

FAITHFUL DURING DISTRESS

Lesson 1, Genesis 19:1, 15-26, 29, NIV

CELEBRITY GODPARENTS

A godparent is an adult chosen by the parents of a young child to take an interest in the child's upbringing and personal development. Parents usually choose a friend or colleague for that role with the understanding that this person will remain close to the family over the years. Many celebrity couples have chosen a well-known friend to serve as a godparent. Can you make a guess as to which celebrity has been selected to be godparent to which celebrity godchild?

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| _____ 1. Willie Mays | | |
| _____ 2. Dolly Parton | a. Usher | e. Angelina Jolie |
| _____ 3. Aretha Franklin | | |
| _____ 4. Steven Spielberg | b. Drew Barrymore | f. Miley Cyrus |
| _____ 5. Jamie Lee Curtis | | |
| _____ 6. Sugar Ray Leonard | c. Khloé Kardashian | g. Jake Gyllenhaal |
| _____ 7. Ben Vereen | | |
| _____ 8. Jacqueline Bisset | d. Barry Bonds | h. Whitney Houston |

SURPRISING OR EXPECTED?

Genesis 18, 19 tells the story of how degrees of faith and doubt affected the lives of real people. Review the elements of this account that follow. When we look at these elements, some may be surprising while some may not. Mark each of these elements as being expected by you (*E*) or as being surprising to you (*S*). There are no right or wrong answers. What is important is that you can explain why you marked each statement as you did.

- _____ 1. Abraham argued with Yahweh for the sake of Lot and his family (Genesis 18:22-33).
- _____ 2. Lot sat at Sodom's city gates, probably indicating that he had assumed a leadership role in that wicked city (Genesis 19:1).
- _____ 3. Even though Lot recognized the sinfulness of Sodom, he remained there with his family (2 Peter 2:5-10).
- _____ 4. Lot's sons-in-law scoffed at the idea that Sodom would be destroyed (Genesis 19:12-14).
- _____ 5. Even though disaster was imminent, Lot hesitated in getting his family out of the city (Genesis 19:15-17).
- _____ 6. Lot argued with his rescuers about how far from the city he should run (Genesis 19:18-22).
- _____ 7. Lot's wife disobeyed the command not to look back at the evil city and remained in that area permanently—as a salt pillar (Genesis 19:23-26)!
- _____ 8. Ultimately, it was Abraham's bold faith, not Lot's, that was responsible for the rescue of Lot and his daughters (Genesis 19:29)

FAITHFUL DURING GRIEF

Lesson 2, 1 Samuel 1:9-20, NIV

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

At times, prayer seems simple—we ask and God answers. More often, however, this vital resource in times of grief and sorrow is not that simple. Here is an outline of the account of Hannah’s request for a son from 1 Samuel 1:9-20. Use the elements from the word and phrase bank to put the outline together.

Reactions of a Sufferer

_____ (vv. 9, 10)
_____ (v. 11)

Possible Responses to a Sufferer

_____ (vv. 12, 13)
_____ (v. 14)
_____ (vv. 15, 16)
_____ (v. 17)

Answers from God

_____ (v. 18)
_____ (vv. 19, 20)

Word and Phrase Bank

Encouragement
Eventual Fulfillment
Immediate Peace
Listening
Mistaken Conclusions
Plea and Promise
Unwarranted Advice
Weeping

A PRAYER THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

In the early sixteenth century, the king of England, speaking for the Church of England, resisted the idea of having an English Bible translation in the language of the common man. William Tyndale translated the Scriptures from Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and worked to get this translation into the hands of people. As a result, Tyndale was arrested and publicly executed. His final words were those of a prayer: “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes!” This plea was eventually granted. Years after Tyndale’s execution, the Word of God could be found in nearly every home in the country.

How does Tyndale’s final prayer challenge some common ideas about prayer?

Certainly, Tyndale’s final prayer was not his only prayer for the king and the availability of the Bible. What might have been the content of some of those earlier prayers?

How does this story inspire you to be more faithful in prayer?

FAITHFUL DURING UNCERTAINTY

Lesson 3, Exodus 16:1-15, NIV

DECODE THE TITLE

What is this puzzle about? You will have to solve it to find out! Unscramble these words, noting the letters in the boxes. Then transfer the boxed letters to the numbered blanks to decode the title.

