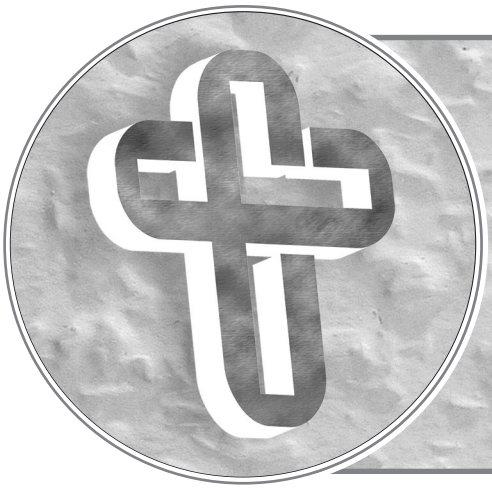


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
APRIL 11 2026

more than a job

Scripture Story: 1 Thessalonians 2:6, 9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8-12; 2 Corinthians 11; 1 Timothy 6:10-19; Colossians 1:25-29; Titus 2:6-8.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 33, 34.
Key Text: 1 Timothy 6:10.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Everyone is faced with a career choice eventually. Even choosing not to go to school or not to plan for a career is a choice—a choice to take whatever comes. God created each one of us to be exactly who we are. He gave us talents, personality, and dreams. He wove us together with all of our nerves and sinews for a particular purpose. We each have something unique and important to contribute. Our careers are a part of that contribution, and choosing them is no small thing!

In 2 Thessalonians 3:8-12 Paul tells us how important it is for us to work for a living and to stay productive. Even Paul, who was the greatest apostle working to further God's kingdom, worked as a tentmaker to support himself. A good work ethic is an important thing. Not only does it develop our characters, but it also serves as a witness.

However, there is another human tendency to work hard in order to make a lot of money. When money is our highest priority, we step onto some very dangerous ground. While money is a necessity in this world, we must not rely on money as if it could save us. Money is a tool, but when we make it our focus, we risk "all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).

When we choose a career, there is more to consider than money and hard work. We are told to be not only consumers but contributors to God's cause. We must pray and ask God to lead us in the direction in which He wants us to go.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that God has a work for them to do. *(Know)*
- Sense the importance of their contribution to God's cause. *(Feel)*
- Choose to seek God and ask for His guidance in their life choices. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Stewardship, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 21

"We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow human beings, and by returning tithe and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. Stewards rejoice in the blessings that come to others as a result of their faithfulness" (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; Rom. 15:26, 27; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:7).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

- What career can you see yourself excelling at in the future?
- Why do you think you would be good at this job? What reservations do you have?
- Do you think that God has a career that He wants you to do, or do you think that career choices are up to us?
- What factors do you take into account when considering your career options?
- How important is salary to you? How important is others' opinion of your choice?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

"Moses is the preeminent figure in the Old Testament. Naturally shy and humble, he sought obscurity. But when the Lord called him to rescue the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, this man of faith revealed the courage, tenacity, and moral convictions of a true hero. . . .

"Moses' mother raised him his first 12 years. He was then educated in the pharaoh's royal school. We might reasonably assume Moses was given the best possible education in reading, writing, history, geography, political science, management, leadership, weapons, and horsemanship—lessons he used well when he later led the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage.

"God turned the curse of Pharaoh's death decree into a blessing. God used the very decree Pharaoh issued to *destroy* Israel to educate Moses to *deliver* Israel" (Mark Finley, *Solid Ground,* p. 204).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

God placed Moses in the royal courts of Pharaoh through miraculous circumstances. First, Moses went through twelve years of training in his parents' home, where he learned to love and honor God. All the rest of the education he received in the pagan schools of Egypt were unable to erase from his mind and heart the love of God that his parents have instilled in him. However God also used the formal education of the best schools in Egypt to prepare Moses for his life-work. When Moses grew up to become a great statesman and he thought he was ready to deliver his people from the Egyptian bondage, God had other plans for him. God had prepared yet another school from which Moses had not yet graduated. So God took Moses to Midian and taught him the lessons of complete reliance on God. It was when Moses was 80 years old and felt entirely inadequate to fulfill his mission that God finally could use him to lead the children of Israel. That's because success and victory belong to God: " 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6, NKJV). God trained Moses for a special mission. What things in your life can you see that might be God's hand, guiding you in a particular direction?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- What characteristics make up a good work ethic according to these passages?
- What lessons do we see about handling money?
- How do these passages relate to choosing one's career?

