

The Complete School of the Bible Manual

Published by:
Paul E. Paino Ministries
P.O. Box 12205 • Fort Wayne, IN 46863

THIS CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL TOOL IS DEDICATED...

For as long as I can remember, my father, Dr. Paul E. Paino, was committed to the next generation. He is known across the country in evangelical circles as the “Sunday School Fanatic”!

This manual is the result of the passion Dad had for providing biblical instruction for children of all ages. The concept of developing a concise program whereby a child could be exposed to the Scripture in a way that would be relevant to this age is demonstrated in the material that is here presented.

Due to modern technology, twelve volumes and thousands of pages have been formatted into CDs that can be held in your hand and easily accessible around the world!

Although Dad accessed Heaven in 2005, his vision and passion for this project lives on. I am sure that this latest step in making this material available around the world joys his heart.

It is only appropriate to acknowledge those who have worked steadfastly to provide this new vehicle of sharing this material. Ann Liechty, Carol Kutzner, Alice Baxter, and Curt Monk have labored immensely to complete this challenge. It has not been without difficulties, but they have refused to give in until the work was done...and they have succeeded!

Our prayer is that, as you use this material, you will be anointed by the Holy Spirit to touch the lives of those who hear it, for eternity.

**Dr. Paul C. Paino
General Overseer-CMI**

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Introduction

The following comments and suggestions are presented to help you better utilize The Complete School of the Bible Manual.

1. The curriculum for grades 1 through 8 contains 51 lessons per grade level. There is no lesson for the 52nd week of the year. This is "Switch Week," when students are promoted from one class to the next. Due to the time involved in moving students to their new classes, we recommend using this class session to welcome the new students, to introduce teachers and workers and to acquaint students with how the class will operate.

The curriculum for grades 9 through 12 contains 52 lessons per grade level and includes an outline for "Switch Week."

2. The curriculum has been designed to be very flexible. It works equally well in graded and non-graded settings. (In a "graded" program, there is a separate class for each grade level. In a "non-graded" program, two or more grade levels are combined to make one class.)

If you operate a graded program, rotate the lessons in each class on a one-year cycle. At the end of the year, students are promoted to the next grade level and will be exposed to a new set of lessons.

If you operate a non-graded program, you can receive the full benefit of the curriculum without any reorganization of your Sunday School. Simply rotate the lessons in each class on a one-, two-, three-, or four-year cycle. For example, if students in grades one through three meet in the same class, you would rotate the lessons on a three-year cycle. The first year you use the curriculum, teach the lessons in Volume 1; the second year, lessons from Volume 2; the third year, lessons from Volume 3. Then, in the fourth year, begin again with the lessons in Volume 1.

3. The curriculum is designed to run from July through June. The starting date for Lesson 1 is the first Sunday in July. If you are implementing the curriculum at another time during the year, simply count forward from the first Sunday in July to determine the beginning lesson. For example, if you implement the curriculum on the first Sunday in January, you would begin with Lesson 26.
4. Easter lessons should be moved in your manual to begin two weeks prior to Easter Sunday. There should be three Easter lessons for grades 1 through 8.
5. You may need to adjust the lessons for other special days (Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Christmas, etc.) depending upon how these holidays fall in the current calendar.
6. There is no established schedule for using the life-related stories. Simply insert them into lessons where you feel they are appropriate. It is helpful to repeat the life-related stories during the year to reinforce the lessons they teach.

7. It is recommended that each teacher receive a copy of this volume, including all the instructional materials in sections one through seven. This will help each teacher to be well-informed and prepared for their responsibilities in the classroom.
8. The lesson outlines in section eight are not designed to be read in class. Teachers should use the outlines to prepare their own presentation. The curriculum manual should not be brought into the classroom and should never be used in front of the class. Instead, use the Bible as you teach. It is important that the students be aware you are teaching from God's Word and not from a manual!

Section 1

**Welcome
To Our
Ministry
Team**

To Our Co-Laborers in the Work of the Ministry

Welcome to the ministry team of the School of the Bible. To be effective leaders and ministers of the Gospel, it is important to understand these basic principles:

- CALLING:** Who we are in relation to where God has placed us in teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- CHARGE:** Our response to the call of God on our lives.
- COMMITMENT:** Our resolve to give our whole heart to obeying that charge.
- CREDIBILITY:** Our personal and ethical qualifications to fulfill our assigned task "as unto the Lord."

We are grateful for your faithfulness in working with us, and we are committed to the task of equipping you as God enables us.

Please read and study this material carefully; fill in the blanks; and sign your name.

Our Calling

All Christians are called to be separate from the world -- to be God's people in a God-rejecting culture. We are called to be worshippers whose goal is to please God, rather than heathens who live to please themselves. (Isaiah 43:21) We are called to be God's children, His servants, His disciples, His dwelling, His bride, His body. Jesus called us the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." God has called us to communicate the ethics and the essence of the kingdom of God in our lifestyle and love for people.

The Greek word for "church" is "ecclesia," which means "called-out ones." The root word is "klesis," a "calling or invitation." God has set us apart to live in this world unto Him and for Him, with a view to eternity with Him. God has assigned to us a specific purpose and responsibility in the work of the harvest of souls.

As God's church we are called and commissioned, both individually and corporately. Each of us must know God personally and individually and be accountable to Him as servants. We are also called together as members of a functioning corporate body. This is a practical reality. We are "partakers together" and "co-laborers with Christ." We submit to one another in the fear of the Lord, knowing that none of us has it all or sees the whole picture. God gives us special gifts to be used for building up the whole group. Each of us has weaknesses and strengths, and we need to be interdependent upon one another.

The calling of a teacher is clearly set forth in scripture as a specific commission to chosen, mature believers. This calling is not based on our ambition, but on God's sovereign choice. It is not based on our ability, for God will enable us to do the task He has appointed us to do for Him. Not all of us are called to a full-time pastoral or apostolic ministry, but our calling is just as real to the Lord. We need to recognize that our calling is from God, confirmed through apostolic authority (pastoral leadership) and by the evidence of a supernatural ability to do it well as we "grow in grace."

To serve in any calling is a wonderful privilege, and we need to recognize from God's Word that it is:

A HIGH CALLING.

"...this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14)

A HOLY CALLING.

God "...hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace...." (2 Timothy 1:9)

A HEAVENLY CALLING.

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him,...." (Hebrews 3:1-2)

A HOPEFUL CALLING.

Paul's prayer:

"That...God...may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,...." (Ephesians 1:17-19)

A HUMBLE CALLING.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:...that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus...." (1 Corinthians 1:26, 29-30)

Humility is the deep awareness of our constant need for God's strength and help in life's situations. People who are "gifted" with special abilities or intellect in some areas are tempted to trust in their natural talent. When they do, they become ineffective in the work of the ministry, because they are operating in the realm and resources of the flesh.

Questions To Be Considered As We Pursue A Teaching Ministry In The Local Church

Did God call me to teach?

If you believe God has called you to teach, then do it "as unto the Lord." Do not faint because of fear, weariness, or hurt feelings. Realize you are where God wants you to be; He has placed you there; and He has equipped you for the task. If you are not where God wants you to be, He will start working in you to put you where He wants you to be.

What group am I called to teach?

God has been preparing you to minister to a certain age group. Seek His direction through prayer, fasting, scripture, and counseling of your pastor. Be ready to serve. Let God open the door for you. Do not try to force it open yourself. God is responsible for the breadth of your ministry. You are responsible for the depth of it. As nearly as possible, focus on the group God has given to you and give them your heart.

Has the pastoral leadership confirmed this calling and agreed to oversee this work?

Any ministry to the flock of God must be yielded to and under the authority of the pastor of the flock. God will bear witness to your calling through the pastoral leadership of the church.

Am I called as a part of this local assembly of believers?

If you believe you have been called, then be faithful to your church and your pastor; cultivate and nurture an unshakable love for them.

Am I a team player?

When it is beneficial to the group, am I willing to step back and let someone else take a more dominant role and lead?

What part of the work am I specifically called of God to perform?

When your work is identified, then strive for excellence in it. Do it *"heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men;...."* (Colossians 3:23)

Our Charge

Teaching is a vital part of the Great Commission to believers. We are commanded to teach all "nations" ("ethnos" -- people groups) about the Christian walk and witness. The word "teach," used by Jesus in His charge to His disciples in Matthew 28:19, is actually the word "matheteuo," which means "disciple, to enroll as a scholar." Our commission is to communicate and distribute information, to mold lives, to inform, and to inspire. We are called to teach and train disciples.

As teachers, we have the privilege of working with and for the pastor to strengthen the work of the gospel in this city, and to bless families by imparting Christian values to their children. We also see ourselves as workers with the parents, encouraging them in their role as the primary spiritual influence in the lives of their children.

In order to educate children effectively, there are several biblical principles we need to remember:

A child's life is molded and affected most by what he is exposed to every day.

In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, God, through Moses, instructed the Israelites to teach their children diligently the things of God throughout the day, and to have many reminders of spiritual truths in their homes and throughout their culture.

When the Sunday School first started in America, many Christian leaders had strong reservations about the whole program, because they were concerned that parents would tend to leave the spiritual training of their children to the Sunday School and neglect spiritual training at home. To be effective, you must inspire and influence beyond the one hour teaching session, lead children to a daily walk with God, and help impart vision to parents for daily family devotions, Christian music, and a spiritual atmosphere at home.

A good teacher will inspire more than inform.

The joy of the Lord is more caught than taught. If you have measles and teach all day on mumps, what will you be most likely to impart?

Most of the effort of a good teacher is outside the classroom.

Some of the activities teachers should pursue outside of the classroom include:

- Prayer;
- Preparation;
- Personal visitation;
- Practice (music, skits, etc.);
- Persistent Bible study;
- Purity in lifestyle as an example.

Teams are more effective than individual efforts.

"Two {are} better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him {that is} alone when he falleth; for {he hath} not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm {alone}? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."
(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

We are soldiers under authority.

Our purpose is to complement and strengthen the vision of this local church. We must always encourage loyalty to the church and honor to the pastor. God will give direction for the church to the pastor. It is our responsibility to support the pastor in the vision God has given to him.

Our purpose is to change lives by stimulating children with a sense of vision and destiny.

Our message is not only, "I can go to heaven when I die," but also that "God made me for a special purpose: to bless Him in my life and worship; to help other Christians; and to win lost people to Jesus."

The charge to Joshua was to love the Word.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."
(Joshua 1:8)

Paul's charge to Timothy:

- Stir up the gift of God within you. (2 Timothy 1:6-7)

God gave us spiritual enablements, but it is up to us to focus on and stimulate those gifts, because "...God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

- Be a good soldier in God's army. (2 Timothy 2:4)

Do not get entangled with the affairs of this life. Be a good businessman or worker, but do not let vocational or recreational pursuits control your life to the point that you are too "tied up" to serve the Lord.

- Flee youthful lusts. (2 Timothy 2:22)

Do not just avoid sexual temptation, run from it. Try not to expose yourself to anything that will arouse your mind to lustful thoughts.

- Pray for those in authority over you. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

- Make a supreme effort to show yourself approved unto God. (2 Timothy 2:15)

If you are a hard worker, you will not be ashamed. A teacher who is a faithful worker will rightly divide the Word of God.

- Avoid fables, and shun profane and vain babbling. (1 Timothy 1:4, 2 Timothy 2:16)

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,...." (Psalms 111:10) and so secular material has no wisdom to impart. Avoid worldly, fabricated heroes and stories. Communicate wisdom and understanding through Bible stories and characters, life experiences, and true-to-life stories. The purpose of secularized education is to create a perspective in children's minds that man is an end unto himself, and that God is unimportant

in the overall scheme of life. Our purpose is to communicate the truth that God is the center of our life, our hope, our purpose, and our daily walk.

- There are three basic character goals to keep in mind when you teach: (1 Timothy 1:5)

(1) Charity -- selfless love -- out of a pure heart, which is a heart that is not polluted with selfishness and willfulness.

(2) A good conscience, which is a spirit that is sensitive to motives or actions that are not pleasing to God.

(3) Unfeigned faith. This is honest faith that is not just "faith in the faith message," but wholehearted trust in God, even when we do not understand the process. Job said, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:...."* (Job 13:15)

I have carefully and prayerfully read this charge, and I receive it as from the Lord. I will diligently seek to fulfill the calling and obey the charge as God gives the grace to me to do it.

Comments: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

My Commitment

1. I will pray faithfully for the class, as I take the responsibility, as from the Lord, very seriously. Without His anointing and supernatural help, I realize I cannot be effective.
2. I will be faithful to attend at least 48 classes per year. I will arrive in the room 30 minutes before starting time to greet the students and prepare for the meeting.
3. I will be diligent to prepare myself and the lesson ahead of time.
4. I am committed to the pastor and to his vision for the church. I am a soldier under authority and a reliable member of the ministry team of this local church.
5. I will faithfully attend at least two regular services here every week, in addition to attending the Sunday School hour.
6. I am a tither. I will give the first tenth of all my income to this local church in obedience to the Lord and as a reminder that I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. I am committed to winning the lost to Jesus Christ and to teaching and training my students to remain true to God as long as they live.
8. I will regularly visit the families of the students to whom I am assigned, especially those families with special needs.
9. I regard myself as being a member of a ministry team. If I see a special problem, I will help, if I can; or, I will notify those in leadership who are qualified to minister to the need.
10. I will reach out promptly to those in my charge who are absent or hurting.
11. I will be regular in my personal and family devotions to keep my heart and house in order and my focus on the things of God.
12. As a teacher, I am eager to receive training and instruction. I trust God to build my character and skills through the insights of those He has placed over me in this ministry.
13. When misunderstandings or interpersonal conflicts arise, I will go to the person with whom I have a problem and privately and quickly make every effort to restore a good relationship. I purpose to avoid being any part of gossip or backbiting, either as a listener or a giver of negative talk about a fellow Christian.

14. I am committed to growing in the pursuit of excellence in my work for the Lord. I will seek training when I have the opportunity, and will be the best I can be at my assigned tasks.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave wither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Comments: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

My Credibility

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Birthdate: _____ Check One: Male Female

Marital Status: _____ Ages of Children: _____

Employer: _____ Work Phone: _____

1. When were you born again? _____

2. Did you experience genuine repentance and faith toward God? _____

3. When were you baptized in water? _____

4. When did you receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit? _____

5. As a Spirit-filled believer, do you pray in tongues? _____

6. Do you read the Bible and pray daily? _____

7. What is your primary vocation? _____

8. What specific skills have you developed that could benefit a Sunday School program?

9. Have you ever been convicted of any crime (other than driving or parking violations)?

Do you have a criminal record? If so, please explain on the reverse side. _____

10. What education or degrees do you have? _____

11. How long have you tithed consistently to this local church? _____

12. Are you willing to receive instruction/correction from the pastors or supervisors? _____

13. Do you know of any personal difficulty or problem that might hinder you from being effective in the work of this ministry to children? _____

My Goals As a Worker In the School of the Bible

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Section 2

Personnel Job Descriptions

Using the Personnel Job Descriptions

This manual is designed to provide instructions and helps in order to assist churches and schools in developing an effective Bible training program. The charts and lists included in this section are intended to be guidelines. Only in rare circumstances can they be duplicated exactly. The absolutes are all in the Bible. Biblical principles will work in any culture or time.

We strongly encourage developing ministry teams, rather than having a single teacher in the class. Every Bible class should have at least two members on the teaching team, even if the class is small. A team is able to generate more excitement, pray more effectively, and minister more comprehensively than one person. This is a biblical principle. Two are indeed better than one.

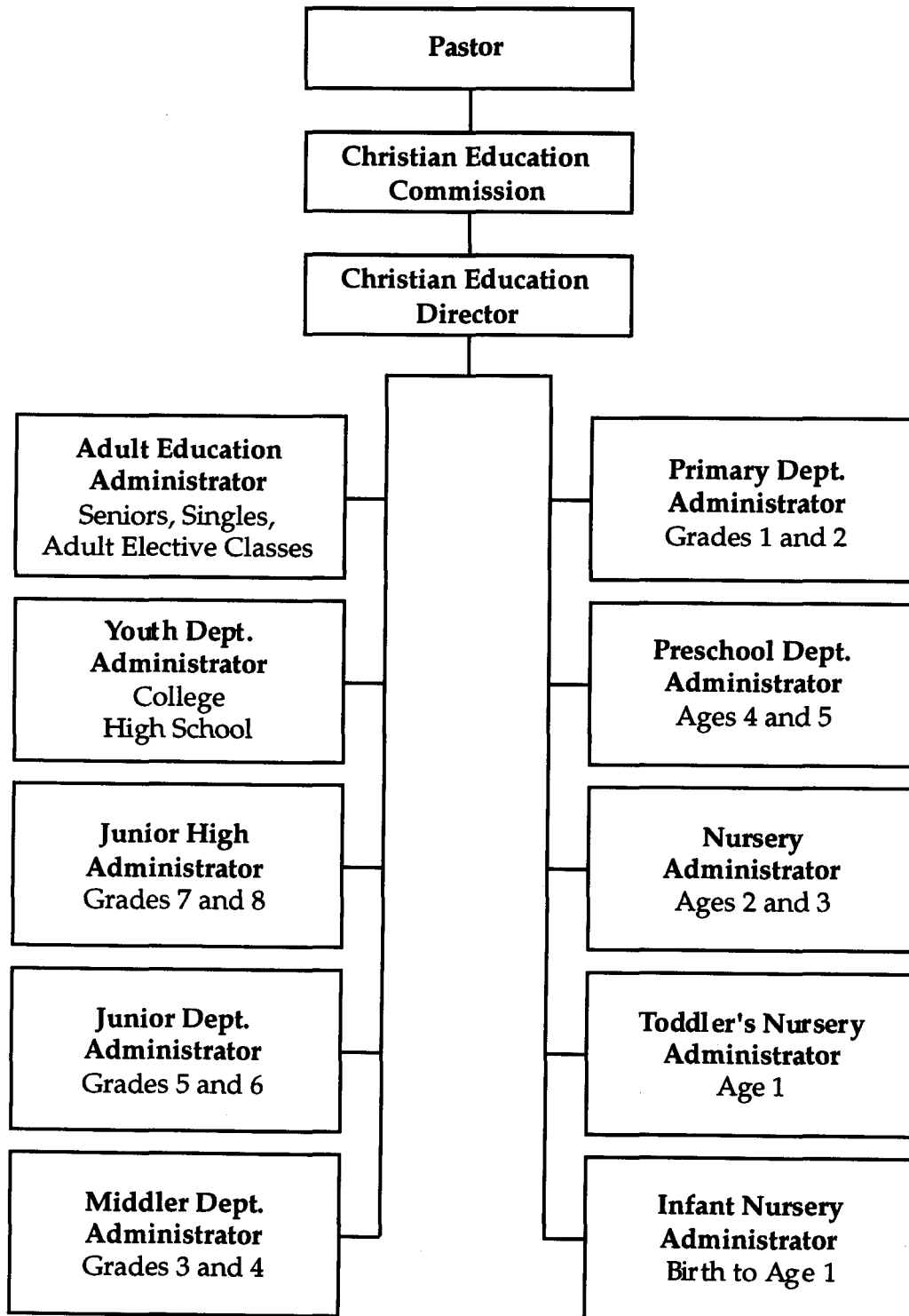
The job descriptions in this section define the responsibilities of the members of an effective ministry team. Sometimes, it may be necessary for a few people to fulfill several responsibilities in the class. However, as the class grows, these responsibilities can be delegated to new leaders as they join the ministry team.

It is also important to establish a clear line of authority in the School of the Bible.

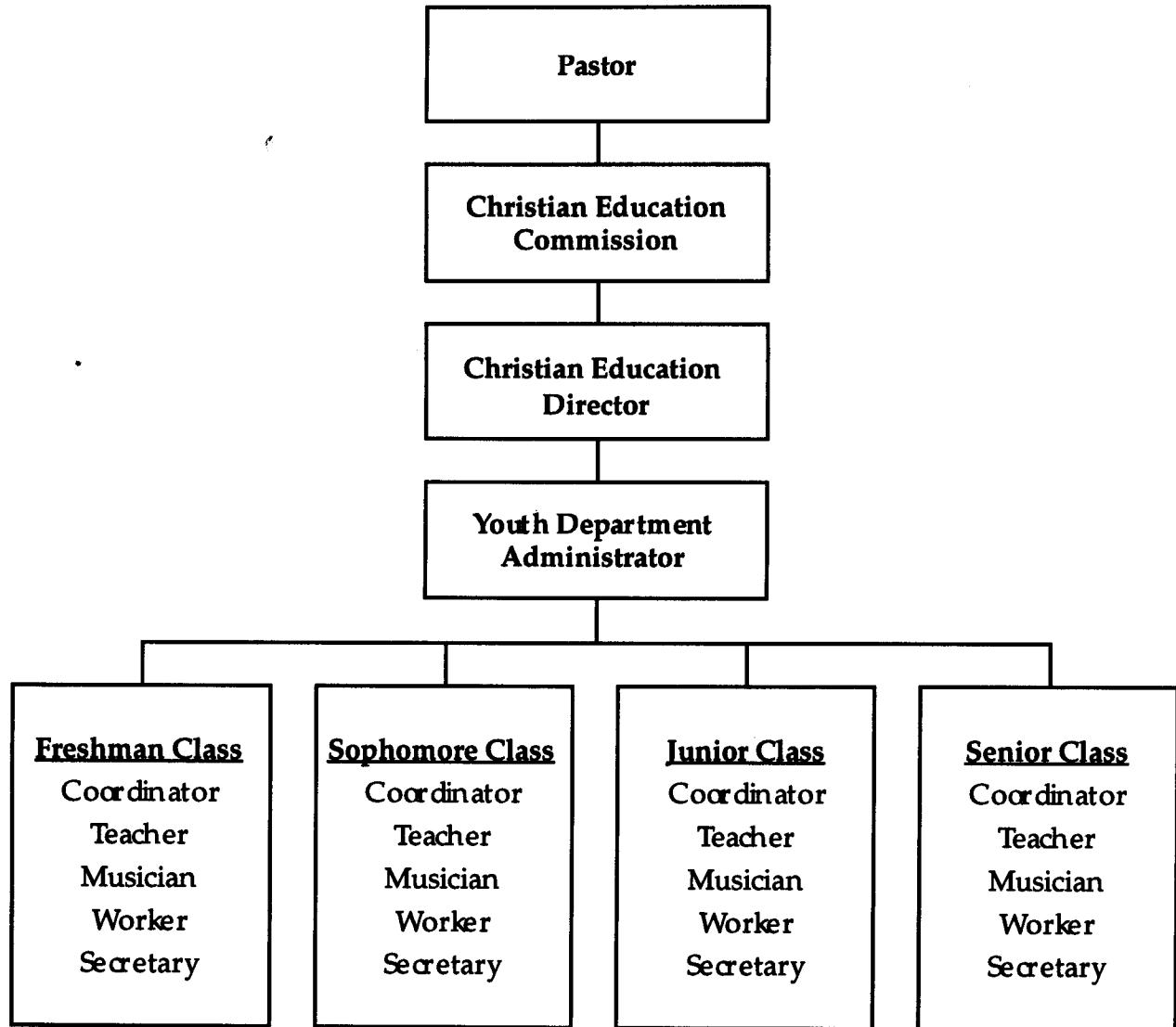
Confusion reigns when there is more than one person thinking they are in charge. The larger the body, the more responsibility needs to be delegated, and the more authority needs to be established on multiple levels. Everyone needs to know to whom they answer, and who has the responsibility to make the final decisions. The pastor is clearly the leader, and needs to have people under his direction who will take the responsibility for creating order and discipline in each class. Then, when there is a difference of opinion, these people graciously defer to him as the leader. One of the most important lessons we learn in Christian ministry is that we must have servants' hearts in order to make it work. Ambition and politics destroy the effectiveness of any ministry team.

Each of us in the family of God has a job to do. We need enough information to do it well. We also need to be a part of something that is bigger than we are; and we need help and encouragement along the way. This section is a tool for Christian leaders to help develop the specific program that will best meet the needs of the people.

School of the Bible Flowchart



Youth Department Flowchart



Administrator (Department Head) Job Description

The Administrator is responsible for the overall function of a department consisting of several classes. In order to achieve an effective and fruitful team ministry, Class Coordinators and Teachers will be under the supervision and guidance of the Administrator, with a view of strengthening the families and the general ministry of the local church.

A. Supervision.

1. Oversee the Class Coordinators.
2. Make certain that a leader for every class is present.
3. Encourage the workers to be punctual, neatly and appropriately dressed, and friendly.
4. Be in the hall 30 minutes before the classes begin to greet the teachers and students as they arrive.
5. Check around to see if there are any physical problems with the building which need to be corrected before the class begins. (Roof leaks, electrical problems, etc.)
6. Be sensitive to the needs of your teachers. Encourage and pray for any of them who are experiencing personal hardships.
7. Know each class team and be ready to step in and oversee a class if the Coordinator's post has not been filled.
8. Make sure the records are being handled correctly, and that the offerings are going to the department secretary with correct designations.
9. Take an active role in promotions and help stimulate interest and growth in the classes.

B. Teacher Training.

1. Conduct regular training sessions for your teaching teams, either as a department, or in conjunction with other departments.
2. Make every member of the group aware of the specific teaching goals of the class, both long and short term.
3. Share your ideas for improving the classes, and listen to the ideas of the Class Coordinators and Teachers with respect and appreciation.
4. Encourage friendship and fellowship among the people in your department.
5. Discuss available, new materials and teaching aids, and continually promote creativity, excitement, and the best audio-visual materials you can use.
6. Minister to the Class Coordinators under your supervision. Visit them as they visit those in their charge. Pray for and with them.

C. Discipline.

1. Be aware of any major discipline problems in the classes.
2. Be ready to handle any special discipline with which the Coordinator needs help.
3. If a child, who has become disruptive in class, is brought to you for correction, make every effort to locate at least one of the child's parents before attempting to discipline the child yourself.
4. NEVER spank or strike a child. Leave that up to the parents. Use physical restraint only if the child is a physical threat to someone. If a child is a consistent source of disruption to his class, you may find it necessary to suspend him. But, realize that disruptive anti-social behavior is a sure indication of severe personal and spiritual problems. Make sure that child is visited several times at home by teachers or others who are competent to minister to families, unless the family declines the offer of help.

Class Coordinator

(Class Leader)
Job Description

The Class Coordinator is directly responsible to the department Administrator. While having the primary responsibility for the class, the Coordinator serves as the leader of the teaching team in each classroom of the School of the Bible.

A. Attend Special Meetings of Leaders.

1. Keep informed on current developments and programs that relate to your class.
2. Share ideas and information with other Coordinators.
3. Receive information, encouragement, and ideas from the Christian Education Director, Pastor, or Administrator.
4. Pray with the other members of the teaching team.
5. Plan for the expansion and improvement of the School of the Bible ministry.

B. Supervise Training of the Teaching Team.

1. Class council meetings.
 - a. Conduct a special meeting with all of your workers at least once each quarter.
 - b. Discuss ideas for improvements in the class.
 - c. Share information from the Coordinators' meetings that is relevant to your team.
 - d. Discuss long- and short-term goals for the class.
 - e. Discuss and try to resolve any problems encountered in the class. Resolve any interpersonal conflicts quickly.
 - f. These meetings could be conducted in one of the homes with fellowship or a shared meal.
2. Assign responsibilities for each class session at least 10 days in advance.
 - a. Require each worker to report on the assignment plans and make sure each segment coordinates with the class theme.
 - b. Have each worker obtain and prepare props and teaching aids ahead of time.

3. Lead the group in goal-setting.
 - a. Attendance goals.
 - b. Offering goals.
 - c. Spiritual goals.
 - d. Visitation goals.
4. Lesson objectives.
 - a. "Quarterly objectives": Outline what you want to communicate for the quarter.
 - b. "Unit" objectives (usually 4 weeks).
 - c. Weekly aim (theme for this session).
5. Work with the team to plan special events, parties, field trips, service projects, etc.
 - a. Make specific assignments and divide responsibilities.
 - b. Fill out and submit the activity form to the Christian Education Director.
6. Lead the team in prayer before the class begins each Sunday.

C. Help Nurture the Spiritual Well-Being of Each Member of the Class.

1. Know the students personally, and be sensitive to their emotional and spiritual needs.
2. Be prepared to counsel on a one-to-one basis, if needed.
3. Set a godly example in your personal lifestyle and disposition.

D. Supervise the Care of the Classroom.

1. Never use tape, thumbtacks or nails on the walls or tape on windows. Use stick-tack.
2. In rooms with drop ceilings, light-weight objects may be hung from the ceiling grids.
3. Remove outdated decorations.
4. Turn off lights after class.
5. Make sure trash is picked up and put in the wastebasket.
6. Report maintenance problems to the Christian Education office.
7. Erase the chalkboards. Never use water on a chalkboard.
8. Arrange the chairs neatly.

E. Storage Cabinet.

1. Clean out the storage cabinet frequently.
2. Do not store food in the room or cabinet. It will draw all sorts of insects.
3. Be conscious of any fire hazard or clutter.

F. Classroom Discipline Problems.

1. The Class Coordinator is responsible for handling any normal discipline problems in the class with patience and consideration for the well-being of the group.
 - a. Never discipline a student with ridicule.
 - b. Never strike a student.
 - c. Convey love and acceptance while trying to determine the reason for the uncooperative or harmful behavior.
 - d. If possible, take a disruptive student aside and try to determine the nature of the problem. Be careful not to convey rejection by saying, "You are a bad child," or "I do not know what I am going to do with you."
 - e. Never leave a student standing or sitting alone in the hall.
2. Severe discipline problems should be referred to the child's father or mother if they are available.
 - a. If the respective parent is not in the building, the Administrator should handle the problem.
 - b. The Administrator should call the parents as quickly as possible.
 - c. The Administrator should give the child some personal attention and seek to discover the real problem behind the behavior, so he can minister to the need.

G. Coordinate and Lead the Visitation Program.

1. Assign a few of the students to each worker on the team.
2. Have each worker keep in touch with and continue to encourage each student assigned to them.
 - a. Birthday cards.
 - b. Phone calls.
 - c. Visits in the home.
 - d. Regular prayer for each one.

3. Organize regular visitations to the students.
 - a. Select a specific day, and get brief written reports.
 - b. Go with a new worker to show them how to make an effective home visit.
 - c. Make visitation an integral part of the Sunday School ministry program.
4. Be aware of absentees.
 - a. Contact missing students on a regular basis by writing, phone calls, and visitation.
 - b. If a student has been absent for more than 6 weeks, and every effort has been made to encourage them to return, contact your Administrator for approval to remove the name from the rolls.
 - c. No name should be removed without the Administrator's approval. It is the Coordinators' responsibility to keep track of extended absentees and not allow them to remain on the records, if they have not indicated that they will be returning soon.
 - d. Keep a record of the name, address, and phone number of each student whose name has been deleted and contact each one again within 3 months.

Teacher

Job Description

A. Communicate the Word of God to the Hearts and Spirits of Your Students. This Involves:

1. Planning:

a. Think ahead.

b. What response do I want to stimulate in their hearts this week?

(1) What do I want them to know?

(2) What do I want them to feel?

(3) What do I want them to do?

c. Suggested goals:

(1) Cultivate gratefulness to God as Creator, Provider, and Protector.

(2) Lead to repentance by awareness of sin, grace, faith.

(3) Combat the "me-centered" mentality of humanism and teach the joy of giving, serving, and preferring one another.

(4) Combat the temporal values system with an awareness of the second coming of Jesus, heaven, hell, eternity, and the judgment seat of Christ.

d. Biblical goals (from 2 Peter 1:5-7 in order):

(1) Faith.

(2) Virtue (character).

(3) Knowledge.

(4) Self-control.

(5) Godliness.

(6) Brotherly kindness.

(7) Charity (selfless love).

e. What are the curriculum goals this year?

2. Preparation: This involves work through the week, preparing your heart as well as your mind.

a. Read the lesson materials you have and all the related scriptures early in the week.

b. Incorporate scriptures and materials from the lesson into your daily devotions through the week.

c. Create an introduction that will stimulate curiosity and interest.

- d. Know the material thoroughly. Practice by discussing or even presenting the material to your family.
- e. Look for, or make, props, pictures, or other visual aids which will captivate their interest and reinforce the message.
- f. Prepare an introduction, main body, and a definite conclusion that will stimulate your students toward the lesson goal.

3. Prayer:

- a. Prepare your spirit as a servant of God. Become sensitive to the will of God and be led by the Spirit.
- b. Pray every day for each of your students by name, and for the needs in their lives of which you are aware.
- c. Learn from your students what their specific needs are, and let them know you are praying about those needs.
- d. Keep notes about prayer needs.
- e. In praying, privately and before the class:
 - (1) Always begin with thanksgiving. *"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise"* (Psalms 100:4)
 - (2) Pray to the Father in Jesus' name.
 - (3) Bless the Lord, and honor His name.
 - (4) Create a focus on His will, His kingdom, His purposes, and His pleasure.
 - (5) Make specific petitions for healing, provision, and spiritual growth based on His Word and purposes.
 - (6) Ask for His forgiveness for wrong attitudes and deeds and pray for overcoming grace as you come with a grateful and humble spirit. Do not recite prayers. Talk to God. Pray in the Spirit. Pray audibly whenever possible and have set times to pray.

Jesus gave a MODEL prayer to His disciples, not to recite, but to emulate. Here is a similar model:

"Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us and for sending Your only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. We love You, and appreciate all the wonderful things You have done in our lives. Thank You for bringing us together as a group to study Your Word and learn Your ways. Thank You for Jason, Sarah, Joey, ... and for providing godly parents and a good church where we can worship You. Dear Lord, help us to understand more clearly what You are doing in our lives and what You want us to do with every precious day You give us to live. Teach us to grow in Your love by loving and serving one another; and, today, let every one of us know, without a doubt, that we are born again, changed, and walking with the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. Help us to realize every day that Jesus is

coming soon; and anoint us to worship You in everything we do. In Jesus' name. Amen."

- (7) Start your day by reading the Bible and praying.
- (8) Include prayer at mealtimes and family devotions.
- (9) Pray together and minister to one another as a teaching team before the class.
- (10) Teach the children to pray for each other, or for a leader who has a serious need.

4. Personality:

- a. Communicate the Word with joy, conviction, and confidence. NEVER read a book other than a Bible to the students.
- b. Look at the students and be sensitive to their responses.
- c. Call the students by name often and encourage them to ask questions. They are more important than your presentation.

5. Persuasiveness:

- a. Know what this church believes.
- b. Be able to overcome the mental roadblocks that have been established in the students' minds by the world.

- 6. Punctuality:** Arrive 30 minutes early, so you can quiet your spirit and help greet the students.

B. Share the Responsibility for Instruction in at Least One of These Teaching Segments:

1. Bible story.
2. Object lesson.
3. Life-related story.
4. Scripture memorization.

C. Learn to Use a Variety of Teaching Techniques and Aids Effectively:

1. Animate your lecture with body language, illustrations, props, and questions.
2. Flannelgraph.
3. Overhead transparency projector.
4. Video cassette.

5. Puppets.
6. Skits with costumes and props.
7. Chalk drawings.
8. Songs that tell or emphasize the story.

D. Learn the Material in Advance:

1. NEVER read a story or carry a quarterly.
2. Do not try to show pictures from a book to a class. Books were made to be used by individuals, not groups.

E. Carry and Read Only a Bible:

1. Make the Bible visible.
2. Encourage the students to bring their Bibles with them and read them.
3. Always teach a lesson or tell a story in your own words.

F. Pray Daily for the Students and for the Sunday Class Session.

G. Greet the Students. Make Them Feel Welcome and Loved.

H. Be Sensitive to Special Needs and Problems.

I. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader. Give that Leader Your Full Support and Cooperation.

J. Be Ready to Substitute for the Class Coordinator When Called Upon to Do So.

K. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.

L. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

M. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Strengthen Your Own Spirit.

N. Participate in the Visitation Ministry Program for Your Class. Realize That the Students' Parents Are Very Important to the Success of Your Ministry.

- O. Attend Meetings and Training Sessions for the Sunday School Workers as Provided, to Develop and Enhance Your Skills and Team Spirit.**
- P. Be Supportive of the Overall Vision and Ministry of the Church.**
1. Always be aware that we need each other.
 2. The goal of a true servant is to make others successful.
- Q. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.**
1. Live the lifestyle you teach to your students.
 2. Be quick to forgive and resolve offenses and misunderstandings, especially with brothers and sisters in the church.
- R. Always Contribute to the Offering, In Order to Set an Example.**
- S. Teach the Use of Offering Envelopes.**
- T. DO NOT USE SECULAR MATERIAL, Such As:**
1. Secular music lyrics.
 2. Secular films (even though they may seem so "nice").
 3. Secular books. Expose the students to Christian heroes and stories which put God in the proper perspective.
- U. Be Careful to Put Nothing on the Walls Except in Designated Areas.**
- V. Help Keep the Room and Closets Clean.**
- W. Turn Out the Lights When You Leave.**

Musician

Job Description

A. Strengthen the Message and Impact of the Class Session with Good, Appropriate Music.

1. Planning:

- a. Work with the Song Leader and Teacher prayerfully in choosing songs which will flow with and reinforce the objectives of the lessons.
- b. Know the lesson plan and have the song list several days in advance of Sunday.
- c. Keep looking for new songs which are biblical and fun to sing, particularly action songs.
- d. Refer to the song list in the manual.

2. Preparation:

- a. Make sure you know the correct keys and chord progressions for the songs. You may need to consult one of the senior musicians during the week.
- b. Practice the songs. Get some coaching if necessary.
- c. Practice the songs with the Song Leader.

3. Prayer:

- a. Prepare your spirit as a servant of God.
- b. Become sensitive to the will of God and be led by the Spirit.

4. Playing:

- a. Adjust your instrumental volume to the size of the room and the size and age of the group.
- b. For 10 or 12 first graders, you need to play softly.
- c. Do not play with your back to the Song Leader or group, especially if you play the guitar.
- d. Play with skill and anointing.

B. Support the Teaching Team with Your Presence and Help During the Entire Class Time.

1. Be ready to play at other times during the class as needed for an altar call, special song, etc.
2. Smile.

C. If You Must Be Absent, Contact a Substitute During the Week and Notify the Class Coordinator.

1. Be sure the substitute is approved by the Administrator and Class Coordinator.
2. Make sure the Coordinator has the phone number of at least one substitute available in the event an unforeseen circumstance keeps you out of the class.

D. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader by Giving Him or Her Your Full Support and Cooperation.

E. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.

F. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

G. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Build Up Your Own Spirit.

H. Be Supportive of the Overall Vision and Ministry of this Church.

1. Always be aware that we need each other, and that the goal of a true servant is to make others successful.
2. We are a team!

I. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.

1. Live the lifestyle you teach others to live.
2. Be quick to forgive and resolve offenses and misunderstandings, especially with brothers and sisters in the church.

Worker
(Assistant)
Job Description

The general worker, one of the most flexible member of the teaching staff, is an assistant to the Class Coordinator, the Secretary, and the Teacher. This worker may be in training for a teaching ministry, or may be one who has a vision for the program, but does not feel called to carry the full responsibility as the leader. As an assistant, the general worker functions in the "ministry of helps," mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12.

A. Assist the Secretary.

1. Know the records procedures, and be able to handle the work when needed.
2. Help with attendance, offering, etc.
3. Assist the Coordinator and Teachers. Be available and willing to teach and to assist with special promotions and events.

B. Help Maintain Discipline in the Class with Firm but Loving Sensitivity, in the Event of Any Disruptions.

C. Participate in the Visitation Program.

D. Attend the Training Sessions and Planning Meetings Scheduled.

E. Be Active in Praying for the Class, the Individual Students, and for the Ministry Team.

F. Relate Personally to the Students Whenever Possible.

G. Come 30 Minutes Before the Class Begins; Stay Through the Dismissal Time; Participate in the Singing, Praying, and Activities; and Support Each of the Team Members.

H. If You Must Be Absent, Notify the Class Coordinator as Soon as Possible.

I. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader.

J. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.

K. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

L. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Build Up Your Own Spirit.

M. Be Supportive of the Overall Vision and Ministry of the Church.

1. Always be aware that we need each other, and the goal of a true servant is to make others successful.
2. We are a team!

N. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.

1. Live the lifestyle you teach others to live.
2. Be quick to forgive and resolve offenses and misunderstandings, especially with brothers and sisters in the church.

Secretary Job Description

A. Greet Each Student and Help Create an Atmosphere of Love and Joy in the House of the Lord.

1. Learn each student's name as quickly as possible, and use that name often.
2. Always recognize visitors and show a special interest in them.
3. Make name tags for the students.
4. Collect the tags at the end of the class and use them again every Sunday.
5. Introduce each new student to a worker.
6. Help make the students feel special about themselves.
7. Keep track of birthdays and, before the session, inform the Class Coordinator of current ones. Send cards to students with birthdays the following week.
8. Keep a list of absentees for visitation, cards, and calls.

B. Keep Accurate Records of Each Class Session.

1. Attendance.
 - a. Use the computer attendance sheet; mark a black letter "P" for present and a red "A" for absent.
 - b. For a new student who has just become a regular attender, fill out the blue change sheet with the class and department, the student's name, address, telephone number, birthday, parents' names and previous dates attended. A student is a "regular" when he or she has attended at least three times in a consistent manner, e.g., once a month for several months, every other Sunday, etc. Place a blue sheet inside the attendance sheet when finished.
 - c. Fill out or update a yellow form with the visitor's name, address, telephone number, birthday, parents' names, and date attending. Continue to record the dates attended on this sheet until the visitor becomes a regular. Keep the yellow form in the file box with the white permanent cards.
 - d. Total the number of class members and visitors and record it at the bottom of the computer attendance sheet.

- e. Take the completed attendance folder and offering envelope to the Divisional Secretary's office and check it over with the Secretary.
 - f. Be sure you have a permanent information card for each student on your attendance sheet.
2. Offering.
- a. The secretary is responsible for counting the School of the Bible offering and putting it in the envelope provided.
 - b. Record the total amount for the day on the envelope.
 - c. Record the total attendance on the envelope.
 - d. Keep any specially designated offerings separate, and turn them in to the Divisional Secretary with a note of explanation.
 - e. Take the completed attendance folder and offering envelope to the Divisional Secretary's office, and check it over with the Secretary.
3. Maintenance record keeping.
- a. Always check the computer visitation sheet for correct information. There may be a change of address or telephone number.
 - b. If a student tells you of a change of address or telephone number, fill out the blue change sheet, put it inside your attendance sheet, and turn it in to the Divisional Secretary.
 - c. Keep the visitation sheet each week for reference.
 - d. Keep the birthday sheet, which you will receive monthly. Fill in any birthdays not listed, and report them on a blue change sheet.
 - e. Be sure to have a white permanent information card for each student on your computer attendance sheet, and keep it in your file box. Do not forget to fill out a card for a visitor who becomes a regular attender. (Discard the yellow form used for visitors.)
4. Other records.
- a. During some promotions, records may be kept on separate forms relating to memory work, recruiting, or points for special efforts.
 - b. Occasionally, you may need some assistance from another worker to keep these extra records straight.
 - c. If an instruction sheet is delivered with additional paperwork, keep it in your attendance folder during the promotion and follow the instructions on the page.

C. Follow-Up.

1. Prepare welcome cards for new students.
 - a. Cards may be obtained from the Audio-Visual Room.
 - b. Include a little personal note. Be sure to sign your name and grade level. Do not just write, "Secretary."
 - c. Address the cards.
 - d. Take the cards to the Audio-Visual Room to be mailed.
2. Absentee follow-up.
 - a. One Sunday missed: send a "miss you" postcard.
 - b. Two Sundays missed: give the student's name and phone number to a Teacher or to the Class Coordinator, so a phone call may be made that week.
 - c. Three Sundays missed: make sure the student is visited by a Teacher or by the Coordinator.
3. Decision Cards.
 - a. These cards are available in the Audio-Visual Room.
 - b. Fill out one card for each student who responds to the salvation appeal in a class session, and turn it in to the Administrator.
 - c. Put the date and the student's name on the "Spiritual Life" form.
4. The books should be turned in to the Divisional Secretary no later than 30 minutes after the beginning of class.

Four Things Every Teacher Must Know

I. A Teacher Must Know the Student.

A. Background.

1. In what church was the student trained?
2. What is the student's cultural heritage?
3. What is the student's birth order?

B. Environment.

1. In what kind of neighborhood does the student live?
2. What school does the student attend?
3. What kind of television programs is the student permitted to watch?

C. Spiritual condition.

1. Is the student born again?
2. Has the student received the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

D. Comprehension ability.

E. Interest level.

F. Personality Problems.

1. Is the student shy, introverted, or antisocial?

2. Is the student belligerent or irritable?

3. Is the student hyperactive?

G. Family situation.

1. In what kind of home does the student live?
2. Are the student's parents divorced, separated, constantly fighting, or devoted to each other?
3. Does the family have devotions together?
4. Is the family addicted to television?
5. Are the student's parents Christians?

H. How can a teacher learn about the students?

1. There are books available which explain characteristics of children at every age level. Go to the bookstore or library for general information.
2. Study carefully the material in your manual concerning your students' development.
3. Acquaint yourself with the student. Call him by name.
4. Pray specifically for each student under your charge.

II. A Teacher Must Know Himself. Before Teaching, Ask Yourself:

- A. Am I tired or irritable?
- B. Am I discouraged? *"David encouraged himself in the LORD...."* (1 Samuel 30:6)
- C. Am I prepared -- really prepared?
- D. Am I enthusiastic?
- E. Am I friendly?
- F. Have I prayed about this class session?
- G. Are there conditions and stresses in my own life that can adversely affect my function in the class?
- H. Am I able to overlook problems and concentrate on the task at hand?
- I. Do I really believe in what I am doing today?
- J. Do I have a positive attitude?

III. A Teacher Must Know the Lesson.

- A. Start preparing well in advance of the day of the class.
- B. NEVER read your lesson or story to the class.
- C. Follow a simple outline. Present specific thoughts.

D. Use visual aids. Students will remember far more when the idea is reinforced by what they see.

E. Use illustrations.

1. From the Bible.
2. From your own life.
3. From the lives of others.
4. From Christian literature.
5. From nature.
6. Allegories.

F. Ask questions.

G. Leave the students with a desire for more. Do not overdo singing or any one segment.

H. Be sure the lesson relates to the pupils on their level. Do the insights you are sharing affect the situations they are facing in their lives?

IV. A Teacher Must Know the Overall Church Program.

- A. See yourself as part of the whole ministry team.
- B. Be faithful to the other programs and functions of the church. Attend the other services.
- C. Stay in your class when the other members of the team are ministering. Your presence is helpful and encouraging.

- D. Share in the promotion of special days and general activities.

- E. Make church announcements in your class.

Adapted from Your Sunday School Can Grow by Dr. Paul E. Paino.

Three Requirements for Every Teacher

The Bible has a great deal to say about teachers. Teaching is one of the special types of ministries that Christ Himself has placed in the church as a "gift." Read carefully the following scripture portion (Ephesians 4:11-16):

11 *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"*

12 *"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

13 *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"*

14 *That we {henceforth} be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, {and} cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"*

15 *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, {even} Christ:"*

16 *"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

We discover from these beautiful verses that the Lord places teachers in the church for the following purposes:

- To Perfect the Saints.
- To Accomplish the Work of the Ministry.
- To Build Up the Body of Christ.
- To Help the Church Come Into a Unity of Faith.
- To Give Knowledge About the Son of God.
- To Exemplify a Godly Lifestyle.
- To Establish Us in Doctrine.
- To Prove the Love of God.
- To Help Believers Fit Into the Body of Christ.

The Work of the Teacher Is Important. God Demands That Every Teacher Have:

A Call. (1 Corinthians 12:26-28)

God calls people to be teachers and workers. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Once we are called, we do not have an option. God requires a called teacher to teach.

Compassion. (Matthew 9:36-38)

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.'"

The Master Teacher was moved with compassion. Jesus cared. Jesus wept. Jesus was concerned, because He loved people. He had something to give that would meet their needs. Every teacher needs to have the motivation and conviction that what he has is greatly needed by the people.

When we genuinely give our heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, it naturally translates into a love for people. In loving Jesus, we please him; we become like Him; and our motivations become more and more like His. Jesus was motivated by a supreme devotion to the Father, and by a selfless love for people. He was the consummate servant: He did nothing out of a motivation for self-gratification or self-glory.

Courage. (Joshua 1:1-16)

God spoke words of encouragement to Joshua, and told him "to be of good

courage." The path to courage is to focus on God's Word and on what God has done, rather than focus on our abilities or accomplishments.

Compassion and courage go naturally together. The Apostle John said, "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear,...*" (1 John 4:18) Fear relates to the apprehension over potential loss. When we are a true servant and focus on the needs of others instead of ourselves, we are set free from fear and can boldly proclaim the Word of God. Daniel said, "*...the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.*" (Daniel 11:32) It takes courage to lead a class and bear the burden of ministering faithfully week after week.

Every teacher must know that he has a call from God, and not just a desire to be in front of people. He must have a genuine compassion for people and a passion for souls, and not just a desire to succeed in a ministry. Every teacher must also have the courage to do what needs to be done in the work, or he will give up when there are difficulties or conflicts.

Adapted from Your Sunday School Can Grow by Dr. Paul E. Paino.

Responsibilities of a School of the Bible Worker

As a teacher in the School of the Bible, you are taking an active part in the ministry of your church. In a sense, you are a minister yourself, serving in the ministry of "perfecting (maturing) the saints." (Ephesians 4:12) As a School of the Bible teacher or worker, you are assisting the professional, ministerial staff in preparing believers to cope with this "present world." (2 Timothy 4:10) The success of a local church is not only dependent upon its pastors, but also upon every saint who is actively doing his part in the ministry of reaching others with the gospel.

What activity is more important than teaching the Word of God? The ministry of teaching is one of the most important jobs in the church. For this reason, every effort has been made to choose individuals who will conscientiously teach God's truths to every person who enters the classroom. Our greatest joy must be in sharing God's Word. Your ministry in the classroom must never be a "burden." Evaluate carefully the potential of each student. Remember that someone needs to share the love of Jesus with them. Also, remember that true ministry is impossible *with human strength and wisdom alone*: you need God's anointing and grace. Pray for God's anointing, and make it a habit to pray for those to whom you minister.

Responsibilities of a Teacher or Class Worker in the School of the Bible:

Be an Example.

Develop deep-rooted convictions directly from God's Word and live by them. Remember that you are an example to the young believers.

Be Faithful to the Public Services of the Church.

A teacher should be willing to attend all the services of his home church: Sunday morning, Sunday evening worship and the midweek service. As a leader in the church program, you need to be strengthened in your spirit by worship and the preaching of the Word. You also set an example by showing that you are excited about the vision you share with others.

Be a Tither.

The tithe (the first tenth of all our financial increase) is an important mark of God's ownership and one of the first principles of Christian ethics. When we hold back from God, we cannot expect anointing or blessing on our lives, and it shows up in our ministry. Tithing strengthens our commitment to the Lord and to the local church. It also helps to develop the mind-set of a servant rather than a "consumer."

Be Loyal to the Pastor and to the Church Program.

This does not mean that the teacher has to believe everything the pastor believes, or even agree fully with everything the church does. It does mean, that as long as there is no conflict with the scriptures, the teacher should be willing to cooperate with the desires of leadership and be loyal to the pastor, as he presents the program under God's direction.

The most important qualification for fellowship is loyalty. Loyalty means, "I am for you and committed to your success; and, if I have a problem with you, I will go to you first and not discuss it with others behind your back." A "murmurer" is one who voices his complaints to people who are not responsible for the decision. Instead of helping, this only creates confusion and unrest.

Be Faithful to the Class.

The teacher needs to be in his class regularly. Of course, there naturally will be times when absence will occur. Irregular attendance indicates a lack of concern for the spiritual condition of the class. Even the youngest of students can sense your concern for their spiritual needs. Show faithfulness by being prompt, prepared, patient, and pliable. Your attitude of faithfulness will make the difference.

Be Willing to Seek Lost Souls.

Use your class to lead people to Christ. Do not just tell sweet stories. Seek to transform lives. Know how to lead a student to Christ, and plan to give your

students a chance to commit their lives to the Lord.

Be Willing to Become a Member of the Church.

Membership in the local church reflects your commitment to that work. Every teacher should have his ties deeply rooted in the local body in which he teaches.

Be regular in attending the Teacher/Coordinator meetings when they are scheduled. These meetings are designed to help the School of the Bible grow. It is a time of prayer and organization for the class you teach.

Be Willing to Visit Absentees.

Every student in the class must be visited at least once each quarter (13 weeks), and those who miss more than one Sunday should be visited as soon as possible. We are concerned about attendance, because we care about the individual and his spiritual growth.

An apparent lack of concern among church leaders can be a major factor in a student's denial or rejection of the Lord in his personal life. Who knows how history may have been altered if a Sunday School teacher had been more effective in reaching out to Adolf Hitler, Charles Manson, or Madalyn Murray O'Hair?

Be Properly Dressed.

Each worker should be dressed in a manner that is appropriate to the occasion. When we are ministering the Word of God to God's children, we are in a place of honor, and should also demonstrate a

spirit that honors those who have come to grow in God.

Ten Qualifications for a School of the Bible Worker:

1. Love God supremely.
2. Love people and be concerned with the spiritual needs of the community.
3. Develop a pleasant personality.
4. Have a real desire to work for the Lord.
5. Do not be easily discouraged.
6. Be a good follower as well as a capable leader.
7. Believe in the absolute necessity of personal salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. Have a sincere desire to serve Christ in the church.
9. Have clear spiritual perception.
10. Be willing to sacrifice time, money, comfort, and energy for the work of the Lord.

Section 3

Student Profiles

Understanding Your Students

In order to minister effectively to any group, it is imperative that you have a working knowledge of the people you teach. Their individual circumstance and personality will affect their response to you and your ministry. Please read this material carefully as you prepare your heart to minister in any capacity to some of the most important people in the world: our children.

We are concerned that you have a working knowledge of your students in a number of ways. Young people are complex. There are some principles that apply to children at specific age levels, and some that we can all relate to no matter what our age. There are also many variables that distinguish each one as unique, with special potentials, needs, and

distinct problems. We are created body, soul, and spirit. Each part of our being is affected by our heritage, environment, and a vast array of cultural and social factors, which affect our responses and reactions.

The profiles which follow describe a child's development at different ages. The more you understand about each child, the more effectively you will be able to handle his fears, misconceptions, and behavioral problems. These profiles will give you some general insights. You will also need to become familiar with such factors as family background, birth order, school influences, television habits, and family and personal devotional life. In doing so, you will have important resources available to minister to your students.

A Profile of Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Students

Physical Development

1. By this time, except for an occasional "late bloomer," the journey through puberty is complete. The body has filled out; the voice has changed, and the growth spurt has ended. Physically, the teenager may be considered an adult. Usually, at this age, teenagers begin to accept their physical appearance, and they are concerned with good hygiene and fitness. They may start a serious weight-lifting or exercise program. It is important to understand that, while physical maturity has fully developed, emotional maturity is a slower process; and, although they may look grown-up, they may not always act grown-up. The key word for working with teenagers is "patience."
2. If a teenager is still a virgin at this age, then the pressure to have sex escalates. We must continue to stress the importance of setting biblical standards for physical expression. God's way is the best way.
3. By this time, a teenager, who earlier experimented with drugs and alcohol, may become a regular user and an eventual addict. This tragedy often comes to the forefront in a crisis situation. The teenager is caught or crashes while driving drunk. The teenager is busted for buying or selling drugs. The teenager is hospitalized from an overdose. It is important to have competent

counseling resources with which to help the teenager.

4. The extreme highs and lows of emotion usually pass by this age. Feelings become more controlled, although an occasional outburst is still to be expected. We must continue to give unconditional love and support.

Intellectual Development

1. Their cognitive abilities and mental capacities continue to expand. Their concentration and attention span increases. Teenagers begin to relate to adults on an adult level. We must begin to treat them on a level where their views and opinions are respected. Our teaching must not be spoon-fed, "me talk, you listen" exercises. It is important that dialogue and interaction take place in the teaching process. We must continually challenge them to think and to discover truth for themselves.
2. During this time, teenagers begin to seek answers to serious questions in life, such as, "Who am I?" "What is the purpose of life?" and "Why am I here?" It is imperative for us to instill a sense of destiny in them by emphasizing that God has a plan and purpose for their lives (Jeremiah 29:11). This search for identity can be a tremendous opportunity for discipleship and spiritual growth as

teenagers begin to get their eyes off of the temporal and onto the eternal.

3. As teenagers begin to see the benefits of doing well academically, school performance generally improves, especially if they want to continue their education.
4. Decisions are being made that may effect them for the rest of their lives -- decisions about furthering their education, decisions about career choices, decisions about relationships. We must give them insight for determining God's will during this critical time of life.

Social Development

1. During the 11th and 12th grades, the influence of peer pressure is not as dominant as in previous years. As social skills develop, and as personal interests and goals expand, the need for peer approval begins to diminish. They are developing an identity of their own. We should encourage them to reach out to others and befriend the younger teenagers within the youth group. This can have a very positive effect in building a sense of community in the youth ministry.
2. Teenagers are beginning to relate to adults on a peer level. Conversation and communication become more "person-to-person" than "adult-to-child" in content. We must treat them as adults.
3. During these last two years of high school, the struggle with parents over independence usually begins to

diminish. Often, the teenager sees the need for parental help and guidance in selecting a college or vocation. Communication begins to improve. We can never overemphasize the importance of family relationships. (Ephesians 6:1-3)

4. During this time, dating becomes important in the teenager's life. Thoughts of marriage may even enter the picture. Teenagers are becoming more skillful in relating to members of the opposite sex. We must continually stress the importance of developing healthy relationships and of having self-control in the area of physical involvement.

Spiritual Development

1. During the 11th and 12th grades, many teenagers are sorting through their priorities and beliefs. They are searching for answers. Their questions should be addressed. They must be challenged spiritually. It is during this time that many teenagers make strong commitments to serve the Lord. We must challenge them to dedicate their lives to His service. Unfortunately, if teenagers are not significantly challenged, they may lose interest in spiritual matters after high school. This is our last chance to influence some of them positively for the cause of Christ.
2. Teenagers are very concerned about their future. Many are stepping out into the unknown for the first time. Their security is shaken. We must make them aware that God has a plan for their lives, and that true success

and happiness come from following Him.

3. We must continually present good role models to teenagers. In the long run, our character will do more for

them than our Bible lessons. Adults who compromise, complain, and criticize are serious stumbling blocks for the spiritual growth of teenagers. We must be consistent examples.

Children of the '90's

What is Happening to Children in America Today?
What is an Effective Teaching Strategy for Sunday School Ministry?

A. Education and Entertainment in America Today.

1. This is the most entertained generation in history: the "couch-potato-kid" culture.
2. "Sesame Street" has revolutionized education.
 - a. Quick, creative, colorful. The programs feature a rapid succession of clever, elaborate, and brilliantly entertaining segments of material with a strong humanistic bias.
 - b. To be "secular," the presentation does not have to be blatantly "anti-God." It must only exclude God. Any philosophy that excludes God is, in effect, working against a Christian world view. All education shapes values and morals. There is no such thing as a religiously neutral education.
 - c. The result is:
 - (1) American children are not easily impressed with a flannelgraph lesson or paper maché puppets.
 - (2) They have an even shorter attention span than previous generations.
 - (3) They tend to be more focused on their "rights" and less responsive to authority figures.
 - (4) They tend to be "hyperactive." In 1900 the average American consumed an average of 2 pounds of processed sugar per year. Today, our average consumption is 200 pounds per year.
 - (5) They tend to see God as less exciting than the world.

B. What Secular Education Cannot Do.

1. Television and movies cannot respond personally to the children. "Sesame Street" is strictly a one-way street.
2. They cannot hug, reciprocate, or show personal interest in their special events.
3. Secular educators and entertainers cannot give life a worthwhile purpose or clear direction. (This goes without saying. If you are not going anywhere, it does not matter how you get there.)
4. The "secular" world cannot operate in spiritual giftings and discernment by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Note: It is possible for some to operate in the satanic counterfeit, such as demon-induced psychic powers, "e.s.p.," or other aspects of witchcraft. Some "churched" children, who have had a lack of exposure to the power of the Holy Spirit, have been attracted to the occult world because of the spiritual void in their lives.

5. Secular education has no answer for basic life questions: "Where did I come from?" "Why am I here?" "Where am I going when I die?" "Does life really matter?" "Who am I?"
6. A secular education does not strengthen the family relationship. In fact, the more secular our perspective on life, the weaker our family ties become. Therefore, a secular education cannot make children emotionally or spiritually secure.
7. By excluding God from their thinking, the secular culture diminishes the basis for vision in life, and inadvertently contributes to the epidemic of teen suicide. "*Where (there is) no vision, the people perish.*" (Proverbs 29:18)

C. Keys to an Effective Sunday School in the '90's.

1. Do not monologue; dialogue.
 - a. Your effectiveness is limited when you use only the straight lecture method: "You listen; I talk." The idea that "children should be seen and not heard" is not going to be relevant today.
 - b. Get them involved in the dynamics of the lesson. As a one-way communicator, you cannot compete with the world system. If you effectively interact with them and relate personally, you have a strong advantage.
2. Be sensitive to special needs.
 - a. A child who will not sit quietly and obey has a problem -- usually at home.
 - b. He does not need to be humiliated in front of his peers.
 - c. He needs private attention, and his parents probably need ministry of some kind, too.
3. Be creative and open to new ideas and exciting ways of presenting the concepts which children need to grasp.
 - a. Dialogue is better than a monologue.
 - b. A 2- or 3-person presentation is better than a solo act.
 - c. Generally, a video is better than a filmstrip.
 - d. Children need a lot of visual stimulation, as well as audible, tangible, and spiritual stimulation.

4. Do not underestimate children.
 - a. They can memorize, even if they cannot yet read.
 - b. They can perceive things in their spirits before all their mental perception comes into play.
 - c. Expose them to the Word of God.
5. Work with parents.
 - a. Get to know the parents.
 - b. Work to make them feel that they are a part of the team, along with you.
 - c. Help them in their goal of training their children properly.
 - d. Encourage parents to memorize the verses, along with their children. This is essential for parents of pre-readers. Otherwise, the children are limited to learning only a few partial verses a month.
 - e. Give parents suggestions for family devotions which are related to the lessons. Make sure you have devotions with your own family; and, share ideas, preferably with an occasional take-home letter.
 - f. If the parents are unsaved, see their child as a key to winning the parents to the Lord.
 - g. Appeal to the parents' natural sense of responsibility. Help them see that, in order to effectively rear children and ensure their survival in these times, they need God's anointing and help.
 - h. To be secure, children desperately need two parents who love each other and who are responsive to God's authority.
6. Provide incentives and rewards for achievement. Be creative. Recognize your students' successes, and acknowledge their accomplishments and special skills.
7. Let kids have fun.
 - a. Have fun with them.
 - b. Smile.
 - c. Let them see that you enjoy the Lord and life in Christ.
 - d. Teach them to "delight themselves in the Lord," and not just in things.

8. Avoid being too simplistic.
 - a. Many people who were raised in Sunday School programs have the impression that the gospel is juvenile, or "kid's stuff," because they heard the stories of Noah and the ark and Daniel in the lion's den over and over again, without much depth or application.
 - b. Children can comprehend more in their spirits than you may realize. Include less familiar illustrations in your lessons; present your material in creative ways; and emphasize the spiritual truths in each lesson. Your excitement about the Word and the lesson will be contagious.

9. Remember that children have been exposed to a lot of humanistic philosophy, which makes them the center of their world.
 - a. With that kind of mind-set, it is possible for them to "accept Jesus into their lives," along with a pack of Muppets, Ninja Turtles, and power fantasy characters. We need to emphasize the concept of **Jesus as the center** of our lives, and repentance and faith as essentials to Christianity.
 - b. The children of today have been overexposed to the occult and to fantasy heroes, and it is not their fault. Let us expose them to the Holy Spirit and to Christian heroes.

Why Do We Lose So Many of Our Children to the World?

Some knowledgeable Christian leaders have estimated that in our evangelical and full-gospel churches, 85% of the children raised in Sunday School turn away from the church of their parents and find the world more enticing. It is time for us to take an honest, hard look at our methods and priorities and seek God for biblical answers.

Why could Joshua say, in Joshua 24:15, *"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD,"* and we cannot? In Joshua's day and culture, the family was strongly the center of society and the life of individuals. By divine mandate, there was less exposure to heathen culture. Moses had conveyed the message from the Lord that the Israelites were not to allow their children to mix with the ungodly people of the land, in order to keep them from the influence of idolatry.

Today, our children have been exposed to far more evil than preceding generations.

The average child today watches 5 or 6 hours of television a day, and it is usually all secular. We need to understand that, although there are Christian programmers and networks, the purpose of secular media leaders is not only to entertain, but also to promote a mind-set and lifestyle that is Godless in perspective and ungodly in practice. Even the highly acclaimed educational television industry is blatantly promoting values and attitudes, which openly oppose Christianity. Not only does

the secular media waste so much time, but the commercial format is also designed to create covetousness as a way of life, and to mold us into "consumers", instead of servants.

The family is portrayed as "any group of people living together," and fathers are mocked as idiots. They are literally "turning the hearts of children from the fathers," as well as promoting witchcraft, immorality, drunkenness, and rebellion. How can a Christian father expose his son to 25,000 beer commercials in the context of sports worship, and then be surprised if the boy is attracted to alcohol as a teenager?

Parents would be far more disciplined about what they allow into their homes and minds, if they were fully aware of the deliberate motives of some powerful media leaders to effect major social change and literally destroy the family and the church. One hour a week of Sunday School, and a little family devotional in the morning, cannot compete with the attraction of endless hours of thrills, cartoons, and entertainment, which promise power illusions and pleasure at the flip of a dial.

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes...." (Psalms 101:3)

Today, one philosophy strongly promoted in education is that children need to be exposed to evil so they will reject it and know how to deal with it. This is a false concept. The more you

expose anyone to evil, the more they are attracted to it.

The only biblical way to conquer evil is to focus on good and be drawn to it.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
(Romans 12:21)

You do not win the battle over temptation by focusing on it and struggling with it. You gain victory over temptation when you live for God, obey

His commandments, and pursue good on a daily basis. The key is found in Galatians 5:16:

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Our culture promotes ungodly heroes.

Heroes are very important to children. Who were the heroes in America 30 years

<p>How Can We Develop a Taste for Spiritual Things?</p>	<p>How Are Carnal Appetites Developed?</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead the students to genuine conversion through repentance and faith. 2. Be excited about the Word, godly character, and serving others. 3. Promote good, melodious music. 4. Read about and discuss the godly heroes of the Bible. 5. Teach the children, by example, to "delight themselves in the Lord" and to really enjoy praise and worship. 6. Help the family make God an integral part of daily life. 7. Make a covenant to put God first in your life, and be committed to three church services a week. 8. Make prayer exciting by documenting answers to prayer. 9. Become skilled in areas of service. Study about God and godly people. 10. Honor parents, pastors, and other leaders as God's servants for our benefit, and pray for them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teach the doctrine of evolution and the basic goodness of man. 2. Focus on physical characteristics, appearance, and entertainment. 3. Allow sensual and carnal music. 4. Keep up with new movies, TV stars, and music idols. 5. Separate "fun" times from "spiritual" times, and treat church attendance as drudgery. 6. Try to take care of all the "spiritual stuff" at church. 7. Practice going to church only when you have time and when it is convenient in your schedule. 8. Try to work things out by talking or meditating. 9. Study drugs, rock music, and sex to create a mental focus on them. 10. Be critical of authority figures, and let your children hear you complain about them.

ago? The Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Davy Crockett. Today, children idolize a neurotic Batman, mutant turtles, sodomite rock stars, and a host of occult-based cartoon characters. Christian parents and church leaders need to be familiar not only with Bible heroes and villains, but also with the biographies of great Christians.

Most of our children develop a stronger taste for the world, than for the things of the Spirit.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

This does not say, "Include some Christian training in your family life, and, after the children sow their wild oats in some years of rebellion, they will come back to the Lord when they become adults."

The word "train" comes from a Hebrew word, which means to "touch the palate." When a baby is learning to eat solid food, the mother starts putting some food on her finger, touching the roof of the baby's mouth and causing it to swallow. The analogy relates to taste. The verse really means, "Cultivate a taste for spiritual things in the heart of your child, and as he grows he will not be attracted to the inferior things of the secular world." *"Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good." (Psalms 34:8)*

It is not enough to expose children to part of the Bible message, and then encourage them to "make a decision." Our goal is to impart a thirst for spiritual things, which will continue to motivate them to seek God. A good teacher will

inspire his students to be a lifelong learner. You can be excited about teaching; but, you have not really taught until the children catch your vision. Anyone can get children to recite a prayer. Our goal is to teach them to become praying people. Anyone can recite verses; but, a great teacher inspires others to love the Word and to make it part of their lives.

In our zeal to promote love and gratefulness to God, and to encourage children to accept Christ, we have neglected repentance from sin -- a necessary biblical foundation for genuine conversion.

"Repent, and be baptized ..." (Acts 2:38)

"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2)

"And others ... save with fear." (Jude 23)

One hundred years ago, William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, said, "I fear that the day will come when men will preach heaven without hell, a crown without a cross, blessing without suffering, and salvation without repentance."

"Others save with fear." When we emphasize the love of God and unconditional security, the response of some is, "God really loves me. How can I do anything less than give Him my all?" Unfortunately, others will respond with, "God loves me; so, I am going to heaven. I can sin and get away with it." In our fear of overemphasizing the fear of the Lord, lest we be labeled "legalistic," we have

overbalanced the scale and lost the sense of awe for a holy God.

Many people who were "raised in Sunday School" seem to have a mocking disregard for the great eternal Judge of the universe. Let us be conscious of that delicate balance of truth: the God of everlasting compassion is a "consuming fire." It was God's love that sent Christ to the cross; and it was His holiness that demanded the death penalty for sin.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
(Galatians 6:7)

While it is the goodness of God that brings men to repentance, (Romans 2:4) it is also because of *"the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."* (Proverbs 16:6) The fear of the Lord is not a negative thing. In fact, there are at least 31 benefits listed in scripture which result from the fear of the Lord. It is not a harsh, dark, negative aspect of faith, but rather a *"fountain of life."* (Proverbs 14:27) The fear of the Lord is the awareness that nothing is hidden from Him, and that all of our actions will be judged by a perfect and holy God. It is the understanding that we are "sure our sins will find us out," and that "God is no respecter of persons." We also need to understand that God never changes. We serve the same God that Noah and Abraham served. If we are not careful, we can overemphasize the passive aspects of grace and allow the impression that God is more like Santa Claus, than the holy God of the Bible.

Our message has often been, "Just accept Jesus into your heart."

We base that on an idea taken from Revelation 3:20, *"Behold I stand at the door and knock,..."* which, in context, has nothing to do with salvation. It is Christ's message to the church about spiritual communion. The message of accepting Jesus was important to the Jews, who understood sin, redemption, and covenant; but, their problem was that they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah they were looking for who would fulfill the covenant.

In our Christian culture, we have no problem accepting Jesus as our Savior; but, we tend to have a humanistic mind-set, which rejects His right to lordship. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is not to decide to accept His genuineness, but to acknowledge His ownership. *"The devils believe and tremble,"* (James 2:19) but they do not give themselves to Him.

The Bible does not tell us to "accept Jesus into our hearts." In fact, it says "We are accepted in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:6) He is the one who accepts us into His heart, as we repent and believe. Many young people can get the false impression that Jesus is meekly "waiting patiently in line" in order to persuade us to allow Him an audience at our discretion. We accept Him into our life, to reside alongside our other beliefs, friends, affections, and habits.

In genuine conversion WE become part of HIS life. We are accepted and adopted, and we become part of His world, His domain, His body, and His army. He is the center of it all, and we become excited about pleasing and glorifying Him. In trying to make the gospel so appealing that

all we have to do is accept Jesus, we have produced many who see Jesus as another source of their pleasure, happiness, and success. Humanism makes self the center of our world and allows for religion, as long as it is not a "radical" transfer of affection and allegiance from self to Jesus.

