

2010  
Fall Season  
Victory Sports Outreach

Weekly Devotion Booklet



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On Angels' Wings & Victory Sports Outreach

Scripture taken from the NIV Study Bible.

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## Welcome to Victory Sports!

If you're new to Victory Sports, you are in for a *real treat*!! VSO is a unique, one-of-a-kind community sports league, whose mission is to share the love and life-saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through sports! We have seen God work, taking this ministry from 80 children in the winter of 2004 to about 500 this past spring. Praise God for His faithfulness!!

When games begin on Saturdays, the Gospel of Jesus is presented in weekly increments using the salvation colors model as follows:

- Gold represents God's glory
  - Black represents man's sin
  - Red represents Jesus' blood
  - White represents purity or cleansing
  - Green represents the new Christian's growth
- G- go to God in prayer
  - R- read the Bible
  - O- obey God, parents, teachers
  - W- witness, tell others about Jesus

During the weekdays, however, instructional practices end with a short devotion. A fictional story begins the devotional time and Biblical principles are drawn out to apply to our lives. That's where you come in. Please be prepared to either read or summarize the lesson each week. Feel free to use easier language for little ones and add your own experiences if you have something you feel would add interest to the lesson.

Of course, we will have printed copies of the booklet available, but if you forget your booklet or come straight from work, you can also view and print the weekly lessons from the VSO website. Just go to [victorysportsoutreach.org](http://victorysportsoutreach.org) and look at the navigation bar on the left side of the home page. Toward the bottom, click on "devotions." This will take you to the devotions page where you can see a weekly schedule and view or print what you need for the week.

This season for our weekly devotions, we begin a new set of mystery adventures. Each mystery will wrap up at the end of each season, though some of the characters will return for the next adventure.

Inspired by the parable of the lost coin in Luke 15:8-10, museum night guard Larry Mitchell has discovered that one of the rare Roman coins has gone missing! Detective Watts and his slightly absent-minded assistant Sargent Bean, must figure out what has happened to the missing coin at the Red Valley Museum of History. For one person, the event will be one of eternal proportions...

**If weather conditions force some practices to be cancelled, weeks 6 and 7 would be good to combine.**

Here's what you can expect each week...

Week #1- Unique and Valuable- Psalm 139:14

Week #2- Character and Motives- Proverbs 16:2

Week #3- Tarnishing Gold- 1 Corinthians 15:33

Week #4- Taking a Tour- James 1:22-23

Week #5- Hide and Seek- Isaiah 48:18

Week #6- Celebrate- Luke 15:9-10

Week #7- The Mystery of Grace- Epilogue- Ephesians 2:8-9

## Week 1- Unique and Valuable

Psalm 139:14, "I praise You, because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

### *Lost and Found: Chapter 1*

Night guard, Larry Mitchell, took his job very seriously. Looking after the Red Valley Museum of History wasn't just his job, it was his *life*. He had seen *Night at the Museum 1 & 2* so many times, he felt like Larry Daley except that the artifacts in *his* museum didn't come to life after the sun went down.

Larry Mitchell knew exactly how many animals were in the Savanna Room, the Tundra room, the Desert Room, and the Rain Forest room. He also knew there were 7 pyramids in the Egyptian room and 10 rare coins on display in the Roman room.

*A place for everything and everything in its place* was Larry's motto. Each night he counted every item to pass the time and to make sure everything was still there. He had already read each of the descriptions on each display and felt he could give a pretty adequate tour of the place if he was ever called to do so.

It was about midnight on Thursday and Larry Mitchell went about the rooms, counting as usual. He never got tired of seeing all the exhibits. He always found something new to learn. He had just come out of the Egyptian room, wondering what life must have been like during that era when he turned the corner into the Roman room. His mind automatically shifted into Roman mode as he began counting the ancient coins, which were generously donated by an anonymous Italian family in the area.

*One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.....* He must have miscounted. He tried again. *One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.....* Aaahhh!! Where was the tenth coin?? It was missing!! Larry was so shocked, he hardly knew what to do! *Calm down, just call security*, he thought to himself. *What am I saying? I am security!!*

*OK then, call the police!* He quickly dialed 9-1-1. Detective Watts and his assistant Sargent Bean came right over.

"Mr. Mitchell, I want you to describe the coin and tell me exactly what happened when you discovered that the Roman coin was missing." Detective Watts requested.

