

Victory Sports Outreach  
2009 Spring Season  
Weekly Devotions Overview

**Fall Season Theme:**

Spiritual training makes us more like Jesus.

***Fall Season Theme Verse:***

*1 Corinthians 9:25*

*“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.*”

If you're new to Victory Sports, each weekly sport practice includes a short devotional time. Our passion is to make Jesus Christ known to the children and families that attend Victory Sports functions. In an age of confusion about spiritual matters, the Bible is our only completely reliable source of truth. We want there to be no mistake that we are presenting Jesus of the Bible.

We use a fictional story to begin each devotional session which leads into the Bible portion. Then we end each session with prayer. Last year, each sport season represented one segment of a three-part story.

This season we'll begin an all-new adventure. Set in England in 1388, Young Richard of Weaver Hill has a dream, one which has a very low probability of coming true. But Lord of the manor, Sir Edward unexpectedly helps young Richard begin his quest to knighthood. Richard is both excited and frightened to be in the manor house- his old life now gone and a new one begun. He has many lessons to learn if he is to progress beyond the status of “page” and go on to become a “squire.”

This story chronicles Richard as he grows in wisdom and stature as a page. His best friend, his twin sister Elizabeth, is an important encouragement during his journey from page to squire. She, too, has a journey of her own if she is to become a lady of a manor someday. Richard's struggles and triumphs are a parallel to our own struggles and triumphs in our spiritual walk with Christ. The story and devotions are just a starting point. If you have a personal experience or can think of other verses that also fit the topic, please share from your heart. Feel free to tailor the devotions to your age group of children also. Use easier language or ask questions during the reading instead of the end for younger children, etc. The devotions work best when you have had a chance to look over the lesson beforehand.

Here are the weekly chapter topics:

- Week #1- Hope in the hopeless/ Psalm 63:5
- Week #2- God looks at the heart/ 1 Samuel 16:7
- Week #3- Don't be discouraged/ Joshua 1:9
- Week #4- Training & Thanksgiving/ Philippians 3:13b-14
- Week #5- The double-edged sword/ Hebrews 4:12
- Week #6- Live by faith, not by sight/ 2 Corinthians 5:7
- Week #7- Finishing the task / Philippians 1:6
- Week #8- Epilogue/Summary

We hope you enjoy the story and the Bible lessons as much as the children enjoy hearing them!

Thank you and God bless!

# Week #1

## *Hope in the hopeless*

*Psalm 62:5, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone;  
my hope comes from Him."*

### *The Weaver of Dreams-Chapter 1*

Young James ran his fingers over his family's shield with the colorful coat of arms.

"Tell me the story again, Grandfather!" James asked with excitement in his eyes.

"You want to hear it again?" Grandfather laughed and went on, "OK, but it's a long story. Can you sit still?"

"I'll try." said James.

Grandfather began, "It was in England in the year 1388. More than anything else in the world, seven-year-old Richard of Weaver Hill wanted to be a knight. He dreamt of riding on a big black horse charging off into battle and coming back holding the royal banner high over his head in a display of victory. Each night he prayed to the Lord that someday he might become a knight. But he never told anyone else about it. He thought others would laugh at him.

You see, there are only a few ways to become a knight. If you are the son of a knight or the son of a king, you can go into training at a nearby manor (or castle) as a young boy. Or if you show some valiant effort in battle, you can be knighted as an adult.

Richard's family was neither noble nor rich, but his mother and father loved the Lord and taught the children to love and fear Him. They were peasants who farmed the same land for hundreds of years. And young Richard was not old enough to have done anything valiant yet. To add insult to injury, Richard was partially blind in one eye. So, basically, his dream of becoming a knight was just that- a dream and nothing more. But Richard had hope and faith.

Now Richard had a twin sister named Elizabeth. She was actually the older of the two by twelve minutes. The two of them were the youngest children in the family. They had five older brothers and three older sisters.

Elizabeth's dream was to be the lady of a manor. But that was unlikely too, coming from a peasant family. Yet even at age seven, she enjoyed helping others and had a servant's heart. She, too, had hope and faith.

Their usual day began by helping with the chores inside and outside, learning manners, and learning how to read and write. They couldn't understand why they had to learn these things when none of their friends had to learn such "nonsense" as they called it. Those things were usually left for the chaplains or pastors so they could read the Bible and then tell the common people what it said. But their mother was very firm about the children learning those things. Funny, they never questioned how their own mother or father learned how to read and write.

One day while Richard and Elizabeth were doing their studies, there came a knock at the door. They had no idea that the person on the other side of the door would change their lives forever.

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. Who wanted to be a knight?
2. Would it have been easy for him to become a knight?
3. What did Richard do since he had no real way of knight's training?

### Bible Thought~

In our new story this season, things aren't looking very good for young Richard to become a knight are they? But he prays every night and he has hope and faith that if God wants him to become a knight, then he will become one.

