

FIGHTER VERSE 1

Isaiah 40:8

Isaiah 40:8—The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Prayer

Pray that God will open the minds and hearts of you and your family/group to understand His Word and to be ready to make a heartfelt response to what He teaches you.

Introductory Activities

Use as many activities as appropriate for your time frame. Explain any activities that you aren't able to actually do with your group, as the questions in the Revisit the Introductory Activities section are based on these activities. **For young children**, use physical objects when possible. **For teens and adults**, modify the activities to reflect the interests of your group.

- Walk around the yard and have children find living plants and dead ones. (Use the words “wither” and “shriveled up” to describe the dead plants.)
- Show photos of a relative or someone else at various ages, who is now deceased.
- Show an old letter in an envelope with a stamp, noting the price of the stamp.
- Bring an antique item or take a field trip to an antique store, noting the differences from today's culture, or show pictures of phones from early days to the present.
- Show pictures of your first car and other cars in past years.
- Talk about your first job, how much you were paid, and how much things cost back then.
- Show pictures of common fashion styles over the last 100 years.

Facilitator's Note—If all your participants are of prekindergarten through kindergarten age, use the Coloring Book Lesson section below.

Coloring Book Lesson

Have them open their *Fighter Verses Study Set 2 Coloring Books* to the correct Fighter Verse. Read the Fighter Verse to them, using your finger to point out each word as you read it.

Referencing the Introductory Activities, ask questions like these:

- ❓ *Remember when we walked around the yard and saw the old, brown, dead plants? Do you remember what I called them? [withered, shriveled] Those plants were once alive, green, and growing, but they changed. They did not stay the same.*

- ❓ *Remember these pictures of [deceased person's name]? Are the photos all the same? [No.] How are they different (not the same)? [In some photos, he is a boy. In some, he is young. In some, he is old and wearing different clothes.] Uncle Joe changed a lot in these pictures. Somebody who saw him when he was a little boy probably wouldn't recognize him (or know who it was) in this picture, because he changed so much.*
- ❓ *There is only one person and one thing that doesn't change. Do you know who the one person is who doesn't change? [God] What is the one thing that doesn't change? [God's Word, the Bible]*

Point out how the picture and the summary sentence on the coloring page can remind them of what the verse means. **Make the Point** that everything gets old and dies or changes, except God and the Bible. Then pray with them about how they can listen to and someday read God's Word, the Bible, and love and trust it because it never changes. They can now use the coloring book page for this lesson.

Refer to the memorization systems mentioned in the How to Use the Discussion Guide section to help the children memorize the verse throughout the week, keeping in mind each child's maturity and abilities.

If the participants are in grades 1-2, you can skip down to the Revisit the Introductory Activities section under the **So What?** section.

If you believe that the second graders would benefit from all the material, continue with the lesson, simplifying when necessary, and add questions appropriate for them.

For all others, continue with the lesson as written.

 **Read Isaiah 40:8 aloud or in unison.**

Isaiah 40:8—The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

1 What? (Observation—What are the facts?)

Facilitator's Note—Summarize the background information and simplify the vocabulary for the younger participants who may have difficulty understanding the concepts presented (e.g., "person who spoke for Him" instead of *mouthpiece*; "what he said would happen" instead of *prophesied*; "etc.).

Basic What? Questions

- ❓ *What do these key words mean?*¹
- wither** [lose freshness; dry out]
- fade** [lose color; weaken; grow dim; decay]

Context of the Fighter Verse

Isaiah was called to be a prophet the year that King Uzziah died (about 740 B.C.) and served as God's mouthpiece during the reigns of several Judean kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

¹ av1611.com/kjbp/kjv-dictionary/kjv-dictionary-index.html

- ❓ *What is a prophet?* [a person chosen by God to speak to the people for Him when He had something He wanted them to know]
- ❓ *Do you know what the three tests of a true prophet are?* [He speaks in the name of the LORD, what he prophesies actually comes to pass and is in agreement with what God has already revealed.]

Background

Facilitator's Note—Summarize and simplify background information for the younger participants.

Isaiah sees the sins of the people of Judah—their refusal to listen to the LORD, their trust in foreign armies to rescue them, their meaningless offerings in the temple—and calls the people to repentance. During the 40 years of Isaiah's prophetic ministry to the kings of Judah, Isaiah prophesied that their sin would cause judgment and captivity in the future. During the interim, Isaiah assumes the destruction of Jerusalem and gives them God's words of comfort and assurance. He tells them that God will redeem and rescue them from the Babylonians by means of the king of Persia, Cyrus, who will conquer the Babylonians and one day allow them to return home, which happened in 538 B.C.

