**1. Motivate**

When have you been glad that you listened to an authority figure?

* advice from a teacher
* a good sermon at church or a conference
* in an informative documentary
* lady on the GPS said take this road around a slowdown
* waiter said a certain menu item was good
* doc said lose weight, cut down on salt
* preacher gave advice on when you wife asks “which dress looks good on me?” (say all of them)
* college advisor wrote down all the courses I needed to take
* mechanic gave advice on which car NOT to buy

**2. Transition**

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_s7a7pfri> If you don’t have wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video to your computer from <http://tinyurl.com/2p8y2bam>

There are lots of “authorities” around … but …

* Jesus is the ultimate authority we should heed.
* Faith acknowledges the authority of Jesus.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Look to Jesus

Listen for a unique request.

Luke 7:1-5 (NIV) When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. 2 There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. 3 The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, 5 because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue."

What was the situation concerning a centurion’s servant for whom he sought help?

* the soldier valued this servant
* he was sick
* about to die

From verse 2 by itself, note the centurion’s level of hope.

* The servant was highly valued
* The centurion saw him as very near death
* Apart from Jesus, he had no hope

In making known the centurion’s request for Jesus to intervene, on what basis did the Jewish leaders indicate he was worthy of Jesus’s response?

* they pleaded earnestly with Jesus
* “He deserves your help”
* “He loves our nation (our people)”
* “He has built our synagogue”

The centurion presented his request to Jesus through friends; how much is this like (or different from) asking friends to pray for us?

* we ask friends to go to Jesus in prayer
* we want them to similarly ask Jesus to meet our need
* only difference was the man’s friends were talking to the earthly human, Jesus
* we are talking to Jesus – he is alive … in heaven

How bad does a situation need to be for you to turn to God for help?

* there does seem to be a ranking, a continuum
* we might take care of getting a band-aid or even a trip to the ER for a cut
* but we would probably want to go to God for a life endangering injury or disease
* we might make an appointment to get our car serviced
* or, if we are suddenly without transportation and need to get somewhere, we might pray about it
* when we are struggling with spiritual issues, we definitely need to turn to God
* when we have an important decision to make (marriage, job choice, major purchase, etc.) we should be seeking God’s guidance

Because of his kindness and good deeds, the Jewish elders were willing to intervene on his behalf. How do we earn the trust of people, even those who might otherwise disrespect us?

* the same way
* help them when they are need
* unsolicited acts of kindness
* friendliness, even with no guarantee of reciprocity

3.2 Acknowledge His Authority

Listen for the basis of the request.

Luke 7:6-8 (NIV) So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. 7 That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

How did Jesus respond to the request of the centurion and the appeal of the elders?

* notice, no discussion
* he appears to have immediately gone to help
* headed that way

What words and phrases do we see that centurion modified his original request?

* don’t trouble yourself
* I don’t deserve to have you actually in my house
* I’m not even worthy to come to you in person (as a Gentile)
* you can heal the servant just by speaking the command

Why did he do so? What personal examples did he have?

* he was experienced in dealing with authority
* he received orders from superiors that he carried out
* he gave orders to his men that they carried
* orders communicated were obeyed, carried out
* he recognized Jesus had that same kind of authority – speak the command and it will happen

Why is it difficult for us to be as dependent on God as the centurion was?

* we might not be as convinced as he was
* we don’t understand or perceive Jesus’ authority
* we are too often self-dependent
* we have doubts

What characteristics of the centurion’s attitude and request would be helpful to remember when we ask God for help?

* Jesus has power and authority
* Jesus can heal
* Jesus can work in our lives, even when He is not physically present

So, what are some ways we can demonstrate submission to God’s authority in our lives?

* listen to what He says to us – as we read His Word, as we hear His Truth proclaimed
* we obey His Word
* we surrender to His Spirit working in our hearts and minds
* we serve Him, minister in His name

How might our lives change if we yielded more to Jesus’s authority?

* spiritual healing
* spiritual victory
* accomplish good things for the Kingdom (Rule) of God
* become more like Christ

3.3 Please the Lord Jesus

Listen for why Jesus was amazed.

Luke 7:9-10 (NIV) When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." 10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

Why was Jesus so amazed?

* realized the man’s understanding of Jesus’ authority
* was indication of an attitude of faith
* many Jews (especially religious leaders) doubted or even had rejected Jesus’ authority
* they even confronted Him, “by what authority did you say/do this?”

What was the outcome of this encounter for the delegation of Jews, the centurion, and the servant?

* the second group sent to Jesus by the centurion returned to the house
* when they got there the servant was in good health

What are the characteristics of a person fully yielded to Christ? How can people tell Jesus has authority over your life?

* pays attention to what God says – scripture, teaching
* submitted to God’s Holy Spirit
* obedient to God’s commands
* demonstrate, live out the Fruit of the Spirit

Why is it important to be encouraged about the quality of our faith, even as Jesus affirmed the faith of the centurion?

* recall the man who said he believed, but needed help with his lack of belief
* we need to be more convinced of Jesus’ power and authority and love
* it’s not how much faith we have, it’s whether or not we are convinced of who Jesus is and what we understand He can do

What should we do when we declare our faith in Jesus for a very important need and it wasn’t met? Is there a problem with our faith or Jesus power?

* neither
* Jesus power is quite valid
* our faith is the right place
* our understanding of the need “not met” is at fault
* God answers in ways and with timing that we don’t always see or understand
* God doesn’t always answer in the way *we* think is best or the way we *want*

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Thanksgiving.

* Spend some time alone reflecting on how God has provided for you in the past.
* Give thanks!

Pray.

* Make a list of the circumstances that challenge your faith.
* Ask God to give you a greater faith in His presence and power.

Seek.

* Seek out someone who is struggling in life during this season.
* Connect with them.
* Bless them with your words and deeds.



Our consulate in Docrolumayenry has forwarded us this message by diplomatic courier. It was passed to one of our operatives from a national pastor. Use the alphabetic key below. You can see how it works with the “HELLO WORLD” sample message. Help and more Fun Family Activities are available at <http://tinyurl.com/2p8y2bam> When you have decoded the message, pass the results to your Bible study leader.

Cryptogram Puzzle