

# Counterculture

#### What's It All About?

As a third grader, my dream was to be a JC Middle School ambassador who represented the school by welcoming new students and serving as a tour guide. Unfortunately, during the summer before my middle school experience, my whole life changed! We lost our home, moved across town, and had numerous health problems, resulting in an astronomical amount of bills. I would not attend JC. My dream was now a nightmare.

But during December, real-life miracles began to happen. My family was getting better as our health improved. We were waiting to hear from an agency about the possibility of returning to our old neighborhood,

which meant getting into JC! An approval letter arrived just before the second semester. We were moving back to our neighborhood and I would return to my dream school! Though thankful for everything, I lost my chance to become an ambassador.

Of course, friendships had been formed during the first semester. Cliques, too! So, I focused all my energy on academics. Within a few months, I was back on track academically, but I had no real friends. During this time a new girl came to our school. Pernella was clearly struggling with some of the same issues.

"Pernella," I called to her one day.

She seemed shocked that I called her by name. "Yeah," she answered, suspiciously.

"Your schedule is similar to mine, and I have seen you in the hallways. Mind if we walk together?" Her eyes widened, and she smiled. "Sounds great!"

"Okay, let's meet back here after class, and then go to lunch together," I suggested.

She nodded. "See you soon!"

As I hurried to class before the bell, I couldn't help but recall my dream, my family's difficulties, and now my duty and delight to be God's ambassador.

What are some of your feelings when you think about or see those who are poor, homeless, or mistreated? Have you ever wondered how God feels about them? If yes, which feelings of God come to your mind?



## **Learning From God**

God's heart, thinking, and wisdom are so much higher and better than those of humankind. He teaches us how to view and respond to others like He would. To follow God's teachings, we must study them, seek His help in understanding, and discipline ourselves to apply them. God's perspective on any area is always based on His great love for the people He created. As His followers, we must recognize the gap between our limitations and God's allknowing character, seek His help, and rely on His power to have the mind of God, then, imitate Him.

**Deuteronomy 24:10–21, NIV**—When you make a loan of any kind to your

neighbor, do not go into their house to get what is offered to you as a pledge. 11 Stay outside and let the neighbor to whom you are making the loan bring the pledge out to you. 12 If the neighbor is poor, do not go to sleep with their pledge in your possession. 13 Return their cloak by sunset so that your neighbor may sleep in it. Then they will thank you, and it will be regarded as a righteous act in the sight of the LORD your God. 14 Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. 15 Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin. 16 Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin. 17 Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. 18 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. 19 When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. 21 When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.

#### What I Have Learned

Circle every 4th letter to complete the statement.

God wants us to help those who really need it by being \_\_\_\_\_\_.

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## Keep In Mind

"Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this" (Deuteronomy 24:18, NIV).

## **Choosing What's Best**

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### **Doing My Part**

Consider *justice* as you now understand it after today's lesson. What injustices do you see happening in your community? Think of your school and neighborhood. This week, share your thoughts about injustices with someone and ask for their help in creating a plan to do something about it. Always pray, and then obey, letting God lead you to action.