

LIVING
THE WORD

CARIBBEAN BIBLE LESSONS



Leaders

Adults • Ages 19 and Up • Teacher Guide

September • October • November • December • 2023



**Adult • Age 19 and Up • Teacher Guide**

The *Adult Teacher Guide* provides suggestions for teacher preparation, a step by step teaching plan for adult Bible study, an alternative teaching plan for young adults and suggestions for applying the lesson. Each adult teacher needs a copy of the *Adult Learner Guide* in addition to this *Adult Teacher Guide*.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Dear Teachers of Adults,

It is indeed a privilege to have you on board for another inspiring journey through the pages of the Christmas 2023 issue of **Caribbean Bible Lessons Bible Leaders Teacher Guide** for adults.

We offer perpetual praise to God for His continued blessings, one of which is the opportunity to meet, whether face to face or online to study His word. As Sunday School teachers we stand in solidarity with, and pray for people in countries where studying the Bible can be life threatening. Our petition is that through God's enabling, they will find ways that are safe and spiritually enriching to engage in worship.

We also want to acknowledge the efforts of our dedicated teams, which commit their time, talents and other resources every week to ensure that the Sunday School interactions are meaningful and spiritually rewarding. One also recognises that a chain is as strong as its weakest link, and so efforts to upgrade skills, techniques and approaches must be given our highest priority. Intentional efforts should be made to obtain feedback from our students so that appropriate adjustments can be made to ensure optimum results from our engagement as guides and mentors in making Christ known.

In addition to meeting to study God's word, be mindful that an integral part of our reason for coming together is for the fellowship. Make sure to allocate some time to finding out how members are doing; bring the class up to date on the status of persons who have not yet returned to "in person" Sunday School. Above all, ensure that each member feels valued and appreciated. As a member of the body of Christ, a critical part of why we do what we do, is to ensure that all members feel that they belong to and are valued by their brethren.

Christmas is a very special time of the year. We look forward to the decorations and festivities. However, most significantly for us Christians, Christmas serves as a remembrance that our Saviour came to serve as a ransom for our sins. Advent also reminds us that we are still required to be in preparation mode for the second coming of our Lord.

In this edition of **CBL Bible Leaders Teacher Guide, Unit 1** brings us face-to-face with the **Disaster at My Door** and offers advice on Christian stewardship in our response to all types of natural disasters. The Unit is a timely exploration of natural disasters, during the Atlantic Hurricane Season, which runs from June 1 to November 30. Usually, September is the most active month with regard to storms and hurricanes in the region.

Unit 2 challenges us to be **Committed** to God. It guides us on being more submissive to God's Will and purpose. Aptly titled, **Maturing, Unit 3** focuses on the ways in which we can grow in our Christian discipleship and the fruit of the Spirit. In **Unit 4**, we explore Advent through the lens of the theme, **Affirming a Secure Future**.

Please accept best wishes for a happy Christmas and may the New Year bring you renewed zeal and commitment for imparting God's Word.

Yours in the Lord's service,

John Mars

MEET OUR WRITERS

UNIT ONE: Genevieve McMaster, British Virgin Islands

Ms McMaster has a zeal for teaching others about God's Word and His purpose for their life. That fervour has seen her serving in various ministries of her church on the island of Tortola. She is a teacher of adult Sunday School and an educator by profession. Sister McMaster explains that writing adult Sunday School Lessons for Caribbean Christian Publications (CCP) has challenged her to be more committed to prayer, reading and studying the Bible. She is committed to allowing the Lord to speak through her for the upliftment of adults.



UNIT TWO: Dahlia Fraser, Jamaica



Ms Fraser accepted Jesus at an early age and has remained active in His service. She is a writer and publishing consultant whose greatest passion is prayer, as she regards it as a powerful resource, which God has given us to impact the world. Sister Fraser has served in a wide range of ministries of the church in Jamaica and in Canada. These include: administration at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, teaching Sunday School, involvement in the prayer ministry, counselling and Christian communications in local congregations.

UNIT THREE: Zoë Simpson, Jamaica

During her high school years, Dr Simpson became aware of her Christian responsibility to help others to find Christ and to grow in Him. Since then, she has used her writing and teaching skills to disciple others. The guiding Bible verse of her life is Ezra 7:10, because it confirms and fuels her passion of studying and sharing the Word. She has served as the Christian Education Director of her denomination. Dr Simpson is the Director of a service organization for teen mothers.



