

Unit III. The Church and Its Teachings

L12/February 22, 2026

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Jonah 3:1-10; Malachi 3:7-12; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:6-8; 13:1-3; 26:12-20; Romans 1:14-16; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:1-15

Print Passages: Acts 1:6-8; 2 Corinthians 8:3-9

Values, Money, and Experiences



IT'S THREE DAYS BEFORE THE LOCAL COMPETITION; DAQUAN, QUAVON, CHARLES, AND RAKEEM WERE READY.

They had spent the last two days working on their presentation. They named the robot SSR (Super Sonic Robot). The judges have certain criteria for the competition, including judging creativity, originality, presentation, and innovation. The boys did a final test and were confident that SSR had a good chance of winning.



Finally, the big day had arrived! There was lots of excitement in the air. The SSR was up against ten other projects. They were all excellent. The judges had a difficult time choosing. Finally, the announcement was made. The SSR came in first place. The deciding factor was in the creativity category. After the win, their parents took them all out for a huge dinner celebration. They were now looking forward to the regionals in two weeks in Arizona.

Fast forward to one day before the regionals. The teacher from their mechanical engineering class traveled with them. The SSR exhibit was all set up, so the boys were hanging out prior to the competition. They were in a giving mood. They saw some homeless people on the street, and they helped them get some food. They also gave to a local charity organization. They felt blessed to be able to give.

At the regionals, the boys tied with a team they had met the day before. They had a feature on the SSR to show in case of a tie. But the boys decided to give the prize to the other team. The team expressed that they would use the \$10,000.00 to send food and safety items to their families in another country.

When the event was over, the boys were approached by a movie company. They wanted to use SSR in their next sci-fi movie. The sign-on agreement far exceeded \$10,000.00. When you give for the right reasons, God blesses those actions.



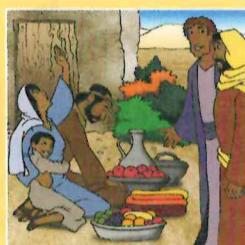
WORD UP

Acts 1:6-8;

2 Corinthians 8:3-9

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

....
3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. 5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 6 So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.



KEY VERSE:

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.
(2 Corinthians 8:9)



WORK OUT

IN TODAY'S SCRIPTURE VERSES, THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS SPEAKING TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH. Paul (formerly Saul) was one of Jesus' primary disciples used to spread the Good News about Jesus and create the church. When Jesus met Saul on the road to Damascus, Saul was on a mission to imprison and/or kill Christians. Following this divine event, Jesus sent Paul (renamed by Jesus) on a different mission to preach, teach, and create believers for the kingdom of God.

God chooses certain people to fulfill special missions. Moses was chosen for the mission of leading the Israelites out of Egypt. God chose Jonah to go to Nineveh on a mission; Jonah rejected the call the first time, but God gave him a second chance—and he completed the mission.

He chose Abraham to go on a mission when Abraham was seventy-five years old. The Holy Spirit chose two people to send on a mission—the first missionary journey: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3).

These people whom God called may have had the experience required to complete the mission. Abraham had great faith, Moses was obedient, and Paul had experienced the divine event at Damascus. Likewise, God will equip you for what He needs. Live a life pleasing to God and be ready for the call . . . if God chooses you.

INSIDE OUT ➔

It is key to understand who wrote the books of the Bible and why. In light of this, respond to the questions below. You may do so on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Who wrote the book of Acts? Why?
2. Who wrote the book (letter) of 2 Corinthians? Why?
3. What does 2 Corinthians 8 mean for Christian values around wealth?

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

Though Paul was pleased with the Corinthians' giving in certain areas (which exceeded expectations in some areas, their monetary giving did not match the others. Paul urged them to excel in this area also. Although you are a youth and maybe serving the church and God in other areas, plan to set aside a monetary sacrifice to participate in Sunday tithes and offerings. Start small, giving as you can afford to give—eventually working your way up to 10 percent. If you have a job making \$200.00 a week, give \$20.00 to God's house.



