Teen Ministry Character Studies

“For this reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from becoming ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” ~2 Peter 2:5-8
Table of Contents

Letter to Teen Leaders .........................................................page 3

Introducing God .................................................................page 4

2 Peter Study Series
- Faith .................................................................page 6
- Goodness .............................................................page 7
- Knowledge ..............................................................page 9
- Self-Control .............................................................page 10
- Perseverance ...........................................................page 12
- Godliness .................................................................page 13
- Brotherly Kindness .....................................................page 15
- Love ........................................................................page 17

Psalm 119 Study: Falling in Love with the Bible ........page 19

Pride and Humility ..............................................................page 20

Deceit .............................................................................page 23

Purity ..............................................................................page 24
Dear Teen Leader (or mature teen helping with studies),

“Here is a saying you can trust. If anyone wants to be a leader in the church, he wants to do a good work for God and people.” (1 Timothy 3:1, NIrV). Thank you for being willing to help guide our young ones to developing a faith of their own! These studies were developed by many different teen leaders, based on their experiences regarding the needs of teens entering the teen ministry. They are designed for younger teens to develop their character and view of God in order to prepare them for discipleship studies later on – however, they are also great tools to use with teen disciples (and even for your own Bible study) as well.

One word of caution: Teens may not initially take these studies very seriously! They often see character studies as a waiting period before they can do the “real studies” (Guard the Gospel), but it’s important that we emphasize that any study we do from the Bible is a “real” Bible study. These studies are very important in helping teens develop a foundation in their hearts for making a decision about becoming a disciple, and the more seriously we take these studies, the more seriously they will take them too.

Here are some tips that have been helpful throughout having character studies:

• Keep close communication with parents (at some points, it may even be helpful to have a parent join in a study, to make sure everyone is on the same page)
• Always give a take-home assignment (something to read, or reflect on, someone to talk to regarding their study)
• Follow up with teens about their personal quiet times (reading and praying) and make sure they are not relying only on the studies for their intake of the Scriptures
• Get to know the teen you are working with – what interests they have, what strengths and weaknesses, and even their general reading ability (New International Readers Version – NIrV is great for teens having more difficulty with reading).
• Encourage the teens to give “real” answers rather than “right” answers.

Finally, remember that this is a tool-kit to use with the teens, but you are not limited to only using these studies! Young teens may also benefit from studying through a gospel with you in order to get to know Jesus, or you may find other studies that will meet their needs. Thanks again for taking part in this crucial task of helping teens build their faith.

Love, the Teen Ministry
Hampton Roads Church
INTRODUCING GOD STUDY

Goal of this study:
To understand the perspective of God that this teen is coming from, and to help them see the powerful yet personal involvement of God in their spiritual journey.

“What I believe about God is the most important thing about me.” -A.W. Tozer

Opening Questions:
Explain to the teen that you want to know what they REALLY think. Not what their parents think, not what they think they are supposed to say, but their genuine thoughts. Keep note of their responses, because these will be helpful in guiding you through the individual needs of the teen who is studying.

-When you think about God, what comes to your mind?
-When you think about Jesus, what comes to your mind?
-Where do you think you have gotten your beliefs about God and Jesus?
-How do you feel about God and Jesus?
-How do you think they feel towards you?
-How would you describe God or Jesus to a friend?

How big is your God?

*Isaiah 40:12-15, 21-22, 25-26

*Number of stars in the universe: 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (that’s 21 zeros!) – God calls them each by name, even though humans don’t have names for all of them.

* Amount of water on earth – about 326,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 gallons (326 million trillion gallons) – God measures this in the cup of his hand.

*God sees us like grasshoppers (and that is probably an over-estimate). What would you do for a grasshopper? How much time do you spend thinking about a grasshopper?
**Up close and personal:**

*Psalm 8:3-5*

*Psalm 139:1-18*

*Isaiah 49:16*

*Seeing how huge and powerful God is could make us feel tiny and unimportant. But as important as he is, he cares more deeply for you than anyone else (even your parents!)*

*The same hands that can hold all of the oceans have your name “tattooed” into them.*

*There are about as many stars as there are pieces of sand (look back to the number of stars). God’s thoughts of you outnumber this amount.*

*How does this make you feel? This should bring us a deep respect and sense of confidence! God has control over all things and is not someone to play around with – but he wants to have a close relationship with you. How do these scriptures compare with what you said your view of God was?*

*With these things in mind, what action will you take? Why do you want to study the Bible?*

**Practicals:** Pray about and discuss your thoughts about God with your family and other Christians, and share a decision about how you will go after getting to know God better, starting this week.
“For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self control, and to self control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love...they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive”(2 Peter 1:5-8)

**Goal of this study:** To teach teen what faith is and the very important role that it plays, along with helping them to make decisions to act on faith.

