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## Lesson Overview

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**Biblical Passage** John 2:1-11

**Supporting Passage** Matthew 23:25-26, Mark 7:6-23, 8:13-19

**Memory Verse** Philippians 4:19

**Biblical Truth** Jesus' miracles revealed His divine authority and glory.

**Context** After calling His disciples, Jesus attended a wedding in Cana. The wedding guests included Jesus' mother, other family and friends, and His disciples. While at the wedding, Jesus performed the first recorded miracle and revealed Himself for the first time as the Messiah. Though John includes fewer miraculous signs than the other Gospels, he did include several of Jesus' miracles. Changing water into wine is the first of seven miracles described in John 1-11.

**Learning Goals**

- Students will examine how Jesus' miracles demonstrated His power and authority as the Messiah.
- Students will identify ways to trust God to meet their needs in life.

**Prayer Suggestions**

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for those in your group.

- Pray that students will examine how Jesus' miracles demonstrated His power and authority as the Messiah.
- Pray that students will identify ways to trust God to meet their needs in life.
- Pray that God will show students more of His glory.

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## Biblical Commentary

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### Investigation

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John the apostle wrote this Gospel between A.D. 85 and 90. It was probably intended for a Gentile church outside Palestine. John 20:30-31 states John's reason for writing his Gospel: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

While at a wedding celebration at Cana in Galilee, Jesus' mother remarked to Him that the hosts had run out of wine. After reminding her that His time had not yet come, Jesus miraculously caused the water in six stone jars to become fine wine. In doing so He revealed His glory to His disciples.

### Importance

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This passage teaches that **Jesus is God and Savior** and is important because it shows the authority and glory of Jesus' divine nature: "He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (Jn. 2:11). By miraculously turning water into wine, Jesus demonstrated both His concern for others and His ability to meet any need at any time. Because of who He is, Jesus holds complete authority as Lord and Christ. Not only is He fully able to meet all the needs of His followers, but He also wants to meet them. It is essential that Christians acknowledge Christ as Provider and trust Him to meet their needs. By doing so, believers discover not only His divine authority but His glory as well.

Other key truths addressed in this lesson include **People are God's Treasure** and **God Is**.

### Interpretation

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**John 2:1-2** In these verses, John offered clues as to the time and setting of this narrative. The wedding occurred on the "third day," which most likely refers to three days after Jesus' encounter with **Philip** and **Nathanael**. By this time Jesus may have had five or six disciples following Him: Nathanael (also known as Bartholomew), Andrew, Peter, Philip, John, and maybe James. He could have already chosen all twelve, even though all of them have not been mentioned at this point in the Gospel.

Little is known about the city of Cana in the region of Galilee. John is the only New Testament writer to mention this city. Many scholars believe it was located about nine miles north of **Nazareth** around the area currently known as Khirbet Kana.

Jesus, His disciples, and His mother were all at the wedding. This suggests that the wedding may have been for a family member or a close friend of Jesus' family. It could have been that Mary was assisting with details of the

wedding celebration, which might explain her statement in verse 5.

A first-century Jewish wedding involved an extensive celebration. After the betrothal period, the groom would be accompanied by a group of people to the bride's house, where the marriage ceremony would be held. Then everyone would return to the groom's house for the celebration, which could go on for a week. The groom's family generally assumed the role of hosts for the festivities and bore most of the financial responsibility for the social event.

**John 2:3** During the first century, wine was a common everyday beverage, typically made from fermented grape juice and mixed with water. It was considered an essential part of every Jewish wedding celebration. To run out of wine at a wedding was unthinkable and could result in embarrassment for the groom and his family.

At this particular wedding, the wine ran out before the celebration was over. This could have been because too many guests showed up or simply because of inadequate preparation. Mary approached Jesus and informed Him of the situation. Why Mary approached Jesus is not clear. Though she knew Jesus was unique among men, it seems unlikely that she hoped He would miraculously provide the wine needed for the celebration. Still, she knew of His concern for meeting people's needs. She may have approached Him with the potentially embarrassing problem because she had faith in His ability to deal with it resourcefully.