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: Genesis 39–47; Matthew 25:14-30; Matthew 18:12-14.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

In the first passage (2 Thessalonians 3:8-12), according to the *Matthew Henry Bible Commentary*, some of the people of the church in Thessalonica misunderstood Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians in which he told them that the coming of Jesus was very soon. They thought that since Jesus' return was so imminent they should not work at their trades, but instead simply wait. This was not what Paul had intended at all. Not only did it put undue stress upon the other members to support them, but they were not piously waiting. They were gossiping and gener-

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Discussion Potpourri

Class discussion of a topic can help solidify the ideas in the students' minds. When facilitating a discussion, it is important to ask a question that is not too broad as to be confusing, nor too narrow as to be too obvious. Students will not answer questions that are either of these extremes. Do not ask anything that can be answered with a simple yes or no. If the question is one that could be relevant to the students' lives, they will be more apt to make comments. Try not to call on one student over and over again, and rephrase their comment back to them to make sure that they are being understood.

ally making trouble. Paul stressed that those who did not work should not eat. They were not to stop living their regular lives, but to keep on working, making money, and eating, while at the same time furthering the church's work. A righteous life is not the life of a recluse, but the life of a productive person who lives as God asks us to.

Timothy, who was first converted by Paul, was an evangelist. He was "lower" than an apostle, and he worked in church planting. Paul was writing to Timothy to encourage him in his ministry. The second passage (1 Timothy 6:10-19) is a charge to Timothy. Paul, as Timothy's mentor, is warning him about the danger of loving money. Timothy was young, and like the rest of us, would have been tempted to do something more lucrative. The work that Timothy did for the church did not pay, and he would have been, in essence, volunteering his time.

Timothy was also being given the responsibility of addressing the very wealthy. In Greek or even Judean society, a young man did not have the ability to approach his elders or those of a higher social status. However, in the Christian community, these social niceties were being stood on their heads. Timothy, both young and not wealthy, was being given the authority to teach those much higher than he was on their responsibilities. The wealthy were to care for the poor and not trust too much in their money. Rich or poor, everyone is equal in God's eyes.

Paul was establishing the church in these sections, giving them direction in how to sustain themselves for the long haul. He was encouraging them in their relationship with God. He was preparing the church to work and the members to continue to live their lives in readiness for the Second Coming of Jesus.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite students to share the Key Text *with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Acts of the Apostles. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

III. CLOSING

Activity

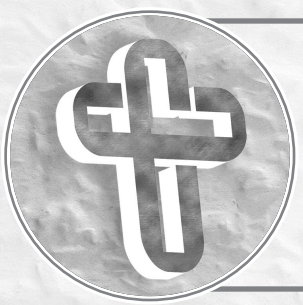
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask the students to write down five ways that they can prepare for their future careers. Examples might be achieving a certain grade level to let them get into university, volunteering in school council, or finding a part-time job or volunteer position in the field that interests them. Look at each idea and ask how God can be included in these plans for their futures. How can God stay at the center of their career goals?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Choosing a career is an important decision. Like all decisions in our lives, God must be a part of it. He created us with a job to do, and our career aspirations are a part of that. God gave us talents and desires for a reason, and if we follow the talents that God gave us, we will find a rewarding career waiting for us. We are not put on this earth to consume and show off; we are here to be productive, help others, and show the world what living for God is all about. While a strong work ethic is very important, it is equally important that we don't get sucked into the trap of striving for money, money, money. We can't forget that God knows our needs before we do, and He'll provide for us. The most important thing we can do is to follow God's will for our lives.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 33, 34.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

APRIL 11 2026

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 1 Thessalonians 2:6, 9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8-12; 2 Corinthians 11; 1 Timothy 6:10-19; Colossians 1:25-29; Titus 2:6-8.

Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 33, 34.

more than a job



Photo by Tompaul Wheeler

flashlight

"The indolent forfeit the invaluable experience gained by a faithful performance of the common duties of life. Not a few, but thousands of human beings exist only to consume the benefits which God in His mercy bestows upon them. . . . They forget that by trading wisely on the talents lent them they are to be producers as well as consumers. If they comprehended the work that the Lord desires them to do as His helping hand they would not shun responsibility" (*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 353).

keytext

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

(1 Timothy 6:10, NIV)

what do you think?

Regarding your career goals for the future, put the following considerations in the order of their importance:

____ How much the job pays
____ How prestigious the job is considered to be
____ Your parents'/friends' opinion of what you should do
____ How much you think you would enjoy the job on a daily basis
____ Whether the job would conflict with your beliefs and standards
____ How many perks the job has (i.e., vacation time, free meals, travel, etc.)
____ How much you can help people and contribute to your community
____ What you believe God is calling you to do with your life

did you know?

Before he became a disciple of Christ, Paul had occupied a high position and was not dependent upon manual labor for support. But afterward, when he had used all his means in furthering the cause of Christ, he resorted at times to his trade to gain a livelihood. Especially was this the case when he labored in places where his motives might have been misunderstood."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 347.

INTO THE STORY

"Nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.'

