Bitter Green Mangoes

A missionary family, called to work in a tropical country, considered mangoes an exotic foretaste of heaven. As this fruit was expensive and difficult to find in their homeland, they were thrilled to know that mangoes were now common and cheap. They were even more excited when they discovered a mango tree in their backyard. They couldn’t wait to pick and eat mangoes from their tree!

But their anticipation shifted to bitterness when they discovered that all “their” mangoes were picked by their neighbors while still green. Apparently the locals used green mangoes to prepare an appreciated dish from that country. How should the missionary family have reacted? Wasn’t it their right to eat ripe mangoes from their own tree? Wouldn’t their protests impair their ability to exemplify the gospel to their neighbors, which essentially is God “giving” eternal life to those who do not deserve it?

They decided that “giving” up their mangoes was nothing compared to what Christ gave up for them. After a while they even tried the green mangoes according to the local custom and ended up loving them!

This week’s theme will focus on Isaac and his interaction with Abimelech (Genesis 26). This account will reveal how the love of money and material gain will ruin the reason we are in this world—our purpose and our mission. At the same time, we will learn important lessons about altruism—the selfless concern for the good of others. This important virtue is practiced by all of Christ’s true representatives, who trust in His promises to provide for them, and are preparing to live in heaven.
Write out Romans 12:9–21 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out Romans 12:14–19. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map it.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Romans 12:9–21. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

Why didn’t God immediately specify to Isaac, in an objective way, the place he should live (Gen. 26:2)?

What specific place does God intend for you to dwell and work?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/stw05-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

What, do you believe, is the most powerful way to reveal God to an unbelieving family member?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/stw05-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Acts 17:26
Psalm 25:8–14; 32:8–10
Romans 8:28, 31, 32
2 Corinthians 10:3, 4
Philippians 2:5–11
1 Peter 2:19–24
Romans 12:9–21

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Romans 12:9–21?

Review your memorized verse from Romans 12:9–21.
Jesus was treated in a very abusive way before being killed by those He came to save. Did He give His life, or was it taken from Him by violence? Explain.

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Meditate on Romans 12:9–21 again and look for where Jesus is.
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study, what are you personally convinced of?

What are some things you can share with others?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/stw05-7
inQuire

Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

If our inclinations or perceptions may be deceiving, how can we choose the place to live and generate income?

Which kind of people, if any, is God unable to guide, even if they ask for guidance?

Why do we leave God’s protective umbrella if we adopt worldly strategies and carnal weapons to solve conflicts? Isn’t He powerful enough to bless us anyway?

If a righteous person treats an unrighteous as he or she were righteous, would not the righteous become unrighteous?

If selfishness is the essence of depravity, how can you fight against it? Is “giving” a solution to eradicate selfishness, or is it a sign that it was eradicated? Explain.

Why is altruism such a difficult virtue to be practiced?

Isaac: The Altruistic Giver