

Victory Sports  
Spring 2011 Devotions  
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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! God has taken this ministry from 80 children in the winter of 2004 to averaging about 500 today. 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 spring for our weekly devotions, we meet up again with Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean. With a little help of some free tickets, they decide to take a couple of days off to visit Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes once again at their spring conference entitled 'Uncovering the Truth Claims of the Bible: God's Special Revelation to Man'.

As always, things aren't always that simple. There are other things afoot at the conference. Whether it's a tornado or an angry young man bent on causing conflict, Watts and Bean are on the job, even when they're off duty!

**Note: All names, events, and places are purely fictional. Any similarities to Victory Sports participants is purely coincidental.**

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

- Week #1- The Need to be Rescued- John 8:32
- Week #2- Uniqueness & Historicity of the Bible- Genesis 1:1
- Week #3- Jesus as a Historical Figure- Luke 2:6-7
- Week #4- The Bible Comes from God-2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Week #5- Jesus Is the Son of God- John 1:14
- Week #6- Our Response to God & the Bible- Romans 10:9-10

## Week #7-Epilogue

**If weather conditions force some practices to be cancelled, weeks 6 and 7 can be combined, using the devotions from week 7.**

**\*The references in the Bible Thought portions will come from Josh McDowell's book *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1999).**

# Week #1-The Need To be Rescued

John 8:32, “Then you will know the truth,  
and the truth will set you free.”

## Rescued by Truth: Chapter 1

Police Chief Adams dropped a manilla envelope on Detective Watts’ desk. Watts looked up and reached for his favorite letter opener- the one with the clown head on the top. The manager of the Red Valley Circus Burger gave it to him for being his most faithful customer.

The envelope slid open easily. Out fell two tickets to the spring conference that scientist Dr. Lane was leading at the Red Valley Museum of History.

Watts walked over to Sergeant Bean’s desk and dangled the two lime green items in front of Bean’s face.

“Wanna go?” asked Watts.

Bean swiped the tickets and examined them. “I guess we could, since we had such a good time at the last one,” he said a little sarcastically. He remembered going to Dr. Lane’s last conference as his body guard just a few months ago . Watts and Bean had ended up chasing a park ranger up a mountain in order to retrieve Dr. Lane’s stolen research.

“We have a couple of personal days we haven’t taken...we could go and just listen...,” suggested Watts.

“You’re serious, aren’t you?”

“Why not? It might be... uh...*intellectually stimulating*,” Watts said quickly.

“Maybe,” said Bean.

“Aren’t you just a little bit curious about the truth claims of the Bible? Haven’t you ever wondered if Jesus is really the Son of God?” Watts asked harmlessly.

“Fine,” Bean let out a sigh. “ Just let the chief know about the personal days we’ll be taking.”.

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Meanwhile, on the other side of town, an angry young man sat in a coffee shop, reading the morning paper. An advertisement had caught his attention: **“The Red Valley Museum of History welcomes Dr. Dexter Lane and Professor Sam Rhodes for their spring conference entitled, ‘Uncovering the Truth Claims of the Bible: God’s Special Revelation to Man’.”**

*Maybe this is the kind of event I can cause a bit ‘o trouble at, he thought to himself. If I can’t be happy, why should others? Perhaps I can make some kind of scene– at least I’ll have a captive audience.*

## Follow-Up Questions:

1. Where were Watts & Bean going?
2. What was going on with the young man who also saw the conference in the paper?

## Bible Thought:

Last season (winter basketball) we looked at the concept of Intelligent Design. We looked at lots of different areas where we saw God’s handiwork displayed in complex order and design- much too orderly to be just results of random chance.

This season, since we know God is the Master Designer of the universe, we’re going to see how He is a personal God as well. He has given us a “love letter,” if you will, telling us His heart and how we can come into a relationship with Him.

We’re going to look at the Bible as an accurate historical book, Jesus as a real historical person, the Bible being inspired by God, Jesus as the Son of God, and finally, our response to what the Bible has to say. Most of the information we’re going to cover comes from a book by called “Evidence That Demands a Verdict.” It was written by Josh McDowell who actually set out to prove Christianity wrong. But the more he investigated the truths of the

Bible, he became convinced that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and faith in Him is the only way to heaven.

