreds of trees. They had to make their own nails to nail the wood together and their own gallons and gallons of sticky, black tar to seal it with. Then there was all the food that must be gathered for the hundreds and hundreds of creatures. It is no wonder that it took Noah up to 100 years to build and prepare the ark!

Can you imagine how curious people became as the ark took shape! "What are you doing, Noah?" they surely asked. "Why are you building this huge boat? Noah told them about God's coming judgment that they might turn away from their sins and trust in Him.

I wish I could say that the people who listened to Noah

repented of their sins and looked forward in faith to the promised Savior; but it did not. No one turned away from their sins and trusted in God.

Finally, the ark was finished. "It's time to load the ark with your family and the creatures," the LORD told Noah. "Seven days from now the rain will come and it will not stop for forty days--until all the land is covered and all the creatures are destroyed." God's promised judgment was coming at last.

Into the ark went Noah, his family and all those creatures. The LORD shut them in safe and dry. Then it was time. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—the rain burst upon the earth and didn't stop for forty days—a month and a half of rain! Streams turned into rivers. Rivers into lakes. Lakes filled up valleys. Valleys swelled up and up until even the tallest mountain was covered. And with all the water, went all of the living creatures. God's sad--but just--judgment had come. Only Noah and those huddled with him in the ark remained. They were safe and no doubt grateful for God's mercy. Only by God counting Noah's faith as righteousness had they been spared.

After forty days, the rain stopped. How lonely and quiet the world must have seemed, floating on that endless sea! How glad Noah and his family must have been when the LORD sent a strong wind to dry out the earth. They must have celebrated the day that the ark's hull settled on Mt. Ararat; and eagerly watched as the mountains seem to grow each day as the winds evaporated more and more of the watery blankets from their steep sides.

For four months the winds blew until at last the earth was ready for its new start. God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you, your family and all the creatures. Come out and begin again. Fill the earth with life!" He told them all. They were all happy to obey. Dry land at last, after over five months on that ark!

The first thing Noah did was to worship God. He thanked the LORD for being merciful to him and his family, even though they were sinners, too. He was grateful that the LORD had chosen his family to be the new beginning for people. Noah made a sacrifice to God to show that he wanted to love and obey Him always.

The LORD accepted Noah's sacrifice because of his faith in Him. He made a covenant--a solemn promise--with them all: "Never again will all life be cut off by the waters

of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. And this is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and all the creatures of the earth: a rainbow set in the clouds."

So into the beautiful, clean, new world, Noah went--his family and the creatures with him-- to fill it with life again. If only the hearts of people had been clean from sin, too! But no! Sin still lived in their hearts. It would multiply as the earth was filled again. The only hope for people was to look forward in faith to God's promised Savior, who would one day bring all lawbreaking to an end and crush the Evil One forever.

Our Bible Truth is:

**God Created Us as Perfect Lawkeepers,
But We Are All Lawbreakers**

In many ways, our world is not that different from Noah's. Most people care little that they are sinners who have broken God's good laws. Many people do not even believe in God at all. And just like in Noah's day, God has already promised a day when He will bring final judgment upon all people for their lawbreaking ways. This time there is no wooden ark to save people from this Day of Judgment. But none is needed. For this time, God provided a wooden cross on which His Son, Jesus, died to save all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him. This was the Savior to whom Noah looked forward in faith. He is the only hope for any of us lawbreakers.

What about you and me? How will it be with us? Will we be like the people in Noah's day that ignored God's warnings; or will we, like Noah, turn and through faith in Jesus be saved? Let's praise God for His mercy in providing a way for lawbreakers like us to be saved. Let's ask Him to give us repentant hearts that long to turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our own Savior.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Before sin came into the world, Adam and Eve lived perfect lives that pleased God.

Answer: True!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Great Griever? What did he grieve? Why?

Answer: The LORD. He grieved that He had made people. He grieved all of their sin.

b. Who deserved punishment for this sadness? Who received mercy instead? Why?

Answer: All people deserved punishment. The LORD showed mercy to all, by warning them for years before sending the flood. But He showed mercy most of all, to Noah and his family who looked to the Lord in faith. The Lord counted their faith as righteousness. He spared their lives in the ark. Through his family would one day come the promised Savior.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 14:2-3

"The ___ looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek ___. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does ___, not even one."

Answers: LORD; God; good.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

At the Cross

PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 9,10

Verse 2

Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

Refrain

At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day.

Verse 3

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ the mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin. *Refrain*

Words: Isaac Watts Music: Ralph E. Hudson

Because we are all lawbreakers, we deserve God's eternal punishment. There will never be anything we can do to earn back eternal life with God. But at the cross where Jesus, the perfect law keeper gave up His life as the payment for all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him, that we can find forgiveness and eternal life. By His perfect sacrifice, all of "crimes" and "burdens" can be "rolled away" forever. What amazing love! What grace--what kindness that we never deserved! That Jesus, the very Son of God, through whom all things were made, would choose to come suffer and die on the cross to save sinful creatures like you and me. All who have Jesus as their Savior do have reason to be happy all the day, every day! There's is eternal life with God!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being perfectly just, yet so merciful to sinful people who turn to You in faith.

C God, we confess that we are sinners, just like the people in Noah's day. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for sending a Savior to save us.

S God, help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Make us like Noah, who looked in faith to You and lived to please You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Looks Down

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 11

The LORD looks down from heaven,
On the sons of man,
To see if there are any who understand,
Any who seek God.
But all have turned aside;
They have together become corrupt,
There is no one who does good,
No, not even one.
Psalm Fourteen, two and three.

Words adapted from Psalm 14:2-3 Constance Dever © 2011

Adam and Eve were created with hearts that sought after God. They were perfect law keepers who were not corrupt and did not turn aside from God. But after they rebelled, they and all their children after them turned aside. Yes, the LORD sees everything and knows everything. He knows what is in each of our hearts. We all have sinful hearts and do sinful things. We have all become corrupt with sin. None of us seek after God on our own. But praise God for sending Jesus to be the Savior of sinners like us! Praise God for sending His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts! God gives us hope! He can do in us what we could never do for ourselves!

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

**God Created Us Perfect Law-Keepers,
But We Are All Lawbreakers**

God created Adam and Eve without sin. They kept God's laws perfectly. They loved Him as they should; and, they loved each other as they should. They pleased God with their "works." That is, they pleased God with how they lived because they loved Him perfectly in their hearts, and they obeyed Him and His good laws perfectly in their lives.

But when Adam and Eve rebelled against God, their hearts and lives became sinful. No longer could they please God with their works, because no longer could they live perfectly. They were spoiled with sin.

Sin didn't stop there. It spread down to all of Adam and Eve's children, too. It even spreads down to us, too. Yes, just like Adam and Eve, we have sinful hearts. We break God's good laws with our thoughts, words, and actions.

God is good and He hates sin. God would not be good if He did not hate it. But, oh, how terrible is God fair punishment for breaking His laws! It is death: separation from Him and His good ways forever! This is what we all deserve.

Yet, God is so merciful to sinners like us! He sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect live here on earth and offer it up as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. Because of Jesus, our sins can be forgiven and we can have eternal life with God!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Psalm 14:2-3

"The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Hole Under the Stairs.

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

1. Who lived in the hole? Who went to talk to her? Why?
2. What did she pray? What happened?

Our story takes place in the late 1700's in a little village near the cold, stony shore of Udale Bay, up in the Scottish Highlands.

Resolis or "The Cape of Light" in Gaelic (the original language of Scotland), was the name of this quiet village of poor fishermen, farmers, quarrymen, shepherds and weavers. This story about Hector M'Phail: a man the Lord used to make Resolis worthy of its name.

Hector was the pastor of the little church in Resolis and he was a man on the move for God! He spent his time studying the Bible and caring for the people of Resolis. He prayed for them and preached to them. And he visited them at their homes.

There were no cars or buses or even trains in the Scottish Highlands back then. You walked or you rode your pony. And that's just what Hector did. He mounted his little white pony and rode miles up and down the twisty-turny mountains, in every kind of weather, to visit the shepherds, fishermen, quarrymen and weavers and talk to them about God.

Why didn't Hector just stay put in his little house and his little church in Resolis and wait for the people to come to him? Because Hector M'Phail had a message that wouldn't wait. He traveled those lonely moors to bring the message of God's mercy shown to sinners. "God created us to know and love Him. He created us to live in perfect happiness according to His good laws. But we have all turned away from Him and become lawbreakers," he would tell them. "We deserve eternal punishment. But God sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment for the sins of all who turn and trust in Him. Accept this gift of God's mercy!" he urged them. And many a person did just that. And Resolis really became a Cape of Light—with the "light" of God's forgiveness through Jesus shining in the hearts of many.

News of this man on the move for God spread. Before long, others looked to his for godly wisdom. So, three times a year, Hector rode his little, white pony over

hundred of miles of difficult, lonely and even dangerous roads to discuss important matters with other church leaders in the big city of Edinburgh.

On one of these trips, Hector happened to stop at a tiny inn in the wild Badenoch Mountains. Hungry and tired, he looked forward to a warm meal and a soft bed, but he made it his first job to care for those around him. He wanted to make sure they knew about Jesus. So, before he ate bite of his meal, he called the innkeeper and family to gather for a time of Bible reading and prayer.

The family gathered around the Bible, ready to learn from Hector. But Hector looked around him and asked, "Is everyone from your household here?"

"Yes, this is everyone," the innkeeper answered.

"All?" Hector asked again.

"Yes," answered the man, "we are all here; there is a little girl in the kitchen, but she is so dirty that she is not fit to be seen."

"Call in the girl," said Hector said, "we will wait till she comes."

"No," the innkeeper replied. "She is too dirty!"

But Hector insisted again. "That little girl who does the dishes needs to know about God, too," refusing to begin until the girl joined them.

At last the kitchen girl was fetched and Hector began reading from the Bible and praying for them all.

Afterwards, Hector spoke to the little girl.. He wanted to know if she knew God's message of mercy and believed in it.

"Who made you?" he asked her, but she didn't know.

"Do you know that you have a soul?" he asked her.

"No, sir. What is one?" she answered.

"Do you ever pray?" he asked her.

"No, sir, I don't even know what that means," she said.

Hector was very upset by the little girl's answers. It seemed she knew nothing at all about God! She needed to know God's laws! She needed to know she was a sinner who needed forgiveness! Most of all, she needed to know how to receive that forgiveness through Jesus. But who was there who could help her learn? Oh, how Hector wanted this little girl to know and accept this gift of God's mercy!

What was Hector to do? This poor girl couldn't even read, so he couldn't give her a Bible to help her learn about God. The innkeeper's family cared so little for her, so he couldn't

count on them to teach her about God. There was only one thing to do: he, himself, would teach her, but he was due in Edinburgh in only a few days. What could be done? Before long an idea came to mind.

"Listen, I am going to Edinburgh, and I am going to bring you back a little scarf. I have something I want you to promise me to do each day and night while I am gone," Hector told the little girl.

"What it is, sir?" the girl asked eagerly.

"I want you to begin to pray to God. Each day and night I want you to pray: 'Lord, show me myself.' Seeing yourself as God sees you is the first step in coming to know Him. Will you promise to do this for me?"

The little kitchen girl eagerly agreed. A new piece of clothing of any kind was something she rarely enjoyed. What he gave her to do sounded interesting and certainly easy. She would begin that very night. So, after all the dishes were washed and the pots scrubbed, the little girl crawled into the hole beneath the stairs that was her "room", lay down on her straw bed and for the first time in her life, prayed to God. "Lord, show me myself," she asked, just as Mr. M'Phail had told her.

The next morning, Hector arose and continued the long trip to Edinburgh. For two weeks, Hector and other leaders discussed important church matters, then at last it was time to head home. Before leaving the city, he stopped in the market to buy a pretty scarf for the little girl as he promised.

Up and up into the Badenoch Mountains went Hector and his pony, until he reached the inn. He was eager to see what had happened to the little girl.

Just as before, Hector gathered the innkeeper's family together for evening devotions. And just as before, the kitchen girl did not join them for devotions. "Where is your kitchen girl? Why doesn't she join us for devotions?" Hector asked.

"Well, sir, she has been of little use to us since the last time you were here," the innkeeper's wife told him. "She has done nothing but sit and cry night and day, and now she is so weak and exhausted she cannot get out of bed. That is where she is now."

"Take me to her," exclaimed Hector, certain of the girl's problem. She led him to the hole under the stairs where he found the poor girl lying on her bed of straw.

"Well, my child, here is the scarf from Edinburgh I

promised you," Hector said to her. "I hope you have kept your promise and said the prayer I taught you."

"I could never take your present. You have already given such a dear gift," the little girl replied. "You taught me a prayer and God has answered it. He has shown me myself and it is a sad sight! How rebellious and selfish I am! I do not live as I should! What should I do?"

Hector rejoiced at the girl's confession! She had had no Bible to read nor a family to help her know God, but God by His Holy Spirit, had been answering her prayer and at work in her heart.

"God has shown her she was a sinner, surely now He will show her He was her Savior!" thought Hector. Then to her he said, "My child, I have good news for you. It is true. You, like all people, have turned away from God and become a lawbreaker. But God sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment for the sins of all who turn and trust in Him," he told her. He forgives all their sins and makes them His people forever."

"I have a new prayer for you to pray now.. Pray: 'Lord, show me Yourself'. He will be as faithful to answer this prayer as He was the first one," he told her. The girl gratefully agreed to begin to pray this new prayer.

Many years passed after Hector's stay in that little inn in the Badedoch Mountains. Hector, the young man on the move, had become Hector the feeble old man at home. No longer could he travel many miles each day to visit others. Now they would have to come to visit him; and so they did. One such visitor traveled by foot many miles to see him: a stately woman bearing a large package. Sir, there's a woman at the door who wishes to see you," announced his servant to him one day.

"Bring her in, by all means," Hector said.

"Good day, sir," greeted the woman. "I am the little girl from the inn in the Badedoch Mountains you cared for long ago," she told him. "You taught me two wonderful prayers and through them, I came to know Jesus as my Savior."

Then, opening the package, she gave Hector a beautiful, hand-woven linen cloth. "Long ago you came to me with a scarf," she reminded him. "Now I have one for you. I wove this long ago, hoping that one day I would get to give it to you. I made this long journey Risolis to give it to you and to tell you myself the wonderful things the Lord used you to do in my life," she told him.

How these words made Hector! Once more, the Lord had used this man of Resolis to bring the light of His forgiveness through Jesus to someone who desperately needed it!

Our Bible Truth is: God Created Us as Perfect Lawkeepers, but We Are All Lawbreakers

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 14:2-3

"The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Nothing long; nothing fancy; just two short, simple prayers were all that little girl prayed. Yet what a great work the Lord did in her heart! It was a work that changed her life forever.

What about you and me? What work is there to do in our hearts? Do we need the Lord to show us ourselves? Do we need the Lord to show us Himself? Let's praise God for being so willing and able to save rebellious lawbreakers like us! Let's pray that He would show us ourselves and show us Himself that we might repent of our sins and trust in Him as Savior.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

After Adam and Eve rebelled against God, they had to work even harder to please God. Only if they had enough good works could they ever be His people again.

Answer: False! They could never have enough good works of their own. Only through the promised Savior (Jesus) could anyone become God's people.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who lived in the hole? Who went to talk to her? Why?

Answer: The little kitchen girl. Hector M'Phail. He wanted to make sure she knew the good news of Jesus.

b. What did she pray? What happened?

Answer: Hector asked her to pray, "Show me myself, then, "Show me Thyself" to God. The Lord used these prayers to help this girl see that she was a sinner, to repent of her sins and trust in Jesus as her Savior.

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

Psalms 14:2-3

"The LORD looks down from ___ on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become ___; there is ___ ___ who does good, not even one."

Answers: heaven; corrupt; no one.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

At the Cross

PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 9,10

Verse 2

Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

Refrain

At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day.

Verse 3

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ the mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin. *Refrain*

Words: Isaac Watts Music: Ralph E. Hudson

Because we are all lawbreakers, we deserve God's eternal punishment. There will never be anything we can do to earn back eternal life with God. But at the cross where Jesus, the perfect law keeper gave up His life as the payment for all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him, that we can find forgiveness and eternal life. By His perfect sacrifice, all of "crimes" and "burdens" can be "rolled away" forever. What amazing love! What grace-- what kindness that we never deserved! That Jesus, the very Son of God, through whom all things were made, would choose to come suffer and die on the cross to save sinful creatures like you and me. All who have Jesus as their Savior do have reason to be happy all the day, every day! There's is eternal life with God!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the God Who Is the Revealer and Forgiver of Sins.

C God, we confess that when You show us ourselves, we see that we are sinners who have rebelled against God. We deserve Your punishment. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You that You don't just doesn't show us our sins, but offer us forgiveness through Jesus, too.

S God, work in our hearts. Show us the sin of our hearts. Show us Yourself. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Looks Down

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 11

The LORD looks down from heaven,
On the sons of man,
To see if there are any who understand,
Any who seek God.
But all have turned aside;
They have together become corrupt,
There is no one who does good,
No, not even one.
Psalm Fourteen, two and three.

Words adapted from Psalm 14:2-3 Constance Dever © 2011

Adam and Eve were created with hearts that sought after God. They were perfect law keepers who were not corrupt and did not turn aside from God. But after they rebelled, they and all their children after them turned aside. Yes, the LORD sees everything and knows everything. He knows what is in each of our hearts. We all have sinful hearts and do sinful things. We have all become corrupt with sin. None of us seek after God on our own. But praise God for sending Jesus to be the Savior of sinners like us! Praise God for sending His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts! God gives us hope! He can do in us what we could never do for ourselves!

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

**God Created Us Perfect Law-Keepers,
But We Are All Lawbreakers**

God created Adam and Eve without sin. They kept God's laws perfectly. They loved Him as they should; and, they loved each other as they should. They pleased God with their "works." That is, they pleased God with how they lived because they loved Him perfectly in their hearts, and they obeyed Him and His good laws perfectly in their lives.

But when Adam and Eve rebelled against God, their hearts and lives became sinful. No longer could they please God with their works, because no longer could they live perfectly. They were spoiled with sin.