To "accept Jesus into our heart" is not bad or untrue, but be aware of what an unregenerate mind can do with that concept, especially when there is no emphasis on sin or repentance. Remember that our children have been strongly influenced by humanism, which centers life in self and rejects accountability and authority.

The Bible calls us to "make disciples" -- to challenge the self-willed child of the '90's to "deny self," and to take up his cross daily and follow Christ. There are thousands of people in the world today, who are doing their own self-willed thing, and who at one time accepted Jesus in their heart; but, they never really grieved and repented over their sin, and never surrendered their life to Him as Lord.

We have brought sensual music into the church in an effort to attract the youth and to be "relevant."

We have swallowed the line that "all young people like sensual music," and that "it does not matter what style of music you use, as long as it says something." But music is, in and of itself, a language and a powerful communication medium. Music can touch the spirit, move the soul, and stimulate the flesh.

It is important to evaluate music on the basis of principle, and not label any "singing star" or group as ungodly, or evil.

Indeed, part of the problem is that sincere artists are resorting to sensual styles and secular methods in order to imitate the world and thereby reach people. We do not want to judge anyone's motives, especially if they are in Christian work. But we must evaluate the music and look at the fruit of the ministry. What is the long-term effect of a given type of music on the listeners? Do they tend to be mighty in spirit? Are they soul winners? Do they derive their pleasure from the music alone, or is there a genuine joy of the Lord and spiritual power expressed through their music?

Here are a few things to consider in the evaluation of music in the church.

- Taste in music is developed by exposure. Not all teenagers enjoy screaming "head-bangers" costumed in spandex, chains, and Revlon.
- Some styles are carnal, and they draw undue sensual attention to the singer. Breathy vocalizations, "bedroom eyes," and lewd dress are being tolerated in the name of "relevance;" but, what does it produce in the hearts?
- The argument that "it sells" is the doctrine of Balaam. Market share is not a biblical criteria for validity in the ministry.
- Is there an inordinate effort to imitate the sounds and appearance of the secular and satanic world of music, or is the singer responding to the Spirit in making a joyful noise unto the Lord?
- Test the spirit of the music and of the musician. Is there a smile on his face? Is there a message being communicated? Is the music a vehicle

for the Word that will move the heart, or is the music a vehicle for the musician to draw attention and admiration to himself?

- Our goal is to do all we can in order to expose youth to godly music and to cultivate a taste for spiritual things.

The Sunday School movement in America has largely ignored its greatest potential resource: parents.

The family is God's primary means for training youth. Unless parents have a vision for daily devotions, Christian music and programs, and a Christ-centered lifestyle, the little scriptural knowledge we can convey on Sunday morning will continue to be overwhelmed by a flood of secular, sensual, and satanic influences -- through movies, television, secular education, and carnal friends. Our task is to inspire young people to live a Christian lifestyle and walk daily with God, and to influence the parents to reinforce the message of God's Word during the week.

Children can memorize many times more scripture than we have expected; but, they need help from the family to do it, especially young children who do not read. Parents need to memorize along with them. When educators adopt such a philosophy, even kindergarten students memorize and quote chapters of the Bible, not just segments of verses.

To reach and influence the children of the '90's effectively, we must develop a working relationship with those parents who at least care enough to send their children to Sunday School, even if they do not bring them. We need to visit, motivate, encourage, and use written

communications to get them to work with us as co-laborers with Christ, and let them know that we are supporting them in the minds and hearts of their children.

Many Christian families do not have a strong conviction about speaking negatively about other believers.

There are many warnings and reminders in the Bible about our tendency to speak critically about each other. James 4:11 says, "*Speak not evil one of another, brethren.*" The word for "speak evil" is "katalaleo," which means "negative speaking." When we are offended or disagree, it is our nature to complain, or murmur, to people we trust. It is the most natural thing in the world to discuss the sermon or leaders in the church with our spouse. Unfortunately, many children hear these discussions, and then develop the impression that the church is "full of hypocrites," and, "you cannot trust the pastor." Many parents have tossed around their complaints in the car or at home for years; and then, they have wondered why their children were so attracted to the bar crowd, or to their secular friends.

We need to encourage each other to believe and speak the best of one another. If there are misunderstandings or conflicts, go to the person with whom we have the problem and resolve it quickly and quietly. We need to be aware of the subtle effect our grumbling has on little ears.

We cling to outdated methods and materials.

We must realize that we are in a battle for the minds and affections of children. We are up against a world system which

has at its disposal incredible, innovative, sophisticated technology, with massive budgets and manpower, producing an alluring enticement to sensuality, humanistic values, and the occult. We need to know that we have the Holy Spirit, God's love, and His creative power.

Let us be intense in our planning, preparation, and presentation of the message of a better hope, a better lifestyle, and a purpose for living through the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot compete with the occult powers of He-man or Jem with a one-dimensional flannelgraph lesson; but, when you have an innovative, colorful, team-oriented program combined with agape love and genuine enthusiasm, along with the operation of spiritual gifts and sensitivity to their real need, you can compete with the "darkness" crowd. They have the illusion of power; we have God's power. We are in a war, and we can no longer get by without the anointing and creative skill.

The Sunday School can lapse into a routine of singing and lesson presentations, and neglect visitation and personal relationships, which are essential for effective training.

The purpose for dividing the youth department into small classes is not

limited to communicating the message on different levels. Nor is it limited to giving an opportunity for several people to teach in front of groups. Our purpose is to divide into small groups, so that there can be a more intimate and personal level of ministry to the young people. If a School of the Bible teacher sees his "ministry" as merely talking in front of a class, he does not understand ministry. Ministry means meeting needs, whatever they are.

A teacher who never visits the students, or rarely telephones them, is like a pastor who only preaches sermons and has no personal contact with the people. Children need to relate to godly adult leaders, who show that they care for them personally. They need to hear their name, and they need a listening ear, a hug, and a little present that says, "You are very special to me. Here is how you can see God's love, because I am showing you that I love you." Children, who get only a classroom diet of lessons, seldom stay long in the church. Each of us needs to feel loved, appreciated, and needed.

Do Not Send Them Away

"Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat." (Mark 6:36)

We find one of the greatest Sunday School lessons in this chapter. There are several things that every worker needs to learn from these verses:

"The day was now far spent"

(Mark 6:35)

When we look at the signs about us, we must be aware that the "day of grace" is indeed far spent. The night of God's judgment and tribulation is upon the world. We do not have a guarantee of a tomorrow for laboring in the harvest, so we must have an urgency of spirit as we relate to the work of soul winning. Jesus was stirred by the lack of time to work, and we should be as well.

"This is a desert place...."

(Mark 6:35)

Men and women are looking for something to satisfy their spiritual thirst and hunger for reality. People are flocking to the illusion of drugs and to the deceptions of cults, because they do not have the reality or hope that only Jesus Christ can bring. Young people see the phoniness, emptiness, and hopelessness of their predecessors; but, they do not know where to turn. Water is a "type" of life, and relates to the refreshing of God's Word and His presence in our life. When

we live apart from God, we dry up in every area of life. Life becomes merely existence. *"The rebellious dwell in a dry land."* (Psalms 68:6)

"Send them away."

(Mark 6:36)

The only answer the disciples had for the multitude was to send them someplace else. They could not meet the need of the people who came to them. Unfortunately, many churches are in the same condition. People come for help with spiritual problems and resulting emotional and physical troubles, and the church sends them off to secular agencies and unsaved "professionals."

When the disciples came to Jesus, they discovered that He had the answer. When we are in touch with the Master, we can meet the needs of people, because we are His servants and ambassadors. Through Christ we have the supply. The legitimate church is a "storehouse" which can meet the needs. That is what ministry is all about: find a need and fill it.

"Jesus saw much people."

(Mark 6:34)

It is possible for us to be with thousands of people and never really SEE them. We can overlook their real problems and individual needs. God's people need spiritual perception. Jesus told His disciples to *"look on the fields, for they are white already unto harvest."* (John 4:35) They were waiting for some

astounding event to initiate their ministry, or for some great public appeal for their services, but Jesus told them to LOOK. He was telling them that people are ready to hear and respond; and, if you are perceptive, you will know it.

Jesus "...was moved with compassion...."

(Mark 6:34)

The great heart of God was moved with compassion, because the people were scattered. God is by nature a Father and a Gatherer. Jesus was concerned for the people in their need. Today, there is a dearth in the land. Sin is scattering families by divorce and churches by division, and too many church leaders still work mechanically through their programs and politics. Notice that Jesus was moved by the scattered, hurting people. He had compassion, and it motivated Him to give to them whatever they needed.

"He began to teach them many things..."

(Mark 6:34)

Jesus was a teacher. Probably the greatest need in the lives of the people was a teacher, and they were hungry for the truth. Every Sunday School teacher has a tremendous responsibility to teach the truth. Truth is not just a set of ideas; but, it is also the expression of the person of Jesus Christ. *"I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life...."* (John 14:6) We are not just the ministers of the sayings of Jesus, but we are also *"the ministers of Christ...."* (1 Corinthians 4:1) We give Jesus to people. A key element in the ministry team of an effective church is God-conscious teachers,

who give themselves to the spiritual ministry of teaching.

"Give ye them to eat."

(Mark 6:37)

Jesus placed the responsibility on His followers. "YOU give them something to eat." In John 21:15, Jesus asked Peter, *"...lovest thou me? ... Feed my lambs."* Jesus saw a direct correlation between Peter's love for Him and his ministry to hungry people. "If you love me, you will bless my children."

If you and I love the Lord, we will give the world the "Bread of Life."

"...and they sat down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties."

(Mark 6:40)

It is interesting to note that Jesus separated the people into "departments," and then gave each disciple responsibility over a group. They all had a part in the ministry, and none of them was omitted.

A good Sunday School program makes it possible for every worker to have a valid and fruitful ministry. If all of us do our part and minister to our own group, the hungry multitude will be fed. "We are workers together with God."

"...He blessed and brake the loaves...."

(Mark 6:41)

Jesus gave the bread to the disciples. By the Spirit, He took what was available and made it enough to meet the need. We need to be sure that what we are feeding

people is from the Lord, and not from our own imagination, or something we gleaned from the world's "wisdom." Jesus blessed the bread and He gave it to the disciples. We need to remember that if we have any good thing to give, it was given to us by the Lord. *"Freely ye have received, freely give."* (Matthew 10:8)

"...and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments ..."

(Mark 6:43)

When God is our source, He is able to supply more than enough to meet our need. He is also a God of order, and He wants nothing wasted. By multiplying the supply beyond the need, He made an opportunity for the disciples to serve as custodians. A teacher's work is not finished when the class has gone. He needs to be responsible for some maintenance and physical preparation as well.

The scripture makes it clear that the whole multitude was filled. Jesus more than met the need. He is the answer! He is the Bread of Life and the Water of Life. He is preparing us, as His disciples, to distribute the abundant life in Christ to the hungry multitude waiting to hear. Do not send them away. Feed them.

Why Unsaved People Do Not Come to Church

Jesus Christ said, "Go ye into all the world...." (Mark 16:15) He instructed us to "fish" for men. It is our responsibility to compel others to come in and hear the Word. We are commissioned by God to be His witnesses to a lost world; to go where men are; to reach; and to teach.

The motivating drive of Christians should be to win unsaved people to Jesus. We can only win men if we contact them where they are. If we are indifferent to soul winning, we will deteriorate into a religious club, instead of into God's mighty army. We must develop a passion to obey the Lord in His Great Commission.

We are not called to sit back and "hold the fort" until Jesus comes. We are called to be laborers in the harvest, to "occupy" until He comes. Here are some of the reasons unsaved people do not come to church. As we evaluate these reasons, it is clear that much of the blame is ours; and that, if we will respond to the Great Commission, many more people will come to Jesus and discover that He gives "life...more abundantly." (John 10:10)

They are not invited.

Very few of us invite people to church. We invite friends to our home. We invite neighbors to social functions. We invite people to PTA meetings, sports events, or shopping trips; but, how often do we invite unchurched neighbors or co-workers to church? Each year, one out of every five Americans changes residence. Many of them stay home on Sunday, because no Christians have shown an

interest by inviting them to their church services.

They are not welcomed.

It is very difficult for the average outsider to "break in" to the average church group. Most churches are very "close knit." It is good to be close friends with fellow church members; but, if we become exclusive, we miss the blessing of reaching out and growing personally.

We have a natural tendency to like "sameness" -- the same pew, the same songs, the same faces. Often, people who are different (foreigners, people from a different social standing, people with more needs than qualities to offer) are not enthusiastically welcomed in a church.

It is interesting that Jesus spoke of judging "church" people as dividing sheep from goats (Matthew 25:32-33), and the criteria for His evaluation is based on our response to various kinds of hurting, needy people. One major focus of Jesus is our response to the "new guy." "I was a stranger, and you took me in." (Matthew 25:35) A great mark of spiritual maturity is our ability to genuinely welcome new people into our lives; to make new friends; and to love the stranger.

They are embarrassed.

We often embarrass people, who come to church or to a class for the first time, by the way we introduce them or insist that they stand or talk. We need to be sensitive

to their personal response to that. Most people like to be welcomed and blessed by individuals in one-on-one conversation, as in a greeting time, or after the service. However, they are very uncomfortable about being put "on display" in front of a group of people whom they do not know.

They are not made aware of the presence of Christ.

If we are not careful, we can spend a lot of time in non-essentials and over-emphasize our programs, instead of the Lord. People today are hungry for reality. They need to see Jesus and hear the Word of God. They do not need more activity. They need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

They are not attracted.

What is our reputation in the community? Are we known as "The First Church of the Hatfields and McCoys?" Are we seen as a bickering, feuding fellowship, or are we "known by our love?" It is important that Christians do not talk about internal problems with outsiders. The unreached have no desire to become a part of a group which forces them to take sides on issues.

It is also important to keep the building as attractive as possible. If visitors see dirty floors, an unkempt lawn, or a unclean restroom, they will tend to react negatively. The way we care for physical things does reflect the way we feel about ourselves and about our God.

We would also do well to examine our mannerisms carefully and our "worship calisthenics." We are often guilty of doing

things because of habit rather than participating in praise and worship as a true reflection of the heart.

They see too much hypocrisy.

How many times do we ignore people all year, and then invite them to attend church when there is a contest or special program? People often react negatively to Christians when they think they are wanted as a number; or, because we need their money. They also look at our own lives, and sometimes they see our preoccupation with seeking after the same temporal values for which they are seeking.

They do not see us excited about the Lord.

One Christian family was relocated to a new city, and visited a full-gospel church similar in doctrine to the one they had left. Their comment was, "It was a nice church. The preaching was good, and the people were friendly; but, most of them sat in the back pews during the service. We were near the front in a sea of empty seats. We felt self-conscious, and decided that, if they were not excited about being there, we would not be either. We settled on another church down the road."

They do not see that the church can meet their needs.

Sometimes the church becomes too focused on programs and gives the impression that it needs people to meet the needs of the church. Instead, we need to show the world that the church has answers for real problems. In some areas,

there is an exodus from Christian churches to the Mormon religion, because the Mormons are perceived to have a stronger emphasis on family values and relationships. People are hungry for that. "Teach me how to get my marriage healed, and how to handle my rebellious teenager. That is what I really need."

They do not feel that they are loved.

Do we really love outsiders? Too often, we are critical of the unsaved, instead of loving them enough to lead them to the Word of God and to the church. When we are willing to invite and welcome the lost, regardless of their weaknesses, our churches will be filled. Men are hungry for Christ. There is no other real answer to the basic needs and problems in their lives.

The Importance of Repentance

One of the basic motivations among genuinely born-again Christians is the desire to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Heaven is so wonderful; God is so good; and hell is so horrible that we want everyone we know to be saved. We grieve over every soul who dies without knowing God. We agree that it is possible for people to become religious and not really have a spiritual new birth. How do we lead people to a genuine, supernatural, "new creature" experience that will result in a life lived in service and worship to God? How do we influence them to become disciples of the Lord?

Jesus spoke of people in the judgment who will say, "*Lord, ... have we not ... in thy name done many wonderful works?*" (Matthew 7:22-23) and He will say, "*I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*" (Matthew 7:23) There are many people who think they are going to heaven; but, they are not. They call Jesus "Lord," but they "work iniquity." In our sincere desire to see people saved, perhaps we have become too eager to persuade them to "make a confession of faith." We have brought a large number of people into the church who think they have a guaranteed ticket to heaven, because they "believed;" when all they really have done is to assent intellectually to the validity of Christ's messianic claims. Biblically, that is not enough. The Apostle James said,

"Thou believest that here is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19)

God's purpose in the earth is not to create people to populate heaven. His purpose is to have a covenant people, who will live and reign with Him forever. The Bible never says that our part is only to accept Jesus. In fact, it says that He accepts us into His life. (Ephesians 1:6) There are many people who are converts to Christianity; and yet they are not living for Christ. These people have not understood their need for genuine repentance, and live their lives as if to say, "I do not love God; but, I have accepted Jesus into my heart, and I am going to heaven. I am saved by grace, and my works have nothing to do with it. So, I am going to live the way I please and enjoy the world while I am here."

The Apostle Jude warned that ungodly men turn "*the grace of God into lasciviousness....*" (Jude 4) In other words, they would say, "since grace is only unmerited favor, then I can sin and get away with it. God loves me. Therefore, I do not need to fear God."

When Charles Finney preached during the Great Awakening revival in America in the 19th century, he often preached on the fiery judgment of God. He preached that hell is hot and sin is dirty. People went forward to the "mourner's bench," often weeping and wailing as the message was finished. They were under strong conviction, and anxious to be relieved of their burden of guilt. Often, Brother Finney refused to give the altar call, saying, "if you are really sincere, think about it another day, and I will pray with you tomorrow." Historians note that over

85% of his thousands of converts became faithful church members, and served the Lord the rest of their lives. Compare that with the statistic that only 5% of Billy Graham's converts become members of local churches. When asked, "What would you do if you had it to do all over again?" Dr. Graham replied, "I would focus my energies on training leaders, as Jesus did, and not just on mass meetings."

Is it wrong to say, "accept Jesus into your life?" No, not really. That is part of it. But, if that is our only emphasis, it can be dangerous. In recent decades, mercy and love have been emphasized to the point where some have preached and taught an "easy-believism" message. They have made it as easy as possible for people to "make a decision for Christ," and have diluted or eliminated repentance and covenant.

Notice in scripture that Jesus addressed the particular needs of the people to whom He was speaking. When a rich young ruler asked Jesus for the key to eternal life, Jesus said, "give your money away," because that was his problem. He knew who God was, and the principles of covenant with Him, but he loved his money, and that was his only hindrance to following Christ.

What was the basic need of the people in Jesus' time? The Jews had the scripture, and they believed it. They understood the principles of God's lordship and His covenant. They were looking for their Messiah. The one great national problem they had was accepting Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. The rest was already understood. To say to a modern member of a Christian, but humanistic, culture, that "all you need to do is to accept Jesus" would be the equivalent of telling anyone

that the way to be saved forever is to give away all your money. Today, we should probably say to orthodox Jews that they need to accept Jesus into their lives. In our "Christian" culture, where Jesus is accepted by most people as God's Son -- the baby in the manger -- we have many people willing to accept Him as Savior; but, they have not repented of their sins or surrendered their lives to Him as Lord.

Today, many people in our humanistically-dominated society are "consumers." They live for themselves and for what they can get. They are "their own person." If that person is taught "just to accept Jesus and go to heaven," he probably will accept Jesus as part of his life; and then he will go on living for himself, with the sense that he does not need to repent, because everything will turn out all right for him.

Yes, there will be those who will be genuinely born again when they hear the message of God's love, and many others will take advantage of the "offer." Jude taught that for different people, you need a different approach.

"And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling {them} out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." (Jude 22-23)

Many people will never experience true conversion until they understand the fear of the Lord.

The first word of the gospel is "repent," or "turn from sin." God's purpose is covenant, not converts. He is seeking worshippers, (John 4:23) not acceptance. Jesus died to redeem us from our sinful lifestyle, not just from hell. (1 Peter 1:18) In

genuine Christianity, we do not accept Jesus into our lifestyle. Religion is often the practice of living for self during the week, and then making some time for God on Sunday. The other days are for making money, watching TV, and worshipping sports or soaps. Jesus is seen as a gentle Santa, wanting desperately to give us happiness, standing on the perimeter of our lives, "waiting patiently in line."

God is not a gentle Santa. He is still seeking a covenant people. Most people in America will "accept Jesus," mentally or historically. Most anyone would be willing to accept Jesus as their Savior, in order to accept the free gift of eternal life. But Jesus said,

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

In other words, "deny self and become part of the body of Christ, finding your identity in Him and His purposes." We all want a Savior, but do we want a Lord?

Teach a gospel message to any church group and then ask, "who among you would like to be assured of a place in heaven, and would like to avoid hell?" No one wants to go to hell; and yet, Jesus said that most people are going there. When you tell people, "God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to die in your place so you can go to heaven," you are speaking truth. But consider that there are many in our "me-centered" culture who will interpret that to say, "Yes, I believe that I am very important, and that God is waiting eagerly to give me a ticket to heaven." They may accept the deal, especially if there is little emphasis on repentance or turning from their sin to serve God. Is there a legitimate spiritual

birth if there is no conviction by the Holy Spirit, genuine grief over sin, or surrender to Christ's Lordship?

John said,

"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1:12)

First of all, he is speaking specifically of the Jews, who, as a nation of God's people, rejected Christ as the Messiah sent by God. Only those who received Him had the potential to become the sons of God. Note that it does not say, "As many as received Him were the sons of God." Jesus taught us that, in order to receive the benefit from the ministry of any prophet, you first had to receive the prophet. (Matthew 10:41) Unless you acknowledge in your heart that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, your repentance will mean nothing. Secondly, to receive Christ as Lord must be more than just an act of the mind or will, because we can be born again only as God works in our spirit, and the mind and will are part of the soul. To receive Jesus Christ as Lord, you must genuinely repent from sin and turn to God. You cannot continue to "be your own person" and also become the "new creation" God wants you to be.

When you are leading an individual or group to Jesus Christ, look for and encourage genuine repentance. Is God dealing with them about their sin, and do they want to be free? The problem with most people is that we often want to be set free from the consequences of sin, but not free from sin. Our nation is working desperately for a medical cure for the disease of AIDS, and we are not crying out against the promiscuous immorality that is spreading it. We are reacting nationally

to the symptom, and refusing to address the cause. It was much the same with the Jews in Jesus' day. The Jews wanted a messiah who would set them free from Rome; but, Jesus came to set them free from sin. They wanted Him to conquer Caesar, but He came to conquer Satan.

Religion is a function of the soul -- mind, will, and emotion -- but genuine Christianity is a relationship with God through the spirit -- "...and they that worship him must worship {him} in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

Many people are led to accept Jesus emotionally or intellectually; but, that is not saving faith. It can produce good feelings about God, or stimulate hope; but, that is not saving faith. One approach to evangelism is to teach young people "just to accept Jesus," and afterward, when the converts have fears, doubts, and confusion in their lives, reassure them repeatedly that they are saved. But the Apostle Paul said,

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

As a result of true repentance and faith, we will have peace if we have really been born again and have been genuinely justified by a supernatural work of God's grace. We will have a "witness of the Spirit" that we are the sons of God. When a "convert" does not have that peace or witness, we should check his foundation, rather than merely try to "treat the symptoms" and convince him he is saved. Was there repentance? Was there a genuine response of faith to God in the spirit? Was there a supernatural new birth? **There are numerous accounts in**

scripture of people who thought they were in right relationship with God; but, they were not. People who were right with God always knew it; and their works were a testimony to their profession of faith. (James 2:18)

If there is doubt, fear, and rebellion in our converts, perhaps we should not be too quick to minister assurance of their salvation before we check the foundation. The epistle to the Hebrews lists six "foundation stones" in chapter six. They are:

- Repentance from dead works;
- Faith toward God;
- Baptisms;
- Laying on of hands;
- Resurrection from the dead;
- Eternal judgment.

The Hebrew Christians were repeating these basics; and they were encouraged to "go on unto maturity" instead of getting saved repeatedly. Today, many people, who do not have a biblical foundation in their lives, are trying to go on to maturity.

Genuine faith will produce obedience and works. When we lead people to genuine faith in Christ, they will not just use God for "fire insurance;" they will be changed. They not only accept Christ as their Savior, but also as their Lord -- the owner, the one who has the right to make the final decisions. As we "*confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved*" (Romans 9:9) (brought to wholeness, healed, made right). The more we affirm and acknowledge His authority in our lives, the more we will walk in

victory. Sin is the result of our self-centered motivations, as we focus too much on the temporal aspects of life and neglect the spiritual. Sin is always an "I" problem. **Faith is a focus on God and His purposes.**

Genuine salvation involves a spiritual birth by the Spirit of God. There is always conviction for sin and a drawing by the Holy Ghost. Faith stirs in our hearts, and draws us to trust God with our lives, our goals, our dreams, and even our money. We make a covenant with God and seal it with obedience in water baptism. If we are genuinely born again, we would naturally have a desire to hear His Word and love His people. *"Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."* (1 John 4:7) Religion causes people to conform to expectations. True Christianity is a supernatural **transformation**, not a reformation or a conformation. If our lives and lifestyles are unchanged, then we should examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith. (2 Corinthians 13:5)

What is our Great Commission?

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...." (Matthew 28:19-20)

What are the actions commanded? **"Go.... teach.... baptize.... teach."** Certainly there is a place for evangelism. Win souls, and lead them to seal that covenant in submission to God in water baptism. Then *"teach them to do what I have commanded you."* Instruct them. Build their character. Teach them to live godly lives in an ungodly world. As we nurture and train young people, they will naturally become positive witnesses to the goodness of God. People who are genuinely saved and living for God in harmony with one another will be the world's most powerful witness that the Bible message is true.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35)

Section 4

Sensational Sunday School Sessions

The Importance of Scheduling Your Class

Please read this section very carefully! If you are going to be a successful teacher and enjoy an efficient class, it will be necessary for you to schedule the activity of the class.

If you are given an hour to teach the class, take advantage of every single moment. A suggested time schedule follows on the next page. In developing this schedule, both the age and attention span of your students were taken into account. If you will discipline yourself to follow the schedule, you will be able to accomplish all the goals for the class session; keep your students' attention; and minister effectively to all in the class.

There are many advantages to scheduling your class:

1. It makes it easier for you to prepare for the class.
2. It helps you cover much more information in the allotted time.
3. It keeps the class moving and maintains the interest of the students.
4. It allows the leader of the class to involve others in helping with the class. This is one of the greatest advantages of having a schedule. When used effectively, it will help build a strong ministry team. It is also
5. A well-scheduled class will minimize discipline problems.
6. Keeping a schedule will protect the teacher from spending too much time in one area of class activity.

an excellent way to train and involve new workers. To many people, the responsibility for teaching for an entire hour in Sunday School is overwhelming and intimidating. However, helping with a 5-minute segment of the class is much more appealing. Gradually involve new workers in the class. Invite them to lead the song service, or help with the memory verse, or receive the offering. Encourage them to get acquainted with the students and learn how the class operates by observing the class for a week or two before they actually minister. Then, as their familiarity and confidence builds, assign new or expanded responsibilities to them. Before you know it, you will have trained another worker for the School of the Bible!

It is very important to acquaint yourself with all of the suggestions given in this section. Become familiar with each segment of the class and how it is to operate. In so doing, you will become the very best teacher you can be!

Youth Ministry Sophomore Class Schedule

The Sunday morning schedule for the youth ministry is based on a 60-minute time frame. All students and youth workers meet together in an opening assembly for corporate worship and prayer. The opening assembly is approximately 20 minutes long. The students then break into their respective classes, according to grade level.

- 8:55 a.m. Opening Prayer.
- 9:00 a.m. Praise and Worship.
- 9:10 a.m. Offering.
Announcements, Special Music.
- 9:15 a.m. Closing Prayer.
- 9:17 a.m. Dismiss to Classes.

- 9:20 a.m. Sophomore Class Announcements.
- 9:23 a.m. Crowdbreaker, Current Events, Teen Testimonies.
- 9:32 a.m. Prayer Requests.
- 9:35 a.m. Lesson.
- 9:55 a.m. Closing Challenge and Prayer.
- 10:00 a.m. Dismiss to General Service.

Preparation for Class

1. Pray for the class each day during the week as you **plan early** for your part of the class presentation.
2. On Saturday night, go to bed early to get **rested** and refreshed. Be prepared to give your very best to the Lord and to your class.
3. Arrive in the classroom **30 minutes** before the class is scheduled to begin.
4. **Pray** with your co-workers. Be especially aware of any specific needs or problems which may need ministry before the students begin to arrive. Be honest with one another. If you are "not with it;" or, if you are going through a personal struggle which will affect your ministry, ask others to pray for you.
5. **Share** together concerning the plans of each member of the team for the day. Make sure your themes and songs flow together.
6. Review the **memory verse** together. Every adult on the team should memorize the scripture verse before the class begins.
7. **Greet** the students as they arrive, and have some kind of activity or craft prepared to occupy their time while they are waiting. You may want to let them work on the activity sheet for the lessons. Gently motivate them to come early by making it a rewarding time.
8. Be **sensitive** to any child who arrives with a heavy heart. Pay attention to special problems and to things you might overhear.
9. If you see a child who is having difficulty settling down, do not feel aggravated that he might disrupt your presentation. Remember that a disruptive child usually indicates a need for special attention and ministry. He is not a fleshly interruption to your nice program. **He is the primary reason you are there.** The greatest ministry is that which can meet the greatest needs and heal the greatest hurts.
10. Prepare the room; prepare your hearts; prepare the team; and then **start on time.**

Singing with Joy

Goal: To create an atmosphere of joy and to prepare young hearts to receive the Word of God.

Focus: Lively, active songs.

Time Limit: 8 Minutes.

1. We sing to develop a focus on the Lord. Make sure your songs have a valid biblical message, as well as a happy tune and rhythm.
2. Remember to use songs the students enjoy, rather than songs that best relate to you. Slow, quiet songs should be rare for young classes.
3. Always go through the actions with them. Lead with joy and enthusiasm. Get the students involved. Have them move around with marching, jumping, and other actions.
4. Coordinate the songs with the lesson each week. You are working as a team in order to communicate a central truth with songs, Bible study, stories, and prayer. Use different songs each week.
5. See that the musician gets a list of all the songs for the day and knows the keys and chord progressions ahead of time. Make sure the musician knows the songs you want to sing.
6. If you have times when you have no musician available, soundtracks for a variety of song selections can be made and held in reserve.
7. To teach new songs, sing the song over several times for the class, and reinforce the message with a few words of introduction or a related scripture reference. It also helps to have related actions, or even a few pictures for a visual aid.
8. Generally, it is best to begin with lively, happy songs, and reserve any devotional, slow song for the end. It may also be appropriate to use a song to reinforce or conclude another segment of the class. Be sure the song is directly related to the lesson, and not just something to "fill in" or kill time.

Offering and Prayer

Time Limit: 7 Minutes.

The Offering Time.

1. It is important that young people learn the joy and importance of giving. Make the offering a joyful time in the class. Teach them to rejoice in giving to the Lord's work.
2. Set the **example**. Always contribute something to the offering yourself.
3. Let different students have the privilege of collecting the offering.
4. If you are receiving an offering for a missionary, talk about the work the missionary is doing for the Lord; and let the children share in the excitement of the ministry.
5. Occasionally, it is acceptable to let the boys compete against the girls, in raising money for missions.
6. Try to think of a way to receive the offering which will add variety and relate to the mission or to the lesson.
 - a. Example: If the offering is for Mexico, try to get a piñata or a sombrero to hold the offering.
 - b. If the lesson is on Joash, try to get some kind of chest to use to hold the offering.

Prayer Time.

1. Make prayer time meaningful by first giving an opportunity for reports and praise concerning answered prayer.
2. When prayer requests relate to students, workers, or their immediate families, make sure someone writes down the requests and asks each student during the week concerning the need they mentioned.
3. If there are several prayer requests, lead the prayer yourself. Do not embarrass a student who might forget one of the needs.

4. If you have a small class, have each student, at different times, pray a short prayer. Each student can include a prayer of thanksgiving, as well as a petition that is on his or her heart. Note any major need that is indicated, such as "God, help my parents to stay together;" and bring it to the attention of someone qualified to minister to that need.
5. Try to include each student's name in your prayer in some way. Ideally, you should know something about each of them, so that you can pray for them and not embarrass them.
 - a. Pray, "Lord, we pray that you will heal Jason's grandmother..."
 - b. Do not pray, "Lord, help Angela to conquer her mean temper;" or, "God, help Lisa with her bed-wetting." Pray that God will help Angela and Lisa with their problems.
6. Teach the children to talk to God in prayer. Let them know that God answers prayer. Whenever possible, show them the results of prayer.
7. Do not recite prayers. Teach the Lord's prayer to the children as a model of a good prayer.

Teaching with Purpose

- Goal:** To communicate the Word of God with skill and excitement.
- Focus:** One major biblical principle concerning doctrine or Christian character.
- Time Limit:** 8 Minutes.

Key Principles of Good Teaching.

1. Always know the story well, and tell it in your own words. Never read a Bible lesson to your students.
2. Memorize key names, numbers, and facts.
3. Use some kind of visual aid, such as flannelgraph, overhead, large drawings, charts, puppets, filmstrip, costume, drama, or video.
4. Relate to the students personally by asking them about facts they should know. Never say, "Who knows the answer to..." Instead, say, "Billy, who was the..." Make it a goal to use as many of their names as possible during the lesson. Remember that names are very important. Calling on specific students will:
 - a. Draw them into the lesson by anticipating that a question may be directed at them.
 - b. Avoid the answers being monopolized by a few outgoing students.
 - c. Draw out the shy member of the class, and make him feel that he is a part of it.
 - d. Make each student feel special.
 - e. Help you learn their names.
5. As you tell the Bible story, watch the students. Look them in the eye and be sensitive to their response. The temptation will be to preach to them, or to be more concerned about your lesson and delivery than about the people you are teaching. There is a difference between preaching and teaching. A good teacher will make each member of the class feel a part of the lesson presentation.

6. Always keep in mind that, behind every name and set of facts in the Bible, there is a lesson in life and character. Focus on the character strengths and weaknesses that resulted in the conflict or rewards, and show that God is always just and consistent as our judge and heavenly Father.
7. Never embarrass a student. If you are aware that there is only one student who is not born again, why have an "altar call?" Instead, why not purpose to visit the child and perhaps his family, and lead him to the Lord at home; or, talk to him at another time? Never teach a group something that applies only to one if you can minister to that person alone.
8. To receive the respect of those you teach, show respect for them as individuals. Show appreciation for their attendance and cooperation, and let them know that you see them as very special people. Also, encourage them to honor their parents and their pastor at all times.

Story-telling to Touch Hearts

- Goal:** To reinforce the central theme of the lesson with a related story.
- Focus:** A true or true-to-life story that will help create a focus on God and on godly heroes.
- Time Limit:** 8 Minutes.

Key Principles of Good Story-Telling.

1. Always know the story well, and tell it in your own words.
2. Memorize key names, numbers, and facts.
3. Whenever possible, use some kind of visual aid, such as flannelgraph, overhead, large drawings, charts, puppets, filmstrip, costume, drama, or video.
4. Instead of relying on fiction, use stories that are true. Use biographies of great Christians to illustrate the lesson and stimulate interest in godly heroes.
5. Research the geographic and cultural setting of the story. Paint a picture with words which will keep the students interested and stimulate their imaginations.
6. Be animated and expressive in telling the story. You may even want to enlist a teaching team member to help you act out a part of it; or, ask one or two of the students to help.
7. Make sure that your students can draw a definite biblical conclusion from the story you are telling.

Scripture Memorization

Goal: "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalms 119:11)

Focus: Memorize key verses of scripture in order to implant the message in the hearts of students.

Time Limit: 8 Minutes.

Key Principles of Scripture Memorization.

1. Many students have a far greater capacity for memorization than we have recognized in the past. Do not make it too easy, or it will not be a challenge to them.
2. It is highly recommended that you try to motivate the parents to memorize the passages at home along with the children. This will greatly increase the children's capacity to retain scripture, and it could be a great encouragement to families in their home devotions.
3. One tool in memorization is to focus on and understand the concept communicated by the verse. It is easier to memorize by visualizing the verse, rather than by trying to recite a group of words by rote.
4. Talk through the verse; explain the meaning of each major word; and review the overall meaning of the verse.
5. Whenever possible, use visual aids to reinforce the idea in their minds.
6. Repeat the verse often. Then, say it at least in one other way, in your own words. Look up the reference in several other translations, and read them to amplify the meaning.
7. Have the students repeat the verse several times as a group. You may also want to call on a few individuals to recite it.
8. Quiz them on the concepts and key words.
9. Have them meditate a few moments on the verse; that is, to visualize the verse being applied to their own lives and situations.
10. Ask for testimonies that might relate to the principle idea in the verse.

Catechism in Doctrine

- Goal:** To build a foundation of wisdom and understanding of the Word of God, *“line upon line, precept upon precept.”*
- Focus:** A clear and concise answer to a basic question on Scriptural truth.
- Time Limit:** 8 Minutes.
- Catechism:** One of the Greek words in the Bible for “teach” is *“katechéo,”* which means *“to sound down into the ear; to indoctrinate.”* Our word *“catechism”* means *“to teach systematically with questions and answers.”*

Key Principles of Youth Catechism.

1. Familiarize yourself with the list of catechism questions included in this manual for this specific grade level. The objective is to systematically communicate a balanced perspective on the essential truths of God’s Word, according to the vision of the pastor and the leadership of your local church.
2. It is important that we all “speak the same thing.” Probably, all of us believe in the basics, as expressed in the “Apostle’s Creed;” but, we will have some different ideas on less critical issues, especially if we have come from different Christian backgrounds. **Do not deliberately teach something which you know will be contradicted in the pulpit.** Even if you feel you are more accurate in your eschatology or hermeneutics, do not create confusion. Be a servant, and let the children hear a harmonious sound from their different authorities.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and {that} there be no divisions among you; but {that} ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

3. Read the question aloud carefully and deliberately. You may want to read it again, or repeat the thought several times during the discussion. You may also wish to ask for a volunteer to explain his answer; but, be careful not to embarrass him or ignore his erroneous concepts, and thus give tacit approval. Usually, he will be “partly right,” or “close.”

4. Do your homework. Look up scripture references ahead of time in several translations, and know how to answer misinformed students. This will be more critical as you deal with older classes, especially if they have come from different backgrounds. Try to anticipate the areas where questions will be the most likely to arise in their minds, and explain them with scripture in your presentation.
5. If you have questions on a doctrinal topic that you are to present, contact one of the pastors well in advance of the class. A phone consultation will usually be adequate to clarify the position of your local church and give added insights on the topic.
6. Review related questions and answers from previous weeks in order to refresh the students' memories and help build a solid base in their spiritual foundation of truth.
7. Try to think of some kind of visual aid to strengthen their memories. For reading students, at least write the question on a chalkboard or poster, and then add a brief summary of the answer.
8. Each Administrator will be encouraged to review the concepts periodically with the class, or with individual students in order to reinforce the importance of learning basic truths. At the end of the class year, a quiz will be given to the students on the questions assigned to the teaching team for the year.

Section 5

Life-related Stories

Using Life-related Stories

These stories are to be used to supplement the lessons in the Complete School of the Bible Manual. Since neither series has to be used every week, they can be alternated with the catechism lessons. They will add color and interest to the lessons and should have a greater impact on the students than fabricated stories.

This series is not a compilation of the "best," or "greatest" in Christian history. Many of the accounts are from the lives of "everyday" people, who may not have achieved anything spectacular in life, but who did have a particular experience which illustrated an important lesson. Many people are included, because they happen to be known by the writer. Other stories come from the well-documented biographies of famous people.

We want to promote Christian heroes. All of us tend to emulate the people we focus on, and the secular world is busy promoting the popularity and success of many vain, shallow people, whose lives bear little resemblance to Jesus-Christ. When we do speak of ungodly people, we want to put them into the proper context. We not only want to know their public image and success, but also to be aware of their personal disasters and the moral failures which led to their wrong philosophies and choices.

Some of the stories come from the lives of people who were not Christians at all. As we read the Bible, we see a very comprehensive mix of people, ranging

from a sanctified saint to a surly scoundrel. We learn wisdom from both the heroes and the villains of history. We can profit by understanding both winners and losers. The key is the word *understanding*.

We have avoided trying to create another "Who's Who" in Christianity, because the topic is so subjective.

This is a collection of teaching illustrations from the lives of people. Some of them are notable, great leaders, and some are quite ordinary. The most lauded and visible people are not necessarily the most fruitful. When we get to heaven, all of us will probably be surprised to see that the greatest rewards and highest honors go to faithful "nobodies," while the rich and famous of today may have lesser positions. We seek to glean illustrations from the lives of a variety of people. We want to understand the factors that have resulted in a joyful, fruitful life for others, so that we might apply those same principles in our lives.

This collection should also serve as a model for the teacher. Each teacher can glean some stories from his own experiences, or from the experiences of people he knows. Those Christians who are in the habit of witnessing to the lost and reaching out to people will tend to have many more good stories than anyone else. Use stories you know and try to focus on real people and true stories. This takes more research and effort than fictional stories, but it is far more effective.

The Story of "All Hail the Power"

John and Charles Wesley were two of the greatest Christian leaders of eighteenth century England. They were so dedicated to God, and so serious and methodical about spiritual things, that they were mockingly called "Methodists." They were two of the 19 children born to Susannah and Samuel Wesley.

While they had many enemies who were stirred against them by the devil, they also had friends among those who loved the gospel. One of their best friends was Edward Perronet. They had enjoyed many adventures together as young men. There were times that they would travel on horseback through country abounding with robbers and thugs. John, Charles, and Ed would ride through the night, singing in stirring three-part harmony. They felt that their music helped to deter some of the dangers. John Wesley, a small man, seemed to be divinely protected through many dangers. While all three friends were preachers and musicians, John was the most prominent speaker, and Charles was most noted as a hymn writer.

Edward was very conscious of John's ability to preach, and determined that he would never speak in his presence. But one day, in a series of meetings, John Wesley announced that Edward Perronet would preach at the 5:00 a.m. service. The next morning, before a large group, Ed said, "I did not want to preach here today, but I will give you the greatest sermon ever heard." He then proceeded to read the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7, and without further comment, sat down.

It was Edward Perronet who wrote the hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus'

Name," in 1779. The powerful lyrics include:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name, let angels prostrate fall.

Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him lord of all.

Ye seed of Israel's chosen race, ye ransomed from the fall.

Hail him who saves you by His grace, and crown Him Lord of all."

For more than two centuries, this great anthem has endured; and it has inspired the hearts of millions of Christians, as they anticipate the inevitable day when Christ is acknowledged as Lord of all -- when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

Rev. E. P. Scott, while a missionary in India, one day met a strange-looking man who was from a very fierce mountain tribe. The man asked him to go to his people with the gospel; and he decided to go, saying, "I must carry Jesus to them." After traveling for two days, he was ambushed by a war party, who pointed spears at his heart. Expecting to die, he pulled out his violin, shut his eyes, and began to sing his own funeral song. He sang "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." He had sung several verses, when he realized that he was still alive, and he did not hear anything. Cautiously opening his eyes, he was amazed to see the native warriors around him on their knees at his feet. They were responding to the power of the song. They listened to the gospel; and within two years, the entire tribe was saved.

The Story of John Armstrong

John Armstrong was an ordinary man who lived in Indianapolis, Indiana. He lived with his wife, who was a nurse. Mr. Armstrong was not a Christian. He smoked cigarettes and drank, as did most of his friends. When he was sixty-five years old, he was diagnosed by two Indianapolis doctors with cancer of the rectum. They told him that there was no hope for him. As the dreaded disease progressed, it eventually ate away the left side of his hip, and a hole developed through his body. The discharge from his intestines would ooze into this hole in his hip, and his wife had to use her hand to scoop out the material and try to keep him clean. The odor from the awful disease was overpowering, and his pain was unbearable. They used three quarts of warm water each day to try to clean him out, to prevent the spread of infection and decay. He had no appetite, and had not known a night's sleep for many months. He lived in constant pain. The cancer spread through his body, eating through the skin in several places.

Because of his age and overall poor health, the hospital would not even try to operate on him or treat him, except for a few pain pills each day. The doctors sent him home to die, and he was limited to the care of his faithful wife. He used an inflatable rubber ring for sitting, because his rectum was so sensitive that he could not bear to sit normally.

On January 9, 1912, the Armstrongs decided to go to church. They had heard about an evangelist named Marie

Woodworth-Etter, who had great faith for healing the sick, and who moved in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They did not know much about the Bible; but they knew that he was dying, and this was their only hope left.

When the altar call was given, John went forward and knelt. The people laid hands on him and prayed for God to heal him. They tried not to notice the strong odors emitting from his pain-racked body. They rebuked the foul disease in Jesus' name. As they prayed, something like plaster seemed to drop on his back. After fifteen minutes at the altar, all of the pain and soreness left his body. The skin healed over, and he felt like a new man. He was instantly free from the habits of smoking and drinking; and he was also gloriously saved. The rheumatism in his right arm and shoulder was also healed, and he jumped over the altar, taking off his coat and putting it on again. He had not been able to use his arm for some time, and he was thrilled to do such a simple task.

Immediately, Mr. Armstrong's appetite returned. Three years later, he and his wife testified that he had gained twenty pounds, and that he had not had a pain since his healing. He was working twelve hours a day, six days a week, with the joy of the Lord filling his heart. This was one of thousands of miraculous healings recorded from the meetings of Marie Woodworth-Etter, one of the greatest Pentecostal evangelists in America at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Story of Francis Asbury

Francis Asbury was born in Staffordshire, England, in 1745. His parents were gentle, hard-working Christians. They were considered a "middle-class" family. (That means that they were not wealthy, but they had everything they needed materially.) Because of the godly influence of his family, Francis was saved as a young boy and served the Lord faithfully all his life. He developed habits that built up his spirit, so he lived a fruitful life and never played the fool by "sowing wild oats."

At the age of seven, Francis made a commitment to read the Bible and pray every day of his life. He loved church meetings where the Spirit of God moved, and where he could worship God with zeal and excitement. In those days, the most dedicated group of Christians was the Methodists, who were great prayer warriors and soul-winners. Francis Asbury began to work with John Wesley, the leader of the movement.

As a teenager, Francis began his 50 years of preaching. At the age of 26, he volunteered to be a missionary to the colonists in the new land called America. His parents said good-bye to their only son, as Francis sailed off on his two-month, long and dangerous voyage to the new world. He never returned to see them again; but gave himself to the work in America.

Francis began to travel as an itinerant preacher. That means that he did not take a pastorate, but would travel by horseback from place to place and preach in churches, home meetings, or open-air meetings. Wherever he went, people would respond to the gospel message and

receive spiritual instruction. Some people would hate or persecute him, but many genuine Christians would receive him warmly and provide him with a room or a meal whenever they could. His salary was only \$64 a year. He wore shabby clothes, and never owned a home. When he did have money, he would often give it to another preacher or needy person. He never married, but gave his whole life to the ministry.

For many years, Francis Asbury would get up at 4:00 in the morning. He would pray for an hour, and then read the Bible for two hours. During the day, he would study the Greek and Hebrew Bible texts, and travel and preach. When he took a rare vacation, he would only preach once a day. However, he would lead five prayer meetings a day. What a vacation!

Francis endured many hardships in his ministry. He crossed the Allegheny Mountains on horseback 60 times, and often slept on the ground, or on boards. He often went days without anything to eat; and as a result, he suffered great physical distress later in life. For weeks, he had to be put on and taken off his horse by others, but he continued to ride and preach. He poured out his life for others; and as a result, he was often given to times of gloom and feelings of dejection. But God moved through him; and his great joy was to see thousands of aimless people saved by the grace of God. While a friend was giving a home Bible study on the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation, Francis Asbury quietly slipped out of this life to view the city they had been discussing.

A Baptist Speaks in Tongues

William Raiford was glad to return to his home town as the speaker for a revival meeting. He had found Christ as his Savior and had been called to preach, while a detective sergeant on the Tulsa, Oklahoma police force.

But William was a little worried, too. He had experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but his parents were skeptical. They were staunch Baptists. After all, William's grandfather had been a Baptist preacher, and his parents had raised their son in the same faith. Both parents were of Creek Indian descent.

Evangelist Raiford felt that his ministry at Eufaula would be a testimony to his parents. They consented to attend -- mostly out of curiosity, and because their son was the speaker.

One evening, the minister preached on the power of the blood of Christ. Then, he asked those who had physical afflictions to come forward for prayer. To Raiford's surprise, his mother, normally quite shy, was one of those who responded to the invitation.

But something much more surprising was to occur. A member of the church, Mrs. Noland Mott, went to welcome Mrs. Raiford. As they embraced each other, the power of God came upon them, and as sometimes happens in Pentecostal services, they were both prostrated in the presence of the Lord.

After a few minutes, Mrs. Mott rose, speaking in other tongues. Then the evangelist's mother got up, raised her

hands, and began to weep and praise God. Looking toward the audience, Raiford saw his father doing the same thing.

Two things had happened to Mrs. Raiford. First, God had given her a vision of Calvary and the meaning and value of the blood of Jesus. Secondly, as she became conscious of her surroundings once more, she heard her friend Mrs. Mott speaking in the Creek Indian language. The father also had understood.

Both of the older Raifords knew Mrs. Mott to be a white woman who had never before spoken in the Creek language. In fluent Creek, she had been telling them that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was real, that it was of God, and that they could receive it.

Mrs. Mott's daughter, now Betty Lawrence, reports that when Mrs. Raiford heard her friend speak in Creek, she became so excited, her joy was almost more than she could bear. She began to shake Mrs. Mott's arm, exclaiming, "You speak Creek! You speak Creek!"

This incident resulted in a spiritual breakthrough in the community, with 20 to 30 people finding Christ during the two weeks of meetings. The Raifords were among those who received the Pentecostal experience.

From "Spoken by the Spirit"
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The Story of M.D. Beall

Myrtle Manville was born in Lake Lyndon, Michigan in 1894 to a strong Catholic family. She was the fourth of six children. She attended the Catholic school, and was thoroughly taught that the Catholic church was the only way to heaven. She had little knowledge of the Bible, but was trained in Catholic tradition and philosophy.

After a year of college, studying to be a teacher, she went to Hubbel and worked for five years as a store clerk. Her brother then got her a job at a factory in Hamtramck, where Harry Lee Beall was a supervisor. While visiting friends, she casually picked up a Bible on the coffee table and read from the book of Ruth. She felt that God was impressing her to marry Harry, even though he was a Methodist, rather than a Catholic. Harry and Myrtle were married, and had a daughter and two sons: Patricia, James Lee, and Harry.

Myrtle Beall knew her children should learn about God, so she faithfully took them to the Methodist Sunday School every week, while she sat in the vestibule and waited for them. In discussing their lessons, she would sometimes say, "Now I am a Catholic, and I do not believe this; but you should."

While the pastor was away at a minister's conference, the people began discussing his weak points and talked of voting him out. They had seen several come and go, and had never found one to keep them satisfied for more than a few years. As the people were talking, Mrs. Beall was praying, and God gave her a word for the church. He said that they should not seek a pastor, but seek Him!

She shared that word from the Lord with the people, and was herself converted in the same service in 1927. She was thrilled. As a Catholic, she thought she would go to hell for marrying a Methodist. She rushed home to inform her husband that she was not going to hell after all.

One day, Mrs. Beall was praying. It was a cold Michigan day, so she had the gas stove on. As she knelt by the stove in fervent prayer, the Holy Ghost flooded her soul and something amazing happened. She began to speak in a new language. She had never heard of the baptism in the Holy Ghost; but she later found that the same thing happened in the early church, and was part of God's plan and promise to His people who would receive the gift. Later, people would ask her to tell them how to get what she had. She replied, "It is the baptism in the Holy Ghost. Here is what you do. Light the oven, stick your head in, pray, and God will move on you." She later learned that Jesus can baptize a believer anywhere!

Now that she was a "Pentecostal," she was no longer welcome to teach in the Methodist church. She went on to start a Sunday School for the neighborhood children, and then founded the Bethesda Missionary Temple, which for many years has been one of the greatest spiritual churches in America. Mrs. Beall became one of the greatest preachers and pastors in the nation's history, because she continued to pray and hear from God. Her sons James Lee and Harry Beall continue to lead this great congregation today in Sterling Heights, Michigan, where it is now called the Bethesda Christian Church.

The Story of Marguerite Black

Marguerite Black lived in Oberlin, Ohio around the turn of the century. She was a helpless cripple, paralyzed for many years. Some friends decided to take her to a revival in St. Louis, Missouri, where Sister Marie Woodworth-Etter was preaching and healing the sick. That was a long trip in those days. But it was worth it. When the little lady with big faith laid her hands on Marguerite, she was instantly healed. She knew God had worked a great miracle for her; and she gave her heart to the Lord, and served Him faithfully the rest of her life.

Years later, in 1915, Mrs. Black was seriously injured in an auto accident. She was completely paralyzed, and suffered many other complications. Her knee was broken, and she had a running abscess. She was nearly blind, because of cataracts on both eyes. Near death, Marguerite insisted that if she could have Sister Etter lay hands on her again, she would be completely healed.

Her friends discovered that the evangelist was then in Petosky, Michigan, conducting tent meetings. God was moving in great power, and multitudes of people were being healed and filled with the Holy Ghost. People were often overwhelmed by the power of God, and many signs and wonders followed the ministry of Marie Woodworth-Etter. Many testified about seeing Jesus in the meetings, and of hearing instruments being played that were not there. Hundreds at a time could hear the same

amazing sounds. People spoke fluently in languages they had never learned, and even children gave powerful prophecies and interpretations of tongues, as the Spirit of God moved over the great crowds.

Word was sent to the evangelist that this dying woman was being brought to the meeting. Sure enough, when Sister Etter laid hands on the woman, she again rose up and was instantly healed. She got up, and put her full weight on the crushed knee. She began to leap and shout and praise the Lord for another miracle. The cataracts fell off her eyes, and the sores dried up. She was fully healed by the Lord.

God also gave her a sensitivity in her spirit to prophesy. While in Galveston, Texas, Marguerite heard from God that a great tidal wave would strike the city, and that the people should prepare for it. She warned those that she could, and some evacuated their homes. But she had a sister there who became angry with her, calling her a crazy fool. Two weeks after the Word of the Lord came to her, the tidal wave came. The sister lost everything, and nearly lost her life. But she did realize that God does use spiritual gifts.

Later, in St. Louis, God showed Marguerite that a great cyclone was coming, and that she should again warn the people. She urged everyone she saw to seek the Lord, and to prepare for the storm. She saved many lives because of the preparation, and was protected by the Lord through the storm herself.

The Story of William Branham

William Branham was born in a dirt-floored log cabin in Kentucky in 1909. William was an unusual boy. He later said that the Lord visited him when he was just three years old, and again four years later. As a young man, God miraculously healed him, and he believed in divine healing for the rest of his life. He also spent a great deal of time in prayer, and that made him spiritually sensitive.

In 1933, William conducted revival meetings in Jeffersonville, Indiana. They were so successful that he stayed and built a church there, which he called Branham Tabernacle. In 1937, his wife and son died, despite his prayers; and so, he focused all of his attention on his ministry.

William Branham was not a great preacher, nor was he much of a Bible scholar or teacher. Unfortunately, he had been taught the "oneness" theology, which is the rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity. He had been taught to think of God as "Jesus Only;" and this error apparently affected his other ideas about God.

But William Branham knew how to pray, and he was able to clearly hear the Holy Spirit by the word of knowledge, as mentioned in I Corinthians 12. In his crusades, people were genuinely healed, and, by the Spirit, Mr. Branham could speak to people in very specific detail about what they were thinking. Branham could commonly cite not only the person's full name, but could tell them by revelation what their need was. He would say things like, "You did not come for healing for yourself. You are praying for your Aunt Ida in Peoria, who lives at 227

Maple Street, and she has stomach cancer. God is healing her."

William Branham was invited to preach in many cities. Thousands flocked to hear the prophet who had such supernatural signs following. He drove a plain Chevrolet truck, and spent all day in a remote cabin outside of town, so that he could be alone with God.

Branham was one of the healing evangelists that started in the 1948 revival. For years, he ministered around the world; and many have said that in thousands of cases of the word of knowledge, he never missed it once. Unfortunately, people became very enamored with the man, to the point of worship. Many reasoned that since he was such an accurate prophet, he must be a correct teacher, too.

Branham was a true prophet of God, but he was an inaccurate teacher. He did, however, have two good Bible teachers traveling with him during much of his ministry -- Ern Baxter, who is today regarded as one of the finest public speakers and teachers in the world, and F.F. Bosworth, who was a prolific writer and teacher.

In 1965, Branham, Bosworth, and Baxter were conducting meetings in India. In services attended by 200,000 or more, thousands were saved and healed. The prime minister of the nation, Neru, begged them to stay, and offered any facility in the nation for their crusades, even though he himself was a Hindu. "Mr. Branham, all of India is at your feet." But Branham said, "No, we have commitments." They went back to the states, where Branham had a date to go

bear hunting. Branham died soon after that, and Bosworth died later. Tragically, many people still cling to the erroneous teachings of William Branham; and they

make up the false "Branhamite" cult, which has led many people into false doctrines.

The Story of John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom was born in Syria, in the early part of the fourth century. His father, Secundus, was a pagan, who served as the commander of the imperial troops of Syria. He was killed when John was a baby. John's widowed mother, Anthusa, was a Christian who devoted herself entirely to training her son. She lived only for him. She taught him knowledge, skills, and wisdom. She also hired the best tutors to further advance his already excellent education. John studied speech under Libanius, the most famous orator of his day. One day, the great Libanius told Anthusa, "I can no longer teach your son. He is now a better speaker than I am."

After studying philosophy, John turned his full attention to learning the Bible. He sought not only to know about God, but to know God through prayer. John found the presence of the Lord to be the most wonderful aspiration of all, and he became devoted to the true God. For ten years, he stayed in the Syrian desert, a hermit alone with God. The Spirit of God taught him many things as he read and prayed and meditated. When he returned to Antioch, he became a priest. He was such an excellent preacher that the Emperor Arcadius had him appointed to the office of Archbishop of Constantinople.

But not only was John a skilled speaker, he was also a godly man who loved righteousness and hated evil. In those days, many leaders in the church were corrupt, living in wealth as they manipulated and used the people. The priesthood had become known for gross sexual immorality, as well as greed and

political stunts. John Chrysostom spoke out strongly against wickedness, both in the church and in the royal family.

The Empress Eudoxia became very angry when she learned that he was exposing her wickedness. She was an evil woman, given to idolatry and immorality. She declared that he was to be banished from the nation. But the people loved the godly man, and rose in support of the good preacher. With revolt brewing, and powerful earthquake that shook the land, and the empress rescinded her order.

But it was not over. When the rulers consecrated a statue with wild drunken parties, John again spoke out boldly against sin. This time the empress quickly banished him to Armenia. But there, he soon led many people to the Lord; and a spiritual revival came to the land, because of the influence of this man of God. Again, the royal family sought to stop his influence. They were afraid that the preacher would be more influential and loved by the people than they were. In fact, they were right.

Out of jealous hatred, the rulers of the land again sought to stop the preacher. They banished him to the most distant shores of the Black Sea. He was forced to walk through cold, harsh terrain; and his strength rapidly deteriorated. John Chrysostom died in the year 407 A.D. He had lived a good, full life. He was hated and persecuted; but had been loved and admired by many whose lives had been made better because of his life.

The Story of "Come Thou Fount"

George Whitefield was called "the silver-tongued evangelist" by thousands of people in England and the United States. He was perhaps the greatest preacher of the eighteenth century, who, along with John and Charles Wesley, won many thousands of people to the Lord, and saw great revivals in many cities of both nations.

One day, while the great Whitefield was preaching in England in an open air meeting, a young man came, as many did, out of curiosity. He later wrote, "I confess it was to spy the nakedness of the land I came -- to pity the folly of the preacher, the infatuation of the hearers, and to abhor the doctrine. I went pitying the poor deluded Methodists, but came away envying their happiness."

The young man was Robert Robinson (b. 1735); and he became a Christian. He wrote a number of songs, but his most famous one reflected his personal testimony. It was titled "Desiring to Praise Worthily." We know it as "Come Thou Fount."

*"Come thou fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing thy grace.
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some celestial measure,
Sung by ransomed hosts above;
Oh, the vast, the boundless treasure*

Of my Lord's unchanging love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer;

Hither by thy help I'm come.

And I hope, by thy good pleasure,

Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,

Wandering from the fold of God.

He, to save my soul from danger,

Interposed his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor,

Daily I'm constrained to be;

Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,

Bind my wandering soul to thee.

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it;

Prone to leave the God I love.

Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,

Seal it from thy courts above."

Some years later, a stagecoach was traveling across the English landscape. It had only two passengers, who were strangers to each other -- a lady and a man. The woman was reading and pondering a little book, which she referred to often.

The man spent his time vacantly looking out over the landscape, as they jostled along in the coach.

After a while, she turned to him and said, "May I ask your opinion of this hymn? Do you know it? It has been a great source of comfort for me, and has given me much pleasure." When he saw the hymn, the man turned pale, and sought to avoid conversation. As she pressed him for a reply, he burst into tears. "Madam, I am the poor, unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago. I

would give a thousand worlds, if I could enjoy the feelings I had back then." Sadly, this gifted man with a great singing voice had enjoyed the pleasures of success and popularity, but had, like Demas, turned from God to seek the pleasures of the world. The man who was "prone to wander," had indeed wandered from the fold of God, and had sought instead his own pursuits. He ended in misery and despair, because he did not do what he himself had encouraged so many others to do through his great song.

The Story of Bill Gothard's Teaching Ministry

Bill Gothard is today a highly respected Christian leader whose ministry focuses on basic Biblical principles, particularly relating to the family and other interpersonal relationships. He describes his ministry as "teaching parents to get along with their children, and teaching children to respond to their parents."

As a teenager, his life was greatly influenced by the strong convictions of his godly father, who was always eager to witness for the Lord as a hard-working Christian businessman. Bill became a soul-winner; and he learned to work with pastels, so that he could hold people's interest with "chalk talks." Groups began to invite him to speak, because they saw the wisdom in the simple Bible truths he was teaching, and the change that God's Word was making in many families.

Eventually, as his youth work continued to expand, Bill came to the conclusion that to really be effective in the long term in building up young people for the Lord, he had to reach the parents. His goal was to teach young people to understand their parents, and teach the parents to understand their children. He realized that there had been serious breakdowns in communication, and that there was very little in our education to teach us the basic principles that make life successful.

He developed a seminar based on principles of successful life and relationships, especially in the family. He began to show young people that their parents could be their best friends and counselors, and to show the parents how to relate to their children as they began to understand them through God's Word.

Bill never advertised his ministry; but as more and more people heard of this exciting teaching and the strong families it was producing, he was invited to more churches. Then groups of churches in cities would invite him to speak for a week at a time, and the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts was developed.

Bill has given his life to the Word of God and prayer, having remained single to pursue his passion for souls and for strong Christian families. He loves churches and pastors, and always encourages people to be faithful to support their pastor. If someone sends their tithe to IBYC, they will find it returned with the admonition to give it to the local church where it belongs. If you have a conviction, be sure it will be tested. One day, a check came in the mail for \$100,000. The money seemed like an answer to prayer, until they read the letter with it. The man said that Bill had blessed his life, and that he needed to catch up on some back tithes. Bill sent him the check back, telling him that it was his conviction that the tithe belongs to the local church -- the "storehouse" -- and should not go to a para-church ministry. Later, they received another letter from the man. He had given the money to his local pastor, and was so blessed by the Lord that he wanted to send an offering to Bill's ministry. This time it was not a tithe -- it was a check for \$200,000.

Today, the organization is called the "Institute in Basic Life Principles;" and it is influencing the nation with practical insights from God's Word that strengthen the family and the local church with God's wisdom.

Healed in Honduras

In 1973, evangelist Euley Hudson was preaching in Honduras, a nation of mostly poor people in Central America. He was having some wonderful experiences in the city (even with hecklers throwing fireworks into the church), as well as good spiritual results. One of the men there arranged for a special service where his brother lived, in the country.

It was indeed in the country. The mission was in the mountains, several miles away. They were able to ride in a four-wheel drive Jeep part of the way, and then had to go on horseback. Several natives loaned the ministry party their horses, and a large number of the people walked along the rough trails with them.

It was a harrowing experience. Brother Hudson's heart beat rapidly as he saw the horse stepping along the trail only inches from cliffs which dropped off hundreds of feet. It was literally breathtaking scenery from that vantage point. The party followed the mountain trails and crossed streams into the night.

Finally, they came to a river with a fairly strong current. The other horsemen made it across, but the preacher's horse seemed terrified. It would not go into the deep water. Then, a little old lady, who was holding her hand to her side, came up and spoke to the horse in Spanish, and he went on across. The other people swam

the river, holding a set of dry clothing over their heads as they went.

At the little mission, the meeting room was so crowded that the people had to stand shoulder to shoulder. The evangelist preached through an interpreter, and people responded for salvation and healing. One of the people who came forward for healing was the sweet little lady who had helped the horse cross the river. When she had been prayed for, she lifted both hands and began to shout and praise the Lord. For several years, she had suffered severe pain, and had spent most of her time with one hand holding her side. Now, she was instantly healed, after all that suffering.

At midnight, they began the long trip back to town. This time, Brother Hudson's horse had almost no trouble getting across the river. When they arrived at the Jeep, the evangelist wanted to thank the owner of the horse for loaning it to him. He was humbled and embarrassed to find that the little lady who had walked the whole distance was the owner. He asked, "Why did you give me your horse while you walked, when you were so sick, and I was strong and healthy?" She replied, "I knew you were a man of God, and that I should bless you. Besides, I knew God would heal me, and I would be happy to walk back."

The Story of Ann Hutchinson

The story of the Puritans is an important part of American history. Both the Pilgrims and the Puritans were Christian groups who came from England and Europe to escape religious persecution from the established church, which strongly opposed the practice of New Testament Christianity and exercised oppressive control over the lives of the people. The early towns in the colonies were built around the church, which was the center of the culture.

In 1636, Mrs. Ann Hutchinson arrived in Boston with her husband. She had heard the preaching of Pastor John Cotton, and she immediately joined his church in America. Pastor Cotton was delighted with these new members. Ann Hutchinson had a sharp mind and a wonderful personality. She also encouraged the pastor, and loved to talk to him about the Word.

In fact, she just loved to discuss the pastor's wonderful sermons each week, and began to meet with a few other women after the service for that purpose. Her commentary was interesting and inspiring, and soon her home meeting became quite large, and included people from other congregations as well.

Gradually, Mrs. Hutchinson began to include some of her own ideas into her discussions. She began to teach that since salvation was by faith alone, then works cannot be an evidence of salvation. Sanctification had nothing to do with redemption. It sounded so full of grace; but she was drawing people to herself, and basking in the limelight of popularity.

Her teaching began to become more bizarre, until she was renouncing all of the pastors (except Pastor Cotton), because she had decided that they were not truly saved. She said that she had special revelation from the Lord, and had no need to submit to preachers who were beneath her spiritually. She was God's chosen vessel of truth, and her intelligence and personality were God's tools to enlighten others. She had fallen into pride, but she did not know it.

When the pastors finally agreed to try her for heresy, she was very angry. She pronounced a curse on all of them, promising that God would ruin them all for attacking her. She insisted that she knew she was right, because of the special revelation she had directly from God. The court was forced to banish her from Massachusetts. She went to Rhode Island, which was led by another self-righteous maverick who had been disfellowshipped because of his pride: Roger Williams.

History shows that God did not curse Boston for rejecting the proud ministry of Ann Hutchinson. In fact, the record shows that Mrs. Hutchinson's husband died the following year, and the baby she was carrying was born horribly deformed. The child died at birth. Her primary supporter, Mary Dyer, also had a baby who died at birth. Her baby had horns, claws, and scales, and emitted such a horrible odor that the women in the birthing room vomited and had to leave. We note that these were lovely ladies, but the Bible says that "*...rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,....*" (I Samuel 15:23)

While these things do not always indicate the judgment of God, it is

significant that the curse she put on the church did come upon her. The remainder of Ann Hutchinson's family

moved to a remote New England colony, where Mrs. Hutchinson was the first victim of an Indian uprising in 1643.

If I Should Die Before I Wake

It is very important for us as Christians to stay sensitive to the Holy Spirit, because we may be led to share the gospel with someone who is living the last day of his life, and who will never have another opportunity to get right with God.

Euley Hudson is a former car salesman who became a full time soul-winner. One day, the Holy Spirit prompted him to pull into a gas station, even though his tank was full. He went into the garage, where a man was working under a car on a hoist. Mr. Hudson introduced himself to the stranger, and then said flatly, "Are you saved?" He was not; but he was the backslidden son of a Southern pastor, and he knew he was going to hell. He lifted his hands and asked God to save him. The obedient believer went on his way, rejoicing that a name had been added to God's book of life. When the hourly news came on the radio, he heard the report that a mechanic at a service station had just been killed when a transmission fell on him. It was the man Hudson had just prayed with.

Later, while hurrying to the airport, he felt led to speak to another car salesman at a dealership. He began to talk to him, but the man put him off. "I will talk to you about it when you get back from Europe." A few days later, Mr. Hudson called his wife from Europe. She said, "By the way, do you know (the car salesman)? He just dropped dead yesterday."

One day, he again felt led to go to a business place and introduce himself to the manager. As they spoke, the manager's friend came in very depressed.

He said, "There is a preacher here. Talk to him." The man's name was Mr. Perky. He was rich. He enjoyed the "good life" with fancy cars, boats, and women, but he was very unhappy. The preacher prayed with him, but he did not respond.

Mr. Perky was hired by the U.S. government to be an advisor in Vietnam. From there, he wrote a letter to Mr. Hudson. He said, "Dear Reverend. I am here in Vietnam as an advisor. I live in a nice place. I have a Vietnamese woman and much alcohol and tobacco, and I am unhappy. Please tell me how to be saved." The preacher wrote back with step-by-step instructions. The man wrote back, "I have done as you said. I no longer drink or smoke or curse. I do not live with that woman, and I am happy. I am saved. I read my Bible and pray each day. I will be returning soon. I will bring my mother to your church when I get back."

Three days later, the preacher saw a large heading in the Sunday paper, which read, "Perky Dies a Mysterious Death in Vietnam." He immediately went to the home of the man's mother. She lived in a luxurious home, but she was on the floor, crying. Mr. Hudson tried to cheer her up. She said, "Oh, I cannot. My son just died, lost. He was a terrible sinner." Mr. Hudson then read the letter he had just received from her son. As she heard the news, her face lit up, and she began to rejoice and praise the Lord. Her son was not burning in hell as she had thought, but was in the presence of Jesus, because one Christian obeyed the Holy Spirit and went to visit a stranger.

The Story of Yousouf Ishmaëlo

Yousouf Ishmaëlo was a famous and popular wrestler from Turkey, who lived many years ago. He was a huge and powerful man who enjoyed tossing other wrestlers around a ring, to the applause and cheers of the great crowds who admired him. Yousouf seemed to have everything. He had fame, glory, money, pleasure, and robust health. But he was still empty inside, because he did not have the most important thing in life -- a relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. The more things he had, the more he wanted.

He heard about the great wealth that lay across the ocean in the new land called America. He also believed he could prove to all that he was the greatest wrestler in all the world, and he longed to take on America's toughest opponents. In 1897, he sailed to this great country, in order to follow his dream of greater fame and fortune.

His first match was against the former heavyweight champion Evan Lewis. Yousouf defeated him easily; and then he defeated the Greco-Roman wrestling champion, Ernest Roeber. The mighty Turk crushed every top American wrestler. He was praised and adored by the crowds; but the thing that thrilled his heart the most was the money he was paid to wrestle. He amassed a small fortune, and had all the money converted to gold coins and gold bars. He had a special leather belt made with many strong pouches, so that he could carry all his precious gold around his large stomach, under his clothes. It is believed that he never took his belt off. At night, he dreamed of all the fine things he would

buy for himself back in his Turkish homeland, with the gold that bulged around his waist 24 hours a day. He was never without his wonderful treasure -- the gold he so cherished.