In our day, we choose what we put our faith in also. Some people put their hope in their jobs, or their family, or their cars, or their money, or their houses or even other people. But the Bible gives us some very clear instructions on who we should put our hope in.

Listen to our verse for today. Psalm 62:5 reads, “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him.” When we put our hope in things of the world, they will always let us down because they are not perfect as God is.

They are also not our creator. The One who created us knows us best and loves us the most, so God is the perfect One for us to put our hope and faith in.

Sometimes we want something really badly. We hope and pray for it, and sometimes it comes true and sometimes it doesn't. When it doesn't, we have to remember that God knows everything. He knows that what we want may not be the best thing for us.

What would happen if we wanted, let's say, to be the richest person in the world. What could be a problem with that? (Let them try to answer). It might seem really good in the beginning, but after a while, we would get to where we thought we could do everything on our own; and we didn't need God for anything. That's a very dangerous place to be!

God made us to need Him. When we need Him, we have a proper view of Him, because we can't do anything of eternal value without Him. If we live life on our own, we are lost. We can't get to heaven on our own because we're not perfect. We can't glorify Him or please Him if we don't get to know Him.

So let's thank Jesus for being our hope today. Let's tell Him how great and awesome He is!

Pray to close the session.

**Fall Season Theme Verse:** 1 Corinthians 9:25

*“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”*

## Week #2

### *God Looks at the Heart*

*1 Samuel 16:7, "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

#### *The Weaver of Dreams-Chapter 2*

When Richard's mother opened the door, she was surprised to see Sir Edward staring back at her. Sir Edward was the lord of the Weaver Hill manor house. It was called Weaver Hill because the manor house was on the top of the highest hill which lay to the east. Sir Edward's family had been weavers before he became a knight and ultimately the lord of the manor.

"Why, come in, Sir Edward." his mother said as she bowed to her guest, "What brings you to our home today?"

"I have some business to discuss with your husband. Is he nearby?" Sir Edward asked.

"Yes, I will have Richard and Elizabeth get him in the fields."

In those days, it was customary for children to be seen and not heard, preferably not even seen. But Sir Edward was not ordinary. As Richard's mother was asking the two of them to go and fetch their father, Sir Edward caught the eye of young Richard. Edward smiled at the young lad and Richard smiled back.

Suddenly Sir Edward had a strange request. "I'd like to meet the rest of the children as well, ma'am."

"Of course," said Richard's mother as she went to get the others. Soon the ten children and their father stood inside the small house.

Sir Edward said to Richard, "Young man, come here and sit on my lap." Richard immediately obeyed. No one disobeyed the lord of the manor. Sir Edward pulled young Richard up onto his knee and began to talk gently with him.

"What is your name, lad?"

"Sir Richard, Sir." Richard responded.

"Sir Richard? That's the title for a knight." Sir Edward replied with his eyebrows raised and a smile on his face.

Before Richard could take the words back he said, "That's what I want to be Sir. I wish to be a knight!"

The answer startled not only Sir Edward, but also his parents and the rest of his family who were all watching.

"Well, Richard, that's a mighty fine ambition. It takes a lot of hard work and practice to be a knight. First you must be a page for about seven years, then if you do well, you become a squire for another seven years. After that, if you still excel, you will become a knight." Sir Edward fully expected the boy to be discouraged. Instead, Richard's response surprised him.

"I am ready to begin now, Sir, if you please."

Sir Edward saw that the hope and faith in the boy's heart. Though it was totally uncharacteristic, he decided to talk to Richard's parents after he had discussed his business with their father.

After a long discussion and a mother's tears, it was decided that young Richard of Weaver Hill should come to begin his training to become a knight.

#### Follow-Up Questions:

1. Who had knocked at the door?
2. What did he do for Richard?
3. Did his parents let him go?

## Bible Thought~

In our story today, Richard had no real way of becoming a knight on his own. His family was not rich, but Sir Edward offered him a chance to train for knighthood even though that was not the traditional way of doing things. Sir Edward saw that Richard had a good heart. He looked at more than just his outward appearance.

There is a story in the Bible very much like this one. In the Old Testament, the Lord told the prophet Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint David as king over all of Israel even though Saul was already king.

See, the people had said they wanted a king “like the other nations.” And God gave them Saul. He was exactly what they wanted- someone who looked the part, but didn’t have real character.

God picked their next king Himself. He, too, looked NOT at David’s outward appearance, but at his heart. This week’s verse is 1 Samuel 16:7, “The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

David was the youngest member of his family. He was a shepherd. What do shepherds do? (They look after sheep, right?) In order to be a shepherd, you have to have some inner qualities.