Sin didn't stop there. It spread down to all of Adam and Eve's children, too. It even spreads down to us, too. Yes, just like Adam and Eve, we have sinful hearts. We break God's good laws with our thoughts, words, and actions.

God is good and He hates sin. God would not be good if He did not hate it. But, oh, how terrible is God's fair punishment for breaking His laws! It is death: separation from Him and His good ways forever! This is what we all deserve.

Yet, God is so merciful to sinners like us! He sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life here on earth and offer it up as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. Because of Jesus, our sins can be forgiven and we can have eternal life with God!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Psalm 14:2-3

"The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one."

CASE STORY

Luke 18:35-19:11

Our story is: The Case of the Tiny Terror.

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

1. Who was the Tiny Terror? Who was he a terror to? Why?
2. Why could he not be in fellowship with God or God's people? How did this change?

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

In Israel, there was a city many nicknamed "Little Paradise." All year round this city enjoyed warm weather, even when the rest of Israel had snow. Springs watered the land, so that no one was ever thirsty and so crops could grow year round. There were beautiful rose gardens throughout the city, especially in the Royal Gardens of Archaelus, son of Herod the Great, who ruled that part of Israel from his splendid palace there.

But perhaps best of all was the air of Little Paradise. It was filled with the sweet smell of balsam leaves that drifted along the breeze from the large balsam plantations planted there. There were few places in the world where balsam could grow; and no where was it as fine as here at "Little Paradise." Merchants from Egypt to Arabia came to buy balsam here. Many fought and died to win Little Paradise and its balsam trees. They wanted to grow rich from selling the perfume and the healing medicine made from its leaves and sap.

At the time of our story, Little Paradise had fallen under the control of the Romans. There still were plenty of Jews who lived and worked there, but a part of just about everything that was made, bought or sold in Little Paradise went to the Romans in the form of a tax. With all those merchants coming in and out of Little Paradise to buy that priceless balsam perfume and medicine, there was a whole lot of tax money to be collected. Little Paradise was one of three richest tax collection stations in all of Israel.

Tax collecting was hard, thankless work that the Romans would rather not do. The Jews hated the tax collectors for taking their hard earned money and giving it to the Romans. They spit on them. The Jewish elders even allowed the people to break one of the Ten Commandments and lie to the tax collectors about how much they bought and sold! The Romans wanted to get tax money without having the hassles of collecting it, so they got Jews to collect it

for them. "We'll make a deal with you," the Romans would say, "You collect all our tax money and whatever extra you can squeeze out is yours. We don't care what you do to the people to get the money or how much extra you collect for yourself," they said. "Just get the job done. Soon you will be very rich. Doesn't that sound good!?" they said. Most Jews refused, but a few who found all that money irresistible. One such man was a man named Mr. Pure-Righteous--as his parents called him.

If Mr. Pure-Righteous' parents had known what their son would grow up to be, I'm sure they would have never given him such a name. Really, it's not a good name for any person, for all people though created by God to be law-keepers, have all rebelled against God and have become lawbreakers. No one is Pure-Righteous by keeping God's laws.

But as it turned out, this name was to be a particularly bad choice for this child, for he grew up to be one of the greediest, wicked men in all of Little Paradise. A far better name would have been Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous --and so we shall call him--for this man did not just grow up to be a tax collector. He grew up to be an architelones: a chief tax collector! Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous headed up tax collection for Little Paradise as well as for goods passing through that whole part of Israel. As boss of the other tax-collectors, he encouraged them to get all the money they could from people, then he took a big, fat amount for himself before handing the rest over to the Romans.

Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous became very rich from all he had stolen in the name of tax-collecting--and also, very hated. The other Jews spit on him. He wasn't allowed in the synagogue or the Temple to worship. No decent person would allow him to step foot in their house or even eat or talk with him. His wickedness made him "unclean," as they called it--not fit for fellowship with God or with God's people. When he made contact with them or their homes, they became "unclean", too. Only tax collectors and other outcasts would have anything to do with him.

What a terrible life! God created us to be law keepers who know and love Him and each other. Life as a lawbreaker would never bring happiness, as Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous was finding out. Only life lived with God, according to His good ways can. But what could be done now? Surely there was no hope for Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous....or was there?

On one warm, spring afternoon some exciting news spread through the streets of Little Paradise faster than balsam scent in the breeze. "He's coming! He's coming! The Rabbi Jesus is coming!" people exclaimed. "He and his disciples are with a crowd from Galilee headed to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. He's just healed the blind man who begs on the road outside of town! Now they're headed this way!" they said.

This was big news indeed! Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous was just as excited as everyone else...and perhaps more so. Even he had heard about this rabbi who spoke powerfully and did amazing miracles. But perhaps there was something else besides curiosity going on inside of Mr. Unpure- Unrighteous when he heard Jesus was coming. Perhaps there was a glimmer of hope in his heart. Other Jewish teachers would have nothing to do with lawbreakers like himself, but this Jesus welcomed tax collectors and sinners...He forgave sins. He had even made Levi, the tax collector of Capernaum, one of His twelve closest disciples!

People often left their work and lined the streets to cheer the Jews on their way to Passover. An even larger crowd that usual gathered now just to see Jesus. Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous wanted to see Him, too; but he was too short to see over the crowd and too hated to be helped.

The crowd praised God as Jesus, followed by His disciples, other Jews, and the healed blind man entered Little Paradise. But poor, tiny, Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous could see nothing! Suddenly an idea came to him. Running on down the street ahead of the crowd, Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous climbed up a mulberry-fig tree as Jesus was about to pass that way.

The tree was perfect. He, Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous could hide in the leaves from the eyes of Jesus--and everyone else, yet, he could see Jesus perfectly. After all, he knew he was unpure and unrighteous. He was a lawbreaker; and Jesus was a great rabbi. What would Jesus say to him, if He knew what all the people in Little Paradise knew?

But Jesus DID know what they knew and even more! He was the Son of God. He knew everything there was to know. Matter of fact, Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous was one of the very reasons Jesus had come to Little Paradise. Jesus had come to save lawbreakers who trusted in Him as their Savior, forgiving their sins and making them Pure and Righteous in God's eyes, with His own Pure Righteousness.

God had planned that today would be the day of salvation for this poor lawbreaker of a man.

Jesus came to mulberry-fig tree, called Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous by name, then said the most incredible thing: "Hurry and come down from the tree, for I must stay at your house today."

"Jesus knows my name without me even telling Him! He wants to stay with me! He wants fellowship with me! A man so unpure and so unrighteous! Perhaps there is hope for a lawbreaker like me, after all." Joyfully, he climbed down the tree and led Jesus and His disciples to his home.

Mr Unpure and Unrighteous rejoiced, but others grumbled. "Jesus has gone to be the guest of a sinner! He should have stayed at the priest's house, not at the unclean house of a wicked man!" they said.

But Jesus knew they were wrong. It wasn't just Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous who was a lawbreaker and sinner; they all were! He had come to save all who would turn away from their sins and trust in Him as his Savior. Even a man like Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous could be made Pure-Righteous before God by Jesus' Pure Righteousness.

That night Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous shared with Jesus and His disciples his fine food and luxurious home, but surely it was Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous who received the greatest gift that night. Imagine how hope must have grown in his heart when he met Levi, the tax collector from Capernaum who had turned from his wicked ways and become one of Jesus' closest friends! Imagine how wonderful it must have been when Jesus offered him—Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous—forgiveness of sins and salvation through faith in Himself, the Messiah, the Pure-Righteous Son of God!

That very day, Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous turned from his sins and believed in Jesus with joy. His sins were forgiven. At last he lived up to the name his parents had given him. Through Jesus, he was truly Mr. Pure-Righteous now!

The first thing Mr. Pure-Righteous wanted to do was to change the way he treated the people of Little Paradise. He stood up in front of Jesus and the people and said, "Lord, half of everything I have I give to the poor. And to anyone I have wronged, I will give them back four times what I wrongly took from them."

The people were amazed. "Give away half of all he has to the poor! The teachers of the law say don't give away more than one-fifth of what you have. Give back four times

what he took! That's what thieves were supposed to do! Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous really is a changed man!"

This time Jesus agreed with the people of Little Paradise. Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous was a changed man. Just like his great-great-great-grandfather Abraham who believed in the LORD and was counted Pure-Righteous for his faith in Him, now Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous had become Mr. Pure-Righteous through his faith in Jesus. "Today, salvation has come to this house, since this man also a son of Abraham," Jesus told them, "for the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Our Bible Truth is:
God Created Us to Be Perfect Law-Keepers,
But We Are All Lawbreakers

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 14:2-3

"The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Who are you most like? The people of Little Paradise? Do you look at certain other people and think of them as lawbreakers and sinners, but not see that you, too, are a lawbreaker and sinner? The Bible tells us that not one of us is a perfect law keeper as God created us to be. We all deserve God's eternal punishment for our sins. Confess your sins and turn in faith to Jesus as your Savior!

Or perhaps you are more like Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous. You are afraid you are too sinful to be forgiven by God? Confess your sins and trust in Jesus as your Savior, too. He promised that whoever comes to Him, He will never, ever drive away. He can save you, too, no matter what you have done. Let's praise God for sending His Son to seek and save sinful people like you and me. Let's ask God to give us soft hearts that see our own sin and turn and trust Him as our own Savior.

Close in prayer.

NOTE on story: This is the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector from Jericho. In an effort to help the children notice new things about this very familiar story, I opted to use "Little Paradise" as a nickname for how the Jews thought of Jericho; and Mr. Pure-Righteous for Zacchaeus, the meaning of his Hebrew name. Feel free to use the real names instead of these nicknames, if it will better suit your children.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect live here on earth and offer it up as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. Because of Jesus, our sins can be forgiven and we can have eternal life with God!

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Tiny Terror? Who was he a terror to? Why?

Answer: Mr. Unpure-Unrighteous (Zachaeus). He was a terror to the people of Jericho because of the way he collected tax money from them--too much and with cruel methods.

b. Why could he not be in fellowship with God or God's people? How did this change?

Answer: Because of how he chose to live a life of sin and would not turn away from it (repent). Through Jesus, he learned how his sins could be forgiven. At last, he turned away from them and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. He was restored in fellowship with God and His people.

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

Psalms 14:2-3

"The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have ___ they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even ___."

Answers: understand; turned aside; one.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

At the Cross

PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 9,10

Verse 2

Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

Refrain

At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day.

Verse 3

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ the mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin. *Refrain*

Words: Isaac Watts Music: Ralph E. Hudson

Because we are all lawbreakers, we deserve God's eternal punishment. There will never be anything we can do to earn back eternal life with God. But at the cross where Jesus, the perfect law keeper gave up His life as the payment for all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him, that we can find forgiveness and eternal life. By His perfect sacrifice, all of "crimes" and "burdens" can be "rolled away" forever. What amazing love! What grace--what kindness that we never deserved! That Jesus, the very Son of God, through whom all things were made, would choose to come suffer and die on the cross to save sinful creatures like you and me. All who have Jesus as their Savior do have reason to be happy all the day, every day! There's is eternal life with God!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You or being our Savior! You are so merciful to sinful people.

C God, we confess that many times, we are like Zacchaeus. We want to have good things and are willing to harm others to get them. We need a Savior, just like Zacchaeus.

T God, thank You for promising to send a Savior to save all those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior, no matter how sinful they have been.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Change our lives so that we don't just say we believe in Jesus, but we show it in how we turn away from our old ways of sinning, just like Zacchaeus did.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Looks Down

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 11

The LORD looks down from heaven,
On the sons of man,
To see if there are any who understand,
Any who seek God.
But all have turned aside;
They have together become corrupt,
There is no one who does good,
No, not even one.
Psalm Fourteen, two and three.

Words adapted from Psalm 14:2-3 Constance Dever © 2011

Adam and Eve were created with hearts that sought after God. They were perfect law keepers who were not corrupt and did not turn aside from God. But after they rebelled, they and all their children after them turned aside. Yes, the LORD sees everything and knows everything. He knows what is in each of our hearts. We all have sinful hearts and do sinful things. We have all become corrupt with sin. None of us seek after God on our own. But praise God for sending Jesus to be the Savior of sinners like us! Praise God for sending His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts! God gives us hope! He can do in us what we could never do for ourselves!

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" *PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Gave Us His Laws To Convict Us Of Sin, That We Might Be Saved

God made each of us with a heart that tells us what is right and wrong. When we hear God's laws, we know that they are right. When we disobey God's laws, we know that we are doing wrong. We know we are not the perfect law-keepers God created us to be and calls us to be.

God's laws remind us that we deserve God's punishment for our sins, but that's not all God has planned for His laws to do. He has also planned for His laws to show us our sin, that we would turn away from our sins and be saved.

God loves to save sinners! Jesus promised that whoever comes to Him, repenting of their sins and trusting in Him as their Savior, He will never turn away. No matter how bad of a lawbreaker they have been, He will forgive their sins and save them. He will forgive us all of our sins, if we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

CASE STORY

Exodus 20, 24; Leviticus; 2 Chronicles 28-30;

1 Kings 6-7; 2 Kings 16-18; Isaiah 7-9

Our story is called:

The Case of the Colossal Clean-Up.

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

1. Colossal means "really big." Who ordered a really big clean up? What was being thrown away?
2. What did the people of Israel and Judah deserve? What did they receive from the LORD instead? How did they show they were repenting of the sins?

Our story starts about in Jerusalem, about 1000 years before Jesus lived on earth.

From the time David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites, he longed for it to be a city dedicated to the glory of the LORD. David wanted to build a beautiful Temple in Jerusalem for the "Name of the LORD," where all people could come and worship Him. It would be where the LORD's special Presence with His people would dwell—just like it had in the Tabernacle. But this time, it would be a permanent house, not a tent that moved around. Guided by the Holy Spirit, David made the plans for the Temple that his son, King Solomon, would build one day.

It took seven, long years for the Temple to be built; and, oh, how magnificent it was when it was finished! The Temple itself was made of white marble. The sun shone brightly off of the white stone, as if the glory of the LORD shone out from it.

One of the first things you saw as you entered the Temple courtyard was the "Sea"—a huge, bronze tub on a tall base. It was carved with twelve bulls and filled with special water. This was where the priests would wash before entering the Temple. Near it stood the great, bronze altar on which all burnt offerings to the LORD were to be made. Every morning and every night, the priests sacrificed a lamb as a burnt offering on it. This was to be a sign of the people's daily promise live for the LORD. The people brought their own sacrifices to the priests, too. They brought sin offerings for their sins, and fellowship offerings to thank God for His blessings.

Inside the Temple were two special rooms: The Holy Place and The Most Holy Place. The walls were decorated with carvings of cherubim and vines. The Holy Place was lit by a golden lampstand with seven wicks shaped like almond buds. It was to be kept burning at all times, as a

Holy Place was lit by a golden lampstand with seven wicks shaped like almond buds. It was to be kept burning at all times, as a sign of God's constant presence. By its light the priests could see to burn incense and oil on the golden Altar of Incense, every morning and night. As the incense and oil hit the hot coals on the altar, a fragrant cloud filled the Holy Place. This cloud stood for the prayers of the people constantly going up to God. There was also a golden table with twelve loaves of bread, baked fresh each Sabbath. These stood for the twelve tribes of Israel, living in the LORD's presence.

Just beyond the Altar of Incense was a curtain, beautifully woven with cherubim. Hidden behind it was the Most Holy Place. This was the most special part of the Temple. It was here that the golden box called the Ark of the Covenant stood. On the top of the box were two golden cherubim whose wings bent over their backs and met in the middle as they faced each other. Inside the Ark were the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. These were the solemn covenant the LORD and the people of Israel made with each other long ago on Mount Sinai. The LORD promised to take care of them and they promised to keep His laws. Curses and blessings came with these promises. Blessings, if they kept their promises. Curses, if they did not.

There, between the cherubim and over the Law of the Covenant that rested in the Ark, the LORD promised His special presence to dwell, like a throne room into Heaven. Only once a year did anyone get to go inside the Most Holy Place. On that day—called the Day of Atonement—the high priest would bring a special blood offering to sprinkle on the cover of the Ark between the cherubim. This offering the LORD accepted to purify the Most Holy Place of the people's sinfulness, so that His Presence could keep dwelling there among them. After all, the LORD was a holy God. He expected them to be a holy people, too. Any broken law, any sin, even if just an accident, broke fellowship with Him.

But the wonderful thing about the LORD was that He was not only holy, He was merciful, too. He accepted the sacrifices of all who brought them in repentance for their sins and faith in Him as covering for their sin. It was no wonder that people from all twelve tribes of Israel would wait with great expectation outside in the Temple courts for the high priest to return from the Most Holy Place. As he pronounced their sacrifice accepted and their sins

covered, all the people let out such a great roar of joyful praise to the LORD that it seemed to thunder through all of Jerusalem. How wonderful was their God! How merciful He was to sinners who turned to Him in repentance and faith!

I am sorry to say that those days full of praise in Jerusalem did not last very long for the twelve tribes of Israel. After King Solomon died, the twelve tribes split apart and became two separate nations...and bitter enemies. The ten tribes in the north called themselves "Israel." The tribes in the south called themselves "Judah." Israel build a new royal city called Samaria and set up golden calves to worship. Soon the golden calves were not enough. They began to worship Baal and Astarte, the idols of the peoples around them.

Like Israel, Judah often abandoned the worship of the LORD, too. They began to turn away from the LORD and worship idols—especially when Aha was their king. Ahaz closed the Temple and sent away the priests—God's presence was no longer wanted. God's laws lay inside the Ark of the Covenant forgotten. The Israelites rebelled against God and made no sacrifices in repentance and faith that they might be forgiven.

The Israelites had broken their promises to the LORD. Would He just stand by and do nothing? No, He would not! God's promises of blessings for obedience to His covenant were about to change to curses for disobedience! He sent prophets to warn them of His coming punishment. They urged the people to turn back to the LORD, but they refused and kept worshipping their idols.

So God allowed enemy armies to come in and attack first Israel, then Judah. 120,000 soldiers were killed! 200,000 women and children were taken away as captives! Enemies stood ready to destroy them completely. Would this be the end of Israel and Judah? They certainly deserved for it to be!

