BIG TRUTH: GOD’S PEOPLE ARE UNWORTHY
Romans 3:23; Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Isaiah 53:6; Ezekiel 20:44, 36:22; Luke 17:10; Job 40:1-4

BIBLE VERSE: ISAIAH 6:5
“And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’”

BIG IDEAS
• All sin and fall short of God’s glory.
• God’s people are unfaithful.
• God’s people are insignificant yet loved.

BIBLE PASSAGE: DEUTERONOMY 9:4-29

UNITE: LIVING IN COMMUNITY
The Unite year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are brought into the family of God- seen throughout the Old Testament as “God’s People” and in the New Testament and today as the church (Exodus 6:7; Colossians 1:18). We are set free from our sin to walk in freedom in Christ (Galatians 5:1) and use our influence to call others to do the same.

SERIES AIMS
Every student should know...
• God has always been making and keeping a people for Himself
• In this age, the church is God’s people
• Being a part of God’s people should inform every aspect of our lives

Every student should strive to...
• Study the connections between God’s people in the Old Testament
• and the church in the New Testament
• Memorize the Bible verse each week
• Invite others into God’s people, the church

Every student should feel...
• Love for God and the people of God
• Accountable to God and to the church to pursue holiness
• Responsible to use their influence to make much of God alone

Every student should want...
• Be marked by their faith
• Talk about God every day, in every setting and circle of influence
• Live as a faithful member of their local church

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS
The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.
BIBLE VERSE: ISAIAH 6:5
“And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’”

God’s people know they are unworthy.
“And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips…”
- Isaiah’s vision of the King of kings resulted in a realization for him. Isaiah realized his own lack of holiness. His response was to cry out in despair at his lack of holiness. He had seen the holy and righteous Lord and realized that he was a sinful man.
- When we come before the presence of God, we know we are not worthy of Him. God’s people understand they are unclean and in need of salvation. They do not stand before Him proud as if they have anything to offer Him. Instead, they are humble, knowing that they are sinful and have nothing but unclean hands to offer insufficient offerings with.

God’s people recognize they fall short of achieving God’s glory.
“...and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King…”
- What it must have been like for Isaiah to have a vision of the King of kings! To see Jesus in all of His glory would have been a wonderful thing, yet it would have immediately highlighted Isaiah’s lack of glory. When Isaiah saw the King with his own eyes, he knew that he fell short of this glory.
- He knew that he was not like God but quite the opposite of God. God’s people recognize this about themselves and turn to Him to receive the salvation they need and to be reconciled to Him. This means that they live humbly before Him, knowing they do not deserve the relationship they have with Him because He is holy and they are not.

God’s people know they are loved.
“And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’
- God is a One who is known and can be known. He revealed Himself to Isaiah in a vision, allowing the prophet to see Him in His glory and righteousness. God reveals Himself to His people for His glory and their good.
- God does this because He loves His people. This is not because of any merit, worth, or good actions that they do on their own, but because of God’s grace and mercy. Though His people are unworthy of Him, He still loves them and reconciles them to Himself.
BIG IDEA #1: ALL SIN AND FALL SHORT OF GOD’S GLORY.¹

[ THIS ]

In Deuteronomy 9:12-13, the Israelites are reminded of their sin against God when they created a golden calf and worshiped it instead of God. While Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments, the people turned away from God and created a false god. They gave themselves over to worshiping the idol and fell short of the glory that is due God. This picture we see in these verses is true of all people, not just the Israelites. All people fall short of God’s glory because all people sin. We all sin because we are born with a broken nature that is sinful. We are inclined to follow the prince of this world rather than obeying God. This pattern of sinning and falling short of the glory that is due the one true God is evident in the lives of the Israelites. God called them out as His special people and blessed them, yet they turned away from Him again and again. Their history is a picture of the history of mankind.

[ THEREFORE ]

Read Deuteronomy 9:4-13. What do you learn about the Israelites’ interaction with God? How does this knowledge help you understand the way you interact with God?

When we read the history of Israel, we should see ourselves in their disobedience. God is faithful to them and reveals His glory to them, yet they turn away whenever they face the slightest obstacle. This knowledge should help us to see that we, too, are sinners and unworthy of God’s glory.

[ THIS ]

God’s glory is His holiness and righteousness on display. It is the manifestation of His perfection. It is who He is. He is glorious because He is perfectly holy, perfectly good, and perfectly righteous. His glory is manifested for His people in the Old Testament through His power and the way He interacts with them. He shows up in burning bushes and reveals Himself in thunderous clouds. In the New Testament, His glory is manifested in His Son, Jesus. Every person has fallen short of this glory. No person can attain this glory, nor is any person worthy of being in its presence. Yet, God makes a way for sinful man to know Him and experience His glory. Though every person has a heart that leads them to reject God, to turn away from Him and choose the things of this world over Him, God chooses to offer reconciliation.

[ THEREFORE ]

How does the brokenness of our culture today support the truth that every person sins and falls short of God’s glory?

Romans 5:12 tells us that sin came into all the world through Adam, and 2 Timothy 3:1-5 reminds us what that sin looks like. The world around us is a visible picture of the ways that sin has played out in human hearts.

Why is it not helpful to ignore that all people sin? Why is the better choice to know ourselves and help others know they fall short of God’s glory?

In Isaiah 6:5, the prophet sees God’s glory and realizes that he, himself is unworthy. This realization leads to the prophet crying out to God. When humans recognize that they fall short of God’s glory, it leads to a turning to God. Though it may seem challenging to tell people they are falling short of something, it brings eternal life to understand your lack in order to gain an eternal future.

