

WHEN CHRIST WAS HERE

LEADER'S GUIDE AND ANSWER KEY

I'm honored that you have chosen the Bible study, *When Christ Was Here*. This study was life changing for me. Whether I'm handling life's routine challenges or slogging through awful trials, I'm overwhelmed by the reality that Jesus volunteered for this. He knew what was ahead for Him on this planet, and still He was willing to come.

First we will lay a scriptural foundation for the doctrine of the incarnation. Guide the women as they discover for themselves—in the Book itself—this truth. Do not rush past these serious scriptures, for they are the basis of one of our most important doctrines. What a woman believes about God shapes her life (all she chooses, all she does), so her theology needs to be soundly biblical. Having a clear understanding of this doctrine will also protect a woman from being vulnerable to false teachers, for most of them in some way deny the incarnation.

Study [be diligent] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [accurately handling] the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

After laying this foundation, we'll spend the rest of the study applying the doctrine of the incarnation to daily life. Jesus is our perfect model of how to live on earth, because He set the pattern for our character and relationships. If we walk in Jesus' footsteps, we will live on earth in a way that pleases His Father.

Read quickly through the book first so you know where we're headed and how we're going to get there, and then work through each lesson carefully for yourself before class. This answer guide will help, but please don't use it as a substitute for your own study. Motivate the other women as well to prepare each lesson ahead of the group gathering.

There's no need to present a lecture. Simply allow individuals to share their answers to the questions. Encourage discussion, providing opportunities for even the quietest ones to contribute if they want to. Make practical applications as the Lord leads you. Watch the time and keep the lessons flowing.

Don't underestimate the importance of your task. As you prepare carefully and saturate your plans in prayer, you will see His truth changing lives. Thank you for serving Him by teaching others His Word.

When Christ Was Here: Leader's Guide and Answer Key

by Claudia Barba

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CHAPTER ONE

THE TRUTH OF THE INCARNATION

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1. His name was to be Immanuel.

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It means “God with us.” Emmanuel and Immanuel are the same name with different spelling.

2. Jesus’ deity is indicated by His titles “the mighty God” and “the everlasting Father.” Only God is eternal. Jesus is one member of the Trinity, equal to the Father. His “going forth”—His being and activity in the universe—has always been. He has always existed.
3. Luke 1:35 mentions the “Holy Ghost” (God the Holy Spirit), the “Highest” (God the Father), and the “Son of God” (God the Son).
4. The Word (Jesus Christ) was alive “in the beginning.” (He is eternal.)

He was “with God.” (He was united in the Trinity with the Father and the Spirit.)

He “was God.” (He has always been deity.)

He is the Creator of all things.

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5. Jesus was “made flesh,” or given a human body.

He lived on earth among human beings.

When people saw Him, they saw God incarnated in human flesh. The “Word” is a wonderful title for Jesus Christ. Words are tools for communication, and God the Son came to communicate to us, by word and example, what God is like.

6. “eternal life”

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7. His resurrection proved that He was much more than an ordinary man.
8. It makes us free from the burden of sin and its penalty, death.

Remind class members to beware of anyone who tries to convince them that God expects us to still

follow the practices of the Torah, such as observing dietary restrictions and keeping the Jewish Sabbath and feasts. If any have questions about this, direct them to Colossians 2:13–23.

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9. Jesus was “in the form of God” and He was “equal with God.”
10. He obeyed His Father’s will, even though it meant dying on a cross.

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11. The Father has exalted the Son—elevated Him to the highest position—as both Son of God and Son of Man. His name is set high above every other name, and one day everyone and everything will bow before Him, acknowledging that He is Lord of all. Notice the importance of His name, Jesus Christ. We should use that name, so honored by the Father, carefully, and never use it or any form of it as a swear word.
12. These six “mystery” facts were not understood earlier.

Jesus was:

- manifested (seen) in the flesh—John 1:14
- justified (declared righteous, given God’s approval) in (by) the Spirit—Matt. 3:16–17
- seen of (by) angels—Luke 2:9–13; Luke 24:4–7; Heb. 1:6
- preached unto the Gentiles—Eph. 3:1–6
- believed on in the world—1 Tim. 3:16
- received up into glory (His ascension)—Acts 1:9

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Share words of hymns that speak of the incarnation. Many Christmas carols do. Other suggestions are “Fairest Lord Jesus,” “His Name is Wonderful,” and “Hallelujah! What a Savior.” Since we learn much doctrine from the songs we sing at church, it’s important to choose those that teach it accurately.

13. “His dear Son,” Jesus Christ.

He is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”

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14. He created all things. Only God has that power.

Right now, He is holding together all created things.

15. He is the head of the church. (see also Eph. 1:22–23) The local church is the group of believers we worship with. The Church which is His body is made up of all believers of all times.

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Jesus was not the first to rise from the dead (He raised others, including Lazarus), but He was the only one with power to resurrect Himself, because as God He had power over death (John 10:17–18). He is also the first to rise to die no more, and His resurrection guarantees that all who are in Him will rise to eternal life. “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept [died]” (1 Cor. 15:20). When at Easter we celebrate His resurrection, we ought to anticipate our own!

16. In “time past” God communicated with people through the prophets. As soon as their prophecies came true and the Messiah arrived on earth, God began speaking to us through Him. Jesus is not just another in a series of prophets, as some religions claim. He is the living Word of God (John 1:1).

As the “express image” of the Father, Jesus reveals everything about Him. If you want to know God, take a long look at Jesus. Watch how He lives, see how He loves, and you will see what God is like.

Jesus holds up, or sustains, everything in the universe, controlling it by His power as God. We have respect for the natural world as His creation, but should we worship it? Should we fear it?

He purged (cleansed, washed away) our sins.

When His work on earth was done, Jesus sat down at the right hand of His Father in heaven. That’s a position of great honor and power. From that seat He intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34).

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17. Personal answers
18. Anyone who denies that Jesus was God incarnate is against Christ. No one can honor Christ while rejecting His deity.

PAGE 11

19. John calls them liars.
He also calls them deceivers (frauds, swindlers).
20. No, there is no salvation without believing in the incarnation. Without it, there is no perfect sacrifice for sin. Without that sacrifice, there is no salvation.
21. Ask any religious teacher what he believes about Jesus Christ. Is He not just divine, but actual deity, God in human flesh? Was He a good example and great teacher, or was He God? Was He *a* son of God or *the* Son of God? Was He created, or is He the eternal Creator? Listen to the answers carefully, for false teachers are often slippery with the truth. (Women may be able to give examples of their confrontations with them.)
22. John warns his readers not to associate with those who deny the “doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9). They are not to do anything at all to show approval of their heresy. That’s not bad manners. It’s love for Christ and commitment to truth.

