OPERATION—DAY 1

Abraham and Sarah:
"If God Said It,
He Will Do It!"



Superpower: FAITH

PROTOTYPE: Genesis 17:17-19; 12:1-3; Hebrews 11:1

AMMUNITION

By faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. (**Hebrews 11:11**)

Origins

God promised Abraham that through him a great nation would arise. Yet, many years later, when the divinely appointed time came near for Abraham's wife to conceive a child, Abraham doubted God's promise because of their advanced ages. This lesson examines how Abraham's growing faith allowed him to discover that the omnipotent, sovereign God had the power to do immeasurably more than he could think or imagine. Christians should believe that God keeps His promises, even when they do not come to fruition when we expect them to do.

CODE WORDS

Covenant: a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement.

Faith: complete trust or confidence in someone or something.

Genesis 17:17-19; 21:1-3; Hebrews 11:1

17 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a
son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child
at the age of ninety?"

18 And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under
your blessing!"



19 Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah
will bear you a son, and you will call him
Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as
an everlasting covenant for his descendants
after him."

• • • • •

1 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he
had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he
had promised.

2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age,
at the very time God had promised him.

3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.

• • • • •

1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about
what we do not see.

HEADQUARTERS

After more than two decades, God's promise to bless Abraham and make his name great was close to fulfillment. However, there was one thing that Abraham desperately wanted that had been denied him all his life. God had promised Abraham that through him a great nation would arise. God said that he would have offspring "as the dust of the earth" and as the number of the stars (see Genesis 13:16; 15:5). Yet, at ninety-nine years of age, Abraham had fathered no children by his wife, Sarah (see Genesis 17:1). And with Sarah at the age of ninety (see Genesis 17:17), it seemed illogical to believe that things would change. By all natural considerations, Sarah was well beyond her childbearing years.

Although Abraham was a man of extraordinary faith—a faith certainly worthy of emulation—he was a man whose faith was not finished. Abraham was a man of great faith, but being human, he did not have a perfect faith. He was a man who, by his experiences with God, developed a "track record" of successes. Abraham was called by God while as an idol worshipper in Haran. When Abraham answered God's call to leave his country and kindred and travel to a land to which God would direct him, he was seventy-five years old. At this advanced age, Abraham had to begin the process of learning to lean on God. He had to divorce himself from former "realities" that he thought were true. Abraham had to realign himself with the new reality of God, who called him to His service. He had to learn to trust this new God. Without a map, a mentor, or a manual to assist him, Abraham was forced to depend completely on God. Abraham learned of God through a personal relationship and grew steadily through his actual living and experiences.

Abraham demonstrated faith at work in the incident where God reaffirmed that the promise would be fulfilled through his wife, Sarah. Abraham, however, expressed some concern relative to this promise, considering their ages (ninety-nine and ninety), and tried to persuade God to accept Ishmael (his son by Hagar) as the heir of the covenant. When God denied his request and reiterated the original promise that Sarah would indeed give birth to a son, Abraham believed God's Word. Abraham's growing faith allowed him to believe that beyond the boundaries of human realities there exist unseen realities that operate at the power of the unseen God. He learned that the limitations of his own reason and understanding had nothing to do with the unlimited power of divine reality.

Sidekicks

1. Abraham worked through personal doubts and maintained his faith in God. Are there circumstances in your life where doubt is hindering you from believing God's Word?

2. When answers to your prayers are delayed, what will you do to maintain your faith and relationship with God?

Superpower
Faith

LAUNCHPAD

Terrina Masterson grew up in a household with quarreling parents. Terrina's parents' constant bickering throughout her childhood eventually led to divorce. Because of the trauma and devastation Terrina experienced from her troubled home life before and after the breakup, she promised herself she would never get married or have children. For many years, Terrina held that vow. She could not bear the thought of an unhealthy marriage or exposing children to the same challenging family dynamics she dealt with throughout her upbringing.

During her late twenties, Terrina's feelings changed. She prayed to God about her desire to marry and have children. Terrina trusted that God would bless her to experience marriage and motherhood. Married for eighteen years and the mother of three, Terrina had seen the answer to her prayers. At the same time, however, she was facing the worst of her fears—Terrina and her husband, Mason, were now on the verge of divorce. Neither Terrina nor Mason ever thought that they would grow apart. Several months ago, Terrina confided in her pastor about her marital difficulties. The pastor recommended that Terrina and Mason visit a reputable Christian counselor. Terrina hesitated to mention her conversation with the pastor to Mason, but now she believed it was the right time to do so. Terrina shared the pastor's recommendation with Mason, and to her surprise, he was willing to go with her to talk to the counselor.

