

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Church

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SUMMER



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THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

AME Discipline

OVERVIEW

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LESSON 1

JUNE 7, 2026

DEBORAH, A LEADER IN A NATIONAL EMERGENCY

LESSON SCRIPTURE: *Judges 4:1-24*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: *Judges 4:4-10, 14, 21-22*

Key Verses: At that time Deborah, a prophet, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. *Judges 4:4-5*

Vocabulary

Prophet: God's spokesperson, who announced the will of God to his people

Judging: forming an opinion, making a decision, or rendering a verdict about someone or something

Glory: praise, honor

Lappidoth:
pronounced: LAP-ih-doth

Barak: pronounced: bah-RAHK

Naphtali:
pronounced: NAF-tuh-lie

Zebulun: pronounced:
ZEH-byoo-lun

Jael: pronounced: JAY-el

SAMPLE

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Focus Scripture: JUDGES 4:4-10, 14, 21-22

JUDGES 4:4-10

- ⁴ At that time Deborah, a prophet, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel.
- ⁵ She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment.
- ⁶ She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Position yourself at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun.'
- ⁷ I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand.' "
- ⁸ Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go."
- ⁹ And she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.
- ¹⁰ Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and ten thousand warriors

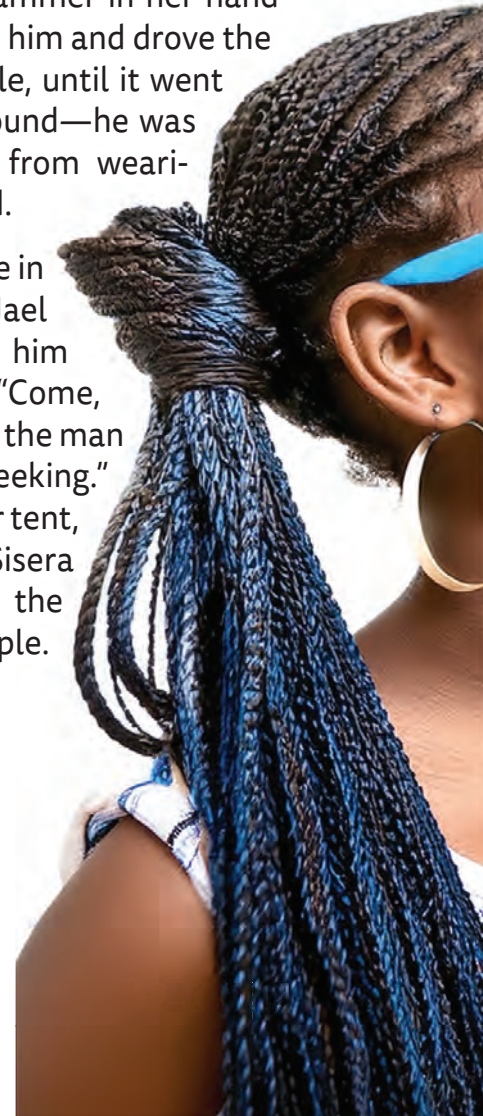
went up behind him, and Deborah went up with him.

JUDGES 4:14

¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day on which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand warriors following him.

JUDGES 4:21-22

- ²¹ But Jael wife of Heber took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, until it went down into the ground—he was lying fast asleep from weariness—and he died.
- ²² Then, as Barak came in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." So he went into her tent, and there was Sisera lying dead, with the tent peg in his temple.



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INTRODUCTION

The summer quarter offers us a selection of faithful witnesses called to defend God in the courts of public opinion and the seats of world power. From beginning to end, the Bible highlights the significant role witnesses play in advancing God's plans and purposes. Unlike the nations surrounding her, Israel had no king. Their king was YHWH, who appointed judges to carry out judicial and administrative duties and fend off Israel's enemies. The judges became important when God was moved by Israel's mournful cry. In Unit One, we examine the faithful leadership of Deborah, Hannah, the bond between Jonathan and David, and the ministry of Amos.