"It's a denarius," Larry corrected the detective, "from the time of Christ. Tiberius Caesar's head is on the front and he is sitting on his throne on the back. It's a gold coin that's very valuable. There aren't that many artifacts that date all the way back from the time of Christ. That makes it quite rare and unique. I was counting the coins like I do every night to make sure they're all here, when I noticed that one of them was missing."

"You count *all* the coins *each* night?" Sargent Bean asked.

"Yep, I count everything in each exhibit each night. It keeps me busy and I always know everything is where it should be." Larry answered.

Sergeant Bean wrote down everything Larry said on a small notepad as Detective Watts thought about who to interview next.

Follow Up Questions :

1. What was Larry Mitchell's job?
2. What was missing?

Bible Thought!

In our story today, a rare and valuable coin was missing from the Red Valley Museum of History. Even though the coin was rare and valuable, there were more like it. It wasn't a one-of-a-kind item.

You, on the other hand *are* a unique and totally one-of-a-kind individual. There is no one else in the world quite like you. Even twins and triplets have their own unique characteristics.

Today's verse is Psalm 139:14, "*I praise You, because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*" The passage goes on to say that God saw us and knew us even before we were formed inside our mothers!

Let's think for just a minute about the first part of the verse though. "I am *fearfully* and *wonderfully* made." The word "fearfully" means in awe of. It is a holy reverence toward God. We stand amazed at who God is and what He has done. And what *has* He done? He created each and every one of us! It is absolutely amazing that a holy, perfect, hugely big God would make such creatures as humans.

The next word is "wonderfully." This word means to separate or distinguish. In this verse, it means that God does things that are above and beyond what we can expect or predict. It signifies incomprehensible wonders (that is a big word that means we can't even begin to understand it). And that is exactly what we find in the human body!

Doctors are still astounded by the way the human body works. There are so many incredibly detailed and technical processes that go on inside our bodies, that we need specialists. No one doctor knows everything about the human body. It's just too complex. With all of our technology, we are just *now* finding out how our brains really work!

We have *eye* doctors and *foot* doctors and *stomach* doctors and *orthopedic* doctors, and doctors who specialize in *blood* and *cells* and certain kinds of *diseases*. Only an all-knowing God could put together a human being that has not even yet been fully discovered!!

Evolution tries to tell us that we are just a product of natural processes- that we came from goo millions of years ago. But the Bible tells us that we are *made* by an intelligent, holy Creator. That means we are a *one-of-a-kind hand-made piece of art!!* The fact that we are so complex is perfect evidence for an intelligent Designer!

But then sin entered into the world and spoiled God's precious creations. Because sin was such a huge problem, it required a huge solution. So God sent Himself- His Son Jesus- to cover our sin with His own righteousness. When we ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and ask Him to be our Lord and Savior, God places His righteousness on us.

And He did this because He loves His creation. Take joy, sweet children, you are *fearfully* and *wonderfully* made!

God don't make no junk!!

Let's pray and thank God for creating us and making us all unique!

Pray to close the session.

## Week 2- Character and Motives

Proverbs 16:2- All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.

### *Lost and Found: Chapter 2*

A gray car pulled into the parking lot of the museum. *Who would be coming to the museum at this hour?* Larry Mitchell thought to himself as he directed the attention of Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean to look outside.

A tall man got out of the car and walked quickly up the front steps and let himself into the museum. Larry, Detective Watts, and Sergeant Bean were all crouched down ready to attack.

But as the unknown man turned the corner, they saw that it was just the museum director, Dr. Thompson. With a sigh of relief, they greeted each other and shook hands.

"As soon as the police station called me, I hurried right over. What is missing and what have you found out so far?" the museum director asked.

"A rare Roman denarius is missing." replied Detective Watts.

"I noticed it was missing as I was counting them tonight." put in Larry Mitchell.

"You *count* the coins *every* night?" Dr. Thompson asked.

Detective Watts rubbed his chin and said, "You both can continue this conversation later. Since there doesn't seem to be a forced entry, I want to interview every employee of the Red Valley Museum of History in the morning. Have everyone arrive before the museum opens and we'll see if we can get to the bottom of this."

"I will contact them all before the morning. Please let me know what else I can do to speed up the investigation." Dr. Thompson offered. He had been praying for God's help ever since he had gotten the telephone call from the police station.