But this wasn't to be the end, for the LORD is a God of great mercy to His rebellious people. He would be true to His Covenant promises, even when His people were untrue to theirs. So, even in those terribly wicked days of King Ahaz, the LORD made an amazing promise of mercy. One day He would send the Messiah—a Savior. He would be born of a woman who had no husband. His father would be no man, but God, Himself! And the baby would be none other than "Immanuel", God with Us. Yes! God, Himself! God's Son,

come to earth! This Messiah would come and save His people from their sins, once and for all. And we know His name, don't we? It's Jesus!

But the LORD didn't wait until the day of Immanuel to have mercy on Judah. Even right then, while King Ahaz was still on the throne, the LORD was quietly at work in the hearts of some. He helped them to keep remember the Covenant they made with Him. He showed them their sins and helped them repent and worship Him. They waited for better days when King Ahaz would be gone and once more they could restore the worship of the LORD to Judah. Among those waiting was none other than King Ahaz' son, Prince Hezekiah.

As soon as Ahaz died, King Hezekiah set to undo his father's wickedness. He flung open the Temple's doors and called a meeting for all the Levites and priests.

"Listen to me, priests and Levites! Make yourselves and the Temple clean again! It's time to worship the LORD again! Our fathers were unfaithful to Him. That's why our enemies have attacked us. But we are going to repent and turn back to the LORD. We are going to make a new covenant with Him," Hezekiah said.

The Levite leaders set right to work. They dumped all the idols in the trash dump down in the Kidron Valley, outside of town and put all the beautiful things used to worship the LORD back in place. It was time to worship the LORD again!

King Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem gathered together with the priests, offering up thousands of offerings. They confessed their sins and promised to serve and love the LORD. In repentance and faith were turning back to worship Him. They sang the beautiful psalms that David had written for them to sing in the Temple, complete with cymbals, harps, lyres and trumpets. How great was rejoicing that day! Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly.

Then King Hezekiah sent messengers throughout all of Judah and Israel: "Come, join us in Jerusalem for Passover! Turn away from your idols! Turn back to the LORD! He will forgive you! He will turn away your enemies, for God is gracious and compassionate," he urged them.

Some of the people refused to repent. But many others were convicted of their sins and set out for Jerusalem. They wanted to turn back to the LORD. What a celebration

it was when they gathered together! For the first time in hundreds of years, people from the twelve tribes joined together to worship the LORD. They offered up Passover lambs in repentance and faith. King Hezekiah, himself, prayed to the LORD to accept their sacrifices and have mercy upon them. The LORD heard his prayer and forgave them. And the people celebrated for two weeks straight!

Our Bible Truth is:

**God Gave Us His Laws to Convict Us of Sin,
That We Might Be Saved**

Our Bible Verse is: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

How very different those days of Temple sacrifices and idol worship may seem from our day! Jesus, the Messiah, Immanuel, has come and offered Himself as the final sacrifice for the sins of all who by repentance and faith turn to Him as Savior. There is no need for the blood of animal sacrifices now. And perhaps in our part

And perhaps in our part of the world we see very few idols. But nonetheless, there are still some things that are very much like those days long ago. The hearts of people are just as stubborn and rebellious now as they were then. People still do not want to hear that they are lawbreakers deserving God's punishment. They resist confessing their sins and turning in repentance and faith to Jesus as Savior. If we are honest with ourselves, we know that all of our hearts are stubborn and rebellious, too. Let's praise God for His work then and now in the rebellious, hard hearts of people. Let's ask Him to soften the hearts of people in our world today that many would confess their sins and by repentance and faith, to trust in Jesus as their Savior. Let's ask Him to do that in our hearts, too.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

It's not our fault that we disobey God. No one has told us what His laws are.

Answer: False! Not only have many of us been taught God's laws, but even in our hearts, God has put a sense of right and wrong. There is no one on earth without excuse for disobeying God.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Colossal means "really big." Who ordered a really big clean up? What was being thrown away?

Answer: King Hezekiah ordered the Temple be cleaned of all the idols, then all the beautiful things used to worship the LORD put back in their proper places.

b. What did the people of Israel and Judah deserve? What did they receive from the LORD instead? How did they show they were repenting of the sins?

Answer: They deserved nothing but his punishment for choosing to rebel against Him, over and over. They did receive some of His punishment, but lots of His mercy, too. He promised to send them a Savior; and, He accepted their sacrifices when they restored the Temple. They showed their repentance by getting rid of the idols and by once more coming to worship Him at the Temple.

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

Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the ___ while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his ___ and the evil man his thoughts. Let him ___ to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our ___, for He will freely pardon."

Answers: LORD; way; turn; God.

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

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 12

Verse 1

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.

Words: Edwin Hatch; Music: Robert Jackson

We are all sinners. We were made to love and obey God, but we have all turned away from that most wonderful of lives. Only God can change us and He can, by His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nicknamed the "Breath of God." Our breath fills our body with the air that it needs to live. The Holy Spirit fills God's people with Himself so that they can know and love God and have His eternal life. God will send His Holy Spirit to work this way in us when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This song is a prayer asking Him to do this.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the one true God, alone worthy of our worship.

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!

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.

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.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Seek the LORD

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 13

Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call on Him while He is near,
Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call on Him while He is near,
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the evil man his thought,
Let him turn, turn to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him,
He will have mercy on him.
Isaiah Fifty-five, six and seven.

Words adapted from Isaiah 55:6-7 Constance Dever © 2011

This verse tells 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.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Gave Us His Laws To Convict Us Of Sin, That We Might Be Saved

God made each of us with a heart that tells us what is right and wrong. When we hear God's laws, we know that they are right. When we disobey God's laws, we know that we are doing wrong. We know we are not the perfect law-keepers God created us to be and calls us to be.

God's laws remind us that we deserve God's punishment for our sins, but that's not all God has planned for His laws to do. He has also planned for His laws to show us our sin, that we would turn away from our sins and be saved.

God loves to save sinners! Jesus promised that whoever comes to Him, repenting of their sins and trusting in Him as their Savior, He will never turn away. No matter how bad of a lawbreaker they have been, He will forgive their sins and save them. He will forgive us all of our sins, if we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

CASE STORY

*adapted from Religious Stories for Young and Old
by Joel Beeke*

Our story is called:

The Case of the Robber's Riches.

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

1. What riches did the robbers steal?
2. Which robber found another, far greater kind of riches? How did he receive these?

This story takes place in the late 1700's, in one of the dark, hidden clefts in the wild, wooded hills of the beautiful Schwraswald (Black Forest) of Germany.

The spot certainly was a strange one for an auction. There was no auction hall; no great crowd of respectable people to bid for the beautiful items for sale. No. This auction took place at midnight in a place hidden among the dark-barked pine trees that gave the Black Forest its name.

The bidders gathered together under torchlight, even armed with knives and other weapons for protection! Who would come to such a place for an auction, you might wonder? Robbers, that's who. The very same robbers who earlier that evening had stolen the wagon of wealthy merchants, filled with all kinds of riches. Usually the robbers would sell their stolen loot in a nearby town. But tonight's catch was so huge that they felt sure that someone would get suspicious and turn them over to the sheriff if they sold any of it close by. So they decided to auction off their goods among themselves, then spread out and each sell their own portion all across the country.

One of the bandits stood in front of them, acting as auctioneer. Costly clothes and many other things were offered for sale, while a bottle of beer was passed round. Item after item was sold to the lucky robber who was able out bid his fellow thieves.

Then as almost a joke, the auctioneer held up a New Testament as the next article up for bid. "What will you give me this book, mates? I'm sure there are plenty of you here who need it!" the bandit began. The crowd laughed, clapped and cheered as the man said all sorts of bad things about God's Word.

"What? No bids, men? Why not? Surely someone here wants a fine book like this," the auctioneer sneered.

"Read us a chapter, first!" someone joked from the crowd. "We need to hear what's in it so we can decide how

much it's really worth."

Thinking this would be worth some good laughs, the other robbers urged the auctioneer on with cheers and applause. "Yes, yes, read us some! Read us some!" they yelled.

Encouraged by their applause, the auctioneer agreed. He opened the New Testament and began to read from it in a mocking voice, to the great amusement of the listeners. How they enjoyed making fun of God's Word! They were certain there was no place in their lives for anything God's Word said! That book told them they had all broken God's laws and they needed to repent of their sins or face His eternal punishment. They laughed at what the robber read. They didn't care what the New Testament said about God, His good laws or even about themselves. Its words were worth a good laugh; that was all. They would live however they pleased.

But in all their joking the robbers failed to notice the oldest thief was not joining in the fun. This was very strange, for usually he was the boldest leader in all their pranks and robbings. But there he was, sitting very quiet and deep in thought, his folded hands resting on his knees. What could this mean?

The reason was a very simple one. The chapter which the auctioneer had chosen to read was the very the same passage his godly father read to him at family worship time thirty years earlier. It was the last words he heard before running away from home to keep from being arrested by the police for a crime he had committed.

In all those years, he had never returned home, but he could still remember it all, as if it was just yesterday. There they were, all seated around the breakfast table, his father, with open Bible on the table, reading the same chapter which the auctioneer was reciting just now to sneers and jeers. There was his dear mother listening eagerly to the Word of God, as were his brothers and sisters. He saw himself, too, and remembered what was in his cold, stubborn heart that morning as he had listened to his father read.

"What place in my life is there for words like these?" he had thought to himself. "I don't care about God or His laws; I will live as I please!"

When he ran away from home that day, he ran away from God and His Word, too. Since that morning, he had never offered a prayer. He had pushed God out of his life,

completely.

But now that very same Word of God, so completely rejected before, was suddenly doing a mighty and miraculous work in this lost man's spirit. God's Holy Spirit began to work in his heart as he heard this Bible passage again. Soon other of the verses his father and mother taught him came to mind. God was giving this old man the gift of faith!

Caught up in all these wonderful memories, the robber chief forgot all that was taking place around him. He was jolted back to the present with a rough slap on the shoulder from the hand of his nearest companion. "Now, old dreamer, why are you not bidding for that book?" his friend joked. "You know you need it worse than anybody else, for you are the biggest sinner among us."

"Yes, that I am," the man said sadly. "Give me that book, auctioneer," he shouted. "I'll pay the full price for it!" he said thrusting the agreed amount of coins into the auctioneer's hands.

The auction continued that night until all the loot was sold. In the morning the robbers left to go one by one to distant villages to try to sell their goods, but the old robber didn't leave with them. Instead, he chose a hidden spot among the rocks to read God's Word and think. As he read, he was overwhelmed with the guilt of all the sinful things he had done.

"What a terrible sinner I have been!" he cried. "I chose to make no place in my life for God and His good laws, all these years. I have lived whatever sinful way pleased me. But I wonder, is it too late for me now? Is there anyway for someone like me to be forgiven by God after all I have done?" he wondered.

There was only one way to find the answer to that question: in God's Word. So on and on the old robber read, seeking for some comfort or hope or guidance. At last, the LORD answered his prayer as he read how Jesus had come to seek and save sinners, even terrible sinners like himself. What great news this was! Wasting not another moment, the old robbers repented of his sins and trusted in Jesus as His Savior. God forgave him. He was saved!

This old man's repentance started with a prayer, but it didn't end there. Repentance means turning away from your sinful life and turning to live a new life--one that aims to please God. This man knew he would have to make a lot of changes if he was really to be one of God's people. And

so he did! He decided to leave the wicked men who had been his companions and to stop robbing. At daybreak he would seek out the pastor of the nearest village and tell him all that had happened. Then, he would turn himself in to the sheriff to receive the punishment he deserved for all the robberies.

So when morning came, the old robber left his hiding place and headed straight for a nearby village. Going to the pastor's house, he told him how he had come to repent of his sins and turn to Christ to seek salvation as a lost sinner. The pastor listened to the man's story and rejoiced to see his true repentance and faith. Yes, Jesus had died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for all who turn and trust in Him. As a true believer in Jesus, even all of the many sins of this old robber had been forgiven by God, once and for all.

Together the pastor and the old man walked down to the village jail to turn himself in. As he entered the jail building, who should he see there behind bars, but all of his companions! Last night while he had been in his hiding place crying out to God for mercy, they had all been caught and arrested. He was the only one to get away!

The old man told the sheriff everything: how he had been a robber for thirty years and had helped rob the merchants with the rest of the men already behind bars. But he also told him of the change that God had brought in his heart. "God in His mercy has used His good Law to convict me of my sins and save me--yes, even me! I am a new man because of Jesus. That is why I have come to turn myself in."

The sheriff was shocked. "Your companions will probably be put to death for their crimes, but it may be that the archduke will show you mercy because you turned yourself in and made this confession," the sheriff told him. "I will do what I can to help you."

Trial day came. Just as the sheriff predicted. All of other robbers were sentenced to death, but the old man was treated with mercy. He was sentenced to serve ten years in prison, but was released at the end of seven, because of his good behavior. He went to live a good life in the service of a kind, rich man.

The old robber proved to be a true follower of Jesus Christ through the rest of his life. Never did he turn back to his old ways. He was a lasting blessing in his master's household to the very end. And on the day he died, he

used his very last breath to bless His Savior who had come to seek and save sinners, even terrible sinners like him.

Our Bible Truth is:
God Gave Us His Laws to Convict Us of Sin That We Might Be Saved

Our Bible Verse is: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

What about you and me? Many of us have heard about God and His good laws from the time we were very small, just like that robber. And we have the same choice he had: to know it, but find no place for to work in our hearts; or, to ask the Holy Spirit to use it to convict us of our sins and turn us in repentance and faith to Jesus. Let's praise God for letting us know Him and His good laws. Let's ask Him to use it to work in our hearts that we trust Him as our Savior and grow to love Him and live for Him more and more each day.

<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God's laws teach us how God wants us to live. They remind us that we are all law-breakers, who do not keep His laws. But, they also point us to Jesus, and the mercy God can show us through Him. <i>Answer: True!</i></p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. What riches did the robbers steal? Answer: They robbed merchants of whatever they carried in their wagons.</p> <p>b. Which robber found another, far greater kind of riches? How did he receive these? Answer: An old-man robber found salvation through Jesus. When he heard God's Word read, the Holy Spirit worked in his heart. He was convicted of his sins, turned from them and trusted in Jesus as his Savior.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:6-7 " ___ the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is ___. Let the wicked forsake his way and the ___ man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have ___ on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon." Answers: Seek; near; evil; mercy.</p>	<p>Breathe on Me, Breath of God <i>PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 12</i></p> <p>Verse 1 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life anew, That I may love what Thou dost love, And do what Thou wouldst do.</p> <p>Words: Edwin Hatch; Music: Robert Jackson</p> <p>We are all sinners. We were made to love and obey God, but we have all turned away from that most wonderful of lives. Only God can change us and He can, by His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nicknamed the "Breath of God." Our breath fills our body with the air that it needs to live. The Holy Spirit fills God's people with Himself so that they can know and love God and have His eternal life. God will send His Holy Spirit to work this way in us when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This song is a prayer asking Him to do this.</p>
<p align="center">AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE VERSE SONG</p>
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being so merciful to sinful people. We praise You for being the giver of Your powerful Word, the Bible.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times, like the man in our story, we hear and know Your Word, the Bible, but we would rather do what we want to do. We too often choose to reject You and Your good ways. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for being so full of compassion and mercy that You would still forgive and accept people who have chosen to deliberately ignore and rebel against You and Your good laws. Thank You for using Your Word, including Your laws, not just to show us that we are sinners, but to convict us of our sins that we might turn to You and be saved.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts. Help us to know and love You and Your good Word. Use Your Word to convict us of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.</p>	<p>Seek the LORD <i>PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 13</i></p> <p>Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call on Him while He is near, Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call on Him while He is near, Let the wicked forsake his way, And the evil man his thought, Let him turn, turn to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him, He will have mercy on him. Isaiah Fifty-five, six and seven.</p> <p>Words adapted from Isaiah 55:6-7 Constance Dever © 2011</p> <p>This verse tells 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.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" *PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Gave Us His Laws To Convict Us Of Sin, That We Might Be Saved

God made each of us with a heart that tells us what is right and wrong. When we hear God's laws, we know that they are right. When we disobey God's laws, we know that we are doing wrong. We know we are not the perfect law-keepers God created us to be and calls us to be.

God's laws remind us that we deserve God's punishment for our sins, but that's not all God has planned for His laws to do. He has also planned for His laws to show us our sin, that we would turn away from our sins and be saved.

God loves to save sinners! Jesus promised that whoever comes to Him, repenting of their sins and trusting in Him as their Savior, He will never turn away. No matter how bad of a lawbreaker they have been, He will forgive their sins and save them. He will forgive us all of our sins, if we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

CASE STORY

Matthew 3,4,5,14; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 3,2

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

1. A convict is someone who has been arrested and put in jail. Who was the convict? Why was he in jail?
2. Who did he hope to convict of his sins that he might repent? Did this person repent?

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

Away from village and city. Away from family, friends and their everyday lives, people were going. Out into the hot, dry wilderness of Judea. Why? To listen to the words of a wild-looking man named John, living out there near the Jordan River. John looked like Prophet Elijah, with his long, uncut hair and his camel-hair sackcloth clothes. He sounded like Prophet Elijah, too, as he gave his urgent message: "Repent for the kingdom of God is near!"

The people listened and wondered: "Could the Messiah be coming at last? Was John the 'voice crying in the wilderness' to prepare the way for the LORD, the Messiah?" Many believed he was. So crowds of people from Judea, Jordan and Jerusalem journeyed out into the wilderness to see and to listen.

But John's message wasn't a message of see and listen. It was a message of change. People needed to repent—to turn away in their hearts from their love of sin, and to turn away in their lives from the sinful ways they lived. This is what John was urging all to do.

But who **would** repent and believe? Many people did. They confessed their sins and were baptized by John there in the Jordan River. Their baptism was a sign of their repentance and their looking forward in faith to the forgiveness of sins God would give through the coming Messiah. Even people known as especially bad sinners came to be baptized, too. People like the Jewish tax collectors who had taken too much money from people. People like the Jewish soldiers who did cruel things to help the tax collectors come, too. They all repented, believed and were baptized.

But the Pharisees and Sadducees—the Jewish religious leaders—were a different matter. They refused to repent and believe: "Why should we, of all people, repent? We fast twice a week; we keep all of God's laws and even all the little rules that the Jewish teachers have made up. We

make our sacrifices; we give a tenth of everything we have—even our spices. We are ready for the Messiah already,” they thought. “Besides, God will save all the Jews, just because they are the sons and daughters of Abraham. Only really sinful people, like those tax collectors and soldiers, need to repent. Not us!” they said. “John is wrong. He certainly is NOT the prophet preparing the way for the Messiah!” they insisted.

