

2009

Victory Sports Outreach
~Spring Season~

Weekly Devotion Guide



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Victory Sports Outreach
2009 Spring Season
Weekly Devotions Overview

Season Theme:

Jesus is with us wherever we go

Season Theme Verse:

Matthew 28:19-20,

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

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 pick right back up where we left off during basketball season. In our ongoing story, the Phillips family drove across the country so the father Jay could direct a sports camp of a retiring friend out in California. Once the Phillips family arrived, Doug Randolph, the old sports director was led to faith and put his own faith in action as “Happy the Clown” during the camp. Happy adopted three troubled boys and used his colored costume to share the good news of the gospel with them. By the end of the camp, they were truly “happy campers.”

Now, on their first short-term missions trip, they experience a culture halfway across the world. In *On the Road Again*, Doug Randolph and the Phillips family travel to the Philippine Islands, along with several other members of their church, to conduct a week-long sports camp. None of the team members is quite prepared for what they might encounter on the other side of the world. But as always, with every struggle, there comes a joy, and if you go to *be* a blessing, you *receive* an even greater one!

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~ No Fear- Isaiah 41:13

Week #2- Christ is My Strength- Phil. 4:13

Week #3~ Hilarious Generosity- 2 Cor. 9:6

Week #4- Pray Until Something Happens- Phil. 4:6-7

Week #5~ Steal No Longer- Eph. 4:28

Week #6~ To Obey is the Way- Isaiah 48:18

Week #7~ I Will Not Forget You- Isaiah 49:15b-16a

Week #8~ Epilogue/Summary

***New this season-** each week will feature a Tagalog Word of the Week. Tagalog is the national language of the Philippines.

At the end of the booklet you will find an appendix for more information regarding the salvation experience. Please reference it as you need.

Week #1- No Fear

Isaiah 41:13, "For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."

On the Road Again- Chapter 1

The Phillips family was excited! They had just boarded a jet along with a group of people from their church who had been invited to go on a short term mission trip to the Philippines, a large group of tropical islands to the southeast of China! Their mission was to lead a smaller version of the sports clinic they had done in the summer.

The jet engines began to roar as the plane raced down the runway. Junior and Heather Phillips had never been on a plane before; their eyes were wide with excitement and they couldn't stop chattering. Mr. & Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Randolph, and the rest of the group settled in. They knew it would be a long day of flights. They would have to change planes in several major cities before they reached their final destination of Manila- the capital of the Philippines.

Junior was babbling on about how to teach a sport to someone who has never played it before. He was trying to decide the easiest sport to teach. Then he remembered the fit he threw over not being able to help with the Randolph clinic soccer group and how much he enjoyed helping with basketball. He had really learned a lot and watched three boys come to know Jesus with the help of Mr. Randolph as "Happy the Clown." So he decided to let the adults put him where he was needed this time.

Heather began looking at a book that her Aunt Nora and Uncle Russ had given them about the Philippines.

"Wow, Junior, it says here that the average temperature is 90 degrees or more all year except during the cold months from December to early February or if you live in the mountains. Ooh, listen to this: it also says Filipinos love to eat bananas. They come in lots of shapes and sizes and even in different colors- green, yellow, red, and brown!

"Awesome- you know how I love bananas... and chips... and ice cream..." Junior replied.

Amazingly, the trip went great with no hassles over luggage or big delays. They arrived in Manila and boarded another bus to take them to the missionary's home. As they rode, Heather got out her journal and quickly wrote...

Dear Journal,

We've been traveling for over 24 hours now. All of us are really exhausted from the jet lag. It is afternoon here but my body tells me it's in the middle of the night!

One last thing... As we got off the airplane and headed down to get our luggage, I looked out at the sea of foreign faces. Our little group stuck out like a sore thumb! For the first time in my life, I understand what it is like to be different from everyone else. I thought I would be really excited, but now I'm feeling pretty afraid. What have we gotten ourselves into? Lord, please protect us and help me not to be so afraid. Help me to remember that verse I was reading on the plane today...

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Review- where were they going?
2. What is it like there?
3. What was Heather afraid of?
4. What makes you afraid?

Tagalog Word of the Week-

KAMUSTA (pronounced *cam-oo-stuh*)= HELLO

Bible Thought~

In our story, Heather is afraid of being in a foreign country surrounded by people who are different than she is. In a perfect world, fear would not exist, but in our sinful world, people are afraid of many things. Here are a few of them:

Fear of darkness	Achluophobia
Fear of spiders	Arachnophobia
Fear of reptiles	Herpetophobia
Fear of snakes	Ophidiophobia
Fear of thunderstorms	Keraunophobia
Fear of school	Scolionophobia
Fear of slime	Blennophobia
Fear of nosebleeds	Epistaxiophobia
Fear of being clean	Ablutophobia

Why do we fear?

