

One Path or Many Paths to Life?

Lesson 1

Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family services
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Objectives

- There is one true path to restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- Satan has deceived many into believing there are many paths that lead to God.
- Distinguishing between true and false paths to God.

Opening Activity

- How many answers are there to the equation $5x=10$?
- How many wrong answers are there to the same equation?

Teaching Points

- Two supernatural powers exist.
- Everyone has a lens through which they view the world which is called a "worldview"
- An individual's worldview affects how they view all of life and can begin to be exposed by the following questions:
 - What is the origin of life?
 - What is the meaning of life?
 - What is right and wrong?
 - What happens after death?
- God and Satan desire man's heart but they engage very different tactics to capture man's heart.

Matthew 7:13-20

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Discussion Questions

1. What do people tend to pursue in life?
2. There are two ways identified in verses 13 and 14. What do these verses tell us is different about the two paths?
3. What do the paths in these verses represent?
4. How do false prophets use people's desires (look at answers to question 1) to deceive them into staying on the path to destruction?
5. When you travel, you will periodically come across signs telling you where you are going. Why would someone stay on a path that takes him or her in the wrong direction?
6. What are reasons someone would tell you the path they are traveling leads to eternity with God when it does not?
7. How do you identify a false prophet? Or a path that leads to destruction vs. a path that leads to life?

Call to Salvation

- The Bible is clear: this is only one way to God.
 - Satan wants to deceive and distract us from this truth.
1. What are common messages from culture and “the flesh” which Satan desires to promote?
 2. What false paths do you think Satan would use to deceive you and others who grow up in church?
 3. Where does “good fruit” and “evil fruit” come from? *Matthew 7:17-18*

Treasure Hunt

- Your goal is to find the treasure in less than 10 minutes using no more than 15 questions.
- Once you think you know the location of the treasure, you can check the location. If you are correct, you can have the treasure. If you are incorrect, you can use the remaining time and question/s to continue looking.
- You can also only check three locations during the course of the activity.

The Good News

Lesson 2

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Objectives

Five Central Realities of the Gospel:

1. Man is dead in sin.
2. Christ as the Rescuer.
3. Salvation through faith in Christ.
4. Faith producing fruit.
5. Eternity with the Lord.

Opening Activity

- Material: rock, living bug, plant, dead bug
- How do you distinguish between what is dead and what is alive?

Teaching Points

- Humans are inherently evil because of “the Fall” in *Genesis 3*. The evil we see around us originates from within us.
- Man’s problem is our broken relationship with God because of our sin. We enter the world wicked and needing rescued from our wickedness.
- God provides a path to be in right relationship with Him through His son, Jesus Christ. The Believer, one who has faith in Christ’s work, is given Jesus Christ’s righteousness and through His righteousness is reconciled to God.
- The converted person grows in their love for and desire to honor God.
- Christ brings life to the believer’s heart so they then look forward to eternity in Heaven with God.

Ephesians 2:1-9 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Discussion Questions

1. How does *Ephesians 2:1-3* describe the unconverted person?
2. What do you notice in your daily life that shows the reality of man's problem?
3. What must happen for a soul to shift from death to life? (*Ephesians 2:4-9*)
4. What is God's solution to man's problem?
5. Describe what keeps man from seeking this solution.
6. How would you summarize what these verses say about right and wrong?
7. What is the significance of salvation coming through faith and not works?
8. What does this (answer to question 7) tell us about the Bible's teaching on where life originates?
9. What do verses 6 and 7 tell us about life after death for the saved?

Call to Salvation

Christianity believes that sin separates man from God and this separation can only be removed through placing one's faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. Why was Jesus' sacrifice necessary?
2. The Greek word translated to Gospel means "the good news" - why is the Gospel good news?

Activity:

Death to Life

Is there Truth? New Age Spirituality

Lesson 3

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Objectives

- New Age Spirituality worldview - What do they believe?
- The appeal of this belief system.
- Dangers of this belief system.
- Where this worldview collides with Christianity.

Opening Activity

- Ask two students to play a game. (for example: Connect Four or Hang Man)
- Then ask two students to play the same game but to ignore all the rules of the game.
- Question:
 - Do rules constrict or provide freedom?