UNIT FOUR: Angela Webb; Rev. John Bramble, Trinidad and Tobago



Mrs Webb is a lay preacher, member of the diaconate and women's group leader for her church, and a retired school principal. She is passionate about Christian Education and this zeal has led her to volunteer in teaching religious education in schools.

The Reverend John Bramble, now deceased, was of the strong conviction that Bible study is the foundation of a growing church. An avid champion of Bible Study in the local church, he had for many years encouraged the study of the Word through the writing of adult Sunday School Lessons.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

NATURAL DISASTERS and your CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

THE Caribbean region has had a long history of being affected by **natural disasters**. These are catastrophic events caused by natural processes of the Earth which are exacerbated by human actions. These events usually result in widespread loss of human life, major structural damage, severe economic disruption and significant environmental damage.

It would seem that natural disasters are not God's judgment upon an individual or a nation. They are part of the essential foundation of the creation that has fallen because of human's sin. *"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice ... We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time"* (Romans 8:21-22).

BIBLE PROPHECIES

Bible prophecies indicate that natural disasters will increase in frequency and intensity as the end of the age

approaches (Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:25-26; Revelation 6:12; 11:13; 16:18). These events seem to coincide with some of the events being predicted by scientists because of the phenomenon of global warming. Global warming is the gradual increase in the overall temperature of the earth's atmosphere generally attributed to the greenhouse effect. And, what is the greenhouse effect? It is a term used to describe the phenomenon whereby the Earth's atmosphere traps the sun's warmth, which would otherwise escape into space.

(Cont'd on page 9)

Special Recognition !

Caribbean Christian Publications wishes to express appreciation to the following persons for their contribution to this issue of the **Bible Leaders Teacher and Learner Guides**:

Curriculum Developers: Elaine Fletcher and Erica James-King.

Biblebackground Writer: Owen Evelyn

Feature Writer: Erica James-King

Reviewer: Grace Peart

Without your efforts, the September-December 2023 issue would not have been a wonderful reality.

UNIT ONE OVERVIEW

Disaster at My Door

Unit Aim: To encourage adults to be faithful in the stewardship of their life and environment, recognising that God has power over everything that happens in the universe including natural disasters and He remains faithful to us.

Lesson 1: Trust Sovereign God

The Lesson defines natural disasters and posits the Bible-based view that natural disasters occur as a result of the Fall of humankind. The study affirms God as sovereign of the universe. Emphasising that catastrophes which result from the natural processes of the earth are not exemplary judgement from God; it explains that in the case of exemplary judgement, the righteous would not suffer with the unrighteous. It inspires adults to exercise their faith in our God Who is always in control.

Lesson 2: Stay Alert and Hopeful

The second Lesson promotes the teaching that responsible stewards of the resources which God has given us, prepare for natural calamities by taking precautionary measures; and when disaster strikes, they are examples of God's wisdom, hope and peace. By highlighting the qualities of a responsible steward, the study underscores the need for spiritual, physical and social preparations for natural disasters.

Lesson 3: Respond with Reverence

Lesson 3 will lead adults to realise God must not be held to human standards, as He is perfect. It prompts us to respond to God with reverence (holy fear and deep respect) in the midst of bewildering as well as favourable circumstances. The Lesson reminds us that God, not us, is the Master of our destiny. Therefore, we should be humble while depending on Him at all times.

Lesson 4: Recognise My Role in Preparedness

Committed Christians who are good stewards help to protect the life and property of members of their community, not just that of their families and themselves. That is the prevailing message of the final Lesson in the Unit. The study also demonstrates that Christians should practise good environmental stewardship, in caring for plants and animals in a responsible way. It prompts adults to commit to making themselves available to serve in disaster preparedness or recovery programmes.

Trust Sovereign God

Desired Outcome

By acknowledging God's awesome power and identifying ways in which we can glorify God before, during and after natural disasters, adults will recognise that God does not let go of His creation-governing power even when we experience natural disasters.