After his great triumph in America, he booked passage on the steamship *Le Bourgogne* in 1898, excited about all the great things awaiting him in the new century that was coming soon. But one night, he felt a great jolt in the ship, and heard a crash. The pilot had been careless; and the ship had collided with another vessel off the coast of Nova Scotia. People were screaming and scrambling for the lifeboats, as the ship began to sink into the dark Atlantic ocean. Yousouf was an excellent swimmer; but as he leaped out of the sinking ship and into the water, he had to struggle desperately to keep his head above the water. Suddenly, the precious gold that had been such a source of security and joy to him was pulling down with relentless force. He had to act quickly. He had only to unbuckle his money belt, and he could make it to the rescue boat. He would be saved, if only he could let go of his money.

But that night, Yousouf Ishmaëlo could not bring himself to let go of his treasure; and so, he sank exhausted below the waves. A few fathoms down, his soul left his body as his lungs filled with the dark salt water; and he went into eternity unprepared to meet God. At that moment, he lost his treasured gold -- his idol -- as surely as if he had cast it away. And now he lost his life, as well. He loved his money; and it was the love of money that destroyed his life.

The Story of Tony Kawalsingh

Trinidad is an Island in the Caribbean located just seven miles from the tip of Venezuela, South America. It was named by Christopher Columbus, who saw three peaks and named the island for the Trinity (in Spanish). It was settled by the English, who brought in slaves and workers from India and Africa. The white ruling class was overthrown in the 1950's; and today, the island has its own government, although somewhat socialistic. The weather is always beautiful. Generally, the people are either very poor or very rich. The vast majority, of course, live in poverty. The Indians brought their Hindu religion and the Africans brought the Moslem sect; and these two religions dominate the culture of Trinidad and Tobago.

Tony was a young Hindu who lived in a small village called Prince's Town. He was born into the warrior caste, signified by the "singh" in the name; and his family was raising him up to be a Hindu priest. As a boy, he was forced to be with his grandmother as she faithfully prayed two hours every morning to her false gods. He had been literally dedicated to Satan through the deceptive religion that promised eternal life through reincarnation. Many of the "gods" they worship are actually demon spirits, although they are represented by colorful and bizarre statues of wood or concrete.

As a young man, Tony went out of curiosity to a large gathering where a man named T. L. Osborn was preaching about

Jesus Christ. He had never heard the gospel before; but as he listened, the Holy Spirit moved on his heart, and he repented and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. He had already antagonized his family by marrying a Moslem girl; and now he was to be baptized a Christian. This meant that he was rejecting Hinduism and the priesthood, and his family turned bitterly against him.

Young Tony began to study the Bible and was hungry to learn all he could about Jesus Christ. Although living in poverty, he sacrificed and gave as much time as possible to attend Bible school in a nearby city. The Lord put a call on his heart to preach the gospel, and he began to preach wherever and whenever he could. God confirmed his ministry with supernatural signs and miracles; and he started a church in his home town. Later, with the help of a few churches in America, the congregation built a church building; and they continue to worship there, near the busy outdoor market place.

Today, Tony is the bishop of several Christian churches in Trinidad, and is a highly respected Christian leader whose counsel is even sought by government leaders. Although he has had invitations to move to North America to pastor (as so many Trinidadians do to escape the oppressive poverty and socialistic government), he has dedicated himself to his own people and is doing an effective work as a native pastor and Christian leader.

The Story of the Latter Rain Revival

In 1948, a great revival began at the Sharon Orphanage and Bible School in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, which led later into the great Charismatic Renewal of the 1960s and '70s in North America. Several Christian leaders had joined together under the leadership of George and Ernie Hawtin to begin the "Global Missions" training center. In February, after seasons of prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit fell in much the same manner as the great Azusa Street Revival of 1906, which had led to the development of many Pentecostal churches and organizations in America. There were 42 people in the group.

According to Ern Hawtin, as they met for Bible study, the Spirit of God fell on them. "Some students were under the power of God on the floor; others were kneeling in adoration and worship before the Lord. The anointing deepened until the awe of God was upon everyone." The Lord began to lead one of the teachers to go to one of the students and prophesy about his future ministry. As he hesitated, one of the women present went to the same individual and spoke precisely the same message that had been impressed on his heart. He realized that it was supernatural prophecy, and not just his own imagination.

During the course of the revival there, the Holy Spirit gave prophecies to many people about the events that were to come to pass, both in the lives of individuals and in the church world. Such outstanding future leaders as Violet Kitley and Edie Iverson were among the students in that meeting.

There were also miracles of physical healings. A few of the students decided that they should lay hands on the sick, so they went to the local hospital and asked if they had anyone who was really sick. They were told that there was a man dying of cancer, so they went to pray for him. The man was indeed in the last stages of cancer. The disease had eaten away part of his face, and he was little more than skin and bones. They prayed the prayer of faith, and the man sat up. He said, "I am hungry. I want some eggs." He had not eaten in days, so the nurses were reluctant to give him such food. But he ate. In fact, he ate two full meals, and was soon out of the hospital.

As a result of the move of God, meetings and conferences were conducted regularly at Sharon, and the Hawthins began to publish *The Sharon Star*. The meetings were characterized by the laying on of hands with prophecy, worship which seemed to be joined by "the angelic choir," fasting and prayer, miracles, and other gifts of the Spirit. The emphasis of the teaching was on the restoration of the fivefold ministry (Ephesians 4:11), spiritual gifts, and body ministry in general.

A pastor in Vancouver, British Columbia named Reg Lazell invited the Hawtin brothers to come there to minister at the great Glad Tidings Temple; and the revival came there in a similar fashion. Another pastor who had been seeking God for revival was Myrtle Beall of Detroit. She drove her car to Vancouver (a very long trip to the west coast) and went back to her church to spark the same kind of powerful move of the Spirit which continues to affect thousands of people

today. The Lord told Mrs. Beall to "build an armory" -- a church building to seat 3,000 people. She did, and God moved

gloriously with a revival of daily meetings which lasted three exciting years.

The Story of Oral Roberts

Oral Roberts was born in 1918 in rural Oklahoma. He was born into a very poor, but very loving family. His father was a preacher who dearly loved God's Word. His mother was a Cherokee Indian who knew the power of prayer. She was often called by others to pray for them when they were sick or in need of a special miracle.

As a youngster, Oral Roberts developed the deadly disease tuberculosis. He became very sick and was confined to bed for over five months. At the time of his illness, tuberculosis was a terminal disease. The antibiotics and medicine used to treat the disease had not yet been developed. Oral was so sick and the tuberculosis so advanced that the district judge had signed papers to place him in the state sanitarium.

One day during his illness, God spoke to Oral's sister, Jewel, in a very special way. a "knowing" came into her spirit that God was going to heal her little brother. This word from God burned in her so strongly that she just had to tell Oral about it. When his sister told him, "God is going to heal you," something changed inside Oral Roberts. The doubt and feeling that he would never get well again left. Instead, Oral had hope and the knowledge that God was real, alive and concerned about his well being. Although he wasn't healed that day, Oral "knew that he knew" that God had a plan for his life and that that plan included healing him.

The next night, Oral's father came into his son's room and announced, "Oral I'm going to kneel beside your bed and pray and not stop until you give you heart to God and get saved." His father was true to

his word and prayed diligently for Oral. As a result of that faithful prayer, Oral gave his heart to Jesus that night. As he did, faith grew in his heart as he realized God had forgiven all of his sins.

A few days later, Oral's older brother, Elmer, rushed into Oral's room grabbed him by the hand and said, "Get up, Oral. There's a man praying for the sick in Ada (Oklahoma), and I've come to take you there." Elmer and his wife had been attending the revival meetings of Rev. George Moncey. They were moved as they watched people they knew get healed through the prayers of this man of God.

There was great anticipation as Elmer loaded Oral into the car and drove, with his parents, to Ada. On the way, in a moment of quietness, God spoke to Oral, telling him, "Son I am going to heal you and you are to take My healing power to your generation. You are to build Me a university and build it on My authority and the Holy Spirit." Oral knew he had heard from God and knew he would be healed.

Oral Roberts was the last one to be prayed for that evening. But, as Rev. Moncey prayed for him, he did so with boldness and in the name of Jesus commanded the tuberculosis to leave Oral's body. At that moment, Oral felt a strong warming sensation flow through his body. His lungs opened up, the pain and weakness left and Oral yelled, "I'm healed! I'm healed!" Then, when the evangelist asked Oral to share what had happened to him, the stutter he'd had all his life disappeared! God not only healed Oral Roberts of tuberculosis, but also of stuttering!

Later, when Oral was tested by the doctors, his physician told him, "You're okay, Oral. Just forget you ever had tuberculosis." God had healed him completely!

That was just the beginning of the many miracles God would work in and through the life of Oral Roberts. Rev. Roberts has been faithful to God's call. He has brought the healing power of God to millions of people and built Oral Roberts University, as God commanded him. Oral Roberts has been greatly used of God because he is careful to listen to God's voice and quick to obey God's commands.

God has used Oral Roberts to communicate many powerful truths from His Word. One is the principle of Seed Faith: that God, as our source, returns to us what we give to Him in faith, believing.

Another, is that God is a good God! He is concerned about every detail of our lives, has our best interests at heart and wants to bless us with good things. We can expect good things from God!

To look at Oral Roberts as he was growing up, you might not notice anything special about him. His background and station in life might make you think that nothing outstanding could come from his life.

However, Oral Roberts learned a truth that made all the difference in his life. "God speaks to those who will listen, and when we hear and obey His voice, He in effect becomes the Head Partner with us in the endeavor." When we are faithful to listen to God's voice and obedient to do what He commands, we, too, can expect God to use our lives in great ways.

The Story of Anna Lock

Anna Lock was born in a coal mining town in southern Illinois. She grew up under a drunken, abusive father, and a weary, overworked mother. At 14, Anna ran away from home to work in another town. At 16, she was the mother of a baby girl, and she settled into an unhappy marriage. When baby Jean was 3, Anna left her to find a better life. A well-dressed woman offered her some kind of job in Chicago. They were met there by a black limousine, which took her to the heart of the city. Her new job was to entertain nightclub customers. She found herself in the bitter world of hard drinking, drugs, and prostitution. At night, she would cry herself to sleep, thinking about her beloved baby girl.

Twenty-six years later, Anna Lock was a derelict on the streets of San Francisco. She was taken many times to General Hospital to be treated for drug overdoses. One day, Major Annie Eastwood of the Salvation Army found Anna in a drugged stupor, lying in the street. She took her to the Army headquarters there, where they had to restrain her with a straitjacket. Major Eastwood took Anna's face in her hands and said, "I see something in you that God can use. I see something better than this in your face." Anna never forgot those words.

Anna finally revealed the name of her daughter in Illinois, whom she had neither seen nor heard from for many years. Jean was contacted and asked what should be done with her mother. She sent money, and Anna was put on the train for Illinois, still bound in a straitjacket. When the train arrived,

Anna was carried off by the porter, and given to Jean. She now had a family to care for her, after all those years.

One day, an aunt, who had been praying for Anna for 40 years, invited her to attend a gospel service. Anna went to the altar with tears streaming down her face. She surrendered her life to Christ, and she was completely changed by the grace of God. She even married a respectable man in the community. Jean then asked her mother to take care of her 9-month old baby girl. She became a loving and kind "mom" to her little granddaughter.

Anna then felt God speaking to her about ministry, so she rented a building and began to preach. She eventually traveled throughout the United States and Canada, and saw hundreds of lives changed as she shared her testimony. Anna had spent 26 years of her life in the dark world of drugs and prostitution. She then spent 20 joyful years in the bright world of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

While Anna was conducting meetings in San Francisco, the pastor invited Major Eastwood to sit on the platform with her as she shared her testimony. They had a delightful reunion. While conducting a revival meeting, she died in Macon, Georgia, on November 23, 1951. Her granddaughter, Jane Shoults, is a pastor's wife and the women's ministries director of the Northern Missouri district of the Assemblies of God.

by Jane Shoults
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The Story of Aimee Semple McPherson

Aimee Elizabeth Kennedy was born on a small farm in Ontario, Canada. Her father was a Methodist organist and music director, while her mother was active in the Salvation Army. Aimee's father taught her to play the piano and organ as a youngster. She was a bright and active child, and an excellent student at school.

Aimee was raised with the Bible and had been taught wisdom and character; but she was confused by the teaching of evolution in the public school, even back at the turn of the century. How could God be the Creator, if everything just evolved over a long period of time? Her faith in God was shaken for some time, because she could not reconcile in her mind these conflicting issues.

As a teenager, she attended some meetings, conducted by a young Pentecostal evangelist named James Semple. She placed her faith in Jesus as her Creator and Lord; and she also received the baptism in the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in tongues. She later fell in love with the preacher, and they were married.

Both James and Aimee felt a call to ministry, and they made plans to be missionaries to China. They first went to London, Ontario, and pioneered a church there. Then they moved to Chicago, Illinois, and became involved in evangelistic travels. In 1910, they left Chicago and sailed to Hong Kong. Within weeks of their arrival there, James contracted malaria, and died. Aimee was alone, broke, eight months pregnant, half a world away from home, and still a teenager.

That fall, after her daughter Roberta was born, she went back to New York to live with her mother. She got a job taking tickets at a theater. While there, she met Harold Stewart McPherson, and married him in 1911. McPherson was not a preacher, but a businessman. They moved to Chicago, and Aimee became very active in church work again. They did some moving around, and had a son, who later became the leader of the Foursquare Gospel Church.

The McPhersons had an unhappy marriage, which was compounded by the separate schedules they kept. Harold spent time in cities preparing for her meetings, and she did the evangelistic work. They were divorced in 1921.

Aimee McPherson was a fascinating person. She was a great success in the ministry, in a time when neither women preachers nor Pentecostals were widely accepted -- and she was very much both. In 1922, she developed the concept of relating the vision of Ezekiel to a fourfold picture of Christ. (Ezekiel 1:4-28) She said that the face of the man represented Jesus as the Savior; the lion represented Him as the Baptizer in the Holy Ghost; the ox as the Healer; and the eagle as the soon-coming King. This was the doctrinal basis for the Foursquare Gospel Church, which is a major Pentecostal denomination today, with over one million members.

Aimee McPherson ministered salvation and divine healing to thousands of people in her crusades. She built Angelus Temple in Los Angeles in 1921, which could seat 5,300 people. It was filled four times every Sunday for twenty years. Pastor Aimee wrote dramas, skits,

illustrated sermons, and anything else that would dramatize the gospel. In one service, she drove onto the platform on a motorcycle, dressed as a policeman. Her sermon was entitled, "Stop! You are Going to Hell!" She was the first woman to preach on the radio, and hers was the first

church to own a radio station. Aimee McPherson was a dynamo for God, and a great example of what one woman can do by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. She died in 1944, and her son Rolf became the leader of the Foursquare denomination for the next 44 years.

The After-School Motorcycle Ride

Several years ago there was a young teen-age boy who attended a public high school. It was spring, and the classmates would often spend some time after school at one another's homes. One morning his mother told him, "Jimmy, I have something I need you to do right after school today, so come straight home." He said, "OK, Mom," and went off to school.

After school, one of his classmates was on his motorcycle and said, "Hop on, Jimmy, and come over to my place to shoot some baskets." As soon as he was on the motorcycle, he remembered his mother's request, and he hopped off. Immediately another boy took his place on the motorcycle, and it sped off.

When Jimmy got home, he was upset. His mother had made him come home

and miss a fun time with his friend, and now she was not even there. She must have forgotten. Finally, she came in and said, "I am sorry I am late, but I stopped to help with a terrible accident. Two of your classmates were on a motorcycle, and a drunk driver hit them head on. The boy driving the motorcycle is in intensive care with severe injuries; and the boy on the back had gone almost fifty feet through the air and was killed instantly."

Jimmy was stunned for a moment, and then said, "Mom, I was almost the one on the back of that motorcycle. It was only two or three seconds from the time I got off until the other boy jumped on to take my place. If I had not remembered to come straight home after school, I would be dead now."

The Story of Saint Patrick

Many people in the world celebrate St. Patrick's day on March 17th, having no idea who the man really was. They wear green, and many drink green beer while singing Irish tunes, in honor of someone they only relate to as a name. Actually, Patrick was not Irish; he was not born on March 17th; he was never made a saint by the church; and he never drove the snakes out of Ireland. He also was not a Roman Catholic.

Patrick was born in 389 A.D. on the west coast of Britain. After centuries of severe persecution, the Edict of Toleration had been given, and Christianity was spreading widely. The Roman Empire was weakening, and Barbarians were sweeping through many lands. Patrick was the son of a Roman magistrate who was also a clergyman in the English church. He was a rebellious and willful youth who lived for pleasure.

When the Roman general was called back to defend Rome, Britain was exposed to the Picts and Vandals, and other dangerous groups. It was also vulnerable to the evil Druids from Hybernia (now Ireland), who offered human sacrifices to their demonic gods. Young Patrick and a few friends were playing by the shore. They looked down the beach and saw some rough-looking men, and they ran for safety. But they were captured when they ran into the rest of the group of pirates, who took them and several hundred other young captives to Ireland. Patrick was sold into slavery as the property of a Druid chieftain, who made him feed swine for six long and miserable years.

As a slave in the darkness of his distress, Patrick recalled the teaching of his

Christian father. He began to pray and to cry out to God. In a dream, a voice spoke to him, "Lo, thy ship awaits thee." He escaped, and traveled two hundred miles on foot through the woods to the sea, where he saw a ship anchored. It had a cargo of Irish wolfhounds. When Patrick asked for passage, he was curtly refused. Then, for some reason, the captain changed his mind, and he was invited on board. He sailed to Gaul, and then back to England.

For years, Patrick planned his revenge on the Druids. He planned to bring to them the light of the gospel. After 20 years, he had another vision. He saw a chorus of people, saying "We beseech thee, holy youth, that you would come among us once more." Having been trained and ordained in the ministry, he went back to the dark forests to preach the gospel to the Druids. There, he preached the simple gospel of Jesus Christ. He never mentioned church tradition. He simply preached the good news of eternal salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He crossed Ireland many times, preaching everywhere he went. He baptized 120,000 people personally. (Note that the whole population of the island was only 300,000.) He established over 300 churches. It was not until 1167 A.D. that the forces from the Roman Catholic church came to subdue the Irish church, many centuries after Patrick established an evangelical church movement there.

It was this Christian church that prevented the barbarian hords from conquering Ireland. This was the legacy of Saint Patrick. His favorite Scripture text

was "*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" (Philippians 1:21) To properly celebrate Saint Patrick's day, instead of

wearing green, we should rather celebrate the gospel, and boldly preach salvation wherever we can.

The Story of C. T. Studd in Africa

C. T. Studd was the top Cricket player in England in the 1880s. He was a tall, handsome young man who was idolized by every boy in England, and admired by everyone. His wealthy father saw to it that the Studd boys had everything they could wish for.

But Mr. Studd was saved in a D. L. Moody meeting in London, and Charles (C. T.) finally followed his father's example six years later. He, too, was converted in a Moody revival service. Charles soon decided to give up his life of pleasure and fame, and become a missionary. He persuaded seven of his old college buddies to go with him, and they became known as the Cambridge Seven.

While studying in China, Charles learned of his father's death. He had inherited a large sum of money. But he had just read what Jesus had said to another rich young man, "*...Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor,....*" (Mark 10:21) Charles decided that this was for him. He quickly contacted his lawyer, and sent money to D. L. Moody, who used it to start the Moody Bible Institute. He also gave to George Müller for his orphanages, and to other ministries. In fact, C. T. Studd gave away his entire fortune, while he happily went on serving Jesus in China.

Just before their wedding in 1888, C. T. and his bride, Priscilla decided to give the rest of their money to the Salvation Army, which was the organization to which she belonged. She simply said, "Well, then, we will start clear with the Lord at our wedding." They went on serving the Lord faithfully.

Charles traveled to the United States, where he influenced many college students to pursue the ministry. In 1900, he became a pastor in India, where the climate was much warmer than China. Again, God blessed his faithful efforts with success in soul-winning.

At the age of 50, Studd felt the call to Africa. It was there that he would see his greatest work accomplished. He had no money, but God provided his fare. He endured great hardships, even living with cannibals, but God sustained him. One day, he was very sick. Remembering the passage in James 5 about anointing with oil, he asked a native to pray for him. They drained an oil lamp on him as he knelt, and he was miraculously healed.

Shortly after this incident, Studd began to pray for a dentist to take care of his teeth. He was advised to go to England, but he said, "If God wants me to have new teeth, He will send a dentist." Later, when his daughter and her husband were coming on a boat up the river to see him, they met a fellow Englishman. When asked why he was coming to the heart of Africa, he said, "I am a dentist. I am going to make a set of teeth for C. T. Studd."

C. T. Studd is remembered as the founder of Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, which has been used of God to win thousands of souls to the kingdom of God. In 1931, in the heart of Africa, surrounded by many native Christians he had won to Jesus, C. T. Studd died victoriously.

The Childhood of Maria Woodworth-Etter

One of the great healing evangelists in America was the fourth daughter of Samuel and Matilda Underwood, born in 1844 in New Lisbon, Ohio. Maria's father was a strong, handsome man; but, he was addicted to alcohol. He was considered a fine fellow, but when he was in town, his friends could easily persuade him to drink. He would spend his entire pay at the bar, and leave little for his poor wife and eight children.

The life of a drunkard's daughter was terrifying and difficult. Worse than the poverty and shame was the fear of the man that should have been her protector. Under the influence of drink, he was mean and utterly selfish. By God's grace and the persistent prayers of his wife, Maria's father was finally saved. After finally becoming the good man and provider his family needed, he suffered from sunstroke while working in the field, and he died, leaving his sickly wife to support her large brood of youngsters. Maria and her older sisters, along with their mother, were forced to seek employment outside the home, in order to bring in a meager income to support them. She longed for an education, but was able only to read and study on her own. She spent as much time as she could memorizing the Bible, but was not born again until the age of thirteen.

She became a faithful church attendant, going as often as possible to God's house. She felt God's call to win lost souls, although it was difficult for a girl to imagine preaching the gospel, because that was a "man's job" in those days. Women could be missionaries, but not real preachers. It just was not done.

A few years later, young Maria married Mr. Woodworth. The set out to establish a home in the country, and worked hard to get ahead. But hardships came on every side, and life was difficult. The hardest part of her life as a young mother was to see the loss of most of her beloved children. The Woodworths had six children, but only their oldest daughter survived to adulthood. As their first little boy was dying, he said, "Mama, do not weep for me; I am going to a better world." The next year, baby Freddy died. Their daughter, Georgie, was born again at the age of seven, at about the same time. This was a great blessing to Maria. However, Georgie became very sick, and suffered with a serious illness for eight months. She loved to talk and sing about Jesus, and was completely focused on heaven and eternal things. This eight-year-old girl knew she was dying, but she was not bitter. Through her suffering, she remained radiant with the joy of the Lord, and full of compassion for others. She said, "Mama, if you could go with me I would be so happy. I hate to leave you; but say you will meet me in heaven. I shall be looking for you." Georgie talked about dying, and set her house in order. She gave away all of her earthly possessions, selected her burial robe, and requested that they leave room for her mother to be buried at her side. She was heard frequently to say:

"I am coming Lord,

Coming now to Thee;

Wash me, cleanse me in the blood

Which flowed on Calvary."

Through her sufferings, Georgie continued to invite people to come to her beloved Jesus, so they could meet her in heaven. As she lay dying, she talked on and on about heaven and the joy of the Lord. Her face shone with the glory of God, and she said, "O mama, I see Jesus and the angels. I see my little brothers; they have come for me."

Instead of being bitter, Mrs. Woodworth decided that she had just that many more reasons to be sure to make it to heaven. She eventually gave her life to preaching the gospel; and God used her to bring many souls into His kingdom.

Maria Woodworth-Etter: Altar Calls

Maria Woodworth-Etter was a feisty little lady who was born in Ohio in 1844. She was the daughter of a drunken father, and suffered many hardships as a child. But she gave her heart fully to the Lord, and God continued to develop her love and faith to prepare her for the ministry.

As the wife of Mr. Woodworth, she bore six children, but saw only one of them grow to adulthood. Through the deaths of her children, she drew even closer to God, and more and more determined to meet her children in heaven. Instead of becoming bitter toward God, she became full of love and compassion for souls.

Maria knew that most people would accept only men in the pulpit, and so she resisted God's call. But God continued to deal with her, and she was faithful to share what the Lord gave her to speak. She began by preaching in the churches in her home area, to people who knew her and her husband. God moved with power as she ministered, and confirmed the call with many amazing conversions.

When she was in her late thirties, she did much evangelistic work in Allen County, Indiana, in the many small towns around Fort Wayne. She went to a Methodist Episcopal Church in Monroeville, for example, which had been spiritually dead for years. No one had been saved in the church for some time; and everyone predicted that she would surely fail to see revival there. The church had an old mourner's bench, but it had not been used in ten years or so. But she had them dust it off and put it in the front, and people began to crowd around it,

weeping over their sins and crying out to God for forgiveness.

The church was so dry and formal that Maria saw a need for a special manifestation of God's power. She prayed for God to do something special. On the third day, an old woman fell to the floor, cold and stiff. She seemed dead, but she still had a pulse. She lay there the rest of the day, and people looked with amazement, afraid to touch her. The next day, six other people fell over. One young woman was overpowered by the presence of God, and she was "frozen" with a glorious smile on her face. The people carried some of them home. Later, they all recovered quite nicely.

But one older man refused to respond to the Holy Spirit's convicting power, even though Mrs. Etter preached that death was near for someone. He left the church, cursing, and was run over by a train.

Some time later, during a revival in Syracuse, Indiana, the spirit of conviction again fell on the people. Sinners fell to the floor like dead people, and others cried out for God's mercy. Maria felt strongly that the "death angel" was near. With tears streaming down her cheeks, she pleaded with the people, warning that some would meet death very soon. She was especially drawn to a young lady and her boyfriend who were not saved. God was dealing with them; but the girl explained that there was a big dance in a few days, and she did not want to miss it. She assured the preacher that she would give her heart to the Lord after that.

After the service, the young couple stopped by the lake for a little ice-skating. The ice broke through, and they went to the bottom and were drowned. They went

into eternity without salvation, because they wanted time for just a little more carnal pleasure, before surrendering their lives to Jesus Christ.

Terry Law: Behind the Iron Curtain

Terry Law was born in 1944. He grew up in Canada, in the home of a pioneer Pentecostal pastor. Although Terry knew that the call of God was on his life to preach, he resisted, because he did not want to be poor, and he wanted to seek pleasure. When he was in law school, the prayers of his godly parents overcame his rebellion, and God gloriously saved him.

Terry eventually went to Oral Roberts University, where he was active in the music ministry. In 1968, he was in Europe, traveling with the World Action Singers. They made an unscheduled trip from Finland to Estonia, which was one of the 15 nations in the Soviet Communist bloc. Here, the government was very anti-Christian, and it was illegal for evangelical believers to meet. When Terry and another leader met with a member of the underground church, they were followed by KGB agents. They stood at a bus stop, and as the bus was leaving, they suddenly jumped on, leaving the secret police agent behind. After an hour of evasive maneuvering through the city, they went to a dark room on the second floor of an old building, where they quietly met with some believers. Terry committed himself to doing what he could in this oppressed land.

Later, while ministering in Africa, God spoke to Terry about his promise to minister in Communist countries. In 1972, a letter came from Poland, inviting Terry's music group "Living Sound" to do some concerts at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. When they arrived, they discovered that they were to sing for the leaders of the Youth Communist Party. They were in a large, smoke-filled hall. It

turned out that the leaders had thought them to be a rock band, and they wanted some violent music to entertain their people. It was a fund-raiser for the Party.

After the group sang a few songs, Terry boldly got up and preached Jesus. He told them that Communism was not the answer. They needed God. He was quickly taken to a back room and interrogated for nearly an hour. He honestly thought he would be taken to prison for the rest of his life. The Communists were embarrassed for making such a mistake, but they had sold thousands of tickets, and had to let them back on stage. But they were to sing for the second concert, and not talk.

Terry was allowed back on stage. They began to sing. At first, it was strained and nervous. But as they sang God's praises, they began to weep, and they to lift their hands to the Lord. They closed the set with the song, "God Is Moving By His Spirit." At the end, the audience was very quiet for a few moments. Then, they all stood to their feet and began to clap in unison. They demanded encore after encore. The Living Sound stayed there until 3:30 in the morning, leading many of the young Communists to the Lord.

They discovered the power of praise and worship. God could and did move by His Spirit, as they gave honor and glory to Him. Terry Law has been behind the iron curtain many times, and God has sustained him through many dangerous situations. He has also seen great revival in the underground, persecuted church. He learned that the battle there is a spiritual one, and that God is greater than the devil who binds people with socialism.

The Story of Stuart Hamblen

Back in the 1950's, one of Los Angeles' most popular radio personalities was a rough, hard-drinking, fast-talking, big man named Stuart Hamblen. In those days, much of the music was played live, and Stuart played the guitar and sang. He wrote many of his own songs, including the famous "I Won't Go Huntin' With You Jake, But I'll Go Chasin' Women." Stuart Hamblen was considered a "man's man" -- a regular "party animal."

But inside, Stuart knew that his life was falling apart. His little wife, Suzie had taken about all she could, and his marriage was in trouble. He sounded happy and carefree on the radio, and he was immensely popular with the Hollywood crowd and the people in general; but he knew it was all for show.

One day, Stuart heard about a young preacher who was conducting tent meetings in the area, and was receiving favorable publicity in the newspapers. The preacher's name was Billy Graham. Stuart went to one of the meetings. At the end of the service, he went up to the young evangelist, and said, "Come on my radio show, and we will fill this tent." He did, and they did. Stuart went to another meeting, and Billy Graham said, "There is a person here who is a phony." Stuart believed that he was talking about him.

That night, at 2:00 in the morning, Stuart went to the preacher's motel room and said, "Preacher, I need you to pray for me." Billy Graham hesitated at first, saying, "No, this is between you and God." But he wound up talking with the big man until five o'clock in the morning. Stuart gave his heart to the Lord, and made the commitment to serve Him the rest of his

life. Suzie was thrilled with the changes in her husband, and she became a Christian, too.

But the city of Los Angeles was not so thrilled. Their favorite beer-guzzler was not guzzling, and he was not chasing women any more. His popularity began to decline. Then, when the station demanded that he advertise for a beer company, he refused to compromise his convictions; and he lost his lucrative job.

For some time, Stuart was unable to find work. After enjoying a good income for years, he was now unable to support his family. One day, an old Hollywood friend named John Wayne came by to see him. The famous actor said, "Stu, I hear you are going through some hard times. Have you thought about going back to drinking?" Stuart said, "No, not even a little. I know God can help me through. It is no secret. God can do anything." Mr. Wayne said, "Say, Stu, maybe you could write a song about that, too."

And he did. Stuart Hamblen thought about it, and that night wrote a new song.

"It is no secret what God can do.

What He's done for others, He'll do for you.

With arms wide open, He'll pardon you.

It is no secret what God can do."

For years after that, Stuart Hamblen wrote songs, and became one of the world's most beloved sacred songwriters. He wrote, "How Big is God," "This Old

House," and many other great songs which have encouraged other Christians around the world.

The Story of Handel's "Messiah"

George Frederick Handel was born around 1684. He was one of Europe's most respected opera composers, when he decided to cross the English channel and settle in London. He was twenty-five years old, and recognized as a musical genius. In London, he found further success in establishing opera as a popular means of entertainment. He started a celebrated music school, the Royal Academy of Music, and was the toast of London.

But opera is dependent upon singing stars, who tend to be proud and temperamental. Jealousies and rivalries began to tear apart the opera troops in England, and the rivalries spread into the nobility of the nation. King George II and his son, Frederick, were leaders of two opposing social factions which centered in the opera.

The situation deteriorated for years, until Handel became utterly discouraged, and it came to the point that opera was not effective in London. He lost his position of social favor, and was financially ruined. Handel became convinced that he should forget opera, which was so dependent upon prima dona soloists, and concentrate on the oratorio, which presented music without the elaborate staging and drama that characterized opera. In fact, opera could not be used during Lent each year, but oratorios were pure music, and were considered worship.

Handel wrote some oratorios for choir and orchestra, most of which were based on Bible themes. He had a knowledge of God and the Bible, but probably considered music as his first love in life -- that is, until music failed to bring him happiness and success, as in his younger days.

In 1741, a friend named Charles Jennens, who had provided the basic themes for Handel's oratorio, "Saul," now came to him with a new idea. He wanted Handel to write an oratorio about Jesus, the most sublime subject of history, art, and music. It should focus on scriptural themes relating to the basic purposes of God in redemption. It was not to be an narrative opera which would focus on scenes and events from the life of Jesus. It would be a spiritual feast of the great Biblical concepts relating to the nature and work of Christ. It was to be an act of Biblical worship, praising Christ, the Messiah. Jennens wrote to Handel with the words from 1 Timothy 3:16: "*And without controversy great is the [mystery of godliness]: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*"

Handel took the challenge, and the Scripture verses given, and began to interpret them musically. At previous writings, he would usually write with spurts of inspiration, with much revision and rewriting. Now, the pen flowed furiously, apparently without any hesitation or correction. His servant would bring him food, often finding that the last meal had not been touched. He also noted that the manuscripts were often stained with tears.

Handel, who had suffered rejection in London, wept openly as he wrote "He was despised and rejected of men." In only 24 days, he had written 265 pages of musical score, to be recognized by many as the greatest musical masterwork in all of history. The "Hallelujah Chorus" became the single most popular song in the

history of the world. As he wrote that chorus, he said, "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God Himself." It was here that he used the full orchestra.

For several years, this oratorio lay gathering dust on a shelf. When it was

finally performed in Dublin, Ireland, it was for a charity benefit for the poor. Today, this great masterpiece is still sung every year by the great choirs of the world, and we are still thrilled by the music which was so inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Persecution of Christians Under Emperor Nero

During the time of Christ and the early Church, the world was under the political control of the Roman Empire. The Roman leaders were generally cruel and selfish, and their moral failures eventually contributed to the fall of the great empire. One problem was that too much power was given to the emperor. He could do virtually anything he wanted, and the results were often horrible.

The sixth emperor of Rome was Nero Domitius, who was born in 37 A.D. His mother, Agrippina, was the sister of the emperor Caligula, who had hundreds of people tortured and killed for his own entertainment. Nero's father was a murderer and a crook. After his death, Agrippina married the emperor Claudius, and had her son, Nero named his successor. She then had the emperor poisoned; and her sixteen-year-old son became the ruler of the world. In order to ensure his power, he had his 14-year-old step-brother poisoned. Nero also had his own mother executed, just to be safe.

Nero started out with some good laws, but as he yielded himself more and more to the devil, he became increasingly vile and perverse. Tradition suggests that Nero had the city of Rome burned so that he could rebuild it to suit himself, around a huge statue of himself.

As the people became more disgusted with his wicked and selfish ways, he decided to blame the fire and the nation's problems on the Christians. Nero had the Apostle Paul beheaded, and Peter and his

wife crucified in Rome. He ordered the general execution by torture of many Christians, seeking to destroy the Church. He ordered his garden parties illuminated at night with torches formed by encasing believers in wax and cloth. He had some sowed up in the skins of wild animals, and the set in an arena to be torn apart by wild dogs. He would entertain his court and the citizens by the spectacle of Christians being torn apart in the circus arena by lions and other wild beasts.

Nero, who supported his fat body on spindly legs, suffered from bad skin and body odor. He was an avid artist, poet, and singer, and he loved to perform in drama and opera. Of course, the exits were always closed when he performed. Nero was a young man who was in love with himself, who never learned that there is actually pleasure in doing for others. His life was controlled by evil spirits, who took great delight in death and destruction.

But Nero found that we all reap what we sow. The people finally turned against him in disgust, and so did the Senate and the army. He awoke in terror one night to find his palace guards had deserted, and soldiers were coming to arrest and execute him. He fled in miserable fear to the home of a former servant, and committed suicide at the ripe old age of 31. Nero is a clear example of a life dedicated to the selfish pursuit of pleasure. What would life be like, if you had unlimited wealth and power at your disposal? Nero found out that it ends in misery, when Jesus is not honored as Lord and Master.

The Story of C. T. Studd

C. T. (Charles) Studd was the greatest cricket player in England; and cricket was the national pastime, much like baseball is in America. In fact, cricket is the game from which baseball was developed. *The Cricketing Record* in 1883 said, "Studd must for the second year be recorded the premier position in England as an all-round cricketer." Studd had it all. He was idolized by legions of young boys, and adored by all the ladies. He was rich, strong, handsome, and young.

Charles had it made. His father was a very wealthy and influential sportsman, who spent a fortune every year on racing and hunting. He had a large estate, with great stables. He also felt that his sons should enjoy every advantage in life. They attended the best colleges, and were given everything they wanted.

While at Eton College, Charles was the captain of the cricket team. Later, he would play for the national team several times, and would win the world championship against Australia in 1883. It was that year that he was proclaimed the greatest cricket player in England.

Charles practiced for hours to perfect his skills. He developed the ability to make decisions instantly, and to handle the bat with perfection. He was good, because he could focus all his energy and concentration on the game. He gave himself to the game, and he was the best. Happily, this quality of wholeheartedness carried into his Christianity, after he became a Christian.

One day, while Charles was studying law at Cambridge University, his father

was reading the papers. He noticed several ugly articles written about an American Christian preacher who was conducting some meetings in London. His name was D. L. Moody. Mr. Studd thought, "There must be something good about this man Moody, or he would never be abused so much by the papers." He went to the revival, and was saved.

Mr. Studd was really saved. He got rid of nearly all of his race horses, and cleared out the largest room in his mansion to make room for gospel meetings. Many of his rich friends were born again, but his sons resisted. Six years later, Charles was visiting his dying brother, George. As he watched him day by day, hovering between life and death, he reassessed his life and values. Charles realized that all the fame and wealth meant nothing in light of eternity. He went to a Moody revival meeting, and he also became a devoted Christian.

Charles went to the famed missionary, Hudson Taylor, and offered his services on the mission field. He even persuaded six of his college buddies to make the same commitment. These seven strong and wealthy young men did a great work for God in China, and became known as the Cambridge Seven.

C. T. Studd went on to be a great missionary in China, India, and Africa. His life was full of exciting adventure, as well as the joy of the Lord. He left a life of wealth and fame to seek first God's kingdom; and today, he is enjoying the pleasures of heaven, which will last for eternity.

The Story of Hudson Taylor

James Hudson Taylor was born on May 21, 1832, in Barnsley, Yorkshire, England. His parents were godly Christians; and they dedicated this firstborn to the Lord as an infant. From his childhood, Hudson expressed the desire to be a missionary to the heathen of the world. He was known to tell people that he was going to be a missionary to China when he grew up. He loved to listen as his father talked with other preachers about the things of God. Dad was a pharmacist, but his greatest love was the gospel.

As a teenager, Hudson Taylor struggled with his love for the things of God; and he was involved in many of the carnal pursuits and temptations of youth. When he was 17, his mother went to visit a friend who lived nearly one hundred miles away. While she was away, the Holy Spirit prompted her to pray for her son; and she began to intercede in great earnestness for him. After several hours, the burden lifted; and she knew he was saved.

At home, Hudson had found a tract in his father's library, and began to read it. He was struck with the phrase, "the finished work of Christ;" and he fell to his knees, yielding his life and heart to the Lord Jesus. The impression given to his mother by the Spirit in that distant city was correct. Hudson Taylor was a genuine believer.

In his teen years, Hudson studied chemistry, as his father had done. He became skilled in the medical field; but he also learned to trust God. Many times he had to rely on God's financial provision; and God never let him down. He also learned that Jesus Christ was his Great

Physician. One day, he became infected with some bacteria in the dissecting lab, and became deathly ill. His malady was generally a fatal one. But Hudson cried out to the Lord, and he received a supernatural healing in his body.

In 1853, young Hudson Taylor sailed for China. During the voyage, the ship was becalmed, and drifted dangerously close to a reef. Taylor and three other Christians on board began to intercede in prayer. He then went to the first officer and suggested they let out the sail, for a wind was coming. The man cursed him; but suddenly the wind picked up, and they sailed out of danger.

In China, he fell in love, and began a happy marriage in 1858 with Maria Dyer. It was her faith and love which sustained him through many dark and discouraging times as a struggling, pioneer missionary.

Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission in 1865. Later, he experienced a spiritual transition in his life, which he termed "the exchanged life." Instead of struggling to have faith, he learned to look to Jesus as his Source in life. He began to rest in God's grace, and to respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Instead of working late into the night, he began to go to bed early, and arise at 5:00 each morning to get into the Word and prayer. More and more, he sought to allow God to work through him, rather than seek to work for God. Like George Müller, he felt that he should not ask people for offerings, but rather that he should pray, allowing the Spirit to prompt people to give to his ministry. He lived a fruitful life, and died during his final visit to China in 1905.

The Story of John Winthrop

If we are to accurately speak of the true forefathers of America, then we must include the name of John Winthrop, a great leader of the Puritans who first settled the New England colonies. He was born in England in 1588, and was educated at Cambridge. He owned a large estate in Suffolk, and was an attorney and judge. At the age of 24, he wrote, "I do resolve to give myself -- my life, my wits, my health, my wealth -- to the service of my God and Savior who, by giving Himself for me and to me, deserves whatsoever I am or can be."

In those days, the religion of England was dominated by the official Church of England, which was controlled politically by a group of bishops, and by the king. The church was steeped in dead tradition and liturgies, while the people were generally corrupt. There were two groups in England who were spiritually alive: the Separatists, who decided to have nothing to do with the state church, and the Puritans, who sought to stay in the church and reform it from the corruption. The Separatists were severely persecuted, and became the first pilgrims to emigrate to America.

The Puritans were far greater in number, and were generally wealthier than the Separatists. King James and the ruling Parliament were fairly tolerant of them. But, the reign of James ended in 1625, and Charles I took the throne. He appointed the vicious William Laud to be the Bishop of London in 1628, who took up the practice of severe persecution against Puritans. Charles himself eventually dissolved the Parliament, for he wanted to reign as sovereign king, with no one to answer to.

Fortunately, before the end of Parliament, the Puritans organized the Massachusetts Bay Company, and its charter was passed through Parliament without any mention of where their meetings were to be held. That charter gave them the legal freedom to settle in the New World, where they would be free to organize and to worship God according to God's Word, and not be persecuted by the bishops.

When William Laud became the Bishop of London, a great migration took place. Over the following 16 years, 20,000 Pilgrims left for New England, while 45,000 other Britons left for other parts of the new world. Many went for the hope of prosperity and adventure; but the Pilgrims migrated specifically for religious freedom.

John Winthrop was reluctant to leave England, but he became convinced that God wanted him in New England. He was also encouraged by the inspiring preaching of John Cotton, who also became a prominent leader in America. Winthrop sailed to his new home in 1630. His wife Margaret, stayed in England with one of their sons, John Junior. Number two son, Henry, was with his father on the ship. He was not the obedient son that John Junior was. John Winthrop was hoping that this pioneer adventure would build his deficient character. Sadly, young Henry drowned in a fishing accident, probably before he had surrendered to God.

When John Winthrop arrived at Salem, he was amazed at the poor condition of the town. Most of the people lived in little more than huts, and the noble Puritan "gentlemen" were above physical labor. Winthrop made all the

able-bodied men work, regardless of their station, and he worked hard himself. He was a great organizer, as well as a man of prayer and covenant. He was known as Nehemias Americus, a reference to

Nehemiah of the Bible, because he was God's man to lead the Puritans to build their city as a people of God in the new land, and to put God first in their lives.

The Story of Susanna Wesley

Susanna Wesley was the beautiful and talented daughter of a preacher. Actually, she was not the only daughter. She had 24 older brothers and sisters. She was born in England in 1699, and was a special delight to her father. While still a teenager, she could read and speak Latin, Greek, French, and English. She was a great thinker, and loved God deeply. Susanna was a small and pretty young woman, with the even features and slight build that her son John inherited.

When she was nineteen years old, Susanna married Samuel Wesley. By the time she was 40, she had 19 children. Unfortunately, her husband was a hot-headed and impulsive preacher, who would sometimes go to preacher's conferences at great expense and leave her to take care of the church and the great house full of children. Samuel was well-meaning, but a poor money manager. He was always spending more than he had; and he spent some time in debtor's prison.

Susanna Wesley was far more educated and intellectual than her husband, and flawlessly organized. She was vastly superior to her husband, but she never seemed to notice. She still gave him the place of head of the home, and even referred to him as "My Master." She taught the children to write to him as "Honored Sir," even when they were writing to him while he was doing jail time. She managed the home with clockwork precision, wasting no time. She cared for the children, and taught them at home, spending quality time with each one regularly. Each child had a special time each week assigned to spend personal time with her to talk about his life and his relationship with the Lord. There would

be confession, counsel, and personal instruction in spiritual matters. Susanna Wesley was a disciplinarian. Once a child was one year old, he was never granted anything for which he cried or whined. Each one was taught to work hard and not complain.

Only ten of her children lived to be adults, and they all served the Lord. Three of her sons, John, Charles, and Samuel, became great preachers, songwriters, and evangelists, and were to have a profound effect on the world for centuries to come. Their success and faithfulness to God was clearly the result of their mother's discipline and Christian influence. Her daughter, Martha married a preacher who was a foolish and unstable man. He was morally unfaithful to her, and took in some of his mistresses. Martha did not become bitter, but even helped care for the women and their illegitimate children. She was greatly wronged by his sin, but never lost her peace or her joy. She said, "Evil was not kept from me, but evil has been kept from harming me."

When Susanna Wesley was 73 years old, she was surrounded by her loving and admiring children on her deathbed. As they sang a hymn, her happy spirit took flight. Her son, Charles wrote the epitaph on her tombstone:

*"In sure and certain hope to rise,
And claim her mansions in the skies;
A Christian here, her flesh laid down,
Her cross exchanging for a crown."*

Susanna Wesley will always be remembered as one of the greatest women in history, whose life and ministry

resulted in the salvation of multitudes, and the birth of a great Christian movement.

The Conversion of Smith Wigglesworth

The year 1859 was known as the year of the great Irish revival. God was moving mightily, especially in the Wesleyan Methodist churches. In Wales, Christmas Evans was preaching great evangelistic crusades, in which people were dancing for joy before the Lord as they were set free from sin. The fire of revival had already been sweeping across America for two years, and now England was praying for the same kind of revival. The two most notable preachers in England were pastor Charles H. Spurgeon and evangelist William Booth, who later started the Salvation Army.

In that year of revival, in a humble shack in Yorkshire, England, Smith Wigglesworth was born. His family was extremely poor; and his father would sometimes dig ditches for just enough money to buy a little bread for his four small children.

When Smith was 6 years old, he was put to work pulling and cleaning turnips from sun-up until sundown. When he was seven, he was employed in a woolen mill along with his older brother and his father. The boys and Dad walked two miles to work each day, where they had to work from 6:00 AM until 6:00 PM. From then on, the family was able to eat regularly. It was common in those days for young children to work long, hard hours, many of them unable to learn to read or rise out of the poverty that surrounded them.

As a child, Smith Wigglesworth longed to know God, even though his parents were not Christians. He would often kneel in the field and ask God for help, especially when he wanted to find birds'

nests. He loved birds, and would care for them at every possible opportunity.

His grandmother was a Wesleyan Methodist. When Smith was eight years old, he went with her to a revival meeting in her church. On Sunday morning at 7:00, there was quite a number of Methodists dancing before the Lord around a big metal stove in the middle of the church house. They were clapping their hands and singing:

Oh, the Lamb, the bleeding Lamb,

The Lamb of Calvary.

The Lamb that was slain,

That liveth again

To intercede for me.

As he clapped his hands and sang along, suddenly his spirit understood the new birth. He understood fully that Jesus was the Lamb of God. He realized that Jesus Christ loved him and had died for him. He repented of his sins; and new life flooded into his soul. He knew that he had new life from God, and he never doubted his salvation as he faithfully and joyfully served God for the next 81 years of his life.

Smith loved to go to church; and he greatly desired to give his testimony. But every time he stood up to speak out, no words would come. He would burst into tears and sit down. Finally the men of the church laid hands on him, and the Spirit came on him and set him free. He became a great soul-winner; and the first person he led to the Lord was his own mother.

The Story of Inomata Yoshiko

Jesus called the Holy Spirit "the Comforter;" and a little Japanese housewife found that is indeed His ministry.

The Alan Thomases had been attending the Assemblies of God church in Garibaldi, Oregon, for less than a year. Pastor J. Clifford Murray, who had come to the town of 1500 a few months before, was doing house-to-house visitation. Alan's wife, Yoshiko, was a little Japanese woman who was willing for her 18-month-old Wayne and three-year-old Nancy to be enrolled in the cradle roll department. Later, they attended the Sunday school when the nursery superintendent called for them. At the invitation of a worker, the entire family attended a service. That day, ex-serviceman Alan Thomas was reclaimed, and his Japanese wife found Christ as her Savior.

But it is difficult to move to a new land with its strange language and customs; and the young Japanese woman was often tempted to become discouraged and discontented, even though the family attended church faithfully. Then it was that God the Holy Spirit, during a prayer time at the altar after a service, spoke through an American woman named Mrs. Stocker, who had no knowledge of the Japanese language.

"Inomata, Inomata Yoshiko," the speaker began, praying in a language she had never learned. Kneeling beside her husband at the altar, Mrs. Thomas grasped

the arm of her husband Alan tightly, for she was hearing her own name -- the family name spoken twice, and then her given name "Yoshiko."

A visiting evangelist, Rev. George Davis, had been speaking each night for a week during June of 1955. This particular night, Friday, he had spoken on the subject of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Christians were in prayer, when Mrs. Stocker began speaking in a new language.

Yoshiko listened intently as Mrs. Stocker continued speaking in Japanese. "I have brought you across the waters and over here so you can find Jesus; and happiness is yours, if you will believe."

Mrs. Stocker had been praying in other tongues, when God used her to convey a personal message directly from God, to comfort and encourage the heart of a young Japanese mother far from home and family.

"She is talking to me, she is talking to me!" Yoshiko exclaimed. This was the assurance she needed. Here was her promise of happiness. As she obeyed the admonition, she, too received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

From The Pentecostal Evangel
October 16, 1955
by Ralph W. Harris
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Section 6

Promotions

The Importance of Promotions

Promotions are used in the School of the Bible as a tool, which allows us to excite and motivate our young people to grow in the things of the Lord.

All of us are motivated by rewards. Many companies offer bonus and incentive plans, and even prizes, because they have learned the effectiveness of good promotions. Contests are held regularly in order to entice us to buy a product or to try some new service. The cost of the prize never exceeds the benefit received by the sponsor.

Our children are sold things through promotions at school, on television, and by a variety of sources. If we are going to compete for their attention among these promotions, we must be willing to utilize our resources in order to offer our children a healthy alternative.

Promotions have been used in Sunday School programs throughout the country for years. Although many promotions have, admittedly, gotten out of hand, the vast majority of them benefited the kingdom of God. What is the price of a soul? Is a hamburger too much? Is a trip to summer camp too little? There is no price too high. We must be good stewards of God's money and spend it in such a way that we have the greatest impact on the lives of those He wants us to touch. God does want to reach our young people. He cares for them, and so should we.

Because of our love for our children and our desire to offer them the kinds of incentives necessary to motivate them to

do greater things, we are involved in several promotions throughout the year. Certainly, we would hope that our children would be spiritual enough not to need such motivations to spur them into action. However, we cannot expect them to be any more motivated than we are.

As adults, we demand stimuli all the time. To come to church, many need some special, high-priced speaker or singer. To participate or serve, we need to be recognized and seen for our service. Many, but not all, need constant motivation to do greater things for God.

Along the way, motivation becomes less for the sake of the prize on earth and more for the prize that God has promised us in heaven. Please help us motivate our young people so that, when they are adults, they will need less stimulation and will be filled with more anticipation for the great things God has in store for their lives.

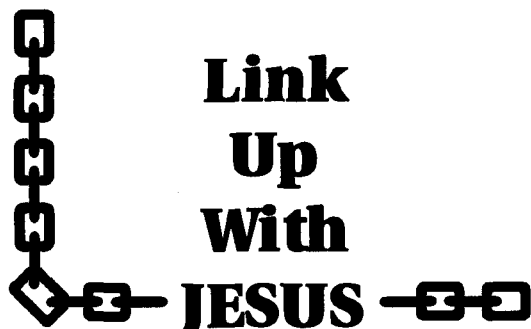
Our promotions are designed to motivate our young people to attend both church and the School of the Bible on a regular basis; to bring their Bibles with them; to bring their tithes and offerings faithfully; to bring their friends to Sunday School on a regular basis; to learn the importance of giving to the needy through participating in the church's emergency food pantry program; and to study and to memorize God's Word.

With these goals in mind, we have designed a set of programs which we plan to promote each year. These programs are

explained on the following pages. They are subject to change and revision; but, the concept of the programs and the basic time of the year during which they will be promoted will remain somewhat constant.

Each class is encouraged to use internal promotions in order to motivate the students to become greater participants in God's work. Bible memory verse contests, attendance awards, and special projects all add to the overall effectiveness of our

program. Special events, such as Christmas and Easter parties, are also encouraged. The church will also hold a "Hallelujah Party" near Halloween in order to provide an alternative to "Trick or Treating" for the children of the church. Change Sunday, when students are promoted to the next grade, is another time to plan special activities in order to say good-bye to one group of students and to welcome the new.



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

The "Link Up with Jesus" promotion is designed to encourage students to memorize Bible verses and to increase the attendance in the Sunday School. The spiritual emphasis of this contest is upon hiding God's Word in our hearts. As we memorize His Word, we "link up" with Him and create a bond that cannot be broken.

This promotion is conducted in the first quarter, and is designed to run for six weeks. Students earn points for attendance, bringing their Bibles, memorizing scripture from prepared lists, and bringing friends to Sunday School.

One of the six Sundays of this promotion is designated as "Bonus Sunday." On this day, students who bring five or more items for the church's emergency food pantry will receive five bonus points. Note: If your church does not have an emergency food pantry, substitute another activity for Bonus Sunday.

Each point the students earn is represented by a link in a paper chain. The more points a student earns, the longer his or her chain becomes.

The links in the chains are made from colored strips of paper. A supply of links will be provided for each classroom. There is a different link for every category in which a student earns points (see samples which follow). Chains should be hung around the room to emphasize the students' accomplishments.

At the end of the promotion, students will receive a prize, based upon the number of links they have in their chain. Every student will receive a prize of some kind. Seven levels of prizes are available. In addition, the five students with the longest chains will receive a special grand prize. A prize will also be awarded to the class which accumulates the highest number of links.

Select prizes of increasing value, and list them on the "Prize List" (see sample which follows). A Grand Prize will also need to be selected for the top five finishers, and a special treat arranged for the winning class (perhaps a pizza party or a trip to an amusement park).

Three weeks prior to the beginning of the promotion, prepared lists of Bible verses will be sent home with the students. These lists will also be mailed to the parents, along with a letter explaining

the promotion and asking them to help their child(ren) memorize the verses.

Midway through the promotion, have the students with the largest number of links in their chains parade through the sanctuary in order to show the congregation what they are accomplishing.

Specific Instructions:

At the beginning of the promotion, write each student's name on a 3" x 5" card. Attach the links of each student's chain to their name card. Affix the name cards to the wall (use Sticky Tack!) or bulletin board in order to display the chains.

A Point Chart must be maintained for every student. Keep these charts in the Secretary's folder.

On the Point Chart, mark the "address" (e.g., Psalms 23:1) of every verse the student is able to recite. Then, write that same address on two links and add them to the student's chain. Use your best judgment in listening to the verses. If students know the verses, but stumble over a few words, give them credit. Be

prepared for some students to learn several verses per week!

To record attendance, write the date the student is present in the appropriate box on the Point Chart, and write their name and the date on one link. Add the link to their chain.

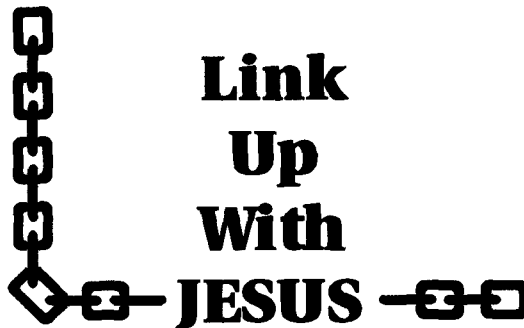
When a student brings his or her Bible, record the date in the appropriate section of the Point Chart, complete the information on the "Brought a Bible" link, and add it to the chain.

When a student brings a friend, record the friend's name on the Point Chart, complete six "Brought a Visitor" links, and add them to the chain.

If a student brings five or more food items for the church's emergency food pantry on the appointed day, place an "X" in the "Qualified for Bonus Points?" box on the Point Chart, and add five links to his or her chain.

If you need additional space to record verses or visitors on a student's Point Chart, attach a second sheet to the original sheet for that student.

**YOU
CAN**



CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

**“Link Up With Jesus”
By Earning Links On Your Chain.**

Bring a Friend to Sunday School <small>Must be someone who has not attended in the last 3 months.</small>	Earn 6 Links
Memorize a Scripture	Earn 2 Links
Attend Sunday School	Earn 1 Link
Bring Your Bible to Sunday School	Earn 1 Link
BONUS SUNDAY: _____	
Earn 5 Links When You Bring 5 Food Items To Help Us Minister To Those Who Are In Need.	

7 Levels Of Prizes Are Available
At The End Of The Contest,
You May Select One Prize From The Prize List.
The Top Five Students Will Receive Grand Prizes.



**Link
Up
With**

PRIZE LIST

JESUS

LEVEL #1 24 Links	
LEVEL #2 36 Links	
LEVEL #3 52 Links	
LEVEL #4 70 Links	
LEVEL #5 100 Links	
LEVEL #6 150 Links	
LEVEL #7 200 Links	
Grand Prize Top 5 Students	

Christ Commands Us

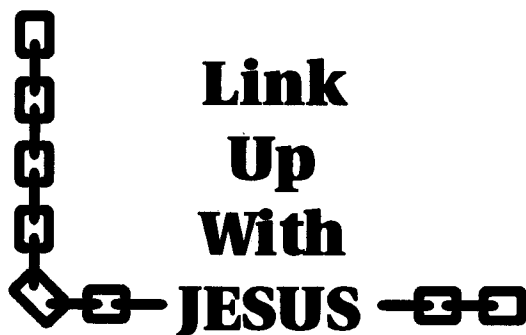
"... Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matt. 25:40

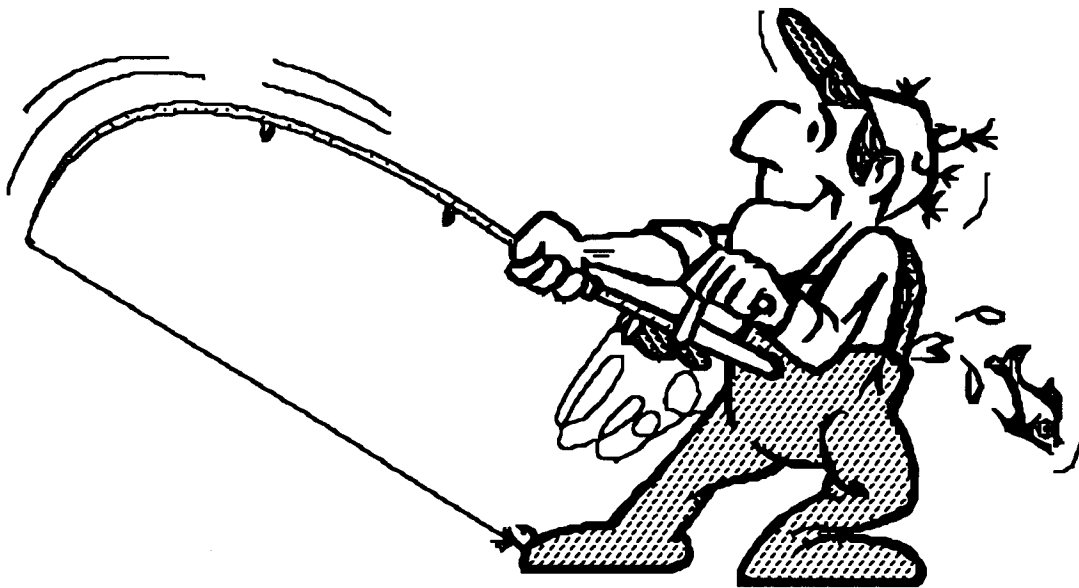
We can fulfill the command of our Lord by ministering to those who are in need.



Bring a minimum of 5 grocery items on _____ to your Sunday School classroom, and you will receive 5 links for your chain. You can "Link up with Jesus" and help us reach out to others.



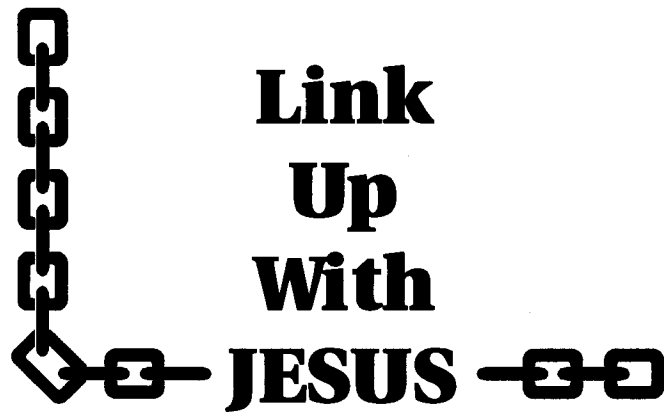
You can't catch fish unless you have the right bait



Spend time this week learning God's Word so you can have the "Right Bait" to catch the biggest fish of all: a person who needs to know Jesus.

**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

You can earn valuable prizes by learning God's Word and by bringing your friends to Sunday School. Start today, and together we can become "fishers of men".



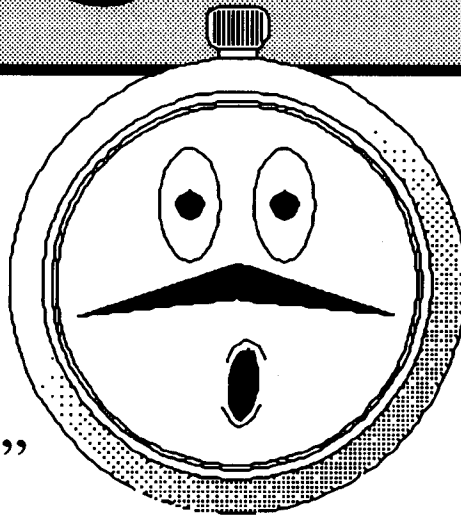
**Time is
getting short**

There Are Only



Weeks Left
In The

“Link Up With Jesus”
Promotion!



**Remember To Bring A Friend And
Learn Your Memory Verses.
Together We Can “Link Up With Jesus”**



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

NAME _____

CLASS _____

Point Chart

Memory Verses Learned

Record the verse "address," below.

Award 2 links per verse.

Attendance

Record the dates in attendance, below. Award 1 link.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Brought the Bible

Record the dates a Bible was brought, below. Award 1 link.

--	--	--	--	--	--

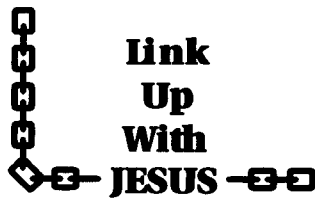
Brought a Friend

Record the name(s) of the friends, below. Award 6 links.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Qualified for Bonus Points?

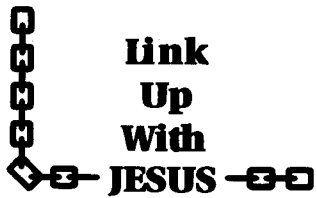
Award 5 links.



Brought a Visitor

Name _____

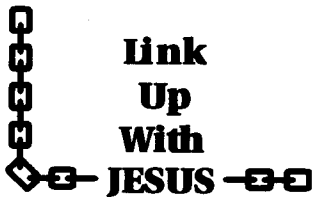
Date _____



Brought a Visitor

Name _____

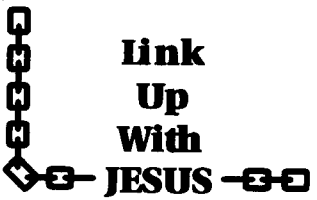
Date _____



Brought a Visitor

Name _____

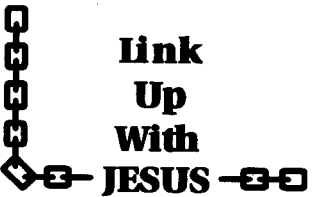
Date _____



Brought a Visitor

Name _____

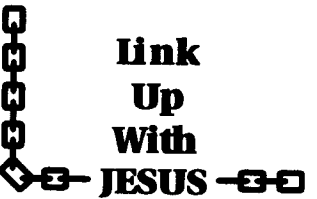
Date _____



Brought a Visitor

Name _____

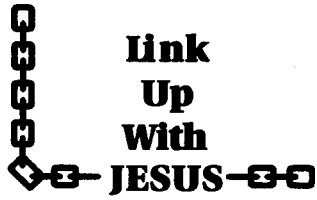
Date _____



Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____

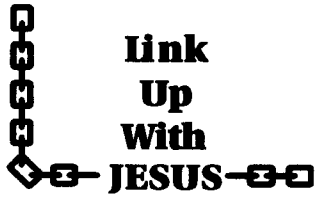


**Link
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With**

Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____

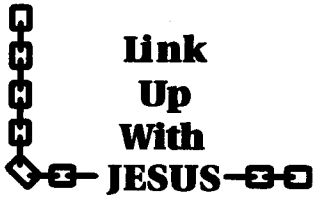


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Verse: _____

Name _____

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**Link
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With**

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Name _____

Date _____

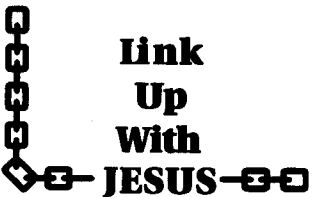


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Verse: _____

Name _____

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**Link
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**Link
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Verse: _____

Name _____

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Attendance

Name _____

Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

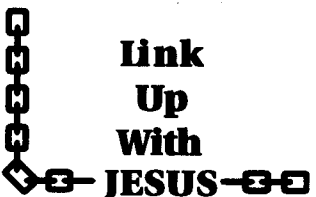
Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

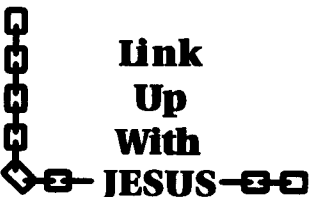
Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

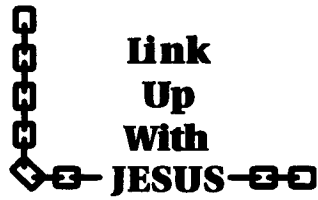
Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

Date _____

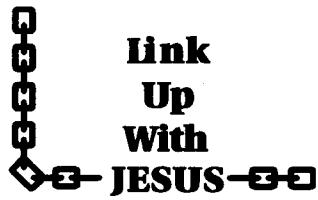


**Link
Up
With**

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____

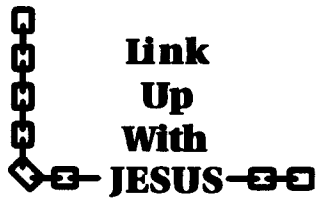


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With**

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____

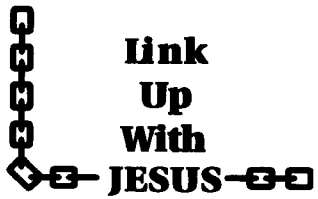


**Link
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Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
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Name _____

Date _____

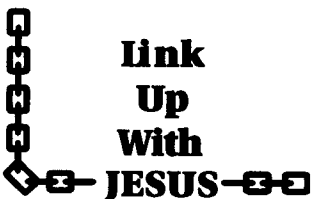


**Link
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With**

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With**

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____

Fuel *Flame*

The "Fuel the Flame" promotion is centered around the Day of Pentecost. The students "fuel" the flame by bringing their friends to Sunday School. Reaching out to others is the heart of the work of the Holy Spirit. When we emphasize the importance of sharing Christ with others and invite them to church where God can touch their lives, young people will respond to the spiritual aspects of this program.

This promotion is designed to be conducted for six weeks, during the second quarter. When possible, it will include the special days of Easter, Pentecost Sunday, and Mothers' Day. Because Easter falls on a different Sunday each year, it may not always be possible to include all three special days in this promotion. Including Mothers' Day in this promotion gives a parent, or a close relative, an opportunity to become acquainted with the Sunday School.

As an incentive, points are awarded to the students for attendance, for memorizing Bible verses, and for bringing their Bibles, their offerings, and their mothers to Sunday School.

To reach the first goal, each student is required to bring at least two people to Sunday School. Additional points will be awarded to the students as they bring other friends, and they will be advanced to higher goal levels.

The prize for each goal level is a discount on the fees for one week at summer camp. Students who earn a total of 55 points will qualify for a discount of \$25.00 on their camp fees for one week. Those who earn 80 points will receive a \$50.00 discount, and those who accumulate a total of 120 points will qualify to have their camp fees for one week paid in full.

In addition to these awards, the five students who earn the highest number of points overall will receive an all-expense-paid trip to an amusement park.

During the six weeks of this "Fuel the Flame" promotion, flyers will be distributed to all of the students. Each flyer will contain a different message. Four of the flyers will be mailed to the students' parents, asking for their cooperation. Announcements will also be made from the pulpit and in the church newsletter.

Each week, the children will be encouraged to fill in their "Flame Thermometer." As the promotion progresses, letters will be sent to the top 10 students and, in the last weeks, to the top 20 students in order to encourage them to continue to bring their friends to church.

"Fuel the Flame" has proved to be a successful promotion. It has effectively increased Sunday School attendance, and it has had a positive, spiritual impact on the lives of the students. For children who otherwise may not be able to attend camp,

it provides a way for them to earn their camp fees.

Each week, a Point Tally sheet is completed to record the points earned by each student during that week. Points for attendance will be awarded to each student in the class. Each week, these Point Tally Sheets and your attendance record must be taken to the Department Secretary.

You may also use a Re-Cap Sheet to keep a running total of the points earned

by the students in your class. Keep this Re-Cap Sheet in your Secretary's folder.

After you complete the Weekly Report form, it should be taken to the Department Secretary.

The Flame Thermometers must be filled in each week by the students with red crayons or markers. Please post these forms on a bulletin board or in another conspicuous place.

Fuel the Flame

CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

Catch the Spirit of Pentecost

Help Us "Fuel the Flame" by Reaching Out and Sharing the Word of God with the World.

YOU RECEIVE POINTS FOR THE FOLLOWING

Bringing Your Bible:	1	Bringing a Friend, 2nd Time:	15
Attendance:	2	Bringing a Friend, 3rd Time +:	5
Bringing an Offering:	2	Bringing Your Mother,	
Memorizing a Bible Verse:	2	Grandmother, Guardian	
Bringing a Friend, 1st Time:	10	on Mother's Day:	10

(Visitors who have attended during the last 6 months do not qualify.)

P R I Z E S	GOAL #1 PRIZE When You Earn 55 Points	
	GOAL #2 PRIZE When You Earn 80 Points	
	GOAL #3 PRIZE When You Earn 120 Points	
	GRAND PRIZE The 5 Students Who Earn the Most Points	

Fuel  *the Flame*

**Who Can
I Invite?**

Friends from School

Relatives

Neighborhood Friends

The Children of Your Parents' Friends

Friends from Outside Activities:

Scouting

Athletics

Camp Programs

Clubs

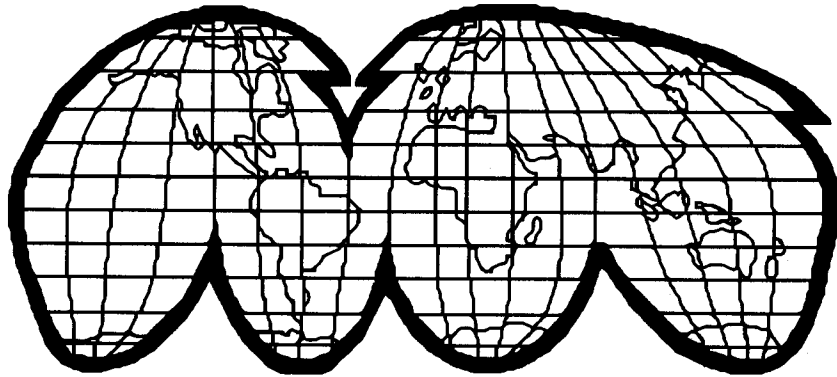


Anyone in the world who needs to know Jesus as their Savior.