Larry, Detective Watts, and Sergeant Bean combed the museum looking for clues until the employees started to arrive just as the sun was coming up. You could tell a lot about a person's character by asking the right questions. And Watts and Bean had asked a lot of questions in their years of working together.

For nearly three hours, the interviews were held in the museum lobby. They talked to those who worked in the museum office, the snack bar, the other night guards, and those who worked on the floor for customer service. Several folks seemed to have a possible motive for taking the coin including Jack Weatherby and William Monroe.

Watts and Bean were getting very tired, but they refused to give up. They would have to go back and do background checks for these people. Jack Weatherby was found to be a rare coin collector in his personal time and William Monroe owned a pawn shop as a side business.

Suspicious, very suspicious indeed!!

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. Who did Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean question?
2. How many suspects did they find?
3. What does the word "suspect" mean?  
(Someone who might have had a reason to do a specific crime)

## Bible Thought!

In our story today, the museum employees are all interviewed to see who might have had a reason to take the coin. They were looking for people with questionable character.

A good definition of “character” is what you do when no one is looking. It’s what you’re really like on the inside. Now, none of us has a perfect character because of our sin. We are all capable of doing wrong things because we’re sinners.

Today’s verse is Proverbs 16:2, “*All a man’s ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.*” If left to ourselves, we don’t think we have done wrong, but Jesus looks at our motives- the reasons we do things. When we don’t know Jesus, we do many things out of selfishness. We think of ourselves before we think of others or how a certain action will make Jesus feel.

But if we have a personal relationship with Jesus, we will feel bad when we do something that makes Jesus sad. This happens because Jesus is constantly making us into a person that acts more and more like Himself.

Our character is something we’re to take good care of. A good character is very difficult to maintain and very easy to lose if we choose to do something unwise. We need to pay attention to what we look at, where we go, who we hang out with, and what we do when we are by ourselves with no one looking.

God is always watching– and, if we have a special relationship with Him, the Holy Spirit will convict us if we have done something to make Jesus sad. When we do sin, Jesus lovingly picks us up, prompts us to ask for forgiveness of the specific sin, and is willing to forgive us and set us on a straight path again.

So how do we try to keep our good character?

**First**, by having that right relationship with Jesus. Spend time reading the Bible and respond to/obey God’s Word.

**Second**, by thinking before we act - Is this something that Jesus would like? Is this action going to hurt others?

**Third**, by asking for forgiveness immediately when we blow it- from not only Jesus, but from others that we hurt.

Let’s stop and pray and ask Jesus to help us have good character.

Pray to close the session.

## Week #3- Tarnishing Gold

1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character."

### *Lost and Found: Chapter 3*

Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean wrote up the necessary reports about each of the suspects so far. Watts and Bean came over to the museum to brainstorm other possibilities with Dr. Thompson.

"Does the museum have a cleaning crew?" Detective Watts asked as Sergeant Bean was trying to figure out how he could go to Circus Burger for a 3-Ring meal. His mouth watered at the thought of a Ringmaster biscuit, clown rounds, and a lion-sized drink. After all, they had been there most of the night and they were all getting pretty hungry.

"Yes, the Jiffy Clean company comes in each night just after closing at 5:00pm. They're here dusting, mopping, and cleaning until about 10 pm. They take the front carpet with them once a week to be cleaned, but that was already done on Tuesday.

"Still, let's talk with them, especially whoever was here earlier tonight," Detective Watts suggested.

"You mean earlier *last* night. It's 9 am," Sergeant Bean's tummy rumbled loudly.

"Oh- thank you! It's time to open the museum. We're still going to let visitors come in, but we've closed the Roman room for now while you're still investigating." Dr. Thompson walked over and unlocked the door for business. He had a peace about all of this from God. *God* knew what happened and Dr. Thompson felt sure the Lord would eventually lead them to the right conclusion.

"Sergeant Bean, contact the Jiffy Clean company and go get us a couple of those 3-Ring breakfast meals from Circus Burger. I could really go for that biscuit of theirs."

"Yes, Sir!" Sergeant Bean practically ran to the squad car, telephone in hand.

Later that morning, Watts and Bean questioned all of the employees who had ever cleaned the museum. The woman who was on duty last night was Ms. Frances. Neither she nor any of the other Jiffy Clean employees saw anything out of the ordinary over the past few days.

