

Power Struggle



Teacher's Guide

Materials

Bibles; pencils or pens; flipchart/chalkboard/whiteboard and appropriate markers

Surveying the Source

Isa. 14:13, 14; Mark 9:35; 1 Cor. 12:7–31; 1 Corinthians 13; Phil. 2:3; 3 John; Rev. 14:6.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Assess effective and ineffective uses of power that they have observed.
- ▶ Build a scriptural foundation for “staying” the mind on God in order to

achieve balance and serenity.

- ▶ Reflect in a practical way on servanthood.

Preparing to Lead

Last year, just about this time, my wife and I rode the Amtrak train from Seattle to the Midwest of the United States so I could perform a nephew's wedding. From the way the engineer kept constantly blowing the whistle and slowing the train to a crawl while rumbling through small towns, he clearly under-

stood what kind of power he was controlling.

And as the newly married couple left the church after the nuptials, they both ascended to the cab of a immense, gleaming Case tractor and chugged across town to the reception—and nobody got in their way!

Getting Started

A. Say: “Think about your fifth- or sixth-grade teacher. Did that person use his or her power effectively or not? Give some examples. What did he or she do to help a rowdy class to become calm? Tell about a time this teacher seemed temporarily powerless in the face of something you, or you and the rest of the class, did.”

B. Find out which person in the class

(or which person's parent) has operated the most powerful piece of machinery. Ask that person to describe (1) what that machine could do when its power was used correctly, (2) what could happen if the machine were used incorrectly or carelessly, and (3) rules which had to be followed to use that power properly.

Delving Into the Word

A. Say: “Here's a ‘what-if’ scenario. Let's say that our pastor has been receiving lots of e-mails and phone calls from teens through seniors concerning how worried they are about world events—how powerless they feel. He or

she wants to respond to this turmoil, so rather than doing a lot of solo personal study, he's decided to involve our class. He's asking us to develop a PowerPoint presentation—complete with music and video clips—that will springboard from

Isaiah 26:3, 4. It will conclude with several practical methods we can use to keep our minds ‘steadfast’ or ‘stayed on’ God. He urges us to absorb all the information we can out of Isaiah 26:3, 4 before going to other parts of the Bible. For now, let’s focus on those practical methods.” Then see what type presentation your class can come up with. Use a flipchart to create PowerPoint slides.

B. Say: “Think of the teenager in your life you are closest to. Maybe this person is a sibling, or a cousin, or a young person in this church.. Now imagine that this teen is starting to show some breathtaking talent in sports (or music, acting,

business, or some other skill). Focus on a real teenager, someone you know—and if that person isn’t quite as talented as I’ve just described, just pretend for a moment. You naturally want to encourage this person, so the next time you see him or her in action, you say, ‘Great job. You’ve really got a lot of talent.’ And he or she looks you in the eye and says, ‘Thanks. Could you answer a question that’s been bothering me? What’s the difference between a talent and a spiritual gift?’ Using 1 Corinthians 12:7–31, and any other passages you can think of, try to come up with a clear and satisfying answer.”

Write student responses on a flipchart.

Discussing the Ideas

1. (This discussion could also lead into the “Who’s First in God’s Eyes” worksheet on page 43.) When Jesus made statements like “The last shall be first” and “He who wants to be greatest must become a servant” was He defining “last/least” and “first/greatest” the way the world does or the way heaven does? Defend your answer.

2. Has the way God uses power needed to change since the Fall? Will it change once Eden is restored? Explain your answers using Bible texts.

3. When have you been a bully? How old were you when you took this role? Whom did you bully? Why? How long (in years) did this bullying last? Have you stopped? If so, what caused you to stop?

4. Let’s imagine that rather than being apprenticed to His dad Jesus had worked at a Home Depot in His youth. How would the young Creator have responded

if His boss had (1) bullied or harassed Him, or (2) “written Him up” for a wrong He didn’t do? Put yourself in Jesus’ sandals and speak phrases you imagine He might have spoken.

5. Think of a time when you felt grouchy about God. What did you expect from His power that didn’t happen? Have these feelings changed, and if so, how much? What has caused the change?

6. Pretend that we are a group of heavenly angels, and we’re all working on our personal mission statements. Remember, you are comfortable in the powerful presence of God—a presence which would vaporize sin and sinners if they came too close. As an angel, you yourself have enough power that you must cloak yourself with invisibility while on earth, unless for some reason you’re appearing as “an angel unawares.” List your vision, your mission, and a few specific goals.

Closing the Activity

If you did not use the reproducible activity for the first of the discussion questions, use it close the lesson. Or close by saying: “As Christians, our main goal is to be transformed into the image in which God had originally created us—*His* image. That image includes the wise use of

power. The Bible teaches us about the wrong use of power. Jesus’ life on earth teaches us about how to use power wisely and how to react to the wrong use of power. May we all continually ask God to help us reach our goals in this area.” Close with prayer.

Maylan Schurch, Renton, Washington, U.S.A.

Copyright 2009
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®

Who's First in the Eyes of God?

Read Mark 9:33–37. As you do, try to crystallize what Jesus was really saying when He said, “ ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’ ” (Mark 9:35, NJKV). Then, using words or brief phrases, write descriptions of what the world’s “first” and God’s “first” would look like in the occupations below. Don’t forget to include your own job or potential career.

In this career what’s “first” as the world defines it?	. . . what’s “first” as God defines it?
CEO or supervisor	Making a lot of money Being ruthless— responsible only to the stockholders	Philanthropy Treating employees fairly Remembering Who gives the power to get wealth
Doctor		
Lawyer		
Aircraft design engineer		
News reporter		
Someone from your own current or potential career		