Today, we delve into the life of Deborah. Deborah, the judge and prophet, faithfully served God and others. *What are the characteristics of a godly leader? How can we demonstrate our faith while serving others?*

BIBLE STORY

(View video at Bible Project)



The book of Judges begins with the death of Joshua. Before the tribes of Israel had kings, they had judges who ruled. God put them in place to help the Israelites remain faithful to God's laws in the promised land. The people seemed to reject all God's laws. The Israelites became corrupt and exhibited godless behavior like their enemies. They were also oppressed by the nations surrounding them.

In their distress, they would cry out to God, and God would raise up a judge to deliver his people. After the judge died, the Israelites would revert to their wickedness, and the cycle would begin again (2:16 - 19). These judges produced justice in the land not only through warfare but also by enacting the laws of the Lord.

The only woman judge was Deborah, whose story is told in Judges 4 and 5. After Judge Ehud led the people to victory in battle and 80 years of peace in the land, he died (Judges 3). The Israelites started following false gods, so God punished them. The king of Canaan, Jabin, was permitted to oppress them for 20 years. God's people cried out for help in fear of Sisera, the head of Jabin's army, who had 900 iron chariots. As always, God heard their cries and responded.

One day, Deborah, the prophet and judge, spoke to Barak on God's behalf. Barak was to take ten thousand men into battle against Sisera.



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God ensured victory over the army (4:7). Barak agreed to go into battle only if Deborah accompanied him. His faith was not strong. But Deborah warned him that if she went with him, a woman would get credit for the victory (4:9). Barak did not care. He needed Deborah's presence to reassure him during battle. She did not fight with the men against Sisera's army. But as she predicted, a woman named Jael killed Sisera and was honored for her courage. This brought temporary peace to the land. But once again, the cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, deliverance, and peace repeated itself. Despite this, the book of Judges demonstrates God's love, grace, and hope for the future.

How did Deborah exhibit faith and courage? Barak had faith but also feared defeat. Is it possible to please God when we doubt his Word? How was the task of defeating Sisera and his army delegated?

LIFE APPLICATION

Deborah was a good judge. After reviewing the scripture, list Deborah's personal and spiritual qualities. When you finish, take a sticky note, write one quality, and post it on the board in front of the class.

DEBORAH'S PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL QUALITIES:

How do your personal qualities compare and/or contrast with Deborah's? Given the qualities identified, do you know any female leaders with similar qualities? What about the examples of Bishop Vashti McKenzie, Harriet Tubman, or Rosa Parks? What qualities do they embody that are examples for others to follow?

God has given each of us different gifts, talents, and qualities. God desires us to listen for him to speak to us about how to use our gifts and talents for his glory. *How can we hear from God? What tools do we have that can help us? How can the body of Christ work together to build God's kingdom?*

SUMMARY

Deborah was chosen by God to be a judge of his people. Deborah had to rely on God's wisdom to guide her. On a regular basis, she had to make decisions that affected people's lives. We can assume that, as a woman, Deborah faced significant opposition in a male-dominated society. Her authority was probably challenged, and decisions disregarded by some. Regardless, Deborah will always be known as a godly leader who listened to God and followed his commands, especially during the national emergency.



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When we confess to be a Christian, do we naturally obey all of God's commands? Why? Why not? Who can guide us in holy living? How can our gifts be used in God's kingdom? Do we know what to do in a national emergency? What gives us hope for the future?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

PRAYER: God, make me a strong, faithful leader who can be trusted to obey your will. Amen.

Song: "MY HOPE IS BUILT"
(AMEC Hymnal #364)



LESSON 2

JUNE 14, 2026

HANNAH, A GODLY MOTHER

LESSON SCRIPTURE: *1 Samuel 1:1-28; 2:1-11, 18-19; 3:1-18*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: *1 Samuel 1:9-20, 25b*

*Key Verse: In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the Lord."
1 Samuel 1:20*

Vocabulary

Distressed: to feel upset, tormented, afflicted

Vexation: to feel troubled, irritated, sorrow

Vow: a promise to God to act in a certain way, often conditioned on some return favor

Countenance: the appearance of the face

Nazirite: a male or female consecrated to God's service by a special type of vow which lasted for a fixed period or sometimes for life

Shiloh: pronounced: shee - LOH

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Focus Scripture: 1 SAMUEL 1:9-20, 25B

1 SAMUEL 1:9-20

⁹ After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord.

¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.

¹¹ She made this vow: "O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head."

¹² As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth.

¹³ Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk.

¹⁴ So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine."

¹⁵ But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord.

¹⁶ Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time."

¹⁷ Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him."

¹⁸ And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight." Then the woman went her way and ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer.

¹⁹ They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her.

²⁰ In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the Lord."

1 SAMUEL 1:25^B

^{25b} ...and (they) brought the child to Eli.



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INTRODUCTION

Do you have dreams and hopes for the future? If you asked most people, they would likely answer, "Yes." "While everyone's dreams and hopes differ, many still feel optimistic that those dreams can come true. It is this optimism that keeps them going forward each day.

In today's lesson, we explore the faith of Hannah, who prayed and trusted that God would grant her the ability to conceive a child.

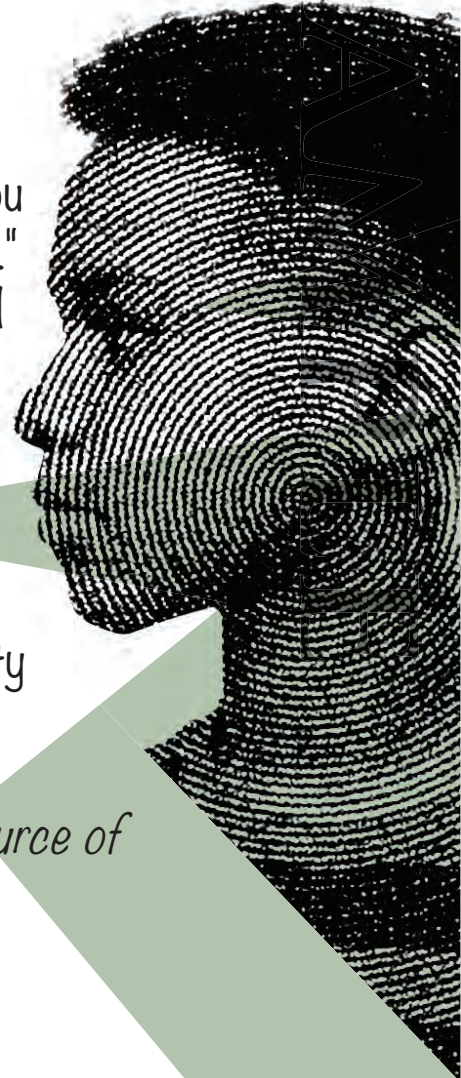
What are your hopes for your future? What is the source of your optimism?

BIBLE STORY

(View video at Bible Project)



In accordance with the law, Elkanah annually took his two wives and children to Shiloh to present sacrifices to God for the Feast of Tabernacles (1:3). The sanctuary and the ark of the covenant were located there. Only the fat of the sacrificed animal was burned as





a freewill and thank offering (Lev. 3:15). The household that made the offering was allowed to cook and consume the rest of the animal (1:3 - 5). Their obedience reflected their devotion to God, and their children were instructed to keep the statutes and remember their heritage.

Hannah was barren. Her barrenness caused her great sorrow and anguish, so she neither ate nor drank at the temple. In ancient Israelite society, barrenness was often viewed as a source of shame and had a social stigma. Women who could not bear children were sometimes marginalized or seen as lacking divine favor. Hannah desperately wanted a child.

At the temple in Shiloh, Hannah wept and prayed for a son (1:10 - 11). She pleaded with God to remember her and act on her behalf. Hannah vowed to give her son to the Lord forever. She also promised never to cut his hair. Long hair was a symbol of dedication to the service of the Lord and was one of the characteristics of the Nazirite vow (Num. 6:1 - 21).