Ms. Frances seemed special. She was a sweet woman whom everyone adored at Jiffy Clean. She could clean just about anything because she had worked there for so long. She even gave Watts and Bean a lesson in coin cleaning."

"You see, gentlemen, coins such as copper and silver naturally tarnish when exposed to water and air, but gold now, gold all by itself stays shiny. It doesn't rust or turn black or anything." Ms. Frances said.

"Thanks for your time, Ms. Frances," Detective Watts finally concluded his questioning.

Watts and Bean were exhausted and ready for some sleep, but Sergeant Bean was still thinking about the coin. When he got home, Bean decided to call Jack Weatherby, the rare coin collector, and ask some more questions about coins and cleaning them. He thought that asking more questions would help him tell if Jack had any motivation to take the missing coin. What he told him was astonishing!

Early the next morning, Bean called Watts with news that just couldn't wait!

"It *does* tarnish!" Bean nearly yelled into the phone.

"What are you talking about? Who is this?" Watts asked.



“It’s me, Sergeant Bean. Gold *does* tarnish when it’s in a closed space with other metals.”

“You called just to tell me that? I think this case is making you a little more looney than normal,” Watts replied and then rolled his eyes and sighed, “See you at the office in an hour.”

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What kind of material was the coin made of?
2. What did Sergeant Bean find out that happens to gold when it is in a closed container with other metals?

Bible Thought!

Last week, we talked about character. We said that character is what you do when no one is looking. We also talked a little about how to keep our character in good shape. We mentioned having a right relationship with Jesus, reading and obeying His Word, thinking before we act, and immediately asking for forgiveness from both Jesus and others when we have blown it.

Today, we’re going to discover another way we can have good character: we’re going to talk about the people we choose to hang out with. Today’s verse is 1 Corinthians 15:33, “*Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.*”

In our story today, we learned that gold by itself does not tarnish in the air, but if it is put in a closed container with other metals, the tarnish of those other metals gets onto the gold. *Hmmm.* Let’s think about that for a moment.

Just like other metals can tarnish the gold, friends that don’t have good character can influence us to do wrong things, can’t they? We really need to think about who we hang out with. Peer pressure is a very hard thing to deal with on our own, isn’t it? But if we have Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He can help us stay strong and pick good friends.

Let’s say you have a friend that wants you to steal something from your classroom at school. Would that be right? What if you were just with someone who was stealing? You would probably be seen as having bad character too, just by hanging out with that person.

It’s fine to tell your friends about Jesus, as you should. But you need to be very careful about being around folks when they’re doing wrong things. You need to protect your own character too.

You need to have friends to encourage you, and to help keep you strong in your faith. *Positive* peer pressure is when your friends encourage you to do things that Jesus would like. Like obeying parents and teachers, being honest, and doing your best in school.

Let’s stop and pray for Jesus to help us pick good friends.

Pray to close the session.

## Week #4- Just Taking a Tour?

James 1:22-23, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.”

### *Lost and Found: Chapter 4*

Not wanting to leave any stone unturned, Watts and Bean decided on questioning the last tour group that had come through before the museum closed yesterday.

They called Dr. Thompson to look up the information for them. The reservation page on the museum’s website showed that third graders from Mrs. Monroe’s class at the Red Valley Elementary School were the last ones to come through the previous day.

“I wonder if this Mrs. Monroe is the wife of William Monroe, the owner of the pawn shop.” Detective Watts questioned.

“Only one way to find out. Let’s go back to school...” Bean answered.

It was just a short drive to the school. Watts and Bean stepped out of the squad car and stopped at the school office to check in. They were shown Mrs. Monroe’s room and given permission to enter. Poor Mrs. Monroe didn’t know what to think. She had never had her class interrupted by police detectives before. She was nervous, but let the two men speak to the class.

“Hi kids! I’m Detective Watts and this is Sergeant Bean. We just wanted to ask you some questions about going to the museum yesterday.”

Mrs. Monroe offered them the information they were looking for. “Oh, my husband works part time doing research for the museum when he’s not at his pawn shop,” she said.

Then all the kids started talking at once about their favorite things at the museum, including the gift shop. Once Mrs. Monroe got them quieted down, Detective Watts asked, “OK, seems like you had a great time. What did you think of the coins in the Roman room? It’s a new exhibit, right?”

