

6th Grade **Winning The Race**

by Cherie Noel

Positive Action Bible Curriculum

6th Grade: Winning The Race

Written by Cherie Noel

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Contents

Unit One: Preparing For The Race

1	The Greatest Book Ever Written	7
2	Josiah—The King With Character	11
3	God Speaks	15

Unit Two: Developing Inner Strength

4	God's Design For Me	21
5	God's Purpose For Me	27
6	Being Filled With The Spirit	31
7	Finding True Joy	37
8	When A Christian Sins	41

Unit Three: Striving For The Prize

9	Being In God's Will	47
10	Honoring Your Parents	51
11	Reputation And Character	57
12	God Wants Your Heart	61
13	Learning To Stand Alone	65
14	Dare To Stand	69

Unit Four: Hindrances To The Runner

15	Acting Like A Fool	75
16	Greed And Covetousness	79
17	Your Enemy, The Devil	83
18	How Satan Tempts Us	87
19	Overcoming Temptation	93
20	Conformity To Christ	99
21	Separation From Worldliness	103

Unit Five: Pressing Toward The Goal

22	The Lamb Of God	109
23	The Miracles Of Christ	113
24	Christ Shows Us How To Live	117
25	Christ-Like Attitudes	123
26	The Crucifixion	127
27	The Resurrection	131
28	Power For Christian Living	135

Unit Six: The Prize Is Won

29	What Will Happen In The Future?	141
30	Christ Returns For His Own	145
31	The Tribulation	149
32	The Antichrist	153
33	Christ Returns And Reigns	157
34	The Final Judgment	161
35	Review Of Revelation	165
	Music Curriculum	171
	Scripture Memorization Sheet	187

Unit One:

Preparing For The Race



Every four years the world takes particular note of a very special event—the Olympic games. The Olympics are held in different countries around the world, and athletes from all the countries of the world compete against each other for gold, silver, and bronze medals. To be an Olympic athlete is a great achievement. To win a medal is one of the world's great honors.

Those who compete in the Olympic games must train and prepare for many years. Preparation for this competition is unlike any other because these athletes practice many hours a day for years in order to be ready for the competition.

One reason the Olympics are not held more often than every four years is because the athletes must be well prepared and trained. Training and participation in smaller competitions to win a place on the Olympic teams requires extra effort for the athlete.

The decathlon is the most difficult competition of all, and the participants in this event are the greatest of all athletes. "Decathlon" means ten events. Athletes who take part must train for all ten events and therefore cannot focus on just one competition. The variety of the events requires competitors to be well-rounded in their physical strength and speed, not merely specialists in one particular skill.

To become a strong Christian requires the same inner determination and strength of character as is required of such athletes as these. The preparation for the Christian is found in the Word of God as God lays the foundation for the victory. As the Christian studies, absorbs, and spends time in God's Word, he will be prepared to be victorious in life. Just as the athlete competes, so must we compete against forces outside of ourselves that want to overcome and defeat us.

As we study the Bible this year, we will see how the Christian life is similar to a great race. The Bible makes many references to the race we run as Christians and to the victory that Jesus Christ can give us. But it all starts with preparation from the Word of God.



LESSON 1

The Greatest Book Ever Written

Key Verse: Ephesians 6:17

VOCABULARY

Prophet: a spokesman for God who uttered the exact words the Lord gave him

Prophecy: something said by a prophet that reveals the divine will of God; a warning of something to come; a vivid, pointed, solemn prediction

Doctrine: a principle held as divine truth

Inspiration: the special influence of the Holy Spirit guiding certain persons to speak and write what God wanted communicated to others

Rebuking: blame or censure for a misdeed; a mild reproof or scolding

Righteousness: actions judged as proper by the standards of God's holy law, which is derived from His holy character

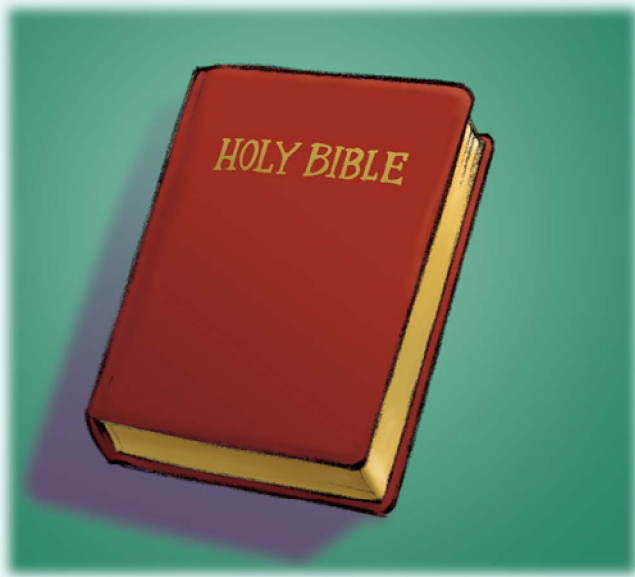
The Bible is the greatest book that has ever been written. In it God Himself speaks to men. It is a book of divine instruction. The Bible is not simply one book. It is an entire library of books that contain a wide variety of information, but it is tied together by one central purpose. The Bible was written by dozens of authors over a period of 1,600 years. It was written in three languages on three continents. The authors were poets, educators, singers, princes, kings, fishermen, and statesmen. Some of these authors were great scholars, while others were unlearned and ignorant men.