The Bible says that God loves a cheerful giver. "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, . . . will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38). Your parents or you may have acquired wealth . . . but look what really happened: "You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).



STEPPING OUT!

This is your challenge for the week: (1) Explain what 2 Corinthians 8 means for Christian values and wealth. (2) Discuss the “Great Commission” (see Matthew 28:18-20) as relevant to your role in sharing God’s message of love, forgiveness, and repentance.



Media Mission



Visit the following online site to check out the video that features the song “Send Me” by William McDowell: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qqu2hPJtuA8&list=RDQqu2hPJtuA8&start_radio=1.

Your other mission is to search online for a song, poem, phrase, picture, additional Scripture, video, or anything else that speaks to the lesson Scripture passages.

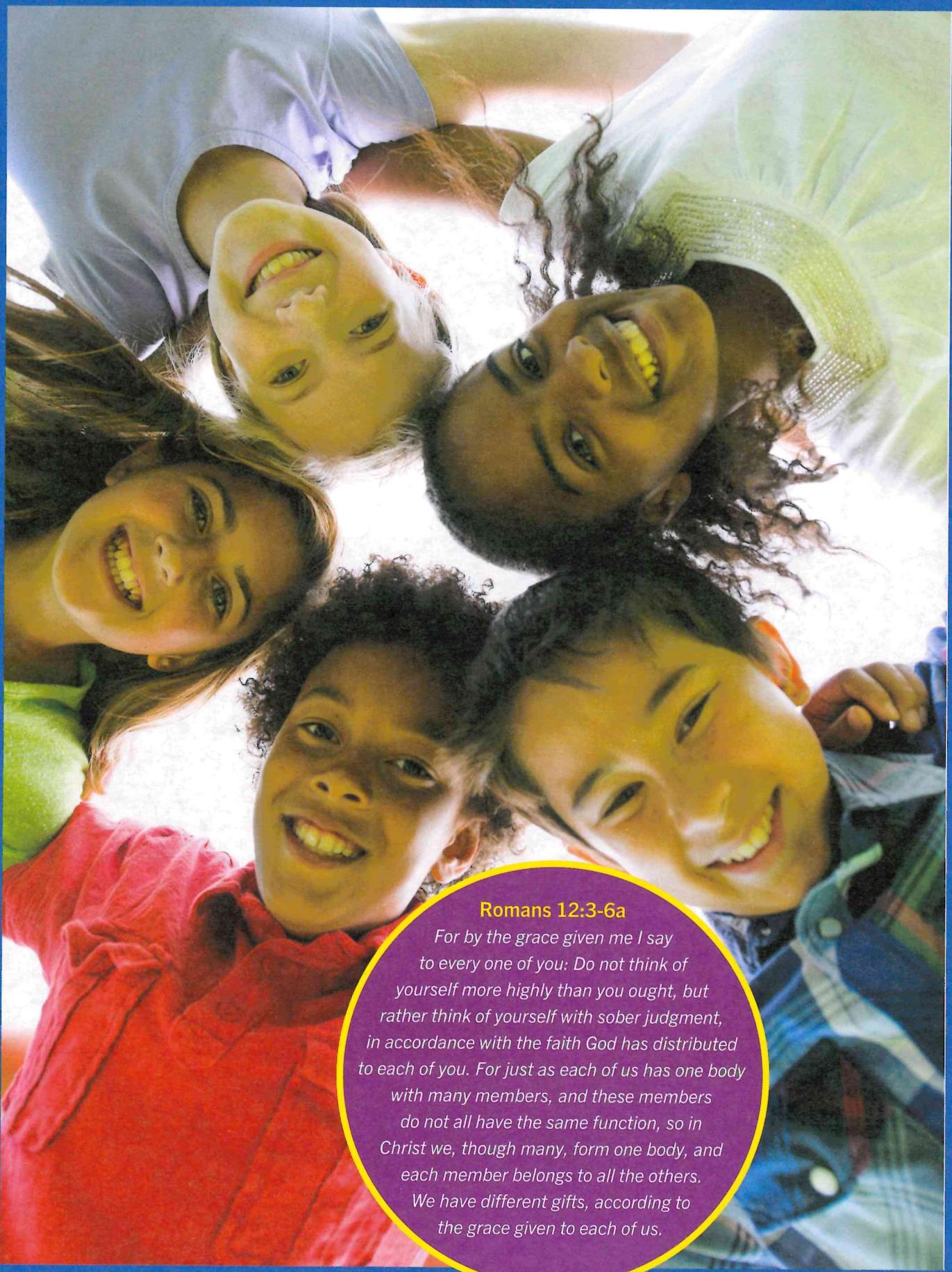


Review Time!

