



GOD'S ARMOR

The Best in Us

June 18, 2022

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Matthew 19:30 (NIV) • “But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

Luke 13:30 (NIV) • “Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”

1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV) • “‘I have the right to do anything,’ you say—but not everything is beneficial. ‘I have the right to do anything’—but not everything is constructive.”

Colossians 3:17 (GNT) • “Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NIV) • “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.”

A Contest in Which All May Win • “[1 Cor. 9:24-27, quoted.] This glorious contest is before us. The apostle seeks to inspire us to enter into a noble emulation, a competition in which will be seen no selfishness, unfairness, or underhanded work. We are to use every spiritual nerve and muscle in the contest for the crown of life. No one who does his best will fail in this contest” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1089).

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “GOD'S ARMOR”

There is a great battle going on around us. It is called the great controversy. This controversy is the battle between good and evil, between God and Satan, and humans are caught in the middle. God gave everything to make a way of escape for us, but the devil is determined to keep us from accepting God's gift of salvation.

Every person throughout the day faces making countless decisions. Some decisions are routine, and others are life-changing decisions. If you stop and think about it, though, even routine decisions could be life-changing. We may think that what we eat for breakfast would be routine and require very little thought, but what you eat for breakfast could impact your health in the future or possibly even that day.

God has given us a road map to help us make decisions. He wants us to make decisions that lead to life eternal. However, every time we face making a decision, the controversy becomes real in our lives. We may know what God says is the best way to go, but often there is a battle that takes place in our hearts and minds. Sadly, we argue within ourselves because we want to do what we want instead of following God without question.

Satan wants us to get caught up in the competitions of this world—but the competition taking place inside ourselves is the one that needs our attention—will we follow God or self? When we settle this question, all the other competitions we will face in life will fall under the guiding hand

of our Father in heaven. We won't get excited and angry over a game, job, or a person. We will ask God to help us be the best that we can be and we will show others God's love.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "GOD'S ARMOR"

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

1. Realize that the competition that matters in life is the one they face everyday in their own lives—follow God or their own desires.
2. Know the difference between how God and the world looks at winning and success.
3. Understand that what we do and say affects how others see us and how they see God.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) blindfold, sign that reads ARRIVED and another that reads DISTRACTED.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons.

Applying • Copies of Friday's section of the student lesson, pens or pencils.

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)
- >> 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 • Arrange chairs and tables to make maneuvering to the right (ARRIVED) side of the classroom difficult (lots of dead ends and turns), but still doable. Arrange the left (DISTRACTED) side with easier maneuverability (fewer turns). Have two signs ready to set up: one on the right front side of the class, saying ARRIVED, and the second sign to set up on the left front side of the class that says DISTRACTED (you will put these up later). Depending on the size of your class, choose two or four students (students that will not mind being blindfolded) and have them step outside the classroom with a teacher. Have the teacher blindfold the students. While these students are out of the classroom, divide the class in half. You can set up your signs as you give the following instructions (you don't want the students that will be blindfolded to see the signs ahead of time).

Tell half the class that their job is to give instructions to the blindfolded students to help them navigate to the ARRIVED sign in the front of the class (hopefully without too many crashes). Remind them that they cannot block or touch the blindfolded students. They can direct only by giving instructions.

Tell the other half of class that they are to try to distract the blindfolded students so they will be unable to follow the instructions that will get them to the ARRIVED sign in the right front side of the class. Let them know that they will be trying to persuade the student to follow their instructions and get to the sign on the left that says DISTRACTED. They cannot block the student's pathway or touch the student, but they can talk to the student, call out directions, or use other verbal distractions, such as singing, to get the student to follow their orders. Let them know that they will begin when you say so.

Bring in the blindfolded students and tell them that their goal is to make it to the front of the room safely while wearing the blindfold. Tell them that the class will be helping them navigate the room.

Go • Remind the students to use only inside voices—no yelling or shouting. They do not want to disrupt other classes, and they want to remain respectful, since they are in the house of God. Give the command for the class to begin giving their instructions to the blindfolded students.

Debriefing • **Ask:** How difficult was it to get to the ARRIVED sign with so many voices telling you what to do? Was it hard to pick a voice and follow it? How did you choose which voice to follow? How did you tune out the other voices so that you heard just the person you chose to give you the right instructions? One direction was much easier to navigate; what struggles did you have in choosing the more difficult path? How difficult do you think it would be to follow the right voice when you really want to go in the other direction?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Ask: Do you believe competition as the world knows it is something that we will

have in heaven? (Answers will vary.) **Say:** The competition we see around us leads us to believe that you should win at all costs. You must be the best and the greatest. But this is not God's way. Ask two volunteers to find and read the following stories: Mark 9:33, 34; 10:35-41.

Say: Here we see that even the disciples had a competitive spirit and argued about who was the greatest among them. **Ask:** Do you think wanting to be the greatest came into this world because of sin? How did Jesus deal with those who had a competitive nature and wanted to be first? Have a student read Mark 9:35, another Mark 10:42-45, and a third student read Luke 13:30.

