

This series is created to help students learn and memorize Scripture. In our context, we used repetition each week to help the students retain the scriptures that they had learned in the previous weeks. Each week, the students wrote the verse for the week on an index card. The cards were hole punched and kept on a binder clip ring.

The letter: A__

Verse: *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."*
Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Have you ever heard the phrase "guard your heart?"
 - Where?
 - What does it mean?
 - Is it important to do?
 - What are some ways that you think you can guard your heart?
- Any idea what a "wellspring" is?
 - Definition – original source of something
 - *Matthew 15:18 - But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. (NIV)*
 - What are some examples of a wellspring?
 - Why do you think that Solomon, a very wise man, said that your heart is the wellspring of your life?
- Get into groups
 - Come up with a list of practical ways that you can guard your heart and why they are important
 - Share with the group

The letter: B__

Verse: *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Define these words!
 - Kindness – good or nice.
 - Compassion – concern for the sufferings of others. Feeling what they feel.
 - Mourning with someone because they are mourning.
 - One another – other people. Love your neighbor.
- What are some ways that you could show kindness to someone? Think outside the box!
- Do you think that kindness is important? Why?
- Are there times when kindness doesn't need to be shown?
- Have you ever felt compassion for someone before? Explain.
- Why do you think that we are directed to show/feel compassion?
- [STORY TIME – Share about a time that you were shown forgiveness]
 - Who showed it to you?
 - What had you done?
 - Did you deserve it?
- The verse doesn't just say to forgive each other, it says to forgive each other like God/Christ forgave you.
 - Why did God forgive us?
 - How in the world can we forgive like that?
 - Do we need to have a reason to forgive someone?
 - Who should we forgive? When should we forgive them?

The letter: C__

Verse: *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."*

Ephesians 6:1 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Who, in your family, is the messiest?
- Which person in your family do you get along with the most? Least?
- What does the Bible say about kids?
- What does the Bible say about parents?
- Get into groups of 3-4.
 - Create your perfect parent-child relationship.
 - Come up with a few key rules, responsibilities, roles, etc.
 - Share with the group.
- Does the Bible say anything about parent-child relationships? What? Where?
- Introduce today's verse!
- What do you think it means to obey?
- What if we add "in the Lord" to that definition? Does it change it?
- "This is the first commandment with a promise." - Refer to *Exodus 20:12 - Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*
 - What is the promise?
 - What does it mean?
- What are some practical ways that you can obey your parents this week?
- What are some ways that you could go about improving your relationship with your parents?

The letter: D__

Verse: *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- How old do you have to be to:
 - Go to Kindergarten?
 - Drive?
 - Buy lottery tickets?
 - Drink alcohol?
 - Rent a car?
 - Get a job?
- Have you ever been told you are too young or too little to do something?
- [STORY TIME - Tell or ask for a couple stories of kids that have done amazing things.]
- [Reveal today's verse]
- Who wrote this verse?
 - Who was it written to?
 - Why was it written?
 - Is this information important?
- What does it mean to set an example?
- Who are the believers?
- Do you think, as teenagers, you have the ability to be an example to adults?
 - Why? Why not?
- What are some ways that you can set examples to other believers
 - In speech?
 - In conduct?
 - In love?
 - In faith?
 - In purity?

The letter: E

Verse: *"Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right." Proverbs 20:11 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- What do you know about Proverbs? Who wrote it? Why?
- *Luke 6:43-45 - No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.*
 - What is a bad tree vs. good tree?
- "People don't pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars."
 - When you see an apple growing on a tree, what do you know? (it's an apple tree)
 - So how was that tree planted? With watermelon seeds?
- How does this relate to your life? Do you think people see your actions?
- Is it fair that people, even small children, are judged by their actions?
- What does it look like to have "pure conduct?" What about "right conduct?"
 - Define conduct.
 - Define pure.
 - Define right.
 - Is there a difference between "pure" and "right?"
- *"The mouth speaks what the heart is full of." Luke 6:45* Sound familiar? What past verse does this connect with?