But John knew the truth. All people are sinners who need God’s forgiveness. It didn’t matter who you were. How sad it was that the Pharisees and Sadducees believed if all Israel repented for a day, then Messiah would come. Yet they were the ones unwilling to repent themselves!

“You think you are right with God already, but your lives don’t show it,” John said to them. “No one is saved just because they come from Abraham’s family. I baptize people with water for repentance, to prepare them for the Messiah. After me He will come. He is more powerful than I—whose sandals I’m not even fit to carry! And He will baptize people with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He will bring eternal life to those who repent and believe, but God’s judgment on those who will not. This will be what happens to you, if you don’t repent of your sins,” John warned then. Offended and furious, the Pharisees and Sadducees went to report what John was saying to the other leaders.

Then one day, John announced the Messiah had come! “Here He is, Jesus, the one God will use to take away the sins of the world!” Now there was more reason to get rid of John. Who was he to announce Jesus as the Messiah! They would must do something now!

But the Pharisees and Sadducees didn’t have to. King Herod, sitting in his luxurious palace, not far to the east of the Jordan River. Would take care of John instead. His spies reported to him about John: “You should see the crowds of people coming to hear him and be baptized!,” his spies told him. “The Pharisees and Sadducees hate John, but the common people, tax collectors and soldiers are repenting and being baptized. They love him,” they told Herod.

“You better watch John,” the spies warned. “He may become a powerful enemy. He says the Messiah is coming. He talks against you. He says your marriage to Herodias, your brother’s wife, is wrong. The people are listening. Be careful or he will turn them against you.”

Queen Herodias was furious when she heard this! It was

true. She had left her husband to be wife to the powerful King Herod. And as a daughter of the High Priest, Herodias knew God’s laws and that she had broken them. But she would not repent. She wanted John dead. “Silence that man!” she ordered.

Herod agreed, but he had to be careful. The people loved John. He must silence John without killing him to keep them happy. Herod posted guards and waited until John crossed the Jordan River into his territory. When he did, they seized him and put him in Herod’s dungeon there at Machaerus.

Even with John out of the way, Herod couldn’t stop thinking about him. “What is John like? I have to see him and hear him, myself,” Herod thought. So John be brought before him and Herod allowed him to speak: “I am the voice crying out in the wilderness,” John told him. “Prepare yourselves for the way of the LORD. The Kingdom of God is near. The Messiah is coming. Repent! You must not have Herodias, your brother’s wife!”

Herod was fascinated by John, but his words disturbed him. Him, repent?! He was half-Jew. He knew God’s laws and how he had broken them. Now God was graciously using John to offer Herod salvation.

Would Herod repent and believe in the coming Messiah? No, he would not! Herodias certainly wouldn’t either! She looked for a chance get rid of John for good.

At last it came. Herod threw a big party to celebrate the day he was crowned tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. High officials, military commanders and other important men came. As they climbed the steep cliff and entered the castle grounds, his guests could not help but be impressed with Machaerus. It looked out onto the rugged Judean wilderness and the lovely hills of Hebron from its 3800-foot perch above the Dead Sea. Herod had huge storehouses for grain and food; cisterns full of gallons of water; and an arsenal filled with every weapon imaginable. It was all so amazing!

In the banquet hall, dinner went on for hours as dish after dish of fine food was served. Then came the entertainment. Salome, Herodias’ daughter, pleased them with her splendid dancing. Round and round, faster and faster, she leapt and twirled to the beat of the music, delighting everyone with her beauty and grace.

No one was more pleased with Salome’s dancing than Herod, himself. In front of all his guests he stood up and

said to her: "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you., up to half my kingdom," he promised.

"What shall I ask for?" Salome asked her mother.

At last the moment Herodias had waited for: "Ask for the head of John the Baptist," she coldly answered.

Salome went to the king and said: "Give me the head of John the Baptist...on a platter."

The king was so upset. What was he to do? He had made a promise to her before these important men! To refuse her might cause these men to distrust him. Herod wanted them to know he was a man of his promises. Oh, how Herodias had trapped her husband! Would he have John put to death, and anger the people who loved John? Or, would he save John's life and lose the respect of these men? And what about himself? Would Herod really add killing John to the long list of wicked things he had done already? Or, would he at last repent and prepare his heart for the Messiah whom John said was coming?

Herod gave into the pressure, brushing aside any stirring in his heart he answered, "You heard the girl. Send the executioner to the dungeon. Bring her John's head." The executioner did as he was told. John's head was brought in and given to Salome...then she gave it to her mother.

John the Baptist died that night in Machaerus, but that did not stop the plans of God. All that John had promised came true. The Messiah, Jesus, had come and He was bringing the Kingdom of God. Reports began to stream in to Herod from all over Galilee about Jesus. What amazing things he said and did! The the people who had repented of their sins and by faith prepared their hearts for salvation through Jesus, joyfully received Jesus and were saved.

But the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and Herod who had rejected John, rejected Jesus, too. The Pharisees and Sadducees had Jesus' arrested. Then on the very morning of Jesus' death, they had Him brought before Herod for questioning. Herod had been as curious about Jesus as he had been about John. Here was the Messiah standing right before him, would he seek the salvation John had promised Jesus would bring? No, he would not. He would not be convicted of his sins or repent of them. He would not believe in Jesus. He and his soldiers dressed Jesus in a purple robe and mocked Him; then sent Him back to be condemned to die. Once more God had shown Herod mercy, but once more he chose to keep his wicked ways with his wicked wife. What a sad end for King Herod!

Our Bible Truth is: God Gave Us His Laws to Convict Us of Sin That We Might Be Saved

Our Bible Verse is: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

How merciful God had been to Herod! How many times He urged Herod to repent and prepare his heart for the salvation that was to come through the Messiah. Yet every single time, Herod refused to repent. To the day he died--as far as we know--Herod never repented of his sins and believed in Jesus.

What about you and me? Are we shocked that Herod never repented of his sins? We shouldn't be. All of us, like Herod are lawbreakers with rebellious hearts. Too many times, we would rather keep our sinful, selfish ways rather than be convicted of our sins and turn to God. Let's praise God for His mercy shown to all of us, sinners. Let's praise Him for using His laws to convict us of our sins. Let's ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and the hearts of others that we all might repent, believe in Jesus, and be saved.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 No matter how bad of a lawbreaker they have been, He will forgive their sins and save them. He will forgive us all of our sins, if we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.
 Answer: True. How merciful is the LORD!

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. A convict is someone who has been arrested and put in jail. Who was the convict? Why was he in jail?
 Answer: John (the Baptist). Herod and his wife didn't like that he said that they were sinners for getting married. (She had been Herod's brother's wife first.)

2. Who did he hope to convict of his sins that he might repent? Did this person repent?
 Answer: Herod. No, he did not.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
Isaiah 55:6-7
 "Seek the LORD while He may be ___; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked ___ his way and the evil man his ____. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely ___"
 Answers: Found; forsake; thoughts; pardon.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Breathe on Me, Breath of God
PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 12

Verse 1
 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
 Fill me with life anew,
 That I may love what Thou dost love,
 And do what Thou wouldst do.

Words: Edwin Hatch; Music: Robert Jackson

We are all sinners. We were made to love and obey God, but we have all turned away from that most wonderful of lives. Only God can change us and He can, by His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nicknamed the "Breath of God." Our breath fills our body with the air that it needs to live. The Holy Spirit fills God's people with Himself so that they can know and love God and have His eternal life. God will send His Holy Spirit to work this way in us when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This song is a prayer asking Him to do this.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being holy and yet so merciful! You call us all to repent of our sins that we might be saved through Jesus!

C God, we confess that we are sinners, like the people who heard John the Baptist's message. We also need to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

T God, we thank You for not leaving sinful people like us in our sins, but providing a way of salvation as Your free gift through Jesus.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to live faithful lives, like John the Baptist--faithful to You, all the way to the day we die!

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Seek the LORD
PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 13

Seek the LORD while He may be found,
 Call on Him while He is near,
 Seek the LORD while He may be found,
 Call on Him while He is near,
 Let the wicked forsake his way,
 And the evil man his thought,
 Let him turn, turn to the LORD,
 And He will have mercy on him,
 He will have mercy on him.
 Isaiah Fifty-five, six and seven.

Words adapted from Isaiah 55:6-7 Constance Dever © 2011

This verse tells 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.

CASE STORY

Exodus 25-31, 35-40 Leviticus, Numbers

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

Jesus Kept God's Law Perfectly,

So by His Grace He Could Save God's People

From the time Adam and Eve became lawbreakers, people have offered sacrifices for their sins.

God's laws tell us there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. God commanded the Israelites to offer up the blood of animals when they sinned, as a sign of their desire to turn from their sins and trust in Him to save them. God received their offerings, given in repentance and faith, and allowed them to remain in fellowship with Him.

But the blood of animals could never take away the sins of a human. Only the blood of a human who lived God's laws perfectly and offered up his life in the sinner's place could do that. God, in His mercy, did just this. He sent His Son Jesus to take on human flesh and be that perfect sacrifice for sins.

Jesus was fully God and fully human. He was perfect; He was not born with a sinful heart like us. Jesus kept all of God's laws. He loved God and others perfectly. He fulfilled all of God's Law with His life. He offered up His life on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for God's people's sins. He took upon Himself the punishment they deserved that they might be forgiven their sins, once and for all. On the third day, God raised Jesus, showing that the power of sin and death had indeed been broken by His perfect sacrifice.

None of us will ever be able to earn salvation with a perfectly lived life, but each of us can have salvation through God's grace—His undeserved gift of salvation to sinners—if we come to Him in repentance and faith in Jesus.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: 1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

Our story is called:

The Case of the Torn Curtain.

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

1. What was behind this special curtain? Who got to go behind it to do what?
2. Who tore this curtain? What did it mean?

This story takes place in Old Testament times, at Mt. Sinai, about 140 years before Jesus lived on earth.

It was New Year's Day and the people of Israel were celebrating! After months of hard work, all the parts to the Tabernacle were finished! Moses gathered all the people to watch this special tent go up. First Moses draped the huge sheet of beautiful, handmade fabric over the gold-covered wooden frame that made up the Tabernacle's walls and roof. How exquisite was the fabric, woven out of finely twisted linen and embroidered with mighty cherubim in blue, scarlet and purple! Then Moses covered up the beautiful fabric with protective layers of goat's hair, rams' skin dyed blood red, and finally the waterproof hides of sea cows. The Tabernacle was up! Now it was time to fill it with all the special things the LORD had commanded them to make.

First, there was the golden Ark of the Covenant, containing the covenant that the LORD had made with the Israelites. Moses carried it into the tent and set it in place in the very back. Then he put up a curtain woven with beautiful cherubim across the tent to separate the space where the Ark was from the rest of the tent. This tiny space was called the Most Holy Place. There, between the two golden cherubim that bent over the top of the Ark's cover, would the LORD's presence dwell especially with His people. Only the high priest would be allowed in there, and he only once a year with a special blood sacrifice. The LORD was holy; His people were sinful lawbreakers. His hatred of sin would break out in judgment against their sinfulness and they would die, if He did not stay separate from them. So He did. His special presence would dwell with them, but only from behind the curtain.

After putting up the shielding curtain, Moses filled the rest of the tent—called the Holy Place—with other things the LORD had them make. There was the golden Table with the twelve, freshly baked loaves of the Bread of Presence (one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel). There was the golden Lampstand with its seven almond-bud-shaped

lamps which must always stay lit; and, the golden Altar of Incense which would burn incense and oil as the priests prayed for the people.

Then Moses covered the entrance to the Holy Place with another curtain woven with cherubim. It must be shielded from the people, too. Now only the priests would be allowed to go in. The LORD was holy; His people were sinful lawbreakers. His hatred of sin would break out in judgment against their sinfulness and they would die, if He did not stay separate from them. His special presence would dwell with them, but only through priests, from behind the curtain.

There was still more to be done. Moses set up the two things that stood outside of the Tent. He placed the Altar of Burnt Offering near the entrance to the Tabernacle and offered burnt offerings and grain offerings on it, just as the LORD commanded him. Then he placed the Bronze Basin with special water for the priests and Moses to wash their hands and feet in before entering the tent or approaching the Altar of Burnt Offerings. Last of all, Moses set up the courtyard around the Tabernacle and the Altar. He put up a curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. Even the courtyard must be shielded. The people could come in the courtyard, but only according to certain rules the LORD gave them. His special presence would dwell with them, but according to certain rules, through priests and from behind the curtain.

At last the tabernacle was ready. It was time for the LORD's presence to dwell there among them. The people watched amazed as the cloud of God's Shekinah glory—his visible Presence— covered the Tent of Meeting and filled the Tabernacle. Not even Moses could enter the tent because the cloud had settled upon it and the glory of the LORD filled it. God's presence had really come to dwell among His people in a special way—but only, always, according to certain rules, through priests and from behind the curtain.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Prepare the Tabernacle, the priests and the people so that they can worship Me and fellowship with Me. Make sure they prepare exactly as I tell them to. I am a holy God. My hatred of sin will break out in judgment against their sinfulness if they do not," He warned. Moses listened carefully to the LORD's instructions. There was much to be done! There were special washings in the Bronze Basin for the priests. Then, special clothes to wear. White linen for the priests. An special hat, blue robe

and vest (called an ephod) with twelve beautiful jewels in it for Aaron, the high priest—one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were special sacrifices for the sins of the priests, too, so that they could enter the Tabernacle without God's hatred of sin judging them. The LORD accepted these sacrifices, given in repentance and faith, and counted the priests as acceptable in His holy sight. Now they were ready to make offerings to Him for the people.

When Moses had done everything the LORD commanded, the LORD began to speak to Aaron. "Now you and your sons are ordained as priests," the LORD told him. "In seven days, gather all the people together again right here at the entrance to the Tabernacle. On that day, you will offer sacrifices to dedicate the people to Me and I will appear to all of them. But, you must do exactly what I tell you to do if the people are to worship Me and have fellowship with Me from behind the curtain."

Seven days came and went. All the people gathered together at the entrance to the Tabernacle. Once more sacrifices needed to be made. Sacrifices for the sins of the priests and for the sins of the people, too. Bulls, rams, goats, grain and olive oil were laid on the Altar as offerings to the LORD, exactly as He told them to.

Then Moses and Aaron went into the Holy Place to meet with the LORD, to ask Him to accept the sacrifices of the people and fulfill His promise to appear to the people. When they finished praying, they came out and Aaron, the high priest faced the people and blessed them something like this: "May the LORD bless you and keep; May the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; The LORD [accept you] and give you peace."

As soon as Aaron finished speaking, the LORD answered his prayer of blessing for the people, for immediately glory of the LORD appeared in dazzling brilliance to all the people. Before their very eyes, blazing fire came out from the LORD's Presence and consumed the offering on the altar in one big blast! When the people saw it, they shouted for joy. The LORD had accepted their sacrifices, given in repentance and faith. They fell flat, face down on the ground and worshiped Him. He was the holy God; they were sinful lawbreakers. And yet, the LORD had made a way for them to worship Him and be in fellowship with Him. And on this very special day, had even shown a little of His splendid, glorious presence to them that was usually

The bulls, rams, oxen and goats sacrificed for the priests and the people that day were the first of thousands and thousands of animals offered to the LORD over the years. But, no matter how many animals were offered it was never enough to pay for the people's sins and never enough to take away the curtain that stood between the holy God and His sinful people. No. There was only one sacrifice that could do that: the sacrifice of a perfect life given up in place of sinful people. There was no one on earth who could do this, but there was someone in heaven! God, Himself!

So God the Father sent His Son, Jesus into the world. He was human like all other people, yet He was no sinful lawbreaker. He lived a perfect life. He could be the sacrifice that was needed; and that's just what He chose to do. He offered up His lifeblood on the cross to His Father as the perfect substitute sacrifice for sinful people. God the Father poured out all of His wrath onto Jesus for God's people's sins until Jesus had paid for every last one. And because He was fully God as well as fully human, there was no end to the power of His blood. His perfect blood was enough not just to save one of God's people, but ALL of God's people-- all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as Savior.

And you know, the most amazing thing happened when Jesus died on the cross that Friday, two thousand years ago. Right when Jesus finished bearing all of God's people's sins, He cried out, "It is finished!" and died. And at that very moment, the curtain that separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place was ripped in two by unseen hands. Why? Because no longer was the curtain needed to protect God's people from God's wrath against their sins. No longer could they only have fellowship with Him from behind the curtain through priests. He was still the holy God; and they were still sinful lawbreakers. But now Jesus had completely satisfied the holy wrath of God against His people's sin. They could have close fellowship with God because of what He had freely done for them.

The sins of God's people were now completely paid for by Jesus. Death could no longer hold Him in the grave! Jesus rose from the dead and went up to heaven to reign and to send the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of God's people. No longer would there be fellowship from behind the curtain. Now it would be fellowship from inside the heart, and one day even face to face with God forever.

**Our Bible Truth is: Jesus Kept God's Laws Perfectly,
So by His Grace He Could Save God's People**

Our Bible Verse is: 1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

Yes, as wonderful as the fellowship of God's Holy Spirit in their hearts, God's people look forward most of all to the day when they will see Him face to face. When they die, their spirits go to be with Him in heaven. Then on the wonderful day when Jesus comes back, He will give them all wonderful new bodies that rise up from their graves and join with their spirits. They will live in the new heaven and earth God will make for them. And there, they will not just have fellowship with Him in their hearts by His Holy Spirit. No. On that day, they will live with Him, face-to-face in His glorious presence. Perfectly happy forever and ever.

Let's praise God for sending Jesus as the once-and-for-all final sacrifice for the sins of His people. Let's ask Him to help us to trust Him as the only Substitute for our sins. Let's ask Him to send His Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts that we might have fellowship of His presence even now, and we might listen, do and walk in His holy ways all of our lives. And one day, go to be with Him forever.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 Only the blood of a human who lived God’s laws perfectly and offered it up in a sinner’s place could pay for a sinner’s sins. Only then could he be forgiven.
 Answer: True. Praise God! He did just that for sinners through Jesus!