**Opening Questions:**

In your own words, what does faith mean? *(Hebrews 11:1)*

How does a lack of faith affect your relationship with God? *(Hebrews 11:6)*

1. Explain to the teen that faith requires belief, but that believing alone it is not enough. True faith is accompanied by action.
   - Read *James 2:14-17*
   - Abraham did a great job demonstrating faith and deeds *(Genesis 22:1-14)*
   - Because of Abraham’s faith he was considered righteous by God *(James 2:21-24)*

2. Explain that if we have faith, God will credit us with righteousness *(Romans 4:21-24)*
   - Part of having faith is understanding that things might seem impossible but then realizing that God is capable of anything.

3. Examples of faith: *Hebrews 11* (choose which ones would most inspire the teen you are working with) Also, Luke 1:26-55 shows how Mary was a great example of a faithful woman.

**Practicals:** Have the teen make a list of things they would like to see God do in their lives (ex: having a friend come to church or a teen event) and encourage them to pray about them continually. Also ask the teen what actions they can take to pair with their faith. (example: inviting their friend to church or a teen event)
GOODNESS STUDY

“For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith GOODNESS, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self control, and to self control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love...they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive” (2 Peter 1:5-8)

The goal of this study: Develop convictions that those who desire to follow God are characterized by being “devoted to what is good” and to help each teen begin to live their life “eager to do what is good.”

Opening Question: How would you describe a good person? What would their lives look like? How would they view opportunities to serve others? What would be a great motivation to be a man/woman devoted to what is good?

Titus 3:8 – “This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good.”
*What does it mean to be “devoted?”
*What things in your life would you say you are devoted?
*Why must we be careful to devote ourselves to doing what is good? What might happen if we aren’t careful?

2nd Timothy 3:16-17 – “so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
*How can you become equipped to do good works?
*Why do we need to be taught, corrected, and even rebuked in order to do good works?
*Hebrews 5:14 – using God’s word will equip us to distinguish good from evil
*How can God’s word help us to know what good works we should be doing?
*How should God’s word motivate you to do good works?

Titus 3:1 – “Remind the people to be subject to rulers & authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do what is good…”
*What prevents us from being ready to do whatever is good?
*Who in your life is it hard for you to serve, love, and to do what is good? (Galatians 6:9)
*Titus 3:14 – devoting oneself to what is good will help you live well too
*How can doing what is good even help your life? (Proverbs 11:25)

What’s the Big Deal?
What should motivate you to look to be a man or woman devoted to what is good?

Romans 8:28 – “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”
*God works for your good
*God is calling you to his purpose (to be like him)
*Can you imagine all the good God has done for you up to this point in your life? And all that he will do for the rest of your life? Wow!!

1st Peter 1:12 - God will get the glory! When you do what is good, God is glorified.

Colossians 1:10-12
*Bearing fruit by doing good works pleases God!
*He has given you the opportunity to share in inheritance of the saints (Heaven!!)
Philippians 2:1-5
*Being devoted to what is good is exciting due to what Jesus has done for us!
*What should motivate you to look to the interests of others?
*Whose attitude should you imitate?
*How can Jesus’ example inspire you to be eager to do good to and for others?

When should we start having a character that is devoted to what is good?
*Immediately! Faith in God is accompanied by being devoted to do what is good

James 2:17-18
*Faith by itself, if not accompanied by action (good deeds), is dead.
*Show your faith by what you do
*Up to this point, would your faith be considered dead or alive?
*How can you begin to express your faith by your actions (good deeds)?

Matthew 5:16
*Your faith is supposed to shine bright for all to see
*How is it that your friends, family, and those around you are going to see your faith?
*Who gets the praise when you decide to do what is good?

Matthew 7:15-20 – We can tell who you really are by the “fruit” you produce
*How do you know an apple tree is really an apple tree?
*How do you know a good tree is really a good tree?
*How do we know you are really devoted to what is good?
*God expects good fruit to be produced. It’s a natural indication of those who follow God.

Is there a difference between being good and devoted to what is good?
*Absolutely! Being good doesn’t mean you are devoted to what is good.
*How do you know if you’re just a “good kid” or are “devoted to what is good”?

1st Samuel 16:7 – “The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”
*What matters most to God?
*What then is the difference between being good and devoted to what is good?
-Your heart is what makes the difference; being a good kid does not mean you have a good heart.

Examples of being “Good” versus “Devoted to what is good”
Matthew 6:1-4 – the Pharisees
Mark 10:17-25 – the rich young ruler
Luke 10:25 -35 – the parable of the Good Samaritan (good example)

Homework:
*Ask your family if they would describe you as “being devoted and eager to do what is good.”
*Journal specific ways how you are going to do what is good from now on.

Answer the following for each “good work”:

Additional Helpful Scriptures:
BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE STUDY

“For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self control, and to self control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love...they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive” (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Goal of this study: Help the teen see the importance of growing in knowledge of the scriptures and guide them towards learning how to do so – also to help motivate consistent quiet times.

Opening Questions: Why is it important to have biblical knowledge?

   - How did the devil try to tempt Jesus?
   - How did Jesus refute the devil’s proposals?
   - How did Jesus know how to respond? (verses 4, 8, and 12)
   - Where did his answers come from (specifically)?
   - How did Jesus know these passages?
   - What might have happened if Jesus didn’t know these passages?
   - When you are tempted by the devil, what are your answers like?
   - How can having biblical knowledge help you to not be tempted by the devil?
   - How many different ways can Satan tempt you?
   - How many different passages do you know in order to refute the devil’s proposals?
   - What do you need to do so your answers are more like Jesus’?

2. Sharing and standing up for your faith (Acts 7.1-53)
   - How was Stephen able to speak about scripture so well?
   - How did Stephen know so much about the Old Testament?
   - What would have happened if Stephen would have said verse 51 without knowing the scriptures?
   - Why was it important for Stephen to know the Old Testament?
   - How are you at standing up for Jesus?
   - How are you at sharing you faith?
   - Have you ever tried to talk about God to someone without knowing the right scriptures to talk about? How did that conversation work out?

Practicals: How do you gain biblical knowledge? (1 Kings 4:29)

   - Where did Solomon get his wisdom and knowledge from?
   - Who can help you grow in your Biblical wisdom?
   - What do you desire to gain more wisdom about regarding the Bible?
   - What will you do to start growing in your biblical knowledge?
SELF-CONTROL STUDY

“For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge SELF-CONTROL, and to self control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love...they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive” (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Goal of this study: To contrast examples of self-control versus self-indulgence, and teach teens how to prepare themselves to have self-control during challenging situations.

Within the Bible, self-control is compared to being alert and ready to do God’s will. It is contrasted to being "asleep" in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. When we are asleep, that’s one of the most vulnerable situations that any of us can be in. We are not prepared, alert, or ready for anything while we’re sleeping. It’s unusual that we are calm, controlled, and rational after being awakened suddenly from a state of rest.

So in your day-to-day life, with stresses at home and challenges at school, does your behavior resemble someone who is asleep and unprepared, or someone who is awake and ready to face each challenge with faith, love and, hope?

Scripture Example 1: 1 Samuel 18:1-11

Here we see Saul and the beginning of his conflict with David. In this passage we learn that David was a servant of Saul, and he took every task and assignment that Saul gave and completed it with success. Saul was very appreciative of this initially, but when other people began to notice David’s success as well, Saul's appreciation turns to jealousy. Saul quickly goes from wanting David at his side, to wanting him dead. Saul was not prepared for David to gain all of the attention he’d been getting; after all, he was king and he was the one people were supposed to look to for strength and guidance. It didn't seem fair. So Saul's immediate response to this surprise reaction to David was surely not a self-controlled one. Saul responded with jealousy, and his jealousy soon turned to hatred, which turned into the desire to kill.

Reflection Questions:

• Have you ever been in a situation where things did not go the way you expected? How did you handle it?
• Have you ever felt cheated out of credit that you were sure you deserved? How did you respond?

Scripture Example 2: 1 Samuel 24:1-22

In this passage we see Saul in one of his attempts to Kill David. We know from the passage that David is innocent and is being pursued simply because Saul is jealous. And after a long time of being chased and threatened, Saul is in a vulnerable position, and David finally has an opportunity to get back at Saul for what he's been doing. Even the people around him are encouraging him to do so.
Reflection Questions:

- Has anyone ever hurt you or treated you badly for no good reason?
- What type of reaction did you have to being treated this way?
- Have you ever gotten back at someone who hurt you?

In this passage we see that David's response to Saul is nothing like we probably would have expected. Have you ever heard the saying “two wrongs don’t make a right,” well David shows us how it’s done. Instead of reacting out of the fear and anger that he may have been feeling, he is self-controlled and decides to do what is right. Although Saul is the one who is completely wrong in this situation, David still sees him as his king and shows him respect. And even though Saul probably deserves to be punished for his behavior, David understands that it’s not his job to do it, but God’s. David completely humbles himself and leaves his emotions out of the equation and considers what is righteous as the only option.

Now we’ve probably all been victims of jealousy (whether we were the jealous ones or the other way around), but not many of us can say that someone wants to or has tried to kill us because of it. Surely we’ve had stronger reactions than David for much smaller offenses that Saul’s; so how did David stay so self-controlled? Why was his reaction to something so unexpected so different from Saul’s? Well let’s look at how this was possible:

1. He prayed. David asked God for guidance in his daily activities. He was concerned about what God wanted, not what he wanted. (Read 1 Samuel 23:1-11)

2. David had godly friends to help him focus on God and to strengthen him. (Read 1 Samuel 23:15-18)

3. David Feared the Lord – he understood who was really in control. It was the Lord, and not Saul who he responded to. (Read 1 Samuel 24:5-7)

Closing Questions:

- Do you pray and ask God to guide you and help you do what is right, or do you determine how you will respond in a given situation?
- How do your current friends influence you? Do they strengthen you when it is hard to obey God rather than your emotions?
- Do you know the word of God? Are you concerned about or even know how God feels about how we should live our lives?

Additional Scriptures: God wants us to live self-controlled lives, below are some scriptures to help us understand God’s will. Study and pray about these passages to discuss them for your next study:

- Proverbs 25:28
- Galatians 5:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 5:5-9
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5
- Titus 2:1-8
- 1 Peter 1:12-14
- 1 Peter 4:7-8
- 2 Peter 1:5-7
- Psalm 37:7-9
- Ecclesiastes 7:8-9
"For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self control PERSEVERANCE, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love....they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive" (2 Peter 1:5-8)

**Goal of this study:** Help teens develop a conviction about perseverance through trials, rather than giving up, in order to build maturity in their relationship with God.

**Opening Questions:** What does perseverance mean to you? Share an example of a time where you had to persevere, or when you watched someone else persevere – what was this like?

**Luke 5:17-20** “Jesus Heals a Paralytic”

- It’s one thing to pass out handouts and invite someone to church. It’s another thing to carry your buddy on a mat and carry him on the roof, pull back the tiles & lower him in front of Jesus.
- These guys were desperate for their friend. They were resolved to go anywhere and do anything to get their buddy to Jesus.
- How far are we willing to go?
- These guys could have turned around because of the crowd, said we will just come back tomorrow, but they said, ‘Right Now’, we’ll do whatever it takes to get this guy to Jesus.

**Genesis 14** - Abraham’s nephew Lot is carried away by foreign kings. When Abraham heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. During the night Abraham divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

- Abraham persevered through the threat of enemies & the dark of night to bring his brother back
- What excuses do we make? (They’re not open, I’m too busy; I already gave them a handout …)
- What about the prayer list we get every week – how long do we continue praying through that?
- What about the people studying and seeking God? Do we persevere to help them?

**Additional Scriptures:**
Romans 5:3-4
Hebrews 12:1
James 1:3

**Homework:** Identify an area that you need to grow in perseverance with, and discuss your plan with your teen leader and parents of how you will go after this area.
**GODLINESS STUDY**

“For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control perseverance, and to perseverance **GODLINESS**, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love...they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive” (2 Peter 1:5-8)

**Goal of this study:**

Compare differences between worldliness and godliness and start making decisions for godliness.

**Opening Questions:**

What do you think worldliness is?
What do you think godliness?
Why does God despise worldliness so much?

In order for us to determine what worldliness is, we have to look at what the opposite is: godliness.

**Godliness:**

- Godliness is being holy:
  “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy, because I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:13-16

- Godliness is being like God in thought, heart and actions. Godliness is being concerned with things of God:
  “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things...And whatever you do whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:2, 17

- Godliness is having a Godly focus, focusing on heaven and things that are eternal.

How would your life be different if this was your mindset? (1Timothy 6:18-19; Titus 3:1-2)

In contrast, let’s take a look at worldliness.

**Worldliness:**

Worldliness is being like the world that we live in. It is being like the people we interact with on an everyday basis. It is conforming rather than standing out.

- God commands, “do not love the world or anything in the world.” 1 John 2:15
God says this because “everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” 1 John 2:16-17

The things of the world are temporary, whereas the things of God are eternal.

How do you think the things of the world can be temporary?

Which things do you have a hard time believing are temporary?

- An example of someone who had a hard time letting go of the things of the world is Lots’ wife. Read Genesis 19:1-26
- There are consequences for worldliness. It cost Lot’s wife her life. (Matthew 16:26)

- Someone who is worldly exhibits these traits: lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful (cocky or egotistical), proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self control, brutal (harsh, cruel or crude), not lovers of the good, treacherous (untrustworthy or unreliable), rash (acting without consideration), conceited (having an excessively favorable opinion of one’s abilities, appearance), lovers of pleasure rather then lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying it power. 2 Tim 3:1-5

Do any of these characteristics describe you?