The Written Word And The Living Word

It would seem that with this many authors, the individual pieces of the Bible would not fit together well. Yet there is great unity throughout the book because really there was only one Author. To understand how so many authors could be unified in their writing of one book, we need to understand that there really was only one main Author.



Read 2 Peter 1:21 and explain in your own words how a book written by so many different people could be unified into the Word of God. Prophecy did not originate in the will of man, but prophets spoke as they were guided by the Holy Spirit.



The Word of God was authored by God Himself. The great subject of God's Word is the Lord Jesus Christ. The person and work of Jesus Christ are promised, prophesied, and pictured in the Old Testament. The life of the Lord Jesus is revealed in the four Gospels, and the meaning and purpose of His life, death, and resurrection are explained in the Epistles. His expected return is foretold in the book of Revelation.

Therefore, the great purpose of the written Word of God, the Bible, is to reveal the living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. God explains this in John 1:1–18. Read and study this passage and then answer the following questions:



What three statements are made about the Word in John 1:1?

1. The Word was in the beginning.
2. The Word was with God.
3. The Word was God.



What does verse 14 mean when it says that the Word became flesh? God sent Christ to the earth, and He became a man.



Why do we capitalize the name "Word"? because it refers to Christ, the Son of God



List the various ways John describes Jesus in verses 3, 4, and 9.

- He is the Creator of all things.
- He is the Life.
- He is the true Light.



What does John say about who Jesus was and how the world accepted Him?

- Verse 10: He made the world and was in the world, but the world did not recognize Him
- Verse 11: He came to help those He created, but they would not receive Him



What is the central message of the Bible (vs. 12)? Whoever receives Jesus Christ is given the right to become children of God.



According to verse 18, how then can we “see” God? Jesus Christ makes Him known.

Life Principle: Jesus Christ (the living Word) is the true God. The Bible (the written Word), though written by dozens of different people, actually has only one Author—God Himself.



We therefore know some very important facts about the Word of God and its Author. Some of these facts are listed below. See how many of the following blanks you can complete with the correct word:

- Jesus is God.
- Jesus was the Creator of the universe.
- The Word has always existed with God.
- God used dozens of different men to put His Word into written form.
- The Holy Spirit worked through men to write down God’s Word for us.
- The Bible is the written Word of God.
- Jesus Christ is the living Word of God.

Purposes For Studying God's Word



Second Timothy 3:16 gives four reasons for us to study God’s Word. List the four purposes below as given in this verse. Beside each purpose, look up the word in the dictionary and write the definition. We need to make sure we understand the purposes for studying God’s Word.

1. Useful for teaching (doctrine)—to learn principles held as divine truth
2. Useful for rebuking—to scold in order to correct
3. Useful for correcting—to conform to a proper standard; to change from wrong to right
4. Useful for training in righteousness—to teach or direct toward correct actions (actions in line with God’s holy character)

The Bible is, therefore, our only way of knowing God personally. Through studying God’s Word this year, we will learn more about God, more about God’s purpose for our lives, and how to live our lives in such a way as to have God’s blessing.

Winning Your Race

Variations of the phrase, "This is what the Lord says," occur hundreds of times in the Old Testament alone. The Bible is truly the Word of God. Never underestimate its importance, uniqueness, or worth!



Give an example of how the Lord could use each of these purposes in your own life (from 2 Tim. 3:16). _____



Name a Bible doctrine (teaching) you learned this week.



Name an area in your life that the Lord may need to rebuke through His Word.



Name an area in your life that God may need to correct or change.



Give an example of some training in righteousness God might give you.



LESSON 2

Josiah—The King With Character

Key Verse: Psalm 119:9

We have heard many times how fortunate we are to live in America. Many Christians around the world do not have Bibles. In many countries, reading the Bible is against the law. Sometimes, when we are used to having something that is easily obtained, we forget how special it really is. The Bible is not an ordinary book, and we need to remind ourselves of the privilege we have of possessing one. At no other time in history and in no other country has it been as easy to own a Bible. We are indeed privileged.

