

# People Need The Lord

**WHY DO PEOPLE NEED THE LORD?** The most common understanding is “to go to heaven when this life is over.” Nobody wants to go to that ‘other place’ - that is, if they really think about it. But then, nobody is really thinking about it, are they? At least not right now when there are so many other more ‘important things’ to worry about! But that’s the point: those ‘things’ are also reasons why people need the Lord right now! There is too much to face alone—we all need God’s help...today!



[>>Teacher: Ask students, “What are some of the most ‘pressing concerns’ on people today for which they need God’s help?” (answers may include: worry about world events, financial hardship, medical problems, etc.) Teacher or a student should read Isaiah 61:1-3 at this time>>]



**MAN IS IN ALL KINDS OF TROUBLE!!** He must be if the Son of God Himself had to leave heaven to come to his rescue. When Jesus announced the beginning of his ministry to his “home church” (see Lk 4:16-21) he read from **Isaiah 61:1-3** which tells us that, to save us, Jesus would not only proclaim “*the acceptable year of the Lord*” [that salvation has come] and “*the day of vengeance of our God*” [so will punishment to those who refuse to repent] but that he also came to:

*Preach good tidings*      *Open prisons of the bound*  
*Proclaim liberty to captives*      *Give beauty for ashes*      *Joy for mourning*  
*Praise for the spirit of heaviness*

Now that is meeting a lot of needs! And all this so that we “...*might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.*” [>> Teacher: tell students that God cares for us as one would his garden (or, in the case of ‘trees’, his ‘orchard’.) But we know how committed He is to us because what He does for us ultimately results in God’s own glory . >>] What God wants for us is best for us - but most people don’t even know it. Why? Well, consider the following.

**“THREE STRIKES AND YOU’RE OUT!!”** Three reasons why people usually don’t see things God’s way:



First and foremost is that sin separates us from God, like a partition or wall. [>>Teacher: stress that each time we sin it is like placing one brick upon another. It may not seem like much (one brick may look small enough) but eventually it adds up to a lot!!>>] Put a high enough fence between you and your neighbor and you can eventually ‘forget’ they are there! But what about the time when you need your neighbor’s help? [>> Have a student read **Isaiah 59:1,2** >>] God tells us in **Isaiah 59:1,2** that He can ‘hear’ us and ‘help’ us but that He must ‘hide’ His face from us because of our sins. [>> Ask: “What do you think it means, ‘hide His face’?”>>] God hates sin (though He still loves sinners) and that’s why He won’t look upon us while we are covered in that awful stuff. We need to turn to him - we need the wall turned down - so we can find “*help in time of need.*” (Heb 4:16) [<<Teacher: read **Heb 4:14-16** Discuss how we can approach Jesus with any problem, no matter how personal, because He fully understands, having lived among us and experienced this life with its trials. God is not disconnected from us, some ‘distant diety’, as other world religions see God. He wants to be close to us, personal, our ‘best friend’!! Now, read the dialog box below and allow some free discussion on this issue, but avoid using too much class time>>]

*Did you know:* Some people are angry with God because He didn’t answer some prayer of theirs, even though they will admit their life is not ‘right’ with Him. This scripture in **Isaiah** explains why God has to ‘chase’ not to answer. However, sometimes God will answer a prayer from someone who would otherwise not ‘deserve’ it just so that, by showing His goodness, He may lead them to repentance (Rom 2:4)



What makes matters worse - sin blinds sinners! (2Cor 4:3,4) [>> Have a student read >>] They can’t see the wall that separates them or any of the other problems caused by the accumulation of evil through the passing of years. A ‘captive’ to sin can’t even change if they wanted to because of their continual war with their own flesh’ (see Rom 7:18-25) Without the Lord, people are in darkness, in prison, and fighting a war with themselves!!

[>>Teacher: suggest to your students that they should read carefully the passage in **Romans 7** at a later time, but share with them the following (verses 18-19 & 24-25) from the New Living Translation: “I want to do what is right, but I can’t. I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway...Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is the plight of many still trapped in sin: they can’t do what’s right even if they wanted to. >>]



But worst of all: a person in sin is at war with God!! (and God is someone you really don't want to pick a fight with!) Check out these scriptures: [ <<Teacher: If your remaining class time is short, suggest to students to read these first two verses on their own time. Otherwise, read each along with the discussion notes that follow>>]

**James 4:4** "...a friend of the world is an enemy of God" [ << The terms "adulterers and adulteresses" refers to the analogy that our relationship to God should be like husband and wife, with worldly entanglement along the lines of 'infidelity.' Consider this rendering of verse 4 from the paraphrased version The Message, "You're cheating on God. If all you want is your own way, flirting with the world every chance you get, you end up enemies of God and his way." >>]

**Phil 3:18,19** "...some are enemies of the cross cause their belly is their god" [ >> The key here is that they 'mind earthly things' - the lusts and attractions of the world are more important. Jesus asked in Mark 8:36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" >>]

**Col 1:21** "...you were enemies - but now He hath reconciled you..." [ >> Teacher: Try to allow class time to read this important passage. This is the heart of the entire Gospel message. Read verses 20-23 along with these lesson notes that follow. >>] And just how did Jesus do that? He did it "...through the blood of his cross" (v.20) with "his flesh through death" (v. 22) But don't forget - it only works if we "...continue in the faith..." (v.23 ) [ << Teacher: This passage flies in the face of the belief that there is nothing more we need to do to ensure our continued faithfulness. Point out the three things mentioned here: <sup>1</sup> "grounded" (know what you believe), <sup>2</sup> "settled" (stand on what you believe) <sup>3</sup> "not moved away from the hope" (stay where you believe). Share this version from the New Living Translation, "But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News." >>]

**COULD IT GET ANY WORSE THAT THIS?** Yes, it can!! The Bible says that everybody who sins 'sells' themselves into 'slavery', that they become the 'prisoners' of Satan, bound to serve him (whether they know it or not - whether they want to or not.) Jesus said, "Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin" (**John 8:34**) but he also promised that "If the Son shall make you free you shall be free indeed!" (**v.36**) People today deny that they are in bondage just like the religious leaders Jesus was speaking to did back then (v.33) [ >> These were the Jewish leaders who claimed that they were Abraham's seed and never in bondage. Truth is the Jewish people had been carried away a number of times into captivity and were presently under the strong-arm rule of the Romans!!>>]



The fact is, we all serve either one kingdom or the other [study Rom 6:16-18] [ >> Have students read later. Passage essentially says, 'whoever you obey - you become their servant.' >>]

You are either on God's side or the side that is against Him - there is no middle ground!! [read Mat 12:30 & Luke 16:13] [ >> Should be read later. Tell students that in these verses Jesus says, 'If you're not with me you're against me' and 'You can't serve two masters - you will always hate one to love the other. If you love the world you can't love God!' >>]

But what about those who are just trying to 'straddle the fence'? Well, **Revelations 3:15,16** says that God is going to 'spit out' all who are 'lukewarm'! [ >>Teacher: This is a Bible verse worth memorizing. It seems an odd thing that God would say, 'If you're not going to be completely on my side then I would rather you just go on completely over to the other one.' Actually, someone who is 'lukewarm' is neither good for God nor the devil since neither one of them can count on him! This issue is important for those who clearly are not living for God but still claim to believe in Him. If you 'know Him' you will 'show Him'. More on faith and works later. >>]