

# — WINNING — **THE RACE**

by **Cherie Noel**

## **Winning the Race - Student Manual**

First Edition by Cherie Noel

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# LESSON 1

## The Word of God

### Vocabulary

- **Prophet** – Someone who shares a spiritual message
- **Scripture** – Sacred writings; another name for the Bible
- **Testament** – A promise or record; the name for the two major divisions of books in the Bible
- **Gospel** – “Good news” or teaching about Jesus
- **Epistle** – A letter; one of the 21 letters in the New Testament
- **Tabernacle** – In Scripture, a tent compound where God showed His presence to Israel
- **Atonement** – When something wrong is erased or canceled

### 1-A Overview of the Bible

The Bible was written down by different authors over a period of 1,600 years. The writers came from many different backgrounds. Some were poets, teachers, singers, kings, fishers, and **prophets**. They wrote in at least three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

God worked through these writers to record His Word for us. In the Bible, God has given us history, prophecy, stories, sermons, letters, and even poetry. All of this **Scripture** teaches us about God.

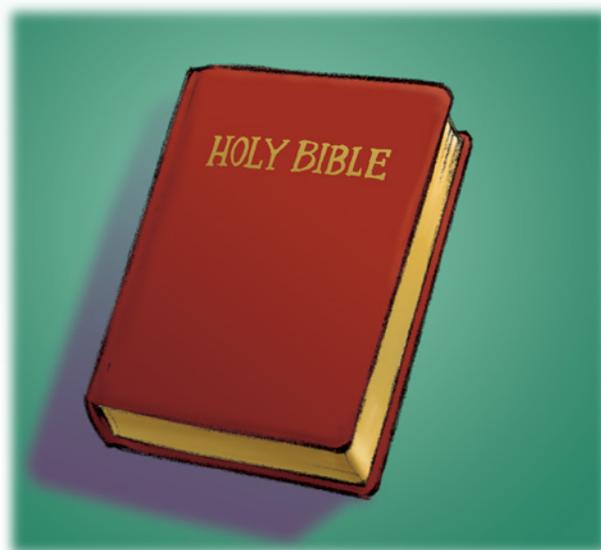
► Turn to the table of contents in your Bible and complete the following statements.

- ◉ The Bible has two main sections: the Old \_\_\_\_\_ and the New.
- ◉ There are a total of \_\_\_\_\_ books in the Bible.
- ◉ The *first* book is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◉ The *last* book is called \_\_\_\_\_.

► Continue using the table of contents to write the missing books below.

The Old Testament	
Genesis	<b>The Law</b>
Leviticus	
Numbers	
Deuteronomy	
Joshua	<b>History</b>
Judges	
1 & 2 Samuel	
1 & 2 Kings	
1 & 2 Chronicles	
Ezra	
Nehemiah	
Esther	
Job	
Proverbs	
Ecclesiastes	
Song of Songs / Song of Solomon	<b>Major Prophets</b>
Isaiah	
Jeremiah	
Lamentations	
Ezekiel	
	<b>Minor Prophets</b>
Hosea	
Joel	
Obadiah	
Jonah	
Micah	
Nahum	
Habakkuk	
Zephaniah	
Haggai	
Zechariah	

The New Testament	
Matthew	<b>Gospels</b>
Mark	
John	
	<b>Letters / Epistles</b>
Romans	
1 & 2 Corinthians	
Ephesians	
Philippians	
Colossians	
1 & 2 Thessalonians	
1 & 2 Timothy	
Titus	
Philemon	
Hebrews	
1, 2, & 3 John	
Jude	
	<b>Prophecy</b>



# 1-B One Author, One Message

Even though the Bible was written down by many different types of people, it has one true Author in God Himself. The books of the Bible seem very different, but they all support one unified message.

► Read **2 Peter 1:19-21** and answer the following questions.

- ◉ Since God's prophecy is like a light in the dark, what should we do? (v. 19)

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- ◉ If Scripture didn't come from people's imaginations, how *did* it come to us? (v. 21)

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► Imagine that a friend asks you to explain what the Bible is about in just one sentence. What would you say?

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► To answer this question better, let's see how God reached out to people throughout the Bible. Read the following verses and answer the questions.

<b>Exodus 29:45-46</b>	In the Old Testament, God told the people of Israel to build a <b>Tabernacle</b> so that He would live among them. What did God want them to know? <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Romans 3:20</b>	God also gave Israel His Law. Because of this Law, what do we know about? <hr/>
<b>Leviticus 4:27-31</b>	In the Old Testament, God gave people ways to show that they were sorry for their sin. If someone sinned but then offered the sacrifice God required, what would happen? <hr/> <hr/>

So why don't Christians offer animal sacrifices today? Why don't we go to a Tabernacle to pray?