Fear is the opposite of trust. We fear people, things, and circumstances for several reasons.

*because we don't know everything

*because we cannot control people/ we think we can't trust them

*because we don't know the future

What would it be like to live our lives without fear? Jesus doesn't want us to be afraid even though He knows from time to time we will be. In I John 4, we read that fear has to do with punishment. From the first sin, man has experienced punishment and fear. It also has to do with suffering. We do not want to be uncomfortable and at times we are afraid that bad things will happen.

So how do we deal with our fears?

If we're not perfect, we can't trust in ourselves. We read in Prov. 28:26, "He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe."

So who or what would be wise to trust in?

Proverbs 29:25 gives us the answer, "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe."

That brings us to today's verse, Isaiah 41:13, "For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."

God is the perfect One to trust in because...

***He loves us-**

1 John 5:18- God keeps the one born of God safe and the evil one cannot harm him.- the word keep safe means to keep or guard us- the Lord guards us from things outside His will happening to us. Yes, bad things may come, but ultimately He will use every bad thing for our good. It is not unseen or unguarded if unpleasant things come- God never says "oops."

WOW- that speaks volumes.

***He is omniscient-**(He knows everything)

***He is omnipresent-**(He is everywhere at once)

***He is omnipotent-**(He is all-powerful)

All we have to do is ask Him.

So by trusting in Jesus to save us from our sins, He comes to live inside us, then whenever we are afraid, all we have to do is **pray/call on Him**. Prov. 18:10 tells us, “The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.” Speak the name of the Lord out loud when you are afraid.

Jesus prayed for his disciples in the garden (Jn. 17:12 reads, “Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name”) so we also should pray for each other.

Let’s pray and ask God to help us not be afraid right now!

Pray to close the session.

Week #2- Christ is My Strength

Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through him who gives me strength."

On the Road Again- Chapter 2

Missionaries Mr. & Mrs. Lyons were so gracious to open their home to the group from the United States. The first thing everyone did was eat an authentic Filipino dinner of rice, fish, eggrolls, and a vegetable dish. Dessert was a fried banana roll with cinnamon on top. After dinner, everyone was glad to go to bed!

Early the next morning the group got on a small bus that was waiting outside the missionaries' home that took them to the small church where they would do the sports camp. God was truly amazing- there were just enough cleared fields to do each sport and they could have a snack and a short devotion each day in the shady areas.

Because it got so hot during the middle of the day, the sports camp would have to be done in the morning. So after a prayer and devotional time, they went to work setting up equipment. The Phillips' church back in America had collected an amazing supply of baseball equipment, as well as volleyballs, footballs, and frisbees.

By 9:00 am, children started coming. Some were cautious at first, but when Mr. Randolph started handing out jelly beans in the salvation colors, the children came in droves. The morning began heating up rather quickly, but it didn't seem to bother the native children.

The first day was off to a great start! Some of the children were enjoying the instruction that Mr. Randolph was giving about flag football when suddenly he started to breathe funny and topple over. In a flash, he was on the ground, passed out from the heat. The clinic was stopped. Mr. Phillips made a mad dash for the first aid kit while Mr. Lyons ran for some cool water for his forehead. It took just a few seconds to revive Mr. Randolph. Mr. Lyons suggested he take a long break inside the church where there was a fan. During the break, Mr. Randolph thought about the clown suit he had brought; it would certainly be too hot to put it on this week, even for a short time. He would have to come up with another plan.

That evening, Heather got out her journal and tried to get down on paper the events of the day...

Dear Journal,

I was so tired last night, I didn't get a good look at the country, but today at sports camp, I noticed all the beautiful green plants and palm trees everywhere. I also learned something new today: TROPICAL means HOT!! This trip going to be harder than we thought. Mr. Randolph passed out today. He's fine now, but we all learned a lesson and are taking things slower. We're not used to this heat. Lord, please strengthen us to do what You've called us to do.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. When did they have to do the sports camp?
2. Why?
3. What happened to Mr. Randolph?

Tagalog Word of the Week~

SALAMAT PO (*sa-la-mat po*)= **THANK YOU**

Bible Thought~

In our story, Mr. Randolph passed out from the heat. He wasn't used to it; not growing up there, he wasn't prepared for the intense heat of the Philippines. It can get well over 100 degrees in the summer months and it is very humid!