Ask: Does wanting to be the best, the greatest, or first give a good impression of what being a Christian is all about? How does this impact you personally? **Say:** The greatest competition we are in is the one for our souls. The real question is: Will we follow God or our own desires? **Ask:** What is most important to you? What position do you want to be in?

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

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

Debriefing • Ask the students to think of illustrations from their own experiences that show a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. It could be an experience with their family, at school, at church, or their activity club (Pathfinders).

Ask: Can you think of someone who fits God's ideal of working together? (Answers will vary.) What kind of person do you want to be? Are you someone who has a positive influence on those around you?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Say: The devil is always trying to distract us from the important things in life—knowing God, helping others, and preparing

for His coming. He isn't opposed to getting us busy doing good things just to keep us from spending time in prayer and Bible study. Have someone read Ephesians 6:11. **Say:** The great controversy is a battle between God and Satan, good and evil. The battleground is our hearts and minds. We may think, *This is a nonissue, or It's of no importance, or God isn't concerned with this*, but everything is important, and God does care. He loves us and wants us in heaven with Him. God knows that the battles we fight are big. Our real battles are not with one another (although the devil likes to make us think so). Have someone read Ephesians 6:12. **Say:** There are only two outcomes in life—eternal death because we have chosen to go our own way, or eternal life because we realize that there is nothing more important than knowing, loving, and serving God. **Ask:** What has God given us to help us know how to win the battle and be sure to stand strong? (the Bible, His Word, the Spirit of Prophecy)

Have individual students read the following verses from Ephesians 6:13-17. Allow time for the students to discuss and answer the following questions. **Ask:** What is the "truth" that is spoken of here? How do we get the "breastplate of righteousness"? What do you think it means to have "your feet shod" with the "gospel of peace"? How does the "shield of faith" work? What does it mean to "take the helmet of salvation"? Does memorizing Scripture help to take "the sword of the Spirit" and use it to keep from becoming like the world?

Say: There will always be someone faster, smarter, or better than you at some things. **Ask:** How do you feel about that person? Are you OK with being the next in line or last in line? Are you willing to let the other person have the best seat, the nicest toy, and the coolest trip? Are these things important to your salvation? What type of influence do you want to have with this person? Do you see them as your equal despite their status? Do you recognize that they are

a child of God, that He loves them and wants them to be saved too?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Make sure the students have this week's lesson. Ask them to look at Friday's Apply section. Tell them that you are going to give them a few moments to reflectively answer the questions, if they have not already done so. You can do this activity one of three ways. When they have finished: 1. Have the students volunteer and read their papers out loud. 2. Collect the papers and hand them out randomly. Have the students read aloud the responses on the paper they have been given. (If it would be appropriate in your group, you could have the students guess to whom each set of answers belongs. This could be fun in a small group, but can be embarrassing to a larger group.) 3. Discuss the questions as a class.

Debriefing • Say: Life is short. We don't know how much time we will have on earth. Seventy years is not a long time. Think about how your family prepares for a family vacation or for visiting family far away. **Ask:** How much time was spent planning and getting ready? How long did it take to get the clothes ready and packed? Were you allowed to go off to play and relax, or were you given things to do to help get ready for the trip?

Say: The trip to heaven takes preparation. **Ask:** Are you getting ready? Are you helping others to get ready? Should a Christian spend their time and energy on the things the world thinks are important? Are you putting God and His kingdom before the things of this world? Do the people you associate with know that God is first in your life? **Say:** Now is the time to make the decision to follow and serve God. Quietly tell Him you are giving your life and plans to Him.

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Are there any biblical guidelines we can find to help us in preparing for heaven? (Refer them to the Bible Insights section of the student lesson.)
2. What do you want your life to say about you?
3. What are some positive things that you can do to influence others for Christ?
4. Are you defining success the world's way or God's way?
5. How can we be sure to act as a child of God in everything we do?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

If we are citizens of the kingdom of God, we are bound by the laws of God's kingdom, not by the expectations of this world. Therefore, we should take a "kingdom perspective" on every action we take and every decision we make. We know that we can do nothing good without the help of God, and through Christ we can do all things (Philippians 4:13), so it is important that we invite Christ to help us live our lives according to His plan for us. The best representative of the kingdom of God is one who exhibits a Christlike character, revealing grace, compassion, and love.



STUDENT LESSON

GOD'S ARMOR The Best in Us

June 18, 2022

Sabbath **FOR STUDY**

- » **Memory Text:** “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown” (1 Corinthians 9:24, 25, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 22, Christian Behavior:** “We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 141-144.

THE BEST IN US

The story is told of a group of children that ran in the Special Olympics in the mid-1970s. These were boys and girls enjoying a day out in the sun and running races. They were happy and excited to be in the 100-yard race. They were jumping up and down waiting for the signal

so they could begin. Then the signal was given to begin the race. The children took off for the finish line. They started running as fast as they could. They were giving it all they had. If you had been there, you would have seen the joy on their faces as they ran down the course—they were having a great time!

Then, suddenly, one of the children tripped and fell shortly after starting. There was a gasp and then a hushed silence as the crowd looked on. A couple of the other racers heard crying and looked behind them. They saw the fallen child lying on the ground. They stopped running, turned around, and started running back toward the starting line. The crowd wondered, “What are they doing? The finish line is the other way!” Then the crowd watched as these two children stopped by the fallen racer. They reached down to help the child up. They had given up their chance to win the race. And they had gone back to help the child who had fallen.