Eli, the priest, thought Hannah was drunk. Hannah informed Eli that she was not drunk and had been praying out of great anguish and grief (1:16). Eli's words of blessing to Hannah restored her spiritually and physically. After she ate, Hannah's face revealed her renewed confidence in answered prayers. The next day, after worshipping God with her family, they returned home. God remembered Hannah.

Elkanah and Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son named Samuel. As she vowed, once weaned, Hannah took him to Eli at the temple (1:25b).

In the scripture, how was Hannah's anguish made worse? What did Hannah's actions tell us about her? When feeling anxious and/or sorrowful, where can we find courage?

LIFE APPLICATION

There are other women in the Bible who experienced barrenness. Research each woman mentioned, then you will be divided into groups to role-play each woman's life situation. The role-playing should take no more than five minutes per woman. Afterwards, name the similar qualities of the women, plus Hannah.

1) Sarah: Genesis 11:30; 15:1 - 6; 18:9 - 18; 21:1 - 7

2) Rebekah: Genesis 25:19 - 26

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3) Rachel: Genesis 29:31; 30:1 - 3, 22 - 24

4) Elizabeth: Luke 1:7, 11 - 19, 23 - 25

Prayer is vital when setting goals or pursuing dreams. It shows true faith in God. Take a few moments to say a silent prayer about your future. After you finish, create a song, dance, poem, or picture that symbolizes your hopes and/or dreams. You can use all the art supplies and posterboards for your creations. If possible, post your creations on social media and the church's website.



SUMMARY

Hannah faced deep sorrow because of her inability to conceive, which caused significant distress. This personal challenge emphasized the social stigma and emotional distress associated with infertility. In her suffering, Hannah did not lash out at Peninnah or Elkanah. Instead, she directed her pain to the only one who could ease it — the Lord, her God.

God is the giver of life, and he can overcome natural limitations to fulfill his purposes. The reversal of barrenness is often associated with divine promises and blessings, as seen in the lives of Hannah, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Elizabeth.

How is Hannah an example of a faithful servant of God? What keeps us from approaching God when we are suffering? How can we open our hearts to God? Why is it essential to pray every day?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