During the first counseling session, Terrina and Mason agreed to be honest about their fears and hopes regarding their family relationship. After several minutes of listening, the counselor shared her observations, pointing out the evidence that Terrina and Mason loved each other—neither seemed interested in ending their marriage. The counselor emphasized the importance of putting faith in God and each other. Terrina and Mason attended more counseling sessions where they prayed with the counselor and worked on strategies to communicate effectively and support each other. Most importantly, Terrina and Mason held unwavering faith that God would fix the broken pieces of their marriage. Gradually, God removed all doubt, fear, and hopelessness, replacing those feelings with love, peace, and joy. After several months of trusting God, improving their communication skills, and striving to maintain an understanding, loving, and forgiving attitude, Terrina and Mason are thankful that they kept the faith and worked through their difficult times.

Sidekicks

1. Terrina confided in her pastor and sought the assistance of a Christian counselor. Why should believers reach out to other Christians when faced with life challenges?

2. What are some reasons why Christians lose faith and doubt or question God's ability to help them during times of uncertainty and or difficulty?

BLACK HISTORY

HERO



Chadwick Boseman

November 29, 1976–
August 28, 2020

Chadwick Aaron Boseman was born in South Carolina and was the youngest of three children; his life exemplified faith. His father worked at a textile factory and managed an upholstery business, and his mother was a nurse. In high school, he played basketball; and when a teammate was shot and killed, Boseman responded by writing a play and found that he felt called to become a storyteller. After graduating from high school, he studied directing at Howard University—and while a student there, he took acting classes in a summer program of the British American Drama Academy at the University of Oxford. He also visited Ghana. The start of his acting career saw him play many iconic historical and heroic figures, including Jackie Robinson and Thurgood Marshall. In 2016, Boseman achieved international fame for playing the Marvel Comics superhero Black Panther. He played T'Challa, king of the fictional African country of Wakanda, who becomes the powerful Black Panther. Boseman was a true fighter, who persevered through a major illness during the latter part of his life. Many movies were filmed during and between his countless surgeries and chemotherapy. During his two-decade career, Boseman received multiple accolades, including two Screen Actors Guild Awards, a Golden Globe Award, a Critics' Choice Movie Award, a Primetime Emmy Award, and an Academy Award nomination.

Battle 1

Unseen Power

Now that you have studied the biblical characters, think about how you can apply what you have learned to your personal life.

Write three personal attributes you will begin to apply to your life as demonstrated in the lives of Abraham and Sarah (for example, "faithfulness").

1. _____

   _____

2. _____

   _____

3. _____

   _____



Battle 2

God Can Fix It

On the lines below, list a few social issues or problems that would improve by placing God in the center and taking a biblical approach. After making your list, identify ways that Christians make a specific, positive impact on the issues that you identified.

LASSO

Abraham maintained his faith in God even when the reality of having a son seemed bleak. Never forget that the promises of God are dependable. Delay is not denial. "Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay" (Habakkuk 2:3a, NIV).

MISSION COMPLETE!

Father, when our faith is tested we find comfort in Your promise never to leave or forsake us. Thank You for Your constant presence with us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

OPERATION—DAY 2

Joseph:
"Hang in There"



Superpower: FORGIVENESS

PROTOTYPE: Genesis 37:28, 35; 39:2, 17-18, 20-21; 41:39-40

AMMUNITION

[Joseph said to his brothers,] "It was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt." **(Genesis 45:8)**

Origins

There are times when one's gifts, talents and abilities may be misjudged by others because they do not understand how God strategically assigns people to their life work according to His divine plan. God had special plans for Joseph to rise to greatness in Egypt. Joseph's ability to interpret dreams foretold that he would become his family's superior. When Joseph shared his dreams with his brothers, they were furious. The favor demonstrated in Joseph's life enraged his brothers, so much so that they plotted to send him away. The brothers cruelly sold Joseph into slavery. What the brothers did not realize was that it was God's plan that Joseph would rise to greatness in Egypt. Without this divine series of events, Jacob's family would have starved in Canaan.

CODE WORDS

Favor: a feeling or show of approval or preference.

Forgiveness: the action or process of forgiving or being forgiven.

Genesis 37:28, 35; 39:2, 17-18, 20-21; 41:39-40

28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

• • • • •

35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave." So his father wept for him.

• • • • •

2 The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

• • • • •



17 Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me.

18 "But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

• • • • •

20 Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison,

21 the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

• • • • •

39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you.

40 "You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."