Fill in the blanks of the sentences below; then discuss the statements as a class.

1. It is better to _____ than to _____.
2. God loves a _____ giver.
3. The _____ of money is the root of all _____.





Romans 12:3-6a

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.



Who's Really in CONTROL?

By Toy Lisa Mitchell

Back in the day, Janet Jackson performed a song titled "Control." The song was meant to express her taking back control of her life; in fact, she stated, "When it has to do with my life, my life, I wanna be the one in control." The song was very popular, in part because it spoke of a kind of freedom from authority and sense of empowerment. Being in control is a popular notion, but ask yourself this: "Am I truly in control of my life? Is my having total control of my life really a source of freedom?" Many youths may believe that their lives are miserable as long as someone else is calling the shots and telling them what to do. There seems to be a power struggle, especially during adolescence, in the desire to be free from being told what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. Craving the fresh air of independence, many will sigh, "I can't wait until I'm eighteen!" In other words, they are saying, "I can't wait to make my own decisions, do my own thing; I can't wait to be free!" However, just to remind you, with such so-called freedom comes responsibility. And, as someone wisely said, "Choices are our future." The choices you make today can determine how your future looks tomorrow.

Having this type of responsibility may be appealing to you. Many young people are quick to say, "I already know about responsibility; I'm mature for my age; I'm smart; I have common sense; I can make good decisions—I know without a shadow of a doubt that I can do this!" So, let us assume that you are mature and smart

and have your life under control—can you confidently say that you know all things? Or better yet, can you say that you have the power to control and dictate every situation and circumstance that you face in life? You might feel like a superhero, but even superheroes have their weaknesses and limitations. So, since you cannot control every situation, since you're not all-knowing, and since you do not have all power, how can you be so ready and confident about taking full and total control of your life?

How would you feel, for example, if you were in the driver's seat of a moving car, blindfolded, handcuffed, and lost in an unfamiliar area? This sounds pretty scary, because not only could you wreck yourself, but you could also harm others. This example may be a bit extreme, but the concept is real. Life is constantly moving and because of your own humanity—which includes weaknesses, limitations, and shortsightedness—you are handcuffed, in a sense, but still trying to remain in the driver's seat of your life. You may think you have control, but, in reality, your own limitations prevent you from having total control. Janet Jackson got it wrong; no one is really in control, and given the limitations of being human, you should not even want to be in total control of your life. Why? Because you don't know everything, nor do you have the authority to control or even arrange things that happen in your life.

Before you get overwhelmed by the bad news, know that there is also good news. Although you may not have control, there's One who does. Want to take a guess? That's right, it's God! The lessons you're reading this quarter are dealing with the sovereignty of God. *Sovereignty* simply means having supreme power and authority—simply put, having total control. There is a reason why you should want God to take control of every aspect of your life and the world around you. God's very nature makes Him more than qualified to be in control. He is the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator—the mastermind of the universe and the One who keeps this world going. God sees the past, the present, and the future all at the same time. God also knows every aspect of who you are as a person, because He created you. He knows every thought and intent of your heart before you even think it (see Psalm 139).

Sometimes, humans can become full of themselves, thinking they have all the right answers. Here is what the Scriptures have to say about humanity: Psalm 103:14 relays that God "knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust." Humanity is also referred to as sheep, as found in Psalm 100:3—"Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture." In these two passages, human beings are referred to as "dust" and "sheep." Sheep are considered to be among the dumbest of animals, constantly in need of a shepherd to guide and protect them. The emphasis is not on presenting humans in a negative light, but on placing human abilities and capabilities in proper perspective.

