
NOTES ON LESSON 2: I CAN HAVE A GREAT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

(Also see “I Can Have a Great Relationship With God” and “Answer Guide for Teachers”)

This second study encourages the new Christian to maintain a growing relationship with God. We may tend to see baptism as an end rather than a beginning. This lesson reminds us to whom we belong, emphasizes the importance of spiritual focus, and affirms that we can overcome sin.

Opening Questions

James 2:23 and *John 15:13–15*. Many new Christians see God in terms of Lord, Creator, and Judge. Without lessening the importance of those divine roles, try to help the new believer understand that a relationship with God is also like a friendship. Ever keeping in mind that He is Lord, the Christian should grow to see Jesus as a friend and determine to be a friend to Him. Our friendship with the Lord grows in the same way earthly friendships do.

Principle #1: Remember to Whom You Belong

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 through *1 Thessalonians 5:19*. Understanding to whom we belong and at what price we were bought is crucial to Christian growth. New Christians will be encouraged as they read about the indwelling Spirit and learn that they are not alone. Jesus has promised to be with us always. Galatians 2:20 reminds Christians that they have been crucified with Christ and no longer live for themselves. Christians are new creatures; Christianity really is the “land of beginning again.” Since learning is emotional as well as intellectual, be sure to use the questions that ask “How do you feel about . . . ?”

Growth is natural for the Christian. As we pray, study, worship, and walk daily with the Lord, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced in us by God’s Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23; Romans 5:5). If we do not worship, pray, study, and obey, we quench the work of the Spirit in our lives.

Principle #2: Keep Your Focus On Things Above

Decision, Devotion, and Dependence. To maintain an intimate, growing relationship with God, we must allow every area of our lives to be permeated by faith in God. Three steps to accomplish-

ing this—“decide,” “devote,” and “depend”—are described in the lesson.

A growing Christian starts each day with a renewed decision to offer himself as a living sacrifice to God. Colossians 3:17 teaches that whatever we do should be done in the name of the Lord. Living this way will require a conscious effort.

A friendship with God (like all friendships) requires a wholehearted desire to please and glorify Him. If the works of the flesh are to be avoided, we must live by the Spirit. It is impossible to live the Christian life alone. We must depend on God, His Word, and His church. God must be welcome in every part of our lives.

Principle #3: You Can Overcome Sin

1 John 2:15–17 through *Psalms 103:3–14*; *1 John 1:8–2:1*. As you consider these Scriptures with your students, do not minimize the role of the devil, but point out personal responsibility. The devil can tempt, trick, and lie; but sinning is a choice. The root of all sin is revealed in *1 John 2:15–17*. James 1:13 reminds that temptation comes from our own lust.

Thank God for the forgiveness that the blood of Jesus provides! Not only will the Christian seek forgiveness, but he will also strive—with God’s help—to avoid sin (*1 Corinthians 10:13*; *Romans 6:1, 2*). *Hebrews 4:14–16* presents a Savior who can help us both when we are facing temptation and when we have sinned. Use *Psalm 119:9–11* to encourage memorization of the Scriptures.

Psalm 103:3–14 and *1 John 1:8–2:1* help new Christians to remember the gracious God they serve. How encouraging is the knowledge that we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus! Realizing that we are forgiven encourages us to overcome sin.

Summary & Application

Maximize the value of this and every lesson by encouraging personal application and reviewing truths learned. James 4:7 calls for Christians to flee and resist the devil. The RESIST acronym presented in the lesson can be used to review the lesson. Stress that, in order to have a great relationship with God, the new Christian must resist the devil and draw near to God. ❖