

Lesson 3

Protect Your Neighbor

Lesson Overview

BIBLE LESSON: Genesis 14:11-24

MEMORY VERSE: He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so he will have something to share with one who has need. Ephesians 4:28

CHALLENGE MEMORY VERSE: So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10

CATECHISM:

The Seventh Commandment: Thou shalt not steal.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not rob our neighbor of his money or property, nor bring them into our possession by unfair dealing or fraud, but help him to improve and protect his property and living.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: The student will know:

- God promises to take care of us.
- God wants us to help others keep what belongs to them.

MATERIALS: Lessons, activity sheets

LESSON OVERVIEW: When Abraham and Lot had too many animals to graze together, Abraham gave his younger nephew first choice of the land. He trusted God would give him everything he needed. When enemies attacked Lot's city, they captured the people and stole their precious belongings. Abraham took 318 men to rescue them. God helped them to win the battle, free the captives, and get back what was stolen. When the king offered Abraham a reward, he wouldn't take it. Abraham told the king to keep the reward—he didn't rescue them for money. Abraham helped Lot because he loved him. God wants us to love our neighbors by helping them.

Possible questions: What land did Lot choose? What land did Abram settle in? What happened to Lot? What did Abram do? What did the king of Sodom want to give to Abram? What did Abram know about God? What has God promised to do for us? What does God want us to do for others?

ACTIVITY 1: News from Canaan: student's name, student's town, Abram, Lot, animals, land, best, army, property, God, best, loved, Abram, student's name.

ACTIVITY 2: Why Not Steal?: fear, love, God, rob, neighbor, money, property, possession, unfair, fraud, improve, protect, property, living. Fill in crossword.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach

Read through both the student and teacher's manual lessons.
Read and study Genesis chapter 14

Prayer Preparation

- Thank God for heavenly treasure given to those who trust in Christ.
- Pray that the children will see Jesus as their treasure and will trust their lives to Him.
- Thank the Lord for each of the children He has placed in your class this year and ask Him to bless these children.

Prepare Materials

- Activity Sheets
- Lessons
- Have memory verse(s) written on the board

Bible Background

Genesis 14:11-24 – Protect Your Neighbor

We are to fear the Lord so that we do not rob our neighbor of his property, nor cheat him or treat him unfairly. That is part of the "second great commandment" to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:37-39). If that is hard for some people to do, the other side of that "coin" can be even more difficult, which is to "help and befriend him in every time of need." Sometimes "loving" your neighbor is hard enough without having to actually help and assist him. But these are all human emotions coming from a sinful heart. This love that God asks of us here must come from the love of God which is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5), and that comes with our position of being justified by faith (Rom 5:1).

The Bible includes many examples of people hating and hurting their neighbors, but there are also examples of people going out of the way to help someone in need. One of those was Abraham who rescued his nephew, Lot.

Lot was Abram's nephew, so in that time and place it might have been Abraham's tribal duty to rescue a relative. But even relatives fall under the definition of "neighbor" and are deserving of our love and help. It is apparent that Abram did love Lot and tried to provide for him.

When they separated their families and possessions, Abram had the right to take the best land for himself, but instead he offered Lot first choice (Gen 13:8-18). Lot chose the rich land east of the Jordan and Abram went west. Abram settled in Canaan, which centuries later would become the Promised Land for Israel. Lot received good land, but ended up in Sodom, and the "men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked sinners against the Lord" (Gen 13:13). When God later told Abram that He was going to destroy the city, Abram prayed that Lot might be delivered safely (Gen 18:22-33).

Now Abram has an opportunity to help his "neighbors" in Sodom and also rescue Lot from his captors. Here is an account of the first war that is described in Scripture arising from a revolt of the five kings under the government of Chedorlaomer. It's hard to keep a "score card" of them all, but

there were nine kings—"four kings against five" (Gen 14:9). This war between these "kings" or tribal princes of ancient Canaan is exactly the same as the frays and skirmishes between Arab chiefs in the present day.

They took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply and departed (v.11). "They also took Lot and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom" (V.12).

When Abram heard that Lot had been captured (v.13, also the first time Abram is called Hebrew), he took 318 of his men and went in pursuit. He defeated the enemies and brought back to Sodom all their possessions, "and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the other people" (v.14).

Abram helped his relative Lot, but he also helped and befriended his neighbors in Sodom (even though he would have very likely known their spiritual condition even at this time). After this victory the king of Sodom goes out to greet Abram and thank him for his help. The king said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the possessions for yourself." To this day it is the rule among Arabs that if a camp is plundered, anyone who recovers the spoils gives up only the people and takes the rest for himself.

Abram refused to take anything for himself. With a generosity unknown in that part of the world, Abram replied, "I have sworn to the Lord," and with strong words common to the region, said "I have lifted up my hand" [that is, I have sworn to the Lord] that I will take nothing lest you should say, "I have made Abram rich" (vs.21-23) 23]. This attitude is common when people help their neighbors today. When offered compensation, they most often refuse because they are not doing it for the money.