Anyone who supports or encourages a false teacher is “partaker of his evil deeds.” Obviously, God puts great importance on the doctrine of the incarnation, and on our understanding and guarding it.

To summarize and review

Ask class members to choose at least one scripture text that teaches the deity of Christ and commit themselves to memorizing it. If they will hide the Word in their hearts, they will be able to defend truth against those who deny it.

Here is an excellent prayer goal for those studying Lesson 1:

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” (Eph. 4:14–15)

CHAPTER TWO

THE INCARNATE ONE—HIS DEITY

PAGE 13

1. First they told Him what others said—that He was the reincarnation of John the Baptist, of Elijah, or of one of the prophets like Jeremiah.

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2. Jesus would have corrected Peter's confession of faith if it were wrong, but He let it stand. This is the first time that Jesus directly told the disciples just who He was—the promised Messiah.

He told Peter that God had revealed to him the truth of Christ's identity.

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3. Jesus was declaring to His best friends, including Thomas, that He was the only way, the only truth, and the only life. He told them that only by believing on Him could anyone come to the Father God. He claimed to be God incarnate, for to know Him was to know God, and to see Him was to see God.

If His words are not true, Jesus was either crazy, deluded, or the worst sort of liar and deceiver.

4. Jesus told Philip that when he saw Him in the flesh, he was seeing God. When He heard Jesus speak, He was hearing God. When He saw Jesus' works, he was seeing God at work.
5. The Jews were furious that Jesus healed (they called it work) on their Sabbath (John 5:1–16). Jesus said that His Father worked all the time, including the Sabbath, and so He did too. By this they understood that He was claiming to be God incarnate, and they wanted to kill Him for blasphemy.

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6. “. . . which I had with thee before the world was.”
“. . . thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

7. sickness, disease

evil spirits, demon possession

nature, storms

death

Ask the women if there are things that they fear. Remind them that our living Savior still has control

over them and keeps us safe.

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8. Nathanael recognized that this man was much more than just another rabbi. He was “the Son of God, the King of Israel.”
9. When the Samaritan woman realized that Jesus knew everything about her, she understood that He was Christ, the Messiah.
10. He knew others’ thoughts. Humans can guess what other people are thinking, but only God can know.
11. Simon the Pharisee was speaking to himself, but Jesus heard and answered those thoughts.

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Even the skeptic Simon should have figured out that this was no ordinary man.

12. Jesus knew which of His disciples was going to betray Him to His enemies.

Sometimes we may wish we could know just what is going to happen, and when. We may even wish we could know for certain what other people are thinking. Can you think of any disadvantages to knowledge like that? Is God wise to withhold those powers from us? Aren’t you glad that God has them though?

13. Jesus perceived in His spirit what they were “reasoning in their hearts”—that He was blaspheming by claiming power to forgive sins—and responded to their thoughts.

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14. The angel called the baby Jesus the “Saviour, Christ the Lord.”

PAGE 20

15. At first the beggar thought Jesus was a prophet.

Jesus told the beggar that the Son of God was standing right before him, talking to him.

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16. Thomas called Jesus “My Lord and my God.” Notice how gentle Jesus is with a sincere doubter in comparison with those who stubbornly refused to believe.

To summarize and review

Ask the class members how they would respond to someone:

- who said she was a Christian but didn’t believe that Jesus was God?
- who said “Jesus was a kind man, a wise teacher, and He went around doing good things, but He

never claimed to be God”?

What would have been like to stand near Jesus when He was on earth and hear Him say that He was the Son of God? Might you have found it hard to believe? Why do people find it hard today?

CHAPTER THREE

THE INCARNATE ONE—HIS HUMANITY

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1. Because it keeps us alive, blood has become a symbol for life. God decreed that shedding of blood was necessary for sin to be forgiven. “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11). The Old Testament law called for continuing sacrifices, but they were just a type of Jesus’ final, perfect sacrifice. The blood He shed is now sufficient payment for all our sins (Eph. 2:13, 1 John 1:7).
2. The sacrifice had to be a perfect male lamb less than a year old.
3. He was the faultless, unblameable, sinless Lamb of God.

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4. John’s proof that Jesus had a physical body is that the apostles (including John himself) heard Him speak, saw Him with their eyes, and touched Him.

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5. They were astonished (shocked, amazed) and offended (scandalized) when they heard Jesus teaching in their synagogue.

They were amazed at the wisdom of His teaching and by His mighty, miraculous works.

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6. Jesus was born to a Jewish mother, so He likely had dark hair, skin, and eyes. He would have worn distinctively Jewish clothing and spoken in a Galilean dialect.

Discuss the paintings of Jesus you have seen. Are they accurate? Since we are not told in the scriptures how Jesus looked (by writers who knew Him and could have told us) it must not be important. But there is an interesting clue in the prophecy of Isaiah 53:2. It took faith to recognize the Messiah in this ordinary-looking Jewish man.

7. Jesus got hungry and needed to eat.

After a long day of ministry, He needed to sleep.

He was weary after a day of travel.

He got thirsty, especially while dying on the cross.

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8. He was moved with compassion, feeling sympathy and pity for the physically and spiritually needy people all around Him.

As Jesus anticipated the suffering of the cross, He was grieved and/or intensely sad, in such anguish that He was near death.

His spirit was troubled, distressed, agitated.

Jesus loved.

9. He learned “obedience by the things which He suffered.” As the perfect Son of God, Jesus was never guilty of disobedience. But as the incarnate Son of Man, He learned for our sakes and as our example how to endure temptation, how to suffer, even how to die—in obedience to His Father’s will.

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10. The multitude was hungry after a long day. Jesus was concerned for them since they would have to walk home without nourishment. God sees our physical needs, has compassion for us, and wants to provide what we need.

Jesus was being followed by a big crowd, but over their objections, He stopped to help two blind men by the road. God knows and cares about the needs of every individual, even (or especially) those ignored or neglected by others.

Jesus saw the young ruler not as a rich, upstanding citizen, but as someone who needed to humble himself and be saved—and He loved him. God is not partial to the wealthy or respectable (Acts 10:34). No matter what our social status, we all come to Him on equal terms.

Jesus looked over the unrepentant city of Jerusalem and wept. God yearns to see all people believe on Him (2 Peter 3:9).

The holy temple of God was being defiled and needed to be cleansed. Jesus’ actions reflect God’s anger toward those who treat holy things in a profane way. He wants our worship to be pure, not fleshly.

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11. He intercedes for us, pleading with the Father on our behalf.
12. He is our mediator, who restores us to peace with the Father.

When we confess, He forgives. He is “faithful and just” to do this. Our forgiveness is based on His character as a faithful and just God, not on what we deserve. He will never fail to forgive any repentant sinner.

