

God's Word— The Foundation for Our Family

A Bible Study Course for Adults

by

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Lesson One
God's Word—The Foundation for Our Family

Trust: The Basis for Family Decisions

Goals

- To reinforce the importance of making God's Word the basis for family decisions.
- To teach us to recognize the roadblocks that hinder the process of making God-pleasing decisions.
- To help us find strength and encouragement in God's promises at those times when the family's decision-making process breaks down.

Life example

Dinnertime for the Scott family has been very tense for the past couple weeks. Jim was informed two weeks ago that he may have to relocate across the country if he wants to keep his job. Jim and his wife, Sue, have also been worried because they are losing money on an apartment complex they own. They are preparing the complex for sale, but that ordeal presents its own set of challenges.

In the meantime, Sue wonders if she should try to find full-time employment. She doesn't like the idea that she wouldn't be home for the kids after school; and she doesn't even want to think about uprooting the family and moving at this time in their lives.

Jennifer, their 16-year-old, cries every time they talk about the possibility of moving. She's devastated by the thought of leaving her friends and her dance team, which has a good chance of making it to state this year.

On the other hand, for 10-year-old Bobby, the prospect of a move offers hope. He is having trouble at school: he doesn't seem to fit in very well and he gets picked on unmercifully. Jim and Sue notice that his grades are dropping and that he spends more and more time alone. They wonder if a new start might be good for him.

Jim and Sue have been praying that God would show them what to do. But the answer doesn't seem clear.

Reflections of faith

1. Jim and Sue have to make some powerfully life-changing decisions in the next couple of weeks. Explore some of the thoughts and fears that each of them may be experiencing at this time.

2. What issues make these decisions especially difficult?
3. If Jim and Sue came to you for advice, what would you tell them at this time?

Light from the Word

Read **Matthew 4:1-11**.

1. Every time Satan challenged Jesus with a temptation, Jesus had to make a decision. Evaluate this statement: Those were easy decisions because Jesus is the Son of God.
2. What made each of these decisions a challenge for our Savior?
3. The decision-making process we go through in life is often similar to the one Jesus went through. In what ways?
4. What example did Jesus set for us when we face challenging decisions?
5. Jesus always had the right passages ready at the right time. Evaluate this statement: I could never hope to be so ready with an answer from the Scriptures.
6. Evaluate this statement: One of our biggest problems is that we forget that God's Word applies to our daily lives.
7. In the wilderness, Jesus repeatedly made the decision to live by God's Word alone. This was part of Jesus' active obedience—Jesus did this to fulfill all righteousness for us (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Sometimes we make bad decisions because we cater to our sinful desires. Why are we able to find comfort and peace in Jesus' active obedience in spite of our failures to always make God-pleasing decisions?

Breakout/discussion

Ask someone to share a particularly challenging decision that his or her family has had to make or is presently facing. As a group, discuss the Bible passages and scriptural principles that seem to apply.

Note: The Bible does not have a specific answer for every decision we face in life. Imagine how immense the Bible would have to be to accomplish that! However, it does lay out principles that guide us in the decision-making process.

Reflections of faith

1. Eventually Jim does receive the ultimatum from his company: either move across the country or look for another job. How does trust play a role in the decision Jim and his family have to make?
2. If the family decides to move, how might Jim and Sue encourage their daughter, Jennifer, to put her trust in the Lord?
3. Imagine that you are a member of the Scott family. Identify the Bible passages or stories you would turn to for encouragement.
4. In addition to reading the Scriptures, it would be a good idea to talk to your pastor and trusted Christian friends. Why?

Light from the Word

1. Read **Ephesians 2:8-10**. What assurances do these verses give us when it comes to the decisions we make in life?
2. What powerful promise does God give us in the words of **Psalm 25:4,5** and **Psalm 37:5,6**?

3. Many people are afraid that they will make the wrong decisions. What encouragement does **Romans 8:28-39** give us as we make decisions?

4. **1 Corinthians chapter 12** speaks of members of Christ's church as a body, each member bringing a certain gift and all working together for the common good. What encouragement does this truth give us when . . .

 . . . a family is struggling to make a decision?

 . . . an individual feels all alone when he or she has to make an important decision?

Let's think about the lesson

1. What important decisions for your family do you see coming up in the near future?

2. How can you prepare yourself and your family spiritually for that time of decision?

3. No one can predict all the decisions one's family will face in life. How can you prepare your family for those unexpected and sometimes emotional times that call for making hard decisions?

Additional Workshop Materials

Lesson One

Trust: The Basis for Family Decisions

A Good Word for Our Family

The fourth stanza of hymn 446 in *Christian Worship* says: "I am trusting you to guide me; You alone shall lead, Ev'ry day and hour supplying All my need."

Write another stanza or two for the hymn that express our trust in God as we face the difficult decisions of life.

Drama Sportz

Have two individuals volunteer to roleplay the decision-making process. Choose a third individual to moderate the scene. While the two volunteers are out of the room, the moderator receives from the audience an important decision the pair will need to struggle through, along with five obstacles that would make that decision even more difficult. These obstacles are written down on sheets of paper. The volunteers are brought out and told about the decision they need to make. They are also told that as they discuss their dilemma, the moderator will step in from time to time to present another obstacle. Then let the play begin.

Roleplay

Your child is feeling overwhelmed by all the activities that require so much time and energy. He or she wonders if it might be necessary to give up something. If so, what? Use what you've learned from God's Word to guide him or her through the decision-making process.

Research Project

Interview several individuals (Christian or non-Christian) to find out what factors influence the decisions they make. Do they feel that their beliefs make it easier or more difficult for them to make decisions? Are they generally at peace with their decisions, or do they worry and second-guess themselves? Find out how much time they spend in personal and corporate spiritual growth. Do you notice any patterns? Report on your findings and what you learned through this process.

Parent Talk

Consider examples of believers in the Bible who struggled with life-changing decisions. What can you learn for your family from their examples?

Prayer

Choose a partner. Share with each other the difficult decisions you each face in the upcoming weeks. Then take a few minutes to pray out loud for each other.