We have to be prepared for some things in our own lives too! Like...

- *sharing with others
- * obeying God, parents, teachers
- * telling the truth
- * being nice to someone we might not like
- * studying instead of cheating on a test
- * not arguing with brothers & sisters
- * getting up for school with a good attitude
- * being respectful to parents & teachers

We are weaklings when it comes to these things. We need help- we can't do them consistently on our own. We need extra strength for these types of things. We need God to help us. He is perfectly prepared for all situations because He is holy- perfect, righteous, sovereign (in control of all things). Psalm 105:4 tells us, "Look to the LORD and His strength; seek His face always."

Today's verse, Philippians 4:13 lets us know, "I *can* do all things through him who gives me strength." God does call us to act and think differently than the world does. Some things are easy for us and some things are more difficult. If we could do everything we needed to on our own, we wouldn't need Jesus' help. He wants to be a part of our lives. He wants us to have faith and rely on Him.

When we are weak, Jesus is our strength. Listen to the words of Paul in the Bible. Remember that Paul is in prison at the time that he wrote these words,

"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power will rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9-12)

How many of us say that we delight in those things Paul mentioned? He said that because He wanted others to see how God worked in his life. Paul wanted God to get the glory because he could not have gone through what he did without God's strength. He is saying it's not about Paul, but about God. Remember the gold color? God is big on God, and that's OK because He is the only One who can say that.

Not many of us will go through what Paul did, but we will have hard things come up in our lives. Hard things are not an excuse for us to quit; they can be an opportunity for Jesus to send His strength to us.

Jesus is more than willing to give us strength to do whatever He wants us to do if we have Him as our Lord and Savior. By understanding that we can't make it to heaven on our own and that His blood on the cross covers us from our sin, we can ask Him to be our Lord and Savior so we will go to heaven and live with Him forever. He will also help us live here on earth His way.

Jesus really is our strength. He is always there when we need Him!

Pray to close the session.

Week #3- Hilarious Generosity

2 Corinthians 9:6, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."

On the Road Again- Chapter 3

By the second day of sports camp the group came prepared with the right clothing and a lot more bottled water to keep them cool during the heat of the day. Mr. Randolph was feeling much better.

He had prayed about another unique way of sharing the colors of the gospel and felt the Lord telling him that clowns are often seen with balloons at the circus. It certainly felt like a circus yesterday as the world began to spin as he passed out! He dug out the colored balloons in the trunk they were going to use for the last day and told everyone on the team what he planned to do with them. Everyone agreed they should use them during the week instead of at the end.

While the team was setting up the equipment that morning, some kids showed up early to help. Among these was a boy named Domingo Albelo and his little sister Annie. Heather hadn't noticed them the day before, but there were so many children, it would have been easy not to have seen them. Their mother watched cautiously from a distance under a palm tree. Domingo and Annie immediately stole Heather's heart. They had round faces and dark brown hair and eyes. They were so willing to help.

The two children had clung to Heather all morning. They laughed and played baseball together and really seemed to be learning the game well. At the end of the camp, Heather made sure that they each got a gold and a black balloon from Mr. Randolph as he shared about God's glory and man's sin. Heather was surprised, though, as Pastor Rob gathered the team together and announced that Domingo and Annie's mom had invited them to their house for lunch!

It took just a little while longer to pack up the equipment, lock up the church and head over to the Albelo home. The home was quite modest, but they enjoyed a very nice lunch of finger sandwiches and bottles of Coke for everyone. The team learned that Mr. & Mrs. Albelo made bamboo furniture in a cottage industry in their neighborhood. They showed the group some of the pieces they were working on. They were really beautiful.

Mrs. Albelo got up to speak in somewhat broken English, "I just want thank you for being friend to my Domingo and Annie. They are...how do you say...shy...but we love Jesus and want to show we love you too. Thank you for coming to Philippines. May God bless you."

Heather talked with Mr. & Mrs. Albelo for a while after they ate about how much Domingo and Annie were learning about baseball. She invited them to come to the sports camp if they could for the rest of the week. Mr. & Mrs. Albelo said they might just do that.

On the bus ride back to the missionaries' home, Pastor Rob commented that the lunch they had just eaten would have been enough food to feed the Albelo family for a week. All of a sudden, the group felt humbled that the Albelos would make that kind of sacrifice for them. Then they remembered the kind of sacrifice Jesus made for them, and instead of going to bless others, they themselves felt truly blessed.