HEADQUARTERS

Joseph was the son of his father, Jacob, in old age. Jacob openly favored Joseph, stirring envy and hatred in his older brothers. Jacob sent Joseph to check on the welfare of his brothers, who were tending the flocks. When the brothers saw him approaching, they concocted a plan that would have resulted in Joseph's death. However, Reuben, the oldest brother, vetoed the idea and suggested that they cast Joseph into a *cistern* (pit or reservoir). He planned to remove Joseph later and take him home. But in Reuben's absence, the other brothers sold Joseph to a band of traders who took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

Young, betrayed, and vulnerable in a foreign land, Joseph called out to God. He realized that with God, he would never be alone. God already knew where he was and what he needed and had an infallible plan for his eventual rescue from his struggles.

God's involvement in Joseph's life eventually led to his promotion in Potiphar's household, winning him favor in his master's sight. Joseph's legacy of faith had sustained him in the betrayal of his brothers. It had encouraged him in the heat of slavery. But, unknown to Joseph, God had new lessons of faith for him to learn.

Potiphar's wife demanded Joseph stop resisting her lustful desire for him. Joseph remained steadfast in his refusal to give in to her persistent temptations. Joseph's rejection of Potiphar's wife angered and humiliated her. To save her pride, she lied and accused Joseph of attempted sexual assault. Believing the false claim, Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison. However, even in prison, Joseph's faith endured. There, he demonstrated a divine ability to interpret dreams in prison. When Joseph correctly interpreted a fellow prisoner's dream that he, the Pharaoh's chief butler, would be released in three days and restored to his former position, the butler promised to remember him. Two years later, the chief butler remembered Joseph when Pharaoh had a troubling dream that his magicians and wise men could not understand.

Sidekicks

1. How was Joseph able to be consistent in character and faith despite hardships and setbacks?

2. What tools or methods do you use to persevere through difficult or challenging times?

When Pharaoh learned of Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, he brought Joseph before him. Upon interpreting the dream, which foretold an approaching famine, Joseph offered wise counsel from the Lord for overcoming its devastating effects. In gratitude and recognition of Joseph's gift, Pharaoh made Joseph a ruler of Egypt, second-in-command.

Joseph's brothers journeyed to Egypt to buy grain when the predicted famine came. Joseph recognized his brothers immediately, although they did not recognize him. When he later confronted them and revealed his identity, Joseph forgave them, explaining that God had used their wickedness to accomplish His will. Joseph's enduring faith sustained him in his trials, reunited his family, and helped to preserve a nation.

Superpower
Forgiveness

LAUNCHPAD

Miriam's mother, Rosa Payne, is one of the best mothers any child could ever have. From childhood until now, Miriam could not recall a time when her mother did not support her, her siblings, and their entire family. Now that Rosa is in her senior years, Miriam believes it is fitting for her siblings to step in and offer their mother daily care. Rosa's siblings, two sisters, and two brothers, all live in the city where their mother resides. Although the siblings visit their mother occasionally, Rosa is the only one who interacts daily with their mother.

About two months ago, Rosa's health started to decline rapidly. After a lengthy hospital stay, the medical team determined that moving forward, Rosa would need a higher level of care. The recommendation was for Rosa to have twenty-four-hour supervision. Miriam and her siblings discussed their options regarding care plans for their mother. After several conversation rounds, one thing was clear: Miriam was the only one willing to let Rosa live with them.

Rosa's children moved her to Miriam's home on the designated day. It took a couple of weeks to build a routine that worked for Rosa, Miriam, and her husband, James, but eventually, everything worked smoothly. Now that Miriam had Rosa living with her, Miriam's siblings made fewer visits. Many days, Miriam wished that one of her brothers or sisters would drop by so that she could have a few minutes to herself. When Miriam brought up this frustration to her siblings, they all vowed to do better about coming to see their mother, but sadly, their behavior did not change.

One morning, Miriam went to help her mother dress for breakfast. After calling Rosa several times and shaking her twice, Miriam realized that her mother had transitioned overnight. Standing there looking at Rosa's lifeless body, Miriam felt mixed emotions of sorrow and joy flooding her heart. Miriam knew that her mother was resting in the arms of Jesus, and this truth brought her peace and comfort.

Miriam notified her family of their mother's passing. One by one, the siblings arrived at Miriam's home. Miriam's siblings assertively discussed possessions and money that their mother left behind. Miriam thought about all the days and nights that she labored to care for their mother without help from her siblings. Miriam was resentful that her siblings had no time to help with their mother when she was alive, but they suddenly had time to determine how they might benefit from their mother's passing. Miriam prayed and asked God to give her strength to deal with her mother's loss and forgive her siblings for their selfishness.