To summarize and review

What part of Jesus' humanity means most to you? For me, it's that He understands emotions. We can take comfort that because Jesus Christ lived on earth, He experienced human emotions—with a few exceptions. Which emotions would the sinless One not have felt? Guilt may come to mind, but remember that for three hours on the cross, the One who had never experienced even one moment of guilt bore the guilt of every sin of every person who had ever lived or would ever live. Including me! Since He did that, I can be instantly forgiven of every sin. Continuing guilt is an unnecessary state of mind and feeling. We do not need to feel guilty about being emotional creatures, unless those feelings are in themselves sinful or lead us into sin.

Do you believe there is a part of your life that God does not know about, cannot understand, and cannot help you with? What do Hebrews 2:17–18 and 4:13–16 say about that?

CHAPTER FOUR

JESUS AND FAMILY

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1. His half brothers were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. Make sure all class members understand why they are only half brothers, since the passage calls them brothers. To the community, they would have appeared to be His full brothers.

He had at least two half sisters, since the word for sisters in Matt. 13:56 is plural. They are never named. So there were at least seven children in Jesus' family.

The Roman Catholic Church, with its unscriptural belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary (see Matt. 1:25), teaches that Jesus' siblings were actually His cousins. But in each place they are mentioned, the literal, common Greek word for a physical brother is used, not the word for cousin. They often accompany Mary, which is another clue that they were her own children.

Another theory is that these were Joseph's children by a previous marriage. But there is no evidence of this, and no mention of them in the story of the family's travel to Bethlehem and Egypt.

2. Elisabeth was His mother Mary's cousin. Her husband was Zacharias and her son was John (the Baptist). His mother's sister, His aunt, was with Mary at the cross.
3. Mary had hidden God's Word in her heart and could quote it accurately. She understood its meaning, and its words saturated her prayer. Jewish young women were not customarily taught by the rabbis as the young men were, so she had either been taught by godly parents at home or had studied on her own.

She was a believer in Jehovah. She magnified Him (made His name great) and praised His holiness, mercy, strength, provision, and help.

4. Mary called herself His "handmaid," a female slave.

She was obviously a willing bondservant of Jehovah.

5. She called God her "Saviour." Only a sinner needs a Savior.

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6. She had a thoughtful, meditative disposition. She was able to store in her heart all she had heard and experienced in her heart and think about it deeply.
7. Joseph was a "just," or righteous, man. Though he knew and followed the Law, he showed mercy on Mary, not wanting her to be publicly stoned for adultery (Deut. 22:23–24)—even before hearing from the angel that her baby had been conceived of the Holy Spirit. When he did hear from the angel, he believed, obeyed, and made certain she remained a virgin until after she gave birth.

8. He would have taught Jesus how to be a family protector and provider, how to work diligently, and how to treat others with kindness. He would have taught Jesus and his other sons the scriptures and instructed them in leading in family and temple worship and celebration of the feasts.

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9. Jesus was called both the carpenter's son and a carpenter, so He must have learned Joseph's trade. In those days a carpenter worked both with wood and other building materials such as stone.
10. His spiritual life is emphasized in Luke 2:40. His spirit was vigorous, He had an extra measure of wisdom, and His life showed the blessing and favor of God.
11. If you picture the scene in the temple as the twelve-year-old Jesus sat with the elders, you will see a young man respectfully listening to their words. He asked them perceptive questions and showed such understanding of truth that they were amazed.

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12. Jesus was obedient to His earthly parents, despite being superior to them in every way. He is every child's example of submission to family authorities.

He developed even greater wisdom, matured physically, and learned social skills that gave Him favor with people. His growth pleased His heavenly Father.

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13. They had watched Jesus grow up in their community without great opportunities for training, so they couldn't explain how it was possible for Him to have such wisdom and power. Since they did not believe He was the Son of God (Matt. 13:58), they concluded that He was just a faker pretending to be someone special. Because of their unbelief, Jesus "could there do no mighty work" (Mark 6:5).

The townspeople made it plain that there was nothing special about the family. They were average in every way.

14. His friends

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They had come to take Him home to rest and recuperate from the pressure of His work.

15. Other family members, because they did not believe that He was deity, probably thought He was coming unhinged and wanted to protect Him from Himself. But since Mary knew He was the Son of God, she was more likely genuinely concerned about protecting Him from the exhausting demands of needy people.
16. "Whosoever shall do the will of God." Anyone who has been saved and so lives in obedience to the will of God is a member of His spiritual family.

17. To Judea

They wanted Him to show off His miracle-working power.

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18. They did not believe that He was the Messiah.

19. Going up to the feast and doing what they asked was not God's will, not in His timing.

Any time would be okay for them, because they were not concerned about doing God's will.

The world accepted them as friends, because they were part of it. (See John 15:19)

The world hated Him.

20. Father-son, mother-daughter, and daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationships can be stressed.

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21. Some legitimate and unavoidable reasons for family strain are:

- Loyalty to a new Master
- New convictions about standards of holy living
- A desire to please God rather than men
- An altered value system

Class members can be encouraged to share specific ways spiritual changes can cause family conflict. It is possible to show love and commitment to our extended families without compromising our faithfulness to Christ, but it takes patience, tact, creativity, and initiative.

22. Mary's sister

The beloved apostle John (John 13:23)

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23. They were in the upper room.

His brothers were with Mary and other disciples. They were praying in unity.

24. James saw his half brother, the resurrected Christ.

25. It was Judas, also known as Jude.

In Jude 1:1, he calls himself "the servant [bondslave] of Jesus Christ."

26. Andrew

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Simon Peter

To summarize and review

You may have someone in your group who came to Christ because of the testimony of a family member. Ask her to share her story. This would be a good time to pray specifically for unsaved family members of the women in your class.

Why is it so hard to be an effective witness to people we are related to? Do you see this in the story of Jesus and His brothers? What is the best approach to take with unsaved relatives?

CHAPTER FIVE

JESUS AND THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS

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1. He was superabundantly zealous about observing the Old Testament law, more than most of his contemporaries. He had many reasons to trust in his religion. Born to Jewish parents, he had an indisputable heritage within the tribe of Benjamin. He had been circumcised, had become a Pharisee (the most legalistic group of Jews), and had passionately persecuted the followers of Jesus. No one could accuse him of not zealously following the law.
2. He praised their sincere passion for God but pointed out that it was self-focused rather than God-focused.

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They had zeal (ardor, passion, fervor) for serving God (and that's a good thing).

There is self-righteousness, and there is the righteousness of God.

They lacked true righteousness, since they tried to please God by mere outward rituals and ceremonies.

They tried to be virtuous through self-righteousness, not the inward righteousness that comes only through faith in God.