Like our young man in the story, everyone has problems. Our natural tendency is to be held captive by something, whether it's fear, insecurity, anger, pride, bitterness, envy, money, power, etc. We're slaves to sin.

We need to be rescued from that vicious cycle. We need to be rescued by the truth- God's truth. In fact, our story this season is entitled *Rescued by Truth*. Our Bible verse today is John 8:32, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Here, Jesus has just finished telling his disciples that if they obey His teaching, they are really His disciples. We are held captive because we believe the world's lies and do not obey God's teachings. Satan has done a pretty good job of telling us what will make us happy. Unfortunately, he is the father of lies. We are spiritually dead and we need to be made alive.

Only Jesus can make us truly alive. This doesn't mean we will never have problems. When we turn our lives over to Jesus, He leads and guides us *through* our problems. He gives us a new heart- one that wants to obey Him.

The Bible is God's truth- that's how we find out how he wants us to live. Next week we'll start looking at this amazing and unique book.

Let's stop and thank God for sending us His truth both in the form of the Bible and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Pray to close the session.

## Week #2- Uniqueness & Historicity of the Bible

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Rescued by Truth: Chapter 2

Sun mixed with dark clouds greeted the morning the conference was to begin. Watts and Bean had agreed to meet up at the Circus Burger on the corner of Main and Elm streets before they went over to the Red Valley Museum of History.

Right on time, Bean walked in and ordered a 3-Ring Breakfast meal. As he sat down, he noticed a young man sitting several booths in front of him. On the young man's table sat his backpack and a familiar lime green ticket. Oh, so he would be attending the conference also.

Sergeant Bean got up and casually walked over to the young man's table and introduced himself. Of course, he was in his street clothes and didn't say he was a police detective, just that he was also going to the conference this morning.

"Uh...nice to meet you," the young man replied, "I'm Milo Oliver Eisenhower. Most people call me *Moe* for short."

"I'm meeting a buddy of mine in just a minute for the conference too. You're welcome to sit with us over there." Bean offered.

"Uh...thanks, but I may have to leave early," said Moe.

At that moment, Detective Watts entered the coffee shop and ordered his breakfast to go. Sergeant Bean thought there was something strange about Moe as he walked over to greet Detective Watts, but he couldn't put his finger on it.

Bean introduced Watts as they were leaving to go to the conference. Milo stayed behind for a few minutes and finished up his coffee.

Over at the Red Valley Museum of History, Watts and Bean found two empty seats toward the front. Dr. Lane was excited to see the two men back.

"I'm glad you got the tickets and decided to come!" said Dr. Lane. "Last time, you didn't really get to enjoy the conference since you were on duty."

"Hopefully we'll get more out of this one! Say, whatever happened to Ranger Miller?" asked Detective Watts.

"I wrote a letter to the local judge and recommended that he be given community service instead of jail time. I sent him tickets for today's conference too, but I haven't seen him yet." replied Dr. Lane.

"I'm excited about the material in your conference this time," Detective Watts replied, "I've always wondered what evidence there is for the Bible to be true and how Jesus could be the Son of God."

"I got dragged here," Bean offered a sarcastic smile.

"Well," Dr. Lane responded, "I hope you find what you're looking for."

Watts and Bean took their seats just as Moe was coming in the front door. He found a seat near the back in case he had to leave early.

Dr. Lane walked to the microphone and began the conference with prayer.

"I'm glad you have all made it this morning. Today we're going answer two very important questions: Is the Bible an accurate historic document? If so, what is it's purpose?" His assistant, Professor Rhodes, began a slide show comparing the Bible to other historic documents. He then went on to describe historic events as recorded not only in the Bible, but in other documents as well.

Watts and Bean found the material fascinating, but when they glanced over to see their new friend Moe, he didn't seem to be paying attention. This was *good stuff*- maybe he was just preoccupied with something. Or maybe he was someone who they should be watching...."