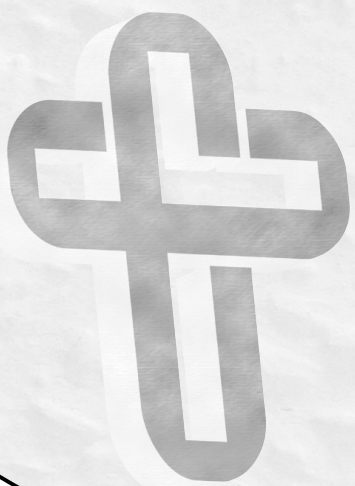
"We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat."

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

"But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

(2 Thessalonians 3:8-12; 1 Timothy 6:10-19, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

According to Paul, how important is staying usefully busy?

_____
_____
_____
_____

We are told to "earn the food [that you] eat." How can you do that? Do you think that everyone has to be working at a paying job, or are there other ways to contribute in different circumstances?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How do you think that money can be a root of evil in your own life?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What kinds of financial responsibilities do we have toward each other?

_____
_____
_____
_____

According to this passage, what is wealth? How does God see wealth?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What should our priorities be for our futures?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How can we balance a good work ethic with "love of money"?

_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us" **(Titus 2:6-8, NIV).**

"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me" **(Colossians 1:28, 29, NIV).**

"We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else" **(1 Thessalonians 2:6, NIV).**

"Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying" **(2 Corinthians 11:29-31, NIV).**

"Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you" **(1 Thessalonians 2:9, NIV).**

further insight

"When in his service for the Master circumstances seemed to require it, [Paul] willingly labored at his trade. Nevertheless, he ever held himself ready to lay aside his secular work, in order to . . . improve a special opportunity to win souls to Jesus. His zeal and industry are a rebuke to indolence and desire for ease."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 354, 355

Sabbath

Read Colossians 1:28, 29.

In today's reading Paul describes what he is working for. Paul was a tentmaker by trade, and he worked hard at his job so that he could financially support himself and never be a burden on the church members. Regardless of his career that he was trained for, his passion was to tell others about Jesus. Paul took great pride in his hard work, but he used his career to further the gospel. Who would have thought that tent-making could be used for God? How could your career path be used for God?

Make a list of as many occupations as you can think of and next to each one write one idea of how God could use that occupation to help others or glorify Him. (Use the note pages in the back of your study guide.)

Sunday

In our Bible passages this week, we see that a good work ethic is incredibly important. We should stay productively busy and we should be contributing to our own keep. If you are not able to work while in school, there are ways to contribute other than financially until you are on your own. However, we also see that the "love of money" can cause a whole heap of problems. How can you keep the balance: working hard and making money while not loving money too much? What do you think is the right balance?

Today, make a budget of your personal expenses and your income. How can you make room for God in your monthly budget?

Monday

Read 1 Timothy 6:10.

The *Key Text* says that some people, "eager for money, have wandered from the faith." In what ways can money cause you to compromise your belief? Most of us immediately think of keeping the Sabbath, but there are other ways that our beliefs can be compromised for money. Consider these options, and write a Christian response you would give if you were enticed to do any of these.

1. Lie to your boss about a mistake you made: _____
2. Allow your supervisor to believe that you worked longer than you did: _____
   _____
3. Write someone else's essay for them:
   _____
4. Stop volunteering your time at church or a charity because work is too demanding:
   _____

Tuesday

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:9.

As Ellen White points out in the *Flashlight* section this week, we are not supposed to be simply consumers. In our society the newest gadgets, the latest fashions, the nicest cars, and the most up-to-date entertainment news are seen as signs of social success. But that is all consumption! God cares about our productivity. He created us each to contribute something unique and distinctive to the world.

Today, make a list of 25 unique things about you that many people might not know. Why did God give you these characteristics? (Use the note pages in the back of your study guide.)

Wednesday

Read Titus 2:6-8.

If you look at the *Punch Line* verses this week, you will see that Paul's focus was never on impressing other people around him with his excellent taste, wealth, or ability to compete. Instead, he worked hard so that he could show God to the people who had not yet met Him. In Titus 2:6-8 he encourages young people to work in such a way that other people will never be able to say anything against them.

For the following situations, make a note of how you would expect a Christian to act versus a non-Christian:

1. Someone ahead of this person in line yells at the cashier for being too slow.
2. A mistake turns out to be the right thing and this person's boss congratulates her for her good work.
3. This person entirely forgets about a major assignment due the next day.

Thursday

Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Choosing a career is an important decision. Not only will it affect your ability to support yourself, but it will also affect your day-to-day happiness. You must choose something that you will love to do so that the 40 or more hours a week you spend at it will be a joy, not drudgery. In what ways can you witness for God in your career choice? How can you help others? How can you do God's will? How much has God factored into your choice?

_____

_____

Friday

Read Romans 11:36.

God created you to be exactly who you are. He gave you your strengths and your abilities, as well as your personality, your looks, and your preferences. God created you to do something with the time He gave you. You have a destiny, and your career is a part of that destiny that God created. Have you talked to God about what He wants you to do with your life? Have you asked the One who designed you what He designed you for?

this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 33, 34.

**Unlikely Leaders* is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net /article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.