

Lesson 13 / November 29, 2009

Trusting God through the Big Tests

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 13 Focus:

Pass God's test with faith.

Lesson 13 Bible Basis:

Genesis 22:1-19;
Hebrews 11:17-19

Students will think of times when they have faced tests and trials and begin to incorporate these trying situations into their theology.

Before your students arrive, write on the whiteboard (or on a piece of poster board), “God won’t give us more than we can handle.”

After students have gathered, ask,

▶ Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

Try to solicit the opinions of students on both sides of the issue. Some will say that they agree because God promises to provide a way out when we are tempted (1 Cor. 10:13). Others, speaking from their own experience—or an experience such as Job’s in the Bible—will say that God does sometimes place us in circumstances that are overwhelming.

Either way, encourage students to share how they feel about the issue and to back up their opinions with examples from Scripture.

As you think about tough tests in life, I want to introduce you to two families: the Works family, who lost two daughters in a shooting at New Life Church in Colorado Springs in late 2007 and the Lawrenson family, who have been through one medical crisis after another, including cystic fibrosis, the premature birth of their daughter, a double lung transplant, and cancer.

Spend some time becoming familiar with the stories of these families before class so that you can introduce them to your students. You can read about their stories at the following websites.

Here, David Works speaks about his faith and the aftermath of his daughters’ death: [<http://www.whiskeyfoxtrot.com/focuschapel.html>].
[www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2007/dec/11/as-father-recovers-aurora-family-grieves-loss-of/]

Here, Nathan Lawrenson blogs about some faith issues while waiting to see if his wife and daughter will survive childbirth:
[<http://cfhusband.blogspot.com/2008/02/fast-track.html>]
[<http://cfhusband.blogspot.com/2008/01/tangible-love.html>].

Lesson 13
Memory Verse

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

– James 1:2-3

- ▶ What would your reaction be if you had to go through the tests and trials that these families have been through?
- ▶ Even if you haven't been through the same kinds of trials that the Works and Lawrenson families have gone through, have you ever felt that God placed you in a situation that was bigger than you could handle? If you're willing, share that situation with the class.
- ▶ How did God show up in the midst of that difficult situation?
- ▶ How did your faith grow as a result?
- ▶ Do you think you would have experienced that same kind of growth if you hadn't been through the test or trial?

In today's study, we'll follow Abraham as he goes through one of the biggest faith tests ever—and we'll see how his faith grows as a result.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *High School Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

Lesson 13 / November 29, 2009

Trusting God through the Big Tests

for use as

STEP 4

Lesson 13 Focus:

Pass God's test with faith.

Lesson 13 Bible Basis:

Genesis 22:1-19;
Hebrews 11:17-19

Students will learn to allow God to work through the trials in their lives, rather than allowing major tests to separate them from God.

Materials:

- a greeting card or piece of stationery for each student
- pens or pencils

We can all see that the test Abraham went through was ultimately a good thing, because God showed up and everything turned out good. But what if, in the middle of the story, Abraham had given up and walked away from God? What if he had decided that God was demanding too much, and he had refused to obey God?

- 1 **Have you ever known someone who walked away from God because of a hard situation in their life? Explain.**
- 2 **Have you ever been tempted to give up on God when times got tough?** (*If so, you're not alone. John 6:66-68 tells of how Jesus' disciples were even tempted to stop following Him because He was teaching them some hard lessons.*)
- 3 **What do you think makes the difference between people who walk away from God when they face trials and people who find their faith being strengthened through those difficult tests?**

This question is a pivotal one because each of your students is certain to face "trials of many kinds," as James 1:2 says. Knowing in advance what makes the difference between disillusionment and major growth can help them gear up for handling trials constructively in the future.

Hand each student a blank greeting card or piece of stationery, and ask them to write a letter to themselves to be read the next time they're facing a major test or trial. Have them remind themselves what it means to face trials in such a way that they become faith-builders and not faith-destroyers. Ask the students to put their letters in their Bibles or keep them in some other place where they will see and remember them the next time they face a tough situation that could challenge their faith.

Lesson 13
Memory Verse

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Challenge your students to spend a few minutes silently talking to God. If they are willing, ask them to commit to sticking with God the next time they face a trial, rather than allowing the test to separate them from God.

After a moment of silent prayer, close by praying for your students. Pray that they will be brave and bold and allow the tests in their lives to strengthen their faith, rather than destroying it.

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