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was the name of the young man they ran into at Circus Burger before the conference?
2. What has happened so far to Ranger Miller (from the last season's story)?

### Bible Thought~

In our story today, Dr. Lane talks about the Bible being historically accurate. Today's verse is Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." When this was written, the people who read it didn't have any problem believing it as truth. The same can be said for us today.

If we know the Bible is true and accurate historically, it helps to tell us where we came from. It tells us the beginning of the world- how it came to be. It gives us the answers we as a culture are so desperately seeking, so let's look at some evidence that it is not only accurate, but a unique book- unlike any other that has ever been written.

**(Use whichever of these examples your kids will understand and appreciate.)**

### The Bible's Uniqueness:<sup>1</sup>

- \*Written over a 1500 yr span w/40 different authors- inspired by God
- \*Written in many different places (caves, prison, wilderness, while \*traveling) in times of peace and war
- \*Contains different kinds of writing- poetry, letter, history, parables
- \*Written on 3 continents (Africa, Europe, Asia)
- \*Written in 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek)
- \*Number of Bible copies sold is in the billions
- \*Survived through time and persecution and criticism
- \*Only religious book to include divine predictive prophecy

### Historicity of the Bible:

- \*The amount of *time between the original manuscripts and its next surviving manuscript* is much *less* than for ancient works of Greek literature.
- \*There are far *more* copies of ancient New Testament manuscripts than works of Greek literature.<sup>2</sup>

### Old Testament-<sup>3</sup>

- \*O.T. Gives a rich history of Israel & its people.
- \*O.T. scribes (men who copied the text) were trained to copy the text letter for letter without errors. They were even known to work in pairs to accomplish this. Groups of these scribes include the Sopherim (3rd-5th century B.C.), the Zugoth (1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.), the Tannaim (active until 200 A.D.), the Tallumudists (100-500 A.D.), and the Masoretes (500-950 A.D.).
- \*The Dead Sea scrolls found in a cave overlooking the Dead Sea by a shepherd looking for a lost goat in 1947. These ancient texts include all of Isaiah and parts of over 20 Old Testament books. The importance of this is that they are over 1,000 years older than the oldest previously known copies of Old Testament writings.

### New Testament-<sup>4</sup>

- \*The N.T. was translated into various other languages very early on (which was usually not done with ancient

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<sup>1</sup>McDowell, pp. 4-13.

<sup>2</sup>McDowell, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, pp.73-75, 77.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, pp. 41-68.

literature) so people could take the gospel into other countries. There are over 15,000 existing copies of these translations still today.

\*The writers of the N.T. were eyewitnesses of what they wrote or interviewed eyewitnesses and claim as much.

\*Most of the writers of the N.T. were martyred for their faith. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah and held to His teaching until their death.

\*Early church fathers (church leaders who were taught by the disciples/apostles or generations after that) quoted Bible references so many times that the New Testament could nearly be reconstructed just from their quotations. (P. 42-43). These church fathers include Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Eusebius.

\*Other non-Christian writers confirm New Testament events such as Tacitus (a first-century Roman historian) and Suetonius (chief secretary to Hadrian-Roman ruler) recording the persecution of Christians.

\*Archaeological sites have been uncovered which confirm cities and sites mentioned in the Bible to be real in historical existence such as the court where Jesus was tried, the Pool of Bethesda, various Roman coins, and decrees and inscriptions on stone.

Wow! There really is a lot of evidence for the Bible to be a true book of history! And Genesis 1:1 gives us a firm foundation! We do not come from primordial soup by random chance. The earth and everything on it (including us!) are the result of a loving Designer's handiwork. We have indeed been rescued!

Let's stop and thank the God of truth for giving us such an amazingly truthful book that we can rely on!

Pray to close the session.

