

Faith Family Worship Guide – Week 37

MEMORIZE

- For those with 1st-5th graders at Brook Hills, focus on the verses that they are memorizing in Children’s Ministry for this unit.
 - 1st Grade – Psalm 100:3-5
 - 2nd Grade – Matthew 7:7-11
 - 3rd Grade – Matthew 7:24-27
 - 4th Grade – 1 John 3:1, 2
 - 5th Grade – Psalm 51:1, 2

READ

As our church reads through the Bible for the next two years, each day will include a chapter from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. As a family, decide if you want to read one or both of these passages. The Faith Family Worship Guide will look ahead to the readings for the upcoming week.

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Questions:

- Why did Paul write to the Corinthians about giving? What was he wanting them to contribute money to?
- As Christ-followers, why do we give money to the church, to ministry projects, and to help the poor?
- Can we give money with a bad attitude? How do we develop a good attitude in giving? What does giving with a good attitude look like?
- Why should we have a good attitude about giving?
- What does 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 indicate about God’s provision for the giver? Do these verses mean that God will give us more money and resources if we are faithful to give? Why or why not? What reason does 2 Corinthians 9:8 give for why God provides for His people?

Bottom Line: God desires for His people to gladly give to help others and to support the spread of the gospel, and He provides for His people so they can be a blessing to others.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship him together.

Preschool

- What does your face look like when you are cheerful?
- Is this how you should feel when you give to others?
- Did you know it makes God happy when we give to others?
- Name some ways we can give to others.
- Can you name everything God has given you?
- What is the greatest gift God has given you?

Children

- “God loves a cheerful giver” (II Corinthians 9:7b KJV) is often one of the first verses people memorize as a young child.
- Talk with your children about what it means to be cheerful.
- When we love the things that God loves it is easy to give cheerfully.
- How can we learn to love the things God loves?
- What are some of the things God loves?

Students

- Read II Cor. 1:1. Who is Paul writing to? (“All of the saints”)
- Who are saints? (Those who are saved, have turned from their sin, and trusted in Christ alone as Lord and Savior.)
- Is there an age where Paul says his words begin to apply? (e.g. Twelve, eighteen, or when you begin to drive a car?)
- What resources has God given *you*? (Not your family or parents)
- With the resources you have been given, have you used them to contribute to the needs of others in any way?
- Does the term “cheerful giver” apply to you?
- What needs to change about the way in which you use your resources? (These can be time and energy as well as money.)
- What will you do this week to take a step in living out this passage? (You may begin by intentionally praying God would change your heart toward sharing what you have.)

SING

There’s nothing we have that we didn’t first receive from the Lord. And if we have freely received, why would we not freely give? So as we continue in worship, let’s join in singing “Follow You”. The lyrics of this modern worship song remind us that God uses surrendered lives and resources to accomplish His purposes in the world. The second verse says:

Use my hands, use my feet to make Your kingdom come
To the corners of the earth, until Your work is done
Because faith without works is dead, and on the cross Your blood was shed
So how could we not give it away so freely?

Let’s trust God to work powerfully through our giving!

Visit our website for a link to this song: www.brookhills.org/gathering/this_week.html.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Readings for September 15-21

2 Samuel 11-17 and 2 Corinthians 4-10

Where We Are In The Story (2 Samuel)

Background of 2 Samuel: Originally, 1 and 2 Samuel were one book but were divided into two books (probably because of length) in the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Written by an unknown author, 2 Samuel chronicles the reign of King David from the death of Saul to his census of the people.

Structure of 2 Samuel:

- 1 Samuel 1-5 describes the transition of leadership from Saul’s family to David.
- 1 Samuel 6-7 includes God’s covenant with David.
- 1 Samuel 8-20 contains descriptions of God’s faithfulness to Israel as well as God’s judgment of David for his sin.
- 1 Samuel 21-24 records David’s praise of God and his response to punishment for his sin.

This Week in 2 Samuel: 2 Samuel 11-20 describes David’s moral failure and the consequences that stem from his actions, and the tentative date for David’s adultery is 992 B.C., which was about nineteen years into his reign. The beginning of 2 Samuel records David’s Ammonite wars, and this would have been the enemy that the Israelites were fighting in 2 Samuel 11 (see 2 Sam. 10). The progression of sin in this chapter can be marked by the verb “sent” (vv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 18, 22, 27). David had “sent” Joab his captain into battle at a time “when kings go out to battle” (v. 1). When from his rooftop he happened to see a woman bathing, he “sent and inquired” about her (v. 3), and although he learned that she was the daughter of one of his trusted advisers and the *wife* of one of his valiant men (see 2 Sam. 23:34), he “sent” for her to come to him. After their affair, she “sent” to David the news of her pregnancy (v. 5), and in an attempt to cover up his sin, he “sent” for Uriah to report to him, hoping he would spend the night with his wife and the baby could be passed off as his (v. 6). When his plan failed, David “sent” word to Joab to put Uriah in a position where he would be killed in

battle (v. 14), and while Uriah did die, other Israelite men were also needlessly killed in battle – collateral damage of David’s cover-up scheme. When this plan succeeded, David “sent” for Bathsheba and made her his wife (v. 27). This action verb emphasizes David’s deliberate disobedience, and God found his actions to be reprehensible (v. 27). In response, the Lord “sent” Nathan to announce His judgment to David (2 Sam. 12:1). These judgments included:

