



What Do We Believe?

Lesson 34

What Do We Believe?

Lesson 34: Evil and Suffering: Christian Response

Scriptures:

Psalm 13:5, 6; 16; 32; Isaiah 58; Habakkuk 2:4; 3:18, 19; Matthew 5:10-12, 38-40; 10:5-40; 16:24-27; Romans 8:18; 12:14-21; Philippians 3:8; II Thessalonians 1:3-12; Hebrews 12:1, 2; I Peter 3:8-18

Lesson Goals:

To show the learner that humans should humbly deal with adversity
To show the learner that humans should be prepared to endure
To show the learner that compassion and comfort are appropriate

Scripture Memory:

Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. Galatians 6:2 The Message

The Lesson:

There was a little girl, Samantha...Sam for short...who was born with one leg shorter than the other. She was a little slower than the rest of the children. She couldn't play sports very well. When teams were chosen, she knew that she would be chosen last. One day, Sam was chosen to be on Randy's touch football team. Sam was placed on the line to block. All she had to do was stand there and try to keep the other player from getting in the action. The other team had the ball and the quarterback threw a pass. It fell short of its goal and just kind of landed in Sam's arms. She didn't know what to do. She knew that she couldn't run fast enough. Suddenly Randy and Mike, the other big guy on their team, grabbed Sam on either side and, holding her between them, began running toward the goal. With some help from team mates who blocked the other team, Sam reached the goal. She made a touchdown!

Although sin and its effects entered the world long ago, almost all the pain in the world is caused by human choices to kill, to tell lies, to be selfish, to not keep our promises, to live carelessly and to mistreat others for our own benefit. Humans must deal with evil and suffering every day. The suffering, or the evil done, may be yours or that of someone else. All of us, like Sam, must do the best we can with what we have. All of us also need help at times, and all of us can give help like that given by Mike and Randy.

Jesus said that when we suffer, especially if our suffering is undeserved, we will be blessed by God. That's in the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew, chapter 5. God does several things through our suffering.

For one thing, we learn from suffering. If our hand accidentally gets in the fire it will burn, but it teaches us to be careful with fire. If we lie, we will probably get caught, and that teaches us to always tell the truth. If we take illegal drugs, we learn that it hurts our bodies and then our bodies won't do everything God intended them to do.

Another thing, when we suffer we understand how much we depend on help from outside ourselves. Not only do we need friends, family, and community helpers like the police and firefighters, we need God's Holy Spirit in our lives to help us..

Now, some think that bad people get away with things...that evil is not punished. That may be true for a while. However, evil is **always** punished. God, being perfectly just, must see that all things, on earth and beyond, are made right. So, maybe someone will get away with doing bad things for a while, but ultimately God will see that the evil is punished. Humans must expect punishment for doing bad things.

One of the most difficult things for us is to endure, or go through, is something we see as unjust. Sam had to live with the fact that she had a permanent disability. However, she found ways to overcome her dis-

ability. She didn't refuse to be put on a team; she was willing to try. We should learn to endure difficulties. We can deal with suffering or evil with a bad attitude, or we can be like Christ and endure it with joy, given by our Heavenly Father.

Jesus endured a difficult life on this earth including betrayal by one of His disciples and a terrible death. However, He did it all with joy because He knew that ultimately God was going to provide victory. We can trust God to be with us in times of evil and suffering, and to reward us for being brave through it all.

Life Application:

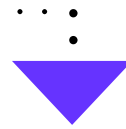
Let's review. What happens to evil? It is **always** punished. Sin and God cannot be together. God is perfect, so ultimately the eternal punishment for evil and a life of sin apart from God is eternal separation from God. For those who have not chosen God there will be eternal pain and suffering.

But, Jesus endured suffering and the cross to offer us a better way. He is **the** Way to God. You cannot get to God by any other means, period. When you believe in God, when you trust Him, placing your confidence in Him alone, something amazing happens. The Holy Spirit moves into your life. It would be nice if all our suffering ended at that moment, but it doesn't. What does happen, though, is that we then have living in us a Comforter, one just like Jesus.

The choice is yours. God is waiting, He is patient with you, because He doesn't want anyone to die apart from Him. He wants everyone to be saved. He wants **you** to be saved. He wants you to be freed from the sin that makes you a slave so that you can be with Him for ever. What's your choice?