List below the names of people you plan to invite. Pray daily over the list. Bring the list to church with you next week, so the entire class may pray for your list.

Fuel  *Flame*

Why Save the World?



**Without Christ Our Friends Will Not Be With
Us in Heaven.**

Without Christ There Is NO Forgiveness Of Sins.

Without Christ There Is No True Joy.

Without Christ All Of Us Will Perish.

You can make a difference by reaching out to your friends and inviting them to church. Talk to one person today. Tell them you want them to go with you to a great place on Sunday morning. Christ has called each of us to share Him with our friends. Talk to someone today!

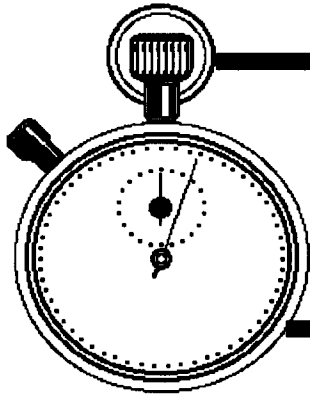
Fuel the Flame

Invite A Friend To Sunday School, And You Could Earn:

GRAND PRIZE For the 5 Students With The Highest Point Totals	
Students Earning 120 Total Points Receive:	
Students Earning 80-119 Total Points Receive:	
Students Earning 55-79 Total Points Receive:	

**Invite a Friend Today and Help Us
Fuel the Flame!**

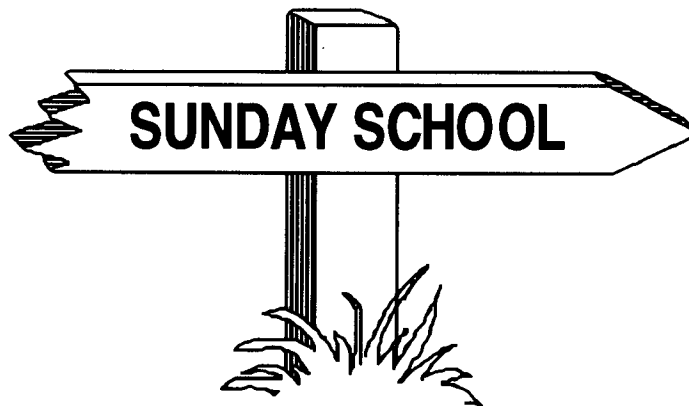
Fuel *the Flame*



**TIME IS
RUNNING OUT!**

**Bring a Friend, or Two,
to Sunday School
Next Week
And Help Us "Fuel the Flame"**

Show Your Friends the Way to Jesus.
Bring Them to Sunday School!



Fuel *the Flame*



Mother's Day

Bring your Mother, Grandmother, or Guardian to Sunday School on Mother's Day and receive 10 bonus points in our "Fuel the Flame" promotion.

Honor Your Mother On This Very
Special Mother's Day.

Mothers are invited to attend the entire hour of Sunday School, or they may choose to attend the Morning Bible Study in the Sanctuary. Only one mother, grandmother, or guardian may be registered per student. A mother with more than one child in the promotion may register in all necessary classes and then attend the class of her choice.



Fuel the Flame

Point Tally

Name _____

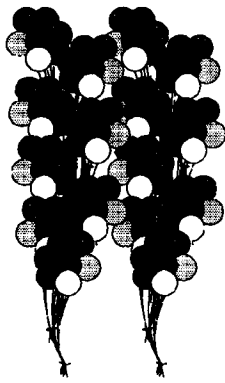
Class _____

Week #	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attendance 2 Points						
Bringing An Offering 2 Points						
Bible Memorization 2 Points						
Bringing A Bible 1 Point						
Bringing A Friend (1st Time) 10 Points						
Bringing A Friend (2nd Time) 15 Points						
Bringing A Friend (Addnl Times) 5 Points						
Bringing Mother on Mother's Day 10 Points						
Total Points For The Week						
Grand Total						

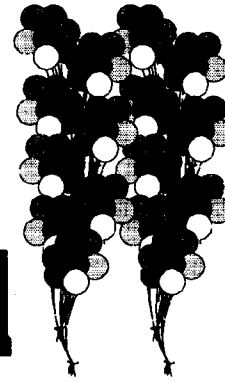
Fuel the Flame

Re-Cap Sheet

Name	Wk #1	Wk #2	Wk #3	Wk #4	Wk #5	Wk #6	Grand Total



Fall Fun Festival



The Fall Fun Festival is a very popular promotion, which is scheduled during the third quarter, usually in September. A variety of games, rides, contests, and concessions make this event a good one for the entire church family.

Prior to the Festival, a six-week promotion will be conducted in which children will be given an opportunity to earn tickets which can be used for the rides, games and various activities. Tickets are awarded for bringing friends: 10; for attendance: 2; bringing a Bible: 1; and memorizing the Bible verse: 1. Tickets will also be given for bringing food items for the church's emergency food pantry.

The Secretary of each class is responsible for keeping a record of the points each student earns each week. To help eliminate lost tickets, they will be distributed to the students at the ticket booth on the day of the Festival.

Each class will be responsible for operating a booth at the Festival. Booths may include games and contests such as:

- Bean bag toss;
- Basketball shoot;
- Cookie walk;

- Ring toss;
- Face painting;
- Fishing: player drops a line over a "wall," and a prize is attached to the line;
- Duck pond: player selects a plastic duck from a tub of water. Each duck is worth a prize.

Use your creativity in selecting the game for your booth. Make it fun and challenging, but not so difficult that students cannot "win." Everyone will receive a prize. Consolation prizes will be given to those who do not complete the game successfully. Prizes of higher value will be awarded to game "winners."

In addition to the booths operated by each class, arrangements can be made for rides, dunk tank, moon walk, etc. Concessions operated by one of the classes (perhaps the high school department) should also be available. A first-aid station, portable restrooms, and a booth for purchasing additional tickets (at a nominal charge) should be included.

The purpose of this promotion is to provide a fun day of fellowship for families. In doing this, we hope to acquaint others with our program, and

encourage other children and parents to join us in the School of the Bible.

Specific Instructions:

Each "point" a student earns is worth one ticket for the Fall Fun Festival. Tickets will be distributed to students at the ticket booth when they arrive for the Festival.

Secretaries will record the points each student earns on the Weekly Point Chart. Totals from this form will then be transferred to the "Re-Cap Sheet."

The Re-Cap Sheets will be used to determine the number of tickets to be awarded to each student. Keep these forms in the Secretary's folder, and double-check them for accuracy.

Fall Fun Festival


Contest begins: _____

The Fall Fun Festival will be held: _____

Earn Tickets For The Festival By:

- Attending Sunday School: 3 tickets, Bringing Your Bible: 2 tickets,
- Bringing an Offering: 2 tickets, Memorizing a Bible Verse: 2 tickets,
- Bringing a food item for those in need: 2 tickets,
- Bringing a friend: 10 tickets)

(Friends who have attended Sunday School during the last 4 months, do not qualify.)



Games

Prizes

Rides

Food

Dunk Tank

Music

*Tickets will be distributed to the students at the Festival.
Students will receive certificates each week, showing the number of tickets earned.*



**GET
EXCITED**

The

"FALL FUN FESTIVAL"

Date:

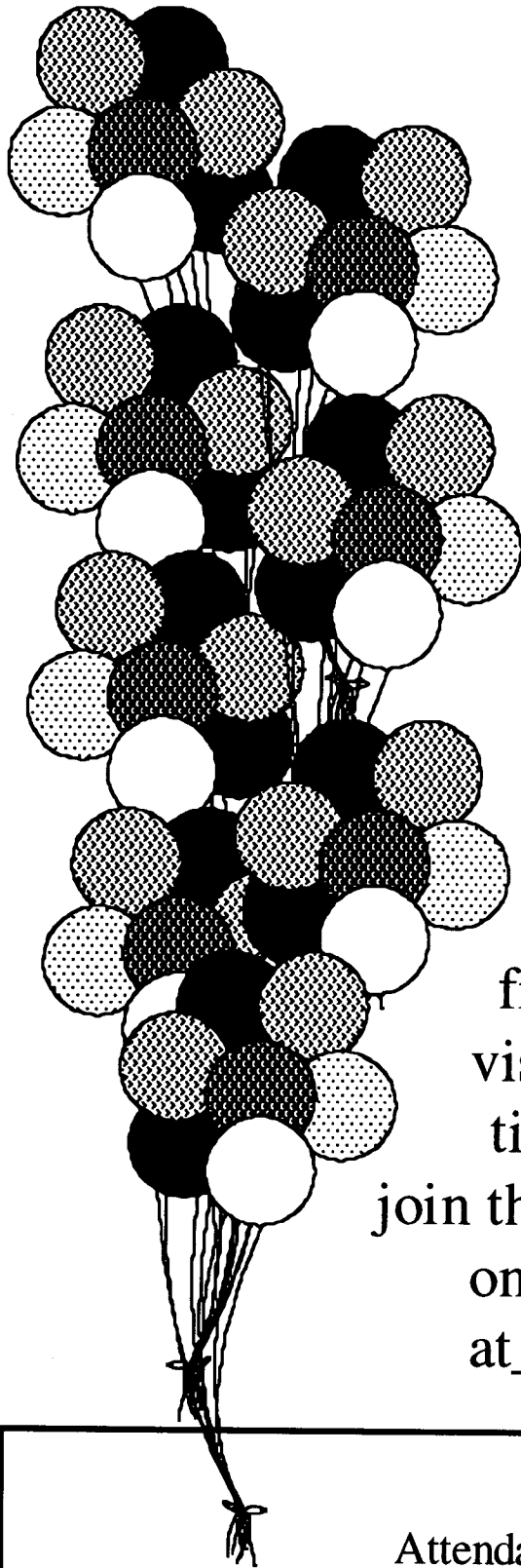
Time:

Place:



*Earn All the Tickets You Can
by Attending Sunday School!
Bring a Friend and Earn Extra Points!*

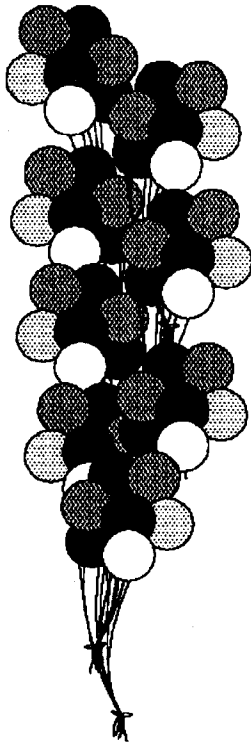
**GAMES PRIZES
MOONWALK
DUNK TANK
FOOD FUN**



Only Weeks to go in the Fall Fun Festival Contest

Remember to bring your friends -- especially first-time visitors -- and join us for a great time in Sunday School. Then, join the fun at The Fall Fun Festival on _____ at _____

Points are awarded for:
 Attendance • Memorizing Bible Verses
 Bringing Your Bible • Bringing an Offering • Bringing a Visitor
 Bringing a Food Item for Those in Need.



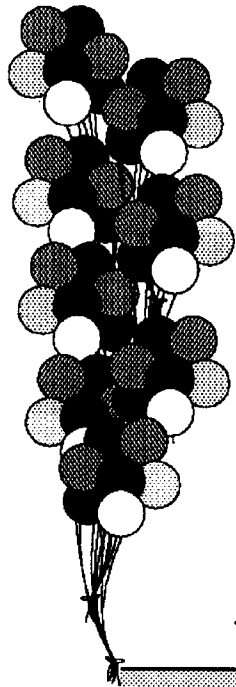
Fall Fun Festival Ticket Certificate

(Name)

*Has Earned a Total of _____ Tickets
for the Fall Fun Festival*

Class Secretary

Have your printer print this form "2-up" (2 forms per page).



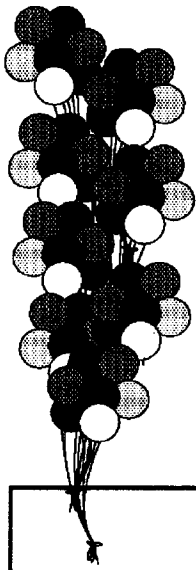
Fall Fun Festival

Weekly Point Chart: Week # _____

Date _____

Class _____

Name	Total points for the week				
	Attendance (3)	Bringing Bible (2)	Bringing an offering (2)	Memory Verse (2)	Bringing food item (2)

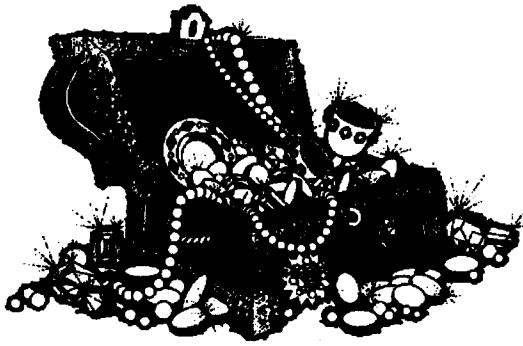


Fall Fun Festival

Re-Cap Sheet

Class:

Name	Wk #1	Wk #2	Wk #3	Wk #4	Wk #5	Wk #6	Misc.	GRAND TOTAL



Unlock The Treasure

Christ is truly the "key" to "Unlocking the Treasure." In this promotion, we want to increase attendance in the School of the Bible and emphasize to the students that Jesus is the key to unlocking vast treasures in our lives -- and not just material ones. We want to encourage students to reach out and witness to their friends, so that they, too, may experience the "treasures" Jesus has to offer.

This promotion is held during the fourth quarter, and runs for six weeks. As in other promotions, points are awarded to the students for their attendance; for bringing their Bible and offerings; for learning their memory verse; for bringing friends; and for contributing food items to the church's emergency food pantry.

Every time a student accumulates 40 points, he or she is awarded a special coin, which is worth 1 gift. A variety of gifts will be available, from which students may choose. Gifts should be displayed in a convenient, central location for the students to see. Some gifts will be worth 1 coin; others worth 2 coins; and some worth 3 coins. Students may elect to use the coin(s) they earn, or save them for a prize of higher value.

At the end of the promotion, the student in each class with the highest

number of points over 200, will receive a special, bonus gift and will be given an opportunity to unlock a treasure chest, filled with gifts valued at over \$200.

Only students who have earned a minimum of 200 points will qualify for this honor. If more than one student in the class earns 200 points or more, the student with the highest point total will be the one who qualifies.

During this promotion, the total number of points earned by each student will not be displayed or announced. It is acceptable to let the students know how many points they have earned from week to week. However, their total points should not be revealed, especially during the last week of the promotion.

At the end of the promotion, the top winner from each class will be given a key. Only one of the keys will open the treasure chest of prizes. **IMPORTANT:** because we do not want to award the grand prize based on "luck" or chance, the student who earned the most points will be given the key which opens the chest. Only the person who distributes the keys will know in advance the name of the grand prize winner. Everyone else will discover who the grand prize winner is when the students try their keys in the lock on the

treasure chest. It will add a bit of excitement and suspense if you have the grand prize winner try his or her key last.

During the course of this promotion, it is good to take the treasure chest of prizes into every classroom and display it briefly, as an incentive for the students. Flyers will also be distributed in the classes, and letters and flyers will be mailed to the parents of students, asking for their help and encouragement.

Specific Instructions:

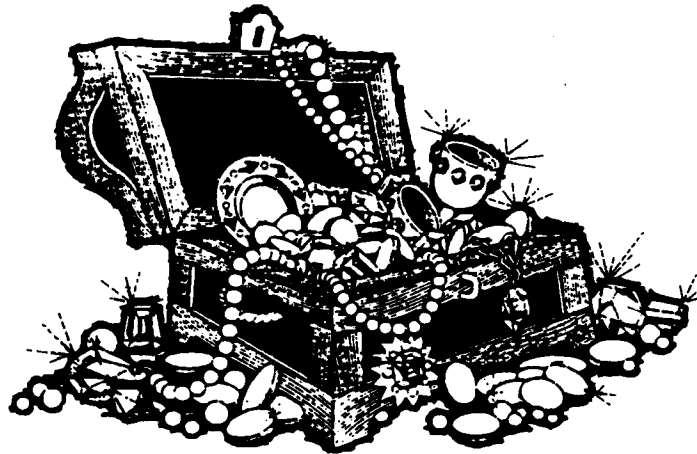
Each Secretary will have a Weekly Point Chart on which to record the points each student earns. A supply of coins will also be distributed to every class. Additional coins will be available in the Audio-Visual Room. Every time students

accumulate 40 points, they will be given one of the coins. Be sure to sign the coins before you distribute them. Coins without signatures cannot be redeemed.

For example: when a student earns a total of 40 points, he or she will be given one coin. When the point total reaches 80 points, he or she will be given a second coin, etc. It is up to the student to decide whether to redeem the coin for a prize, or save it and try to earn a prize of greater value.

Re-Cap sheets will also be included in the Secretary's folder. Record on this sheet the total number of points each student earns each week. This will help you to determine when students qualify to receive a coin.

YOU CAN Unlock The



Treasure

Beginning: _____ and Ending: _____

How Can You Earn Points?

- Attend Sunday School: 5 points • Bring Your Bible: 2 points
- Bring an Offering: 2 points • Learn the Bible Verse: 5 points
- Bring a Food Item for Those in Need: 5 points
- Bring a Friend: 20 points

.....

For every 40 points you earn, you will receive a "Gold Coin."

Coins can be redeemed for prizes.

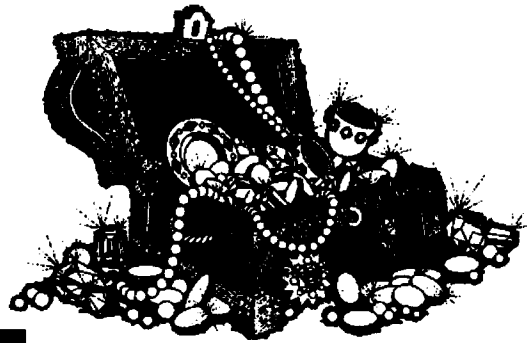
The student in each class, who earns the most points over 200, will win a special prize and will be given a key which may open the Treasure Chest.

The Treasure Chest contains prizes valued at over \$_____.

The student whose key opens the Treasure Chest, will win its contents!

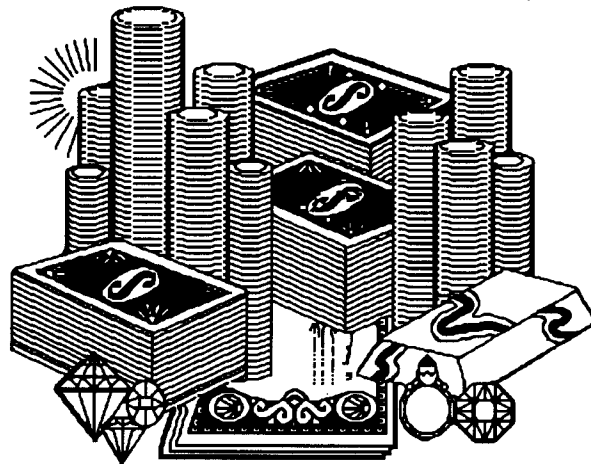
Invite Your Friends to Sunday School!

Unlock The



Treasure

What Treasure is Inside the Chest?

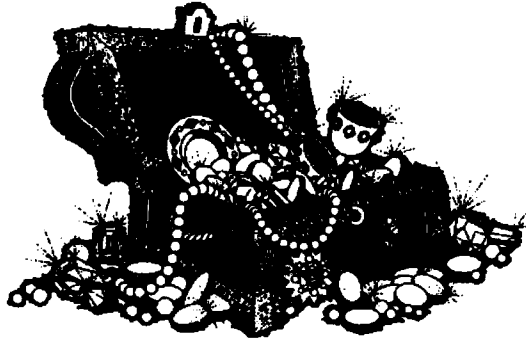


God says that He is worth more than Silver or Gold, and we are to treasure Him above all earthly riches!

You have the opportunity to win an earthly treasure, while helping others to find the treasure of knowing Jesus. Bring a friend to Sunday School between _____ and _____ and earn the opportunity to open the chest and claim the prize.



Unlock The

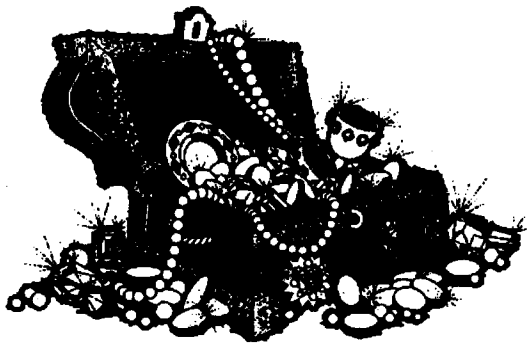


Weekly Point Chart

Treasure

Name	Attendance (5)	Bringing Bible (2)	Bringing an offering (2)	Memory Verse (5)	Bringing food item (5)	Bringing a friend (20)	Total points for the week

Unlock The



Re-Cap Sheet

Treasure

Class:

Name	Wk #1	Wk #2	Wk #3	Wk #4	Wk #5	Wk #6	Misc.	TOTAL

Section 7

Catechism In Doctrine

Introduction to Catechism in Doctrine

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (I Timothy 4:16)

Jesus said, *"Take heed what ye hear..."* (Mark 4:24) Be careful about what you allow to enter your mind, because it will affect your heart. We are living in a day that is characterized by the deception Jesus warned about in Matthew 24. Our young people are being taught the doctrine of secular humanism, which leads to rebellion, pride, hedonism, and self-destruction.

The purpose of this material is to help stimulate a focus on truth that will change lives. Truth is not just a set of ideas. No one person has all the right answers to every detail of theological thought. Each of us sees *"through a glass darkly,"* (1 Corinthians 13:12) particularly when it comes to our eschatology. It is important that we respect one another in our pursuit of truth. As orthodox Christian teachers, we agree on the essential basics that are expressed in the "Apostle's Creed." Beyond that, we have different perspectives and insights concerning the particular matters of interest relative to Bible history and application. Our purpose is to present basic concepts that will stimulate an interest in young people to seek after wisdom, not to present our views as the final word on doctrine.

Truth is not a set of concepts: truth is the Person of Jesus Christ. When we know the Truth (Jesus), the truth will set us free. Freedom is not the right to do whatever

we want, but is the power to do what we should.

God's Word includes a curriculum guide for all education. It outlines the priorities that should be the basis for every training program. (I Peter 1) The first objective of a wise teacher is **faith**. We are to define and stimulate a focus on God and His purposes in the earth. Before we can train anyone, we must know that he has been supernaturally born again by God's grace through faith. Unless he is born again, he cannot possibly see the Kingdom of God (spiritual reality). (John 3:3)

The second priority is character training. Peter said, *"Add to your faith virtue."* Virtue is the positive influence that flows out of a life that is whole, and transformed by the power and love of God. After he has been led to a personal relationship with God, he needs *"instruction in righteousness."* (II Timothy 3:16) He needs lessons that will teach him to live well, not just to make a living.

Notice that **knowledge** is third on God's list of priorities, not first, as is the agenda of the secular world of educators. In a secularized education, faith and virtue are eliminated by the state, with the erroneous belief that knowledge apart from faith can bring man to wholeness and fulfillment in life. But knowledge without the balancing perspective of faith results in pride and rebellion. *"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."* (I Corinthians 8:1)

These lessons emphasize doctrine that stimulates wisdom, which begins with the

fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 9:10) There is a focus on creation, grace, spiritual gifts, accountability, and eschatology. When young people are taught that they are not a cosmic accident, but an eternal soul designed by a loving Heavenly Father, they will tend to be more responsive to other authorities. They will be more likely to have an attitude of gratitude, and a heart for the things of God.

Our goal is not simply to increase our knowledge, but also to hear those things which will have the greatest possible benefit for our lives: things that will still have value ten thousand years from now.

We do not want simply to learn facts about Jesus, but we want God's abiding presence in our lives. We want to know Jesus. As the Apostle Peter said, "*Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" (II Peter 3:18) In other words, humble yourself and receive more of God's enabling power and strength, and get to know Jesus more personally and intimately.

We pray that these lessons will stir your faith, encourage your heart, and stimulate your desire to search the Word of God with joy as we anticipate the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.

What Did God Mean When He Gave the Commandment Forbidding Killing?

God commanded that people must never take it upon themselves to take the life of another human being.

"Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13)

It is ironic that some people have used the sixth commandment as an argument against capital punishment, saying, "Well, the Bible says thou shalt not kill; so do not kill the criminals." However, as we examine the Word of God, we discover that God not only allows civil governments to execute criminals, but also He commands them to do it.

A more literal translation of this commandment is, "thou shalt do no murder." God certainly was not speaking against capital punishment or national defense, because other directives from God clearly outline the necessity of punishing serious crime in order to protect people. God allows for self-defense and police protection as well.

Biblically, capital punishment, or the use of the death penalty to punish serious crime, is necessary if a nation is to deter criminals, who have no regard for the lives or property of others. God specifically commands the death penalty for murder, and that is a direct reflection on the value He places on a human life. Human life is so precious, that murder must warrant the supreme punishment.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Genesis 9:6)

In the book of Genesis, the very beginning of the law, God specifically commanded civil government to carry out the penalty against murder. God did not delegate to the state the responsibility to feed the poor or to educate children. However, He did mandate that the civil government be responsible for capital punishment, so that they would be

"a terror ...to the evil...the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Romans 13:3-4)

Civil governments which eliminate capital punishment greatly damage their ability to deter crime in their society, and they become a joke to the criminal element rather than a terror.

God not only allows national defense, but, in many cases, He also commanded Israel to destroy other nations, sometimes even including the livestock. It is thought that some of these nations were full of diseases as a result of widespread immorality. If they had not been killed, the diseases would have been spread to

every part of the world. There were also many evil leaders in the world, and armies which would have conquered and destroyed God's people. Armies have been necessary as long as wicked leaders have been in the world.

This commandment also has nothing to do with killing animals. The Christian view of animals is clear. Animals are not humans, and they exist largely for the benefit of man. Animals do not have a spirit, and they do not have basic human rights. It has always been in order to kill animals for food and/or clothing,

although it is not Christian or ethical to inflict undue suffering on any creature.

This commandment against murder is clear. No individual has the right, out of anger, to take the life of another. We are commanded to forgive. People who hate other people have cut them off in their spirit and will never give them another chance to make things right. That is why the Apostle John said, "*Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.*" (1 John 3:15)

Why Did God Prohibit Adultery in the Commandments He Gave to Us?

Adultery is a very serious sin against a marriage partner. Marriage is God's living illustration of His covenant relationship with us.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."
(Exodus 20:14)

Adultery refers to an intimate physical union by a married person with someone who is not his spouse. If two unmarried people share in such an act, it is called "fornication." In God's law, fornication is a sin. Adultery is also a sin, because adultery breaks a serious vow of fidelity which was made before God.

God created the sexual aspect of humanity, not only for procreation, but also as a beautiful way for a covenant man and woman to express their love and enjoy each other. Adam and Eve *"were both naked ... and were not ashamed."* (Genesis 2:25) This kind of openness and intimacy was created to be enjoyed with one partner for life. When we enter into a marriage covenant, we vow to "forsake all others." Each belongs to the other in a relationship that is exclusive, just as we are to belong to God and worship no other god.

It is wonderful to find the one partner for life and to share with that person something special, which you share with no one else. A person who commits adultery is using another person for his own gratification or ego, and damages his integrity before God and man. The result

in his own life is guilt, fear, condemnation, and sometimes illegitimate babies, serious diseases, or death. (In Israel, the penalty for adultery was death.) The person who commits adultery damages his mind, his heart, and his potential for joy and peace. The adulterer causes his marriage partner to suffer insecurity, guilt, depression, jealousy, and anger. No wonder the Bible says,

"But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul."
(Proverbs 6:32)

If a man is a man of understanding, he will not commit adultery.

Proverbs 5, 6, and 7 provide much wisdom on the subject of adultery. We learn that those who commit adultery will be bound by that sin (Proverbs 5:22); their very life will be preyed upon. (Proverbs 6:26) They will get a wound and dishonor, and the reproach on their reputation will stay with them throughout life. (Proverbs 6:33) Proverbs Chapter 7 tells the story of a foolish young man who was blinded by lust and lured to his death by an immoral woman.

Marriage is more than a contract; it is a covenant. In a covenant, we give ourselves to each other. In a real sense, our bodies belong to our spouse. (1 Corinthians 7:4) This also illustrates the fact we belong to God and that our bodies were not made to be used for immorality.

God loves marriage and hates divorce. One of the safeguards He placed upon us to protect the family and the marriage union was His strong warning and command against adultery. The world is constantly portraying adultery and

fornication as if there were no consequences; but, that is a lie.

When people sin against their covenant partner, there are always consequences. Wise young people decide at an early age to resist the peer pressure to compromise themselves, and to keep themselves pure for marriage. They keep their God-given gift of sex within their marriage covenant and find the greatest potential for fulfillment that they can have.

What Kind of Character Weakness Do We Demonstrate When We Steal?

A person who steals is showing a lack of respect for other people, for God and for himself. He is also demonstrating a selfish, lazy spirit.

"Thou shalt not steal." (Exodus 20:15)

All of us know what stealing is. We are stealing any time we take something which does not belong to us, without the permission of the owner. Private ownership has always been a good part of God's economy. God encourages and rewards diligence. Some will work harder than others and will develop greater skills. As a result, they will accumulate more wealth in their lives than others. While all of us should learn to be generous and share with others who are less fortunate, we never have a right to take property away from someone else, even if we think they do not deserve to have so much.

By His nature, God is a God of love, and love is expressed in the way we give: *"God so loved...that he gave..."* (John 3:16) When we have God's love in our hearts, we will naturally want to give to those who have needs. Sin is the opposite. Sin causes us to focus on ourselves and on what we want. When our hearts are full of sin, we can see only what we want or need, and we become insensitive to the needs or feelings of others. Usually, those who have their possessions stolen feel personally violated and hurt; but, the thief is so concerned with what he wants that he does not regard the feelings of others.

God's plan to deal with stealing is called "restitution." In Israel, a person who stole was commanded to return four times as much as he took and, in some cases, seven times as much. This is a good deterrent to stealing. Solomon noted that,

"Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house."
(Proverbs 6:30-31)

Historically, there have been nations which have punished thieves with the death penalty, or by cutting off their hands, as they still do in some Middle-East countries. This is contrary to God's perfect system of justice. In the Bible, God's laws mandate that the punishment fit the crime. Instead of cutting off the hands, God's wisdom is to make the person work with his hands and learn to give.

"Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Ephesians 4:28)

Poverty does not cause crime. Crime is the result of sin in the heart. People who steal have an attitude that the world owes

them a living. Very often, those who were given things in life which they did not have to earn have developed this selfish and lazy mentality. The wisest approach is to make them work with their hands, so

they will learn the value of money, and then teach them to give to others in need. They may learn that the joy of giving and the fulfillment of hard work is far better than the sin of stealing.

What Does It Mean to “Bear False Witness” Against a Neighbor?

This is a commandment against lying, particularly when we pass judgment on another person without knowing the facts.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” (Exodus 20:16)

The initial intent of this law is to deter perjury, or the use of deliberate false statements as a witness against a person being tried in a court of law. Even honest witnesses to a crime often see only a part of the picture and can have a distorted view. So, at least two witnesses are needed to convict a guilty person in most situations. Queen Jezebel instructed people to bear false witness against Naboth so that King Ahab could execute him and take over his property. (1 Kings 21) When Jesus was tried, there were many people who falsely accused Him.

It is a serious thing to damage the reputation of a man, and to be a false witness makes the speaker guilty of causing the suffering and damage which can result from a judgment based on a distortion of the facts. *“A false witness shall not be unpunished,....”* (Proverbs 19:5)

The Bible is particularly strong in admonishing Christians to speak honestly both about and to each other. In fact, we are to *“speak not evil one of another, brethren.”* (James 4:11) Here, the word “evil” means negative. We should not

speak in a way that will damage the reputation of another believer. We need to realize that Christians are on the same team and must be honest with each other. (Ephesians 4:25)

In the broader application, we recognize the evil of any form of deception. Lying is the sin of deliberate deception -- seeking to cause someone to believe something that is not true in order to benefit self in some way. It is a normal part of the sin nature to lie. Satan is a liar, and is called the “father of lies.” (John 8:44) His kingdom is a kingdom of darkness and thrives only by deception. The “big lie” of the devil is the idea that, if we do not submit to God’s authority, we can be free to do what we want; and, that freedom is the right to do whatever we want. He does not tell us that, when we reject God’s authority, we come under the dominion and bondage of slavery. (1 Samuel 15:23)

Sin is based on deception. It is only through deception that Satan can convince people to reject a perfect, loving God and come under Satan’s sphere of control in the bondage and hopelessness of sin. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

A lie is not simply making an untrue statement. An honest person may make a statement which is not accurate, but he has

no intention to deceive. He thinks it is correct. On the other hand, you may make a technically accurate statement in a way that will lead the listener to a wrong conclusion. That is lying -- deliberate deception. For instance, if mom says, "Billy, did you wash your hands?" Billy may reply, "Yes ma'am," and under his

breath, mutter to himself, "a week ago Tuesday." He did wash his hands; but, he also knows that the question was made to see whether he had just accomplished that task. He allowed mom to believe something that was not true. He lied. "*He that speaketh lies shall not escape.*" (Proverbs 19:5)

Why Is It a Sin to Covet?

To have an attitude of covetousness demonstrates a temporal values system, an ungrateful spirit, and a lack of love.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, or anything that is thy neighbor's." (Exodus 20:17)

It is interesting to notice that, while most of the commandments deal with restraints on our actions, this one deals strictly with the attitude of the heart. People perpetrate many wrongs on one another as a result of this particular character weakness. So, it is very important. Solomon wisely said to guard your heart -- the center of your affections -- carefully, for what you do in life will be directed by what is in your heart. (Proverbs 4:23 paraphrased)

Envy is a similar emotion that comes from a focus on other people. It involves resentment against God or people because we are not what they are.

Jealousy is the fear of being replaced in the affections of others.

Covetousness is a selfish concentration on the possessions of other people. It shows that we have a temporal values system -- a short-sighted way of placing undue emphasis and affection on the things that at best can be ours only

temporarily -- while we neglect the more important and eternal things of the spirit. The Bible tells us to choose to focus on the things of higher and eternal value, such as godly character, wisdom, and good works. We can actually control what we will love.

"Set your affections on things above" -- higher things -- "not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:2)

A covetous person has his affections set on things. That is not wisdom.

Covetousness also shows an ungrateful spirit. "After all, God should have given that to me instead of lavishing everything on my neighbor." Ahab was a millionaire king with vast power and many servants, but he coveted Naboth's vineyard. He was miserable in his palace.

Covetousness also is the result of a lack of love. When we love with God's *agape* love, we focus on the needs of others. We delight to see our brother blessed, even when he seems to have more than we have. Love causes us to give. Sin causes us to covet, because the center of our affection and attention is self.

The Apostle Paul wrote an encouraging letter while shivering in a dark, rat-infested prison, saying cheerfully,

*"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
(Philippians 4:11)*

Contentment is the opposite of covetousness and has nothing to do with the amount of wealth we possess. It is a character quality and is not the result of acquiring things. When you learn contentment, you may not get what you want, but you will want what you get.

Contentment is stimulated by praising the Lord. Contentment says, "I know God has provided all I need."

"Having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts...." (1 Timothy 6:8-9)

What Does the Bible Mean When It Speaks of the Heart?

The heart is the center of our affections; and,
it is the key to the direction of our life and lifestyle.

*"Keep thy heart with all diligence;
for out of it are the issues of life."*
(Proverbs 4:23)

The Bible teaches us that, in the image of God, man is a tripartite being. We were created by God with a spirit, a soul, and a physical body. Our spirit is God-conscious; our soul is self-conscious; and our body is sense-conscious. It is interesting to note that some created beings are spirit but have no physical body, such as angels; and some creatures have a body but no eternal spirit, such as animals.

Scripture has many references to something called our heart, which is very important. It is not a separate fourth part of our being. It is the center of our affections and relates primarily to the soul or personality of man, because our hearts greatly affect our thoughts, feelings, and decisions.

"Heart" basically means "center" and is not referring to the fist-sized blood pump in our chest by the same name. It can be said that a person who is focused on God and whose life is dominated by the Spirit has his heart in the spirit. As the Apostle Paul said, *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Philippians 1:21) David said,

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,...."
(Psalms 27:4)

You can see where the affections of these men are centered.

The lives of some people are dominated and controlled by the flesh. They think of evil all day long.

"...every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5)

Their *"...God is their belly...."* (Philippians 3:19) These people have their hearts in the flesh and in the world. They are spiritually dead. They are *"...sensual, having not the Spirit."* (Jude 19)

It is important to note that, while our decisions in life are directed by our hearts, they also influence our hearts. People focus attention on evil entertainment, because their hearts are not pure. Then, the more evil they absorb with their eyes and ears, the more corrupt their hearts become. The more we decide to read the Bible, pray, and fellowship with believers, the more our hearts are drawn toward God. As the old hymn says, "I love to tell

the story, for those who know it best, seem hungry and thirsting, to hear it like the rest."

We can decide what kind of music or literature we love. We can guard our heart by being careful what we put into our mind. *"Set your affections on things above..."* -- higher values. (Colossians 3:2) We protect our hearts by focusing on that which is good. (Philippians 4:8) *"Keep your heart with all diligence."* (Proverbs 4:23) Be careful about giving your heart to the world or to its idols.

We should guard and guide our hearts with the Spirit and the Word of God and be careful not to let our hearts control our lives. The humanist says, "just follow your heart," but the Bible says that

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)

Be diligent to *"...establish your hearts:..."* (James 5:8) by humbly seeking after God and His grace.

What Do the Words “Lasciviousness” and “Concupiscence” Mean?

Lasciviousness is the practice of stirring up sensual desires which cannot be rightly satisfied. Concupiscence is an abnormally strong appetite for sensuality.

“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence....”
(Romans 7:8)

The direct relationship between lasciviousness and concupiscence is a vivid illustration of the principle of guarding the heart. The more we are exposed to evil, the more we are drawn to it.

Notice the extremes of evil constantly portrayed by the entertainment world today, with a constant emphasis on fornication, violence, and witchcraft. Have you noticed there is rarely a reference to extremes of righteousness? Many ungodly people deal with their guilt by focusing on great evil, and convincing themselves that they “are not so bad.” Also, there are forces which desire to destroy strong, free nations by encouraging young people to become morally and mentally weakened by obsessions with pleasure.

Lasciviousness involves the deliberate stimulation of wrong sexual desires, such as pornography, lewd dress, and secular dancing. God created sex to be a delightful and beautiful expression of covenant love between a man and his wife. It is designed to be an intimate and private blessing. But, sin has corrupted this gift and made it a

recreational, spectator sport; and it has brought about the demeaning of both women and men through carnal exploitation of this natural human drive.

One lie of humanistic education is that “we need sex education to satisfy the curiosity of young people.” This is extreme stupidity, because you cannot satisfy with sensual material; you can only stimulate. The more you have, the more you want. Pornography is addictive.

“Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.” (Proverbs 27:20)

When any young person is exposed to lasciviousness through pornography, sensual music, and television, he develops an inordinately strong sexual appetite -- an addiction to sensual material. This condition is called “**concupiscence**.” To expand on what Paul was saying in Romans 7, “The practice of sin in my life developed into the state of concupiscence. This brought the bondage of a controlling addiction that kept me from enjoying life.” To put it another way: “the wages of lasciviousness are concupiscence.”

Lasciviousness is a moral trap; and concupiscence will destroy your soul. Job said,

"I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1)

You cannot play games with your sex drive and not damage your soul, any more that you can put fire inside your shirt and not be burned. (Proverbs 6:27)

Today, there are many young people who have lost most of their potential for

God and for a happy marriage, because of concupiscence. No wonder Paul said to "flee fornication." (1 Corinthians 6:18) It is one of the "works of the flesh" listed in Galatians 5:19. We should treat the younger women as sisters, "...with all purity..." (1 Timothy 5:2), and not involve ourselves in practices or situations which will vex our souls and spirits.

What Is Witchcraft?

Witchcraft is a work of the flesh, whereby those who do not turn to God as their source enter into all manner of deception and occult practices.

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft..." (1 Samuel 15:23)

The Greek word for "witchcraft" is "pharmakeía." It literally means "medication." It is our root word for "pharmacy"; and it relates to the use of drugs and alcohol, as well as to sorcery and magic.

The key word that ties these things together is the word "**deception.**" Satan's realm is called the kingdom of darkness; and it thrives only through lies and partial truths. The basic purpose of drugs is deception. This has been used in beneficial ways by medical doctors to assist the body's healing processes. If the body is in intense pain, drugs can be administered to weaken or eliminate that sensation, so the person can get some needed rest.

The basic purpose of alcoholic drinking and illegal drugs is the same. The drunkard or addict gains the false impression of well-being, happiness, or even temporary euphoria. But, of course, it does not last, because it is a deception. He is not happy. For a time, he only thinks he is.

The classic application of "witchcraft" today relates to the practice of turning to the flesh for power or direction in life. Witchcraft involves astrology, fortune-

telling, psychic phenomenon, hypnosis, transcendental meditation, magic, and demon-possession. It may involve Satan worship; but, usually, it does not. In fact, most witches do not even believe in a real devil. They believe in an impersonal "force"; and they think that their powers come from "within". In fact, if there is any psychic power, it comes from a demon spirit. It is all an elaborate and deadly game of deception.

"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,... should shine unto them." (2 Corinthians 4:4)

People are deceived into thinking that their lives are directed by the stars instead of by God.

Satan seeks to imitate God. He loves to get people involved in the supernatural. But, the purpose is always destruction. Today, our culture is being flooded with a promotion for witchcraft through cartoons, movies, the advertisement industry, books, video games, and the public schools. Witchcraft draws its source from the principalities of darkness. It is unwittingly a subject of Satan's kingdom.

We can get an idea of God's impression of witchcraft when we read that He commanded the Israelites to execute all witches. (Exodus 22:18) As Christians, we must be sure never to involve ourselves in any activities which are related to witchcraft, such as the reading of horoscopes, the watching of television or movies in which witchcraft is portrayed in a positive way, or the reading of witchcraft-related literature.

We must also avoid a fascination with "extra-sensory perception" or any supernatural activity that is not specifically shown in the Word of God to be godly. We

must always seek discernment from the Word of God, for

"...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14)

The terrifying message Samuel gave to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:23 should make us very serious about our response to authority today. Rebellion is the rejection of authority -- the desire to "be your own person." Samuel said that, when you come out from under God's authority, you forfeit His protection. You are then subject to the dominion of the kingdom of darkness and to all kinds of deception.

Who Are the Sons of God?

In the Old Testament, the angels are referred to as “sons of God.”

There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” (Genesis 6:4)

There are five Old Testament references to “sons of God.” Two of them are in Job, the oldest book in the Bible. Both of these verses are referring to angels. Angels are clearly created by God, and are shown to be accountable to Him. All of the New Testament references to “sons of God” (such as John 1:12-13 and 1 John 3:1) are speaking of godly, redeemed people. Many newer translations prefer the term “children of God.”

The account in Genesis 6 is referring to fallen angels. They committed fornication with the “daughters of men,” and their offspring were giants. Note in verse 9 that Noah was “perfect in his generation.” Satan had contaminated all of the other families in the earth with these fallen angels. Only Noah’s family was undefiled by these wicked spirit-beings.

The Bible does not teach that angels are sexless beings. Jesus said that in heaven we would not marry, but would be “like the angels in heaven.” The reason angels do not marry is that they are all males. Angels are capable of sexuality, but they have to leave the state in which they were

created to commit fornication with human women.

Jude said, “*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh....*” (Jude 6-7) The “fornication” is referring to the action of the angels, and not just to the people of Sodom.

God commanded Israel to wipe out all of the Canaanites, because they were also contaminated by sexual angels. Some time after that, God arrested those fornicating angels and put them in chains of fire. These are the angels which the saints will judge.

There are two kinds of fallen angels. The ones who sinned sexually with humans are in prison: a place in the underworld called “Tartarus.” Since then, if an angel sins sexually, the judgment of God will come immediately, because God no longer permits it. Now Satan uses demons to try to thwart God’s program. Demons are not angels, but are the disembodied spirits of a pre-Adamic race, which was destroyed before the re-creation of Genesis 1.

The good angels are the "sons of God," and there is a great host of them. Prayer by Christians dispatches angels to work on our behalf. These angels camp around those of us who love God. We are a special breed. Angels are sons of God by creation, but we are sons of God by redemption. What a glorious salvation!

Angels do not understand redemption, but they desire to look into it. The sons of God reveal His power, but the children of God reveal His love. God could create mountains and angels without love, but He shows His love when He redeems people. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (children) of God."* (Romans 8:14)

What Is a Revelation?

A revelation is the unveiling of that which had been unknown, or hidden from us, as a mystery.

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest,...."
(Romans 16:25-26)

When God created man, He placed him in a time-space world and made him very limited in his ability to see or understand. When sin entered the human race, man's spiritual vision was diminished even more; and he was "subject to vanity," or to living with a tendency to carnality and the neglect of the spiritual realities of life.

We are born in sin, spiritually blind. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Even when we are born again, we still can see only as "...through a glass, darkly." (1 Corinthians 13:12) Many things are a mystery to us; that is, they are hidden from our view.

It is necessary for us to trust God at His word, even when we do not understand everything that happens. We must respond to God in faith, if we are to respond to Him at all, and respond to His love, even though we do not see Him. When we love God even in this natural life, God knows that our love is genuine, and He is blessed by our honest response of faith and obedience.

Jesus often spoke in parables, because He loved to communicate the truth of God's kingdom. He did not want carnal people following Him just because of the miracles and free fish sandwiches. It was prophesied that Jesus would speak in parables.

"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 13:35)

He told His disciples,

"...it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matthew 13:11)

Jesus wanted to give revelation only to His disciples, or disciplined ones.

The verb form of "revelation" means "to uncover - to reveal that which was hidden." The Bible is a revelation from God concerning Jesus Christ and God's purposes for mankind, and many mysteries in life are unveiled in it. The last book in the Bible is even titled the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." Many people view this as a revelation from Jesus concerning the end times. It is more accurate to see it as an unveiling of the truth of Jesus Christ the Lord, and,

secondarily, to see it as a glimpse into the events that surround His work in the last days.

Indeed, the book of the Revelation, as a chart to end times, has more mystery than revelation, because it veils events in prophetic language and symbolic imagery. However, it does unveil a clear picture of Jesus as the conquering King of Kings and

Lord of Lords; the mighty Judge of all the nations; and the Lamb on the throne of God. We are given a clear and powerful revelation of what we really need to know, while there are yet many mysteries to be revealed about events and the course of the human race. We may not yet be able to accurately chart the future; but, we know who the winner is in the end.

What Is the Difference Between Inspiration and Illumination?

Inspiration is the work of the Holy Spirit to impart a divine, perfect word to His anointed writer. Illumination is the work of the same Spirit to make the truth of the Bible clear to the reader.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

The word inspiration literally means, "to breathe in". It refers to the fact that the Spirit of God breathed into the holy men of God who penned the scriptures. According to Bible scholars, God gave to at least 40 different writers, by a special anointing, a supernatural gift to speak as His instrument and to communicate the message of the gospel to God's people. We are not sure of the exact number of writers, because the writers of some of the books of the Bible and some of the Psalms are not clearly specified.

God is the author of the Bible.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21)

This is how God gave us His anointed message over a period of 1600 years, from Moses to John. Even so, the writers were not mindless robots taking dictation, just as those who prophesy today are not given

every word to say. When God gives inspiration, He breathes His Spirit into a yielded, holy human vessel, and gives wisdom, knowledge, and spiritual insights that cannot be received by natural means.

God used the various personalities and experiences of the writers to add fullness to the writings; and the whole collection of 66 books in the Bible holds together as a cohesive unit, affirming one divine author. We do not claim to have the same level of inspiration the writers of scripture had, for the canon of God's Word is complete. All other inspiration must be subject to the proven Word.

When we receive spiritual illumination, the Holy Spirit opens our understanding to truth that has always been; but, we need His anointing to perceive it. To "illuminate" simply means "to turn on the light". Every believer must receive illumination concerning Jesus in order to exercise faith for salvation. As we open our minds to God in prayer and Bible reading, God continues to shine in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 4:4) This illumination relates to the work of the Holy Spirit as our teacher; affirms the words of the preacher; and brings us to more and more truths, as we open the

Word of God with an honest heart of a learner.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance..." (John 14:26)

It would be a tragic mistake to believe that, since we have the Holy Spirit, we no

longer need pastors and teachers, because Jesus continues to raise them up to instruct us in righteousness. If we were to fail to accept God's messengers, we would miss a great deal of what God is saying to the church today. The Spirit works through His servants, and then confirms their message to our hearts by bearing witness. We often respond to anointed word with "amen," as an indication of that witness in our spirit.

Is the Book of Mormon the Inspired Word of God, as the Holy Bible Is?

No. The Book of Mormon is one of many false teachings, which seek to imitate or even supplant the Bible, which is the inspired Word of God.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter 2:1)

One of Satan's most effective weapons against the gospel of Jesus Christ is the use of cults, or religious groups, which claim to preach truth and provide a way to God. Many cults even claim to be Christian and seek acceptance in the world by identifying with the genuine people of God. Peter said that,

"...many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Peter 2:2)

Since the world does not know the difference between a cult and a true Christian church, they sometimes will be blame Christians for the wrongs done by the cults.

One such cult was started by an illiterate farmer named Joseph Smith. He lived near Palmyra, New York, in the early 1800's. He and his family had a reputation for laziness and mischief. Young Joseph

had a vivid and wild imagination. He would sit by the hour in the hills, thinking up imaginary tales of lost civilizations and great battles. Later, he would tell his fiction to anyone who would listen.

As time went on, Joseph Smith believed that God appeared to him, telling him that all the churches were wrong, and that he had been chosen to be God's true prophet. Supposedly, he was given golden tablets by an angel named Moroni, who told the story of ancient peoples who came to America many centuries ago; built great cities; and then annihilated one another in great battles. Most of this happened -- an amazing coincidence -- right there near Palmyra, New York. It just so happened that the same kind of stories young Joseph had made up, later became the basis for the Book of Mormon.

Joseph attracted some followers; and he started what is now the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." He did not believe in the Trinity; and he denied that we can be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ apart from our works. He believed that God was Adam, and that good Mormons can help earn their way to heaven and evolve into gods. He also practiced polygamy -- multiple wives.

A basic idea in the Mormon faith is that God is still giving divine scriptural revelation; and, thus, they deny the Bible as the complete Word of God. In fact, they place their Book of Mormon above the Bible, even though there has been no archaeological evidence ever found to substantiate any of the incredible stories in it. Also, there are many references to things that did not even exist at the time or the place described by the Mormons.

The Bible has stood the test of time. It is being continually reaffirmed by archaeological discoveries; by the fulfillment of its prophecies; and by signs and wonders.

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (2 Peter 1:16)

Is Jesus Really God?

Yes. Jesus Christ is equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit;
and these Three are One God.

While the Church of God is carrying out the commission to preach the gospel to the whole world, Satan is trying to damage the work of the Kingdom by raising up and encouraging false teachers and churches. They claim to be Christian; but, they are not. These are called pseudo-Christian cults. Many use the Bible; but, so did Satan. The difference is that they will use isolated verses and parts of passages to support their ideas. They will use half-truths: concepts that are only partially true and, therefore, are very dangerous.

Jesus warned us that in the last days there would be many false prophets and false teachers, who will be very clever. They will seem to be Christian. However, their purpose is to damage the Christian faith; to dilute and pollute the true church.

One biblical test for the validity of a teacher or a religious group is their response to the deity of Christ. Most cults accept Jesus as a man and even as a great prophet from God. But, true Christians worship Jesus as very God, the Creator, as well as our risen Savior and Lord. Jesus did not begin life 2,000 years ago; He simply became incarnated and took on humanity to become our "kinsman redeemer" (Ruth 3, 4) and the Lamb of God. From eternity past, Jesus was "with God, and was God." (John 1:1-2)

John warned of false teachers too, and said that

"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." (1 John 4:2)

Note that he said to test their spirit, not just their words. True Christians believe that Jesus Christ, the Savior, the anointed one from God, came in the flesh: that deity became humanity. False teachers will recognize an historical Jesus who came in the flesh; but, they will reject His deity.

When an angel in the Bible was worshipped, he would stop the person and say, "No. Do not worship me. Only God is to be worshipped." But, Jesus often received worship, because He was also deity. Thomas bowed to Him and said, "My Lord and my God," (John 20:28) and Jesus accepted that. Indeed, the reason the Jews tried to kill Him is that

"...he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." (John 5:18)

Jesus said, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;...." (John 14:9) Jesus was not saying that He is the Father, but that He is the revelation of what the Father is like. He is the physical expression of the

Trinity, the *"fullness of the Godhead bodily."* (Colossians 2:9)

In Revelation 3:14, Jesus is called *"the beginning of the creation of God."* The word "beginning" is the Greek word "arche", which is the source of our word "architect." Jesus was not created; but, rather, He was the "architect of creation."

A man came to Jesus and called Him "Good Master." Jesus replied,

"Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one,...God:"
(Matthew 19:17)

He did not say, "I'm not good," as some might think. He was saying in essence, "how can you recognize my godly character and attributes -- goodness -- and still not recognize that I am God? If I were not God, I could not be perfectly good." Jesus is very God, and very man.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

Is It Wrong to Gamble?

Gambling is wrong, because it violates God's plan for His people and His principles of love and work ethics.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:10)

The term "gamble" means to risk something of value in playing a game of chance. Nearly everyone recognizes that it is wrong to gamble and to take chances with the necessities of life. Many individuals have ruined their lives by an addiction to gambling. A compulsive gambler has a lack of self-acceptance and a disregard for the value of money.

While the Bible does not provide a direct discourse on the merits or evils of gambling, there are several clear principles which must be applied in determining whether any activity is acceptable in the Christian lifestyle. Consider these statements:

1. Gambling violates God's command that man must earn his living by work -- by the sweat of his face. (Genesis 3:19) When people gamble for money, they are seeking to increase their wealth by chance; by "getting lucky;" and by seeking an unearned reward. The Christian work ethic teaches that we should increase our wealth by work; and, if a man

does not work, he should not eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

2. Gambling stirs up a heart of greed and covetousness by creating a focus on acquiring money.
3. Gambling is associated with many forms of evil; and, we are told to "*abstain from all appearance of evil.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:22)
4. Gambling thrives on deception and illusion. The focus is always on winning: "Win instantly! Be a millionaire!" Everyone who gambles expects to win. Otherwise, they would not make the wager; and yet, the vast majority are losers.
5. The few who do gain their wealth by gambling instead of by working rarely benefit much in the long term. Their continued gambling usually results in losing all or most of their winnings.

"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase." (Proverbs 13:11)
6. Gambling, especially impulse gambling, is a devourer of money and often results in financial bondage, poverty, and broken families.

7. Gambling violates the principle of *agape* love, because anyone who wins in gambling does so at the expense of others. Gambling never creates wealth as work does; it only redistributes it from many to a few. Christians should seek to bless others, and to work to produce goods and services which will benefit everyone.
8. Gambling has supplanted God's plan of support in many churches. Now they rely on "bingo" or other games

of chance to support the ministry, because the people do not tithe.

9. Gambling glorifies luck, rather than God, as our provider.

Money is not to be our focus, goal, or god in this life. Money should be a natural result of hard work; a reward for diligence; but not our master. Do not ever work for money. Work for God and for others and receive the pay as a natural response of those you serve, "*for the laborer is worthy of his hire.*" (Luke 10:7)

What Is Secular Humanism?

Secular humanism is a philosophy, or faith, based on the notion that man is supreme and self-sufficient; and, therefore, he is not in need of God.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." (Romans 1:28)

Secular humanism is a form of the original lie and has become the greatest deception ever forced onto modern western civilization. "Secular" means "non-religious", or "non-spiritual". "Humanism" is the philosophy, based on the **theory of evolution**, that man is the supreme being -- self-existent and self-sufficient. The term must not be confused with a similar sounding term, "humanitarian," meaning "philanthropic".

Satan said to Eve in the garden, *"Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."* (Genesis 3:5) "You should rule your own lives; be your own persons; and morality should be determined by popular consensus -- majority opinion."

A fundamental part of the humanist faith is the rejection of the knowledge of God and the subsequent attempt to explain life as if there were no spiritual realities. The theory of evolution was developed as an attempt to explain creation without acknowledging the Creator. It still remains a weak theory, with no scientific verification. Nevertheless, the humanists staunchly defend it as if it were scientific,

because creation is the only alternative, and they have rejected the Creator.

"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God." Why? Because *"They are corrupt, they have done abominable works."* (Psalms 14:1) When there is guilt in your heart, you must deal with it either by repenting, or convincing yourself that there is no judge -- no God. Why do people still believe in evolution? Because they choose to believe that concept.

Humanism is diametrically opposed to biblical Christianity. Humanism seeks a one-world, socialist order, and rejects biblical morality. Humanism believes that, eventually, man will save himself through technology, diplomacy, and philosophy. Humanism seeks to gain control of nations by indoctrinating children through entertainment, mass media, and schools.

The Humanist Manifesto was written in 1933 by John Dewey, an educator and author of the Dewey Decimal System. Charles Francis Potter, former president of the National Education Association, said, "Education is the most powerful ally of humanism, and every American public school is a school of humanism." The deception was simple. They convinced the nation that government and education

should be "religiously neutral;" and so, God must be excluded.

To exclude God automatically establishes the religion of secularism. Every law and every doctrine must have a moral and religious basis. For example, the humanist teaching on values is basically the rejection of biblical and family authority. Each individual must set his own values, because each is his own god,

or judge. Rejecting God's ownership leads people to the political bondage of socialism, the destruction of the family, abortion, and suicide. (Galatians 6:7-8)
Humanism has

"...changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.... "
(Romans 1:25)

What Is the New Age Movement?

The New Age Movement is an anti-Christian religion, based primarily on secular humanism, Hinduism, and witchcraft.

"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error." (2 Peter 2:18)

The Apostle Paul warned that

"...in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron: forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats...." (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

Notice three clear steps that our culture has recently experienced:

1. We **departed from the faith**. In the middle of this century, America began a steady reversal of its Christian values. We took the Bible and prayer out of the schools, the courts, and most of our communications. We turned from a focus on God to a secularization of our thinking.
2. We **gave heed to seducing spirits**. In the moral vacuum that resulted, there came a great increase in

fornication, perversion, and lasciviousness. Sex became a recreational sport, and a national obsession.

3. We received **doctrines of devils**. The next step was a rapid rise in the occult and demonic religions. America opened its doors to the demented and demon-possessed gurus of Hinduism and the ancient religion of eastern mysticism -- the mother of satanic cults.

India, with her heart of idolatry, is a land of 3,300,000 gods, and each idol represents a demonic spirit. Many Hindus literally open their spirits to demons. Hindus believe in reincarnation, which is the idea that each person will return to earth many times in many different human or animal forms. They have been deceived, because

"it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this, the judgment:"
(Hebrews 9:27)

The New Age Movement is built on many deceptions, all designed to get man to focus on himself. This can open his spirit to human or demonic manipulation. People open their spirit to evil through transcendental meditation, drugs, video games, and rock music.

The New Age Movement promotes reincarnation, which leads to a fatalistic outlook on life. There is a strong belief in astrology, which seeks to control people's lives through suggestion and manipulation. This false religion focuses attention on the impersonal **force** of the universe instead of on a personal God. Because of the belief in reincarnation, they command *"...to abstain from meats,"* (1 Timothy 4:3) because that cow might really be grandma. Since they have rejected God and the Bible,

"the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe

not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine onto them." (2 Corinthians 4:4)

The New Age movement promotes itself as compassionate and humanitarian. In fact, it is diabolically anti-Christian. Part of their agenda is the destruction, or at least the devaluation, of the family. New Age also promotes various forms of moral perversion, particularly homosexuality -- sodomy. The "new world order" is based on the idea that the world can achieve world peace through a socialistic, godless program of diplomacy. New Age is really a form of Satan's old lie.

What Is a Christian Pastor?

A Christian pastor is an apostolic gift from Jesus to the Body of Christ.
He is specifically called by God to lead a local church,
as a shepherd leads and feeds his flock of sheep.

"And he gave some,...pastors..."
(Ephesians 4:11)

The Greek word "poimn" means "shepherd", or "pastor". Jesus, who is called the Great Shepherd, has called gifted people and prepared them to serve under Him as special leadership gifts to the church, as shepherds, or "under-shepherds."

Every true pastor will have a heart of love for the people he leads; but, he knows that Jesus is the Chief Shepherd -- the final authority and the ultimate head of the church. (Colossians 1:18) A good pastor will seek to draw people to Jesus instead of to himself. He will recognize that "his" flock is really the Lord's flock, for which he will give an account at the day of judgment. The people belong to the Lord; just as children really belong to God, and parents are responsible for "their" family.

The pastor of the church is in much the same role as the father in a home. He is the leader; the head of the family under Christ; the primary provider and protector.

We realize from Psalms 23:1 that "*the LORD is my shepherd*" -- pastor -- but not to the exclusion of any other pastor; just as He, as our Father, gave us a natural father to guide us to Him. God uses people to

lead people. God is training all of us to be leaders. The first quality of a good leader is that he is a faithful follower. He is teachable. God delegates authority and follows a "chain of command" in the home, church, government, and business world.

Moses was not the king of Israel. He was really the pastor of the nation. Moses listened to God and then told the people the word of the Lord. It was his job to stay close to God and to receive God's orders.

When the people were carnal, they tended to react against Moses. They wanted to control the decisions. But, God honored His delegated leader and taught the people that His church is not a democracy -- rule by the people -- but a **theocracy** -- rule by God. Of course, every pastor must also remember that the church is a theocracy and not a monarchy -- rule by one person. Also, the purpose of any church board is to confirm the word of God and to serve as a support team, not to be an oligarchy -- rule by a committee.

The pastor needs to be subject to counsel, and even to correction, by other godly leaders. Note that there are different kinds of apostolic gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11. Every good pastor will be related to "apostolic authority," that is, recognized

teams of mature anointed leaders. This will protect him from error and will protect the church.

The pastor is the **leader** of the local church. He is the one to whom God gives the vision for the church. He will always see more of God's vision than any of the people.

The pastor is also the **feeder** of the flock. (1 Peter 5:2) He is responsible for a

balanced diet of the Word of God going out from the pulpit. He protects the church from false doctrine, just as the shepherd protects the sheep from poisonous plants or harmful weeds. He knows that, when the people are fed well, they will be strong and healthy; and they will win souls and bring others into the church.

What Is a New Testament Deacon?

A New Testament deacon is a mature member of the church, who assists the pastor by serving in practical and physical areas of ministry.

"Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."
(Matthew 20:26-27)

The word, "minister," means "servant." All Christians have a ministry of some kind. Early in their ministry, the church leaders in the book of Acts discovered that there were many practical aspects to meeting the needs of people. As God's extended family, the church needed to help some people with physical needs, especially widows with no husband to provide and care for their needs.

The apostles found themselves with too much to do; they did not have enough time for the Word and prayer. They also could not get everything done, because the people started to complain about the inadequate care for the Greek widows.

At the Lord's direction, the leaders said,

"...It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to

prayer, and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:2-4)

These men were appointed by the leaders to be servants and helpers. A modern application of the deacon/servant mentality would be the man who says, "Pastor, I will take care of Widow Jones; and I will mow your lawn Saturday, so you can have more time to read the Bible and pray. I will lighten your physical load, so you can preach your best next Sunday."

The basic function of a deacon is to lighten the load of the leaders by attending to the physical needs of the congregation. A pastor can be at his best if he has faithful, dependable men and women who can open the building; regulate the temperatures; set the lights; check and tidy up the rooms; and oversee the ushers. The whole church is more effective when the physical building and grounds are well managed.

In the early church, the deacons were chosen by the pastoral leadership in recognition of their faithful help in the work of the church. The qualifications for deacons were given to Pastor Timothy as a guideline. The Apostle Paul told the pastor that deacons must be serious-minded; honest; sober; and they must not be greedy. They must have a clear conscience; a good reputation; and a godly wife, who will not

gossip. (1 Timothy 3:8-13) They should also function in the church in a supportive capacity.

A church leader should be careful never to give the title, "deacon" to anyone who is not already serving with a deacon's heart. Having a function without a title will not hurt anyone; but, having a title without the function will cause a man to be proud.

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul taught the importance of diversity of gifts and ministries in the church. Some are called to lead and to teach, and others have the gift of "helps." (12:28) The man with a true servant's heart, with the gift of helps, is a great gift to the pastor and to the church. The church would be less effective without his ministry.

What Is a Local Church Elder?

A local church elder is a mature Christian, who is able to help the pastor in the personal and spiritual care of the people.

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock,..." (1 Peter 5:2-3)

The Bible teaches that people are like sheep. They need to "flock together"; to be fed; and to be protected. People need the personal care of a shepherd. A good pastor will be dedicated to the care and feeding of his flock. However, when a church becomes large, it becomes necessary to have help in caring for families and needy individuals on a personal level. A pastor can feed a large church on a general level; but, he cannot do all the counseling and give all the personal oversight.

The Apostle Peter outlined the basic functions of local church elders. They are **feeders, overseers, and examples.**

1. **Feeders.** Elders are to be "apt to teach." They should be able to communicate practical and biblical truth to others.
2. **Overseers.** Elders are overseers. The word "bishop" means "overseer", or one who gives leadership and personal care to others. The title is

used often to describe leaders who are overseers over a number of pastors and churches, much like the apostles did in the early church. Paul was clearly the overseer of Timothy, Titus, and many other pastors.

A good local church elder will watch over families. He will keep his eye on them, and will notice when they are missing or have a special need. He will call on them occasionally and give them encouragement. If there is a serious need he cannot meet, he will call on the pastor to minister.

A good elder is an "undershepherd." As a deacon frees the pastor's time by overseeing projects, the elder helps the pastor by overseeing people.

3. **Examples.** Paul outlined the qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-11. Basically, an elder must be an honest, mature Christian, who leads his own home well. He must be a good husband and father; a hard worker; a good teacher; given to hospitality. He must also not be a "novice" -- meaning, "newly planted" -- or he will be lifted up with pride.

The Apostle James also taught that the elders should lay hands on the sick. (James

5:14) This is a natural expression of the fact that elders minister to people.

It is both an honor and a serious responsibility to be appointed to serve as

an elder. The work of the elder is a vital ministry in any large church.

What Did the Apostle Paul Mean by the "Letter of the Law"?

The "letter of the law" refers to the practice of interpreting and using the wording in laws and ordinances to force people to focus on the rules themselves, rather than to perceive the intent, or "spirit", of the law.

God "...also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Corinthians 3:6)

The Pharisees, a religious sect, had great difficulty receiving Jesus. They were very zealous about the law; and they were also very morally upright, strictly carrying out the details of the law in their daily living. Their problem was that they focused on law and works so much, that they missed God's plan for relationship with mankind.

The Pharisees used the "letter of the law" to burden people with rules; and then they condemned the people when they could not follow all of the rules perfectly. Jesus indicted them when He said,

"...they bind heavy burdens...and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." (Matthew 23:4)

God had commanded men to rest on the Sabbath. To impress this commandment upon the people, the Pharisees developed over 400 rules, defining in great

detail that which constituted "work" in their eyes. Because of these rules, they placed a yoke of bondage upon everyone. Jesus upset their program by "working" on the Sabbath. He recognized a higher principle: that people needed healing on the Sabbath, too. He said, *"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."* (Mark 2:27)

The letter of the law bound men with hundreds of restrictions. The spirit of the law was to set aside a day unto God for rest and for worship.

God told Israel,

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment:..." (Deuteronomy 22:5)

For centuries, men have defined what clothing style "pertains" to whom and have vigorously condemned women for wearing any kind of slacks, or pants, even if they are feminine in design. But, the intent of the law was simply to eliminate the practice of "cross-dressing" -- the practice of some men to masquerade as women, or women as men.

Homosexuality is an abomination to God -- not Levi's jeans. Those who use this verse to condemn women in slacks should look at verse 8, which commands a home-builder to have a railing around his roof so his guests would not fall off. The letter of the law says, "every roof must have a guardrail around it." The spirit of the law is, "take precautions to prevent injuries."

Peter told women that they should be more concerned about their inward character than their outward appearance. He said,

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;...." (1 Peter 3:3)

Those who follow the letter and teach that this is a command against wearing gold or plaited hair must realize, then, that it is also a command to be a nudist!

Paul said that *"the law is good, if a man use it lawfully,...."* (1 Timothy 1:8) God is love; and He made laws for the benefit of people. The basis of all of God's law is love.

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10)

If some leaders are oppressive with laws and are "legalistic", they need to get to know God better. They need to see the spirit of the law, which is based on God's love.

What Is the Difference Between Conformation and Transformation?

To conform is to adapt to an image or expected behavior pattern. To be transformed is to be changed on the inside by a creative work.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2)

Man-made religion involves manipulating people with a creed or behavior pattern, usually for the benefit and enrichment of the leader. You can become a good Moslem or Jehovah's Witness by learning their doctrines and conforming to their codes of behavior.

However, you cannot become a Christian by converting to the Christian religion. To be a child of God, you must be born again. (John 3:3) This new birth is a miracle. A hog can be trained to be a pet hog; but, he can never become a human being. That would require a miracle. (Note: a pet hog could imitate some people fairly accurately, but it would still be merely conforming.) Satan does not care if people conform to a religion, as long as they are not transformed by God's grace.

The world has an image of self-sufficient rebellion and self-indulgent willfulness. The spirit of the world is carnal. It resists the image of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the ultimate servant, who lived

His life entirely for the benefit and honor of the Father and for others.

Another way of translating the statement of Romans 12:2 regarding conformity is, "Do not let the world system force you into its mold." To **conform** is to blend in with the crowd -- to be like everyone else. A conformist will always be concerned that "everyone else is doing it." He will be a habitual follower and will gravitate toward the "...broad road that leadeth to destruction." (Matthew 7:13) He will be led by popular consensus and will be "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...." (Ephesians 4:14)

Another similar word here is "**reformed**". God **formed** man in His character image; but, sin marred that image and created a relational conflict. Some people try to reestablish that moral image by doing good deeds. They try to form the original good image, or to "re-form" themselves; but, they can never do it without God's supernatural grace.

The Spirit of God is at work in the lives of every believer to **conform** us to the image of Jesus Christ, working in our yielded, submitted hearts. (Romans 8:29) However, the Word of God states that our minds need to be **transformed**. We are

transformed by the renewing -- not the removing -- of our minds.

Our thinking patterns are changed as we live for eternity, instead of for the moment; and for God, instead of for ourselves. That is, as born-again people, the more we yield our lives and minds to God's Spirit, the more He will change us *"into the same image from glory to glory,..."* (2 Corinthians 3:18) by the power of His virtue.

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13)

You can conform to a church and become religious; but, it will not get you into heaven. You can reform to a degree and conquer some of your destructive habits. It may lengthen and improve your life; but, you can never do enough good deeds to merit heaven. Every human being on earth needs to be transformed by God's grace. He needs a Savior to set him free from his sins; and the only one who can do that is Jesus Christ, who said, *"Ye must be born again."* (John 3:7)

What Are the Works of the Flesh?