The letter: F_

Verse: *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Romans 3:23 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Show a fail video to intro
- Share your biggest fail (leader, be wise about this)
- Today, we are talking about sin! What is sin? – To miss the mark, to screw up.
- v. 21 – "righteousness has been made known" – This is apart from the law.
 - This means no sacrifices, special prayers, ceremonies, etc. It is given through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - What does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ? *Romans 10:9 - If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
- No difference – We are all the same. If you aren't Jewish, you are a Gentile.
- v. 23 – We have all sinned! We are all failures.
- What do you think it means to "fall short of the glory of God?"
 - The glory of God – The goal of all things. God's will.
- v. 24 – We are ALL justified FREELY! Declared righteous or right.
 - Through Jesus Christ. This leads us back to *Romans 10:9 - If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

The letter: G__

Verse: *"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Have you ever done something wrong and felt bad about it afterward? Share?
- Share about a time when you felt guilty.
- There are lots of big "church words" in this verse, so let's start with definitions
 - Sorrow – a feeling of deep distress,
 - Repentance – a change or reversal in one's choices or actions, turning from sin.
 - Salvation – being saved from sins.
- Knowing the definition of sorrow, what do you think godly sorrow is? Worldly?
- Share some examples of godly sorrow vs. worldly sorrow.
- **Read v. 8-13.** Discuss what these verses are talking about.
 - Paul is discussing his 1st letter to the Corinthians and the fact that it brought them sorrow.
 - He states that he doesn't regret it because that sorrow led them to repentance.
- What does Paul mean by "worldly sorrow brings death?"
- Think about your life and the world around you. What are some things that you may experience godly sorrow about?
- Has anyone ever caused you sorrow? Was it godly or worldly?

The letter: H

Verse: *'Honor your father and mother', and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'*
Matthew 19:19 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- How many times does the Bible say "Honor your father and mother" in the Bible? – 8 times.
- How many times does the Bible say to "love your neighbor?" - 10 times - 9 of these say "love your neighbor as yourself."
- Why do you think the Bible says those 2 phrases so many times?
- What does "honor" mean? – To treat with respect or reverence.
- What does "love" mean? – Agape. Highest form of love.
 - Definition – universal, unconditional love that transcends and serves regardless of circumstances.
 - Transcends – to go beyond range or limits.
- Jesus tells the man "follow the commandments" – Don't murder. Don't commit adultery. Don't steal. Don't lie.
- Why do you think Jesus only referenced those 4 commandments?
- Why do you think Jesus ended with "honor your father and mother and love your neighbor?"
- What does this look like in your life?
- What do you think Jesus wants from you in this area?
- Who are your neighbors?
- Are any of them hard to love? Why?
- What are some things you can do to show love to them?

The letter: I__

Verse: *"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Read *Philippians 3:5-6* - circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.— This is Paul's "resume." Is he bragging here? These are all big accomplishments. Paul fit the bill as a great Pharisee. Cream of the crop.
 - Paul fit all of the requirements – Hebrew from the tribe of Benjamin.
 - A Pharisee, and based on the law, faultless.
 - A persecutor of the church.
- Read *Philippians 3:7-11* - *But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.* – Why does Paul consider his accomplishments "loss?"
- Read *Philippians 3:12-13* - *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,* – Paul listed a pretty big resume before, but now says "forgetting what is behind." Why do you think he says this?
- What are some goals that you have set in your life before? Did you accomplish it? If yes, how? Was it difficult? If not, why not?
- What is the goal Paul is talking about?
- Do you think Paul accomplished that goal?
- What prize is he trying to win?
- What do you think it means for God to call you heavenward? Is this something that we are all called to?

The letter: J__

Verse: *"Jesus wept." John 11:35 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Have every student read the passage.
- Define "wept": to shed tears to express extreme grief or sorrow.
- One at a time, let's see your best weeping!
- Have you ever wept before? Why? What was wrong?
- Is it possible to weep in joy?
- Is it good to weep?
- So Jesus was/is God. Why the heck would He be weeping?
- Get into groups. Split up chapter 11 into verses: 1-8, 9-16, 17-24, 25-32, 33-37.
 - Have the groups summarize what was going on.
- Why was Jesus weeping in verse 35? – He was deeply saddened and troubled that his friend had died. v. 3 calls Lazarus "the one Jesus loves."
- Jesus was fully human. He needed to weep the death of Lazarus.
- Have you ever been sad about something before?
- Do you think it is OK to weep about that? Why? Why not?
- If Jesus needed to mourn and weep about the death of his friend, how much more do you think that is necessary for us sometimes?