1. ETEHRAW	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	1	
2. BOJ		<input type="checkbox"/>
		2
3. MYNEO	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	3	
4. NUHGER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4	5
5. NITRETNE		<input type="checkbox"/>
		6
6. RECSIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	7	
7. CILOTSIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	8	
8. UOPITLNLO		<input type="checkbox"/>
		9
9. RIFTFCA		<input type="checkbox"/>
		10
10. NDCHRILE	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	11	
11. SOUPES		<input type="checkbox"/>
		12
12. TUNESFLESAW	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13	14
13. PITDYISUT		<input type="checkbox"/>
		15
14. HAEHLT	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	16	

13 11 14 15 1 16 5 7 9 8 12 10 2 3 4 6

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

In Exodus 16:1-15, we read about how Yahweh answered the complaints of the people of Israel by giving them bread and meat to eat. But some people never learn! In Numbers 11:4-6, 18-20, 31-34, similar complaints and responses were made. Compare and contrast these accounts by reading the passages and answering these questions.

When did these events happen? _____

Who was complaining? _____

What were the complaints? _____

What did Yahweh say to the people about these complaints? _____

What did Yahweh do to the people because of these complaints? _____

FAITHFUL DESPITE UNFAITHFULNESS

Lesson 4, Numbers 13:1, 2, 17, 18, 25-28; 14:1, 2, 5-10, NIV

MOTIVATION

Match the beginning of each motivational quote to its conclusion.

- _____ 1. Life shrinks or expands . . .
- _____ 2. I attribute my success to this: . . .
- _____ 3. Every strike brings me closer to . . .
- _____ 4. The most common way people give up their power is . . .
- _____ 5. Eighty percent of success is . . .
- _____ 6. Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, . . .
- _____ 7. I am not a product of my circumstances; . . .
- _____ 8. You miss 100% of the shots . . .
- _____ 9. Whether you think you can or you think you can't, . . .
- _____ 10. The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and . . .

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. showing up. (Woody Allen) | f. it can achieve. (Napoleon Hill) |
| b. the next home run. (Babe Ruth) | g. you're right. (Henry Ford) |
| c. I never gave or took any excuse.
(Florence Nightingale) | h. in proportion to one's courage.
(Anais Nin) |
| d. by thinking they don't have any.
(Alice Walker) | i. I am a product of my decisions.
(Stephen Covey) |
| e. the day you find out why. (Mark Twain) | j. you don't take. (Wayne Gretzky) |

COUNSELING SESSION

As was the case in today's Bible lesson, walking by faith is not often easy. Consider these three cases of people who know they should trust God and move forward, but they are paralyzed with fear. Without "giving advice," how would you counsel them?

Case 1: Mark and Gwen have prayed for years that they be used by God in a greater way. They applied to a missions agency, were accepted, and have been able to secure pledges of financial support. But their fears are mounting, and they wonder if this move is God's will.

Case 2: Calvin's congregation is conducting a capital fundraising campaign. He has been blessed financially in great ways over the years and has the means to give a five-figure gift. And though his financial advisor assures him that he can do this, Calvin balks.

Case 3: The Morrisons are a family of five, with children aged 12–17. They believed that God was leading them to add another child to their family through an overseas adoption, and the process has been proceeding without problems. But as the day comes closer for a child to be available, the difficulties they will face seem more and more daunting.

FAITHFUL IN CONSEQUENCES

Lesson 5, Numbers 14:10b-20, NIV

IN PLACE OF

Find the words in this grid that are defined as someone standing in the place of another.

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

WORD LIST:

Advocate	Liaison
Agent	Pinch hitter
Ally	Promoter
Backer	Proxy
Broker	Sponsor
Champion	Stand-in
Deputy	Substitute
Go-between	Supporter
Intercessor	Understudy
Intermediator	

SUBSTITUTING SUBTEXT

After the rebellion of the Israelites in the wilderness, Moses and God had a memorable conversation! These six statements are loose paraphrases of what either God or Moses was saying. In the blank before each statement, place a verse reference(s) to indicate where you believe that statement fits in the conversation. Note that answers may vary, so be prepared to defend your placement.

- _____ 1. What will people say?
- _____ 2. OK, you win!
- _____ 3. I've had it up to here with them!
- _____ 4. Be the "better man."
- _____ 5. I'll give you their share.
- _____ 6. You should keep your promise.

OBEDIENT FAITH

Lesson 6, Deuteronomy 4:1-8, 12, 13, NIV

WHY OBEY?

Today's text includes at least three reasons from Moses for obeying God's commands. Each of these can motivate and encourage Christians today just as they did God's people led by Moses. Respond to each of the case studies below with a rationale from today's text to challenge the speaker's attitude.