Once they had brushed the dirt off the fallen child, the two children linked their arms through the fallen child’s arms, and together they once again started toward the finish line. Those three children crossed the finish line, not as individuals, but together! The crowd was moved to tears, and those three children received a cheering applause.

There are several other stories in which an athlete has fallen and another has given up the race to help the injured person. Why? Because they realized that the race wasn’t just about winning, it was about how they wanted to reach the finish line. This is what it means to truly care

about others. Our goal is heaven, and we want to “run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1, NKJV). And along the way, we want to help others learn about Jesus “so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24, NKJV).—Kathleen Sowards.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Colossians 3:17.
- » It’s Friday afternoon, and you and some of your good friends are trying to decide how to spend the afternoon. Someone suggests playing a sports game, but you know that these types of games usually end up with someone hurt or in a disagreement. Another suggests visiting a friend who is recovering from a long illness.
- » How will your decision affect your friendships? Are you willing to spend the afternoon visiting a sick friend? How could you make this second option more appealing to your friends?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

- » Read Psalm 106:3; Romans 12:1, 2; Ephesians 5:1, 2.
- » We represent God here on earth. Everything we do and everything we say will bring either dishonor or glory to God. The things we do and say can influence others to accept God as their loving Savior or influence them to turn away from Him. If we accept and follow God’s plan for our lives, we will be influences for good. We will show His love to the world around us.

- » In what ways do you represent God’s love to those around you?

- » Unscramble the following words and put them in the verse below where they belong.

itphrr- wsaoey	ovlyle
uert	utirev
rrtpoe	upre
bnole	ujts

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are _____ whatever things are _____, whatever things are _____, whatever things are _____, whatever things are _____, whatever things are of good _____, if there is any _____ and if there is anything _____—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8, NKJV).

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read James 1:19, 20.
- » The biggest competition a Christian will face is not the kind found on a sports field. It is the one found in our own lives. There are things in life that guide us, and they are called “priorities.” Each of us must decide what our guiding priorities are.
- » We need to focus on the competition within ourselves. We all face struggles in making decisions—will we put Jesus first, or will we follow our selfish desires? Will we make the decision to follow the Lord, or will we choose the easy path that leads to the destruction of our souls? We need the power of the Holy Spirit to help overcome the natural human tendencies to put ourselves first at any cost.
- » This race for heaven is not a competition against others. Jesus died for everyone.

Salvation is a gift offered to every person ever born. Our highest priority is to win others for Christ!

- » Only God can give us a kingdom perspective to help us understand where this race really is in the grand scheme of things. Are the things of this earth more important than the relationships we build for heaven? Are power, money, and fame more important than reflecting God's love to someone else? Are our own wants more important than winning someone for Christ and His kingdom? That is the real "race" we are involved in on this earth.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Fill in the blanks after looking up the texts in the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible. If you do not have an NIV Bible, you can go to Biblegateway.com.

1. "A person's _____ yields _____; it is to one's glory to _____ an _____" (Proverbs 19:11).
2. "My dear _____ and _____, take note of this: _____ should be quick to _____, slow to _____ and slow to become _____, because human anger does not produce the _____ that God _____" (James 1:19, 20).
3. "'I have the _____ to do _____,' you say—but not _____ is _____. 'I have the _____ to do _____'—but not _____ is _____" (1 Corinthians 10:23).
4. "And _____ you do, whether in _____ or _____, do it _____ in the name of the _____, giving _____ to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).

5. "Whatever your _____ finds to _____, do it with _____ your _____, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither _____ nor _____ nor _____" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

6. "Put on the _____ armor of God, so that you can take your stand _____ the devil's schemes. For our _____ is _____ against flesh and blood, but _____ the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the _____ of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to _____, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand _____ then, with the _____ of _____ buckled around your waist, with the _____ of _____ in place, and with your _____ with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, _____ up the _____ of _____, with which you can extinguish _____ the flaming arrows of the evil one. _____ the _____ of _____ and the _____ of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:11-17).

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Ecclesiastes 9:10.
- » Review the memory text.
- » We have to be students of the Bible and of the principles that Christ put forward while He was here on earth. The more we study Christ, the more we realize that the kingdom of God is not about status, position, winning, or even getting ahead. Rather, His kingdom is about the willingness to see others as equals, regardless of their talents, and to

create a cooperative effort with those with whom we come in contact.

- » Christ is asking you to see everyone as a brother or a sister. Always do the best you can, but keep a perspective of Christ's will for you and His kingdom close to your heart.

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read Matthew 16:26; Philippians 3:7, 8, 14.
- » Look at the questions below. We know that winning and losing are different in the world's estimate from how God and Christians view and understand them. Answer each question by listing or drawing various attributes (qualities, characteristics, aspects) of each.
- » How does the world understand success and winning?

- » How does the Christian understand true success?

- » How does the world understand losing and failure?

- » How does the Christian understand losing and failure?