The letter: K__

Verse: *"Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies."*

Psalm 34:13 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Play telephone game or 2 truths and a lie.
- What is the biggest lie that you have ever told? Why did you tell it?
- Did people believe it?
- What does the Bible have to say about lying? Point to *Exodus 20*.
- Other than that, why is lying bad?
- Read *Psalm 34:12-13 - Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.*
- How many of you love life? How many of you want to "see many good days?"
- What do you think it means to keep your tongue from evil?
- Is this easy to do? Why?
- What about telling lies? Is that hard to keep from doing?
- Read verse 14. How can you know what is evil and what is good?
 - Take a look at Jesus first of all.
 - If we are in the Word every day and in growing in our relationship with God, the Holy Spirit will guide us.
- What does this look like in your life? Does it mean you need to evaluate who you hang out with? What you watch? What music you listen to?

The letter: L__

Verse: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." Deuteronomy 6:5 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Who wrote the book of Deuteronomy? Why did he write it?
 - Moses wrote it as a reminder to the Israelites of what they had been through and what God had done for them.
- Read *Deuteronomy 6:4-9 - Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.[a] Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*
- Why does Moses write verse 4? To establish that God is the only god.
- What do you think Moses is saying in verse 5? Is there a difference between him just saying, "Love God" and adding "with all your heart?" Explain.
- How can you have these commandments on your heart?
- Look at verse 7. When does Moses want you to be talking about these things?
 - What does that look like in your life?
 - Do you think people would be annoyed by you talking about it all the time?
 - Could it be impactful for someone to hear you talking about it?
- What do you think is meant in verse 8 by "tie them as symbols on your hands?"
 - What does that look like today?
 - Same question about verse 9.
- How often do you think about God during your normal day?
- How often do you think about the Bible?
- Are there things in your life that remind you to remember God and love Him?
 - What are some of those things? What could they be?

The letter: M

Verse: *"Mercy triumphs over judgement." James 2:13 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Define mercy.
- Define judgment.
- How are these 2 terms related?
- Raise your hand if you like to be judged. The term "judge" typically carries negative connotations with it. Are you typically judged for things you do well?
- Read *James 2:8-12 - If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,*
- What do you think it would look like in your life to "really keep the royal law?"
- Do you think what verse 10 is saying is fair?
- Does it seem like there is mercy in that?
- Do you think this passage is saying that all sins are equal? Why?
- In verse 12, does the phrase "judged by the law that gives freedom" makes sense to you? Or does it seem odd for a law to give freedom? Explain.
- Paul says in verse 13, "judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful." Have you ever been judged without mercy? How did that feel? Did it seem fair?
- Paul ends this passage with this sentence, "Mercy triumphs over judgment."
 - What does it mean to triumph?
 - Does this mean that God's mercy wins over his judgement? Will we still be judged for our sins?
 - Since we will still be judged, is there a line saying mercy stops winning over judgement?

The letter: N

Verse: *"No one can serve two masters." Matthew 6:24 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Begin by reading *Matthew 6:19-24* - *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 'The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!' 'No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*
- Discuss the context in which this passage exists (The Sermon on the Mount).
 - What is the sermon on the mount?
 - What was its purpose?
- "Store up your treasures in heaven" is a pretty common church phrase. What do you think it means?
 - What kinds of treasure is this referring to? Money? Possessions?
- Move to verse 24, this seems to also be talking about money. Does it seem to you that verses 22-23 are out of place? Why?
 - How could Jesus' words about money connect also with his teaching about the eyes in 22-23?
- In verse 24, Jesus says that you can't serve two masters. Put this into your own words. (ex. *You can't worship two things.*)
- He goes on to say that you can't serve God and money.
 - Is this just an example Jesus is using?
 - How else might this apply to our lives?
 - What other things could you replace 'money' with?
 - Video games?
 - Girlfriend/boyfriend?
 - Netflix?
 - Drugs?
 - Alcohol?

