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

Table of Contents

Introduction	xi
Section 1: Welcome to Our Ministry Team	1
To Our Co-Laborers in the Work of the Ministry3	,
Our Calling5	;
Our Charge9)
My Commitment13	,
My Credibility15	;
My Goals17	,
Section 2: Personnel Job Descriptions	19
Using the Personnel Job Descriptions21	
School of the Bible Flowchart23	ì
Youth Department Flowchart25	;
Administrator27	•
Class Coordinator29	ı
Teacher33	•
Musician39	ı
Worker41	
Secretary43	1
Four Things Every Teacher Must Know47	ı
Three Requirements for Every Teacher51	
Responsibilities of a School of the Bible Worker53	

Section	a 3: Student Profiles	57
U	Inderstanding Your Students59	
Α	A Profile of Ninth and Tenth Grade Students61	
C	Children of the '90's65	
W	Why Do We Lose So Many of Our Children to the World?69	
D	Oo Not Send Them Away77	
W	Vhy Unsaved People Do Not Come to Church81	
T	The Importance of Repentance85	
Section	4: Sensational Sunday School Sessions	91
T	he Importance of Scheduling Your Class93	
C	Class Schedule95	
P	reparation for Class97	
Si	inging with Joy99	
0	Offering and Prayer101	
Te	eaching with Purpose103	
St	tory-telling to Touch Hearts105	
Sc	cripture Memorization107	
C	atechism in Doctrine109	
Section	5: Life-related Stories1	11
U	sing Life-related Stories113	
Ti	he Story of Billy Bray115	
Ti	he Story of Ada Buchwalter117	
Th	he Story of Peter Cartwright119	
Tł	he Story of Christopher Columbus	
Tł	he Story of Fanny Crosby123	

The Story of Jim Elliot	125
The Story of Lorne Fox	127
The Story of H. B. Garlock, Rescued From Cannibals	129
The Story of Andrew Gih	131
The Story of Young Bill Gothard	133
The Story of Mordecai Ham	135
The Story of Dick Iverson	137
The Story of Bob Jones	139
The Story of Adoniram Judson	141
The Korean Girl Who Loved Jesus	143
The Story of D. L. Moody	145
The Story of Alexander Maclaren	147
The Story of Marinus	149
The Salvation of Samuel Morris	151
Samuel Morris: Coming to America	153
Samuel Morris: Life in America	155
George Müller's Prayer Life	157
Revival at Northampton	159
The Story of Polycarp	161
The Story of Charles Price	163
The Story of Revolutionary Preachers	165
The Story of "Rock of Ages"	167
The Story of Sandy and Her Dad	
The Story of C. I. Scofield	171
The Story of Horatio Spafford	173
The Story of Squanto	175

	The Story of Peter Waldo	177	
	The Story of George Washington's Prayer Life	179	
	The Story of Washington and the Tory	.181	
	The Boyhood of Smith Wigglesworth	183	
	Smith Wigglesworth: Baptism in the Holy Spirit	185	
	The Story of Moses Vegh	.187	
	The Story of Bill and Moses Vegh	.189	
Secti	ion 6: Promotions		.191
	The Importance of Promotions	.193	
	Link Up with Jesus	.195	
	Fuel the Flame	.217	
	Fall Fun Festival	.235	
	Unlock the Treasure	.249	
Secti	on 7: Catechism in Doctrine	• • • • • • •	.261
	Introduction to Catechism in Doctrine	.263	
	How Do We "Speak in Tongues?"	.265	
	How Does Faith in the Second Coming of Christ Affect a Person's Lifestyle?	.267	
	What Is Divine Healing?	.269	
	What Does the Bible Say about the Laying on of Hands for Physical Healing?	.271	
	What Is Faith?	.273	
	How Do We Develop Faith in God?	275	
	What Is the Grace of God?	277	
	How Can We Know if We Have Eternal Life?	279	
	Did Jesus Do Away with the Law When He Died on the Cross?	281	
	What Is Regeneration?	202	

What Is Salvation?285	
Where Do People Go When They Die?287	
What Is the Importance of Water Baptism?289	
Why Don't We Baptize Babies or Sprinkle People for Baptism?291	
How Can We Exercise Faith in God?293	
What Are Trials?295	
What Are Temptations?297	
Why Did Jesus Teach in Parables?299	
How Do We Strengthen Our Faith in God?301	
What Are the Greek Words for "Love", and What Do They Mean?303	
What Is Righteousness?305	
What Is Holiness?307	
What Is the "Baptism of Fire"?309	
What Is the Tithe?311	
What Does "Stewardship" Mean?313	
What Is the Difference Between the Pounds and the Talents?315	
What Is an Offering?317	
What Is Almsgiving?319	
What Is a Covenant?321	
What Is the Difference Between a Covenant and a Contract?323	
Section 8: Lessons	25
Lesson 1: Do Not Believe Anything That I Say327 All teaching must be compared against the truth of the inerrant Word of God.	
Lesson 2: God's Plan for Man333 The theme of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is God's redemptive plan for man.	

Lesson 3: Good and Evil: How Can This Be?
Lesson 4: God: How Do You Know He Exists?
Lesson 5: Pride: The Root of All Sin349 Pride is the root of all sin and all evil.
Lesson 6: Prayer: The Valid Solution
Lesson 7: Prayer: Its Power
Lesson 8: The Sanctity of Human Life
Lesson 9: The Rapture and the Second Coming
Lesson 10: Problems That Young Adults Face
Lesson 11: The Light of the World: Jesus Christ
Lesson 12: The Light of the World: The Body of Christ
Lesson 13: The Light of the World: Using Your Gifts
Lesson 14: Who Is Satan?
Lesson 15: The Reality of Hell
Lesson 16: What Is the Occult?405 Occult practices include involvement with the spirit world, which is strictly forbidden by God.

Lesson 17	: The New Age	.413
The	e New Age is not a set of new truths, but a cleverly disguised lection of old lies.	
Losson 18	: World Religions	.419
The	ere are many false religions in the world, but only one way to God esus Christ.	
Leson 10	: Modern Cults	427
We	must make sure that we know the real Jesus, so that we are not reived by a counterfeit Jesus.	• • •
Lassan 20	: The Middle East: Ishmael and Isaac	125
A l	look at the unrest between the nations of the Middle East the is of Abraham.	. 300
Losson 21	: The Holy Spirit in You	.441
The	e indwelling Gift of the Holy Spirit, and His ministry to the iever.	
Losson 22	: Filled with the Spirit	447
In e	choosing to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is educed in our lives, which is the character of Jesus Christ.	· ** /
Lesson 23	: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit	452
	e purpose and power of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.	•=>0
Lesson 24:	: Agonizomai	. 45 9
We	must dedicate our lives totally to Jesus, just as He gave Himself ally for us.	
Lesson 25	: Seeking God's Will	465
	must seek the will of God with all of our heart, soul, and mind.	. 100
Lesson 26	: Commitment	.469
The	e commitment of marriage is a model of the relationship between us Christ and the church.	
Lesson 27	: Rock Music: Words of Wisdom?	<i>47</i> 5
	sic can be used to bring glory to God or dishonor to Him.	.4/ 0
Lesson 28:	: The New Birth	481
Wh	en we are born again, we are transformed from darkness to light; we become the children of God.	- 101
Lesson 29.	Renewing the Mind	485
	d is doing a work of transformation in us, by the renewing of our	10 0
	ids.	

Lesson 30: The Cutting Edge	489
It is possible to lose touch with the power of God in our lives, even in the midst of fellow believers.	
Lesson 31: Divine Healing	493
Divine healing is a part of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.	
Lesson 32: Christian Liberty	497
Christian liberty produces true freedom, but only in the context of obedience to God.	
Lesson 33: Thieves of Joy	503
Our circumstances will not affect our joy, when our joy is grounded in our relationship with the Lord.	
Lesson 34: Taking out the Garbage	507
Confession and repentance are necessary, in order for us to be cleansed of sin.	
Lesson 35: The Spiritual Body: Taking Care of It	513
It is important to take care of our physical bodies, but not to the neglect of our spiritual bodies.	
Lesson 36: Obedience: Doing the Do's	519
Concentrating on doing what God wants us to do is the best way to avoid doing what He does not want us to do.	
Lesson 37: The Judgment Seat of Christ	525
Christians will all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, at which rewards will be given based on our works, whether good or bad.	
Lesson 38: Growing Up	529
Growing up is a time in life, during which it is expedient to be obedient to parents and to God.	
Lesson 39: Become as Little Children	535
It is necessary for our spiritual growth to recognize that we are in need of instruction from the Lord.	
Lesson 40: Submission to Authority	541
Obedience requires voluntary submission to the one in authority.	
Lesson 41: The Breath of God	545
The breath of God brought physical life to man; the Holy Spirit brings life to man's spirit; the Word of God sustains both.	
Lesson 42: Enoch: Walking with God	549
Maintaining a consistent walk with God is the best way to be prepared	
for the coming of the Lord.	

Lesson 43: Obedience and the Cross: Abraham and Isaac	.555
Lesson 44: Abraham and Isaac: Like Father, Like Son	.561
Lesson 45: Jacob, the Usurper: Sowing and Reaping	.567
Lesson 46: True Love, Part 1: What Does It Mean?	573
Lesson 47: True Love, Part 2: Redefining Dating	577
Lesson 48: True Love, Part 3: Sexual Immorality	583
Lesson 49: Judging and Misjudging It is easy to misjudge, but extremely difficult to judge.	589
Let the Word of God be your guide through life.	59 3
Lesson 51: Faith Is a Decision	599
Lesson 52: Preservatives	603

Introduction

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

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 sérvants. 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 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 believe,...." us-ward who (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 greek training when I l tasks.	owing in the pursuit of nave the opportunity, a	f excellence in my work and will be the best I ca	for the Lord. I will n be at my assigned
"Whatsoever thy hand j device, nor knowledge, 9:10)	findeth to do, do it wit nor wisdom in the gr	th thy might, for there ave wither thou goest."	is no work, nor (Ecclesiastes
Comments:		, <u>, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , </u>	
		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
			and the second s
Signature		Date:	

My Credibility

Name:	Telephone:	Telephone:		
Address:				
City:	State:	Zip Code:		
Birthdate:	Check One:	[] Male [] Female		
Marital Status:	Ages of Childs	en:		
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 th	e Holy Spirit?			
5. As a Spirit-filled believer, do you pray is	n tongues?			
6. Do you read the Bible and pray daily?	6. Do you read the Bible and pray daily?			
7. What is your primary vocation?				
8. What specific skills have you developed	l that could benefit a Su	ınday School program?		
9. Have you ever been convicted of any cr	rime (other than driving	g or parking violations)?		
Do you have a criminal record? If so, ple	ease explain on the reve	rse side		
10. What education or degrees do you have	?			
11. How long have you tithed consistently t	o this local church?			
12. Are you willing to receive instruction/o	correction from the past	ors or supervisors?		
13. Do you know of any personal difficulty effective in the work of this ministry to	y or problem that migh children?	t hinder you from being		

My Credibility	Volume 4
Write any additional comments or explanations here:	
Signature Date:	

My Goals As a Worker In the School of the Bible

1.	 		 	
2.	 			
3.				
3.				
4.	, and the second of		 	
5.	 			
		, ,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,		
6.				
7.				 100-11
8.				
9.				
<i>)</i> .				
10				
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.

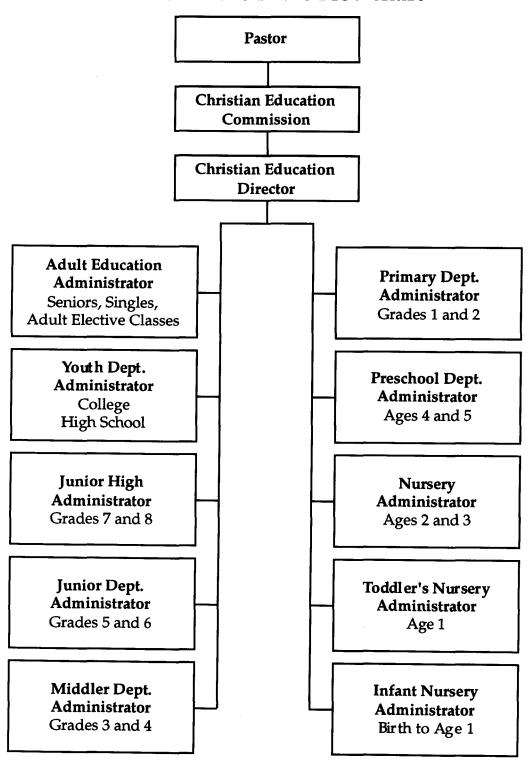
We strongly encourage developing ministry teams, rather than having a single teacher in the class. Every Bible class should have at least two members on the teaching team, even if the class is small. A team is able to generate more excitement, pray more effectively, and minister more comprehensively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

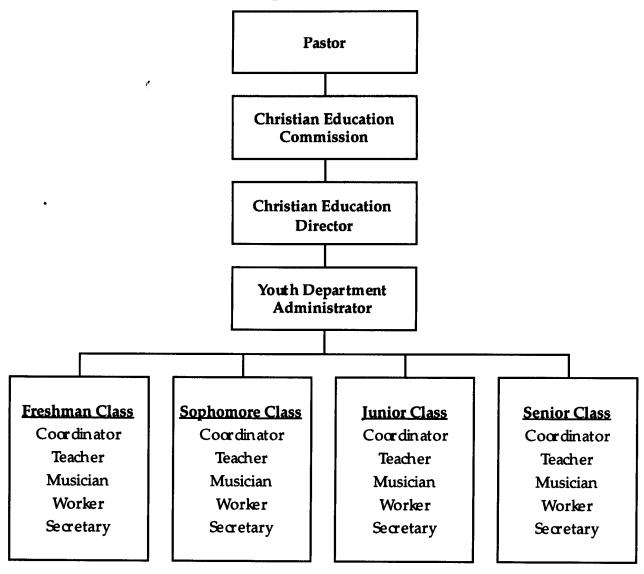
It is also important to establish a clear line of authority in the School of the Bible. Confusion reigns when there is more than one person thinking they are in charge. The larger the body, the more responsibility needs to be delegated, and the more authority needs to be established on multiple levels. 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







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.

Class Coordinator Volume 10

- 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.

Volume 7

- 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.

Volume 7

- 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.
- L. 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.

SecretaryJob 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.)

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.
- 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 Ninth and Tenth Grade Students

Physical Development

- 1. For many teenagers, the awkward and often turbulent journey through puberty is near completion. By the 9th or 10th grade, most teenagers "catch up" with their peers in physical development. During this time, it is important to understand that teenagers are very concerned with their physical appearance and apparel. Such ordinary problems as a facial blemish, or not having the right brand of clothing, may seem trivial to an adult; but, to a teenager, it is a brutal blow to self-esteem. We need to be aware of this, and emphasize that God made us the way we are for a purpose. He is more concerned with the development of our inner character (1 Samuel 16:7) than physical beauty which is temporal (Proverbs 31:30)
- 2. Teenagers are extremely aware of their sexual development, and sexual experimentation often begins during this time. We need to be prepared when a teenager asks, "What's wrong with premarital sex?"
- 3. Teenagers frequently develop an erroneous sense of being indestructible. Many may experiment with drugs and alcohol out of curiosity or peer pressure, with the thought that it will not effect them. It is important that we teach teenagers that their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that they should honor God with their body by taking care of it. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

4. Teenagers may have unpredictable mood swings. Emotions are strong and fragile. One minute they are skipping and singing, but in a short time they may be angry or depressed. It is important that we recognize this in teenagers. Be willing to weather the storm with them.

Intellectual Development

- 1. It is during the 9th and 10th grades that youth move from concrete thinking to abstract thinking. They begin to experience a new world of ideas and concepts. They do not take beliefs at face value anymore. Instead, they begin to question and to inquire. With younger children, a teacher may be very effective with storytelling; however, as cognitive thinking develops, it is important to use interactive learning, such as panel and group discussions, questions and answers, and debates symposiums.
- 2. We live in an instant entertainment society. The average teenager watches between 3 and 5 hours of television a day, and listens to music from 4 to 6 hours a day. Many teenagers go to sleep with music playing. The minds of teenagers are overexposed, but underdeveloped. We must challenge them to use their intellect. The mind, like a muscle, must be used in order to grow stronger. The mind of the typical American teenager, with its diet of TV, VCR, and CD's, is "jello."

We must challenge teenagers to think!

Teenagers should be challenged to memorize scripture. They are now capable of memorizing long passages of scripture, and even whole chapters.

Teenagers should be challenged to read. Teenagers who develop good reading habits have the world at their fingertips. (Proverbs 4:7)

Teenagers should be challenged to write. Why do teenagers dislike essay tests and writing assignments in school? It is because writing takes thinking -- the organization of thoughts -- something with which many American teenagers are unaccustomed. Teenagers should not be spoon-fed all the answers. A mistake often made is that we tell teenagers what to think, instead of teaching them how to think. If teenagers ask a question concerning evolution, then encourage them to do research, and direct them to some good materials on the subject; but, do not ramble through 100 proofs for creationism. Challenge them to think for themselves. Remember, if the mind is not worked, then, like a muscle, it will be weak.

- 3. Creativity begins to grow. We need to give teenagers the opportunity to express themselves through such learning activities as problem-solving and role-playing. Encouraging teenagers in art and drama is also an effective way to spark creativity.
- 4. Teenagers begin to make decisions on their own. It is important that we help them make wise decisions, by encouraging them to look at the

possibilities and consider the consequences.