The works of the flesh are the actions and attitudes which naturally flow out of a life that is motivated by a self-centered, carnal mentality.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and the like;..."
(Galatians 5:19-21)

When a man is **carnal**, that is, when he has a self-centered world view, he will be led by his appetites and impulses and will choose immediate gratification over ultimate good. When he allows his flesh to dominate his decisions and lifestyle, his spirit becomes insensitive and weak.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:5-6)

The Apostle Paul mentioned a number of responses to life that demonstrate the spiritual dullness in an individual. They are called the "**works of the flesh.**" It is interesting to note that they are not the "works of the devil." Christians are notorious for saying "the devil made me do it." That leads to incomplete repentance. These are the things people do

as a result of their failure to seek wisdom and to keep their bodies under subjection. (1 Corinthians 9:27)

Adultery is breaking a marriage vow of fidelity. Covenant love can be maintained only by walking in the power of the grace of God. Genuine love is an evidence of the indwelling presence of God. (1 John 4:8-9)

Fornication is an act of sexual immorality. Lust is a satanic perversion of love which always seeks self-gratification at the expense of others. Love gives at the expense of self. (John 3:16)

Uncleanness may be a morally unclean act, or the chronic neglect of physical cleanliness. God's grace motivates us to keep ourselves clean.

Lasciviousness is the practice of stirring up lustful thoughts. It leads to moral bondage and selfishness.

When a man's life is fleshly, he will always practice some form of **idolatry**, because he will focus his affection and adoration on things or vain, self-gratifying images.

Witchcraft is rebellion and it involves wrongful drug use and other forms of self-deception. Flesh rejects God's authority, and has no defense against the influences of the occult.

Hatred is the result of blaming others in bitterness for the negatives in our life, and is the mental counterpart to murder.

Variance means quarreling or contention, and shows a lack of meekness.

Strife implies that people in their contentions will form factions, or angry cliques against one another.

Carnal people are prone to be led by fads. This tendency is called **emulations**.

Wrath is a selfish, passionate anger.

Sedition is a disloyal spirit that causes discord and division. It is the betrayal of a trust, particularly the trust of a leader.

Heresy means "to make a choice." It relates to the practice of turning from truth to a lie, or of joining a divisive group.

Envy is a corrupting ill-will against others because of their position or achievement in life.

Murder is the result of the overflow of hatred in the heart.

Drunkenness is the use of alcohol as an escape from responsibility. It is a fleshly opposite to repentance.

"And such like" means that there are many works of the flesh. This list gives a general idea of that which is generated by carnal, unrepentant human nature.

What Is the Fruit of the Spirit?

The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Jesus Christ produced in the believer by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

It is interesting to note that the Apostle Paul lists the "works" of the flesh and then the "fruit" of the Spirit -- not the "works" of the Spirit. The implication here is that these character qualities flow out of those who are full of the Holy Ghost. These qualities do not require specific thought or unusual effort on our part. A peach tree does not struggle to produce peaches. If it is a healthy, mature tree, it will naturally produce fruit in its season.

The Holy Spirit cultivates the character of Jesus in our lives. Fruit must be cultivated. The peach tree will draw water and minerals through its root system and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The sunlight will shine on the green leaves. The result is that the sweetness in the tree will flow into the buds and develop into fruit. All fruit contains seeds. The ultimate purpose of fruit is to produce more plants.

Jesus said,

"I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much

fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5)

We are like branches of the tree. We draw our spiritual life and vitality from the source -- Jesus. We are grafted into Him. As we abide in Him, His Spirit flows through us. His attitudes and qualities flow into our life and lifestyle. His love flows through our hearts; and reproductive fruit develops, which will cause others to be drawn to Christ and be born again.

It has been said that the fruit of the Spirit is **love** and that all the other qualities listed are expressions of that. Love is certainly the first and most essential fruit of the Spirit. Sin causes us to be selfish. The primary evidence that we have been genuinely born of the Spirit is that our focus is changed from self-seeking to love. **Love** is the opposite of selfishness. Therefore, love is an evidence and the result of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Joy is a positive response in our spirit to the presence of God; whereas, happiness is an emotion of the soul. Doing the will of God results in joy.

Peace is a quiet sense of serenity that comes from an assured hope that God loves us and can handle any problem. Peace is not the absence of storms. It is a

response to the abiding presence of Jesus; therefore, it is not limited to emotional feeling or human understanding.

Longsuffering means patience which is born of hope.

Gentleness means mildness. Is the ability to treat others with courtesy and consideration, rather than with harshness or rudeness.

Goodness is benevolence -- always seeking that which will benefit others.

Faith is a positive focus on God and His purposes. It is honest, simple, spiritual trust.

Meekness is controlled strength. It is the ability to yield our rights in deference to another.

Temperance means self-control. When the Holy Spirit is in our lives, we do not have to let our appetites control our lives. We have the freedom to do what the Spirit is leading us to do, rather than to be forced to obey what the world or our flesh is demanding.

This is the kind of character that comes from abiding in Jesus. If we find that we do not have joy and freedom flowing in our hearts, we should seek God and surrender to Him. Rather than attempting to "turn over a new leaf," we must remember that we are "branches," ever abiding in Jesus.

What Is the Manifestation of the Spirit?

The manifestation of the Spirit is that which is given by the Holy Spirit through the spirituals; that is, the word of wisdom; the word of knowledge; faith; gifts of healing; the working of miracles; prophecy; discerning of spirits; various kinds of tongues; and interpretation of tongues.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge; ...faith; ...the gifts of healing; ...the working of miracles; ...prophecy; ...discerning of spirits; ...divers kinds of tongues; ...the interpretation of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

In this chapter, the Apostle Paul is teaching about the way the Holy Spirit works through different people in different ways to bless and edify -- build up -- everyone in the church. He reminds us that there are different gifts, different administrations, and different operations of the Holy Spirit. At that point he defines nine **spirituals**, or the **manifestation** of the Holy Spirit. To **manifest** means to reveal, to express, or to exhibit. Christians often refer to the spirituals as the "gifts" of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is resident in every born-again believer. When Christians receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as believers did in the New Testament accounts, they will be enabled to speak in tongues, because the Holy Spirit will give them the utterance. Tongues is both a

manifestation of the Spirit and the initial physical evidence of the supernatural baptism into the Spirit.

Any Spirit-baptized believer can be used by the Holy Spirit in the spirituals for the benefit of the whole group.

"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

Everyone will receive the benefit of the gift. All of these gifts are supernatural, and they have nothing to do with our intellect or personality. If we are sensitive and obedient, the Holy Spirit can work through us, just as He did when we received the baptism in the Holy Ghost.

If someone receives a **word of wisdom**, he is getting an insight from God that did not come from his own understanding. Wisdom involves direction from God. Generally, it will be for the benefit of another person or, perhaps, the whole church.

A **word of knowledge** is the impartation of specific information from God. Knowledge is the practical application of wisdom. The person who receives a word of knowledge does not

receive a great deal of wisdom or knowledge; he receives only a small portion of that which is resident in God's limitless resources.

The Holy Spirit may impart **gifts of healings** to the sick through the faith of others. Note that there is more than one gift of healing, just as there are different kinds of tongues.

The gift of **faith** is supernaturally imparted to a believer by the Holy Spirit for a specific need or situation.

The Holy Spirit may be manifested through the working of **miracles**. The purpose of miracles is to confirm the Word of God and the work of God.

Prophecy is speaking for God. It is "forth-telling" a message from God as the Holy Spirit directs, rather than foretelling the future.

Discerning of spirits is not the ability or the right to "judge a person's spirit." It is the awareness, given by the Spirit, of the spiritual source of a problem. It is good to discern whether a physical problem is

organic or demonic, because you need to know whether to lay hands on the sick or cast out a devil. In the Bible, some people were blind, and others had a blind spirit. Jesus never laid hands on a person to cast out a spirit; He cast out the demon by His spoken command.

Divers (different, or various) **tongues** is an ability to speak in a foreign language as the Spirit gives utterance. These languages may be human or angelic. (1 Corinthians 13:1) There are different tongues for private and public use. (See 1 Corinthians Chapter 14)

Interpretation of tongues is the supernatural ability, through the Holy Spirit, to interpret -- translate -- a public message in tongues given for the benefit of the church.

It is wonderful to know that God has not left us to our own resources to try to build His church or minister to His people. We should seek to be sensitive and obedient to the Holy Ghost, so that we can be used as a vessel of His ministry to the church.

What Are the Grace Gifts of the Spirit?

Several spiritual gifts are listed in Romans 12, with the indication that every believer has received special grace to serve the Lord in one of these areas.

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy ...or ministry ...or teaching ...or exhortation ...or giving ...or ruling ... or mercy..." (Romans 12:5-8)

The Greek word for "grace" is "charis". It is the root for the word "gift" or "charisma". It relates to the fact that, as born-again believers, we are saved and equipped by God's enabling power working through us, and not by our own ability. "Grace" is what God does for and through us, as opposed to works. "Works" are what we do in response to faith.

Peter indicated that every believer has received a particular spiritual gift, or an ability from the Lord, to be used for the blessing and service of others.

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

"Manifold" means that there are different kinds of grace gifts. The word "steward" reminds us that, when God gives a gift, it is always for us to use in serving others. It is not for our own

benefit. Stewardship also implies accountability to God.

Every Christian is to develop all of these positive qualities. Each Christian has a gift which will allow him to excel in one area. The only one who is strong in all of these areas is Jesus. He is the ideal example for everyone.

Some believers are gifted in the area of **prophecy**, or declaring truth. They have a zeal for righteousness and want everyone to repent and receive the message of salvation. They tend to be very open, honest, and straightforward. Peter was a "prophecy-motivated" Christian.

A **ministry**-motivated Christian has a real gift in the area of serving. He is sensitive to practical physical needs of others. This is similar to the "gift of helps" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12.

A **teacher** has a strong desire to communicate truth. He is studious, and he will check out "chapter and verse" before accepting any new teaching. Luke was a teacher, and gave detailed, accurate accounts.

An **exhorter** is an encourager. He is gifted with practical insights and will help others mature and succeed in the Lord. The Apostle Paul is an example.

A **giver** is one who is gifted in the area of finance. He has a special ability to earn and accumulate money, with his purpose being to give as much as possible to the work of the Lord. He especially loves to give to projects which do not receive mass promotion and loves it even more when God prompts him to meet specific needs.

A **ruler** is one who is gifted in the area of organization. He has an ability to plan

ahead and to conserve time by keeping things in order. He delegates duties to others skillfully.

A **mercy-motivated** Christian is most sensitive to the emotional needs of people. He is a good balance to the prophet. John was mercy-motivated, and worked well with Peter.

What Are the "Last Days"?

The "last days", referred to in the Bible, are the years preceding the return of Christ to the earth to judge mankind and to establish His sovereign rule over the world.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." (2 Timothy 3:1)

In understanding and identifying God's calendar of events in human history, it is important to see that God follows consistent patterns in dealing with individuals, nations, and world events. In creation, God established the seven-day week, with the seventh day reserved for a time of rest.

Almost 6,000 years have passed since the fall of man. Most Christian leaders believe that the seventh millennium will be the time when Jesus rules on the earth, and all of creation will be at rest. During that time, Satan will be chained in a bottomless pit, and there will be great peace on the earth.

It is interesting to note that, at the end of two millennia, Abraham offered his son, Isaac, on the mountain. At the end of the fourth "day" -- four millennia -- on the human calendar, God offered His Son, Jesus, as the sin offering for the human race. It is possible that the "last days" of God's calendar could mean the "church age" of 2,000 years -- the time between the crucifixion and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Apostle John said,

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last times." (1 John 2:18)

The primary discourse in scripture on the last days is in Matthew 24, where Jesus taught His disciples about the signs of the end times. He described a world with much darkness, deception, false cults, wars, rumors of wars, distress of nations with perplexities, earthquakes, fears, etc. Paul said that

"...men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...." (2 Timothy 3:2)

In general, the Bible indicates that the last days preceding the "day of the Lord" will be characterized by an increase in satanic activity; wickedness among men; and international problems. Much of this will set the stage for the Great Tribulation and the rise of the Antichrist.

The amazing thing is that the Bible predicts a great Pentecostal revival at the same time. Joel said,

"It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...." (Joel 2:28)

Amos indicated that there would be a restoration of praise and worship as in the days of David (Amos 9:11). Peter spoke of a restitution of all things spoken of by the prophets, before Jesus would return. (Acts 3:21) While the forces of darkness are preparing the world for Antichrist, the Spirit of God is preparing the Bride for Christ.

Jesus said that no man would know the day or the hour of His return, although men have tried repeatedly to predict it.

But, Jesus did say that we can know the season; and, from all that He and the prophets in the Bible have indicated, we are certainly living in those "last days". If nothing else, we are assured that we are closer to the day of the Lord than any of our predecessors. We should be watching, and

"...Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,...and so much the more, as we see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)

Maranatha! (Our Lord returns!) *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* (Revelation 22:20)

What Is the Dispensational Significance of the Seven Churches in the Book of Revelation?

The seven churches, mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3, parallel the historic progression of the church throughout the church age.

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Revelation 1:20)

When John was exiled to Patmos for preaching the gospel, Jesus gave to him a great revelation of Himself and a prophetic glimpse into the end times. He actually dictated seven letters, to be delivered to the pastors of seven major churches in Asia Minor. Most Bible historians believe that the churches selected and the order given are not accidental.

Over the last 1900 years since the revelation was given, the general history of the church world has followed the pattern in the same order. It should be noted that this does not mean that every church in each historic period matched the description or deserved the indictment given. However, a large percentage of churches did, and so the order given became a general overview.

The letters were written to the "angelos" of the churches. "Angelos" means "messenger", and refers to the

senior pastor of each church. In those days, the Christians were united. Generally, there was one church in each city.

From about 70 A.D. to 170 A.D., the church in **Ephesus** was similar in condition to the apostolic church. After the church was established by the apostles in a Pentecostal revival, there was a gradual spiritual decline. The people were still working hard; but, they had left their first love. Their work continued while their worship diminished.

Smyrna was the suffering church. Many Christians suffered severe persecution, particularly during the period of time from 170 A.D. to about 313 A.D. Smyrna was a faithful and zealous congregation; and it was the only church to receive praise and commendations from the Lord. Historically, the church has always been the purest and strongest under persecution. However, during times of prolonged prosperity, it has been weak and lethargic.

Pergamos means "marriage, tower". From 313 A.D. to 606 A.D., the church began to mix with the world. It became politically strong, but spiritually weak. The state and the church intermingled; both were morally polluted.

Thyatira was indicted for allowing the harlot Jezebel to corrupt people's morals. Jezebel was a picture of a corrupt church government, which ruled by bribery and treachery. The Dark Ages were dark, because of the spiritual blindness of the people and the leaders. A Christian, named Thomas Aquinas, visited the Pope, who showed him the church's vast wealth and said, "As you can see, we can no longer say, 'silver and gold have I none.'" Thomas replied, "Neither can you say, 'In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk.'"

Sardis was a picture of the reformation begun by Martin Luther. From 1516 A.D. to about 1750 A.D., the "remnant" people of God rose up to restore salvation by grace.

Philadelphia -- "city of brotherly love" -- reflected the great revival in the church from 1750 A.D. to 1900 A.D.

Laodicea was a picture of the last days church: the church in financial prosperity, but spiritual lukewarmness.

What Is the Great Tribulation?

The great tribulation will be a time of intense and widespread suffering on earth. It will be the final period of history before the millennial reign of Christ on the earth.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matthew 24:21)

One of the great benefits of reading the Bible is that we learn the fear of the Lord; and we realize that God is a righteous and faithful judge of mankind. We see that God not only judges us as individuals, but He also judges cities, nations, and generations. Much of the book of Revelation deals with the seven years immediately preceding the Millennium, when Jesus Christ will establish His rule on the earth. There will be a time of God's judgment on the nations of the earth, when vast numbers of people will die.

Jesus said,

"As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away;...." (Matthew 24:37-38)

Jesus also mentioned the historical account of Lot during the judgment of

Sodom and Gomorrah. These accounts remind us of the "salt principle". Jesus said that the believers are the "...salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13) Salt is a preservative. God told Abraham that, if there were as few as ten righteous people in the city of Sodom, He would spare the whole city from destruction. There were many homosexuals in Sodom, and various other forms of moral perversion. Such sin brings destruction. When it was determined that Lot was the only just man in the city, God removed him and his family and executed the people of the city with fiery destruction. When the whole world was wicked in Noah's day, and men were given over to evil continually, God commanded Noah's family to enter the ark; and all the wicked people perished in the flood.

Many Christians believe that, before the great tribulation, the Lord will come for His elect saints who are on the earth. This view is consistent with the concept that the presence of the godly in the earth holds back the wrath of God on the rest of the world.

"...only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."
(2 Thessalonians 2:7)

"Letteth," means "to hold down, or keep".

Then there will follow awesome destruction and widespread death and suffering. At the end, the devil will assemble a large army, which will be destroyed at the great Battle of Armageddon. After this, the Lord Jesus Christ will come again to the earth to rule for 1,000 years.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days... shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of

heaven with power and great glory." (Matthew 24:29-30)

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." (Jude 14) We do not know the details or exactly how and when all of this will occur, but we do know that God will judge the earth by fire -- tribulation -- and that it be well with those who are abiding in His love at the time.

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world,...." (Revelation 3:10)

What Is Hell Like?

Hell is a real place of darkness, fire, misery, and torment for people who did not respond to God's plan of salvation with repentance, faith, and love for God during their life on earth.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)

Jesus spoke much more about hell than He did about heaven, because He does not want anyone to go to that unspeakably horrible place. Most false cults reject the idea of a literal hell, because they are religions invented by people. Whenever men invent their own doctrines, they will tend to shape them according to their own desires and omit anything they do not like. But, the Bible clearly teaches there is a literal and eternal hell.

Jesus related the account of Lazarus and the rich man. (Luke 16:19-31) This was not an allegory or a parable. It was an actual account of two real men, one of whom was identified by name. Both of them died. Lazarus went to Paradise, and the rich man went to hell. Both bodies were still in the grave; but, their souls were still alive and conscious. The rich man could look up into Paradise and could even communicate with Abraham; but, he could not do anything to escape from hell, or even to get some relief.

Scientists have recently discovered that the core of the earth is hotter than they

thought -- about 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Volcanoes are the result of weaknesses and breaks in the hardened crust of the earth, and the molten material -- magma-- comes spewing to the surface. Imagine being confined to the inside of a volcano for centuries, with its darkness, heat, and noxious fumes. That is what hell is like.

The Bible does not teach about a "soul sleep," although some cults do. Paradise and hell were both located somewhere inside the earth, a great distance apart. Paradise was also called "Abraham's Bosom" and was evacuated when Jesus ascended into Heaven after His resurrection. From then on, all the saints who died went to heaven to be "*present with the Lord.*" (2 Corinthians 5:8)

Hell, however, is still occupied, and it will be until the Great White Throne Judgment. (Revelation 20) At that time, the inhabitants of hell will be resurrected from the dead and will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be judged for their wickedness and will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

The Lake of Fire is a place somewhere in the universe, which God prepared for the devil and his angels; but, it is large enough for the ungodly people as well. Apparently, it will be similar to hell, with

the torment of perpetual fire, darkness, loneliness, and absolute hopelessness. There will also be no end to the suffering, because God created man to be an eternal spirit. Jesus mentioned that hell was a place *"where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."* (Mark 9:44)

Obviously, the truly wise man will not fear those who have only the power to destroy this short natural life; but, he will fear God, because God is the one with the keys to death, hell, and the grave.

What Is Heaven Like?

Heaven is a fabulous city, called "the New Jerusalem", where the children of God will live with Him in perfect peace and joy forever.

*"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."
(Revelation 21:2)*

The Bible teaches that God has created a real place called "heaven". There are references to heaven, or the heavens, signifying the physical atmosphere over the earth. But, "heaven" usually refers to the New Jerusalem, and Jerusalem means "city of peace."

When John was exiled by the Romans on the prison island of Patmos, God let him see a vision of this great city. Apparently, it will come down from outer space and will hover over present-day Palestine as God's capital city. There, the saints -- born-again Christians, the overcomers from among the human race -- will have an eternal home with no sickness, death, or sorrow.

This city is far too massive to sit on the ground in Palestine. According to prophecy, it will be about 1500 miles wide and 1500 miles long, and about 1500 miles high! (Revelation 21:16) The walls are made of jasper -- a precious stone -- and are more than 200 feet thick. The city has 12 gates, each made from a gigantic pearl. It has 12 foundations. Many Bible scholars believe this to mean that there will be 12

levels, or "floors." On the bottom level, there will be about 2,250,000 square miles of living space. If the other foundations are about 10 miles thick -- we do not know-- then from the first level you could look up, and the bottom of the second floor would still be 115 miles above you. On the 12 levels, there would be about 27,000,000 square miles of land, with lots of room for high rise buildings. There is enough room in this city for every person who has ever lived on earth, with plenty to spare.

But scripture indicates that the majority of the people on earth have rejected God and will not be there. God said that

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14)

The Bible says that no fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate men, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, or extortioners will be in heaven. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

The last two chapters in the Bible give us nearly everything we know of New Jerusalem. The rest of the Bible is devoted to many instructions, which will help us

to get there. It is good to know that we have a hope for such a city. We know that while many prophecies in the book of the Revelation are prophetic pictures and not literal things, the New Jerusalem is shown in scripture to be a literal place that God has built for His people.

By earth's standards, heaven is a city of unspeakable wealth, where streets are paved with pure gold. There is a river of

life and a tree of life. The city will be illuminated by God; so, there will be no night. In heaven, Jesus is the center of attention. There is a continual sound of perfect music and glorious worship. Heaven would be an uncomfortable place for those who are in love with themselves, or who love sin. However, for people who love to worship and serve God, the place will be absolutely heavenly.

Section 8

Lessons

The Christian's Position in Grace

Volume 12

Lesson 1

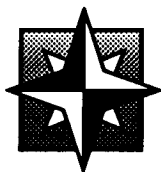


Bible Reference

Ephesians 1

18 *"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

19 *"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,"*



Theme

The blessings we have in Christ.



Memory Verse

Ephesians 1:3

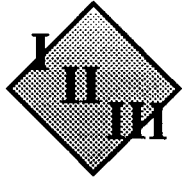
"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:"



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 1:17-19

17 *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*



Outline

I. Blessings In Christ.

A. Blessed with all spiritual blessings. (verse 3)

1. God is not only Jesus' Father, but His God, as well. (John 20:17)
2. All blessings in Christ are still for today. (2 Corinthians 1:20)
3. The blessings include the pure doctrines of the gospel.
4. The blessings include the full graces and gifts of the Spirit. These are necessary for our walk in the Spirit.

B. Chose us to be holy. (verse 1:4)

1. Elected by God for all to be holy. (verse 4)
2. Before the foundation of the world. (2 Timothy 1:9)
3. He reconciled us through Christ to Himself. (2 Corinthians 5:18)

C. Predestined us to be children. (verses 5-6)

1. Foreordained: God has predestined all believers to be adopted into His family. Who becomes a child is up to the individual.
2. It is God's will and pleasure that all be saved and come to the saving grace of Jesus Christ through His death, burial and resurrection.
3. This act, and the acceptance of it, will bring praise and glory to Jesus and bring us into His grace.

D. Redeemed us by His blood. (verse 7)

1. This is the price God paid.
 - a. We manifest his grace. (Romans 3:24-25)
 - b. To adopt us as his children. (Romans 8:15-17)
2. This is the mercy and love we receive.

E. Abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. (verse 8)

1. Wisdom is that attribute which shows what is the best end and the best means to attain that end. (1 Corinthians 1:30)
2. Prudence is practical wisdom -- or better known as "common sense."

F. Made known to us his will. (verses 9-10)

1. This mystery is that the salvation Jesus provided is for not only the Jew, but also for the gentile. (Romans 11:25)
2. This mystery will continue, until Christ comes and reigns in the seventh and final dispensation.
 - a. Will rid the earth of all rebellion.
 - b. Will restore God's administration over His kingdom. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28)

G. Gave us an inheritance. (verses 11-12)

1. According to His purpose.
2. According to His will.
3. To be His praise and glory.

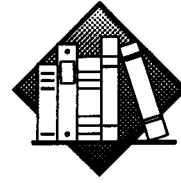
H. Sealed us with His Spirit. (verses 1:13-14)

1. Sealed by the Spirit of promise.

- a. After we trusted.
- b. After we believed.
2. This is the first payment of our inheritance.

II. Prayer for Blessing. (verses 5-19)

- A. That God may impart the spirit of wisdom and revelation.
 1. In the knowledge of Christ. (verse 17)
 2. That understanding may be enlightened. (verse 18)
 3. That we know what is the hope of His calling. (verse 18)
 4. And the riches of the glory of His inheritance. (verse 18)
- B. That we know the greatness of His power.
 1. Toward believers. (verse 19)
 2. According to His power.
 - a. Which is manifested in Christ.
 - b. Through the resurrection.
 - c. Above all principalities and powers.
 - d. Gave Him to be Head of the church -- the body of Christ.



Lesson Material

In our study of Ephesians, it is important to keep in mind that the book is divided into two, distinct divisions. Chapters 1-3 deal with the believer's position in Christ. Chapters 4-6 deal with the practice of the believer as a result of his position. Perhaps a better way of expressing this would be to say that the first three chapters are the doctrine of the Christian and the last three chapters are the duty of a Christian.

The opening chapter is spent giving great dignity to the believer. Paul's prayer is that the Christians would have the realization of who they are in Christ.

Predestination must always be accompanied by foreknowledge. God, knowing the end from the beginning, was aware of our choices; and thus, we were predestined to be in His family.

God's predetermined plan was redemption, a term with which all residents of Ephesus were familiar. All of the major trade routes between east and west converged at Ephesus. The people from abroad would come to buy at Ephesus. They would place their personal seal upon the merchandise that they bought. Then, their purchase would be shipped to them. When it would arrive at their home port, it was then "redeemed" by the owner.

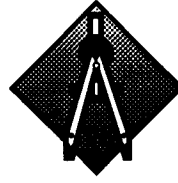
The apostle Paul uses this business terminology to present a powerful, spiritual truth. We have been purchased by Jesus' shed blood; and we have the seal of the Holy Spirit upon us. We are on our



Spiritual Truths

- The Christian believer has a very exalted place, due to God's grace.
- Christ is the exalted Head of His body, the church.

journey; and no one else can have a claim upon us, until our Father redeems us at the port of heaven.



Methods

Have students read the scriptures listed. Write the numbers one through eight on a blackboard, and list the eight spiritual blessings we have in Christ, as you go through them.

Made Alive in Christ

Volume 12

Lesson 2



Bible Reference

Ephesians 2

20 "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."



Theme

Salvation and unity of the saints.



Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:8-9

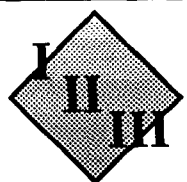
"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 2:19-22

19 "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;



Outline

I. The Salvation of the Saints. (verses 1-10)

- A. Originally, we were dead in our trespasses and sins. (verse 1)
- B. We walked according to the course of the present world. (verse 2)
 - 1. We were controlled by Satan.
 - 2. Satan is working in the fallen human race.
- C. Jewish Christians also were controlled by this life, before they believed. (verse 3)
 - 1. They were children of wrath, like all men.
 - 2. We were all were dead in sin.
- D. God's great love for us saved us and united us. (verses 4-5)
 - 1. Through Jesus Christ.
 - 2. By faith in Him.
- E. Made us alive. (verse 5)
 - 1. While we were still in sin.
 - 2. Together with Jesus Christ.
- F. Raises us up. (verse 6)
 - 1. To sit with him in heavenly places.
 - 2. In Jesus Christ.

G. He did this to show through the ages to come: (verse 7)

- 1. His wealth of grace.
- 2. His kindness.
- 3. Through Jesus Christ.

H. Salvation is the gift of God. (verses 8-9)

- 1. This gift is given by relying on God.
- 2. It cannot be earned or boasted about.

I. We are his workmanship. (verse 10)

- 1. New creations. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- 2. Brought about in Jesus Christ.
- 3. To walk in good works.

II. The Unity of the Saints.

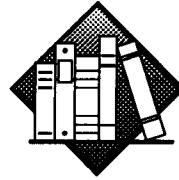
- A. Reminder that we were once unclean (gentiles) and uncircumcised (not of the faith). (verse 11)
- B. Reminder that we were once separated from Jesus Christ. (verse 12)
 - 1. Excluded, and foreigners to the promise.
 - 2. Without hope, and without God.
- C. The blood of Jesus Christ changed all that. We now have the same standing before God, as did his chosen people. (verse 13)
- D. Christ has made peace between the Jew and the gentile. He broke down the barrier that divided us, by His blood. (verse 14)
- E. The barrier was the law, with its rules and regulations. (verse 15)
 - 1. Christ created in Himself one new man, instead of two.

2. Thus, making peace.
- F. In Christ's body, He reconciled both Jew and gentile to God. Through the cross, He got rid of the hostilities. (verse 16)
- G. He came and preached peace to those who were far away and to those who were near. (verse 17)
- H. Now, through Christ, we all have access to God the Father by one Spirit. (verse 18)
- I. We are now all fellow citizens. (verse 19)
1. With God's chosen people.
 2. Members of God's household.
- J. Sharing the same foundation, with Jesus Christ being the Cornerstone. (verse 20)
- K. Being built as a holy temple for God to dwell in by his Spirit. (verses 21-22)



Spiritual Truths

- Salvation and the unity of the saints were established through the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- This act was done for both Jew and Gentile.

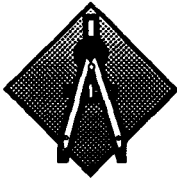


Lesson Material

The first chapter of Ephesians showed us the Trinity of God in our salvation. The Father planned, the Son gave His life for it, and the Holy Spirit applies it to our lives. Now, in chapter two, we see the trinity of man displayed. First, we see man dead, spiritually -- cut off from God because of his sin nature. Man does not become a sinner because he sins; but, rather, he sins because he is a sinner.

Once we are made alive spiritually, through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, our body is inhabited by the Holy Spirit. We, too, then, shall have a bodily resurrection. (Romans 8:11) As the Holy Spirit works in us, our souls, which are our means of relating to one another, are being transformed, as well. The Holy Spirit, working in us, takes away our attitude of exclusiveness. Neither Jew nor gentile is superior; but, we realize that we are all one in Christ.

The most important element in the construction of any building is the cornerstone. If it is not properly laid, the rest of the building will not come together. With Jesus as our Cornerstone, we can build our relationships with God, ourselves and one another, and they will stand secure.



Methods

Take a set of building blocks, and color one of the building blocks a different color

than the rest. Erect a small building, using the colored block as the cornerstone. When building is completed, pull out the cornerstone and watch the building fall. Use this illustration to show how the church would crumble, without Christ, the Cornerstone.

The Mystery of the Church

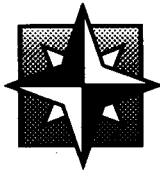
Volume 12

Lesson 3



Bible Reference

Ephesians 3



Theme

The divine secret, now revealed.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 3:3-6, 14-19

3 *"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

4 *"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

5 *"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

6 *"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."*

14 *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

15 *"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

16 *"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

17 *"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*

18 *"May be able to comprehend with all saints what {is} the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

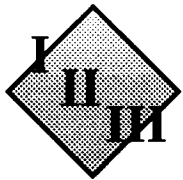
19 *"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."*



Memory Verse

Ephesians 3:6

"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:"



Outline

I. The Mystery of Christ. (verses 1-7)

- A. Paul establishes his divine calling. This calling was by the grace of God. (verse 1-2)
- B. The revelation of a mystery was given to him. (verse 3)
- C. It was a divine secret, and a special insight into the mystery of Christ. (verses 4-5)
 - 1. This secret was not known before.
 - 2. It was being revealed by the Spirit.

D. The new truth is the union of Jew and gentile into the body of Christ. (verses 6-7)

- 1. This was being done by the Holy Spirit.
- 2. The mystery was not the existence of the church, but the life of the church.
 - a. All saints with Christ form one unit.
 - b. With Christ as the Head.
 - c. Saints as the parts.
- 3. This, then, allows the gentiles to partake in all of the promises of God, through their belief in Jesus Christ.

II. The Purpose of the Gospel of Christ. (verses 8-13)

- A. The preaching of the gospel had a two-fold purpose. (verses 8-9)
 - 1. To enlighten all men about the divine secret.
 - 2. To gain converts and build Christ's church.
- B. Yet, its scope was much wider. (verses 10-11)
 - 1. It served to show the wisdom of God to the principalities and powers of the heavenlies.
 - 2. This was to be done through the church.
 - a. The church is an object lesson.
 - b. Shows what God's love and wisdom can do with a ruined race, through Christ Jesus.

C. The gospel assists us. (verses 12-13)

1. It gives us boldness.
2. It gives us confidence.
 - a. With God the Father.
 - b. Through faith in Christ.

III. How to be Filled with All of the Fullness of God. (verses 14-21)

A. The key to this fullness is Christ. (verse 17)

B. According to the rich glory of God. (verse 16)

C. That we be strengthened. (verse 16)

1. With His power.
2. Through His Spirit.

D. That Christ will dwell within, through faith. (verse 17)

E. That we be grounded in love. (verse 17)

F. To know the breadth, length, height, and depth of Christ's love. (verses 18-19)

G. This love surpasses all knowledge, and leads to the fullness of God. (verse 19)

H. He is able to do above all that we can do and think. (verse 20)

I. According to His power that works in us, for His glory -- through Christ and the church.



Spiritual Truths

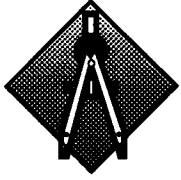
- The full intent of the gospel was not just to reestablish man's relationship with God but to show all of God's creation what His wisdom and love can do with a fallen, ruined race, through His Son, Christ Jesus.
- Paul's prayer of Ephesians chapter three is the key to the fullness of the new life in the believer.



Lesson Material

The dilemma of Paul's day is best communicated in two words: "repent" and "believe." These concepts are what divide the book of Acts in two. "Repent" was Peter's message to the Jews, because they needed to repent of the spiritual pride that led to their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. Paul was given the message to the Gentiles, which was "believe" that they, too, could be heirs of this great salvation. This revelation was so amazing, that even the angels did not understand how this had been done. (1 Peter 1:12)

Paul wants us to be prepared for our future entrance into heaven by our continual access, now, through prayer. Prayer is the final part of our realization of purpose, so that we can be introduced, in chapter four, to our performance, which can only be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Methods

Put all of the students' names in a hat for a drawing. You can give away a small gift as the prize. Draw a name out of the hat, but do not reveal the winner, until the lesson is over. This will exemplify the revelation of the mystery of the church.

The Church's Heavenly Walk

Volume 12

Lesson 4

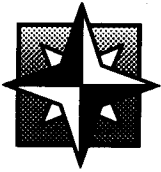


Bible Reference

Ephesians 4

31 "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."



Theme

The great truths about the church are applied to the practical life and conduct of believers.



Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:16

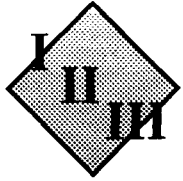
"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 4:30-31

30 "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.



Outline

I. A Walk Worthy of High Position. (verses 1-3)

- A. Live a life according to your calling.
1. Be humble.
 2. Be patient.
 3. Be gentle.
 4. Bear with each other in love.
- B. Make an extra effort to keep the unity of the Spirit, through the bond of peace.

II. Life of the Corporate Body. (verses 4-6)

- A. Seven-fold unity.
1. One body.
 2. One Spirit.
 3. One hope.
 4. One Lord.
 5. One faith.
 6. One baptism.
 7. One God and Father.
 - a. Over all.
 - b. Through all.
 - c. In all.
- B. We must endeavor to keep unity.

III. Gifts to the Body and Purposes. (verses 7-16)

- A. Christ has distributed gifts of grace throughout the body, each having a different function, but one in purpose.
- B. Christ has the authority to do this, through His descent and ascension. (Psalms 68:18)
- C. These gifts to the church are known as apostolic ministries. They are people given to the church by Jesus Himself.
1. Apostles.
 2. Prophets.
 3. Evangelists.
 4. Pastors.
 5. Teachers.
- D. Their purpose is to prepare the body for works of service.
1. So that the body can be built up.
 2. Reaching a unity of faith.
 3. Increasing in knowledge of Christ.
 4. Becoming mature.
 5. Attaining the fullness of Christ.
- E. As a result of these gifts:
1. We will no longer be children.
 - a. Tossed to and fro by adversity.
 - b. Blown around by false teachings.
 - c. Deceived by crafty men.
 2. We will speak the truth in love.
 - a. Growing up in Christ.
 - b. Growing together as a body as each part functions.

IV. The Walk of the Individual Believer. (verses 17-32)

A. As a new person in Christ.

1. No longer live as before, as a gentile.
 - a. Dark in understanding.
 - b. Separated from God.
 - c. Ignorant.
 - d. Blinded in heart.
 - e. No sensitivity.
 - f. Living in sensuality.
 - g. Indulging in impurity.
 - h. Lusting for more.
2. Live in accordance with the truth of Christ.
 - a. Put off your old self.
 - b. Be made new, in the attitude of your mind.
 - c. Put on new self.
 - d. Be like God, in righteousness and holiness.
 - e. Quit lying, and speak the truth.
 - f. If you are angry, do not sin.
 - g. Work hard for a living, and do not steal.
 - h. Share with those in need.

B. As indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

1. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Speak only what is helpful.
 - b. Build up one another.
 - c. Get rid of bitterness.
 - d. Get rid of rage.
 - e. Get rid of anger.
 - f. Get rid of brawling.
 - g. Get rid of slander.
 - h. Get rid of malice.
 - i. Be kind to one another.
 - j. Be compassionate to one another.
 - k. Forgive one another.
2. Instead, treat each other:
 - a. With kindness.
 - b. With tenderheartedness.

- c. With forgiveness.
- d. With remembrance of God's forgiveness toward us.



Spiritual Truths

- Each Christian, as an individual, is to lead a life that reflects Jesus and His life-changing power.
- As Christians, we also have a job to do in the body of Christ.
- No matter how big or how small our job is, the body cannot function properly if we are not doing our part.



Lesson Material

The word "walk" is used by Paul to describe a Christian's character in everyday life. Let us take this lesson, and approach it in a little different way. Break the class into five discussion groups. Challenge each group to look at the verses that accompany the challenge. Ask them, "How do these verses tell us to accomplish this admonition?"

Admonition #1: Ephesians 4:1 says, "Walk worthy of your call." (verses 2-16) Notice in verse 11, Jesus gave us the gift of these ministers (the five-fold ministry), to help us attain this walk.

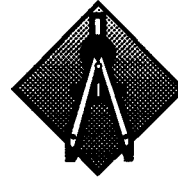
Admonition #2: Ephesians 4:17 says, "Walk not in the vanity of your mind." (verses 18-32) Pay careful attention to words that apply to the mind, e.g., "learn."

Admonition #3: Ephesians 5:2 says, "Walk in love. (verses 2-7)

Admonition #4: Ephesians 5:8 says, "Walk as children of light." (verses 9-14)

Admonition #5: Ephesians 5:15 says, "Walk circumspectly." (verses 16-20) Be sure to explain that "circumspectly" means looking all around you.

When you bring the groups back together, have a spokesman from each group present what they learned about the way we should walk as Christians.



Methods

Have four students come forward, and have them hold a piece of cloth tight between them at the corners. As they are holding the cloth tightly, have a few other students place some items on the cloth (combs, rings and so on). Have one of the students let go of his corner. The other three should be able to keep the cloth tight, but it will be hard. Then have another student let go of his corner. This should cause all that was on the cloth to fall. Use this to demonstrate how the whole body must function together, in order to be effective.

Be Imitators of God

Volume 12

Lesson 5



Bible Reference

Ephesians 5

20 "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

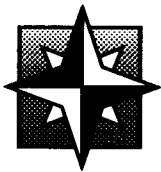
21 "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

22 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."



Theme

Follow God -- not only as a believer, but also as one of His children.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:18-25

18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

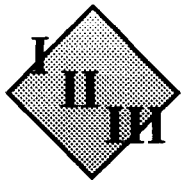
19 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;



Memory Verse

Ephesians 5:21

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."



Outline

I. Walk as a Child of God. (verses 1-2)

- A. Be an imitator of God, as a beloved child.
- B. Live a life of love, as Christ loved us.
 - 1. An offering for us.
 - 2. A Sacrifice to God.

II. Do Not Walk as the World Walks. (verses 3-17)

- A. These are improper for God's children.
 - 1. Sexual immorality.
 - 2. Impurity.
 - 3. Greed.
- B. Give thanksgiving in your speech.
 - 1. No obscenity.
 - 2. No foolish talk.
 - 3. No coarse joking.
- C. Anyone who practices these things will not inherit the kingdom of Christ.
 - 1. Instead, they will feel God's wrath.
 - 2. For being disobedient, they will be judged.

D. For we were once partakers of this life.

- 1. But now we are children of light.
 - a. We should live that way.
 - b. Finding what pleases God.
- 2. We are to have nothing to do with darkness.
 - a. Its fruitless deeds.
 - b. We are to expose it.

E. Be careful how you live.

- 1. Not as unwise, but as wise.
- 2. Making the most of every situation.
- 3. Do not be foolish.
- 4. Understand God's will.

III. Walk the Spirit-filled life. (verses 18-25)

A. Be filled with the Spirit.

- 1. Not drunk on the wine of the world.
- 2. Speak in Psalms.
- 3. Speak in hymns.
- 4. Speak in spiritual songs.

B. Submit to one another, for Christ's sake.

- 1. Wives, submit to husbands, as the church submits to Christ.
- 2. Husbands, love your wives.
 - a. As Christ loved the church.
 - b. Even unto death.
- 3. Man will leave his family, to join his wife. (Genesis 2:24)
 - a. They become one flesh.
 - b. Just as Christ and the church have become one.



Spiritual Truths

- We are commanded to walk as a child of God, and not as the world walks.
- We are to submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit and be filled with the Spirit, so that all that we do will be a blessing to God.



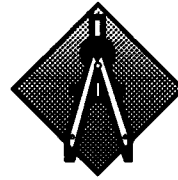
Lesson Material

Walking as a child of the light is a process of eliminating the darkness from our lives. This is where we come in contact, scripturally, with the difference between justification and sanctification.

The first three chapters have shown us that all that is required in our justification is to believe and to accept God's provision

for our eternal life through Jesus' sacrifice. Now, Paul moves us to the outworking of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. Paul uses the illustration of not being intoxicated, but being under the control of the Spirit.

Let us follow this line of thinking to open up our class discussion. Have the class mention things which can happen, when under the influence of alcohol. Relate these things to our Spirit-filled life. Here are some examples: our speech changes, our inhibitions are removed, our thinking is altered.



Methods

Call two students up front, and have one do everything the other does. This is called "monkey see, monkey do." If we are to be imitators of God, we must see in His Word what He does and listen to the voice of His indwelling Holy Spirit.

Do Not Change

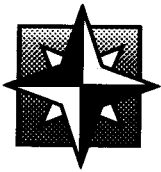
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Lesson 6



Bible Reference

Ephesians 6:10-21



Theme

No matter what happens in any circumstance, do not quit following Jesus Christ.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 6:10-18

10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high {places}.

13 "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

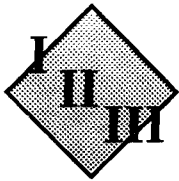
18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."



Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:10

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."



Outline

- I. Do Not Change What You Believe. (verse 14)**
- A. We have the belt of truth.
 - B. All others are lies.
- II. Do Not Change Who You Live For. (verse 14)**
- A. We have the breastplate of righteousness.
 - B. If we live in Christ, we stand in His right standing, and not our own.
- III. Do Not Change What You Do. (verse 15)**
- A. We are filled, and ready with the gospel of peace.
 - B. Always be ready and willing to be a light to your world.
 1. Friends.
 2. Loved ones.
 3. Superiors.
 4. Acquaintances.
- IV. Do Not Change Who You Trust. (verse 16)**
- A. We have the shield of faith.
 - B. Remember, only those who live by faith can please God. (Hebrews 11:6)
 - C. It is our faith in Christ that sets us apart from the world around us.
- V. Do Not Change What Has Been Done for You. (verse 17)**
- A. We wear the helmet of salvation.
 - B. Do not cheapen the sacrifice of Christ, by living as the world does.
 - C. A high price was paid for this helmet.
- VI. Do Not Change What You Read. (verse 17)**
- A. We have the Word -- the sword of the Spirit -- and, when used and used right, it is the most powerful weapon in the spirit world.
 - B. Read daily, that you may be strong in His power.

VII. Do Not Change Who You Rely Upon. (verse 18)

A. We can pray in the Spirit.

1. Always.
2. All kinds.
3. Any request.

B. Be alert and keep praying -- prayer is another powerful weapon that we have to use.

VIII. When We Do Not Change and Are Dressed in God's Armor, We Stand in His Might. (verses 10-13)

- A. Stand against Satan's schemes.
- B. Stand against authorities, powers and rulers in heavenly places.
- C. Stand your ground when the day of evil comes.
- D. Do not war against people. Recognize who your enemy is.
- E. After everything -- stand.

- We need to recognize where our battle is, and with whom.



Lesson Material

Warfare has changed dramatically, since the writing of the scriptures. Discuss some of these differences with the class. Use the Persian Gulf War (Desert Storm) as a comparison with what it must have been like to be in a war at the time Paul was writing this letter. Today, we hear occasional reports of how armies have killed some of their own troops, by some type of miscalculation.

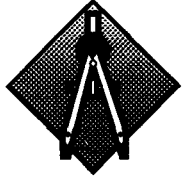
There is one piece of armor missing in Ephesians 6. The Christian soldier is not protected from behind. From this, we learn two great principles of spiritual warfare. First, a Christian soldier is never covered, if he retreats. Secondly, he does not need to worry about his exposed areas, because his fellow soldiers will keep him covered.

Two good points of discussion from these verses are: (1) What are some of the things that would cause us to retreat from the battle in the Christian life? (2) How can we protect one another in this tough battle to live for Christ?



Spiritual Truths

- We must always remain strong in the Lord and His power.
- We need to make sure that we have our armor on daily, and that we never change what Christ has done for us.



Methods

List the pieces of armor in Ephesians 6 on a blackboard, and have the students list the significance of each piece from the Word. Note that it is the soldier's duty to put on the armor himself -- daily.

Who Is the Holy Spirit? (Part I)

Volume 12

Lesson 7



Bible References

John 14:16

Romans 8

Ephesians 3-4

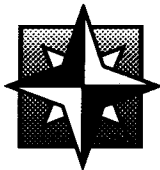
for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."



Memory Verse

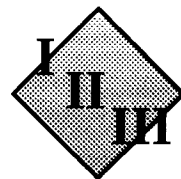
John 4:24

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."



Theme

A look at Who the Holy Spirit is and His character.



Outline



Scripture Reading

John 16:13

13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:

- I. The Holy Spirit Is Not:
 - A. He is not a thing.
 - B. He is not an "it."
 - C. He is not a material substance.

- D. He is not an impersonal force or energy.
- E. He is not just a quality.
- F. He is not an abstract being.

II. Who the Holy Spirit Is:

- A. He is a real person.
 - 1. He thinks. (Romans 8:27)
 - 2. He acts. (Ephesians 3:16)
 - 3. He loves. (Romans 5:5; 15:30)
 - 4. He wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
 - 5. He feels. (Ephesians 4:30)
 - 6. He speaks. (Acts 13:2; 8:29; 10:19)
- B. He is God.
 - 1. God is Spirit. (John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 3:17)
 - 2. Equal with God. (Acts 5:3-4; 1 John 5:7)
 - 3. Spoke as God spoke. (Acts 28:25; Isaiah 48:16; Hebrews 3:7-11)
- C. He is eternal.
 - 1. Was in the beginning. (Genesis 1:2; Psalms 104:30)
 - 2. Was equal in sending Christ. (Isaiah 48:16; 61:1)
 - 3. Active in the last days. (Acts 2:16-21)
 - 4. Will remain forever with Christ and believers. (Revelation 22:17)
- D. He is omnipresent. (Psalms 139:7-10)
- E. He is omniscient (all-knowing). (Isaiah 40:13-14; Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Peter 1:11)
- F. He is omnipotent (all-powerful). (Luke 1:35; Genesis 1:2; Zechariah 4:6)

- 1. Remember, this is simple groundwork that we are laying.
- 2. We are simply trying to get an idea as to Who the Holy Spirit is.

III. There Are Many Names or Titles for the Holy Spirit.

- A. Comforter or Counselor. (John 14:16)
- B. Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11)
- C. Spirit of God. (Genesis 1:2, 1 Samuel 19:20)
- D. Spirit of Truth. (1 John 4:6, 5:6)
- E. Baptizer. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- F. Spirit of Judgment. (Isaiah 28:5-6)
- G. Spirit of Grace. (Hebrews 10:29)
- H. Spirit of Wisdom, Revelation, Might, Knowledge. (Isaiah 11:2)
- I. Spirit of Holiness. (Romans 1:4)
- J. Spirit of Life. (Romans 8:2)
- K. Spirit of Adoption. (Romans 8:15)
- L. Spirit of Faith. (2 Corinthians 4:13)
- M. Spirit of Glory. (1 Peter 4:14)
- N. Power of the Highest. (Luke 1:35)
- O. Eternal Spirit. (Hebrews 9:14)

IV. Names and Titles Are Important.

- A. They identify.
 - 1. They characterize.

2. They describe.
- B. They often reveal things about the one named.
1. They may show his nature.
 2. They may show his position.
- C. The Names we have listed reveal the character, nature, position, and work of the Holy Spirit. They tell us Who He is and what He does.



Spiritual Truths

- The Holy Spirit is more than a thing. He is a Person.
- The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead.
- The Holy Spirit also has all of the characteristics of God, which are revealed in His Names.

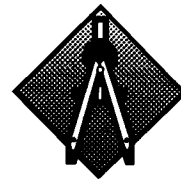


Lesson Material

The Name derived from the Greek for the Holy Spirit is "Paraclete." The word has two components. The first is *para*, which means "along side." The second is

kaleo, which means "to call." One way to think of this is to think of a cheerleader standing on the sidelines, calling out encouragement to the participants in the game.

The Holy Spirit can work in and through us in many different ways. One way is best described in His Name, "Encourager." This same word is found in Hebrews 3:13, expressed as "exhort:" "*But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*" This verse tells us three things about the Holy Spirit's work in our lives to make us an encouragement to one another. (1) Do it today. Do not let inhibitions talk you into procrastinating. (2) "Daily" tells us not to give up on each other. We need to keep at it. (3) The reason that the Holy Spirit wants to work through us to encourage each other is that sin can harden our hearts. Discuss these three applications of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.



Methods

Write the numbers one through fifteen on the blackboard. Have the students give as many different names and titles of the Holy Spirit from scripture as they can. You will probably find that they will have 20-25.

Who Is the Holy Spirit? (Part II)

Volume 12

Lesson 8

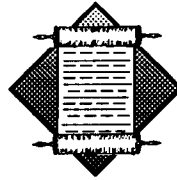


Bible References

Matthew 3:16-17

John 7:37-39; 16:13

Ephesians 5



Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:16-17

16 *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:*

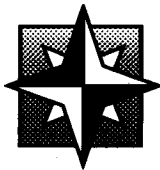
17 *"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

John 7:37-39

37 *"In the last day, that great {day} of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

38 *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

39 *"(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet {given}; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"*



Theme

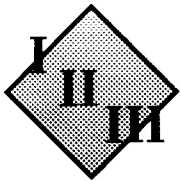
The character of the Holy Spirit, as revealed in Bible types, or symbols.



Memory Verse

John 7:38

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."



Outline

I. Types, or Symbols, of the Holy Spirit in Scripture.

A. Oil. (1 Samuel 10:1; James 5:14; Psalms 23:5; Hebrews 1:9)

1. Penetrates.
2. Permeates.
3. Saturates.
4. Soothes.
5. Moistens.
6. Protects.
7. Lubricates.
8. Purges.
9. Cleanses.
10. Radiates light.
11. Radiates warmth.
12. If edible, provides nutrition.
13. Anoints.
 - a. As shown by the anointing of kings.
 - b. Empowers us for service.
14. Represents the fullness of the Spirit.
15. Provides divine sanctioning to the believer.

16. It all emphasizes the Holy Spirit's total involvement in the spiritual life of the believer in Christ.

B. Dove. (Matthew 3:16)

1. Peace.
2. Gentleness.
3. Sensitive.
 - a. We must also be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's inner prompting.
 - b. If we ignore Him, we will grieve Him. (Ephesians 4:30)
4. Like a dove of peace, when strife or contention enters in, He will leave.

C. Water. (John 7:38)

1. Water brings life.
2. Quenches.
3. Refreshes.
4. Cleanses.
5. Purifies.
6. Changes seashores and rivers.
7. Yet, can run still and deep.
8. Can be a terrible force to those who resist.
9. Beautiful and restful, to those who live in its harmony.
10. Jesus called the Holy Spirit, "Rivers of Living Water."

D. Wind. (John 3:8)

1. Strong.
2. Unrestrained.
3. Persistent.
4. Prevailing.
5. Pervading.
6. Refreshing.
7. Unseen.

E. Fire. (Luke 3:16)

1. Practical.
2. Useful.
3. Lights.

4. Heats.
5. Purifies.
6. Refines.
7. Cheerful.
8. Stimulating.
9. Consuming.
10. Not to be fooled with.
11. Not a play thing. Neither is the Holy Spirit.

F. Wine. (Ephesians 5:18)

1. People at Pentecost could only be compared to having had too much wine. (Acts 2:13)
2. Has a soothing effect.
3. Has healing effect. Paul instructed Timothy to take a little wine for his infirmities. (1 Timothy 5:23)
4. Paul tell us to be not drunk on wine, but rather be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

G. Seal. (Ephesians 1:13)

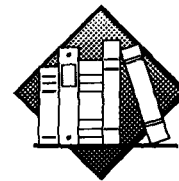
1. Outward.
2. Visible.
3. Marks ownership.
4. The Holy Spirit is God's seal on believers, who were bought with a price.
5. The Holy Spirit is God's way of saying, "Belongs to Jesus."

II. The Names, Titles and Symbols of the Holy Spirit Are Used to Help Us Better Understand the Third Person of the Godhead.



Spiritual Truths

- The symbols of the Holy Spirit show us His nature and work.
- He is a purger, a peace-giver, and a life-giver; and He is persistent, purifying, and soothing.
- All believers are sealed unto God by the indwelling Holy Spirit.



Lesson Material

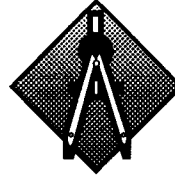
The Bible uses many pictures, or symbols, to describe spiritual things. Bible scholars call these symbols "types." This lesson examines many of the types of the Holy Spirit, which are given in scripture. As we learn about these types of the Holy Spirit, we will learn more of His nature and work.

Oil is often used as a type of the Holy Spirit. Oil was always used when anointing a king in Israel. It was to show that king's calling and preparation for service. Today, the Holy Spirit anoints believers in our service for the Lord. Notice that anointing is always connected to a specific task that is undertaken for the Lord. Anointing is not for our benefit, or just to make us "feel good."

The Holy Spirit is also shown as a Dove in the Bible. This typifies His gentle character. He is a Gentleman; and He will

never violate our will. As the Fire of God, the Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier in the life of the believer. As the Living Water, He is the very Source of life to the believer, and the One Who continually refreshes and cleanses us. As wine, He is the Source of our joy and power; and as a Seal, He is the One Who keeps us unto God.

The Holy Spirit indwells all believers. We must emphasize that, as believers, we need to become more aware of His presence within. He is the One Who illuminates God's Word to us; and He is the One Who speaks conviction to our hearts, in order to turn us to the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:9)



Methods

Have the students list on the blackboard the types of the Holy Spirit. Then, have the students explain the characteristics of each type, and how each of those characteristics applies to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Who Is the Holy Spirit? (Part III)

Volume 12

Lesson 9

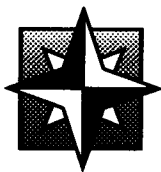


Bible References

John 16:7-14

Romans 8

1 John 5:7



Theme

The role of the Holy Spirit within the triune Godhead.



Scripture Reading

John 16:7-14

7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 "Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, {that} shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

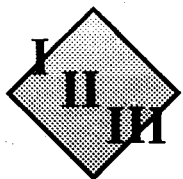
14 "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show {it} unto you."



Memory Verse

1 John 5:7

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."



Outline

I. Questions.

- A. How did the Holy Spirit come into being?
- B. What is His relationship with the Father and the Son?
- C. What is His function?
- D. What is His relationship with believers?

II. The Eternal Holy Spirit.

- A. We know that God has always been. (Revelation 1:8; Genesis 1:1; John 1:1)
- B. We know that Jesus has always been. (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; Revelation 13:8)
- C. We know third that the Holy Spirit has always been. (Genesis 1:1-2; Hebrews 9:14)

III. The Holy Spirit's Role in Creation.

- A. Look at Genesis 1:1-3.
- B. Who is the Architect here?
 1. God the Father.
 2. The planner.
 3. The mastermind.
 4. Why? Because of His love for mankind.

C. Who is the Contractor?

1. God the Son -- Jesus Christ. (Colossians 1:17)
2. The Word of God. (John 1:1-3)
3. The servant.

D. Who is the Laborer? Who made it happen?

1. The Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:2)
2. The breath of God. (John 20:22)
3. The breath of life. (Genesis 2:7)
4. The spirit of life. (Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 3:6)

IV. The Holy Spirit Has the Same Nature and Character as the Father and the Son.

- A. He is the spirit of love.
- B. He is the spirit of service.
- C. He is in unity with the Father and the Son. (1 John 5:7)
- D. He is equal with the Father and the Son. (Isaiah 48:16; Matthew 28:19; 1 John 5:7)
- E. The Holy Spirit has a specific function within the Godhead.

V. What Is the Job of the Holy Spirit?

- A. It is his job to reveal things to mankind. (Acts 11:28; 1 Corinthians 2:10)
1. The nature of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:11-13)
 2. The character of Christ. (Galatians 5:22)
 3. The power of Christ. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8)
 4. The image of Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:18)
 5. The salvation of Christ. (1 John 5:6)
- B. It is His job to speak to mankind.
1. Things of God. (John 14:26)
 2. Ways of God. (1 Corinthians 2:14-16)
 3. Mysteries of God. (Ephesians 3:3; 6:19)
 4. The will of God. (John 6:63)
- C. Jesus called the Holy Spirit "another Comforter." (John 14:16)
1. His ministry to the believers would be as Jesus' ministry to His disciples.
 2. His ministry also would be to reprove (show or convict) the world:
 - a. Of sin.
 - b. Of righteousness.
 - c. Of judgment.



Spiritual Truths

- The Holy Spirit is the third, eternal Person of the Godhead. He is one in nature and essence with the Father and the Son.
- The Holy Spirit has a specific role within the Godhead.
- The Holy Spirit is the laborer of God.



Lesson Material

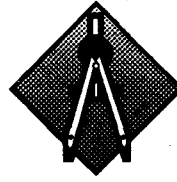
The concept of the Trinity is very difficult to grasp. It is even more difficult to defend, since the term is not found in the scriptures. There are three places in the Bible where all three Members of the Godhead are revealed at the same time.

The first is in creation. (Genesis 1:1-3) We can see all three Persons of the Trinity active in creation. God the Father created. God the Son spoke -- John 1:1 says that Jesus is the Word of God. And John 1:3 says that without Jesus, nothing was created. And the Holy Spirit was present, as the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters.

Two other places in which the Trinity is expressed are at the conception of Jesus (Luke 1:35) and in the resurrection. Show the class, through the resurrection, how all three Persons of the Trinity are present: the Father (Galatians 1:1); the Son (John

2:19-21; 10:18), and the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:11) And yet, Acts 2:32 says that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Challenge the students to spend the next week trying to find examples of how one thing can be expressed in three ways. They can talk to their science teachers about water, which can be in the form of a solid, liquid or gas. See how many additional illustrations they can find.



Methods

Bring in a set of plans for a building. Have one student play the part of the architect who drew the plans. (This is a type of God.) Have another student be a builder or contractor, who takes the plans from the contractor and will oversee the building being built. (This is a type of Jesus.) Have a third student be the laborer -- the one who drives the nails and erects the building. (This is a type of the Holy Spirit.) This will help show how the Godhead functions.

The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer

Volume 12

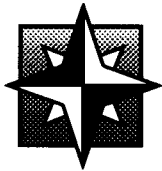
Lesson 10



Bible References

Romans 8

1 Corinthians 12:13



Theme

The Holy Spirit's relationship and ministry to the believer.



Scripture Reading

Romans 8:9-16

9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 "And if Christ {be} in you, the body {is} dead because of sin; but the Spirit {is} life because of righteousness.

11 "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

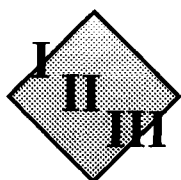
16 "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 12:13

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether {we be} Jews or Gentiles, whether {we be} bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."



Outline

I. What Is the Holy Spirit's Relationship to Believers?

A. The New Testament shows a three-fold relationship.

1. With.

- a. Approach of God to the soul with conviction. (John 16:8)
- b. Presentation of Christ as the center of our faith. (John 16:14)
- c. Imparting of faith. (Ephesians 2:8)
- d. Regeneration. (Romans 8:9-10; Titus 3:5)
- e. Abiding presence of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

2. In.

- a. To give victory over the flesh. (Romans 8:2-4; Galatians 5:16-17)
- b. Creates a Christ-like character. (Galatians 5:22-23)

c. Help with infirmities. (Romans 8:26)

d. Inspires prayer. (Ephesians 6:18)

e. Gives access to God. (Ephesians 2:18)

f. Makes believers aware of their kinship. (Romans 8:16)

g. Places us into the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

h. Comforts and intercedes. (Acts 9:31 and Romans 8:26)

i. Reveals Christ. (John 16:14)

j. Sanctifies believers. (Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11)

3. On.

a. Describes the relationship between Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. (Matthew 3:16; Luke 4:18)

b. The relationship of Mary and the birth of Jesus Christ. (Luke 1:35)

c. The relationship of the Holy Spirit and believers. (Acts 1:8; 2:17; 1 Peter 4:14)

B. When we come to Christ and become new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17), Who convicted us to make that change?

1. When we are growing in Christ and are reading His Word, Who teaches us the things of God? (John 16:13)

2. As we try to be more Christ-like and know God's will for our lives, Who shows us the depth of God's own heart? (Romans 5:5)

C. When we are reading God's Word and it jumps out at us with fresh revelation, Who is revealing those things? (John 16:13)

1. Who gives us the ability and power to witness, preach, teach and evangelize? (Acts 1:8)

2. Who takes the Word of God and sets it on fire, and drives it into the hearts of those who hear it?

II. How Important Is the Holy Spirit in the Lives of believers?

- A. Without Him, we would not be able to bridge the gap between us and God.
- B. As fleshly men, we would continue to live in sin and be pulled in directions that are contrary to God's will for our lives.
- C. We could never be shaped into the image of Christ. (Romans 8:29)

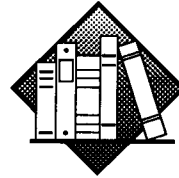
III. All Throughout the History of the Church, There Has Always Been an Awareness of the Holy Spirit.

- A. But, starting right now, you can experience a new awareness of the Holy Spirit in your own life.
 1. Is the Holy Spirit in your own life?
 2. Is the Holy Spirit really interested in you?
 3. Can you experience Him personally?
- B. Yes -- if you have received Jesus as your Savior.
 1. If you want to walk and live in the Spirit, you can and will experience the Holy Spirit's work in your life.
 2. He will make you to become more Christ-like and also become a victor through Jesus Christ.



Spiritual Truths

- The Holy Spirit indwells all believers.
- The Holy Spirit continues to lead and sanctify believers.
- The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is four-fold: regeneration, anointing, infilling, and baptism (referring to the baptism in the Holy Spirit).



Lesson Material

Our emphasis in these lessons on the nature and work of the Holy Spirit is to encourage the students to become aware of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, so that they can then cooperate with His work in their lives.

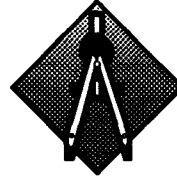
The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer can be shown in four different areas: regeneration, anointing, infilling, and baptism.

Regeneration refers to the event of salvation -- when the believer is born again. The Holy Spirit gives life to our spirit, and we experience a re-birth, or spiritual birth. (John 3) The result is that we are given eternal life; we become children of God; and we are placed into the body of Christ.

Anointing refers to that work of the Holy Spirit whereby He empowers us to do a specific task. It is a supernatural enablement for the work of God.

Infilling refers to that process in Ephesians chapter 5, by which the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, which is the character of Jesus Christ.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the experience in which Jesus immerses, or baptizes us, in the Holy Spirit. The result is power to witness, and expression of the manifestation of the Spirit, or "spirituals," listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.



Methods

On the blackboard, under the heading, "Four-fold Ministry of the Holy Spirit," list the following, with the help of the students:

- Regeneration -- Salvation
- Anointing -- Service
- Infilling -- Fruit
- Baptism -- "Spirituals"

Spiritual Gifts

Volume 12

Lesson 11



Bible References

Romans 12

1 Corinthians 12

Ephesians 4

ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

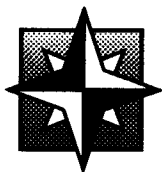
4 "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."



Theme

Examining the grace gifts, the apostolic gifts and the manifestation of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:28

28 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."



Scripture Reading

Romans 12:3-8

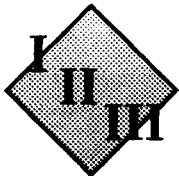
3 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 7:7

"For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that."



Outline

I. What Spiritual Gifts Are Not.

- A. They are not separate forces.
- B. They do not work independently of one another.
- C. They are not "off the cuff" remarks.
- D. They are not imaginations.
- E. They are not mystical.
- F. They are not little games, or toys to be played with.
- G. They are not for the amusement of the body.
- H. They are not ego-builders for the one operating in the gift.
 1. Stay away from someone who boasts about his gifting.
 2. These people are operating in their own pride and glory.

3. They have become "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals." (1 Corinthians 13:1)

- I. They are not earned.
- J. Those who operate within their gifts without humility and love can become full of pride; and we know that pride goes before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)

II. What Spiritual Gifts Are.

- A. They are distinct ways in which God works supernaturally through believers.
- B. They are the unified workings of one Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)
- C. Spiritual gifts are God in action, through the believer, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (1 Peter 4:10-11)

III. The Gifts and Their Classifications.

- A. There are three classifications of spiritual gifts that we will examine: the manifestation of the Spirit ("spirituals"); the grace (*charis*) gifts; and the apostolic ("five-fold") gifts.
- B. The manifestation of the Spirit ("spirituals" -- also commonly called "spiritual gifts"). (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 1. Word of wisdom.
 2. Word of knowledge.
 3. Gift of faith.
 4. Gifts of healings.
 5. Working of miracles.
 6. Prophecy.
 7. Discerning of spirits.
 8. Different kinds of tongues.

9. Interpretation of tongues.
- C. Grace (*charis*) gifts of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:3-8)
1. Gifts of helps.
 2. Gifts of administration.
 3. Gift of serving.
 4. Gift of teaching.
 5. Gift of exhorting.
 6. Gift of giving.
 7. Gift of ruling.
 6. Gift of mercy.
- D. The apostolic (five-fold) gifts are people whom Jesus Christ has gifted to the body. (Ephesians 4:11-12)
1. Apostle.
 2. Prophet.
 3. Evangelist.
 4. Pastor.
 5. Teacher.
- E. Each category of gifts has a specific purpose.
1. The manifestation of the Spirit is for the purpose of edification, exhortation and comfort. (1 Corinthians 14:3) Any believer who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit can operate in the spirituals, as the Holy Spirit chooses to do so.
 2. The grace gifts are specific giftings to individuals, for the good of the body. Each believer has at least one grace gift. (Romans 12:4-8)
 3. The apostolic gifts are given to train the church for the work of the ministry, and for the spiritual maturing of all believers. (Ephesians 4:12-16)

IV. Categorizing the Manifestation of the Spirit (the Nine Spirituals).

- A. Revelation gifts.
1. Word of knowledge.
 2. Word of wisdom.
 3. Discerning of spirits.
- B. Utterance gifts.
1. Prophecy.
 2. Tongues.
 3. Interpretation of tongues.
- C. Power gifts.
1. Healings.
 2. Miracles.
 3. Faith.
 - a. This does not refer to saving faith.
 - b. This is a supernatural infusion of faith, for the purpose of a specific need, or situation.



Spiritual Truths

- We all have been placed into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.
- He then imparts a grace gift to us to use in the body, so that the body can function properly.
- The Apostolic gifts are actual men or women that Christ Himself has placed in the body.

- The baptism in the Holy Spirit enables us to operate in the nine spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, as the Holy Spirit chooses. We do not "possess" the spirituals.



Lesson Material

The church of Jesus Christ is described throughout the New Testament as a "body," or the "body of Christ." Jesus Christ is the Head of the body (Ephesians 1:22-23); and every believer is a "member in particular." (1 Corinthians 12:27)

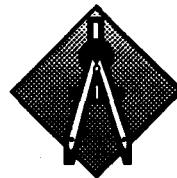
To ensure the proper functioning of the body, God has given many gifts to the church. In so doing, He has made provision for the governing of the body, the edification of the body, and the maturing of the body. This lesson is an overview of some of the gifts that God has given to the body.

The Lord Jesus has gifted certain individuals to the body, for the purpose of apostolic ministry. (Ephesians 4) These are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Their specific purpose is for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, the maturing of the saints, and the ensuring that each member functions properly within the body.

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 describes the nine "spirituals," or, as verse 7 states, the "manifestation" of the Spirit. These are commonly called "spiritual gifts." These spirituals can operate through any Spirit-

baptized believer, as the Holy Spirit chooses to do so. It is important to note that no individual "has" these gifts, any more that any individual "has" the Holy Spirit, in the sense of ownership. The Holy Spirit "has" us -- and He chooses how and when to operate in these gifts through the individual believer.

1 Corinthians 12:28 lists two grace gifts: helps and governments. Other grace gifts are found in Romans 12. They are ministry (serving), teaching (differing from the apostolic gift of teacher), exhorting, giving, ruling and showing mercy. These giftings are always given for the benefit of the whole body, rather than the individual. Every member of the body is given at least one type of grace gift, in which to function. It is God's desire that every member function in the gifts that God has given them, for the good of the church and for the glory of God.



Methods

Open the class discussion by asking the students when they have seen or experienced the gifts of the Spirit in operation in a church service, or in their own personal lives. Discuss how you can know if you are called to be in the apostolic ministry. Explain how we can all be a gift to the body of Christ.

List the different categories of gifts on the blackboard, as you cover them. Be sure to state the purpose of each category of gifts.

The Fruit of the Spirit

Volume 12

Lesson 12



Bible References

Galatians 5:22-23

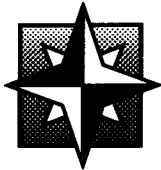
Ephesians 5:18-21

18 *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

19 *"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

20 *"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

21 *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."*



Theme

The Spirit-filled life and its result -- the fruit of the Spirit.



Memory Verse

Galatians 5:22-23

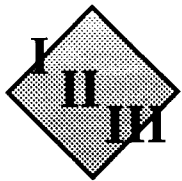
"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:9, 18-21

9 *"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;"*



Outline

I. The Spirit-filled Life.

A. What is being "filled with the Spirit?"

1. It is maintaining a state of yieldedness and obedience to the work of the Holy Spirit in one's life.
2. It is a continual process, rather than a one-time event.
 - a. The Greek tense of the verb "be filled" translates "be continually being filled."
 - b. In other words, "be filled and refilled and refilled."
3. It is a work of the Holy Spirit, which is done over a period of time in the life of the believer.
 - a. Fruit appears only after a tree has matured.
 - b. Fruit must be cultivated.

B. The result of being filled with the Spirit -- the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

1. The fruit of the Spirit is produced in the life of the Spirit-filled believer.
2. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ formed in us.
3. There is only one fruit of the Spirit, but it has nine aspects of Jesus' character:
 - a. Love.
 - b. Joy.
 - c. Peace.
 - d. Longsuffering.
 - e. Gentleness.
 - f. Goodness.
 - g. Faith.
 - h. Meekness.

i. Temperance.

II. How Can I be Filled with the Spirit? (Ephesians 5:19-21)

A. Speaking and singing to yourself. (verse 19)

1. Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs.
2. Making melody in your heart to the Lord.
3. Filling your mind and satisfying your soul with God's presence and God's Word.

