

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! 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 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 winter for our weekly devotions, we meet up again with Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean, who have a new assignment that they're not thrilled about. Being assigned to be bodyguards to a renowned scientist for a few days seems like drudgery to the two officers. They must not only protect Dr. Lane, but all of his research as well. Could Watts and Bean actually learn a thing or two from Dr. Dexter Lane while he's in town?

Dr. Lane's conference covers the topic of Intelligent Design. This is a fairly controversial subject today, but Christianity and evolution cannot exist together. The Bible tells us that death came as a result of sin. Sin came as a result of man's disobedience. Evolution says that death preceded man's appearance on the earth.. The Bible says that death came after man was created. This season, we'll look at scientific evidence for the creation account in the Bible.

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- Always Be Prepared- 1 Peter 3:15

Week #2- Heads Up!- Psalm 19:1-3

Week #3- "Recipe" for Life! - Psalm 8:3-4

Week #4- Cell-A-Bration!- Psalm 139:13-14

Week #5- All Systems Go!- Eph. 2:13

Week #6- Flood!- Genesis 7:11-12

Week #7- Making It Plain- Romans 1:20

Week #8- Summary (if needed)

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

Week #1- Always Be Prepared

1 Peter 3:15, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone for the hope that you have."

Reasons for Believing: Chapter 1

Sergeant Bean turned around on his heels and whined, "Oh Watts, not that! Anything but that..."

"Look, there's nothing we can do about the chief's orders. I don't enjoy bodyguard duty any more than you do, but we might as well make the best of it," Detective Watts replied with a sigh.

"Who is Dexter Lane anyway?" Sergeant Bean asked. "I've never even heard of him."

"Don't you read the paper, Bean?" Watts was cut short when Police Chief Adams walked in and finished the answer, "Dr. Dexter Lane is a famous scientist and he's in town giving a conference at the Red Valley Museum of History beginning tomorrow at 2:00 pm. His assistant called us, very worried, because he's had some pretty serious threats against him and his research if he goes through with this lecture. Dr. Lane needs our protection--undercover, of course. We don't need anyone to panic. Just stay with him until he leaves town. His flight gets in tonight at 5:00. Go ahead and pick him up and take him to the hotel."

Chief Adams handed them the flight number and the name of the hotel where Dr. Lane would be staying. Several hours later, Watts and Bean were headed toward the airport in an unmarked police car.

"How are we going to recognize Dr. Lane at the airport?" Bean asked.

"We'll just write his name down on a sheet of paper and hold it up as people get off his flight," replied Detective Watts.

"All I have is the back of this policeman's ball program," Bean announced. "I think it has a little ketchup on it though."

"I guess that'll have to do. Write down *Dexter Lane*."

Thirty minutes later, Dr. Lane recognized his name and walked up to Detective Watts and Sergeant Bean. They all shook hands as Dr. Lane introduced himself and his assistant, Professor Sam Rhodes.

As they were driving Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes to their hotel, Detective Watts began to get some background on the case. "So, Dr. Lane, tell me what kind of work you do and what kind of threats you've been getting."

Dr. Lane's face brightened as he said, "I deal with Intelligent Design, mostly. You know, The Anthropic Principle, conditions for carbon-based life to exist, laws of thermodynamics, things like that."

"What?? I didn't understand a thing you just said," Sergeant Bean gasped.

Professor Rhodes helped him out, "We look at scientific data to see that the universe is not the result of random chance. It didn't just happen by accident. Our universe, and therefore earth, was designed by an intelligent creator-- God."

"You mean, there's actually evidence that God created the universe? I thought religion was just faith in God and the Bible," said Bean, a bit shocked.

"Oh yes, the Bible tells us to be prepared to give an answer for the hope that lies within you. There is actually quite a lot of evidence to support the Truth of Christianity."

Detective Watts was still thinking, "So what kind of threats have you received then?"

Dr. Lane's face began to frown, "Twice last week, I got a phone call from someone saying that I'd better not go through with this conference or I'd never see my research again."

"Don't worry. We'll do our best to protect you and your research. Let's get you both some dinner. Do you like Circus Burger? There's one right off this exit," offered Sergeant Bean.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What is Watts' and Bean's next assignment?
2. Who is Dexter Lane?

Bible Truth~

This season, we're going to be looking at scientific evidence for the creation account of the Bible. Scientists call this *Intelligent Design*. This is a big phrase which means that someone really smart made the whole universe. Now, the only person who could have done such a thing would be the God of the Bible.