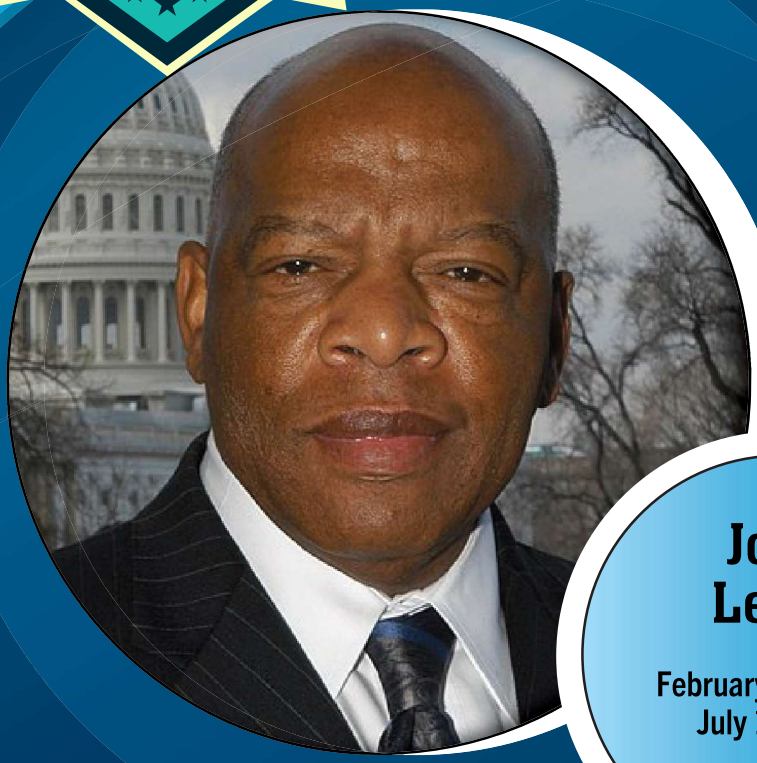
Sidekicks

1. Miriam was hurt by her siblings' selfish motives, yet she prayed rather than voicing her resentment. Do you think Miriam made the right decision? Why or why not?

2. Do you have unforgiveness toward someone who has knowingly or unknowingly offended you? What hinders you from forgiving him/her?

BLACK HISTORY

HERO



John Lewis

February 21, 1940–
July 17, 2020

(Source: Wikipedia)

John Lewis is one of the most notable American Civil Rights Movement leaders and the former U.S. Representative for Georgia's 5th congressional district. Right from youth, Lewis subscribed to the philosophy which considers suffering as redemptive. He acknowledged that he was arrested about forty times in the 1960s and about five times in Congress for protesting the South African Apartheid regime as well as violence in Sudan, and immigration policies of the United States. He participated in the 1960 Nashville sit-ins and the Freedom Rides, was the chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) from 1963 to 1966, and was one of the "Big Six" leaders of groups who organized the 1963 March on Washington. Lewis lived and practiced love, forgiveness, and nonviolence. He is a true exemplar of a forgiving prisoner whose work and deeds changed and transformed his community for the better. He said, "We were taught not to hate, not to become bitter, but to believe in the philosophy and discipline of non-violence, in the way of peace, in the way of love, the way of forgiveness and reconciliation."

Battle 1

Joseph and John

Now that you have studied the biblical characters, think about how you can apply what you have learned to your personal life.

Write three personal attributes or actions you will begin to apply to your life as demonstrated by the life of Joseph (for example, "forgiveness").

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

After reading about the contemporary figure on the previous page, return to this page and write another set of personal attributes or actions illustrated by the Black History Hero—John Lewis (for example, "brave").

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Application of personal qualities is a challenging experience; therefore, ask a trusted friend, an acquaintance, or your pastor to hold you accountable. Finally, commit these attributes to the Lord in prayer. Ask God to help you live your life in accordance with these qualities.

Battle 2

"Lord, Help Me Forgive"

Read, reflect, and respond to each of the following statements. Be prepared to share your responses with the class as time permits.

Give examples of circumstances through which faithful Christians may or do show forgiveness.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Think of examples or slogans, biblical or otherwise, that call individuals to forgive others.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Write the names of well-known individuals whose lives provide examples of forgiveness.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

LASSO

Eventually, Joseph realized that his struggles were a necessary part of God's plan for his life. Believers should know that the adversities of life are inevitable but usually temporary. Sometimes, God turns situations around—and sometimes, He gives the grace to endure (see 2 Corinthians 12:9). Those who trust God no matter what will be better for having walked through their trials with Him.

