



## THE SINNER'S NEED

### Rock Bottom

January 25, 2020

#### 1 PREPARING

##### A. THE SOURCE

**Jeremiah 13:23 (NIV)** • “Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.”

**John 6:29, 30 (NIV)** • “Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’ So they asked him, ‘What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?’ ”

**Romans 3:23 (NIV)** • “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

**Acts 2:37, 38 (NIV)** • “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ ”

**Acts 8:34-39 (NIV)** • “The eunuch asked Philip, ‘Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?’ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?’ And he gave orders to stop the chariot.

Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.”

**Acts 16:30, 31 (NIV)** • “He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’ ”

(See additional passages in student material.)

##### B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “THE SINNER'S NEED”

It's the most basic and important message in the whole Bible—salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Easy words to say, especially for lifelong Christians—but for someone in your e-Teen class, it might be a revolutionary new concept that hits them for the very first time.

As you teach this lesson, keep the students' focus—and your own—clearly on the fact that we need God. We can't earn salvation alone. Some people have to “hit rock bottom” before they can admit their need of God.

As Christian teachers and youth leaders our goal is to encourage young people to accept Jesus into their lives *before* they reach the point of failure and despair. Young people need to have a sense of their need for God, but also of the potential they can reach with His power.

Keep the focus clearly on grace in this lesson. We rightly spend much time with young people at this age talking about rules and behavior—at home, at school, even in church. But the message that grace is God’s free gift of love can’t be overemphasized. Hammer it home.

### C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “THE SINNER’S NEED”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Understand that salvation is a totally free gift from God.
2. Know that they have a need for God, no matter how good or bad they may be.
3. Respond to a call to give their heart to Jesus.

### D. MATERIALS NEEDED

**Beginning** • (Activity A) inexpensive gifts in gift-wrapped boxes, one better gift-wrapped treat; copies of your own puzzle, or the word search on p. 46; pens or pencils; (Activity B) sets of opposite words on slips of paper, cellophane tape or pins.

**Connecting** • Bibles; chalkboard or flipchart; student lessons.

## 2 BRIDGING

### A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

**Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:**

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

### B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at [www.realtimefaith.net](http://www.realtimefaith.net))
- >> Service project reports

## 3 BEGINNING

**NOTE TO TEACHER:** Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

### A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

**Get ready** • Bring a number of small gift-wrapped boxes to class—as many as you have students. In all but one of the boxes place very small, inexpensive gifts such as bookmarks, pencils, erasers. Have one more valuable gift you know most of your class members would like, such as a CD, a gift certificate, something they’ll value.

**Get set** • As students come in to class, hand out the word search activity (see p. 46) or a copy of your own Bible quiz or puzzle. The activity is designed to be fairly easy; you can allow or even encourage students to work together so that everyone will complete it.

**Go** • The person who finishes first will probably announce that they have done so, but simply ask them to wait till everyone else has finished. After allowing enough time, announce that since everyone has completed the word search puzzle, everyone will get a prize. Hand out the prize boxes randomly, but make sure the most valuable prize does *not* go to the person who completed the puzzle first.

**Debriefing • Ask:** How did you feel about the gifts you got? (They were OK; nothing special.) How did you feel about the gift (name of person who got the valuable gift) got? (That was better.) Did they do anything to deserve that? (No) Ask the person who finished first if they felt cheated by not getting the better gift. How do we usually feel when we get good things we don't deserve? (Pretty happy and lucky) Is God fair? (We expect Him to be. Not if it means He gives everybody exactly what they deserve.) Does God give us what we deserve, or does He give us less or more than we deserve? There may be a variety of answers here if the students are being honest, because many of them are dealing with circumstances in their lives that do not seem fair, or that they don't deserve. Point out that you will be continuing to explore the answer to this question throughout the lesson.

## B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

**Get ready •** Make up lists of words that belong in pairs (for example: "bread-butter," "Adam-Eve" or "David-Goliath" or "Daniel-lions' den," "knife-fork," "sun-moon," etc.). When you have enough to be able to assign one word to each class member, write the individual words on small slips of paper.

**Get set •** Bring the slips of paper and some cellophane tape or pins to class. As students arrive, tape a word on their backs.

**Go •** They will have to guess what or who they are by asking only yes or no questions of other people, and then each person needs to find their partner. When all the pairs have found each other, sit back down and debrief.