New Age Spirituality

- Someone holding to this view would likely be open to the existence of spiritual forces, yet they would deny anything as having absolute authority.
- They would also deny absolute truth. They would see truth as relative and able to be defined by each individual.
- Some who ascribe to this view can appreciate the Bible's moral teachings on loving and serving others. However, they would not believe in the Bible as the inspired word of God.
- This worldview says the most important thing is to be true to one's self and show kindness to others.

Matthew 22:37-40 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Discussion Questions

1. What might someone who agrees with the New Age Spirituality worldview agree with from *Matthew 22:37-40*?
2. In what ways does the New Age Spirituality sound similar to Christianity?
3. In what ways does this viewpoint sound appealing?
4. Would you see any dangers in this worldview?
5. Could someone follow this type of belief system and believe they are a Christian? How so?
6. What might someone who agrees with the New Age Spirituality worldview disagree with or have a different interpretation of from *Matthew 22:37-40*?

If Time Allows:

- Read *Matthew 7* and circle what someone from a New Age Spirituality worldview would focus on. Then underline other parts of *Matthew 7* that someone from the New Age Spirituality perspective would likely disregard.
 - What do you notice from this exercise?

Call to Salvation

- Christianity teaches: You are in need of being reconciled to God through placing your faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ's sacrifice on the cross brings salvation and then you are able to love and serve others. Read the verses in *Matthew 22:37-40* and have students focus on the order: first love God and then love others.
- New Age Spirituality teaches: First, you are a good person and then second, go love other people. New Age Spirituality removes the need for God or salvation and just tells the person to love others. Those who follow this worldview appear to be very nice, kind and loving people. They may do many nice things but they do not know or follow the one true God, which means they are still dead in their sin even though they do nice things.

Chief of Police Fired

Have you ridden in a car recently? Why do so many people use vehicles as a way of transportation?

One God, No Jesus Islam and Judaism

Lesson 4

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Objectives

- Islam, Judaism, and Christianity all believe there is one true God. However, these religions are vastly different from one another and each of these three religions worship a different God.
- Basic understanding of Islam and Judaism.
- Where these worldviews collide with Christianity.

Opening Activity

- Ask for three volunteers. One is by himself while the other two are together. Pretend that no one and nothing else exists (imagine before Creation). Person one exists all by themselves and the other two exist together by themselves.
- Ask person 1 to say something. In our pretend world, did anything or anyone hear person 1 say anything? What purpose does speaking have for person 1?
- Ask person 2 to speak and person 3 to reply. Does speaking make sense for this pair (person 2 and person 3)?

Islam

Muslims believe Allah:

- Is a merciful God who created the universe and everything in it.
- Forgave Adam and Eve for their transgressions in the Garden of Eden and there were no lasting impacts of their sin. They do not believe they became spiritually dead nor that this deadness was transferred to future generations. As a result, there is no concept of original sin in Islam.

Muslims believe Man:

- Is morally neutral at birth and can choose either to do good or evil.
- If someone chooses to do more good than evil, they will go to heaven. If they do more evil than good, they will go to hell.

	Christians Believe	Muslims Believe
Man's Position Before God	Man is born spiritually dead and needs to be brought to spiritual life.	Man is born spiritually neutral and can choose to do good apart from God's intervention.
God's Posture Toward Man	God desires an intimate relationship with man.	God is distant and unknowable for man. He does not care about man.
Salvation	Through faith in Jesus Christ's work on the cross.	Through doing more good works than bad works. ("being good enough")
God	Belief in one God who is distinct in three persons (Trinity): The Father, Son and Holy Ghost	God is one in essence and person.
Scripture	Holy Bible	Quran
Jesus	He is God. The Messiah who took on flesh and overcame sin and death.	A prophet.

- Muhammad is the central human figure of Islam. Muslims consider him to be the Prophet who exposed the truth about who God is and how to be His follower.
- The Quran contains Islam's teachings and beliefs. Much like the Holy Bible is to the Christian, the Quran is to the Muslim.
- Comparison Chart: Christianity, Islam <http://www.walkthru.org/wr>

Judaism

- Their Bible called the Hebrew Bible or the Tanakh is very similar to the Old Testament portion of the Christian Bible. They also have what is called The Talmud: this is Jewish rabbis' interpretations of how to live out the teachings from the Old Testament.
- Jews are waiting for the Messiah and do not believe Jesus was the promised Messiah. Jews believe the Messiah will be a political leader who will come with strong military power.
- Judaism is not as focused as other religions on trying to convert others to their view. Jews hold themselves to high standards regarding following the laws of the Torah - first five books of the Bible.