It's no fun being single, and it's especially difficult to be a single Christian. Most of the single people I meet are pushing for sexual intimacy as a part of any ongoing dating relationship. And this is even true with other Christians! Why should I continue to say No when it seems like everybody is saying Yes?

Photo: © kjekol / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Everybody knows nice guys finish last, especially where I work. I have a family to feed and kids to put through college, and I really need a promotion in my job. If I have to butter up my boss to get it, I will. If I have to remind the boss how hard I'm working (harder than the other people in my department), I'll tell him. If my boss asks me to lie to a vendor to get us more time, if he tells me to promise a customer something we may not be able to deliver, why should I make waves? It's only a job, and I'll use my higher salary to do many good things.



Photo: © ajr_images / iStock / Getty Images Plus



The older I get, the less willing I am to keep trying to be perfect. We're all only human, after all. Frankly, I get a little tired of going to church and coming home feeling guilty because of how I don't measure up. God is a God of love, right? Doesn't He know how hard it is to live by the rules my minister is always preaching?

Photo: © Radist / iStock / Getty Images Plus

OBEYING GOD WITH CONFIDENCE

We can note many similarities between the hero of last week's lesson, Moses, and Elijah, the prophet we're studying today. Look at the Scriptures in the left column of the chart below and then fill in the blanks in the right-hand column to describe how the lives of these two men were similar.

Moses Exodus 5:1; 7:20; 8:20; 9:1	Challenged _____ who defied God.
Elijah 1 Kings 18:16-18	Challenged _____ who defied God.
Moses Exodus 2:11-15 Elijah 1 Kings 17:1-7	Forced to _____ from _____. Forced to _____ from _____.
Moses Exodus 3:1-6 Elijah 1 Kings 19:9-13	(Both) Experienced the _____ of God in a unique way.

WHAT JESUS SAID

Jesus used today's story of Elijah and the widow to make a point with those who heard him preach in his hometown of Nazareth. Read Luke 4:16-30 and consider the following questions.

1. What claim did Jesus make about himself?

2. How was Jesus comparing the faithfulness of his audience with the faithfulness of the Israelites in Elijah's day?

3. How did his hearers react? Why?

4. What does God honor most: religious heritage or current faith?

5. Write a sentence to state the lesson in this for Christian churchgoers today.

WHAT'S FAITH LIKE?

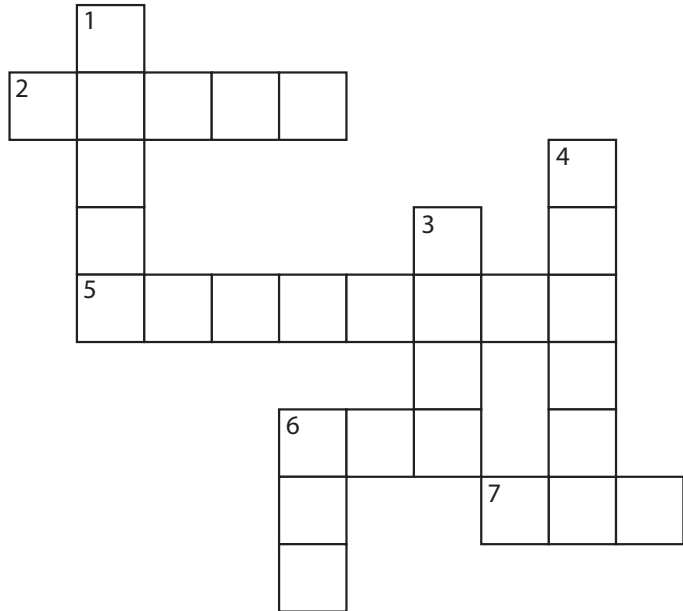
Use the clues below to complete this crossword puzzle. Then arrange all the words in the puzzle to form a sentence that makes a statement about faith.

Down

- 1. Without this it is impossible to please God.
- 3. Better than hate, but not quite love.
- 4. Sometimes it's in a tank.
- 6. Connecting conjunction.

Across

- 2. Drink eight glasses a day.
- 5. Opposite of arrogance.
- 6. I am, and they ____.
- 7. Same as 6 down.



MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE

What petition or praise could you lift to God that would truly stretch your faith? What do you desire, what great need do you see in your world, that can be helped only by God's hand? In the space below, jot down faith-stretching prayer requests. Consider how God's answer to those prayers might surprise others—or you, yourself!