## Week #3- Jesus as a Historical Figure

Verses-Luke 2:6-7, “While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

### Rescued by Truth: Chapter 3

When everyone returned after lunch on the first day of the conference, the sky began to grow dark. Dr. Lane began the afternoon session by recapping the historic authenticity of the Bible and then went on to talk about Jesus as a historical figure. Again, sources outside the Bible easily confirmed that Jesus really lived on the earth and went around teaching and performing miracles.

Suddenly, Watts’ and Bean’s mobile radios went crazy with activity.

Even with the sound turned almost all the way down, everyone’s heads turned to see what the noise was all about. Watts and Bean excused themselves and went out into the foyer to listen. One word that kept being repeated was *tornado*! Outside, warning sirens began blaring, and a big *THUD* was heard across the parking lot!

The big THUD was the large oak tree that had been located on the south side of the museum parking lot. It was now *across* the parking lot. Part of it fell so closely to the front door that the door itself could not possibly be opened.

At that point, the conference attendees began filing out to the hallway to see what was going on. Moe thought to himself, *Wow! I didn’t plan this but this sure puts a wrinkle in their plans. Maybe I won’t have to make a scene after all. This is great! How could people believe that a loving God would allow a tree to fall on their conference like this?*

“OK, let’s not panic,” said Detective Watts. “The tree seems to be blocking the entrance, but we’ll check the other exits as well. We’re going to call this into the station and they’ll contact the necessary folks to get this tree out of here.”

Dr. Lane spoke up, “Folks, let’s let Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean do their jobs. Let’s just go back into the auditorium and finish up our conference for today. Hopefully it won’t take too long for this tree to be removed.”

Moe moped back to his seat, plotting his next move. Watts and Bean went to the back of the museum, only to find that other debris had blocked the back entrance also, with a small amount of damage to the museum roof.

About an hour later, the authorities began to arrive with all kinds of equipment including many chainsaws for the tree removal. The chainsaws were loud, but the conference still went on. Watts and Bean excused themselves and walked out to the foyer to check on their progress. They were surprised to see Ranger Miller among those helping out.

Watts and Bean knocked on the door to get his attention. Through the door, they spoke briefly.

“Good to see you, Ranger Miller. How have you been? Dr. Lane said he sent you tickets. Why weren’t you here this morning?” asked Bean.

“Actually, I overslept. When I woke up, I had planned on coming to the afternoon session. Then I got a call to come and help remove this tree. Sometimes I volunteer with the town on projects like this. I guess God got me here anyway,” he laughed a bit. Ranger Miller wished he could have made it to the conference earlier. Of course, then he would be on the inside of the building, needing to be rescued too.

After being let off with just a community service sentence from trying to steal Dr. Lane’s research back in the winter and months of reading his Bible, he was very close to surrendering his life to Christ. If they could get this tree removed, maybe he could catch the last bit of the conference...

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was the big THUD?
2. Who came to help with the tree removal?
3. Why wasn’t Ranger Miller there in the morning?



## Bible Thought~

Do you remember last week how we talked about needing to be rescued? The people in today's story needed rescuing too, didn't they? In the story, rescue workers came to cut the tree apart so they could get out of the conference. In real life, who did we say was the only person who could really rescue us from our enslavement to sin? It is Jesus, isn't it? Jesus isn't just a legend. He was a real person who lived two thousand years ago. That's what we're going to look at today because true Christianity depends on the real person of Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man who died, was buried, and rose again to atone for our sins.

Our Bible verse today is Luke 2:6-7, "While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." You know this because this is the Christmas story. Joseph and Mary had gone to Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus had wanted to make a census (count) of all the people in the entire Roman empire. Joseph was from the line of David and had to be counted in Bethlehem.

We've already looked at the Bible as a historically accurate book, so it is reasonable to assume that Jesus was a real person who lived on the earth.

Some people who don't want to believe in Jesus simply say that He never existed. Folks who really study history, though, will tell you something much different. There is quite a bit of evidence for the man called Jesus who lived on the earth.

