

Not Really Free

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1**Lesson 5****Focus:**

Our gift of salvation is absolutely free.

Lesson 5**Bible Basis:**

Ephesians 1:3-6; 2:4-10

Lesson 5**Memory Verse:**

For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. —Ephesians 2:8-9

Students will contrast “free” offers from merchants—which inevitably come with some sort of cost—with the free, no-strings-attached gift of salvation.

Materials:

- Internet access

➤ **Does anyone use any subscription services?** (Answers will vary but may include music and video streaming subscriptions, monthly tea or coffee subscriptions, etc.)

There are subscription services for many things these days—even groceries. You can have Amazon automatically order and ship your most commonly purchased items.

Many subscriptions find new customers by offering a free trial of their product or service. Some newer streaming services may offer a 7-day trial. After the trial, though, the customer starts paying a fee per month for that service. Most subscriptions hope that people will take advantage of the free trial and continue paying for their services.

➤ **Have any of you or your families ever done a free trial of something? Did you continue paying for the service, or did you cancel after the trial?** (Answers will vary.)

You’ve probably heard the saying that “if it’s too good to be true, it probably is.” And that’s good advice for life. Most people will enjoy a service and continue paying for it. Or, they may forget they’re even paying for it in the first place. Most “free” trials don’t end up being free. Nothing in life is truly free.

However, there’s one exception to that rule. God really does want to give us something for nothing, and it’s the most valuable gift in the world: His love. That may sound like a cliché. It may sound too good to be true. But the love of Jesus honestly comes with no strings attached. Let’s read about it in the Book of Ephesians.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher’s guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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STEP 4 

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Materials:

- Permanent markers (1 per student)
- Index cards (1 per student)

If your class is meeting online, invite your students to bring a permanent marker and index card with them to class.

As we talked about earlier, nothing in life is really free. But as we've also been learning today, there's one exception to the rule: God's love. Jesus cares so much that He died in order to share eternity with us—He paid for it so we don't have to! That's an unbelievable level of love, and there's nothing we can do to deserve it. The most valuable gift in the world is also the only one that's truly free.

We've been learning about Christ's love, something we can't possibly earn. But we can and should be thankful for it! We talked about free trials at the beginning of our lesson. Many free trials come with a code, allowing you to access their services, such as ONEWEEKFREE or TRYFORFREE.

Hand out index cards and permanent markers to your students. If your class is meeting online, invite them to have those items ready.

Let's take a few minutes to come up your own coupon code as a reminder of God's love. It's completely up to you what kind of code you want to create. It's simply a reminder to yourself to express thankfulness for God's free gift. Give your students an opportunity to brainstorm some things they might use as coupon code. Some ideas might include: the Cross plus the word FREE, GODSLOVE, XTREMELOVE, FREEGIFT, etc.

Once your students have come up with their coupon code, encourage them to put it someplace where they will see it and be reminded of God's love. If they don't want to write on their index card, they may choose to write it on their shoe (even if it is just the sole), write it on their phone cover, or write it on the palm of their hand.

Everyone knows that normally when a coupon says FREE, there's a catch. Maybe you have to buy something before you get the "free" stuff. Or you have to give the company

your cell number so they can bombard you with text messages. But honestly, there's no purchase necessary for Jesus' love! Your coupon is just a reminder to express your gratitude.

- > If you refuse to make a coupon code and ignore God all week, will He stop loving you? (Absolutely not!)**
- > If you design a great coupon code and display it where everyone can see it, will God love you more? (No way!)**

Give your students a few minutes to create and place their coupon codes as they desire. **Thanking God is not something you *have* to do to earn salvation. But it's something you *get* to do because of His free gift. Use your coupon code as a reminder to praise Jesus for His eternal love.**

Close in prayer.

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