Social Development

- 1. Friends are teenagers' main focus in life. The social development of teenagers at this age begins to take dominance. Peer groups or cliques are forming. The high school cafeteria is divided into various peer clusters such as "jocks," "headbangers," "preppies," ethnic minorities, etc. All adolescents are influenced by their peers, and many teenagers will do almost anything to be accepted by their peer group. It is important that we teach teenagers the qualities of courage and conviction. Teenagers should also be challenged to be "other-centered," (Philippians 2:3, 4) and to reach out to those around them. It should be noted that, if a teenager does not make friends within the youth group, chances are good that the teenager will not stick around, and will begin to look for friends elsewhere. We must provide enjoyable activities which encourage teenagers to get acquainted with each other. Class crowd-breakers, group projects, and social activities are good places to sow seeds for building friendships.
- 2. During this time, teenagers begin to struggle with independence from parents. Teenagers want the freedom to do as they please; and yet, they are not capable, emotionally or economically, of handling the responsibility of living without their parents. It is a difficult experience for both teenagers and parents. A

- questionable party away from home rarely excites the parents; and a quiet evening with the the folks rarely excites the teenagers. Often, we must encourage youth to communicate with their parents; and we have the responsibility to share the importance of parental obedience.
- 3. The teenager's interest in the opposite sex is high. It is a time when boys and girls begin to communicate their interest in one another. Boys become "girl scouts" and vice versa. We need to provide a positive social atmosphere, so that healthy friendships between the sexes can develop. Too often in our society, teenagers become lovers before they become friends. We need to emphasize the importance of Biblical friendship (1 Timothy 5:2); and we need to provide opportunities for social interaction.

Spiritual Development

1. At this age, teenagers start to question their faith. As they develop intellectually, teenagers begin to search for adequate reasons for faith. Do they believe, because their parents told them to; or, do they believe because it is truth? As they develop socially, they may have friends at school with different beliefs. How do they know whether what they believe

- is true? It is important to understand that doubt does not necessarily mean danger. We are to love the Lord with all our "mind" (Matthew 22:37), and we cannot love the Lord with all our mind if we do not use it. Doubt can lead to a careful examination of beliefs, which often leads to a more personal, firsthand acceptance of the tenets of faith. Although this experience can give parents an anxiety attack, ("Lord! Save my child!"), with patience and prayer, it may ultimately strengthen the teenager's faith. Remember, the challenge of the Bible is: "Taste and see that the Lord is good ..." (Psalms 34:8). At this stage in their development, teenagers need more than being told; they need to taste.
- 2. Teenagers are open to spiritual concerns. Although teenagers may question what they believe, this does not mean they are uninterested in God or religious matters. It is critical that we give a clear presentation of the gospel. Teenagers will respond to the claims of Christ!
- 3. We must show teenagers how their faith can relate to their daily living. Church becomes irrelevant when the teenager sees no connection between what happens during the week and what is taught in church on Sunday. We must show how living by Biblical principles will lead to a satisfying and rewarding life (1 Peter 3:10).

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 demoninduced 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.

Children of the '90's Volume 7

- 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.

Section 3 Student Profiles

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

How Can We Develop a Taste for Spiritual Things?

- 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.

How Are Carnal Appetites Developed?

- 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 coworkers 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 them to do what I have "teach 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

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!

- 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.

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 <u>Complete School</u> 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 Billy Bray

Billy Bray was an ordinary guy. Today, he would be called a "good ol' boy." Billy was the town drunk in Truro, Cornwall, England. He was born in 1794 and lived for 74 years. He could not sing or preach, and had no unusual skills, yet he is remembered by generations of people. What made him special?

Well, for years, he was not special. He was not only a drunk, but he was given to indulge himself in immorality. He also was addicted to smoking tobacco. His father had been a Christian; but he died, and left little Billy to be raised by a grandfather who did not serve God, and therefore did not teach him how to live well in this life. Billy worked in the mines, and spent much of his time in the beer halls. Night after night, his poor wife had to come to the tavern to bring him home, because he was too drunk to make it on his own. His selfish, undisciplined lifestyle of pleasure-seeking was destroying his life, and hurting the people around him.

One day he began reading a book by John Bunyan called "Visions of Heaven and Hell." He began to think seriously about eternity. He realized that hell was a place of unspeakable torment in flames, darkness, and hopelessness, while heaven was a place of eternal joy, peace, and fulfillment in the presence of God. He became convicted of his evil life. Billy believed God's promise of justification, and he was born again.

Billy Bray's salvation resulted in a dramatic change in his life. He often danced in the street where he had before made a fool of himself for the devil. He said,

"The Lord has made me glad, and no one can make me sad.

He makes me shout, and no one can make me doubt.

He it is that makes me dance and leap,

And there is no one that can keep down my feet."

Billy was a lousy poet, too, but his heart was right with God. Billy was a happy Christian. Even when his beloved wife died, he jumped around the room for joy, shouting, "My dear Joey has gone up to be with the shining angels. Glory, glory, glory!"

When Billy was saved, he stopped drinking, but he still used tobacco, even though he knew the Lord had said to serve Him with clean lips. One day, a good woman said to him, "Don't you think it's wrong to smoke?" Instead of being offended, he threw away his tobacco and smashed his pipe. He never smoked again. He later said, "If God had meant for men to smoke, he would have made a chimney in the back of their heads. No architect would have the smoke come out the front door."

One day, Billy was digging the potatoes out of his garden, and was tempted to resent the poor crop. He immediately began to tell the devil, "When I was serving you, I didn't have no taters at all! God has been so good to me." He said that when he started reminding the devil of all the good things God had done for him, he left him alone.

Finally, the day came when the doctor told Billy Bray that he was about to die. He exclaimed, "Glory, glory be to God! I shall soon be with God. Even if I was to go

down to hell, I would shout glory to God so much that the devil would have to get rid of me. But I'm going to heaven, and keep on shouting praise to the Lord."

The Story of Ada Buchwalter

Some unbelievers in the glossolalia go to great lengths to disclaim the possibility that the Holy Spirit can speak through a believer in a known language. sometimes go so far as to say the miracle on the day of Pentecost was one of hearing and not of utterance. Quoting Acts 1:8, "How hear we in our own tongue," they stress the word hear and say that the 120 on the day of Pentecost spoke in their own language, but each of the strangers present heard it in his own language. conveniently ignore verse four, which says, "They all began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

But we must not limit the Holy Spirit. Jesus likened His activity to the wind which "bloweth where it listeth (wishes)." (John 3:8) The Pentecostal Evangel (June 24, 1922) records an unusual miracle of hearing.

Miss Ada Buchwalter had been working with Mr. and Mrs. Lewer (her sister) in Yunnan Province on the borders of Tibet. They traveled six days, and then Mr. and Mrs. Lewer went on to the capital, leaving her in the company of a Chinese girl. Ada was far from home, and practically alone. The Chinese girl had been saved from her former worship of idols, but had not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The two young women visited about a dozen nearby towns and finally came to a

town which had all the marks of being poverty stricken. Its one narrow street was muddy and filthy. But the Chinese girl with Miss Buchwalter spoke to the women who gathered.

Most of the people of the village were from the Ming Chia tribe, and did not understand Chinese well, for their languages are different. But at the close, to the amazement of the two Christian women, the Ming Chia women said, "You spoke in our tongue."

"Oh, but I didn't," said the Chinese girl. "I don't know a word of your language."

But they insisted that she had.

The Chinese girl said to Ada Buchwalter, "Could it be that the Holy Spirit changed my words from Chinese to Ming Chia so they could hear the gospel?"

Do you not think so?

Mrs. Buchwalter later married Leonard Bolton, and they labored in Yunnan Province for many years with great effectiveness.

From "Spoken by the Spirit" by Ralph W. Harris © 1973 Used by Permission Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of Peter Cartwright

Peter Cartwright was born in Virginia in 1785. His parents, feeling the need to be more independent, traveled through dangerous Indian territory to the new land of Kentucky. With no schools or large towns available, they lived off the land and survived through the rough winters and hot summers. They worked hard, and they played hard. Peter (along with his father and brother), gave himself to horseracing, gambling, drinking, and dancing.

When Peter was a teenager, the Cartwrights spent a day and most of the night at a wedding five miles from home. When they got home from the party, it was nearly dawn. After the horses were put away, Peter began to reflect on his rough life. He was deeply moved with conviction and anguish over his sin. He sold his race horse, burned his playing cards, and gave himself to Bible reading for the next three months.

Meanwhile, the great Cumberland revival was spreading through the country. It began in 1801 with some Presbyterian ministers. Thousands of people would gather in open air meetings, and the Holy Spirit would move in waves of glory and power. Many thousands were dramatically saved, and signs and wonders accompanied the ministry of the Word. Each meeting would last for hours, followed by more hours of praying, weeping, and rejoicing at the altar. Hundreds would fall to the ground, "slain" in the Spirit, as they were overwhelmed by the power of God.

At this camp-meeting, the big, burly teenager came, anxiously seeking God's mercy. As he prayed, he heard in his spirit the words, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Instantly, he was filled with overwhelming joy. He never doubted his salvation from that moment on.

Young Peter quickly became a soulwinner. He was given an exhorter's license, and he was soon organizing Bible classes. He tried to go to school for a short time, but was mocked and persecuted for his faith. He went on to serve in the ministry, an "uneducated" but dynamic young man. What he lacked in academics, he more than made up for in zeal. Many who heard his passionate testimony were won to the Lord.

One day he was asked to preach, but he felt very unqualified. He prayed, "Lord, if you want me to preach, please give me one soul tonight." He preached on Isaiah 26:4: "Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." That night, a noted infidel who had openly opposed Christianity came forward to give his life to Jesus.

Peter Cartwright became famous as a fiery revival preacher. He was big and strong, and was known to step out of the pulpit on occasion to thrash a few fellows who were mocking and disrupting a meeting. He would then return to his sermon, having gained the rapt attention of his hearers.

One Saturday night, while crossing the Cumberland mountains, Cartwright was staying in a house where a dance was in progress. He was to preach there the next day, but nobody there knew who he was. He sat down in the corner of the room, and a lovely young lady came over to him and invited him to dance with her. Hand in hand they walked out onto the floor.

Then Peter stopped the fiddle player, and announced, "I never do anything of importance without asking the Lord's help and direction first. I want to ask God's blessing on this beautiful young woman, on all of you kind people." With that, he knelt to the floor. The poor girl could not pull her hand out of his powerful grip, so she was obliged to kneel as well.

He prayed with fervency, and with power. Soon, the people who had not fled the room were weeping, and the girl was laying on the floor, crying out to God. A mighty revival started that very night at the dance. Peter Cartwright was a great wilderness revival preacher for many years, and his life was filled with exciting adventures.

The Story of Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus grew up in Genoa, Italy, where he helped his father in the family's wool shop. He loved the sea, and he was on a ship at every opportunity. He also grew up with the knowledge that his name "Christopher" meant "Christbearer;" and that understanding was to come to him many times during his life, when he was tempted to focus on greed or fame. He felt that God had given him a commission to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations; and he gave his attention to that vision.

When Christopher was 33, he worked with his brother, Bartolomeo as a map maker in Lisbon, Portugal, the seafaring capital of the world in that day. The year was 1484. Most of the world's secular scholars still believed that the earth was flat, and that ships which ventured out too far into the ocean would fall off the edge. But many Christians believed that the earth was round, because Isaiah had prophesied about the "circle of the earth." (Isaiah 40:22) There was much debate over the issue, and the Christians were mocked as being "superstitious" and "unscientific."

Christopher had heard about the travels of Marco Polo and the exotic lands in the Far East. He was convinced that India could be reached by traveling about 2,700 miles west across the Atlantic. His theology was right, but his geography was a little off. The earth was much larger than he thought; and there was a little obstacle in the path he did not know about. Today, that piece of land is called "America."

Christopher tried for years to get the financing for an expedition to the West,

but he met with scorn and opposition. The only ones who had that kind of money were kings and queens, and their advisors did not believe his story. He went to King John II of Portugal, and then to England, Spain, and France. Each time, he was rejected. Then, in a monastery in Spain, God spoke to his heart and dealt with his attitudes. He had been trying to accomplish a great missionary feat in his own strength. He surrendered to the Lord, and he began to pray diligently that God would provide the financing.

Finally, the Lord worked in the hearts of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain. Their army had just defeated the Moors and had obtained full control of the nation of Spain. They wanted to do something for the work of the Lord, to show their gratitude for His grace on their country; and here was a missionary with a plan to sail west to take the gospel of their Savior to India. As our hero shared his vision with them a second time, they agreed to finance the trip. Christopher was delighted; but immediately his weakness for greed flared up, and as soon as he got the loan approval, he insisted that he be given 10% of the wealth and be named Admiral of the Seas. He was thrown out on the spot; but one of the king's counselors interceded for him, and he returned, although a little more humble.

In 1492, he set sail in three small but swift Spanish Caravel sailing vessels on his missionary journey. Finally, on October 12, after much discouragement and near-mutiny, they sighted land. It was not India, but it was a new mission field with people who needed the message of the Christ-bearer.

The Story of Fanny Crosby

Francis J. Crosby was born on a farm in New York, in 1820. When she was just six weeks old, she suffered from an eye infection. Her worried father found a "doctor," who told him to treat her eyes with a mustard "poultice." He later found out that the man was not a qualified doctor at all. His "remedy" burned the baby's eyes, and she was totally blind for life.

Rather than become bitter, Fanny's parents and grandmother taught her to focus on the positive aspects of life, and to enjoy it fully. When she was eight, Fanny wrote a poem:

"O what a happy soul am I!

Although I cannot see,

I am resolved that in this world,

Contented I will be."

How many blessings I enjoy,

That other people don't.

To weep and sigh because I'm blind,

I cannot, and I won't."

Little Fanny found that the secret of contentment was to focus on the advantages of every situation; and she saw some advantages to blindness. She learned to memorize quickly, since she could not read. Fanny memorized whole books of the Bible, as well as thousands of songs. She enjoyed a full and happy life. While Francis was a young girl, her godly grandmother became her "eyes," describing everything she saw in vivid language. Fanny learned to paint

powerful pictures with words, and she became one of the greatest poets in history.

Fanny went to the Institute for the Blind in New York, when she was 15 years old. She went as a student, and then became a teacher there. She spent 23 years there. She met Alexander Van Alstyne, who was also blind. They had a happy marriage, although their one daughter died in infancy.

Although raised in a Christian home, Fanny did not become a Christian until she was 31 years old. She was moved greatly at the singing of "At the Cross," by Isaac Watts. Her happy life was now absolutely radiant; and she began to compose hymns to express her thoughts. She would compose them in her mind, and then quote them to someone to write for her at the first opportunity. During her delightful 94 years of life, Fanny Crosby composed more than 8,000 hymns.

Fanny Crosby was much in demand as a speaker, for she was so happy and positive, and her mind was filled with wisdom from knowing God personally and from knowing the Scriptures so thoroughly. Even though she died in 1915, she still greatly influences millions of Christians today through her wonderful hymns.

When asked one day if she would like her vision restored if it became medically possible, she replied, "Oh, no. I am excited about the fact that the first face I will ever see will be the face of Jesus!"

Remember that it was this happy, blind woman who wrote,

"Perfect submission, perfect delight.

Visions of rapture now burst on my sight.

Angels descending, bring from above, Echoes of mercy, whispers of love. This is my story, this is my song,

Praising my Savior all the day long.

This is my story, this is my song,

Praising my Savior all the day long."

The Story of Jim Elliot

In the early 1950's, a young American Bible college student named Jim Elliot felt the call of God to become a missionary. His bride, Elizabeth, shared his vision and his zeal for God; and they prepared for several years to become missionaries.

After much training and fund-raising, the time came for Jim to begin his missionary ministry. He had the use of a small airplane and four other godly young men, to help him reach into the jungles of Ecuador. Their first objective was to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the fierce Auca Indian tribe, located deep in the jungle.

Wives and friends stayed behind on this dangerous first trip. After years of planning and praying, the men took off for South America. They followed the Curaray River, and came to the place where they had heard the Aucas lived, in a village near the river. For several weeks, they dropped gifts and pictures to the people, showing that they were friendly. Finally, on January 3, 1956, the pilot, Ned Saint, made five trips in a small airplane to ferry in Ed McCully, Jim Elliot, and Roger Youderain. He later brought Pete Fleming.

For several days, they waited to make contact with the Aucas. A few came out to their clearing, but wandered off again. Within a week, the Aucas killed all five of the kind missionaries.

When word finally got back to Elizabeth, she was heartbroken. It seemed so senseless for these bright young men to die before they had the chance to win even one of these people to the Lord. They had made the supreme sacrifice for a people who responded only with hatred and violence.

As she was going through his possessions, she came upon his favorite Bible. In it, he had written, "He is no fool who exchanges what he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose." Those words stirred her faith and her hope. She began to pray and ask God for direction. Eventually, she would go with a few others and bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the very people who had killed her young husband. They learned that the strangers from the sky had actually given their lives to bring them the hope of eternal life; and many of them became believers.

It seemed to some that these deaths were senseless. Why did God not guide them away from danger, or protect them in some other way? Why did God allow obedient servants to die so prematurely? We do not know all of the answers; but we do know that the result of their sacrifice was a strong mission work that continues to this day, winning whole tribes to the Lord. And we also know that there is a special reward promised in Scripture to those who give their lives for the sake of the gospel of Christ, for they are the martyrs. In fact, biblically, there is no greater way to enter God's eternal heaven than to lay down your life for the One Who gave His life for you.

The Story of Lorne Fox

In the 1940's, one of the world's greatest preachers was Dr. Charles Price, who pastored a large non-denominational church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Dr. Price was noted not only for his rich insights into the Word of God, but for his keen spiritual sensitivity as a prophet. He also had great faith for divine healing, and thousands of people were miraculously healed of all sorts of diseases in his meetings.

One day a nine-year-old boy named Lorne Fox was taken up to the platform in a wheelchair. He had been a helpless and hopeless cripple for all of his young life. He had never walked, and his arms hung limply in his lap. His hands were curled up and withered, for they had never been used. Lorne's hands could get no signal from his brain.

Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Price told the boy to rise up and walk. For the first time in his life, he felt sensation in his legs, and he leaped out of his wheelchair and walked, while thousands of people shouted and rejoiced before the Lord. Then Dr. Price did an even more amazing thing. He said to the boy, "Now, go to the piano and play it." Of course, Lorne had never touched the piano in his life. He had never really touched anything, and knew nothing about music. But he sat down on the piano bench and played. The hands that a

few moments before had been useless now flew over the keys with precision and flair.

Lorne continued to play the piano for many years. He went into the ministry himself at a young age, and he used his gift of music throughout his career. As you might expect, his personal testimony stirred many people to believe for their own miraculous healing, and many received their miracle from the Lord.