After breaking worldliness down does it sound like something you would feel happy describing yourself as? Why or why not?

- The bible has a way of testing to see if you are worldly: “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own,” John 15:19.

Are you more often accepted by your friends and your classmates or do you stand out?

Also, 1 John 2:15-17—“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” This is another test.

Is there anything in the world you love more then God?

Now that we know what worldliness is and what godliness is, let us strive to be like God “for physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” 1 Timothy 4:8

Practicals:

Make a list of ways you can train to be godly and turn away from worldliness this week, along with deciding who will help measure your progress.
“For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self control, and to self control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness BROTHERLY KINDNESS, and to brotherly kindness love…they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive”(2 Peter 1:5-8)

Goal of this study:
Deepen teens’ understanding of the character of kindness, and how to imitate examples in the Bible, rather than acting out of the sinful nature, which is selfish.

Opening Questions:
What is kindness?
How does kindness relate to our Christian walk?

*Potential Answers*
Being kind to each other
Love and kindness
Interactions
Favors, behaviors, feeling, liking
Being considerate, thoughtful, nice
Forgiveness

What are some examples of kindness in the scriptures?
This study will help us look at some examples together.
[Make sure to paint the picture and give background and context to Joseph and his family]
Main text: Genesis 37 & 50:15 [Joseph]

• Repaying good for evil; you have to choose; its a decision
• God is watching; we have to answer to God for our responses
• Unloving behavior by others does not authorize unkind behavior

How would you feel if you were Joseph? What might you do?
How would you feel if you were the brothers?
How is Joseph kind?
-gracious speech
-cares for needs, provides for them
-clears the air, helps them to feel comfortable "don't be afraid"
Why does Joseph behave this way?
• *Relationship with God, sees how God worked things out for the good*

**Luke 10:25-36 - Good Samaritan**
• Jesus tells us to "Go do the same" – commanded to be a good neighbor

**Eph 4:29-32**
• Kindness is seen in how you speak and show forgiveness
• v31 examples of un-kindness

**Proverbs 11:17**
**Proverbs 14:21 & 31**
**Proverbs 19:17**
- Promises and blessings from being kind

What does the Bible promise you if you are kind?

Are you kind to the people around you?
What area do you need to exhibit brotherly kindness?
What reasons do you have to be unkind?
How does God want you to respond despite your reasons?

**Practicals:**
*Give additional scripture to read for homework*
*Memorize a scripture on kindness*
*Pray about specific need to be kind and share with teen leader/parent*

**Additional Scriptures:**
1 Sam 25 - Nabal [Bad]
Gen 19:1 - Lot
Gen 13:8 - Abraham
Ex 2:17 - Moses
Ruth 2:6, 14 - Boaz
2 Sam 9 [7] - David
Acts 16: 25-34 - Jailer shows kindness to Paul
LOVE STUDY

“For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self control, and to self control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness LOVE... they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive” (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Goal of this study:
Deepen the teens understanding of love and help them to begin putting it into practice.

I Corinthians 13:1-3 NLT

First, however, let me tell you about something else that is better than anything! If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth but did not love others, I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophesy and if I knew all the mysteries of the future and knew everything about everything, but didn’t love others, what good would I be? And if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, without love I would be no good to anybody. If I gave up everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it, but if I didn’t love others, I would be of no value whatsoever.

“Love is everything. Without love everything else is meaningless”

Read 1 John 4:7-8 and John 13:34-35

- God is the definition of love
- Without loving God and each other, God cannot live within us
- This is vital for our salvation

Read 1 Peter 1:22 and Romans 12:9-10

- Our love for others can’t be “surfacy”. It has to be real genuine love from the heart.

Read 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

Love is: patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not rude, not self seeking, not easily angered, keeps no record of wrong, hates evil, rejoices with the truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, last forever.

(Read other versions of this text as well, NLT, The Message)
*Who are some people that you love in your life?

*How does this love for them hold up to the 1 Corinthians 13 test?

*If you are not loving as the scripture says, then what are you doing?

*Which characteristic of love is most challenging for you, and with whom?

**Read Luke 15:11-32**

*How did the older brother lack love?

- he kept record of wrongs, was self seeking, was envious, and was angry

*Do you try to justify the way you feel about someone?

**Practicals:**

Commit to praying for someone whom it is hard for you to love

Come up with ways to encourage someone: write a card, have them over for dinner, etc.

