



# ROCK SOLID

2023 WHFMS PROGRAM KIT



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## ROCK SOLID

WHFMS Program Kit 2023

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# WELCOME

## KAREN HALL

Dear WHFMS Friends,

I'm not an organized person; I tend to put things aside to file later. My photo album of our 39-year-old son is still a plastic tub full of pictures, his art and school papers. I'm always going to "get around to it." But, when I do open that tub, I'm transported. I lose all sense of time and quickly forget everything I need to do while I re-live those wonderful times. We easily put aside memories of times both good and bad, but then something happens — a picture, a smell, a song and we are once again experiencing the feelings as strongly as ever.

Our Father knew we needed reminders of both the good and bad things in our lives. The Old Testament is full of instructions to build a memorial, often of rocks, as a way of remembering what had happened. These memorials also served as a visual for future generations. They were told to tell their children how the Lord had protected them, guided them and led them to victory.

This year our program kit is about these Ebenezers. These "stones of help" are as important today in the year 2023 as they were then. I know you will enjoy studying about these memorials. However, as you study, I encourage you to consider setting up Ebenezers in your life. How has God blessed you? How has he answered prayers? How has he protected you? Maybe you can keep a notebook listing these events. Perhaps a box in which you put little pieces of paper that you can open and remember is the Ebenezer for you. Whatever it is, start it. And, remember to share with others what they mean. We are encouraged when we see the work of our Lord in each other's lives.

We appreciate the women of the Appalachian Region who have creatively worked to develop these programs for us. Interestingly, many of those women have an Ebenezer at the campground at Blowing Rock, N.C. The stone buildings, the front porch rockers and the walks down to the creek all serve to remind them of the many times the Lord answered prayers. Perhaps that beautiful mountain campground inspired this year's programs.

What is your Ebenezer? I would love to hear from you as you share about that memorial of special remembrance.

Now, you must excuse me. I have to look up the lyrics to the beautiful hymn, "Come Thou Fount." I'm having trouble remembering the second verse.

Love each one of you,

Karen

# GOD IS ROCK SOLID

PAM BUCHANAN

**PURPOSE:** In this lesson, we will seek to learn of the power of God that led the Israelites to cross the Jordan on dry land. Their obedience in creating a 12-stone altar as a memorial would cause them to forever remember this miracle and provide an opportunity to tell about their rock-solid God. This lesson will also introduce the visual suggestion of creating a miniature stone altar to be used for monthly review throughout all the lessons in this program kit.

**MUSIC:** (Hymns of Heritage & Hope) “My Hope Is Built” #630 or “Praise the Name of Jesus” #250 If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

**SCRIPTURE:** Joshua 3-4

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Obtain a flatter rock that can serve as a foundation for the mini altar-like visual (to be added to at each circle meeting.) This rock needs to be thick enough to be able to write on with a permanent marker. Have index cards and pencils ready for the introduction game, and a game prize - like a bag of rock candy, if you desire. Also, have Bibles available for those who need one, and assign Scripture pieces at the start, to make reading through them smoother. If using music, acquire enough hymnals for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play accompaniment.

## ROLLING

To introduce this lesson, and this year’s program kit theme, ask the ladies to play a quick game of “Fill-in-the-Blank.” Hand out index cards and pencils and ask them to write several answers to the following phrase... “Rock \_\_\_\_\_.” (some answers might include Rock City or Rock On or Rock Concert, etc.) After several minutes, ask the ladies to share and compare their answers.

**OPTIONAL:** Offer a simple prize (like a bag of rock candy) to the lady who gets the most unique answers (ones not duplicated by anyone else in the group).

Our 2023 WHFMS Program Kit is titled, “Rock Solid” and comes from our theme verse in 1 Samuel 2:2b, “There is no Rock like our God.” Each lesson this year will center on rocks or stones in the Bible that highlight our theme verse. I would like to present this “flat rock,” which will serve as the foundation for our yearly visual. Let’s leave this rock in sight on the table, and we will come back to it at the conclusion of our lesson time.

## ONWARD

Ask the ladies to turn to Joshua 3 in their Bibles, and skim through this chapter. After a few minutes, ask for a volunteer to briefly summarize the events recorded here:

- What was happening? (Israelites were crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land)
- Who was leading? (Joshua)
- What instructions were given? (The priest and the ark go first, step into the water, then all the people.)
- When was the scary part? (The Jordan River was at “flood stage,” but as they obeyed God’s instructions, the river stopped flowing, and the Israelites crossed over on dry ground.)

After this simple review of Joshua 3, ask for a volunteer to read Joshua 4:1-7.

## CONSIDER

What an amazing miracle they had just witnessed, and now God instructs them to set up a memorial so that they would always remember. Pay close attention to verses 6b -7a where we read...

“In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them...”

- **IN THE FUTURE** – As we walk forward on our life journey, none of us can know how much time we will have, but the Bible teaches us to honor our God with every day we are given. We are encouraged to be grateful for every single future day, and to live expecting our Rock-Solid God to act on our behalf and for our good.
- **WHEN YOUR CHILDREN ASK YOU** - Who are the children in your life? Your list may include biological children, adopted children, neighborhood children, classroom children, church children, camp children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews, etc. Make a list of those children. Commit to praying for your relationship with them and for open doors to “question times.”
- **WHAT DO THESE STONES MEAN?** Give some thought to what your own personal stories of our Rock-Solid God might be. I have a friend who, on the occasion of her retirement, built an actual stone altar in her yard, and then posted a picture on Facebook with these words, “In the Old Testament, people often marked major moments in their lives by piling up stones along the journey. It was their way of saying, ‘God met me here in a special way. He did something really big, and I am forever changed because of it.’” These piled-up stones would be a visual reminder forever of those God-moments. We might not have an actual stone structure in our yard, but I encourage you to consider what your own stories of God’s miracles and of his goodness are that you can share with others. Do you have any visual reminders of those special events? One suggestion would be to begin writing the account of these

life moments in a journal that could prompt you to remember and to share.

- TELL THEM – Ask God to provide opportunities for you to share all of your special remembrances of how our Rock-Solid God has answered prayer, protected, brought peace and forever changed your journey as you responded to him.

Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 4:24 and then discuss the purpose of this visible memorial of stones.

- SO THAT all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful, and
- SO THAT you might always fear the Lord your God.

## KICKER

As we travel through life - from birth to death - there will definitely be times that we do not feel stable and steady on our feet. So much of life is uncertain, and that makes this year's theme so relevant for our day and time. How important it is for us to experience our Rock-Solid God, and then to share that with others along the way. Please consider what your own personal "stone-remembrances" would be. I challenge you to share one or more with someone else in the next month.

As we close this lesson, let's return to the "flat stone" from the beginning of our lesson. Ask a volunteer to use a permanent marker to write a few words on the side of this stone that would represent the key thought of this lesson (you can write the title of the lesson – God Is Rock Solid – or maybe the word, "Memorial" or "Remember," etc.) This flat rock will serve as the foundation of our yearly altar (to reappear at each meeting and to be built upon), and also as a way to remember/review past lessons throughout the year. (Wouldn't it be great if someone could take a picture of this visual structure at various times of the year and post it to Facebook or share it by email? This would be a great way for different WHFMS Circles to stay connected, and maybe even share our God-stories!)

Close with one or more song(s) of your choice and prayer together.

**SHARED BY:** Pam Buchanan lives in a cottage on the Blowing Rock AC Campground with her husband, Rev. Rob Buchanan. She attends the Blue Ridge AC Chapel. Enjoying the mountain air and living among the woodland creatures, Pam is benefiting from extra time in her "prayer chair" as well as reading, working puzzles and watching the birds (and other animals) eat from the feeders while singing, "This Is My Father's World."



# GOD'S PRESENCE IS ROCK SOLID

LIBBY HARREN

**PURPOSE:** As Christians, we should all desire a closer relationship with God. In this lesson, we will find tools and ideas to help us connect to and feel God's presence more powerfully.