Heather was so overcome with emotion that she wasn't sure what she would write in her journal that night, but she *was* sure that when she picked up her pen that night, the words would come.

Follow-Up Questions~

1. Into whose home was the team welcomed for lunch?
2. How much food did the Albelos sacrifice for the team?

Tagalog Words of the Week~

KAIBIGAN (*kay-began*) = FRIEND

SARAP (*sa-rap*) = DELICIOUS

Bible Thought~

In our story, the Albelo family shared their food with the team from the U.S. Did you know that the Bible speaks about sharing too? In 2 Corinthians, Paul tells the people, “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.”

Sowing and reaping are farming terms. A farmer sows or plants his seed in the spring and in the fall he reaps or harvests his crops, right? If a farmer puts down just a bit of seed, he’s not going to get much out of it, will he? But if he plants a lot of seed, he has a much better chance of getting a bumper crop in the fall!

The same principle is used for us living as Christians. Sowing can refer to telling someone about Christ or giving to someone in need or using our gifts and talents for the Lord. It doesn’t necessarily have to be money, because some of us don’t necessarily have money to give, but we could give our time or our talent, couldn’t we?

The more we do these things, the more we are blessed for it. Now, it might not be something we receive here on earth, but God is the Ancient of Days, and He keeps an account of everything we do here on earth so it can be rewarded either here on earth or later in heaven.

Interestingly enough, 2 Cor. 9:7 ends by stating that, “God loves a *cheerful* giver (emphasis added).” He doesn’t want us to feel like we are obligated to give or give out of a begrudging heart. He wants us to be happy about how we give or share. In fact, He not only wants us to be happy, He wants us to be *hilarious* about it! How about that!? The Greek word for cheerful in that verse is *hilaros*, which is where we get our word hilarious!! Pretty neat, huh?!

He wants us to get a kick out of helping others. But, can we do that even if we don’t have a lot to give? Ask the boy who gave his lunch to Jesus! Jesus turned the five loaves and two fishes in to a lunch for more than 5,000 people (see Matthew 14:13-21) with 12 basketfuls left over!!

Jesus can do more with our little gifts than we can with our big ones, so let’s be hilarious givers!!

Pray to close the session.

Week #4- P.U.S.H. (Pray Until Something Happens)

Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God will transcend all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

On the Road Again-Chapter 4

By the third day of the sports camp, things were running smoothly. The children were having a good time learning about baseball, touch football, volleyball, and ultimate frisbee. You could look out over the field and see the different stations set up and hear much laughter coming out of the mouths of the children.

Junior looked over at the flag football group. Suddenly he saw something that made him laugh! Two little boys at the same time, went flying up into the air! They didn't look to be hurt because they were laughing too! They had slipped on some very well camouflaged banana peels discarded on the grass. Of course, the peels were green, so the boys didn't even notice them!

After the laughter died back down, the clinics started back up again. Things were going so well, most groups tried to scrimmage at the end of the session. The morning wound down with Mr. Randolph handing out red balloons and explaining what Jesus had done for them on the cross- taking their punishment and rising from the dead so we might go to live in heaven with Him one day. Many children appeared to really be thinking about what Mr. Randolph was saying. Just before he dismissed the children, he had a special surprise for them.

"If you come back tonight, we will show a special movie right here in the field. We'll shine it on the side of the church so everyone will be able to see it. It's the *Jesus* film and it will show you who Jesus really is. We'll even do an American tradition of popcorn at the movie!" Mr. Randolph tried to explain what popcorn was, but he wasn't sure the children understood what he was saying.

That evening, the team came back and set up all the movie and popcorn equipment along with their electrical adaptor which would allow the American equipment to function with the foreign electrical currents. But when they went to plug in the equipment, there was no power!!

They had heard that power outages were common, but didn't think it would really affect them because most of what they were doing didn't require electricity. They asked around and no one knew when it would come back on. Pastor Rob and missionaries Mr. & Mrs. Lyons gathered the team to pray. They kept on praying for nearly an hour, trusting that at the right time it would come on.

Folks started arriving and it seemed for a while like they would have to cancel the movie event, when suddenly the projector turned on by itself and the popcorn maker began making noise!! The team began praising the Lord!! He had made the power come on just in the nick of time!

Heather had much to write about in her journal that night!

Dear Journal,

Wow! What a day! We prayed and prayed for the power to come back on and thank the Lord it did! There were many tears shed by the people as they watched how Jesus died for their sins and how He came alive again on the third day! The Holy Spirit is really working here! I can't wait to see what will happen tomorrow!!

