TEACH IT **TALK** SESSION 10

This talk guide is just that: a guide. It's not intended to be a manuscript to read aloud. It's here to give you ideas, structure, and stories to blend with your personal study (Prep It) as you prepare your talk.

The content complements the other Teach It guides, allowing you to give a talk on the same topic students are studying in other settings (like small groups) without too much overlap.

1. Materials (Optional)

- A student (one who doesn't mind hamming it up) to mock you as you begin your talk; or use a video clip of someone mocking a teacher behind his or her back.

2. Optional Openings

VISUAL ILLUSTRATION
Have one of your students stand behind you and mock or mimic you as you begin your talk. Start off with some basic announcements, or go ahead and begin telling a story as part of your talk. What you say doesn't matter as much as simply giving the student some good material to mock. (Another option is to search the phrase *behind the teacher's back* on YouTube or another video-sharing Web site for a clip to show. (The effect will be better live.) After a few minutes, discover the mocker behind you. Then talk about what people do when no one is looking. A person is much more likely to mock the speaker or teacher if he thinks the teacher won't see him.

QUOTATIONS
Share one or two of the following quotations to introduce the idea of what motivates us to do good things—seen or unseen, rewarded or unrewarded.

Too many people are ready to carry the stool when the piano needs to be moved.
—Anonymous

The virtue of a man ought to be measured not by his extraordinary exertions, but by his everyday conduct.
—Blaise Pascal (1623-1662, French mathematician, physicist, and religious philosopher)

People not only lose faith in their talents and their dreams or values; some simply tire of them.
—Edward Hoagland (1932-present, U.S. writer and professor)

3. Digging In

PERSONAL STORY
Tell a personal story about a time when you did a random act of kindness or sacrificed for something that would bring you no tangible reward. Here's an example:

One snowy day I didn't have any money and I was bored. Typically my solution to boredom is activity. One of my favorite activities is going to a movie. But going to a movie these days is a little pricey, so that was out. I'd seen every movie we had at the house and didn't have any money to even rent one. So what to do, what to do? I called a few friends, and we went shoveling.

Now keep in mind that I really don't like shoveling my driveway. So we didn't. We decided to shovel other people's driveways. For some reason, it's a lot easier and a whole lot more fun to shovel somebody else's driveway than your own. There were a few of us, so we could even do it fairly quickly.

Almost everyone has a shovel, or can come up with one from a friend or neighbor, so it doesn't cost anything. You just knock on a door and tell the person who answers, "We're here to shovel your driveway!" They usually do one of two things: start saying "no," or start reaching for their wallets. That's when you say, "No, you don't understand. This is free."

That's when you get the head tilt—kinda like a dog when it hears a strange noise. People sort of tilt their heads and give you this what-are-you-talking-about look. It's the same look followers of Jesus got when they acted on his command to carry someone's bag a second mile.

In New Testament times, if you were stopped by a Roman soldier and told to carry his bag, you were legally required to do it. For one mile. That was the deal. If you went a second mile, you'd get a head tilt and a confused look.

So on that snowy day, and others to come, my friends and I went to people's houses, blessed them by taking care of their driveways, and had a lot of fun. We even turned it into a little competition. We started timing ourselves and would try to beat our record (two minutes and 40 seconds by the way).

We didn't have money. We didn't make money. We had time and shovels. And ultimately, we had fun.

Continue with—

So which would be better: Having fun while helping people by shoveling their driveways for free or making money by shoveling people's driveways for a fee? Had we charged for the shoveling and made money, there's a good chance we wouldn't have had near the fun. I'm sure I wouldn't even remember the events of that day enough to be telling them to you now. And I know the little money we would have made that day would be long gone.

Shoveling driveways for free can teach you a lot about true fulfillment. And it's exactly what God teaches all through Scripture. There are bigger and better things than money to let our minds dwell on—things like sacrificing for others, loving others, showing mercy to others, and waiting on Jesus to come back.

4. Digging Deeper

Tell your students that James opens chapter 5 with some rough instructions to his readers. Share—

James 5:1-6 says, "Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of

the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you."