In the middle of all this is the appearance of Melchizedek, king of Salem, or Jerusalem, which lay on Abram's route homeward, and was within a reasonable distance of Sodom. Melchizedek seems to be a person who foreshadows the Christ to come. He is identified as king and priest, and he brings out bread and wine (a normal refreshment for travelers at the time).

Melchizedek blessed Abram from God, and he blessed God from Abram (vs.19-20). We ought to give thanks for other's mercies as for our own. Abram gave him the tenth of the spoils (Heb 7:4). When we have received great mercy from God, it is fitting that we should express our thankfulness by some special act of charity.

Learn the New Words

It is okay to explain the new words in the beginning or as you encounter them.

treasure: A treasure is something that is worth a lot. It is something special or precious to you. You might be careful to take care of your treasure.

man of God: This is a man who loves God and lives for God

Lot: Lot was Abraham's nephew

valuable: Something that is valuable is usually worth a lot of money (you could remind them of Mary's expensive perfume from last lesson)

reward: Something given when someone has done something special. It could be money or a gift.

diamond: A valuable sparkling jewel.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Greet the children as they arrive. Open the class with prayer, praying for each child by name, if you like.

SHARING: Ask the students to think of something that is a treasure to them.

Read the Memory Verse

Remember the appendix of ways to teach memorization of the verse. Read it clearly,

“He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so he will have something to share with one who has need.” Ephesians 4:28

Be sure to read it together aloud. Remind the children you’ll repeat the verse again at the end.

Review the Recent Lessons

Remember we have been learning about the Seventh Commandment: Thou shalt not steal. Review the main ideas from the previous two weeks. We are not to steal what belongs to someone else like Judas did. We are not to deal unfairly or defraud others to get what belongs to them like Zaccheus did. Not only should we avoid stealing, but we should help others improve and protect his property. We are our brothers’ keepers and helpers.

TEACHING TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

Read the Lesson

Teacher read the opening paragraph. **ASK:** What does God want us to do? (Help others keep things that are theirs).

Move on to the next paragraph. Read (or ask a volunteer to read) Genesis 13:1-13.

ASK: What did Abraham do? (*He gave his nephew, Lot, first choice of the land.*)

SAY: Let’s find out what happened next. Read the third paragraph of the lesson or tell the story of Abraham’s rescue of Lot, emphasize the following points:

- An army took Lot, his family, and all their things.
- Abraham wanted to help and rescue Lot.
- God helped Abraham win the battle and set Lot and all the people free.
- The king of Lot’s city wanted to give Abraham a reward.
- Abraham didn’t take the reward. He just wanted to help the people be safe and keep their things.

- Abraham didn’t want the king to make him rich. God was Abraham’s treasure and God would give him everything he needed.

SAY: Abraham loved God best. His treasure was in heaven.

ASK: How did Abraham help the people keep what belonged to them?

Help the class find Genesis 14. Ask them to follow along as you read verses 21-24. Then read Matthew 6:20-21: “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

ASK: Are treasures in heaven better than treasures on earth? When our treasures are in heaven, where will our hearts be? (responses). **SAY:** That means we will love Jesus best. When Jesus is our Savior and we live for Him, we will love Him more than things. God will help us love Him best of all. Abraham knew God was his treasure and would give him everything he needed. God will give us

everything we need if we belong to Him and live for Him.

Repeat the Memory Verses

Discussion:

ASK: If you helped someone and they wanted to pay you, could you say, “I just wanted to help you because I love Jesus”?

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Do the Activities Together

News from Canaan!

Activity 1

Fill in the news article, with details from the lesson.

ACTIVITY CENTER

Activity 1

NEWS FROM CANAAN!

This is (Student's Name) reporting live from (your town).

You are not going to believe what happened to the man of God called Abram and his nephew Lot. They had been sharing their land, but decided to move apart because their animals needed more space. Abram let Lot choose the land he wanted, and Lot picked the best land. One day an army attacked Sodom where Lot lived. The army captured Lot and his neighbors and stole their valuable belongings. Abram came with 318 men, and God helped Abram rescue them.

The king of Sodom wanted to reward Abram by giving him all his property, which was a lot! I think most people would have taken it. But do you think Abram did? No, he did not! Abram told the king, “You keep your money and property.” Abram had promised God he would not take anything, not even a sandal strap.

Abram trusted God to take care of him. Abram let Lot have the best land. Then he helped protect that land too, all because he loved Lot and wanted what was best for him. Today Abram showed us all his love for God and his love for his neighbors.

Goodnight, friends! Signing off now, this is your trusted reporter, (Student's Name)

Why Not Steal?

Activity 2

Write the missing words for the meaning of the Seventh Commandment and fill in the missing letters to the crossword puzzle.

Activity 2

WHY NOT STEAL?

Write the missing words for the meaning of the Seventh Commandment. Then fill in the missing letters in the word puzzle. One of the words is used twice.

We should fear and love God so that we do not rob our neighbor of his money or property, nor bring them into our possession by unfair dealing or fraud, but help him to improve and protect his property and living.

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CLOSING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Closing Prayer

Ask about prayer requests. Allow students to pray if they choose. Allow time for silent prayer. Encourage students to bow their heads and close their eyes.

Additional Teaching Options

Hymns and Songs:

Additional activities for a multi-age class: