

The Bible, Our Instruction Manual For Life (History of Surgery)

(appropriate for grade schoolers and older)

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(Concept taken from Rev. John S. Mahon, Grace Community International, Houston, TX)

The following lesson is written in a style for grade schoolers (10-12 year olds). With minor modifications it can also be used with teenagers. You will need a bottle of Listerine hidden in a paper bag for this lesson.

Tonight we're going to talk about how the Bible is our instruction manual for life. But first let's start with a joke. Now, this joke is a little complicated so you are going to have to listen closely or you are not going to understand the joke.

Joke

There were 4 people on an airplane. One was the pilot. The other 3 were passengers. One of the passengers was a Pastor. Another passenger was a Boy Scout. The last passenger was a man who claimed he was the smartest man in the world.

The plane was flying pretty high up but it started to have engine trouble and was going down. It was clear the plane was going to crash. Unfortunately, there were only 3 parachutes on the plane and 4 people including the pilot. The pilot ran out of the cockpit, put on one of the parachutes and jumped out of the plane yelling, "Geronimo"! Let's all say it together – 1,2,3- "Geronimo"!

So now there are three people left on the plane and only 2 parachutes. Then the smartest man in the world said, "I'm the smartest man in the world, the world needs my great intellect". And he grabs a parachute and jumps out of the plane and yells, "Eureka"! Let's all say it together – 1,2,3 - "Eureka"!

Now the Pastor turns to the Boy Scout, and he says, "Son, I've lived a long life and I'm ready to meet the Lord so I'm just gonna let Jesus be Jesus in me – its like putting on a coat – Son, I want you to take the last parachute! But the Boy Scout says, "Pastor, relax, the smartest man in the world just jumped out of this plane with my backpack on"!

Did everyone understand the joke? Raise your hand if you don't get it. (explain it if necessary).

This kind of thing happens a lot in life. If you do things according to God's wisdom instead of the world's wisdom it may seem foolish at the time but in the long run you will find out God's wisdom was right and the wisdom of the world's smartest people was wrong. And that is what we are going to talk about tonight – following God's wisdom given to us in the Bible.

A Story About YOU!

Now let me tell you a story and the story is about YOU. Tomorrow you wake up with a bad pain in your side and a fever and you don't feel well. Your parents take you to the doctor and he pokes around your stomach. Then the doctor says, "You have acute appendicitis. If we don't do surgery and remove it, it will burst and you will get an infection". So, you are going to have to have an operation where they cut open your stomach and take out the bad appendix.

What are some things that will be needed for the surgery to be successful?

Write things on the board as the kids say them. To help the process along ask the following questions:

- 1) Would you prefer to have smart doctors and nurses or dumb ones?
- 2) Would you prefer to have well-trained, highly educated doctors or ones that are still learning?
- 3) How about experience? – would you prefer to have doctors who have done this operation many times or doctors who are doing their first surgery – on you.
- 4) Would you prefer to be operated on in a good hospital or outside in a tent?
- 5) Would you prefer the surgeon use surgical instruments designed for the surgery or whatever he could find?
- 6) How about anesthesia - so you can't feel any pain?
- 7) What about germ control? (antiseptics, sterile sutures, sterile garments, antibiotics)

How many of you have actually had your appendix taken out? You look OK.

Now I have some very good news for you. I am going to make sure you have the smartest, best trained, most experienced surgical team in the entire world. You will be operated on in the best hospital in the world and the surgical team will have access to the most modern medical technology that the world has to offer no matter how expensive – your care will be better than that of kings and presidents of countries. So, how do you feel about your surgery? How many people feel pretty good about how it will go? Raise your hands.

We'll that's funny – this isn't working out the way I expected. Oh, you know what? I forgot to mention one little thing. I'm really sorry about this but I forgot to give you one little, teeny tiny, itty bitty, microscopic piece of information. **I forgot to mention that the year of your operation is not 2008; it is 1808 – 200 years ago!**

I'm 49 years old so 200 years ago doesn't seem that long ago to me. Now in 1808 they did surgery but it was a little different back then.

Anesthesia

Anesthesia was first used by an American doctor, Dr. Crawford Long in 1842. Dr. Long used Ether to put a man to sleep while he removed a tumor from the man's neck. When the man woke up he reported that during the surgery he did not feel anything. And the whole world was stunned because until then no one knew this was possible. No one knew you could do surgery on someone without the person feeling any pain. (I've had surgery on my neck also so I'll show you my scar sometime if you want to see it.)

Unfortunately Dr. Long did not invent anesthesia until 34 years after your surgery so, I'm sorry but you won't have any anesthetic for your surgery – you will be awake through the whole operation and able to feel everything – I hope that's OK!

Germ Control

Until the 1850's no one knew what caused disease and infection. During the 1850's a French doctor, Dr. Louis Pasteur (in your best French accent say, "He was from France!"), Dr. Louis Pasteur performed some experiments that proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that germs were the cause of disease and infection. So, if you wanted to control infection during surgery you were going to have to figure out a way to control germs. Now, no one knew how to do that but at least now they knew what the problem was.

Various doctors started working on different ways to control germs and about 10 years later in 1865 another doctor, a British doctor named Dr. Joseph Lister (in your best British accent say, "He was quite British, you know!"), Dr. Lister, who worked for Queen Victoria, invented some antiseptic sprays that were very good at killing germs but were harmless to humans. You could spray these in the air, on the patient, on the doctor's hands (remember surgeons back then did not wear gloves), and on the surgical instruments. You just sprayed the stuff everywhere!