PREPARE FOR SUNDAY

- Psalm 135:6; 147:15-18; Job 38:1-18; Genesis 8:20-22; Romans 8:19-22

• For Introduce the Lesson:

1) Prior to Sunday, assign some adults to take to class, a **photo** of the effects of a natural disaster, which they have taken with their *smart phones* or found in the *newspapers, magazines* or on the *Internet*.

2) Know the **Unit** and **Lesson** titles and the essence of the **Lesson**.
3) Study the information in **A DEEPER LOOK**.

• For BIBLE STUDY:

1) Be familiar with **Section 2 (LG)**.
2) Reflect on the questions, which you will need to ask.

• For LIVING THE LESSON:

1) Prepare a **chart** titled, **Actions which Honour God**. Draw a **three-column table** with the following column-headings: Pre-Disaster; During Disaster; Post-Disaster.
2) Provide **markers**.

TRUTH FOR THE DAY

God is in charge of the universe and no act of nature is unknown and goes unnoticed by Him.

A DEEPER LOOK

Natural Disaster — A natural event such as a flood, hurricane or earthquake that causes great damage or loss of life (*en.oxforddictionaries.com*).

God is Sovereign — This means that God is in control of everything not just in principle but also in practice (*www.theopedia.com*).

Judgement — An action, which assesses compliance with and rewards for divine truth and divine principles (Isaiah 16:5; 33:5; Psalm 89:14; 1 Peter 4:17). Salvation or damnation is a reward resulting from judgement (*Matthew 11:22,24; Luke 10:14*).

God's exemplary judgement—A term used by theologians to describe natural catastrophes in which the wicked is destroyed and the righteous is not harmed (*Genesis 6:8; 7; 3:13*).

TOGETHER ON SUNDAY

Introduce the Lesson 5 minutes

Welcome the members. Define the term *natural disaster*, using information from **A DEEPER LOOK**. Invite each person with a **photo** to stand and display his or her **photo**. The photo bearers should also state where the natural disaster depicted in their picture took place and how it affected their life, or the life of persons in the location in which it occurred. Tell the adults that the **Unit**, including today's **Lesson**, will challenge them to consider how they view natural disasters and how God expects them to respond to natural disasters.

BIBLE STUDY 25 MINUTES

Have two volunteers read **Psalm 147:15-18; Job 38:1-18**. Have the adults share their perspectives on what they can learn about God's nature and natural disasters from Psalm 147:15-18. After the responses, highlight that God's power is not limited to the heavens but extends to the Earth; controlling the elements—the sea,

the clouds, lightning, rain and wind. Remind them to never lose sight that God is in charge even when calamities occur.

Giving a background to the Job passage, state that after being silent throughout the reports in the book of Job, about the dialogues between Job and his friends, God finally spoke with Job. Job wanted to know what was the cause of his suffering, so that if it were about an offense he could confess it, repent and so he thought this would bring an end to his suffering. Point out that God does not answer Job to indicate whether he is innocent or guilty. Instead, God speaks about the wonders of the world which He has created and contrasts that with the abilities of human beings, who are frail, vulnerable and entirely dependent on God.

Outline that the passage suggests that God advises Job to recognise human limitations and trust that God will take care of what Job and others cannot know or do. We also learn from this portion of Scripture that we can look for signs of God's work and power in the natural environment and in the natural phenomena, which affect us. Emphasise that God is affirming that He makes and sustains the universe. **Ask:** *Since we know that God is sovereign, how can this knowledge help us before, during*

and after a hurricane? Point out that if we are responsible, godly stewards, we will not only pray before a natural disaster but take the necessary precautionary measures.

Cite Genesis 8:20-22 and **Section 2 (LG)** to relate that God no longer uses natural disasters, as exemplary judgement for the wicked. Stress that in exemplary judgement only the evil are punished. Underscore that in natural disasters of our era, both those faithful and unfaithful to God die. Therefore, those crises are not exemplary judgement.

Invite a volunteer to read **Romans 8:19-22**. Refer to the passage while indicating that Paul was attributing a human consciousness of pain to the whole of creation. Indicate that sin has been, and is, the cause of all the suffering that exists in the natural, social, emotional and spiritual environments.

Elaborate that injury, deformity, and infirmity affect creatures, plants and the Earth, because of the sin of Adam and Eve and our own disobedience to God. Emphasise that the travail and pain, which the Earth is undergoing, will come to an end with the second coming of Christ. State that natural disasters should remind us that the coming of the Lord is near and that the time to get right with God is running out (Matthew 24:7, 8).