Another boy’s hand shot up, “I know that there are ten coins on exhibit as well as other artifacts from the Roman period from about 25 B.C. to 390 A.D.. The coins are of various metals including copper, silver, and gold. Many have the emperor’s pictures on them.”

Watts and Bean looked at each other with eyebrows raised.

“Wow! You must really like history! Did you read up on that exhibit ahead of time?” Sergeant Bean asked.

The boy nodded and said, “Yes, and Mrs. Monroe also tells us a lot about the exhibits when her husband learns something new.” Mrs. Monroe began to blush.

Just then, another girl started speaking, “My mom has a gold watch.” Then a boy said, “Gold is my favorite color.” Still another called out, “My cat is gold with black stripes!” All the children started talking at once again so Watts and Bean decided this was a good time to leave Mrs. Monroe to get her class quieted down again.

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. Did Mrs. Monroe turn out to be the wife of the pawn shop owner?
2. Did the kids have a good time at the museum?

## Bible Thought!

In our story today, Watts and Bean decide to interview the last group to tour the museum before the coin went missing. How many of you have taken a tour of something?

In a museum, you look at things and learn new information, but the items stay there, right? You don't bring them home with you. You learn new things, but most of the time, it doesn't really influence you to change your life, does it?

Sometimes you stop at the gift shop and purchase an item to remind you of your time there, but you have to pay for it, and even then, it's only a copy of the real thing in the museum, right? A counterfeit if you will.

Today's verse is James 1:22-23, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like." That would be pointless, wouldn't it- to forget what you looked like when you walked away- a waste of time.

When we come to Victory Sports or any other place that teaches us about Jesus like church or Sunday School, do we just come and visit? Is it like just taking a tour- like learning about Jesus and going home just living like you did before?

See, because we don't want you to come to Victory Sports and not have Jesus make an impact in your life. We're not here to just tell you that Jesus loves you and let you go home without having it affect your life in a real way. In real life, there are more important consequences for not letting God's Word have an impact on your life- more so than just forgetting what you look like.

The bottom line is that we are sinners. We've already talked about that. But that made a problem, because God can't look on sin. So, in order for us to ever be with Him in heaven, He provided a way to remove our sin.

He sent His One and Only Son, Jesus, to earth at just the right time, to die in our place- to take the punishment for our sins. He also rose bodily from the dead three days later to prove that His death was enough to pay for our sins. Now He, through His Holy Spirit, is replacing hard, sinful hearts with hearts that can respond to Him.

When we realize our sin and our need for a relationship with Jesus, we can tell Him we're sorry ask Him to forgive us of our sins, and ask Him to come in and be our Lord and Savior. Then He starts making us to be more and more like Jesus in our actions and attitudes.

We're going to stop and pray now and if you want to talk about this more, see myself or one of the other coaches, or Coach P, or maybe even your pastor.

Let's stop and pray for God to create in us new hearts and ask Him to reveal Himself to us so we can have a real and right relationship with Him.

Pray to close the session. You might pray something like this:

*Lord, thank you for letting us come and learn about You tonight. But Lord, it would be a waste of time to come and hear about You and not let it affect our lives.*

*Lord, help us to see how our sin separates us from You. Lord, please forgive us for when we wrong You. Thank You for dying for us on the cross, and then coming alive again on the third day! Lord, You are even more powerful than sin and death! Help us to want You to come into our lives to be our Savior and Lord of our lives. Lord, please keep us safe as we travel home tonight.*

*In Jesus Name, Amen.*

## Week #5- Hide and Seek

Isaiah 48:18- "If only you had paid attention to My commands, your peace would have been like a river."

### *Lost and Found: Chapter 5*

Back at the police station, Watts and Bean chowed down on their Circus Burger biscuits while going over all of the facts in the case:

Fact #1: the coin was stolen sometime between 5 pm and midnight from the Red Valley Museum of History two days ago.

Fact #2: Larry Mitchell discovered the missing coin and called the police.

Fact #3: Museum employees, Jack Weatherby, and William Monroe have background checks done. Jack Weatherby is a coin collector. Mr. Monroe owns a pawn shop as a side business.

Fact #4: All Jiffy Clean employees are interviewed and seem innocent, even Ms. Frances, who even gave them information about cleaning coins.

