

LET US MAKE A NAME

MAIN POINT.

God will always accomplish His will for **His glory**.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God confused the language of humanity to scatter the people over the face of the earth. But through the gospel of Jesus Christ, God saves people from every tribe, tongue, and nation to form one people united in Christ forever (**Rev. 7:9-10**).



REBELLION

— OUTCOME OF PRIDE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Genesis 11:1

Genesis 11:32

SIN LURES US INTO REBELLION

GENESIS 11:1-4

1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. 2 And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 3 And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

OUR REBELLION CAN'T STOP GOD'S WILL

GENESIS 11:5-9

5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. 6 And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. 9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

Leaders: Thank you for preparing to teach God's Word. As you do, may He teach you new and wonderful truths (Ps. 119:18).

God will always accomplish
His will for **His** glory.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

SIN LURES US INTO REBELLION

GENESIS 11:3-4

"Genesis 11:1–9 also mirrors the attempt of humanity in the garden to achieve power independently of God. The attempt of the Babelites to transgress human limits is reminiscent of Eve's ambition (3:5–6). As in the tower story, the divine plural also appears in the garden account (3:22), and both indicate the divine distress over the potential havoc that the new knowledge achieved by mankind may bring about (3:22; 11:6)."¹⁶

GENESIS 11:4

"The name they desired probably refers to the reputation or fame they were seeking. Their action was a manifestation of their independence from God. . . . Second, they wanted to assure themselves of a strength that would come with unity. As a unified group they could be powerful—even without God's help."¹⁷

OUR REBELLION CAN'T STOP GOD'S WILL

GENESIS 11:8-9

"Thus, the theme of arrogant rebellion is central to the story. God puts down those who exalt themselves. God's plan will be established, if not with man's cooperation and obedience, then in spite of his disobedience."¹⁸



CONTEXT

The account of the scattering at Babel is monumental in the biblical narrative. After the flood, the population exploded, and people migrated east, all speaking one language. However, Genesis 10 gives an account of Noah's sons settling according to their different languages; Genesis 11 is a flashback explaining why this happened. God commanded them to "fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1). But vulnerability and danger came with dispersal, so the people became determined to stay together in one place. They began building a high tower, not to reach the heavens, but to **pridefully proclaim their own power and independence**. But God's will for the earth to be filled couldn't be stopped by man's rebellion. He confused their language and scattered them across the earth. The name, Babel, even sounds like the Hebrew word for "confuse." We still see the effects of this event today. Difficulties stemming from language barriers are a direct result of the rebellion that occurred at Babel.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION



sin as transgression

The word transgression means "to cross over" or "to pass by" and is often used in reference to transgressing **God's explicit commands**. When God gives a specific command, as He did with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and when that command is disobeyed, transgression has taken place (Rom. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:14). In this sense, sin is **breaking the law**.

LEADER'S PRAYER

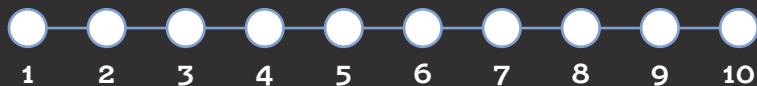
GOD, HELP US TO ONLY BUILD UP YOUR
NAME AND NOT OUR OWN. WE WANT YOU TO
RECEIVE ALL GLORY.



KICK STARTER

RATE IT!

On a scale of 1-10, how difficult is it to learn a new language?



These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

FAME OR NO FAME

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses:

- **IF YOU COULD BE FAMOUS, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO BE FAMOUS FOR?**
- **DO YOU THINK BEING FAMOUS WOULD CHANGE YOU?**
- **WOULD YOU RATHER BE FAMOUS OR NOT? WHY?**

Being famous isn't sinful. In fact, tons of people use their fame for God's glory. But it's tricky. Fame tends to affect us more than we realize. It can cause us to seek our own glory instead of giving God all the glory. Most of the time, the root of the issue of fame is in the motive: Are you seeking to be known so that people will remember you? Or do you want them to see God?