God wants us to know about His creation. Today's verse is *1 Peter 3:15*, "*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone for the hope that you have.*" It makes a lot more sense to people when you have an intelligent answer for the hope that we have in God. If God created everything, He has it all under control. He doesn't want us to be ignorant about creation. He has put it there so we can see His handiwork and praise Him for it!! He is very creative and He wants to share it with us!!

Let's think about something for a moment. Suppose you were at Myrtle Beach and you found a watch on the shore. Would you immediately assume that the ocean made it and just spit it up on the sand? Would you think that millions of years of evolution "just happened" to slosh all these intricate pieces together in such a way that it actually kept accurate time?

That's silly, of course! You would think to yourself, *Someone lost their Timex watch*. Timex is a well-known watch company with intelligent people who design watches. A watch has a lot of little pieces that do specific things. There's a little battery that makes an electrical current that makes a quartz crystal vibrate at a certain rate. This rate, then tells how fast the hands or dial should move. If it works right, it keeps time well. But you would never think it was made by random chance because it is orderly, has a specific design and does a certain thing, right?

Our universe and our earth are designed so intricately that it simply could not be the result of random chance. Over the next few weeks, we'll take a look at several different areas to show that it was made by God.

We will look at the universe: stars, galaxies, and our earth. We'll look at what it takes to support life on our planet. We'll also look at the cell, and some of our body systems. We'll even look at some of the effects of Noah's flood on our earth.

Our faith is not a blind faith. We have an intelligent faith!

Let's thank God for His amazing creation!

Pray to close the session.

Week #2- Heads Up!

Psalm 19:1-3, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day, they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard."

Reasons for Believing: Chapter 2

Bright and early the next morning, Watts and Bean picked up Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes from the airport and took them to the Red Valley Museum of History. Dr. Thompson, the museum director, was there to greet them. Watts and Bean helped the two scientists set up as best they could.

"I've been thinking that the best way to protect you will be for us to act casual-- like we're part of your staff. When you begin, I'll sit in the front row and Sergeant Bean will sit near the back since those are the only ways in or out of this room."

"That sounds good. Of course, Professor Rhodes or I will alert you to anything we find suspicious also," said Dr. Lane. "People will begin coming in soon. Why don't you both man the refreshment table. Dr. Thompson will open the doors and begin greeting people in just a moment.

Soon nearly three hundred people were packed into the lecture hall at the museum. Watts and Bean took their seats as they promised. Dr. Lane gathered up his notes, which were on light blue paper, welcomed everyone, and opened the session with prayer. Detective Watts thought this was curious. Sergeant Bean was grateful for the free donuts.

"Some of you here today may be skeptics," Dr. Lane began, "Some of you may just want to know how to give a reason for the hope that is already in you. Some of you may not know why you're here- maybe you were invited by a friend. Regardless of why you're here, you *will* find answers. You will be surprised to see how much evidence there is for the Truth claims of Christianity. It all begins with Intelligent Design. Let's get started."

Dr. Lane went on to describe how many stars are in our galaxy and how far apart they are and where our earth lies. He also talked about how many galaxies are in our universe-- how hugely big it really is.

Watts and Bean were happy to be able to understand most of what Dr. Lane was talking about. Professor Rhodes worked the projector that showed a power point presentation which helped a lot.

So far, no one looked suspicious. There were many different kinds of people, but really no one that Watts or Bean could say was out to threaten Dr. Lane. Everyone appeared to be listening and taking notes. During the lunch break, everyone filed out and came back in an orderly way. Stone cold normal.

During the afternoon, Dr. Lane said that for many centuries, people thought the sun revolved around the earth. Some people were actually angry when Copernicus suggested that the earth revolved around the sun!

"So, when you're out tonight, try to count the stars and try to imagine how big the universe is. Now try to imagine a Designer that is even bigger still.... That's where we'll end today folks," Dr. Lane went on, "Tomorrow morning, we'll look at what it takes for life to exist on earth."

Watts and Bean went to the two exits to watch people leave, all the while keeping an eye out for Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes, but nothing out of the ordinary happened.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Did Watts and Bean find anyone suspicious at the conference today?
2. What do you think when you look into the sky? How big do you think the universe is?

Bible Thought~

Today's verse is *Psalm 19:1-3, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day, they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard."*

The verse says the sky “pours forth speech.” What do you think the stars would say if they could talk? (Let them answer)

Maybe~ I shine because God made me!

Or~ Look at us! How awesome is the Lord- the Creator God!

The stars are there to show us God’s handiwork. It lets us know that there *is* intelligent life out there- His name is God!!