► Read **Ephesians 5:1-2** and answer the following questions.

- ◉ Who should we follow and imitate? (v. 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- ◉ What did Jesus Christ do for us? (v. 2)

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Jesus died on a cross to take the punishment for our sin. He became the perfect sacrifice, and then He rose from the dead to show His power. He offers to forgive and save people who turn from their sin and follow Him. We don't need Old Testament rituals anymore.

When we read the Old and New Testaments together, we can understand the big message of the Bible. Scripture tells us how a perfect God loves sinful people like us. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can know God and be close to Him.

## 1-C Jesus the Word

All of Scripture points toward Jesus:

- ◉ The Old Testament promises the coming of Jesus.
- ◉ In the New Testament, the four Gospels record what He said and did before dying and rising again.
- ◉ The Epistles explain how we can be like Him.
- ◉ And the Book of Revelation promises that He'll come back one day.

Scripture is the *written* Word of God, and it shows us the *living* Word, who is Jesus. So there are two "Words" of God. We read one Word to know the other Word better.

► Read **John 1:1**. What three things does John say about the Word?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

► Continue reading in **John 1:2-18** and fill the blanks in the following summaries.

<b>Verses 1-3</b>	The Word was God, and everything was created by Him.
<b>Verse 4</b>	In the Word was _____, which was the light of everyone.
<b>Verse 10</b>	The Word was in the world, but the people did not _____ Him, even though He had made everything.
<b>Verse 12</b>	Those who received the Word became _____ of God.

► Look again at **John 1:14-17**. Which Word was John talking about in this chapter?

- The written Word     The living Word     Some other word

► If the Word is like a light to us, what do you think the “darkness” is?

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► Finally, read **John 1:14** again, along with **Philippians 2:5-8**. What do you think John meant when he wrote about the Word becoming “flesh”?

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Since Jesus is fully God and fully human, He is the perfect bridge between God and His people. As the living Word, Jesus brings us light and life. By studying Jesus, we can know God and enjoy His gifts better.

## Winning Your Race



If you rely on the truth of God's Word, you can run your life's race well. No matter what challenges you face, God can be your strength.

► What is something you want to learn about Scripture this year?

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► How do you want to change or grow?

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# LESSON 2

## Seeking God's Word

### Vocabulary

- **Wisdom** – The ability to use knowledge well; insight and understanding
- **Inspiration** – The way God worked through human writers to record Scripture; “God-breathed”
- **Doctrine** – An important teaching or belief, often by a religious group
- **Reproof / Rebuke** – To tell people that they have done wrong
- **Idolatry** – The practice of worshiping idols or false gods
- **Covenant** – A binding agreement between two or more people; a promise

### 2-A Pictures of the Word

We won't know God well unless we spend time learning His Word. Scripture tells us who God is and what He's like. He made us to know, love, and follow Him, but we cannot do these things well without the Bible. After all, if you love someone but never listen to what they say, do you really love them?

► The Bible helps us know God better in many ways. Match the passages below to their main ideas.

<b>A. Psalm 19:7</b>	<b>B. Psalm 119:9-11</b>	<b>C. John 5:24, 37-40</b>	<b>D. 2 Timothy 3:16</b>
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	God's Law can help our soul and give us <b>wisdom</b> .
	Scripture points to Jesus, who offers us eternal life. To know God the Father, we must listen to His Word.
	God's Word helps us follow His commands and avoid sinning against Him.
	Scripture offers us good <b>doctrine</b> and corrects us from doing wrong.

- ▶ The writers of Scripture used many different pictures to explain how God uses His Word. Read the following passages and fill in the blanks. Then draw a picture of each thing that the Word is like.

<b>Psalm 119:105-106</b>
God's Word is like a _____ that helps us walk along a dark path.

<b>Matthew 13:8, 23</b>
The Word is like a _____ that grows in our heart to produce fruit.

<b>Hebrews 4:12</b>
God's Word is alive and sharper than a _____. It cuts deep to show our inner self.

<b>James 1:22-25</b>
Hearing the Word is like seeing our face in a _____. It shows us what we should change.

- ▶ Think about all the passages you've read in this lesson so far. If you choose to study Scripture, how do you expect God to use His Word in your life?

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## 2-B The Boy King

After the reign of King Solomon, the Israelites split into two separate kingdoms: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The following years were a dark time for both kingdoms. The leaders and the people worshiped false gods and did horrible things to each other. There were no godly rulers in Israel and only a few in Judah.