After Dr. Price died in 1947, Lorne Fox continued to publish the "Golden Grain," a powerful prophetic magazine Brother Price had used to lead thousands of people spiritually. Rev. Fox also worked for years with another evangelist named Willard Cantelon. Brother Cantelon was also a skilled musician, who played the saxophone and banjo with great skill and anointing. In addition to being a great Bible teacher, Brother Cantelon was also an artist. Each evening, he would paint an original oil painting as he preached, and then presented it to the person who had brought the most visitors.

Lorne Fox passed off the scene, but Willard Cantelon went on to touch the lives of millions as a writer and television speaker. His most famous book is "The Day the Dollar Dies." These men were among the company of prophets, who have an unusually strong sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and faith for the supernatural.

The Story of H. B. Garlock, Rescued From Cannibals

If anyone were to ask missionary H. B. Garlock, "What is the value of speaking with other tongues?" he would answer: "It saved my life."

In the early 1920's when the Garlocks went to Liberia as missionaries, it was known as "the white man's graveyard." It almost became that for him.

A feudal war had broken out between two factions of a cannibal tribe, and a member of the losing side had been captured and eaten by the victors. When a caravan sent by the missionaries for supplies passed through a village of the defeated faction, they recognized a member of the caravan as belonging to the enemy. After capturing him, they beat him nearly to death and put him in their prison house. And the caravan was refused permission to continue.

Garlock decided to try to rescue the carrier. Upon arriving at the village just before dark, he told his men to help him over the stockade (a pole fence surrounding the village), and to hurry to his side when he reached the hut that served as a prison. They were praying desperately.

Walking up to the hut with a display of courage that he did not feel, Garlock greeted the two spearmen guarding the door as though nothing was amiss, cut the grass rope which held the bamboo door in place, released the prisoner from the center post of the hut and dragged him outside. Then, out of sheer exhaustion, he sat down on an old elephant skull. His men joined him.

News spread quickly through the village, and soon the small group of men were surrounded by an angry mob, armed with cutlasses, spears, bows and arrows, and clubs. Momentarily they expected to be torn apart by the screaming crowd.

Finally, the witch doctor went into his act. His long pigtails were smeared down with cow dung and palm oil. Around his neck hung a string of leopards' teeth, and pouches of jujus and fetish medicines. He was a fearsome sight. Grimacing, making sudden lunges at the missionary, parading before the people reciting victorious battles, he was presenting a challenge to the missionary. Finally, he came over and laid down his wand at Garlock's feet as though to say: "Here is your chance to defend yourself before we kill and eat you."

"I was really on the spot," Rev. Garlock reports. "I only knew a few words of greeting in their language. So I prayed, 'God in heaven, if ever You helped us, help us now."

Suddenly, the missionary began to shake. At first he was ashamed for the people to see how frightened he was. Then he realized the power of the Holy Spirit had come upon him. To his mind came the command of Jesus in Mark 13:11, "Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak...whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."

Stooping down, Garlock picked up the witch doctor's wand, and began with one of the few words he knew in the Pahn language, "Nihlay," which means "I say." Then, he reports, "The Holy Ghost took

control of my tongue, and from my lips poured a torrent of words I had never learned."

A change rapidly took place among those assembled in that cannibal village. The witch doctor sent for a white fowl, wrung its neck, and prostrated himself in front of the missionary. He than smeared blood on the head of Garlock, on the carrier, on his own head, and on the head of the chief. He said, "We see your God

fight for you. Please tell us what to do to atone for our mistake."

The villagers provided men to carry the wounded carrier back to the mission station, and they fed the other members of the caravan. Later, a mission was established there; and there are many Christians there today.

from "Spoken by the Spirit" by Ralph W. Harris © 1973 Used by permission.

The Story of Andrew Gih

Andrew Gih was born in Shanghai, China. He was the son of a Confucian scholar. His family was Buddhist, and they believed it was wrong to kill animals. They were taught that if their good deeds outweighed their bad deeds, they could merit "heaven." His mother was a kind woman with no schooling, so Andrew studied Confucianism under his father. He was taught to worship his ancestors. On certain days, the family would offer food and burn paper money to their dead ancestors. He thought that the keys to life were in the Buddhist religion, with its chanting, self-denial, and strict vegetarian diet.

His father died when he was twelve years old, and left him with the responsibility of supporting his mother. He had to work, and he became very bitter at life. He hated people and was generally hot-tempered. He lived in grief and sorrow. When his uncle died, he thought that suicide might be a solution to the misery of his life.

When some of his friends learned English, he decided he wanted to speak the language, too. While looking for a school, he found Bethel Mission, which operated a school near his home. It was a Christian mission school, which also taught the English language. He had no interest in religion, and he was very materialistic. He did not believe in God or a devil, and he had no desire to go to chapel. When asked why he would not attend, he said, "I live too far away to make it on time." This was a lie.

He was in a Christian school, so he was required to study the Bible. Since the Bible was an English translation, he was happy to study it. Once, another student asked him if he believed the Genesis account of creation. He said he did not. He had been taught the doctrine of evolution. The students discussed the Biblical concept that all creatures produce after their own kind. There are no mixtures, or creatures in transition from one species to another. Through their intelligent discussions, Andrew became convinced that evolution was a lie, and that there had to be a Creator God, Who designed and ordered the universe.

Even though he believed in God, he still loved darkness and sin. He believed, but he was still lost. Later, the school invited Miss C. I. Tippel to speak for the school. She was a missionary to India. During the meeting, there was a great move of the Holy Spirit, and many people were convicted of their sins and converted. The Holy Ghost also moved on Andrew's heart, and revealed his true spiritual condition. He wanted to cry out, "What can I do to be saved?" The Spirit pointed him to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. He lifted up his eyes of faith, and beheld the Son of God, hanging on a cross in his place. He realized that God was calling him to Himself. He bowed down, and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." He felt his emotional burdens lifting from his soul, and the peace of God flooded in. He soon had the joy of leading his mother to Jesus, as well.

In 1931, he received a call from God to preach, and he began immediately. He had such an intensity for God that, as he spoke, conviction for sin would fall on the people, and the preaching meeting would turn into a fervent prayer meeting. When he married Tse Ying, it was the first

Christian wedding in the city of Shanghai. His wife started preaching, also. They both emphasized the work of the Holy Ghost, including the baptism in the Spirit. Their work became a worldwide ministry.

The Story of Young Bill Gothard

When Billy was a young boy, his father was born again and became a zealous witness for the Lord. Mr. Gothard was a member of a mainline denominational church which did not emphasize the Bible, but focused on social issues and religious traditions. When Billy's father gave the plan of salvation in his Sunday School class, he was ordered by the church leadership never to insult the people by implying that they were sinners. He soon left there to seek out a Bible-preaching church, and he became a faithful member of that congregation.

Mr. Gothard Senior had a good position as an executive with a major family magazine. But one day, the company received an order to advertise bar stools. Mr. Gothard felt that it would violate his convictions to promote anything connected with the beer industry that had destroyed so many lives and families; and so, rather than compromise his convictions, he quit his position and took a low-paying job with the local mission. This example of courage was to inspire young Bill with the fact that the purpose of life is to win souls and advance God's work -- and he, too, dedicated his life to the Lord.

Bill was a small, quiet boy with a burning zeal for God. He loved the Bible, and spent much time in prayer. In high school, he made a vow to the Lord that he would witness to an average of at least one person a day. He wrote for and received permission from a Christian publication to conduct a spiritual survey, and used that as a tool to interview his fellow students. He based it usually on the question, "What do you think are the three most important

things in life?" Almost always, the answers would relate to love, joy, and peace. He would follow up with letters and phone calls, always leading the conversation to the truth that true love, joy, and peace come from Jesus Christ, as fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Bill won many of his fellow students to the Lord, and afterward continued seeking the Lord for new ways to bring God's message of salvation to young people. He learned to do chalk talks: creating a large landscape with pastel chalk, while he shared his message. He would even go into the streets of cities to invite gangs to hear the gospel.

One day while going to a youth meeting, his car stalled on the road, and a careless driver behind him drove into the back of it, destroying it beyond repair. He decided that this was God's way to get him to reach out to friends, as he needed someone to take him to the meetings. One day, he prayed for the Lord to provide a car, so that he could be more efficient in getting to youth meetings; and God spoke to several people about the need. Later, as he was leafing through his car titles, he realized that he did not have to look to man to meet the needs. He purposed to ask only the Lord when he was in need, and believe that He would provide the exact amount he needed. He followed that principle throughout his fruitful ministry, and he discovered that God was able to direct him through the provision or the withholding of finances. Today, his ministry team, the Institute in Basic Life Principles, has a large teaching and publishing ministry, with facilities that are first class.

The Story of Mordecai Ham

Mordecai Ham was an American Baptist preacher, born in 1878. He lived a long and joyful life as an evangelist. He was considered a "hell-fire-and-damnation" preacher, who held the crowds in rapt attention in large city-wide crusades and in extended revival meetings in large churches. The first year of his evangelistic ministry, he prayed hard and worked hard, and saw 33,000 conversions. That is certainly more than most preachers win in a lifetime.

Over the next thirty years, his preaching resulted in more than 300,000 people who not only accepted the Lord as their Savior, but also became planted in local churches. He preached strongly against the liquor and beer industry. The author of the prohibition amendment credited Billy Sunday and Mordecai Ham with emptying most of the saloons in the south. In this respect particularly, he influenced the nation for good.

Of all the hundreds of thousands of people saved under his ministry, undoubtedly the most notable was Billy Graham. Billy lived in Charlotte, North Carolina. There was nothing notably wrong with him. He was a high school baseball and basketball star. He was popular with the girls, and a good student. He was from a Christian home, and did not smoke or drink or cuss. He was a good boy, but at the age of seventeen, he was still not saved.

Mordecai Ham had come to Charlotte for a three-month crusade. Every night,

the tent would be filled with worshippers and sinners, sitting on the wooden chairs, benches, and boxes inside and surrounding the tent. It was summer. Billy and his friends had other things to do, and for several weeks avoided the revival. But one night, they had run out of things to do, and they all decided to go to the meeting that everyone was talking about.

Billy was amazed at the grandeur of the meeting. He was used to going to his parents' little church. Here was a crowd of 5,000 people, singing and worshipping God. The choir was wonderful, with all of the ladies in white dresses, and the men in white shirts. But when the evangelist got up to preach, Billy felt that the powerful words were directed right at him. He thought about the fires of hell, and the idea was frightening to him.

The next night, he came back with his buddy, Grady Wilson. This time, hoping to avoid the gazing eye of the preacher, he sat in the choir, although he could not sing a note. When Mordecai Ham said, "There is a great sinner in this place tonight," Billy thought surely he had been talking to his mother about him behind his back. When the altar call was given, Billy nudged Grady and said, "Let us go." They both went to the altar and gave their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. Both of them became full-time preachers, who have touched the lives of millions of people around the world.

The Story of Dick Iverson

Dick Iverson was the son of a pastor in Portland, Oregon, who was called of God at a young age to preach the gospel. He traveled as an evangelist for several years and was greatly anointed by the Holy Spirit and used of God with supernatural signs following. His father, who had a small church called Deliverance Temple, became ill, and asked his son to move to Portland and help him in the work. The church was not able to support both families, so Dick came to do the work in the church while supporting his young family by selling used cars. He found that he had a talent for spotting good used cars and selling; and while it became a very heavy work load as his father became unable to do any of the work in the church, he managed to handle both full-time jobs.

One night, he realized that someone very powerful was standing at the foot of his bed. The being spoke clearly to him and said, "If you will give yourself to the business, I will make you a millionaire." He knew immediately what was meant, and that it was a valid offer. It would mean quitting the ministry and giving all his efforts to the car sales business. He would greatly prosper, and would be able to support many missionaries on the field, as well as provide a good living for his wife and four young daughters.

He also quickly realized that this was not the voice of the Lord, but the devil himself. God had called him to preach, and although it was difficult for him and his family, he knew he was doing the right thing. He settled it in his mind to reject the riches and continue to be faithful in the ministry, no matter what the cost.

After his ailing father died, Dick became the senior pastor of the church and began to work full-time as the pastor. He missed the days of travel and excitement that he had known as an evangelist, but he stayed faithful to the task, hoping that someday he might be released from the duties of the church as God would send somebody else to pastor the struggling flock.

One day God gave a message to him through another preacher who had a strong prophetic anointing, and said that the problem in the church was that the pastor did not love the sheep. He responded as David did when the prophet Nathan rebuked him. He repented and responded fully to the call of God, and became committed to his local congregation.

The church began to grow, and he began to raise up young men to preach and teach the Word of God. Today, the church is called Bible Temple, and has a worldrenowned leadership team and Bible College, and a great congregation of several thousand. Bible Temple sends out thousands of ministry tapes and textbooks all over the world, and has produced more than 500 pastors and missionaries. Dick Iverson has been mightily used by God to change the lives of multitudes of people. But he had to decide to say no to the world and to a plan that sounded spiritual and right, but was actually a plot from Satan to get him off the track.

The Story of Bob Jones

Robert Reynolds Jones was born in Shipperville, Alabama, in 1883. He was the firstborn of twelve children, and his parents were dedicated Christians. Robert grew up on a farm, where everyone pitched in with the chores and worked long, hard hours. He was never lazy, and had a sharp intellect as well as a strong body.

At the age of eleven, he gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. The preaching of the Word in church moved him to deep conviction, and he genuinely repented of his sins. He began preaching as a young boy, and winning other kids to Jesus. At the ripe old age of twelve, he became the Sunday School superintendent for his home church. He had an unusually good ability to memorize Scripture, and to preach with skill and zeal. People loved to hear this young man preach, because he had an ability to make things understandable.

The "boy preacher" was ordained by the Methodist church when he was 15 years old. Two years later, his parents died. He had a great responsibility to help the family, for he had eleven younger brothers and sisters, and no father and mother to care for them. Bob helped on the farm, but was kept very busy preaching the gospel. He had no time for anything but work. He preached in cotton fields, brush arbors, and small churches.

When Bob was 21, the years of hard work and neglect of his own physical health finally caught up with him. With his body in a weakened condition, he

contracted tuberculosis of the throat. He also had double pneumonia, and was told that he had less than ten years to live. He began to pray, and told the Lord that he was willing to take better care of the temple of the Holy Spirit. Responding to the Lord, and to the advice of his physician, he moved out west, where the air was clean and dry. There, he prayed and rested, and God completely healed his body.

He went back to Alabama, refreshed, strong, and ready to preach. He courted a fine Christian girl named Mary Stollenwerk, and they were married in 1908. She was a great help to his ministry, because she was well-educated and refined. Their son, Bob Jones Junior, was born in 1911. Bob Jones began to be in demand as a speaker, and soon he was preaching in camp meetings and city-wide campaigns.

Bob Jones continued his education, and obtained a doctor's degree. motivated by a desire to train preachers for the work of the ministry, he founded Bob Jones College near Panama City, Florida. The college moved to Cleveland, Tennessee in 1933, and then to its present location in Greenville, South Carolina in 1946. Bob Jones University now has an enrollment of 4,000 each year. Until his death in 1968, Dr. Jones promoted the preaching of the Bible as the pure Word of God, and opposed atheism, modernism, and liberal social theology. remembered as one of the great fundamentalist preachers in America, and name is synonymous with conservative Christian education.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of Adoniram Judson

Adoniram Judson was a preacher's kid. He was born in 1788 in Malden, Massachusetts. Adoniram was a very gifted child who learned to read at the age of 3 and was "preaching" to his playmates as a 4-year-old. He learned sea navigation at the age of 10, and could read Greek by the age of 12.

When he was only 16 years old, he entered Providence College and became best friends with a boy named Jacob Eames. Jacob was also intellectually gifted, but he was an atheist and lived a wicked life. The two young men spent many hours talking over their ideas and philosophy, and the more they talked the more the godless Jacob eroded the religious ideas that Adoniram had grown up with all his life.

After graduation, Adoniram returned home and announced to his heartbroken parents that he was an atheist and intended to go out into the world and live a worldly life of pleasure. But had a hard time forgetting his mother's tears. He spent a year living in sin in New York City, and then decided to travel west.

On the first night of his trip he found that the inn was full. In order to get a bed for the night he had to share a room with a dying man. The room was divided in half by a curtain, but all through the night he heard the miserable moans of the sick man who obviously was not ready to face the Lord. As he heard the sounds of the dying man, he thought of death. He remembered the faith of his parents, and their bright hope of eternal life in Heaven with Jesus. He knew that his best friend Jacob Eames would laugh him to scorn for thinking about eternity.

Finally, late into the night, the fitful and distressing sounds from the next bed ceased, and Adoniram was able to sleep until the sun woke him. He asked the innkeeper about the other man. He replied, "I'm sorry, but the man died during the night." Adoniram was not ready to handle the idea of death, and was upset by its proximity. "What was his name?" he asked. The innkeeper said, "His name was Eames. Jacob Eames."

As the word, "lost, lost, lost" echoed through his mind, he realized that his atheist friend was wrong, and that he had died with no hope and gone to hell. Adoniram went home to his parents and announced that he was going to Bible College. There he gave his heart to the Lord and dedicated himself to be a missionary.

Through years of suffering and hardship, Adoniram Judson finally established a missionary work in Burma, becoming the first American foreign missionary. He suffered imprisonment and torture, the deaths of two wives due to the harsh and filthy conditions, and saw the deaths of several of his children. But through it all he stayed faithful to Christ, and had occasion to bless even the men who had tortured him. When Adoniram Judson went to Burma, there were no Christians in the country, and it was seven years before he won his first convert. By the end of his life there were 7,000 Burmese Christians, 63 churches, and 123 ministers in the nation; and Dr. Judson had also translated to Bible into the Burmese language.

The Korean Girl Who Loved Jesus

For most of the 20th century, the followers of Karl Marx, who wrote "The Communist Manifesto," have pursued their goal of world conquest, and have taken control of many nations of the world. In the process, millions of people, many of them Christians, were murdered. What Marx called communism (a shared society) really became socialism, which means that the state owns and controls everything.

Since Christians tend to value freedom and family, and since the Marxist government is by nature atheistic (denies the existence of God, the supreme authority), Christians are always persecuted and often martyred by socialists.