- ❓ *Who wrote Isaiah 40:8?* [Isaiah]
- ❓ *What do you know about the writer?* [was a faithful prophet of God, lived in Judah, prophesied during the reign of four Judean kings, lived in the eighth century B.C.]
- ❓ *Who was he originally writing to?* [the people of Judah]
- ❓ *What was the problem?* [unbelief, sin, disobedience, idolatry, corruption, worldliness, trusting in foreign armies rather than God]
- ❓ *What type of writing is Isaiah 40:8?* [comparison, contrast, illustration] *Give examples.* [grass and flowers to Word of God; withers and fades to stand forever]
- ❓ *What is happening at the time of the writing?* [the people of Judah are not keeping the covenant they made with God; they have been worshipping idols; they have been making alliances with pagan nations; they have been warned of coming judgment and exile]

2 So What? (Interpretation—What is the meaning?)

 Read Isaiah 40:8 aloud or in unison.

Isaiah 40:8—The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Revisit the Introductory Activities

Depending on the activities used and the age of the participants, ask questions similar to these below. **If there are any prekindergarten- through kindergarten-age** children present using the *Fighter Verses Study Set 2 Coloring Book*, remember to include them by rephrasing appropriate questions for their benefit.

Photos

- ? *What do these pictures show about [deceased person's name] who passed away last year? [We see him as a young child, a teenager, a grown-up, an old man, and now he's gone (dead, passed away, in heaven). He changed. He didn't stay the same. He isn't here anymore.]*

Antiques (e.g., antique irons)

- ? *Do we use any of these in our house? Why or why not? [No, because they are old, too heavy, not made any more. We have better electric ones.]*
- ? *What do all these irons show you? [Things that were invented and used long ago are outdated. Over time, new and improved ones take their place.]*

Use as many items and questions as needed for participants to see that things around us change all the time. With older participants, use current events, music, technology, medical breakthroughs, popular sports stars, etc. to make the point.

Facilitator's Note—If the participants are in grades 1-2 and you believe that they understand the basic truths of this Fighter Verse, you can go to the Personal Application and the Action Step in the **Now What?** section. **If the second graders** would benefit from the remaining material, simplify when necessary and add questions appropriate for them.

So What? Verse-by-Verse

 Read Isaiah 40:8 out loud or in unison.

Isaiah 40:8—The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

- ? *What words are used in Isaiah 40:8 to show that grass and flowers change? [witheres, fades]*
- ? *What words used in Isaiah 40:8 mean “never changes”? [stand forever]*

- ① *How do you think the withering grass and the fading flowers are like the items we used in our Introductory Activities?* [The grass is alive and green for a while, but then it dries up and dies, and the flowers are sweet smelling and beautiful for a short time and then they die. They don't stay the same forever. Even things we use today are different from how they used to be, like operator telephones, dial and push-button phones, big cell phone, and now watch phones. Things are always changing.]
- ① *What does the verse say never changes?* [The Word of God—the spoken words of God, which were later written down.]
- ① *What does it mean that the Word of God never changes?* [It will always be relevant and mean the same thing God meant it to mean when He first gave it. It does not change over time or in different cultures. The Ten Commandments aren't any different today than they were when God gave them to Moses. All the words of Jesus are just as true and needed today as they were the day He taught them in Israel. Every writer of the Scriptures was inspired by God to write what He wanted us to know, and that doesn't change over time. It cannot be added to, nor have any part taken away from it.]

Facilitators Note—If participants would benefit from a deeper understanding of the context of Isaiah 40:8, continue with the material below. Otherwise proceed to the **Now What?** section.

 **Read all of Isaiah 40 (or verses 1-8 for early elementary-age children).**

Read to catch a glimpse of the love, joy, compassion, comfort, forgiveness, and strength that God has for His people as they anticipate the prophesied exile and look forward to someday returning to Jerusalem.