B. Giving thanks to the Lord. (verse 20)

1. Always -- a continual state of thanksgiving is the result of faith in God and contentment.
2. For all things.
 - a. Believing that God has ordered your steps, no matter what the circumstances. (Psalms 37:23)
 - b. We can always thank God for Who He is and for what He has done for us.

C. Submission in relationships. (verse 21)

1. To God.
2. One to another.



Spiritual Truths

- The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ, which the Holy Spirit produces in the believer.

- The fruit of the Spirit is not a one-time gifting, but rather, a process of cultivation in our lives.
- The key to developing the fruit of the Spirit is to stay continually filled with the Spirit.



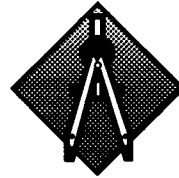
Lesson Material

The gifts of the Spirit are given to us as He wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11) But the fruit of the Spirit must be cultivated in each individual believer by the Holy Spirit, through the continual process of being filled with the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Jesus, which is produced in the lives of believers by the Holy Spirit. Notice that the word, "fruit" is singular, rather than the plural, "fruits." There are nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23; but, there is only one fruit of the Spirit.

God's desire is to conform us to the image of Jesus. (Romans 8:29) Paul expressed the same desire for the church, when he said, "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be [formed in you].*" (Galatians 4:19) The Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, transforming us from the character and mind set of the natural man into the character and mind set of Jesus Himself. We do not lose our individuality in this process; but, we do lose our old, anti-God, fleshly character.

God does not force the fruit of the Spirit onto us. It is a matter of our choice, as we decide to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16) and stay submitted to and obedient to the Holy Spirit. We cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit in ourselves; only the Holy Spirit can. He does this through an ongoing process, which is called "being filled with the Spirit." The result is the character of Christ formed in us -- love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. We do not come by these things naturally; but, we do come by them supernaturally -- by staying filled with the Spirit.



Methods

Use the analogy of fruit, which the Bible already provides. Explain that a fruit tree does not bear fruit the same season that it is planted. It must be pruned, cultivated and watered over many seasons; and as it matures, it will bear fruit.

Ask your students whether they can see the fruit of the Spirit produced in their own lives. Can they see a difference between now and one year ago?

Encourage your students to be "continually being filled" with the Spirit, by following the directives in Ephesians 5:19-21.

The Indwelling Holy Spirit

Volume 12

Lesson 13



Bible References

John 20:22

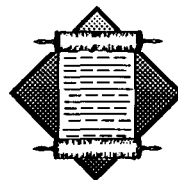
Romans 6:11

Romans 8

1 Corinthians 12:13

1 Corinthians 14

Ephesians 1:13-14



Scripture Reading

Romans 8:9-16

9 *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

10 *"And if Christ {be} in you, the body {is} dead because of sin; but the Spirit {is} life because of righteousness.*

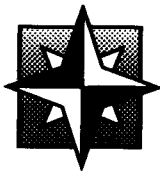
11 *"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

12 *"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

13 *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

14 *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

15 *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received*

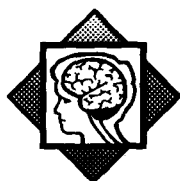


Theme

The indwelling Holy Spirit and His ongoing work in the life of the believer.

the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

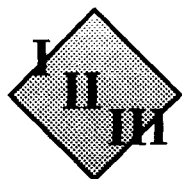
16 *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"*



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 12:13

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether {we be} Jews or Gentiles, whether {we be} bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."



Outline

I. Before Salvation.

- A. Our souls and flesh controlled our motives.
- B. Our sinful nature controlled us. (Galatians 5:17)
- C. We desired to satisfy our flesh.
- D. We tried to dominate every aspect of the things around us, to please self.
- E. The result was a spirit deadened by sin, a soul ruled by sin, and a corrupt body to carry it all out.

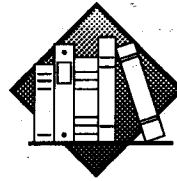
II. After Salvation.

- A. We became born of the Spirit. (John 3:8) This is also called "regeneration." (Titus 3:5)
- B. We became children of God. (Romans 8:16; John 1:14)
- C. Our spirits were made alive. (Ephesians 2:1; Romans 8:10)
- D. We were sealed by the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13)
- E. We became new creatures. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- F. We obtained an inner Witness. (Romans 8:16)
- G. We were placed into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- H. We received the Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:9)
- I. We received the hope of resurrection unto eternal life. (Romans 8:11)

III. The Ongoing Work of the Indwelling Holy Spirit.

- A. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. (John 16:8)
 1. Being saved does not make us sin-proof.
 2. When we confess (acknowledge) our sin, Jesus will forgive and cleanse us. (1 John 1:9)
- B. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God to us.
 1. He takes the written Word (*logos*) and speaks it to our hearts (*rhema*).

2. The Author of the Book is the best One to explain it. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)
 3. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. (John 16:13; 1 John 2:27)
- C. The Holy Spirit empowers our witness for the gospel.
1. The baptism in the Holy Spirit gives us supernatural power to be witnesses for Christ. (Acts 1:8)
 2. Speaking in unknown tongues is a sign to the unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 14:22)
- D. The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. (Galatians 5:22-23)
1. This is the character of Jesus Christ being formed in us.
 2. We must be filled with the Spirit, in order for this fruit to be produced in us.
- E. The Holy Spirit anoints us for service.
1. This is a supernatural enabling for the accomplishment of a specific ministry task.
 2. The power of the Holy Spirit flows through us, as we labor for Him.
- The Holy Spirit continually works in the lives of believers.



Lesson Material

After Jesus raised from the dead, He appeared to His disciples and breathed on them, saying, "...Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John 20:22) Before Jesus went to the cross, He had told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be in them. (John 14:17) Up until that time, the Holy Spirit was "with" them, but not "in" them. In the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit came "upon" men and women of faith; but now that Jesus is glorified, He has given all believers the Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

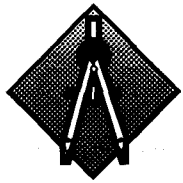
The Holy Spirit is the One Who is the Voice of Jesus in our lives. He makes the World of God real to us, and He convicts us when we sin. He makes us like Jesus; and He empowers us to witness for Him. Surely, we have a great Treasure in these earthen vessels! (2 Corinthians 4:7)

We must always be aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. As we walk carefully and obediently to Him, He will continue to change us into the image of Jesus, and develop in us an intimate relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is the greatest Gift that a person can receive. (Acts 2:38) Let us be thankful for, and mindful of, the blessed Holy Spirit.



Spiritual Truths

- The Holy Spirit makes our spirits alive at the moment of salvation. This is called "regeneration."
- The Holy Spirit indwells all believers.



Methods

Have the students open their Bibles to Romans, chapter 8, and list as many of the works of the Holy Spirit in our lives as they can find.

Review the four-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit:

Regeneration -- Salvation

Anointing -- Service

Infilling -- Fruit

Baptism -- Spirituals

Tongues and a Whole Lot More

Volume 12

Lesson 14



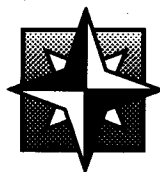
Bible References

John 1:33

Acts 1:8; 2:4

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

1 Corinthians 14



Theme

There is more to the baptism in the Holy Spirit than speaking in tongues.



Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 12-15

1 *"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual {gifts}, but rather that ye may prophesy.*

2 *"For he that speaketh in an {unknown} tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth {him}; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.*

3 *"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men {to} edification, and exhortation, and comfort.*

4 *"He that speaketh in an {unknown} tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.*

5 *"I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater {is} he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."*

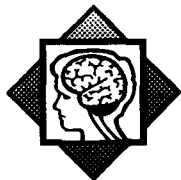
12 *"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual {gifts}, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

13 *"Wherefore let him that speaketh in an {unknown} tongue pray that he may interpret.*

14 *"For if I pray in an {unknown} tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

15 *"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the*

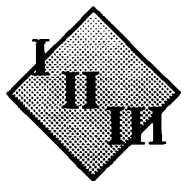
understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."



Memory Verse

Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."



Outline

I. What Is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

- A. It is an event, in which the believer is immersed in the Holy Spirit.
- B. Jesus is the Baptizer. (John 1:33)
- C. It is available for every believer.

II. What Is the Purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

- A. Power to witness. (Acts 1:8)
- B. Supernatural enabling. (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)

- C. Edification, both corporately and individually.

III. Results of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- A. Initial, physical evidence: tongues. (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46)

- 1. Speaking in a language that is unknown to the speaker.
- 2. The Spirit gives the utterance.

- B. The manifestation of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

- 1. Also called "spirituals" or "spiritual gifts."

- 2. Nine aspects of the manifestation of the Spirit:

- a. Word of wisdom.

- b. Word of knowledge.

- c. Faith.

- (1) This does not refer to saving faith.

- (2) This is a supernatural infusion of faith for a specific circumstance.

- d. Gifts of healings.

- (1) Notice both "gifts" and "healings" are plural.

- (2) Many types of healings.

- e. Working of miracles.

- f. Prophecy.

- (1) This is "forth-telling" a message given to the believer by the Holy Spirit.

- (2) It will always edify, exhort or comfort. (1 Corinthians 14:3)

- (3) It is to be judged. (1 Corinthians 14:29)

- g. Discerning of spirits.

- h. Different kinds of tongues.

- i. Interpretation of tongues.

IV. Different Kinds of Tongues.

A. Private tongues.

1. Our spirits are praying, according to the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 14:14)
2. Subject to our will. (1 Corinthians 14:15) The Holy Spirit does not force us to speak.
3. We do not understand what we are saying. (1 Corinthians 14:14)
4. We speak mysteries unto God. (1 Corinthians 14:2)
5. We are edified. (1 Corinthians 14:4)

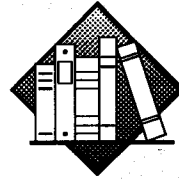
B. Public tongues.

1. Must be accompanied by interpretation. (1 Corinthians 14:5, 13, 27)
2. For the edification of the body. (1 Corinthians 14:5, 26)
3. A sign to unbelievers. (1 Corinthians 14:22)



Spiritual Truths

- The baptism in the Holy Spirit is available to every believer.
- Jesus is the One Who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit edifies us (builds us up), both corporately and individually.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers our witness for Jesus Christ.

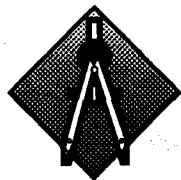


Lesson Material

In John 1:33, Jesus is described to John the Baptist in this way: "...Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." It is the Lord Jesus Himself Who baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit. Just as our bodies are immersed in water when we are baptized in water, so also our spirits are immersed in the Holy Spirit, when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all believers. It is very important, for several reasons. First, we are empowered in our witness for Jesus Christ. Secondly, we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to operate in the manifestation of the Spirit, as shown in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. And thirdly, we are edified (built up and strengthened) spiritually, both individually and corporately.

To qualify to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, one needs only to be saved and to be willing to receive. Just as with salvation, God will never force Himself upon us; nor will He withhold any good thing from us. (Psalms 84:11) It is important to realize that, as believers, we already have received the Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit (as we learned in Lesson 13). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate work of Jesus Christ in the life of the believer, subsequent to salvation.



Methods

List the nine "spiritual gifts," or manifestation of the Holy Spirit, from 1

Corinthians 12:8-12; and explain them, using the outline.

Be prepared with your teaching team to minister the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Encourage your students that this is for every believer, great or small.

The Holy Spirit Follow-Up

Volume 12

Lesson 15



Bible References

John 1:33; 14:16
Acts 1:8; 2:4
Romans 8
Romans 12
1 Corinthians 12-14
Galatians 5:22-23
Ephesians 5:18-21



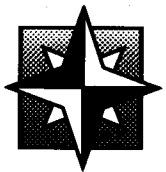
Scripture Reading

John 14:15-17

15 *"If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

16 *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

17 *"(Even) the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."*



Theme

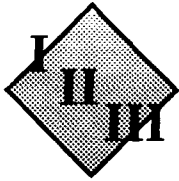
A recap of the eight lesson series on the Holy Spirit.



Memory Verse

1 Peter 4:11

"If any man speak, {let him speak} as the oracles of God; if any man minister, {let him do it} as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."



Outline

I. Who Is the Holy Spirit?

- A. He is a real Person.
- B. He is God.
- C. He is our Comforter.
- D. He is the Power of the Most High.
- E. He symbolized by oil, a dove, water, wind, fire, wine, and a seal.

II. What Is His Relationship to God, Jesus, and Believers?

- A. He is the third Person in the Triune Godhead.
- B. He is the Laborer of creation.
- C. He has the same nature and character as God and Jesus.
- D. He reveals the things of God to believers.
- E. He resides with the believer, dwells in the believer, and rests upon the believer.

III. Spiritual Gifts.

- A. They are God in action, through the believer, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- B. There are spiritual gifts -- the manifestation of the Spirit -- in which

we can operate, after we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

- C. There are grace gifts, which are given by the Holy Spirit to every believer, in order to edify the body.
- D. There are five apostolic gifts, which are people whom Jesus Christ has given to the body, for the purpose of training, equipping and maturing the saints.

IV. The Fruit of the Spirit.

- A. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ being formed in us.
- B. The fruit of the Spirit is the result of being filled and refilled with the Spirit.
- C. There is one fruit of the Spirit, with nine aspects, as listed in Galatians 5:22-23.
- D. The fruit of the Spirit is cultivated in our lives over a period of time.
- E. The Holy Spirit is making us like Jesus.

V. Tongues and a Whole Lot More.

- A. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for every believer.
- B. Jesus is the One Who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.
- C. The baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers our witness for Jesus Christ.
- D. The baptism in the Holy Spirit edifies us, both individually and corporately.



Spiritual Truths

- The Holy Spirit is a vital part of the Christian's life.
- The Holy Spirit is our connection to God and our Guide.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us with gifts, in order to do God's work here on earth.
- The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is four-fold: regeneration, anointing, infilling, and baptism.



Lesson Material

It is important to understand and recap the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, so that, as believers, we may more fully appreciate and cooperate with His work in our lives.

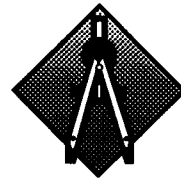
The Holy Spirit is the One Who gives life to our spirits at salvation. This is called "regeneration." He then places us into the body of Christ. He bears witness with our spirits that we are God's children; and He indwells each believer forever.

The Holy Spirit empowers believers for specific service for God. This is called "anointing." We receive a specific unction and empowering from Him, in order to accomplish a specific task.

The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, which is the character of Christ formed in us. He does this, as believers stay filled with the Spirit.

Jesus baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit; and, as result, we are empowered in our witness for the gospel and we are edified, both individually and corporately. The initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in unknown tongues.

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher, our Guide, and our Comforter. We need to develop our relationship with this intimate Friend. We must take care to acknowledge and appreciate His presence, and never to quench or grieve Him. He will always glorify Jesus; and He will make us more like Jesus.



Methods

By recapping the series of lessons on the Holy Spirit, it is hopeful that if there is any confusion regarding any of the Holy Spirit's ministries in the life of the believer, or any question about the Person of the Holy Spirit, the students will verbalize their questions. Be sure to encourage questions, by way of classroom participation, or by way of written quiz.

Again, encourage your students to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. If any feel inhibited, offer to speak and pray with them privately, outside of class time.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Volume 12

Lesson 16



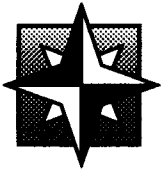
Bible Reference

Revelation 1

servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."



Theme

The glorified Son of Man.



Memory Verse

Revelation 1:3

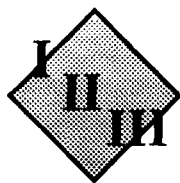
"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those thing which are written therein: for the time is at hand."



Scripture Reading

Revelation 1:1-3

1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his



Outline

I. Introduction. (verses 1-3)

A. Title of Revelation.

1. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."
2. Revelation comes from the Greek word "apocalypse."
 - a. "To unveil."
 - b. "To reveal."
 - c. "To uncover."
 - d. "Lift up a curtain."
3. The unveiling, revealing, and uncovering of Jesus Christ in all of His splendor, glory and majesty.

B. The origin of Revelation.

1. Started in the mind of God.
 - a. From the beginning.
 - b. Held until Jesus was finally exalted as the Head of the church.
2. This revelation contained facts and truths that even Jesus did not know, while on earth as the Son of Man.
 - a. His power on earth was only that which God the Father had given him through the Holy Spirit. (Luke 4:18-19; John 5:19-30)
 - b. There were certain things that were hidden from Jesus during His ministry on earth. (Mark 13:32; 14:36)
3. The Revelation was given to John on the island of Patmos. (verse 9)

C. The subject of Revelation.

1. Revelation is not just the unveiling of the fullness of Jesus Christ. This is done throughout the entire Bible.
2. It is also a revelation of all of the things that will come to pass. (verse 1)
 - a. Jesus Christ is the Center of the Revelation; but He is not the only person, thing or activity mentioned.
 - b. It is the last fulfillment of biblical prophecy.
 - c. It reveals the final destination of the church.
 - d. It brings forth the culmination of the restoration and conversion of Israel.
 - e. It brings out scriptural truths that have never been stated before.

D. The transmission of the Revelation.

1. God the Father gave it to Jesus Christ. (verse 1)
2. Jesus Christ gave it to John.
3. John then gave it to the church. John was not the originator, but rather, the recorder.

E. The authenticity of the Revelation.

1. It is the Word of God.
2. It testifies of Jesus Christ, both concerning Him and from Him.
3. John's authority as a disciple and prophet. (John 21:24; Revelation 1:10)

F. The nature of the Revelation is prophetic.

1. Verse 3 shows it to be prophetic in its content; and there is a blessing associated with it.

2. It, being the Word of God and the purpose of God, shows direct prophetic communication.
3. The testimony of Jesus Christ lines it up with the rest of the Bible as being prophetic.
4. The messages to the churches are of a prophetic nature.
5. "The time is at hand." -- Verse 3 shows the beginning of prophetic events.

II. The Blessings of Revelation. (verse 3)

A. They are reliant upon each individual.

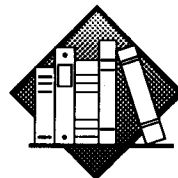
1. To read the Revelation.
2. To hear the Revelation.

B. To practice (keep) the Revelation.

1. Watchfulness of Christ's second coming. (verse 16:15)
2. Being called to the marriage supper. (verse 19:9)
3. Righteousness. (verse 19:8)
4. Keeping of God's commandments. (verse 22:14)

the last days, when God's plan of redemption is completely fulfilled.

- It contains the last biblical prophecies to be fulfilled.



Lesson Material

There are three important truths that strike us immediately upon looking at Revelation, chapter one. First, look at the title. It is not a revelation of Saint John. Rather, it is the revelation of Jesus Christ to the apostle John.

Secondly, this is not a series of revelations, but one, single revelation. This is important to realize, so that we do not become divided on sub-points and miss the main point -- it is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

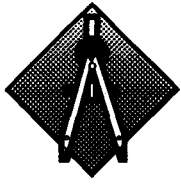
Thirdly, the outline of the book is given in Revelation 1:19: "things which thou hast seen" (chapter 1); "things which are" (chapters 2-3); "things which shall be hereafter." (chapters 4-22)

Too often, we tend to look at prophecy as though it is too difficult to understand, and not for us. Verse 10 tells us two important points to begin our study. First, come to study on the Lord's day -- that is, Sunday. Secondly, let us get into the Spirit, because He has been given to us as our Teacher. (John 16:13) As we come together in Sunday School, let us ask the Holy Spirit to guide us into understanding the letter and believe for our blessing. (Revelation 1:3)



Spiritual Truths

- The book of Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, in all of His glory and splendor as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- The book of Revelation is a look into the future as to what will take place in



Methods

The subject and nature of this lesson requires a teaching atmosphere. Have students read the Bible verses aloud, as much as possible. Let the students know

which chapters of Revelation will be studied in the weeks ahead, so that they may preview those chapters in their private study time.

Encourage the students with the blessing that is promised for reading the book of Revelation. (Revelation 1:3) Ask the students to keep track of any current events which may point to the fulfilling of Bible prophecy.

Understanding Revelation

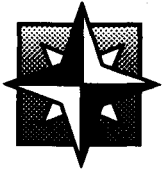
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Lesson 17



Bible Reference

Revelation 1



Theme

An overview of the book of Revelation and its purpose.



Scripture Reading

Revelation 1:4-11

4 "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen.

8 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9 "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus,

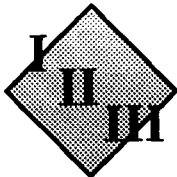
and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."



Memory Verse

Revelation 1:8

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."



Outline

I. The Salutation. (verses 4-5a)

- A. Addressed to the seven churches in Asia.
 - 1. This is the only one of John's five books that used his name.
 - 2. This shows the personal relationship he had with those churches.
- B. Its message is applicable to all people from that time forward.
- C. It makes reference to the character and nature of God.
 - 1. Spirit.
 - 2. Infinite.

- 3. Eternal.
- 4. Unchangeable.
 - a. In wisdom.
 - b. In power.
 - c. In holiness.
 - d. In justice.
 - e. In goodness.
 - f. In truth.
- 5. All things have God the Father as their source, support and end.

D. It points to the fullness of the Spirit in Christ's life and ministry.

E. It is given to John by Jesus.

- 1. The faithful witness.
- 2. First begotten of the dead.
 - a. No one else has had (or has yet to have) a resurrected and glorified body before Christ.
 - b. Jesus is the only One with a glorified body.
- 3. Prince of the Kings of the earth.

II. Exaltation. (verses 5b-6)

- A. This shows us why we should glorify, worship and exalt God.
 - 1. Because of His love for us. This is the central theme of the Bible.
 - 2. He washed us from our sins in His own blood.
- B. He made us, not only in the sense of a human being, but also as a spirit being, in that we have been born again or recreated.

III. The Main Theme of Revelation. (verse 7)

- A. The second coming of Jesus Christ.
1. This is announced in the beginning. (Revelation 1:7)
 2. Announced in the middle. (Revelation 11:15-18)
 3. And in the end. (Revelation 22:20)
- B. All of the other events that take place are in preparation for His coming.
1. The seven seals.
 2. The seven trumpets.
 3. The seven vials.
 4. All of the things that occur in between.

IV. The Eternity of God the Son. (verse 8)

- A. Shows Jesus' equality with God the Father.
1. In eternity.
 2. State of being.
 3. In power.
 4. In Lordship.
- B. He is the Alpha and Omega.
1. The first and last.
 2. The beginning and ending.
 3. The eternity and authority.
- V. The Prophet John. (verses 9-11)
- A. John was quickened or "in the Spirit."
- B. He was chosen to have revealed to him these things that would shortly come to pass.



Spiritual Truths

- Though the message of Revelation is addressed to the seven churches in Asia, its content is for all peoples from that time forward.
- Its main purpose was to reveal and record the second coming of Jesus Christ, in all of His power and glory.



Lesson Material

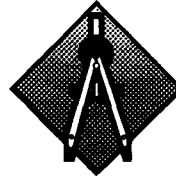
There are three different, multi-faceted presentations presented in Revelation 1. Let us take a look at each one.

(1) Jesus Christ. Explain in your own words what you think verses 13-16 mean as a description of Jesus.

(2) The Holy Spirit. Some confusion may come with the statement in verse 4, "the seven spirits." Turn to Isaiah 11:2 and see if the class can explain the passage in Revelation 1:4 -- "*And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*"

(3) The churches. There are seven local churches of Asia Minor. Find them on a map. There are seven stages of history. Break the class into seven groups; and see if they can find the seven stages of the church, down through its history. Lastly,

each of the seven churches is a picture of our personal lives today. Have a discussion with the class about where they think they are, as an individual member of the body of Christ, and which of the seven churches is the best picture of their relationship with the Lord.



Methods

Remind the students of the personal blessing associated with the reading of the book of Revelation. (Revelation 1:3) Although the book is largely prophetic in nature, its principles can still be applied to our lives. Challenge the students to allow the Holy Spirit to deal in their hearts, as they study this portion of God's Word.

In His Hand

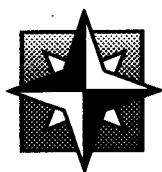
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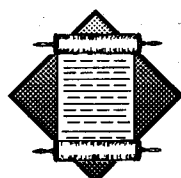
Bible Reference

Revelation 1



Theme

Jesus Christ is the One Who has all authority.



Scripture Reading

Revelation 1:12-20

12 "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 "And his feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

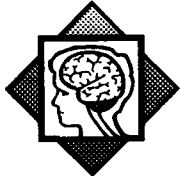
16 "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

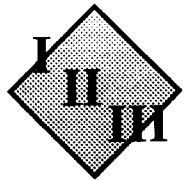
20 "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."



Memory Verse

Revelation 1:18

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."



Outline

I. The Things that John Has Seen. (verses 12-20)

- A. The vision of a glorified Christ.
 - 1. In the midst of the seven lamp stands.
 - 2. The Son of Man.
 - a. The last Adam.
 - b. Taking over the works of God the Father.
- B. The characteristics of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. He was clothed with a royal garment.
 - a. Now the high priest of all of the churches.
 - b. Taking His place as King of kings.
 - 2. His head and hair were white as snow.
 - 3. His eyes were as flames.
 - 4. His feet were like brass.
 - 5. He had a voice as many waters.

- 6. He held seven stars in His right hand. These are the *angelos*, or pastors, of the seven churches. (verse 20).
- 7. The countenance of His face.
- 8. The eight characteristics shown above give us a true revelation of the perfect glory of our risen Lord.

- C. The vision had the same effect on John that it had on others who had experienced seeing the glory of God. (Isaiah 6:1-8; Acts 9:3-8)

II. The Symbols of the Vision. (verse 20)

- A. The seven stars are angels of the seven churches.
 - 1. "Angel" in this case means "messenger." These seven messengers are the pastors of the seven churches.
 - 2. Stars, representing the light they should shine toward an unsaved world.
- B. The seven candlesticks, or lamp stands, represent the seven churches.
 - 1. They should be the manifestation of the glorified Christ.
 - 2. They should spread the Word of God to a darkened world.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus Christ is now revealed in all of His glory and splendor, as He takes His

rightful place as the Head of the church universal.

- Jesus Christ holds the church age in His right hand.



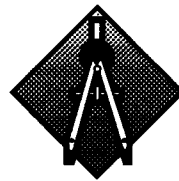
Lesson Material

In Revelation 1:18, Jesus gives a statement of his death, descent into hell and His resurrection which proclaimed His victory over death -- *"I (am) he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*

In Luke 16:19-31, we find the true story of Lazarus and his death. See if you can explain what took place during the interval described by Jesus in Revelation 1:18 as "became dead."

Along with the explanation in Luke 16, Revelation 1:18 makes clear: (1) There is life after death, and not a state of "soul sleep;" (2) The torture of hell is two-fold: we have a part of us which cannot be satisfied, and the agony of the sins of omission (what we could have done, but did not) is real.

Jesus Christ has all authority over life and death, heaven and hell, and the spirit world. We must encourage our students to look beyond the manger, the cross, and even the resurrection, unto the glorified Christ, in order to truly understand the One Whom they serve. *"...For I know whom I have believed, and [am persuaded] that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."* (2 Timothy 1:12)



Methods

Have the class consider personally and prayerfully what they can do to eliminate the guilt created by missed opportunities in their lives. What opportunities can they take advantage of now, so that the memory of this omission does not follow them eternally?

Explain the difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus personally.

Explain the difference between knowing Jesus as Savior and knowing Jesus as Lord.

He That Hath An Ear

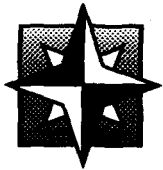
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Lesson 19



Bible References

Revelation 2-3



Theme

A message to the church today, from the book of Revelation.



Scripture Reading

Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29

7 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

11 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that

overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

17 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

29 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Revelation 3:6, 13, 22

6 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

13 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

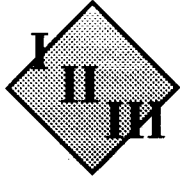
22 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."



Memory Verse

Revelation 3:20

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."



Outline

I. Jesus Tells John to Address the Letters to Each of the Seven Churches in Asia.

- A. Ephesus.
- B. Smyrna.
- C. Pergamos.
- D. Thyatira.
- E. Sardis.
- F. Philadelphia.
- G. Laodicea.

II. Jesus Opens Each Letter with a Reference to His Glorified Name.

- A. Ephesus.
 1. He Who holds the seven stars and walks among the seven lamp stands.
 2. This establishes His authority as Head of the church.
- B. Smyrna.
 1. The First and the Last, Who died and came to life again.
 2. This confirms His position as the last Adam and the first begotten of the dead.

3. It also confirms His victory over death, hell and the grave.

C. Pergamos.

1. He Who has the sharp, double-edged sword.
2. Reestablishes Himself as the mighty and powerful Word of God.

D. Thyatira.

1. Whose eyes are like blazing fire, and Whose feet are like burnished bronze.
2. Blazing eyes represent the judgment that comes with Christ's return.
3. Feet of bronze indicate Jesus' reign as the last kingdom (or empire) for eternity.

E. Sardis.

1. He Who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.
2. This shows Jesus as being in control of the ministry of the church. (Ephesians 4:11)

F. Philadelphia.

1. He Who is holy and true.
2. Confirms the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

G. Laodicea.

1. The Amen; the faithful and true Witness; the Ruler of God's creation.
2. He is the finale, the Omega, the end and the final authority; and He will take his place as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

III. In Each Case, Except for Laodicea and Sardis, Jesus Had a Positive Comment about Each Church.

A. Ephesus.

1. He knew their hard work and perseverance.
2. Their intolerance of wicked men.
3. Their endurance of hardship.
4. Their not growing weary.

B. Smyrna.

1. He knew their affliction and poverty.
2. The slander they withstood.

C. Pergamos.

1. They remain faithful to Christ's name.
2. They remained strong in their faith.

D. Thyatira.

1. He commended them for their love, faith, service and perseverance.
2. They had increased their activity for Christ.

E. Philadelphia.

1. They had kept His Word.
2. They had not denied His Name.

IV. Even Though They Had Positive Things Going for Them, Jesus Had Admonishments for Each of the Churches, Except for Philadelphia and Smyrna.

A. Ephesus.

1. "You have left your first love."
2. Could this be the excitement that they first experienced at their salvation, which they had lost?

B. Pergamos.

1. "You hold on to the teaching of Balaam."
2. They were participating in sexual immorality.

C. Thyatira.

1. They tolerated the woman, Jezebel.
2. They, too were caught up in sexual immorality.

D. Sardis.

1. Jesus found their deeds (works) incomplete.
2. They were becoming careless in their walk.

E. Laodicea.

1. Jesus found them to be neither hot nor cold.
2. They were useless to the Lord.

F. Jesus sent a strong message of repentance to each of these churches.

G. He also commanded all seven churches to listen to what the Spirit was saying to the churches.

V. Can We Look at the Church Today, and Say that We Are Any Better Off?

- A. While we see great numbers of people coming to Jesus Christ, we are also seeing a large number of believers backsliding and getting caught up in the things of the world. They seem to have lost the joy of their salvation. Can this be any different than Ephesus?
- B. In today's society, sexual promiscuity is running rampant. The sad thing is that it is just as bad in the church. The divorce rate in the church now runs the same as the world; and infidelity is just as high. We also see teachings of "new age" ideas slipping into the church. Is there any difference between the church today, and Pergamos and Thyatira?
- C. Is the work of today's church complete? Are we putting forth the effort needed to win souls for the kingdom? Or, are we allowing the enemy to sidetrack us with meaningless issues, which keep us preoccupied and away from Christ's great commission to preach the gospel to all the world and bring believers to his kingdom? Are we Sardis?
- D. Are we making a stand? Has the church become apathetic? Are we, as believers, shining as lights to a darkened world? Or do we just "blend in," like Laodicea?
- E. Are we ready to repent? Are we ready to turn from the ways of the world and quit compromising? Are we ready to listen to what the Spirit has to say to the Church?

VI. Jesus Left a Challenge and a Promise with Each Church. The Challenge Was to Overcome. The Promises:

- A. The right to eat from the tree of life. (Revelation 2:7)
- B. Protection from eternal death. (Revelation 2:11)
- C. Hidden food and a new name. (Revelation 2:17)
- D. Authority over all the nations. (Revelation 2:26-27)
- E. To be dressed in white and have our names in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 3:5)
- F. He will make us a pillar, and stamp us with God's Name and the name of God's city. (Revelation 3:12)
- G. And He will give us the right to sit with Him on His throne. (Revelation 3:21)



Spiritual Truths

- Much that was wrong in the churches of Revelation, is evident in our churches today.
- We need to heed Jesus' warning to repent; and we must listen to what the Spirit is saying to us today.



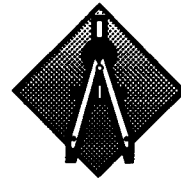
Lesson Material

All seven churches of Asia Minor have lessons for us today. The church at Pergamos has an interesting illustration from the Old Testament that is quoted two other times in the New Testament.

Turn to Numbers 22, and read the story of Balaam. As you read, notice that the sin of Balaam is settling for the permissive will of God. Discuss this with the class. (1) What do they think this means? (Describe it from the story.) (2) Turn to Jude 11 and 2 Peter 2:15; and read again from Revelation 2:14. Notice the progression from error, to a way of living, to becoming a doctrine in the church. How does this relate to the students' individual lives? Is there an area in which they know God's perfect will, and are settling for less than the best?

It is important to note the Memory Verse, which is Revelation 3:20. We often use this verse when witnessing, in order to illustrate that Jesus is desiring to come into one's life; but, actually, this is the heart's cry of Jesus to His church, which

had grown lukewarm and lost its first love. Are we still "on fire" for the Lord? How do we return to the "first works?" By returning to prayer, fellowship, worship, and study of the Word of God, we can place ourselves in the position of allowing the Holy Spirit to refill us, cleanse and challenge us, and mature us in our love for, and relationship with, the Lord.



Methods

List the seven churches in Revelation; and then, list each of the things that Jesus said to each church. Have the students share how they see the church today, as compared to the churches of Asia.

Have a time of prayer, in which you challenge the students (and staff, as well) in the area of growing lukewarm or passive in their relationship with the Lord. Re-dedication is biblical -- it is the "dying daily" and daily presenting of ourselves as "living sacrifices" that is pleasing to God. (Romans 12:1)

The Heavenly Throne

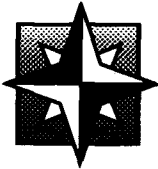
Volume 12

Lesson 20



Bible References

Revelation 4-5



Theme

John's account of the King of Kings and His throne.



Scripture Reading

Revelation 4:1-3

1 "After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice

which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 "And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

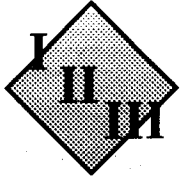
3 "And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."



Memory Verse

Revelation 4:11

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."



Outline

I. The Things that Will Take Place After This. (Revelation 4:1)

- A. John is shown the things to come.
1. John was "in the Spirit."
 2. "After this" -- after the rapture of the church.
 3. The church is no longer hindering the revelation of Antichrist and forces of evil. (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8)
- B. The Creator on the throne.
1. John's reaction.
 2. The glory of God.
 3. The description of the throne.
 - a. Symbolic colors.
 - (1) Jasper.
 - (2) Sardine.
 - (3) Emerald.
 - b. The elders around the throne.
 - (1) 24 in number.
 - (2) Represents Israel and the church.
 - c. Other aspects of John's vision.
 - (1) Sea of glass.
 - (2) The four living creatures.
- C. The sealed book.
1. In God's right hand.
 2. The title deed of the earth.
 - a. Man had forfeited this title deed to Satan.
 - b. Jesus purchased it back by His cross and resurrection.
 3. The call for the book to be opened.
 - a. The Lamb.

- b. A picture of Christ, the Lamb of God.
- c. Jesus claims the title deed to the earth.

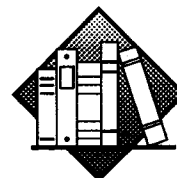
II. Application to Our Lives.

- A. Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.
- B. Jesus is reigning in a real, literal kingdom.
- C. Jesus is coming again to establish His kingdom on the earth.



Spiritual Truths

- The work of the Holy Spirit continues on earth, even after the Rapture of the church.
- Jesus Christ is a real King on the real throne, with all authority and power.
- When Christ takes the book, He is claiming that which He died for and which rightfully belongs to Him.



Lesson Material

John is shown the things to come. He now has a viewpoint from heaven as to what is going to take place. He was taken

up in the spirit and brought before a throne.

Most Bible scholars believe that the "after these things" of Revelation 4:1 refers to the rapture of the church, since the church is no longer mentioned again until chapter 22:16. 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 lends credence to this, in that the Wicked one (the Antichrist) cannot be revealed, until that which is stopping him is taken away. This has been thought to be either the church or the Holy Spirit; but it is quite obvious that the Holy Spirit is still at work "after this" on the earth, in order for salvation to occur. Therefore, it is the church which is hindering the unveiling of the Antichrist and the loosing of the forces of evil upon the earth.

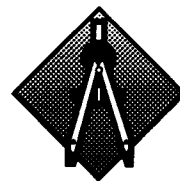
John is in complete awe of what he is seeing before him. The scene which he describes is full of reverence, dignity and majesty. He was conscious of a Presence on the throne; but he saw no form. Rather, he was awe-struck by the gem-like colors that he saw. These colors symbolized the glory that surrounded the throne. The jasper was more than likely a diamond, pure and sparkling white, which would represent the holiness and glory of God. The sardine stone is a fiery red color, that would symbolize the justice of God. The emerald green rainbow would be the symbol of the Creator's covenant with the earth. (Genesis 9:11-17)

John also saw the elders seated around the throne, who would represent believers of the Old and New Testaments (Covenants). Their number was 24, which stands for the 12 tribes of the Old Testament and the 12 apostles of the New Testament.

The other items that John sees would suggest the power and sovereignty of God.

The sea of glass could easily represent the vastness of God's creation. The four living creatures symbolize the fullness and variety of God's creation.

Then, John describes a special book. The sealed book (scroll) was in the right hand of the Creator, denoting His authority to have the right to it. Many Bible scholars believe that this scroll contains the title deeds of the world, and represents the kingdoms (continents) of the world. Man had forfeited this title deed to Satan, in his fall from grace in the Garden. Up until the cross, Satan had the title and authority over the world. This is evident in his temptation of Christ. (Matthew 4:8-10) However, Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and His conquering of death, hell and the grave, took that authority and title deed away from Satan. Now, the challenge is issued to whomever is worthy to open the book. John sees a Lamb, as though it had been slain, in the midst of the throne. This is without a doubt the risen Christ, taking His rightful place at the right hand of the Creator, in His full power and glory. Jesus claims the title deed to the earth. In taking the book from the Creator, Christ takes claim to what He died for and what is now rightfully His.



Methods

Make a scroll that is divided into seven sections. It must have a seal removed, in order to open each of the sections. This will show the students how the unrolling of the scroll took place.

Try to find an artist's rendition of Jesus Christ in His glory. If this is not available, ask the students to list some of the aspects of the description of Christ and His throne from Revelation chapters one and four.

Challenge the students to recognize Jesus Christ for Who He is -- the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords -- risen, glorified, reigning, and coming soon.

The Wrath of God

Volume 12

Lesson 21



Bible References

Revelation 6

Matthew 24

Romans 5:9

1 Thessalonians 1:10

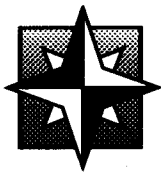
6 "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

9 "Then they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."

24 "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"



Theme

The opening of the first six seals, and the wrath of God poured out upon the earth.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 24:5-7, 9, 24, 29

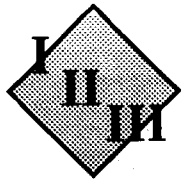
5 "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.



Memory Verse

Romans 5:9

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."



Outline

I. The Removing of the Seven Seals.

- A. Revealing the contents of the scroll.
- B. Christ claims His rightful rule.
- C. Each seal has a corresponding event.
- D. The sign of Jesus' coming, from Matthew chapter 24.
- E. The world under Satan's control.

II. Jesus' Discourse From Matthew 24.

- A. Warning against deception.
- B. Wars and rumors of wars.
- C. Famine.
- D. Widespread death.
- E. Persecution and martyrdom.
- F. The sign of the Son of Man.

III. Who Can Stand, in the Day of His Wrath? (Revelation 6:17)

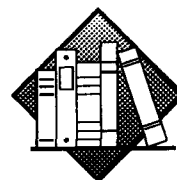
- A. The "cup" of the wrath of God.
- B. As with Sodom and Gomorrah.
- C. The sacrifice of Jesus satisfied the justice of God.

- D. Those who reject Christ are subject to God's wrath.
- E. God's wrath poured out upon the earth.
- F. We are saved from wrath.



Spiritual Truths

- The seals of Revelation show us a world that is dying and going to hell without Christ.
- We are spared from the wrath of God, through our faith in Jesus Christ.



Lesson Material

The removal of the seven seals does not mean the mere unfolding of the scroll. Each seal has to be removed, before its contents can be revealed. In opening the seals, Christ is making His claim to the title deed of the world, and declaring His right to rule over the kingdoms. With each opening of a seal in heaven, a corresponding event takes place on the earth. The opening of the seals also corresponds with Christ's answer to the disciples' question in Matthew 24:3 -- "What will be the sign of Your coming?"

The events of the seals describe a world in need of Christ and under the control of

Satan. These events are the outpouring of God's wrath on an unbelieving, Christ-rejecting world. In Matthew 24, Jesus first warns against deception -- about false Christs claiming to be Messiah. (Matthew 24:4-5) And the first seal tells of a false Christ, who is bent on conquering and destruction.

Next, Jesus forewarns of wars and rumors of wars; but then, He counsels us not to worry, for these things must happen. (Matthew 24:6) The second seal reveals a red horse, with the authority to take peace from the earth.

Famine will strike the earth in such a way that it will take a day's wages just to buy the needed foodstuffs to live on. Jesus Himself says that famines will strike the earth, and that this is just the beginning. (Matthew 24:7) This corresponds with the third seal.

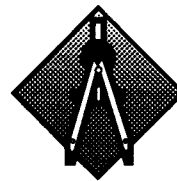
When the fourth seal is opened, death will be unleashed, with power to kill one-fourth of all the earth's inhabitants in all manners. Except for Christ's return to the earth, no flesh would be saved. (Matthew 24:32)

The fifth seal reveals those who would be killed for their faith in Christ, and the reward that they earn. Jesus said in Matthew 24:9 that they would be persecuted and put to death, because of their trust in Him.

The sixth seal relates directly to Matthew 24:29, as it speaks of the sun turning black, the moon blood red, stars falling from the sky, great earthquakes, and all of the kings and nations of the earth mourning and seeking refuge from *"...the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:"* (Revelation 6:16)

The Bible often speaks of the wrath of God; and, very often, it mentions a "cup" with it. (Isaiah 51:17; Jeremiah 25:15; Habakkuk 2:16; Revelation 14:10; 16:19) As it was with Sodom and Gomorrah, whenever sin is committed, there must be a consequence paid. It is the law of God -- if you break a law or sin a sin, you must pay the penalty. The sacrifice of Jesus satisfied the justice of God. When we enter into a covenant of faith in God through Jesus Christ, we are justified before our holy God and removed from His wrath. But those who reject Christ are subject to God's wrath. That is why Revelation 6:17 states that the great day of their wrath has come. Those on the earth did not accept God's sacrifice for sin; and so, they must suffer the consequences. Chapters 8, 9, 15 and 16 of Revelation show us God's pouring out of His wrath on an unwilling, unloving, unbelieving and sinful world.

We are saved from wrath. That is why we have a hope. Romans 5:9 says that we are saved from God's wrath through Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 says that Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come.



Methods

While the book of Revelation can be misunderstood by some or scary to others, it is a book of hope to those of us who believe in Jesus Christ. Just as we saw in this lesson, we have nothing to fear in what is going to take place before Christ's final return.

Remember that when you are reading the book of Revelation, it is the unveiling

of our glorified Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is finally seen in His full glory; and He dominates the whole book. The book's subject is Jesus Christ; and it also shows the end-times happenings in

heaven and their effects on the earth. It shows how God will take care of the rebellion of Satan and his followers once and for all, and set up His kingdom on the earth.

Church Relationships

Volume 12

Lesson 22



Bible Reference

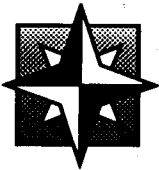
Ephesians 4:12-16



Memory Verse

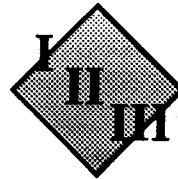
Ephesians 4:2-3

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."



Theme

Our relationships within the body of believers.



Outline

- I. Four Important Questions.
 - A. What should church relationships mean to me?
 - B. What do church relationships mean to me?
 - C. Where do I fit in with church relationships?
 - D. What can I do about my church relationships?



Scripture Reading

Hebrews 10:24-25

24 *"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

25 *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

II. Problems in Our Christian Relationships.

A. I sometimes have a problem relating to another Christian. Why?

1. Perhaps it is because you have never tried. Have you ever been in a situation when you were the new kid on the block, and no one reached out in friendship to you? How did you feel?
2. It might be time for you as a true believer in Christ to stop waiting on people to come to you, and for you to start seeking out new relationships. You might be pleased with the results.

B. Why are my unsaved friends sometimes more real than my Christian friends? There could be two possible reasons for this happening.

1. We all have a need to be accepted. We want to be liked when we come into contact with somebody.
2. Sometimes, we will give up who we really are, in order to gain that acceptance. This could be the case with some of your friends. In order for them to be a part of the group, they become like the group; and this can cause confusion and problems.
3. The confusion results when you see them at church and they act one way, and then when you see them away from church, they act another way.
4. The problems arise when they start becoming more and more like your unsaved friends, and possibly open themselves up to worldly and unholy practices.
5. The Bible says that we are to be a light to a darkened world; but we

must be careful not to let that darkness snuff out our light.

6. This is actually compromise and hypocrisy. Jesus called it "lukewarmness." (Revelation 3:16)
 7. We need to check out our own hearts, before we go accusing others. (Matthew 7:3; Romans 2:1)
 8. The second reason actually could go back to question "A." Are we really reaching out to this Christian brother or sister and making them feel a part of the body of Christ? If we did, perhaps they would not have to reach out to the world for the friendship, love and acceptance that we all need.
 9. Before we start condemning anyone, we should stop to see if we are doing all that we can to help in the situation.
- ### C. Why do I find that I do not have much in common with my friends from church?
1. You may find that you do have a lot in common; but you will never find out, if you just sit there wondering why.
 2. Friendships and relationships are the result of people coming together and discussing things, doing things and enjoying things together.
 3. How can you know someone if you never talk to them or are never around them? That is why the church and its fellowship are so important.
 4. If you think you do not have anything in common, perhaps it is because you are not willing to work on finding anything in common.
 5. We all, as believers, have one thing in common: we know Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.

III. What Are My Relationships with Other Christians Like?

A. I have really been hurt by some of my Christian friends; so, how can I forgive them?

1. This is a valid question; and it addresses a real issue.
2. Christ has provided the answer for us in His Word.
3. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:23 that if a brother or sister has offended us, we should go and repair that relationship. In doing this, we should approach the situation as if we were the offender and not the offended. Find out what may have caused them to have hurt you. Maybe we did do something that offended them and we were not even aware of it. So, seek their forgiveness and start the healing process in that relationship. If the relationship is not healed, then continue to pray for that person; and, by all means, continue to try and right whatever wrong that might be there.

B. I would really like to know more people at church, but it is hard to get into their group.

1. Elite groups, cliques and the such have no place in the church; but, they can exist.
2. The important thing is that you realize that it is imperative for you to find out where God wants you to be in the body.
3. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 says that there are different gifts but the same Spirit, and different services but the same Lord, and different workings but the same God. Find out what

your gift, your service, or your working is.

4. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 shows us why it is important for you to find out where God wants you to be, rather than your wanting to belong to a certain group. When you have found that area, then you will have accomplished much; and you will surround yourself with people that have the same gift and purpose that you have -- someone with whom you have something in common.
5. You (collectively) are the body of Christ; and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27)

IV. Where Do I Fit In?

- A. Do I do my part? (Ephesians 4:16)
- B. Do I express equal concern? (1 Corinthians 12:25)
- C. Am I serving others in love? (Galatians 5:13)
- D. Am I building others up? (Ephesians 4:12)
- E. Do I carry others' burdens? (Galatians 6:2)
- F. Am I an encourager? (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- G. Do I submit, or am I rebellious? (Ephesians 5:21)
- H. Do I forgive? (Ephesians 4:32)
- I. Am I honest? (Colossians 3:9)
- J. Do I offer hospitality? (1 Peter 4:9)
- K. Do I speak wisely? (Colossians 3:16)

- L. Am I confessing my faults to others and praying for others? (James 5:16)
- M. Look at this list again. Do you want to fit in? Where do you fit in? What areas can you improve in? What can you do?

V. What Can I Do? (Colossians 3:1-17)

A. Be patient.

1. Acceptance does not happen overnight.
2. It takes some of us a little longer to accept a new person.

B. Be kind.

1. Kindness towards a person can do more to win a person over than anything you can do.
2. Practice acts of kindness.

C. Be unselfish.

1. Nothing turns someone off quicker than a selfish person.
2. Be willing to share what you have.

D. Be humble.

1. People just do not like braggers. They turn them off.
2. People like this are usually trying to hide their insecure natures. You could, however be the one who reaches out and can effectively minister to that person.
3. But above all else, if you want to be accepted, have a humble spirit.

E. Be forgiving.

1. If for nothing else, do it for your own sake.

2. You will reap forgiveness, if you sow forgiveness.

F. Be honest.

1. Be honest in your dealings with people.
2. You will find that they are much more apt to accept and welcome you.

G. Be a moral person.

1. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you; and allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct you.
2. By using this winning combination, you will find that when you are in compromising situations, you will know what decision to make.

H. Have a spirit of peace.

1. Be known as a peacemaker. The Bible says that peacemakers will be blessed. (Matthew 5:9)
2. If you allow the Holy Spirit to use you, you will be awed at the solutions He will give you when problems arise.

I. Grow in the knowledge of Christ.

1. Seek Christ; seek His wisdom; seek His understanding; seek His direction; seek all that He has for you.
2. He will bring person after person before you, just as a reward for your diligently seeking Him.

J. Be filled with the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) Let God change your character.

VI. The Challenge.

- A. What are your strong points? Work to make them stronger.
- B. Where are your weaknesses? Ask Christ to help you to strengthen you in those areas.



Spiritual Truths

- The level of satisfaction we get out of relationships with other believers really rests on our shoulders.
- Are we doing our part to help promote these relationships, or are we just waiting to be blessed?

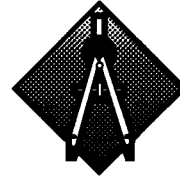


Lesson Material

Hebrews 12:15-17 tells us that one of greatest, if not the greatest, interferences to our being able to have healthy relationships, is summarized in the word, "bitterness." The Bible calls it the "root of bitterness." That tells us that it is sometimes something unable to be seen,

but that it is there underneath the surface, causing us difficulty in our relationships. For some of us, when we come into church, on the surface all looks well; however, underneath there is a root of bitterness. Then, as we are outside of the house of God, those roots of bitterness and resentment are manifested in our relationships at school and at work and family.

Let us take an inventory in our own lives, and find out what resentments are standing in the way of our healthy relationships.



Methods

Ask the students the main four questions, and have them respond and give examples. Then, go through the list of responses given for each question.

Encourage the students to share together in time outside of the classroom. Group activities can be planned, in order to encourage fellowship.

Remember, Christian fellowship is fellowship which is centered around Christ. Some of the greatest times of fellowship are those which are centered in group prayer and worship, study of the Word, and witnessing together.

Love Not the World

Volume 12

Lesson 23



Bible References

Colossians 4:5-6

1 John 2:15-17

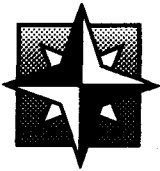
17 "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."



Memory Verse

Matthew 5:13

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."



Theme

The believer and worldly relationships.

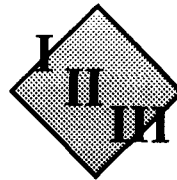


Scripture Reading

1 John 2:15-17

15 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.



Outline

- I. Four Important Questions.
 - A. What should my worldly relationships mean to me?
 - B. What do my worldly relationships mean to me?
 - C. Where do I fit in my worldly relationships?

D. What can I do about my worldly relationships?

II. What Should My Relationship with the Unsaved World Be?

A. Do I have the respect of my unsaved friends?

1. Do your friends know where you stand with Jesus Christ?
2. Have you ever given them a reason to doubt your relationship with Jesus Christ?
3. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 says that we are to lead a peaceful life, minding our own business and doing what we are told to do, so that in our daily living we may win the respect of outsiders.

B. Do I show respect to the people who are in authority over me (i.e. teachers, coaches, pastors, bosses, parents)?

1. Usually, when someone is rebellious against any of the above group, they also have a problem submitting to the authority of Jesus Christ, which can often lead to a much deeper problem in that person's life.
2. When we are facing a task, we should approach it as if Jesus Christ Himself was the One directing us to do the task. We are really serving Him, when we serve those who are placed in authority over us. (Colossians 3:22-25; 1 Peter 2:13-17)
3. Yet, we are still commanded not to compromise our faith by committing any ungodly deeds that are given us to do. (Titus 2:12)

C. Am I willing to be involved in the things of my community?

1. We sometimes get into situations that would allow us to be a servant to those we come in contact with. Do not beg off doing something for an unsaved generation, just because we are busy or too holy. They may really need the help; and it may give us the opportunity to be a true witness for Christ. Make sure that it does not conflict with the Word of God.
2. Ephesians 6:7-8 tells us that we should be willing to be servants, and that the Lord will be a rewarder of those who are.
3. Are we active? Do we help? Are we willing to serve, or are we content to sit back and "wait for Jesus to come?"

III. What Are My Relationships with Unsaved People Really Like?

A. Do I conform too easily to the ways of the world? Do I easily succumb to peer pressure and allow my unsaved friends to control me? (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 6:17)

B. Do I get along with my co-workers and bosses, without compromising my faith?

1. If a decision is made that may cause a compromise to arise, do I just go along with it, or do I have the faith to speak out about how I feel?
2. We are to be subject to the authority that is placed over us, but not to the extent that it goes directly against God's Word and His will.

C. Do I feel like the world owes me something?

1. There is a big difference between being confident in our faith and arrogance in our faith.
2. Nobody likes or will listen to someone who is cocky; and this attitude goes directly against God's Word.
3. The world owes us nothing; and yet, we owe the world our testimony for Jesus Christ, for we ourselves are indebted to Him for the grace which He has shown us.

D. Have we conformed to the world? (Romans 12:2)

1. The Bible says that we are to separate ourselves from the things of the world (2 Corinthians 6:17); and yet, we are to be a witness to it.
2. We are to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:29)
3. We are to affect the world, rather than being effected by it.

IV. Where Do I Fit In, with My Worldly Relationships?

A. Is my attitude about Jesus such that people will want what I have?

1. Is Jesus everything to me? Do I showcase Him, or do I keep Him hidden away?
2. Am I positive when I speak about the things of Jesus and the church?

B. Do I exercise Christ-like character?

1. Do I allow Christ and the Holy Spirit to flow through me?

2. Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in my life?

C. We need unsaved friends, just as much as we need saved friends.

1. We cannot be a light to a dark world, if we are constantly surrounding ourselves with light.
2. We must reach out to claim those who are in the dark.

D. Most importantly, you may be the only "Jesus" your unsaved friends and loved ones may come in contact with. (Titus 2:9-10; Matthew 28:19)

1. We all cannot "go into all the world" and make disciples.
2. But we all have our own world that we can touch; and we need to reach out to that world as much as we can.

V. What Can I Do?

A. Be ready.

1. You should be ready and willing to minister, whenever and wherever God calls you.
2. The only way this can be possible is through reading His Word and through prayer.
3. Without these two elements being active in your life, you can never be ready in season or out of season. (2 Timothy 4:2)

B. Be consistent.

1. People respect honesty and consistency. Nobody likes "wishy-washy."
2. Strive to be the best that you can be for Christ -- all of the time.

C. Represent Christ everywhere; school, work, sports, music, every aspect of your life.

1. Remember that you are to do everything as if you were doing it for Christ and His glory.
2. You will either shame Christ or exalt him -- which will it be?

D. Love them right where they are -- just like Jesus loved and still loves you, right where you are.

1. Love is what will bridge the gap between Jesus and the unsaved world.
2. It was that love that sent Jesus to the cross for the world; and it will be that love that saves it.

E. How do we handle worldly relationships?

1. With love and without compromise, just like Jesus did.
2. Read the Word; and you will see just how to do it.



Lesson Material

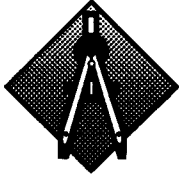
Our scripture reading for today says in 1 John 2:17, *"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."* What John is saying to us is that we are not to pursue worldly relationships, because they are an illusion. If we think that there is a certain worldly crowd or worldly relationship or friendship that we could have, and that it is going to make us more fulfilled in our lives, that is an illusion. It is like the cartoon, "Peanuts." Lucy holds the football for Charlie Brown; and Charlie thinks that this year he will be able to get there and kick it and finally be satisfied. But every year, Lucy pulls the football away. The same is true in our seeking out worldly relationships. Right when we get there, it is pulled away; and we are left dissatisfied and disillusioned.

The best way to feel satisfied and to be most fulfilled in each relationship is to know that we, as 1 John 2:17 says, are doing the will of God. It will give us the knowledge that what we are doing and who we are in relationship with is abiding forever.



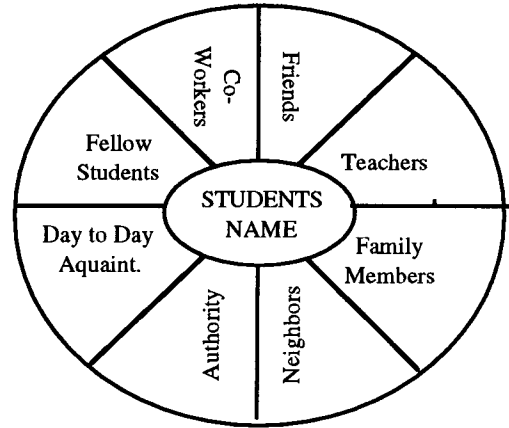
Spiritual Truths

- In many instances we are the only Jesus some of our friends, co-workers and relatives see.
- We need to make sure we are living the type of life Christ wants us to be or they will never want what we have.



Methods

Draw the figure below on a blackboard; and use it to show the students how they can touch their world for Jesus.



All in the Family

Volume 12

Lesson 24



Bible References

Ephesians 6:1-3

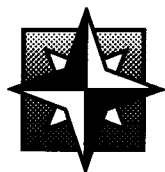
Colossians 3:18-20



Memory Verse

Joshua 24:15

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."



Theme

The importance of family relationships.



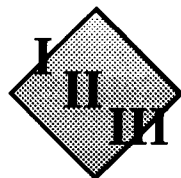
Scripture Reading

Ephesians 6:1-3

1 *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*

2 *"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;*

3 *"That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."*



Outline

- I. **Four Questions.**
 - A. What should my family relationships mean to me?
 - B. What do my family relationships mean to me?
 - C. Where do I fit in my family relationships?
 - D. What can I do about my family relationships?

II. What Should My Relationships with My Family Be?

- A. Am I obedient to what my parents ask of me?
1. Am I submissive to those who are placed in authority over me, or is there a root of rebellion against Christ and those whom He has put over me?
 2. And yet, we must also not let that authority come into direct conflict with God's law or His Word.
 3. We must also remember that tied in with our parent's authority is the love that they have for us; and that sometimes, out of that love for us, they must guide and direct us.
- B. Do I respect the privacy and property of my other family members?
1. Do I think that what is mine is mine, and what is theirs is mine, too?
 2. Do I allow my other family members time to themselves, or am I constantly wanting their attention to be centered on me?
 3. Am I respectful of the fact that my Mom and Dad need time to be alone?
- C. Do I (and am I willing to) do my part around the house?
1. When it comes time for chores, do I pitch in, without complaining?
 2. Do I bribe my siblings to do my part, or find a convenient excuse to not be around?
 3. We must remember that the family is not much different than the church, in that each member must do its part, for it to function

property.

- D. Do I pray regularly for all of my family members?
1. When was the last time you prayed for your parents and their jobs, your siblings at school, or your other loved ones and their activities?
 2. We must remember that it is our prayers and our example that change things. It is how we approach things and how we pray for things that can have the biggest impact on those things.
- E. If there is strife? Do I do all that I can, to help ease it?
1. When I see a conflict arise, do I act as a peacemaker, or do I add fuel to the flame?
 2. Do not ever take sides -- remain neutral. In particular, do not ever go against your parents, if a conflict arises with one of your siblings. Remember that God blesses peacemakers.

III. What Do My Family Relationships Mean to Me?

- A. Am I constantly arguing with my parents and my siblings?
1. No matter what is said, am I ready to pounce? Do I have an attitude that I am always right?
 2. Perhaps some of the conflict in the family is due to my inability to admit a wrong and work toward a peaceful solution.
- B. Am I always wanting my own way, even at the expense of others and their feelings?

1. We all, at some point, think we know what is best for us. This sometimes can cause a problem, because we are usually looking at it from a very closed perception.
 2. We need to realize that there is safety and wisdom in a multitude of counselors. (Proverbs 11:14)
 3. We need to be more receptive of other people's input, and not rely solely on our own thinking.
 4. So, the next time that you are ready to want your own way, take a step back and listen; and, most importantly, listen to the Lord.
- C. When an issue needs to be discussed or my parents are correcting me, do I wish that they would "get off my back?"
1. We need to remember the heavy responsibility that has been given to our parents in raising us.
 2. Is there anybody here who wants to grow up to be a loser? Who wants to end up in prison? Who wants to go to hell?
 3. When our parents want to discuss something or correct an area that they see as a potential problem, it is because of the love that they have for us.
 4. Remember, they may see us going down a road that they themselves have been down; and they know the hurt or harm that is waiting at the end. And because of the love they have for you, they are just trying to keep you from making a potentially harmful mistake.
 5. So, the next time a discussion of this sort arises, listen to what they have to say. There will come a point in time when you will appreciate what they did.
6. Also, rely on the Holy Spirit. Keep in God's Word, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct you.
- IV. Where Do I Fit In, with My Family Relationships?**
- A. Do my parents really love and care for me? How can I tell?
1. Normally, our parents love us; and that love is expressed in their care and provision for us.
 2. We must also remember that different people have different ways to express love.
 - a. It is sometimes harder for a man (father) to show his love to his children (and sometimes harder with sons).
 - b. The mother is much more prone to outward displays of affection than the father.
 - c. And yet, we can usually tell that they both love us.
 3. Sometimes, the way our parents handle situations and discipline shows their love for us.
 - a. Many young people think that their parents do not love them, because they never discipline them and pretty much let them do what they want.
 - b. And yet, from the parents' side, they may be doing this because they think it is how they show their children that they love them.
 - c. So, you can appreciate the problem that this can sometimes create.
 4. The key to this is communication. Do not be afraid to sit down and discuss this very important issue together.

B. I want a little more freedom. How do I go about getting it?

1. Responsibility, and how we handle it, will usually lead to more or less freedom.
2. When we are given a task to do and we handle it in a way that pleases those who give us the task, they will usually give a little more freedom as we show responsibility.
3. When we do not handle our tasks and responsibilities properly, there is a tendency to be more restrictive.
4. A good example is with curfew. If we have a 12:00 midnight curfew, but we are constantly coming in at 12:30, do you think that we will get more freedom? What if we constantly got home 15 minutes early?
5. So you want more freedom? Learn to handle what you already have; and become more responsible in all that you do.

C. I sometimes feel that what I contribute is not appreciated.

1. We all sometimes feel like our efforts are not appreciated.
2. We must learn to realize that if our efforts are moral and forthright, that while we may not win the praise of man, we are really only concerned about pleasing the Lord.
3. Remember that it is nice to get an "atta boy" or a pat on the back; but, it is more rewarding when we hear the Holy Spirit whisper to our spirit, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21)

D. I want my family to always be a strong family. What can I do?

1. Pray. Nothing can hold a family together better, or make it stronger, than prayer.
2. In fact, let us look at the next question, and we can see what we can do.

V. What Can I Do to Help My Family Relationships?

- A. Do not be afraid to sit down and talk with parents, siblings, or any family member.
- B. Be an example of Christ-like character to your siblings, as well as your parents.
- C. Learn to love your family unconditionally. Do not expect anything in return. If you do, you are not expressing real love. Remember, you can choose your friends, but you are stuck with your relatives.
- D. Do not be satisfied doing just what is required of you. Always try to do something extra.
- E. Do not ever pit one family member against another, or take sides. This only leads to divisions.
- F. Be obedient in all that your parents ask of you. Remember, this pleases the Lord.



Spiritual Truths

- The family is God's first ordained institution. He formed it; He instituted it; and He blessed it.
- We are all part of a family. We must do what we can to make it stronger.
- The entire moral fiber of society is based in the family. If the family fails, so does the society.
- Remember, you are as important a part of the family as anyone. You are needed by your family -- and you need your family.

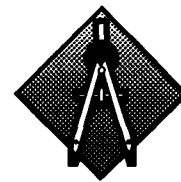


Lesson Material

The last part of Micah 7:6 says, "...A man's enemies are the men of his own house." Today, we live in a society where many of the enemies of children growing up are the member's of their own homes, because of sexual, emotional and physical abuse; and, even in some Christian homes, there is abuse. We are finding that an individual's enemies are those members of his own house; and how grateful we need to be that Micah 7:6 is not the end of what the Lord has to reveal to us. It says in verse 7, "Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: and my God will hear me."

If you have found in your relationships at home that there are people there who have wronged you, rather than run away or simply "stuff" those emotions, why not look unto the Lord and wait for God to be your deliverer? Seeking escape and running away from the problem only causes you to have to face it again. God will hear you; and He will deliver you.

The family is ordained of God. It is the place of training in relationships, including friendships, parenting, marriage relationships, and, most importantly, our relationship with God.



Methods

Have three students act the part of father, mother, son or daughter. Have them act out a scene in which the teenager wants to go some place that he knows he should not go; but his friends are going, and he does not want to be left out. Dad and Mom know that he should not go there; and they do not want him to. Have the students act out various ways of resolving the problem. Afterwards, have the rest of the students comment on what was wrong or right about each scenario.

Emphasize to your students that our relationship with God is always affected by our relationship with people; and our relationship with people is always affected by our relationship with God. If we want to be right with God, we must be right with others. (1 John 4:20)

A Marriage Made in Heaven

Volume 12

Lesson 25



Bible References

Genesis 2:18-24

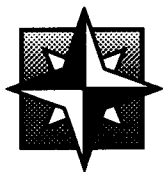
Ephesians 5:31-33

unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Malachi 2:14-16



Theme

Biblical guidelines for the marriage relationship.

14 "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet {is} she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

15 "And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:31-33

16 "For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for {one} covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."

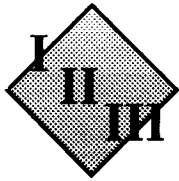
31 "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined



Memory Verse

Ephesians 5:33

"Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."



Outline

I. What Should a Marriage Relationship Be?

A. Genesis 2:18-24 reveals four truths about marriage.

1. The concept of marriage was God's idea. Adam did not plan it. He did not ask for it. He had no part in it. God alone decided that Adam needed a wife.
2. God formed Eve. He alone knew the kind of wife that Adam needed.
3. God presented Eve to Adam. Adam did not have to go and look for her.
4. God determined how they were to relate to each other. The result of all this was God's perfect timing and His perfect will in their relationship.

B. Marriage is a commitment. (Ephesians 5:31-33)

1. We can be committed to so many things that get us nowhere; and yet, when a relationship requires commitment, we sometimes look for the easy way out.
2. Why do you think that God hates divorce so much?
 - a. Divorce shows a lack of stability -- a lack of insight into the things of God, and a lack of commitment.
 - b. If we cannot stay committed to our marriage covenant, how can we be committed to our spiritual covenant with God?

C. Marriage is contractual. (Malachi 2:14)

D. Marriage is Christian. It is God's first established ordinance; and it should always be looked upon with sanctity.

E. Marriage is communication.

1. Any and every good relationship needs to have good communication, no matter what kind it is.
2. This is most important in the marriage relationship.
3. That is why there is dating. Dating allows us to develop and sharpen our communication skills with those of the opposite sex.
4. Learn to be a good communicator. It will pay off, when you are married.

F. Marriage is companionship. Do things together. Have fun together. Learn to appreciate your mate's likes. Be best friends to each other.

II. What Does the Marriage Relationship Mean to Me?

- A. Is marriage going to be an escape for me? Do not ever think of marriage as a way to get out of the house or out of a bad situation.
- B. Do not get married just because everyone else is. Our society puts much pressure on someone who is 25-35 to get married. People think there is something wrong with an unmarried person; and, after a while, we start to think that there is something wrong with us, if we are not married.
- C. When you approach marriage, look at it with an open mind. Do not let someone else's bad marriage influence you.
- D. What if I never get married? Good question. Maybe you will not get married. There are some whom God has called to remain unmarried, for the sake of the kingdom. The key is to be sensitive to what God wants for your life.
- E. I do not want to get married, because I am afraid of its ending in divorce. If you hide in your heart the truths of Genesis 2:18-24; if you continually seek God's direction; and if you pray for the mate that God has for you, you will not need to worry about it failing. God will bless it.

III. What Can I Do?

- A. Look for the right qualities in a mate.

- 1. Christian commitment. (2 Corinthians 6:14)
- 2. Character.

- 3. Integrity.
- 4. Faithfulness.
- 5. Compatibility.

- B. If I have found the right person whom I am to marry, what is next?

- 1. Seek pre-marital counseling.
- 2. Learn to pray together.
- 3. Learn to compliment each other.
- 4. Get rid of any excess baggage.
 - a. Attitudes.
 - b. Criticism.
 - c. Unforgiveness.
 - d. Expectations.
- 5. Have a moderate engagement period. This will allow you to get to know one another, and protect you against moving too fast into one of the biggest decisions you will ever make.
- 6. Do not allow Satan to lie to you, and then get involved with sex before marriage.
 - a. Do not ruin a relationship, because you cannot wait.
 - b. "We are going to be married soon anyway," is not a good excuse.
 - c. Sex is the special moment that solidifies and blesses the marriage. It is an expression of intimacy that God has designed to be a part of the covenant relationship of marriage.
 - d. That is why it is so vitally important that you remain pure before marriage. Sex outside of the marriage covenant adversely affects those who participate in it, and adversely affects the marriage bed.

- C. After marriage, what should we do to keep it going?

- 1. Take time for one another.

- a. Get away alone.
- b. If children are involved, find someone to take care of them; but, get away -- alone.
2. Never criticize your mate in word, thought or deed.
3. Learn to build your mate up.
 - a. Especially in the areas they feel lacking in.
 - b. Learn to expound their good qualities. Let God take care of the others.
4. Be each others most guarded confidante.
 - a. There is not anything in your life that you should not be able to share with your mate.
 - b. Be best friends.
5. Make your physical appearance as appealing to each other as possible -- not just in the clothes that we wear, but in the actual physical sense, too.
6. Show respect and admiration for each other.
 - a. Husbands, privately and publicly, keep your attention on your wife, and not other women.
 - b. Wives, always show your husband how important he is to you.
7. Be courteous to one another; and do not take each other for granted. Always treat each other as if this was your first date.
8. Keep sex as a major part of your marriage.
 - a. God ordained it.
 - b. God blessed it.
 - c. You both need it.
 - d. But always keep it in the marriage and within the marriage.
9. Continually pray for and with each other; and keep Christ in the center of your marriage.



Spiritual Truths

- The total concept of marriage was God's idea. Adam and Eve had nothing to do with it.
- God knew what kind of mate Adam needed; and so, He formed and presented him with Eve.
- If we are patient and wait on God, He will present us with a mate, because He knows the kind of mate we need.