One of the nations which fell to communism was North Korea, although South Korea remained free. In North Korea, many churches were destroyed, and many Christians were martyred.

It was therefore not a complete surprise when a little Korean Christian church was interrupted one Sunday by a group of soldiers. The officer went to the front of the room, where he curtly instructed the little pastor to sit down. He said, "The Christian religion is against the law, and is an expression of rebellion against the state. You people are hereby ordered to disband, and to show your loyalty to the people by renouncing this Jesus you worship. We do not believe in God, and we will not tolerate this religion. We have placed the

portrait of this Jewish Messiah on the door of the church. You will file out of the building one by one. To demonstrate your proper obedience to the state, you are to spit on the picture as you go by it. If you refuse to obey, you will be shot immediately."

The people sat in stunned silence. They began to weep. One by one, from the back of the church they shuffled out into the church yard. The first man, trembling, walked by the painting of Jesus and spit enough to be noticed. The next man did the same. The first six who went out were men, and all of them obeyed the officer's command.

The seventh person to leave was a young girl, who was also weeping. But, instead of spitting on the picture of her Lord, she took part of her long skirt and began to clean off the spittle that was dripping down its surface. She was weeping and sobbing. Not only did she know that it was her death sentence, but it broke her young heart to see the picture of her wonderful Jesus so defiled by the men who claimed to be His followers.

The soldiers watched in amazement, and then in deep admiration. They were so moved by the faith and the tender love of this simple girl, that they turned to the six men who had spit on the portrait, and shot them instead. Then they abruptly left. That girl, and many others, went on to serve the Lord, because they had seen the power and the importance of faith.

The Story of D. L. Moody

This is the story of a man who refused to quit. He was born in Northfield, Massachusetts on February 5, 1837. Dwight was only four years old when his father died, and the family lived in poverty. After struggling in school for a few years, Dwight's uncle offered him a job selling shoes in his store in Boston, with the condition that he agree to faithfully attend church while working at the store. So, at the age of seventeen, he moved to the big city and began his work.

During the Sunday School class, the teacher told the students to turn to the Gospel of John. Dwight had no idea where John was. The other students noticed him leafing through Genesis, and began to laugh at him. The alert teacher quickly traded Bibles with him and went on with the lesson.

As time went on, Dwight did very well as a shoe salesman, but not so well in the church. When he applied for church membership, he was rejected by the committee. They felt that he was not likely to be a productive member of the church, and would not be a good representative of Christianity. Undaunted, he stayed faithful to the church, and also joined the YMCA, which was at the time very active in soul-winning and Christian training.

In 1856, at the age of 19, he moved to Chicago and became active in the YMCA as well as the church. He was a very aggressive soul-winner. He rented 4 pews in the Congregational Church and filled them with anyone he could find. He was known to chase some potential converts through the back alleys of the city, always ready to "compel them to come in."

When he was told that there was no class available for him to teach, he went to the streets and brought in 18 young people and started his own Sunday School class.

He continued to be successful in the shoe business, but always focused his greatest efforts on his work for the Lord. While still a young man, he started a little Sunday School in a deserted saloon in the north part of Chicago. He was known as "Crazy Moody" by people who saw him ride through the streets on a pony, leading a group of children to Sunday School like a "pied piper." By 1863, his group had grown out of several buildings, and Dwight decided to build a building with classrooms and a 1500-seat auditorium.

D. L. Moody conducted several great revival campaigns in England, as well as in the United States. While he was in Ireland, he met Henry Moorhouse, who was known as "the Boy Preacher." Moorhouse asked Moody to take him along to the United States, but Moody was not interested. Later, Henry showed up in Chicago, and invited himself to preach for Moody. He was allowed to speak; and because the Holy Spirit moved through him, he was asked to preach more meetings for Moody.

There were two great lessons that Dwight learned from Henry Moorhouse. First, Henry taught him to rely on the Word of God, and stop preaching men's words. Secondly, he taught him about preaching the love of God, rather than hell and God's hatred for sin. He learned that God hates sin, but loves sinners. From then on, Moody preached the love and grace of God.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of Alexander Maclaren

Alexander Maclaren was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1826. He was the son of a godly lay preacher, who wanted with all his heart to see his son enter the Christian ministry. He diligently instilled in his son a love for the Word of God, and instructed him in wisdom through his formative years.

In 1842, the family moved to London, England, and Alex was enrolled in college. He was especially diligent in studying Hebrew and Greek, and was a top student. For the rest of his life, he made it a habit to read from the original Hebrew Old Testament, and the Greek New Testament, every day. He studied the Bible, not just as a source for sermons, but as a source for life and wisdom.

In 1845, he was sent to pastor a small, run-down church in Southampton. After he graduated from college, he took a church called Portland Chapel. church had suffered under incompetent pastor, who left the church deep in debt and suffering from a bad reputation in the community. The church unwisely borrowed money, presuming that they could pay back the debts in the future, rather than being content with what God had provided. The result was a weak, discouraged group of people whose faith was shaken.

Alex took the church, and later testified that this struggling, obscure church was a good training ground for his future ministry. He remarked that others had been given good, solid churches, and did not have to struggle and pray as he did to survive. It was easier for him to see his utter dependence on God, and also the need to study and get a clear word from

God for the people. The church prospered under his leadership, and the debts were paid. In 1856, he married his cousin, Marion, who was a great help in his work for the Lord.

Two years later, he was asked to pastor Union Chapel in Manchester. He was to pastor that great church for 45 years. He believed in staying with the same congregation, and he seldom took other speaking engagements. He even turned down the prestigious Yale lecture series, because his focus was on his own congregation. Maclaren worked hard all week to prepare sermons for his large flock. He always wanted to make sure that they would have something worth coming to hear, when they went to Union Chapel.

Alexander loved the great outdoors, but he stayed in this dirty, industrial city. He was quiet and shy; but his calling put him among many people, and so he preached the Word of God faithfully. It was often difficult for this quiet, shy man to be the pastor of a large church. Some people thought he was proud and aloof. But everyone knew that Alexander Maclaren loved his church, and that he loved his God. He often suffered from stage fright, because it was so against his nature to speak in front of people. But his passion for the Word prevailed, and he went on and preached, disregarding his own feelings. He considered preaching hard work, and made it a point to study in his work boots, rather than house slippers. He was a great pastor, who left many great sermons in written form for others to learn from.

The Story of Marinus

During the time of the New Testament and for centuries afterward, the Roman Empire was the dominant world power. The emperor was called Caesar; and the Jews as well as many other national groups were subject to his vast authority. Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem to pay taxes to the Roman Empire; and Jesus taught his followers to pay the taxes to Caesar, even though the Romans oppressed them and later persecuted Christians.

One of the ranks of authority in the Roman army was Centurion. The name comes from the Latin word "centa," which means "one hundred." It is also the root for our English word "century." A Centurion, then, was in command of one hundred Roman soldiers, and was under the command of a Vesparian, who was in turn under a Tribune.

In Caesarea of Palestine, there lived a Roman Centurion who loved God and was able to greatly bless the Christian work in his time. His name was Cornelius, and he was instrumental in teaching Peter that God wanted to save Gentiles as well as Jews; and he and his family received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. His story is recorded in Acts 10.

Many years later in the same city, another Christian Roman soldier was being considered for the honor of the rank of Centurion. He was a courageous and mighty warrior, and had won many honors on the battlefield. His family was wealthy and highly respected as leaders in the community. This promotion would be another special milestone in the life of this outstanding young Christian.

As he stood before the magistrate to be promoted to the rank of Centurion, another soldier stepped forward and said, "Marinus is a Christian, so he will not sacrifice to the emperors. He should not be promoted to the rank of Centurion." The magistrate was deeply distressed by this accusation, and said, "Marinus, are you a Christian?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Would you refuse to sacrifice to the Caesar?"

"I will serve him faithfully, and I will fight for him, but I worship the Lord Jesus Christ, and will not worship Caesar."

The magistrate said, "I grant you a stay of three hours to reconsider what you have said."

After three hours Marinus was again brought before the magistrate, and again refused to renounce Christ. He said, "I have chosen to hold fast to the God Whom I serve, and to His Son, Jesus Christ." He was immediately taken to the executioner and killed. In the greater court of heaven, he was awarded an eternal crown of life by the great Judge of all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a result of his courage, many who witnessed his execution were drawn to the Lord and became Christians. During those years of persecution by the Roman Empire, the body of Christ grew, as people saw that this faith in Jesus was more precious to Christians than life itself.

Life-related Stories

The Salvation of Samuel Morris

Many years ago, in the jungles of west Africa, lived a homely little native boy named Kavoo. He was small and sickly, and was not expected to amount to much in his life, even though his father was the chief of his village.

Kavoo suffered greatly in his young life. It was a practice among warring tribes to take the son of a conquered chief as a hostage, to ensure payment of more goods in the future. The son was often tortured, until the tribe could come up with the required ransom. The Kru tribe had been defeated several times; and Kavoo had been taken as a child each time to suffer for months, or even years, at the hands of cruel enemies.

When he was fifteen, he was taken by an especially cruel and greedy chief, who had him tortured daily with whips of thorny, poisonous vines, which cut his flesh to ribbons and sent searing pain through his body. He became too weak to sit up.

Kavoo's father brought everything his poor tribe had of value. It was all taken by the more powerful chief, who then declared that it was not enough. The desperate father even offered his daughter, but Kavoo insisted that she could not bear the torture. Finally, Kavoo was to be tortured one more time, and then buried up to his neck near an anthill. His mouth would be propped open and smeared with a sweet substance to attract the ants, who would eat him, head first.

As Kavoo was being tied up for his execution, a blinding light suddenly flashed, and a voice from heaven told him to arise and flee. His tortured, weak body

was instantly healed, and he ran like a deer into the jungle. For weeks, he walked through the deadly African jungle, guided past the venomous snakes and fierce predators by a supernatural light, illuminating his path all night long. The light led him to a settlement near Monrovia, Liberia. This was the one area in all of Northwest Africa which was safe from the slave trade that flourished back then in the late nineteenth century.

Kavoo got a job as a plantation worker where another Kru tribesman worked. Soon, he overheard a white woman teaching about Saul of Tarsus, who was converted when he saw a blinding light from heaven. He became excited, and exclaimed, "That is the same light that brought me here!"

The woman was Miss Knolls, from Fort Wayne, Indiana. She taught him from the Bible, and also taught him to speak and read the English language. Kavoo still suffered feelings of inferiority, after the years of torture he had endured. He prayed and prayed in agony to the heavenly Father, until the workers in the hut made him go out in the jungle to pray. One night, he prayed until midnight, and then returned to his bunk, still seeking God. Suddenly, the room was filled with light, and the burden lifted. He knew that he was adopted by God, and he shouted with joy, until everyone was awake. Miss Knoll baptized him in the river, and she gave him a Christian name. Since he was her first convert, she gave this homely African boy the name of a Christian banker in Fort Wayne, Samuel Morris.

Soon, Samuel led another boy to the Lord. Amazingly, this boy was also from

the Kru tribe, and he had also been captured by the same chief that had taken Kavoo. He had witnessed the light that

had set Kavoo free; and he was able to verify the amazing story of supernatural deliverance.

Samuel Morris: Coming to America

Samuel Morris began his short life as a native African boy named Kavoo, who had been captured and tortured for ransom by a rival chieftain. But a blinding light came out of the sky; and God instantly healed his body, and led him through the jungle to a settlement in Liberia, where he heard the gospel and was gloriously saved. His name was changed to Samuel Morris by the missionary.

When he heard about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, young Samuel read his Bible diligently, and asked for all the information he could get. It was the turn of the century, and not too many Christians were Pentecostal, or understood speaking in tongues. Finally, someone told him of a man who knew about the Holy Ghost baptism. He was Stephen Merritt from New York. Samuel said, "I will go to New York to see this man."

Samuel went to the docks, and asked a merchant captain for passage to America. The man was a harsh and coarse seaman, and he had no use for a homely black boy. But Samuel stayed by the shore for three days, fasting and praying. God arranged for some of the crewmen to desert, and the captain needed an extra hand. He would work for his fare.

When he got on board, he saw the cabin boy lying on the deck. He had been injured, and could not walk. Samuel, with simple faith, reached out and laid hands on him. The boy was instantly healed. At first, Samuel was treated with rough cruelty by the captain and crew. He became deathly ill working in the rigging, and so he prayed and asked God to give him another job. The cabin boy soon asked him to trade jobs; and he went

joyfully to work, cleaning the captain's filthy quarters. He did every task as unto the Lord, and soon the man realized that he now had a faithful servant. Still, he kicked and beat him at will.

The captain provided the crew with plenty of rum, which resulted in many brawls. One especially wicked Malay crewman was attacking a shipmate with a cutlass, when little Sammy stepped in front of him and said, "Do not kill, do not kill." The man hated black people, and had vowed to kill the boy. But now, he could not. The cutlass froze in his hand, and he simply walked away.

The captain saw that this frail and homely boy was not only a prayer warrior, but a peace-maker. He became the first man on the ship to give his heart to the Lord. When the vicious Malay was later on his deathbed from illness, Samuel prayed for him, and he was healed. The big brute became devoted to Sammy and to his God. Gradually, many of the rough, pagan sailors were won to Jesus by the little African; and they joyfully learned to sing Christian songs and to pray with their spiritual leader.

God began to prosper the merchant ship during the five-month trip to New York. In fact, as a direct result of Sammy's prayers, God delivered the ship and crew from a hoard of natives who tried to kill the crew and loot the ship. When they arrived at the harbor in New York, the crew took up a collection to outfit their new friend with the best clothes they could find for him, and wept openly as he left them. Their lives were dramatically changed.

Samuel Morris: Life in America

Samuel Morris began his short life as a native African boy named Kavoo, who had been captured and tortured for ransom by a rival chieftain. But a blinding light came out of the sky; and God instantly healed his body, and led him through the jungle to a settlement in Liberia, where he heard the gospel and was saved. His name was changed to Samuel Morris by the missionary.

Sammy heard about the baptism in the Holy Ghost, and he desperately wanted the experience for himself. He was told that a man named Stephen Merritt from New York could tell him about it. Samuel said, "I will go to New York to see him."

Samuel went to the docks, and obtained passage on a merchant ship in exchange for work as a cabin boy. During the five months on the ship, Samuel won the captain and many of the rough sailors to the Lord with his faithful life and powerful prayers. When he arrived in New York, he found a carriage driver to take him to Mr. Merritt's. Amazingly, the man knew just where to go. Samuel had no money, but he confidently said, "Mr. Merritt will pay the fare." When he arrived, Mr. Merritt was just leaving for a meeting. He told Sammy to wait for him at the mission across the street, and went on. That night, he returned to the mission to see an amazing sight. There was Sammy, praying with great intensity, surrounded by seventeen rough men, who were all on their knees asking for God's forgiveness. Although he was still struggling with English, he won seventeen men to Jesus his first day in America.

The Merritt family took this homely black boy into their home, and were

challenged and blessed by his meek spirit and his great faith. Samuel, on the other hand, had never seen such luxury. He had never slept in a real bed, or sat at such a table to eat. The Merritts took him to a clothing shop and replaced the rough clothes the sailors had donated with fine new clothes.

Later, Mr. Merritt took Samuel with him to a meeting, along with two dignified preachers. When they saw him, they expected him to hop out and walk behind the coach. They were indignant when Mr. Merritt allowed him to ride with them. But as they went along, talking about the city and the sights, Samuel finally said, "Please, talk to me about Jesus. I would like to pray." As he prayed, the Holy Spirit came into the carriage, and the hearts of the men were moved as they realized their lack of faith.

When Samuel was asked to speak, he was not impressive, except for his praying. When he prayed, people began to weep with conviction, and would flock to the altar. It was not long before a group in Mr. Merritt's church had taken up an offering to send Samuel to Fort Wayne, Indiana to attend Taylor University and study for the ministry.

In Fort Wayne, the teenager from Africa touched the lives of everyone with his passion for God and his simple faith. He laid his hands on the sick, and they recovered. He worked hard, and studied diligently. But the harsh Indiana winter proved too much for his frail body. He worked very hard, and neglected to dress warmly enough when he went outdoors. He went on to see Jesus face to face, still a teenager, in 1893.

George Müller's Prayer Life

George Müller was a nineteenth century English pastor, who is remembered today as one of the greatest men of faith and prayer in history. He and his wife began to help the orphans and other destitute people who came to their door for help in their desperate need. While the Müllers were not at all wealthy, they realized that their heavenly Father was; and they learned to look to Him for the needs of others.

Mr. Müller prayed for hours each day, often for basic daily necessities. One day, there was no food at all for the children, but they gathered in the dining hall and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving for God's faithful provision. When the prayer was ended, there was a knock at the door. A baker sheepishly told them that he had felt a strong urge to get up during the night and bake extra bread. Would they be able to use it? As they joyfully carried in the fresh bread, a milkman came to the door and said that his horse-drawn milk wagon had broken down in front of the orphanage, and asked if they would kindly take the milk, so that he could move the empty wagon to a repair shop. Such testimonies abounded in the life of this unusual man of faith.

Pastor Müller also founded the Scriptural Knowledge Institute for Home and Abroad. Eventually, he established 5 homes for orphans, which cared for over 121,000 young people over the years. At one point, he was feeding and caring for 2,100 orphans daily.

George Müller felt a deep desire to show people the power of prayer, and he purposed to support his many ministry organizations through prayer. He made it a point never to ask people for money or even to tell them of the needs. He would go to God on his knees, and people would come to him, often saying, "Mr. Müller, I feel impressed to give you this money." Often, the people would be unsaved business people in the community, but they were moved by the Lord to support His work.

Over a period of 63 years, George Müller raised over seven and one-half million dollars for the ministry, just by private prayer. During his ministry, he was given nearly \$500,000 in personal gifts, most of which he immediately gave to the institute. When he died at the age of 93, he left an estate of less than \$1,000.

It is said that beside George Müller's bed were found two deep grooves in the hardwood floor, where his knees had been for thousands of hours. He read the Bible through more than 200 times, and half of his Bible-reading time was on his knees. He lived a full, happy life, knowing that he had been responsible for thousands of souls in God's kingdom, primarily because he had learned the power of prayer.