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What did the two boys slip on during football camp?
2. What happened in the evening when they were supposed to watch the *Jesus* film and pop popcorn?
3. What did they do about the power outage?

Tagalog *Word of the Week*

PANALANGIN (*pana-lang-gin*)= PRAYER

Bible Thought~

In our story, the power has gone out at a very inopportune time, or has it?? Sometimes God allows things like that to happen not to frustrate us (although we do get frustrated at times), but to give us an opportunity to exercise our right to prayer. Prayer is simply talking to God. We can do it anytime, anywhere, and with our eyes open or closed. We can send up a desperate quick silent prayer (help me!), or we can set a deliberate time of praise, reflection, and requests.

Prayer involves some basic elements. We can use the acrostic A.C.T.S. to help us. “A” stands for adoration. We remember the gold color- it stands for God’s glory. Adoration is when we tell Him how great He is, how worthy He is, how marvelous He is, how perfect and holy and majestic He is.

“C” stands for confession. Like the black color, we are not perfect, but sinful. We must confess our sins to Him so He can forgive us and cleanse us. These are specific sins. It’s OK to just list them (He knows our hearts anyway). We need to be truly sorry over them though.

“T” stands for thanksgiving. Thank Him for all the wonderful things He has done and will do. We’ll talk more about this in just a minute with today’s Bible verse.

“S” stands for supplication. That’s a big word that stands for what we request of God. It’s our list of things we ask God for- needs, wants, for ourselves and for others.

Our verse for today is Philippians 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God will transcend all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Jesus doesn’t want us to worry or be anxious. He wants us to trust Him. One of the ways we can practice that is through prayer. He already knows what is in our hearts, but prayer changes us. But how?

When we take our requests (and praise!) to God, it makes us realize how great He is. It also makes us realize how much we need Him and His help in our lives. That is a good thing!

When we are worried and anxious about something, we have no peace about it, right? But here’s something awesome- the end of today’s verse tells us the “peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Wow! God will give us His peace when we pray with thanksgiving.

What does that mean? By thanking God for what He has already done for us and for what He will do in that situation, we exercise our faith. He loves that and gives us His peace when we pray with thanksgiving.

Maybe some of you have heard of the acrostic “P.U.S.H.” It stands for Pray Until Something Happens. That’s a good thing to remember. Keep praying until something happens. It may not be what we wanted, but God will give us His grace and peace to go through whatever He wants for our lives. (*This would be a good time to share an example of something you prayed for a long time for and then it finally happened.*)

Ask for some prayer requests and pray for the kids.

Week #5- Steal No Longer

Ephesians 4:28, "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need."

On the Road Again- Chapter 5

Everyone could tell what a great trip this was turning out to be. Last night after the Jesus film, many people decided to follow Jesus as their Lord and Savior. It didn't seem to bother the team that they didn't get much sleep after putting all of the movie and popcorn equipment away. The Filipino children loved the popcorn, and the team had learned a valuable lesson on prayer.

They worked quickly to set up the different centers. Heather was just about finished putting out the baseball equipment when Domingo and Annie came walking across the field, and gave her a big hug. They both seemed to be naturals at the new sport.

During a scrimmage, Domingo hit a home run! The ball went so far, they didn't see where it landed for it went through some trees into a nearby yard. The ball got the attention of two teens in the yard and they came out to investigate.

Unfortunately, their intentions weren't good. They watched everyone play for a while and when the baseball clinic took a water break, the two teens came rushing onto the field grabbing up as many baseballs and gloves as they could carry. Of course, this caused a great commotion, as the children noticed and began to scream and yell, but the teens were running quickly away.

Surprisingly enough, the first ones to the rescue were the touch football players, who began running like mad to catch up to the teen thieves. Two older players caught up with the thieves and tackled them to the ground! Wow, they hadn't even been taught to tackle!! They were just playing flag football, but they sure scored a touchdown for the sports clinic that day!

All of the balls and gloves were retrieved and missionary Lyons sat the teens down and began to tell them what the sports clinic was really all about. The teens were so intrigued by what was going on that they stayed until Mr. Randolph did the devotion at the end with the white balloons.

As Mr. Randolph explained about being pure and cleansed from sins based on what Jesus had done for them on the cross, a change of heart appeared to be taking place in the teens. Their faces softened. Heather could almost see a smile wanting to come out and display itself. That night she wrote in her journal.

