



**elev8**

life on another level

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# Student Workbook

**YEAR 2**

**Life and Action**  
**Goodness**

**Bible Readings**

John 4

Exodus 2

Daniel 1

Proverbs 22:17-29



### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this week you will be able to:

- Locate the theme of goodness to other faiths in the Bible
- Express the theme or story in your own way
- Apply your learning from the story to your own life and community

### Notes from Bible Reading

**Scripture** A word or phrase that stood out to me:

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**Observation** What is happening in this Bible reading?

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**Application** Something that I learned about who I am or how I should live:

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**Prayer** What I would like to say to God, ask of God, or what I think God is saying to me:

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**Key Question** What does the Bible say about goodness to other faiths?

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### Engage

Go around the group and share one thing for each heading that has happened since you last met:

- Plus – What has been good or enjoyable?
- Minus – What has been difficult or painful?
- Interesting – What has been unusual or thought provoking?

Share one teaching or idea from a religion other than Christianity, and what you think of its usefulness to your own life.

### Explore – Locate

- *What stood out to you in the Bible readings this week?*
- *What did you find meaningful or significant?*
- *Is there anything that you didn't understand or found confusing?*
- *Any questions or comments you may have?*

The word goodness can mean a number of different things. The focus we've chosen here is on appreciating other faiths outside of Christianity.

It's important to get across the idea that Jesus didn't come to start a new religion, but reform people's idea about God and how then should we live.

Although he started with the Jews (after all he was born a Jew), the target for most of his criticism was how the Jewish religious system had missed the point of a lot of what God was about. Many Christian church leaders have publicly said that Jesus would probably react in the same way to a lot of our Christian religious system too.

The Jewish Torah (their main holy book) makes up 75% of the Christian Bible. So we certainly have a lot to be grateful for and in common with the Jewish religion.

Additionally the Muslim religion not only uses parts of the Torah (and therefore the Christian Bible), it also sees Jesus as a significant player in God's dealing

with the world (there are more references to Jesus in the Koran than there are of the originator of their religious system).

Many other religious systems have either strong parallels or have incorporated Christian wisdom, understandings and practices into their own systems.

This has led to the popular (but wrong) idea that all religions are about the same thing and will lead you to God. That's like saying Anzac Day and Christmas is the same thing - sure both are holidays, but the reasons why we celebrate them and what they mean for our lives should be different.

But all religious systems do tend to point us to the existence of something greater, and although some stop part of the way to God (some expressions of Christianity also do that), God can use anyone's spiritual journey to get them to Him eventually because ultimately that's where he wants us.

Anyway, rather than go into the differences (we'll leave that for another session maybe), this session focus is about how God can use other religions to help us understand Him better and live out more the life He intended for us.

(continued...)

### Explore – Locate *(...continued)*

John 4 describes an encounter of Jesus with a woman from another culture and religious system.

- Does he try to convince her that the religious system he was born into is better than hers?
- Or that his is more right than her?
- Or does he concede that both their religious systems are flawed but have elements that are useful in helping us get to God?
- Does he leave it there?

Daniel 1 has the Jewish young men benefiting from some of the wisdom and learning of other culture to make them significant leaders in the world (though notice how they are discerning also).

Exodus 2 has a similar situation with Moses. Notice the different cultures that Moses lives in and is a part of. What is his father-in-law's job? His father-in-law later will give him advice (Exodus 18) that makes a significant impact on the Jewish system.

Proverbs 22:17-29 (actually it includes all of chapters 23-24 too) are distinctive in that they are most likely Egyptian rather than Jewish in origin. And certainly the New Testament, especially Paul's writings, are heavily influenced by (and sometimes as reaction to) the Greek thinking of his time.

### Explore – Express

Break into four groups, each with the separate weekly readings.

Each group reads over their passages and try to read some of the background around the people involved in each of the areas.

Prepare a short statement that you will share with the wider group (the other groups looking at different passages) what your allocated passage has to say about how a person's journey, understanding and relationship with Jesus can be enriched by ideas or practices not 'in the Bible.'

#### Things to consider:

- How does Jesus deal with other people who don't believe the same way he does? Does he treat them all the same?
- What ideas that you have not read in the Bible yourself have you found useful in thinking or living like Jesus?
- How can we judge if something might be inconsistent with Jesus?
- Is it possible for a man-made religion to have nothing of value?
- Do you believe that it is possible that all religions can lead to God?
- (Or possibly, that all religions can point towards God?)

#### Another issue:

A lot of people have wrong ideas of Christianity and criticise it from a position of ignorance. It is possible that happens with other religions also.

You might want to brainstorm all the different religions that you as a group currently thinks exist and maybe choose one for yourself that you are going to look into a bit more (you can decide as a group whether you accept the religion 'Jedi').

### Explore – Integrate

- Get around to knowing just some basic facts of another (or more) religious system - who are the main people involved, which country did it come from, what is the purpose of human life, and one area they have in common with Christianity.
- Be aware of some of the criticisms about Christianity and discuss with someone else how valid or fair the criticism is.
- How will I ensure I am respectful of others views?
- Keep in mind the following quote: "Those who are often keen to share their views, are rarely as keen to hear others."

### Extend

Discuss with your group the challenges you are tackling. Use the time to ask for any help you might need or to work together on any shared projects that you have.

#### Questions that may be helpful include:

- What challenges are you working on at the moment?
- Do you need any support or assistance?
- Are there any challenges that you have completed that we need to recognise and celebrate?
- Are there any new challenges that you want to work on?

### Encourage

Tell another student in your group something you value or appreciate about them.

Share one thing you would like to pray for and pray for one another.

Pray that the Lord continuously helps me learn more about his ways so that I may be able to share with others views of my own faith as well as theirs.

Thank God for the variety of ideas and people in the world.

Pray that I discern what I can learn from other people's views that will help me grow more in my understanding and practice of relating to Jesus.