Continue with—

James follows that with James 5:7-9, which says, "Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!"

PERSONAL ILLUSTRATION
Share a personal illustration about a time you had to wait and endure. For example:

There's something really uncomfortable about waiting. When I was a kid I didn't like it when my mom would punish me for doing something wrong, but I was scared out of my mind when she'd say, "Just wait until your father gets home!" That wait was the worst part. I would have done anything to erase whatever mistake I'd made because I knew Dad was coming home. I also knew he played college football and was a black belt in karate. He didn't hit me, but he could be scary just due to his size and the fact that I'd seen him break bricks with his bare hands. Those were the things going through my mind while I was waiting for him to come home.

Continue with—

It's pretty easy to get caught up in our own little worlds—clicking along with the latest gear and gadgets, listening to our music, turning in our homework, figuring out what career can get us the biggest coin. We lose track of the fact that our own little world is just temporary. It's God's big world that matters. The whole Bible is packed with stories and teachings about getting God's big world into our little world. And the big heads-up in the Bible is that someday Jesus will return, and then it's nothing but God's big world. Meanwhile, we wait for that to happen. And God gave us some things to do—and not to do—while we wait. Sometimes it's hard to stay away from the things we're not to do while we wait. Waiting is the hardest part.

OPTIONAL MIX-INS
You may want to point out a few facts about this passage in James:

-The word patient *used here carried a sense of waiting and endurance. Verse 8 lets us know that it won't be an easy wait; we may have to stand firm.*

-The farmer analogy is a great one, especially since many of these folks probably had an agricultural background (being from the twelve tribes of Israel—an agricultural people—as noted in James 1:1).

-The word valuable *is easy to miss on a casual read, but it was an intentional adjective. The farmer is having to wait in anxiety—at the mercy of weather—to get his reward—the harvesting of his valuable crop. The same is true with us. We wait in anxiety at the mercy of a fallen world to get our valuable reward, the return of Jesus.*

I talk with a lot of guys and girls who struggle with physical issues with their dating partners. So whenever I hear a guy say, "I just can't help myself," I ask him to do something. I say, "Picture for a second that you're at your girlfriend's house. Things are getting a little steamy, and you hear a car door close. Then you see her dad's car in the driveway. What happens next?" It always ends the same. The guy tells me that he's a perfect gentleman, ready to have a nice conversation with Mr. Dad. "So you can help yourself; you just choose not to," is my reply. Girls, the same is true for you.

James tells us that while we wait on Jesus' return, we are to "be patient and stand firm" (James 5:8). Resist temptation. And if you find yourself thinking, *I can't help myself,* just picture Jesus coming back the moment you can't help yourself.

5. Taking It Inward

Continue with—

I think if we thought Jesus was really about to come back, we'd make some changes. I think if we really believed God was real and was actually in this room, we'd make some changes. We do stuff with God in the room that we'd never do with our mom or pastor or teacher in the room. The obvious answer to why we do that is we have trouble really believing God is in the room or that he's coming back soon. Our faith isn't involved in experiencing the fullness of God at that moment. So we just live our lives. We cave to temptation. We pursue things we think make us happy, such as money or good looks.

I think we'd all live drastically different lives if we really believed in and experienced Jesus in our daily situations. I also think we'd live drastically different lives if we believed he might possibly come back 10 minutes from now.

Just think for a minute: How would that change your life?

6. Wrapping It Up

Finish with—

What have you been thinking about all day? How would your thoughts be different if you knew they were the last thoughts you'd have before Jesus returned? The book of James, not to mention the entire New Testament, was written with the thought that Jesus' return could happen any minute. That's still true today.

Until Jesus comes back, imagine him walking with you, driving with you, sitting with you while you're at your computer. But don't picture him in a robe with a sash, wearing sandals. That was the garb of the day when Jesus was here on earth. Picture him wearing what you'd be wearing or what a cool 30-year-old might have on. That's a more real picture—and it may help you more easily picture him in your world today.

Which is good, because he is.