Dear Journal,

*I can't believe those two teens came to steal our equipment! I'm surprised they stayed to hear about Jesus' cleansing and forgiveness of sins. They even took a white balloon when it was over. I wonder if they'll come back for the last day of sports camp? I wonder if they'll ever get to the place where they **give** instead of **take** from others? I guess we'll all have to wait and see...*

Follow-Up Questions~

1. What happened at the sports clinic?
2. Who caught up with the two thieves?

Tagalog *Word of the Week:*

PAUMANHIN (*pa-o-man-hin*)= *SORRY, EXCUSE ME, FORGIVE ME*

Bible Thought~

In our story today, two teenagers try to steal some baseball equipment, but are caught before they can get away. So what does the Bible say about stealing? In the Ten Commandments, commandment #8 tells us not to steal. We still have laws in our country today which have consequences for stealing.

Also in our story today, Mr. Randolph told about the white color. That is the purity and cleansing we can receive since Jesus went to the cross to save us from being seen as sinful in front of God the Father. If we have received this forgiveness by wanting Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, we should certainly not be stealing.

Our verse today is Ephesians 4:28, "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need." Paul is talking to the Christians in Ephesus. Apparently some of the Christians were stealing!!

The message of this verse is that they must do something useful with their hands so they can share with others. After all, isn't sharing the opposite of stealing? Jesus wants us to share with others. Again, think of the blessing the little boy received by sharing his loaves and fishes. Jesus turned it into something wonderful, didn't He?

Let's talk about some of the ways stealing can happen. *When we flat-out take an item from a store and don't pay for it.

*When we take something from a friend's house or bookbag.

*When we cheat on a test, we are stealing someone else's hard work in studying.

*When we take home pencils or pens in school that don't belong to us and never bring them back.

*When we "borrow" something from someone and don't intend to give it back.

*When you lie and say you are younger than you are to get a reduced rate at a restaurant or admission to an event.

*When you get older- cheating on your taxes.

If we really begin to love others as we love ourselves, we will not want to steal. Stealing hurts people and companies. It ruins our testimony and makes people not want to trust us. It is easier not to steal than to make it right by having to bring the item back and confess.

If we begin as young people living truthfully and honestly, we will be more successful in God's eyes even if we don't make as much money. God is not concerned with how much we make at a certain job. He is looking at our hearts.

Pray for the Lord to bestow courage on each young person to live honestly.

Week #6- To Obey is the Way

Isaiah 48:18, If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would've been like a river."

On the Road Again- Chapter 6

The team gathered to pray and ask the Lord's guidance and blessing on the day. They would have a testimony time tomorrow morning, but today was the last official day of sports camp. When they were finished praying, Missionary Lyons had a special announcement.

"Since today is our last official camp day and it is going to be a bit hotter, along with our green balloons to hand out today, we have rounded up a hose to attach to the spigot on the side of the church. We'll end early today and spray the hose over the children. They can get cooled off and play for a few minutes. You are welcome to get wet also. I just want to remind you that this water is not filtered, so please don't swallow it." he cautioned.

There was a bit of sadness in the air as the morning went on. The team and the children knew a goodbye would have to be said soon. Domingo and Annie were trying to savor the time they had with Heather. The two teens who had tried to steal equipment the day before even showed back up and were trying to get in some last day fun.

Mr. Lyons had everyone stop about an half hour early and had the children line up in their sport groups over near the church. He said he had a special surprise for them and asked for a couple of volunteers. The two teens from the day before came forward.

"Good- come with me for a moment," said Mr. Lyons as he led the teens to the hose. Mr. Lyons was silently praying that the teens wouldn't try to pull a prank on the young campers. The teens obeyed and carried the hose to the field.

"Who wants to get wet?!" asked Mr. Lyons.

All the children shouted with glee as they were joyfully squirted by the two teens. Some of the children were dancing. Others were doing crazy poses under the spray of water. Still others were catching the water in their mouths for a cool drink. Junior thought that looked like fun, so he, too, captured a big swig of water between his lips.

The moment he swallowed he knew he was in trouble. He knew he was in trouble. He panicked for a moment, but then ran over to his mom and told her about swallowing the water.

"Oh Junior, you didn't!" she cried. "Let's ask Mr. Lyons what we should do."

Mr. Lyons thought for a moment before he suggested that Junior to try to dilute the hose water by drinking several bottled waters. Heather ran to get the bottled water for her brother.

That evening, the expected began to happen for Junior. He wasn't able to escape the consequences of his actions. Heather reached for her pen and began to write...

