

Lesson 3—Jeremiah 29:13

“When you seek me, you will find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”

Review:

Who remembers our verse from last week? (let kids recite for a prize)
We talked about how God wants us to come to him, his heart is for children. We talked about how he helped David, even when his brothers wanted to turn him away, how David said even if his family forsakes him, God will take him up. Even as we begin this year, God wants *all* of us – even children – to come to Him.

Additional verses to consider:

- Proverbs 2:1-5 “My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.”
- Proverbs 8:17, “I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.”
- Matthew 6:33 “Seek first the kingdom of God”
- Psalm 34:4 “I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me.”
- Luke 15 (Lost coin, lost sheep, lost son) This may more accurately be a picture of God seeking us, a slightly larger concept perhaps too big to bring up. But if it seems to fit, it is a beautiful picture to note that though we are called to seek him, and *should* seek Him with our whole heart, he also, is seeking us. He is looking for a

man who will “stand in the gap” (Ezekiel 22:30), for “righteous men” (Genesis 18), for men who will “come” to him (Luke 13:34). He “seeks true worshippers” and to save “the lost.” Some could even say he even sought out Adam and Eve in the garden after they’d sinned.

- The book of Malachi references the “leftovers” concept used with the banana illustration several times.

Visual Activity to Begin Class: The Whole Banana

This could also be done at the conclusion of class to drive the point home

Hold up a Banana and tell the class this “Banana” represents our heart. God told Jeremiah that he wants his people to see him with their whole heart. Now let’s say God says, “I want your heart, Katherine.”

And we say, “okay, God ... but let me first finish playing this video game” (take a bite of the banana)

And God comes back and says again, “Katherine, I want your heart”

And we say, “Yes, yes, God, in just a minute, let me first finish my piano practice” (take another bite of the banana)

And God comes back a third time and says, “Katherine, please, your heart,” (because God really is patient with us, just like it was with Israel, and he always always wants us to seek him even when we haven’t been so good)

And we say, “Ooooh, I’m coming God. As soon as I finish this TV show, I promise I’ll be there.” (take another bite)

And soon we’re at the end of the day ...and our banana is mostly gone, and we say, “oooh. Here God, you can have my banana.”

That seems yucky right? Who wants to give God an old banana peel?

But do we do this? We do. We too often give God our leftovers, when God really wants our whole heart.

Read & Discuss the Word:

- Jeremiah 29:10-14—Do we know this story? God’s people had gotten so evil that he allowed them to be taken captive. It was kind of like a spanking, a really bad punishment because God’s people have completely turned away from him. They were doing evil, evil things. (You don’t need to share this, but at this point they weren’t just worshipping idols. They’d been so influenced by the ways of these foreign countries, they were now offering their children to these idols, and making them “walk through the fire of Molech”) But even in their sins, God hasn’t given up on them. But God loves his people. He loves us even at our worst and still he is pleading with them to seek Him.

Apply the Word:

- What does it mean to do something with “all your heart?”

- What is something you love to do? Music? Sports? Do you do that with “all your heart?” Have you ever heard someone say, “she does that with her whole heart?”
- What about schoolwork? Do you do that with your whole heart? Another verse you may have heard is “whatever you do, do you work **heart-ily**” (Col 3:23), as if you were serving the Lord.
- When we do something with ALL our heart, we don’t have space for a divided heart. We give God 100%.
 - Have you gone to talk with someone and they were looking at their cell phone or watching TV? How did that make you feel? Not very good right ... **because they weren’t giving you their whole heart.**

The banana activity could also be done here. Otherwise, use this time to have your class color their workbook sheet and practice the verse.

Watch or Sing the Word:

“With my whole heart, Lord let me love you”

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=with+my+whole+heart+lord+let+me+love+you&docid=607986723076324044&mid=240F616F7F6635F90A5F240F616F7F6635F90A5F&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>