- Porn?
- What are some practical things that we can do to make sure we are putting God first, or worshipping Him, instead of _____?
- What can YOU do this week to put God first in your life?

The letter: O

Verse: *"O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Psalm 63:1 (ESV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- What is one thing you can't live without?
 - Students may start with answers like phone, family, etc. Point them to answers like air, water, etc.
 - Why can't we live without air and water?
- Share about a time when you were so thirsty, but you had nothing to drink.
- Isn't it crazy that over 70% of earth is covered by water yet millions of people don't have water to drink? Can you imagine not having water? Probably not.
- Read *Psalm 63:1 - You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.* Define/discuss key words – earnestly, thirst, weary, water.
- David says, "my soul thirsts for you." What do you think it means to thirst for God? Is it even possible to "thirst for God?"
- Do you think it sounds like a good thing to thirst for God? Why?
 - Is that something that you should actively be doing?
- The big question today is, "How can you thirst for God?"
- A simple way to examine that is to think about being physically thirsty. When do you get thirsty? Why do you get thirsty? When you are thirsty, it is probably because you haven't had water for a while. When this happens, you begin to notice that you don't have water. Compare that to God. When you haven't spent time with God for a while, do you start to notice it?
- How do you think you can get to the point where you thirst for God?
 - Answer – you must spend time with Him first in order to miss spending time with Him.
- What are some things that you can do to spend time with God?
 - SOAP – Scripture, Observe, Apply, Pray.

The letter: P

Verse: *"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."*

Proverbs 16:18 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Define "haughty" – an attitude of superiority, disdainfully proud
- What is "pride"?
 - Is there a good type of pride?
 - Discuss what the difference is in bad pride and good pride.
- The Bible (NIV) mentions "pride" and "proud" nearly 100 times. What are some scriptures that you know of dealing with pride?
 - Compare and contrast some of these other scriptures with *Proverbs 16:18 - Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*
 - Are there any Biblical examples of what we would call good pride?
- Would you agree or disagree that humility is the opposite of pride?
 - Do you think that being humble is just something that we can choose to do? What about pride? Can we choose to be proud? Or is it something that we develop over time?
- Who is someone in your life that is humble? What characteristics do they possess?
- In what ways have you seen this play out in your own life? What kind of fall or destruction did you see?
- How can you strive to be humbler?
 - Do you think there is a difference between being humble to avoid destruction and being humble because the Bible calls us to be humble?

The letter: Q

Verse: *"Quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools." Ecclesiastes 9:17 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Have students search for other Scriptures with the word "quiet."
- How would you define "quiet"? What can you think of any other scriptures that relate (quiet, still, rest, silence)? – Good opportunity to teach students how to search for key words using the index.
- We are commanded to be quiet a lot, but has God ever commanded to be loud?
 - Story of Joshua/Jericho. – *Joshua 6*
 - Did the shout actually knock the walls down? No, God did, but I bet it was stinking loud when they shouted.
- Have a student shout something from one end of the room while another on the other end repeats. Then, have a student whisper and have the other repeat it.
 - Which was easier to hear? Why?
- Read *Ecclesiastes 9:17 - The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools. (NIV)*
 - Define "heeded."
 - Why should quiet words be heeded more than loud ones?
 - Who is more likely to shout, wise or foolish people?
- What lesson can be learned here? Listening is so important. In order to hear wisdom, we must be willing to work hard at listening. It's easy to hear the foolishness in the word, but much harder to hear the wisdom.

The letter: R

Verse: *"Remember the Sabbath by keeping it Holy." Exodus 20:8 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- What is the Sabbath? – "a day of religious observance and abstinence from work, kept by Jews from Friday evening to Saturday evening, and by most Christians on Sunday."
 - What do you think is considered work?
 - Is the Bible telling us to not work on Sunday?
 - There are lots of people that work on Sundays, are they sinning?
- Why do you think God commanded us to "remember the Sabbath?"
- How do we keep it holy?
- This sounds like the golden ticket to show your parents when you don't want to do anything doesn't it? Why isn't that what God commanded here?
- Read *Exodus 20:9-11 - Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.* How do those relate to verse 8?
- Why do you think that God rested on the 7th day?
- Is rest important in our lives? Why?