3. There is our "own righteousness" and "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."
4. People trust baptism, confirmation, church attendance and membership, tithing, praying, reading the Bible, doing good works, trying to keep the Ten Commandments, or simply "doing the best I can."

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5. They did not wash their hands properly. This was ceremonial handwashing that involved pouring water onto hands that were held and rubbed together in a specific manner. They were also accused of not washing their cooking and serving utensils in the prescribed way. These were man-made, not God-made, rules.
6. Jesus called them hypocrites, people who say the right things but have hearts cold toward God. They taught "for doctrines the commandments of men," disregarding the true commands of God in favor of their own rules and rituals.
7. Jesus taught that sin is an internal, heart issue, not an external one. Righteousness doesn't result from any physical ceremony or religious observance.

8. Evil thoughts, adultery and fornication (sexual sins), murder, theft, covetousness, depravity of all sorts, deceit, lewdness (filthiness), an evil eye (envy), blasphemy against God, pride, and foolishness (recklessness).
9. Jesus and His disciples did not keep the Pharisees' Sabbath regulations.

He claimed to be God living in human flesh—much greater than any building, even the temple. He also declared Himself Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath did not govern Him; He reigned over it instead.

They began scheming to kill Jesus.

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10. "The Law and the Prophets" is the entire Old Testament.
11. Though He challenged the religious laws of men, He came to fulfill, or complete, the law of God. The ceremonial (worship) laws were full of symbols that pointed forward to His death. Jesus carefully lived out the civil law, which regulated community life in Israel, and He obeyed all the moral law. By His perfect life, He set an example of submitting to the law of God, but by His death He fulfilled all its demands. The laws set up by God for the Jewish people reveal the nature of God, such as His justice and holiness, and teach us what pleases Him, though today we live under the law of Christ (Matt. 22:37–40). It is important to remember that the moral law (with the exception of the Sabbath commands of Exod. 20:8–11) is repeated for us in the New Testament.
12. At the cross Jesus put an end to the condemnation of the Old Testament law (see also Gal. 3:23–26).

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The Pharisees focused on outward obedience, on keeping rules without having a clean heart. Jesus told His disciples that true righteousness is a matter of the heart, not just of right external behavior. Righteousness moves from the inside to be seen on the outside, not the other way around. We are sinners, born in sin, so we can never be saved by our works, no matter how hard we try to be perfect. But perfection is possible . . .

13. . . . through Christ's imputed righteousness, which is offered to us as God's gracious gift when we accept Him, the perfect sacrifice for our sin, as our Savior. If we are "in Him" (see Phil. 3:9), we are counted as having His righteousness—which is much greater than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.
14. Note: Scripture should be Matt. 6:1–4.

They blew a trumpet in the synagogues and streets to draw attention to their money gift.
15. They prayed standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets so that people would see them and know they were praying.

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We are to pray in a private place to our heavenly Father.

Vain (needless, empty) repetition is unnecessary, because the Father hears us the first time. This doesn't mean we can't repeat our requests, but that we aren't supposed to just say empty words because they sound pious or recite ritual prayers without personal understanding.

Forgiveness of the wrongs of others is essential to prayer that is heard and answered.

16. They made sure to look miserable so people would notice that they were not eating. They put on sad and gloomy faces and did not wash their faces or groom their hair.

We are supposed to fast in secret, so that only our heavenly Father notices.

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17. An "evil and adulterous generation"

Hypocrites

18. Note: Scripture should be Matt. 16:5–12.

He called their doctrine "leaven."

Just as a little bit of leaven goes a long way in bread dough (see 1 Cor. 5:6–7), so a little bit of evil or self-righteousness is dangerous to true righteousness. We should beware of it.

19. They demanded from others what they were not willing to do themselves. They did their good works for the praise of others. They wore special garments to get attention. They demanded to be treated like celebrities and called by special titles. Jesus told His disciples not to live pretentiously but as humble servants.

20. Over and over He called them hypocrites.

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He also called them blind guides. (That's a vivid picture.)

blind fools

serpents and a generation of vipers

21. They strained out a gnat, but swallowed a camel.

They were careful about insignificant details, but careless about weighty issues of righteousness.

22. He compared them to dishes that were sparkling clean on the outside but filthy on the inside.

Wash the inside of the dishes first.

23. He said they were like beautiful, glistening, freshly-whitewashed tombs full of the decay of death. Jesus was a master at teaching with metaphors. No one listening could mistake His meaning.

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24. After His death, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus' body away. Nicodemus joined him, and together they anointed the body with many pounds of myrrh and aloes (spices). They wrapped it carefully in strips of linen and placed it in a new tomb.

To summarize and review

We should all beware of tolerating the spirit of the Pharisees in ourselves. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Do I ever respond to a public invitation appeal? Am I willing to bow in humility before God and others, or am I worried that others might speculate about what sins I am confessing?
- Do I spend more time in outward religious duties than I do in private worship? Is my “religious time” limited to church services and Bible study classes? Do I only pray when others are listening?
- Am I willing to serve in a humble, invisible setting, or do I want trumpets sounded before me? Do I expect to be praised from the pulpit or publicly honored for what I have done?
- Do I ever judge myself spiritually superior to others?
- Am I more concerned about what people will think of what I wear to church or about the condition of my heart when I get there—the part of me that only God sees?

CHAPTER SIX

JESUS AND SOCIAL OUTCASTS

PAGE 57

1. Jesus was teaching in the synagogue at Nazareth, where He grew up.
2. The Messiah would:
 - preach good tidings (the gospel) to the meek (the poor)
 - bind up (heal) the brokenhearted
 - proclaim liberty to the captives
 - give sight to the blind
 - give freedom to those who were bruised (oppressed)

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3. He was quoting from the book of Isaiah. The people who were listening were familiar with this passage, which is a prophecy about the Messiah.
4. He said, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21). He was making an unmistakable claim to be the Messiah.
5. Many were healed “of their infirmities [sicknesses, diseases] and plagues, and of evil spirits [demons],” and many blind people were given sight.

Jesus asked them to tell John that they had seen Jesus give sight to the blind, make the lame walk, cleanse lepers, and raise the dead. The last thing He mentioned, that the gospel was preached to the poor, doesn't meet our usual definition of a miracle. It is a reference to Isaiah 61:1–2. Jesus wanted John to be reassured that He was the One John believed Him to be.

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6. The lesson is at the end of verse 14. The one who exalts himself will be brought low, but the one who humbles himself will be lifted up. The Pharisee trusted in his own righteousness, but the publican begged for God's mercy.
7. Jesus challenged him with the impossible demands of the moral law, but this self-deceived young man maintained that he was perfect in keeping it. He then showed the young man what he really loved by asking him to give up all he had to the poor. Jesus was not teaching that the way to heaven is to keep the law and give to charity. He used these two challenges as a way of revealing to this man what he was

not willing to do: humbly admit his guilt before God and in faith surrender to a new master. He left without doing either. Pride and possessions kept him from becoming a believer in Jesus Christ.