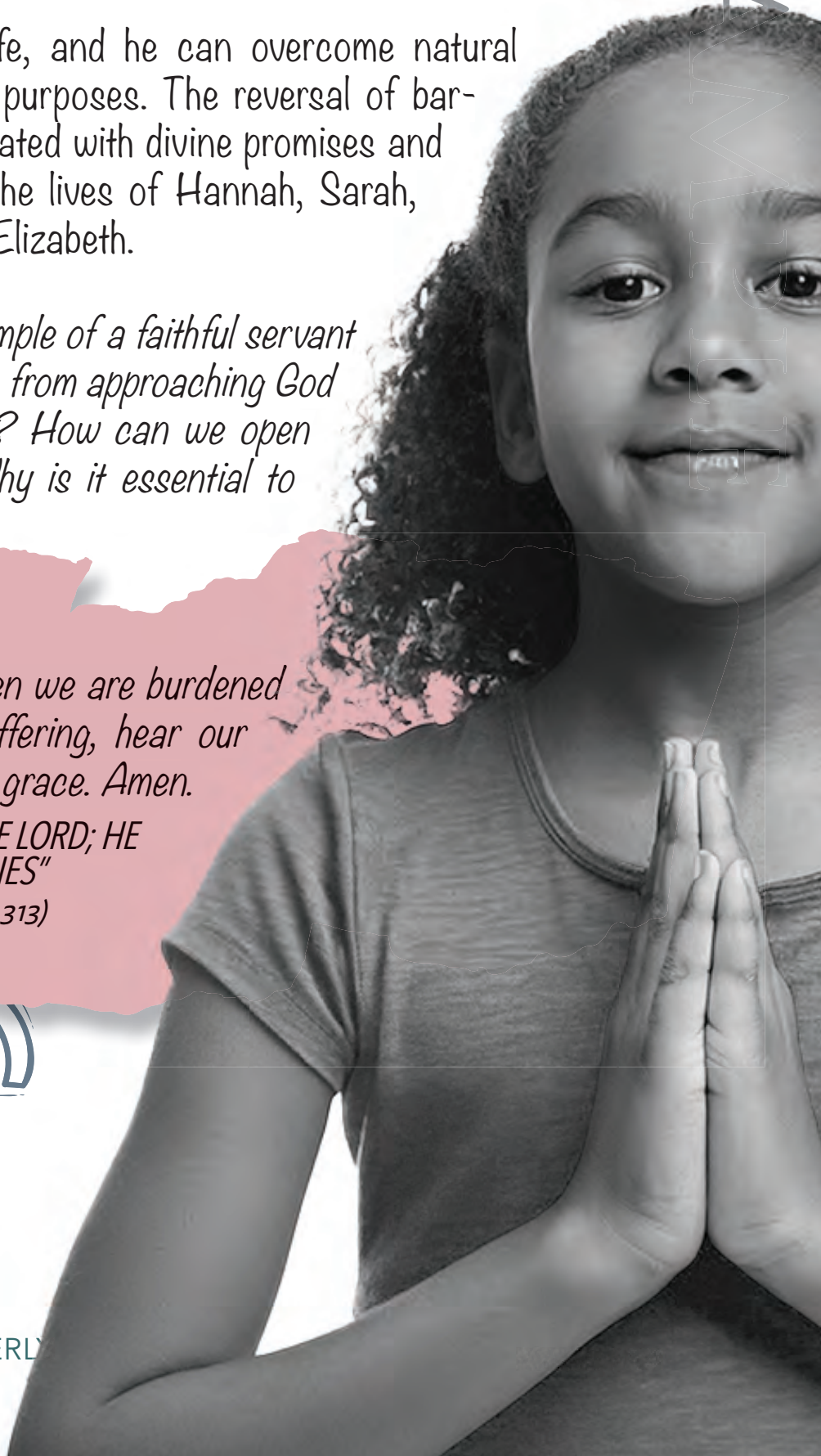
PRAYER: God, when we are burdened with worry and suffering, hear our prayers and extend grace. Amen.

Song: "I LOVE THE LORD; HE HEARD MY CRIES"

(AMEC Hymnal # 313)

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LESSON 3

JUNE 21, 2026

JONATHAN AND DAVID, A NOBLE FRIENDSHIP

LESSON SCRIPTURE: *1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-42;
2 Samuel 1:17-27; 21:7*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: *1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:16-17, 32-34, 42; 2 Samuel
1:26-27; 21:7*

*Key Verse: Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, "The Lord shall be between me and you and between my descendants and your descendants forever."
1 Samuel 20:42*

Vocabulary

Covenant: a formal and binding agreement established between two parties, often sealed with ritual actions

Disgraced: the cause of shame or dishonor

Oath: to appeal to divine authority to uphold the truth of a statement

Mephibosheth: pronounced: meh-FIB-oh-sheth

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**Focus Scripture: 1 SAMUEL 18:1-4; 20:16-17, 32-34, 42;
2 SAMUEL 1:26-27; 21:7**

1 SAMUEL 18:1-4

¹ When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

² Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house.

³ Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul.

⁴ Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing and gave it to David and his armor and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

1 SAMUEL 20:16-17

¹⁶ Thus Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord seek out the enemies of David."

¹⁷ Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own life.

1 SAMUEL 20:32-34

³² Then Jonathan answered his father Saul, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"

³³ But Saul threw his spear at him to strike him, so Jonathan knew that it was the decision of his father to put David to death.

³⁴ Jonathan sprang up from the table in fierce anger and ate no food on the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David and because his father had disgraced him.

1 SAMUEL 20:42

⁴² Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord shall be between me and you and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'" He got up and left, and Jonathan went into the city.