**(Use easier language for little ones such as "there are many other people who wrote about Jesus in addition to what the Bible says")**

\*The Roman historian Tacitus who lived from 55-120 A.D. mentions the death of Nero and his starting the rumor that the Christians set the fire of Rome. He alludes to Christ being killed by Pontius Pilate and refers to the superstition surrounding Christ (most likely His resurrection).<sup>5</sup>

\*Thallus, who lived in the first century A.D. is quoted by Julius Africanus around 221 A.D. as recording the darkness of an eclipse at the time when Christ died. This is exactly what we find in the Biblical account of Christ's crucifixion.<sup>6</sup>

\*Even the Babylonian Talmud (collection of laws and comments on Moses' writings and the traditions of the Jews) tells of Jesus' crucifixion on the eve of the Passover.<sup>7</sup>

\*Many verses in the New Testament come from creeds (or sayings) from early Christians, most of whom mention Jesus and His crucifixion. These sayings were developed after Jesus' resurrection and before the New Testament writings began.<sup>8</sup>

\*The writers of the New Testament themselves all presume (or were eyewitnesses) that Jesus actually lived and that what He said was extremely important.<sup>9</sup>

Our faith is not built on a legend. It is based on the real God-man Jesus. We'll look at the Bible being from God next week and His being the Son of God the week after that, but the main thing to know and understand is that Christianity is true because the Bible is true and Jesus is the Son of God.

Let's stop and thank Jesus for telling us about Himself through the pages of the Bible! He is our rescuer!

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<sup>5</sup>McDowell, p. 120.

<sup>6</sup>McDowell, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 124.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p.126.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 130.

## Week #4- The Bible Comes from God

2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

### Rescued by Truth: Chapter 4

All afternoon, the workers cut and trimmed and hauled off pieces both large and small of the tree that lay across the entrance to the museum. It was nearly six o'clock before they managed to clear the rubble away enough to open the door.

Just an hour before, museum night guard Larry Mitchell had reported to work, but quickly found that he could not enter the building until the tree had been cleared. He waited patiently to be able to get in and do his job.

Tired and hungry, the conference-goers left the building, grateful to have been rescued. Most took the time to thank the workers who were still clearing the parking lot. Only a small number of cars sustained any damage.

The next morning, many people came back for the next session. Watts and Bean were glad to return and glad to see both Ranger Miller in attendance as well as Larry Mitchell, who had just gotten off work and decided to stay for this morning's session. As a museum employee, he got a special discount for the conference. Watts and Bean had met Larry on their first case involving the museum. A rare coin had been lost and found with his help.

The four men chatted briefly before the session began as Moe walked in and took his seat. Today might just be the day that he set off the firecrackers in his backpack. That would certainly get people's attention. The tree thing was pretty good, but *he* needed center stage. He wanted to get back at God for being laid off from his job. It wasn't fair! *I'll show them*, he thought to himself. Maybe during the break he could sneak to one side and light them...

Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes began the morning's session by expressing their thanks to God for keeping them safe during the storm. He went on to give evidence that the Bible is inspired- that it comes from God to us.

Mid-morning, Moe got his opportunity. A short break was announced by Dr. Lane. Everyone got up to stretch their legs. Moe quietly walked to the side of the room and unzipped the backpack.

First, there was confusion and then anger! This was Moe's backpack alright, but the fireworks were gone!! How could this have happened? He was sure he put them in there this morning. Or did he? This was starting to get weird...

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. Were they able to get the tree cut away?
2. What was Moe planning on doing?

### Bible Thought~

In our story today, Dr. Lane was giving a lecture about the Bible being sent to us from God. We're also going to look at some of the evidence that the Bible comes from God.

First, the men who wrote it were men of God- people like Moses, David, Samuel, and Ezra in the Old Testament. Then there are those who wrote the New Testament- Paul, John, Luke, Timothy, Peter, and James. No one questioned their commitment to Christ at the time the books were written. They were devout men of God, seeking to write down things for the next generation because that's how history was handed down.<sup>1</sup> Many of the men died defending their faith in God.

The Bible itself tells us that it is *inspired*- that is, it comes from God- it contains thoughts and events God wants us to know. That's what we see in today's verse. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” That is the purpose of the Bible.