LIVING THE LESSON 10 MINUTES

Invite adults to reflect on the passages and earlier discussions and **list** on the **chart**, ways in which we can glorify God in how we behave **before, during and after natural disasters**. If the following are not included on the list, **suggest them:** ☞ *recognise that God is sovereign and have faith in Him;* ☞ *pray about our circumstances at all times;* ☞ *build in areas which are not flood prone;* ☞ *engage consistently in proper waste disposal;* ☞ *store important documents in waterproof bags/plastic containers before a flood or hurricane;* ☞ *practise earthquake drills;* ☞ *participate in reforestation.*

Close with a time of prayer, affirming God as sovereign and interceding for adults to be better stewards in caring for the environment.

FOR YOUNGER ADULTS

PREPARE FOR SUNDAY

- Psalm 135:6; 147:15-18; Job 38:1-18; Genesis 8:20-22; Romans 8:19-22

- **For Attention Getter:**

- 1) Familiarise yourself with the story in **THAT'S LIFE** (LG).
- 2) Prior to Sunday, assign a young adult to do a **monologue** featuring Sandra from the **THAT'S LIFE** story.

- **For BIBLE STUDY OPTION:**

- 1) Be knowledgeable of all the Scripture references.
- 2) Use the information in **A DEEPER LOOK** to inform your discussion.
- 3) Pay keen attention to **Section 1** (LG).

- **For APPLICATION:**

- 1) Create and display a horizontal **banner** with the **BIBLE TRUTH** and **LIFE QUESTION** (LG).
- 2) Provide guidance on the discussion on the **LIFE QUESTION**.
- 3) Prepare to implement the instructions in the first paragraph of **LIVING THE LESSON** (TG), page 7.

ON SUNDAY!

Attention Getter 5 minutes

Welcome the young adults. Invite the assigned person to do a **monologue** of Sandra in the **THAT'S LIFE** (LG) story. Take responses to the questions connected to the story. **State:** *Today, we will be shown the kind of God-centred perspectives we should have on natural disasters and how our response to natural disasters, should glorify God.*

BIBLE STUDY OPTION

Summarise Job 38:1-18. Use Section 1 (LG) to assist you with highlighting the major points in the passage. Indicate that God is affirming that He makes and sustains the universe. Therefore, no natural disaster is without His knowledge, action or permission.

State that God's discussion with Job also made mention of preparedness (v. 3). God was cautioning Job to prepare to answer His rigorous questions. Note that the phrase in verse 3—*"Brace yourself like a man"* (v. 3 NIV) or *"Gird up now thy loins like a man"* (v. 3 KJV)—is an urgent call to get ready for immediate action, or to prepare for a coming action or event. Point out that to keep from impeding the wearer during any vigorous activity, such as battle, exercise and strenuous work, the loose ends of garments (tunics, cloaks, mantles) had to be gathered up and tucked into one's girdle. Explain that the girdle was a band about six inches wide which was worn around the loins. Say that to *"brace yourself like a man"* was to take mental or spiritual preparatory measures for a coming challenge. Emphasise that similarly, God expects us to live in spiritual, mental, emotional and social readiness for natural disasters.

Cite Romans 8:19-22 to point out that the Fall of humankind and their continued sinfulness have caused natural catastrophes. Say that these will end when Christ returns.

APPLICATION 20 MINUTES

Have the young adults repeat the **BIBLE TRUTH** and **LIFE QUESTION** displayed on the horizontal **banner**. Invite young adults to give their answers to the **LIFE QUESTION**, citing examples from their experiences.

For the final activity for the young adults, follow the guidelines in the first paragraph of **LIVING THE LESSON** (TG), page 7.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

NATURAL DISASTERS and your CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP (cont'd from page 4)

GLOBAL WARMING

This effect is caused by the presence of significant amounts of certain gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O).

The Earth has warmed by an average of 0.85°C since 1880. This increasing trend of global warming is unequivocal and unprecedented over decades to millennia. This information was generated by the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** which falls under the auspices of the United Nations. The IPCC (2013) and climatologists are **predicting an average global temperature increase of 3.2 to 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100**. This increase in global surface temperatures has been projected to cause severe droughts and more intense storms.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The practical response of the Christian to help reduce the sources and impacts of climate change should be environmental stewardship. Climate change refers to significantly observed or measured long-term changes in average weather conditions.