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. What was behind this special curtain? Who got to go behind it to do what?
 Answer: The Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies--the special dwelling place of the LORD’s presence with His people. Only the high priest, once a year, to make a special offering for the sins of the people.

b. Who tore this curtain? What did it mean?
 Answer: We don’t know exactly, but God was the one who caused it to be torn. It meant that Jesus had given himself as the full payment for the sins of God’s people and made the way of salvation.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
1 Peter 3:18
 “For ___died for sins once for ___, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring ___ to God.”
 Answers: Christ; all; you.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Amazing Grace
PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 14,15

Verse 1
 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
 That saved a wretch like me.
 I once was lost, but now am found.
 Was blind but now I see.

Verse 2
 ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 And grace my fears relieved;
 How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed!

Words: John Newton Music: Virginia Harmony: arr. Edwin O. Excell

We would all be lost in our sins and rebellion forever, if it were not for God sending His Son Jesus. Jesus kept God’s laws perfectly and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice needed for sin. Then He gives to all who repent of their sins and trust in Him the amazingly gracious gift of salvation. He first gives them “sight” to make them aware of their sinfulness and to fear His judgment, then as they turn to Him, He relieves their fears by taking away their guilt the hour they believe.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Maker of the way to true and everlasting fellowship with You through Jesus.

C God, we confess that we, like the Israelites, are sinners who cannot stand before You, the holy God. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You that now sinners like us can have close fellowship with You, not behind a curtain, but in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit. Thank You for providing salvation through Jesus!

S God, we ask that You would work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Give us close fellowship with You!

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For Christ Died for Sins
PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 16

For Christ died for sins, once for all,
 The righteous for the unrighteous,
 To bring you to God,
 Bring you to God,
 For Christ died to bring you to God.
 First Peter Three, eighteen.

Words adapted from 1 Peter 3:18 Constance Dever © 2011

Jesus chose to suffer and die on the cross as the perfect substitute for all who turn from their sins and trust in Him as Savior. He alone is righteous. He alone kept God’s laws perfectly, so he alone could bring us to God. He knew none of us could never pay for our own sins. We would never be able to come to God on our own. So He chose to give up His life to give them salvation by His grace--His free gift given to undeserving sinners, like you and me. Yes, He would bring us to God.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" *PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

**Jesus Kept God's Law Perfectly,
So by His Grace He Could Save God's People**

From the time Adam and Eve became lawbreakers, people have offered sacrifices for their sins.

God's laws tell us there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. God commanded the Israelites to offer up the blood of animals when they sinned, as a sign of their desire to turn from their sins and trust in Him to save them. God received their offerings, given in repentance and faith, and allowed them to remain in fellowship with Him.

But the blood of animals could never take away the sins of a human. Only the blood of a human who lived God's laws perfectly and offered up his life in the sinner's place could do that. God, in His mercy, did just this. He sent His Son Jesus to take on human flesh and be that perfect sacrifice for sins.

Jesus was fully God and fully human. He was perfect; He was not born with a sinful heart like us. Jesus kept all of God's laws. He loved God and others perfectly. He fulfilled all of God's Law with His life. He offered up His life on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for God's people's sins. He took upon Himself the punishment they deserved that they might be forgiven their sins, once and for all. On the third day, God raised Jesus, showing that the power of sin and death had indeed been broken by His perfect sacrifice.

None of us will ever be able to earn salvation with a perfectly lived life, but each of us can have salvation through God's grace—His undeserved gift of salvation to sinners—if we come to Him in repentance and faith in Jesus.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: 1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Persistent Snowstorm.

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

1. Who was out in the snowstorm? How did he change his plans because it was so persistent? (i.e. because it wouldn't stop).
2. What did this man learn that changed his life? What did the snow remind him of?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place in 1850 in Colchester, England.

Not even a shadow of hope. That's how Charles felt. How could he ever get rid of his guilty conscience? It weighed down upon him like a heavy burden. Yet nothing he did seemed to help. He got up early in the morning to read good books about God—maybe they would tell him what to do. He tried really hard to do good things and love God—maybe being a good person would help. He sought God for six months, praying: "Lord, save me!" Yet not even then was there peace. His guilty conscience remained. Still Charles felt not even a shadow of hope.

The more Charles thought about himself, the less hope he had. "God is just and holy. I am a sinner; a lawbreaker. No matter how hard I try, I still rebel against Him. Wouldn't He be unfair to save someone like me?" So on Charles went, with not even a shadow of hope.

One day Charles got caught out in a snowstorm. He watched the dark ground change to dazzling white as the flakes covered it up. "My heart is dark with sin as the ground is dark with soil. If only my sin could be cover up and my heart changed to be white as snow! But how? How could God change my heart? How will there ever be any hope for me?" he wondered.

Even though Charles felt so hopeless, he didn't give up seeking peace for his guilty conscience and forgiveness for his sins. "I will visit every church in town, a different one each Sunday," Charles decided. "Perhaps in one of them I will find what I am looking for." So that's what he did. Charles went to big churches and small churches of all kinds. He heard many good messages. One man preached about God being in control of all things; another preached that Christians should live out their love to God by obeying His Law; and yet another about the glorious riches that await Christians in heaven with Jesus. But never did Charles hear how a he might find peace for his

guilty conscience and forgiveness for his sins. "If these pastors don't give me the answer, then who can? "If the Lord won't answer my prayers, then what can be done?" Charles wondered. Perhaps I really am beyond "even a shadow of hope."

But of course the Lord was answering Charles' prayers, but in His perfect timing. On one particular Sunday in January, just weeks after the snowstorm, the Lord at last gave Charles the answer he was seeking. Charles arose as usual and prepared to visit the next church on his list. Perhaps today would be the day where he would hear the words he longed to hear.

"Snow again!" Charles thought as he looked out the window at the heavy snow falling. "I better bundle up. It's a very long walk to the church I'm visiting today."

A blast of cold and snowflakes hit Charles in the face as he opened the door of the house. It was enough of a storm to keep many at home, but not Charles. The burden of his sins and his guilty conscience troubled him far more than any storm. So Charles went out into the storm and headed down the street towards church.

Heavier and heavier the snow fell. The cobbled streets, usually filled with people going to church, were almost completely deserted. Still Charles tramped on. He didn't like the snow, wind and cold, but he wanted nothing more than to be beyond "not even a shadow of hope."

The snow piled up onto Charles' ankles and calves now. It was getting hard to walk and he was so cold! It was still such a long way to the church he had chosen! Charles paused to decide whether to keep going or turn back. As he did, he noticed a little chapel nearby. He had heard about this chapel but hadn't put it on his list to visit...and for very good reason, he thought. It was said that the people there sang hymns so loudly that it made your head ache-- which Charles felt he could do better without. But the thought of some place, warm, dry and nearby was worth chancing a headache, decided Charles, as headed for its door.

Inside the plain, little chapel, Charles found only a dozen or so people who had braved the storm like he. As the service began, Charles settled himself on a pew near the back. After some hardy hymn-singing and prayers, it was time for the sermon. But where was the pastor? He still had not appeared. Apparently the storm had gotten the best of him.

At last, after a long silence a very thin-looking man, a

shoemaker or tailor or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. He was a very simple man with little education of any kind. He stuck closely to the short Bible verse he chose to preach upon, for he knew so little to say. "Look unto Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth," he read.

The man did not even say the words correctly, but that did not matter to Charles. "There is a glimpse of hope for me in that verse. Perhaps this man will tell me what I want to know," Charles thought as he listened.

"My dear friends," the man continued, "this is a very simple verse indeed. It says, 'Look.' Now lookin' don't take a deal of pains. It ain't liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just, 'Look.' Well, you can look. A man needn't be worth a lot of money to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. But then the verse says, 'Look unto Me.' Ay!" said he, "many of you are lookin' to yourselves, but it's no use lookin' there. You'll never find any comfort in yourselves. But Jesus Christ say, 'Look unto Me. I am sweatin' great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hangin' on the cross. Look unto Me; I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend to Heaven. Look unto Me; I am sittin' at the Father's right hand. O poor sinner, look unto Me! Look unto Me!" the man said.

When the thin man had gone on like that for about ten minutes he had little else to say. Then he looked straight at Charles. They were strangers; and yet, it was as if the Lord had allowed that simple man to know all of Charles' heart. "Young man," he said to Charles, "you look very miserable. You will always be miserable in life and in death if you don't obey the words of this verse.

But, if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." Then, lifting up his hands, he shouted, "Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live."

At once Charles saw the way of salvation. And oh, he looked until he could almost have looked his eyes away. There and then the cloud of sin was gone, the darkness of guilt rolled away, and that moment he knew peace from guilt and forgiveness of his sins.

Charles felt as if he could have sprung from the seat on which he sat, and called out: "I am forgiven! I am forgiven! There was no shadow of hope for me when I depended upon myself. There is no way to ever be for sinners to be good enough to satisfy the holy God with their own good

deeds. But Jesus Christ, He kept God's laws perfectly. He never sinned. On the cross He offered up His life as the perfect sacrifice for my sins! By His grace, He has done for me what I could never do for myself. Through Christ, there is not only a shadow of hope; there is hope so great that no one can measure it! It is infinite; it is forever!" he knew. At last God had given Charles what he was looking for: peace for his guilty conscience; forgiveness of his sins--all through Jesus Christ.

When the service was over, Charles stepped out of the warm building and back into the wild storm. The snow had gotten much deeper while he had been at church. It would be a difficult trip home. But it wasn't the snow's depth that Charles was thinking about right then; it was its color: white! Pure, dazzling, white! Just like his heart was, now that he had looked to Christ and been forgiven. The darkness of guilt and sin were more than covered over. They were gone, once and for all! Charles felt as if he could dance through its fluffy banks all the way home. Praise God! Through Jesus, even he, Charles Spurgeon, was far beyond "not even a shadow of hope!" And he was never going back.

Charles Spurgeon grew up to be one of the greatest preachers of all time. To know God and to tell others about peace for guilty consciences and forgiveness of sins through Jesus became one of his greatest pleasures in life. He had no fear to share this good news with the mightiest prince or the poorest beggar on the street. All people were without even a shadow of hope of salvation unless they looked to Christ for forgiveness of their sins. He wanted to make sure every person he met knew this offer of hope, too.

Our Bible Truth is:
Jesus Kept God's Laws Perfectly,
So by His Grace He Could Save God's People

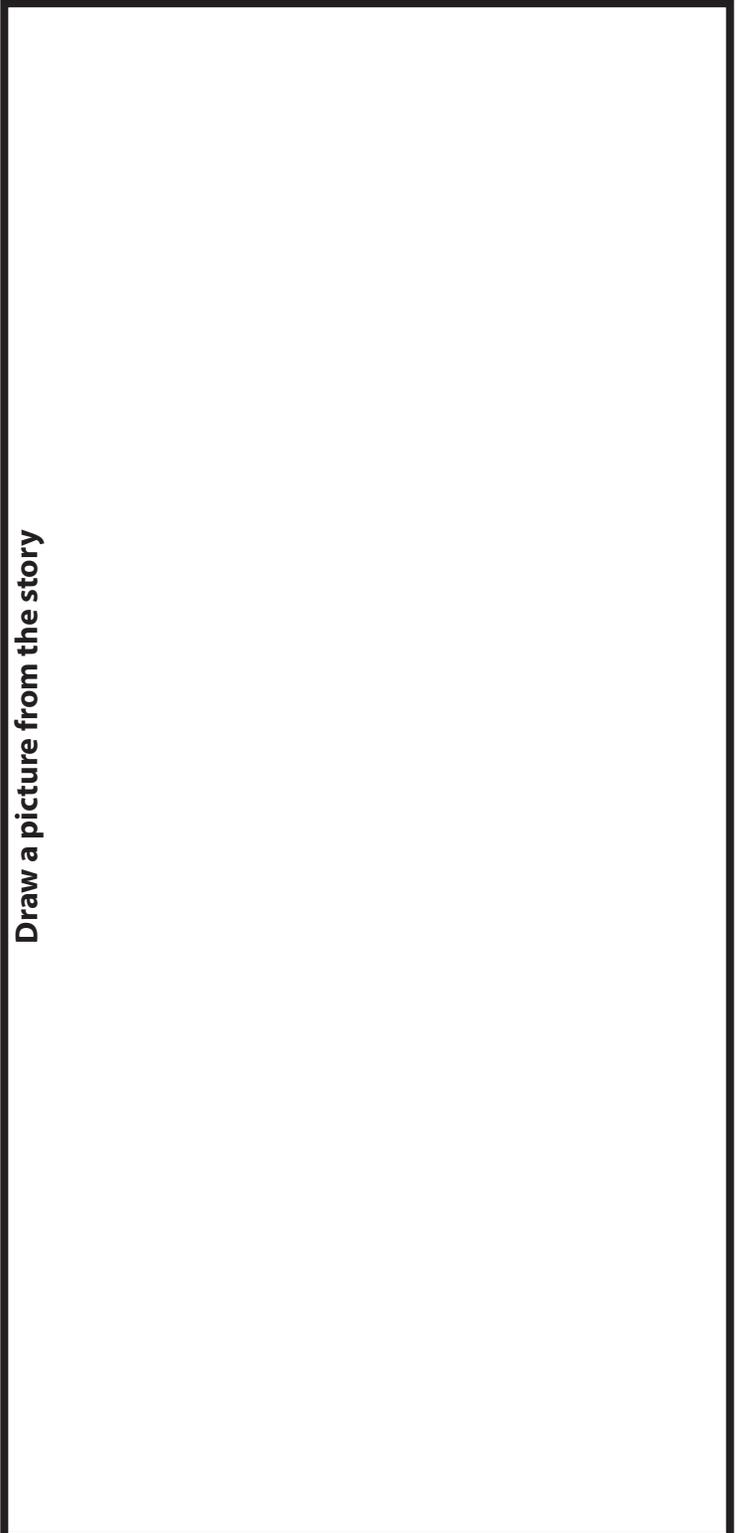
Our Bible Verse is: 1 Peter 3:18
"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

Thousands of people received peace of heart, forgiveness of sins and the delight of knowing the Lord through Charles Spurgeon's faithful witness. What about you and me? Who do we know who needs to hear about Jesus? Who will tell them if not us? Do we think we are not smart enough or old enough to share about Jesus? Think

about the simple man who spoke in little chapel the day of the snowstorm. Do we think no one will listen when we share? Look at what the Lord did for Charles Spurgeon?

Let's praise God for offering to forgive us through Jesus. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts that we might turn from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. Let's ask Him to help us share with boldness His wonderful offer of salvation with others, too, that they might be saved.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: Jesus is the only one who ever lived out God's laws perfectly., That's why only He could be the perfect sacrifice for sins. Answer: True.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who was out in the snowstorm? How did he change his plans because it was so persistent? (i.e. because it wouldn't stop). Answer: Charles Spurgeon. He went to a completely different church for Sunday services.</p> <p>b. What did this man learn that changed his life? What did the snow remind him of? Answer: He heard that God forgave sinners, not based on their works, but on Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross. The white snow that covered the dark earth reminded him of how God had covered over his sins forever through Jesus.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: 1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ ___ for sins once for all, the righteous for the ___, to bring you to ___." Answers: died; unrighteous; God.</p>

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>Amazing Grace <i>PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 14,15</i></p> <p>Verse 1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found. Was blind but now I see.</p> <p>Verse 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed!</p> <p>Words: John Newton Music: Virginia Harmony: arr. Edwin O. Excell</p> <p>We would all be lost in our sins and rebellion forever, if it were not for God sending His Son Jesus. Jesus kept God's laws perfectly and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice needed for sin. Then He gives to all who repent of their sins and trust in Him the amazingly gracious gift of salvation. He first gives them "sight" to make them aware of their sinfulness and to fear His judgment, then as they turn to Him, He relieves their fears by taking away their guilt the hour they believe.</p>

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the worker of all things for the good of His people. We praise You for even using a bad snowstorm to bring the thin man to preach and Charles to hear to the good news of the gospel and be saved.</p> <p>C God, we confess that like Charles, we are sinners. We cannot live lives that please You by our own good works. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You that You offer us salvation through Jesus. We don't have to depend upon our own good works. We can depend upon Jesus!</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts that we see our sin, turn away from it and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Forgive us our sins. Make our hearts clean and fresh, like the white snow that covered the dark ground, as Charles walked through it on his way home.</p>

BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p>For Christ Died for Sins <i>PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 16</i></p> <p>For Christ died for sins, once for all, The righteous for the unrighteous, To bring you to God, Bring you to God, For Christ died to bring you to God. First Peter Three, eighteen.</p> <p>Words adapted from 1 Peter 3:18 Constance Dever © 2011</p> <p>Jesus chose to suffer and die on the cross as the perfect substitute for all who turn from their sins and trust in Him as Savior. He alone is righteous. He alone kept God's laws perfectly, so he alone could bring us to God. He knew none of us could never pay for our own sins. We would never be able to come to God on our own. So He chose to give up His life to give them salvation by His grace--His free gift given to undeserving sinners, like you and me. Yes, He would bring us to God.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" *PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

**Jesus Kept God's Law Perfectly,
So by His Grace He Could Save God's People**

From the time Adam and Eve became lawbreakers, people have offered sacrifices for their sins.

God's laws tell us there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. God commanded the Israelites to offer up the blood of animals when they sinned, as a sign of their desire to turn from their sins and trust in Him to save them. God received their offerings, given in repentance and faith, and allowed them to remain in fellowship with Him.

But the blood of animals could never take away the sins of a human. Only the blood of a human who lived God's laws perfectly and offered up his life in the sinner's place could do that. God, in His mercy, did just this. He sent His Son Jesus to take on human flesh and be that perfect sacrifice for sins.

Jesus was fully God and fully human. He was perfect; He was not born with a sinful heart like us. Jesus kept all of God's laws. He loved God and others perfectly. He fulfilled all of God's Law with His life. He offered up His life on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for God's people's sins. He took upon Himself the punishment they deserved that they might be forgiven their sins, once and for all. On the third day, God raised Jesus, showing that the power of sin and death had indeed been broken by His perfect sacrifice.