John 14:6-14

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

Discussion Questions

1. How would you respond to someone who says Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are the same?
2. Circle Jesus' claims about himself in *John 14:6-14*. How would these claims collide with the beliefs of Islam and Judaism?
3. According to *John 14:6-14* how would you describe the relationship between Jesus and The Father?
4. If you were talking with someone of the Islam or Judaism faith would you focus on helping him or her live a Godly life or know Jesus? Why?
5. As we interact with individuals of differing beliefs, we often find out they live honorably. How would you help someone understand their need for a Savior when they may not realize they need a Savior?

Call to Salvation

In Islam, there is no need for salvation. They believe you get what you deserve based on how you live. In Judaism, salvation is needed but is coming from a future messiah. They would primarily see salvation occurring through following the law and trusting in the future messiah. Christianity differs from both Islam and Judaism in believing salvation is needed and is found through trusting in Jesus Christ's work on the cross. Faith is central in all three of these religions but where each places their faith is vastly different. In Islam, faith is placed in an individual's actions. In Judaism, faith is placed in a future Messiah. In Christianity, faith is placed in the completed work of Jesus Christ.

Which Goes Where?

This activity will focus on reviewing differing beliefs between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Divide class into two teams and put away the material from the lesson so they cannot use it to answer questions.

Each correct answer = 2pts.

Are they Christian? Mormonism & Jehovah Witness

Lesson 5

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Objectives

- Mormonism and Jehovah Witness worldview (What do they believe?)
- The appeal of this belief system.
- Dangers of this belief system.
- Where this worldview collides with Christianity.

Opening Activity

- Material: A real \$20 and a fake \$20.
- Which of these existed first?
- Which one ultimately will be used?

Mormonism: Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints

- Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church in 1830 in Palmyra, New York.
- Joseph Smith claimed he received direct revelation from Jesus Christ who told him all churches were deceived and then shared the “true gospel” with him.
- While many Mormons claim they are Christians, Joseph Smith claimed that what he was told by God and Jesus is that all Christian churches were wrong, their creeds were an abomination, and their beliefs corrupt.

	Christians Believe	Mormons Believe
Man's Position Before God	Man is born spiritually dead and needs to be brought to spiritual life.	Man is inherently good and living correctly can lead to man becoming a god in the afterlife.
Salvation	Through faith in Jesus Christ's work on the cross.	Through combination of faith, good works, Mormon baptism and laying on of hands.
God	Belief in one God who is distinct in three persons (Trinity): The Father, Son and Holy Ghost	Belief in multiple gods but one ultimate God "Heavenly Father", who was a man but became God through obedience. (Deny the doctrine of The Trinity)
Scripture	Holy Bible	Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, King James Bible; as far as it was correctly translated
Jesus	He is God. The Messiah who took on flesh and overcame sin and death.	A spirit baby of "Heavenly Father" and Mary. A God but a lesser God than "Heavenly Father".

Jehovah Witness: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

- While they identify themselves as a Christian church, they deny several core Christian doctrines and affirm several doctrines, which are outside of orthodox Christianity.
- While there are many differences between Christianity and JW, the difference of how they see God and Jesus is the core difference which is of utmost importance.
- JW believe only 144,000 people will be allowed into heaven. These are referred to as the “anointed” and the 144,000 have all been accounted for by 1935, meaning no one born after 1935 will be allowed into heaven. However, they believe other good people will live on earth in its original created state (prior to the fall in *Genesis 3*).
- Some would say JW believe salvation is earned through good works. They do not believe in hell or that eternal punishment for sin exists. Those who die in their sin will just cease to exist.