**MUSIC:** "He Is Here" (Hymns of Heritage and Hope# 435) or "Surely the Presence" (© 1977 Lanny Wolfe, Pathway Press) If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 31:1-8

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Make sure there is a second rock to add to the altar and a marker to write on the rock. Type out the Scriptures for everyone or have Bibles (in the same version). Have a blackboard, whiteboard or poster board, and markers for the board you choose. If using music, acquire enough hymnals or copies of the music for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play the accompaniment.

## ROLLING (REVIEW)

In the first lesson, we talked about how "God Is Rock Solid." Our strong, powerful God led the Israelites, his chosen people, through the Jordan River during flood season. He then instructed the people to set up a stone altar as a memorial of that event. We, too, need memorials in our lives so we can remember God's provision and so to testify to others of God's glory.

**ASK:** What is our memorial for this lesson? (Read or have someone read the word on the second stone.)

Ask the ladies to call out some of the things or situations that cause them to be afraid. Some of these will probably include spiders, snakes, cancer, flying, heights, enclosed places, medical procedures or death. Write their responses on the board. We will return to this later.

## ONWARD

Ask the ladies to turn to Deuteronomy 31:1- 8 in their Bibles or hand out the Scripture cards you have made for them. Read the Scripture aloud or ask an individual to read it.

**ASK:** Who is speaking and to whom is he speaking? (Moses is speaking to the children of Israel and to Joshua.)

**ASK:** Why is this a scary situation? (They will meet many enemies that they will have to destroy.)

**ASK:** Why are they not to be terrified? (The Lord goes with them.)

## CONSIDER

Scripture begins and ends with the presence of God. From Genesis, with God walking with Adam and Eve in the garden, to Revelation, when Jesus returns to bring a new heaven and a new earth in which we will enjoy God's presence eternally, his presence goes before us. We KNOW that to be true, but sometimes we get an empty feeling like God is not there. Even though we have accepted Christ as our Savior and have read and studied the Scriptures, we can still feel that something is missing. We have the ability to feel God's presence at all times, yet we live in a sinful world that clouds our awareness of him. It is at those times that we need to come honestly to him so that he can heal the gaps that prevent our closeness to him. I suggest that in these troublesome times you pick a Scripture to read. Perhaps you might choose a Scripture that has touched you in the past in some way. Then, do not study it, but read it—intentionally, prayerfully and thoroughly, letting it seep into every pore of your being. Then read it again, and again, concentrating on its richness, its meaning. Try to sense what the Lord is telling you in the words you are reading. You may not feel his presence immediately, but do not give up. As you continue to do this exercise day after day, week after week you will awaken your own spirit to the Holy Spirit.

## KICKER

I have shared this in a previous program kit, but it bears repeating. When my son Andrew died suddenly at 34 years old, we were devastated of course. BUT GOD ... his presence rolled over us like a calming wind. I learned to call it a "Holy Haze." We still sensed the loss, but it was no longer like a raw wound. God was WITH us! He comforted us when nothing or no one else could.

Look back at our list on the board. Is there anything on that list that is greater than God's power? (NO!)

Reflect on a time when you have been aware of the presence of God in your life. Perhaps it was during a special song, witnessing the birth of a baby, during an illness or death, or even hoeing your garden. Take some time now to share your experience with the group. How might you use these experiences to bolster someone else's faith?

Add a rock that says "God's Presence" to your stone altar that you began earlier in the year. Close with one or more song(s) of your choice and prayer together.

## SHARED BY:

Libby Harren lives in Lenoir, N.C. with her husband, Michael. She attends Calvary Advent Christian Church in Lenoir, where she plays the piano. She is a retired teacher and currently volunteers two days a week at a Christian school. She delights in the shenanigans of her grandchildren, Kaylee, Ariana and Bryson.

# GOD'S REFUGE IS ROCK SOLID

SHIRLEY ROSS

**PURPOSE:** In this lesson, we will seek to acknowledge that GOD provides the only protection we can count on, no matter what, and pray for his help in the situation where we need it, now.

**MUSIC:** (Hymns of Heritage & Hope) "A Mighty Fortress" (18), "O God Our Help" (33), "Thou Wilt Keep Him" (78), or "Like Zion's Holy Mount" (88). If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 33:12-32; Psalm 27:5-6; Psalm 71:2-3; Psalm 94:22-23 (NLT)

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Make sure there is a third rock to add to the altar. Type out the Scriptures for everyone or have Bibles (in the same version). Give out sheets of paper and pencils, so notes can be taken, etc. Type out the theme verse of 1 Samuel 2:2b ("There is no rock like our God.") somewhere on it, OR, if you haven't done anything like this yet this year, maybe give each member a little booklet. You could title each page with the month's topic so they can take notes, use it for review, etc. Bring a marker to write on the rock. If using music, acquire enough hymnals or copies of the music for each person to have one. **Optional:** Have a recording or an instrumentalist play accompaniment.

## ROLLING (REVIEW)

In lesson one, we talked about how God is Rock Solid. We studied how strong and powerful God is as we read about God's miraculous leading of the Israelites through the Jordan River during flood season. They then set up a stone altar as a memorial of that event. WE should have "memorials" in our lives so others can see God's glory, as they hear what he's done for us.

ASK: What is your memorial? (Read the word on the flat stone from the first meeting.)

In lesson two, we talked about how God's Presence is Rock Solid.

ASK: When has God's presence been real to you? (Read the word on the rock from that meeting.)

## ONWARD

This month's lesson is God's Refuge is Rock Solid. God will protect us, even as he protected Moses. Read all of the Scriptures, one at a time. After each Scripture is read, ask the same question:

ASK: In this Scripture, from what do we need protection?" ("answers" in parentheses). Then let people list things in the categories. (Some samples are in parentheses.)

Read or have someone read the first Scripture with an inflection that makes it sound like Moses is nagging or teasing God, if possible.

Exodus 33:12-23 (The sight of God's glory)

Here is my take on this Scripture. Feel free to disagree and conclude differently. Previous to this passage, it says in 33:8-11 that Moses went in to the Tent of Meeting and met with God as friends. In this Scripture we just read, Moses seems to be kind of demanding and pushing to even SEE GOD (when in 33:20 it says "You cannot see my face and live!")  
NOT ALLOWED.

ASK: Does God sometimes have to protect us from ourselves?

ASK: Is this true of something YOU have asked of God?

Psalms 27:5-6 (Trouble)

ASK: From what kinds of troubles do you need to find refuge? (Health issues, marital/family struggles....)

Psalms 71:2-3 (Our own personal enemies)

ASK: Can you think of enemies you are fighting? (It could even be something like a tendency to procrastinate, no self-discipline, or people .....

Psalms 94:22-23 (Evil people all around us)

ASK: With whom are believers (you) in a daily struggle? (Non-believers in all walks of life, Satan-controlled people in positions of authority.....)

Write SHELTER or REFUGE on this month's rock.

## **CONSIDER**

ASK: Why do YOU need God's refuge – from yourself? from trouble of some sort? from personal enemies? from evil around you, in general?) (Discuss)

In February 2021, I had to have a hysterectomy to remove endometrial cancer. From the time I found out and informed a few people so they could pray, I was not afraid. When the time drew near for surgery, I told my family and church family, and I could feel their prayers. It was an amazing experience. My "refuge" was less of a cave (I'm claustrophobic!) and more of a feeling of floating on a cloud of prayers (or maybe being up on that high

rock). Truly, God was my refuge. Everyone's story is a little different but what can YOU share with someone who is going through trouble now, to point them to the Mighty Fortress, the Solid Rock, the God who has been our help through the ages?

## **KICKER**

Write down a testimony about when God has been your refuge. Tell it to the person sitting next (near) to you. (Also, be ready to tell someone else the first chance you get.)

Close with one or more song(s) of your choice and prayer together.