Monday	Thursday
Tuesday	Friday
Wednesday	Saturday

REFLECTING ON GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Try to imagine the mind-set and the attitude of both the Pharisee and the sinful woman in the Luke 7 account. What might they have written in their diaries the evening after that event happened? In the space below, jot down their contrasting interpretations of what Jesus said and did. Include what they might have included in their prayers that evening. You need not write complete entries, but only phrases that would have been included.

Simon's Diary

The Woman's Diary

A GRAPH OF MY GRATITUDE

On the graph below, put points to indicate how grateful you've been to God in the past. Connect the points to make a line graph that tells a story of your gratitude. Circle the points that represent the highest points of gratitude.

Extremely								
Very								
Somewhat								
A little								
None								
	50 years ago	40 years ago	30 years ago	20 years ago	10 years ago	5 years ago	Last year	Last week

How does your graph relate to your understanding of God's forgiveness?

What would make you more grateful for how he has forgiven you?

How can you demonstrate this gratitude?

FAITH THAT IS TESTED

Lesson 10, 2 Corinthians 13:1-11, NIV

A DIFFICULT LETTER

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is difficult, sometimes bordering on harsh. He ends it with challenges that are pointed but ultimately full of positive possibilities.

Use the following outline to help you summarize what Paul is telling the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 13:1-13. First fill in the blanks to state which verses are represented by each heading. Then jot down a sentence or two to summarize what Paul is saying in that section.

A. His warning repeated; verses ____ - ____

B. His wish presented; verses ____ - ____

C. His hopes explained; verses ____ - ____

D. His blessing given; verses ____ - ____

STRENGTH THROUGH WEAKNESS

Today's passage is not the only place where Paul writes to the Corinthians about strength through weakness. Read these passages to see what else he says: 1 Corinthians 1:27; 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10. (You may also want to look at other passages, such as Psalm 8:2 and Hebrews 11:32-34.)

Write one or two sentences that summarize the Bible's teaching about achieving ultimate strength by embracing weakness.

Now jot down one area of your life where you feel especially weak. How could God use that weakness for his glory?

FAITH THAT SETS AN EXAMPLE

Lesson 11, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10, NIV

COUNTERFEIT GODS

In his book *Counterfeit Gods*, Timothy Keller says, “Anything in life can serve as an idol, a God-alternative, a counterfeit god.” He goes on to point out that not only evil problems—such as greed, sexual lust, or misuse of power—are idols. More often good things become idols when we place the pursuit of them above our devotion to God.

In the left column of the chart below, write good goals we do well to pursue. (Two are listed to get you started.) In the right column, jot down ways in which this good goal can become an unhealthy idol.

Good goals, such as . . .	become idols when . . .
Strong family	
Healthy body	

Place a star beside each of the goals at the left that you have set for yourself. Circle the goal that threatens to become an idol in your life.

COMPOSING A PRAYER

Write a one-sentence prayer below, asking for God’s help in putting him first and removing any idol from your life.

Dear God,

FAITH THAT IS FOCUSED

Lesson 12, 1 Peter 1:13-25, NIV

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HOLY?

The eight words below describe various aspects of what it means to be holy. How many can you find?

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

Word Bank:

consecrated
different
hallowed
pure
revered
sacred
sanctified
separate

MY LIFE IS YOURS, LORD

Read the lyrics to the hymn “Take My Life and Let It Be” by Frances Havergal. Next to phrases in the hymn, write words or verse references from 1 Peter 1:13-25 that express similar ideas.

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in endless praise

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every pow’r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Underline phrases from the hymn that are the most challenging or inspirational to you. Then choose one of the stanzas to memorize as a prayer you’ll repeat throughout the coming week.

FAITH THAT ESCAPES CORRUPTION

Lesson 13, 2 Peter 1:1-15, NIV

WHAT DO THEY NEED?

Peter lists eight qualities essential to our maturity in Christ. Almost every Christian needs to concentrate on at least one of these in order to demonstrate and experience more deeply his or her relationship to God. Draw a line from each quality on the left to the quote that fits it on the right. Be aware that not everyone will match them the same way.

