

Youth Teaching Resources

October 14, 2018



Doing, and Being (September 2-November 25)

Genesis 2:18-24 – “Being Equal”

Psalm 90 (RCL 90:12-17) – “Gaining Perspective”

Isaiah 53:4-12 – “Redeeming Love”

Jeremiah 31:7-9 – “Saving Grace”

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Find links and videos related to this lesson.

Gaining Perspective

Psalm 90 (RCL 90:12-17)

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

Our students have a lot of hopes. Some want to play sports professionally. Some want to be first chair for a symphony. Some want to develop groundbreaking medicines. Their hopes seem unbelievable to us. Maybe it is the weight of “life” that has hampered our spirits and dreams. Maybe it is that we know the effort it takes to fulfill these dreams. Maybe it is having those same dreams and not seeing them fulfilled. Whatever the reason, don’t stop your students from having hopes and dreams. Provide opportunities for your students to succeed but don’t push them beyond what they desire. Be supportive. Be hopeful. Cheer on their dreams.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip “You’re My Only Hope” from *Star Wars: A New Hope*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a conversation with questions like the following:

- 1) What is Obi Wan’s reaction as he hears the message?
- 2) How can he be their only hope?
- 3) Who does Leia put her hope in?
- 4) Where does our faith call us to put our hope?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Psalm 90. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) As the psalm begins, what type of psalm do you think this will be? How does the psalm end and how does this change how you read the psalm?
- 2) How does this psalm echo the stories of creation?
- 3) Why does the psalmist attribute human morality to God's anger?
- 4) Where does this idea of life being 70 to 80 years come from? Do the biblical accounts match this?
- 5) How can the wrath of God lead to wisdom?
- 6) Where does our hope for joy come from?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) Who wrote this psalm if not Moses?
- 2) How long were the lifespans of people in the Bible?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": Does God repent?

Transformation

Conclude your time together by distributing Post-it notes and writing utensils to the gathered students. As you distribute the items, challenge your students to write down all their hopes, with one hope on each Post-it. When they have finished writing down their hopes, instruct the students to come post their hopes at the front of the room and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What is your biggest hope?
- 2) Have you ever believed your hopes to be too big?
- 3) How do you plan to accomplish your hope?
- 4) What can get in the way of your hopes?
- 5) Does your faith influence what you hope for? How?

Close with a prayer thanking God for hope; especially when there seems to be no hope.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

The text—The Revised Common Lectionary text for the day is Psalm 90:12-17, which is an odd choice, given that the psalm’s primary divisions are vv. 1-12 and 13-17. Verse 12 relates to the verses that come before, so we are much better served by studying the entire chapter.

Books of psalms—The psalms are traditionally divided into five unequal “books,” as follows: 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, and 107-150. This was apparently done for liturgical reasons, probably to coincide with readings from the five books of the Torah.

Note that today’s text begins the fourth book.

Not Moses?—Despite traditions associating Genesis-Deuteronomy with Moses, overwhelming evidence points to a multiplicity of authors. Genesis 3 comes from a source typically known as J, or the “Yahwist.” Writings by this author use the name “Yahweh,” and portray God as sometimes appearing in human form, interacting personally with humans.

Really long lives—If you think the lifespans accorded to the descendants of Adam in Genesis 5 are long, consider a tradition among the Sumerians, who also held to a tradition about a flood. A famous Sumerian king list, which appears to include both actual and mythological rulers, names eight kings who ruled prior to the flood, with their reigns ranging from 18,600 to 43,200 years each: a total of 241,200 years! After the flood, the lifespans of succeeding kings were much shorter. (A translation of *The Sumerian King List*, by Thorkild Jacobsen, can be found here: <https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/as11.pdf>).

The Sumerian king list has long been of interest to biblical scholars, for Genesis also portrays eight generations from Adam to Noah, and much longer lifespans before the flood than afterward

I’ll Fly Away—Lyrics to “I’ll Fly Away” can be found here: http://www.popularhymns.com/ill_fly_away.php. A number of video versions, including this one by Alison Kraus, can be found on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BPoMIQHwpo>).

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Does God repent?

Verse 13 of Psalm 90 calls on God to *repent*, using the same word (*shub*) used for human repentance. The word literally means “to turn around.” It does not suggest that God has been doing evil and needs to repent of it, but that the psalmist hopes God will change directions, turning from wrath and showing compassion instead.

The Old Testament contains several examples in which God is said to have repented, in the sense of regretting a past decision. Genesis 6:6-7 says that God regretted having created humankind, and 1 Samuel 15:11 portrays God’s frustration and sorrow over having chosen Saul to be king.

In Exodus 32, God threatened to consume the wanton Israelites and start over with Moses, but Moses prayed for God to turn from anger and remember God’s promises to the patriarchs, “And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people” (Exod. 32:14). Here a verbal form of *nacham* is used, a word that often means “comfort” but can also mean “relent.”

Both 2 Samuel 24:16 and 1 Chronicles 21:15 describe a plague God had brought in response to David taking a census. After David offered a sacrifice and prayed, Yahweh “relented from the calamity” and stopped the destroying angel.

Several other verses speak of God relenting from harm planned against someone (Psalm 106:45; Jer. 18:8, 26:3, 13, 19, 42:10; Joel 2:13-14; Amos 7:3, 6; Jonah 3:9-10, 4:2). A common thread runs through these: they portray an instance in which God had threatened to destroy, but relented when the people sought God and changed their ways. In other words, when the people turned away from their evil, God turned away from punishments previously announced: it’s not so much a change of mind, but that God proves true to God’s nature, forgiving those who repent.

Even so, both Jeremiah and Ezekiel spoke of times when things have gone too far and there would be no change of mind, that judgment would come (Jer. 4:27-28, Ezek. 24:14). While both speak of judgment, they do not imply total destruction: there is always a remnant.

God always acts in divine freedom—which thankfully includes the freedom to forgive.