One of the good kings of Judah was named Josiah. He became the king of Judah when he was only eight years old.

► Read about how Josiah became king in

**2 Chronicles 33:1-6** and **21-25**.

- ◉ What kind of king was Josiah's grandfather Manasseh? (vv. 1-6)

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- ◉ King Manasseh eventually turned from his evil ways and asked God for forgiveness. Did his son Amon do the same? (vv. 21-23)  Yes  No
- ◉ Why did Josiah become king before he could grow up? (vv. 24-25)

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This did not seem like a good start for Josiah. His father had not taught him about God. The land was filled with **idolatry** and other wickedness. The people had forgotten about God's Law. How could a child lead a nation like this?

► Josiah became a good leader for one reason—he decided to follow God. Read the following verses in **2 Chronicles 34** and mark the correct ending to each sentence.

**Verses 1-3: In the eighth year of his reign, Josiah chose to seek . . .**

allies from the nations around Judah.

the approval of wealthy people in Jerusalem.

the God of his ancestor, King David.



**Verse 3: Twelve years after he became king, Josiah started to . . .**

build a new temple for God.

destroy places where people worshiped idols.

write a new book of Scripture.

**Verses 8–10: Later, Josiah helped gather money to repair . . .**

the wall around Jerusalem.

the House (Temple) of the Lord in Jerusalem.

the high places he had once torn down.

**Verses 14–15: While the priest Hilkiah was working in the Temple, he found . . .**

an old loaf of bread.

the robes worn by Aaron the priest.

the Book of the Law of the Lord.

**Verses 16–19: When Shaphan read before the king, Josiah . . .**

tore his clothes in sorrow and anguish.

jumped for joy.

smashed his throne in anger.



When Josiah finally heard the Law of God, he was sad that his people had ignored it for so long. The Word of God changed Josiah and his kingdom.

## 2-C Josiah's Humility

In the Book of Deuteronomy, God told His people about all the blessings He would give them if they followed Him. He also explained the curses that would come on them if they rejected Him and worshiped false gods.

► Read **2 Chronicles 34:19–21**. After King Josiah heard God's Law, why was he distressed?

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Josiah was humble enough to know that he needed help from God. He didn't try to ignore God and do whatever he wanted. Instead, he wanted to help Israel follow the ways of the Lord.

- ▶ Continue reading in **2 Chronicles 34:22-33** and fill in the blanks below.

Josiah told Hilkiah the priest to ask God for answers. So Hilkiah went to \_\_\_\_\_ **verse 22**  
the prophetess. She gave Hilkiah two messages from God:

1. God would bring terrible things to Judah—including all the \_\_\_\_\_ **verse 24**  
described in the Book of Deuteronomy. This would happen because the people had rejected God.
2. Because Josiah \_\_\_\_\_ **verse 27** himself before God, the Lord listened to him. The kingdom would not suffer as long as Josiah lived.

When Josiah heard God's message, he gathered everyone at the Temple and read all the words of the Book of the \_\_\_\_\_ **verse 30**. Then the king himself made a \_\_\_\_\_ **verse 31** to obey God's commands, and he told everyone else do the same.

From that point onward, Josiah led the people to follow their Lord. For the rest of the king's reign, the nation served God and respected His Word.

## Winning Your Race

Godly leaders need humility. We must be willing to seek help when we need it, and we must be willing to serve others when they need it. We all depend on God, so no one is too big or important to help people.

- ▶ Describe one way you like to help others.

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- ▶ Explain how you could do this in a way that leads people to thank God—and not just you.

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# LESSON 3

## Listening to God

### Vocabulary

- **Revelation** – Something that is revealed or shown; God’s communication to us
- **Doubt** – To distrust; a feeling of uncertainty or unbelief about something
- **Parable** – A story that pictures or illustrates a lesson
- **Vineyard** – A place for growing grapevines

### 3-A God Speaks to Moses

The Bible is God’s **revelation** to us. He revealed His Word so we could know Him better. When we read through all this history, poetry, and prophecy, we should ask what it shows us about God.

Before Scripture was complete, people needed to listen to God in different ways. When God first spoke to Moses, He appeared in an unusual form.

► Read **Exodus 3:1-8** and answer the following questions.

- ◉ Before hearing God call to him, what did Moses see? (vv. 2-4)

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- ◉ God told Moses to show respect in this place. What did Moses need to do? (v. 5)

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- ◉ The Lord had seen the suffering of His people. What would He do now? (v. 8)

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Suddenly, at the age of 80, Moses had a mission from God. The Israelites had lived in Egypt for 430 years. They spent much of that time as slaves. But God had compassion on them, and He told Moses to lead the people out of Egypt to their own land.