Two measures in which environmental stewardship can be achieved are through adaptation and mitigation.

Climate change adaptation is an initiative to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected global warming and changing climate conditions. Mitigation is human intervention to reduce the amount of greenhouse gasses emitted into the atmosphere.

Sound climate change adaptation and mitigation practices include expanding rainwater harvesting, the use of better water storage and conservation techniques and the improvement of land management. Examples of the latter environmental stewardship practices are erosion control and soil protection through tree planting, the enhancement of building codes to ensure hurricane proof buildings and reducing the dependence on fossil fuel as the main source of energy.

REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Individually, we can also reduce our own **carbon footprint**. We can do this by reducing, reusing and recycling waste, turning off electrical equipment when not in use, using energy efficient light bulbs, and using water more efficiently. We can also use less paper or go paperless when conducting certain activities.

Stay Alert & Hopeful

Desired Outcome

Adults will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of being responsible and faithful stewards of God by committing to some personal, disaster preparedness practices; and making a booklet or poster promoting disaster preparedness tips.

PREPARE FOR SUNDAY

- Mark 4:35-41; Ecclesiastes 9:1-3, 10-12; Hebrews 2:14-18

• For Introduce the Lesson:

1) Source a recording of the **song, I Told the Storm**, © Gregory O'Quin, 1998, Word/Epic/Sony Distribution.

2) Know the information in **A DEEPER LOOK**.

• For LIVING THE LESSON:

1) Provide *writing paper* and pens for **Reality Check** (LG).

2) Prior to Sunday, invite a member who has experience in computer graphics to bring his or her laptop to church to help in the design of a **Disaster Preparedness Booklet**.

3) As an option for making the **Booklet**, provide *Bristol paper; glue; typing sheets; markers; crayons; wool*.

TRUTH FOR THE DAY

Every responsible Christian steward will prepare wisely for eventualities and be unrelenting in their faith and hope in God, during natural disasters and other circumstances in their life.

A DEEPER LOOK

☐ **Steward**—One who manages resources or administers affairs on behalf of another.

☐ **Stewardship**—The responsibility of overseeing or protecting something valuable; the act of managing something on behalf of another.

☐ **Christian Stewardship**—*Utilising or managing all resources God provides for the glory of God and the betterment of God's creation.* (Charles Bugg. 1991. *Stewardship in Holman Bible Dictionary*. Holman: Tennessee. pp. 1303-1304).

TOGETHER ON SUNDAY

Introduce the Lesson 5 minutes

Welcome the members. Invite them to close their eyes and listen as you play the recording of the **song, I Told the Storm**. After the recording ends, read over the words of the chorus. Ask two volunteers to share how they felt and what thoughts went through their mind, when they heard the recording of the song and the lyrics that you read. After the answers, tell the class that in today's **Lesson** we are being reminded that we ought to always be alert to the potential of a natural disaster or other forms of crisis. Share the information in **A DEEPER LOOK**. Highlight that today, we will also explore the need to be hopeful and faithful stewards of God during natural phenomena and other types of situations.

BIBLE STUDY 20 MINUTES

Have the class examine **Ecclesiastes 9:1-3, 10-12**. Explain that while the actual author of the book seems unclear, the book itself seems to reflect the teachings or the conclusions drawn by King Solomon (1:1) towards the latter part of his life. Invite them to state what are some of the messages they have learnt from the passages just read. Explain that throughout King Solomon's life he enjoyed

every pleasure imaginable to humans (2:1-10). Therefore, he was in a good position during his latter days, to advise those in his era and the generations to come that: **1)** all the activities in this life that one participates in are ultimately meaningless (1:2), unless they are done for God. **2)** Ultimately, no matter what one's station in life, all life comes to the same conclusion—physical death (Ecclesiastes 9:3).

Emphasise that life is futile, when it is lived without God and in disobedience to Him. Ask the members to share how the Ecclesiastes passage, especially verses 11-12, can be instructive in helping us to live in daily readiness for disasters. Reiterate that the same calamities strike people. Explain that there are no guarantees as to what life will bring. Underscore that God is Supreme over everything and everyone; so, we can depend on Him to take care of us, no matter what circumstances affect us.