2 SAMUEL 1:26-27

²⁶ I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; greatly beloved were you to me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

²⁷ How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

2 SAMUEL 21:7

⁷ But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of the Lord that was between them, between David and Jonathan son of Saul.



INTRODUCTION

We can have friends who are closer to us than our own families. You are in school together, play the same sports, live in the same neighborhood, participate in the same community activities, and your families attend the same church. You needed money, and they helped you get it. You were sick, and they visited or called. You had to give a speech in school, and they helped you practice. You had work to do at home before you could go to the party, and they worked with you. You broke up with your girlfriend/boyfriend, and they were the first people you told. And so much more. You also do the same for them. That is what friends are for.

In today's lesson, we will explore the loving friendship between David and Jonathan.

What makes a good friend? How can we tell if the person is genuine? What is the most surprising thing a friend has done for you?

BIBLE STORY

(View video at Bible Project)



The prophet Samuel, Hannah's son, was chosen by God to judge the Israelites. Samuel called the people to genuine repentance and to turning away from Canaanite idolatry (1 Sam. 7:1-8). He remained faithful to God in all he did. But his sons were evil judges who took bribes and acted unjustly (8:1 - 42). This is when the people began to demand a king, rejecting God's leadership. Samuel warned about the cost of rejecting God's plans. He anointed Saul as king (9:1-10:16). Nevertheless, Saul began to violate God's law, revealing his unbelief and disobedience. God rejected Saul as king (13:11 - 23).

Jonathan, Saul's son, had a genuine, victorious faith (14:1 - 23). Saul continued to act foolishly, refused to obey God's commands, and acted proudly (1 Sam. 15). God rejected Saul and put an evil spirit on him. David, a shepherd boy, was anointed king by Samuel in obedience to God. David slew Goliath (17:12 - 54). Saul desired to kill David out of jealousy.

When David and Jonathan met, they became close friends immediately. The Bible chronicles numerous relationships, but the bond of friendship shared between David and Jonathan is consistently cited as one of the deepest and most loving. Jonathan recognized God had chosen David to be the next king (23:17). He accepted God's plan and still loved David.

David and Jonathan based their friendship on a commitment to God. They did not let anything to come between them, especially family

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drama. When their friendship was tested, they drew closer together (20:16 - 17). Jonathan made a covenant with “the house of David.” They loved each other deeply. David and Jonathan’s friendship lasted until the end. And after Jonathan died, David welcomed his son, Mephibosheth, into his family as he had promised (21:7). Their covenant extended beyond death, and into many generations yet to come.

Why didn’t Jonathan side with his father, Saul, regarding David? Is it right to go against our parents and stand up for friends? Do you feel lying to your parents is needed in some instances? What were the most important factors in their friendship?

LIFE APPLICATION

Relationships can be healthy or negative/toxic. Brainstorm the characteristics of both:

HEALTHY:	NEGATIVE/TOXIC:

Reflect on your relationships. How do those relationships promote healthy and positive influences? Do you have negative or toxic relationships that you need to avoid?

Search your phone or other electronic devices for pictures that reflect love and faithfulness. Discuss why you chose the picture. If you do

not have a picture, share a favorite movie or song that reflects love and faithfulness.



SUMMARY

Jonathan and David had a special friendship. They genuinely loved each other. When their friendship was tested, their bond was stronger than the resistance. Jonathan protected David from his father, Saul, who desired to kill him. Who would risk their life for a friend? This proved their love for one another. A true friend sticks with you through life's challenges. Moreover, you encourage, support, and challenge one another to be your best selves.