Dr. Lister's sprays were so effective that before he invented them 50% of people died after surgery from infection – even though the surgery itself went fine. But after his sprays were invented only 3% of people died from infection after surgery and the whole world was stunned because no one knew this was possible. No one knew it was possible to do surgery on people without half of them dying from infection.

In fact, one of Dr. Lister's products was so good we still use it today - 150 years later. Does anyone know what it is? *Take the bottle of Listerine out of the bag.* Listerine – see the label, kills germs on contact! And if you cover up the last 3 letters of its name it says, "Lister" – its named after Dr. Lister.

Unfortunately, Dr. Lister's antiseptic sprays were not available until 1865, 57 years after your surgery in 1808 so there won't be any germ control during your surgery. I hope that's OK!

Sterile Surgical Garments

It wasn't until the 1880's that sterile surgical garments – masks, hats, garment, and gloves - were invented (American doctor, Dr. Halstead). So for your operation the surgeon will wear his regular street clothes. I hope that is OK!

Sterile Sutures (Stitches)

Sterile (germ free) sutures, also invented by Dr. Lister, were also not available until the 1880's. Now people had thought about sewing up wounds back in 1808 but the doctors noticed that every time you sewed up people's wounds they would get an infection and die but if you did not sew up their wounds they would only die half the time – so they stopped sewing people up. Once sterile sutures were invented in the 1880's they started sewing people up again. So, for your operation instead of sewing you up your doctor will wrap an enormous, tight bandage all the way around your mid-section to hold you together while you heal and you will have a big, huge scar. I hope that is OK!

Antibiotics

Also, antibiotics were not discovered until 1928 (British doctor, Dr. Fleming), 120 years after your surgery so they won't be available either.

OK, sorry I forgot to mention those things

So, now how do you feel about your surgery? Not so good? I don't understand. These are the smartest, best trained, most experienced doctors in the world using the best medical technology known to man and they really do want to help you – so what's the problem?

The problem is that as smart as they were, there is just a lot of stuff they did not know. We look back on what people believed 200 years ago and we can't believe how little they knew. And guess what? 200 years from now people will be stunned at how we treat cancer today (we cut off body parts, spray people with deadly radiation, inject toxic chemicals into their bloodstream) when all they have to do is give someone a genetically engineered shot and their cancer disappears.

Conclusion

My point with this story is that human wisdom is very limited not just in medical science but in every area of life whether its marriage, raising children, handling money, obeying authority, etc.

Any 200 year old book you read about any area of life is going to show that people back then believed some pretty strange, sad things and that human wisdom is very limited.

But the Bible is not an old book – it is an ancient book! The newest parts of the Bible were not written 200 years ago – they were written (hold up one finger for each time you say, "200") 200+200+200+200+200+200+200+200+200+200 years ago (2000 years ago). The oldest parts of the Bible were written many hundreds of years before that. And yet the wisdom of this ancient book is as perfect and useful as the day it was written – no other book written by men is like that. It could only be possible if it was written by a perfectly wise God, which it was.

As you get older and go to mid-school, and high school and college you are going to have many teachers who are considered experts in the wisdom of the world in some area of life. Many of them do not believe in God or the Bible and will want you to believe things that are different than what the Bible says. When that happens you will have to make a choice – believe them or believe what God says in the Bible.

When I was 18 years old I made a decision that whenever the experts of the world disagreed with what the Bible said I would believe the Bible and 31 years later I've seen the blessings that come from obeying God and I've also seen the destruction and pain that eventually came into the lives of people who followed the world's wisdom instead.

Now, in the future when older people who are experts try to tell you that there is no God and the Bible is not true, I want you to remember your surgery in 1808 and how little those experts knew back then and I want you to put your faith in God and the Bible.

Psalm 119:98-100

“Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, For Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Thy precepts.”

If you study God's Word, the Bible, and you meditate on it, and you obey it you will have more wisdom and understanding than your non-christian teachers and non-christians who are older than you. Isn't that great? Wouldn't you like to be wiser than the world's experts and older non-christians. You can if you make the Bible your instruction manual for life.

Deuteronomy 4:39-40

"Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. 40" So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

Deuteronomy 6:1-3

"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3" O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Deuteronomy 12:28

"Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

Psalms 12:6

The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.

Psalms 119:140

Your word is very pure, Therefore Your servant loves it.

Psalms 18:30

As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

Proverbs 30:5-6

Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

Psalms 33:4

For the word of the LORD is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness.

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Psalms 119:130

The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

Psalms 119:169

Let my cry come before You, O LORD; Give me understanding according to Your word.

Isaiah 55:10-11

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; 11So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Mark 7:9-13

He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. 10"For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH'; 11but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' 12you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; 13thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."

John 17:17

"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

Deuteronomy 4:1-8

"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. 2"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3"Your eyes have seen what the LORD has done in the case of Baal-peor, for all the men who followed Baal-peor, the LORD your God has destroyed them from among you. 4"But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you. 5"See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. 6"So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' 7"For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? 8"Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?"

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Bible, Our Instruction Manual for Life (History of Surgery)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Deuteronomy 4:39-40, Deuteronomy 6:1-3, Deuteronomy 12:28*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalm 12:6, Psalm 119:140, Psalm 18:30, Proverbs 30:5-6*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalm 33:4, Psalm 119:105,130,169, Isaiah 55:10-11*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 17:17, Isaiah 40:8*

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