None of us will ever be able to earn salvation with a perfectly lived life, but each of us can have salvation through God's grace—His undeserved gift of salvation to sinners—if we come to Him in repentance and faith in Jesus.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: 1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

CASE STORY

*Leviticus 16; Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 2:8ff;23;
John 19; Hebrews*

Our story is: The Case of the Goat-Lamb Man.

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

1. Who was the convict? Why was he in jail?
2. What did he do that was so convicting? Who did he hope would change?

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

Night was falling over Israel and it was getting dark--pitch dark! Back then there was no electricity; only fires and little oil lamps. So when the sun went down, the lights went out and people went home! Everyone, that is, but the protectors of the herds. They stayed up all night in the darkness with the animals.

What could be so important about sheep, goats, and cattle—that they needed babysitting all night, in all kinds of weather? After all, they're just animals, right?

Well, the people of Israel wouldn't call them "just animals." They depended on them for a lot of the clothes and food that ate. The Israelites needed these animals like we need grocery and clothing stores.

Because these animals freely grazed the grasslands and wildernesses of Israel, they needed constant protection, especially at night. Bears, lions, wolves, and thieves were always on the prowl. So, while the rest of Israel closed their eyes in sleep, the cattlemen, feeding their cattle on the grassy Plain of Sharon to the south; and the goatherds and shepherds grazing their goats and sheep out in the wilderness lands to the east, kept their watchful eyes open, all night long.

But there was an even more important reason why these sheep, goats and cattle were protected. The Israelites could not stay spiritually "clean" without them. Thousands of sheep, goats and bulls in perfect condition were needed each year to be used as sacrifices to the LORD at the Temple in Jerusalem. Every morning and every evening, a perfect, one-year-old lamb was offered on the Altar of Burnt Offering as the first and last sacrifices of the day. That's 730 lambs right there! Tens of thousands more, perfect, one-year-old lambs were needed to sacrifice as Passover lambs for the families who came to Jerusalem to celebrate that feast each year. Now that's a lot of lambs! So many lambs were needed that the priests hired

shepherds to keep special flocks of sheep just for Temple use in the not-too-distant hills outside of Bethlehem. They built a watchtower called the Migdal Eder, “tower of the flock,” from which to keep better tabs on the sheep. Whenever more sheep were needed in the Temple courts for sacrifices, the shepherds picked out perfect ones and drove them into Jerusalem.

But it wasn’t just perfect lambs that were needed. Perfect bulls and goats were necessary for Temple sacrifices, too. It was their blood that was presented to the LORD on the Day of Atonement—the most important day of the year. On that day, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place in the Temple. First, he sacrificed a perfect bull calf as a sin offering for his own sins. After all, he was a law breaker like every other Israelite. He could only bring the people’s offering for his own sins. After all, he was a law breaker like every other Israelite. He could only bring the people’s offering before the LORD if he had been purified first.

Then, two perfect goats were brought before him. One goat was chosen to be the sin offering for the people. A crimson red thread was tied around its neck. The high priest killed it and then took its blood behind the beautiful, cherubim-embroidered curtain into the Most Holy Place. He sprinkled the blood between the two golden cherubim on the cover of the Ark on the spot called the Mercy Seat. When offered in repentance and faith, the LORD counted this blood sacrifice as acceptable to purify the Most Holy Place of the people’s sins for the whole year. This was how the LORD’s presence could continue to dwell there and the people could stay in fellowship with Him.

After sprinkling the blood on the Mercy Seat, the high priest came out of the Most Holy Place and sprinkled goat’s blood on the Holy Place and on the Altar of Burnt Offerings. These needed to be purified from the sins of the people, too, if they were to stay in fellowship with the LORD for the year.

Then other goat was brought the high priest to be the ‘scapegoat,’ the bearer of the people’s sins. The high priest tied a crimson thread around him, too, but this time it was around his head, not his neck. Then he laid both of his hands on the head of the goat and confessed over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins. God accepted this confession and transferred the impurity of their sins onto the goat’s head. He handed the goat over to a man who led the goat miles away from the Temple to

die. This was a sign that God had carried away their sins, never to be counted against them again.

So you see, there were very, very good reasons for those herders to stay out all night the animals. Someone had to protect them so there would be perfect animals for sacrifice. God’s people were lawbreakers. They could never stay pure by keeping His laws perfectly. They needed these animals to stay in fellowship with the LORD.

But really, God’s people needed more than perfect animals—a lot more. They needed a perfect law-keeping person to offer up Himself in their place. His blood could be the final sacrifice that would satisfy God’s wrath against their sins for all time. And God, Himself, chose to provide such a person: His own Son, Jesus.

One night, near Migdal Eder in the hills of Bethlehem, as shepherds kept watch over the Temple sheep an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

How right it was that the LORD chose to be born in an animal shelter near where shepherds kept the perfect sheep used in Temple sacrifices. Had not He, the LORD Himself, had come to earth to be the perfect, law-keeping man who would lay down His life as the final sacrifice for His people? He was the Lamb of God.

That night was just the beginning. Over the next thirty three years Jesus lived out His call. He kept every single bit of the God’s law. There was not even one time when He sinned in His heart, with His words or with anything He did. He always loved God with all His heart, mind, soul and strength. He always loved others. He told people to repent and believe in Him. Those who put their faith in Him as their Savior would be saved from their sins once and for all. He was the perfect, law keeping human who had come to be the final sacrifice for God’s People.

At last it came time for Jesus to give up His life. His enemies arrested Him and soldiers nailed Him to the cross. They thought they had won. but Jesus knew better. This

was the very thing He had come to do. He was the perfect, law-keeping human come to make the final sacrifice. He had come to suffer and die on that cross for God's people's sins. He was the Scapegoat of God, taking the punishment for all the sins of God's people. When all their sins were paid for, Jesus gave up His spirit and died.

On earth, Jesus' body hung limp and dead. It was buried in the tomb. But Jesus' spirit rose. He was the Perfect High Priest of God. He entered into heaven, the real Most Holy Place, where real cherubim bow before the real throne of God in the fullness of the LORD's glorious Presence. He came before His Father as the perfect high priest who had no sins of his own and brought his own perfect blood to offer as the perfect sacrifice for all those who would ever repent of their sins and believe in Him as their Savior. Here was perfect righteousness that could cleanse guilty consciences and sinful hearts. What no human on earth could do; what no sheep, goats or bulls could do; Jesus did as the final sacrifice.

What happened in heaven was declared on earth. The veil of the Most Holy Place was torn in two the day Jesus died. No longer did the guilt of sin separate the holy LORD from His people. The LORD's holiness was satisfied once and for all with Jesus' perfect, law-keeping life as substitute for theirs. The final sacrifice had been made.

And on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, proving He had conquered sin and death for all of God's people. Yes, He was the final sacrifice!

Our Bible Truth is:

Jesus Kept God's Laws Perfectly, So By His Grace He Could Save His People

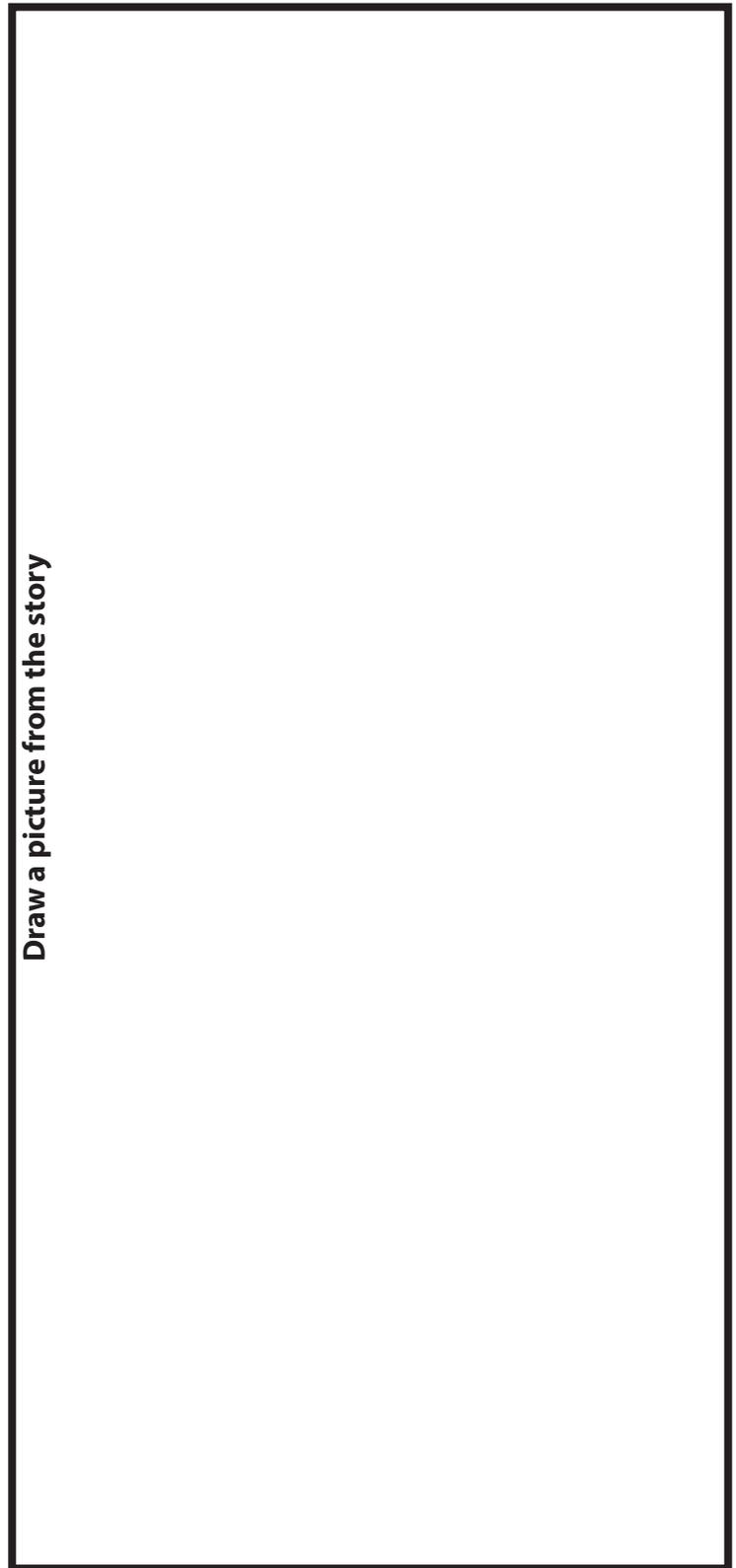
Our Bible Verse is: 1 Peter 3:18:

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

How awesome is the LORD! How perfect His holiness! How great His wrath against the sins of His people. Yet, how great is His love! How amazing His grace! To think, that God the Father would send His Son to become a man, to live the perfect life His people could never live. That He would choose to suffer their punishment and death, so that He by His grace He could give them the gifts of forgiveness of sins and eternal life that they never could deserve!

Let's praise the LORD for the riches of His love. Let's ask

Him to help us to never forget what Jesus did to be the final sacrifice for God's people. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts that we might turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior,. Let's ask Him to help us live out our lives in thankfulness and in obedience as the best way we have to show Him how grateful we are for what He has done.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 Only people who try really, really hard to keep God’s laws can be saved from their sins by their own effort.
Answer: False! None of us, no matter how hard we try to keep God’s laws can ever deserve God’s salvation. But anyone, who turns from their sins and trusts in Jesus as their Savior, can be saved! His sacrifice is enough for even the worst of sinners!

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. Who was Goat-Lamb Man? What goat was he like? What lamb was he like?
Answer: Jesus. He was like the scapegoat who bore the people’s sins and took them away. He was like the Passover lamb that was killed so that God would Passover the people’s sins.

b. What did he do so that no more goats or lambs were needed?
Answer: Jesus bore the punishment for sins of God’s people in His body, once and for all. No more scapegoats or Passover lambs would ever be needed again. They pointed to His final, perfect sacrifice.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
1 Peter 3:18
 “For Christ died for ___ once for all, the ___ for the unrighteous, to ___ you to God.”
Answers: sins; righteous; bring.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Amazing Grace
PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 14,15

Verse 1
 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
 That saved a wretch like me.
 I once was lost, but now am found.
 Was blind but now I see.

Verse 2
 ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 And grace my fears relieved;
 How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed!

Words: John Newton Music: Virginia Harmony: arr. Edwin O. Excell

We would all be lost in our sins and rebellion forever, if it were not for God sending His Son Jesus. Jesus kept God’s laws perfectly and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice needed for sin. Then He gives to all who repent of their sins and trust in Him the amazingly gracious gift of salvation. He first gives them “sight” to make them aware of their sinfulness and to fear His judgment, then as they turn to Him, He relieves their fears by taking away their guilt the hour they believe.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Gracious Provider of the final sacrifice for sins, without which we could never be saved.

C God, we confess that we are sinners who cannot please You with our own goodness. We need Jesus to be the Lamb who perfectly takes away the punishment for our sins.

T God, we thank You for sending Jesus to take the punishment for sinners like us! Thank You that our guilt can be completely taken away because of Him!

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to live thankful and joyful lives that seek to obey You in everything we do, as the only way we have to show how grateful we are.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For Christ Died for Sins
PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 16

For Christ died for sins, once for all,
 The righteous for the unrighteous,
 To bring you to God,
 Bring you to God,
 For Christ died to bring you to God.
 First Peter Three, eighteen.

Words adapted from 1 Peter 3:18 Constance Dever © 2011

Jesus chose to suffer and die on the cross as the perfect substitute for all who turn from their sins and trust in Him as Savior. He alone is righteous. He alone kept God’s laws perfectly, so he alone could bring us to God. He knew none of us could never pay for our own sins. We would never be able to come to God on our own. So He chose to give up His life to give them salvation by His grace--His free gift given to undeserving sinners, like you and me. Yes, He would bring us to God.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 5: The Heart of God's Law is Love

Love is more than just a good feeling we have inside our hearts. Real love acts in love towards others.

God gave us His laws to tell us how we should live if we would love God and others. They tell us that we should always love God most of all. They tell us to love others as much as we love ourselves. Jesus said that to love God most of all, and to love others as yourself, sums up all of God's Laws.

Jesus lived a perfect life of love that fulfilled all of God's laws. He lived this way because He loved God most of all. This is the only way He would ever want to live. He also did this as part of God's plan to save His people. Jesus offered up His life, lived in perfect obedience to God's laws, as the perfect sacrifice for their sins when He died on the cross. All who turn away from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior are forgiven for their sins. No longer does God hold against them all the ways they break His good laws. He gives them eternal life with Him as His free gift.

But just because Jesus has paid for their sins, that doesn't mean God's people don't care about God's laws anymore. God's laws are how God wants His people to live. They are always the best way to live because they are perfectly good and loving. Like Jesus, God's people want to keep God's laws because God's people love God and want to please Him. The Holy Spirit living in their hearts helps God's people keep God's laws so that they love God and others in ways they never could before.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest command. And the second in like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

CASE STORY

Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi

Our story is called:

The Case of the Two-faced Lover.

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

1. To be two-faced means to say one thing, then do another. Who was the two-faced lover? How did they show they were two-faced?
2. Who loved the two-faced lover? How did He show His love to them?

This story takes place in Old Testament times, in Jerusalem, starting about 600 years before Jesus lived on earth.

Weeds and rocky ruins. That's all the people of Judah saw as they entered Jerusalem. Just seventy years earlier, this city had been magnificent. It had been the home of their kings and the glorious Temple. Thousands of people had lived within its great walls. Thousands more came from all over Israel to worship the LORD, bring their offerings to and learn God's laws. What did they learn from His laws? What did they see when they came to the Temple? That the LORD was a holy God who called them to live holy lives. And, He was a loving God who called them to live lives of love towards Him and others. For the heart of this holy God and His good laws is love.

Yes, Jerusalem had been very special: the one place in all the earth where people could come and draw near to the one, true God. The one place they could hear His Law and learn how to live in love. But something terrible had happened and it started where most troubles start: in the hearts of the people. For, the heart of God's Law might be love for God and others, but the heart of the people and their kings was sinful rebellion. They knew God's laws were perfectly loving and good, but they chose to break them. They worshiped idols instead of the LORD. They acted selfishly and hatefully towards others. God sent many prophets to warn them to repent or face destruction of their land and seventy years of slavery in Babylon.

But they refused to change and the LORD sent Nebuchadnezzar and his mighty Babylonian army into Judah to smash Jerusalem and everything else. Down it all went and the Temple with it. Nebuchadnezzar carried back to Babylon thousands of people and all the best things in Jerusalem—including 5400 articles of gold and silver from the Temple. The land of Israel lay abandoned and in ruins. The people of Israel were taken far away from home,

forced to serve the Babylonians, and then the Persians, as slaves for seventy years, just as the LORD had warned them.

But now the seventy years was over. The LORD worked in the heart of King Cyrus of Persia to let them return to Judah and rebuild their land and the Temple. The LORD had Cyrus free 50,000 slaves, and send them home with great riches. He gave them 100 priestly garments of the finest white linen; a half ton of gold and 3 tons of silver; 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys, and all 5400 articles of silver and gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the LORD's Temple years earlier.

The people set out across the miles of deserty wilderness for Judah, their home. They settled their families back in their homes, then gathered back together in the weeds and rocky ruins of Jerusalem. It was time to rebuild the altar of the LORD. With humble, repentant hearts, they dedicated themselves to the LORD. The priests offered up their best lambs as a sacrifice to Him. This was a day of new beginnings for the people. Once more, they promised to love the LORD most of all and love each other too, by learning and living by His good laws.

Over the next twenty years, more of the people came back to Judah. Together they rebuilt their land. Best of all, they rebuilt Jerusalem, their beloved capital city: its houses, its walls, and of course, the Temple. Once more they came together in Jerusalem for feasts, to make sacrifices and to listen to the priests read God's Law. They confessed their sins and committed themselves to the LORD. The heart of God's Law was love; and now the heart of the priests and the people seemed to love God and each other, too. Could it be that the people had learned their lesson? Could it be that the days of hearts full of sinful rebellion were over? Only time would tell...and so it did.