If you have a sibling, brainstorm ways to show love to him/her and share your plan with your teen leader.
PSALM 119 STUDY: FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE BIBLE

Other Words for the Bible: words, laws, commands, statutes, decrees, precepts. Read through Psalm 119 and complete the chart. Teen leader and teen can do together, and teen can finish for homework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are David’s attitudes and feelings about God’s word?</th>
<th>What will the word of God do for me?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 14 – rejoices over following it</td>
<td>v. 9 – helps me to be pure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRIDE and HUMILITY STUDIES

The Bible says in Daniel 4:37 “those who walk in pride he is able to humble.” We need to identify and repent of pride in our lives if we are to be as Christ-like and effective, as God wants. Here are 12 ways pride can manifest itself in our lives:

1. **CRITICAL** Numbers 16:1, 9-11 shows how Korah was proud and critical. Be careful not to always find fault (Jude 16) and tear others down.

2. **UNGRATEFUL** Deuteronomy 8:10-14 shows how success can lead us to be ungrateful to God for all He has done (see v. 14). A Christian who’s not grateful for salvation is in real danger.

3. **SELF-RELIANT** Deut. 8:15-18 shows how we can begin to think it is our own skill or talent that has led to our success. We begin boasting and we pray less and more ritually. See also Hosea 13:6.

4. **INSECURE** 1 Kings 19 shows how Elijah became insecure and allowed Jezebel to get him down. This is being oversensitive and crushed when challenged, worried about what others think. Self-pity.

5. **SELFISH** 2 Kings 20:16-19 shows Hezekiah hearing bad news, but he is glad because it will be after his lifetime. It is pride to have a selfish concern for our own ministry and ourselves. This is reflected in our prayer for others’ ministries, our zeal for others’ successes and victories, and our relationships with peers.

6. **INDEPENDENCE** 2 Chronicles 26:16-20 shows Uzziah’s pride; he did not ask advice, and so he acted foolishly. Success can breed this.

7. **DEFENSIVE** 2 Chr. 26:19-20 shows a typical emotional, defensive response to challenge. Pride leads to quarrels (Pr. 13:10) and being unwilling to listen. Often defensive people are not open about their weaknesses, so they are tough to pin down—slippery.

8. **UNWILLING TO HATE OWN SIN** Psalm 36:2 speaks to this. Sometimes we get more indignant about the wrongs of others than we do about our own.

9. **NOT BROKEN** Isaiah 66:1-2 indicates we should tremble at God’s word. Psalm 51:17 talks of having a broken and contrite heart. Jeremiah 8:6 warns of people who do not repent, saying “What have I done?” We all need to be convicted by the truth.

10. **DECEIVED** Obadiah 3-4 speaks of people who are so proud they are not even aware of their own situation, so close to disaster. In their hearts, they think “No one can catch me”
11. UNWILLING TO ASSOCIATE WITH PEOPLE OF LOW POSITION  Romans 12:16 speaks of this. Proud people don’t have the time or desire to associate too much with weak or “unimportant” people, or to do “menial” tasks.

12. NOT CHANGING  Titus 3:2 speaks of true humility. This is an inward humility, one that responds to challenge with change. One can learn how to respond in the “right” way to challenge without ever becoming humble. See Matthew 21:28-32.

DEALING WITH PRIDE (Can do together or for homework)

I. Proverbs 16:5 and 21:4  Do I Believe the Bible when it says that pride is a sin (21:4)? Why does God detest all the proud of heart (16:5)? Why would He react so strongly against the sin of pride? (Write down the reason that immediately comes to mind.)

A. In my own words, relating these Proverbs to my own life, what are some identifiable symptoms of pride? (Write them down.)

1. Proverbs 3:7
2. Proverbs 11:12
3. Proverbs 11:24
4. Proverbs 12:9
5. Proverbs 12:15
6. Proverbs 13:10, 22:10
7. Proverbs 13:13
8. Proverbs 14:8
9. Proverbs 14:9

10. Proverbs 15:12
11. Proverbs 17:5
12. Proverbs 17:19
13. Proverbs 18:2, 13
14. Proverbs 18:19
15. Proverbs 20:6, 25
16. Proverbs 27:1
17. Proverbs 27:2
18. Proverbs 28:13

B. According to these “symptoms”, is it possible to have low self-esteem and still be prideful?

C. If I have any trace of pride, can I blame it on anything or anyone else? Mark 7:21-23

D. What kind of consequences will pride have in my life?

1. In my relationship with God – Isaiah 30:15-18, 1 Peter 5:5-7, Revelation 3:14-19
3. In my personal relationships – Philippians 2:3-4
4. In my role in the church – Matthew 23:5-12
5. In my values – 1 John 2:15-17
6. In my future—Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 29:23