You have to be gentle, provide for the sheep’s food and water, protect them from predatory animals, and lead them to safe and green pastures. As for David, God saw that those qualities would make the kind of king that God wanted. He saw through his outward appearance and looked into his heart. David had a heart for the things of God. Remember, his brothers were shepherds also, but God chose David.

In our lives today, Jesus doesn’t look at our appearance or our family situation. He looks into our hearts to see if we have a relationship with Him. You can fake it on the outside, but not on the inside. There is no point in faking it if He already knows what we’re really like. He just wants us to confess our sin and believe in Him as our Lord and Savior.

Here at Victory Sports, you can be a really good soccer player, disc golfer, or cheerleader, but if you don’t have good character and a good attitude, it will eventually come out and it won’t be good for the team.

What would be some characteristics not just of a good athlete, but of a good participant? (Let them answer then suggest:)

- \* being a good listener
- \* being obedient
- \* not talking badly about others
- \* using encouraging language toward teammates
- \* not complaining about drills
- \* having a good temper (not throwing fits)

We can’t have these things on our own because we’re born sinful. Only Jesus can help change us from the inside out. Only HE can give us a new heart and a new attitude.

Let’s pray and ask Jesus to work in our hearts this season and help us to have a great team!

Pray to close the session.

**Fall Season Theme Verse:** 1 Corinthians 9:25

*“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”*

## Week #3

### *Don't be discouraged*

*Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous.  
Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged,  
for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

#### *The Weaver of Dreams-Chapter 3*

That fall Richard was sent to the manor of Sir Edward and Lady Anne. He was very excited and very afraid all at the same time for He had never been away from home like this before. He was given a small room next to the staff's quarters. He was also fitted with two sets of clothing which included tight pants and a long tunic (or shirt), a belt, shoes, and a cloak (coat).

During the first week, Richard was introduced to the servants of the manor, but he was to be the personal servant of Sir Edward and Lady Anne. He helped Sir Edward dress each morning by laying out his clothes and helping him on with his armor when he went to defend his land. He would also bring their clothes to the washmaid to be cleaned.

The chaplain began teaching him reading and writing, Latin, math, and the sciences. The first few weeks went well, but soon young Richard noticed that his studies were quite the same as what he had been doing at home. He began to be discouraged and impatient at his training not being as exciting as he had dreamed it would be. He wanted to slay dragons and rescue princesses locked in high towers! What poor luck Richard thought he was having.

Part of his first lesson was to memorize Joshua 1:9, "*Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*" As he tried to memorize the verse, he prayed for the Lord to encourage him and show him He was with him..

Before he had left home Richard has made a secret promise with his sister Elizabeth. She was to visit him each day around the back of the manor house. She would signal to him with the call of a dove. He would sneak downstairs and get the hot muffin or bread she would bring him. Oh, he was fed at the mansion, but there was nothing like his mother's home cooked biscuits or muffins or bread. That became the bright spot in Richard's first days at the manor house.

One day Richard was feeling particularly sad and discouraged about it taking entirely too long to become a knight. He remembered that Elizabeth was due to arrive soon when an idea popped into his head. He slipped downstairs to ask the washmaid if she needed any help in doing her laundry each day.

"My sister Elizabeth, now, is a real gem. She is very good at all kinds of tasks. She loves to help people. I wonder if you might like to have her come and help you here with all this laundry each day. She could stay with me in my room so she would be here bright and early each day to help you. She doesn't eat much."

"Well, now I don't know. I'd have to ask Lady Anne and see what she thinks," the washmaid answered as she took a rather large bundle of wet laundry out of a wooden barrel.

After the washmaid hung the laundry on the clothesline, she went to fetch Lady Anne and see about having Elizabeth come to the manor to help her with her laundry. And Richard went around the back of the manor to wait for Elizabeth.

#### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What were some of the things Richard was supposed to do at first?
2. How did Richard begin to feel after a while?
3. What did he pray for?

## Bible Thought~

In our story today, Richard began to feel discouraged. He wanted to be doing bigger and better things and was upset that he had to start with the small things.

What are some of the things that discourage you? (Let them answer then suggest:)

- \* Maybe not doing well in school, or
- \* Someone isn't paying attention to you, or
- \* A situation not working like you thought it would, or
- \* Maybe a game or a toy you thought would make you happy but didn't turn out to.
- \* Maybe someone who let you down.

We can't control our circumstances, but we can control our reactions. Even if we're discouraged, we don't have to be rude or ugly or hurtful to others. That just makes the problem worse.

Lots of things can make us discouraged. The reason we get discouraged is that we look to things or people to make us happy. Jesus is the *only one* who can make us truly happy. We talked the first week about Jesus being the One Who created us, so He is the One we can put our hope in. He is also the One Who can make us truly happy or joyful.

Did you know you can pray to Jesus to change our attitude? If you're having a bad day or are upset about something, did you know you could pray for Jesus to help you feel better?

Let's look our verse for this week: Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." If we have Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He says He is with us wherever we go because He sends His Holy Spirit to live inside of us.

Let's look at some other Bible truths that can help encourage us:

\*Jesus' LOVE and FAITHFULNESS for us is HUGE (Ps. 36: 5,7 "Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. How priceless is Your unfailing love")

\*When we are weak, Jesus HELPS us (2 Cor. 12:9,10, "For my power is made perfect in weakness. For when I am weak, then I am strong.")

\*Jesus KNEW us before we were EVEN BORN (Ps. 139:15, "My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place.")

\*Jesus FORGIVES our sin (1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.")

When we are discouraged, the first thing we should do is pray, then we can go read our Bibles or talk to an adult about how we feel.

Let's pray right now and thank Him for being our encouragement.

Pray to close the session.

**Fall Season Theme Verse: 1 Corinthians 9:25**

*"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."*

## Week #4

### *Train to Get the Prize*

*Philippians 3:13b-14, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

#### *The Weaver of Dreams-Chapter 4:*

The washmaid took longer to return than Richard thought and that was just fine because Elizabeth arrived right on schedule. This time she brought a hot cross bun from home. She had even put a little butter on top! Yum!!

Just as he was licking his lips from the last bite and getting caught up on the latest news from home, he blurted out, "I asked the washmaid if you could come and live here and help her out with the laundry."

"You did *what*?" she asked in surprise.

"What- you help mother at home with the laundry. Then you could be with me here and keep me company..." he noted.

"Well....," she hesitated, "I have always wanted to be a lady of a manor. I guess I'll have to start somewhere. I wonder if Mother and Father will approve..."

"The washmaid went to speak with Lady Anne. She'll be back any minute. You'd better go back home. I'll let you know what she says just as soon as I find out." Richard gave her a hug and she ran down the hill toward home.

Richard had to wait a whole week until he heard from the washmaid. During that week, he began some new training in the afternoons by some squires, older boys who were also training to be knights.

This training was more physical than mental. *This I can get into* he thought to himself. He was taught to wrestle both on the ground and while sitting piggy-back upon someone else. He was knocked to the ground several times, but each time, he got right back up and began again. He not only learned how to take someone down, but how to avoid being pinned. None of the drills were easy, but they did help him build up strength.

There were also running drills for speed and obstacle courses for agility. Before and after each day's training he was taught to stretch to be more flexible. Little by little, Richard became stronger and faster because he stuck with it and didn't give up when it became difficult. He kept the prize of knighthood in his mind to keep himself focused.

Finally the day came when the washmaid found young Richard in wrestling training with another boy.

She came straight to the point. "Lady Anne has agreed to have your sister Elizabeth join you here. They have sent a servant to speak to your parents and bring her back as soon as possible. And none too soon, either. My laundry seems to have doubled since Lord Edward has returned home from being away." With that the washmaid turned on her heel and started back toward her work.

"Thank you, ma'am." Richard replied. He was so happy that Elizabeth would be joining him soon. He finished his training and thanked the Lord for answering his prayer.

#### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What request was Richard waiting for an answer to? What was the answer?
2. What were some of the new things Richard was being trained to do?
3. Did he give up when things got hard?

#### Bible Thought~

In our story today, Richard learns about sticking with his training even when he got knocked down or things were difficult. He kept focused on the main goal- becoming a knight. Today we're going to talk about training.



When we understand that our sin has kept us from heaven and that the only way to heaven is to ask Jesus to forgive us from our sin and make us clean and holy, then we enter into a relationship and a training process also. It is a spiritual training of learning more and more about Jesus and having Him make us into the person He wants us to become- someone more like Him.

Our verse this week is Philippians 3:13b-14, “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Keep in mind that we can’t work our way to heaven. But there will be times in life that we want to give up when things get difficult. Just like Richard kept his eye on the prize of becoming a knight, we must keep our eyes on Jesus- the author and finisher of our faith.

Like in our season theme verse, our prize is not something here on earth- it is being with Jesus forever in heaven after we die if we have that relationship with Him. We’ll talk more about having that relationship with Jesus in just a few minutes.

It is also good to have people that we can ask to help us or to pray for us. That brings us to another point. In our story, Richard thanked the Lord for answering his prayer and letting Elizabeth come to live with him.

How much do we have to be thankful for? LOTS of things- food, clothes, fresh water, parents, teachers, VSO!, and JESUS!!! Let’s try to be thankful for God’s blessings. Let’s ask God to help us remember to thank Him and others for good things.

Even if things aren’t as good as you’d like right now, being thankful puts everything into perspective. It makes us focus again on Jesus and He is the One who gives us good things. And especially remember to thank Jesus for answering our prayers!!

Let’s pray to Him right now. Close your eyes as I talk for a bit and we’ll say a prayer at the end.

(Lead this sample prayer:) Maybe you don’t understand about focusing on Jesus because you don’t have a relationship with Him. If you want to have that, just say something like this in your head: Jesus, I thank You for sending Jesus to die for me on the cross. I am sorry that I have sinned against You. I want You to be my Savior, my way to heaven, and my Lord, my guide for my life here on earth. Help me to follow you with all my heart. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

You can look up now. If you prayed that in your heart just now, please let me or a coach or a grown up know so we can rejoice with you!

***Fall Season Theme Verse: 1 Corinthians 9:25***

*“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”*

## Week #5

### *The Double-Edged Sword*

*Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*

#### The Weaver of Dreams- Chapter 5:

Elizabeth arrived a few days later and was allowed to stay in the same room with Richard. She, too, was fitted with two sets of clothes complete with dress, apron, shoes, and a scarf to cover her head. She was a very big help to the washmaid and even was brought to the cook to help in the garden and kitchen from time to time.

What fun they had together! Each night they would tell each other what they had learned and done during the day. In this way, each of them was really learning much more than they could have otherwise. Elizabeth learned all about the importance of being quick, agile, and flexible from Richard and he learned about how to cook and get tough dirt stains out from her!

Then one day several months later, Richard was sent out to learn a new skill. Out came a squire with a wooden sword, a small shield called a buckler. Another boy was with him holding a wooden lance and a quintain, a straw-filled dummy which hung from a wooden pole.

The sword and lance was blunt on the end presumably so he wouldn't hurt himself. Richard started daydreaming. *I am finally on my way to knighthood. Soon, I'll be using a sharp metal sword and lance and have a shield with my very own symbols on it.*

"Richard, *Richard!*" the trainer was raising his voice by now. "Hold out your hand and take this sword and buckler, if you please."

Richard had come to his senses and began learning how to use the sword and shield. It wasn't long before he was upon a horse, learning to use the lance to knock into the quintain target.

His lessons were long and hard, but Richard had learned how important it was to keep going and learn all that he could. He was really now beginning to enjoy his knight's training. He called himself *Sir Richard the Dragon Slayer* in his own mind.

He felt like all of his training were starting to come together like pieces of a puzzle. Lately, he had even been learning verses having to do with swords in the Bible. He remembered one in particular, Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Wow. All at once he knew that being a knight wasn't just your training, it was what's inside your heart. He hoped and prayed that he would make a good knight when the time came.

#### Follow-Up Questions:

1. How was Elizabeth getting along at the manor?
2. What was Richard learning this week?
3. Was he enjoying it or was he ready to give up?

#### Bible Truth~

Last week, we talked about the importance of training and discipline when we want to learn something worthwhile. We also talked about how we are in spiritual training when we have Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

This week Richard learns to use a sword. Medieval swords were very important. Depending on how long the handle was, you could use it with either one hand or two and was mainly used a defensive weapon. Good swordsmen could swing their swords with ease and defend themselves.

The Bible has a lot to say about swords. The very sword itself in medieval times was a Christian symbol because the whole sword including the handle (or hilt) was in the shape of a cross, like the one Jesus died on.

In the Bible, the Bible itself is referred to as the double-edged sword. Our verse this week is Hebrews 4:12, “Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

The big idea of this verse is that God’s Word penetrates beyond mere outward actions or appearance. It goes to our deeper thoughts and attitudes. The next verse states that nothing is hidden from God’s sight, and we are held accountable to God even for the hidden attitudes of the heart.

The double-edged sword has two symbols. One edge is for defending against sinful behavior and the other edge is for showing us our own faults so we can ask for forgiveness from God.

The verse also states that the Bible is “living and active.” This is because it never stops speaking to us. God uses His Word as the main way He speaks to us. There is always something in it that helps us change and grow to be more like Christ. That’s what the verse means when it states, “it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

God already knows what’s inside our heart, but He uses the Bible to tell us! Sometimes that means stopping something that’s not honoring to God. Sometimes that means starting to do something that we haven’t been doing (like simply reading God’s word!).

If we want to know what God is saying to us, or we want to know how Jesus wants us to live, let’s read the Bible!

Let’s pray to God right now and thank Him for His gift of the Bible to us!

Pray to close the session.

***Fall Season Theme Verse: 1 Corinthians 9:25***

*“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”*

## Week #6

### *Walking by Faith*

*2 Corinthians 5:7, "We live by faith, not by sight."*

#### *The Weaver of Dreams- Chapter 6*

With schooling and sword training under his belt, he would also be taught yet another skill. He would have to know how to get his own food- he would have to hunt. His father was both a farmer and a hunter, but Richard had only gone on a couple of hunts with his father before he went to live at the manor.

He would have two different types of lessons- both hunting and falconing. Falconing was hunting for birds. Hunting required being on horseback and using a spear or bow and arrow, but, as Richard soon found out, hawking meant releasing a hawk in order to catch smaller birds such as a duck.

Lesson 1 would be hunting. He already knew how to ride a horse from when he lived at home. This day he mounted his horse and drew back his bow just like his trainer was showing him. He got a little overexcited and *ooof*. The bow slipped out of his hand and snapped back against his eye- his good eye. He lost his balance on the horse and fell to the ground. Then everything went black.

He was taken to the infirmary at the manor. A short heavy man was bending over him when he woke up. "Well, son, you took a pretty good blow to your left eye. You'll have a shiner for a few weeks. You'll have to watch your step for a while," the man commented.

Only Richard knew he was nearly blind in his right eye. This would make him nearly completely blind for a while. What was he going to do? Should he tell Sir Edward and his trainer that he couldn't see? That would put an end to his training for good. Or should he try to go forward with his training and try to rely on what he had previously learned?

His answer came in the form of the Bible verse he was learning that week. *2 Corinthians 5:7, "We live by faith, not by sight."* Well, he certainly didn't have his sight, so he decided to live by faith. And both he and Elizabeth prayed that no one would find out and send Richard home.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth put her skills to work by helping nurse his eye back to health.

"The swelling is going down even more and it's not quite so purple anymore?" she commented as she applied cold compresses and a salve (ointment) each night.

Richard's eye healed in record time. The dark purple turned yellow-green and then disappeared. He did regain his sight, but for that short time, he prayed that God would guide him in his training and God answered his prayers. No one except Elizabeth knew he was living by faith.

#### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was Richard doing when he hurt his eye?
2. Which eye did he hurt?
3. Did Richard decide to keep on with his training even though he couldn't see very well?

#### Bible Thought~

In our story today, even though Richard couldn't see very well, he prayed and continued his training by faith. He has a helper in Elizabeth who helps put ointment on his eye to help it heal. In real life, even though we can't see Jesus, we know He exists by what we read in the Bible and what we see in the lives of other people who have a relationship with Jesus.

We enter into that personal relationship by faith and then we live it out by faith too. So what is faith? Hebrews 11:1 tells us that "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." So faith is

trust in God to save us and to keep on changing us once we're saved.

The Bible also tells us that faith comes from God and that it is impossible to please God without faith. (Eph. 2:8,9 & Heb. 11:6)

Today's verse sums it up for us- 2 Corinthians 5:7 states, "We live by faith, not by sight." If we knew what was going to happen, we wouldn't need faith. But God loves it when we choose to trust in what He has done for us on the cross and what He has in store for us after we believe.

Sometimes He asks us to trust Him by moving to another area or school or another job (when you get older) or by getting involved in a particular group or club, etc.

Maybe it is something as simple as trusting Him to obey your parents or doing your chores with a good attitude or being nice to a new person at school.

Whatever Jesus is asking you to do, if you have faith to obey, that will please God. There is still time to begin a relationship with Jesus if you feel Him calling to you in your heart.

Let's pray to Jesus and thank Him for faith to believe in Who He is, what He has done for us on the cross, and what He will do as He changes us into the person He wants us to be. Let's also ask Him for the faith to obey His Word- the Bible, and thank Him for the people He puts into our lives to help us stay close to Jesus.

Pray to close the session.

***Fall Season Theme Verse: 1 Corinthians 9:25***

*"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."*

## Week #7

### *He's Still Working on Me*

*Phil. 1:6 "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will be faithful to carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

#### The Weaver of Dreams- Chapter 7

Months turned into years and soon Richard and Elizabeth were quite comfortable in the manor house. Even though their lessons got harder and harder with each year, they did their best and God gave them grace and strength to excel.

Just before they were about to celebrate their fourteenth birthday, Lady Anne and Sir Edward called them both in to speak to them. Richard and Elizabeth thought they might be in trouble, but kind words were spoken.

"We realize your parents have visited from time to time, but you have not been to your own home in quite some time. We would like to let you go home for a month and return here to begin your next training period. If you would like to do this, you may go whenever you are ready. We will send a servant for you in 4 weeks."

Well, Richard and Elizabeth were overjoyed. They immediately ran down the long hill toward their family home. Their mother looked old now, but still had a glow about her as they burst through the door.

"What? Can it be my babies? Have they sent you away from the manor house? What has happened?! Please tell me now before I faint," their mother cried.

"Mother, mother! Everything is fine," Elizabeth replied as she ran to hug her. "Lady Anne and Sir Edward let us go home for a month before we begin our next phase of training. I will train to be Lady Anne's Lady-In-Waiting and Richard will go on to be a squire for Sir Edward."

"Your father and I are very proud of you." Mother offered.

"Where is Father?" Richard asked.

"Out in the fields. He'll be up any minute," their mother answered.

They spent a wonderful evening at home with their parents and older brothers and sisters who were not married off yet. That night they slept as sound as if they had never left...

Three weeks into their stay, Richard and Elizabeth were up late talking one evening.

"I didn't realize how much I missed home until we got back here." Elizabeth stated.

"I know what you mean. Being home feels so nice. I almost wish..." Richard started to say.

"Almost wish we didn't have to go back?" Elizabeth asked.

"Yes," Richard said sheepishly. "With Mother and Father getting older, maybe we should stay here and help take care of the farm."

"I did notice Mother was doing things much slower." Elizabeth noted. A long silence followed before Richard spoke.

"Let's tell them tomorrow that we want to stay and help run the farm." Richard offered as they both became lost in thought and drifted off to sleep.

The next morning, Richard and Elizabeth came into where Mother was preparing breakfast.

"Mother and Father, we have something to tell you." Richard said nervously, but Mother and Father didn't seem to notice.

Mother was stirring something in a large kettle, "I know we keep saying it, but we just want you to know how proud we are of you."

Father shared Mother's smile as he said, "At first we weren't sure that you going to the manor was the right thing. But now, after so many years, the Lord has shown us that we made the right decision. The Lord has always been there for us and He will continue to protect us and provide for us."

Mother looked up from the kettle, "Now, children, what was it you wanted to tell us?"

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did Richard and Elizabeth get to do?
2. What were they thinking once they got settled back home?
3. Do you think they will decide to go back to the manor or stay home?

Bible Thought~

You'll have to come back for the basketball season in the winter to find out whether Richard and Elizabeth will go back to the manor or stay at home. But today, we are going to talk about how important it is to finish what you start.

Sometimes there are circumstances beyond our control that prevent us from finishing something, like if you move to another town or school- things like that. We're not talking about those circumstances. We're talking about saying you want to be on a team or in a club of some kind and then not following through with your commitment.

Let's think for a minute what would have happened if Jesus had said it was too hard to go to the cross to die for our sins. That would have been a disaster, right? But the truth is, He did die even though He suffered terribly.

We should make careful decisions on whether to start something and if we decide to do it, we need to finish it. On that same note, when we enter into a relationship with Jesus, He begins to make us into a new creation. (2 Cor. 5:17)

Jesus does not quit halfway into our lives. What He starts, He finishes as our verse today says. Phil. 1:6 "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will be faithful to carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Even if we don't see God working, He is. Sometimes He asks us to wait on an answer to pray. Sometimes He asks us to do something difficult. Sometimes He gives us a blessing or teaches us something new. But He is always with us.

If we are confessing known sin and obeying God's Word, then we are GROWing. Let's go over the letters in the acronym one last time.

G- Go to God in prayer

R- Read the Bible

O- Obey God and others in authority

W- Witness to others about Jesus

Let's thank Jesus right now for not giving up on us and making us into the person He wants us to become.

Pray to close the session.

**Fall Season Theme Verse:** 1 Corinthians 9:25

*"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."*

# Week #8

## Summary

We've learned a lot of lessons this season. Let's take a minute and review. What was your favorite week's lesson or story?

Our season theme verse was 1 Corinthians 9:25

"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Week #1 Richard wants to be a knight so badly but has no hope of training because of his family.	Jesus is our hope in a hopeless world. <i>Psalm 62:5, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him."</i>
Week #2 Sir Edward comes to the door of Richard's family and offers him training even though it is not usual.	God looks at our hearts, not at our appearance or situation. <i>1 Samuel 16:7, "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."</i>
Week #3 Richard gets discouraged because he thinks his lessons are not any different from what he was learning at home. He asks for Elizabeth to come to the manor to help with the laundry.	Don't be discouraged. <i>Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."</i>
Week #4 Richard perseveres under the difficult training of wrestling, running, and obstacle courses. Elizabeth gets to come to the manor.	Train to get the prize- being with Jesus in heaven! <i>Philippians 3:13b-14, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."</i>
Week #5 Richard begins sword training with the double-edged sword. Elizabeth does well helping the washmaid.	The double-edged sword is the Word of God. <i>Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."</i>
Week #6 Richard's bow slips back and hits his good eye. He must train by faith and not by sight. Elizabeth helps put salve on it.	Live by faith, not by sight. <i>2 Corinthians 5:7, "We live by faith, not by sight."</i>
Week #7 Richard and Elizabeth get to come home for a month in between training levels. They must decide whether to go back to the manor or to stay home and help their aging parents.	Finishing what you start/ God finishes what He starts. <i>Phil. 1:6 "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will be faithful to carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."</i>



## ~Appendix~

### A Fuller Understanding of Salvation

The Gold, Black, Red, and White color sections are based on Chapter 2 entitled “Conversion” ( pages 54-64) from *Desiring God* by John Piper

The term “Glory of God” in the Bible generally refers to the visible splendor or moral beauty of God’s manifold perfections. God’s ultimate goal and our ultimate goal are the same: to glorify God. At the same time, He desires to satisfy the hearts of those who live to glorify Himself. He joins us in the pursuit to glorify Him. Of course, this does not apply to everyone, for not everyone will make Christ their ultimate treasure.