As years passed, the people began to forget the hard years of slavery in Babylon. Sin began to creep steadily back into their hearts and the hearts of the priests, too. Their love for God began to grow tired and cold. It showed in their sacrifices. Oh yes, they kept bringing sacrifices to the Temple, but not the best animals of their flocks that the LORD required. Now they brought Him only animals they did want themselves: those who were sick, injured, blind. When their crops came in, they kept all of the best grain for themselves. They didn't love Him enough to give the full portion that they were to supposed to present to

Him. Not only that, but they began to marry women who worshiped idols. No longer did they care that their families worshiped the LORD and lived according to His good laws. Some of them even began to practice witchcraft.

Their love for each other grew selfish and hateful again, too. They didn't take care of widows and orphans. They cheated the people who worked for them out of the money they deserved. They treated unfairly the people from other countries that came to live among them. Husbands didn't want to live with their wives anymore.

The priests should have helped the people. They should have refused their bad sacrifices. They should have warned the people to repent and turn back to the LORD, but they did not. They didn't care about honoring God any more than the people did.

The people and the priests didn't care, but the LORD did. Out of love for them and the glory of His name, He began to discipline them. He withheld His blessings from them that they might see their sinfulness. Their crops did not grow very well. The enemy nations around them began to hate them. Did the people repent of their sinful ways? No, they did not. They kept on sinning and blamed everything on God saying, "What does it matter if we keep God's laws? What has He ever done for us? He doesn't listen to our prayers!"

The LORD sent the prophet Malachi to warn the people. "Listen up, you priests! Listen up, you people!" Malachi said to them. "The LORD sees everything you are doing. He is a great King, yet you give Him only poor sacrifices. He sees how you are treating each other. He hates it! The heart of God's Law is love: love for Him and love for others. It is clear that you do not love Him or each other. It's because of your sins that He has been withholding His blessings from you. Turn from your sinful ways! Turn back to Him! Start obeying His good laws again!" Malachi urged them.

"Return to Him and He will return to you. Don't just honor Him with your lips. Honor Him with your lives. Bring good sacrifices with repentant and grateful hearts that show you really love Him," he told them. "Start to treat each other in loving ways according to His good laws and see if He doesn't answer you with blessings."

Some of the people listened to what Malachi said. They confessed and repented of their sins. They turned back to the LORD and offered Him right sacrifices. They treated others as God's good Law commanded. But most of the

people and many of the priests did not repent.

“How could our people keep being so stubborn?” the godly wanted to know. “Will there be a day when the hearts of God’s people are filled with love for God and others and the wicked will be gone forever?” they wondered.

The LORD gave them the answer through Malachi, “Yes, a very different day is coming. The day when the LORD will send the Messiah. He will come to save God’s people from their sins once and for all,” the LORD promised.

“The Messiah will be the good priest who will really teach you God’s Law. He will turn many from sin. He will be the “Sun of Righteousness” who will live a perfect life. Then He will offer it up as the final sacrifice for the sins of all who would ever repent and trust Him as their Savior. He will send the Holy Spirit to give them new hearts full of love towards God and others,” he told them.

“Then, at the end of time, this Messiah will come back to earth again,” the LORD promised. “He will bring final punishment to the wicked who refuse to repent and trust in God. But for God’s people, all those who repent of their sins and trust in Him, He would bring complete and everlasting healing from sin and death,” He promised. “And on that Day, so great will be the rejoicing of God’s people that they will leap as calves do when they are released from their stalls. The heart of God’s Law is love; and at last on that Day, it would be the heart of God’s people, too,” He said.

The godly people rejoiced at these wonderful promises. They didn’t know His name, yet they looked forward in faith to the day the Messiah would come. But we do know His name, don’t we? It’s Jesus! He is the Messiah who God sent to save God’s people from their sins and whom God will send back again one day to bring an end to sin and death and a beginning to perfect life with God forever. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Our Bible Truth is: The Heart of God’s Law is Love

Our Bible Verse is: Matthew 22:36-40

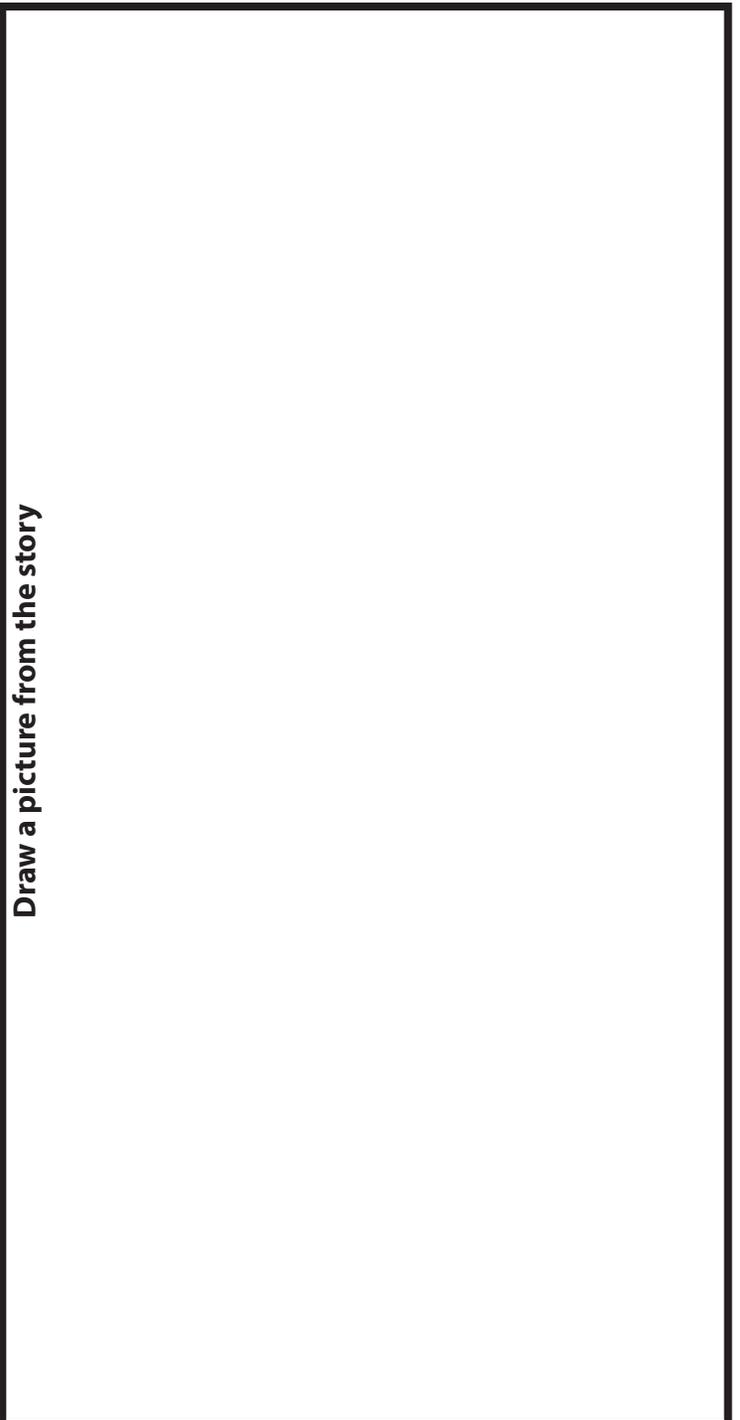
“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest command. And the second in like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

What about you and me? If we are honest with ourselves, we know there are too many times that we are just

like those people of Judah. How often do we only honor God with our lips, but our hearts are really far from Him? Do we know the right answers to questions about loving God and others, but don’t look to see if we really love them as we know we should?

Let’s praise God for giving us His Law so we can know how to love Him and others. Let’s ask Him to work in our hearts that we would repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let’s ask Him to work in our hearts so that we do not just honor Him with our lips, but truly honor Him with hearts full of desire to keep His Law by loving Him and others.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Love is just a good feeling we have inside our hearts.

Answer: False. Love sometimes includes a good feeling in our hearts, but love is much more. Love acts in loves towards others.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. To be two-faced means to say one thing, then do another. Who was the two-faced lover? How did they show they were two-faced?

Answer: The people of Israel. They promised to love God: to worship Him and keep His laws of love. But, they did not love Him in their hearts, with their worship gifts or by keeping His good laws.

b. Who loved the two-faced lover? How did He show His love to them?

Answer: The LORD did. He showed His love by being patient, by disciplining them to help them to repent, and by sending Jesus to save from their sins, all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “___ the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest ___. And the second in like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the ___ and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Answers: love; command; Law.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Take My Life

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 18

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.

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

To consecrate something means to set something apart for a special purpose. This hymn is a prayer to God, asking Him to take our life and use it to live out His good will, according to His good laws. In doing this, we live by the very heart of His laws: love!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the rescuer of Your people from slavery to sin and to death. You give them eternal life.

C God, we confess that too many times, like the Israelites, we are sinners who choose to use the good things You have given us to do what we want to do, instead of using them to worship and serve You. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You that even though we have often disobeyed Your good ways and misused the good things You have given us, that You offer us forgiveness through Jesus.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to use all the good gifts You have given us to serve You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Love the Lord

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 19

Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
Love the Lord your God with all your soul,
Love the Lord your God with all your mind,
This is the first and greatest command.

And the second is like it...

Love your neighbor as yourself,
Love your neighbor as yourself,
Love your neighbor as yourself,
All the law and prophets hang,
On these two commandments.
Matthew Twenty-two, thirty-seven through forty.

Words: Matthew 22:37-40 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

God has given us many laws in the Bible. It’s good to know them all. But Jesus tells us that the purpose behind them all is to love God most of all, and to love others as we love ourselves. When we live out all His good laws, we are loving God and love others as He wants us to.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

**We're learning... Bible Truth 5:
The Heart of God's Law is Love**

Love is more than just a good feeling we have inside our hearts. Real love acts in love towards others.

God gave us His laws to tell us how we should live if we would love God and others. They tell us that we should always love God most of all. They tell us to love others as much as we love ourselves. Jesus said that to love God most of all, and to love others as yourself, sums up all of God's Laws.

Jesus lived a perfect life of love that fulfilled all of God's laws. He lived this way because He loved God most of all. This is the only way He would ever want to live. He also did this as part of God's plan to save His people. Jesus offered up His life, lived in perfect obedience to God's laws, as the perfect sacrifice for their sins when He died on the cross. All who turn away from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior are forgiven for their sins. No longer does God hold against them all the ways they break His good laws. He gives them eternal life with Him as His free gift.

But just because Jesus has paid for their sins, that doesn't mean God's people don't care about God's laws anymore. God's laws are how God wants His people to live. They are always the best way to live because they are perfectly good and loving. Like Jesus, God's people want to keep God's laws because God's people love God and want to please Him. The Holy Spirit living in their hearts helps God's people keep God's laws so that they love God and others in ways they never could before.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest command. And the second in like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Bold Bridge-Builder.

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

1. Who was the Bold Bridge-Builder? How was he bold?
2. Why was he so bold? What was he trying to do?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place in the 1760's in Germany.

Fritz Oberlin sat in his cold attic room in Strasburg, Germany, writing in his journal: "January 1, 1760. "Lord, You are God. This day I promise myself to You. I want to use all that I am to love You and others with my heart, mind, soul and strength," he wrote.

Fritz took his promise seriously. He worked hard. He studied the Bible, surgery and medicine, plant life and French in school. He made himself eat only salted bread for dinner and slept on his cold, hard attic floor. Why did he do these things? Because Fritz wanted God to call him to be a pastor in a difficult place where life would be hard and all these skills needed. He wanted to be joyful and content as well as prepared for whatever the Lord wanted him to do.

The Lord certainly was preparing Fritz to serve Him in a very difficult place, but it was not the army, as Fritz thought. And one cold night in February, only about a month after writing that promise to the Lord, Fritz was to find out what that difficult place was to be.

There was a knock at the door:

"Come in," Fritz called out.

"Hello, Mr. Oberlin. My name is Pastor Stuber. You don't know me, but I have heard of you. I've been told that you want to be a pastor in a difficult place. I believe I have the job for you," he told Fritz. I think God has been preparing you to take my place as pastor at Waldbach in the Vosges Mountains."

"But why there? And why me?" Fritz asked.

"For hundreds of years, the mountain people who live there have suffered terribly. War after war between France and Germany has left Waldbach and the other little villages in shambles. The people used to make a good living as farmers and as miners in the copper mines in the mountains, but the soldiers destroyed the roads and bridges, the crops, and the houses. The hundred or so families who still live there barely have enough food

to keep themselves alive. They do not know how to grow good crops. There are few tradesmen among them to build or repair the things they need. The bitter cold winters leave snow on the ground six months of the year and many families have to share clothes and shoes because they don't have enough of for each person to wear. A rich person in Waldbach is someone who has enough bread to eat for the year! When I came to Waldbach, they did not have Bibles. They did not know God's laws. Most of them could not read or sing. Their pastors had not even told the good news about Jesus," Pastor Stuber told him.

"For ten years I have worked with the people in Waldbach and the other poor mountain villages nearby," Pastor Stuber continued. "I have bought them Bibles and started simple, little schools. They are learning to read the Bible and sing hymns. I have taught them the good news of Jesus at school and at church. But all of this is no more than a beginning. Their living conditions are still so poor. The people are slow of heart to change. So much more needs to be done for their bodies and their souls," he said.

"I wish I could stay and help them longer, but my wife is deathly ill. I, myself, am too sick to continue. Someone else must take up the work, but I didn't know who. Then I heard about you, Fritz. God has prepared you well for it. Would you be willing to take the good news of Jesus to them in my place, and help them?" Stuber asked

"Yes, I will go," Fritz replied. "I will go and love these people, both body and soul."

In God's kindness, Fritz was not to go alone. His sister, Sophia begged their parents to let her go and keep house for him. Her love for God and for these people made her eager to endure hardship for them. Their parents said yes. And so it was that Sophia and Fritz left Strasburg for Waldbach in the Vosges Mountains.

As they traveled through the mountains to Waldbach, they could see how right Pastor Stuber had been about everything. Turning off the well-traveled Rothau road, they headed for Waldbach on the only path there was—just a poor, dirt trail. When they reached the banks of the River Bruche near Waldbach, there found there was no bridge. Their only choices were to turn back or risk the cold, swirling waters. They chose the risk. Into the river went horse, luggage and all. Somehow they managed all get across safely.

When they entered Waldbach, what a sad sight it all

was! How miserable looking were the little huts and the poor people who lived in them! Fritz could see why these poor living conditions had left Stuber and his wife so ill. It looked like an impossible job.

But Fritz and Sophia did not turn back. Why? Because of the great love the Holy Spirit had worked in both of their hearts for God and for others: "Lord, You are God. This day I promise myself to You. I want to use all that I am to love You and others with my heart, mind, soul and strength," Fritz had vowed long ago. He would not give up now. Sophia agreed with him completely. They would stay and live out God's Law among these people. They would try to show them what it meant to love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength; and to love others as themselves. They would love these people, body and soul.

Fritz had come to these people first of all as their pastor. He knew more than anything else they needed to know God's Word. From the very first Sunday, he began to preach the good news of Jesus boldly from the pulpit. "God, our Creator and King, offers forgiveness of sins through Jesus to all who turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. Turn to Him this day and become His people," he urged them.

But the people didn't want to hear that they were sinners. They didn't want to repent and believe. "This pastor wants us to change too much," they grumbled. "We'll teach him a thing or two," some of them said.

"When he passes by on his horse, we'll throw water on them and make his horse spook and run off with him. "We'll sneak up on him and beat him up," others decided. "That should get rid of him."

Fritz found out about both of the plans. But instead of running him off, the threats made Fritz even bolder. He went straight up to those people and told them: "You know neither me nor my horse. My horse is too fast for you to catch. And we are here to love you body and soul. You cannot stop us from telling you the good news of Jesus. You cannot scare us into leaving, no matter what you do to me. I will even leave my horse at home and go on foot, so you can get me wet and beat me up all the more easily."

God used Fritz' boldness and love to change his enemies. They came to church. The Holy Spirit worked in their hearts as they listened. Now they began to love God with their heart, mind, soul and strength and each other, too.

Fritz and Sophia didn't only want to change the hearts

of the people of Waldbach. They wanted to ease their miserable way of life, too. "These people need better education. They need to learn all about the Law of God so that they can live out their love for Him and each other as He has told them to in the Bible. They need to know how to grow better crops and make all sorts of things. They need roads and bridges to connect their village to markets in other towns to sell the good things they will grow and make," they decided.

But once more the people grumbled about the changes Fritz planned. "We don't have money to build school buildings. We don't know how to build bridges or blast rocks to make roads. It would be easier to go to the moon than to do what you plan," they told him.

But Fritz and Sophia did not give up. They would keep on loving these stubborn people, body and soul! They kept trusting that God would help change these people's lives, just like He had begun to change their heart. somehow the LORD would fulfill these plans for schools, jobs, roads and bridges. They were certain.

And sure enough He did! Christians from other places sent money to help them build the schools. Soon children were learning history, English and math, the Bible and hymns. The girls learned how to sew, weave, knit. The boys also learned how to grow good crops and care for fruit trees. Fritz brought in craftsmen from other towns to teach the young men how to be blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, and shoemakers. The children took home what they learned at school and shared it with their parents at home. Waldbach had begun to change.

Together Fritz and the men blasted rocks, leveled ground and lay a bridge across the River Bruche. At last, Waldbach was connected to the world. Its goods could easily be taken to market and the people begin to make money enough to take good care of their families.

Fritz Oberlin stayed in Waldbach for eight years until he was called away to Pennsylvania in America to help another, even poorer village of people. But never did the villagers of Waldbach forget their dear pastor who had loved them, body and soul. Next to the bridge over the River Bruche stands a plaque that says: "Bridge of Charity," or "Bridge of Gifts Given in Love." How true it was, for this bridge, as well as everything else Fritz did in those eight years, had been Fritz Oberlin's gift of love given to the people of Waldbach.