We have already discussed how we got our Bible and some of the reasons for studying it. To remind ourselves of the importance of studying God's Word, let's look at some other important verses.



Read Psalm 119:11. What is a primary purpose for studying His Word? that we might
not sin against God



As we studied in our last lesson, the Bible is a "living" book—it is God-breathed! It knows your mind and heart and can tell you things about yourself of which you might not be aware. Read Psalm 139:23–24 and explain what we should be desiring to see God do in our hearts through His Word.

We should want God to search us, know us, test us, and find the sin in us in order to lead us
to the way of eternal life.

Josiah's Family

In this lesson we are going to study the story of King Josiah, who became the king of Judah when he was only eight years old. King Josiah has a unique story because the Word of God played a very unique role in his life.

First, we need to see what kind of a family Josiah had. His father's name was Amon. Read about Amon and about Josiah's grandfather, Manasseh, in 2 Chronicles 33:21–24.



What did Amon and Manasseh do that was wrong in the eyes of the Lord? They
worshiped and offered sacrifices to idols.



Describe the character of Amon.

**He did evil in the eyes of the Lord,
would not humble himself before the Lord,
and increased his guilt.**



How did God deal with Amon in verse 24?

**Amon's officials conspired against him and
assassinated him in his palace.**



Josiah's Character

When Josiah became king, the nation of Judah was very sinful. His father had been a godless man and a terrible leader. When the leadership rebels against God, the nation will have many problems. In this case, the land was full of idols, the temple was falling apart, and the enemies of Judah were getting stronger and stronger.

But Josiah had learned to stand alone and do right. He had to learn these things on his own because he did not have the right kind of parents teaching him or showing him a good example. But Josiah was not led astray by the poor character of his father or the idol-worshiping people in his nation.



Read 2 Chronicles 34:1–3 and describe the character of Josiah.

**He did right in the eyes of the Lord and did not go to one side or the other but stayed on
the right track.**

Life Principle: Right character produces right actions.

Josiah's Actions

The Bible says that Josiah had an excellent example to follow. He did not imitate the godless men of Judah's history (including his own father).



Who was Josiah's hero according to 2 Chronicles 34:2–3? **King David**

The desire of Josiah's heart was to seek after God. The Bible teaches that real faith in God will cause you to do something. Others will know what you think and stand for; they will be able to tell by your actions. King Josiah's faith made him act.



Based on 2 Chronicles 34:3–7, explain what King Josiah did first in the land of Judah. He destroyed all the idols and the altars used for idol worship.



It took Josiah six years to clean up the land. Now he set to work at the next task. According to 2 Chronicles 34:8–13, what did he do next? He had the temple of the Lord repaired and rebuilt.



Do not think that it was easy for Josiah to give his heart to the Lord. It isn't always easy even if you have parents and teachers who love the Lord and show you the right example of Christian character.

It is so much more difficult if parents and friends are constantly pulling you away from the Lord or if your parents are gone, as was true in Josiah's life. But in spite of the idol worship in his land and the sinful character of his father, Josiah was proud to stand for God. Josiah's character is a good example for all of us to follow and learn from, especially since he had the strength to take a strong stand while he was so young. And because he loved the Lord, God was able to use him to reveal His Word once again.

Read the following verses in 2 Chronicles 34 and answer these questions:



Verse 27: What attitude did God see in the heart of Josiah? a responsive and humble heart



Verse 28: What did God promise Josiah because his heart was right? He would have peace in his lifetime and not see the disaster God would bring on his people.



Verse 25: Why was God's wrath to be poured out on the people? because they forsook God and burned incense to other gods



Verse 30: What need did Josiah see that the people had, and what did he do about it? to know God's Word—He read God's Word aloud to them.



Verse 31: Copy the promises Josiah made before the Lord.

- to follow the Lord
- to keep His commands, regulations, and decrees with all his heart and all his soul
- to obey the words of the covenant

Winning Your Race



God used Josiah and other faithful men and women to lead many people to worship Him.

Whom should we admire more? These people, or God Himself? Why?



Is it your desire to develop the type of character that can be a testimony to others? Why or why not? _____



LESSON 3

God Speaks

Key Verse: Hebrews 4:12

VOCABULARY

Discern: to come to know something that is not clear or easily recognizable to the mind or eye

Zeal: an enthusiastic, often intense interest or devotion to a cause

Zealot: a person who is intensely or fanatically devoted to a cause

When we read the Word of God, the Creator of the universe is actually speaking directly to our hearts and minds. To think that God Himself cares enough about us to speak directly to us in this special way should always give us a sense of awe. We forget what the Bible really is sometimes and therefore we do not realize when we study it how privileged we are to be able to understand it. Through the Bible, we can understand God Himself and His plan for the ages. We can also allow it to change us and make us into a person of outstanding courage and character.