**SHARED BY:** Shirley Ross, wife of pastor Dave Ross for 50 years. She enjoys the music and child-teaching aspects of ministry the most. Although she grew up in Vermont, she loved their pastorates in State Road Church in northern Maine and at Fellowship Church (Bethlehem, N.C.) as well as living in Charlotte while Dave was Executive Director of ACGC.



# GOD'S HELP IS ROCK SOLID

PATSY RICHARDSON

**PURPOSE:** In this lesson, we will explore how idols separate us from God and the importance of God's rock-solid help, both in our time of trouble and as a source of strength when we face tough times. In today's Scripture, Samuel sets an Ebenezer stone as a reminder of God's help to the Israelites in their time of trouble and a moment in time to reflect on the help God provided. This lesson will help you reflect on those times when God has sent his rock-solid help to deliver you and help you to mark those moments as reminders that his rock-solid help is always with you.

**MUSIC:** (Hymns of Heritage & Hope #64) "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" (Pay close attention to the second verse). If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Samuel 7:1-12

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Make sure there is a fourth rock to add to the altar. Type out the Scriptures for everyone or have Bibles (in the same version). Give out sheets of paper and pencils, so notes can be taken, etc. Type out the theme verse of 1 Samuel 2:2b ("There is no rock like our God.") somewhere on it, OR, if you haven't done anything like this yet this year, maybe give each member a little booklet. You could title each page with the month's topic so they can take notes, use it for review, etc. Bring a marker to write on the rock. If using music, acquire enough hymnals or copies of the music for each person to have one. **Optional:** Have a recording or an instrumentalist play accompaniment.

## ROLLING (REVIEW)

Our theme for this year is Rock Solid, which comes from 1 Samuel 2:2b, "There is no Rock like our God." With each lesson, use a flat rock to build your own altar. For this lesson, we invite you to conclude the lesson with a reflection of God's rock-solid help in your "Ebenezer moments."

In lesson three, we talked about how God's refuge is rock-solid.

ASK: When has God's refuge been real to you?

## ONWARD

Ask one of the ladies to read 1 Samuel 7:1-12, then ask someone to briefly summarize the events recorded.

ASK: What was happening? (Israelites saved from Philistines)

ASK: Who was leading the Israelites? (Samuel)

ASK: What instructions did Samuel give? (Get rid of foreign gods. Assemble at Mizpah. Do not stop crying to the Lord.)

ASK: What was the scary part? (When the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle?)

ASK: How did Samuel commemorate the victory over the Philistines? (By setting the Ebenezer stone)

## **CONSIDER**

As witnessed throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites turned their back on God. Then God intervenes through his chosen leader, and the Israelites return to God. In verse 3 of today's Scripture reading, Samuel says to the Israelites, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreth and commit yourselves to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." Specifically, consider Samuel's command to get rid of your foreign gods and Ashtoreth, which probably is indicating either different statues or different modifications of the deities, according to BibleStudyTools.com.

Most church-going folks might argue that they do not bow to foreign gods or golden statues of deities, but there are still things, which maybe are not bad, that distract us from God.

ASK: What things distract us from God?

ASK: Have you ever considered that anything that pulls you away from your prayer time, your Bible study, worship, time with fellow believers or your personal relationship with God could be your Ashtoreth?

These could be things like community service, your job, your child's education or even church activities. These things are good, but when taken to an extreme, they may hinder your relationship with God.

ASK: Think of a time when you realized your focus was not on God. How did you change your focus?

ASK: Throughout your day, how do you keep your focus on God?

ASK: When do you feel closest to God?

As a group, how do we encourage each other to remember God's Rock-Solid Help?

## **KICKER**

One of my jobs was in the marketing department at Liberty University. My team produced brochures, booklets, posters and more for each of the schools and academic departments. The requests for projects far outnumbered our ability to produce the pieces. The team felt

overwhelmed and discouraged, to say the least. During our team devotional time, our manager reminded us of the Ebenezer stone Samuel set. It was a point of remembrance of God's help. While our troubles seemed small in comparison to what the Israelites faced, we needed a reminder of the projects God had helped us complete. We started an Ebenezer jar, printing the names of completed projects or team accomplishments on flat rocks and placing them in the jar. On our down days, we could look back at how God had carried us through difficult projects.

Think of a time when God has been a help to you. It may be an answered prayer or a transformative moment on your spiritual journey. Write it down in a place where you can easily see it. Add to the list as you experience God's rock-solid help. Look back at those experiences when you feel distracted by Ashtoreth.

Close with a song of your choice and prayer.

**SHARED BY:** Patsy Richardson, and her daughters, Paige Counts and Allison Richardson, love an adventure. From ziplining to indoor sky diving, the trio are willing to try it. Time together is a challenge with Allison calling Brunswick, Georgia home, and Patsy and Paige living in Lenoir, North Carolina. It's easy to say faith, family and service is at the heart of this family.

# GOD'S POWER IS ROCK SOLID

JENNIFER SHERWOOD

**PURPOSE:** In this lesson, we will study the showdown between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. We'll examine how the Israelites, once again, found themselves at a crossroads. Unwilling to acknowledge the one, true God, they were distracted by false prophets. In the process, we will seek an understanding of how we struggle to submit to God and recognize that he is all-powerful. Using visual aids will help us reflect on times God's power has been rock solid.

**MUSIC:** (Hymns of Heritage and Hope) "There is Power in the Blood" (348), "This is the Day" (755), "To God be the Glory" (61), "You are my All in All" (278), "I Stand in Awe" (270), "Holy Ground" (262), "We Bow Down" (285), "Seek Ye First" (578), "There Is None Like You" (287), "Majesty" (288) If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Kings 18:20-29

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Purchase a flat lemon-lime soda, a fizzy lemon-lime soda, two clear plastic glasses and four raisins for an optional object lesson. You will also need to have your stone altar in view, along with a couple of jar candles and a lighter for the kicker portion of the program.

Make sure there is a rock to add to the altar and a marker to write on the rock. Type out the Scriptures for everyone or have Bibles (in the same version). Have a blackboard, whiteboard, or poster board, and markers for the board you choose. If using music, acquire enough hymnals or copies of the music for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play the accompaniment.

## ROLLING (REVIEW)

Review previous lessons by having members share which attribute of God, mentioned in a previous program, was most meaningful to them. Examine your society's stone altar and reflect on the goodness of God.

**OPTIONAL:** You can also perform the following demonstration to illustrate God's power. Pour the flat lemon/lime soda into one clear plastic cup. Pour an equal amount of fizzy lemon/lime soda into the second plastic cup. Place two raisins in each cup and ask members to watch what happens. The raisins in the flat soda will sink and the raisins in the fizzy soda should float.

However, if this doesn't happen right away, you can ask the group to pay close attention to how the raisins in the fizzy soda are coated in a layer of bubbles. Ask them how this demonstration relates to God's power in our lives.

## **ONWARD**

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 18:20-21.

Ask for a volunteer to read, then ask the following questions:

ASK: WHAT was Elijah's question to the people? (Will you serve God or Baal?)

ASK: HOW did they respond and WHY might their response indicate they were spiritually lukewarm? (They said nothing which revealed they were unwilling to choose)

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 18:22-24.

Ask for another volunteer to read, then ask the following questions:

ASK: WHAT was the purpose of this contest? (For God's people and the pagans to see God's true power revealed)

ASK: WHY do you think this contest got the attention of the people? (Once again, the people were returning to idol worship and Elijah knew that it would take a powerful act of God to get their attention refocused on the one true God.)

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 18:25-29.

Ask for a final volunteer to read, then ask the following questions:

ASK: WHY did Elijah give every possible advantage to the prophets of Baal (He wanted no accusations that he had set up an unfair contest.)

ASK: HOW did the prophets of Baal react when Baal was silent? (They cried aloud, leaped on the altar and cut themselves.)

ASK: WHAT do you think the Israelites were thinking when they realized Baal did not respond? (They may have realized Baal was powerless and they needed to turn to the God that delivered them from Egypt.)



