

Lesson 1

Climbing Onward—Introduction



A Quick Look

Aim

The students will:

- compare the process of becoming a mature Christian to climbing a mountain.
- identify the book of James as a guide to the climb.
- become familiar with the author and the purpose of the book of James.

From the Word

James 1:1
Psalm 121:1-8
1 Kings 18:20-45
1 Kings 19:3a,9-18

What You Need

- Write each one of the following topics boldly on different sheets of A-4 paper: PURITY, HOLINESS, FRIENDSHIP, KNOWING GOD BETTER, TIPS ON COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS, GOD'S WISDOM, POWER TO PRAISE.
- For the Opener, pieces of wood and a large dark piece of cloth.

Memory Verse
Psalm 121:1-2

The Opener

ASK—*Have you ever taken a walk up a mountain?* (Teacher, if your students live in an area where there are no mountains, briefly describe what a mountainous region is like.)

CHOOSE five volunteers. Give them five minutes to construct a small “mountain” from the materials you brought. ASK—*What are the challenges or dangers a person might face when he climbs a mountain?* (Falling off the path; stumbling on rocks; getting lost; etc.) *What are the benefits of climbing a mountain?* (A sense of accomplishment at completing a difficult task; seeing the beauty of the surrounding area from the top.)

TELL—The Christian life is like climbing a mountain. We are climbing toward becoming like Jesus and growing in Christian character. SHOW the papers you prepared and place them around the “mountain.”

TELL—These are some of the topics we will discuss this year. Today we will look at a Bible passage that talks about mountains. We will begin to learn about climbing onward in our spiritual journey.

Truth Discovery

Part 1

ASK students to open to **Psalm 121**. Sing a song based on this psalm, if you know one.

TELL—The person who wrote this psalm may have been a traveller on his way to Jerusalem for one of the annual Jewish celebrations. Jerusalem is located on the top of a mountain. Perhaps the traveller became tired or afraid as he journeyed.

ASK them to read quickly through the psalm by themselves.

Choose someone to read v. 2. *Where did the writer of the psalm say his help came from? How does he describe the Lord?* (Maker of heaven and earth.) *Why would this be a comfort to someone who is climbing a difficult path up a mountain?*

ASK—The words “watch” or “watches” are used several times in this psalm. *Why do you think the writer repeated these words?*

ASK each student to read v. 3-8 with the person next to him and look for what the Lord promised. Afterwards, let them share their answers.

READ v. 1-2. WRITE this statement on the board:

WHEN YOU ARE CLIMBING, REMEMBER THAT GOD'S LOVING AND STRONG ATTENTION IS ALWAYS UPON YOU.

REMIND them that we are thinking of the Christian life as a climb. We are climbing toward growth in Christian character.

Part 2

ASK—*Which book in the New Testament contains much practical advice for living the Christian life?* (The book of James.) We can view this book as a guide God has given us to help us on our climb toward growing in Christian character. This year some of our lessons will help us to explore the book of James.

Read **James 1:1** and WRITE these facts about the book of James on the board.

Author—James, the brother of Jesus.

TELL—At one time James did not believe that Jesus was God's Son. Later James became not only a believer but a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

Audience—Jewish Christians who had been scattered because of persecution.

Purpose—To teach and encourage these scattered people who were facing difficulties.

The Challenge

TELL—Our Teen Page today reminds us of a story in the Bible that mentions mountains.

Have students **complete the Teen Page now or assign it for next week.**



TELL—We will all face difficulties as we climb toward maturity in our lives. Knowing that God's strong and loving attention is upon us can encourage us in our climb. CHALLENGE students to memorise all of Psalm 121. CHOOSE a student to read **The Bottom Line.**

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In 1 Kings 18-19, Elijah had some "mountain experiences." Read the following statements. Think about the answers to Question 4. Be prepared to discuss it in class.

1. Elijah's first climb up Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:20-40). God used Elijah to show the people of Israel His power over the false prophets. Elijah must have felt full of joy after this first "mountain experience."
2. Elijah's second climb up Mt. Carmel (Kings 18:41-45). In answer to Elijah's prayers, God sent heavy rains on the land, after 3 year of drought (no rain). Elijah must have felt full of confidence in God's power, after God brought the rain.
3. Elijah's climb up Mt. Horeb. Read 1 Kings 19:1-3a, 9-18. Why was Elijah afraid? What reason did Elijah give God for why he was hiding in the cave on Mt. Horeb? Through which force of nature did God finally speak to Elijah? What encouragement did God give to Elijah in v. 18?
4. Your mountain climb. What difficulties are you meeting as you climb toward growth in your Christian character and toward becoming like Jesus? What can help you with these difficulties?



Firm Foothold

Psalm 121:1-2

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

The Bottom Line

The Christian life is like climbing a mountain.
We are climbing toward becoming like Jesus and growing in our character.
God's attention is always upon us as we climb.
The book of James gives practical advice that will help us in our climb.