Revival at Northampton

During the 1600's, thousands of Puritans and other Christians settled in the new land of America. As long as they sought God, they were blessed and protected. However, when the people became spiritually dull, many of the native tribes united under one chief, who was known as King Philip; and many of the Christians were viciously killed by Indians. It was only by the help of the Christian Indians that they eventually defeated Philip.

During the first half of the eighteenth century (1700's), there was a notable decrease in spiritual zeal among the people in America. They had peace and prosperity; and it was only later, during the Revolutionary War, that the nation was spiritually stirred and united. However, in the midst of that period of lethargy and spiritual inactivity, there was a notable revival, called the "Great Awakening." For a time, God moved mightily, both in England and in the American colonies.

In 1734, God moved in a wonderful way in Northampton, Massachusetts. Jonathan Edwards was a Puritan pastor who was a brilliant Bible scholar, but a boring speaker. He was in the habit of staring at the back wall of the church throughout the sermon; and he was, in general, a less than interesting speaker.

However, he began to preach more and more about the grace of God, and he became bold in speaking out against the religious complacency of the day. He began to preach with zeal and anointing about genuine salvation through repentance and faith; and that winter, many people were dramatically and miraculously saved. One young woman, the most notoriously immoral person in town, was born again by the grace of God. She immediately began to serve the Lord, and would freely testify of the wonderful work of God in her life.

No one was more surprised at all this than Pastor Edwards, because he was simply not a dynamic person. This great revival was not a product of his personality, but clearly came as a result of God's sovereign move in answer to the prayers of the people. The people would eagerly gather for every church meeting, several times a week. They would worship with great joy and zeal, and there would be many tears during the sermon. Some would be weeping in sorrow and conviction over their sins, while others would weep with joy every time they heard God's Word.

During the next spring and summer, the whole town was full of the joy of the Lord. Visitors would come to town and often return home rejoicing, because their lives had been so touched by the presence of the Lord. Surrounding towns began to experience revival. Crowds would flock into the church buildings that for years had seen only a few people. Worship services would burst with excitement, where previously only a few feeble voices had barely carried a tune.

Many of the worst sinners around were now sharing their joy with others. Pastor Edwards also developed a message on the judgment of God, and moved thousands of people to repentance. It became one of the most famous sermons in history: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

The Story of Polycarp

In the year 162 A. D., Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Verus became the emperor of the Roman Empire; and he led further persecution against the Christians, particularly in Asia and France. Romans took great pleasure in inflicting great suffering upon believers. would force Christians to walk over thorns, nails, and sharp shells. would beat them with metal-studded whips, until their sinews and veins were exposed. They sought new and ingenious ways to inflict humiliation and pain, before their courageous victims expired. They succeeded in forcing many to deny the faith in a moment of weakness, but many others were sent to heaven by way of the persecutors.

One young Christian named Germanicus was so courageous in the face of torture, that the pagan tormentors were enraged; and they decided that he should be put to death. They also decided to still the voice of Polycarp, the venerable old bishop of Smyrna.

When the pastor heard of the plans of the Romans to execute him, he escaped and went into hiding. But he was discovered by a child. That night, he dreamed that his bed had suddenly caught on fire. He surmised from that that it was the Lord's will for him to become a martyr for Christ, so he did not seek to flee again. When the Roman soldiers came to arrest him, they were amazed at his peaceful countenance. He offered to feed them, and then asked for an hour to pray. request was granted, and he prayed with such fervency that the men regretted capturing him.

Pastor Polycarp was taken before the pro-consul, and was commanded to renounce his faith. He replied, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has never done me wrong. How then, can I deny the Savior who gave His life so freely for me? I will not recant. Jesus Christ is Lord and King." He was dragged to the marketplace, where a stake had been prepared for his burning.

The men tied him to a large pole, and surrounded it with a pile of brush. The fire became hot, driving the people back, but the bishop continued to sing praises to God in the midst of the flames. Determined to stop the mouth of the man of God, soldiers stabbed him in the sides with spears. Blood flowed down his sides, and put out the fire. Polycarp continued to sing and pray with all of his strength.

You would think that these pagans would have seen the hand of God on the Bishop, but they were so full of hatred and evil that they only thought of ways to kill the old man. With considerable effort, they finally succeeded in killing the kind preacher, and in burning his body. They also rounded up twelve other Christians who had supported Polycarp's ministry, and killed them as well.

But the more the pagans sought to blot out Christianity through killing, the more people were attracted to this faith worth dying for. The early church thrived and grew because of the blood of saints like Polycarp, whose memory yet today is honored by millions who have also discovered that Jesus Christ is both Lord and King.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of Charles Price

Charles Sydney Price was born in England in 1887, and trained in law at Wesley College. He emigrated to Canada, and decided to enter the ministry as a Methodist. He became disenchanted with that organization, and became the pastor of a Congregational church in Valdez, Alaska. He became a popular modernist speaker; and after World War I, he took the pastorate of the large and formal First Congregational Church in Lodi, California.

Some of Pastor Price's people were showing interest in the Pentecostal movement and in the work of a local female preacher, named Aimee Semple McPherson. In 1920, after hearing about a meeting, he decided to attend incognito. Later, he claimed that the preacher "murdered the English language;" but the Spirit of God moved on Price, and he ran to the altar under deep conviction.

Soon after that, Pastor Price went to some "tarrying meetings" at a Baptist church in San Jose; and he received the baptism in the Holy Ghost, with the evidence of speaking in tongues. He returned to his church, "where the power of God commenced to fall." When the denominational leaders found out that he had received Pentecost, they forced him to resign from his pastorate. He then started an independent church, called Lodi Bethel Temple.

In 1922, Charles Price began to travel, preaching in meetings which attracted thousands of people each night, particularly in Canada. The ministry was "confirmed with signs following," as thousands of people were saved, filled with the Holy Ghost, and healed. Often, the power of God was so strong that people

would fall out, and were unable to stand for a time. One woman who was greatly influenced by Dr. Price was Kathryn Kuhlman, who would go on to pursue a similar ministry.

In 1926, Dr. Price began to publish a monthly magazine called "Golden Grain," which included some of his sermon transcriptions. He had a powerful prophetic anointing, and a passion for the body of Christ. Dr. Price later pastored a great church in Edmonton, Alberta, in Canada. He was opposed bitterly by other preachers, who were jealous of his anointing and his popularity.

One night, Dr. Price was praying for the sick, when he spotted the pastor of a large Methodist church who had spoken against him. Dr. Price said, "Just to show you that I am not the healer, I am going to ask my good friend, Dr. McKay, to come and lay hands on this woman." The pastor could do nothing other than come and mumble a prayer for the woman, whom he could see was seriously crippled. When God touched her, she began to scream, because her body was being straightened, and the braces now hurt her. The braces were taken off, and she began to run and rejoice. Dr. McKay became a supporter and close friend of Charles Price.

In 1947, Charles Price told his friends that there would be many healing evangelists, beginning in 1948, and that some years later, they would see a great Charismatic renewal in denominational churches. When asked one night to go to a meeting, Dr. Price said, "No, God told me to stay home tonight. He is going to meet with me, and take me home." That night, he died, a very happy and successful man.

The Story of Revolutionary Preachers

Many people today are unaware of the strong role that the church played in early American history. In fact, the Bible was at the core of the foundation of this nation. Many of the cities of New England were built around the church; and the most influential voice in town was that of the pastor.

The war for independence from Great Britain was primarily fought for religious freedom, although the oppressive bondage of taxation was a factor. It was the American pulpit that stirred the patriots of America to action, and led thousands of faithful church members to the support of General George Washington and the continental army.

During the battles of Lexington and Concord, Pastor Philips Payson captured two British supply wagons single-handedly. Pastor John Craighead recruited the men in his church, and personally led them to New Jersey to support Washington. When he was not fighting, he was preaching.

One Sunday morning in 1775, a Lutheran pastor in Virginia named Peter Muhlenberg preached a sermon on "For everything there is a season." He said that there was a time for peace, and a time for war. At the end of his inspiring message, he flung off his robe to reveal the uniform of a colonel in the Continental Army. He said, "And now it is time to fight." He marched that same afternoon with 300 men that he had recruited from his congregation. Pastor Muhlenberg later rose to the rank of brigadier general, having gained many honors for bravery for himself and for his regiment.

After Great Britain declared war on the patriots who declared independence from the empire, efforts were made to recruit military help from other countries. But most of them refused. France later sent troops to fight with the Americans. But Germany allowed England to hire German mercenary troops (soldiers for hire).

In 1780, the German General Wilhelm von Knyphausen crossed into New Jersey with 5,000 troops. In the little town of Springfield, the patriots fought them off. But, during the fighting, the wife of Pastor James Caldwell, a mother of nine, was shot and killed by German fire in her home. It was never determined whether it was deliberate or not, because Pastor Caldwell was wanted by the British for helping the American army. slaying of this kind and loving mother stirred the anger of the townspeople. When the German and British troops came back two weeks later, they were met with furious resistance.

The patriots were fighting valiantly, many of them firing their muskets from behind a fence beside Pastor Caldwell's church. To fire a muzzle-loader, it was necessary to put in gunpowder, a lead ball, and some paper. When they ran out of paper for their guns, Pastor Caldwell ran into the church and gathered up several copies of Watt's Psalms and Hymns. He ran out, tearing pages out of the hymnals, shouting, "Give 'em Watts, boys!"

The British Empire was the most powerful military force on earth; but because of the influence and prayer of Christians in Congress, and praying generals and pastors, the Americans won their independence.

The Story of "Rock of Ages"

Augustus Montague Toplady was a fine English gentleman, who lived about two centuries ago. At the young age of 36, he was dying of consumption. His doctor examined him one day, and said, "Your pulse is becoming weaker." "That is a good sign," said the poet, "that my death is fast approaching; and I can add that my heart beats every day stronger and stronger for glory." Unlike unsaved people who are terrified at the thought of death, he welcomed it as a friend, knowing that it would mean an end of his sufferings, and eternity in heaven.

As he lay on his deathbed, Mr. Toplady wrote the poem "Rock of Ages." He originally entitled it "A Living and Dying Prayer for the Holiest Believer in the World." Now, he was not claiming to be that person. His thought was that even the holiest person in the world had to rely on God's grace for salvation, and could not have the hope of heaven on the basis of his good works.

The great poem, which has become one of the best-loved and most sung hymns in history, included the words:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let my hide myself in Thee.

Let the water and the blood,

From thy riven side which flowed,

Be of sin the double cure,

Save from wrath, and make me pure.

"Not the labour of my hands,

Can fulfill thy law's demands;

Could my zeal no respite know,

Could my tears forever flow,

All for sin could not atone.

Thou must save, and thou alone.

"Nothing in my hand I bring.

Simply to the cross I cling.

Naked, come to thee for dress;

Helpless, look to thee for grace;

Foul, I to the fountain fly:

Wash me Savior, or I die.

"While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyestrings break in death,
When I soar through tracts unknown,
See thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me.
Let my hide myself in thee."

The dying poet saw a picture in his mind of a great cleft in the rock, which was a shelter from the driving storms of life. He pictured himself as a fleeting bird, with

no ability to withstand the danger apart from the protection of the Rock.

Many people have been known to sing this great hymn at the time of their own deaths, or in times of mortal peril. When the steamship "London" sank in the Bay of Biscay in 1866, a man who survived reported that the passengers were singing it together as the ship went down. A few years later, another ship was on fire in New York harbor, and the people were forced into the water, many without life

jackets. One famous singer was there with his wife. As he was putting her life jacket on, a man rushed up and grabbed it out of his hands. They were forced immediately into the water. Soon, she said, "I cannot hold on any longer." As they struggled in the cold sea, in his agony, he began to sing "Rock of Ages." Many others joined in. Some gained strength to hold on until they were rescued, and others went into eternity with the song echoing in their minds. "Rock of Ages" ministers to many Christians yet today.

The Story of Sandy and Her Dad

Sandy was a fine seventh-grader, who lived in Alabama. Her father had been an army sergeant in the Korean War. It was now the sixties, and Sarge had a wife and a fine family. Sandy and one of her brothers were Christians, but mom and dad had never been born again. Sandy prayed every day for her dad. He was a good father, and he loved her very much. He tried to give her everything she wanted; but what she wanted most was for him to get saved.

One day, a pastor in town ran into Sarge. He recognized him immediately. He had served under Sarge in Korea. It had been 21 years, but Sarge had not changed that much. Soon they were talking about old times, and establishing a friendship. The pastor invited him to church, but he was not interested. Sarge had a good life, and did not feel like he needed the Lord right then.

The preacher did not give up on him. He went to his home several times to visit, always looking for a way to win him to the Lord. He soon observed the close bond between Sarge and his daughter, Sandy. As soon as he was able, he talked to the young teen girl about her dad, and asked her to invite her dad to take her to church. Sure enough, the next Sunday, there was Sandy, happily coming to the church with her daddy.

The pastor was pleased, but again, he was stumped. He could not seem to get Sarge to the altar to give his life to the Lord. The family was attending church regularly, but no evangelistic sermon seemed to move him to commit himself to Jesus.

The pastor finally reasoned that he had found Sarge's strength, and that was his love for his girl. He called Sandy, and asked her to write a letter to her dad, and mail it from school. On Friday, Sarge got a letter in the mail, while his girl was in school. It said,

"Dear Daddy,

You are the best dad in all the world, and I want to thank you for all the things you do for me. Thanks for taking me places. Thanks for all the nice clothes you buy me. Thanks for the radio you gave me for my birthday. Thanks for food, for a home, and thanks for taking me to church. Dad, you are the greatest, and I only know one thing more that you could do to make you even greater, and that is to give your heart to Jesus. Dad, I am fasting and praying for you, because I do not want my wonderful dad to go to hell.

Love,

San."

That Sunday, the preacher preached an evangelistic sermon, and he walked up and down the center aisle. He saw Sarge and his wife, with tears in their eyes. As he gave the altar call, he went back to the pew where they were, and gently took the baby from the arms of Sarge's wife, and handed it to the lady beside her. He led them both to the altar, and said, "Sarge, 21 years ago, you were my leader in Korea. Now, I am your leader, and I am bringing you to Jesus." Sarge and his wife were saved, along with several other people in the service.

The Story of C. I. Scofield

Cyrus Scofield was born in Michigan, in 1843. The writer of the Scofield Study Bible had a difficult early life. His mother died giving him birth. As she was dying, she prayed that God would make him a minister. His family moved to Tennessee, where he received an elementary education. As a boy, Cyrus had a thirst for He was always asking knowledge. questions, especially about new subjects. Although his father and stepmother were Christians, he was only superficially religious. He listened to the Bible, but thought of it only in terms of history and stories, rather than the life-changing gospel.

By the time Cyrus was ready for college, the Civil War had begun. At the age of seventeen, he joined the Confederate Army. He was an excellent horseman, and was frequently given the task of delivering messages under fire. He was awarded often for his bravery.

After the war, he studied law in St. Louis, and was admitted to the bar in Kansas in 1869. He was elected to the Kansas State Legislature, and was later appointed a United States district attorney. He then returned to St. Louis to practice the law profession there. In all of these career moves, Cyrus was still not a believer. He became more involved in sin as his successes came. He had been a social drinker. But his drinking increased, to the point that he was becoming a drunkard.

But his family was praying for him. As a result, God brought a man named Tom McPheeters into his life. Tom worked with the YMCA. In those days, the YMCA was very evangelistic. It was indeed the Young Men's Christian Association, which existed for the purpose of leading young men and boys to Jesus, and training them for service. Tom prayed for Cyrus, and won him to the Lord.

Cyrus became very active in the church, and was ordained into the ministry in Dallas in 1883, where he was asked to be the pastor of a Congregational church. He studied the Bible diligently. He applied the same thirst for knowledge to the Bible that he had demonstrated in secular life. Since his training was in law, rather than the Bible, he decided to try to develop the kind of Bible that he would have wanted to use as an untrained church worker. He developed the Scofield Annotated Bible, with notes and updates built into the King James version. He was influenced by frequent talks with Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China. He and his wife made frequent trips to England, where he studied in the famed Oxford libraries. When his Bible was finished, it was published by the Oxford University Press in 1909. This was his great achievement, and the work that gave him fame to this day. Scofield is still honored as a pioneer, who sought to make the Bible understood by the common man. Though he died in 1919, he is still remembered today for this achievement.

The Story of Horatio Spafford

You have probably heard of the great Chicago fire of 1871, which, according to tradition, was started by Mrs. O'Leary's cow, which kicked over the kerosene lantern. Thousands of buildings burned to the ground, and many lives were lost. One of the wealthy men of Chicago who suffered great financial losses in the fire was a Christian businessman named Horatio Spafford. He lost most of what he owned, but he declared that he was grateful, because he still had his faithful wife and his four delightful daughters.

The Spaffords had known hardship. Their only son had died tragically; but they kept their eyes on the Lord, and purposed to meet him in heaven. After the fire, Mr. Spafford was too busy helping people who were even less fortunate than himself to spend too much time feeling sorry for himself. In fact, he worked too hard. His doctor finally advised him to take some vacation time.

The Spafford family decided to travel to Europe for a long-overdue vacation. Determined to take care of a few more business matters, Mr. Spafford sent his wife and daughters on a sailing ship, and promised to take passage himself to join them as soon as possible in Europe.

On the voyage, another tragedy struck. The ship collided with another, and many lives were lost. Mrs. Spafford and the girls clung to pieces of the wreckage; but one by one, the girls slipped under the cold, dark waters, and drowned. Mrs. Spafford

survived. When she arrived in Europe, she wired a simple message back to her husband: "Saved alone."

Horatio Spafford immediately sought the first available transatlantic vessel. One night, as they were sailing, the captain spoke to Mr. Spafford to let him know that they were near the spot where his daughters' ship had gone down. As he retired to his cabin, he turned to the Lord in his grief and loss. He felt the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the inspiration to write a song which has ministered to millions of believers through the decades that have passed. He wrote:

"When peace like a river attendeth my way,

When sorrow like sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well with my soul.

And Lord, haste the day

When my faith shall be sight,

The clouds be rolled back as a scroll.

The trump shall resound,

And the Lord shall descend,

Even so, it is well with my soul."