Although we are made in God's image, no one is in any way a god unto himself or herself. Without God's Spirit, no one even has the slightest capacity to think like God. Isaiah 55:8-9 exclaims that God's thoughts are not like our thoughts, and neither are His ways like our ways; in fact, His thoughts and His ways are higher than ours. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that humanity does not control anything, because there is Someone greater who does—and that's not such a bad thing.

Now certainly one may raise the question that if God is in control of this world then why is it in the shape that it is in? Couldn't God just make everything better, and peaceful? Since things are not so perfect and in some cases are tumultuous, it seems hard to believe that this all-powerful and all-knowing God is in control. Yes, this presents a dilemma: although God is in control, He does allow humans to make decisions, and this is referred to as *free will*—the liberty and ability to act according to one's own judgment and discretion. The conditions of this world

are the result of decisions that people choose to make, decisions that God permits under the umbrella of free will. Remember that every choice has a future and every decision has consequences. Sometimes, you are living in the consequences of your own or someone else's decisions, which may have come as a result of thinking that "one is in control." You drove that car blindfolded and handcuffed and now you are dealing with the consequences.

The good news is that God has not left us unattended to follow our own will; He has provided ways for us to seek His guidance and direction. Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages us to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and not to lean on our own understanding. In order to accomplish this, we must use free will in a way that includes choosing to give up control of our lives to the One who is really in control. Why not place your life, your decisions, your past, your present, and your future in the hands of the One who will make sure to direct your path? God has a purpose and a plan for your life; He also has a path to make sure that that purpose is fulfilled. You have a choice to make: If you allow God to drive your life, you'll be pleased with the destination—because He is the one who is truly in control!

Meditation Corner

Scripture: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Song: "I Need You Now" by Smokie Norful

Remember that God is SOVEREIGN:

- S—Supreme (Deuteronomy 32:39)
- O—Omnipotent (Psalm 62:11)
- V—Victorious (1 Corinthians 15:57)
- E—Eminent (Ephesians 1:21)
- R—Ruling (Colossians 2:10)
- E—Equipped (Hebrews 13:21)
- I—Invincible (John 10:29)
- G—Great (Psalm 95:3)
- N—Noteworthy (Isaiah 45:5)

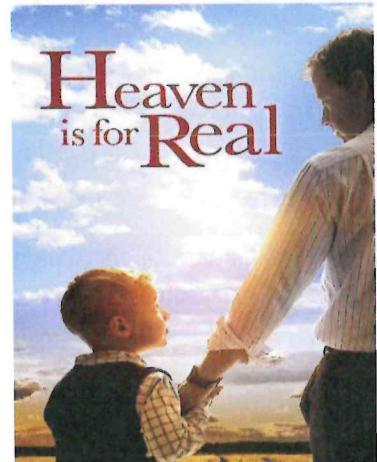
Prayer: Father God, I declare by faith that there is no god like You. I surrender to You, because there is no other help or strength like You on the earth. When I am restless, impatient, and tempted to be too confident in my own failing strength and so-called wisdom, help me, God, to always remember who I am and what You are. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

MEDIA REVIEW

MOVIE REVIEW

Heaven Is for Real

Based on the #1 New York Times best-selling book, *Heaven Is for Real* recounts the true story of a small-town father who must find the courage and conviction to share his son's extraordinary, life-changing experience with the world. Starring Academy Award® nominee Greg Kinnear (Best Supporting Actor, *As Good As It Gets*, 1997) as Todd Burpo, the real-life father whose son Colton claims to have visited heaven during a near-death experience. Colton shares the details of his amazing journey with childlike innocence and speaks matter-of-factly about things that happened before his birth—things he couldn't possibly know.



MUSIC REVIEW

"Keep the Faith"

Artist: Charles Jenkins

The lyrics encourage the listener to hold on and keep the faith no matter what you're going through. The song writer asks the listener a series of thought-provoking questions that turns the listener back to God and reminds them to keep the faith through it all and trust God.