The letter: S

Verse: – *“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you as well.” Matthew 6:33 (NIV)*

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week’s verse.

- Would any of you say that you are a “worrywart?” If not, do you have family members that are?
 - What do you/they worry about?
- Why do you think people worry? Is worry something that can be corrected?
 - How do you think worry could be corrected or fixed?
- Let’s read what Jesus has to say about worry. *Matthew 6:25-34 - “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”*
 - *“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*
 - Walk the students through this passage. Talk about the birds and how they relate to worry. This passage is very relevant to life today.
 - Why do we worry about things like clothes?
 - Have you ever gotten upset about what mom fixed for dinner? Personal story about my kids not wanting what’s for dinner. If you are whining about dinner, you are worrying about it. Share some alternative ways you could handle that. If you are getting dinner, you are getting what you need.

- Jesus said, “seek first his kingdom and righteousness.” What does that mean?
 - What is “his kingdom?” - Used in the N.T. to refer to the reign of the Messiah (Jesus). (source – BlueLetterBible.org)
 - What does righteousness mean? - Integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting.
 - Put that all together and simplify: seek God before anything else. Strive for integrity, purity, and rightness.
 - How could we do that in our lives?

The letter: T

Verse: – “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” Proverbs 3:5 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week’s verse.

- What is trust? *At its simplest, trust is “firm belief”*
 - Share about a time that you so firmly believed in something (that didn’t really matter) that you argued about it with fiery passion.
- What are some other scriptures that use the phrase “with all your heart?”
- What does “with all your heart” mean? Have you ever loved someone or something “with all your heart?”
- Should there be a difference in your life when you just trust or believe in God and when you trust in the Lord with all your heart?
 - If so, how should someone’s life be different?
 - If not, why?
- Looking at your own life, what would it take for you to get to the point of trusting God with all your heart? Would that take any extra effort on your part?

The letter: U

Verse: – *"Use hospitality one to another without grumbling."*

1 Peter 4:9 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Read *1 Peter 4:7-10 - The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (NIV)* (this is a powerful and easy message to walk through with student.s)
- We hear people say. "The end is near." Peter wrote this nearly 2,000 years ago. What do you think he meant by that? *Always be alert. Pray continuously. Jesus could return at any moment. Be ready.*
- *Note – passage says, "above all" that probably means it's important! Why?
- The word "love" used here is *agape* in the Greek. Do you know what this means? How do we love unconditionally?
- How can "love cover a multitude of sins?" Definition of cover – hide or veil.
- What is hospitality? *Generous to guests. Welcoming.*
- Why did Peter think hospitality was important enough to mention directly after "above all, agape?"
- Is it possible to show hospitality and be grumbling?
- Why is our attitude important when showing hospitality?
- Hospitality is considered a spiritual gift. If we don't have that gift, are we still commanded to be hospitable?
- Hospitality is a way to serve others. Verse 10 says we should use our gifts to serve others. What are some ways that you can serve others with your gifts?
- Why do you think serving others is important?
- Do you think hospitality is important? What are some ways that you can show hospitality in your life?

The letter: V

Verse: – “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

Romans 12:19 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- What did we talk about last week? *Hospitality and loving others deeply.*
- Who are we supposed to love?
- Read Romans 12:17 - *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. (NIV)* – What does it mean to repay evil for evil?
 - “Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.” Do this mean we should learn what other people think is right and then do that? (Pull in other translations to answer) *No. Live in such a way that people can see that you're honorable.*
- Read Romans 12:18 - *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* – What do you think it means to live at peace with everyone? No war? No physical fighting?
 - What about in your own life? What does it look like to live at peace with the people in your life (parents, siblings, teachers, friends)?
- Read Romans 12:19 - *Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.* – Do you think that God gets revenge?
 - God's wrath sounds scary. What do you think it is? *Anger*
 - Why do you think God says, “it is mine to avenge; I will repay?”
- Read Romans 12:20-21 - *On the contrary, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* – What do you think the overall theme of this passage is?
 - Have you heard of the phrase, “Kill them with kindness”? Do you think that relates here?
 - What are some ways that you could overcome evil with good in your own life?
- What is revenge?

