

More Lessons From the Expert Teacher



SABBATH—OCTOBER 31

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 3:1–11; Genesis 28:10–17; John 1:1–14; Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 10:46–52.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Go,’ said Jesus. ‘Your faith has healed you.’ Right away he [the blind man] could see. And he followed Jesus along the road” (Mark 10:52, NlrV).



Jesus is our Expert Teacher. He is the only One who can solve our sin problem.

WAS THERE A TIME when you felt bad about yourself? We all have. We have all done things that cause us pain when we think about them. We have also done things we do not want anyone to know about. Everyone has had this experience, right?

Think about some of the bad experiences that happened to people in the Bible. Maybe you first thought of the time when Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the forbidden tree. Or what about Jacob when he tricked his father into showing him more favor than he showed to Esau? Then Jacob ran away in fear from his brother's anger. How did Jacob sleep at night? What about the woman who was “caught sleeping with a man who was not her husband” (John 8:4, NlrV)? David also had this experience. He slept with a woman who was someone else's wife. He wrote Psalm 32 after it happened. He also talks about how bad his sin made him feel. David also talks about how good it feels to turn back to God after we sin.

All these stories show us that we are all the same: we are all sinners. That is why the Good News about Jesus is for everyone. Jesus' death is for all humans too.

So, Christian education must show us the only way to solve our sin problem. This week, we will look to the only One who can solve this problem: Jesus, our Expert Teacher.

HIDING FROM GOD (Genesis 3:1–11)

Read Genesis 3:1–11. Why do you think God asks Adam, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9, ERV).

Many pictures about the Fall show the forbidden fruit as an apple. But that is not what the Bible says. The Bible only says it is the “‘fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden’ ” (Genesis 3:3, ERV). What the fruit was does not matter. What is important is that the fruit was forbidden. The forbidden fruit is a word picture. When Adam and Eve ate it, it showed that they had chosen to follow their own plan, not God’s. Their eating the fruit was the same as their saying, “I can be in charge of my own life. I can be god to myself. I have more say so than God.”

Sure enough, when the snake got Adam and Eve to eat the fruit, their lives went out of control. Then they heard God nearby. So, “they hid among the trees in the garden” (Genesis 3:8, ERV).

Do you think it is strange that God asks Adam where he is? God knows everything. Of course, He knows where Adam is. So, why does God ask what He already knows? Maybe the Lord asks the question to help Adam and Eve understand that they are hiding because of their sin. So, God is helping them see the bad things that have happened because of their actions.

Read Romans 5:11–19. In these verses Paul shows how Jesus’ death on the cross happens because of Adam’s sin in Eden. What should the connection between these two things tell us about how Jesus came to undo what Adam did?

God’s plan to save sinners is His answer to Adam and Eve’s sin. Adam and Eve hide from God in shame and guilt. God comes to save them from their sin. We, too, have done the same thing. Jesus comes to save us. So, the question, “Where are you?” is something that God asks each one of us too. That is, where is Jesus in your life? And what has Jesus done to save you from your sin and guilt?

Christian education includes many important things. Why must it help us understand that, as sinners, we want to hide from God? And then why must Christian education help us to look to Jesus as the only One who can save us?



“Where are you?”

RUNNING AWAY (Genesis 28:10–17)

Read Genesis 28:10–17. What experience does Jacob have before the story in these verses happens? What does this story teach us about God’s forgiveness and mercy for people who are “running away” from their sins?



“The ladder is a word picture for Jesus. Jesus connects earth with heaven, and humans with God.”

Jacob, with his mother’s help, tricks his father. Now Jacob is paying for his lies. His brother wants to kill him for his lies. So, Jacob runs away from home to escape the danger. Jacob heads to his uncle’s place in Haran. For sure, this is a scary experience for Jacob.

One night, Jacob falls asleep on the ground in the middle of nowhere. He uses a stone for a pillow. Soon he starts to dream. In the dream, Jacob sees a ladder or stairs. The bottom of the stairs rests on the ground. The top of the stairs stretches to heaven. Angels go up and down the stairs.

Then Jacob hears a voice say, “‘I am the Lord, the God of Abraham’ ” (Genesis 28:13, ESV). The voice says to Jacob the same promises that God gave to Abraham and Isaac. The voice tells Jacob that his future children will become a mighty people. They will be a blessing to every family on earth. “‘I am with you,’ ” the voice says, “‘and I will protect you everywhere you go. . . . I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised’ ” (Genesis 28:15, ERV).