Our love and devotion to God should motivate us to love and serve others. The same love God has for us God has for everyone else. So, our lives need to reflect that love in every situation. *Why is it important to have a life devoted to God? How did Jonathan and David reveal their devotion to God? How can others know you love them?*

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

PRAYER: *God, help me reflect the love you give. Give me wisdom concerning my friends. I need friends who genuinely love God as I do. I promise to continue to witness to others I encounter. Amen.*

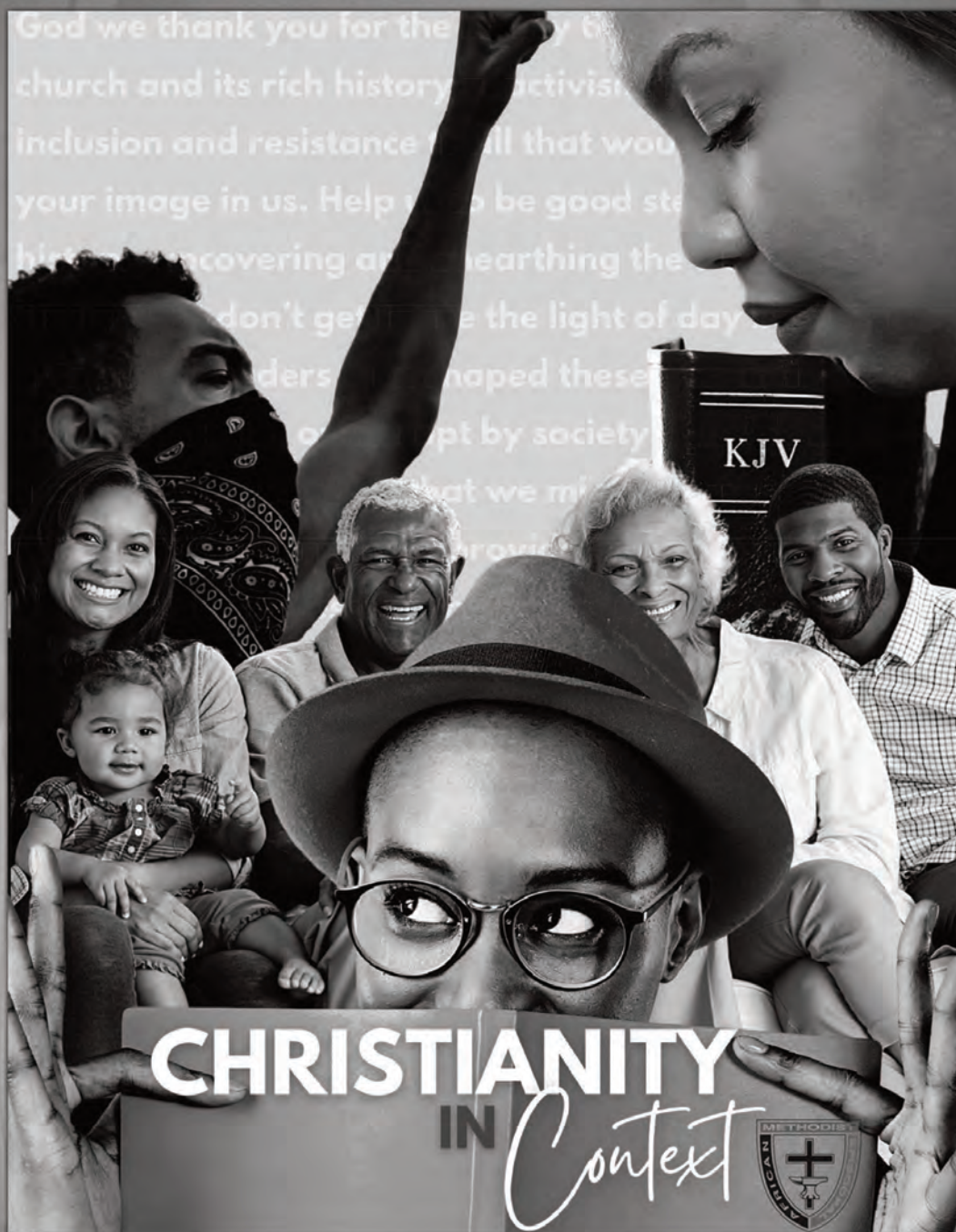
Song: "O THOU, IN WHOSE PRESENCE"
(AMEC Hymnal #83)

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