The Story of Squanto

The Pilgrims who came to America on the Mayflower were Christians, whose primary purpose was to escape religious oppression and persecution from the Church of England. Though they met with many hardships, God sustained them, often through miraculous means.

After landing on Cape Cod in 1620, they found a wonderful location, which was near a deep bay in the ocean, and was blessed by four spring-fed creeks. There was even a field with twenty acres of land cleared for crops, but it had not been tilled in several years. They were amazed that such a choice spot could be uninhabited, but so it was.

That winter was extremely difficult. They did not have the provisions to last through it, and many died in the harsh New England winter. The leader, William Bradford, lost his wife, who drowned in the sea -- although it is not clear why she died. By March, 47 of the 102 who had come from England had died.

One day, Captain Miles Standish was meeting with the men in the common house when someone said, "Indian coming." "Should not that be, Indians coming?" someone asked. No. It was one lone Indian, who asked if they had any His name was Samoset, and he spoke fluent English. He had ridden with English vessels up and down the coast, simply because he loved to travel. Samoset informed the pilgrims that the territory they had settled had been the home of the Patuxets, a large and hostile Indian tribe that had been wiped out by a strange disease. Other tribes believed it to be the work of an evil spirit, so they left the place alone. It was actually the safest

and nicest location that they could have found in America.

The next week, Samoset returned with another Indian, who was the last of the Patuxets. His name was Squanto. In 1605, he and four others had been captured by English explorers and taken to England, where they were questioned. After nine years in England, he came back to the Patuxets with Captain John Smith. Smith sailed away, another British captain, Thomas Hunt, came to them and lured 20 of them onto his ship. He put them in chains and took them to Malaga, a port off the coast of Spain, to be sold as slaves. A few of them, including Squanto, were bought by some friars, who taught them the Christian faith.

Squanto was then able to get back to England; and in 1619, he returned to his home. There, he was crushed to find that everyone had died. He wandered aimlessly, and then settled in the Massasoit's camp. He had lost all reason for living.

When Squanto learned about the suffering pilgrims from England, his countenance changed. He went to them, and he began to teach them everything that they needed to know, in order to survive and thrive in this harsh wilderness. He taught them to fish, trap, and hunt. He showed them how to plant corn, using fish as fertilizer. He taught them to harvest maple syrup from the trees; and he showed them which plants were edible. He taught them all of the skills that they needed, and he even guided them in their trading ventures.

God had sovereignly prepared this amazing man to be the teacher and guide that these Christians would need, in order to survive. He found his purpose and fulfillment in helping these dedicated and grateful people; and he earned a place in American history as God's man for the hour.

The Story of Peter Waldo

During the first few centuries after the death and resurrection of Christ, Christianity grew throughout the known world, in spite of periods of intense persecution from civil and religious authorities. But, over the centuries, many church leaders became carnal and corrupt. Humanistic and superstitious traditions began to rise in prominence. became a lucrative business, manipulating the common people for personal gain. The Bible was hidden from the people, and religion was ruled by tradition and politics. This lack of spiritual light led to the Dark Ages, which continued for centuries.

During the Dark Ages, however, there were some genuine believers in the world. One such light in the darkness was Peter Waldo, a wealthy businessman from Lyons, France. One day, he was at a party with some friends, when another merchant had a seizure and suddenly died. He pondered the thought of death; and he sought a Bible, to get some answers to quiet his fears. It was a long search, because the few hand-written copies in existence were hard to come by. Finally, he bought one for a large sum of money. In it, he found the greatest treasure in the world: God's plan of salvation.

Peter gave his heart and his life to the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave away his wealth, and he sought to tell everyone the good news of the gospel. People mocked him as a fool, but he used every opportunity to point them to eternal riches. He realized that the Roman Catholic Church, with its emphasis on indulgences and ceremonies and traditions, was not leading people to God, and was in fact keeping the Bible from

people, to maintain power over them. He determined to proclaim God's Word to the common people. In 1180 A.D., he had produced a translation of the New Testament in the language of the people of the day; and he and his followers preached the gospel. They became traveling peddlers, carrying merchandise from house to house. Their real purpose was to share the "Pearl of Great Price," and show their customers the most valuable treasure of all. They taught many people that Jesus is the head of the church, and not the pope. They exposed many of the false teachings of the Roman Church, and led thousands of people to Christ.

In 1208 A.D., Pope Innocent III began a major campaign against the so-called "Waldensians." He decreed that evangelism and Bible study were dangerous, and those who preached the Bible were heretics. The Church put many of the Christians to death, but they could not stamp out the influence of Peter Waldo. He died in 1217 A.D.; but his followers continued the task of personal evangelism, often under the threat of death.

Later, some Waldensians appealed to Pope Alexander III to let them preach the gospel. They gave him a copy of their Bible. They were officially forbidden to and preach: then. they excommunicated from the church. Remembering Acts 4:19, they continued to preach the gospel; and their numbers grew, in spite of the danger. Even as late as 1655 A.D., nearly two thousand Waldensians were killed for their faith in only one year. Peter Waldo's memory and influence live on, because he was a genuine hero in a dark age.

Life-related Stories

The Story of George Washington's Prayer Life

George Washington was born in 1731; and he became known as the father of his country. He was not technically the first president of the United States, because the nation really began in 1776, and the president of the Continental Congress for the first twelve years was a dedicated Christian man of courage named John Hancock. But after the Constitution was ratified in 1789, George Washington became the first official president of the new nation, serving two terms by unanimous vote. The people were so pleased with the military commander who had led the Revolution that they would have gladly made him president for life; but, he humbly limited the presidency to eight years.

George Washington was descended from a long line of strong Christians, and was greatly influenced by his godly mother. His lifelong habit was to spend two hours alone each day in prayer and Bible reading. He also loved to talk to others about the things of God. Those who knew him personally always recognized that George Washington was an extremely humble man who was faithful to God in prayer. He considered the Bible to be the absolute essential element in government, and declared that it would be impossible to rightly govern any people without God and the Bible. In his farewell address, he said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to good government, religion and morality are the inseparable and necessary pillars and support. Let not that man claim the name of patriotism who seeks to undermine those pillars."

When George Washington was just twenty years old, he began writing down some of his prayers. He developed a book of prayers, which give rich insights into the heart of this godly man. Here is a sample of his prayers:

"Most Gracious Lord God, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift, I offer to thy divine majesty my unfeigned praise and thanksgiving for all thy mercies towards me. Thou mad'st me at first and hast ever since sustained the work of thy own hand; thou gav'st thy Son to die for me; and hast given me assurance of salvation, upon my repentance and sincerely endeavoring to conform my life to his holy precepts and example. Thou art pleased to lengthen out to me the time of repentance and to move me to it by thy spirit and by thy word, by thy mercies, and by thy judgments; out of a deepness of thy mercies, and my own unworthiness, I do appear before thee at this time....Suffer me not to be drawn from thee, by the blandishments of the world, carnal desires, the cunning of the devil, or deceitfulness of sin. Work in me thy good will and pleasure, and discharge my mind from all things that are displeasing to thee, of all ill will and discontent, wrath and bitterness, pride and vain conceit of myself, and render me charitable, pure, holy, patient and heavenly minded."

When George Washington was leading the ragtag American army through the bitter winter at Valley Forge, he devoted much time to private but fervent prayers. He sought not only divine guidance, but supernatural assistance. He wrote later that he had been visited by an angel while there, who told him that he would be successful in the Revolutionary War, and that a "Union" would be established as a mighty nation. He was also told that

within the first century of the new nation, a bloody civil war would come between the North and the South, and that the North would win and preserve the Union.

On the last day of his life, he sent everyone out of his room, so that he could

spend one more precious hour alone with God. When his assistant came in, he sighed, "'Tis well." He closed his eyes, folded his arms, and said, "Father of mercies, receive me to thyself," and died.

The Story of Washington and the Tory

During the winter of 1777 and 1778, the young American army was encamped in Valley Forge. The new nation had declared independence from oppressive British government, and was desperately fighting against overwhelming military power to crush their resistance. It was a bitterly cold winter, and the men were poorly equipped. Few had adequate clothing, and some had no shoes. They shivered in tents, and had little to eat. Many died from exposure, and morale was But General Washington kept praying and seeking God for guidance, and the Lord saw them through.

One day, a Tory (an American who was loyal to the British) was captured and taken to the camp at Valley Forge. His name was Michael Wittman, and he was accused of having carried aid and information to the British in Philadelphia. It was proven that he had done great harm to the American army, and he was courtmartialed. He was pronounced guilty of spying for the enemy, and was sentenced to be hanged.

The evening before the execution, an old man with long, white hair appeared at the camp. He told the guards that his name was Peter Miller, and that he wanted to speak with Mr. Washington. He said, "General Washington, I have a great favor to ask of you. Washington replied, "I shall be pleased to grant you almost anything, for you have done us many favors in the past. Make your request."

Peter replied, "I hear that Michael Wittman has been found guilty of treason, and is to be hanged tomorrow. I have come to ask you to pardon him."

"That is impossible," the general said. "Wittman is an evil man, who has done all in his power to betray us. He has even offered to join the British army. We dare not be lenient with traitors. I cannot pardon your friend."

"Friend?" cried Peter Miller. "He is no friend of mine. He is my bitterest enemy. He has persecuted me for years. He has even beaten me and spit in my face, knowing full well that I would not strike back, since I am a Christian. Michael Wittman is no friend of mine."

"Then why, sir, do you wish him pardoned?"

"I ask it, because Jesus did as much for me, " was the old man's answer.

Washington turned away, and disappeared into another room. He returned shortly with a paper, which he signed, declaring a full pardon for Michael Wittman.

"My dear friend," he said, "I thank you for this fine example of Christian charity. God bless you."

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Boyhood of Smith Wigglesworth

In 1868, Smith Wigglesworth was a boy of nine, who was confirmed at an early age in the Episcopal church. His father was not a church-goer; but he sent his children, because his favorite drinking buddy at the English "pub" was the pastor. Young Smith was deeply moved by the experience of the laying on of hands, and he was hungry for God. He could not understand the way other boys were cursing and acting, as if there was no eternity. He loved church, and deeply desired to read the Bible. But he could not, because from the time he was old enough to attend school, he had been forced by poverty to work 12 hours a day at the mill.

When he was 13 years old, his family moved to Bradford, England. There, he went to the Wesleyan Methodist Church, where there was a good move of God among the people. During some special meetings, seven boys were asked to give a 15-minute testimony or speech. For 3 weeks, Smith lived in prayer; and he was mightily anointed to share, when his time came to speak. He quickly gained the respect of the Christians in the area as a young man with a burning zeal for God.

He was full of joy, and he had a burning desire to win the lost to Jesus Christ. He was constantly sharing with other boys about Jesus with great enthusiasm, even though he was often mocked and treated roughly by the neighborhood bullies. He loved to carry a Bible, even though he could read only a little.

When he was 16 years old, he joined the Salvation Army, which was the most aggressive soul-winning group in the area. The army members would fast and pray diligently for souls; and dozens of people came to the Lord every week as a result of their prayerful witnessing. At times, the group would pray specifically for 50 or 100 souls for the week; and God always helped them to see the goal accomplished.

While working in the mill, he met a godly man from the Plymouth Brethren Church, who taught him about the importance of water baptism, and about the Second Coming of Christ. The man was a plumber, and he took young Smith under his wing and taught him his craft.

When he was 18, he applied for work as a plumber with a local builder. The man said, "Sorry, we are not hiring." But there was something about this young man that caused the builder to give him a chance. He sent Smith to install plumbing in a row of homes, which he finished in a week. The man was amazed, and Smith gained the reputation as an excellent plumber. He began to earn a good wage, but he spent most of his income on orphans or the homeless children who gathered around him to hear him teach about his beloved Jesus. Hundreds of these children were won to the Lord through the zeal of this godly young plumber.

The Salvation Army often asked him to speak for their meetings, even though he was not a very good speaker. In fact, he spent much of the speaking time weeping as words would fail him, when he would be overcome by emotion. Smith Wigglesworth worked hard, prayed much, and won many hundreds of souls to the Lord as a teenager. He was a mighty soulwinner for the Lord, and many miracles accompanied his ministry.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

Smith Wigglesworth: Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Smith Wigglesworth was a plumber in 19th century England, who was a zealous and faithful Christian. He had great faith in God, but had not learned about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as a young man. One day, an older man hobbled to his home and asked for help. He said, "If my people knew I was coming here, they would never let me come. You have the worst reputation of any man I know of. But I believe you are a good man. Please put your hand on my leg." Smith did so, and found that it felt like a log, not a leg. "It is cancer. My whole leg is cancerous, and I am dying. Please help me."

Smith prayed, and the Lord told him that if he would fast and pray for seven days, his leg would be healed. Four days later, the man came bounding to the house, saying, "I am perfectly healed!" On his next visit, the man gave a large offering to Smith's daughter, because he heard that she was going to Africa as a missionary. He then turned to Mr. Wigglesworth and said, "Have you heard the latest? They are receiving the Baptism in the Holy Ghost in Sunderland, and speaking in other tongues." He invited Smith to go at his expense, for they were both interested in receiving more from God.

Upon their arrival in Sunderland, they were greeted by some friends who had moved there. These Christian friends wanted to protect them from this Pentecostal "heresy," so they gave them false reports about what was happening. Smith said, "Let us pray." He prayed earnestly; and afterwards, the friends quietly said, "Do not pay any heed to what we have said. Obey the Lord."

The two men went to a Salvation Army service, saying, "We want to know about the speaking in tongues here." The officer there said, "That is all of the devil." Later, they attended some of the meetings in the Episcopal church, where some were testifying about being baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Smith said, "Let me hear these tongues. I want to receive it, just like they did on the day of Pentecost in the Bible." No one would speak in tongues for him; but they were invited to a prayer meeting, where people were tarrying for the Baptism. It was a wonderful prayer meeting that lasted until 2:30 in the morning; but he still did not hear anyone speaking in tongues. He had lost his hotel key, so he stayed with an Indian friend in his hotel, where they prayed the rest of the night.

After four more days of prayer, he felt that he should return home. He went to the home of the Episcopal Vicar to say good-bye. The Vicar's wife, Mrs. Boddy, was home. Smith said to her, "I still have not received tongues yet." She replied, "You do not need to seek tongues. You need the Baptism!" "But I have the Baptism," he protested. "I just have not spoken in tongues." She then laid hands on him, and left the room. The fire of God fell on him, and Smith Wigglesworth cried, "Clean, clean, clean!" He was filled with joy, and could not speak in English. He spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave him utterance. He had received supernatural anointings in the past, and had great faith. He thought before that he had received the Baptism in the Holy Ghost; but now, he knew that this was the real Baptism, just like in the book of Acts in the Bible.

The Story of Moses Vegh

Frank Vegh was born in a small Hungarian village, in 1900. He was taught in a Reformed school, while his future wife attended a Catholic school. In 1928, they emigrated with their three small sons to Canada, and settled in Windsor, Ontario. In 1933, Julianna Vegh gave birth to their seventh son, and they named him Moses. They eventually raised nine sons and one daughter.

The Veghs were devoted Christians, and Papa Vegh served as a Nazarene pastor for many years. In those days, most preachers had to work in secular jobs, because few congregations could support a pastor full time. From the time Moses was very young, he would walk a quarter mile down the road to his grandmother's house. She had no electricity or running water in the house, but she was a godly woman. Each evening, Moses and one or two of his brothers would sit by the fireplace and listen to Grandma teach them hymns and Bible stories. instilled in them the fear of the Lord as much as she could, laying a spiritual foundation which reinforced the Christian heritage and work ethics of their parents.

During World War II, some of the older Vegh boys served in the military. Although they had picked up such vices as smoking and drinking, they always respected their parents; and they would come home at night and kneel by their beds to pray, even when they were drunk. An older brother, Bill, had been sent home from the navy, because his foot had been crushed on the ship. One night, Bill sawed off his cast, squeezed his foot into a small shoe to hold the bones together, and went to a movie theater with some friends. They saw a war scene in which a church

was being destroyed. As Bill's friends laughed and mocked the church, conviction overwhelmed him, and he ran out of the theater. He gave his heart to the Lord, and began to witness to his brothers.

One evening, while taking some cousins home from a gathering, Bill stopped the 1929 Durant car and announced, "We are going to pray. If there is anyone here who does not want to pray, he can get out now and walk." Thirteen-year-old Moses knew that he was the only unsaved person in the car, and that he was talking about him. Bill was fired up about God, and he had been praying fervently for his younger brother.

Bill finally parked the car beside a side road, and everyone began to pray. Young Moses saw a vision of a long corridor leading to his heart, with trumpeters on both sides. He saw the Lord, and repented of his sins. As the Lord came into his life, he saw demons fleeing in all directions. He had not even realized that he was in bondage, until God set him free. The glory of God filled the old car, and he saw his cousins as if it was daylight, even though it was midnight.

The boys got home at 4:00 in the morning. Bill said, "Moses, we are not through yet. You need the baptism in the Holy Ghost. We will start praying tomorrow." The next day, they went to the old mission and began to tarry for the Holy Ghost. They prayed all day long.

There, Moses saw another vision of Jesus. He was coming to him in a stream of water, and He said, "Will you follow me?" He gladly responded with a willing heart to be baptized in water; and

immediately, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke in a heavenly language. From that day on, Moses Vegh spoke in tongues every day; and he had a ministry which was characterized by supernatural power and prophetic insight.

The Story of Bill and Moses Vegh

Frank Vegh was a Hungarian preacher who had emigrated to Canada in 1928. He and his wife had nine sons and one daughter.

Before World War II, many preachers, including Pastor Vegh, believed that the radio was "the devil's tool," and taught their people to avoid the "carnal" device. But brother Lou was very clever with electronics, and he built his own crystal set. The boys would go to their upstairs room and set up the contraption, where they eagerly listened to some of their favorite radio dramas and comedians.

One day, young Moses went quietly up to the room to listen to the radio, and he saw his father listening on the headphones to Rev. Charles Fuller and his great choir on their weekly broadcast. He had never heard such music, and tears dropped down his cheeks. Soon, the Veghs had an old, used radio in their living room, and listening to the radio became a favorite family activity. Every week, they faithfully listened to Mrs. Beall from Detroit, who presented her program called "America to Your Knees."