## CONSIDER

Later, in 1 Kings chapter 18, we read that the One True God wins the contest after Elijah rebuilds the altar and pours water over it. God ignites the altar, sending his people to their knees in praise and worship. Once again, Baal fails to show up because, as we know, he is an imaginary god. We often place our hope in people and circumstances as limited as this. Our heavenly father is all-powerful, able to create, ignite, heal, deliver and restore. At times, we believe God is incapable of delivering, unless he has our assistance, or we go to desperate extremes, like the prophets of Baal did, to find out we placed our faith in the wrong thing. How we need to rely on our Abba Father, acknowledging he is capable of doing great and powerful things! We forget that when we puddle in our weakness, he manifests in greatness.

READ 2 Corinthians 12:9.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY: For 46 years I enjoyed a healthy, active life. Then, in September 2020, I was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma. Two days later, I discovered I had contracted the coronavirus. I physically felt limp and defeated. God met me at my bed, as I faced a long quarantine and then surgery. I had always believed that my own ambitious drive toward good health and my stamina would lead to longevity. I exercised regularly, maintained a healthy weight, and, yet, here I was very sick. Would God be able to still use me if I couldn't homeschool, cook for my family, or lead children's ministry at church? Much like the children of Israel needed God to show them something big, I knew I needed the same. Then, God revealed unexpected words. He said, "My power is perfected in your weakness." I had to yield to his will for my life, not fully knowing what that might be. Three weeks later, I was strong enough to have surgery that removed my right kidney and gall bladder, plus repaired a hernia. I was ready for a full recovery in order to begin immunotherapy treatments. However, I was in for another power move by God. The pathology report indicated my cancer had not spread and that it had been completely removed with my kidney. I would not even need immunotherapy! God did an amazing work of restoring my body, but, most importantly, he renewed my mind. When I could admit my weakness, he then could be glorified.

THINK of a time when you've been reluctant to relinquish control so God could work. SHARE with the group if you feel comfortable.

THINK of a time when God did something powerful in your life that you weren't expecting. SHARE with the group how this changed you.

## KICKER

As a group, discuss the times in which you've experienced God's power. Our lesson has centered around an altar that became the place where God exhibited his power through fire. For those of you who have experienced camp, you have memories of the altar in the chapel or the area surrounding the campfire.

**ASK:** How can you help other ladies understand God's power in special places that aren't necessarily in the sanctuary?

Consider doing this activity. Light a few candles in jars near your stone altar. Add a rock that says "God's Power" to the altar. You may even want to turn off or dim the lights. Then, sing some camp songs or hymns that remind us of how God reveals his power through healing, restoring, renewing and so forth.

You can close your time of worship in prayer, praying for those who need to know of God's power and thanking him for the ways he has revealed himself to you.

**SHARED BY:** Jennifer Sherwood is the wife of Todd and attends Calvary Advent Christian Church in Lenoir, North Carolina. In addition to enjoying teaching her youngest child at home, she likes watching her older children play soccer and disc golf. She loves working with the children at church, feeding her goats, exercising with friends and finding bargains at yard sales.

# GOD'S SALVATION IS ROCK SOLID

CINDY EARP

**PURPOSE:** In this lesson, we will learn that God is the cornerstone of our salvation, the One who replaces our “heart of stone” with a “heart of flesh. Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame. He is our rock-solid God.

**MUSIC:** (Hymns of Heritage and Hope) “Search Me, O God” (591) If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

**SCRIPTURE:** Ezekiel 36:26, 1 Peter 2:4-8, Psalm 95:1, and Ephesians 2:19-22. You can also use Jeremiah 24:7, Ezekiel 11:19, Psalm 51:10 all in the NIV.

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Find a rock for the altar as close as possible to the shape of a heart or draw a heart on a flat rock with a permanent marker. Assign scripture readings to members prior to the program so they can be ready when the time comes. This will help the program flow smoothly. If using music, acquire enough hymnals or copies of the music for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play the accompaniment.

## ROLLING (REVIEW)

Open with prayer.

Review the visuals from the rocks already studied so far this year. Discuss memories of or reactions to these lessons that you had.

## ONWARD

READ: Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV)

ASK: What does it mean to have a “heart of stone”?

A heart of stone cannot be penetrated. The Holy Spirit will not enter such a heart, so Christ’s teachings will not penetrate a hard heart. If Christ is not allowed to enter a person’s heart, that person will not accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. They remain in their sins.

ASK: What does it mean to have a “heart of flesh”?

In contrast, a heart of flesh can absorb new ideas and teachings. The Holy Spirit can change their way of life by teaching them to follow the Lord’s leading and grow into the

person the Lord means for them to be. Christ-like characteristics can become a part of that person's way of thinking and living. They can accept Christ as their Lord and Savior and be saved from their sins.

READ: 1 Peter 2:4-8 (NIV)

ASK: What are the two meanings of "the living stone" referenced in this passage?

To start this passage, "the living stone" is referring to Christ. He was rejected by humans to the point of being crucified. Christ was chosen and precious to God, his only son. This was prophesied in Isaiah 28:16. He is the precious stone that makes our salvation possible. Christ, who was crucified and rose from the dead, is the cornerstone for our salvation and the church.

The other meaning of "the living stone" is the church whose foundation is Christ. We, the church, are the spiritual stones used to build and establish the church to fulfill the great commission Christ gave us when he ascended. There are those who reject the church and Christ, and, for them, Christ is a stumbling block as they try to disprove who Christ is.

READ: Psalm 95:1 (NIV)

ASK: How is Christ "the rock of our salvation"?

Christ is the rock-solid foundation of our faith. Salvation is only possible through him and him alone. If we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and repent from our sins, he enters our hearts and molds us into the people we were meant to be. Through the Holy Spirit, we grow to be more like Christ and grow closer to him.

We should continually praise his name for our salvation and the privilege of becoming children of God.

READ: Ephesians 2:19-22 (NIV)

ASK: What is the building that this Scripture is referencing?

The building is the church – not necessarily a physical building, but a spiritual community of those of us who have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior and have been forgiven of our sins. Once we accept Christ as our Savior, we become children of God and members of his household. The foundation of our faith starts with Christ and is built

upon by the apostles and prophets, as they help us learn more about Christ and God. We learn of his promises and his love. All Christians around the world are part of the same family of God joined by our belief in Jesus Christ and his soon-coming return. Scriptures for further discussion:

Jeremiah 24:7 (NIV) Christ has given us a heart of flesh so we can know him better.

Ezekiel 11:19 (NIV) In Christ all Christians are of one heart and mind, walking in his laws and decrees.

Psalms 51:10 (NIV) Father, help me be more like you. Established even firmer in the foundation you have given me. Amen

## **CONSIDER**

We should praise Christ for his promise to come again and make it possible for us to live with him forever in the New Jerusalem. He is coming soon.

## **KICKER**

Have you made Christ Lord of your heart? Is there someone you know who needs to allow Christ to change their heart of stone to a heart of flesh? Do you know someone who needs to make Christ the king of their heart? Spread the news.

**SHARED BY:** Cindy Earp is married to Robert who is the pastor of Berea Advent Christian Church in Collettsville, N.C. She is the church pianist, middle school Sunday school teacher and an active member of the WHFMS. Robert and Cindy have two grown boys who are both married to wonderful women. They all live around Lenoir, N.C. She has been an elementary school teacher for 20 years and is going to be retiring in July. Cindy enjoys playing the piano, painting landscapes, quilting, reading, working puzzles and other crafts.



# GOD'S FOUNDATION IS ROCK SOLID

JANELLE WALSH

**PURPOSE:** In this lesson, we learn about the importance of having a firm foundation that is built on Jesus' words.

**MUSIC:** Search on Youtube for Psalty's song "Sandyland" by Debby Kerner & Ernie Rettino. Lyrics start with "Don't build your house on the sandy land." If you cannot share the video, read through the lyrics together.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6. Prepared with English Standard Version.