	Christians Believe	Jehovah Witnesses Believe
God	Belief in one God who is distinct in three persons (Trinity): The Father, Son and Holy Ghost	Belief in multiple gods but one ultimate God "Jehovah". (Deny the doctrine of The Trinity)
Scripture	Holy Bible	New World Translation (NWT) version of the Bible. They published this in 1961. Several passages they translated differently than other Bible translations to fit their doctrine.
Jesus	He is God. The Messiah who took on flesh and overcame sin and death.	Jesus is a God but a lesser God who was created by the ultimate God. In 1954, they stopped worshipping Jesus saying it was idolatrous to do so. They see Him as the first creation of God.

Isaiah 44:6-8

"Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. 7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. 8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."

Discussion Questions

1. What does *Isaiah 44:6-8* teach us about God? How are these teachings similar or different from Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses view of God?
2. How would you respond to someone who says Christianity and Mormonism are the same?
3. How would you respond to someone who says Christianity and Jehovah Witness are the same?
4. What are the differences in how Christians, Mormons, and Jehovah Witness' view Jesus?
5. If you were talking with a Mormon or Jehovah Witness, would you focus on helping them live a Godly life or know the God of the Bible? Why?
6. Often the New Testament draws on the Old Testament to teach and bring into greater focus the truths in the Old Testament. *Hebrews 1:10* is drawing from *Psalms 102:25*. Read *Hebrews 1:6-12* and *Psalms 102:24-27*. How might these verses be used to help expound the truth about who God is to a Mormon or JW?
7. Read the chart comparing Christianity, Mormonism, and Jehovah Witnesses beliefs. What differences stand out to you? World Religions Chart - <http://www.walkthru.org/wr>

Call to Salvation

Among other things, Mormons and Jehovah Witness' have very different views on hell from Christianity. Mormons believe only those who have walked away from Mormon church will go to hell while Jehovah Witnesses believe there is no hell. The Bible clearly teaches there to be two eternal destinations, Heaven and Hell. Heaven is the eternal dwelling place for all who place their faith in Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ, His righteousness is given to the believer. Placing faith in Christ's work on the cross is the only hope for heaven.

God and His Creation

Class should divide into three groups:

- One group (3+ students) will act out what God would have been like prior to creation and how the Creation story would look according to biblical Christianity.
- The second group (1-3 students) will observe and point out where those from the Mormon faith would disagree with the Christian story line.
- The third group (1-3 students) will observe and point out where those from the Jehovah Witness faith would disagree with the Christian story line.

You Get What You Deserve: Eastern Religion

Lesson 6

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Objectives

- Hinduism and Buddhism worldviews (What do they believe?)
- The appeal of this belief system.
- Dangers of this belief system.
- Where this worldview collides with Christianity.

Opening Discussion

- What would it take for a rotten tomato to become edible?

Hinduism

- Hinduism does not have central doctrines or creeds to which all followers agree on. For this reason, Hinduism is considered the least dogmatic of the major world religions.
- They believe truth is eternal and there are many ways to truth. They believe in many gods but one ultimate god called Brahman who created everything and is in everything.
- All gods can be worshiped and there is no right way to worship these gods.
- In Hinduism, humans are believed to be immortal and going through endless cycles of reincarnation.
- The goal of life in Hinduism is to break out of the endless cycle of reincarnation. Part of life is discovering this way of truth and how to live according to it.

Hinduism Worldview

1. Origin of Life: There is no beginning but rather many beginnings.
2. Life Mission: Live according to your dharma. Dharma is each person's right religious and moral law.
3. Right and wrong are outlined and defined in sacred scriptures, which focus on living morally and religious devotion, but there is no one right way to live.
4. After death, you are reincarnated. As you live rightly, you are progressively reincarnated into higher levels of the caste system. As you progress, you will ultimately break free of the cycle of reincarnation and become one with Brahman.

Buddhism

Siddhartha Gautama is the founder of Buddhism. He grew up in a royal family and was sheltered from the outside world. One day he was able to leave the palace and for the first time came across the reality of suffering in the world. He was also intrigued by the happiness he saw in a poor beggar. Siddhartha Gautama was amazed of the beggar's happiness in spite of his circumstances. Through seeing life outside of the palace, he decided to leave his privileged life to seek understanding and spiritual enlightenment.

Buddhism cont.