Assign an adult to read **Mark 4:35-41**. Remind them that human beings do not control the weather, God does. **Ask:** *Considering all that the disciples had seen and heard of Jesus, why do you think they responded in that manner?* State that the disciples'

wakeup call, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" reflects fear and lack of faith. Point out that we should always be prepared, but we should not live in fear. Highlight that Jesus calls us to trust Him in all the adversities of life.

Read Hebrews 2:14-18.

Point to the issue of death raised in verse 15. Comment that we could not and cannot save ourselves from death and eternal damnation. Point out that salvation can only be obtained by means of accepting Jesus' death and resurrection. Help members affirm their faith in God acknowledging that Christ came in the flesh because we are flesh.

Use the passage to reinforce that God is our hope in despair, and our hope in good and bad times. Affirm that there is no power that can compare and successfully compete with God's power. Hence, we have every reason to trust God completely. Say that through Jesus alone, we have hope in this life and after the grave. Note that one certainty of life is that God is intimately involved in the life of those who trust Him. **Ask:** *How do faith and hope in God help you to be a good steward of God in times of disasters?* Take some responses.

LIVING THE LESSON 15 MINUTES

Divide the class into two groups. Advise them to start the following assignments in class and finish them as homework: **□Group 1:** Create a **Disaster Preparedness Booklet for the Sunday School**. It should have Disaster Preparedness tips, relevant drawings about readiness for natural disasters and relevant Bible passages.

□Group 2: Complete the activities in **Reality Check**. When the group members have completed the tasks, they should share some of their answers with members of the group. Discuss.

Close with a prayer for adults to be hopeful and faithful stewards of God.

FOR YOUNGER ADULTS

PREPARE FOR SUNDAY

• Mark 4:35-41;
Ecclesiastes 9:1-3, 10-12;
Hebrews 2:14-18

• For **BIBLE STUDY OPTION**:

1) Know the assigned Scripture references so you can interrelate them in your discussion.

2) Be familiar with the information in **A DEEPER LOOK**, so you can use it to inform the discussion.

• For **APPLICATION**:

1) Provide large sheets of **cartridge paper**, markers, crayons, pencils and relevant pictures for **Group 1**.

2) Invite two members who have experience in computer graphics or basic information technology to bring their **laptops** or **tablets** to church to help in the design of the **"Precious Memory" book**. If the church has a computer lab, let **Group 2** use it to carry out their assignment.

3) Also supply **Group 2** with Bristol paper, typing sheet, markers, crayons, pencils, glue, glitter, wool, scissors, pictures.

4) Provide **pens** and **paper**.

ON SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY OPTION

Invite two volunteers to read **Ecclesiastes 9:1-3, 10-12; Hebrews 2:14-18**. Lead the class in comparing the concerns and solutions noted in both passages. Cite what both passages say about death. Underscore that the first and wisest preparation for disasters is to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of our life through 1) confession of sin, 2) repentance from sin, 3) the confession of our faith in Jesus, and 4) a commitment to live in obedience to Christ always.

Highlight that many people fear that disasters might take their life and that of their family and friends. State that while some fear death because they are not sure what comes after, the Bible clearly tells us that after death is judgment. Explain that the notion that *"when you dead you done"* is now also being challenged by Science. The largest study on near-death and out-of-body experiences ever done thus far (McKay, October 07, 2014) reported that of those cardiac arrest persons surveyed, nearly 40% reported some form of *"awareness"* during the time when they were considered clinically dead. Say that the passages just read teach that there is no reason to fear death, so long as we have a right relationship with God. Point out that non-Christians still have time to make it right with God at this moment, because no other time is promised to us.

Drawing attention to **Mark 4:35-41**. Emphasise that Jesus provides victory over the literal and figurative *"storms"* in our life. **Ask:** *What literal or figurative storm have you overcome because of faith and hope in God, and adequate preparedness measures?* Emphasise that studying God's Word and obeying it are preparedness measures for every situation in life.