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Bible passages printed out if you choose to use them as unison readings: Matthew 7:24-25 and Matthew 7:26-27. Otherwise, assign Scripture readings to members prior to the program so they can be ready when the time comes. T-Chart, either make your own, or print the one at the end of the program. Find a rock for the altar. If using music, acquire enough hymnals or copies of the music for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play the accompaniment.

## ROLLING (REVIEW)

Open with prayer.

Review the visuals from the rocks already studied so far this year.

## ONWARD

READ Matthew 7:24-27. One group (or one person) read verses 24 and 25. A second group (or person) reads verses 26-27.

The parallel writing of the two parts of our passage makes the contrasts evident. Find the contrasts:

- wise – foolish
- rock – sand
- did not fall – fell
- does – does not

In two short verses, a situation is introduced, and the outcome is given. If you listed them in the order they were introduced, the words that correlate with wise are together. If we had only these words, we could conclude that being wise is the better thing.

Look for what the two parts have in common:

- “everyone who hears these words of mine”
- house
- rain fell, floods came and winds blew and beat against the house

We have the same setting: a house. Both houses share the same weather effects; rain, flood and wind all come against the house.

They also share the same quote from Jesus himself. “Everyone who hears these words of mine.” The changing factor is how the words are received.

How do you follow those words? Are you somebody who “does them,” like a wise man? The contrasting word “not” presents the absolute change in the results that person receives. The foolish man (as in mankind) does not do them. One small word and one huge life decision direct the person in the opposite direction.

So, what do we do? Let’s consider some of the words of Jesus that are life directions for us.

## CONSIDER

Let’s read some other words Jesus spoke that direct us towards what we should be actively seeking to do in order to live out our lives to build on the solid foundation.

Scan Luke 6, or assign sections to small groups to read together and report to the others. **Watch for the actions** that should be part of our day-to-day living. **Seek the contrasts:** what should we NOT be doing? This passage contains lots of information. You will need to decide ahead of time if you will be finding the highlights of the passage or if you are able to go deep. Tell the members of your group ahead of time.

A possible response method is a t-chart. One is included as part of this lesson with sample answers. Allow time for discussion.

Personal Consideration: As a seminary wife, I was allowed to audit courses. One of the biggest things I learned during Old Testament Survey was this: If something is repeated in the Bible, it is a literary device that is used to emphasize the importance of whatever was being said.

What directions are we given that are restated? Verse 35 restates several things. “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great ...” This verse serves to recap the highlights of what has already been said, starting in verse 27. We know how hard this is.

Verse 37 also has a set of repeated words. “Judge not” and “condemn not” are parallel statements, contrasted by “forgive and you will be forgiven.” Consider especially how important these words are. We are not called to make the final decisions in this life. I’m absolved from the responsibility of deciding if someone is or is not saved. I’m called to forgive.

One of my favorite parts is verse 30.

I grew up a missionary kid. My dad and mom served as home missionaries in Montana. Their pay was based on the support of others. Finances were always tight.

I can well remember the day my mom stood in the middle of the kitchen trying to figure out what to make for the next meal. Dad was gone to a Bible study in a rural community and wouldn’t be home until very late. She said aloud, “If we had boxed macaroni and cheese, it would be enough.”

That night, dad came home from the Bible study. He told us he giggled as he brought in the gift he had been given after the meeting. I can only imagine him quietly moving 12 cases of boxed macaroni and cheese into the kitchen and stacking them like a tower right where mom had been standing when she made her statement earlier!

Dad gave readily and happily of his time and his talents wherever he could share them. Traveling over an hour one way to teach a Bible study or to preach a sermon was completely normal for him. “Give and it will be given to you” was lived out in our lives that day!

But the story didn’t end there! My grandma witnessed the event and told my mom she should have wished for steak. A week later, dad came home from visiting some rancher friends. They had decided to share their bounty and sent dad home from that trip with enough beef to fill our freezer.

Our bank account may not have reflected it, but our celebration of the meat reminded us that “good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” I am deeply grateful to my parents for demonstrating how to give and for reminding us to recognize when it was put back in our laps!

# KICKER

ASK: What one thing in your reading stood out to you today?

ASK: How can you use God's Word from today to develop a rock-solid foundation?

We need to have the foundation so that when the storms of life hit, we are able to withstand the attacks of the wind, flood and rain in our lives. This may be very personal, so sharing is optional. I encourage you to write down your take-away today or mark it in your Bible. Refer to it and ask God to help you make the application in your life.

**SHARED BY:** Janelle Walsh is a pastor's wife at the Princeton Advent Christian Church in West Virginia. She lives with her husband, their two young adults and a pair of dachshunds. She is a music teacher and is studying for her master's degree in music education. In her free time, she enjoys crocheting and making cards. After sharing a good portion of the 144 boxes of macaroni and cheese, she no longer wants to eat it.

## SAMPLE COMPARISON CHART

SHOULD BE DOING	SHOULD NOT BE DOING
DO GOOD, EVEN ON THE SABBATH (Verse 9)	
Do good and lend (vs. 35)	Expect nothing in return (vs. 35)

# GOD'S FORGIVENESS IS ROCK SOLID

ALICE KRUEGER

**PURPOSE:** In this program, we will examine five attributes of God's forgiveness and compare these attributes to our methods of dealing with the sinfulness in our life. God's attributes will be considered as characteristics of a diamond, a rock-solid example of God's love exemplified in the story of the woman caught in adultery.

**MUSIC:** (Hymns of Heritage & Hope) #630 "My Hope Is Built," #318 Amazing Grace; #239 "Oh, How He Loves You and Me"; Hugh Mitchell's "Thy Loving Kindness"

**SCRIPTURE:** John 8:3-11

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Prepare 2 large posters as follows. The first one will be used in the "Rolling" section of the program. The second poster will be used to record the responses of the women as each characteristic is discussed.

THERE IS NO ROCK LIKE OUR GOD (1 SAMUEL 2:26)	
Program	Lesson Learned
God's Presence	
God's Refuge	
God's Help	
God's Power	
God's Salvation	
God's Foundation	

## ACRONYM: BeCause Christ Redeemed Us

Characteristics of God's Forgiveness	
B BEAUTIFUL	
C CLEAR	
C COSTLY	
R RARE	
U UNIQUE	

## ROLLING

As a method of reviewing past lessons, women will join with a partner or partners and choose one of the previous programs to consider. Have each partnership identify a word or words that reflect lessons learned in that program. Record their responses on the poster as the woman briefly share the reason for their choice.

## ONWARD

Ask the ladies to read John 8:3-11 in their Bibles. After a few minutes, ask for a volunteer to briefly summarize the passage. Then, pose these questions to the group.

ASK: Where did this encounter take place? (The temple courts.)

ASK: Who were the participants? (Jesus, many people, teachers of the law, Pharisees, a woman caught in adultery)

ASK: What was happening? (Jesus was teaching the people when the teachers of the law and Pharisees brought in the woman accused of adultery.)

ASK: How did the teachers of the law and Pharisees try to trap Jesus? (They stated that the Law of Moses required stoning of the adulterer to see how Jesus would respond.)

ASK: What action did Jesus take? (Jesus responded by bending down and writing something on the ground. When his challengers kept questioning him, Jesus said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.")

ASK: What did Jesus do next? (He again wrote on the ground.)