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<sup>1</sup>McDowell, p. 336.

We can think of God inspiring men to write down His words kind of like being in a sailboat with the sails up. When the wind blows, it makes the boat move.<sup>2</sup> God put the thoughts into the men's minds and they wrote down the words. God's Holy Spirit helped them either remember events to record or prophecy about things to come. We see this in the verse in 2 Timothy 1:21 where it states, "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Jesus also tells His disciples when He was here on the earth that He would send the Holy Spirit (after He went back to heaven) to guide them into all truth and help them remember Jesus' words (see John 14)

Since the Bible comes from God and God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18, "it is impossible for God to lie."), we can know that the Bible contains God's truth.

In order for this truth to set us free, we must *know* the truth contained in scripture. God has allowed us to have His Word so that we might be taught and disciplined by it as we see in our verse today.

Let us thank God now for the steps He took to make sure that His Word was preserved for us today and the other people of the world.

Let's also pray for those people still translating the Bible into the languages of unreached people groups in the world today.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 338.

## Week #5- Jesus is The Son of God

John 1:14, “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

### Rescued by Truth: Chapter 5

After the break, Moe sat there stunned. He *must* find his fireworks! If someone had found out about his plan and took them he'd be in *big* trouble. His mind began racing...who had been sitting beside him this morning?? At the moment, a museum security guard sat on his left. His name tag read, “Larry.” Moe began to panic. Did Larry know that he had planned on causing a problem? Had he found the fireworks? Moe frantically scanned the floor, trying not to look suspicious.

On Moe's right sat what looked like a park ranger. His name tag read “Miller.” Suddenly Moe felt trapped. Was he being guarded? For a moment he felt like he was losing his mind!

At the same time, Dr. Lane went on to give the logical conclusions for Jesus's claim to be the Son of God as recorded in the Bible.

“He was either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. He died for our sins, but He did not stay dead. He rose again, appearing to many people. The evidence points to Him being the Son of God- just as He claimed to be,” Dr. Lane explained.

Moe had to get away! He needed time to think. This was going all wrong! He quietly excused himself from his seat and made his way to the front entrance. Watts and Bean saw him get up. They had been around long enough to notice when someone wasn't acting right.

They followed Moe out into the parking lot. They saw him talking to himself. They crept up behind him to listen to what he was saying to himself. They heard enough to begin paying attention; words like *mad, fireworks, lost, must find, and conference* made them begin a conversation with Moe.

“Moe, you alright?” asked Detective Watts.

Moe turned around to face them, his face white as a ghost. He hadn't heard anyone behind him.

“You seem really upset. Wanna talk?” Sergeant Bean was also concerned.

He thought about denying everything, or at least asking how much the detectives had overheard as he had been talking to himself. He even thought about running away, but decided Bean could probably keep up with him, and he was suddenly very tired of the game of revenge he was playing.

In that split second, Moe dropped his head into his hands and let out a stifled scream of release. He decided to come clean and tell Watts and Bean about his past and how angry he was, even to the point of setting off fireworks and asking the people how God could have allowed everything to have happened in his past.

Watts and Bean decided not to take him into custody and eventually talked Moe into staying to hear the rest of the conference.

“I'm sure Dr. Lane would be willing to talk with you after the conference is over.” Watts offered.

“Maybe that's what I need,” sighed Moe, so he went back inside and sat down...

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was Dr. Lane talking about at this session of the conference?
2. Why did Moe feel trapped? What did he do?
3. Who followed Moe? What happened then?

### Bible Thought~

In the story today, Dr. Lane was talking about Jesus being the Son of God. This means He was fully God and fully man at the same time. We don't know exactly how this happened, but we know it to be true. Let's look at the evidence.

Scripture itself tells us that Jesus claimed to be God as we see in Mark 14:61-62, “Again the high priest asked Him, ‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?’”

“‘I am,’ said Jesus.’ And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.’”

God the Father also testifies to Jesus being His Son when Jesus is baptized by John in (Matt. 3:17- “this is My Son in whom I am well pleased.”).