8. Mark 10:46 tells us that he was a blind beggar, and his name was Bartimaeus. What a contrast to the others in this chapter! The Pharisee was too proud to bow before Jesus and was rejected, but the beggar pled for mercy and received healing. The rich young man had much to offer but refused to surrender. Though the blind beggar had nothing to offer but faith, that was enough.
9. He was the chief tax collector.

He was rich.

He was short.

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He was a “son of Abraham,” or a Jew.

10. Government (Caesar) is authorized by God to collect taxes, and we ought to pay them.
11. As Jesus was teaching His disciples, He used the publicans as illustrations of the lowest common denominator of attitudes and behavior. “Even the publicans,” He said, know how to do the most basic things right. Jesus’ followers should live by a higher standard.
12. Jesus outlined steps of appealing to a disobedient Christian to repent. If he refuses, then he is to be treated as “a heathen and a publican”—someone we ought not to associate with.

PAGE 61

People who heard Jesus say this were used to shunning tax collectors.

13. “publicans and sinners”
“an heathen man and a publican”
“the publicans and the harlots”

PAGE 62

14. The stilling of the storm, the casting out of demons (who committed suicide by leaping off a cliff), and the healing of a paralyzed man

PAGE 63

15. Matthew left everything, got up, and followed Jesus.

Jesus accepted anyone—regardless of background, occupation, or social standing—who wanted to follow Him.

Matthew knew he was needy, and he believed in Jesus. Unlike the rich young man, he instantly, willingly left behind his riches to follow Him.

16. Personal answers

PAGE 64

We never know whose heart the Lord has prepared for the seed of the gospel, so we should plant it every time He opens an opportunity, no matter what we think the response will be. Every soul has equal value to God, who shows no partiality (see Acts 10:34–35).

17. He gave a feast.

He invited many other publicans.

18. Like many new believers, he was eager to introduce his friends to Christ.

19. They were scandalized, grumbling that Jesus should not eat or drink with “publicans and sinners.” Associating with outcasts, especially dining with them, was against their man-made moral code.

20. He made it clear that His whole purpose for coming to earth was to be a friend of sinners, not of people who thought they were already righteous. His explanation is memorable: “They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.”

The Pharisees thought they were whole, but they were actually sick with sin.

The publicans knew they were sick and needed a Savior.

PAGE 66

21. He quickly gave half of his possessions to the poor, and he was ready and willing, without any prompting from Jesus, to make restitution to those he had cheated. This was more than the law required. He was showing a generous spirit (which publicans were not known for) and a sincere change of heart. It’s obvious that Zacchaeus now craved spiritual riches, not material wealth—another contrast with the rich young ruler.

To summarize and review

We don’t have a caste system in the USA, but we do have different levels of social ranking. Do educational level, vocational status, and wealth affect fellowship within the church? Should they? What can we do to change that?

Who are the social outsiders in your community? Are they always the most obnoxious or depraved people, or does it sometimes have to do with poverty, disabilities, skin color, or language and cultural differences? If Jesus were here, what would He do for outsiders? How can we befriend people who are different from us? How can we bring them the gospel?

CHAPTER SEVEN

JESUS AND MORAL OUTCASTS

PAGE 67

1. No. Simon didn't provide Jesus with water to wash, oil for anointing, or a welcoming kiss of hospitality.

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2. We're not told if he was insulting Jesus or simply neglectful, but these were simple, standard gestures of hospitality, which a Pharisee would not normally forget.

PAGE 69

3. There should be shocked gasps and horrified whispers ("How dare she?" "How could she?"). Those present at the dinner (even including the disciples) should look stunned at her brazenness and appalled at her bold entrance into a room filled with "decent" folks. Everyone but Jesus was flabbergasted when she walked in—disgusted, even.

PAGE 70

4. The church lady was not thinking like Christ, who seeks the unlovely, loves them just as they are, draws them to Himself, and changes their lives from the inside out.

We usually recoil from public sinners. Of course, there may be some danger for a woman alone in that sort of place, but we must never forget that each sinner on the street is a soul Jesus died to save. We should look for ways to show them His love and offer them the message that transforms.

5. An alabaster box or flask containing perfumed oil

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6. She poured its contents onto His feet.
7. She was devoted and loving.
8. Personal answers

An "alabaster box" offering is an extravagantly self-sacrificing gift motivated only by love.

PAGE 72

We may not ever make that kind of offering because we are selfish, because we have never seen a need that called for it, or because we don't love that much.

9. He was talking to himself.
10. He decided that Jesus was not "a prophet."
11. If this were the Messiah, Simon thought, He would have not allowed a sinful woman to touch him, since that was taboo for a Pharisee. Disregarding the miracle of the woman's transformed life in favor of his own prejudices, he rejected any possibility that Jesus could be the Messiah.
12. He was answering Simon's unspoken thoughts.
13. He knew (and still knows) people's thoughts.

PAGE 73

14. A creditor and his two debtors

One owed 500 pence and the other owed only 50 pence.

The creditor cancelled both debts.

15. Which of these two would love the former creditor more?
16. The point is that the one who is most aware of how much he has been forgiven will be the one who most loves the one who forgives.
17. The host didn't even provide small, ordinary courtesies for the Lord, but the forgiven woman extravagantly expressed her love for Him.

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18. She knew how great her sin was and how clean Jesus had made her heart. Simon, however, judged himself already righteous with no need for forgiveness.

19. Her sins have been forgiven.

Her faith has saved her, and she can go in peace with His blessing.

20. God looks at our hearts—our mind, emotions, and will. He sees our true inner selves, which other people can't see.

PAGE 76

21. Coveting

Stealing

The fifth commandment—honoring parents

Bearing false witness

The first—placing the god of self before Him

PAGE 77

22. malice (any kind of wrongdoing or wickedness), guile (deliberate deceit), hypocrisy (pretending to be something you're not), envy (jealousy), and evil speaking (slander or backbiting)

To summarize and review

Eph. 4:29–31; 5:4, Col. 3:8–9, and James 1:21 contain other lists of sins we are supposed to “put off” (Col. 3:8) because we are believers in Christ. Use Bible reference books and dictionaries to find out what those serious words mean. It will be sobering to realize how much sin we tolerate and excuse in our lives. Acknowledging this will motivate us to seek His pardon, and finding that forgiveness will help us love Him more. Our sins nailed Christ to the cross, but He freely forgives. Such love should make us adore Him and sacrifice for Him like the woman of Luke 7.