**John 2:4** Though the word "dear" does not appear in the Greek text, translators often include it in English translations because Jesus using the word **woman** alone to address His mother sounds unkind and disrespectful. No disrespect was intended; nor was any taken.

Though Jesus' statement was courteous, it was a mild rebuke. While she was still His mother, He was more than her Son--He was her Lord as well. His ministry would be dictated by the will of His Heavenly Father.

**John 2:5-8** Mary apparently believed that Jesus would take care of the situation. She knew He would do what was right, thus she directed the **servants** to follow Jesus' instructions. Her words to the servants suggest that she had some responsibility in the wedding celebration.

The jars that were near the area where Jesus and Mary were talking held water not for drinking but for ceremonial washing. The jars were hewn out of stone; they were more durable than the clay pots or jars often used to hold water. Because they were made from stone, they maintained their purity in accordance with Mosaic Law (Lev. 11:36). These stone jars were large, perhaps the size of modern trash cans. They were different sizes, holding from 20 to 30 gallons of water each.

The Jews (especially Pharisees) usually used the water in the jars in their ritual purification before and after eating and also after returning from the market, where they may have had contact with unclean Gentiles (non-Jews). As part of their tradition, they also symbolically purified the plates, cups, and pots they used in cooking and eating. Mark elaborated on this practice that was a part of "the tradition of the elders." He explained that the Jewish leaders had added to God's Law and made life miserable for the majority of Jews (Mk. 7:3-4). Jesus later spoke words of rebuke to the Jewish leaders who thought that their traditions and rituals made them right with God (Mt. 23:25-26, Mk. 7:6-23).

Jesus instructed the servants to fill the jars with water. The servants followed His instructions and filled the jars "to the brim," probably drawing water from a nearby well and carrying it to the jars. Next, Jesus told the servants to withdraw some of the liquid (perhaps in a small pitcher or cup) and take it to the "master of the banquet." This position might be similar to that of a headwaiter in a fancy restaurant or a butler in a wealthy family. He might even have been a master of ceremonies. Often when new food or drink was brought out, it was first taken to the master, perhaps for his approval, before being given to the other guests.

**John 2:9-10** The servants did as Jesus instructed. John noted simply that "the water . . . had been turned into wine." This happened without any fanfare and probably with only the servants later realizing what had happened. The servants knew they had put water in the jars and may have reluctantly taken the cup or pitcher to the master, almost anticipating his reaction. They may have expected him to spit out the water and rebuke them for tricking him. Regardless of their thoughts or hesitations, they went to him. The master tasted the liquid the servants brought to him, which now was wine. He did not know its origin. Apparently he was unaware the wine for the celebration had run out.

It was a common practice to offer guests the best wine first in order to impress them. Later, they would be served a lesser quality wine after celebrating for some time and having "had too much to drink." The lesser quality wine could have been watered down, or it may have been newly fermented, in which case it would not be as good as wine that had aged. Yet on this occasion the master believed that the bridegroom and his family had gone against tradition and waited until the end of the celebration to bring out the best wine.

How did this miracle happen? Obviously no one--except God--knows. But just as a person does not have to understand the process of bypass surgery to benefit from the procedure, neither did the servants have to understand what had happened in order to experience this miracle.

**John 2:11** This event was "the first of Jesus' miraculous **signs**." Certainly, the servants knew what had occurred and probably spread the word about it. As a result of this miracle, Jesus "revealed his glory." John mentioned this glory in the beginning of his Gospel (Jn. 1:14). It was an indication of Jesus' character, identity, power, and authority.

Apparently the disciples witnessed this miracle because they "put their faith in him" as a consequence. We know that they already believed He was the Messiah (Jn. 1:35-51). This phrase must mean that they trusted Him enough to follow Him.