MISSION COMPLETE!

Heavenly Father, help us to reflect Your image and walk in a spirit of forgiveness when we are mistreated. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

OPERATION—DAY 3

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: "I Said What I Said"



Superpower: COURAGE

PROTOTYPE: Daniel 3:14-18, 26b-27

AMMUNITION

[Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said,] "We want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." **(Daniel 3:18)**

Origins

Today's lesson is set sometime during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BC) and involves three Jewish captives of the Babylonian conquest of Judah. Their names were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, but their captors forced them to take the Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. By faith, God empowered the three young men to refuse the king's order to bow down and worship a golden image. According to the law, the men received the sentence of death in a blazing furnace. Before being condemned to the fire, they bravely told the king that they would not bow to another god even if their God did not rescue them from the fiery furnace.

CODE WORDS

Amazement: a feeling of great surprise and wonder.

Furious: extremely angry; enraged with violent passion.

Daniel 3:14-18, 26b-27

14 Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?

15 "Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"



16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

17 "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand.

18 "But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

• • • • •

26 So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire,

27 and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

HEADQUARTERS

During the destruction of Judah by the Babylonian Empire in 587 BC, thousands of Jews were seized from their homeland and taken as captives to Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BC) invited three of them to join his official staff—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—renamed in Babylon as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

During his reign, King Nebuchadnezzar erected a colossal gold statue (ninety feet tall and nine feet wide) on the plain of Dura. Conquering kings often erected great images of themselves or the god that they believed had led them to victory. The king's decree summoned all officials to come, bow down, and worship on demand. Some onlookers eagerly reported to the king that the young Hebrew men (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) were guilty of blatant and unlawful disobedience to the decree. When King Nebuchadnezzar heard of it, he summoned the trio before him, allowing them a final chance to show their obedience and loyalty by bowing down.

However, the young men's response was not fear or uncertainty but utter dedication to God—regardless of the consequences. In that trying hour, they were unsure of how God would resolve their dilemma, but they were absolutely sure how they would respond in their faith. They knew that God could deliver them but indicated their resolve that they would still refuse to bow before the golden image even if He chose not to rescue them.

When King Nebuchadnezzar heard the defiant reply of the young Hebrews, he flew into a fierce rage that caused him to superheat the fiery furnace in hopes of blocking any rescue effort by the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The king investigated the heart of the hellish inferno he had ordered and reasoned, "What manner of god could possibly save mortal flesh from such inescapable annihilation? What deity could obstruct the devastating rampage that would pillage the flesh and turn even bones to ashes? He asked, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Daniel 3:15c, KJV). King Nebuchadnezzar's arrogant query was soon answered by the God who made the earth and delivered unscathed the three sons of faith from the feeble sparks that he thought were unquenchable. There, the young Hebrews stood and were delivered and justified before a defeated and mystified minion who would dare challenge the power of almighty God. These courageous, young Hebrews committed themselves to the way of faith despite the terrible fate that seemed to await them. They did not take a blind leap of faith; they leaped because they knew that God was looking.

Sidekicks

1. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego met their promised fate with courage and confidence. What can believers learn from their example?
2. Think of a time when you were called to take a courageous stand against some act of injustice. Were you able to respond in courage and faith? Discuss.

Superpower
Courage

LAUNCHPAD

Growing up in the inner city of Kansas City, Missouri, Omari and most of his friends lived in conditions where money and resources were minimal. Although Omari came from a low-income family, he could not recall a day when he had missed a meal or lacked the necessities of life. Omari's parents worked hard each day to ensure he and his siblings had what they most needed. Two of his parents' proudest memories are the day when Omari went off to college and the day, five years later, when he graduated with a master's degree in political science.

For the past twenty-five years, Omari has worked with a non-profit organization created to combat injustices that significantly impact his community. Omari's organization primarily focuses on food insecurity, youth employment, adult basic education classes, college and vocational school, and admissions assistance. Through his work, Omari has gained an honorable reputation. He is known by many to be "the hardest-working man on the block."

One evening after a fundraiser event, several board members and private citizens from the community approached Omari with an idea. The group leader urged Omari to enter the upcoming mayoral race. The request caught Omari off guard, but he was flattered that his colleagues and community allies believed in his ability to do the job. Omari thanked the group and assured them that he would carefully consider the call to mayorship.