**Debriefing • Ask:** How frustrating was it not knowing what word was on your back? Was it fun or annoying trying to find out? (Somewhat annoying because everyone was focused on their own need to find out what their word was.) Once you knew who you were, how difficult was it to find your partner? (Pretty easy then) How

did it feel knowing you were supposed to "belong" with someone else in the group but not knowing whom? (Just wanted to find them.) Have you ever felt as if you were incomplete or something was missing from your life?

**Ask:** Some people believe we all have this feeling at times, and that it shows we have a need for God. What do you think about this idea?

## C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

**In your own words, tell the following story:**

Jeff and Sara are both attending a Christian school. Jeff is in school only because his dad pulled some strings with the principal. He got kicked out of his last school for cheating; over the summer he was arrested for starting a fight, and now he is on probation; and he is just back at school after a week's suspension for cutting class.

Sara is student council president, captain of the girls' volleyball team, and the top student in her class. She's active in her church's teen group, sings in the youth choir, and goes to church each week. She loves to be involved in school and church activities, although she doesn't consider herself "super-religious" or anything.

**Ask:** Who needs God more, Jeff or Sara? Whom does God care more about? Who would have a more difficult time giving his or her heart to Jesus?

Through discussion, lead students toward the idea that everyone has a need for God. No one is too "good" or too "bad" to be saved. Everyone needs Jesus in their lives—all they need to do is realize and admit they have a need.

## 4 CONNECTING

### A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

If you did Activity A for Beginning, start with the idea that today's lesson is about getting something you don't deserve—something that's not available to just one person, but to everyone.

If you started with Activity B for Beginning, link with the idea that every person has a need for God whether they know it or not—this lesson is about how we fill that need.

**Ask: Do you agree that everyone needs God?** (Some people seem to more than others.)

**What about people who say they don't?** (That doesn't seem right, but some people are pretty good.) **Are they just kidding themselves, or have they not realized it yet, or are there genuinely some people who can get by without God?** After students have discussed this for a while, read together **Romans 3:23**.

**Say:** The Bible tells us that everyone has sinned, and that even people who act nice and are happy and well adjusted still fall way short of God's glory. Yet God wants everyone in His kingdom. He looks at each person, messed-up as they may be, and sees a potential agent for His kingdom.

**Ask:** How is God going to bridge the gap between what we are (sinful human beings), and what He wants us to be—citizens of His eternal kingdom? (Even if we are not sure how He does it, it is obvious that we can't do it ourselves.) Find and read **Jeremiah 13:23** aloud together.

## B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

**Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.**

**Ask:** Do you think most people need to hit "rock bottom" before they can make a change in their lives? Why or why not? **Does God wait for us to hit rock bottom?** (He is always calling us to let Him make a change in us.) **Can God save someone who's living a pretty good life and hasn't sinned all that badly yet?** (He can save them, but first they must realize that it isn't their "good life" that is able to save them.) **Can He save someone who has made a total mess of their lives?**

(Yes, but they still may bear some of the scars that result from their choices.) **Can God save someone who says, "I'm fine the way I am. I don't need God?"** (He will never save someone against their will.)

Through discussion, bring out the idea that God can save *anyone*. We don't have to be at "rock bottom"—in fact, God would rather we come to Him when we're young and haven't made a mess of our lives—but sometimes people who have messed up badly are more likely to recognize their need of Him.

**Say:** The person most difficult for God to save is the person who doesn't recognize they have a need.

## C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

**Pose the following scenario:**

A friend who attends another Christian church asks you, "Are you saved?" or "Are you born again?" What would you say?

Help the students formulate responses by posing the following questions: **Does your answer relate to whether or not you were born in a Christian family? whether you've been baptized or not? whether you've ever gone up front during an altar call at church, week of prayer, or youth rally?** (Point out that any or all of these may be an opportunity for you to give your heart to Jesus, but giving your heart to Him can also be a private experience between you and God, completely outside any church or religious setting.) **Is being "saved" always a one-time thing, or can it happen over a period of time?** (The experience of giving your life to Jesus is different for everybody. Just because we hear dramatic stories of people who were converted in a single moment doesn't mean it's that way for everyone.) **How can you be sure you've given your heart to God? Is there something inside—or outside—that can tell you for sure?** (Lead students toward the idea of having an assurance of salvation—if we've asked God to forgive us and accepted Jesus, we can know in our hearts we're saved

right now because that is what He has told us in the Bible.) It is a good idea to begin each day in prayer, surrendering your heart and life to God.

Have volunteers find and read the following texts: **Acts 16:30, 31; Acts 8:34-39; John 6:29, 30; Acts 2:37, 38.**

**Ask:** What do these texts tell us about coming to Jesus? What do we need to do? Make a list of key points where all can see.