Scripture even tells us the demons believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 3:11).

But let’s look at this from a logical point of view. Jesus either told the truth about His claim to be the Son of God or He lied. If He lied and He knew it (deceiving people), then He was also a hypocrite because He lived His life as an example of goodness. That doesn’t make sense.<sup>1</sup>

If He lied and didn’t know it, He would have been a lunatic. However, the wisdom, compassion, gentleness, knowledge of Scripture and apparent authority over it that His life reflected would contradict lunacy. He could not have been as clear-headed if He were a lunatic.<sup>2</sup>

Since both of these don’t make sense, the only logical conclusion is that He was telling the truth— that He was the Lord. In fact, Jesus fulfilled over 300 Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah- the One sent from heaven to save His people.<sup>3</sup>

These prophecies include that He would be born to a virgin (Mary), that He would come through the line of Jesse and the house of David, that He would be born in Bethlehem and be prophet, priest, and king. The prophecies also say that He would be betrayed, die on a cross without His bones broken, that people would cast lots for His clothing and that He would ultimately rise from the dead.

Conservative estimates say that for one person to fulfill all of the prophecies, it would be 1 in 10 to the 17<sup>th</sup> power. That’s like filling the state of Texas up with quarters two feet deep and marking one of them.<sup>4</sup>

As far as His real death, burial, and resurrection, there are also many evidences for these events. We know that He was really dead because a group of people pronounced Him dead and Joseph of Arimathea was given permission to take His body for burial. The grave was sealed by a huge rock, a squad of Roman soldiers and a cord placed across the entrance fastened on each side with sealing clay (the way they knew if it would have been opened).<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the tomb was empty on the morning of the third day. And it was the women who were the first to arrive. Women didn’t even have a voice in court. There would be no reason for Jesus to have women find an empty grave when they were not legal witnesses. A fraud would have had someone else be the first witnesses.

The Roman soldiers went to the high priests so that they might find a way for them not to be put to death while Christ rose on their watch. Everyone knew the tomb was empty.

Jesus also appeared to many people, each of the disciples and then to the crowd of 500. He encouraged them to touch His hands and side to see that He was indeed the same Jesus they knew before. They even watched Him ascend into heaven! There was no doubt in their minds after all of this.

The disciples were bold after they received the Holy Spirit that was promised to them and went around preaching Jesus as the Messiah. And so the church was born.

In light of all this evidence, we can see that Jesus really was who He claimed to be- the Son of God!

Let’s stop and thank Jesus for coming to the earth to take the punishment of our sin and rise again so we could have eternal life with Him forever. Pray to close the session.

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<sup>1</sup>McDowell, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 168.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 193.

<sup>1</sup>McDowell, p. 234

## Week #6-Our Response To The Truth Claims of God and The Bible

Romans 10:9-10, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

### Rescued by Truth: Chapter 6

“The events of the first day bring me to a very special point,” Dr. Lane recounted as he got everyone’s attention again. “We were trapped in here. There was no way we could get out. We had to be rescued. In real life, we also have to be rescued, don’t we? We have been born into sin and that will keep us out of heaven because God cannot look upon sin. So He sent His Son, Jesus, to die in our place— to take our punishment and rise again three days later. When God calls us into a relationship with Him, He can do that because of what His Son did for us. This is the gospel- the good news that we share with the world.”

Moe had never thought of the events of yesterday in a spiritual manner. Dr. Lane did have a point. Suddenly, he had a “light bulb” moment. Guilt surrounded him. He needed rescuing too. His life was a mess. He was dealing with so many hurts from his past. Reality set in. Had he actually planned to set off fireworks this morning? He wondered how many people in the audience could have been hurt. Larry, on his left, nodded his head as Dr. Lane continued speaking.

Ranger Miller sat there with tears in his eyes as Dr. Lane spoke of needing rescuing. He, too, started putting the pieces together. He had been saved once by not having to go to jail. After months of searching the scriptures, things were finally coming to life inside of him. Watts and Bean, also listening intently, felt God’s call on their lives.

