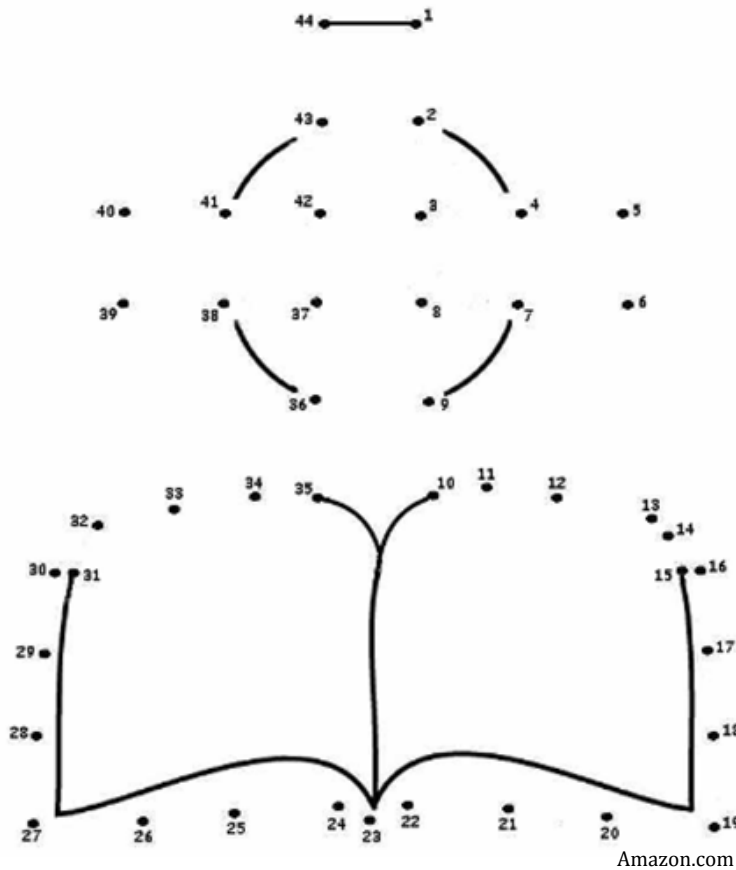


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**Sol·dier** (sōl'jər)-noun:

a skilled and experienced worker who is dedicated to a cause

**Trained** (trān)-verb:

taught; disciplined; given specialized instructions to improve

**Re·spon·sive** (rī-spōn'siv)-adjective:

reacting quickly, strongly or favorably

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The Master's Child Church Youth Ministry  
**Shining STAR**

Soldiers Trained and Responsive

Special Edition, Volume 3



# HOLY WEEK

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*Let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins...since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. **1 John 4:7-11** (NLT)*



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## “A Fruitful Fig”

A fig is a fruit that is shaped like a pear and can be eaten fresh, preserved or dry. It is best grown in dry and warmed temperatures. Figs can be found in some foods such as jam, and snacks (Fig Newton). As Jesus traveled back to Jerusalem in the morning after spending the night in Bethany (a village near the Mount of Olives), he was very hungry. He noticed a fig tree on the side of the road and he decided to see if it had fruit. He had planned to eat the fruit for breakfast before traveling back to Jerusalem. After noticing that the fig tree only had green leaves, he was disappointed and decided to curse the tree, because it didn't have any fruit on it. Once Jesus cursed the tree, it could no longer bear fruit. He said “Let no fruit grow on you ever again.” Immediately the fig tree withered away. (Matthew 21:19b). For three years the fig tree was unproductive.

Our lives can sometimes represent the fig tree that Jesus seen beside the road. We are functioning, but we are not living productive lives. The tree had green leaves, but it bared no fruit. From a distance it looked good. The green leaves were an indication that the tree had life. Every morning we wake up to eat breakfast and go about our busy day. Oftentimes, without realizing what our true purpose is. We should begin our morning with prayer to find out from the Lord what he want us to do. It is important that we live each day with purpose. We should pray to God daily, read our bibles, do good in school, obey our parents, and avoid negative unproductive people. God desires to use us each day. We have to make sure that we are available for His use at all times. We should wake up each morning asking God to guide us to our divine purpose. Jesus cursed the fig tree for not being productive or available to meet his need. We have to make sure that our lives are productive in a way that Jesus can use us. Otherwise, it will wither away just like the fig tree. Sometimes we do enough to get through the day, but if we're not following the blueprint of our lives, then we will have an unproductive life.

Trees provide this world with oxygen, water conservation, paper, etc. That's great right? Trees are also beautiful, colorful and pleasing to the natural eye. All trees have a purpose but all trees are not fruitful. To be fruitful we must put our Faith In God! Faith in God produces good fruit! Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Usually, when we are not being productive, it's because we have taken our focus off God. Matthew 16:26 says “*And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?*” Are you trying to win the approval of man or God (Gal. 1:10)? Man cannot curse what God has blessed. Unlike the fig tree, we must remain fruitful, productive and purposeful so that we will be available for the Master's use!

Read Matthew 21:18-22 and Mark 11:12-26

## “Cleansing the Temple”

Have you ever invited friends over to your house when your parents instructed you not to? Did you get caught disobeying the rules of your parent's household? If so, did your parents put your friends out the house and it was an embarrassment to you? In Matthew 21:12, Jesus went into the temple and put out everyone that disrespected the house of God. There were individuals such as the money changers who had made the church out of what we would call a mall or flea market. Can you imagine coming to church for service and the building was transformed into a mall? As you entered the building, you noticed people were everywhere exchanging money for clothes and shoes. This would be an unexpected surprise, and an OMG moment, right? Jesus probably felt the same way when he entered the temple. I'm sure he was surprised at what the people had turned the house of God into. After putting the individuals out for disrespecting the temple of God he had to remind them of the purpose of the temple. "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:13). It is very important for us to respect our parents, obey their rules and respect our households. Operating in a spirit of disrespect and disobedience is very inappropriate and can cause our parents to take things from us. It does not feel good to have something taken away, so we have to make sure that we make the right choices. Sometimes we have to be reminded of the purpose of the house of God. The house of God is a safe place where we can enter to pray, serve God and the needs of His people. It should be respected at all times. Our households are intended to protect and cover us and we should feel safe when we enter. It should be respected as well.

## “The Trials of Jesus”

The arrest and trials of Jesus were unfair and unnecessary. Jesus had some haters (people who didn't like him and would do anything to get rid of Him). Unfortunately, some of His haters were Jews (his very own people). Jesus, who had six different trials prior to His crucifixion endured physical and verbal abuse.

Although Jesus had to deal with being falsely accused and wrongfully abused, He did not respond with violence. You will have some haters too and how you respond to them will be important. When dealing with your haters who may do or say things to you that you may not like or deserve, you can be like Jesus by allowing His Spirit to control your actions rather than your flesh. From a human perspective, sometimes the first response is retaliation rather than restraint (a control over the expression of one's emotions or thoughts). However, if we are like Jesus, we must learn to show restraint. In God's Word, it is written “*Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone?*” (Rom. 12:17-18 NLT)