During this time of searching, he was meditating near the Ganges River where he learned what he called the "Four Noble Truths":

1. All life is suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is desire.
3. Eliminating desire is the way to eliminating suffering.
4. Desire can be eliminated by following the Eightfold Path.

Buddhism Worldview

1. Origin of Life: No specific teaching on this.
2. Life Mission: Eliminate suffering, gain enlightenment & follow the Eightfold Path:
3. The Eightfold Path:
 1. Right Understanding
 2. Right Thought
 3. Right Speech
 4. Right Action
 5. Right Livelihood
 6. Right Effort
 7. Right Mindfulness (concentration)
 8. Right Meditation
3. Right and wrong: Knowledge of right and wrong comes through self-awareness and self-understanding. (Generally: avoid killing or harming living beings, avoid stealing, avoid sexual misconduct, avoid lying, avoid alcohol and intoxicating drugs)
4. After death: Belief in the cycle of death and rebirth. Through right living "nirvana" can eventually be reached. Most Buddhists believe that when "nirvana" is reached, the individual dies and is not reborn.

Romans 3:9-18

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;
10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

- 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:
14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:
15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:
16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:
17 And the way of peace have they not known:
18 There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Discussion Questions

1. What does *Romans 3:9-18* teach us about man? How are these teachings similar or different from Hinduism and Buddhism's view of man?
2. How would you respond to the following objection of *Romans 3:9-18*?
"Romans 3:9-18 seems to be saying no one does anything good. I see many non-Christians who do good things. Therefore, what *Romans 3* is teaching must be inaccurate."
3. What changes a person according to each of the following religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity?
4. If you were talking with a Hindu or Buddhist, would you focus on helping them live a Godly life or know the God of the Bible? Why?
5. Read the chart comparing Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism beliefs. What differences stand out to you? *World Religions Chart* - <http://www.walkthru.org/wr>

Call to Salvation

According to the Bible, we are spiritually dead and unable to generate anything good of ourselves. We need the work of Christ on the cross to transform us, giving us a new heart and bringing spiritual life. Through faith in Christ, we are rescued from ourselves and able to live a life that is honoring to God because He sees us as being covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Which leader sounds more appealing to follow?

1. I will bring you life, joy, peace and happiness. I am everywhere and in everything. You can worship me however you wish and I will accept you and help you see how powerful you are. I have created you and put my goodness and power in you. I don't have rules for you to follow but I want you to reach your full potential by finding and enjoying the life that resides within you. I will lead you and help you enjoy life without restricting you. I only want to help you find the path of life that best fits you so we can become one in the way that fits you best.
2. I know life is difficult and I am here to help free you from the pain and difficulties of this life. I don't have a specific path for you to follow. You can live how you want. If you want to escape the pain and suffering of this world then I will help you disconnect from the things of this world so you can be free from pain and suffering.
3. You are sick and will die if you don't take action. Your sickness keeps us from being able to interact in the way I desire. I have a cure for your sickness but it will require sacrifice and pain to be healed. Healing will bring inner life but will also bring persecution. Once cured from your sickness I will require you to become my servant. I am a good master who loves and cares for my servants but I do require that you will live, think and believe in a way that is honoring to me. My way of life will feel restrictive but it is meant to be protective.

Where They Stand: Comparing Religions

Lesson 7

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Objectives

- Review key differences of world religions compared to Christianity.
- Highlight key Christian beliefs.

Opening Discussion

- How would you get to know someone you have never met in person?

Christianity and Other World Religions

There are three main areas where other world religions disagree with Christianity. Some world religions disagree with Christianity on all three points while others disagree with Christianity on only one of the three points below.

1. There is One God.
2. Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus as Equal with God and Eternally Existing (not created).

- Which religions would agree with Christianity that there is one God?
- Which religions would agree with Christianity that there is: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?
- Which religions would agree with Christianity that Jesus (and the Holy Spirit) are co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father?

Philippians 2:5-11

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Discussion Questions

1. Who is exalted in these verses?
2. What do these verses tell the reader to do?
3. Why is it so important to understand who Jesus is?
4. What is one word or short phrase each world religion covered in these lessons might use to describe Jesus?
 - a. Islam, Judaism, New Age Spirituality, Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity
5. What do these verses tell us about Jesus?
6. How do these verses either align or go against what other world religions believe about Jesus?