APPLICATION 20 MINUTES

Divide the class into groups with the following tasks which they should start in class and complete during two weeks:

Group 1: Create two **Disaster Preparedness Posters** for the church's bulletin board. One **poster** should address hurricane awareness while the other should promote earthquake precautionary measures. Include on both **posters**, a Bible verse which assures us of God's help.

Group 2: Compile a **book** of *Precious Promises* which we can turn to in the face of disasters. The book should have Bible verses and testimonies from the class and other church members.

Group 3: Complete the activities in the **Reality Check**. Dramatise the **THAT'S LIFE** story and discuss your answers to the questions related to the story.

Respond with Reverence

Desired Outcome

Adults will be led to affirm the importance of reverence for God and a readiness to learn from Him in situations of despair and satisfaction, by: 1) assessing their attitudes towards God during a recent disaster, and 2) reflecting on the impact the disaster had on their spiritual life.

PREPARE FOR SUNDAY

• Romans 11:33-34;
Joel 1:1-20;
Job 8:1-7; 42:10;
Habakkuk 1:12-13

• For Introduce the Lesson:

1) Create and display a **chart** of definitions based on **A DEEPER LOOK**.

2) Have a **white board** or mount a large sheet of **newsprint**. Make **two columns** on the **white board** or **newsprint**, headed: **Natural Disasters**; **Man-made Disasters**.
3) Provide **markers**.

• For BIBLE STUDY:

1) Design a **chart** with a **five-column table**. Title the **chart**, **Attitudes towards God during Disasters**.
2) Supply **markers**.

• For LIVING THE LESSON:

1) Reflect on **THAT'S LIFE (LG)**.
2) Before Sunday, ask the adults to read up on agricultural crises caused by plant diseases and preventative measures.
3) Provide **writing paper and pens**.

TRUTH FOR THE DAY

God expects us to adopt an attitude of reverence to Him and a willingness to learn from Him, in every circumstance.

A DEEPER LOOK

☐ **Reverence** — A feeling or attitude of deep respect accompanied with awe and devotion. A feeling of profound awe, respect, admiration and love.

☐ **Disaster** — Serious disruption occurring suddenly and involving wide-spread impact and loss of human life, material and economic resources.

☐ **Natural Disaster** — A natural event which causes great damage or loss of life. A catastrophe caused by forces of nature.

☐ **Man-made Disaster** — Disastrous event caused directly and chiefly by identifiable deliberate or negligent human actions.

TOGETHER ON SUNDAY

Introduce the Lesson 10 minutes

Welcome the members. Draw their attention to the **chart** with the definitions. Let them read the definitions aloud. Invite the members to list on the **white board** or **newsprint**, some types of natural and human disasters. **Examples of man-made disasters**: car and plane crashes, crime, oil spills, air pollution, war, bomb explosions, and industrial accidents.

Next, encourage the adults to think of a natural or man-made disaster in which they felt deep respect and awe for God and praised God for His greatness. Allow two volunteers to share their thoughts with the class. Inform the adults that today's **Lesson** puts the spotlight on the need to have a holy fear (reverence) of God, while expressing confidence in Him and in His ability to act in our best interest inside and outside of crises. Indicate that the **Lesson** will also explore the importance for us to use disasters to aid our growth in godly character.

BIBLE STUDY 20 MINUTES

Assign two persons to read: **Joel 1:1-20; Job 8:1-7; 42:10.**

State that the devastation in the land of Judah was immense and far-reaching—crops and animals were dying from the locusts' invasion and the severe drought. Cite verse 10 to elaborate on the extensive nature of the natural adversities facing the Israelites in Judah.

Ask: *What are some of the terms used by the writer to describe the desperate and hostile conditions existing in Judah?* Take some responses.

Emphasise that Joel cautioned the people of Judah that they would only get release from the plague of locusts and the drought, if they repented and renewed their relationship with God. He proclaimed that the Lord required prayer and fasting, which should entail public confession, repentance and surrender to God's Will.

Underscore that we should always respond to God with reverence in and outside of crises. State that God is always ready to forgive and to help us, when we cry out to Him in sincerity.

Making reference to Job, state that sin was not the cause of Job's tribulations. Emphasise that God will allow us to be tested through natural and man-made disasters to reveal our true character, as well as the degree of commitment and love we have for Him. **Enquire:** *What have your experiences with natural disasters revealed about your character and love of God?*

Read Habakkuk 1:12-13.