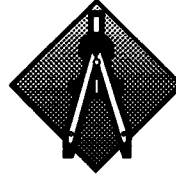


Lesson Material

In Genesis 2:24, we have the account of the first prophecy spoken by man: *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."* We know that Adam had no mother and father; so, how could he speak of that which he did not know? It was a prophecy; and it shows us the great importance of the marriage relationship, and what it does as far as the dynamic of our spiritual life. The second thing that this points out is that Adam was unaware that he had a need, until God told him so. (Genesis 2:18) This tells us that man does not function best if he enters a relationship out of his neediness, but rather when he enters a relationship out of his affluence. And the last thing that could be brought out from this passage is that Adam was not in

search of his wife; but rather, God brought her to him.

God is vitally interested in our marriage relationships. We must marry a believer, in order to maintain our Christian walk. (2 Corinthians 6:14) Our marriage relationship is a biblical type of the church's relationship with Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:32) Our marriage relationship is to be the most unique, intimate relationship in our lives, next to our relationship with the Lord. As such, a healthy marriage relationship affects us spiritually, emotionally, and even physically; and it certainly affects all of the other relationships in our lives. We must carefully and prayerfully seek God's will in our marriage relationships.



Methods

Have the male students sit on one side, and have the female students sit on the other. Address each group, when you are specifically dealing with husbands and wives. Address the group as a whole, when talking about the act of marriage.

Encourage the students to pray now about their future mate (and for their future mate). Encourage the students with Psalms 37:4 -- *"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."* What this passage is saying is that as we delight ourselves in the Lord, He puts desires in our hearts; and then, He satisfies those desires. If we put our relationship with God first, He will be pleased to provide us with the mate that He knows we need.

God's Pattern for Men and Women

Volume 12

Lesson 26



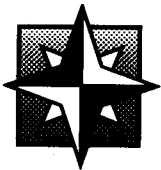
Bible References

Ephesians 5:22-24

Colossians 3:18-19

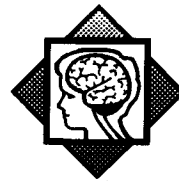
23 *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

24 *"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."*



Theme

Examining the differences between godly and worldly patterns for men and women.



Memory Verse

Ephesians 5:25

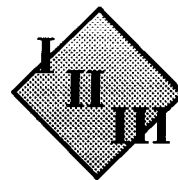
"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:22-24

22 *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*



Outline

- I. **Four Major Relationships.**
 - A. Church.
 - B. Family.

C. Worldly.

strength, in order to try and attain it.

D. Marriage.

II. There Are Two Patterns in Relationships that Men and Women Both Can Follow.

A. There is the pattern of the world, in which the world dictates how men and women should behave.

B. Then there is the pattern of God's Word, in which God has established the way a man and a woman should relate to each other.

C. We will take a look at both patterns, for both men and women.

III. The Worldly Pattern for Men.

A. It is ego-motivated. The worldly man thinks and does things that edify his flesh. The more "macho" he is, the more his ego or self is satisfied.

B. It is self-strength.

1. I can do it on my own. I do not need any help.
2. Ask a man to stop and ask for directions, if he is lost.

C. It is power-motivated. A man will use his superior physical strength, in order to gain ego fulfillment.

D. It is position-motivated.

1. A worldly man will use his positional status to gain what he wants and to feed his ego.
2. If that does not get him what he wants, he will revert to his physical

E. Men speak quickly and forget quickly. A man will say something that is very hurtful to his wife. Thirty minutes later, he will have completely forgotten about it, and he will wonder what is wrong with her.

F. Men are motivated by sight.

1. Just watch a young woman go down the street in suggestive clothing.
2. Or have a "hot rod" car pull up to a stop light.

G. Men have difficulty in verbalizing emotion.

1. Not only verbalizing love, but just plain showing affection.
2. The worldly man struggles with how to be a man, and yet show love and affection, without being thought of as a wimp.

H. Now you have a man who seeks position and power, and who will use what he can to get it. It is the only way he can satisfy his immense ego. He wants to do it his way, because he sees everybody else doing it that way. He does not know how to verbalize any emotion; and when he does, he says the wrong thing. When it all falls apart or does not work out like he thinks it should, he withdraws and does not want to (or is unable to) handle his responsibilities. You end up with an emotional, selfish little boy.

I. The woman's response is, "You want me to submit to that?"

IV. The Worldly Pattern for Women.

A. It is security-motivated.

1. The things that a man strives so hard to get, do not supply security for the woman.
2. The security that a woman looks for includes trust and honesty.
3. Love and dependability are parts of that security.
4. A woman's security is based on insight. A woman has an innate ability to perceive a leader's (husband's) true motives.
5. A woman's security is also based on awareness. No matter how a man tries to cover his weaknesses with his ego, the woman has the ability to recognize, and in some instances, bring those faults to his attention.

B. Women hear things differently than men; and they are not as quick to forget or forgive.

1. Just listen sometimes to conversations between men and women, and you will be amazed at how much work there needs to be in communication skills.
2. When a cutting remark is directed at a woman, she does not forget; and it takes a lot for her to forgive.

C. Women are turned on more by what they hear than what they see. The, "Me Tarzan, you Jane" mentality does not get very far with women.

D. What you have is a woman who is wanting to hear the right things and is looking for security in a relationship. When she does not get what she wants, she stoops to manipulating her man and allowing him to think he is in

control. And yet, the real power is in her hands. She becomes the angry, hard woman.

E. The man's response is, "You want me to love her?"

V. The Lord's Pattern for Men. (Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19)

A. Husbands -- be the leader. God intended it that way, in all things.

B. Love your wives.

C. Just as Christ loved the church. This puts you on Christ's level of commitment.

D. He gave himself for her, always choosing the highest good for those under His authority. It is total commitment.

E. The difference for the man begins with his accepting the responsibility before God of providing for the highest good of those placed under his authority.

VI. The Lord's Pattern for Women. (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18)

A. Wives -- be under authority.

B. Submit to your husbands, as to those who are in authority.

C. As in the way you should submit to the Lord.

D. For the husband is the head of the wife.

E. As Christ is the Head of the church, for God has placed Him there; and all who

are in the body must submit to His authority.

- F. As the church submits to Christ as Lord of all, so wives should submit to their husbands in everything.
- G. Trust in your husband, as you trust in the Lord.
- H. The difference for the woman is her responsibility before God -- to submit to the husband that He has placed in authority over her. This is a direct command, that she might be able to minister to her husband for his highest good.

VII. Other Obligations and Differences.

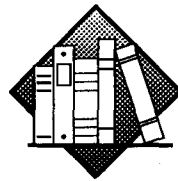
- A. The wife is the only person who can ultimately feed her husband's ego. This is her duty.
- B. The husband's love for his wife provides her security.
- C. With a woman, sex is more of an emotional experience.
- D. With a man, sex is more of a physical experience.
- E. Women run on a predictable cycle of emotion, while a man is more unpredictable. The man must realize his wife's cycle, and be prepared to minister to his wife.

VIII. God Will Help Us to Fulfill His Word and Become What We Were Designed to Be.



Spiritual Truths

- All relationships involve men and women, to a certain degree.
- We must realize that God made men and women different for a reason, so that they can complement one another.
- It is up to each of us to realize what our responsibilities are in these relationships, while at the same time fulfill God's pattern for them.

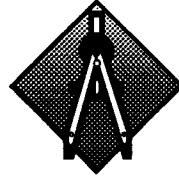


Lesson Material

The tragedy in our society today is that "submission" has come to mean to us "inferiority." Jesus said that the greatest among us is a servant. (Mark 10:44) If we could learn that, our lives could be turned around. The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 5:22-24, lays down very simple premises for husbands and wives. The first is for wives to learn to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord. The way that we submit unto the Lord as wives is demonstrated in the way that the church submits unto Jesus. Number one is through an attitude of obedience, and not just outward actions. There are many times that the wife simply performs an action without there being the attitude. The heart attitude is more important than the outward expression.

The second message that the apostle Paul brings to us is that husbands are to

love their wives, even as Christ has loved the church. Here we find that the responsibility of the husband is to lay down his life, which is what Jesus has done for us. We so often think as Christians, "I am willing to die for Jesus;" but, are we willing to live for him? There are so many husbands who think that because they are working and providing for the family physically, that they have laid down their lives; or, because they would give their lives for their family to protect it, that is all that they need to do. It is easy for the husband to say that he would die for his wife; but, is he willing to live for her? Let us consider how the duty of the wife must be to maintain an attitude of submission; and how the duty of the husband is to maintain an attitude of loving, and giving himself for, his wife, as Christ ever lives for His wife, the church. (Hebrews 7:25)



Methods

List four columns on the blackboard, with headings as follows:

Worldly Men

Godly Men

Worldly Women

Godly Women

Have the female students list the worldly and godly characteristics of women; and have the males do the same for the men.

Emphasize to the students that the Pattern for our character is Jesus Christ; and the standard for our way of living is in God's Word.

Our Foundation

Volume 12

Lesson 27



Bible References

Isaiah 28:16

Luke 6:47-49

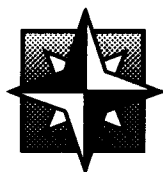
Matthew 7:24-27



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 3:11

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."



Theme

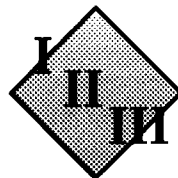
Laying a proper foundation of faith.



Scripture Reading

Isaiah 28:16

16 "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."



Outline

- I. **Understanding God Can Be Difficult.**
 - A. To understand God, sometimes we need to take a different approach than we usually do.
 - B. Hopefully after this lesson is finished, we will be able to grasp the idea that God is totally for us. (Romans 8:31)
 - C. God is pulling for you. He wants you to be a winner. He wants you to be the best you can be.
 - D. God's ways and God's plans may be much different from ours; but, this does not mean that He is not for us.

E. God wants to be intimately involved in every aspect of our lives.

II. Foundations -- What Are They For?

A. What is the first thing a builder does, when he puts up a building?

B. Why does he put in a foundation?

1. The foundation is the most important part of any building.
2. If the foundation is weak, what will happen to the building? (Luke 6:47-49)
3. If the foundation is strong, what will be the results? (Luke 6:47-49)
4. The foundation is permanent and functional. It supports the whole building.

C. The foundation of every Christian is the same. Each one of us is different and unique; and yet, each one of us has the same Foundation. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

D. As Christians, we will never come to the place where we do not need our foundation. As we mature and grow in Christ, we will continually be expanding and building on our foundation.

III. Building Inspectors.

A. When a builder is done with the foundation, what is the next step that has to be done?

B. Our society today has lost a lot of the craftsmanship and quality that went into building, years and years ago.

C. Today, we put up houses apartments and buildings in 45-60-90 days; and we wonder why, 15-25 years from now, they start falling apart.

D. And so, the government says that the building inspector must come around and make sure that everything is all right.

E. An attitude of hurriedness can slip into the church.

1. They get saved.
2. They immediately are thrust into the limelight of giving a testimony, or preaching..
3. They get sent out in a dark and wicked world to save the lost; and they are prime targets for Satan.
4. They become misled or embittered; and we lose them.
5. The church must take care to disciple converts.

F. We pray that God will give us patience; but, we want it right now.

1. We are always in a hurry.
2. We want His will in our lives, but we do not want God to crowd us or cramp our style or bother us.

G. We send for God's Word, in order to accomplish what we would like to see done, in the manner that we think.

IV. God Does Not Operate That Way.

A. God is not in a hurry.

B. God is patient and meticulous.

- C. He is going to do it right the first time, because He is more interested in how it is done than what is done.
- D. God is our building inspector; and because of His love for us, He is committed to making sure that our foundation is correct, and that the house we are building will stand not only His inspection but anything that will come against it.
- E. God has three really good building inspection tools that He uses. (Matthew 7:24-27)
1. Wind.
 2. Rain.
 3. Flood.
- F. How does God use these? That is what we are going to find out the next few weeks.



Lesson Material

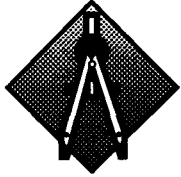
In studying Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus brings out several truths that are important to us -- the first being the importance of a good foundation. In Luke 6:47, a good foundation is determined by the depth of the foundation. 1 Corinthians 3:11 says that there is no other foundation that can be laid other than that which is laid; namely, Jesus Christ. It is how deep we go in our relationship to God through obedience to Jesus and by following His example, that determines the security of our foundation. Jesus tells us that there will come three attacks -- the rain, the flood and the wind. Rain bespeaks of erosion; and that takes place slowly, with letting our Bible study slack off, our prayer time slack off, and also our involvement with church youth activities and church attendance. When those things have taken place, we are vulnerable to the floods that the enemy will bring. Isaiah talks about the enemy coming in like a flood, and the Lord raising up a standard against that. (Isaiah 59:19) The floods that can come into our lives are times of quick devastation, when life catches us off guard, because we have not dug deep. We have allowed the erosion, and now the flood can bring its devastation. After that takes place, Jesus said that the wind can come. Ephesians 4:14 says there can come every wind of doctrine, once the enemy has eroded and brought in the questions toward God by the floods. Then, we have been prepared by the enemy to be struck with the final devastation, which is the wind of doctrine that can come -- humanism, evolution, etc. That is why it is important to be firmly grounded in



Spiritual Truths

- The foundation of every believer is the same.
- God is committed, because of His love for us, to testing our foundation, so that we can be the best Christian we can be.

God's Word and submitted to godly authority. Psalms 11:3 says, *"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*



Methods

Do some research on architecture, or bring in a set of building plans. Explain

how important the foundation of a building is. What materials is it made of? How is its size and shape determined? What is the purpose of the foundation?

Encourage the students to allow the Holy Spirit to search them, in order to determine the depth of their foundation in Jesus Christ. Have a time of prayer and commitment to the Lord. The foundation of Jesus Christ is not just for Sundays; it is the very basis for every day of our lives.

God and His Ways

Volume 12

Lesson 28



Bible References

Exodus 3:13-14

Isaiah 55:8-11

Jeremiah 31:3

Hebrews 12:5-13

the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

7 *"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

8 *"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

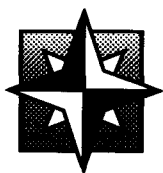
9 *"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected {us}, and we gave {them} reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?*

10 *"For they verily for a few days chastened {us} after their own pleasure; but he for {our} profit, that {we} might be partakers of his holiness.*

11 *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

12 *"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;*

13 *"And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."*



Theme

God's eternal nature and eternal plan for our lives.



Scripture Reading

Hebrews 12:5-13

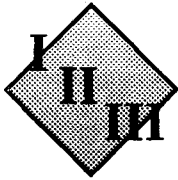
5 *"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of*



Memory Verse

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I [know the thoughts] that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."



Outline

I. The Eternal Nature of God.

A. I am. (Exodus 3:13-14)

1. God's nature is revealed in His Word.
2. "I am" -- Hebrew form of all tenses of the verb, "to be."
3. God, the Originator and Sustainer.
4. God, the Holder of our future.
5. We must lay down our preconceived ideas about God.
6. God's Word accomplishes God's will.
7. We can neither control nor fully understand God.

B. God's ways are above our ways. We cannot comprehend Him; but, we can trust His character.

1. We cannot relate to God with our human reasoning.

2. God's Word assures us of the integrity of His character and His love for us.

II. The Eternal Plan of God for Our Lives.

A. God is interested in every aspect of our lives.

B. God is at work to change us.

1. Conformed to Christ's image. (Romans 8:29)
2. The fruit of the Spirit is Christ's character formed in us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

C. God corrects and chastens us. (Hebrews 12:5-13)

1. This is proof of our sonship. (Hebrews 12:8)
2. This is proof of God's love for us. (Proverbs 3:12)



Spiritual Truths

- God's character is eternal and unchanging.
- God has an eternal plan for our lives.
- God is conforming us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- God teaches, corrects, and chastises us.



Lesson Material

God's Word is the revelation of Himself and His plan for man. God created us for the purpose of fellowship with Him. Because we were created with the ability to choose (as free moral agents), Adam and Eve exercised their free wills in the Garden of Eden and chose to disobey God, breaking relationship with Him. The Bible is the account of God's plan to restore mankind to Himself through the provision of Jesus Christ, the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8)

God's nature is not like our nature. God is eternal. He had no beginning; and He will have no end. He existed before creation; and He exists both within and outside of creation. His very nature is impossible for the finite mind of man to comprehend. But because of His mercy and His desire to restore us unto Himself, God has revealed Himself to us, even to the point of taking on flesh and becoming a Man -- Jesus Christ. Jesus is the revelation of God's love for mankind.

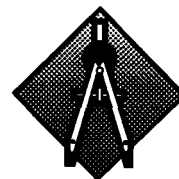
We must lay down our preconceived ideas about God. We can neither control nor fully understand God. God's ways are above our ways. (Isaiah 55:9) We cannot relate to God with our human reasoning. God's Word assures us of the integrity of His character and His love for us. We cannot comprehend Him; but, we can trust His character.

God is interested in every aspect of our lives. He knows us thoroughly (Psalms 139); and yet, He loves us infinitely. (Romans 5:8)

God is at work to change us, for our own good. Man, in his sinful, fallen condition, is not as he was created to be. God is conforming us to Christ's image, in a process known as "sanctification," in order to restore us to that which we were created to be -- righteous, holy, and pure creatures, in unhindered fellowship and service to God. God is changing us by correction and chastisement, just as a loving father corrects his erring child. God's correction is proof of His love for us. He never punishes and condemns His children; rather, He corrects and convicts His children, in order bring awareness of our need for repentance and turn our hearts back toward Himself.

God is forming the character of Christ in us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. That is what the fruit of the Spirit is. It is the Holy Spirit's ministry to make us more like Jesus. And we will find that, as God's children, the more like Jesus and the less like the "old man" we become, the more happy and fulfilled we will be.

Jeremiah 31:3 says, "*The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, (saying), Yea, I have loved thee with an [everlasting love]: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*" God loves us with an everlasting love. His plan for us is good. (Jeremiah 29:11)



Methods

Ask the students to share incidents in which they received correction from an authority (parent, teacher, etc.) because of

some wrongdoing. Was the correction done in love? Did they learn from it?

Encourage the students to recognize God's love in His dealings in their lives. When we understand that God is dealing in the realm of the eternal, rather than in

the realm of the temporal, we can relax and become teachable and willing toward Him.

Pray with the students for their spiritual eyes to be opened to what God is doing in their lives.

Looking on the Inside

Volume 12

Lesson 29



Bible References

Isaiah 11:1-4

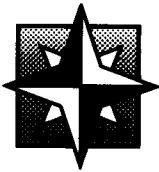
Mark 10:17-22

John 13:37-38

2 "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

3 "And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."



Theme

Externalism versus reality.



Scripture Reading

Isaiah 11:1-4

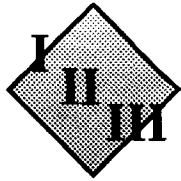
1 "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:



Memory Verse

1 Samuel 16:7

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for (the LORD seeth) not as man seeth; for man looketh on the [outward appearance], but the LORD looketh on the heart."



Outline

I. Human Beings Always Look at Things in the Natural.

- A. We first notice the outward appearance.
- B. We prejudge, based on appearance.
- C. The account of the rich young ruler. (Mark 10:17-22)
 1. His status in life.
 2. The disciples' possible thoughts.
 3. Jesus examines the man's heart.
 4. Jesus' challenge to the man.

II. Jesus Never Looks at Things with the Natural Eye. (Isaiah 11:1-4)

- A. Jesus judges righteously and truthfully.
 1. Not by outward appearance.
 2. Only God can judge the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)
- B. Jesus discerned the heart of the rich young ruler.
 1. Jesus loved him.
 2. Jesus knew the man's love of money.

C. Jesus discerned the heart of Peter.

1. Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him.
2. Jesus promised restoration for Peter. (Luke 22:32)

D. God convicts us by the Holy Spirit.

1. Conviction is not condemnation. (Romans 8:1)
2. Conviction points us to God.
3. We agree with God and yield ourselves to His work in us.

III. God's Inspection of our Lives.

- A. Our attitudes.
- B. Our motives.
- C. We may deceive ourselves and other people, but we cannot deceive God.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus never looked at things in the natural or from the exterior. He was more interested in the inner man and the attitudes.
- We, on the other hand, are quick to make judgments when we meet people, based solely on what we see.
- Only God can know what is in our hearts.



Lesson Material

Our scripture reading in this lesson shows us that Jesus is the only One Who can judge people accurately and righteously. As human beings, we first notice the outward appearance. When you meet someone for the very first time, what is the first thing you do? We almost always note the way they are dressed, the way they walk, or the way they present themselves. We prejudge, based on appearance. Even before they have spoken, we have prejudged them. We have decided in our minds whether we like them or not, based simply on what we have seen.

In Mark 10:17-22, there is the account of a rich young ruler who came to Jesus. This man was obviously well-do-do; and he enjoyed a position of social status within the community. The disciples may have wondered just exactly what this man wanted from Jesus -- power, recognition, or perhaps position in the ministry? Or, the disciples may have thought what great advantages to their ministry such a man of status could bring to them.

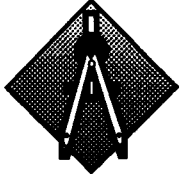
But Jesus examined the man's heart. He knew that, even though the man had kept the law, there was a hindrance in the man's life that was keeping him from God. That hindrance was the man's love of money. As Jesus Himself said, *"No man can serve [two masters]: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."* (Matthew 6:24) Jesus addressed this heart issue in the man, who, while outwardly

professing to desire to follow Jesus, inwardly had another priority -- the "god" of material wealth. Jesus discerned the heart of the rich young ruler.

Jesus also discerned the heart of Peter. (John 13-37-38) Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him, even when Peter loudly proclaimed his loyalty for the Lord. And, even while telling Peter what would really happen, Jesus promised restoration for Peter. (Luke 22:32) It is important to note that the scripture states that Jesus loved both the rich young man and Peter. God loves us, even when we are in sin and rebellion, and even when we are unaware of the wickedness in our own hearts. (Romans 5:8)

When God addresses an area of sin or a flaw in our character, He convicts us by the Holy Spirit. Conviction is not condemnation. Condemnation causes us to look inward and feel guilty and hopeless. Conviction points us to God, and leads us to repentance. We agree with God and yield ourselves to His work in us.

God knows our thoughts, our intents, our attitudes and our motives; and He loves us, in spite of them all. We may deceive ourselves and other people, but we cannot deceive God. When we are open and honest with Him, God gently deals with our hearts and cleanses us from sin. (1 John 1:9) Confession of sin is not informing God of what we have done; confession is agreeing with God that what we have done is wrong, and acknowledging His righteous judgment in our lives.



Methods

Take two boxes, and put a stone in one and a small gift in the other. Have two students open them; and observe their reactions upon discovering the contents of

the boxes. This will help illustrate how we look at things from the outside.

Encourage the students to let Jesus do the judging, and to not judge other students by their outward appearances. Remind the students that as they sow mercy, they will reap mercy. Never take on the job of the Holy Spirit. Rather, we should take care that we are listening to His voice of conviction in our own lives.

Search Me

Volume 12

Lesson 30



Bible References

Psalms 139:23-24

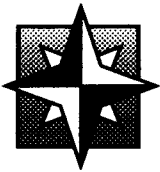
Hebrews 12:4-7



Memory Verse

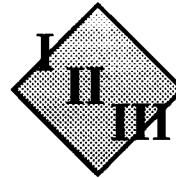
Psalms 139:1

"O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me."



Theme

How do we respond to God's building inspections?



Outline

I. We Can React to God's Building Inspections in One of Four Ways.

A. We can respond the right way.

1. Yield to God.
2. Stay in God's Word.
3. Listen for God's voice in prayer.

B. We can faint. (Hebrews 12:5)

1. Withdrawing from His dealing.
2. Falling into self-pity.
3. Giving in to depression.



Scripture Reading

Psalms 139:23-24

23 *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:*

24 *"And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

C. We can take God's dealings lightly.

1. Ignoring Him.
2. Procrastinating.

D. We can get bitter.

1. Becoming angry.
2. Allowing a root of bitterness.
(Hebrews 12:15)

II. God's Dealings Are Serious Business.

A. God deals with us, because He loves us.

1. He has our good in mind. (Romans 8:28)
2. He has our character in mind.
(Romans 8:29)

B. If we do not respond to His dealings, God will discipline us. (Hebrews 12:6-7)

1. Discipline hurts.
2. Discipline works.

C. God has a purpose in His dealings with us.

1. To keep us from fleshly temptation.
2. To conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.

III. David Desired God's Best for His Life.

A. David knew that his success was dependent upon his relationship with God.

1. When our hearts are honest before God, we are secure enough to invite His searching.
 - a. Trusting God's judgment.

b. Being willing to submit to His judgment.

2. God wants to be sovereign in our lives.

a. If Jesus is not Lord of all, Jesus is not Lord at all.

b. Idolatry is giving someone or something in our lives the preeminence that rightfully belongs to God.

c. *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."* (Exodus 20:3)

3. God is for us. (Romans 8:31)

B. The Lord knows us.

1. He knows even the secret things of our hearts. (Jeremiah 17:10)
2. He knows our motives.
3. He loves us, anyway.
4. He knows us better than we know ourselves.



Spiritual Truths

- God searches and tries us, in order to conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- The fruits of God's dealings in our lives are dependent upon our response to Him.



Lesson Material

God is constantly searching and trying our hearts. Our response to His dealings in our lives determines whether we will become better, or bitter.

When God starts to deal with us in an area, we can recognize His hand working in our lives and yield to His moving, knowing that He has our best interest at heart and that He loves us. However, the only way we can know His voice and His direction is through praying and reading His Word. If we are not doing those two things, we will probably react in one of the following three ways:

We can faint. (Hebrews 12:5) This is not in the sense of passing out, but in the sense of trying to steal away, hide, or crawl in a corner. (This is what the Greek word for "faint" means.)

We can feel sorry for ourselves -- have a self-pity party and act like God does not love us anymore.

Or, we can give in to depression -- act like we are the only ones who are experiencing all of these trials and tribulations.

We can take God's dealings lightly, by ignoring Him. We can push it off, similar to the way we treat our parents, when they tell us to do something that we do not want to do. We must remember that our attitude of submission toward worldly authority is a reflection of our attitude of submission toward God Himself.

We can ignore God's dealing, hoping that it will go away and never come back. And yet, because God is committed to testing our foundation, His dealing keeps coming back -- stronger and stronger.

We can choose to become bitter. We can get mad at God and shake our fists at Him and yell at Him; and we will allow bitterness toward Him to enter into our spirits. (Hebrews 12:15) When that root of bitterness comes in, it spreads like a cancer. It infects our relationship with God, as well as our relationship with others in our lives.

God deals with us, because He loves us. He is changing us for our good and for His glory. He is making us into what He intended for us to be, in the first place. If we do not respond to His dealings, God will discipline us. (Hebrews 12:6-7) This is not because He is trying to inflict pain upon us, but because He is trying to correct us -- always in love. God has a purpose in His dealings with us. He is keeping us from fleshly temptation; and He is conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ.

David knew that his success was dependent upon his relationship with God. Look at Psalms 139:23. When our hearts are honest before God, we are confident enough to invite His searching. Are we secure enough in our relationship with God to ask Him to search us -- to say, "Show me what is not pleasing to you Lord; and take it. I give it up?"

God wants to be sovereign in our lives. There is a saying that goes: "If Jesus is not Lord of all, Jesus is not Lord at all." Anything that takes priority in our lives is an idol to us. Idolatry is giving someone or something in our lives the preeminence that rightfully belongs to God. We cannot

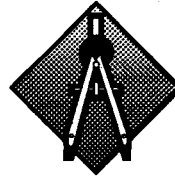
be happy without Jesus being on the throne of our lives; and God will not be satisfied elsewhere.

We must always remember that God is for us. (Romans 8:31) He is not looking for excuses to condemn us. (Romans 8:1) His searching and trying of our foundation is for the purpose of building us stronger and creating things of eternal value in us.

The Lord knows us. He knows even the secret things of our hearts. (Jeremiah 17:10) David had just been searched; and yet, he knew without God constantly checking his foundation, he would easily fall prey to the enemy. (Psalms 138:7-8) God knows us better than we know ourselves. And yet, He loves us with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3)

Let us not resist the searching and dealings of God. Rather, let us be assured

that when He searches us, He is once again proving His love for us.



Methods

Ask the students to share the ways in which they know that God has dealt with them. It may have been a feeling of conviction; a natural consequence of some action; discipline by an authority, etc.

List on the blackboard the positive results of God's dealings in our lives. Close with a prayer of submission to God in any and every area of our lives that He may be dealing in.

God Knows

Volume 12

Lesson 31



Bible References

Jeremiah 17:9-10

Proverbs 21:2

1 Samuel 16:7

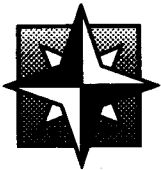
his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."



Memory Verse

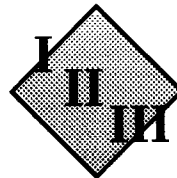
Proverbs 16:2

"All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits."



Theme

We must measure ourselves according to the standard of the Word of God.



Outline

- I. **David's Son, Solomon Succeeded Him on the Throne.**
 - A. Solomon wrote the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and The Song of Solomon.
 - B. Solomon very likely watched intently as his father ruled Israel; and, more than likely, he read David's writings with great interest.



Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 17:9-10

9 *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"*

10 *"I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to*

- C. He was probably determined in his heart that he was not going to make mistakes as his father.
- D. Solomon started off correctly in his relationship with God.
 1. He worshipped with sacrifices.
 2. He asked God for wisdom, rather than riches or honor. (2 Chronicles 1:8-12)
- E. Solomon struggled with the same things as his father, David.
 1. There is "nothing new under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9)
 2. All temptations are common to all men. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

II. The Book of Proverbs Was Written Mostly by Solomon.

- A. Proverbs is full of contrasts.
 1. Most of the contrasts deal with the differences between God and man.
 2. And most of the differences are between God's knowing and man's guessing.
- B. An illustration of this concept.
 1. Proverbs 16:2 -- *"All the ways of a man {are} clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits."*
 2. Proverbs 21:2 -- *"Every way of a man {is} right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts."*
 3. Jeremiah 17:10 -- *"I the LORD search the heart, {I} try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, {and} according to the fruit of his doings."*
 4. God's standard and man's standard are not the same.
 - a. Man cannot judge righteously.

- b. God cannot judge unrighteously.

III. God Always Deals Truthfully.

- A. God desires us to be truthful. (Psalms 51:6)
 - B. It is easier to talk the talk than to walk the walk.
 - C. God wants us to be obedient to the truth that He has shown us.
 1. We are responsible for what is revealed to us.
 2. Our actions always reflect what is in our hearts.
 - D. Jesus' rebuke to the church in Sardis. (Revelation 3:1-3)
 1. Jesus found their deeds (works) incomplete.
 2. They were becoming careless in their walk.
 - E. Phoniness hinders true relationship.
 1. Trying to be someone whom you are not.
 2. Unwilling to be honest.
 - F. Phoniness hinders our testimony before the world.
- ## IV. God Wants to Make Us the Best We Can Be.
- A. If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)
 1. The real (internal) us.
 2. God does not deal with the external. (1 Samuel 16:7)

B. God wants His best for us.

1. He does not condemn. (Romans 8:1)
2. He corrects, in order to draw us to repentance.
 - a. Conviction turns us toward God.
 - b. 1 John 1:9 -- He cleanses us.

C. He points out flaws in our lives for specific reasons.

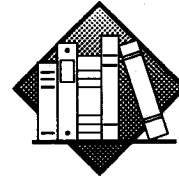
1. There must be truth in our innermost being. (Psalms 51:6)
2. We can only realize our potential when we allow God to transform us. (Romans 12:2)
 - a. This is a process of change.
 - b. The Holy Spirit is sanctifying us.
 - c. He is working on our minds and attitudes.

D. God speaks to His children.

1. Usually in a still, small voice. (1 Kings 19:12)
2. We receive His direction from the indwelling Holy Spirit.
3. We receive His direction through His Word.

E. God tests our foundations, in order to establish them on the strength of His truth.

- God, on the other hand, weighs man's heart, motives and attitudes, according to His standard of judgment.
- We must maintain a tender heart, a listening ear, and a submissive spirit toward God.



Lesson Material

Solomon wrote some of the most wise sayings ever written. He was able to do this, because of a supernatural gift of wisdom given to him by the Lord. One of the wise lessons that Solomon learned in his life was that only the Lord can judge righteously and truthfully; and only the Lord can discern truthfulness in the heart of man.

God desires us to be truthful. God knows what is inside of us. And He knows when we have not permitted the light of His truth to shine inside the darkness of our self-deception. When God reveals truth to us, we become responsible for what we do with that truth. We can make ourselves appear to be obedient believers; but, God knows what is happening in the hidden man -- in our deepest hearts. He judges according to what He sees there.

This is why Jesus rebuked the church in Sardis. They had begun correctly; but now their works were not perfect, and they were in need of repentance. We must realize that, even though our sins are forgiven when we repent and receive Jesus as our Savior, we still must allow God to continually deal with our sins and sin nature. If we fail to do so, we hinder



Spiritual Truths

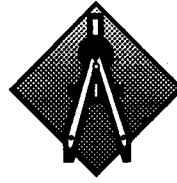
- Man is always trying to justify his own actions; and, by doing so, he always thinks more highly of himself than he should.

our relationship with God and subject ourselves to judgment.

Phoniness (behaving in an untruthful manner before others) hinders both our relationship with God and our testimony before the world. It also hinders our own spiritual growth and health. The only way to avoid such untruthfulness is to quickly respond to God's dealings in our hearts with repentance -- which is turning around, stopping what we were doing, and heading in the other direction (back toward the things of God).

God is dealing with the real us -- the inner man. He is not interested in externals. God is for us -- the real us -- and all that He knows that we can be. He points out flaws and sin in our lives for the purpose of correcting, cleansing and changing us. God is interested in doing an eternal work of lasting value in us.

God speaks to us through His Word, through the voice of the Holy Spirit, while we are praying, and through the voice of godly authority. When we listen to His voice, and heed it, we will find that we are walking in truth. God tests our foundations, in order to establish them on the strength of His truth.



Methods

On the blackboard, write two words:

Conviction Condemnation

Underneath both words, list the results of each. (Have the students suggest these. Under "Conviction," they may list such things as "Comes from the Holy Spirit;" "Draws toward God;" "Leads to Repentance," etc. Under "Condemnation," they may list such things as "Does not come from God;" "Turns one away from God;" "Leads to Guilt and Hopelessness," etc.)

Have prayer with the students; and assure them that God's dealings in our lives are proof of His love for us as His children. Encourage the students to honestly confess and repent before the Lord, whether in class or privately.

Building Plans

Volume 12

Lesson 32



Bible References

Proverbs 21:2

Matthew 7:24-27

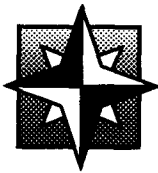
1 Corinthians 3:10-16

24 "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."



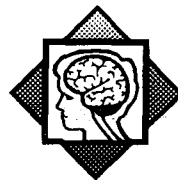
Theme

God tests our foundation and what we build upon it.



Scripture Reading

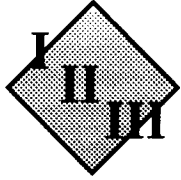
Matthew 7:24-27



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 3:11

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."



Outline

I. We Must Be Careful Not to Lay a Counterfeit Foundation.

- A. This foundation could be based on intellect, emotions or theory.
- B. It could be one that has totally removed Jesus Christ from having anything to do with our lives.
- C. The true Foundation is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)
- D. We are to build upon this Foundation. (1 Corinthians 3:10-16)
 - 1. Wood, hay, stubble.
 - a. Do not last, or stand the test.
 - b. Fleshly-motivated works.
 - 2. Gold, silver, precious stones.
 - a. Lasting -- permanent.
 - b. Godly motivated works.

II. Elements of the True Foundation. (Hebrews 6:1-2)

- A. Repentance from dead works.
- B. Faith toward God.
- C. Doctrine of baptisms.
- D. Laying on of hands.
- E. Resurrection of the dead.
- F. Eternal judgment.

III. The Test of Our Foundation.

- A. Jesus taught about our foundation in Matthew 7:24-27.
 - 1. Rain tests our foundation.
 - a. Pressure or stress.
 - b. Daily temptation.
 - 2. Wind tests our foundation.
 - a. Sudden, and without warning.
 - b. Trials and distresses.
 - 3. Floods test our foundation.
 - a. Overwhelming.
 - b. Indicative of great adversity.
- B. Only if the house is built upon the foundation of God's Word can it withstand these testings.

IV. Are We Ready for Inspection?

- A. Stay clean. (1 John 1:9)
- B. Stay willing.
- C. Stay submitted.



Spiritual Truths

- We must build our lives on the foundation of Jesus Christ.
- We build on the foundation by heeding God's Word and acting upon it.
- We are responsible for how we build upon our foundation.
- We are secure on the foundation of Jesus Christ, no matter what the temptation, trial, or adversity.



Lesson Material

In 1 Corinthians 3:10-16, the apostle Paul compares our spiritual lives with building on a foundation. The foundation of our lives is Jesus Christ. How and what we build upon the foundation is a matter of our choice.

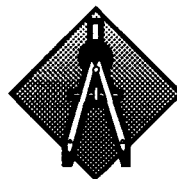
While we are not saved by our works, works do matter in our Christian lives. The Bible says that "...*faith without works is dead.*" (James 2:20) When we stay in right relationship with God and remain obedient to His directives in our lives, we are building lasting, permanent works on our foundation. All other works will be burned up. These are fleshly-motivated works, regardless of their appearance, which were not done in faith by the direction of the Holy Spirit. Anything that we do outside of God's plan for our lives will only amount to wood, hay and stubble. While our salvation is secure (our foundation), what we have built on the foundation can only be lasting and permanent, if it is built by God through us. As Christians, our position in glory will depend upon what we have built upon the foundation. This is the judgment that we receive, according to our works.

Jesus said that our foundation will be tested in this life. We are tested by temptations, trials and adversities. But if we stay securely upon the foundation, we will be more than conquerors through every testing that comes our way. (Romans 8:37)

We maintain our foundation in three ways. First, we must stay clean. This

means that when we sin, we immediately acknowledge our sin and repent before the Lord, in order to receive His forgiveness and cleansing. Secondly, we must stay willing. This means that whenever the Lord speaks a directive to our hearts, we are obedient, and we act upon what He has said. And lastly, we must stay submitted. Our relationship with the Lord must be one in which we maintain a servant's attitude toward Him, recognizing His rightful rule in our lives. And our relationship with others, particularly those in authority over us, must be maintained correctly, in order to us to remain in a right relationship with God Himself.

The Bible promises great reward to those who build correctly upon the Foundation of Jesus Christ in their lives. Eternal works produce eternal rewards. Let us strive to maintain our proper foundation, and to use only eternal building materials.



Methods

Discussion Questions:

What is our spiritual foundation? (1 Corinthians 3:11)

What types of things could we build on our foundation, that would only amount of "wood, hay, or stubble?"

What types of things could we build on our foundation, that would endure as "gold, silver, or precious stones?"

A Teachable Spirit

Volume 12

Lesson 33



Bible References

Matthew 28:19

1 Corinthians 8:1-3

2 Peter 3:18

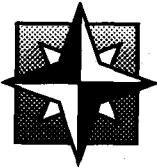
Proverbs 1:5, 7



Scripture Reading

Matthew 28:19

19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"



Theme

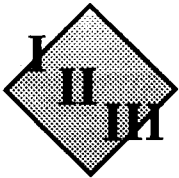
We must maintain a teachable spirit, in order to grow in our Christian walk and disciple others.



Memory Verse

2 Peter 3:18

"But grow in grace, and (in) the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him (be) glory both now and for ever. Amen."



Outline

I. The Need for a Teachable Spirit.

- A. We need to grow spiritually. (1 Peter 1:13)
- B. We must rely on Jesus Christ for our spiritual growth.
- C. As we rely on Him, He imparts grace to us.
- D. Our part is to remain teachable. (Proverbs 1:5, 7)

II. What Is Required of Us, in Our Relationship with Jesus?

- A. We must follow Him. (John 12:26)
- B. We do not merely find Him; we must follow, as a disciple.
- C. Discipling is a lifelong process.
- D. We must examine our motive, in order to see if we are truly disciples.

III. Go and Make Disciples. (Matthew 28:19)

- A. Disciples are students.
- B. This does not refer to the acquiring of knowledge only.
- C. Knowledge without character is worthless.

- D. Maturity is only gained by spiritual growth.
- E. The world exalts knowledge, while disregarding character.
- F. A disciple (a learner) applies knowledge to everyday living.
- G. Knowledge applied is wisdom; knowledge not applied is wasted.

IV. We Must Remember that We Do Not Know It All. (1 Corinthians 8:1-3)

- A. We are ever learning; and we are to make disciples -- other learners.
- B. We never reach a point in this life at which we cease to learn.
- C. Learners must submit to godly teaching.
- D. He ceases to be a teacher who ceases to be a student.
- E. Follow Jesus -- ever learning from Him. (Matthew 11:29)



Spiritual Truths

- We are commanded by God to go into all the world and make disciples.
- The process of discipling does not end with conversion; it has only begun.
- Before we can make disciples, we ourselves must remain disciples.



Lesson Material

2 Corinthians 7:1 says, *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."* We have a responsibility in our Christian walk, and that is to remain teachable and in right relationship with God, so that He can perfect (mature) us.

We need to grow spiritually. In 2 Peter 3:18, we read: *"But grow in grace, and (in) the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...."* Notice that this is a command to the believer. We must choose to grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is a matter of our will. It is a matter of staying submitted to God. It is a matter of maintaining a teachable attitude. We cannot produce anything spiritual or of lasting value in ourselves. Jesus said, *"...Without me ye can do nothing."* (John 15:5) We must rely on Him for our spiritual growth. We must rely on the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Christ in us -- which is the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

As we rely on the Lord, He imparts grace to us. He gives us understanding of the things of God. He reveals the truths of His Word to us. And He searches our hearts and reveals to us what is really in there, so that He might be given free course to deal with our inner man. Our part in this process is to remain teachable. (Proverbs 1:5, 7)

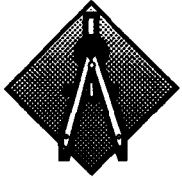
A disciple is a learner. Jesus did not ask that people find Him; He required that people follow Him, in order to become

disciples. And, in turn, we are not commanded to go and make converts; we are commanded to go and make disciples -- other students and learners.

Discipling is a lifelong process. It is a process of God continually teaching us. And it is a process of our remaining in a teachable state, in order to receive God's teaching. We must continually examine our motives. Are we willing to learn of Jesus, or are we merely desiring to see what blessings we might be able to get from Him?

There is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is the acquiring of facts. The Bible says that knowledge alone "puffs up," or makes one conceited and high-minded. (1 Corinthians 8:1) But wisdom is the application of knowledge. When we take what we have learned from God, whether through His Word, the still, small voice of His Spirit, or the teaching of godly pastors and teachers, and let God apply it to our lives, we have acquired wisdom. Wisdom changes our character. It is of much greater value than the accumulation of factual knowledge. Knowledge applied is wisdom; knowledge not applied is wasted.

We never reach a point in this life at which we cease to learn. Even as teachers, we must still remain students ourselves. He ceases to be a teacher who ceases to be a student. We never will know it all. But we have a God Who knows everything -- the beginning from the end -- and Who desires to reveal spiritual things to us, in order to change us and mature us. This ongoing process of transformation is called "sanctification." As learners, we must submit ourselves both to God and to godly teaching. Follow Jesus -- ever learning from Him. (Matthew 11:29)



Methods

Ask one of the students to be prepared to teach the class a recipe, a craft, a science experiment, etc. Show the students that the process of learning is much more than acquiring facts. One must want to learn; and then, one must take a "hands on" approach to learning, in order to apply knowledge.

This can be compared to driving a car. One can learn many facts about driving in a driver's education class; but, one can never be fully equipped to drive a car without some practical driving experience. God's Word is not to be just another reference filed away in our minds. His Word is alive; and it is meant to challenge, change and mature us spiritually.

Pray with the students; and ask God to help them to apply what He is dealing with in their lives, so that they may benefit from His teaching. Ask God for a humble and teachable spirit, for both the students and the teachers.

Cultivating a Teachable Spirit

Volume 12

Lesson 34



Bible References

Luke 10:17-24

John 3:1-10

Hebrews 12:1-25

Proverbs 15:31-33



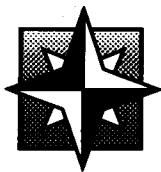
Scripture Reading

Proverbs 15:31-33

31 *"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.*

32 *"He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.*

33 *"The fear of the LORD {is} the instruction of wisdom; and before honour {is} humility."*



Theme

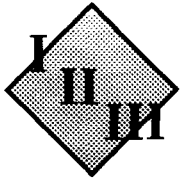
Making sure that we are yielded to God and submitted to His guidance.



Memory Verse

1 Peter 1:13

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"



Outline

I. Are We Learners?

- A. Ask God.
- B. Ask those around you.
- C. Are we a good listener? (Proverbs 1:5)
 - 1. Wise people listen, more than talk.
 - 2. We have two ears and one mouth. We should be listening more that we are talking.
- D. Are we progressive in our learning? (Proverbs 9:9)
 - 1. We become stagnant, when we stop the learning process.
 - 2. The learning attitude of Nicodemus. (John 3:1-10)
 - a. Abandon preconceived ideas and ask questions.
 - b. Jesus tests our learning attitude, before He reveals anything to us.
 - c. Disciples are more than followers.
 - d. We must desire to grow in wisdom.
- E. Do we understand the nature of revelation? (Luke 10:17-24)
 - 1. Revelation is by God's grace.
 - 2. Revelation of truth comes from God. (Proverbs 2:6-10; 26:1-2)
 - 3. Revelation is progressive.

F. Do we receive and accept reproof? (Proverbs 15:31-33)

- 1. Those who hate instruction are "brutish" -- stupid. (Proverbs 12:1)
- 2. Those who receive correction gain by it.

G. Are we easily bored at church?

- 1. Are we merely looking for entertainment or social activity?
- 2. Do we fail to receive from our godly teachers?

H. Are we always hearing the message for someone else?

I. Are we submissive to authority?

- 1. Church, school, government -- any kind of authority at all.
- 2. Our attitude toward authority reveals our attitude toward God.

II. The Pattern of Hebrews 12.

A. Verses 1-13 of this chapter deal with God's discipline.

- 1. Lay aside everything that hinders our spiritual walk.
- 2. Keeping our eyes on Jesus.
- 3. The purpose of God's chastening.

B. Verses 14-25a deal with the difference between Esau and Jacob.

- 1. Esau and Jacob were both sinners.
- 2. The difference between the two was that one valued the birthright and one despised it.
- 3. The birthright can be compared to the kingdom of God; the land of Canaan; the fruitful Christian life.
- 4. We must choose to allow God's best for our lives.



Spiritual Truths

- God wants nothing more than for us to be yielded to Him and His guidance.
- God's dealing in our lives is part of the sanctification process, which we must go through, in order to become what He wants us to be.
- We must continually examine our hearts, in order to maintain a teachable attitude and receive from the Lord.



Lesson Material

As we have seen in the previous lesson, a disciple is a learner -- much more than a follower. A disciple is one who is a student of the One Whom he follows. A disciple maintains a humble and teachable attitude toward his Master.

There are several questions presented in this lesson, in order to help us assess whether we are learners:

Does God consider us to be a good learner? What about other people who know us?

Are we a good listener?

Are we progressive in our learning:

Do we understand the nature of revelation?

Can we receive and accept reproof?

Are we easily bored at church?

Do we always hear the message for someone else?

Are we submitted to authority?

All of these questions will point out any defect in our attitudes that can hinder our discipleship.

First of all, we must stay in contact with God Himself. This is done through prayer, the reading of His Word, and staying in fellowship with, and under the teaching of, other believers. When we maintain an attitude of submission toward God, we become sensitive to His Spirit and responsive to His conviction. We become soft clay in the hands of the Potter.

Next, we must have the courage to honestly ask those with whom we are in direct contact whether they think that we are teachable. Ask those who know you, and who are in a position of observation of your responses in teaching situations, such as in Sunday School, in church services, in school, on the job, etc.

We must determine to be good listeners. God has given us two ears and one mouth. It could be said that perhaps we were designed to listen twice as much as we talk. We do not merely listen with the physical ear; but we determine to give our attention to what is being said, and we listen with our mind and with our spirit. We see from Proverbs 1:5 that a wise man continues to listen. He does not determine at a certain point that now he is the one who knows it all, and so he will be doing all of the talking.

We must be progressive in our learning. We must stay under the voice of

teaching and ask questions, in order to continue on as a disciple. We become stagnant, when we stop the learning process, or when we learn only on a superficial basis. Nicodemus provides us with a great example of learning, from John chapter three. Nicodemus came to Jesus and told Him everything that he knew -- that Jesus was a miracle-worker from God. But Jesus tested Nicodemus' teachable attitude by telling him what he did not know, rather than responding to what he did know: "*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (John 3:3) Nicodemus' teachable attitude is seen by his response. He asked questions. He wanted to learn from the Master: "*...How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*" (John 3:4) Nicodemus wanted to know more. He wanted to develop in his relationship with God. Nicodemus was a disciple.

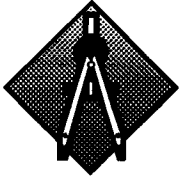
God will bring us to the end of what we know, in order to make us ready to receive what we do not know. God will help us to become willing to learn of Him. Our attitudes must be dealt with, before we can receive revelation from God. Otherwise, further revelation will only become "head" knowledge, with no effect on our character and no lasting value in our lives.

A teachable attitude is one which will accept reproof and correction. Rather than bristling at reproof, a disciple receives it and therefore profits from it. Correction is an integral part of the learning process. When we stay in a teachable attitude, we will learn the true condition of our hearts and be less likely to be prey to self-deception.

We must examine our attitudes at church. Just because it is the same class, or the same preacher, or the same teacher, does not mean that we cannot receive from it. When we close ourselves off to those whom God has placed in our lives to teach us, we become hard-hearted toward God Himself. We must carry the attitude that every time we come to church, God has something to reveal to us; and we must determine to hear and receive that truth from God, through whatever vessel He chooses. And we must not shrug off conviction to someone else. If we find that what we are hearing surely applies to someone we know, rather than to ourselves, we have ceased from learning and have become judges. This is not maintaining a teachable spirit.

In Hebrews chapter 12, we learn that God is desiring to change us through His chastening and correction. We maintain a correct attitude toward Him, by recognizing Jesus as the "*...author and finisher of our faith;...*" God is working out His plan for our lives; and the more we cooperate with Him, the happier and more fruitful we will become. The example of Jacob and Esau illustrates how our teachable attitude can affect our relationships with God, our relationships with others, our future, and our ability to receive from God.

God is wanting to break our hard hearts and test our foundations, so that He can create in us a teachable, willing spirit. The choice is ours.



Methods

Write the questions from the lesson on the blackboard, or pass out a questionnaire to each student. Ask the students to respond to the questions, as you are

presenting the lesson material. Read the students' answers, or discuss verbal answers, in light of the scriptural references given.

Invite the students, in a time of quiet and reflection, to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to them the condition of their hearts. Are they teachable? Do they receive reproof? Do they desire more of the things of God?

Foundation Test

Volume 12

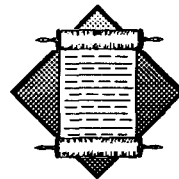
Lesson 35



Bible References

Luke 6:47-49

2 Timothy 2:15

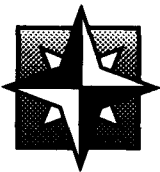


Scripture Reading

2 Corinthians 13:5-6

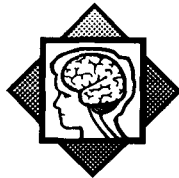
5 *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"*

6 *"But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates."*



Theme

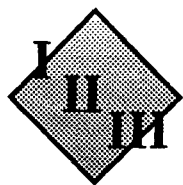
A review of the lessons on our foundation and God's dealings in our lives.



Memory Verse

2 Timothy 2:15

15 *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*



Outline

I. This Is a Test Over the Last Few Lessons.

A. Questions. (Total points on the test: 145)

1. What do all Christians have in common? -- 5 points
2. Find one of the scriptures that we looked at, that deals with our foundations. -- 5 points
3. What are the three tests that come to our foundation? -- 5 points each/ 15 points
4. Who is our building inspector? -- 5 points
5. What does "I am" mean? -- 5 points
6. Who does God discipline? -- 5 points
7. What two areas is God checking, when He inspects our foundations? -- 5 points each/ 10 points
8. How do we, as humans, look at things? -- 5 points
9. When Jesus deals with us, He does not condemn. He does what? -- 5 points
10. We can respond to God's dealings in four ways. Name them. -- 5 points/20 points
11. What is it in our lives that God cannot bless? -- 5 points
12. Man thinks that he looks good in his own eyes; but, what does God weigh? -- 5 points
13. What did Solomon ask for from God? -- 5 points
14. What was unique about David's request in Psalms 139:23? -- 5 points

15. Why is God committed to testing our foundations? -- 5 points
16. In order for us to have a strong foundation, what must we be? -- 5 points
17. There several ways to tell if we are teachable. Name four. -- 5 points each/ 20 points
18. A man who hates correction is what? -- 5 points
19. Why did God honor Jacob above Esau? -- 5 points
20. Why is it important to be submitted to authority? -- 5 points

B. Answers to the Questions.

1. The same Foundation -- Jesus Christ.
2. Luke 6:47-49 or Matthew 7:24-27.
3. Rain, wind, flood.
4. God.
5. The eternal, self-existent God.
6. Those He loves.
7. Motives and attitudes.
8. From the outside (appearance).
9. Conviction.
10. The right way; Faint; Put it off; Become bitter.
11. Unreality (untruthfulness).
12. The heart.
13. Wisdom.
14. He had already been searched, in verse 1.
15. Because He loves us.
16. Teachable.
17. (1) Ask God. (2) Ask someone around us. (4) Do we progress with our learning? (5) Do we understand the nature of revelation? (6) Can we receive reproof? (7) Are we bored in church? (8) Do we hear messages only for other people? (9) Do we submit to authority?
18. Stupid.
19. Jacob honored the birthright.

20. Our attitude toward authority reflects our attitude toward God.

II. Challenge the Students to Use This Test to Check Their Foundation in Jesus Christ.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus Christ is our Foundation.
- We build on the foundation by our works.
- Our foundation will be tested.
- Our attitudes determine our ability to learn.
- It is our responsibility to maintain a teachable spirit.



Lesson Material

Philippians 1:6 says, *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath [begun a good work] in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:"* God is doing a work in our lives. He has laid the foundation; and it is up to us how we build upon it.

The Christian walk is a learning process. We are disciples of Jesus. He has

given us His Holy Spirit, to teach us the things of God and to lead and guide our daily lives. He has given us His Word, as a light to our pathway. (Psalms 119:105) And He has given us godly parents, teachers, pastors and other authorities, to teach and lead us. Whether we choose to appropriate all that God has given us determines how much we will grow spiritually.

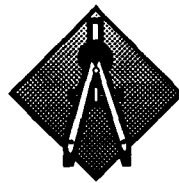
Not only are we to be disciples ourselves; but, we are to make disciples of others. This is the heart of Jesus. A newborn child cannot survive on its own. It must be cared for, fed, protected, and nurtured. So it is with spiritual babes -- and Jesus has commanded us to disciple and care for those who are newly born again.

God's will for our lives is that we grow up and reproduce. He does not want us to remain spiritual babes. But that choice is up to us. We must daily submit our lives to God and to His dealings with us.

God has great things in store for us. In Jeremiah 29:11, we read: *"For I [know the thoughts] that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."* Even when we do not understand what God is doing in our lives, and even when we are being chastened, we can trust in the immutable character of the God Who loves us and Who gave Himself for us.

The spiritually mature Christian is one who invests himself in others, in the same way as our Lord invested Himself in His disciples, and still invests Himself in us. The way to have a burden for others is to have a love for the Lord -- a love and trust that welcomes His dealings and submits to them.

God is for us. And God has a sure plan for our lives. It is a good plan. We will remain joyful, fruitful Christians, and true disciples, as we choose to walk in the plan that God has for us.



Methods

Break the class into 2 or 3 groups; and give the youth workers each a copy of the test without the answers. Give the groups 20 minutes to complete the test. Then have the youth workers grade the tests, as the answers are read. You may want to hand out prizes for first, second, and third place.

Christ, the Christian's Life

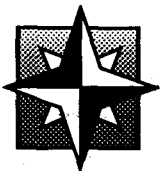
Volume 12

Lesson 36



Bible Reference

Philippians 1



Theme

Rejoicing, in spite of suffering.



Scripture Reading

Philippians 1:27-30

27 "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that

whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

29 "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

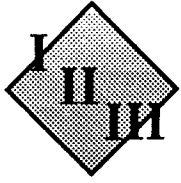
30 "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear {to be} in me."



Memory Verse

Philippians 1:21

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."



Outline

I. Joy Triumphant Over Suffering. (verses 8-18)

- A. Abounding in love.
- B. Remaining blameless.
- C. Being filled with the righteousness of Christ.
- D. Continuing to share the Word.
- E. The real reason for joy -- Christ being preached.
- F. Exhortation and encouragement.

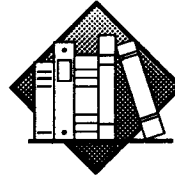
II. Expectation of Deliverance. (verses 19-30)

- A. In the midst of trials.
- B. Exalting Jesus Christ.
- C. Paul's desire to be with Christ, and yet remain with the believers.
- D. Standing in unity of spirit.
- E. The privilege of suffering for Christ.



Spiritual Truths

- No matter what our circumstances are, we, as believers, must allow the life, nature and mind of Christ to flow out of us.
- Our attitude in trials is a testimony to the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Lesson Material

In the next few lessons, we will be studying from the book of Philippians. Paul, as spiritual father and overseer of the Philippian church, wrote this epistle to encourage and exhort the believers to continue pressing on in the things of Christ, in spite of hardship and adversity.

Paul begins the letter with a prayer for the believers. We will look at several aspects of Paul's prayer, in order to apply it to our lives.

Paul's simple request and prayer was that we as Christians have our love abound, in knowledge and insight. He also prayed that we learn to discern what is best for us; that we remain pure and blameless until Christ returns; and that we be filled with Christ's righteousness, for God's glory and praise. The character of Jesus Christ showing through our lives is the greatest possible testimony to the world; and it is proof that the gospel which we preach is real.

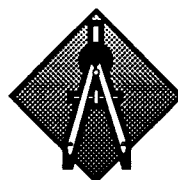
In spite of hardship and trial, Paul exhorts us to continue sharing the Word with great courage. Regardless of the circumstances, God is worthy of praise, and Christ is worthy to be preached. Often, it is in the midst of trouble and adversity that the truth of the gospel is attested to in our lives. And it is in the midst of trouble and adversity that we are purified and sanctified.

We as believers are encouraged to live our lives as an example, so that we are an encouragement to one another. We must remember that, as Christians, we are in this battle together. Our unity is not based upon every "jot and tittle" of the law; but it is based on the very Person of the One Whom we know as Savior and Lord -- Jesus Christ. It is especially important for us to uphold and encourage one another, in times of distress and trial. The world will not encourage us in the faith; only fellow believers can.

Paul tells us in verse 29 that we have been "granted" to suffer for the sake of Christ. This does not refer to suffering as a natural result of sinfulness or foolishness; but, rather, it refers to suffering that comes as a direct result of our witness for Jesus Christ. In 2 Timothy 2:12, we learn that if we suffer with Jesus, we will also reign with Him. Jesus Himself said, *"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have [persecuted me], they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."* (John 15:20) Suffering is a part of the Christian walk. It is to be expected. (1 Peter 4:12) If we have never been persecuted or challenged or made to suffer because of our Christian testimony, we would do well to examine our witness before the world.

There is a difference between testings and persecution. Testings are those times when God uses people, circumstances or events in our lives, in order to purify us and prune us unto spiritual growth. Every believer goes through times of testing. God usually does not deliver us out of the testing, lest the testing be in vain and not accomplish its purpose in our lives. But God does deliver us through the testing, giving us peace and victory even in the midst of the trial, and, through the trial, accomplishing something of lasting, eternal value in us.

Paul's example of self-sacrificing love for the Philippians is a model for us as believers today. We must be committed to the household of faith. We must stand by our brothers and sisters in Christ. We must be ready to give of ourselves for the body of Christ and be spent in service to others. In this kind of love and commitment to one another, God is glorified. It is a sign to an unbelieving world; and it is edification for the body of believers.



Methods

Present several scenarios of testing to the students; and then, ask them how they could best respond with encouragement for the one who is going through the trial. (For example, a student may be struggling with a sinful habit. To encourage him, other students may put an arm around him; pray for him; spend some time with him after church; share from the Word, etc.) The objective is to encourage the students both to recognize when a fellow

believer is going through a time of testing, and to respond in love toward that believer during his time of testing.

Ask the students to share ways in which our lives as believers can be testimonies to those around us, without our ever having opened our Bibles.

Christ, the Christian's Pattern

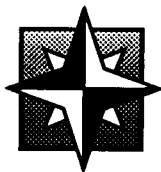
Volume 12

Lesson 37



Bible Reference

Philippians 2:1-18



Theme

Rejoicing in service.



Scripture Reading

Philippians 2:5-11

5 *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

6 *"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

7 *"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

8 *"And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

9 *"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

10 *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

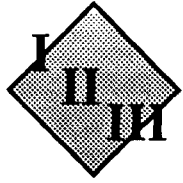
11 *"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*



Memory Verse

Philippians 2:12

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."



Outline

I. Meekness and Unity. (verses 1-4)

A. We are to gain encouragement through:

1. Consolation in Christ.
2. The comfort of His love.
3. The fellowship of the Spirit.
4. Tenderness and compassion.

B. We can then make our joy complete through:

1. Being like-minded.
2. Having the same love.
3. Being of one accord.
4. Doing nothing out of selfishness or conceit.
5. Being humble toward others.
6. Being interested in others.

II. Look to the Self-humbling Christ. (verses 5-11)

A. Our attitude should be like Christ's.

1. Though He was God, He did not try to use His position for gain.
2. He made Himself a servant.
3. He humbled Himself, and was obedient to death.

B. Because of His humble nature, God exalted Him.

1. To the highest position, and gave Him a Name above all names.

2. So that all of creation will bow before Him.
3. And all will confess Him as Lord.

III. The Outworking of Our Salvation. (verses 12-18)

A. While the Holy Spirit is sanctifying our inward man, we should be allowing our salvation to flow out of our lives, so as to have an effect on those around us.

1. This will allow God to work on us, according to His purpose and will.
2. We should do everything without complaining or arguing, in a spirit of unity.
3. We are to be blameless and pure.
4. We should be without fault and depravity.
5. We need to shine as lights in the world, as we hold out the Word of life.

B. As we are poured out as a sacrifice and for service, we should rejoice.

1. Our labor is not in vain.
2. We rejoice in one another's faith.



Spiritual Truths

- As Christians, we need to take on the nature of Christ, as a meek and humble servant.
- We must let God exalt us, and never exalt ourselves.

- Our relationship with other believers is reflective of our attitude toward Christ.



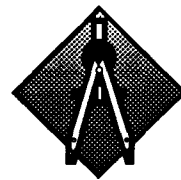
Lesson Material

Philippians 2:5 begins by saying, *"Let this mind be in you,"* The key word in this phrase is the word, "let." We must choose our mind set -- we must choose to take on the attitude of Jesus. And that attitude is one of a servant. Jesus set aside all of His eternal glory and attributes of Deity, in order to come to this earth and fulfill the Father's plan. The Bible says that He *"...made himself of no reputation,...."* (Philippians 1:7) Jesus did not come to fulfill His own agenda; and He did not concern Himself with His own reputation. Jesus did not defend Himself or His mission. He knew the plan of God for His life, and He did it. And He did it with a servant's attitude -- a servant first to God, and then to the very ones whom He came to redeem: *"Even as the Son of man came [not to be ministered] unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."* (Matthew 20:28)

God desires that we as believers take on this mind set of Christ in our relationships with other believers. Our comfort and strength come from knowing Him and His love, from the indwelling Holy Spirit, and from the unity of faith with our fellow believers. However, the attitudes of Christ do not come to us naturally. They are outworkings of His Spirit within us. In the natural, we tend to be selfish and self-serving, only caring for others when we are sure that our own needs are met. But this is not the nature of Jesus Christ. We

must continually allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, in order to produce Christian character in us. Whenever we find ourselves preoccupied with ourselves and our own needs (for whatever reason), we need to stop and assess our Christian walk. God wants our vision to be outward -- toward other believers and also non-believers -- and not inward. When we become preoccupied with self, we fail to serve others, and we fail to serve God. When each member of the body of Christ looks to the needs of others, the needs of all are met.

Only as we lose our lives, are we able to save them. (Matthew 10:39) Only as we humble ourselves, are we able to be exalted. (1 Peter 5:6) It is the opposite of worldly thinking. This is because we are no longer of this world; we have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) It is our responsibility to allow the Holy Spirit to change our lives, so that our walk reflects the new man within. Anything that God asks of us in sacrifice is not in vain. Our labor will produce fruit; and God will be glorified in our lives. We always have reason to rejoice -- in Christ, and in the new thing that He is doing in us.



Methods

Ask the students how they can be lights in the midst of a dark and perverse world. Darken the room; and then, using a flashlight or lighted candle, illustrate how even a small light pervades the darkness. Hold the candle or flashlight up high, to illustrate how the darkness is dissipated

when the light is not hidden. Notice that darkness is always conquered by the light.

Read the account of Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet from John 13:4-17. How

does this illustrate the servant's attitude of Jesus? What was His challenge to His disciples? What was His promise? (See verse 17: *"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."*)

Christ, the Object of Our Expectation

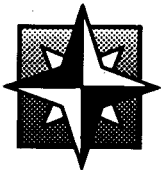
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Lesson 38



Bible Reference

Philippians 3



Theme

Are we wholly devoted to Jesus Christ?



Scripture Reading

Philippians 3:7-10, 13-14

7 "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 "Yea doubtless, and I count all things {but} loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all

things, and do count them {but} dung, that I may win Christ,

9 "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

13 "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but {this} one thing {I do}, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

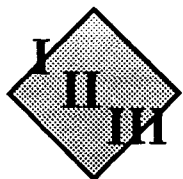


Memory Verse

Philippians 3:13-14

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but {this} one thing {I do}, forgetting those things which are behind,

and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."



Outline

I. Eight Words to Determine Our Devotion to Jesus Christ.

A. Rejoice. (verses 1-3a)

1. Rejoice in the Lord.
2. Rejoice in that we are the chosen elect.
3. Rejoice that we are not a part of the world.

B. Worship. (verses 3b-4)

1. We worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)
2. We glory in Christ Jesus, and give glory to Him.
3. We have no confidence in anything besides Jesus.

C. Confidence. (verses 3-6)

1. We have no confidence in the flesh.
2. We have no confidence in our own works.
3. Our confidence is in Christ and His work.

D. Righteousness. (verses 7-9)

1. In and of ourselves, we cannot be righteous. (Isaiah 64:6)

2. We lay aside our own efforts, and strive for the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ.
3. Our righteousness does not come from our vain attempts at keeping the law, but through our faith in Christ.

E. Faith. (verse 9b)

1. Our faith is established in Christ.
2. Our faith is not dependent upon what someone else says or does.
3. Our faith is built through our desire to follow Christ -- to be more like Christ, and to serve Christ.
4. Our faith comes from God, Who provides our righteousness.

F. Fellowship. (verses 10-11)

1. Knowing Jesus in the fellowship of His sufferings.
2. Knowing Him in the power of His resurrection.
3. If we suffer with Him, we will reign with Him. (2 Timothy 2:12)

G. Desire. (verses 12-14)

1. Pressing on, as for a prize.
2. Setting the spiritual goal of becoming more Christ-like, regardless of the cost.
3. Forgetting the things which are behind.

H. Walk. (verses 17-19)

1. Mature believers are to be examples for those younger in the faith.
2. Be careful who you are watching, so that you are not distracted.
3. Not failing of the grace of God.

II. What Is Our Expectation? (verses 20-21)

- A. Our citizenship.
- B. Our transformation.



Spiritual Truths

- The Christian life is like a race. We must strive toward the goal of being Christ-like.
- Seeking after worldly and fleshly desires hinders our spiritual walk.
- We must strive to keep Christ the Center of our faith, desires and expectations.



Lesson Material

Jesus Christ is the "One and Only" of the Christian. He is the Cause of our rejoicing; the Object of our worship; the Source of our confidence; the Provider of our righteousness; the Establisher of our faith; the Focus of our fellowship; the Desire of our hearts; and the Goal of our spiritual walk.

Nothing of value in our spiritual walk comes from our own fleshly efforts. This is true of everything from our very salvation to our works. The more our lives are

hidden in Christ (Colossians 3:3), the more alive we actually become. The things of this world lose their hold and influence on us; and we are able to more fully focus on the goal of our Christian walk -- Jesus Christ Himself. We do not merely desire to be in heaven with Jesus. We desire to be changed into His likeness and freed from the old nature, which is at enmity with Him. We are now strangers and aliens in this world. (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11) Our citizenship has changed. Our goals have changed. We are changed; and we are being changed, from "glory to glory." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

We must strive to maintain our focus on the Lord and on things eternal. We must set our affections on the things above. (Colossians 3:2) The writer of Hebrews likens this struggle to running a race. We must not let anything hinder that race. Hebrews 12:1 says: *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside [every weight], and the sin which doth so easily beset {us}, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."*

From this verse, we learn of two things which hinder our race. First, it is "every weight." A weight is anything that holds back our spiritual walk. The Holy Spirit has written His laws of personal conviction on each of our hearts. Our disobedience to these laws causes hindrances, or weights, in our Christian walk. Secondly, the "sin that easily besets us" needs to be laid aside. Every believer is prone to certain sins. Some may be indulging in a habit; for others, it may be an attitude; and for others, it may be sins of omission -- of not being obedient in a specific area which the Holy Spirit has pointed out. We must choose to lay aside these weights. Our deliverance from sin and bondage has already been provided in

Jesus Christ: *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be [free indeed]."* (John 8:36) It is up to us to choose to appropriate the provision of freedom that has been given to us by the Son of God.

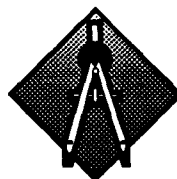
God does not want us to be bogged down, or held back, in our Christian walk. Paul exhorts us to *"forget those things which are behind."* (Philippians 3:13) What are *"those things?"* They are our past sins, our past failures, and even our past victories.

When we confess our sin and turn from it, we receive forgiveness from Jesus Christ; and we are cleansed from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) We need to stand on that promise, and not allow ourselves to be tied to a weight that even God has forgotten. (Isaiah 38:17; 43:25; Hebrews 8:12) If God can forget it, then so can (and should) we. Our past sins are to have no more power or hold on us.

So also it is with our past failures. For many reasons, we have all failed God. Perhaps we had tried sincerely and in faith to attempt something for God; and yet, we have failed. Perhaps we have been disappointed, when we thought that God was going to answer a prayer or meet a specific need. Perhaps we have even failed God and turned from Him for a season. If we have genuinely repented before God, God says, *"Forget it!"* Get up, dust yourself off, and try again, for God's sake as well as your own. Ask for God's forgiveness, and move on.

One other thing that we need to forget is our past victories. Yesterday's victories do not ensure today's battles. We tend to *"rest on our laurels"* after a great victory is won, and *"stall out"* in our spiritual walk. One victory prepares us for the next battle. We will have plenty of time for reminiscing in heaven. Right now, we have a goal to reach. We are not there, yet.

Our attitude in running the race is four-fold, as found in Philippians 3:13 -- 1.) We do not consider ourselves as having arrived yet; 2.) We forget the things which are behind us; 3.) We reach forward to the things ahead; and 4.) We press on toward the prize. Jesus Christ is our Focus, our Model and our great Reward.



Methods

Have the students discuss people they know who are setting a Christ-like example that they can follow, and also those who are not. Allow them to share how they can see Christ working in their own lives.