Ellen G. White tells how Paul himself, many hundreds of years later, “saw the same ladder that Jacob saw in his dream. The ladder is a word picture for Jesus. Jesus connects earth with heaven, and humans with God. Paul’s faith grows strong as he remembers how the early fathers of his people and prophets, or God’s special messengers, trusted in Jesus. Jesus is Paul’s support and his hope. Paul lays down his life for this same Jesus.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 512, adapted.

Jacob awakes, and he says to himself: “‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it’ ” (Genesis 28:16, NKJV). What happens here fills Jacob with fear and wonder. He will never forget the place. He gives it a name. Then he swears an oath. He promises to be loyal to God for the rest of his life.

What can we learn from this story about how God, in Jesus, is always trying to reach sinners? Why must this Bible truth be an important part of Christian education?

JESUS THE TEACHER (John 1:1–14)

Which first verse in the New Testament is the most famous? Of course, it is John 1:1: “Before the world began, the Word [Jesus] was there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1, ERV). John 1:1 soon takes you to this powerful verse: “The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. . . . And the Word was full of grace [loving-favor] and truth” (John 1:14, Nlrv).

Read John 1:1–14. What do these verses tell us about who Jesus is and what He is doing here? What should this tell us about why Jesus is the best example of a teacher?

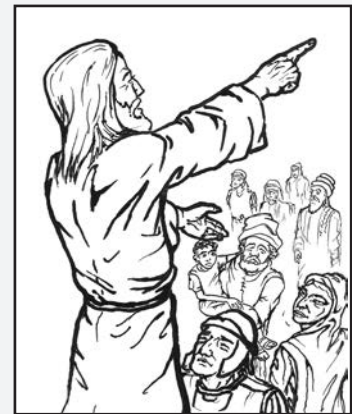
God talked to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God talked to Jacob in the middle of nowhere. This same God comes to live on this earth as a Man. The New Testament tells us that God was shown in Jesus. From Jesus, we can learn about God’s plan for us and His holy way. Why? Because Jesus is God.

John 1 also tells us how John the Baptist is a very powerful teacher. Even religious leaders from Jerusalem think that John may be someone special. But John is preparing the way for Someone more wonderful than himself. Someone very special is about to come. When He does, John the Baptist will not be good enough to “be the slave who unties the strings on his sandals” (John 1:27, ERV).

Then John sees Jesus. Then John announces that Jesus is the Son of God. That day, and the next day, John says Jesus is the Lamb of God. Two of John the Baptist’s followers decide to follow Jesus. When Jesus asks them what they want, they say, “ ‘Rabbi, where are you staying?’ (‘Rabbi’ means ‘Teacher.’)” (John 1:38, ERV).

Jesus, then, is a Rabbi, a Teacher. But Jesus is not the same as any other teacher. Again, He is God. So, God came down to humans as a human. In a human body, Jesus worked as a Rabbi, or a Teacher. No wonder Ellen G. White named Jesus “the best Teacher who ever lived on this earth.”—*Signs of the Times*, June 10, 1886. Of course, He was. This Teacher is God Himself.

Jesus is God. So, we can learn from Him the best ways of teaching Bible truth. Why are the things we say and do as teachers important? What can we learn from Jesus?



Jesus is “the best Teacher who ever lived on this earth.”

THE WOMAN WHO WILL NOT GIVE UP (Matthew 15:21–28)

One story in Jesus' life shows us a woman who will not give up. Jesus does not answer her right away. But she does not stop asking Jesus for help.

Read the story about the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30). Do you see that Jesus' followers are not patient with her? It looks as if Jesus Himself pays no attention to her. What do you think about the woman's bold spirit? What does this story teach us about the way that Jesus teaches people?

Jesus is near Tyre and Sidon. He goes into a land filled with strangers who hate each other. The Greek-speaking people who live in cities look down on the Jewish farmers in the country. The Jewish farmers look down on the Greek-speaking people who live in the cities. The two groups don't like each other. Shortly before this time, Herod is the governor of Galilee. Galilee is Jesus' homeland. Herod is the same as a puppet. Rome controls what Herod does. Jesus and John share the ideas about God's kingdom. So, John's death shows Jesus the real danger He is in if He keeps preaching. Jesus goes inside a house, hoping no one will know He is there (Mark 7:24). But the Canaanite woman finds Him.