Call to Salvation

In the Gospel according to *Matthew 16:13-15* Jesus asks His disciples two questions: "*Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?*" and "*But whom say ye that I am?*" This is the central question everyone will answer. We must first answer this question for ourselves and then humbly acknowledge that if we come to faith in Jesus, our faith has come about by God revealing it to us. (*Matthew 16:17*) This should humble us and lead us to patiently point others to Jesus Christ. He is the Great I Am, God incarnate who is co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father and has purchased eternal life through His willing sacrifice.

Activity

Which religion does this describe?

Why are there so many religions?

Living with Boldness and Humility

Lesson 8

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Objectives

- Help students consider what they believe about Jesus.
- Help students wrestle through the reality that there are many different worldviews.

Opening Activity

- What are examples of questions where there is only one correct answer and questions where there are many different possible answers?

God Created a Good World

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1:1 God created a perfect world and gave man the position of having dominion over the earth and the other creatures God had created. (*Genesis 1:26*) God gave man the privilege to rule over His created world but they had to trust Him and live under His authority. In *Genesis 2:17* God tells man they are not to eat of the tree of *"the knowledge of good and evil"*. This is the only restriction we see God placing on Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Man Rules With God

At this point in the biblical account, creation and life in God's created world is perfect. Man is given the authority to rule the earth and its inhabitants. There is a perfect relationship between God and Man and there is no confusion about who is God and who is not. The world is not void of evil but its presence and impact is limited such that it is not even mentioned until *chap. 3 vs. 1* where this evil is called *"the serpent"*. We do not even realize the serpent is evil until we realize the serpent seems to be challenging God's message and heart toward Eve. To this point in the story, Eve fully trusts God and is willing to live within the structure God has created.

Man is Deceived

Now, the serpent begins to challenge Eve's assumptions about God and suggests God is holding out on her. He wants Eve to doubt God and rebel against His authority by eating of the tree of *"the knowledge of good and evil"*. In doing so evil shifts from being present with minimal effect to becoming a powerful force able to corrupt man's heart, the created world, and man's relationship with God. Adam and Eve's rebellion against God changed the world and specifically changed man's relationship with God. Essentially, man decided to dissolve his relationship with God in hopes of finding a better deal.

Man Seeks To Be God

Since then man has been on a journey for a "better deal" than what God offers. This has led to the creation of many false gods and many false religions. Man continues to rebel against God's message. Instead, man desires to create our own path for life. This ultimately leads man away from the true path of life into creating a false path that either feels better, looks more appealing, or makes more sense to man's corrupted mind. The message of living under the authority of the good and trustworthy God of the Bible is distorted by the continual work of "the serpent" whose work is to cast doubt constantly on the goodness of God.

Genesis 11:1-9

*"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.
2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.
3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.
4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.
5 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.
6 And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.
7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.
8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.
9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."*

Discussion Questions

1. If you look just at *Genesis 11:1-4* what is the people's plan? Do you think the plan sounds good, bad, or neutral?
2. Reading *verses 5-9* what does God think of their plan? Why does He intervene so their plan is not able to happen?
3. Identify words you would use to describe God from *Genesis 11:1-9*.
4. Identify words you would use to describe man from *Genesis 11:1-9*.
5. How would your view of God or man change if you would also consider God's instruction to Noah two chapters earlier in *Genesis 9:1*- "*And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*"?
6. How would your view of God or man change if you also consider *Genesis 6:5-8*- "*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord*"?

Call to Salvation

Early in the Bible man rebelled against God's authority. Evil took root in the heart of man and all of creation was corrupted as a result. The Bible is a story of God relentlessly pursuing a rebellious people. As we walk through life, it can be easy for Satan to convince us the God does not care for us or that we should be able to follow whatever path we desire. The reality is God is our creator and we need Him. He loves and cares for us far greater than we deserve and we are to live as grateful children to almighty God. We are to seek to know and follow Him even when, in our brokenness, we naturally rebel against being under His authority.

Why is the God of the Bible ...?

The goal of this activity is to stir up discussion on how to interact with individuals from other religions as well as how to view others given that many of them are very nice people trying to do the right thing.