## Implications

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Teenagers desire stuff. They see what others have and want it for themselves. They often depend upon their parents and others to meet these wants. Yet, the things that are most important in life cannot be obtained through someone else, but only through God. Thankfully **Jesus is God and Savior**. He is God; He has authority and power over all created things, including water. He is Savior; He not only supplied what was needed for eternal salvation, but He rescues from everyday stresses and offers peace in all situations. Just as Jesus listened to Mary, He knows the needs of students. Just as Jesus provided for his mother Mary, He can provide what is best for everyone.

## Teaching Plan

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### Connect

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#### Review Questions

*(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.*

*Print one copy of the "Review Questions" activity sheet for your use.*

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide the context for today's lesson.

#### Master Teacher Option: What Do You See?

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will try to remember everything about someone's appearance.*

*Provide paper and a pen for each student.*

Explain that students will need to depend on their memories and keen sense of observation for this activity. Enlist a student to stand up so that everyone can take a mental picture of his or her appearance. Then, ask the volunteer to leave the room. Instruct the volunteer to change three things about his or her appearance over the next 30 seconds. (Changes may include reversing a belt, moving a watch or ring from one arm to another, untying a shoe, or parting hair on the opposite side.)

When the volunteer returns, direct students to identify the changes and note them on the paper provided. After thirty seconds, instruct the volunteer to reveal the changes he or she made and check to see how many students identified all three.

Play another round, this time encouraging a second student volunteer to make small, almost imperceptible changes. Again, instruct students to identify the changes and note them on the paper provided. After thirty seconds, instruct the volunteer to reveal the changes he or she has made and check to see how many students identified all three.

Afterward, point out that small changes make a big difference. Conclude by saying: **Jesus revealed His divine nature when He looked at a problem and changed a potentially embarrassing moment into an opportunity to show His authority and power.**

## Explore

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### Master Teacher Key Study: His First Miracle

*(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will study John 2:1-11 to examine how Jesus' miracles demonstrated His power and authority as the Messiah.*

*Print one copy of the Master Teacher Key Study for your use. Provide a copy of the Student Worksheet and a pen for each student.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will examine how Jesus' miracles demonstrated His power and authority as the Messiah.

Pass out pens and copies of the Student Worksheet. Then, use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach John 2:1-22.

## Transform

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### Deeper Discussion

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will discuss why how they can trust God to meet their needs in life.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will identify ways to trust God to meet their needs in life.

Use the following questions to lead students in a discussion about how to follow Christ's call in their daily lives:

- **Why is it significant that the servants gave credit to Jesus for this miracle? What does this example say to you?**
- **To what or whom do you give credit when needs are met?**
- **How did Jesus show both His power and authority through this miracle? How did He show His care for people?**

After discussion, emphasize that Jesus' miracles met the needs of people just like us. Lead students in prayer, asking God to help students to trust God to meet their needs in His will and His timing.

### Master Teacher Option: Provision and Requests

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will discuss whether Jesus would expect His followers to complete a task they were not prepared for.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will identify ways to trust God to meet their needs in life.

Remind students that when the servants followed through in obedience to what Jesus told them to do, they saw Jesus' amazing provision and His glory. Instruct students to work with one or two other students to identify things the servants needed to complete the task Jesus gave them. After two minutes, review, making sure that responses include: *they had to carry heavy jars to a water source and fill them up; possibly they had to make multiple trips; they had to carry a sample to the Master of the Banquet; they had to obey Jesus when they didn't know what He was doing.*

Then, ask: **Using this passage as a model, do you think Jesus would ask you to use something He has not provided to you to complete a task He has given you? Why or why not?** After students respond, ask: **How does knowing this increase or decrease your trust in God to meet your needs?** After responses, lead students in prayer, asking God to teach them to trust that they will experience more of who Jesus is as they cooperate with His plan.