Mrs. Beall pastored a strong Pentecostal church, and many of the boys from the congregation went to serve in World War II. She not only prayed for them every day, but she called the nation to prayer. Mom Beall had made a covenant with God. She prayed that God would bring all of the boys home safely from the war,

including her own son, Jim. Amazingly, not one of the young men on her prayer list was killed.

One of the Vegh boys from Windsor, Ontario, was sent home with a broken foot, but God used that to bring him to salvation. He was dramatically saved, and he began to lead his brothers to the Lord, as well. With the help of his teenage brother Moses and some others, Bill began to pastor his own church.

The Vegh boys were hungry for God, and were eager to be involved in spiritual They heard that there was a prophet named Brother Heebner in Toledo, Ohio. Bill and Moses fasted and prayed, and made the long trip to Toledo. When they arrived, they found that the man was out of town. They were very discouraged that the prophet would not know that they were coming. They went back to the mission in Windsor, and prayed. One of the young men began to prophesy, and the spirit of prophecy came upon all of them. They began to exercise spiritual gifts, even though there was little understanding of such supernatural things in those days.

Several of the Veghs entered the ministry, but Moses was to become the most prominent preacher in the family. He later became the pastor of a great church in Findlay, Ohio. Pastor Vegh is currently serving in Budapest, Hungary with his wife, Betty.

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.

Q Link Q Up Q 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 C Link
C Up
C With
S-G-JESUS -G-E

CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

"Link Up With Jesus" By Earning Links On Your Chain.

Bring a Friend to Sunday School

Must be someone who has not attended in the last 3 months.

Memorize a Scripture

Attend Sunday School

Bring Your Bible to Sunday School

BONUS SUNDAY:

Earn 6 Links

Earn 2 Links

Earn 1 Link

Earn 1 Link

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

S-3-JESUS-3-0

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

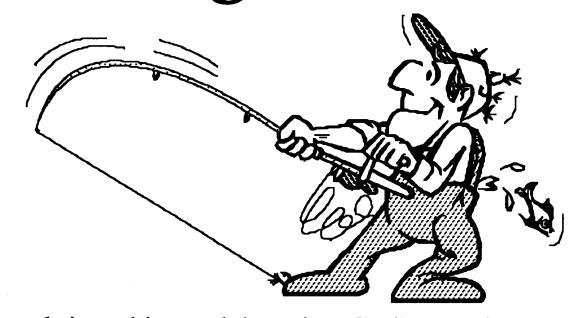
We can fulfill the command of our Lord by ministering to those who are in need.



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.



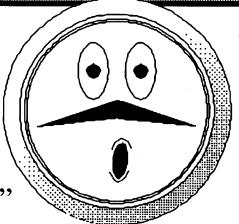
You can earn valuable prizes by learning God's Word and by bringing your friends to Sunday School. Start today, and together we can become "fishers of men". Charles Link
Charles Up
Charles With
Charles JESUS — 3-63

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"

Sectio	n 6													Pror	notior
ប្រ h Link				NA	ME					·					
Link C Up C With						CL	ASS								
	ф ф	3-		ith SUS	='	6 -6	9		Po	i	nt	C	ha	ar	t
Memory Verses Learned Record the verse "address," below. Award 2 links per verse.															
											,			į	
										<u>.</u>					
		-741			<u></u>								į		
At	tenc	lan	ce	Record	l the d	lates in	attenc	lance,	below.	Awa	ard 1 lii	nk.			
					į.										
Br	Brought the Bible Record the dates a Bible was brought, below. Award 1 link.														
Bro	Brought a Friend Record the name(s) of the friends, below. Award 6 links.														

Qualified for Bonus Points?

Award 5 links.

0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-	link Up With JESUS -©- ©	Brought a Visitor	Name
00000 000000	Link Up With JESUS - 13-1 2	Brought a Visitor	Name Date
0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-	Link Up With JESUS - 12 - 1	Brought a Visitor	Name
	Link Up With JESUS - G- O	Brought a Visitor	Name
Q	Link Up With JESUS - © - ©	Brought a Visitor	Name
G G G G −	Link Up With JESUS -0-0	Brought a Visitor	Name

00000	Link Up With JESUS-8-0	Verse:	Name
0000¢	Link Up With JESUS-G-C	Verse:	Name
	Link Up With JESUS- G- O	Verse:	Name Date
- \$	Link Up With JESUS -22	Verse:	Name
Q Q Q Q Q Q	Link Up With JESUS -0-0	Verse:	Name
	Link Up With JESUS-0-0	Verse:	Name Date

	Link Up With - JESUS- G- Q	Attendance	Name Date
0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-	Link Up With - JESUS- C3-C	Attendance	Name
G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-G-	Link Up With - JESUS- 2-2	Attendance	Name
0000¢	Link Up With - JESUS- CJ -CJ	Attendance	Name
0000	Link Up With - JESUS- 	Attendance	Name
Q Q Q Q Q Q Q	Link Up With - JESUS - 12- 21	Attendance	Name

	Iink Up With JESUS -⊕ ⊕	Brought a Bible	Name
	Iink Up With JESUS -⊖ ⊖	Brought a Bible	Name Date
	Link Up With JESUS -G-C	Brought a Bible	Name Date
Ģ 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 7 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	Link Up With JESUS -©- ©	Brought a Bible	Name Date
	Link Up With JESUS -©- ©	Brought a Bible	Name Date
G G G G G G G G G G G G G	Link Up With JESUS -EJ- EJ	Brought a Bible	Name



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-expensepaid 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,

Fuel The Flame Volume 7

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.



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

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

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



Who Can I Invite?

Friends from School Relatives

Neighborhood Friends
The Children of Your Parents' Friends



Friends from Outside Activities:
Scouting
Athletics
Camp Programs



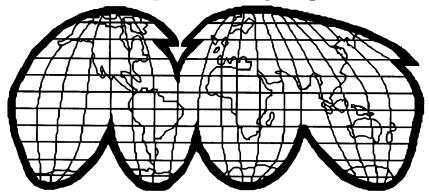
Anyone in the world who needs to know Jesus as their Savior.

Clubs

List below the names of	f people you	ı plan to invite	e. Pray daily over	the
list. Bring the list to chu		_	•	
may pray for your list.		,		
	· 			



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!



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:

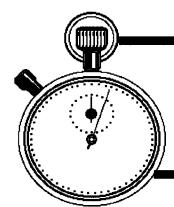
Students Earning 80-119 Total

Points Receive:

Students Earning 55-79 Total Points Receive:

Invite a Friend Today and Help Us Fuel the Flame!





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!







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 then one child in the promotion may register in all necessary classes and then attend the class of her choice.





-1	P	oint	Tal	ly
----	---	------	-----	----

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						



Re-Cap Sheet

		_					
Name	Wk #1	Wk #2	Wk #3	Wk #4	Wk #5	Wk #6	Grand Total
				·			
			-				
				·			
							-
					-		



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 puchasing 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 Fall Fun Festival Volume 7

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 distibuted 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:

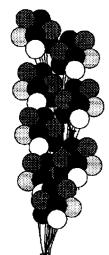
Earn Tickets For The Festival By:

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)

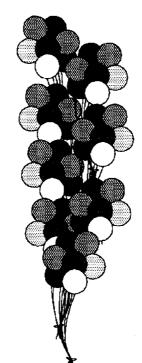
(Friends who have attended Sunday School during the last 4 months, do not qualify.)

Games



Prizes

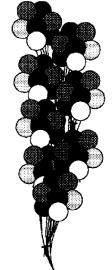
Rides



Food

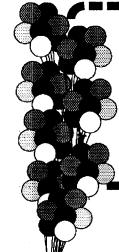
Dunk Tank

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

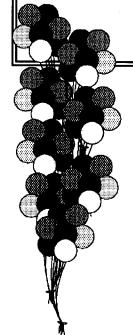




Date:

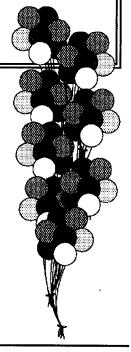
Time:

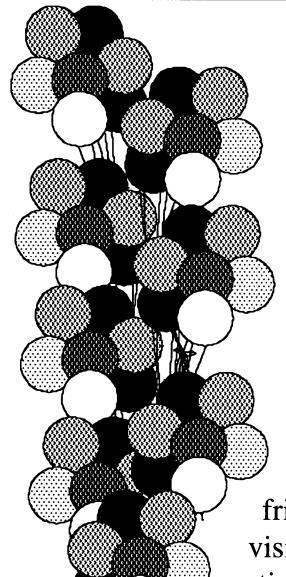
Place:



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

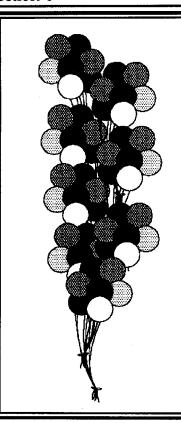
Remember to bring your friends -- especially first-time visitors -- and join us for a great time in Sunday School. Then, join the fun at The Fall Fun Festival

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.

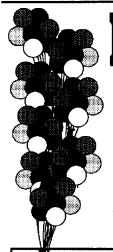


Fall Fun Festival Ticket Certificate

(Name)	*************************************
Has Earned a Total ofTie for the Fall Fun Festival	ckets
Class Secretary	

Have your printer print this form "2-up" (2 forms per page).

	Fall Fun Veekly Point (
	Date									
	Class									
	01033									
			points for th							
		Bringing food ite	ng a friend (1 nm (2)	0)						
	Me	mory Verse (2)								
	Bringing an off Bringing Bible (2	**************************************								
X	Attendance (3)									
Nam	ne									



Fall Fun Festival

Re-Cap Sheet

Class:

Name	\A/L #	14	/V/L #0	\A/L #3	\A/L #/	\A/L #5	Wk #6	Miss	GRAND
Name	VVK #	-	VVK #Z	VVK #3	VVK #2	WK #5	VVK #O	MISC.	TOTAL
	<u> </u>								
		1							
			,						
		1							
		1							
		1							
		1							
	! !	1							
		+							
		+							
			l		<u></u>				



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. <u>IMPORTANT</u>: 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

D		1	T 1:		
Beginning:	•	ana	Endin	g:	
_ ~				<i></i>	

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 willreceive 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 Treaure 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



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.

Treasure Coin

Redeemable for 1 Gift, or Save for Gift of Greater Value

Authorized Signature

Treasure Coin

Redeemable for 1 Gift, or Save for Gift of Greater Value

Authorized Signature

Treasure Coin

Redeemable for 1 Gift, or Save for Gift of Greater Value

Authorized Signature

Treasure Coin

Redeemable for 1 Gift, or Save for Gift of Greater Value

Authorized Signature

Treasure Coin

Redeemable for 1 Gift, or Save for Gift of Greater Value

Authorized Signature

Treasure Coin

Redeemable for 1 Gift, or Save for Gift of Greater Value

Authorized Signature

Unlock The



Weekly Point Chart

A COMPANDO		Total points for the week									
Treasure_		Bringing a friend (20)									
ireasure	Bringing food item (5)										
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Memo	ory Verse (5)] [
Bringin	g an offerir										
Bringing	Bible (2)]]									
Attendance (5											
Name											

Unlock The



Re-Cap Sheet

Treasure

Class:

Name	Wk #	#1	Wk #2	Wk	#3	Wk	#4	Wk #5	Wk #	6	Misc.	TOTAL
										1		
										1		
										T		
										Ī	- VI.	
										Ī		
										T		
										Ī		
							1			T		
		1			1		1		// //	T	···	
					1					T		

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.

How Do We "Speak in Tongues?"

As stated in the book of Acts, when we are baptized in the Holy Ghost, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak in unknown languages.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:4)

In the Bible, the supernatural evidence of speaking in a "heavenly language" accompanied the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and continued in their lives as a means of spiritual intercession and edifying. The Apostle Paul especially encouraged the practice, because he said, "He that speaketh in a unknown tongue edifieth himself (builds up his spiritual strength)."(1 Corinthians 14:4) He also said, "I speak in tongues more than ye all;" and, "I would that ye all spake with tongues." (1 Corinthians 14:5, 18)

The supernatural manifestation of speaking in a tongue that you have not learned is also called "glossolalia." As we speak in a language we do not understand, it is an evidence of a humble yielding to the Holy Spirit. We speak in obedience to the Lord and as a joyful response to His presence and power. Many people seem disappointed that God does not bypass their will and speak through them like a robot. The Holy Spirit does not move that way. He "gives the utterance;" and we do the speaking.

As we praise and seek God with all our hearts as believers, we come to the point where we cannot express what is in our spirits with our known language. The Spirit of God can pray and praise through us as we yield our bodies and tongues to Him. We are baptized into the Person of the Holy Spirit by a sovereign act of Jesus Christ. Peter said,

"Repent, and be baptized,... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38)

We do not earn a gift. We have to receive the gift in faith. Part of receiving the gift is yielding our tongue to His direction. He impresses new words in our spirit; but, we must do the speaking in faith and obedience. The language does not come from our mind. It comes from our spirit.

Some Christians have been taught that we should not speak in tongues, as they did in the early church, because we might open ourselves to an unholy spirit. But Jesus said,

If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:13)

How Does Faith in the Second Coming of Christ Affect a Person's Lifestyle?

When we have a valid hope in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will live for the Lord, instead of for our own selfish purposes.

"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3)

The early Christians greeted each other with, "Maranatha!" This means, "Our Lord is coming again!" They were constantly stirring up their "blessed hope" and were encouraging each other to center their lives and activities around things from which they would benefit eternally. They were "in one accord" and had such a deep love for one another that even the heathens noticed their loyalty and care for one another. They had a strong realization that the things of this life are temporary and the things of the spirit are eternal. So, they sought to live each day ready for Jesus to return, knowing that they would soon give an account to Him for every word, action, and thought.

John said that all people who possess this hope will live pure lives, because the joy of hope also includes a healthy fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is knowing that our lives really belong to Him and that everything in this life will affect us eternally. The lie of Satan, on the other hand, is "thou shalt not surely die." In other words, "you can sin and get away with it if you're not caught." No. God is perfectly just and holy, and you can "be"

sure your sin will find you out." (Numbers 32:23) "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...." (Proverbs 9:10) "...and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil." (Proverbs 16:6)

The world tries to fill our minds with so much diversion, entertainment, and temporal desires that the Lord is "crowded out" of our thinking; we easily lose our sense of urgency and purpose for eternity. Paul said,

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,...." (2 Timothy 4:10)

The world looks attractive until you realize that it is temporary and its rewards are immediate. But, we are created to live forever; and God's rewards and blessings last forever.

Several years ago, Jim Elliot, a missionary, and some of his friends were working in the jungles of Ecuador, trying to evangelize the Acua Indians. Some of those Indians killed Jim Elliot; and, after his death, his friends found these words of wisdom written in his diary: "He is no fool who exchanges that which he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose."

What Is Divine Healing?

Divine healing is the miraculous repair or restoration -- by the supernatural intervention of God -- of that which has been diseased or injured.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

Healing for the spirit, soul, and body is part of the atonement provided for believers by the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Sin brought separation from God in our spirits; guilt and anguish in our souls; and it results ultimately in physical suffering and death. (Romans 6:23) But God is good, and He is the author of blessing and healing. Sin and the devil always tear down; but, God's influence in our lives is always positive.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

The Bible is full of cases where people were miraculously healed of diseases and injuries, and some were even raised from the dead by the power of God. In His short ministry on earth, Jesus was the best example of a healer. When He commissioned His disciples, He told them to lay hands on the sick and that they would recover. There is no scriptural reason to believe that God has stopped

healing people in response to believing prayer. In fact, Jesus said that one evidence that we are genuine believers is that we would minister healing to the sick. (Mark 16:18)

Healing is also part of God's creation. He designed our bodies to heal our wounds and fight disease. Emotions that result from sin, such as guilt, fear, anger, and depression, work against the body's immune system and diminish its ability to heal properly. A clean heart, joy, and laughter increase the body's healing potential.

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." (Proverbs 17:22)

When we speak of divine healing, or "miracles," we deal with a supernatural acceleration or bypassing of the natural laws of healing. For instance, when we believe God for healing, growths can disappear suddenly; broken bones can mend in a moment's time; people with destroyed nerve systems can see or feel again instantly; and even the lives of people, who have been dead for days, can be restored, with no brain-damage.

Not everyone who asks for divine healing receives it. We do not know all the answers; but, there are several factors. One major factor is that God loves to respond to genuine faith. However, if we are not healed, it is not necessarily an indication of weak faith or unconfessed sin. When we pray for healing, we need to do so, in faith, believing God will intervene for us. Another factor is that God sees the larger picture of our lives and knows what is best for us. He is able to make

"...all things work together for good to them that love God,...." (Romans 8:28)

One definition of healing is "preservation from an early death." God

still heals people today and loves for us to look to Him as our first recourse when we are hurting. It is not a sin to go to doctors or hospitals. Sometimes God uses them as His agents for health and healing. Be sure to keep your focus on faith in God and not just on natural means.

Divine healing is a touch of resurrection power. It is not a guarantee of perfect health. The "law of sin and death" is at work in each of us, and one day, we will all die. (Romans 8:2, Hebrews 9:27) But, until that day, we can look to God for His healing touch.

What Does the Bible Say about the Laying on of Hands for Physical Healing?

We are instructed in the Bible to call for the elders of the church to lay hands on us for healing.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;...." (James 5:14-15)

The Apostle James was the pastor of the great church in Jerusalem. He gave many practical insights into spiritual conduct among Christians in a local church. In chapter 5, verses 13-14, he said,

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders...."

There are times when we should pray for our own needs and draw close to the Lord. God allows pressures and adversity in our lives, knowing that, as we turn to Him in humility and prayer, we grow spiritually. We tend to get spiritually lazy when everything in life goes easily. However, there are other times when we need others to pray with us and for us, including times of physical illness.

Notice that the pastor -- inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak for God -- tells us that

the one who is sick should call for the elders. Sometimes someone else will want to call for prayer help. But, if the sick person does not ask for it himself, he may not be open by faith to receive from the Lord. If he is able to speak for himself, he should humble himself and ask for prayer.