In that day, a woman was not allowed to talk for herself or ask for what she wanted. What is more, this woman belongs to a race group that the Jews do not like. So, this does not help the woman's chances for success at all. But the woman's daughter is sick. The woman wants help. So, she keeps asking for help.

At first, Jesus behaves as if He does not want to help her. "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs," Jesus says (Matthew 15:26, NRSV).

But something wonderful happens. The woman knows all about dogs. The Jews do not. They do not even keep dogs as pets. The woman says, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the pieces of food that fall from their master's table" (Matthew 15:27, ERV). Her answer changes everything. Her faith touches Jesus' heart. He heals her child.

"You will get what you asked for" (Matthew 15:28, ERV). What do these words mean? What should we do when things don't go the way we want?



“Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the pieces of food that fall from their master's table.”

A STUDENT WHO UNDERSTANDS (Mark 10:46–52)

Jesus and His followers turn to Jerusalem. At this time, Herod and the Jewish religious leaders are worried about Jesus. They fear that Jesus may be a danger to them the same as John the Baptist was. Jesus' followers include the poor and other people who deeply want to see things change for the better.

Jesus wants more than anything to bring hope to the people living on earth. But He knows that the people with the most power will do everything possible to stop His work. These leaders do not want Jesus to succeed.

Some people are on Jesus' side. This group of people includes Jesus' 12 followers. They are Jesus' special students. The Twelve really want Jesus to succeed. At the same time, they are confused, or "blind." Mark 8:31–33 shows us why. The Master Teacher gives His students a test. He wants them to "see," or understand, things that are hard for them to see. In many spiritual ways, Jesus' followers are blind to what is most important (read Mark 8:37).

This is what happens right before Jesus meets a blind man who **can** "see"!

Read the story in Mark 10:46–52 about Jesus healing Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus is a blind beggar. Do you see how much mercy that Jesus shows Bartimaeus? How does the blind man's wish to "see" lead to his decision to "follow" Jesus on the road to Jerusalem? Do you think that Mark is trying to show us how Bartimaeus and Jesus' other followers are different? How does this story help you to understand why you should open your heart to Jesus?

Bartimaeus wants to see. He wants to see the curl in a baby's hair and the color of ripe wheat in the field. But seeing is more than just what we can look at with our eyes. Seeing also is about understanding spiritual truth. It is about understanding what Jesus, the Expert Teacher, says. Seeing with your eyes is important. Jesus knows this. He also knows that every person's deepest wish is for a new and better life.

Read Hebrews 5:12–14. What are these verses teaching us about the best education we can have?



Seeing also is about understanding spiritual truth. It is about understanding what Jesus, the Expert Teacher, says.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Test of Discipleship,” pages 57–65, in *Steps to Christ*.

Ellen G. White tells us what happens when we fully accept Jesus: “We want to be the same as He is in our hearts. We want His Spirit to live in us. We want to follow His plan for our lives. We want to please Jesus in everything we do.”—*Steps to Christ*, page 58, adapted. With Jesus in our hearts, we will “enjoy our work.”—*Steps to Christ*, page 59, adapted. Now, read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7. This sermon shows us Jesus’ most important teachings for His students. His kingdom is built on these important rules.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① God talked with Adam and Eve. He talked with Jacob. God talks with us too. God knows our deepest wishes, just as He knew what was in Bartimaeus’s heart. God wants us to think about who we are and where we are going. Knowing all this, think about the ways we teach the Bible to our kids and to each other. What makes Bible teaching exciting and not boring? How can we teach the Bible so that it makes people want to give their lives to God?
- ② “Where are you in your life’s journey?” Is this question too personal? Or do you think it can help to talk about the answer with people you trust? How does the idea about the church as the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27, KJV) help us answer this question? Why can our conversations with each other help us learn more about what Jesus wants us to know?
- ③ As soon as Bartimaeus can see, he “follows” Jesus on the road to Jerusalem. On this road, Bartimaeus heard Jesus’ wisdom every day. For sure, Bartimaeus wanted people to see Jesus living in his heart. We can believe that following Jesus filled Bartimaeus with joy, as *Steps to Christ* put it. Why do you think that following the important rules in the Sermon on the Mount will fill someone with joy?
- ④ How can you tell what is good and what is evil? What helps us to tell how they are different? Why is what we do with this knowledge more important than having this knowledge itself?



**With Jesus in our hearts,
we will enjoy all the work
that we must do.**