Now, let’s think about how big the universe really is. What is our closest star?? (let them answer) That’s right- the Sun! The Sun is 93 *million* miles away, right? If you could run a mile in four minutes, you would be 700 years old before you reached the sun!!*

So how many stars are there in our galaxy? Some say about 100 *billion*. There may even be 100 *billion galaxies* in our universe!!* We can’t really even wrap our minds around a million, much less a billion. Now think about a 100 billion of 100 billion! It doesn’t even make sense to us, does it??

Now, let’s pull back a little and take a brief look at *our* galaxy- The Milky Way. It is a spiral shaped galaxy (with swirl shaped “arms” like on a peppermint candy). Our earth is located in a clear spot between two of the arms. If we were located in one of the gaseous parts of the arms, we would have a very cloudy atmosphere and wouldn’t be able to look out at the night sky.

But God didn’t put us there. He put us between the cloudy parts so we could have a good view of His handiwork.** Makes sense, doesn’t it? He wants to show us what He made. Don’t you want to show what you made to people you love? But God not only put the earth in the best spot for observation, he put people on that planet!! **When we observe God’s creation, we are observing part of God’s glory.** Pretty cool, huh?!

We know a lot about our solar system by looking through really big telescopes here on the earth and by sending the Hubble Space Telescope out into space to take pictures and send them back. Have you ever seen some of those pictures? They’re incredible, aren’t they?

One other really cool way we have learned a lot about our sun is through eclipses. We can’t look directly at the sun because we would go blind very quickly (*never* look directly at the sun!!). But when there’s an eclipse, photographers can take pictures of the *chromosphere*- the outer gas layer of the sun.

Because of this, scientists were able to look at the light through a prism (the flash spectrum) and tell what kind of gases the sun is made of- mostly Hydrogen and Helium. Isn’t that amazing??

Have you ever wondered why the moon seems to cover up the sun exactly? This is because the size of the sun is about 400 times larger than the moon but it is about 400 times farther away. Their “apparent size” in the sky is the same. Only an orderly intelligent God could make their sizes just right so we could discover His handiwork!

When you go home tonight (or the next time it’s clear), think about God creating the stars you see and think about how big the universe is. God made all that and He loves us! It is truly amazing!!

Let’s thank God for creating the sun, moon, and stars that we see.

Pray to close the session.

* Taken from *It Couldn’t Just Happen: Fascinating Facts About God’s World* by Lawrence O. Richards. Nashville: Tommy Nelson, Inc., 1989, page 9.

** Taken from the DVD *The Privileged Planet: The Search for Purpose in the Universe*. Illustra Media. 2004.

Week #3- “Recipe” for Life

Psalm 8:3-4, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him?”

Reasons for Believing: Chapter 3

People started coming into the conference room about fifteen minutes before the lecture was to start. Watts and Bean watched carefully as the people took their seats. Again, nothing out of the ordinary.

After prayer, Dr. Lane began this morning’s session with these words, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him? That is Psalm 8, verses 3 and 4. I assume you and I are alive, since we’re all here this morning. Today we will begin looking at what is needed for life to occur. Is it just by accident that life exists, or is there more to it? I will show you that things had to be designed JUST RIGHT to sustain living things. In fact, it is a complicated ‘recipe’, if you will.”

Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes put on an impressive presentation, going over half of the 20 or so necessary items in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. It made Watts and Bean really begin thinking. You could tell all the others in the audience were thinking too.

About 2:30, as Dr. Lane was speaking about the importance of liquid water, a loud *CRASH* was heard in the hallway outside the conference room. Everyone’s heads immediately turned back toward the sound. Watts and Bean ran out the door to inspect what had happened.

“Watts, over here!” cried Sergeant Bean.

The large sign announcing the conference lay on the floor, partially bent from the fall, as the front door was shutting at the other end of the hall.

“Stay here. I’ll go!” Detective Watts yelled as he began running after whoever was fleeing out the front door.

As soon as Watts got out the door, he saw someone running around the corner of the next block. Watts was past his prime and his speed and agility had left him years ago. He simply couldn’t keep up with the mysterious runner. Watts was gasping for air as he walked back to the museum. On the bright side, now they had a description of the suspect-- male wearing a dark green jacket and dark pants. Not very much to go on; the suspect could simply change clothes and try again tomorrow. He had probably tried to sneak in, knocking over the sign in the process, and then fled.

Meanwhile, Professor Rhodes and Dr. Lane were trying to get everyone quieted down again for a question-and-answer session on what they had covered so far.