Is there any sin that any of us could never commit? One of the purposes of trials is to show us what we are made of and what sins we are capable of. The heat of trials causes impurities to rise to the surface of our hearts so we can deal with them. Encourage women to share how the Lord worked through stressful times to show them their flaws, and how they grew through those experiences.

CHAPTER EIGHT

JESUS AND PEOPLE IN PAIN

PAGE 79

1. "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."

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2. "This sickness is not unto death."
3. If death is final, this wasn't death. If death means no more life, this wasn't death, for Lazarus would rise again.

For all believers, physical death isn't final, for when we are born again, we receive everlasting life. John 11:26 is true: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

4. He loved this family; yet when they needed Him, He waited two days before going to help them.

PAGE 82

5. The Lord had not given her children. Elkanah's other wife Peninnah, who did have children, taunted her. Hannah was probably praying for a child to fill her empty arms and give her relief from the cruel words of her rival. (Polygamy was not God's plan, but it was a fact in Israel at that time. It's easy to see from this story one of its inherent problems.)

After a long wait, her prayers were purified. Now she asked for a son not for herself, but to give to the Lord all the days of his life. The wait totally altered her prayer.

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6. Answers may be something like this: When a desire is not met for a very long time, the weary wait makes your heart sick; but when what you long for finally does come true, it is as though a tree of life is springing up in your heart.
7. Four days

PAGE 84

8. Jesus Christ is glorified. Even people who know little about the Bible usually have some familiarity with this story and understand that Jesus has power over death.
9. Personal answers

PAGE 85

10. She knew He had the power to heal sickness.

She doesn't seem confident that Jesus could raise her brother Himself, but she believed that He had a close enough connection to God the Father that He could ask Him to do it.

She believed in a future resurrection, and that Lazarus would rise along with others then.

She had a clear understanding of who Jesus was—the Messiah, the Son of God.

11. He would stink, since he had been dead four days. (This is Martha, known for her good housekeeping.)

PAGE 86

12. Jesus was going back to where Jewish leaders had recently tried to stone Him.

13. Thomas fully expected that he and the other disciples would die along with Jesus.

14. Some who saw the raising of Lazarus became believers. Others, however, went to the Pharisees with news of the miracle, which moved the chief priests and Pharisees to meet to find a way to destroy Him. They feared that Roman opposition to someone claiming to be a new king would cause all Jews to lose their liberty. From that day on, they began scheming how to capture and kill Jesus (v. 53).

15. One of the purposes of His raising of Lazarus was to strengthen the weak faith of His disciples. Seeing Him raise Lazarus from the dead after four days, in such a dramatic setting, would have had much more impact than seeing Him heal His friend's sickness.

PAGE 87

16. After seeing this miracle, they ought to have been thoroughly convinced that He was God the Son.

He had absolute power over death—even His own.

PAGE 88

17. They thought He was crying because He loved Lazarus.

There are several opinions about why He cried, since He knew He was about to raise Lazarus. Some believe He was weeping over the pain and death that sin has brought to earth. Others think He was disturbed by mourners who wailed hopelessly at the tomb, even though they knew that resurrection from the dead was promised in the Old Testament. I think the simplest explanation is best: Jesus' friend had died, so He was sad; Mary and Martha's brother had died, and He wept in sympathy with them.

18. We mourn at the death of other believers, but our sorrow is soothed by our hope of seeing them again. This is different from our pain when one who rejects Christ dies. Then we have reason for genuine grief, since for them there is no hope beyond the grave (Heb. 9:27).

Our hope is another, better life beyond this one. We will live forever with our Lord (2 Cor. 5:7–8).

19. We rejoice with one who rejoices and weep with one who weeps. This is sympathy for or "feeling

with” another person.

20. Believers are all part of the same body, the body of Christ. When my head hurts or my feet hurt or my stomach aches, my whole body is affected. When one member of His body has a need, we all ought to respond with whatever help we can give.

To summarize and review

Women in your class may feel free to share prayers they have been waiting a long time for God to answer. Pray together for those needs, and review together the reasons from this lesson why His response may seem long in coming.

This would also be a good time for women to share the best lessons they have learned through pain. I met my friend Becky while I was going through a very private but heartbreaking trial. Just a few minutes after we were introduced, she drew me aside and asked, “Are you in pain?” I was stunned but deeply moved, and I asked how she knew. “I’ve been through so much pain myself that I recognize it when I see it.”

The Lord still uses Becky’s understanding, empathetic spirit to encourage me. Her testimony of steadfastness during trials much heavier than mine is humbling. Her devotion to intercessory prayer is a blessing and challenge. I want my pain to help me as hers has helped her.

CHAPTER NINE

JESUS AND PEOPLE WHO FAIL

PAGE 92

1. They were tired and frustrated after fishing all night and catching nothing, and they still had to mend their nets before they could rest.

Jesus asked them to launch their boats and go fishing again.

Peter objected at first. They had caught nothing all night long. It was now morning, and their best catches were during the cool evening hours. His reluctance is understandable, but he did what Jesus asked.

2. Peter fell at Jesus' feet in humility and devotion.

Peter was a passionate, unpredictable man.

3. Only God can control the behavior of fish in the sea.

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4. Now Peter would "catch men."

He would try to capture the souls of men with the gospel, not trap fish in nets. The fish were destined for death, but the people would receive eternal life.

5. They left their homes and families, their business and income.

6. Peter was a man of action. Jesus had retreated for prayer. Peter went to find Him, to persuade Him to come back and get busy teaching.

Peter was so self-assured that he even rebuked (reprimanded, scolded) the Lord for saying that He would suffer, die, and rise again. He was motivated by a desire to protect Jesus from harm, but still he boldly contradicted Him. It was wrong, as you can tell from Jesus' response in verse 23.

Peter was impulsive. He wanted the glory of the transfiguration to go on and on because it was a great experience for the small group of disciples, so he asked if they could build three tabernacles on the site. We admire his excitement but question his motives.

Peter was changeable, volatile, and unpredictable. At the feast, he suddenly drew up his feet and refused to let Jesus wash them, exclaiming, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" But when he saw the point of it, he suddenly asked not only for washing of his feet, but also of his hands and his head. Peter learned quickly and acted immediately.

PAGE 94

7. When he recognized Jesus, he rushed headlong to Him—either confident that the Lord would enable him to walk on water, or just not even noticing that he wasn't on dry ground.
8. Peter grasped that Jesus was the true Messiah, the Son of God, so he knew that He was the One Who spoke the words that gave eternal life.

PAGE 95

9. Jesus said that His Father had revealed this truth to Peter.
10. Peter declared that he would give his life for Jesus' sake.

Jesus gently questioned Peter's devotion and then predicted that by daybreak, Peter would deny Him three times.