Invite volunteers to list on the **chart-table** provided, the perspectives or attitudes of the following persons towards God, during the disaster of their time: the Israelites, Joel, Job, Bildad and Habakkuk. Have the class compare the attitudes listed. Discuss. Point out that while trying to understand God's actions in using the Babylonians against the Israelites, Habakkuk complained and questioned God's actions. Point out that we should not emulate Habakkuk's attitude displayed in the passage. Emphasise that we should trust God even when we do not understand our adversities. State that God's ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 35:9).

LIVING THE LESSON 15 MINUTES

Discuss the **THAT'S LIFE** story and take answers to the related questions. Highlight the importance of being good stewards in not breaching importation or customs laws in bringing plants, fruits and animals from one country to another, as this can cause outbreaks of severe agricultural diseases.

Have a time of **question and answer** in which the adults write responses to the following questions: *In one sentence, describe the last disaster you encountered?* *What were your thoughts and feelings at that time?* *In what ways was your spiritual life impacted positively and negatively during and after the natural disaster?* *How did you grow spiritually during and after that disaster?* *List some ways in which you should have grown spiritually from your experience with the last disaster.* *What impact has the disaster had on other areas of your life?*

Point out that we should use every circumstance, whether it is good or bad, to help us to revere God; as well as grow in Christian character, in our relationship with God and in personal development.

FOR YOUNGER ADULTS

ON SUNDAY

PREPARE FOR SUNDAY

• Romans 11:33-34;
Joel 1:1-20;
Job 8:1-7; 42:10;
Habakkuk 1:12-13

• **For Attention Getter:**

1) Prepare and display a **chart** outlining the information from **A DEEPER LOOK (TG)**.

2) Get ready to lead in the singing of the **worship song, You Deserve The Glory** © Terry MacAlmon, 2000, *The Glory of His Presence* album.

• **For BIBLE STUDY OPTION:**

1) Do background reading on the entire chapter of **Habakkuk 1**.

2) Reflect on the similarities in the crises in **Joel 1** and **Habakkuk 1**.

• **For APPLICATION:**

1) Reflect on the question you will need to ask. Plan to also share with the class, your response to the question.

2) Prepare to comment on the importance of honouring God in favourable and distressing circumstances.

3) Provide *paper* and *pens* for **Reality Check (LG)**.

Attention Getter 5 minutes

Welcome the young adults. Turn their attention to the **chart** with the definitions. Lead the class in the singing of the **worship song, You Deserve The Glory**. Invite the young adults to think of a natural or man-made disaster in which they felt reverence for God and praised God for His majestic greatness. Allow a young adult to share his or her thoughts. Relate that today's **Lesson** will emphasise that we must have reverence for God during good times and distressing times. Indicate that the **Lesson** will also explore the importance of using disasters to nurture our growth in godly character.

BIBLE STUDY OPTION

Assign two young adults to read and compare **Joel 1:1-20; Habakkuk 1:12-13**. Cite the first passage to point out that the people of Israel and their animals were experiencing two natural disasters. Note that they had a severe scarcity of food crops and water due to drought and locust-infestation of the vegetation. Refer to verse 9 and mention that the destruction to agricultural produce caused by the locusts was so acute that it affected corporate worship. Indicate that the situation was so grave that the priests had nothing to use for the daily grain and drink offerings in the Temple. Without such worship rituals and services in the Temple, there was an even greater void in the covenant relationship between God and Israel.

Highlight that the only way to conquer such adversities was repentance. Say that the prophet Joel called on the people of Israel to be as sorrowful over their sin as an engaged woman whose fiancé was killed before her wedding day (v. 8). Explain that **sack cloth** was a coarse cloth made from goat's hair. It was worn as a sign of mourning or as an act of penitence. Inform the class that the way we respond to disasters should help us to grow in reverence for God and in Christian virtues.

APPLICATION 20 MINUTES

Ask: *What are the Christian ways in which you have grown as a result of experiencing a recent natural or man-made catastrophe?* Take some responses. Emphasise that God is in control, but He gives us the choice to glorify or dishonour Him in every situation. If we follow the latter choice we attract God's wrath. Reiterate that if we love God we will honour Him always.

Close by allowing each member to do the activities in **Reality Check**.

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