## 5 APPLYING

### A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Divide the class into pairs. In each pair, one person is to role-play the part of someone who doesn't know anything about Christianity or how to become a Christian. Their partner should try to explain to them what it means to accept Jesus and how to do it, using Bible verses and whatever other examples or illustrations they find helpful. Direct the "non-Christian" partner to ask questions and make the exercise challenging for the "Christian" partner. When all pairs have had a few minutes to work through this exercise, invite a couple of pairs (how many will depend on time) who you know will be comfortable doing this to act out their role play for the whole class.

### B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. If becoming a Christian is so easy, why do some people seem to find it so hard?

2. What would you say to someone who said they just couldn't believe in Jesus?
3. Could God forgive a serial killer? Why or why not?
4. If a person is basically living a good life, why do they need God?
5. What would you say to someone who says, "I gave my heart to Jesus, but I really don't feel any different"?

## 6 CLOSING

### SUMMARY

**In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:**

God is recruiting agents for His kingdom. He knows our potential. He can see us as we could be, as He wants to make us. He wants everyone, no matter who they are, what they've done, or where they come from. That means you. The only entrance requirement is that you let the Spirit convince you that you need God in your life. That means recognizing that you can't make it into heaven on your own—and also that you can't live your best possible life here on this earth without God's power. If you've never made that total commitment of giving your heart to Jesus, maybe today's the day to do it. And if you have made it before, remember that, like any relationship, your friendship with Jesus needs to be kept alive by talking to each other and doing stuff together regularly. Maybe it's time to renew that friendship and renew that commitment again today.

# WORD SEARCH

**FOR LESSON FOUR:** This puzzle may be used for Beginning Activity 1.

Find words from this week's Bible verses in the word search below. Words can be backward, forward, up, down, or diagonal.

FAITH

NEW PERSON

SINNERS

SAVED

DEMONSTRATES

LOVED

BELONGS

ETERNAL

DEATH

SIN

Q	F	A	I	T	H	W	E	R	N	T	Y	U	I	O	S
C	Z	A	S	S	D	F	G	H	E	H	J	K	L	P	R
X	C	V	B	N	M	E	Q	E	W	L	R	T	Y	U	E
M	N	B	V	X	Z	T	A	S	P	C	O	V	B	P	N
B	M	J	H	G	F	E	D	S	E	V	C	V	B	O	N
E	U	Y	T	R	E	R	W	Q	R	S	D	V	E	I	I
L	I	O	I	U	Y	N	R	E	S	E	D	W	N	D	S
O	O	P	D	E	V	A	S	D	O	S	C	E	M	U	Z
N	F	G	E	F	G	L	R	T	N	R	Q	A	K	Y	X
G	D	H	A	F	H	L	T	G	G	T	W	S	J	T	C
S	S	J	T	D	J	I	G	B	H	Y	E	D	H	R	V
U	A	K	H	S	K	F	F	D	J	U	T	F	G	E	B
Y	Q	O	Y	A	L	E	Y	Q	U	I	F	G	F	W	N
T	W	N	T	Q	P	U	T	W	I	O	I	H	D	Q	M
R	I	I	R	W	O	I	R	E	O	P	G	J	S	A	K
S	E	U	E	S	E	T	A	R	T	S	N	O	M	E	D

*Answers at end of Student Lesson*



## STUDENT LESSON

### THE SINNER'S NEED Rock Bottom

January 25, 2020

#### Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 10, The Experience of Salvation:** "Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. . . . Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 103-106

#### ROCK BOTTOM

Bill was a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army when he had his first drink. At 22 years of age he had a good career ahead of him. He was well on his way to making a success from a life that had gotten off to a rough start. His father's alcoholism had broken up Bill's parents' marriage when he was just a kid, and he'd been raised by his grandparents. But it looked as if Bill would overcome that rough start until he found out that, just like his dad, he loved to drink.

By the time he was in his 30s Bill was a

wreck. Whereas once he used to drink to celebrate a successful business deal, now he couldn't hold down a job. He and his wife were living in her parents' house because they couldn't afford a home of their own. Bill was so down and out that he sometimes begged for cash on the street. He was hospitalized four times to try to quit drinking.

One day in 1934 Bill gave up. He admitted that he couldn't do anything to break the power of alcoholism in his life. It was up to God to help him out.

Seventy years later the organization Bill W. founded, Alcoholics Anonymous, has more than 2 million members in 150 countries, as well as dozens of spin-off groups including Alateen. The very first steps of the program are to admit that you are powerless over your problem and to ask a higher power for help.