*Sweet, silly woman*, Watts thought to himself. *The coin wasn't dirty, it was missing!!*

Fact #5: Mrs. Monroe is the wife of William Monroe, the pawn shop owner. Her class had a good time at the museum, including the one child who seemed to know everything about the coin exhibit.

*Cute kid!* Bean thought. *Wish I could remember stuff like that.*

What were they missing? Detective Watts played with the change in his pocket absentmindedly.

Suddenly a look of shock came over Sergeant Bean's face. "What did that kid say about the different kinds of metals used in the Roman coins?"

Watts narrowed his eyes and answered, "He said they were made of various metals like copper, silver, and gold."

"And weren't they all kept in that sealed plexiglass case?" Bean asked.

"Yes, and Ms. Frances said that gold doesn't tarnish. But what does that have to do with the case?" Watts asked.

"Don't you see?" Bean cried, "Jack Weatherby told me that gold *does* tarnish! Remember, that's what I was trying to tell you yesterday morning! You told me the case was making me crazy, but it all makes sense now! Don't you get it?"

"I'm starting to, but why don't you tell me what you think happened?" Watts asked very seriously.

"I think Ms. Frances saw that the gold coin was tarnished from being kept in the case with the other metals. She wasn't lying when she said gold doesn't tarnish by itself. But we know that it does when it's sealed up with other metals. Kind of like bad company corrupting good character."

"Go on," said Watts.

"So, I say sweet old Ms. Frances took it to be cleaned and either sold it or lost it. I think she's hiding something."

"Let's go back and talk to Ms. Frances right now!" Watts and Bean jumped up and headed out the door.

They arrived at the Jiffy Clean office in record time. Ms. Frances was called out to come see the two gentlemen.

"Ms. Frances, we know you're a busy woman, but would you mind answering just a few

more questions?” Watts asked.

Within ten minutes, she had confessed with tears in her eyes. “I was trying to clean the coin,” she sobbed, “I hate to see a tarnished coin. So I found some keys to the case and went to clean it, but it fell on the floor and I couldn’t find it to put it back. I was afraid and didn’t want to get in trouble, so I said nothing. I’m sorry. I should have said something earlier instead of getting the police involved,” she said wiping her eyes and nose.

“We know you weren’t trying to steal it, Mrs. Frances. But you did tell us initially that you hadn’t seen anything out of the ordinary the night it went missing, and *it is* still missing.” Detective Watts went on, “We’re going to need your help to find it, Ms. Frances.”

Follow-Up Questions:

1. How did the coin disappear?
2. Did Ms. Frances tell the truth the first time?

Bible Thought!

In today’s part of the story, we learn that it was Ms. Frances who was trying to clean the coin, but dropped it and then couldn’t find it to put it back.

What do you think Ms. Frances should have done? (Let them answer) Right, if she had just told the truth the first time, she might have gotten in trouble for taking the coin to clean it, but at least she would have had some help in finding the coin. Right now, it’s still missing, right?

Today’s verse is Isaiah 48:18- “If only you had paid attention to My commands, your peace would have been like a river.” When we don’t tell the truth at first, bad things start to happen. Don’t you think Ms. Frances sat around worrying what was going to happen to her after she lost the coin? The same thing happens to us.

Sometimes telling the truth is hard at first, but it saves us from #1) having to remember what we’ve said to keep up the lie, and #2) the worry of being found out, and #3) worse consequences for us after we have been caught.

Proverbs 12:22 tells us that “The LORD detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful.” We also read that Jesus is the Way, the **Truth**, and the Life (John 14:6). We are most like Jesus when we are being truthful.

Many people these days think that truth is just what feels truthful for them, but there is truth that is **absolute**. That means that it is true for all people, for all times, whether we believe it is true or not. It is Jesus’ truth- the standards that He upholds and requires of us. He gives us a glimpse into His truth with the Ten Commandments. These are some of the ways that uphold His righteousness. One of those commandments is not to bear false witness. That means that we are not to say things that aren’t true according to God’s truth.

Of course, we need to be loving when we are truthful. We can be truthful and rude if we’re telling someone the truth in order to hurt them. Jesus can help us be both loving and truthful.

Satan is the opposite of Jesus in every way. He is described as the father of lies (John 8:44). When we lie, we are doing the opposite of what Jesus wants us to do.