Copy all of Hebrews 4:12 here. **Wording will vary according to the translation you use.**



List some of the special powers the Word of God claims in this verse.

- **It is alive, powerful, and active.**
- **It is able to penetrate deep into our hearts.**
- **It judges the thoughts and motives of our hearts.**

Life Principle: The Word of God should change us.



God Speaks To Moses

One of the best examples of God’s speaking directly to someone in the Bible is in the story of Moses. God had specifically chosen Moses to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt and out of slavery. Moses was an old man—eighty years old—when God spoke to him. God had been preparing Moses for this task for many years. But now, when the time God had chosen had arrived, Moses was not sure he was ready. He began to make excuses to God.

Look up each of the following verses in the Book of Exodus. In your own words, explain Moses’ excuses and how God responded to him.

Verses	Moses’ Excuse	God’s Response
3:11–12	Who am I to do something so important?	I will be with you.
3:13–14	They won’t understand who sent me.	Just say “I Am” sent you.
4:1–4	They will not believe me.	I will do miracles through you so they will believe.
4:10–12	I am not a good speaker.	I will show you what to say.

In these passages, we can see the certainty of God’s promises through His Word. God knows that if we are willing, He can give us power to do anything He wants for us. Look at the chart again and notice the promises God made to Moses.

Moses made many excuses to God, but he never told God he was unwilling. If he had not been willing, God might have chosen someone else. But God knew Moses’ heart and met his need. When Moses stopped giving excuses, God used him in a great way.



From your past studies, what do you remember about God's purpose for Moses in His plan?
to bring Israel out of the slavery of Egypt and lead them through the wilderness



What does the Bible say about Moses in Deuteronomy 34:10–12?
There has never been a prophet as Moses whom God used to do so many signs and wonders.

Simon The Zealot

Jesus had two disciples named Simon. Jesus changed the name of one of them to Peter, and most Christians are very familiar with the type of man Simon Peter was. Though he denied Christ before He died, this man became a great preacher after Christ's resurrection.

The other Simon is not well known. In fact, he is only mentioned a couple of times. In Luke 6:15 he is called "the Zealot" or "Zelotes." This was a nickname. It referred to a political group of those times called the Zealots.



Look up the words "zeal," "zealot," and "zealous" in the dictionary and use the meanings to explain the type of man Simon probably was.
a person intensely or fanatically devoted to
a cause



At the time of Christ, the Roman Empire was very strong. The Romans had control of Israel, and all the Jews were under the power of their government. The Zealots were a band of Jewish men who wanted Israel to have her freedom. They wanted to overthrow the Roman government.

Simon was a member of the Zealots who felt they could take on the whole Roman army. Their lives were "on fire for a cause." They were devoted to Israel. When Simon became a believer, Jesus changed his zeal away from politics. Jesus was a zealot—but not a Zealot. We read that He had a zeal for His Father's house when He cleansed the temple. Like Jesus, Simon was now "on fire" for spiritual things.

This is the way God wants us to live. Sometimes Christians have a "don't care" attitude, and then nothing satisfies them. When a Christian is full of fire and zeal, life is very full and exciting.

As we study the Word of God this year, God wants you to become zealous for spiritual things and zealous to learn more about Him.

Winning Your Race

Read Revelation 3:15–16. What kind of Christian are you? Are you hot or cold, or are you lukewarm?



What kind of attitude does God want Christians to have? He wants us to be zealous toward Him—not apathetic or uncaring.



Read 1 Chronicles 28:9 and, in your own words, tell what kind of heart and mind God is looking for. someone who will serve Him with wholehearted devotion and a willing mind;
someone who is seeking God



Imagine that God was talking directly to you as He talked to Moses. Think through all of the verses we have studied in this lesson. What would God say to you about the attitude of your heart and mind? _____

Unit Two:

Developing Inner Strength



Key Verse: 1 John 2:14

Athletes who compete in the Olympic games, particularly those who compete in the decathlon, must develop their inner strength to become the best athlete in their particular competition. Many, many times it is that one athlete who has an extra measure of inner strength who becomes the winner.

Athletes don't just compete against one another. They also must be attentive to time and distance standards. The competition is really a test of the athlete's speed, agility, endurance, and strength.

Christians are not called to compete against one another at all. We are competing against the strengths and weaknesses within ourselves. It is our inner weaknesses of character that will cause us to fail and not achieve our full potential. God wants to develop our inner character and strength so that we might be strong in the world and have an honorable and victorious life.

We must learn, therefore, that God has a purpose for us, that He wants to fill us with His Holy Spirit to give us His strength, and that our inner strength of character must come from God Himself. These are the lessons we will learn in Unit Two.