Planning for Lesson 35
Christian Behavior: Knowing
God's Will



- ◆ **Memory Verse Activity** - Review the memory verse many times. Talk about its meaning. Talk about how you feel when you help others, even if you, too, are suffering.
- ◆ Provide a topical list of the needs we face and the applicable Bible verses.
- ◆ Read Psalm 32 responsively.
- ◆ Read Habakkuk 3:17-19. Talk about Habakkuk's circumstances and his response. Illustrate the passage. Also look at Matthew 5:10-12, 38-40 and Matthew 10:5-40. Discuss what our response should be to evil and suffering.
- ◆ Read Matthew 16:24-27, Romans 8:18 and Philippians 3:8. What does it mean to follow Jesus?
- ◆ Sing "Trust and Obey," "No Excuse," "Romans 16:19," "All That Thrills My Soul," "He Keeps Me Singing," "He Lives," "Jesus Is All the World to Me," "Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus," "Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy," and "It Is Well with My Soul."
- ◆ **Dig Deeper:** Read Isaiah 58. Make a list of the sins of the people. Then make a list of God's instructions. Talk about what it means to have a heart of true worship.
- ◆ **Dig Deeper Still:** Read Hebrews 11:1-12:2. Look at these verses in light of a marathon. Talk about the history of those who go before us. Talk about the training and discipline involved. Discuss Hebrews 11:39-40 and then look again at Hebrews 12:1-2. Encourage your students to comment about how they run the race.



**Stoop down
and reach out to those
who are oppressed.
Share their burdens,
and so complete
Christ's law.
Galatians 6:2**

TRUE WORSHIP

Read Isaiah 58. Place the words from the word box in the correct column.

Evil

True Worship

Evil	True Worship

Word Search



S	S	E	N	S	U	O	E	T	Q	U	I	R	R	D	T	H
W	K	W	G	O	S	N	I	E	R	F	P	E	E	E	E	T
O	D	O	O	G	O	W	A	L	S	T	S	I	R	H	C	U
R	T	S	N	O	I	O	S	E	R	G	S	A	E	R	T	R
D	D	H	V	T	N	D	M	U	H	U	H	E	A	E	D	U
O	N	G	E	O	P	P	R	E	S	S	E	D	C	I	R	P
F	E	N	T	O	Q	O	D	C	E	E	I	L	H	P	O	O
T	J	I	H	N	U	O	N	L	F	L	B	M	O	B	W	T
H	S	G	E	O	I	T	U	S	H	L	A	N	U	K	S	L
E	I	R	W	O	T	S	R	G	N	U	M	R	T	F	L	E
U	O	U	E	T	I	L	P	T	S	P	D	R	H	V	C	B
P	O	O	G	E	E	N	E	R	I	E	H	L	N	F	C	O
I	E	C	H	A	S	T	E	N	N	N	G	W	S	R	A	N
G	A	L	A	T	I	A	N	S	D	H	E	I	E	S	S	I
I	R	I	E	H	H	A	I	A	S	I	A	I	V	L	T	M
T	O	F	S	A	L	K	C	I	T	M	P	S	O	E	G	A
N	O	I	Q	A	M	A	L	F	N	E	S	S	R	I	D	T

_____ and _____
 to those who are _____
 their _____, and so complete _____,
 _____ 6:2

Word Search



S	S	E	N	S	U	O	E	T	Q	U	I	R	R	D	T	H
W	K	W	G	O	S	N	I	E	R	F	P	E	E	E	E	T
O	D	O	O	G	O	W	A	L	S	T	S	I	R	H	C	U
R	T	S	N	O	I	O	S	E	R	G	S	A	E	R	T	R
D	D	H	V	T	N	D	M	U	H	U	H	E	A	E	D	U
O	N	G	E	O	P	P	R	E	S	S	E	D	C	I	R	P
F	E	N	T	O	Q	O	D	C	E	E	I	L	H	P	O	O
T	J	I	H	N	U	O	N	L	F	L	B	M	O	B	W	T
H	S	G	E	O	I	T	U	S	H	L	A	N	U	K	S	L
E	I	R	W	O	T	S	R	G	N	U	M	R	T	F	L	E
U	O	U	E	T	I	L	P	T	S	P	D	R	H	V	C	B
P	O	O	G	E	E	N	E	R	I	E	H	L	N	F	C	O
I	E	C	H	A	S	T	E	N	N	N	G	W	S	R	A	N
G	A	L	A	T	I	A	N	S	D	H	E	I	E	S	S	I
I	R	I	E	H	H	A	I	A	S	I	A	I	V	L	T	M
T	O	F	S	A	L	K	C	I	T	M	P	S	O	E	G	A
N	O	I	Q	A	M	A	L	F	N	E	S	S	R	I	D	T

**Stoop down and reach out
to those who are oppressed.
Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law.
Galatians 6:2**