Sidekicks

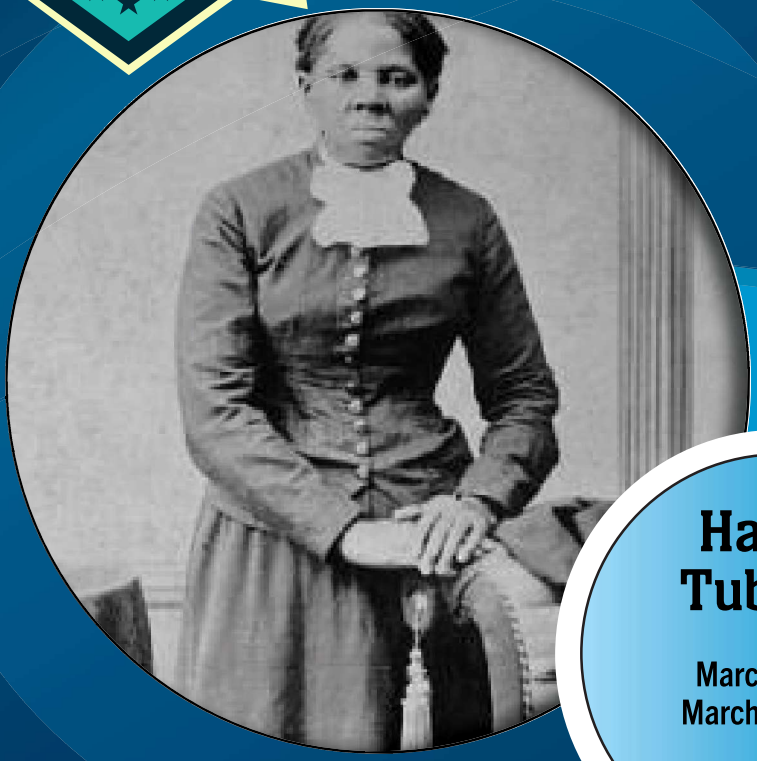
1. Omari discussed his potential candidacy for mayor with his wife and children. Do you think this was an important part of the process?

2. Omari's past mistakes fueled his passion to create programs that promote youth empowerment. How might others benefit if you were to share your past experiences?

Omari was excited about the very thought of being mayor. Still, he also worried about public ridicule that he would surely face because of the horrible mistakes he made in his adolescent years. Convicted of burglary and auto-theft crimes, Omari spent time in jail. He paid his debt to society, pulled himself together, finished his high school degree at a juvenile correction facility, went to college, and ultimately turned his life around for the better. Omari knew that being a public figure meant that any detail about his life would be open to public scrutiny. He discussed his plan to run for mayor with his wife and children. Together, they weighed the pros and cons of his decision. Although Omari feared having past transgressions blasted across the media, he felt confident about explaining what was going on with him during that period of his life and how he has since dedicated his life's work to help youth avoid the pitfalls he experienced. Omari decided to be courageous and step out in faith, trusting that God would be with him every step of the way.

BLACK HISTORY

HERO



Harriet Tubman

March 1822–
March 10, 1913

Source:
womenshistory.org

Harriet Tubman, born in Dorchester County, Maryland, was a woman whose life exemplified courage. Tubman was the fifth of nine children. As a teenager, she was hit in the head with a dry goods store weight, thrown by an overseer who was attempting to stop a runaway slave. As a result of the head injury, for the rest of her life, Harriet suffered from epileptic seizures. In 1849, fearing she would be sold following her master's death, Harriet Tubman fled to freedom in Philadelphia. On the way to Philadelphia, Harriet was assisted by members of the Abolitionist movement—both black and white—who maintained "stations" on the Underground Railroad. During the Civil War, Tubman worked for the Union Army. She served as an intelligence gatherer, refugee organizer, raid leader, nurse, and fundraiser. She was also the first woman to plan and lead a military operation: the 1863 raid at Combahee Ferry—which freed more than seven hundred fifty slaves. In the years between her escape and the beginning of the Civil War, Harriet led many others to freedom, including her parents and four of her siblings, via the Underground Railroad. In all, she is believed to have conducted approximately three hundred people to freedom in the North.

Battle 1

Taking a Courageous Stand

In today's world, various kinds of injustices are prevalent, including racism, unfair housing practices, and inequitable education for lower-income students. Considering this truth, answer the following questions in relation to this statement.