An hour later, Professor Rhodes finished out by saying, “Thanks for your patience today folks. We’re sorry about the sign falling today and disturbing us. It seems that there may be some here that are trying to destroy the message that God has for us. Let’s stop and pray about this.” Dr. Lane came forward and prayed that the Lord would overcome anything that tried to stop the conference.

Rhodes and Lane were both eager to talk with Watts and Bean when it was over. Detective Watts told them of his chase and the description they had so far. No one could think of anyone who had a dark green jacket and dark pants (not much of a fashion statement), but they all decided if there was another need for a chase, Sergeant Bean would go instead.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What happened at the conference?
2. What kinds of things do you think are needed to sustain life here on earth?

Bible Thought~

Today’s verse is *Psalm 8:3-4, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the*

stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him?" God not only made the universe, He created life on it. Life can't exist just anywhere in the universe. He created the perfect conditions here on earth for His creation.

There are about 20 or so things that have to be just right, but here are a few of them (you don't have to list all of them- just whatever you think your age group might be able to understand): *

- ✧liquid water
- ✧perfect distance from the sun (Habitable or 'Goldilocks' zone)
if it were 5% closer- too hot, 20% farther away- too cold.
- ✧right place in the galaxy- away from stardust
- ✧right size of the sun- ours is a G2 main sequence dwarf star
- ✧gas giant planets shielding us from asteroids and large space debris
- ✧oxygen-rich atmosphere
- ✧earth having the correct mass- for gravitational pull to hold in a protective atmosphere
- ✧orbited by a large moon
- ✧plate tectonics- crust able to move
- ✧magnetic field- to shield from cosmic radiation
- ✧correct balance of land and seas
- ✧terrestrial planet- plants can live here
- ✧moderate rate of planet's rotation so all sides of the earth face the sun

Given the conservative estimate of having each of those all occur by chance (1 in 10 each), the combined result is 1 in 10 to the 15th degree- basically impossible due to the total number of stars in the universe.*

These conditions have been so meticulously arranged, that it is logical to conclude that God put us here for a reason. The Bible tells us the reason is for us to know Him and to have a relationship with Him. If any one of these conditions were just a little bit different, life would not be able to exist at all!

That's what kind of God we serve- so precise and powerful, and yet He LOVES US- like our verse today says- HE IS MINDFUL OF US!!

Let's thank Him for life and the opportunity to know Him.

Pray to close the session.

* Taken from the DVD *The Privileged Planet: The Search for Purpose in the Universe*. Illustra Media. 2004.

Week #4- Cell-a-Bration!

Psalm 139:13-14, "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Reasons for Believing: Chapter 4

Watts and Bean met at the police station later that evening and talked about the case. They certainly had their work cut out for them. No case had been quite like this. They were learning so much about the creation of the universe and life, but they couldn't seem to find out who would sabotage this conference.

"Didn't the person on the phone say that if Dr. Lane went through with the conference, his notes would be stolen?" Sergeant Bean asked.

"Yes," replied Detective Watts, "What are you thinking?"

"What if we made a copy of the research paperwork and then attached some kind of homing device to the bag Dr. Lane keeps it all in?"

"Bean, that's a brilliant idea! Why didn't I think of that myself?"

"Probably because you're thinking about those donuts at the table we'll be manning in the morning," Sergeant Bean said with a sly smile.

"Ha, ha! Very funny... Let's call Dr. Lane and see if he wouldn't mind us copying his research notes."

Fifteen minutes later, the two officers were on their way to Dr. Lane's hotel. Both Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes thought this was an excellent idea and rode back to the station for wait on their notes to be copied.

"Good thing we have some of the same light blue paper here at the station." said Sergeant Bean.

"OK, the notes are copied now. They look just the same as the original ones. Whoever is trying to get to your notes probably knows they're on blue paper. Come this way and I'll attach a small homing device onto your brief case. We'll keep the original set safe here at the station."

With the trap set, Watts and Bean drove Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes back to the hotel.

"Don't worry, we'll catch our man. Try to get some sleep. We'll pick you up in the morning."

"I won't worry-- God has everything under control. I *will* pray that He lets us catch whomever is doing this. This person obviously needs God to work in his or her life right now." Dr. Lane sounded very peaceful.

The next morning, Dr. Lane began his lecture with a big smile, "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This morning we'll be talking about the building block of all life forms- the cell. The cell is an amazing part of God's creation. It's like a tiny factory, each tiny piece doing a special job over and over. In the human body alone, there are trillions of cells- each one designed to make all the systems of the body do what they need to do."