Ask the students to list several of their own personal goals; and then, assess these goals as a group, in light of eternal values.

Christ, the Christian's Strength

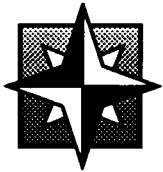
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Lesson 39



Bible Reference

Philippians 4:1-19



Theme

The peace and strength of God are available to every believer.



Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:6-9, 19

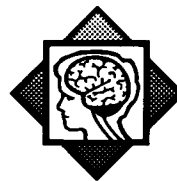
6 *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

7 *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

8 *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things {are} honest, whatsoever things {are} just, whatsoever things {are} pure, whatsoever things {are} lovely, whatsoever things {are} of good report; if {there be} any virtue, and if {there be} any praise, think on these things.*

9 *"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."*

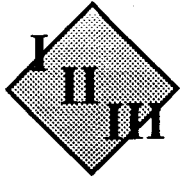
19 *"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*



Memory Verse

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."



Outline

I. The Secret of the Peace of God.

- A. Rejoice in the Lord. (verse 4)
- B. Let moderation be seen in your life. (verse 5)
- C. Do not worry about anything. (verse 6)
- D. Through prayer and with thanksgiving, let God know your requests. (verse 6)
- E. Then, the peace of God will guard your heart and mind. (verse 7)
 1. This peace overshadows all understanding.
 2. It is only available through Jesus Christ.

II. Guarding Our Minds.

- A. As believers, we are commanded to think on certain things. (verse 8)
 1. Things that are true.
 2. Things that are honest.
 3. Things that are just.
 4. Things that are pure.
 5. Things that are lovely.
 6. Things that are of good report.
 7. Things that are virtuous.
 8. Things that are praiseworthy.
- B. When we put these things into practice in our lives, the peace of God will be with us.

III. Contentment in Christ. (verses 10-19)

- A. Paul tells us that we need to be content in any circumstance, whether it be a time of want or a time of plenty.
- B. He had learned and experienced being able to do all things through Christ, Who gave him strength.
- C. He knew that God would meet all of his needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.



Spiritual Truths

- Our source of joy and reason for rejoicing is the Lord.
- We must actively guard our minds.
- God's peace is available to us, outside of our understanding and regardless of our circumstances.
- God will provide all of our needs.
- Contentment is a matter of faith, rather than a matter of material possessions.



Lesson Material

As Christians, the battlefield on which the war between the flesh and the Spirit is

waged is our minds. In this reading from Philippians, Paul gives believers some specific guidelines for guarding our minds and maintaining our peace.

First of all, we must realize that it is Jesus Himself Who is the Source of joy and the reason for our rejoicing. If we look to anything or anyone else for our joy, it will fall short, and our joy will wax and wane. The joy that God gives is not limited to mere human emotion. God's joy is a part of the fruit of the Spirit, which is a work of the Holy Spirit within us, as He produces the character of Jesus in our lives. The joy of Jesus was not dependent upon circumstances or anything earthly. His joy was in His relationship with and obedience to His Father. And as we are in Him, our source of joy can now be the same. We can always rejoice in Who God is; in the fact that we know Him; in what He has done for us; in the Gift of the Holy Spirit, etc.

Next, Paul exhorts believers to "*Let your moderation be known to all men....*" (verse 5) The Christian walk is to be a walk of consistency and stability -- a steady, upward climb. We are not to be given to extremes. Our lifestyle is to be one that glorifies the Lord, in all that we do.

We must always bear in mind that the Lord is coming soon. (verse 5) The coming of Jesus is not only our source of hope, but it is also motivation for us in our thinking, in our planning, in the decisions that we make, and in the behavior which we choose. When we keep in mind that Jesus is coming soon, we will keep our lives pure. (1 John 3:3) And we will not need to fret over wickedness in the world, because we know that one day soon, the King of Glory will make all things right.

The next step in maintaining our peace is our active fight against anxiety and worry. Everyone becomes overwhelmed from time to time over certain adversities and other distresses in our lives. But we can keep these things from robbing us of our peace, by giving them to the Lord in prayer. Notice that in verse 6, there are two aspects to our prayer in times of distress. First, our prayer is to include supplication. This means earnest prayer -- the kind that gets results. (James 5:16) We will not experience the peace of God while waiting for the answer to our prayer, if we have only prayed superficially and not really given our burden over to Him. Secondly, our prayer is to be coupled with thanksgiving. If we believe that God is Who He says He is, and if we believe that nothing is too difficult for Him, there should be no problem in us thanking Him. What do we thank Him for? We thank Him in all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18); and we thank Him for all things. (Ephesians 5:20) The Bible says that the steps of the righteous are ordered by the Lord. (Psalms 37:23) When we realize that God is really in control of our lives, and that His plans for us are good (Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:28-29), we can give thanks and we can rest in God's peace.

God's peace passes understanding. (verse 7) This means that God's peace is not dependent upon our circumstances, our need, or our ability to see the answer to our prayer. We can have peace in the midst of the trial, before the answer comes, regardless of whether the answer comes.

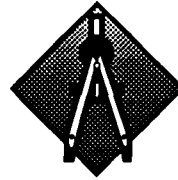
There is an active exercise that we can do to guard our minds. We can take responsibility for, and control of, our thought life. In order to keep our peace, we must not allow ourselves to be given over to thoughts of unbelief or sinfulness. We cannot stop a thought from occurring; but

we do not have to entertain it. Rather, we must actively fill our minds with thoughts that are honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. If what we are thinking does not meet the above criteria, we must reject those thoughts and replace them with proper thinking. In this way, we can preserve and maintain our peace.

We can also guard our peace by our faith in God as our Provider. (verses 10-19) Our ability to be content is not dependent upon our material possessions or financial future. Rather, our ability to be content is determined by our willingness to rest in the hands of the One Who made us and Who has promised to meet our needs. If we have been obedient with what God has given us, we can rest in the assurance of His future provision. (verse 19)

It is Christ Who gives us strength. (verse 13) As we do our part to guard our

minds and maintain our peace, all of the resources of heaven are available to us. We can surely rejoice in the Lord.



Methods

Have each student write down on paper a list of things for which they have had to rely on God; and have them share with the other students. Then, have them write down things for which they are now waiting on God.

Encourage the students to pray for one another and to return with testimonies of God's provision.

Have group prayer for those who are in need of God's peace.

Grace

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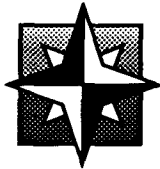
Bible Reference

Galatians 1

7 "Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 "As we said before, so say I now again, If any {man} preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."



Theme

Our calling by the grace of God.



Memory Verse

Galatians 1:15-16

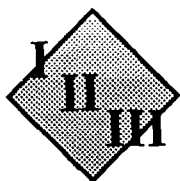
"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:"



Scripture Reading

Galatians 1:6-9

6 "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:



Outline

I. We Are Not Sent From or By Men. (verses 1-5)

- A. We are sent with a message by God the Father.
- B. And by Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, to save us from this evil world and for the glory of God.

II. Staying True to the Gospel. (verses 6-9)

- A. The test of the gospel of Christ is grace.
- B. Any gospel that excludes grace, or mingles grace with the law as a means of justification or sanctification, is a different gospel.
- C. Anyone who perverts the true gospel of Jesus Christ is accursed.

III. Our Calling Is from God Alone.

- A. The gospel that we preach does not come from man. On the contrary, it is quite the opposite of man and his worldly ways.
- B. Our message should be one of revelation from God. Remember, God did not call you to be an imitator, but rather to have you share how He has touched your life and changed you through His saving grace.

- C. God has set you apart from birth and has called you by grace, for a time such as this. He did this, because it was pleasing to Him to have you as a part of His kingdom.

IV. What Is Grace?

- A. Grace is unmerited favor from God.
 - 1. Mercy is God not giving us what we deserve.
 - 2. Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve.
- B. The grace of God has its limitations for those who refuse to obey the gospel of Christ. Nowhere in the Word does it teach that God's grace is unconditional.
- C. God provides His grace to believers, as long as they walk in the light and remain true to the gospel. (1 John 1:6-7)
- D. Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and the things of the world, while we live righteously.
- E. The grace of God is what saved the world and brought salvation through repentance. It allows us to overcome sin. It also imparts great blessings and faith as we live our lives, if we will allow it.
- F. The grace of God is our means of justification. It makes us partakers of Christ and the elect of God, while it also calls us to preach and teach the gospel of Christ boldly.
- G. God's grace gives us strength, power, endurance, stability, hope and help in the time of need.

H. The grace of God is what changed our lives. Because of God's grace, we have new life.



Spiritual Truths

- Grace is God's unmerited favor.
- We must not take the grace of God for granted.
- The grace of God is available for our help in striving to live a productive Christian life, as long as we walk in the truth of the gospel.
- When we stop relying on the truth, we take ourselves out from under God's protecting grace and all of its benefits.



Lesson Material

Titus 3:5 says, "[Not by works of righteousness] which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." We started our Christian walk by the grace of God; and we continue on in this walk by His grace.

Religion is man's attempt to reach God, or, at least, to achieve righteousness by his own works. Christianity is not a religion. Christianity is a relationship with God. This relationship with God originates with

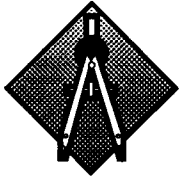
God's provision (Jesus Christ) and is sustained by God's grace. Our salvation is provided for us by the shed blood of the risen Christ; and it has nothing to do with our dead works or our self-justification. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: {it is} the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Paul's letter to the Galatians was written to address the problem of heretical teachers, who had confused the believers with perverse doctrine. (verse 7) These false teachers were attempting to bring the Galatian believers back under the bondage of the law. (Galatians 2:4) In so doing, they were making null and void the grace of God, by which the believers were saved; and they were causing the believers to rely upon the same dead works that were unable to save them, in the first place. Paul was very quick to refute the heresy of these false teachers, for their teaching was in direct conflict with the gospel, with the potential of damaging all evangelistic efforts.

The book of Galatians speaks much about God's grace. "Grace" can be defined as "unmerited favor," or "God's riches at Christ's expense." The grace by which we were saved is the same grace in which we walk and the same grace by which we look forward in faith to our eternal hope of heaven. The doctrine of the grace of God is fundamental to Christianity. Anything else is a perversion of the gospel -- "another gospel." (verses 8-9)

Paul also notes that his calling is by the grace of God. (Galatians 1:1, 10-24) Our calling refers not only to our salvation, but also to our placement into the body of Christ and our appointment to function in a specific way within the body. (1 Corinthians 12:13) We are new creations

in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17) What we are, what we do for God, and what we will become (1 John 3:2) are all according to the magnificent grace of God.



Methods

Have the students share experiences of when they were under a protected shelter, and what happened when they left that protection. This could be a physical shelter

(such as staying inside the house during a storm), or a figurative shelter (such as removing oneself out from under parental authority).

Use the analogy of getting ticketed for speeding. Note that speed limits are set to keep drivers in check; and when the speed limit is exceeded, the law mandates punishment by way of speeding tickets and fines. But the law does not produce good drivers. It can only attempt to keep bad drivers in check. Our own works may keep us righteous-appearing, but only God's grace can make us new creatures, who are truly righteous.

Justification

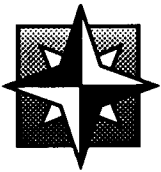
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Bible References

Galatians 2:16-3:9



Theme

Justification by faith.



Scripture Reading

Galatians 2:16-21

16 "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, {is} therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19 "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

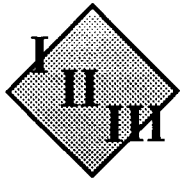
21 "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness {come} by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."



Memory Verse

Galatians 2:20

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."



Outline

I. Jew and Gentile Alike Must Be Justified by Faith, Without the Law. (Galatians 2:15-16)

- A. No man is justified by the works of the law.
- B. By observing the law, no man is justified.
- C. Our justification comes through our faith in Christ Jesus.

II. The Law Has No Claim on Those Who Are in Christ. (Galatians 2:19-20)

- A. When Christ died on the cross in our place, He died to the old law; and therefore, we died to the old law, also.
- B. When He rose from the dead, we rose with Him, so that we could live unto God.
- C. Christ's death showed that there was no salvation available through the law.
- D. The life we now live is really His life living through us; and it is based totally on our faith in Christ, Who loved us and made it possible to live by faith.

III. Christ's Death Was for Nothing, If We Can Be Justified by the Law. (Galatians 2:21)

- A. This would frustrate or void the grace of God.
- B. Christ's death and our faith in him would amount to nothing.
- C. But because righteousness, justification and salvation come only by Christ's death, the law is useless as a way of salvation.

IV. The Holy Spirit Comes Only by Faith. (Galatians 3:1-5)

- A. We must be careful not to allow someone to lure us away from the truth with smooth talk.
- B. We do not receive the indwelling Holy Spirit through the law, but through faith.
- C. The law cannot make us perfect in the flesh, as can the Holy Spirit.
- D. If we return to the law, then the work that Christ has done in us was in vain.
- E. The gifts of the Spirit are not imparted by the law, but by the Holy Spirit, through faith.

V. Even Before Christ, Men Were Justified by Faith, and Not by the Keeping of the Law. (Galatians 3:6-9)

- A. Abraham believed God; and he was justified by his faith.

B. We are the children of Abraham, by faith; and therefore, we have a right to be justified by that same faith and belief in God.



Spiritual Truths

- Salvation by grace is for all people, whether Jew or gentile.
- We are justified by faith, and not by the law.
- We live our life of faith by the faith of the One Who saved us -- Jesus Christ.



Lesson Material

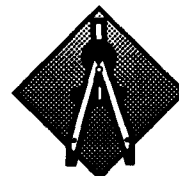
As we continue in our study of the book of Galatians, we will begin to study the doctrine of justification. To "justify" means to be made "just as if I had never sinned." Our justification before God can only come from God Himself; and it has nothing to do with our own dead works or self-righteousness. Sinful man cannot justify himself before a holy God.

God justifies us because of our faith in Jesus Christ. (Romans 3:26) It is this same faith by which we are saved, and by which we receive the Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Even in Old Testament times, men

of God were justified by faith, and not by the keeping of the law. *"For what saith the scripture? [Abraham believed God], and it was counted unto him for righteousness."* (Romans 4:3)

Self-justification is the result of the mind set of the natural, unregenerate man. Be we have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Now, having "begun in the Spirit," Paul admonishes us to continue in the Spirit. (Galatians 3:3) The key verse to Galatians chapter three is verse 11: *"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, {it is} evident: for, The just shall live by faith."*

We will continue to examine the life of faith, as we study further the book of Galatians.



Methods

Have the students share other Old Testament saints, who would have been justified by their faith in God. (Use Hebrews chapter 11 for reference.)

Show the students the importance of the life of faith. If we seek to maintain our righteousness by our own works, then we will have nowhere to go for cleansing from sin. We cannot justify ourselves, and we cannot cleanse ourselves. But we are not required to walk the Christian walk in our own strength. Our faith in Christ will avail us of all that we need, in order to live a successful, fruitful Christian life.

The Purpose of the Law

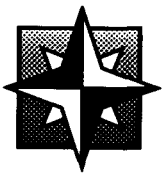
Volume 12

Lesson 42



Bible Reference

Galatians 3:10-4:3



Theme

The law, which was fulfilled in Christ, was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.



Scripture Reading

Galatians 3:21-27

21 "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of

Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster (to bring us) unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

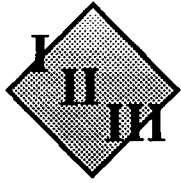
27 "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."



Memory Verse

Galatians 3:28

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."



Outline

I. Anyone Who Follows the Law Is Under the Curse of the Law. (Galatians 3:10-12)

- A. If someone is practicing the law, then all things of the law must be practiced.
- B. This covers not just the Ten Commandments, but every feast, ritual, sacrifice and all other laws written in the book of the law. (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
- C. However, no man is justified by the law, but only by faith; and if he observes the law, he must live in the law.

II. Because Christ Bore the Curse of the Law for Us, We Are Able to Receive Two Great Blessings. (Galatians 3:13-14)

- A. When Christ died on the cross, He bought us back from the curse of the law.
- B. We are no longer in bondage to it -- a slave to it -- or subject to its penalty (death).
- C. Because of His atoning act, we can now partake in the blessing of Abraham's covenant with God; and we can also receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith.

III. The True Reason for Which the Law Was Given. (Galatians 3:19-20)

- A. The law was given, until the seed of Genesis 3:15 was manifested.
- B. It was to make man accountable for his transgressions.
- C. The mediator of the law, or the first covenant, was Moses; the Mediator of the second covenant, grace, was Jesus Christ.
- D. The law was given to point us to Jesus Christ.

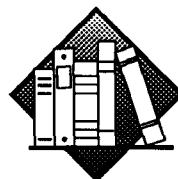
IV. The Law Is Not Against the Promises of God. (Galatians 3:21-25)

- A. If the law could have brought righteousness and life, then justification could have come through the law.
- B. The law was used as a teacher, in order to teach us that we needed more than the law to justify us.
- C. The Word says that the whole world is a prisoner to sin.
- D. The law helped to fulfill the promise of justification by faith, in that it showed us that we needed Jesus Christ.
- E. And because faith came, we no longer need the teacher (the law).

V. Faith Makes Us Heirs in God's Family. (Galatians 3:26-4:3)

- A. Our faith in Christ makes us children of God.
- B. Our faith in Christ baptizes us into the body of Christ.
- C. This baptism also causes us to put on Christ, which means that we assume His character and righteousness. To profess Christ means that we take on the life and works of Christ, and follow in His steps.
- D. All bridges that divide mankind are destroyed when we know Christ. There is no male/female, bond/free, Jew/Gentile.
- E. Our unity as Christians is centered in Jesus Christ.
- F. We now are heirs to the promise of Abraham, and no longer children under bondage to the principles of the law and the world's system.

- Christ came and bore the curse of the law; and He set believers free from its condemnation, dominion, and penalty.
- We are now under grace and the new law of liberty in Christ.



Lesson Material

In this portion of the book of Galatians, we learn what the purpose of the law was. The term "law" refers to the Mosaic law, which includes the Pentateuch (Genesis, Leviticus, Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Of course, the Ten Commandments are included as part of the law.

God gave the law for two reasons. First, the law clearly showed man's inability to live in perfect righteousness and holiness. It was like a mirror for man to look into and discover his fallen, sinful nature. Secondly, Paul called the law a "schoolmaster" to bring us to Christ. (Galatians 3:25) Because of the law, man was able to see the coming Redeemer, Who would fulfill the demands of the law and therefore be qualified to be the Justifier of all who receive salvation by grace through faith. The law was not sinful; but man is inherently sinful.

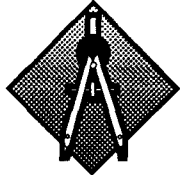
Jesus Christ came to do what the law could not do -- justify fallen mankind before a holy God. He became the Mediator between God and man. (1 Timothy 2:5) Jesus Himself stated that He came to fulfill the law. (Matthew 5:17) Now, in Jesus, there is no longer Jew or gentile, bond or slave, or male or female. We have an



Spiritual Truths

- The law is in contrast with grace: Under grace, God imputes His righteousness, while under the law, He mandated righteousness.
- The law, in itself, is holy, just, good and spiritual, because it came from God.
- The law showed that the whole world was sinful.

equal standing before God by faith, as God's children; and our unity is centered in the Person of Jesus Christ.



Methods

Ask the students to list as many biblical types of Jesus from the law as they can

find. (Examples: The Passover lamb, the brazen serpent, the tabernacle, etc.) This will illustrate how the law was to point men to Christ.

Bring in a copy of a last will and testament; and show the students how we are now heirs to the last will and testament of God the Father, through Christ Jesus. All that is His, is now ours.

Now and Then

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Lesson 43



Bible Reference

Galatians 4:4-5:15

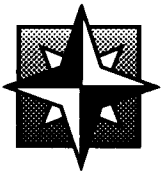
9 "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

10 "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

11 "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

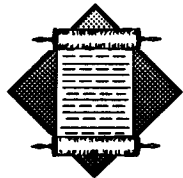
13 "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 "And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, {even} as Christ Jesus."



Theme

Continuing on in the faith.



Scripture Reading

Galatians 4:8-11, 13-14

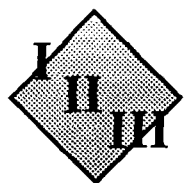
8 "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.



Memory Verse

Galatians 5:1

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."



Outline

I. We Are Now Even More Than Heirs. We Are Sons and Daughters of God. (Galatians 4:4-7)

- A. God had preordained the time when Jesus Christ would be born under the law.
- B. Because He was able to fulfill all the law as a Man, He was able to redeem the world, that we might become sons and daughters of God.
- C. To show us that we are truly His sons and daughters, God sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts, so that we can say, "Abba, Father."
- D. Because we are now children of God, we are heirs of God, and heirs to all that is His.

II. Falling Back into Our Old Ways Is Like Going Back to the First Grade Again. (Galatians 4:8-16)

- A. At one time, we did not know the benefits of knowing God. We were slaves to the world and its law.
- B. We then came to know God; and we were even known by God.
- C. After knowing and enjoying the blessings of God in our lives, how could we ever go back to the weak, elementary principles of the law and its bondage?

- D. When we turn from joyous truth back to a life of sin and bondage, we lose our joy. Just observe someone who is backslidden; and see how much joy they really have.

III. Beware of Those Who Would Cause You to Fall Away. (Galatians 4:17-18)

- A. Sin and darkness do not like to be alone. They always want to take someone else down with them.
- B. We need to be very careful about whom we allow to affect our lives. More importantly, we need to be the ones who do the affecting for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

IV. The Law and Grace Cannot Exist Together. (Galatians 4:21-5:1)

- A. Abraham had two sons. One was born of a slave girl and one of his wife. (Genesis 16:15; 21:1-8)
- B. The one born of the slave girl was conceived by the flesh, while the one born of his wife was by the promise.
- C. These two births represent the two covenants -- the law and grace.
- D. As it was then, and is still true today, the son of the slave girl torments the son of promise.
- E. Just as Abraham did, we must cast out the slave girl and her son, because they will not be heirs with the son of the promise.

- F. Because of this, we are also children of the promise.
- G. Stand firm in the freedom that Christ has made available to us; and do not return to the bondage of sin.



Spiritual Truths

- When we do not stay true to Christ's Word and put into practice His teachings, we open ourselves up to falling back into the sinful life that we once led.
- We are God's children and God's heirs.
- We can only remain free of bondage, as we stand fast in the liberty that we have in Christ.

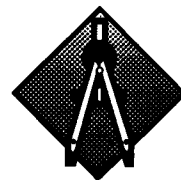


Lesson Material

In Christ, we have become children of God and heirs of God. In fact, the Bible even calls us "joint-heirs" with Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:17) Since the Father has placed all things under Jesus' feet (Ephesians 1:22), then how great is our inheritance! As the Bible says, *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* (1 Corinthians 2:9)

With all of this in mind, why would we settle for anything less? And yet, that is exactly what was happening to the believers in Galatia. They were being deceived by false teachers into going back into their former ways of dead religion and fleshly works. They were trading the life of promise and freedom (Isaac) for the life of fleshliness and bondage (Ishmael). As their spiritual father, Paul entreated the Galatians to stand fast in their faith and remember all that they had and were, as a result of the grace of God in their lives.

Our liberty in Christ is just that -- the grace of God working in our lives, which has set us free from the bondage of sin and the law. Jesus said, *"If the Son therefore shall make you [free], ye shall be [free] indeed."* (John 8:36) Our liberty in Christ does not mean that we can walk the walk of faith haphazardly or without regard for others. We must not use liberty as an occasion for fleshliness. (Galatians 5:13) Even as Christ has fulfilled the law, in Him, we walk in the fulfillment of the law, when we walk in love. (Galatians 5:14)



Methods

Refer back to Genesis 16:15 and Genesis 21:1-8. Read the stories of Ishmael and Isaac; and, using the account of Galatians 4:22-31, apply the truths of law versus grace.

Ask the students what liberty in Christ means. Explain that the determining factor in exercising our liberties is found in Galatians 5:14: "For all the law is fulfilled

in one word, {even} in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

How might this challenge the way in which we exercise our liberty?

Encourage the students to examine their own hearts, in order to determine

whether they have slipped into an attitude of dead works concerning their relationship with the Lord (e.g., "I am right with God, because I attend church regularly, etc.).

Walk in the Spirit

Volume 12

Lesson 44



Bible Reference

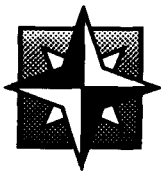
Galatians 5:2-6:18



Memory Verse

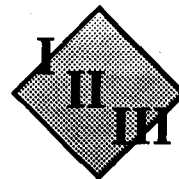
Galatians 6:14

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."



Theme

Living a spiritual life and overcoming the flesh.



Outline



Scripture Reading

Galatians 5:16-18

16 *"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

17 *"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

18 *"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."*

I. Justification by the Law Makes Grace of No Effect. (Galatians 5:2-6)

- A. If we insist on following the law, we take on the whole responsibility of the law.
- B. We then seek to find our justification through the law, instead of through faith in Christ.
- C. If we do this, then faith will be of no benefit to us.
- D. We then must select either the old covenant or the new covenant.

- E. If we select the old covenant, then we have fallen from grace.
- F. If we select the new covenant, we are only obligated to follow the laws and commandments of the new covenant.
- G. For us to continue in the righteousness of grace by faith, we must continue to live and walk in the Spirit, be patient in hope, stay in Christ, and continue in faith.

II. We Need to Forget About the Law and Stay in Christ and Grace. (Galatians 5:7-15)

- A. We must realize that when indecision comes (about obeying the truth), it does not come from Jesus Christ, but from the enemy.
- B. It is our responsibility to live our lives fully in Christ, for if we allow a little sin or false doctrine to creep in, it can corrupt our whole life and conduct.
- C. We have been called to complete freedom from all the law.
- D. However, we should not allow this freedom to be an instrument to feed and satisfy the flesh, because we have an obligation to live a righteous life.

III. A Secret to Victory Over Sin. (Galatians 5:16-26)

- A. We must always walk in the Spirit, and thus not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- B. We must be led by the Spirit, and no longer be under the law.
- C. We must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. (verse 24)

1. Adultery.
2. Fornication.
3. Uncleanliness.
4. Lasciviousness.
5. Idolatry.
6. Witchcraft (including drugs).
7. Hatred.
8. Variance (discord).
9. Emulations (jealousy).
10. Wrath.
11. Strife (factions).
12. Seditions (Dissension).
13. Heresies.
14. Envy.
15. Murder.
16. Drunkenness.
17. Revellings (partying).

- D. Those who practice these things and such have no place in the kingdom of God.
- E. We must also live in the Spirit. (verse 25)
- F. We must not desire vain glory, provoke one another, or envy one another. (verse 26)
- G. We must manifest a spiritual life that is full of the fruit of the Spirit.
 1. Love.
 2. Joy.
 3. Peace.
 4. Longsuffering.
 5. Gentleness.
 6. Goodness.
 7. Faith.
 8. Meekness.
 9. Self-control.
- H. There is no law that can condemn someone who is manifesting the fruit of the Spirit. The law can only condemn sin.

IV. Proofs of a Spiritual Life. (Galatians 6:1-6)

- A. We need to have a spirit of restoration.
- B. When a brother or sister has fallen into temptation, we need to reach out to them in love and help them get back into their place of grace in Christ.
- C. When doing this, we want to make sure that we do not look down our noses at them, for we could someday suffer the same fate.
- D. We must never browbeat a fallen brother or sister, but show Christ's love and mercy and thus fulfill the law of Christ.
- E. If we look upon a brother or sister who has fallen with an attitude of superiority, bigotry, conceit or intolerance, then we are only deceiving ourselves.
- F. Instead, we should test our own attitudes and conduct against the standard of Christ, and allow Him to show us just what we have to brag about.
- G. Every one of us must learn to bear our own burdens, and yet be willing to share the burdens of others. In doing this, it works two great principles in our lives.
 - 1. First, in bearing our own burdens, we can learn to trust God.
 - 2. Secondly, by helping bear others' burdens, we will quickly learn how to be more like Christ in our attitudes and deeds.
- H. We also need to learn how to teach and communicate the lessons we have

learned to other brothers and sisters. These are not teaching formulas, but rather accounts of how the grace of God helped us in times of trouble. This is being a burden-bearer for someone who may be going through the same thing.

V. Living Under the Law and Living Under Grace Lead to Different Destinations. (Galatians 6:7-11)

- A. We need to realize that God will not be mocked, when it comes to us either fulfilling the law or living in grace.
 - 1. He has already stated in His Word the principle of sowing and reaping.
 - 2. This principle is one that will never change and will never fail.
- B. As surely as we are commanded to reproduce after our own kind, and as surely as harvest follows sowing, every man will reap what he sows and will solely bear the responsibility for his own destiny.
- C. In the case of law and grace, if we sow to the law, we will reap corruption; and that will lead to eternal damnation and death. If, however, we sow to grace, we will reap a life of the Spirit, and life everlasting.
- D. We must not lose faith, when we are sharing Christ and reaching out to a lost world that does not seem to understand what we are trying to do for them. We will eventually reap what we have sown, if we do not give up.
- E. So, whenever we have the opportunity, we need to do good and allow all men to see Christ in our lives.

We must do good especially to other believers, that we might be a source of strength to them.

VI. Why No Man Should Strive to Keep the Law. (Galatians 6:14-16)

- A. Many people will try the things of this world, in order to fill the Christ-shaped void that is in their lives. These things are empty and worthless, and they should have no place in the life of anyone, especially a believer.
- B. As believers, these things need to be crucified to us through Christ Jesus; and we should be crucified to them, through Christ Jesus.
- C. The only life that will avail anything is a new life -- a new creation in Christ Jesus.
- D. If we want the peace and mercy of God to rest upon us, we must realize that we need to walk a life totally in the redemptive grace of God, apart from all other things.

- We must also take on the servant's character of Jesus Christ, by becoming burden-bearers and restorers to those brothers and sisters who are struggling or have fallen.



Lesson Material

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."
(Galatians 6:15)

In God's eyes, it does not matter what our social status is in this life; it does not matter whether we are rich or poor, male or female; it does not matter whether we are religious or not; and it even does not matter whether we appear righteous or not. In God's eyes, the only thing that matters is this -- are we new creatures in Christ Jesus, or still the "old man?" God is not trying to clean up our old, fallen nature; but rather, He is interested in totally changing lives through the new birth. (John 3)

After we are born again, there begins a war within, between our old, fleshly nature and our new, Spirit nature. Paul himself struggled with this conflict, as seen in Romans chapter 7.

The determining factor in this war between flesh and Spirit is our will. It is up to us whether we choose to walk in the Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to change and transform us into Christ's image, or whether we choose to disregard the Holy Spirit's work in our lives and fall back into fleshliness. The Christian walk is an



Spiritual Truths

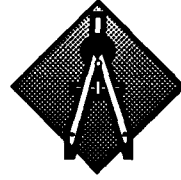
- In order for us to live a life that is pleasing to God, we must walk in the Spirit, and not the flesh.
- We need to be aware that it is only the grace of God that allows us to be partakers in His kingdom.

uphill climb. We cannot stand still. Either we are pressing upward, or we are falling backward. The only way to avoid falling back into our old, fleshly ways is to walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16)

Our relationship with God is horizontal, as well as vertical. The natural outworking of our walk in the Spirit is the love that we have one for another. (Galatians 5:13-14) The apostle John said that if we say that we love God, but hate our brother, we are lying. (1 John 4:20) Our love for one another is expressed in the way in which we treat each other. We will express the love of Christ working in us by bearing one another's burdens, serving one another, and taking care of the needs of those who are in the "household of faith." (Galatians 6:10)

The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is an ongoing process, and not an occasional event. As we continue to depend upon Him for grace, justification and sanctification, He will continue to make us more and more like Jesus. That is what the fruit of the Spirit is -- the

character of Jesus Christ, produced in us by the Holy Spirit.



Methods

Have the students list ways in which they have tried to use their good works to justify themselves before God.

Ask the students to write down a list of brothers and sisters they know who are struggling, and for whom they could be burden-bearers.

List on the blackboard the nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. (Notice that it is only one fruit.) Ask the students to recall incidents in Jesus' life which showed each aspect of the fruit of the Spirit.

Have prayer with the students; and challenge them to allow the Holy Spirit to make them more Christ-like.

Our Right Standing Before God

Volume 12

Lesson 45



Bible Reference

Romans 5:1-9

1 Corinthians 6:11

2 *"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

3 *"And not only {so}, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*

4 *"And patience, experience; and experience, hope:*

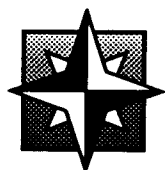
5 *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

6 *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

7 *"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

8 *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

9 *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*



Theme

Because Jesus Christ has justified us, we are in right standing before God.



Scripture Reading

Romans 5:1-9

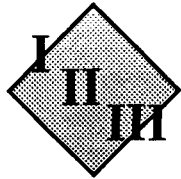
1 *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*



Memory Verse

Romans 5:8-9

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."



Outline

- I. Our Justification, As Believers, Is Determined by the Following:**
- A. God presented Jesus as a sacrifice, in order to demonstrate His justice to those who have faith in Christ. (Romans 3:26)
 - B. Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins, and then resurrected for our justification. (Romans 4:25)
 - C. We are justified in the Name of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:11)
 - D. We are justified by God's grace through our faith in His redemption. (Romans 3:24)
 - E. We have hope for eternity, because we are justified by His grace. (Titus 3:7)
- II. Justification by Faith Also Brings Other Benefits. (Romans 5:1-9)**
- A. It results in peace with God. (verse 1)
 - B. It gives us access to God's grace. (verse 2)
 - C. It allows us to continue to stand in grace. (verse 2)
 - D. Justification brings about joy and hope. (verse 2)
 - E. We can rejoice, even in the midst of tribulation and testing. (verses 3-5)
 - F. Justification allows the love of God to dwell in our hearts. (verses 5-8)
 - G. We were given the blessing of the Holy Spirit, because of justification. (verse 5)
 - H. Since we are justified by His blood, we are also saved from the penalty of sin and the wrath of God. (verse 9)
 - I. Justification clears our conscience from sin. (1 Corinthians 4:4-5)
 - J. Justification is dependent upon the condition of our hearts. (Matthew 12:37)
- F. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, we are justified from everything that the law could not justify. (Acts 13:39)
 - G. Our repentant hearts determine our justification before God. (Luke 18:14)
 - H. Obedience to God, His calling, and His Word brings justification. (Romans 5:18)

- K. Justification sets us free from the curse of the law. (Acts 13:39)
- L. God uses justification to pardon sin. (Romans 3:20-28)

III. How Do We Know that We Are Justified?

- A. When we are washed by Christ's blood and sanctified through Him, and made a new creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)
- B. When we repent of our sins. (Luke 18:13-14)
- C. When we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and His act of redemption. (Romans 3:24-31)
- D. When we respond to God's call and plan for our lives. (Romans 8:30)



Spiritual Truths

- The basis for justification is God's desire to restore fellowship with man, which was broken by Adam in the Garden of Eden.
- Christ's death on the cross was the vehicle that God used to make it possible to have that fellowship restored.
- Our ability to now fellowship with God through our faith in Jesus Christ is proof of our justification; and our total reconciliation to God is the result of His justification.



Lesson Material

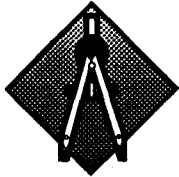
The biblical doctrine of justification is foundational to the Christian faith. The purpose of this lesson is to study, in depth, our justification in Jesus Christ. We see from scripture the involvement of the Triune God in our justification: The Father is the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus (Romans 3:26); Jesus was raised from the dead unto our justification (Romans 4:25); and the Holy Spirit is the Agent of our justification. (1 Corinthians 6:11) To be "justified" means to be made "just as if I had never sinned." Because of the justification which God has provided, we are in right standing before God.

The doctrine of justification is linked to the doctrine of redemption (Romans 3:24); the doctrine of grace (Titus 3:7); the doctrine of faith (Acts 13:39); the doctrine of repentance (Luke 18:14); and the doctrine of righteousness. (Romans 5:18) It is evident that the doctrine of justification is very important; and so, we will examine some of the results of (and benefits of) our justification, from Romans 5:1-9.

Because of justification, we have peace with God; we are no longer enemies of God. We have access to God, and continue in our right standing before Him. We have joy and hope; and we have the wonderful Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Because of justification, we have been delivered from the wrath of God.

There are other benefits to our justification, also. We have been set free from the law. (Acts 13:39) And we have been pardoned by God. (Romans 3:20-28)

Our God is holy and just. He is also our Justifier. (Romans 3:26) With all of this in mind, we can rejoice and remember the words of the apostle Paul: *"Who shall lay any thing [to the charge of] God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth."* (Romans 8:33)



Methods

On the blackboard, list the benefits of justification, as you teach. Ask the students to define the terms used, in order

to make sure that they understand biblical terminology.

Use the analogy of a country club. A member who has paid his dues and has followed the bylaws of the group is referred to as a member "in good standing." Draw the parallel between this and our right standing before God. Who has paid our dues? Who has satisfied the law, that we might be in right standing before God?

Not Guilty

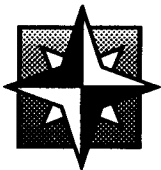
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Lesson 46



Bible References

Romans 5-6



Theme

As we are condemned in Adam, so also we can be justified in Jesus Christ.



Scripture Reading

Romans 5:12-21

12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 "(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 "But not as the offence, so also (is) the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, (which is) by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 "And not as (it was) by one that sinned, (so is) the gift: for the judgment (was) by one to condemnation, but the free gift (is) of many offences unto justification.

17 "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 "Therefore as by the offence of one (judgment came) upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (the free gift came) upon all men unto justification of life.

19 "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

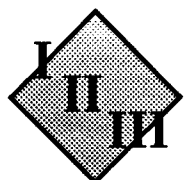
21 *"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."*



Memory Verse

Romans 5:18

"Therefore as by the offence of one {judgment came} upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one {the free gift came} upon all men unto justification of life."



Outline

I. Sin Entered the World through Adam. (Romans 5:12-21)

- A. Adam's disobedience.
- B. God's judgment.
- C. The sin nature passed on to all men.

II. Sin Was Conquered by Jesus Christ.

- A. Jesus Christ had no sin nature. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- B. Jesus was tempted like us, yet He did not sin. (Hebrews 2:18)
- C. Through Christ's obedience, He conquered the results of Adam's disobedience.

III. The Entrance of the Law.

- A. The law was God's standard.
- B. Man is accountable to God.
- C. Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the law. (Matthew 5:17)

IV. Before Sin Entered the World.

- A. Adam was created in a sinless state.
- B. Adam's sin separated him from God.
- C. Jesus -- the last Adam. (1 Corinthians 15:45)
- D. Grace reigns unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ.

V. Jesus' Sacrifice and Resurrection are the Basis of Our Justification.

- A. Jesus is our High Priest before God. (Hebrews 4:15)
- B. We are clothed in His righteousness. (Revelation 19:8)

- C. We are sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- D. We now have right standing before God.



Spiritual Truths

- The justification of man by God simply means that God washes, sanctifies and declares the believer no longer guilty.
- God cannot declare anyone not guilty, unless they are cleansed from sin and made holy through the blood of Jesus Christ.
- As in the first Adam, condemnation and death came upon all, so also in Jesus, the last Adam, justification and eternal life comes upon all who believe in Him.



Lesson Material

Sin entered the world through Adam. (Romans 5:12-21) Because of Adam's disobedience in the garden of Eden, sin nature entered the world. Along with that sin nature came the judgment that God had pronounced -- death. And so, death was passed upon all men, for all have sinned (born into a sinful world with a sin nature). (Romans 3:23)

Jesus Christ had no sin nature. (2 Corinthians 5:21) Sin nature is passed from generation to generation through the bloodline of man. But Christ was born of the Spirit (Luke 1:35); and He had no sin nature in His bloodline. Jesus was tempted like us, yet He did not sin. (Hebrews 2:18) He was born into the world with no sin; but, in order to be the perfect Sacrifice for sin, He had to be tempted in all ways, so that He could overcome sin and its penalty.

Through Christ's obedience, He conquered the results of Adam's disobedience. He conquered all that sin had to offer; and He paid the price that God had set for sin, which was death. So, through Adam's disobedience, sin and death entered the world; and through Christ's obedience, sin and death were conquered.

The law was God's standard. The law was brought so that there could be a scale by which to judge the sins of man. The law made man accountable to God. There needed to be condemnation, in order to show man his sinfulness. Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the law. (Matthew 5:17) But, as we have already studied, not only did Christ not fall to the temptation of sin, He also was the only Man Who fulfilled the entire law.

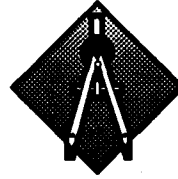
Adam was created in a sinless state. Before Adam entered into sin, he could walk and talk with God, and stand before Him completely guiltless. However, after his fall, he could no longer stand in God's presence. He knew that he was naked; and he hid from God. He was guilty. But because Christ overcame sin and its penalty and fulfilled the law, He overcame Adam's fall and was able to stand before God guiltless and blameless, the perfect Sacrifice. So, where sin once reigned unto

death, grace reigns much more unto eternal life by Jesus Christ.

Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection are the basis of our justification. Jesus is our High Priest before God. (Hebrews 4:15) He now stands before God, free from guilt, as an acceptable Sacrifice; and God has declared Him righteous. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, He becomes our substitute before God; and we can then stand before God, free from guilt, acceptable to Him, and counted as righteous. We are sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ.

We now have right standing before God. Our being able to stand before God in

Christ Jesus, guilt-free, holy, righteous and sanctified, is called "justification."



Methods

Have the students set up a mock courtroom, in which someone is accused of a crime and must stand trial. Have someone act as Jesus Christ and take the penalty for the crime committed. Have the accused declared "not guilty."

God's Plan for Marriage

Volume 12

Lesson 47



Bible References

Ephesians 5

Colossians 3

24 "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so (let) the wives (be) to their own husbands in every thing.

25 "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife (see) that she reverence (her) husband."



Theme

God's plan for a rich, meaningful and lasting marriage.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:22-33

22 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

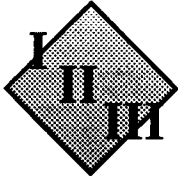
23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.



Memory Verse

Colossians 3:18-19

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."



Outline

I. Satan's Attack on Marriage.

- A. Marriage is God-ordained.
- B. Satan's plan of destruction.
- C. The devastation of divorce.
- D. The effect on the church.
- E. Spiritual relationships are affected by the marriage relationship.
- F. Society's lack of commitment.
- G. Selfishness undermines marriage.
- H. Rebellion in the children.
- I. Lack of unity in the family.
- J. God can give us victory in our homes.

II. God's Plan for Successful Marriages.

- A. God's hatred of divorce.
- B. God's outline for marriage: Ephesians chapter 5.
- C. Four commands for wives.
 1. Submit to your husband.
 2. Recognize the headship of your husband.
 3. Be subject to your husband.
 4. Reverence your husband.
- D. Eight commands for husbands.
 1. Be the head of your wife.
 2. Love her, as Christ loved the church.
 3. Love her, as you would your own self.
 4. Nourish your wife.
 5. Cherish your wife.
 6. Join together as one flesh.
 7. Leave your parents for your wife.
 8. Cleave to your wife.



Spiritual Truths

- Both husbands and wives have God-mandated responsibilities within the marriage relationship.
- God has a plan for successful marriages; and, it works.
- Satan has a plan of attack against the marriage covenant, the family, and the church.



Lesson Material

Marriage is God's first ordained institution; and because of this, Satan has tried to destroy it since the Garden of Eden. In destroying marriages, Satan knows that he can destroy the church. He knows that strong family relationships are one of the basic foundations of a strong church. If he can cause division and divorce in the family, he can cause division in the church. If he can take the male leadership out of the home and cause the woman to assume the leadership role, the family unit will be completely contrary to God's Word.

When problems occur in the home and in marriages, they almost always have an impact on the ministry of the church. When we are critical in marriage, we are critical in all that we do. If we are noncommittal in marriage, we have the same attitude in life. If we lack spiritual direction in marriage, it will carry over to the church.

Our society today has put a blessing on being noncommittal. We are so afraid to be committed to anything, because it may come back to hurt us. This is simply a result of selfish attitudes. With our selfish attitude toward commitment, we find the divorce rate running 50-55% in marriages. We figure if we do not like them, get rid of them. The sad thing is that the same divorce rate is also in the church.

That is one of the main reasons that there is so much rebellion in our children today. It is a direct attack from Satan, in his attempts to destroy the family and thus, the church. That rebellion stems directly

from the result of a lack of unification in the family and the lack of a male spiritual leader in the home. But God can give us victory in our homes. On the surface, it would seem that Satan is winning this battle; but, God is still in control.

God has given us a plan, so that we can defeat Satan's plans, and so that we can have the kind of marriage that God intended us to have. You now know why God hates divorce so much. He knows what Satan's plans are; and He knows how Satan wants to destroy the church of Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 5, God gives us an outline for marriage, with commands for both husbands and wives to follow. There are four commands for wives to follow:

1. Submit to your husband -- not in a cringing dictatorship-type of submission, but as the church submits to Christ. Your husband has been placed over you as the spiritual leader; and you need to submit to that authority, out of reverence and respect for Christ.

2. Recognize the headship of your husband. The position that a husband has been put in comes directly from God; and it is an awesome responsibility. Remember that you are responsible to him; but also remember to Whom he is responsible. If he does not live up to his end of the bargain, do not come against him -- just go over his head to God.

3. Be subject to your husband. You are to obey your husband, as you would obey Christ. It is his responsibility to lead the family. Let him. Do not be the type of wife who is constantly challenging his decisions and causing strife in the relationship. Let him lead.

4. Reverence your husband. Let him know that you love his leadership

abilities. Reconfirm his headship. Tell him that he is doing a great job.

There are eight commands (notice -- twice as many as the wife) for husbands to follow:

1. Be the head of your wife. You are now her covering. You are responsible for her well-being. You are her provider and her leader. It is now your responsibility under God to look after her ultimate good.

2. Love her, as Christ loved the church. Look to no other, as you love her. She will respond in kind. We have a tendency to think that the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, but we forget that all grass needs mowed. So, love her and her only, even to the point of dying for her.

3. Love her, as you would your own self. Do you hate yourself? Do you want what is best for you? Love your wife in the same way.

4. Nourish your wife -- not just in a physical way, but feed her spiritually, emotionally, mentally and materially. Give her the best that you can. It may not be a lot; but what you have, give to her joyfully and whole-heartedly.

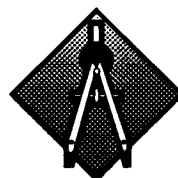
5. Cherish your wife. Treat her like you did when you were dating. Make her feel like she is the only woman alive. Put her first in everything.

6. Join together as one flesh. This is why sex outside of marriage is a sin in God's eyes. The wedding night is so special, because it is when a husband and wife no longer are centered on themselves but on each other. It is the fulfillment of the vows that they have just exchanged; and it completes the commitment that

they have made before God. It joins them together as one flesh; and it should remain that way throughout the rest of their lives, until "death do they part."

7. Leave your parents for your wife. You now have a wife who needs all of your love and attention, and who needs to see you acting like and being a man. She does not want a man who is constantly running to his parents at the first hint of pressure, but a man who can stand up to that pressure and thus make their relationship stronger, as they work together.

8. Cleave to your wife. You are now joined together. Let no one, even yourself, ever divide you. Do everything that you possibly can, in order to keep your marriage whole. As hard as it may sound, no matter what circumstances there are, the well-being of your marriage falls squarely on your shoulders. It is all up to you, and no one else.



Methods

Have the male students and female students sit opposite of each other, as you direct these tough challenges to each group.

Many of your students will be marrying within the next few years. Our job as Bible teachers and youth leaders is to prepare our students for the marriage relationship, by thoroughly grounding them in God's Word.

Present current marriage and divorce statistics. With your pastor's permission, invite a Christian married couple to testify

of the joys and rewards (and obstacles overcome) within a godly marriage relationship.

Marriage Guidelines

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Bible References

Ephesians 5

Colossians 3

3 "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

5 "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 "In the which ye also walked some time when ye lived in them.

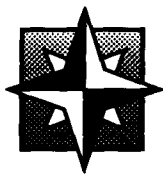
8 "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all.

12 "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;



Theme

A look at guidelines for the marriage relationship, from Colossians chapter 3.



Scripture Reading

Colossians 3:1-17

1 "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

13 *"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

14 *"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*

15 *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

16 *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

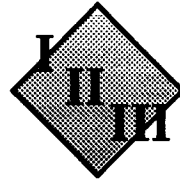
17 *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."*



Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:32

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."



Outline

I. Marriage Guidelines from Colossians 3:1-17.

- A. Set your minds and hearts on things above.
- B. Our lives are now hidden with Christ.
- C. Put to death our earthly nature.
- D. Rid ourselves of our old ways.
- E. Put on the new self.
- F. Do not lie to one another.
- G. Put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
- H. Support one another.
- I. Forgive one another.
- J. Love each other, which binds in perfect unity.
 - 1. *Agape* love.
 - 2. *Phileo* love.
 - 3. *Eros* love.
- K. Let Christ's peace rule in your hearts.
- L. Be thankful.
- M. Teach and admonish with gratitude.
- N. Let the Word dwell in you.

II. Do All of These Things In the Name of Jesus.

- A. Your marriage will grow and flourish.
- B. God will use you to bring glory and honor to Him.
- C. God will bless your obedience to Him.



Spiritual Truths

- The principles of Colossians 3 apply to all of our relationships, including the marriage relationship.
- When we apply these principles to our marriage relationships, our marriages flourish and prosper.
- Marriage is God's creation; and God's Word contains the plan for a successful, fulfilling marriage.



Lesson Material

We are going to look at Colossians 3:1-17, as a guideline for how we should treat husbands and wives.

The first foundation stone of a strong marriage is a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ, by both husband and wife. To keep that marriage growing stronger, we need to keep our thoughts

and deeds based on God's principles. Just as the husband's and wife's individual lives are in Christ, their combined life is now in Christ and hidden within Him. They are now joined together with the life-changing Christ.

We must put to death our earthly nature. Earthly desires, lust and sin have no place in a marriage. These things need to be crucified with Christ, so that the marriage can survive. Remember, anything that is of the world is enmity against God and enmity against marriage.

We must also rid ourselves of our old ways. Marriage is hard enough, without bringing garbage into it. Get the garbage out, and bury it for good. It has no place in God's marriage; and it should never, ever be dug up again. Instead, put on the new self. We are now new creatures in Christ; and our marriage is also a new creation -- the joining of two lives to form one new life. We need to let the new creation grow and flourish, for the glory of God.

Do not lie to one another. We have all heard that a "little white lie" will never hurt anybody. But God's Word says that all lies hurt. A marriage must have truth and honesty, if it is to grow. Any lies, even the smallest, will cause hardship, division, hurt, deceitfulness and distrust. Do not do anything that would cause you to lie, and then you will not have to lie.

Put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Remember how you would want to be treated in any given situation; and then respond to your husband or wife in that manner. And be sure to support one another. Mutual support is a must in a strong marriage. In a lot of instances, the support and understanding of husbands

and wives is the only support that we have. It is critical to stand with each other, as we do battle with Satan, when he tries to destroy what God has joined together.

We must always forgive one another. Ephesians 4:26 says not to let the sun go down on your wrath. If we do, we allow Satan to gain a foothold in the marriage. Forgiveness is strong medicine. It allows healing to enter, and it strengthens the relationship. Do not hold grudges. Remember that the measure of forgiveness that you give is the same measure that you will receive.

Love each other, which binds in perfect unity. A marriage is the only avenue in which all three types of love (*agape*, *phileo* and *eros*) can properly function. *Agape* love is the divine, strong, ardent, tender, compassionate devotion to the well-being of the husband or wife. *Phileo* love is the act of being a friend, liking, and being fond of someone. All marriages should have this working in them. A husband and wife should always be each other's best friend. *Eros* love is the sexual feeling and desire that a husband and wife should have toward each other. This is meant strictly for within the marriage; and it is one of the ways in which God allows us to show our love toward our husband or wife.

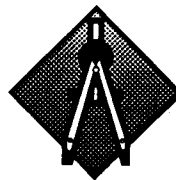
Let Christ's peace rule in your hearts. In marriage, as in life, if we keep Christ as the center of our relationships, we will always have peace in our hearts. It is when we are no longer centered on Him that we get into trouble, by allowing our sin nature to rule us. And be thankful. We are to give thanks to God in all things. But we should be especially thankful and grateful for the mate whom God has given us. It is not by chance that you marry who you marry, but by God's divine intervention. The key is to continually pray and seek God's direction,

as you and your mate wait for God to bring you together.

Teach and admonish each other with gratitude. You need to learn how to receive correction and direction, in love. This is especially hard for the husband, because most men cannot stand criticism from anyone -- least of all, his wife. But, as husband and wife, you need to learn from one another and grow in the process.

Let the Word dwell in you. If you are ever going to be successful with any or all of the previous items, you have to stay in God's Word. It has to permeate every part of your being. As it does, you will find your relationship with God growing stronger and your marital relationship more exciting than you could ever imagine.

As your marriage grows strong and flourishes, God will use it as a witness to other couples on how a marriage should be. He will use you to bring glory and honor to Him. And He will bless your obedience to Him. Be a willing subject; and allow God to bless you beyond imagination.



Methods

Before class, list the 15 principles in Colossians 3:1-17 on a blackboard; and have the students share how they think each principle applies to marriage. Then go through what is shown in your lesson outline.

Colossians 3:18-19 reaffirms God's pattern for marriages in Ephesians 5. So

many times, we forget that husbands and wives are also people (and, hopefully, born-again, Spirit-filled Christians). We need to remember that we should treat them the way that God has commanded us

to treat other Christians. Sometimes, husbands and wives treat each other a lot differently than they treat their Christian friends.

Building a Marriage

Volume 12

Lesson 49



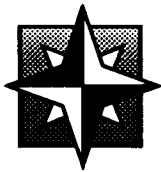
Bible Reference

Ephesians 4

which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

31 *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

32 *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*



Theme

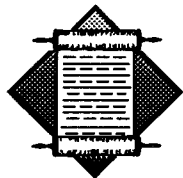
Essentials for strengthening and developing the marriage relationship.



Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:2

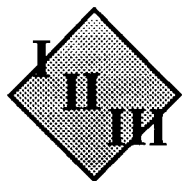
"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;"



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 4:16, 31-32

16 *"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that*



Outline

I. Kindness: An Essential Ingredient in a Good Marriage.

- A. Acceptance is the basis of kindness.
1. Recognizing faults.
 2. Building up one another.
 3. Reassurance.
 4. Christ's total acceptance of us.
- B. We must be re-educated.
1. The battle against the fleshly nature.
 2. Self-centeredness.
 3. Sanctification by the Holy Spirit.
 4. Combating worldly attitudes.
- C. We must be willing to change.

II. We Can Change Only Ourselves.

- A. Humbling ourselves.
- B. Mutual cooperation.
- C. Willingness coupled with humility.
- D. The leadership of the home.

III. Building Up the Marriage.

- A. Recognizing our own faults.
- B. Learning to work through problems.
- C. Correcting our own bad habits.
- D. Timing and tact.

E. Working it out together.



Spiritual Truths

- The bringing together of two people in a marriage can sometimes be shocking, if we do not realize that we all are not perfect.
- As we work through these imperfections, we need to allow God to work through and in us, as He changes us daily.
- We need to strive to be life-givers and builders, as we work through every area of our lives and marriages.



Lesson Material

We have taken a quick look at God's overall plan for marriages. We now want to take some specific areas and see how they can affect a marriage. We want to keep in mind that all aspects of marriage are important, and they need to be cultivated, in order to have a strong, growing marriage. These next areas are, however, the ones that seem to get the most attention.

Kindness is an essential ingredient to a good marriage. The real basis of kindness is total acceptance. Kindness and compassion look past the unlovely areas

of people, in order to accept them as they are.

When you come into a marriage, you must realize that there are faults, not just in your mate, but in yourself, too. We need to put each other at ease about these areas. Rather than us criticizing each other about these faults, we need to lead by example; and we also need to pray for each other, as it concerns those areas. One of the best things that you can do is to build up each others' strong points. It is much more healthier and God-like to build someone up than it is to destroy someone. Proverbs 18:21 says that death and life is in the power of the tongue. Be known as a life-giver, rather than a destroyer.

Reassurance is also vital to a healthy marriage. Reassure each other that you love and accept the total package. If your mate is attempting to change an area that needs attention, get behind him, encourage him and help him. If your mate happens to fail, do not belittle his attempt, but rather reassure him that you still love and accept him, just as he is.

Total acceptance is a solid fixture in any marriage, just as it is in our relationship with Christ. Can you imagine where you would be in Christ, if He did not accept you, just the way you are?

Learning to be kind takes time. It is not something that just happens. It requires us to re-educate ourselves. As sinners, saved by grace, we are constantly battling our own sin nature and our desire to fulfill the things of the flesh. One of the areas we are always struggling with is our self-centeredness. We are naturally selfish; and being kind and compassionate goes totally against this selfishness. So, we need to retrain our selfish nature. The only way that we can do this is by allowing the Holy

Spirit to sanctify us and change us, day by day, to be more like Christ. Our minds and hearts must be stayed on Christ. This process of re-education is usually harder for the husband than for the wife. Our society has taught men that it is a sign of weakness to be kind and compassionate. When the man gets married, he brings this worldly attitude into the marriage and puts a tremendous strain on it. The wife, on the other hand, has kindness and compassion built into her.

We must be willing to change. We need to ask ourselves a very hard question. Am I willing to train myself away from my selfish attitude, to the point that I honestly feel kindness and compassion toward my mate? We can change only ourselves. Luke 6:41 says that before we can point a finger at anyone, we must first take a look at ourselves. So, what we need to do is take a long look in the mirror and be willing to say, "Start with me." This is the process known as humbling ourselves. When we humble ourselves, in order to be willing to change, we bring about a unity of the spirit through peace. (Ephesians 4:2)

Marriage is not a one-person show. If either mate does not think he needs to change and improve, the marriage is headed for hard times. Marriage is a partnership, which is shared equally. Our attitude should be one of humility, as we willingly allow God to change us for our own personal betterment, as well as for the betterment of the marriage.

Most worldly counselors believe that troubles in marriages are usually split 50/50, as to whose problem it is. God's Word says, however, that it is the husband who is responsible for the well-being of the relationship. This basically means that it should be the husband who must step

up to the mirror first and say, "Start with me." When he is willing to accept his responsibility and assume his leadership role by example, then, and only then, will the wife be willing to face her faults and say, "Start with me."

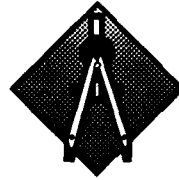
When it comes time to deal with faults, we must be willing to ask each other to help in overcoming them. That is why Ephesians 4:15 says we are to help each other grow, as we build our marriage up. We must recognize there are two kinds of faults -- little, irritating and annoying habits, and those more serious habits -- both of which can be corrected.

The annoying and irritating habits serve a very important function in a marriage. They allow a husband and wife to learn the very important lesson of working through problems with each other. They need to be handled with love and understanding. The other group of habits could include things such as driving too fast or spending money wastefully. These habits or faults can be corrected. They allow a husband and wife to develop themselves as good stewards of life, as they face them in love and with wisdom.

Another area of importance in helping each other grow is timing and tact. Not every occasion is meant for correction. There is a time, a purpose, and a reason for everything. The wise husband and wife learn quickly when those times are and when they are not. Some husbands and

wives constantly nit-pick at one another. We need to make sure that we do not become like that. The key is working it out together, so that you both can grow, and so that your marriage can also grow.

It took us a long time to get the way we are; and, in a lot of instances, we will not change overnight. Aim at being good to each other and for each other.



Methods

Have you ever known a marriage where the husband or wife just treats the other like dirt? They talk down to them, and they are always criticizing them. They seem to never have anything kind to say to them.

Role-play a husband and wife, who are deadlocked in an argument over each other's irritating habits (such as dirty socks on the floor, or makeup in the sink). Then, apply the principles of Ephesians 4:2 to the conversation: lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearing one another in love.

Pray with your students for God's will to be accomplished for their future mates and marriages.

Marriage Communication

Volume 12

Lesson 50



Bible Reference

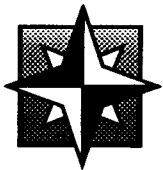
Ephesians 5:19



Memory Verse

Proverbs 1:5, 7

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."



Theme

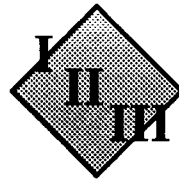
Good communication is essential to the marriage relationship.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 4:29

29 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."



Outline

- I. **Good Communication Is Essential to the Marriage Relationship. (Ephesians 4:29)**
 - A. We must always strive to keep the lines of communication open.
 - B. We must learn to have meaningful conversation.
 - C. Who is doing all of the talking?

D. Communication essentials.

1. Learn how to let your mate be your best friend.
2. Go out together, alone, often.
3. Always be honest with one another.
4. Limit time spent apart.
5. Disagreements and forgiveness.
6. Learn to respect each others' need for privacy.

E. The results of good communication last for a lifetime.

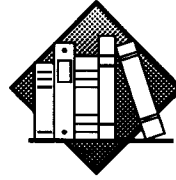
II. Dealing with Disagreements.

- A. Try to understand your mate's point of view.
- B. Check your weapons; and make sure that they are not deadly.
- C. Lower your voice -- do not raise it.
- D. Never have a disagreement in public.
- E. Know when to stop and let it drop.



Spiritual Truths

- Watching what we say and how we say it are always important in a marriage.
- The words that we use can either bring us closer or drive us apart.
- It is also important how we use words in our disagreements. They can be destructive, or they can help to build a strong and growing marriage.



Lesson Material

There are always certain key elements that make any relationship a good one. Communication is one of those key elements to any relationship, especially marriage. We want to take a few moments to look at how good communication can strongly enhance the marriage relationship.

We must always strive to keep the lines of communication open. Little spats or a hard day at work are no excuses for not sharing things with one another. Being able to sit down with your husband or wife and sharing your successes, your failures, your thoughts and your feelings is one of the simplest pleasures we can have in a marriage. It allows us to grow closer and closer together, as we share more and more.

We must learn to have meaningful conversation. Being able to sit down and have a meaningful conversation with someone of the opposite gender is like being kind -- it has to be learned. That is why the dating process is so important. It gives us the opportunity to learn how to communicate with each other. It is not for discovering your self sexually. It is so that you can learn how to talk. One of the problems that most men have when they enter a marriage is that they spend most of their time looking for sex and never learn how to talk to a woman. This can cause some real problems. So, learn how to talk with each other.

Who is doing all of the talking? "Well, I try talking with my husband, and he just will not listen." "Yes, I would like to talk

with my wife, but she will not stop talking enough, to let me." Have you ever heard that before? Proverbs 1:7 says that a fool despises wisdom. Who is a fool? A fool is someone who thinks that they have to be talking all of the time. They are not interested in what anyone else has to say. They just want to talk, talk, talk. A fool is also someone who will not listen. They do not think that they have to. They already know everything; so, why listen? How do we know that they are fools? Proverbs 1:5 says that a wise man will listen and increase in his knowledge. If you want to have a successful marriage, do two things -- learn how to talk properly, and learn how to listen. We want to look at some ways that will help us in communication with our husbands and wives.

Learn how to let your mate be your best friend. You can do this by spending time together. Our society has put such an emphasis on being successful, that we spend all of our time reaching for success. This has put a lot of strain on marriages, as husbands and wives are constantly going in different directions and have no time for each other. This can also happen in the church. We get so busy serving here or there, that we lose sight of our most important ministry -- our family. So, arrange your schedules, so that you can spend a lot of good, quality time together and become best friends.

Go out together, alone, often. Go to lunch, to dinner, take a walk. Set time aside for these important moments. Do not let outside influences interrupt them. If and when children are involved, find someone to watch them. This time is important, not only in your communication with each other, but also in keeping the romance alive in your marriage.

When we communicate with one another, we must always be honest and up front with each other. Half-truths and lies only build walls; and each time we lie, we just spread the gap between us further and further. To be honest with our mates, we must first learn to be honest with ourselves. When we lie, we are usually trying to cover up something that we know we should not have done. If we look at ourselves and then turn to the Lord and our mates, we can overcome the problem and potentially work together to solve it.

Limit your time spent apart. There are going to be times in a marriage when the husband and wife are going to be apart. Always set a realistic limit to this time. It is not good in a marriage for a husband and wife to be apart. It hinders the growing process that is taking place in the marriage. However, if you must be apart, use the time wisely. Phone calls, cards, letters and even flowers are ways in which you can communicate that you are missing your mate and his love. Never let a fight or a disagreement be the reason for a separation.

All couples will have disagreements. So many times, a disagreement is the result of our not being able to say or put our feelings into words. We do not know how to say it, so we do not say anything; and this leads to the disagreement. However, if we are patient with one another and keep trying, we can usually overcome this area. There will come times when a disagreement occurs and it is justified. When this happens, we must make total mercy and forgiveness our goal. We may have a right to question, but we have no right to condemn. So, when confessions are being made, ask God to give you a spirit of tenderness. The rewards you reap will be many.

Learn to respect each other's need for privacy. We all need time to be alone -- not totally apart, but alone. We all need to be alone to read the Bible, alone to pray, alone to be with God, or alone with our thoughts. After these times of being alone, you need to get back with your husband or wife and share and communicate what you learned, in order to grow together.

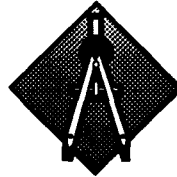
We must be prepared to deal with disagreements. Try to understand your mate's point of view. When a disagreement arises, try to understand your mate's point of view; try to feel how they feel. Check your weapons; and make sure that they are not deadly. Disagreements are never a time to bring up the past or uncover something that is under the blood of Jesus. Attack the problem, together, and not the person. Remember, your goal is not to hurt, but to understand.

Lower your voice -- do not raise it. Try to maintain some composure and sanity. Nobody wants to listen to (or try to understand) a raving maniac. And there is no place for physical violence in a marriage. If you feel rage and or anger coming, on excuse yourself and go get some fresh air; but never resort to violence. Never have a disagreement in public. It is bad enough that you are having one, without letting the whole world know. Also, try not to have a disagreement in front of your children. They need to continue to see you as Christian parents and role models. If they do become aware of a disagreement

between you, make sure that they also see that you have worked things out in love and forgiveness.

Know when to stop and let it drop. Strive to reach a solution; and then, forget about it. When apologies are given and forgiveness is sought, make assurances that it is forgotten, just like the Lord does for us. Learn to clear out the hostilities, so that there is room for the love that is waiting to move in.

The results of good communication last a lifetime. It takes a lifetime of commitment and sharing to make a strong marriage; and communication is one aspect of the marriage relationship that has a big impact on true companionship.



Methods

Have the students sit in a circle. Start with the student to the left of the leader, and whisper a very familiar phrase in his ear. Have him then whisper the phrase to the next student, and so on, around the circle and back to the leader. Compare the phrase that ended to the one that started; and discuss how our not talking or listening properly can have some amazing results.

Marriage Cultivation

Volume 12

Lesson 51



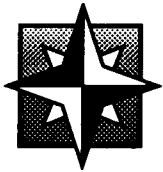
Bible References

Proverbs 15:1-4

Ephesians 4:29

3 *"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

4 *"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit."*



Theme

Deepening and developing the marriage relationship.



Memory Verse

Proverbs 12:25

"Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad."

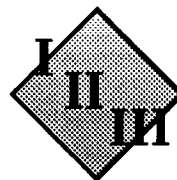


Scripture Reading

Proverbs 15:1-4

1 *"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*

2 *"The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.*



Outline

- I. **Good Words Have a Positive Impact on a Marriage.**
 - A. Verbally express your love for your mate.
 - B. Compliment your mate.
 - C. Always communicate with respect.

II. Cultivate the Romance.

- A. Special days.
- B. Ordinary days -- be creative.
- C. Do not ever stop courting.

III. How and How Not to Treat Each Other.

- A. In public.
- B. Be courteous.
- C. Prioritize your mate.
- D. Refrain from negative words.
- E. Be mindful of each other's feelings.
- F. Never leave each other in emotional times.



Spiritual Truths

- The power of our words is staggering. We can build or destroy.
- In a marriage, no one can build us up or tear us down quicker than our husbands or wives.
- If you like something, say so; if you do not, be quiet.



Lesson Material

We have looked at some practical ways on how to properly speak with each other; Now, we want to look at some ways of how to keep the spark going in a marriage. If we do not grasp how to properly treat each other, we miss the best that the Lord gave us -- the intimate, fulfilling relationship with our spouse.

Good words have a positive impact on a marriage. Verbally express your love for your mate. Start out by telling him that you love him. Husbands and wives should never get tired of saying this or hearing this. It helps to reinforce to them that they are still number one, in their mates' eyes.

Compliment your mate. Do not hesitate in handing out compliments, for they play a big part in solidifying the marriage relationship. If they look nice, tell them. If they have done something great, congratulate them. A compliment may help, when a husband or wife is struggling to improve in an area or to overcome a fault. They help, as we and our mates grow older and no longer feel that we are the person that we once were. If we struggle with self-esteem, compliments help in building a strong, positive self-image.

Always communicate with respect. There will be times in our marriages that we will have to tell our husband or wife that we do not like something. It will benefit both us and the marriage, if we know how to do it. Always start out with something positive. This helps to soften the impact somewhat; and it will

eventually show your mate that it really troubles you that you have to say this. If there is good communication and mutual respect in the relationship, we should not mind the helpful suggestions, as long as they are presented in a positive manner. This shows that the number one concern of both partners is the strengthening of the marriage.

An area of marriage that must always be cultivated is that of romance, devotion, anticipation, and excitement. Use your imagination to make something special out of special days. Keep a calendar of special days, such as birthdays, anniversary, first date, first kiss, and so on. Then, make a special effort to do something to celebrate it. Be creative. As important as these little gestures are, sometimes some loving action is exactly what is needed. Nothing will stimulate your partner more than their knowing that they stimulate you. Something inside of us responds to that. It is exciting. You can add to this excitement, if you constantly let your husband or wife know how much you miss them, when you are apart.

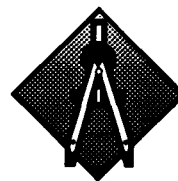
Do not ever stop courting. Let them know that you love them more today than yesterday, but not as much as tomorrow. Keep anticipation and the "I can hardly wait to be with you" spirit alive in your marriage.

We must always keep in mind how to (and how not to) treat each other. In public, keep your head on straight. When you are with your husband or wife, think before you do or say anything. Do not be afraid to hold hands. God will never condemn you for being in love. You can be proud of your happy, godly marriage. And God may use it as a witness.

Be courteous. Men, always treat your wives as ladies; and wives, always let your husbands be gentlemen. If he wants to open a door, let him. If she wants you to seat her at the table, do it. Chivalry and being ladylike should never die in a marriage.

Prioritize your mate. Always, always, always treat each other as number one on your list. Do not ever embarrass one another in public situations. When you are together, walk proudly together. This will do more to damage Satan and his plans against the family unit than you know. Refrain from negative words. Never use cruel words, or compare one another to other people. This will only cause hurt and destruction; and it will take time to rebuild again. Be mindful of each other's feelings. Treat each other as people, and not things. Things are to use, but people are to love.

Finally, never leave each other in emotional times. You need one another in times like these; and it gives you the opportunity to build your marriage stronger. When you treat each other correctly, you build for yourselves many rewards in your relationship. Do not destroy them, by using the wrong words.



Methods

Have the students sit in a circle. Start with the leader, and have him say something uplifting to the person on the left; and have that person say something to the one on their left, and so on, around the room and back to the leader. Then

reverse, and start to the leader's right. This will help the students in learning how to say good things.

We must make a decided effort to learn positive communication. It is often much easier to communicate negatively. Encourage the students to continue practicing positive communication in all of their relationships.

Be outwardly expressive in your relationships, starting with your relationship with the Lord. Lead the students in verbal, expressive worship and singing, proclaiming God's greatness, lifting up your hands, clapping, etc. A healthy marriage will spring up out of a healthy relationship with the Lord.