1. What kind of courage may still be necessary in the contemporary practice of our faith?

_____

_____

_____

2. What qualities are necessary for trusting God in situations of life and death?

_____

_____

_____

3. What moves you to remain faithful to God, even when you cannot be sure that He will deliver you?

_____

_____

_____

Battle 2

Movie Magic

Consider the possibility of someone making a movie that would depict the courage of your faith. Would your story demonstrate courage or cowardice? What would the title of the movie be and what actor would play you? In the space below, make a brief outline of scenes that would be highlighted in your movie—such as where the movie will take place, what specific event called for courage, and how you responded to that call.

LASSO

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were subjected to practices that were contrary to their faith teachings. However, those practices did not alter their devotion to God. Let us follow the faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and stand boldly in our allegiance to God.

MISSION COMPLETE!

Heavenly Father, grant us the courage to trust You even when facing situations that could possibly crush us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

OPERATION—DAY 5

Peter:

"You Can Count on Me"



Superpower: TRUST

PROTOTYPE: Matthew 14:22-31

AMMUNITION

"Come," [Jesus] said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. (**Matthew 14:29**)

Origins

Today's lesson highlights how doubt can hinder believers in their trusting Jesus' ability to rescue them from seemingly impossible situations. When Jesus invited Peter to come to Him, Peter was enthusiastic about leaving the boat to walk on water to meet Jesus. Peter's enthusiasm was short-lived, however, when he focused on the wind and waves. Taking his eyes off Jesus, Peter focused on the surrounding dangers. Sensing the real problem, Jesus encouraged Peter not to fear. Although Peter failed his faith test in that moment, Jesus saved him from sinking. Jesus provides a living hope to those who place their faith in Him.

CODE WORDS

Afraid: feeling fear or anxiety; frightened.

Sink: to descend below the surface of something, especially of a liquid; to become submerged.

Matthew 14:22-31

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on
ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.

23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by
himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone,

24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buf-
feted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.



26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake,
they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and
cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take cour-
age! It is I. Don't be afraid."

28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come
to you on the water."

29 "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the
boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink,
cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of
little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

HEADQUARTERS

The episode that this lesson of trust is built upon occurred in the Sea of Galilee—a body of fresh water in northern Israel that is 200 feet deep, 14 miles long, and 7.5 miles wide. The miracle follows closely upon another—Jesus' feeding of the five thousand—which occurred on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Following this phenomenal event, Jesus commanded His disciples to get into a boat and go before Him to the other side while He dismissed the crowd. In the aftermath, Jesus climbed upon one of the surrounding hillsides to refresh Himself in prayer.

The disciples set out to obey Jesus' directive to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. For much of the time, the weather was calm—but later in the evening, strong winds from the surrounding mountains descended violently upon the waters, causing waves to rise and the waters to become treacherous. Navigating the rough waters required the fishermen's best skills. Although the task was difficult, the disciples fought valiantly against the relentless power of the storm. They struggled far into the night surrounded by an ominous darkness and besieged by a raging sea that carried them helplessly far from the shore. When it seemed that all hope was gone, in the fourth watch of the night (between 3:00 and 6:00 a.m.), Jesus came walking upon the water. Frightened by the unusual sight of someone walking on water, the disciples supposed that Jesus was a ghost. However, in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came pacing upon the storm-tossed water and called out words of comfort in a familiar voice.

Sidekicks

1. How do you think Peter's "walking on water" experience changed his life, as well as the lives of those who witnessed the amazing encounter?

2. Do you believe that trusting God involves taking risks? Why or why not?

Upon seeing such an amazing sight, Peter asked Jesus to let him come to Him on the water. When Jesus said "Come," Peter climbed from the safety of the boat and into the violent sea. Initially, Peter did walk upon the water, but when his faith faltered, he floundered and began to sink beneath the waves. While Peter kept his eyes fixed upon Christ, he "walked on the water," but when the danger captured his attention and became his focus, he forgot that the One who told him to come would protect him.

When Peter tried and failed, he was rebuked but not rejected by Jesus. In fact, when he did fail, Peter knew that there was one thing he could count on: the fact that Jesus loved him. When we fail, Jesus does not reject us. He restores us and prepares us for the next test that is sure to come. When we learn to trust the Lord, our tests become a testimony of His power and love for us.

Superpower
Trust

LAUNCHPAD

Reed had been blessed with the gift of cooking. In fact, for years, many of his relatives and friends have tried to convince him to open a restaurant. You name it, Reed can cook it. Reed is infamous for providing a play-by-play narrative of what he is doing as he prepares and cooks the food. Whenever people hear that Reed is cooking, whether at a family gathering, church fellowship, or community event, there is usually standing room only. People are always entertained by his cooking skills, his tricks with knives, and his infamous catch line: "Yes, Lawd, there it is!"