¹ Romans 3:23: Every person sins against God and every person falls short of His glory.
BIG IDEA #2: GOD’S PEOPLE ARE UNFAITHFUL.²

[THIS]
In Deuteronomy 9:4-29, Moses recounts the unfaithfulness of Israel. Moses was preparing them to enter the Promised Land after the people had wandered in the desert for forty years for their unfaithfulness. As he prepared them, he reminded them that God was not bringing them into the land because of anything they had done, but because of His faithfulness. The Israelites were characterized by their stubbornness and habitual turning away from God. Even when God blessed them again and again, they would grumble and complain against Him. They would reject Him and worship idols, attributing to the idols work that God had done for them. Their unfaithfulness kept them from the Promised Land for forty years and cost them greatly. Even as Moses prepared them to enter the Land that God had long ago promised them, he reminded them of their idolatrous hearts. This characteristic of the Israelites is true of humans today. God’s people are unfaithful, choosing to follow their sinful, deceptive hearts instead of His commands.

[THEREFORE]
Read Jeremiah 2:13 and Hosea 6:6-7. How do these verses reveal a pattern in God’s people’s lives? How is this same pattern reflected in the lives of people today?
God’s people were idolatrous. They would grumble and complain against Him. They would follow Him for a while only to turn away and chase idols. Today, people choose idol worship and following their hearts over faithfulness to God. A similar pattern develops of seeking God and then turning away.

[THIS]
God is faithful to His people. He is a steadfast and faithful God. His faithfulness does not depend upon the faithfulness of mankind. In Deuteronomy 9:4-29, Moses reminds the people that God is going to hand over their enemies, but He’s going to do it because He promised to do it and He keeps His promises. Moses did not want the people to mistake God’s blessing and work on their behalf to mean that they were righteous or had done anything to deserve it. Instead, he wanted them to understand that God was driving out the inhabitants of the land because He is God. Today, God’s people should understand the same truth about themselves. They are unfaithful people, yet God remains faithful to them. God does what He does because He is a promise-keeper and works to fulfill His glory. God’s people today are as unfaithful as the Israelites were unfaithful, yet God still goes before His people and fights for them, provides for them, and sustains them. He does so for His glory and the good of His people.

[THEREFORE]
Consider the example of the Israelites. What thoughts often lead to unfaithfulness in a person’s heart?
Judges 8:33-34 and 2 Peter 3:9 help us understand that often we believe the lie that God is not good, and He is not faithful. When we believe these lies, we are unfaithful ourselves. We choose to follow our sinful hearts.

Because man is unfaithful, why is God’s faithfulness good news?
In Deuteronomy 9:5, Moses reminds the people of their unfaithfulness and God’s faithfulness. It’s good news that God is a covenant keeper because it means that we have hope for a future and eternal life.

² 2 Chronicles 29:6: The people of Israel had a history of unfaithfulness as do humans today.
BIG IDEA #3: GOD’S PEOPLE ARE INSIGNIFICANT YET LOVED.3

[ THIS ]
In Isaiah 40:12-15, the prophet presents a picture of God’s power, His stature, and significance compared to mankind’s. People are not like God. People are reflective of God, but they are not Him. God is much higher and greater than mankind. In these verses, Isaiah asks questions that point back to the creation of the world. Only God is the Creator of all things. Only He is greater and outside of the created world that we live inside of. His significance is greater than ours. Compared to God, we are insignificant beings because we are created beings. God, who is not created and has no beginning or end, is the center of all things. It is from Him that life comes. All that we have and are is from Him. The air we breathe and the world we live in is from Him. Understanding our insignificance is important in taking steps toward reconciliation with God. When we truly understand how insignificant we are compared to God, we will be able to acknowledge our sinfulness and receive salvation.

[ THEREFORE ]
How does pride and self-love keep people from understanding their insignificance compared to God’s significance?
In Isaiah 40:12-15, Isaiah notes that it is God who created all the things in the world. Our pride and love of ourselves lead us to think we are more than we are. It is a lie that leads us to believe we have a significance that we do not have apart from the grace that God has shown us.

[ THIS ]
God’s people are insignificant, but they are also loved. Because God is perfect in every way, He can be perfectly just while also being perfectly loving. His love is perfect while mankind’s love is not. God loves His people and cares for them because of who He is, not because of who man is. In Deuteronomy 9:4-29, Moses reminds the people of who they are. They are stubborn and prideful. They are unfaithful and sinful, yet God keeps His promise to them and leads them into the Promised Land. God does this with His people today. Humans are created beings and fall short of the glory of God. God’s people, though redeemed by Him, continue to sin against Him, yet He continues to show His mercy and grace to them. God loves His people because He is love and is perfect in all His ways. God shows His love to His people by caring for them and providing for them. He shows His love by making a way for His people to be redeemed from their sin. Jesus left His place in Heaven and came to the earth, humbling Himself and taking on human flesh that He might redeem the world. This is the way that a significant God shows His people how He loves them.

[ THEREFORE ]
Why is it necessary for a person to understand his or her unworthiness?
Matthew 5:5 and Psalm 37:11 teach us that those who are meek inherit eternal life. Meekness is the ability and willingness to see one’s unworthiness. It is meekness that leads a person to salvation.

How is understanding unworthiness different from having a low self-esteem or view of yourself?
Knowing you are unworthy is different from having a low self-esteem because it is not just thinking poorly of yourself. An understanding of unworthiness is connected to being teachable and turning to Christ as 1 Peter 3:15 and Psalm 25:9 show us.

3. Deuteronomy 7:6-8: God chose the Israelites to be His people and set them apart. He calls sinners to Himself and saves them.