- David’s family would face strife and death because he had killed Uriah the Hittite in order to take his wife (v. 9-12). Throughout Scripture, God practices talionic justice (an eye for an eye), and He demonstrates talionic justice in this judgment. Because David had inflicted death and, thus, severed a family, death and betrayal would wrench his own family. While David had an affair with another man’s wife, the same would be done with his wives – but it would be public knowledge. This occurred in 2 Samuel 16:15-23 when David’s son Absalom staged a rebellion that caused David to flee Jerusalem, and to demonstrate his authority, Absalom appropriated his father’s concubines who had been left at the palace, which in the ancient near east symbolized the shift of power to a new ruler.
- Bathsheba’s child would die (vv. 14).
 - Because of David’s response to this child’s death, 2 Samuel 12 is often used in discussions concerning what happens to children when they die. For more about this topic, read Pastor David’s paper entitled “The Incarnation and Children’s Hospital” on: brookhills.org/contribute/IncarnationandChildrensHospital.pdf.

When confronted with his sin, David’s response distinguishes him from King Saul, for instead of making excuses for himself, David acknowledged his sin, recognizing that his actions were ultimately against God (v. 13). God’s forgiveness of David was immediate (v. 13), which reiterates the sincerity of David’s confession and points to the graciousness of God, and Psalm 51 provides further evidence of David’s contrition over his actions and his petition to God for restoration in his relationship with Him.

The remainder of this week’s passages in 2 Samuel concern Absalom’s rebellion. The son of David’s wife Maacah (see 2 Sam. 3:1-3), Absalom’s rebellion was triggered by the rape of his sister Tamar by their half-brother Amnon who was the current heir to the throne (2 Sam. 13). Although aware of Amnon’s actions (2 Sam. 13:21), David took no action against him, probably because David recognized his own hypocrisy if he tried, which still does not excuse the lack of discipline. Enraged by Amnon’s actions, Absalom spent two years plotting his revenge, and after killing Amnon, Absalom fled to his grandfather’s home in Geshur where he lived for three years (2 Sam. 13:34-39). Although Joab brought him back to Jerusalem, Absalom remained estranged from his father for two additional years, which provided time for Absalom to begin politicking and planning his rebellion (2 Sam. 14-15). During this time, even Ahithophel, David’s trusted advisor, joined Absalom’s conspiracy (2 Sam. 15:12).

As he fled from Jerusalem, David learned of Ahithophel’s defection, and along with his prayer for God to turn Ahithophel’s counsel into foolishness, David hatched a plan to send Hushai, a friend and advisor, to join Absalom’s inner circle and to counter Ahithophel’s counsel as well as to pass along intelligence information to David through the priests (1 Sam. 15:30-37). This plan worked, and Hushai’s actions led to David’s protection from a military attack (2 Sam. 17). Throughout the turmoil in David’s family and in the country, Yahweh remained faithful to his covenant to David as well as to His promise to punish David for his sin.

Where We Are In The Story (2 Corinthians)

Background of 2 Corinthians: In 1 Corinthians, we learn that Paul sent Timothy to Corinth because of his concerns about this church (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10). Timothy’s experiences in Corinth prompted Paul to visit these believers in what he describes as a “painful visit” (2 Cor. 2:1), particularly because of his interactions with an unnamed Corinthian (2 Cor. 2:5-11). This visit led Paul to write a “severe letter” to the Corinthians (see 2 Cor. 2:3; 7:8-12), which has been lost, so 2 Corinthians is actually the third letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. This letter was meant to prepare the Corinthians for his impending visit, which is described in Acts 20:3. Opponents of Paul who were preaching a false gospel also materialized in Corinth (2 Cor. 3:1; 11:4), and Paul provides a defense of his ministry in 2 Corinthians because of the accusations of these “super apostles” (2 Cor. 10-12). His defense leads to the theme in this letter of God’s power and sufficiency despite human weakness.