During the summer months, Reed is completely busy with catering engagements. Without fail, at every event where his food is served, people encourage him to open a restaurant. Reed always shrugs off those comments, emphasizing that he just cooks for pleasure. But the truth is that Reed had tried opening a restaurant several years prior. With the help of God, Reed managed to save $10,000, and even selected a restaurant location and name. Reed spoke of his restaurant plan only with his sister, Brenda, and figured that his savings would be enough money to get the business up and going.

When Reed discovered that his restaurant start-up cost would be more than he anticipated, he panicked because he already knew his chances were slim of securing a bank loan. Suddenly, Reed remembered and reached out to a friend who frequently won at horse races. Believing he had no other option, Reed gave his friend $8,000 and actually expected to triple his money. Brenda tried to encourage Reed to trust that God would provide resources and people who would be willing to give him a loan so he would not have to resort to desperate measures to get the money he needed. Reed did believe that God would help him but did not have confidence that God would help in time—so, thinking he was doing what was best, Reed gave most of his savings to his friend to place a bet in an upcoming race.

Sidekicks

1. Reed rejected wise counsel from Brenda. Why is it important for believers to seek and heed the wise counsel of trusted family members and friends?

2. Have you ever taken matters into your own hands when it appeared that God was not responding to your prayer or need? What was the outcome of your decision?

On the day of the race, Reed convinced himself that everything would work out as planned. Seconds after the race started, it was over for Reed. The horse he selected did not win and he lost all the money he bet. Reed vowed that if God ever gave him another opportunity, he would trust Him for the resources and action plan. Until then, Reed will continue to wow the crowds with his delicious food and joyful cooking antics.

BLACK HISTORY

HERO



Justin Pearson

Born January 7, 1995

Justin J. Pearson is a member of the Tennessee House of Representatives, representing the 86th district, covering parts of the city of Memphis. Pearson was born in Memphis, Tennessee. His father was a preacher and his mother a teacher; he exemplifies a trusted servant leader who prioritizes people and our community. When he was sworn into office at the age of 28, Pearson became the second-youngest lawmaker serving in the Tennessee House of Representatives.

After the March 27, 2023, Covenant School shooting in Nashville that killed three nine-year-olds and three employees, Pearson joined a March 30 protest for gun-control reform at the state capitol, alongside Gloria Johnson and Justin Jones. Pearson, Johnson, and Jones became known as "The Tennessee Three," and the Tennessee House voted on whether to expel the three members. He and fellow state representative Justin Jones were expelled on April 6, 2023, for participating in a gun-control protest inside the state capitol in a manner that Republicans described as "disorderly behavior." On April 12, six days after his expulsion, Pearson was reappointed to the Tennessee House following a unanimous vote by the Shelby County Board of Commissioners.

Battle 1

Trust that Matters

Answer the following questions and follow the instructions as given.

Name two people whom you trust. How did you come to trust them? Have there been others you trusted who disappointed you? How did such disappointments affect your ability to trust? What do you require before you are willing to trust a person?

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Jesus brought salvation to the world when He died on the Cross, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day with all power and authority in heaven and on the earth. Considering this precious gift, what else does Jesus have to do before you are willing to trust Him? Honestly reflect on areas of your life that you have not surrendered to Jesus. Write a prayer, asking Jesus to help you trust Him more. Speak your prayer to God, believing that He hears you and He will answer.

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Battle 2

Searching for Words

Find the listed words from today's lesson in the word search below.

W	O	U	L	J	W	A	V	E	S	K	X	Q	E	K
W	E	E	T	H	E	H	G	K	C	Q	U	B	Q	S
I	N	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S	W	B	E	X
R	F	P	S	A	G	U	E	H	F	G	T	B	P	Y
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T	I	E	G	X	D	Y	N	T	X	O	E	J	L	N
P	N	D	B	Z	W	A	L	K	I	N	G	T	J	T
O	K	S	M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N	S	I	D	E
N	Y	F	X	V	J	G	B	B	Y	Q	T	K	M	W

COME **GHOST** **PETER** **TRUST** **WAVES**

DISCIPLES **JESUS** **SINK** **WALKING** **WORSHIPED**

FEAR **MOUNTAINSIDE** **TERRIFIED** **WATER**

LASSO

Prayer and focus on God are two essentials for living a Christ-centered life. Prayer is the way that we communicate with God, and focus helps us to align our lives to our faith teachings. A faithful Christian must do both—pray and obey God's Word.

MISSION COMPLETE!

Heavenly Father, as we face life's circumstances, please grant us determination to trust You even in our moments of doubt. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.