E. Can I possible be an exception to the consequences of pride in any form? Proverbs 16:5

II. Suggested Scriptures to study: Read the book of Proverbs, marking every verse that refers to pride in any form.

III. Things to Pray About: Any symptoms of pride that you have identified in this study. Honestly talking with God about whether you are willing to make any sacrifice to rid yourself of the pride you have admitted (Matthew 5:30, Hebrews 4:12-13)

Praying about what it would take to humble yourself under God’s mighty hand (1 Peter 5:6).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIDEFUL ATTITUDE</th>
<th>HUMBLE ATTITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I know enough already” – satisfied</td>
<td>Has a desire to learn – wants wisdom (Proverbs 1:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I know what is best in this situation.”</td>
<td>Seeks counsel and guidance (Proverbs 1:3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must always be right and have the last word</td>
<td>Willing to back down when wrong (Proverbs 6:2-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holds grudges when corrected or rebuked</td>
<td>Responds positively to rebukes (Proverbs 1:23-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will not accept rebuke</td>
<td>Listens to wisdom and changes (Proverbs 1:25-33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“God’s my buddy. He won’t judge me.”</td>
<td>Realizes sin and fears God (Luke 18:10-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hears and agrees with mouth, but not with heart</td>
<td>Listens to instruction – changes life (Proverbs 1:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimizes sin and argues nit-picky points</td>
<td>Agreeable when shown a better way (Proverbs 1:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No respect for leaders</td>
<td>Willing to weigh out leader’s advice (Hebrews 13:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignores advice – is rebellious</td>
<td>Responds to advice, follows through (Matthew 21:28-31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejects people who want to help</td>
<td>Welcomes and appreciates the help (Proverbs 2:1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leans on own understanding</td>
<td>Leans on the word of God (Psalm 119:105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wise in own eyes – praises self</td>
<td>Knows God’s wisdom (Proverbs 3:5-7, 27:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry when God disciplines him/her</td>
<td>Welcomes God’s discipline (Proverbs 3:11-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to be served</td>
<td>Will serve others (Mark 9:35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mocks or insults the truth in heart</td>
<td>Treasures God’s word (Proverbs 3:34, 9:8, 30:5-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees no need to learn more about God</td>
<td>Hungers and thirsts for bible study (Proverbs 9:9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees no practical need for Jesus</td>
<td>Realizes total need for Jesus (John 15:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow to apologize and repent when wrong</td>
<td>Quick to apologize and to make things right (Luke 19:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scorns God’s commands</td>
<td>Respects God’s commands (Proverbs 5:7-14, 13:13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinks life is his/her own</td>
<td>Realizes life is God’s (Galatians 2:20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarrels in relationships</td>
<td>Peace in relationships (1Corintians 1:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loner – keeps to own activities</td>
<td>Wants fellowship with the body (Proverbs 24:5-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stubborn in “my way of doing things”</td>
<td>Yielding – waits for God’s way (Ecclesiastes 5:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puts others down in speech and actions</td>
<td>Builds others up in word and deed (Ephesians 4:29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rash – jumps into things</td>
<td>Thinks before acts (Proverbs 14:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults those who say what he/she wants to hear</td>
<td>Consults the wise (Proverbs 15:12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delights when others fail</td>
<td>Rejoices in victories of others (1Corintians 13:6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps record of wrongs</td>
<td>Forgiving heart and spirit (1Corintians 13:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking and talking about self</td>
<td>Thinking and talking about others (Philippians 2:4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to be loved</td>
<td>Loves from the heart – affectionate (1Thessalonians 2:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won’t do menial jobs – feels above them</td>
<td>Will gladly do lowly jobs (John 13:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is selfish and rebellious</td>
<td>Is sacrificial and submissive (Philippians 2:1-11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DECEIT STUDY

Goal of this study: To recognize our own deceit and how it affects our relationship with God.

Opening Question: What is your current understanding of deceit?

Definition: Leading others to believe something that is not entirely true by covering up, lying, pretending, exaggerating, etc.


Questions: (Acts 5:1-11)
*What did Ananias and Sapphira want the other disciples to think about them?*
-That they were giving, kind, generous, like everyone else.

*How did they try to deceive the other disciples?*
-They tried to make the disciples/apostles believe they were giving more than they actually were. They wanted people to think they gave all their money away when they kept some of it.

*Was God angry with them because they kept some of the money?*
-No, verse 4 says that God was angry because they lied about it.