11. Peter said that even if everyone else abandoned Jesus, he never would, and that he would die with Jesus if necessary. He was absolutely sure of himself, but it was faulty self-confidence. Notice that all the other disciples echoed his promise (Matt. 26:35).

PAGE 96

12. The devil asked the Lord for permission to bring heavy temptations to Peter.

Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail when tried, but, that if it did, he would recover and be a help to other disciples.

He saw a time when Peter would be a useful minister of the gospel. And he certainly was.

PAGE 97

13. There was no need for one man's violence. The Father could send more than 72,000 angels to protect His Son if He wanted to, but Jesus' suffering and death were His will, and Jesus was willing to drink from that bitter, painful cup.
14. Each time, Peter vehemently denied even knowing Jesus Christ.
15. Peter swore as a way of emphasizing his denial.

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16. He feared for his own life. Would the authorities next come after Jesus' friends?
17. Peter made his last denial; the rooster crowed; the Lord looked at Peter; Peter remembered Jesus' prediction.
18. It was not a look of surprise, but of disappointment and sorrow.

It was surely also a look that spoke compassion and the promise of forgiveness.

19. He “went out, and wept bitterly.” He sobbed violently over his failure.

PAGE 99

20. He had learned to be covered with humility, rather than proudly self-confident. He had learned through failure what he was capable of, and it was humbling. Now he wanted, for himself and his readers, the grace of God and the lifting up that He gives to those who humble themselves before they fail. He advised his readers to give all their cares to the One who cares so much for them, rather than trying to solve problems themselves (like with a sword). He warns them to watch out for the devil who is stalking them nonstop, and to stand strong against his temptations.

PAGE 100

21. The angel at Jesus’ empty tomb told the women to tell the disciples “and Peter” to meet Him in Galilee. He must have wanted Peter to know that he was not to be excluded from the group because of his failure. And at some point, the resurrected Savior met personally with Peter.

22. When he recognized Jesus, he threw on his garment and jumped overboard (again!) to get to Him. This man just wanted to be near his Lord. He was still not a cautious, wary man.

PAGE 101

23. Three thousand were saved, baptized, and added to the church.

To summarize and review

Does restoration always take place as quickly as Peter’s did? Are there some sinful failures for which we can be forgiven but from which we can never fully recover?

What do you suppose the conversation was like between the Lord and Peter after the resurrection?

CHAPTER TEN

JESUS AND THE DISCOURAGED

PAGE 104

1. Jesus said that if they destroyed the temple, He would raise it up in three days.
2. They thought He was talking about the literal temple, which had taken forty-six years to rebuild.
He was referring to the temple of His own body, which would die and be resurrected in three days.
3. He would suffer much; He would be rejected by the leaders of the Jews; He would die; He would rise again on the third day.

PAGE 105

4. The Gentiles would persecute Him.
He would be mocked [jeered] spitefully entreated [insulted], spit on, scourged, and killed.
He would rise again.

PAGE 106

5. They just didn't get it—not yet. They didn't understand the Old Testament Scriptures that the Messiah would die and rise again (such as Psalm 16:10).
6. Their words seemed like nonsense to the disciples. Maybe they thought the women were hysterical.
7. They were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus (which apparently was their hometown).
The trip was sixty furlongs.
8. It was the day of the resurrection.

PAGE 107

9. Their eyes were “holden,” or supernaturally prevented from knowing who He was.
10. They were sad and gloomy. It showed on their faces and could be heard in their voices.
11. He wanted them to tell Him how they felt, to express their bewilderment, pain, and discouragement.

PAGE 108

12. Close friends tell each other everything—good and bad, happy and sad.

Our Lord loves to have that kind of relationship with us. We honor Him when we treat Him as a true and loving friend who understands. He loves to hear our voices!

13. They thought He was a “prophet mighty in deed and in word,” come to rescue Israel from their Roman oppressors.

PAGE 109

14. He referred to Moses’ Books and all the Prophets. Jesus was showing them Himself in the Old Testament—still an exciting Bible study for anyone!

PAGE 110

15. A part of Psalm 22:1 was quoted directly by Jesus on the cross (Mark 15:34). He was ridiculed by those who saw Him on the cross, and some asked why He was not delivered (Mark 15:31). His bones were pulled out of joint. He had great thirst. His hands and feet were pierced. Soldiers gambled for His clothing.

He was offered vinegar mixed with gall (an herb) as a pain-deadening drink, but He would not drink it.

He was despised and rejected by men, bruised, wounded, and afflicted. He was beaten and cruelly flogged. But He did not say a word to defend Himself and made no move to resist, for by being submissive to His persecutors, He was being obedient to His Father’s will.

16. The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms
17. All that had been prophesied about the Messiah
18. Christ had to suffer, die, and rise the third day. Repentance and forgiveness of sins would be preached in His name everywhere, beginning in Jerusalem. They would be witnesses of this.

PAGE 111

19. The Comforter was the Holy Ghost. He would teach them what they needed to know and would remind them of what Jesus had taught them. He would be a witness to give true testimony about Jesus Christ. He would guide them to the truth and show them things that were to come. The Spirit’s job is not to bring attention to Himself, but to point people to Christ instead (see John 16:14).

PAGE 112

20. In the same moment, He vanished.
21. Their hearts were set on fire as He opened up (expounded) the scriptures to them.

To summarize and review

Ask the women in your group to share what they do when they are feeling down, to help themselves start feeling better. Ask them to label their choices as fleshly or spiritual. Is the Lord impatient or angry with us when we feel discouraged? How does He help us, if we will let Him?

When a friend calls on you to help her with her discouragement (or to complain about it), how do you try to help? Jesus didn't deny or reinterpret the disciples' circumstances; He didn't distract them with entertainment or simply try to cheer them up. What did He do instead? What should we do?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

JESUS AND TRIALS: THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

PAGE 116

1. Jesus was “sore amazed” (struck with terror) and “very heavy.” What He was experiencing was new to the sinless Son of God (see Heb. 5:8) and weighed down His soul, filling it with agony. Mark 14:34 tells us that His suffering was severe enough to actually kill Him.

PAGE 117

2. He perspired thick clots of blood. Luke, who recorded this physical detail, was a physician.
3. He was exceedingly sorrowful or intensely sad.

PAGE 118

4. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (quoted from Ps. 22:1).

PAGE 119

5. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword, which are trouble, pain, cruel treatment, lack of food, insufficient clothing, danger, and war

Personal answers

The point of the passage is that nothing can come between us and the love of Christ.

6. Jesus cried, and since He never sinned, we know that crying in pain or grief is not sinful.

PAGE 120

7. We are to pray about absolutely everything and not be anxious about anything.
8. We are supposed to hand over all our troubles to Him. That leaves none to hand over to other people, none left to worry about, none to try to handle by ourselves.