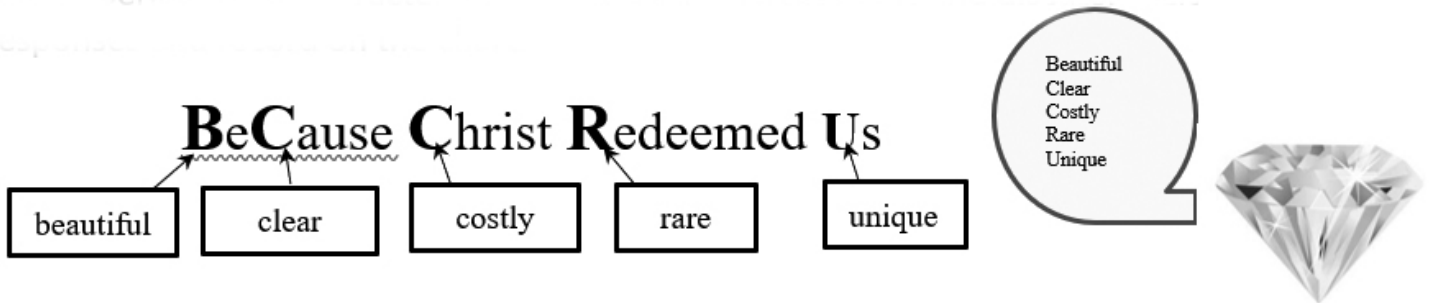
ASK: What was the ultimate conclusion of this encounter? (Everyone left the area but Jesus and the woman. Jesus turned to her and asked her where her accusers were and if anyone condemned her. She responded, "No one." Jesus stated that he did not condemn her either, and then he told her she should go and leave her life of sin.)

After this review of John 8:3-11, ask a volunteer to read the passage.



# CONSIDER

Think about the ways we attempt to justify our sins without relying on the forgiveness of God. We will consider five of those ways and compare them to God’s response when we repent. Focusing on our theme, God’s Forgiveness is Rock Solid, we will use five characteristics of a rock-solid diamond to describe aspects of God’s forgiveness. We will also use an acronym to assist us in remembering these characteristics. Read each characteristic and discuss. Elicit responses and record on the chart.



All Scriptures are taken from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible.

<b>Human Responses</b>	<b>God’s Response to Our Repentance</b>
Cubic Zirconium Not the real thing — they do not possess the properties of actual diamonds.	Rock-solid Diamonds Like God’s forgiveness, diamonds are the real thing.

<b>BEAUTIFUL</b>	
<b>Counterfeit Appearance vs.</b>	<b>The BEAUTY of God’s Forgiveness</b>
When we repeatedly commit a sin (e.g.: judging others), our response might be based on the following thinking: “I keep doing this. It’s not so bad. I guess it’s just a habit.”  “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them <b>FINDS MERCY</b> ” (Proverbs 28:13).	Jesus’ dealings with the woman accused of adultery (John 8:3-11) is an example of the beauty of God’s forgiveness.  “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and <b>PURIFY US</b> from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).  “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, in him there is no darkness at all... But if we <b>WALK IN THE LIGHT</b> , as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:5, 7).

<b>CLEAR</b>	
<b>The Payment Plan vs.</b>	<b>The Forgiveness of God That Makes Us CLEAR of Sin</b>
When we have the belief that if we try hard today to do what pleases God, we can make up for the sins we committed yesterday (or anytime in the past).	“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose SINS ARE COVERED. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him” (Rom. 4:7-8).
<i>Human Responses</i>	<i>God’s Response to Our Repentance</i>
Forgiveness is a gift that has already been purchased by the blood of the Lamb. The sooner we confess and repent of our sins, the sooner God clears them away.	<p>“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and IN WHOSE SPIRIT IS NO DECEIT” (Psalm 32:1-2).</p> <p>“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that YOUR SINS MAY BE WIPED OUT, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord” (Acts 3:19).</p> <p>“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isaiah 1:18).</p>

<b>COSTLY</b>	
<b>Excuses are Cheap vs.</b>	<b>God’s COSTLY Forgiveness</b>
<p>We make excuses for our sinning. Some of the sins about which we make excuses are listed in 2 Corinthians 12:20, sins such as: quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.</p> <p>Excuses are cheap, defined as an attempt to lessen the penalty of an action or offense. Our excuse might be, “Talking about others isn’t so bad. Everybody does it.” It would benefit us to remember that sin is sin, and we receive forgiveness of our sins at a VERY HIGH PRICE.</p>	<p>“He was DELIVERED OVER TO DEATH for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Romans 4:25).</p> <p>“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a SACRIFICE OF ATONEMENT through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:22-25).</p>

## RARE

<b>The Common Things in Life (habits) vs.</b>	<b>The UNCOMMONNESS of God's Forgiveness</b>
<p>The word "common" is defined as something found or DONE OFTEN, done by more than one, ORDINARY, and NOT EXCEPTIONAL.</p> <p>Habits are so named because they are done often. They can become stumbling blocks in our walk with the Lord especially when we do not stop to consider the impact they might have on our spiritual life.</p> <p>Perhaps there is a habit in your life that affects your walk with the Lord. Acknowledging that habit, asking for forgiveness, and requesting God's help in overcoming it will provide you with the uncommonness of God's forgiveness.</p> <p>It is rare to have a love so strong that a man would be willing to give up his own life, or a father willing to give up the life of his son, to save others.</p>	<p>These verses testify to the UNCOMMON or rare aspect of God's forgiveness. None other throughout history has paid such a high price to redeem those who seek redemption.</p> <p>"For God so loved the world that he gave HIS ONE AND ONLY SON that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).</p> <p>"Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us ALIVE WITH CHRIST even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4).</p> <p>"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18-19).</p>

## UNIQUE

<b>Usual Things vs.</b>	<b>The UNIQUENESS of God's Forgiveness</b>
<p>"Usual" is defined as habitually or typically occurring, or usual. Unique, however, is defined as UNEQUALED. These verses surely speak to the unequalled forgiveness we receive from God.</p>	<p>"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD" (2 Cor. 5:21).</p> <p>This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed</p>

Perhaps we usually ask forgiveness when we have committed sin. We might also stop to consider the unusualness or uniqueness of a forgiveness so great that it cleanses us of all our sins, destroys death, brings life and immortality, and justifies us before God so that we may become the righteousness of God.

death and has brought LIFE and IMMORTALITY to light through the gospel.

“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:18-19).

## KICKER

Take a few moments out of your busy life to consider any thoughts or behaviors that distance you from the love of God. When we seek forgiveness for our transgressions, God shines his beautiful and costly light of forgiveness on us and clears the sins from our life with the rare and unique gift that Jesus purchased by taking the punishment we deserved. Remember to thank the Lord for that priceless gift and to share with others information about the gift that God offers to all.

In order to abide by God’s wishes and fully experience the beauty of forgiveness, it is necessary to forgive ourselves and others. The following are just a few of the many Scriptures that apply.

Forgiving ourselves: Romans 8:1, Romans 5:1

Forgiving others: Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 6:14, Luke 6:37, Mark 11:25

Close with one or more song(s) of your choice and prayer together.

**SHARED BY:** Alice Krueger and her husband live in Hudson, North Carolina and attend Calvary Advent Christian Church. They moved to North Carolina from New Jersey 19 years ago so that she could complete her doctorate in educational leadership at Appalachian State. She has enjoyed teaching many grades over the course of her career, from pre-school to college, and ended her time in education mentoring beginning teachers in her county of residence. She keeps very busy these days camping with her husband, teaching Sunday school, walking, dancing and spending time with her grown children and their families.

# GOD'S BLESSED HOPE IS ROCK SOLID

JENNIFER DUNCAN

**PURPOSE:** In this lesson, we will research, remember, and renew our faith in God's Blessed Hope which is the promise of eternal life at the return of Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior.

**MUSIC:** Hymns of Heritage and Hope #709 - Looking for that Blessed Hope.

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Corinthians 15

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** If using music, acquire enough hymnals or copies of the music for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play the accompaniment.

Gather the visuals from previous lessons to be used as a review, and as a new one for this lesson. Have Bibles available for anyone who needs one. Write out the scripture passages and assign them to groups as ladies arrive.

Group 1 reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Group 2 reading: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

Group 3 reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

## ROLLING (REVIEW)

For the opening activity, pull out the visuals of the rocks studied this year and review them.

ASK: What do you remember most from the lessons?

ASK: Did anyone have a meaningful reaction to one of the lessons they would be willing to share?