- ① *Why do you think God would give words of comfort before the devastating events ever happened?* [to give them hope when they face their enemies and are taken captive; to allow them to see that, though everything around them is changing, God does not change; their covenant-keeping God doing what He always does—keeping His promises; it encourages repentance and trust as they wait for their deliverance]
- ① *How does verse 8 fit into the whole theme of the chapter, which looks forward to when the people of Judah will be conquered, exiled, and one day return to their land?* [Answers will vary, such as verse 1—God knows they need comfort and calls for it to be given; verse 2—at some point, the hardships will be over and their sins will be forgiven, and this gives hope; verses 3-5—the Lord, the triumphant King is coming and everything that needs to happen, to be changed, to be corrected will be, and that gives hope and confidence to a fearful and difficult situation; verses 6-7—the people and their strength, beauty, health, wisdom, accomplishments, etc., are compared to grass that withers and flowers that fade; they are weak and all their triumphs and glory are fleeting, but God and His Word are strong, eternal, and unchanging, etc.]
- ① *How are the people like the withering grass?* [they are born, grow older and then they die; they continually change; etc.]

- ❓ *How could they have applied Isaiah's message in Isaiah 40:8? [They could have seen the error of their ways, the hardness of their hearts, and repented. They could have followed Isaiah's example and put their trust in the LORD instead of in foreign kings. They could have recalled the recorded faith or the sins of their ancestors and acted differently, but they did not.]*
- ❓ *What is the most encouraging part of verse 8? ["but the word of our God will stand forever."]*
- ❓ *How would this be encouraging to the people when Isaiah just told them that the Babylonians would take them into exile? [He, whose Word stands forever, had said that one day He would save them from their captors and bring them back to their homeland; this sure Word from God was given ahead of time to give them assurance that deliverance would come some day; etc.]*
- ❓ *How can all believers use this truth, that God's Word stands forever in their lives, no matter where they live, or how old they are? [Since our very bodies eventually die, and everything we have—good looks, intelligence, abilities, strength, health, money, toys, cars, computers, etc.—gets old, breaks, wears out, becomes obsolete, should we really spend so much time and effort to achieve the perfect body and acquire the latest and the best equipment and spend so little time on the things that will last forever?; we should see the value of the "greatest things" now, and seek to grow in those areas now]*
- ❓ *What are the "greatest things"? [being saved; knowing, trusting, and glorifying God; being obedient to His Word; storing up treasures in heaven through serving God and others; sharing the Good News with everyone; etc.]*

3 Now What? (Application—What is God's intended effect?)

General Application

- ❓ *How does this Fighter Verse apply to all people (saved and/or unsaved) in all cultures and in all historical time periods? (For this first lesson, if the participants are young you may need to suggest an application. Give them time to write their answers.)*
- All living earthly things (plants, animals, insects, people, etc.) change, get old, and die.
 - God's spoken Word (now written Word) never changes.
 - God's spoken Word (now written Word) lasts forever and can be trusted.

Facilitator's Note: Have participants share other verses they have noted about God's Word lasting forever. [e.g., Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; 1 Peter 1:25; Psalm 119:89,160; Psalm 117:2; Psalm 111:7; Psalm 33:11; etc.]

Personal Application

- ❓ *How can you apply the message of Isaiah 40:8 to your life?* (For this first lesson, if the participants are young and unsure of how God might want them to apply it personally, you may need to share one of your applications as an example.)

Facilitator's Note—If the participants are in grades 1-2, pray with them about their application responses, and then proceed to the Action Step.

Insights

Having studied this passage more deeply, record any new insights the Lord has given you in regard to this verse.

Action Step

Provide time for the members to sit quietly and ask the Lord to show them what action He would like them to take based on what they learned from the study of this passage. Then have them write that idea in their study guide in the section called **Action Step**. Give an example for those who may need help.

- I believe the Lord is calling me to not think and act as if things are more important than people. This week, I will try to share my toys with [somebody's name].
- I believe the Lord is calling me to be more serious about reading His Word and praying that He will speak to my heart personally.

Prayer

Pray the Fighter Verse for yourself and, if possible, for your family or other small group participants. Perhaps you could personalize the verse by saying, "Lord, may [names of participants] know that although the things around them may break, spoil, become obsolete, or even die, your Word will stand forever. Let them be encouraged, strengthened, and emboldened by the absolute fact that it will never change or lose its power to comfort, convict, and prepare them for this life and the next."

This Week

- Memorize the Fighter Verse. (Refer to the memorization suggestions mentioned in the How to Use the Discussion Guide to help the participants memorize the verse throughout the week.)
- Encourage someone with this week's Fighter Verse.
- Check the Fighter Verses App for devotional blog posts and memorization quizzes. And, if you use the English Standard Version of the Bible, there are also Fighter Verses songs and trivia questions.