Dear Journal,

Junior got a mouthful of hose water this afternoon. Even though he tried to dilute it with clean water, it only helped a little. The cramps have started for him already. I hope it doesn't get too bad before we have to travel home. If only he had listened to Mr. Lyons...

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was the special surprise for the campers on the last day of camp?
2. What was Junior's mistake? What were the consequences?

Tagalog Word of the Week
MAKINIG (*maki-nig*)= *LISTEN*

Bible Thought~

In our story, Junior ends up with bacteria in his stomach and some pretty painful cramps. If he had obeyed Mr. Lyons' instructions, he could have saved himself the painful consequences.

Today's verse says just that. Isaiah 48:18 states, "If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would've been like a river." Have you ever heard of the song that goes,

*I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul*

What does "peace like a river" mean? A river moves pretty fast at times. How can that be peaceful? Let's think for a moment about the difference between a pond and a river. Pond water is still and doesn't move. Quite often it gets algae growing on it, creating a kind of scum on the top of it. It's pretty gross if you're not the kind of animal that eats algae.

But a river, now, even though it moves quickly, has fresh, cool, clean water. It doesn't stay still enough for a scum of algae to form on it.

Not obeying God's Word can make us feel slimy inside like a stagnant pond. Of course, when we confess our sins, Jesus makes us clean and pure. But when we do obey, Jesus gives us peace like a pure clean rushing river.

The water that Junior drank out of the hose wasn't pond water, but it had some bad bacteria in it. If he had obeyed the command not to drink the water, he wouldn't have had to endure the stomach cramps. And so it is with us, if we obey God's Word, we will save ourselves embarrassment, humiliation, and God's (and parents') discipline.

Obeying God's Word should not merely be done to avoid consequences, but to show God how much we love Him. It becomes a matter of relationship. God does not make rules for us to trap us. He is showing us His perfect way to live. In Psalm 119:105 David tells us that, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." A few verses later he tells us, "Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping Your decrees to the very end."

We must decide that we will obey God's Word. That is the very foundation for living the way God wants us to. He will help us live right if we just ask Him!

Pray to close the session, asking God to help the children obey and understand what being a Christian really means. Just pray or discuss what it means. Pray that God will reveal Himself to the children. Don't ask for a show of hands.

*For more information on what salvation means, turn to the appendix at the end of the booklet.

Week #7- I Will Not Forget You

Isaiah 49:15b-16a, "I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."

On the Road Again- Chapter 7

Saturday morning came much too early for the team. Even they couldn't wait for the time of testimony in the morning, they didn't want to leave the Philippines. Junior, still not feeling well from his water incident, stayed back at the missionaries' home with Mrs. Phillips during the morning.

When the rest of the team arrived at the church, they were surprised to find lots of people already there waiting for them. As the team got out of the bus, many of the children ran up to them waving palm branches. They all walked over to a place beside the church doors.

Mr. Lyons spoke quietly, "I don't know how we can thank you for coming and leading this sports camp. We've truly enjoyed it and have seen God work in many ways this week. Is there anyone who would like to give a testimony to what God has done in his or her life this week?"

One by one, many people told of how they came to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior during the course of the week. Last to speak were the two teens who had come to steal the baseball equipment.

"We just want to say that if God cares enough about us to bring some people all the way from the United States of America to get our attention, then He is who we want to follow." At that, a thunderous applause erupted with many shouts of praise.

Mr. Albelo got up to speak next, "After watching the *Jesus* film the other night, I got an idea. I started whittling my scrap pieces of bamboo and I couldn't stop until I was done. I want each of you to have one to remember how much you have blessed this community this week."

He reached into a box and took out the pieces of bamboo, each one intricately carved in the shape of Christ's hands, complete with the nail hole of His crucifixion. Many tears were shed as each team member received his gift.

Mr. Randolph then spoke, "We also have a gift for you. We want you to keep on doing sports camp as often as you like, but you'll need some equipment to do it. Last night, we locked everything up in the church for you to keep. May God bless you as you serve Him in this community."

More tears were shed at this announcement. As the meeting came to a close, many pictures were taken and many hugs were given. The team knew it was time to board the bus that would take them back to Mr. & Mrs. Lyons home so they could pack up their things to fly home.

When they had packed their bags, Heather took her journal out one last time.

Dear Journal,

I can't believe we have to leave tomorrow. I will never forget this place- the beauty of it nor it's people. I will never forget Annie and Domingo. Never.

Follow-Up Questions~

1. What happened to the two teenagers who tried to steal?
2. What did Mr. Albelo give each of the team members to remember the Philippines by?