## ONWARD

Break into groups. Have each group read the assigned Scripture, answer the questions below (you may want to print or write out the questions for each group), and be prepared to share answers when the large group joins together again.

\* Group 1 questions (1 Corinthians 15:1-11):

1. According to this passage, by what are you saved? [the gospel (v. 2), Christ's death and resurrection (vv. 3-8)]
2. What is of first importance? [Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (vv. 3-8)]

\* Group 2 questions (1 Corinthians 15:12-34):

1. What do you learn about where our hope comes from? [it comes from Christ's death and resurrection (vv. 20-22)]
2. How do those with only human hopes live? [as they please (vv. 32-34)]

\* Group 3 questions (1 Corinthians 15:35-58):

1. Is our hope earthly or eternal? (eternal)
2. What differences are there between the earthly and the heavenly body? [perishable to imperishable, dishonor to glory, weakness to power, natural to spiritual (vv. 42-44); mortal to immortal (vv. 52-54)]
3. When we have the blessed hope, how are we to live? [stand firm, be unmoved, give ourselves fully to God (v. 58)]

So, what do we do? Let's consider some of the words of Jesus that are life directions for us.

## CONSIDER

When I think back on the experiences I've had so far there is one time in my life that quickly comes to mind where I was sure that God's blessed hope is rock solid.

In February 2015, my maternal grandmother died. As I laid in her room at my parents' house, my eyes landed on her Bible. I turned a light on, grabbed the Bible and began to flip through the pages. I scanned for the passages she had underlined or highlighted or the notes she had made. It wasn't long before I noticed a theme. It was clear that her hope was in the Lord. At the memorial service, I had the privilege of reading one of those highlighted hope passages; John 14:1-4 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." And as this line from "Midnight Cry" played I raised my hands in worship to God because I knew without a doubt that my hope was found in him, too and because of our shared hope we will be together in heaven.

"When Jesus steps out  
On a cloud to call His children  
the dead in Christ shall rise to meet Him in the air"



## KICKER

Split into small groups of 2-3 and take a few minutes to answer these questions.

Do you know anyone who does not have God's Blessed Hope?

How can you share this hope with them?

If you have God's Blessed Hope, does it change how you live?

If not, why? If yes, how?

**SHARED BY:** Jennifer Duncan lives in Lenoir, N.C. with her husband, Jonathan, their three daughters, a dog, and seven chickens. She attends Central Advent Christian Church in Lenoir. She works full time in an N.C. PreK classroom and part time as her church's media coordinator. She enjoys meeting one-on-one with other women and helping to teach the children and youth in her church.

# GOD IS ROCK SOLID (WOMEN'S SUNDAY)

ROBIN COPELAND

**PURPOSE:** This is a full service for a Women's Sunday program, focusing on the theme that God is "Rock Solid" Let's acknowledge and commemorate God's work in our lives.

**MUSIC:** All hymn numbers are from Hymns of Heritage and Hope. If you are putting the lyrics to songs in print, make sure your church has a license to print them first.

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Samuel 2:2 (NIV) - "There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God."

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** The suggested plan included may be altered to fit your church's worship format.

- 1) Decide on an order of service, and whether or not to have ladies complete the special activity of building a stone memorial at the appropriate times. If you decide against the activity, ignore step 2.
- 2) Prepare 9 flat stones with each one of the following phrases written in bold print on each stone: 1. God is Rock Solid; 2. His Presence; 3. His Refuge; 4. His Help; 5. His Power; 6. His Salvation; 7. His Foundation; 8. His Forgiveness; 9. The Blessed Hope

## SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship: Psalms 62:1-2, 5-8

Invocation

Hymn Choices: "In Times Like These" (327), "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" (18), "A Shelter in the Time of Storm" (624)

Prayer of Intercession

Praise/Special Music: "God My Rock" by Paul Baloche, "Praise the Name of Jesus" (18)

Message Presentation: "God is Rock Solid"

Hymn: "The Solid Rock" (630)

Benediction: 1 Samuel 2:2

## MESSAGE — GOD IS ROCK SOLID

Rock structures, altars or monuments in the Bible were a common way for the Israelites to encourage future generations to remember and proclaim the great deeds of God Almighty. Stone monuments marked the time and place where God touched his people in a significant way. We, too, are taught to celebrate and remember what God has done for us. Most of us

have specific and personal ways we do this, but we can learn from history and each other ways to do it better in order to bring others to know our Lord and honor him.

We celebrate and remember that God is rock-solid. In Joshua 3-4, we learn about the power of God that led the Israelites to cross the Jordan on dry ground. Their obedience in creating a 12-stone altar would cause them to forever remember this miracle and provide an opportunity to talk about their rock-solid God. (Begin to build a stone altar where the congregation can see.)

We celebrate and remember that God's presence is rock-solid. *(Read lesson 2 purpose from Rock Solid - 2023 WHFMS Program Kit. Add the second stone to the stone altar.)*

We celebrate and remember that God's refuge is rock-solid. *(Read lesson 3 purpose from Rock Solid - 2023 WHFMS Program Kit. Add the third stone to the stone altar.)*

We celebrate and remember that God's help is rock-solid. *(Read lesson 4 purpose from Rock Solid - 2023 WHFMS Program Kit. Add the fourth stone to the stone altar.)*

We celebrate and remember that God's power is rock-solid. *(Read lesson 5 purpose from Rock Solid - 2023 WHFMS Program Kit. Add the fifth stone to the stone altar.)*

We celebrate and remember that God's salvation is rock-solid. *(Read lesson 6 purpose from Rock Solid - 2023 WHFMS Program Kit. Add the sixth stone to the stone altar.)*

We celebrate and remember that God's foundation is rock-solid. *(Read lesson 7 purpose from Rock Solid - 2023 WHFMS Program Kit. Add the seventh stone to the stone altar.)*

We celebrate and remember that God's forgiveness is rock-solid. *(Read lesson 8 purpose from Rock Solid - 2023 WHFMS Program Kit. Add the eighth stone to the stone altar.)*

We celebrate and remember that God's blessed hope is rock-solid. *(Read lesson 9 purpose from Rock Solid - 2023 WHFMS Program Kit. Add the ninth stone to the stone altar.)*

(SUGGESTION: While the stone altar is being built, you may wish to have some of your women share a testimony that acknowledges and commemorates God's work in her life.)

**SHARED BY:** Robin Copeland lives in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina. She attends Tabernacle Advent Christian Church in Lenoir where she and her husband, Bob, pastor. She enjoys weekend scenic drives along the Blue Ridge Parkway. After a long, hard day of teaching, she spends her evenings in her recliner with her Maltipoo dog, Tippy, on her lap.

# GOD IS ROCK SOLID (INSTALLATION SERVICE)

EVELYN BRICKER

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this service is to install the officers. Feel free to adapt as needed.

**MUSIC:** Hymns of Heritage and Hope #630 “My Hope is Built” If you are putting the lyrics to songs in print, make sure your church has a license to print them first.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 7:24-27; Psalm 95:1-7

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** 1. Provide hymn books for everyone. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play accompaniment. 2. Before hand, hand paint a smooth river rock about the size of a paper weight for each officer with the appropriate Bible verse reference printed on each one. This can be as simple or elaborate as your skills or the skills of your helper allow.

**Say:** Our theme this year is “Rock Solid” from Hannah’s prayer in 1 Samuel 2 as she prays “...there is no rock like our God.” And how blessed we are to be able to call God our rock! Truly how can we make it through the storms of this life without being firmly planted upon the Rock of our salvation? May we be building our house upon the Rock.

Ask the officers to stand up front together.

**Say:** Today, as we think of the responsibilities the future will hold for each of you, may we, like Hannah, “...rejoice in your salvation.” On Christ the solid rock I stand!

**Madam President:** I would like to encourage you with the words of Psalm 18:2, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” As you deal with the challenges of leadership in the days ahead, refer often to these precious words of Scripture and remember who it is who fights your battles. Pray without ceasing and remember who it is who fights the battles of those you lead. Build on your Rock and remember who builds his church.