Dr. Lane began to walk toward the other side of the stage as Professor Rhodes began his power point presentation on all the parts of the cell.

Everyone was watching the big screen in the front of the room, so no one, not even Watts and Bean, noticed the arm with the dark green sleeve slowly come around the other side of the stage and pull back the brief case that Dr. Lane had left beside the podium....

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What happened to Dr. Lane's brief case at the conference?
2. Was Dr. Lane worried? What did he do?

Bible Thought~

Today's verse is *Psalm 139:13-14, "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."* We've looked at this verse before, but not from a scientific standpoint. Plants, animals, and people all start out from one single cell. It keeps on dividing until you

have a fully formed plant or animal or person. Each cell is like a miniature factory. And there are tons of different kind of cells even inside your own body. There is even a whole branch of science dedicated to the study of cells- it's called *cytology*.

You have skin cells and muscle cells and cells that form your heart, brain, and other organs. You even have nerve cells and blood cells and fat cells! You have trillions of cells in your body at any given time. Some of those cells even renew themselves, like your skin cells. You get a new set of skin cells about once a week.

Within each cell, there are many different parts doing lots of different jobs. Some give structure & defense (cell wall, cell membrane). Some parts make proteins (ribosomes & the endoplasmic reticulum) and some make energy (mitochondria). There is even a thing called a *nucleus*- which is the control center of the cell itself (This is where the chromosomes are made- the genetic code of the cell-- DNA).

In fact, the cell could not function without ALL of it's intricate pieces. If any one of them isn't right, the cell dies. (This is called "irreducible complexity" in scientific circles). Evolution tells us that random chance makes things happen, but in the cell, things have to be just right or it doesn't survive. That is the result of Intelligent Design-- only God could design a highly sophisticated factory.

Now, all this happens in a tiny amount of space. In fact, a human red blood cell is only about 7 micrometers wide. A micrometer is 1 millionth of a meter (or 1 thousandth of a millimeter). You could fit about 64,000 on the head of a pin (from wikipedia)! Can you imagine that??

God can not only make hugely big things like the sun and the universe, but he makes teeny weeny things like cells that form plants and animals that live and grow. Isn't that amazing?

But the most amazing thing of all is that He cares for us-- not just that He made us-- but that He loves us.

Let's pray and thank God for His amazing creation!

Pray to close the session.

Week #5-All Systems Go!

Ephesians 2:13, "But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ."

Reasons for Believing: Chapter 5

Dr. Lane stood on the side of the stage for nearly ten minutes as he spoke from memory all about the difference between plant and animal cell walls while Professor Rhodes showed pictures of both.

He had put all of his morning notes onto the podium, so he didn't notice anything was missing until it was time to break for lunch. Watts and Bean came up to the front of the stage as everyone was making their way out the two exits. Dr. Lane was gathering up his notes on the podium to put them into this brief case when he discovered it was missing! Watts and Bean noticed it was missing about two seconds after Dr. Lane did.

"OK, let's not panic," Detective Watts heard himself saying, "Remember, we have the homing device on the bag."

"If he doesn't ditch the bag somewhere." Professor Rhodes was getting a bit nervous.

"Oh-- I actually put a second device inside the stack of paper just in case that should happen. It's quite thin. You wouldn't be able to feel it in the stack." Detective Watts was quite confident. "Let's just see where this little baby went," he said as he turned on the homing device monitor.

Two little blips were flashing across the screen. "At least they're flashing together. That means whoever it is hasn't ditched the bag yet. Bean, you and I will go follow this guy. Call for backup, then call someone at the station to bring Dr. Lane his notes so he can continue this afternoon."

"You got it," said Bean.

Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes sat down and prayed while they waited for another police officer to bring the original set of notes.

After his notes were brought down from the station, Dr. Lane began the afternoon session as everyone came back in from their lunch break.

"Since we looked at the cell this morning, this afternoon, we'll see that the systems of the human body are so uniquely designed to do specific things, it is impossible that all of these systems could come together by chance to make up a person." Dr. Lane continued while Professor Rhodes put up a slide of the heart and the circulatory system.

Meanwhile, Watts and Bean had scrambled to the squad car to begin the chase.

"At least for now, we're not on foot," noted Detective Watts.

"Right. Left onto Campbell Avenue, then right on route 74." The thief had managed to get quite far. *He* certainly wasn't on foot either. Suddenly the blipping slowed. Watts and Bean followed the blip to a strange place. What would a thief be doing in a National Park on a hiking trail?