*So their desire for people to think well of them won over their desire for God to be pleased. Have you ever deceived anyone so they would think differently about you? How?*

Possible personal examples: lying about grades or getting in trouble at school so parents wouldn't be angry, not telling the whole truth or leaving out parts of a story that would make you look bad, being different at school and at home/church so you fit in.

*Why does God hate deceit and lies? (John 8:44)*
-Because lies come from Satan and God loves the truth.

*Can we be with God if we continue to be deceitful? (Psalm 101:7)*
-No, no one who is deceitful can enter God's house.

*Does God feel the same way about lying as murder and these other sins? (Revelation 21:8)*
-Yes, they all deserve the same punishment.

(Revelation 22:14-15)
*What is the difference between those on the inside of the kingdom and those on the outside?*
-Those on the inside have washed their robes and have been cleansed of their sin.

Homework: Write down 5 ways you have been deceitful or lied, and then write down what you wanted people to think about you for each one and what the truth is instead. Then look up a scripture each day for a week about truth.
**PURITY STUDY**

**Intro to Study:** Struggles with purity will arise in many forms among teens. Teens are bombarded with peer pressure from friends at school, the influence of media, and access to inappropriate content online. Teens need to have a clear understanding that God sets the standard of purity and not the world. They should be aware of the consequences, as well as tools, to fight for God’s standard in this area.

**Opening Questions:**
1. If you brought a new white shirt or white tennis shoes, what are some things that you might do to prevent them from getting dirty?
   - Walk only on the side walk or clean places
   - Stay away from paints, mud, messy items
   - Keep them in the box
2. What makes water pure?
   - Free from dirt, dust
   - Unmixed with any other substances
3. How would you know the water was not pure (impure)?
   - Mixed with another substance
   - Has objects, particles, pieces in it
4. What are some ways that teenagers are impure in everyday life?
   - Lusting after the opposite sex (double-takes)
   - Watching and listening to sexually explicit content
   - Reading or watching pornographic websites/movies/magazines
   - Telling dirty or inappropriate jokes
   - Curse, swear, lie
   - Get drunk, do drugs

**Goal of this study:**
The goal of this study is to help you to see what God considers the standard of purity, to learn how to make every effort to make it your standard and useful tools to help you succeed.

**God’s standards:**
1 Thessalonians 4:7
God calls us to live a holy life
Describe holy. -worthy of devotion, righteous, set apart/opposite of the world

2 Timothy 2:22
Pursue righteousness (what’s right according to God)
What are some evil things that the youth desire? -sex, money, ungodly attention
What does it look like to pursue something? -actively going after it

Ephesians 5:3-5
God’s standard is No hint of sexual immorality, any kind of impurity, or greed. They are improper for God’s people and God takes this seriously.
What are things that are sexually immoral, impure, greed?
- Sexually immoral—sex before marriage, oral sex, inappropriate touching
- Impure—cursing, flirting
- Greed—desiring/acquiring anything in excess. Ex. Money, clothes, food

What is an idolater?—worships something other than God
What is the result of you having a hint of impurity in your life?—will not receive an inheritance

**How to purify yourself:**

2 Peter 3:14
-Make every effort

What is the difference between someone trying to do something valuable and making every effort to do something?
What will your life look like if you were making every effort to be spotless, blameless?
What can you start doing today to make this effort?
What can you stop doing today to make this effort?

1 Corinthians 6:18 (use discretion with maturity of teen)
-Flee from sexual immorality

Describe what it looks like to flee.
What are sexual immoral things that you need to flee from?
Why should you flee from sexual immorality?—protect your body, obey God
What are consequences of this that you've seen happen?—unwanted pregnancy, sexual diseases

Philippians 4:8
-Think of pure things

What should your thoughts be filled with?—true, right, noble, etc. things
Describe things that are true, right, pure, etc.—the Bible is true, loving your neighbor is right, encouraging one another toward good deeds

Psalm 119: 9
-Live according the Bible

How can a young man keep his ways pure?
What do you think it means by “his ways”?
Are you living by the Bible? Why? Why Not?

**Personal Heart Check:**

What has been your standard of purity?
What areas of purity do you need to make every effort to rid of?
What does your lifestyle, entertainment & music choices say about your purity?
What can you do to make yourself pure before God?

**Practical Applications:**

Make two columns on a page. In the first column, title it “Flee”, the second column “Pursue”. Under each column write down areas/things you need to flee from and then write down things/areas you want to pursue. Ask your teen leaders, parents, church leaders for ways that can help you. Remember to focus on God and His standards to help you to see and overcome areas of purity.

**Additional Scriptures:**

Galatians 5:19, 1 John 3:2-3, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, James 1:21, Colossians 3:5-6, Proverbs 1:32-33