## Take Home Activity

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### Family Devotion

*(10-15 minutes at home, easy set-up)*

*Distribute copies of the Family Devotion to students and encourage them to share the devotion with their family.*

A copy of the Family Devotion will be included in your lesson PDF download.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Use these questions to review the content from Lesson 9: "He Called His Disciples"  
The correct answer for each question is printed in bold, italic font.

1. Who were the two brothers Jesus called to be His disciples as He walked beside the Sea of Galilee?
  - a. Paul and Barnabas
  - b. Matthew and Mark
  - c. *Peter and Andrew***
  - d. Ben and Jerry
2. Who was the tax collector Jesus called to be His disciple?
  - a. Zacchaeus
  - b. *Matthew***
  - c. Judas Iscariot
  - d. James
3. What were the general words that Jesus used to call His disciples?
  - a. "Come along."
  - b. "Go with me."
  - c. "Let's go!"
  - d. *"Follow Me."***
4. Where were James and John when Jesus called them to be His disciples?
  - a. *In a boat with their father***
  - b. On the shore preparing their nets
  - c. In the synagogue
  - d. At home
5. How does the Bible say that these disciples responded to Christ's call?
  - a. They were hesitant.
  - b. They were afraid of Jesus.
  - c. They laughed at Jesus.
  - d. *They followed Him immediately.***

## HIS FIRST MIRACLE

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

*Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.*

**Introduction:** Jesus performed miracles and met needs throughout His ministry. These miracles often met the practical needs of His followers. The primary purpose of these miraculous acts, however, was to reveal Himself as the Messiah—the one sent to save His people.

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### 1. We can trust Jesus to act for the glory of God alone (John 2:1–4).

**Biblical Background:** Jesus' actions during His life were not meant to make certain religious or political groups happy. He also did not live for the purpose of making His followers happy. At a wedding, His mother brought her concern for her hosts to Jesus because she expected Him to help (vv. 1–3). Jesus kindly reminded His mother that He was not interested in appeasing people because He lived for the glory of God alone (v. 4). Jesus lives and presently acts for the glory of God. In turn, these actions are the best for those who follow Jesus but are primarily in God's timing for God's glory.

**Illustration:** Actress Natalie Portman doesn't care to talk about the latest fashions. She refuses to focus on topics such as her love life because she believes that this kind of information is pointless. Rather, she diverts attention to a cause. Portman is not interested in appeasing the curious interests of the general public; she does, however, want to spread the news about caring for others in the world and how to bring change to people's lives.

**Application:** Jesus does not act according to our timetables or selfish wishes and desires. We can rejoice in the truth that we do not serve a God whose actions are determined by His followers. Rather, we can trust in a God who acts in the best interest of all by acting to make His glory known to all people.

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### 2. We can trust Jesus to meet our needs for God's glory (John 2:5–8).

**Biblical Background:** Jesus cares about people and has compassion for their needs. Jesus knew the social consequences that would happen if the groom's family had run out of wine. He cared about their position. And, Mary accepted Jesus' divine authority over her and the actions of the servants (v. 5). Jesus used the people and the resources available to Him, and gave instructions to the servants without giving them any explanations as to what He was doing (vv. 6-8). We can trust that Jesus is concerned about the needs that we have and will meet those needs in a way that will bring glory to God.

**Illustration:** Compassion International is an organization that seeks to assist children around the world to help them overcome their spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty. While meeting the needs of these children, Compassion seeks to glorify God by caring for others and by helping them to have a growing relationship with Jesus.

**Application:** We can trust the truth that Jesus cares about our needs. He is concerned about our physical, spiritual, emotional, and social wellbeing. He will meet our needs in a way that brings God the most glory.

### 3. We can base our faith on Jesus as the revealed Messiah (John 2:9–11).

**Biblical Background:** Jesus is not an imposter. Although He met a practical need for the family of the wedding couple, His primary purpose for the miracle was to reveal Himself as the Messiah (vv. 9–11). Because Jesus is God and Savior, we can trust in Jesus as the Savior who is not false but has proven Himself as the revealed Messiah.