Let’s ask Jesus to help us tell the truth, even if the consequences are difficult at first. Pray to close the session.

## Week #6- Celebrate

Luke 15:9-10, “And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my coin.’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

### *Lost and Found: Chapter 6*

“Where did you clean the coin, Ms. Frances? Can you show us where you took it?” Detective Watts asked.

As they went over to the museum to begin looking for the coin, they met up with Larry Mitchell who was coming in to work for the night.

“Larry! Over here! We’re going to need your help too. You have a really bright flashlight, don’t you?” Sergeant Bean asked.

“Yes. I’ll help you in any way I can.” Secretly he was really glad he was being asked to help. As they walked, Bean told Larry what had happened and now they were to look for the missing coin in the back where the coins were cleaned.

Together, Watts, Bean, Larry, and Ms. Frances went to the cleaning room and started looking in all directions.

“I had the coin here on the table and it rolled off that way,” Ms. Frances indicated the direction with her right hand. All four of them scoured the room for more than an hour when Larry decided to venture out into the hall.

*It could have rolled way out here, I suppose.* On his hands and knees, he shined the flashlight in every nook and cranny possible. After another half hour, they all met back up at the table.

“I don’t understand this.” Detective Watts said. “Could someone else have come along and taken it?”

“It’s not likely,” said Ms. Frances, “No one knew it had rolled off the table and even I couldn’t find it at the time.”

“It’s not very big- maybe an inch wide and pretty thin.” Sergeant Bean said, “Could it have gotten stuck sideways somewhere?”

Larry thought and said, “Sometimes this building creaks at night because it is so old. Maybe the coin is stuck between one of the floorboards.”

The four of them got down on their hands and knees. They inspected each joint and found nothing. They were just about to give up when Larry looked behind the door and his flashlight shone back a reflected sparkle.

His heart started beating wildly in his chest, but he still needed a small screwdriver to make sure it was the coin. Fortunately he had come prepared. Larry wedged the tiny tool into the crack and gave it a firm pull. Finally it popped out with a *ping*.

“I found it! Here it is! I found it!” Larry kept repeating. Everyone came running over to look at the Roman wonder.

“It’s marvelous, isn’t it?” Ms. Frances asked.

“It’s amazing!” Sergeant Bean cried.

“It’s magnificent!” Larry called out.

“It’s about time!” Detective Watts rejoiced and went for his phone to call the museum

director, Dr. Thompson.

“Excuse me, Detective Watts,” Ms. Frances fearfully cleared her throat, “but what is going to happen to *me* now?”

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Who helped find the coin?
2. Where did they find the coin?

Bible Thought!

Today we see that the lost coin was found. There’s a story like this in the Bible- it’s called the parable of the lost coin. Very simply, it is about a woman who has ten coins and loses one. She searches all over her house. Our verse today tells us the end of the story. Luke 15: 9-10 read, “And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my coin.’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Have you ever lost something that you looked really hard to find before you finally found it? Maybe it was something really valuable like a piece of jewelry. Or maybe it was something like a TV remote- those things seem to get lost all the time! But then when you find it, aren’t you really happy and excited?!

So in the same way that we rejoice when we find something we lose, God rejoices over those who turn from their sin and turn to Him. And one day He will throw a big party called The Marriage Supper of the Lamb for all those He has redeemed (bought back). In the past few weeks, we’ve talked a lot about that, so if you have questions or want to talk more, please see one of us. It is the most important decision you could ever make because it affects where you spend eternity. Remember that everyone will spend eternity somewhere. Where will you be?

Let’s pray to close the session.

If you feel led, go ahead and pray a sample sinners prayer- something that includes:

How great God is,  
That we know our sin separates us from God,  
That we acknowledge and turn away from our sinful ways and  
Accept that Jesus died in our place to take away the punishment of eternity without Him.  
And that He rose again the third day, conquering sin and death.  
Then ask Him to come into our life and be our Savior and Lord  
Savior- because He has saved us from hell.  
Lord- because we want Him to be the boss of our life now.

## Week #7- The Mystery of Grace (Conclusion)

Ephesians 2:8-9 state, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.”

### *Lost and Found: Epilogue*

Ms. Frances was very nervous as she waited for Detective Watts to answer her question as to what would happen to her now that she had confessed to losing the coin.