All five men listened carefully to Dr. Lane’s presentation on Jesus being the Son of God. Dr. Lane was a wise man. He knew his friends were in the audience listening and could sense a change in their faces as he spoke. When he gave an invitation to accept Christ’s call on their lives, Ranger Miller went forward first, nearly running to the front of the room. Watts and Bean followed quietly, knowing how God had orchestrated the various cases in their careers to bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ.

Last, but not least, Moe, weeping so much that he could hardly see in front of him, made his way down to the front. Larry Mitchell, seeing that the men that had been sitting on either side of him had gone forward, went down to counsel them in their decision.

Dr. Lane, so full of emotion, could hardly go on. He handed the microphone to Professor Rhodes, went down to the group of men, and brought them into a side room to talk with them privately. Professor Rhodes finished up the conference in his place.

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What happened to Moe and Ranger Miller?

### Bible Thought~

In our story today, Moe and Ranger Miller heard the information from Dr. Lane. God stirred their hearts and they both responded to His call on their lives.

You’ve been here for the season also and have heard lots of information about the Bible and Jesus being the Son of God- just as He claimed to be.

Today’s verse is Romans 10:9-10, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

The bottom line is this: we can’t make it to heaven on our own. Our sin has separated us from a holy God. So Jesus came down from heaven, died for our sins to take our punishment and then rose again. He is still alive in heaven as we’ve already talked about the resurrection.

You might feel God calling you to begin a relationship with Him also, just like the characters in our story. If you are sorry for your sin and would like to do this, let one of us know and we will talk to you.

We'll help you confess with your mouth the things that you believe in your heart.

Let's stop and thank God for loving us enough to rescue us from our own sin so we can have a relationship with Him and live with Him in heaven forever.

Pray to close the session.

## Week #7- Epilogue

(Can be used separately or at the end of week 6 if we need to combine weeks due to weather cancellations)

Seven men- lives woven together by God's purposes. Three to point the way to God, and four to receive God's forgiveness and enter into a relationship with Him. Though it is the end of the story, it was a new beginning for four of them.

Moe's fireworks were never found, by him or by anyone else. They had simply vanished. His anger was replaced with a deep sense of gratitude to Christ. The director of the museum offered him a job taking ticket reservations, which he gladly accepted. Another rescue.

Ranger Miller put his knowledge of nature together with his newfound faith to begin a part-time business of giving Christian tours of the national park. He continued in his rescue volunteer work for he, too, understood what it meant to be rescued.

Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean were much more diligent in their jobs. After all, they were working for the Lord now, not just Chief Adams. They still went to Circus Burger at least once a week and stopped by the museum regularly just to check out the exhibits.

Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes were able to take their conference on the road to many more places, impacting many more lives for Christ. But they would always have a special place in their hearts for their new friends in Red Valley.

Larry continued on as the best night guard he could be for the glory of God. He still kept busy at night by counting *all* of the exhibits *every* night.

The End.

Which was your favorite week's chapter?

<b>Week 1: The Need to Be Rescued-</b> Watts & Bean receive tickets to Dr. Lane's spring conference. We meet Moe, an angry young man.	John 8:32, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
<b>Week2: The Uniqueness &amp; Historicity of the Bible-</b> Watts & Bean meet Moe at Circus Burger. First session of the conference where Moe isn't paying attention.	Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."
<b>Week 3: Jesus as a Historical Figure-</b> A tornado hits the conference and they are trapped inside. Watts & Bean call the rescue team where Ranger Miller volunteers.	Verses-Luke 2:6-7, "While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."
<b>Week 4:The Bible Comes from God-</b> Rescue workers remove the tree and Moe plans to use his fireworks- they disappear!	2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
<b>Week 5:Jesus is the Son of God-</b> Moe feels trapped and runs out of the conference. Watts & Bean follow him. He finally confesses.	John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."
<b>Week 6: Our Response to the Truth Claims of the Bible-</b> Moe and Ranger Miller hear the last session of the conference and dedicate their lives to Christ.	Romans 10:9-10, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."



## **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.