Plan Ahead for Fighter Verse 9

Have the participants plant some flower seeds in a garden or in a pot. Water the plants and try to keep them growing until then, but if they end up wilting or dying, that's okay, as you can adjust the discussion accordingly.

FIGHTER VERSE 1  **Isaiah 40:8**

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Prayer

Pray that God will open your mind and heart to understand His Word and to be ready to make a heartfelt response to what He teaches you.

 **Read Isaiah 40:8.**

Isaiah 40:8—The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

1 What? (Observation—What are the facts?)

Simplified Vocabulary—“person who spoke for Him” instead of *mouthpiece*; “what he said would happen” instead of *prophesied*

Basic What? Questions

 *What do these key words mean?* (The footnote contains a helpful link for definitions.³)

withers

fades

Context of the Fighter Verse

Isaiah was called to be a prophet the year that King Uzziah died (about 740 B.C.) and served as God’s mouthpiece during the reigns of several Judean kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

 *What is a prophet?*

³ av1611.com/kjbp/kjv-dictionary/kjv-dictionary-index.html (compiled from Noah Webster’s American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828)

? *Do you know what the three tests of a true prophet are?*

Background

Isaiah sees the sins of the people of Judah—their refusal to listen to the LORD, their trust in foreign armies to rescue them, their meaningless offerings in the temple—and calls the people to repentance. During the 40 years of Isaiah's prophetic ministry to the kings of Judah, Isaiah prophesied that their sin would cause judgment and captivity in the future. During the interim, Isaiah assumes the destruction of Jerusalem and gives them God's words of comfort and assurance. He tells them that God will redeem and rescue them from the Babylonians by means of the king of Persia, Cyrus, who will conquer the Babylonians and one day allow them to return home, which happened in 538 B.C.

? *Who wrote Isaiah 40:8?*

? *What do you know about the writer?*

? *Who was he originally writing to?*

? *What was the problem?*

? *What type of writing is Isaiah 40:8? Give examples.*

? *What is happening at the time of the writing?*

2 So What? (Interpretation—What is the meaning?)

Note: If you are working independently before your group discussion (or are doing the study on your own), skip the “Revisit the Introductory Activities,” as this is intended for discussion during the group lesson. Go to “So What? Verse-by-Verse.”

 **Read Isaiah 40:8.**

Isaiah 40:8—The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Revisit the Introductory Activities

(If you are participating in a group study, this section will be used during the discussion time.)

 **Photos**—What do these pictures show about (a deceased person) who passed away last year?

 **Antiques (e.g., antique item)**—Do we use any of these in our house? Why or why not?

 What do all these objects show you?

So What? Verse-by-Verse

Note: If you are working independently before your group discussion (or are doing the study on your own), skip the “Revisit the Introductory Activities,” as this is intended for discussion during the group lesson. Go to “So What? Verse-by-Verse.”

 **Read Isaiah 40:8.**

Isaiah 40:8—The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

 What words are used in Isaiah 40:8 to show that grass and flowers change?

 What words used in Isaiah 40:8 mean “never changes”?

? *How do you think the withering grass and the fading flowers are like the items we used in our Introductory Activities? (Note: Those doing the study on their own could skip this question.)*

? *What does the verse say never changes?*

? *What does it mean that the Word of God never changes?*

 **Read all of Isaiah 40 (or verses 1-8 for early elementary-age children).**

Read to catch a glimpse of the love, joy, compassion, comfort, forgiveness, and strength that God has for His people as they anticipate the prophesied exile and look forward to someday returning to Jerusalem.

? *Why do you think God would give words of comfort before the devastating events ever happened?*

? *How does verse 8 fit into the whole theme of the chapter, which looks forward to when the people of Judah will be conquered, exiled, and one day return to their land?*

? *How are the people like the withering grass?*

- ① *How could they have applied Isaiah's message in Isaiah 40:8?*

- ② *What is the most encouraging part of verse 8?*

- ③ *How would this be encouraging to the people when Isaiah just told them that the Babylonians would take them into exile?*

- ④ *How can all believers use this truth, that God's word stands forever, in their lives, no matter where they live, or how old they are?*

- ⑤ *What are the "greatest things"?*

③ Now What? (Application—What is God's intended effect?)