“I do appreciate your helping us *find* the coin, Ms. Frances.” Detective Watts noted as he looked toward the sweet woman. “Let’s wait until Dr. Thompson arrives.”

Sergeant Bean whispered, “Poor Ms. Frances. She has gotten herself in a pickle now, hasn’t she? Maybe Dr. Thompson will agree not to press any charges even though she didn’t tell us the truth at first.”

Dr. Thompson’s gray car pulled into the parking lot in a few minutes, which was a good thing because Ms. Frances was about to chew off all of her fingernails.

“You’ve found the coin?!” Dr. Thompson asked excitedly. “Wherever did you find it? Let me see.”

Sergeant Bean held up the coin and handed it to the very relieved director. Dr. Thompson let out a big sigh.

Detective Watts answered “It was here the whole time. Ms. Frances from Jiffy Clean, here, will tell you what happened.”

By the time she had re-told the entire story, she was truly sobbing. Dr. Thompson could see she that she was very sorry for causing a whole lot of trouble to the museum staff and the police department. He knew he would not be pressing charges against her. Instead, he chose his words carefully.

“Ms. Frances, what do you know about the word *grace*?”

Two weeks later...

Ms. Frances was a changed woman. Dr. Thompson used this experience to tell her about God’s grace and forgiveness. She had understood completely and asked Jesus to be her Lord and Savior. No charges were filed against her. In fact, she and Jack Weatherby both volunteered to clean coins for the museum every other week.

Mrs. Monroe was eager to tell her class that the coin had been found. The class was so excited that they acted it out in class and Mr. Monroe came to watch.

Larry Mitchell, already a believer in Jesus, continued to be the best museum night guard he could be at the Red Valley Museum of History. And he still counted the coins every night.

Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean were quite surprised to see how this situation could be used in a spiritual sense. They both began to consider that you didn’t need to be a police detective to find this Jesus of the Bible. Maybe there was something to this after all. All you needed to do was look for clues. They seemed to be all around you if you would only look...

~The End~

Bible Thought!

Grace is a huge part of the gospel. The word “grace” means that we receive something we



do not deserve. We certainly can do nothing to earn salvation. God demands perfect righteousness because He is perfectly righteous. We are sinners. We can't be good enough to be in God's presence without Jesus' shed blood covering us.

That God's salvation is a free gift is grace. It is all God and it is all grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 state, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast."

Let's stop and thank Jesus for His free gift of grace.

Pray to close the session.

Summary (if needed)

<p>Week 1- Rare and Valuable-Night guard Larry Mitchell discovers a coin missing at the Red Valley Museum of History. Watts &amp; Bean come from the police department to investigate.</p>	<p>Psalm 139:14, “I praise You, because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”</p>
<p>Week 2- Character &amp; Motives- Museum employees are questioned. Jack Weatherby &amp; William Monroe are suspects.</p>	<p>Proverbs 16:2- All a man’s ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.</p>
<p>Week 3- Tarnishing Gold- Ms. Frances from Jiffy Clean is questioned. Sgt. Bean finds out that gold tarnishes from being in a closed container w/ other metals.</p>	<p>1 Corinthians 15:33, “Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.”</p>
<p>Week 4- Just Taking A Tour? Mrs. Monroe’s 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class is questioned. William Monroe, owner of the pawn shop is the husband of Mrs. Monroe, the teacher. The kids had a great time. One child remembered many things about the coin exhibit.</p>	<p>James 1:22-23, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.”</p>
<p>Week 5- Hide and Seek- Ms. Frances is found to have taken the coin to be cleaned and lost it before she could put it back.</p>	<p>Isaiah 48:18- “If only you had paid attention to My commands, your peace would have been like a river.”</p>
<p>Week 6- Celebrate- Ms. Frances, Larry Mitchell, Detective Watts, &amp; Sgt. Bean all try to find the coin. It is found by Larry in a crack of the floorboards!!</p>	<p>Luke 15:9-10, “And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my coin.’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”</p>
<p>Week 7- The Mystery of Grace No charges will be filed against Ms. Frances. She is told about Jesus’ free gift of salvation and accepts Jesus as her Lord and Savior.</p>	<p>Ephesians 2:8-9 state, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.”</p>

## 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 Copyright 1986, 1996, 2003 Multnomah Books.

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.