**Madam Vice President:** In your role as support person to the president, I would like to encourage you with the words of Psalm 62:2, “He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress, I shall not be shaken.” While it is uncertain when or where you may be called into the line of duty, you can be sure of your Rock. Stand on him and you will not be shaken.

**Madam Secretary:** As your role is to be the record keeper for our group, I would like to draw your attention to the portion of David’s song of deliverance recorded in 2 Samuel 22:47,

“The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation.” Certainly, we want to exalt our God in all that we do as an organization. And he will be exalted! We have read the last book and we know the ending! As you fulfill your role, may you have many opportunities to exalt our living God, the rock of our salvation.

**Madam Treasurer:** To put it bluntly, without your accurate, faithful work, we cannot be very effective as an organization. In what could be a difficult, thankless job, remember the words of Psalm 61:2, “From the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” When you feel overwhelmed by the tasks ahead, may you look to your rock. He is not only bigger than you, he is bigger than any balancing problem you may have!

**Spiritual Life Chair:** How privileged we are to be able to worship the Rock of our salvation. As you help us to keep focused on what really matters in the days ahead, I would encourage you with the words of Psalm 95:1 “Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.” Our mighty God, who holds the whole world in his hands is our God and “we are the sheep of his pasture.” What a privilege to serve him!

**Let us pray:** Pray for each of the officers being installed or ask someone else to do. Try to be specific for each officer’s needs.

**Lead in song:** Sing together: “My Hope is Built” p. 630 in Hymns of Heritage and Hope.

**SHARED BY:** Evelyn Bricker is the wife of Paul Bricker who ministers at Beckley Advent Christian Church and as chaplain at the Beckley VAMC. They have three grown children and three grandsons. Evelyn is a retired nurse and current chicken farmer.

# WEEK OF PRAYER 2023

## PAT HAVENER

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this service is to provide material to enjoy a week of prayer, either personally, as a group, as a special service, or as a supplement to another activity or meeting.

**MUSIC:** (Hymns of Heritage & Hope) “My Hope Is Built” #630 or “Praise the Name of Jesus” #250 If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** There is little preparation needed. You need only to read through the material several times to be comfortable in presenting this.

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Samuel 2:2, 1 Peter 2:4-5, Hebrews 11:10, 1 Corinthians 3:10, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Psalm 19:14, Philippians 1:6, Joshua 4:24

## ROLLING

**PERSONAL TESTIMONY:** I am sitting in a hotel room in New Orleans, just returning from the children’s hospital, with an emergency admission for a small child awaiting open-heart surgery. We had been in fervent prayer that God would move to direct us in her care. He allowed the perfect circumstances for her admission, instead of waiting the length of time for which we had prepared. Like so many other times, I am amazed at the power of God and the power of prayer. When God wants to do something through you, he does not leave it up to chance. He will not only give you the instructions, but he will give you the provisions and even more. He will remove, block, unblock and come against anything that will get in the way of making it happen. When you put it all in perspective, it appears unfathomable.

## ONWARD

Hannah was determined and diligent in her prayers, “No one is holy like the LORD! There is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God” (1 Samuel 2:2, NLT).

Hannah’s story is a powerful one of strength, courage, persistent prayer and unwavering commitment to seeking God’s face. She faced challenging circumstances and felt discouraged and angry with God. Despite her challenges, feelings of rejection and abandonment, she did not stop praying. She prayed when she was unsure if she would ever have children, and she prayed when God blessed her with a son.

We are living in a time where so much is going on around us. It is a world of change, unsettling events and circumstances and things going awry all around. We face disturbing



political conditions, natural disasters, crime, death, racial tensions, unstable economies, moral corruption and breakdown. The list could go on and on. Quite honestly, it is pretty depressing. We need something steady and calm to ground us in times like these. We need a firm foundation, a rock, in this shifting world.

The same could be said for other generations. I am sure they felt much the same in biblical times as well. So, we can lean on the same principles that gave them rest and peace in unsettling times. One such principle is that God is our rock. He is strong, dependable, never shifting or changing, and always there to protect and shield us from the storms of this world.

### **PRAYERS TO BUILD ON A SOLID FOUNDATION**

Without a solid foundation, a building or structure can collapse. When the foundation of a building is faulty, no matter how beautiful the building is, the building will collapse in time. Our lives can be compared to a building (1 Peter 2:4-5). Just as the foundation of any physical building is important, the foundation of our lives is especially important. If our marriage, finances, business, career, or ministry is built on a solid foundation or the right foundation it will stand. But, if our lives are built on a faulty or evil foundation they will crumble.

In Hebrews 11:10, God is called an architect and builder. Tell God that you do not want to be the one building your life with your own hands. Tell him that you want him to use his own architectural hands to build your life, because a house that has God as its architect and builder can never be built on a faulty foundation. Pray this same prayer for your church, a church that has God as its architect and builder cannot be established on a faulty foundation.

If human architects can produce such beautiful architectural designs, imagine how beautiful life, family, ministry or church that is built by God will look. So, pray this prayer:

Father, take over the building of my life so your beauty and glory can be seen in every aspect of my life. Pray this same prayer for your church for it is well with your church, it will certainly be well with you. Father, come and build my local church so your beauty and glory can radiate all over the place I have chosen to worship and serve you.

Father, give all pastors, ministers, and leaders in the body of Christ the grace to build on no other foundation but the foundation of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10). Help them O Lord so they do not miss it.

Father, give me the grace to build on no other foundation but the foundation of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10). This prayer is especially important because without the grace of

God, without God's help, we can very easily miss it, and we can end up focusing on the wrong things.

My Father and my God, replace every faulty foundation in my life with Jesus Christ.

Father, help me to be daily grounded and firmly rooted in your word so I can withstand the storms of life.

1 Corinthians 3:11

“For no one can lay any foundation other than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ” (CSB).

Matthew 7:24-27

“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash” (CSB).

One of my favorite worship songs has been “Build Your Life” by Housefires. The lyrics to this song echo the passage above. I encourage you to look up the lyrics online.

## **CONSIDER**

With God and his Word as our foundation, we cannot be shaken. He will hold us steady when the winds blow, the rain pours, diseases strike, and the earthquakes. His love remains steadfast. May we never forget it.

If you are in a season of ongoing adversity, challenges, or opposition, I invite you to be encouraged by Hannah's story and her resilience in seeking God. Continue to be persistent in prayer, surrender all your emotions to God, remember God's faithfulness, and speak victory despite opposition.

## **KICKER**

Prayer is a powerful tool that God wants us to use to stay connected with him, strengthen our spiritual maturity, and use it as a weapon to overcome the tactics of the enemy. When adversity comes, the good news is that God desires for us to draw closer to him and we are victorious through Christ Jesus.

“No one is holy like the LORD! There is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.” 1 Samuel 2:2 (NLT)

Jesus is our cornerstone—joining us to God, binding us together, and bearing our weights in life.

God is the rock that will sharpen us and make us more effective. “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.” Psalm 19:14 (NLT)

“And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

Close with one or more song(s) of your choice and prayer together.

**SHARED BY:** Pat Havener lives in Seffner, Florida with her very patient husband of 48 years. Gary pastors the Seffner Community Advent Christian Church. Pat enjoys gardening, herbs and their cats Priscilla and Pete, especially Pete, who at 30 pounds needs a diet. She is a proud grandmother to seven grandchildren. Pat teaches a middle school Sunday school class and directs the church children’s programs. She serves as her local and national WHFMS Spiritual Life Chairman. Pat also volunteers as a medical missionary for the Children’s Heart Program of Samaritan’s Purse, training medical folks in women’s and children’s health in Honduras and transporting children needing open-heart surgery from less fortunate countries to North America for life-changing surgeries. She is a certified RN clinician, specializing in STDs, women’s health and pediatrics.