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Fame—a lot of us want it. Scroll on any form of social media and you'll notice one thing: People are constantly sharing every detail of their lives in an effort to be known. Even young children aspire to be YouTube sensations and practice recording tutorials for pretend audiences. So, is being famous wrong? Is it wrong for your name to be great? Well, it depends on why you're known. If you look at Scripture, all of the people who built their names for their own glory eventually fell. They built their own kingdoms, and their outcomes were never good. But if you look at the outcome of those who built up God's name, it's entirely different. Moses. David. Josiah. Paul. All of their names are well known, but it's because they spent their days pointing to someone much greater than they could ever be: God. So, go ahead and live in a way that people remember you. But make sure it's because you were building God's kingdom instead of your own; it's the only thing that lasts.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

God will always accomplish
His will for **His glory**.

SIN LURES US INTO REBELLION

READ GENESIS 11:1-4

WHAT MOTIVATED THE PEOPLE TO BUILD A TOWER?

The motive behind building the tower is pretty clear: The people didn't want to "fill the earth," so they decided to build a powerful city. **This tower would guarantee fame and security.** It would build their name among the other nations, maybe even provoke fear. It would declare independence. Making bricks didn't seem to be the problem, because God was silent about that decision. But building a permanent tower and city to "make a name" for themselves (v. 4) provoked God to act.

IT NEVER SAYS GOD IMMEDIATELY DESTROYED THE TOWER. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

Sometimes we need reminders of where we messed up, not to keep us in shame, but to serve as boundary lines. **Perhaps God left the tower as a reminder that obedience to Him is always the better way.** Perhaps He left it as a reminder that trusting His plan is the only way—that our own plans will always be futile. We may devise our own plans, but God's plans will always prevail, even when we rebel against Him (Prov. 19:21).

WHAT ARE THE "TOWERS" IN YOUR LIFE? IN OTHER WORDS, ARE THERE AREAS IN WHICH YOU'RE *REBELLING* AGAINST GOD?

The tower of Babel represents many things, but one prevalent idea it represents is rebellion. You likely have moments when you've purposely rebelled against God. We all have those moments. Maybe you acted in pride or desperation to fit in. Maybe you acted in doubt or defiance. Maybe you fought really hard to create a reputation or a name for yourself, and in the end, it wasn't even the real you, and it didn't satisfy your soul. **The thing is, these "towers" never last. Eventually, the tower of Babel ended in rubble. Anything we build out of rebellion or pride will end the same way.** Instead, we can invest in what lasts—our relationship with God and His glory.

OUR REBELLION CAN'T STOP GOD'S WILL

READ GENESIS 11:5-9



WHAT DOES THIS STORY TEACH US ABOUT TRYING TO DO ANYTHING APART FROM GOD?

We sometimes think we can exist independently of God. We think we can handle things in our own strength. We think we can fight temptation alone. Sometimes we even try to be “good” apart from Him, settling for morality instead of holiness. But the truth? **We can't do anything without Christ: He is the vine; we're the branches (John 15:4-5).** We can't live without the Vine sustaining us. We need Him if we're going to be holy; we need Him to do anything worthwhile; we need Him if we're going to obey. When we live truly dependent on Christ, we're truly alive.



HOW DO YOU SEE GOD'S MERCY EVEN IN HIS JUDGMENT AT BABEL?

Think about what God had just done in response to corrupt, sinful humanity: He destroyed the world with a flood! Because God is just, He wouldn't have been wrong to destroy humanity because of the disobedience that occurred at Babel. Instead, God confused their language and scattered them. In reality, this was mercy. **Not only did God spare their lives, but He also spared the people from spiraling further into disobedience and away from Him.** They were given another opportunity to get things right and to walk closely with the Lord.

WHAT DO YOU LEARN ABOUT GOD'S AUTHORITY IN THIS STORY?

God has ultimate authority, even when we choose to rebel. Although the people thought they could go their own way and accomplish their own goals, ultimately, God's plans were accomplished.

WRAP-UP

THIS WEEK, HOW CAN YOU LIVE IN A WAY THAT MAKES GOD'S NAME GREAT INSTEAD OF YOUR OWN?

Almost everything about our culture pushes us toward making a name for ourselves. It starts when we're young; we're taught to strive to be the best at whatever we do—sports, grades, and so on. And while it's awesome to work hard at everything we do, we must also check our motives. If pride is behind your efforts, then you're building a tower. Instead, can you obey the Lord even when it's not easy? Can you let someone else have the attention even when you feel like you deserve it? Can you let someone else be greater? More than that, can you allow God's name to be greater than your own? **Motive is everything.** No matter what you do, seek to do it in a way that God receives the glory.