**Illustration:** In the *Life Application Bible Commentary: John*, Barton wrote, “People look everywhere but to God for excitement and meaning. For some reason, they expect God to be dull and lifeless. Just as the wine Jesus made was the best, so life in him is better than life on our own. Why wait until everything else runs out before trying God? Don’t save the best until last” (p. 35).

**Application:** We do not place our faith in a false religion or in a false savior. We base our faith on Jesus as the true Messiah, and we can place our full faith on this truth. Through His miracles, Jesus showed complete evidence that He is the Messiah.

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**Conclusion:** While meeting a practical need, Jesus revealed His glory as the only one with divine authority to provide miraculous solutions to all problems. Make your requests to Him, and then expect Him to provide. When He meets those needs pause to praise Him as the source of all gifts.

# LESSON 10

## HIS FIRST MIRACLE

**Biblical Passage:** John 2:1-11

**Memory Verse:** Philippians 4:19

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

1. We can trust Jesus to act for the \_\_\_\_\_ of God alone (John 2:1-4).
2. We can trust Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ for God’s glory (John 2:5-8).
3. We can base our faith on Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_ (John 2:9-11).

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it significant that the servants gave credit to Jesus for this miracle?  
What does this example say to you?
- To what or whom do you give credit when needs are met?
- How did Jesus show both His power and authority through this miracle?  
How did He show His care for people?

### STORY IN REVERSE

#### PART 1: WHY?

*John 2:11*

What was the purpose of Jesus’ miracle of turning water into wine?

#### PART 2: WHAT?

*John 2:9-10*

What did the wedding party and guests experience with the wine?

#### PART 3: HOW?

*John 2:6-8*

How did the water become wine? How did the servants respond to Jesus?

#### PART 4: WHERE?

*John 2:1-5*

Where was Jesus and what was happening when He performed this first sign?

### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT . . .

“Every thing that a man leans upon but God will be a dart that will certainly pierce his heart through and through. He who leans only upon Christ lives the highest, choicest, safest, and sweetest life.”—*Thomas Brooks*

# LESSON 10

## HIS FIRST MIRACLE

**Biblical Passage:** John 2:1-11

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In a world where the seemingly miraculous happens every day, how can we recognize the glory of God? Let's face it, if people in biblical times had ever witnessed planes flying through the air with people on board, men and women having conversations with others via cell phones, and something even as common as indoor running water, they would have believed they were witnessing miracles beyond their wildest imagination. Is there any room for God to perform the miraculous and make an impression on us?

Certainly, and He does it every day. First, God isn't out to impress us, but He is out to let us see glimpses of His glory. You see, God's glory is all about revealing who He is. When God allows us to see His glory, it's to help us understand His love, His character, and the fact that He is the God who longs to relate to us.

Read John 2:1-11. Jesus marked the belonging of His ministry through the display of His divine authority and glory. Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana. Jesus wasn't ready for the whole world to know the miracles He was capable of doing, but He was ready to show a small group of people a glimpse of who He—the God who has control over everything. By performing this miracle, He revealed His loving and compassionate nature as well as His ability to meet any need, both physical and spiritual.

It's hard to impress teenagers today. They live in a world of every known technological wonder, and these wonders are improving every day. However, when teens are introduced to Jesus, they see something extraordinary. They see a God who is in touch with their lives and their needs, and who wants them to know Him. God is more than capable of making an impression, but He often reveals Himself in subtle ways. When we point young people to Christ and spiritual changes begin to occur, the result is something miraculous—revealing things that only God can do.

### CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

- What are some things we use every day that would have seemed miraculous thirty years ago?
- What could God possibly do that would seem miraculous to us today?
- What was so impressive about Jesus turning water into wine?
- What, if anything, do you think Jesus would want people to know about His ability to perform miracles?
- What miracles has God performed in your life, and what did you discover about God as a result?