- When God called him, Moses didn't think he was a good choice. How did God answer Moses' **doubts** and questions? Read the following passages and fill in the blanks of each summary.

	Moses' Doubt	God's Answer
<b>Exodus 3:11-12</b>	Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring out the people?	I will be _____.
<b>Exodus 3:13-14</b>	What if they ask for the name of the God who sent me?	Say, " _____ has sent me to you."
<b>Exodus 4:1-5</b>	But the people will not believe me or listen to me.	God turned Moses' _____ into a _____, and then changed it back again. This would be one sign of God's power.
<b>Exodus 4:10-12</b>	But I cannot speak well.	I will teach you what _____ _____.

- From this conversation, how do you think Moses felt about what God asked him to do?

\_\_\_\_\_

- Finally, read **Exodus 4:13-20** and answer the following questions.

- ◉ Who was sent by God to help Moses speak? (vv. 14-16) \_\_\_\_\_
- ◉ Did Moses eventually decide to go? (v. 20)     Yes     No

## 3-B God Speaks to Jonah

Many years after Moses led Israel out of Egypt, God spoke to Jonah the prophet. God didn't ask Jonah to help some poor, oppressed people. Instead, Jonah needed to share God's truth with Israel's enemies—the wicked, violent people of Nineveh.

- Read the following passages and match each sentence to its correct ending.

<b>Jonah 1:1-3</b> – When God first told Jonah to preach in Nineveh, Jonah . . .	<b>A.</b> got on a ship heading for Tarshish.
<b>Jonah 1:8-12</b> – When the sailors found out he was running from God, Jonah . . .	<b>B.</b> vomited Jonah up onto land.
<b>Jonah 1:16-17</b> – Before Jonah could drown, God . . .	<b>C.</b> went to preach in Nineveh.
<b>Jonah 2:1-2, 10</b> – After Jonah prayed for help, God spoke to the fish, which . . .	<b>D.</b> made a huge fish swallow him.
<b>Jonah 3:1-3</b> – The second time that God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, Jonah . . .	<b>E.</b> told them to throw him into the sea.

- Read all of **Jonah 4** and answer the following questions.

- ⦿ When Jonah found out that God wouldn't destroy Nineveh after all, how did he feel? (vv. 1-4)

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- ⦿ What do you think God taught Jonah with the plant that died?

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- Read each statement and mark if it applies to Moses or Jonah. Some statements may be true for both men or neither.

	Moses	Jonah
Chosen to help save the Israelites		
Chosen to help save the Ninevites		
Was afraid to do what God said to do		
Obedied God's commands without doubt or hesitation		
Told God his doubts and fears		
Ran away from God's calling		
Eventually asked God for help		
Didn't want his audience to listen to him and change		

### 3-C True Obedience

- In **Matthew 21:28-32**, Jesus told a **parable** to some religious leaders who were very prideful. Read the story and mark the correct ending to each sentence.

#### Verses 28-29: In the story, the first son . . .

worked in the **vineyard** as soon as he was told.

said he wouldn't work, but later did, after all.

said he wouldn't work and then relaxed all day.

#### Verse 30: When the second son was told to go work, he . . .

worked in the vineyard as soon as he was told.

said he wouldn't work, but later did, after all.

said he would go to the vineyard, but did not.

#### Verse 31: The son who actually obeyed his father was . . .

the first son.

the second son.

neither son.

#### Verse 32: Jesus showed the religious leaders that they were like . . .

the first son.

the second son.

neither son.



The religious leaders claimed to obey God, but they didn't really. Jesus pointed to other kinds of sinners with bad reputations. He said that even these people could enter God's kingdom before prideful leaders.

## Winning Your Race

God wants us to listen to His words and respond to them. It's not enough just to know about Scripture. We should learn *and* do. The Word can change us from the inside out.

- ▶ Look again at **James 1:22-25**. If we hear the Word but don't do what it says, who are we like?

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The whole point of a mirror is to show you what you look like. Is your hair messed up? Do you have a smudge on your nose?

Scripture can do the same thing, but spiritually. The Word shows us who Jesus is. We can study Him and compare ourselves to His love and kindness.

- ▶ In the spaces below, list three reasons why it can be difficult to study God's Word.

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- ▶ Choose one of the reasons above and explain how you might make it *less* difficult. How can you seek help? How can you study the Word despite the challenge?

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