

Yesterday. Today. Forever.

Module 2: Loving the Story

Lesson 4: Loving means Obeying

Objectives:

Students will

- analyze a parable to determine its meaning
- generate a list of Jesus' commands
- extend understanding by connecting obedience to love for God

Materials Needed:

- ☐ whiteboard/chart paper and markers
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ pens/pencils and Post-it notes
- ☐ Appendix A: Matthew 7:24-27 written out in parallel
- ☐ Appendix B: Scripture Slips: one set for every 3 groups
- ☐ Loving the Story Lesson 4 Spot the Differences PowerPoint
- ☐ computer and LCD Projector
- ☐ colourful cardstock cut into postcard sized rectangles

Pre-lesson preparation:

- Write out Matthew 7:24-27 in parallel on either white board or chart paper using Appendix A as an example, or use the PowerPoint slide provided in the Spot the Differences Powerpoint
- Try to anticipate how many groups you will have based on your normal attendance (see the guide below). Cut apart one set of Appendix B: Scripture Slips for every three groups.

Minds On

Approximately 30 minutes

Read Matthew 7:24-27. Ask the students what 'the rock' is. Don't give much time; just get quick answers (Jesus, the Bible, etc.)

Prompt: Tuck those answers away for a few minutes and we will come back to them.

(Leader's Note: Put out the first slide of the Spot the Differences PowerPoint.) These two pictures are very similar, but there are a number of differences. With a partner, see if you can find more than 6. (There are 8 that we could find).

Give the students 2 minutes to look at the pictures: no longer! Ask pairs to offer their observations. When all 8 have been identified, or the group is totally stumped, show the second slide with the differences circled.

Prompt: We are now going to do a similar exercise with the passage about the wise and foolish builders.

Reveal the passage written out as in the attached file example. As students in their same pairs to look for how the two columns are different. As you collect examples, use different coloured markers to circle or underline the differences in the two passages, or if you are using the Powerpoint, these differences are animated as you move through the presentation.

Prompt: We are now going to start at the bottom and work our way up. Even though both houses have the same wind and rain come at them, one house falls and the other stands. Why is this? (because one house is built on rock and the other is built on sand) The builder on rock is described as wise and the other is foolish. Let's look at the first 2 lines to see how these two men are different. Notice that they both hear the words of Jesus. It isn't that one knows Jesus and the other doesn't. It isn't that one knows the Bible and the other doesn't. The first lines are the same. Where does the difference come in?

(**Leader's Note:** take a few answers here - the wise one does what Jesus says and the foolish one does not) What is a formal word for doing what someone says? (obedience) So, the rock is that we are wise if we build our lives on is obedience to the words of Jesus. (**Leader's Note:** If anyone had said that at the beginning, congratulate them.) The answers that we had at the beginning are all good answers but this passage points at a specific idea about what 'the rock' means in this context.

Action

Approximately 35 minutes

Prompt: In John 14:23-24, Jesus says, "If you love me you will obey my commandments." But, what did Jesus command? We are going to explore the words of Jesus to find out. In a moment I am going to divide you up into smaller groups and give each group some scripture passages. Many of Jesus' commands are worded using imperative verbs. Imperative verbs are commanding words, like **clean** your room. Or, **Come** here. Or **Be** quiet. You are going to read the verses and try to find the commands of Jesus. Each time you find an imperative verb, write it on a Post-it note. Hang on to your Post-it notes as you fill them out. You will have 15 minutes.

Number off your students, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, etc., using the guide below for numbers. Also make sure every student is assigned to a group, then tell the groups where you would like them to meet (1s by the window, 2s by the piano, etc.). Tell the students to 'go!' As the groups are settling, bring the scripture slips, pens and Post-its and make sure each group knows what it is doing.

# of Students	# of groups	Appendix A sheets to Use
3-5 students	2	Group 1, Group 2, you will summarize the Group 3 information
6-15 students	3	Group 1, Group 2, Group 3
16-17 students	4	Group 1 (double), Group 2, Group 3
18-30 students	6	Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 (all groups double)
>30 students	students/5	add extra sheets as needed

If individual students do not have distinct roles, the ideal group has 3 to 5 students. Obviously this depends on the students, but fewer than three, and the ideas may not have as much breadth, and more than 5, it will be difficult for individual students to have meaningful contributions.

Give the students a warning when about 5 minutes are left. When about 2 minutes are left, tell the groups you would like for a volunteer from each group to stick their Post-its on a whiteboard or easily visible wall.

Below is a ‘teacher’s summary’ of the scriptures with the imperatives in brackets

1. Mark 1:15; John 3:16; John 20:22 (repent, believe, receive the Holy Spirit - regeneration) Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:1-14 (be baptized and live the life that it initiates – ongoing transformation)
2. Matt. 5:43-48; 22:36-40; John 13:34-35, Luke 10:25-37 (love others – forgive others) Matt 28:18-20 (make disciples, teach the Word, train leaders, send missionaries)
3. Matt. 26:26-28; John 4:24 (break bread – Lord’s Supper) John 16:24 (Pray) Luke 6:38 (give, our time, money and talents)

Prompt: From John 14, we know that if we love Jesus, we will keep his commands. This statement is a ‘logical consequence’ or ‘if/then’ statement. If one thing is true, then another thing will happen. If it rains all day, the ground will get wet. We know what

Jesus commands. So here is the difficult part. We don't always do what Jesus commands. Do you think the opposite is true? If we don't love Jesus, we don't keep his commands? Or are things more complex than that? Take a moment to answer this question in your mind: When you don't follow what Jesus commands, does it have to do with lack of love or some other reason?

Give the students several moments to think about this then ask them to turn to a partner and share. After two or three minutes, ask the students to share something they heard a partner say.

Consolidate/Debrief

Approximately 10 minutes

Prompt: Following Jesus is not typically an 'all at once' process. It takes years to consistently follow Jesus' commands. In a moment, I am going to hand out some card stock and markers. Take a moment and look at the commands on the Post-it notes and consider one or two 'imperatives' that you would like to try to be better at following. Use the card stock to make a reminder to yourself. At the top of your card write: 'To better show my love to Jesus, I want to get better at...' and fill in the rest with the command you want to improve. For those of you who are not yet sure about following Jesus, the imperatives can still be a good starting place for being a more loving and generous person. Just write 'I want to get better at...' and fill in the rest with the command you want to improve. Decorate your card if you would like.

Read John 13:34, 35 as a blessing over your students. Encourage them to love one another and those around them.

Appendix A: Matthew 7 in Parallel

Matthew 7:24, 25	Matthew 7:26, 27
<p>“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine</p> <p>and puts them into practice</p> <p>is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.</p> <p>The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.</p>	<p>But everyone who hears these words of mine</p> <p>and does not put them into practice</p> <p>is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.</p> <p>The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”</p>

Appendix B: Scripture slips

Group 1

Mark 1:15;

John 3:16;

John 20:22;

Matt. 28:18-20;

Rom. 6:1-14

Group 2

Matt. 5:43-48;

Matt. 22:36-40;

John 13:34-35;

Luke 10:25-37;

Matt 28:18-20;

Group 3

Matt. 26:26-28;

John 4:24;

John 16:24;

Luke 6:38