Tagalog *Word of the Week*

PAALAM (pa-lam)= GOOD-BYE

Bible Thought~

In our story, the team must say good-bye to their new friends in the Philippines. But we never have to say good-bye to Jesus if He already lives inside our hearts. And also, Jesus never has to say good-bye to us if we have that relationship with Him.

We forget other things a lot- like making our bed, a homework assignment, or maybe saying “thank you.” Sometimes we even put a string on our finger to help us not forget certain things we are supposed to do.

Jesus says something very interesting in today’s verse in Isaiah 49:15-16, “I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands.” You might get a trophy sometime that has your name engraved on it. It is a permanent thing; you can’t just erase it.

When Jesus made this comment, it says to us that He is permanently bonded to us if we have a personal relationship with Him. When we become His child, He never forgets that He is our Father. Some of us have good relationships with our dads here on earth and some don’t, but we never have to guess if Jesus still loves us or is caring for us.

Jesus also tells us that He will never leave us nor forsake us (see Joshua 1:5). There isn’t anyplace we could go that Jesus could not find us-

- * not under our beds
- * not in our closets
- * not on the playground
- * not in the classroom
- * not at the grocery store
- * not in the car

Knowing this can let us feel secure. People and friends (even parents and coaches!) can let us down sometimes, but Jesus will never let us down. He loves us so much that He died for us. He will never forget, leave, or turn His back on us.

Pray to close the session and review what being a Christian means, but once again, just pray that folks understand. Don’t ask for a show of hands.

Ask the Lord to show Himself to the children so they can be secure in knowing Him as their Lord and Savior.

Week #8- Season Summary

On the Road Again- Epilogue

Maybe you've heard the saying, "God works in mysterious ways." You will be glad to know that the two teens who gave their hearts to Jesus after their life of crime volunteered to head up the flag football the next time the sports camp was offered. "God must like football," they reasoned, "since He had us tackled to get our attention."

Domingo and Annie's mom and dad, Mr. & Mrs. Albelo said they would head up the baseball part of the next clinic since Domingo's home run was part of a divine plan!

Mr. & Mrs. Lyons were so encouraged by all that happened at the sports camp that they decided to do one in the spring and fall each year.

And Heather kept on writing in her journal even after she returned home. In fact, this is her latest entry:

Dear Journal,

You're never believe what I got in the mail today!- A letter from Domingo and Annie!!

The End.

Tagalog *Word of the Week*

HALLELUJAH = *HALLELUJAH* in any language!!

Thank the kids for coming each week!

Ask the kids if they learned anything...

Ask the kids what their favorite lesson was...

Here's a summary of this season's lessons:

Week 1 Mr. Randolph, the Phillips family and some church members board fly to the Philippines for a sports camp mission trip. Heather is afraid.	<i>Isaiah 41:13, "For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."</i>	Tagalog Word of the Week: <i>KAMUSTA</i> = <i>HOW ARE YOU?</i>
Week 2 Mr. Randolph passes out from the heat during sports camp.	<i>Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through him who gives me strength."</i>	Tagalog Word of the Week: <i>SALAMAT PO</i> = <i>THANK YOU</i>
Week 3 Mr. & Mrs. Albelo feed the team lunch one day out of their big generosity	<i>2 Corinthians 9:6, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."</i>	Tagalog Word of the Week: <i>KAIBIGAN</i> = <i>FRIEND</i> <i>SARAP</i> (<i>sa-rap</i>) = <i>DELICIOUS</i>

<p>Week 4 The power goes out just as the Jesus film is about to be shown with popcorn!</p>	<p><i>Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God will transcend all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."</i></p>	<p>Tagalog Word of the Week: PANALANGIN= PRAYER</p>
<p>Week 5 Two teens try to steal baseball equipment and end up tackled instead.</p>	<p><i>Ephesians 4:28, "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need."</i></p>	<p>Tagalog Word of the Week: PAUMANHIN= SORRY!</p>
<p>Week 6 Junior gets a mouthful of water and a stomach full of cramps!</p>	<p><i>Isaiah 48:18, If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would've been like a river."</i></p>	<p>Tagalog Word of the Week: MAKINIG= LISTEN</p>
<p>Week 7 The team receives carvings of Jesus' crucified hands and leaves behind the sports equipment.</p>	<p><i>Isaiah 49:15b-16a, "I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."</i></p>	<p>Tagalog Word of the Week: PAALAM= GOOD-BYE</p>

Pray to close the season!

~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.