General Application

- ① *How does this Fighter Verse apply to all people (saved and/or unsaved) in all cultures and in all historical time periods?*

? *What other verses can you think of about God's Word lasting forever? (Note the verse references only.)*

Personal Application

? *How can you apply the message of Isaiah 40:8 to your life?*

Insights

Having studied this passage more deeply, record any new insights the Lord has given you in regard to this verse.

Action Step

Sit quietly and ask the Lord to show you what action He would like you to take, based on what you learned from the study of this passage. Then write about this.

Prayer

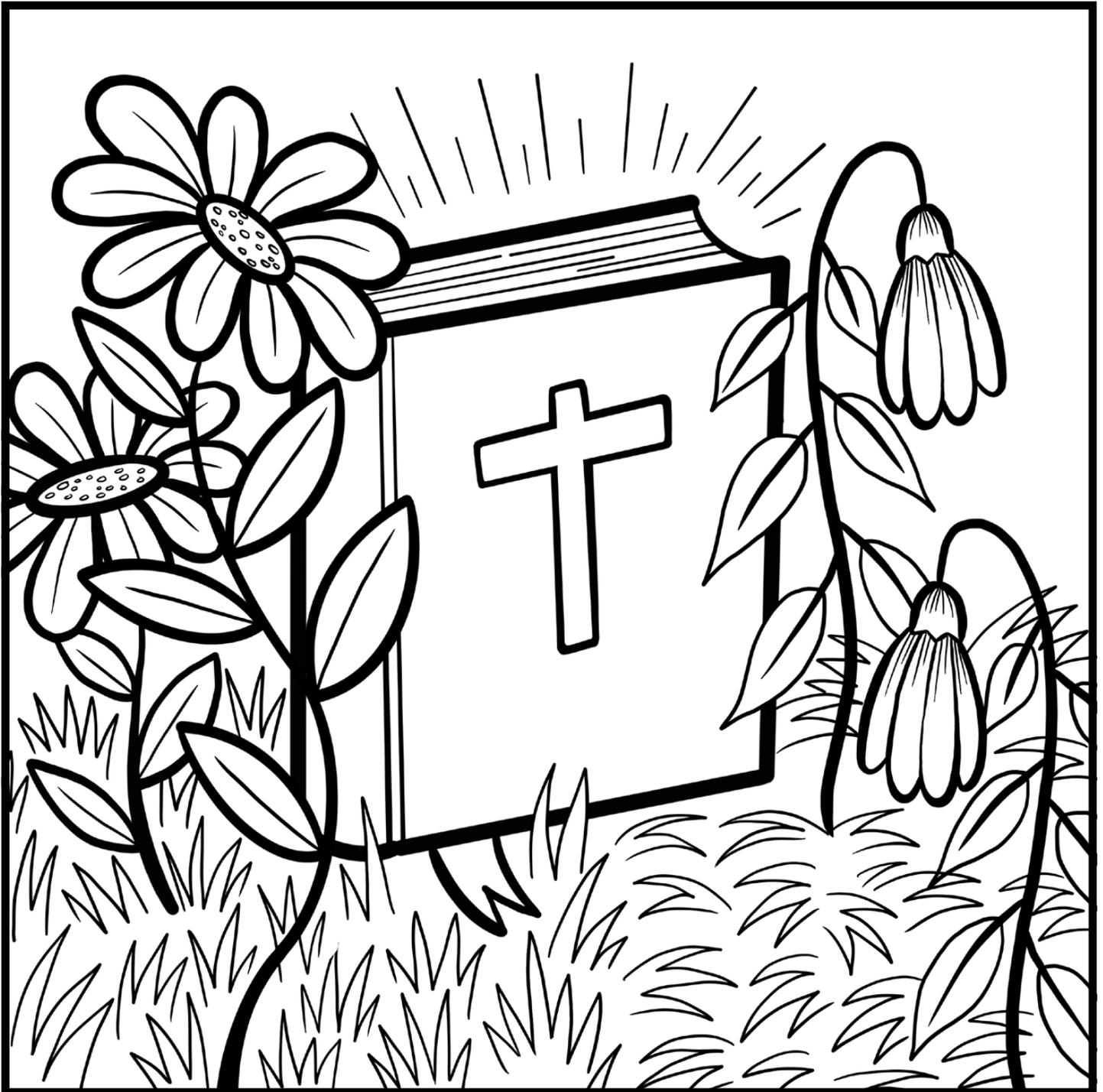
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Isaiah 40:8—*The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.*



Flowers change and die, but God and His Word are forever.