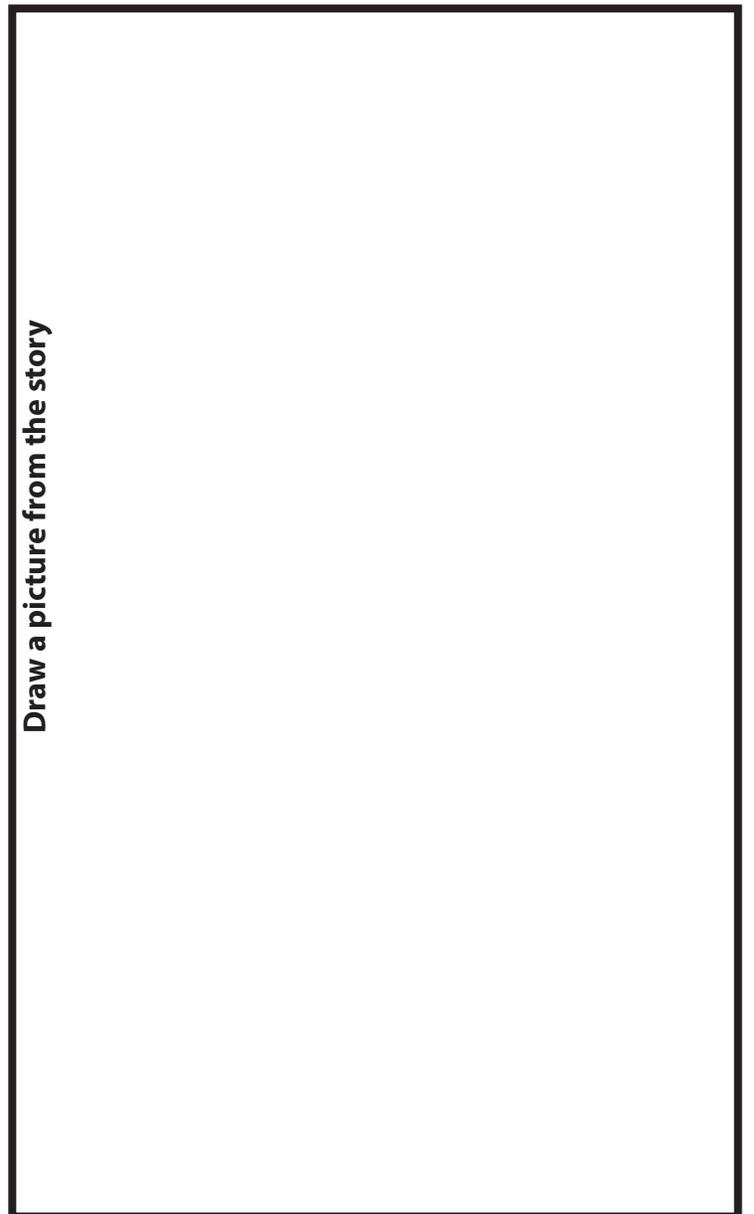
Our Bible Truth is: The Heart of God's Laws Is Love

Our Bible Verse is: Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest command. And the second in like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Fritz longed to love God and others like our Bible Verse says. God helped Fritz to love like this and He can help us, too. How? When we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. When we do, God will make us His people and send His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts, helping us to love God and others like this, too.

Let's thank God for His amazing power to put love like this in His people. Let's ask Him to work like this in us, even today.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Jesus lived a perfect live of love and He offered it up as the perfect payment for sins, for all the laws we break. Because He paid for our sins, it doesn't matter how we live. Answer: False! Yes, Jesus died and paid for the sins of God's people, but God's people want to obey God's laws because they love Him and want to live to please Him.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Bold Bridge-BUILDER? How was he bold?

Answer: Fritz Oberlin. He was bold in how he preached the gospel, helped the people and built the bridge, even when everyone was against him.

b. Why was he so bold? What was he trying to do?

Answer: He was so bold because he wanted to love God with all his life. That meant he would try to love God most of all, and to love others as himself, as Jesus said summed up God's laws. He did everything he could to love the people of Waldbach, body and soul.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your ___ with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your ___.' This is the first and greatest command. And the second in like it: 'Love your ___ as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Answers: God; mind; neighbor.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Take My Life

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 18

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.

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

To consecrate something means to set something apart for a special purpose. This hymn is a prayer to God, asking Him to take our life and use it to live out His good will, according to His good laws. In doing this, we live by the very heart of His laws: love!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Giver of love for You and for others. It is only by Your grace that Fritz and his sister could keep loving the people of Waldbach the way they did.

C God, we confess that many times, we are not like Fritz and his sister. We do not try to love You the most or love others as much as we love ourselves. Many times we only want to do what is easiest for us.

T God, we thank You that You care for the needs of both the bodies and the souls of people. Thank You for the powerful way You work in the hearts of Your people to selflessly care for others, even when they are mean and ungrateful.

S God, work in our hearts that we see our sin, turn away from it and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to love You most of all. Help us to selflessly love others, as Fritz and his sister did.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Love the Lord

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 19

Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
Love the Lord your God with all your soul,
Love the Lord your God with all your mind,
This is the first and greatest command.

And the second is like it...

Love your neighbor as yourself,
Love your neighbor as yourself,
Love your neighbor as yourself,
All the law and prophets hang,
On these two commandments.
Matthew Twenty-two, thirty-seven through forty.

Words: Matthew 22:37-40 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

God has given us many laws in the Bible. It's good to know them all. But Jesus tells us that the purpose behind them all is to love God most of all, and to love others as we love ourselves. When we live out all His good laws, we are loving God and love others as He wants us to.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" *PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

**We're learning... Bible Truth 5:
The Heart of God's Law is Love**

Love is more than just a good feeling we have inside our hearts. Real love acts in love towards others.

God gave us His laws to tell us how we should live if we would love God and others. They tell us that we should always love God most of all. They tell us to love others as much as we love ourselves. Jesus said that to love God most of all, and to love others as yourself, sums up all of God's Laws.

Jesus lived a perfect life of love that fulfilled all of God's laws. He lived this way because He loved God most of all. This is the only way He would ever want to live. He also did this as part of God's plan to save His people. Jesus offered up His life, lived in perfect obedience to God's laws, as the perfect sacrifice for their sins when He died on the cross. All who turn away from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior are forgiven for their sins. No longer does God hold against them all the ways they break His good laws. He gives them eternal life with Him as His free gift.

But just because Jesus has paid for their sins, that doesn't mean God's people don't care about God's laws anymore. God's laws are how God wants His people to live. They are always the best way to live because they are perfectly good and loving. Like Jesus, God's people want to keep God's laws because God's people love God and want to please Him. The Holy Spirit living in their hearts helps God's people keep God's laws so that they love God and others in ways they never could before.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest command. And the second in like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

CASE STORY

Luke 10:24-37

Our story is: The Case of the Shema and the Scribe.

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

1. What is the Shema? What is a scribe and what did he do to keep the Shema?
2. What did Jesus teach the scribe about the Shema?

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

Jesus was headed towards Jerusalem. A man joined the large crowd which had gathered to hear Jesus teach. The people around him needed only one look to know that this man was one of the most important men in Israel. His long, flowing robes, the phylactery strapped around his forehead said it all: he was a scribe—an expert in God's Law. For thirty- five years this man had studied every in and out of God's Law to know the meaning of the verses tucked inside that phylactery and be able to teach it to others. What were the verses in that little black leather box tied to his forehead? The Jews called them 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." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) These were the most important verses in Torah, "the Law"—the Jewish name for the first five books in the Bible that Moses wrote down.

From the time he was a boy, this man began studying the meaning of those verses. When all the other little boys had gone to the local synagogue school to learn the basics of Jewish Law, this very smart little boy one went to a special academy called the Beth Hammedrash to become a scribe.

"You must know God's Law perfectly and be able to teach it to others. There is nothing more important than God's Word and the writings of the scribes and other great teachers. You must be like a hedge of protection around the Law, making sure that our people know it and keep it just as God requires," his teachers told him.

This little boy worked hard. As soon as he learned to read and write the Hebrew letters, he studied Bible, then the Midrash and the Talmud--two books of other rules the scribes thought all should obey. Last of all, the boy was taught how to make a copy of the Bible--the greatest honor of all. There were lots of rules he had to follow to write it down correctly.

"Never write down even one word by memory," his teachers told him. "Always have another copy of it in front of you. Before you write a word, you must say it out loud. Always remember to wash your hands before and after each time you write down the name of the LORD because His name is so holy. Make sure there is white space between every single letter of God's Word you write down--the words must never touch each other. Do not leave out or add even the smallest mark. A scroll with even the smallest mistake must be fixed within thirty days or buried. We must never have anything but perfect copies of the Bible!" they told him. "That is why you must be so careful. Remember: you are the hedge of protection around God's Law. You must always protect it!" they warned him.

It wasn't until his fortieth birthday, that this boy was at last considered a full scribe. Now he was the expert and keeper of God's Law. After all his years of studying, what had this scribe decided those verses in his phylactery meant? How should we love God? By staying pure by keeping all the scribes' little rules and staying away from sinners like tax collectors and Samaritans. That's what all the teachers taught--well not quite all the teachers! This new teacher, Jesus, disagreed. He hadn't trained to be a scribe, yet He taught His new teaching as if it was the only right way to understand God's Word. He didn't keep all the little rules the scribes had added to God's laws.

As you can imagine, the Jewish leaders were furious with Jesus. They wanted to get rid of Him. And that's exactly why this scribe was in the crowd with Jesus that day: to do something to make Jesus look bad.

The scribe stood up in front of the crowd and asked Jesus a favorite question debated among the scribes. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Perhaps Jesus' answer would show Him up as a bad teacher; or better yet, cause Him to say something that would get Him in trouble, the scribe hoped.

Jesus didn't answer his question but turned it back to the scribe. "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

The scribe answered back with the words of the Shema in his phylactery and a verse from Leviticus: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and

you will live."

"But who is my neighbor?" the scribe asked.

Jesus knew what was going on inside this scribe. He didn't really want to know how to keep these commandments better. He had only come to find fault. The words of the Shema tucked inside his phylactery had never made it into his heart at all. He could give clever answers, but his heart was cold. He knew nothing of the real heart of God's Law: love for God, love for others. This scribe had come as an enemy, but Jesus responded with the loving rebuke of a friend. He would tell a story that would answer this man's question and reveal what true love looked like. Perhaps he would be convicted of his sin, and truly turn to God.

"A Jewish man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho," Jesus began. "As he came to that dangerous stretch known as the 'Red and Bloody Way,' robbers hiding in the deserted cliffs jumped out at him. They stripped him of his valuable clothes and belongings, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be the first person to travel down that same road after the attack. He had just finished his service at the Temple offering sacrifices before the LORD and was on his way home. He saw the man, bloody and bruised along the side of the road, either dead or almost dead.

"What should I do?" thought the priest. "I can't tell if that man is dead or just almost dead. If he's alive, I guess I could help him. But if he is dead, it's a completely different matter. The little rules of the scribes clearly say that not even a priest's shadow must touch a dead man or he will become unclean. Aren't I supposed to love God by keeping all the little rules and staying pure? I better not take a chance. I'm sure someone else will come by and help him soon," he decided.

The priest was right. Someone else did come along soon. It was a Levite. Like the priest, he had just finished serving in the Temple, too. He had helped lead the worship services to the LORD and now he was on his way home, just like the priest. As he came down the rocky path, he saw the man, too.

"Is that man dead or just almost dead? I guess I can get a little closer to see," he thought to himself. He nudged up as close to the body as he dared, but saw no sign of life.

"He might be dead. If he is, I will become unclean if I help him. Hmmm...the scribes' little rules tell me to love God by staying pure. How can I do that, if I touch this man and

he's dead? Surely, someone else will come by soon to help the man." So the Levite, too, passed by the man on the other side of the road and continued on home.

The Levite was right. Someone else did come along soon. It was a Samaritan merchant passing through enemy territory on business. If anyone was in a hurry to get out of Israel, it was him. He had probably felt the spit of disgust of many a Jew on his face already this trip. Any decent Jew would refuse to talk to him, give him a place to stay or a bite of food to eat. According to the scribes' little rules, a Jew became impure if he touched a Samaritan or anything a Samaritan owned. But as this Samaritan man saw the dying Jewish man lying in the road, and went to help him. He didn't care that the Jew usually would have cringed at the very thought of a Samaritan touching him. This was a man was almost dead. Nothing else mattered. He tore some cloth into bandages and poured oil and wine into his wounds to clean and soothe them. Putting the man on his donkey, he took to him nearby inn, and took care of the man all night. The next day the Samaritan man took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'I have business that can't wait. Take this money. It should be enough to cover his food for three weeks. Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have.'"

His story finished, Jesus turned once more to the scribe and asked, "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

"The 'one' who showed mercy on him," the scribe answered, refusing to even say the word "Samaritan."

"Go and do likewise," Jesus urged the scribe.

The Bible never tells us what happened to the scribe after hearing Jesus' story. He had given Jesus the right answer, but what was going on in his heart? Did the true meaning of Shema tucked in his phylactery come into his heart? Would today be the day when he would give up his clever answers for true love for God and for others? We can only hope that he did receive Jesus' rebuke and in repentance and faith, turned to truly keep the heart of God's Law by loving God and loving others.

Our Bible Truth is: The Heart of God's Law Is Love

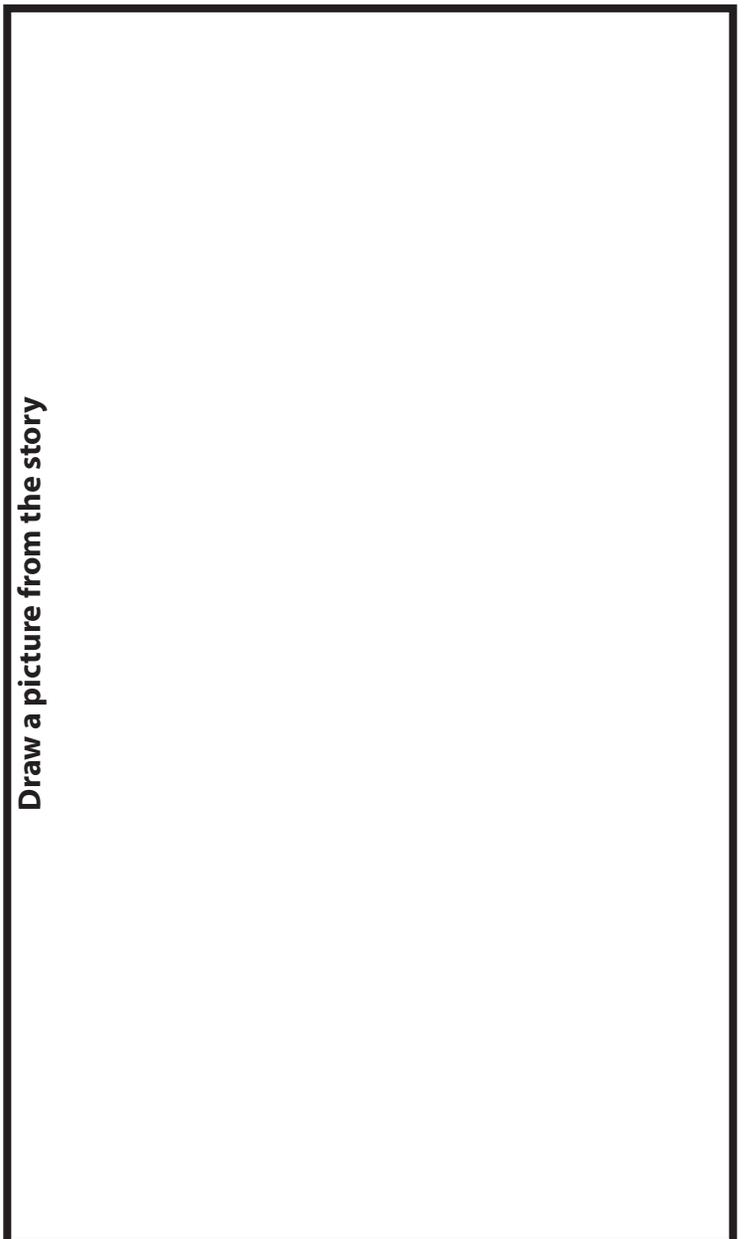
Our Bible Verse is: Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your

heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest command. And the second in like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

But what about you and me? How much are we like the scribes in Jesus' day? Is there pride growing in our hearts because we know so much? Do we only know Bible verses about loving God and loving others, but do not really love God and others, like the heart of God's Law tells us to? Let's praise God for giving us His laws that show us how to truly love Him and others.

Let's ask Him to help us turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to help us, like the Samaritan, desire to show love and mercy on whoever needs it—even if they are our worst enemies.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 Love is just a good feeling we have inside our hearts.
 Answer: False. Love sometimes includes a good feeling in our hearts, but love is much more. Love acts in loves towards others.

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. What is the Shema? What is a scribe and what did he do to keep the Shema?
 Answer: The Shema is the name for 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." A scribe was a man who trained many years to write down copies of the Bible by hand.

b. What did the scribe think the Shema meant? What did Jesus teach the scribe about the Shema?
 Answer: He should be careful to keep many extra laws and teach others to do the same. This would protect them from breaking God's laws. Jesus taught that this was not how to keep God's laws. Loving God and loving others and showing them mercy were how God's laws were fulfilled.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Matthew 22:36-40
 "Teacher, which is the greatest ___ in the Law?' Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your ___ and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest command. And the second in like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ___ the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
 Answers: commandment; heart; all.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Take My Life
PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 18

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.

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

To consecrate something means to set something apart for a special purpose. This hymn is a prayer to God, asking Him to take our life and use it to live out His good will, according to His good laws. In doing this, we live by the very heart of His laws: love!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Maker of Your Perfect Law that shows us how to love You and others.

C God, we confess that many times, like the scribe, we know the right answers, but do not really love You or others. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for promising to save all those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Thank You for being so willing to forgive us and to work love for You and others in our hearts, if we ask You.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to change our hearts so that we love You most and love others as much as we love ourselves.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Love the Lord
PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 19

Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
 Love the Lord your God with all your soul,
 Love the Lord your God with all your mind,
 This is the first and greatest command.

And the second is like it...

Love your neighbor as yourself,
 Love your neighbor as yourself,
 Love your neighbor as yourself,
 All the law and prophets hang,
 On these two commandments.
 Matthew Twenty-two, thirty-seven through forty.

Words: Matthew 22:37-40 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

God has given us many laws in the Bible. It's good to know them all. But Jesus tells us that the purpose behind them all is to love God most of all, and to love others as we love ourselves. When we live out all His good laws, we are loving God and love others as He wants us to.