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Where did the homing device lead them?
2. Do you ever stop and think about how complicated your body is?

Bible Thought~

Last week, we talked about cells, remember? Cells make up organs and organs make up body systems. There are many different systems of the body-- can you name any?

Here are some of the major ones: the digestive system, the skeletal system, the nervous system, the lymphatic system, the renal system, and the circulatory system. (You can leave out the reproductive system ☺)

There are too many to talk about all at once, so today we're just going to talk about the circulatory system. Last week we talked about a red blood cell as being only 7 millionths of a meter wide, remember?

So how do these guys get around? They go through arteries and veins, right? Did you know that an adult has about **75,000 miles** of blood vessels in his/her body? Some arteries and veins are really big, and some capillaries are so small that the blood cells have to go through one at a time!!

The system doesn't just carry red blood cells though. You also have white blood cells, antibodies, sugars, salts, hormones, enzymes, amino acids (proteins), and fats! Did you know that? If you take medicines, that gets around your body through your blood too!!

When you get sick, your white blood cells and antibodies attack the harmful bacteria right away. If they can't do their job well enough, you can take medicine to help them along. Your antibodies are so "smart", that your body "remembers" some diseases (like chicken pox) so it will attack the disease the second time before you even feel sick!

Now, let's talk about your pumping system--your heart. It is the most powerful muscle in your body. It beats without you even having to tell it to! Your heart will pump about 40 million times per year! It can pump 450,000 tons of blood in an average person's life.*

We can help our heart out by taking good care of ourselves-- by eating good things and exercising. God wants us to take some responsibility here!

When we eat leafy vegetables, we help out one of the most fascinating parts of our circulatory system-- the blood clotting system. Vitamin K-- have you even heard of Vitamin K? Well, it helps our liver make clotting chemicals. When you get a cut, you probably don't even think about your blood not clotting because it does it so regularly. It's a good thing it doesn't get all clotty inside your body, otherwise you would have no way of transporting many of the things our bodies need.

Many triggers are needed for clotting to occur. These triggers cannot possibly be part of random chance since they are so unique and specific with a purpose. First, platelets in your blood are alerted to a tear in your blood vessel. They begin to stick together around the tear. They also attract clotting factors (proteins) in your blood. They add themselves to the platelets to strengthen it. Then a substance called fibrin is woven into the plug of platelets and clotting factors in a mesh-like shape to strengthen it still. On top of this, red blood cells and white blood cells stick to the plug also. This bunch of substances is called the clot. It stays in place until it is no longer needed and then gets dissolved.** Amazing. So orderly and yet so complex!

Now, since we're talking about blood today, let's talk about Jesus' shed blood on the cross. Clotting didn't save Him that day because He had a much bigger purpose. He gave His life so we could gain eternal life. When He died on the cross, He took our punishment and gave us His righteousness. When he rose from the grave 3 days later, He showed that He is more powerful than sin and death.

Today's verse is *Ephesians 2:13*, "*But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.*" When we believe that Jesus is the Ultimate Creator and that He died on the cross to have a relationship with us, we will also be sorry for our sin that separates us from Himself.

When we are willing to turn away from our old way and turn to Him as our Lord and Savior, we will gain this eternal life. He begins the process of making us into a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

We hope this all makes sense to you. Let's stop and thank the Lord for all that He is to us and all that He did for us on the cross.

Pray to close the session.

*Information on the circulatory system taken from Taken from *It Couldn't Just Happen: Fascinating Facts About God's World* by Lawrence O. Richards. Nashville: Tommy Nelson, Inc., 1989, pages 136-138.

**Information on blood clotting was found on the DVD *The Truth Project* by Focus on the Family, 2006 (taught by Del Tackett). Lesson 5 Part 2.

Week #6- Flood!

Romans 1:20, "since what may be known about God is plain to them. 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 men are without excuse."

Reasons for Believing: Chapter 6

"Seriously?" Detective Watts couldn't believe this. "I couldn't catch the guy on foot and now I have to chase him *up a mountain*?"

"I'll go first. Let me hold the monitor. We'll catch him one way or another," said Sergeant Bean. "Tell the backup to start around on the other side of the trail. Maybe we can surround him."

"Good idea," Watts said as he picked up his walkie-talkie.

Both men were making their way up the trail at a good pace, with Sergeant Bean about 50 feet out in front. The blipping had stopped. Good. Now they could at least close in on their target.

Watts and Bean were very nearly to the top of the mountain. They could see the valley below and a small waterfall on the opposite side. What a spectacular view of nature!