This Week in 2 Corinthians: Unlike 1 Corinthians, this book seems a little disorganized in that Paul often circles back to

further discuss previous subjects, but throughout the letter, he defends himself against the claims of the false teachers in Corinth. Their allegations against Paul involve the following:

- They claimed to be on par with Paul and the other apostles and trusted teachers, if not superior to them, because of the message that they preached (2 Cor. 11:12-15). Because of this, Paul refers them as “super-apostles” and “false apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5, 13; 12:11).
- The false teachers advocated righteousness based on the old covenant (2 Cor. 3). This means that they were Judaizers or those who urged Gentile Christians to live like Jews by keeping the law, specifically circumcision and food laws, and they did not understand the freedom that came in Christ (see also Rom. 8:1-11).
- Paul vacillated in his travel plans to Corinth because of God’s leading and other circumstances that arose, and as a result, the false teachers brought into question his word and his care for the Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:12-22; 2:12-17).
- The false teachers brought letters of recommendation with them while Paul had none (2 Cor. 3:1-3; 4:1-2). Paul points out that, unlike these traveling teachers, he did not charge the Corinthians for his teaching (2 Cor. 11:7; 12:14-18).
- The false teachers valued and praised outward skills such as a strong presence and speaking skills and valued these more than the content of one’s heart (2 Cor. 5:12; 10:7-12; 11:1-6). They boasted in themselves, their skills, and their accomplishments, but Paul responds by quoting Jeremiah 9:24 and stating that the only boasting that should occur is boasting in the Lord (2 Cor. 10:17).

2 Corinthians 4 continues the discussion from chapter three in which Paul is defending his ministry, and this can be seen in how he starts the section off with the theme of commending/recommendation (see 2 Cor. 3:1-2; 4:1-2; 5:12; 6:4). The false teachers in Corinth would have carried letters of introduction from powerful friends, and such letters were used to open doors for these teachers in a new city. Because they were teachers, they would have relied on the Corinthians to financially support them in return for their instruction (see 2 Cor. 2:17; 11:7-11, 20; 12:13-18). These teachers emphasized resources such as the letters of recommendation or impressive oratorical skills as indicators of validity and success, and they criticized Paul for not having either.

In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul points out that by focusing on such outward, earthly measures, the teachers were attending to what is temporary and visible instead of what is eternal and invisible. In God’s program, He uses “jars of clay” or what is weak to show His strength (2 Cor. 4:7), and this perspective highlights God’s ability to work through human suffering to accomplish His purpose. In the midst of sickness, affliction, and death, believers can hope and look towards the day when we will be raised with Christ and receive the inheritance promised to us (2 Cor. 4:8-5:5). Living in light of what is eternal requires the believer to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7), which is in contrast to the actions and teachings of the false teachers in Corinth (2 Cor. 5:12).

This leads Paul to rehearse the gospel. Those who are in Christ are a new creation and are reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:16-18), and as a result of our peace with God, we join Him in His work by becoming “ambassadors for Christ” and telling others of God’s offer of forgiveness and reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21). In light of the gospel, Paul urges the Corinthians “not to receive the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1-2). As recipients of God’s grace, our lives should line up with God’s truth and purpose. Regarding Paul’s description of ministry in 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, P.E. Hughes writes the following in his commentary on this epistle:

This movingly beautiful hymn-like passage flows from the deep heart of the Apostle’s knowledge and experience...It challenges every serious reader to re-examine as before God his own relationship to the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord and with redoubled earnestness to dedicate his life and talents afresh to the single-minded prosecution of the cause of Christ.

The context about not being yoked with unbelievers in 2 Corinthians 6 has to do with the temple cults in Corinth (although it can also refer to the false teachers), and it has implications for all human relationships, including dating/marriage relationships (so this text dissuades missionary dating as well as marrying an unbeliever). Separation does not mean that we avoid all contact with unbelievers, for that would prohibit our involvement in God’s mission. Paul’s use of the words “yoked,” “partnership,” and “fellowship” (2 Cor. 6:14) provide a picture of the type of relationship that Paul is meaning, for these words give the idea of combining or allying ourselves with unbelievers. The basis for this instruction is found in our reconciliation with God (2 Cor. 5). Because we are in relationship with Him and because He resides in us (2 Cor. 6:16), we should avoid any union with anything that opposes Him. Instead, our lives should honor

and reflect the One who has saved us.

In this letter, Paul also includes instructions regarding a collection for the poor believers in Jerusalem. This had originally been communicated to the Corinthians in his first letter (1 Cor. 16:1, 3), and Paul intended to pick up the Corinthians' offering when he came through the city. Other churches in the region had also contributed to this offering (see Rom. 15:26; Gal. 2:10), and when they first had word of this need, the Corinthians were enthusiastic about giving (2 Cor. 8:10-11). However, they had ceased in their efforts to raise funds for this collection, which is why Paul wrote to spur them on and included the example of the Macedonians who gave to the offering out of their own poverty (2 Cor. 8:1-5). Paul is not just concerned with their giving; he also attends to their attitude in giving (2 Cor. 9:7). Paul roots his discussion on giving in the grace of God, for sincere generosity is evidence of God's work in our hearts (2 Cor. 9:13). Also, in giving the believer demonstrates faith in God's provision and recognizes that He is the reason why we have means to give in the first place. The discussion of giving can be a sensitive subject in the church, and for more teaching on this subject, listen to Pastor David's sermon on 2 Corinthians 8-9 entitled "The Cross and Christian Generosity" (radical.net).