Mere “belief” is not enough. Many sinful folks say they “believe in Jesus” but it is not enough to change their lifestyle. Even Satan and his demons believe in Jesus. A more appropriate question is “Do you receive Jesus as your treasure? Do you treasure Him more than anything?” Note our season theme verse- Philippians 3:8, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”

Note some key truths outlining our need and God’s provision:

#### **Gold**

1: We were created in His image so we would act as prisms, reflecting God’s glory. “The proper understanding of everything in life begins with God. No one will ever understand the necessity of conversion who does not know why God created us.” (p.56 )

2: It is the duty of every person to live for the glory of God. Our duty comes from God’s design. That means to value Him/His glory above all else and make it known with implicit thanksgiving. Nature and conscience provide the witness for all men, so all men are without excuse (Rom. 1:20, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities- His eternal power and divine nature- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”).

#### **Black**

3. All of us have failed in some way to glorify God as we should. (Rom. 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”) This does not mean we are to be as glorious as God, but that we have exchanged the glory of God for images. (Rom. 1:22-23 states, “Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.” This is how we “fall short” of God’s glory. We have exchanged something of supreme value for something of lesser value. All sin comes from not putting the supreme value on God’s glory. This is the very essence of sin. (p.57) We have dishonored His glory by trusting in ourselves. The evil of sin is not so much what it does to us or others, but what it does to God. But we do not just choose to sin, we are sinful by birth.

4. We are all subject to eternal condemnation by God for falling short of His glory. Hell is not just a temporary place of judgment and rehabilitation. It is eternal torment and separation because we have acted against our duty to glorify Him Who is eternally holy, righteous, excellent, and beautiful. (Rom. 6:23, “The wages of sin is death.” 2 Thess. 1:9, “They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might.”).

#### **Red**

5. In His great mercy, God has made a way for sinners to enter into His righteousness by dying on the cross in their

place and rising from the dead. (1 Peter 3:18, “Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.” Rom. 6:5, “If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.” Also note 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”)

The good news is that God Himself has decreed a way to satisfy the demands of His justice without condemning the whole human race. The wisdom of God has ordained a way for the love of God to deliver us from the wrath of God without compromising the justice of God- through the death of the Son of God for sinners.

### **White**

6. The benefits of the death of Christ belong to those who repent and trust in Him. (Acts 3:19, “Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.”) Think of it as heads and tails- turn tail on the fruit of unbelief and head straight for Jesus and His promises. Conversion is a miracle of God. Repentance and faith are our acts, but it is made possible because of God’s work of regeneration.

Regeneration is where God takes our hard, rebellious hearts and replaces them with a heart that desires Him above all (Ezekiel 36:26-27, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” Also note Ephesians 2:4-5, “But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions- it is by grace you have been saved.” And Eph. 2:8-9, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.” Lastly note Romans 9:16, “It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.”).

So when we repent (turn) from our sin and place our faith in Christ alone for our salvation, we are in fact responding to the work of God already done in our hearts. Saving faith, then, is the confidence that if you forsake all sinful pleasures, the hidden treasure of holy joy will satisfy your deepest desire. Saving faith is the heartfelt conviction not only that Christ is reliable, but also that He is desirable. It is the confidence that He will come through with His promises and that what He promises is more to be desired than all the world.

### **Green**

Although not addressed in this particular chapter of *Desiring God*, we know that a close relationship with Christ is the key to real spiritual growth. John chapter 15 refers to this wondrous relationship as “abiding” or “remaining” in Christ. The chapter is a word picture of Christ as the vine, the Father as the gardener, and we as believers as the branches. The only way to live a fruit-laden, joy-filled, God-glorified life is to stay connected to the Vine. John 15:5 states, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.”

As we grow in our relationship, we begin to bear fruit much like a real branch bears real grapes. This fruit comes in the form of attitudes, actions, and words born from a heart that is becoming increasingly more like Christ. Galatians 5:22 gives us a list of some fruit that we will produce when we abide in Christ- love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The G-R-O-W acronym mentioned in the weekly devotion section helps the children to get a better understanding of the actions which take place as a result of our new relationship with Christ. They will want to **Go** to God in prayer, **Read** the Bible, **Obey** God and parents, and **Witness** to others as a result of what has happened in their hearts.

Also, in John 15:9-11, “As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father’s commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” This joy Christ is speaking of is the joy we find in knowing and glorifying Christ, which ultimately leads us back to the gold color- God’s glory. As a regenerated believer, we will have that new desire to give Him glory the way it should be.