As Christians, citizens of God's kingdom, we know God is our higher power. Alcoholics talk about having to hit rock bottom, even if that means begging for money on the street, before they realize how much they need help. But we're not all homeless or down-and-out. Many of us are pretty well-off, popular, clean-living people, aren't we? Do we all need to hit rock bottom before we can accept God's offer to help us?

#### Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read John 3:16.
- » It's the last evening of your church's Week of

Prayer meeting, and the pastor's making an appeal for people to give their hearts to God. The lights are low, the music is playing, the Holy Spirit is working.

- » But from your place in the back row you feel confused. Lately nothing seems to be going right at school, at home, even with your friends. You wonder if "giving your heart to Jesus," like the preacher says, would make a big difference. What would it even mean? What would your friends think if you stood up and walked to the front? How will your life change if you take this step?

### Monday

## BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

- » Read John 3:3-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Titus 3:3-7.
- » God loves you. He sent His Son to die in your place so you might live forever with Him. He has also sent the Holy Spirit to help you resist the devil and live a life filled with His goodness and love.
- » What in your life is holding you back from making the life-changing decision to live a life for Him instead of yourself?

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- » Unscramble the words below and write out the verse on the lines below.

power forgiveness us have 13, 14 the conveyed whom blood His delivered NKJV we kingdom He through of 1: has of us of and love His of darkness Colossians from in sins the redemption the Son into the

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### Tuesday

## REFLECTING

- » Read Ephesians 2:8, 9.
- » What does it mean to "accept Jesus" or "give your heart to God"? Do you have to "hit rock bottom" first?
- » If you grew up in church, you've probably heard about "salvation" for as long as you can remember. Now it's time to find out what it means for you, personally.
- » It isn't just about getting baptized because you're "old enough" and all your friends are doing it. It isn't even about going up to the front after a special meeting when the preacher has everyone feeling kind of guilty.
- » It's about knowing in your own heart that *you need God*. That doesn't mean you have to "hit rock bottom." It just means knowing you can't live a perfect, holy, happy life all on your own strength. You need God to make you complete. You need God's power to become the person you were created to be. Most of all, you need Jesus' death on the cross for your sins as your only ticket to heaven.
- » See, eternal life isn't something we can earn or deserve, no matter how good we are. We're human, sinful, born to die. Imperfect beings can't live forever in a perfect world unless we accept the prepaid ticket Jesus bought for us at Calvary.
- » "Accepting Jesus" means you get His power in your life today and the promise of eternal life in the future. All you have to do is admit you can't do it alone.
- » "But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government

in heaven and on earth" (Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 24).

## Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

» Look up the Bible verses in the New King James Version and fill in the blanks.

1. John 3:16. "For God so \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ that He \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_ begotten \_\_\_\_\_, that \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ should not perish but have \_\_\_\_\_ life."

2. Ephesians 2:8, 9. "For by \_\_\_\_\_ you have been \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, and that not of \_\_\_\_\_; it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, not of \_\_\_\_\_, lest anyone should boast."

3. 2 Corinthians 5:17. "Therefore, if \_\_\_\_\_ is in \_\_\_\_\_, he is a \_\_\_\_\_; old things have \_\_\_\_\_; behold, \_\_\_\_\_ things \_\_\_\_\_."

4. Romans 5:8. "But \_\_\_\_\_ demonstrates \_\_\_\_\_ own \_\_\_\_\_ toward \_\_\_\_\_, in that while we were still \_\_\_\_\_, Christ \_\_\_\_\_ for us."

5. Romans 6:23. "For the \_\_\_\_\_

of \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_, but the \_\_\_\_\_ of God is \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ our Lord."

6. Romans 3:23. "For \_\_\_\_\_ have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_."

## Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read Revelation 3:20.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Sometimes we hear about someone's "search for God." Really, it should be the other way around. God is searching for *you*. He'll do anything to get your attention; He'll stop at nothing to make sure you notice Him.
- » Why does He love you so much? He made you. Only He knows you inside out. He knows the worst about you and loves you anyway. And only He knows the person you're capable of becoming, with His help.
- » What is He waiting for? Well, He won't force His way into your life. He's waiting for one simple thing: for you to respond to His Spirit and admit that you need Him, that you want Him in your life.

## Friday APPLYING

- » Read Psalm 51:10.
- » Sit down and take a few minutes to write a letter to God. Write it out by hand in the space below, or type it on your computer as if you were sending God an email. Tell Him