At the same moment, Watts and Bean stopped in their tracks. They looked to their left and there stood Park Ranger Miller near a bench that had been strategically placed for hikers to take in the view.

The ranger knew he had been found, for at that same moment, two other officers approached him from the other side. He was surrounded.

"OK-- hands up where we can see them," Detective Watts announced.

As the Ranger Miller put his hands up, the brief case fell from his lap and the light blue papers fell on the ground. The other two officers rushed in to hold the papers and case as evidence.

Thirty minutes later, the ranger told them the whole story. He had become a park ranger because he loved nature. He believed that evolution had been responsible for all that he saw, but a few weeks ago, Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes had been doing research on what he called *his* mountain. Dr. Lane had had the audacity to say that the flood of the Bible was most likely responsible for the layers of rock you can see on the side of the mountain and the fossils found there. He had said that nature proclaims God's glory so men are without excuse. This made him very angry. He had thought he should prevent others from hearing this "radical" information. Ranger Miller had planned to throw Dr. Lane's research off the top of the mountain, which it was why he had left all the paperwork in the brief case-- less mess for the environment and all. What he didn't bargain on, though, was the wit of two determined police officers, Watts and Bean.

As soon as the ranger was taken down to the police station, Watts and Bean went right back over to the museum to let Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes know that they had caught their man.

"Wow-- I never would have guessed that that park ranger would do something like that." said Professor Rhodes, scratching his head.

"Everyone has an inclination for evil inside himself. I just wish Ranger Miller would have read my research on nature, or at least come to the conference. Tomorrow is the last day, and I am going to be speaking on that very subject." Dr. Lane commented.

"I have an idea," began Professor Rhodes. "Do you think we could let him come and listen to the last session tomorrow? It might be just the thing that changes his mind about Intelligent Design."

"Are you sure you want him in the same room with you after what he did to you?" asked Detective Watts.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Who tried to steal the research?
2. What did Ranger Miller believe was responsible for nature?

Bible Thought~

Many things in nature can be explained by the flood in the Bible. Of course, the world is a very different place today than it was before Noah's flood. Today's verse is *Genesis 7:11-12*, "*In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month- on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.*"

Many Creation Scientists believe there was a vapor canopy that surrounded the earth before the flood, keeping the climate warm and humid-- just right for a lot of growth (sort of like the rain forest). The Bible verse seems to indicate that not only the vapor canopy fell on the earth, but that the water under the ground was forced out also. Water coming from both top and bottom would surely provide a great mess-- one that you could not escape unless you were in Noah's ark.

Like in the story, layers of sediment could have been deposited in a short amount of time as the earth was being shaken around and having its plates moved about (plate tectonics). This is how many of our tall mountains have come about. Great pieces of earth were forced up under other slabs of earth, causing these other pieces to rise sharply into the air. It is interesting that the mountain ranges of the earth are almost all along a longitudinal line (vertical line instead of horizontal line) according to the edges of the earth's plates.

There is also evidence to suggest volcanic activity during the flood. The eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980 was like a miniature model which showed how mud flows can gorge out canyons in just a few hours and how trees can be deposited upright in a lake bed and be petrified just a few years later.

The fossil record also shows sea animals on the tops of mountains, which is consistent with a flood description. In fact, some fossil beds have many bones found together in a mangled mess, as if they were carried there in a hurry. A whole bunch of water could do this very easily, couldn't it?

Even in the world after the flood, God keeps His promises to us found in the Bible-- remember, when we see a rainbow, it is God's promise to never flood the whole earth again with water. We can trust in God's Word and in Him! (See Gen. 9:12-16)

Let's pray and thank God for keeping everything under control!

Pray to close the session.

Week #7- Making It Plain

Romans 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."

Reasons for Believing: Chapter 7

"I think it's an excellent idea," said Dr. Lane. I'd like to be able to present more evidence to Ranger Miller. If he is in the middle of a crowd, it'll be more obvious if he tries anything."

The next morning, everyone took their places as usual. Dr. Lane announced his special guest and then began, "Do you ever wonder why you feel such awe when you see something beautiful in nature? It is because we are seeing a part of God's glory. We see both His power and His eternal nature through His creation."

Ranger Miller sat through the presentation without expression.

At the end of the day, Dr. Lane approached Ranger Miller and told him he was glad that he had been allowed to come today.

Ranger Miller said honestly, "You've given me a lot to think about. What you said does make a lot of sense. But you kept referring to verses in the Bible. How do we know the Bible is true and that the Designer is God? What does that mean for our lives?" asked Ranger Miller.