The letter: W

Verse: – “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”
Psalm 27:14 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Wait for the Lord – Who likes to wait?
 - Are you a patient person? Share a story of a time you just had no patience.
 - Patience is hard. Why do you think David is telling us to wait on God?
- Be strong – Someone give me their best definition of strong. In this case, it isn't talking about physical strength. This is more along the lines of courageous or prevail.
- Take heart – What does take heart mean? – *To be strong, courageous, or bold.*
 - So “be strong” and “take heart” are basically the same thing.
- Wait for the Lord – The same phrase again.
- When something is repeated in the Bible, what's that mean? *It's probably important. [This is something we teach our students often.]*
- Read Psalm 27:13-14 - *I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.* – After reading the context of v. 14, what are we to wait on?
 - Someone tell me what hope is. - *Feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.*
- Have you ever been through a hard time before? *Read Psalm 27:12 - Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.(NIV)* Does this sound like a fun time?
 - How do you think Psalm 27:13-14 would be helpful for someone going through that?
- How could this be helpful for you (or a friend) going through a tough time?

The letter: X

Verse: – “Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy”
Psalm 99:5 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week’s verse.

- If you can find a verse that starts with an X, show me!
- Read *Psalm 99:5 - Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.* – The elephant in the room is what does “exalt” mean?
 - *To rise up, to be raised, to be lifted.*
 - How can we, as humans, raise or lift, God up?
- What are some things that we “exalt” in our lives?
- Why do you think we are so passionate about exalting other things in life?
- What is worship? – *to bow down.*
 - What does that mean?
 - How can we worship in our own life?
 - Singing songs? Reading Bible? Praying? What else?
- “at his footstool” – to fully understand that, we need to start simple. Where is a footstool at? *On the ground.* Sometimes our worship should fill us with so much awe that it takes us to the ground.
 - *Isaiah 66:1 - This is what the Lord says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? (NIV)* says that “heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.”
 - Worship God where you are. You don’t have to be at church to worship Him.
- He is holy – What does holy mean? *Sacred or set apart.* God is different than we are. He is holy, set apart, and sacred. That is *WHY* we should worship him.

The letter: Y

Verse: – *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."*
Matthew 5:14 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Has the power ever gone out in your house? What was the first thing you did? How much light did it take to allow you to see what you needed to see?
 - Share about a time when your power went out.
- There is a major difference in the impact of a small light in a dark room and a large shadow in the light.
- Read *Matthew 5:14-16* - *"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."* – Discuss who is speaking. What is the setting?
 - Who was Jesus talking to?
 - What does Jesus mean by "you are the light?"
- Jesus said to let your light shine before others so that they may see your good deeds.
 - Read *Matthew 6:1* - *"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."* – Compare and contrast this with *Matthew 5:16*.
 - Is Jesus contradicting Himself?
 - Is there a difference between the two verses?
- How can we be the light of the world in our own lives? Think at school, work, family, etc.
- What are some ways that you have put a bowl over your light?

The letter: Z

Verse: – “Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments, O Lord.” Psalm 97:8 (NIV)

Discussion

Discuss content and application of the week's verse.

- Who or what is “Zion?” *Zion is another name for Jerusalem*
 - Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel.
 - Judah was a tribe that came from Jacob (Israel).
 - Why do you think that David was talking about Zion and Judah?
- Any ideas why the people would be glad about God's judgments?
- Read *Psalm 97:6-7 - The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all peoples see his glory. All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols—worship him, all you gods! (NIV)*? That's why the people are glad and rejoicing God's judgments.
- Read *Psalm 97:9-10 - For you, Lord, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. Let those who love the Lord hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.*
 - Do people who love God generally hate evil?
 - Does it seem to you that God guards the lives of his faithful ones?
 - Give examples of faithful people that have died young.
 - Do you think this could mean something a little different?
 - Discuss whether “guard the lives” could mean eternal lives.
- Do you think it's important to hear the good stories of God's work?
- Do you think it's important for you to share your good stories? Bad stories?