PAGE 121

9. Just before the cross, when God would have to turn His face from the One bearing all our sins in His body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24), Jesus used this tender name used by a child for his father. It's as if just before those hours of separation between them, He wanted to remind the Father—and Himself—that He was His beloved, only begotten Son.
10. We don't come to God in the bondage of fear, as slaves, but as children who have received the spirit of adoption into His family, so we can call him our "Abba."
11. The Holy Spirit testifies that we are God's children. The Spirit sends this assurance deep into our own hearts, so that if we have received the gift of salvation, we do not ever need to doubt if we are God's own.

PAGE 122

12. The Psalmist Asaph experienced:
 - so much emotional pain that he could not sleep or speak
 - a sense of being overwhelmed
 - the feeling of being abandoned by God, having lost His favor and mercy
 - doubts that God's promises were true
 - fear that God had forgotten him
13. The writer of Psalm 88 seems completely despondent. His soul was so full of sickness and trouble that he thought he was about to die. He had no strength and felt adrift, drowning, forsaken, and forgotten by God. People had abandoned him too and treated him with repugnance, and he was collapsing under the weight of that grief. God had cast him off and hid His face from him, he believed, and he was suffering the terrors of God's wrath.

It's a dreadful picture of someone suffering and sees God as the cause of his pain, which he doesn't think he deserves. There is hardly a glimmer of hope or trust in this psalm.
14. The things that are impossible for man are possible with God. He can do all things!

PAGE 123

15. There is nothing too hard—too wonderful, too marvelous—for God to do.
16. He can do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," more than we can think to ask or could even imagine.

PAGE 125

17. Personal answers
18. When a trial affects someone we love more than life, it's terribly hard to pray this prayer with sincerity.

But it's the first and best prayer to pray, for it's the prayer that does not fail.

19. An angel arrived from heaven to minister to Him, to restore His strength (compare Matt. 4:11).

To summarize and review

When we are in a trial, it's easy to say "Woe is me" and believe our pain the worst ever, until we meet someone whose difficulty is much greater than ours. We gain perspective and our troubles look small by comparison. How does the story of Gethsemane help us when we are trudging through a trial?

Suggest that class members record the five-step path to follow through trials in the flyleaf of their Bibles. Someday—maybe sooner than they think—it will come in handy.

CHAPTER TWELVE

JESUS AND TEMPTATION

PAGE 128

1. He endured every sort of fleshly and spiritual temptation a human being can face.
2. Because He was tempted then just as we are now, He knows from experience how to help us. Because He conquered every temptation, He is able to strengthen us in our own battles with sin.
3. Temptations humble us, especially when we fail, so they show how much we need a Savior. They also reveal what is in our hearts, prove if we are willing to be obedient to Him, and help us see how desperately we need His Word hidden in our hearts (Ps. 119:11).
4. The Spirit led Him there. It was the Father's will for Him to be tempted.

PAGE 129

5. Satan wanted Job to curse God to His face, to "prove" that Job only feared God because He had blessed Job with riches.

Satan was not allowed to touch Job's body.

PAGE 130

Job grieved and mourned, but he still blessed and worshiped God. His words showed plainly that he loved God for Himself alone, not because of His blessings. He did not accuse God of being unjust.

6. He rebuked his wife as one of the "foolish women" (infidels, unbelievers). He defended God, asking her if God should be expected to only give us good gifts and never allow trouble to come. "In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 6:10).
7. We are only given ordinary human temptations, never tempted beyond our ability to resist, and are always, without exception, provided with an escape route.

PAGE 131

8. He was praying.
9. The Holy Ghost appeared in the physical shape of a dove.

The Father's voice "came from heaven, which said, 'Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.' "

10. Immediately—the very next thing

PAGE 132

11. He asked Jehovah to let him die. His exhilarating victory was followed by depression, made worse by physical exhaustion. He had no more strength. He was done!

God was teaching Elijah that victory over evil came through the power of God, not man. He also was showing Elijah his limits, that even a powerful prophet needed food and rest. He was humbling Elijah by letting him see himself at his worst, encouraging him that he was not alone, and showing him that God's working is often quiet and gentle like a still, small voice, rather than public and dramatic like the triumph over the prophets of Baal.

PAGE 133

12. There were dangerous animals with Him in the wilderness.

13. Personal answers

Point out that these are times to be especially aware of temptations and to lean hard on the One who helps us conquer them. The devil takes advantage of us when we are distracted by difficult circumstances.

PAGE 134

14. He asked Him to turn stones into loaves of bread. It's interesting that this first temptation, just as in the Garden of Eden, involved food.

Satan was being snide, trying to get Jesus to demonstrate pride.

PAGE 135

15. Jesus had not eaten for forty days and nights. It was the obvious place to start.
16. He wanted to prove to Satan that He trusted the Father to provide food when it was time. He needed to obey the Word of God more than He needed to eat.

Every day, He miraculously provided just enough manna to eat.

He was testing their obedience.

He wanted them to know that the most important thing in life was not food, but obedience to the Word of God.

17. You are proving to God that you love Him.

PAGE 136

18. The need for food can lead to gluttony, and the need for sleep may lead to sloth. Natural sexual desires can be perverted into fornication. Our need for communication may lead to gossip and slander, and the enjoyment of recreation into poor stewardship of time. These are just a few examples of the temptations of the flesh that grow out of our God-given desires and needs.

Personal answers

We have individual bents toward specific sins (James 1:14).

19. He directed Jesus to the pinnacle (the top corner) of the temple.

He asked Him to throw Himself down to see if angels would catch Him.

PAGE 137

20. Verses 11–12

21. “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

PAGE 138

22. A very high mountain

He showed Jesus all the glory of all the kingdoms of the world.

He offered to give them to Jesus if He would bow and worship Him. That seems absurd to us. How could Satan believe that he, an angel cast out of heaven for arrogant pride, could be worshiped by the Son of God? But he did think that. Satan’s pride has blinded him to reality.

PAGE 139

23. He is “the prince [ruler] of this world.”

24. He is “the god of this world [this age].” Satan did have authority to offer control of earth’s kingdoms in exchange for Christ’s adulation. We ought never to forget who is in control of this world’s political and social structure (and even most of its religions)—the devil.

25. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:10, from Deut. 6:13–14).

To summarize and review

The devil has used the same tools of temptation over and over again. He doesn’t need new ones, because these still work so well. Discuss how the three “baits” he used to try to trap Jesus are like the ones he used with Adam and Eve, with the children of Israel in the wilderness, and with each of us. You’ll find them named in 1 John 2:16–18.

What powers has Satan been allowed to have in this world? But what are the limits of his power? What are the keys to personally resisting and defeating him every day?