"I'm glad you asked me that because that is precisely the subject of our spring seminar. In fact, it's called, 'Uncovering the Truth Claims of the Bible: God's Special Revelation to Man.'" replied Dr. Lane.

Off to the side, Watts and Bean waited to take the ranger back to the police station. The two police officers have heard much about God's love and creation over the past few months. Their hearts were becoming softened to God's Truth. Was there a reason they were involved with these kinds of cases? Was God trying to reveal Himself to them? Was there a reason Ranger Miller was able to hear the message too? Maybe so...maybe so.

The End.

Bible Thought~

Have you ever gone hiking or to the mountains, or even to the beach, and been amazed at the beauty of nature? Just like Dr. Lane said in the conclusion to our story today, it is because we are seeing something much bigger than we are- we are seeing God reveal a part of Himself to us.

Nature is all around us. We can't really get away from it, just like we really can't get away from God. Just like the heavens reveal the glory of God (back in week 2), the earth reveals His glory too.

Today's verse is *Romans 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."*

Nature is highly complex, just like all the other areas we've looked at so far. Things like the water cycle, volcanoes, photosynthesis, plate tectonics, hurricanes, and the changing seasons are God's way of keeping His creation balanced and regulated. If you look at each of these in detail, they are all very intricately designed systems that could not function without God's design.

Even when a leaf changes color, there is a "trap door" that closes at the point where the leaf attaches to the branch. There is no way for the water to get to the leaf anymore. The chlorophyll can't do its job of making sugar (glucose) anymore and it begins to break down. As it breaks down, other chemicals already inside the leaf begin to show their colors. Each tree has its own unique color that it will turn, which is how we get all of the amazing colors of autumn.

After all of the leaves fall off the trees, we have winter. Winter seems dead, but the roots of plants grow deeper so they can be stronger when they begin growing again in the springtime.

This winter, let's get grounded like a plant's roots go deeper. As we think about nature and the stars and about our own bodies, let's think about our relationship with the One who created all of it. Do we have one? Let's begin a relationship with Christ if we don't have one.

Let's thank the Lord for revealing Himself to us in some very real ways. Let's thank Him for being so amazingly ordered and intelligent and sovereign. Despite whatever is happening in the world, God is still in control.

We really don't have any excuse for not seeing that God is the designer and creator of the universe. Just look up! He has made it plain to us!

Let's stop and pray to Him today!

Pray to close the session.

NEXT SEASON, WE'LL LOOK AT THE IMPLICATIONS OF INTELLIGENT DESIGN~

†IF GOD IS OUR DESIGNER, WHAT DOES HE HAVE TO SAY TO US?

†THE BIBLE IS HIS LETTER TO US- WE'LL LOOK AT THE HISTORICITY OF THE BIBLE AND HOW JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD.

†HIS WORD IS TRUE AND WE NEED TO OBEY OR TAKE THE CONSEQUENCES.

Week #7-Summary

Which week was your favorite and why??

<p>Week 1- Watts and Bean are given bodyguard duty to Dr. Lane to protect him and his research.</p>	<p><i>1 Peter 3:15, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone for the hope that you have."</i></p>
<p>Week 2- During the first day of the conference, Dr. Lane shares how big the universe is. No one suspicious shows up.</p>	<p><i>Psalms 19:1-3, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day, they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard."</i></p>
<p>Week 3- The morning of the second day of the conference, someone knocks over a large floor sign. Watts tries to chase him down, but the intruder is too fast. Dr. Lane talks about the elements needed for life to exist.</p>	<p><i>Psalms 8:3-4, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him?"</i></p>
<p>Week 4- Bean suggests putting a homing device on the research of Dr. Lane. The notes are secretly stolen during Dr. Lane's presentation on the cell on the morning of the third day of the conference.</p>	<p><i>Psalms 139:13-14, "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."</i></p>
<p>Week 5- during the afternoon of the third day, Dr. Lane discusses body systems as Watts and Bean follow the homing device to a National Park.</p>	<p><i>Ephesians 2:13, "But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ."</i></p>
<p>Week 6- Watts and Bean catch Ranger Miller and he confesses the whole story. Ranger Miller is angry that Dr. Lane and Professor Rhodes said that some of nature can be explained by the flood of the Bible.</p>	<p><i>Genesis 7:11-12, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month- on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights."</i></p>
<p>Week 7- Ranger Miller attends the last day of the conference and has a lot to think about. Dr. Lane's presentation is about nature revealing God's creation.</p>	<p><i>Romans 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."</i></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.