1. Knowledge	A. I'm sorry, but I can't get over being angry with two people in my church whose actions continue to frustrate me. I prefer just to ignore them when the church gathers on Sunday. I don't need to sit near them!
2. Self-control	B. My friends think of me as a "wild person," and I like that, to tell you the truth. It's fun to break the rules!
3. Godliness	C. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed trying to figure out what I'm supposed to do and how I'm supposed to live as a Christian.
4. Goodness	D. With all the talk about sex around me and all the liberated views of sex portrayed in media and advertising, I struggle to live by the narrow sexual standards of the Bible.
5. Faith	E. I don't know how much longer I can deal with the problems and pressures of my life and all the assaults on my faith from my family and in the workplace.
6. Perseverance	F. Of course I believe in God. But I must admit I continue to see areas of my life where I haven't let God take control.
7. Mutual affection	G. I hear talk of God, but I'm not sure I believe everything I do should be tackled with God in mind.
8. Love	H. Sure there are plenty of needs in the world. But I'm too busy with my own job and my own family to worry about the poor or abused or underfed people in the world.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Select one quality from the list above and write it in the space below. Then make a list of at least three practical steps you can take to develop and demonstrate that virtue this week. You may decide to share your goals with another class member or someone else close to you.

Area where I need to grow:	How I can allow this quality to grow in me: 1. 2. 3.
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Lesson 1

Celebrity Godparents: 1=d. 2=f. 3=h. 4=b. 5=g. 6=c. 7=a. 8=e.

Lesson 2

Suggested answers to “Putting It Together”:

Reactions of a Sufferer

- Weeping (vv. 9, 10)
- Plea and Promise (v. 11)

Possible Responses to a Sufferer

- Mistaken Conclusions (vv. 12, 13)
- Unwarranted Advice (v. 14)
- Listening (vv. 15, 16)
- Encouragement (v. 17)

Answers from God

- Immediate Peace (v. 18)
- Eventual Fulfillment (vv. 19, 20)

Lesson 3

Answers to “Decode the Title”: 1=weather. 2=job. 3=money. 4=hunger. 5=Internet. 6=prices. 7=politics. 8=pollution. 9=traffic. 10=children. 11=spouse. 12=wastefulness. 13=stupidity. 14=health. *Title*=What We Gripe About.

Lesson 4

Answers to “Motivation”: 1=h. 2=c. 3=b. 4=d. 5=a. 6=f. 7=i. 8=j. 9=g. 10=e.

Lesson 5

Answers to “In Place Of”:

I Y . R E K C A B
 . N A D V O C A T E
 . . . T . . . G U . T . R
 . . N E . R E T R O P P U S
 . C I . R Y . N S . M G
 . H D . L M L S T R O O
 . A N L Y I E . . . B E . R
 . M A . A C . D E . . D . P
 . P T I R E T T I H H C N I P
 . I S E D . W . . . A U
 . O T . E E T U T I T S B U S
 N N . . . E . P R O S N O P S
 I . . . N U R E K O R B
 T
 Y X O R P

Suggested answers to “Substituting Subtext” (Answers may vary.) 1. vv. 13, 14; 2. v. 20. 3. v. 11. 4. vv. 17-19. 5. v. 12. 6. vv. 15, 16.

Lesson 7

Answers to “Obeying God with Confidence”: (Moses) Challenged Pharaoh who defied God. (Elijah) Challenged Ahab who defied God; (Moses) Forced to flee from Pharaoh. (Elijah) Forced to hide from Ahab; (Moses and Elijah) Experienced the presence of God in a unique way.

Suggested answers to “What Jesus Said”: 1=He claimed to be the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. 2=He said no prophet is accepted in his own country, which is why Elijah had to go to a pagan widow for help. 3=They were “filled with wrath” and tried to throw him off a cliff. 4=God values obedience more than religious credentials or heritage. 5=We can’t claim God’s blessing based on the fact of our being Christians; our faith must be accompanied by acts of obedience.

Lesson 8

Answer to “What’s Faith Like?”: Faith and humility are like water and oxygen. See grid below.



Lesson 10

Answers to “A Difficult Letter”: vv. 1-4; vv. 5, 6; vv. 7-10; vv. 11-13.

Lesson 12

Answers to “What Does It Mean to Be Holy?”:

. T D S
 E N . A C
 W . . . E O C
 O . . . N R . R . . P
 . E . L . . . S . . . E . E . U
 . T L R E V E R E D . F . D R
 . A . . . C F . E
 H R . . R I
 . A . A D E I F I T C N A S D
 . P T
 . E
 D S

Lesson 13

Suggested answers to “What Do They Need?”: 1-C. 2-B. 3-F. 4-D. 5-G. 6-E. 7-A. 8-H.