He should call for the **elders** of the church. It is our natural tendency to relate to our peers; but, God wants us to learn to respond to mature leaders. We see in the next verse,

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (James 5:16)

Often our physical problems are a result of bitterness or our unconfessed sin. A mature elder would be a good person to talk to about your weak areas and to make yourself accountable to him for victory in those areas.

The elders should anoint the sick with oil, as a symbol of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is a reminder that, while we may be getting medical care, the Lord is our Great Physician and is the source of our healing.

What Is Faith?

Faith is a spiritual focus on God, His purposes, and His power. It leads us to a response of trust and obedience.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

Hebrews 11 is called "God's Hall of Fame," or "the Faith Chapter." It is significant that God was never impressed with great deeds or intelligence. He was impressed by men's faith. Jesus never got excited about the goodness of the Pharisees or the wealth of big givers; but, He was often moved by the faith of a poor widow or a child. Faith is not a device to get God to do what we want. Faith is not positive thinking. Faith is a strong sense of trust and dependence on God, even when we do not get what we want. Paul warned against those who thought that "gain is godliness." (1 Timothy 6:5) In fact, Pastor James said that

"... hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith...."
(James 2:5)

In other words, when we do not have a life of "ease and plenty," we tend to be more dependent on God and more inclined to pray for our needs.

It is human nature to neglect to pray and to seek after God when life is too easy. So, God allows times of struggle or adversity, even enemies, for our benefit. Because they focused their vision on God and His purposes instead of on their immediate comfort or gain, many "heroes of faith" in the Bible were delivered out of impossible situations. Many others, through faith, were able to choose eternal life over their safety, and they were killed by those who reacted to their godly witness. These other heroes of faith are called "martyrs," and even today the enemies of the gospel are murdering thousands of Christians.

Faith is not positive thinking, because faith is not a function of our mind. Some people think they can get God to do what they want with positive confession. Note that while a positive mental attitude is generally healthy and good, it does not move mountains or produce miracles. Faith is trust and a response to God in our spirit. When God speaks a promise to our heart -- things hoped for -- faith responds to God and receives it from God, and the physical results follow. Some people try to apply to their need a scripture or a promise God made to someone else, and insist that God must do the same thing for them if they confess and claim it for themselves. This is called "presumption" and is focused on the problem or want, rather than on God.

Faith is not a way to assert our own will. Instead, faith surrenders to God's will and purposes, even when we do not

What Is Faith? Volume 10

understand what is happening. In fact, if we could see the final chapter, it would not be faith. Faith is the "evidence of things not seen." Faith is honest, simple, spiritual trust. One of the greatest expressions of faith was from a man who

had lost everything and had absolutely nothing in the natural to show for his faith. This man, Job, said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:...." (Job 13:15) Now, that is faith!

How Do We Develop Faith in God?

We strengthen and develop our faith with reminders of God's greatness, faithfulness, and love; by prayer; worship; Bible reading; and hearing Bible preaching.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

Satan is the enemy of our soul. His great goal is to get us focused on ourselves, on people, or on the things of the world -anything to keep us from walking in faith and in the joy of the Lord. He especially targets those Christians who are effective and have a potential in God to damage his dark kingdom by becoming soul winners. The more we concentrate on ourselves. other people, and possessions, the less concentration we will have on God. A focus on self produces pride; a focus on people produces bitterness; and a focus on things produces a temporal value system. A carnal, temporal focus on life will also produce fear, which is the opposite of faith.

Conversely, the more we direct our thoughts and energies toward God and His Word, the more we stimulate trust and confidence in Him. After all, He never fails; and He has no faults or weaknesses. All through the Bible, we see people in their ups and downs; at their best and at their worst; but, God never loses a battle or makes a mistake. It is significant that our own failures and sins ultimately cause us to doubt and even to reject God. Or, we react to the humanity in people as an

excuse to violate God's will for our lives and go our own way.

One great attack from the forces of darkness is called "secular humanism." The word sounds like the good word "humanitarian;" but, actually, it is an evil philosophy, designed to turn people away from God. Humanism is simply a perspective on life that excludes God from the picture. It is actually a religion, based on the doctrine of evolution. It leads us to the fatalistic view that "life just happens; and things in life just happen; so, avoid problems and try to be happy." Secular humanism has resulted in widespread rebellion, depression, addictions, and suicide, because it keeps us from God and the fear of the Lord.

When we stimulate our spirit with God's Word, we build purpose, peace, and joy in our lives. We realize that God is in control and has a plan and purpose for our lives. Life has meaning and direction; and God can give us the grace to live it to the fullest. Not only that, but we also have an eternal hope of heaven. No wonder Isaiah said,

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee:...." (Isaiah 26:3)

We direct our attention toward God as we read His Word; listen to godly music; gather in church to worship and hear Bible preaching; and have Christian fellowship with one another. The more we include God in our thinking, the more we build up our faith, because everything about God is good. Indeed, to know Him is to love Him.

What Is the Grace of God?

The grace of God is favor, blessing, and enablement, which are imparted as a gift to those who humble themselves before Him and receive it.

"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." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The grace of God is a powerful and wonderful truth that is unique to the Christian faith. While most religions teach that people must earn eternal life, God's Word says that God gives us eternal life and imparts wholeness to our lives by His grace, not by our own merits. The Greek word for "grace" is "charis," and the word for "gift" is "charisma." So, they are similar. There are two aspects of spiritual gifts:

- 1. Grace is unmerited. We do not receive it by being good, but by being humble.
- 2. Grace is the power and virtue of God, working through us and for us, and not our own fleshly will and strength.

"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13)

Some people suggest that grace is merely unmerited favor. If that were true, then to "grow in grace" would be to deserve it less, and one should sin more to get more grace. In Romans 5:20, when Paul said, "...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;" he was not saying, "people who sin more receive more grace." Rather, he was saying, "when there is much evil in a society, God will give greater grace to His people so they can still be overcomers." Paul warned about those who would "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." (Jude 4) That is to say, "Since I am saved by grace, then I can be immoral and get away with it." Paul's answer was,

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid...." (Romans 6:1-2)

If grace were only unmerited favor, then it would teach us not to worry if our lives are immoral and less deserving of reward. But, Paul said that the grace of God teaches us

"that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world...." (Titus 2:11-12)

The great truth of the grace of God is that we are not made righteous by our own efforts or intellect. We are destined for heaven, because of the merit of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. We can never develop enough goodness to be God's children. However, God is able to impute and impart righteousness to us, as we humble ourselves under His hand. When Paul was suffering, he asked God to remove his "thorn in the flesh." God said, "My grace is sufficient for thee:...." (2 Corinthians 12:9) This clearly refers to the fact that God would give him strength and

power. Paul did not need mercy, because it was not a sin problem. Grace is more than unmerited favor. No wonder the apostles said, "grace to you." We cannot be overcomers with our own human effort and wisdom. We need God's supernatural gifts in our lives to be "more than conquerors."

How Can We Know if We Have Eternal Life?

We can know we have eternal life if we have a covenant relationship with God through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39)

Jesus was addressing a particular problem which the Pharisees had -- one that many people still have today. They thought that "truth" would lead them to the Spirit. They were often diligent in memorizing the law and obeying all kinds of rules; but, they missed the underlying purpose. It is human nature to try to "deserve" God's favor and reward. So, many people are desperately and faithfully "religious," but they have no personal relationship with the Lord. All through the Bible, the prophets reminded the people that God was more interested in their hearts than in their religious observances.

In the days of Jesus, the scribes were very respected by the Jewish people. A scribe was a man whose occupation was writing copies of the scriptures. Therefore, the scribes naturally memorized large portions of the Word; and they would answer people's questions, teaching as "experts." But, they rarely knew the Lord. In fact, we know of prostitutes and publicans (I.R.S. men) who got saved; but, we do not know of any scribe who ever became an effective Christian.

The error of man-made religion is the idea that "truth will lead us to God" (the Spirit). Jesus said the opposite: "The Spirit of truth...will guide you into all truth:..." (John 16:13) We know that we are the children of God, because

"The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit,...." (Romans 8:16)

We know that we have eternal life, because of the Word of God. John said,

"These things have I written unto you that believe...that ye may know that ye have eternal life,...." (1 John 5:13)

God's purpose is to have a people who fully belong to Him through a covenant relationship, and not merely a group of people who observe religious forms and rituals. The scribes were so busy trying to find God through the scriptures that they missed the greatest revelation of God in history: the Lord Jesus Christ. They were so caught up in details, they did not see the "big picture." Jesus rebuked them for thinking that they could find eternal life through their intellect and debate. Their main purpose was to know "about" God, while God's purpose was to have a people who know Him. Jesus let the people know that the purpose of scripture was to point men to Him -- the "way, the truth, and the

life." (John 14:6) Truth is not a set of ideas, but the person of Jesus Christ.

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." (Galatians 3:24)

Did Jesus Do Away with the Law When He Died on the Cross?

No. He fulfilled the law of God and made many of the religious ordinances of the Old Covenant unnecessary.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17-18)

A law is a principle that always works. The law of gravity says, "when you are close to planet earth, it will pull you toward itself. Nothing ever falls upward." The law of sin and death means, "sin always tends toward death. Sin never lifts up a man; it always pulls him down." The law of the Spirit of life says, "God's presence tends toward life, both in quality and quantity."

The Law of the Lord is the sum of the basic principles of life and relationship, as expressed by the anointed writers of the Bible. The Ten Commandments were part of God's basic laws of morality and ethics, given to His people through Moses. Basically, the first four commandments can be summed up with "Thou shalt love the LORD your God," and the other six with "love one another." Paul said,

"...love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the

fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10)

Many aspects of the old covenant given to Moses were expressed in ordinances, such as rituals and animal sacrifices. By fulfilling all of the offerings and ordinances, which were a "type" of salvation through His blood, Jesus took away these ordinances, nailing them to the cross:

"...blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." (Colossians 2:14)

Sin is rooted in selfishness; and genuine Christian conversion is expressed by love. (John 13:35) Sin seeks selfish goals and pleasure at the expense of others, while God's love prompts us to give; to share; and to serve. When you understand the definitions and implications of each, sin and genuine love are mutually exclusive. Sin is the opposite of love. When Jesus reigns in our hearts as Lord, He gives us the grace to obey the prompting of God's Spirit and to care genuinely about the needs and feelings of others. This is the Law of God written in our hearts, not just in our minds.

Law is the irreducible minimum of ethical behavior; but, God's grace gives us the power to live for others. When Jesus is in your heart, no one needs to tell you, "do not steal." In fact, you are already doing the opposite by being a giver. You do not covet what your neighbor has; in fact, you want to bless him.

"The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient...." (1 Timothy 1:9)

The law is not just a set of strict rules to keep us from having fun.

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul:...." (Psalms 19:7) "The law is good, if a man use it lawfully." (1 Timothy 1:8)

We are not saved by keeping the law; we are saved by God's grace through faith. But, if we find ourselves living in violation of God's laws, it is an indication that we need to go to Jesus; repent; and make things right:

"...the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ...." (Galatians 3:24)

What Is Regeneration?

Regeneration means "new birth".

It refers to the new spiritual life believers receive when they repent of their sin and entrust their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The Greek term "genesia" means "beginning", or "birth". That word is the title of the first book of the Bible. "Regeneration" means "born again." The classic teaching was given to a church leader, named Nicodemus, who came secretly to Jesus by night, because most Jewish leaders were critical and skeptical of Jesus. Jesus said to him,

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:5-6)

In this present physical life, we are born with an active and functioning body and soul; but, our spirits are dead, because we were born in sin. Our spirits are that part of us that can know and perceive God and the things of the spirit. Our natural minds are limited to this physical, three-dimensional world; and they cannot relate to supernatural things.

"...the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

The "natural man" means anyone who has not been born again spiritually by faith in Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus said to Nicodemus,

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

Without being born again, Nicodemus would not be able to "see," or perceive, the kingdom of God.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, their disobedience caused a separation from God's holy presence; and separation from God is spiritual death. Their perception was changed, and

"...the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked;...." (Genesis 3:7)

That is, they had formerly seen with spiritual vision; and they had seen the glory of God in one another. Now, they had a carnal focus, and could see only the physical. They were afraid and ashamed. They became insensitive to the Spirit, because of the damage they had done to their spirit. Everyone born to a human father inherited that "sin nature," and is born spiritually blind. That is the reason we are naturally drawn to selfish and sinful desires. We see only a time-space world, where we are allured to a temporal values system. It is only when we are born again that our spiritual sensitivity is restored, and we can see from an eternal point of view.

When the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and deals with our spirit, we either resist

Him and justify ourselves, or we respond to Him and confess our guilt and sin to God. By repentance and faith we receive God's forgiveness, based on the fact that Jesus paid the death penalty for us on the cross. At that moment, by the power of God's grace, we are "born of the Spirit." We have eternal life in us as the gift of God; and we know that when we die (physical death is separation from the body), we will go to heaven and live with God forever. There is no other way to know you are going to heaven. You must be born again.

What Is Salvation?

Salvation is a broad term. It involves all the positive changes which occur in a person's life, as he responds to God by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:9-10)

The doctrine of salvation involves regeneration -- new birth; conversion -- change; adoption -- becoming a child of God; sanctification -- being set apart for God's purposes; justification -- legally acquitted from the penalty of our sins; and redemption -- being bought back as God's restored possession. The term "salvation" literally means, "to be made whole; healing for spirit, soul, and body."

We understand the term "saved" in natural physical terms as being protected from an early death. If we are about to drown and we are pulled from the water by a rescuer, we have been saved from drowning. Because of His death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, Jesus became "...the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." (1 Timothy 4:10) He saved us from the controlling power of sin and, therefore, saved us also from the

penalty of sin, which is eternal separation from God in hell.

Many people see the term as synonymous with regeneration, or a "ticket to heaven;" but, it is really more than that. As we are "saved," our sin is removed; our spirits are made alive; our minds are renewed; our emotions are healed; and we are transformed "...from glory to glory,...." (2 Corinthians 3:18) God's goal is not just to get as many sinners as He can to go to heaven. His objective is to have a covenant people who love Him and give their lives to Him, allowing Him to make them whole and heal all the destructive effects of sin. The Bible does not teach that we are just "saved sinners;" it refers to us as "saints of God."

A common concept is that we are only saved from hell. But, the Bible teaches that we are saved from our old sinful lifestyle. (1 Peter 1:18-19) We are saved -- made spiritually whole -- by God's grace through faith. We are also told to "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12) That is, we are responsible for our own spiritual maturity and strength.

The Apostle James said, "...the prayer of faith shall save the sick,...." (James 5:15)

"Salvation" is the same Greek word as "healing." Salvation, as it relates to our spirit, is being "quickened" -- made alive -- and made right with God by a covenant relationship through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:1) Salvation of the soul is renewal and healing in the mind and

emotions. Salvation for the body is healing, strength, and resurrection. To be saved means more than just being freed from the penalty of sin. It also involves freedom from the power and the consequences of sin.

Where Do People Go When They Die?

When a Christian dies, his spirit goes to heaven, while the spirit of an unbeliever goes to a place in the earth called "hell."

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8)

Death for a human being does not mean the end of existence. It means a separation, or a transition. Physical death is the separation from the body. Spiritual death means separation from God. At the time of death, the body usually is buried in a grave, but the spirit and soul of the person continue forever.

In Luke 16, Jesus told about two men who died. One was a poor man, named Lazarus, and the other was a rich man who had shown no kindness to Lazarus. Their spirits went into the earth to a place called "Sheol", or "the place of departed spirits." There were two parts to this spirit place. The upper part was called "Paradise," and the lower part was called "Hell." The souls in "Hell" suffered from tormenting fire and hopelessness. When Jesus was on the cross, He told one of the thieves crucified with Him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) All of those who died in faith before then

had the hope of heaven, but they could not go there until the perfect sin offering had been offered for the sins of the world.

Jesus was the "Lamb of God," and our "High Priest." After Jesus died, He ascended to heaven to offer His blood on the "mercy seat," and He took with Him all the souls who were in Paradise. So, now Paradise is empty. For a Christian to be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord," because the way to God was made. The souls of the lost will suffer in Hell until after the Millennium -thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth -- and then they will stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne Judgment. They will be cast into the "Lake of Fire," to suffer eternal separation from God and His love.

The souls of the righteous dead are alive and, apparently, are aware of the activities of the church on the earth. At the time of the "First Resurrection," their bodies will be raised from the grave, and they will have an eternal incorruptible body. (1 John 3:2)

What Is the Importance of Water Baptism?

In Christian baptism, we are responding to the covenant we made with God as repentant believers by being "buried with Christ."

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3-4)

The New Testament clearly teaches the importance of following Christ by being buried in the waters of baptism after we are born again through the blood of Jesus by our faith and repentance from sin. John the Baptist had baptized people "unto repentance," as a means of expressing sorrow for sin. But, Jesus came and asked John to baptize Him. He initiated the first "Christian baptism." Baptism as a child of God is openly renouncing our past sinful life of self-willed rebellion and rising "to walk in newness of life" with Jesus as Lord. (Romans 6:4)

There are a number of scriptures that indicate that Christian baptism is more than an outward sign of an inward work. Paul said,

"...our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans 6:6)

Peter said,

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,...." (Acts 2:38)

As we obey the Lord and identify with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection, we acknowledge that we are in Christ, and that we are spiritually washed. We are still human and subject to failure; but, the sin that was once our master has been brought into remission, like a disease that has been brought under control. We are now servants to God, and do not have to live in bondage to the sin that once made us its slaves. In Acts 22:16, when Saul of Tarsus was converted, Ananias said to him,

"...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Covenant is essential in our relationship with God. In order to have any relationship with Him, there must be a covenant. A covenant is more than a contract. A covenant says, "I give myself to you. I love you more than I love myself."

Under the old covenant, the sign was the circumcision of the males. This is not required to be a Christian under God's new covenant. The sign of the new covenant is water baptism. That marks us as New Testament believers; and, in obedience, we put a seal on our faith response to the death of Christ on the cross to atone for our sins.

There is freedom provided for us in the atonement; but, as humans, we still need to "seek...God's righteousness" (Matthew 6:33) and grow in grace as we pray, read the Bible, and worship with other believers in the church.

Why Don't We Baptize Babies or Sprinkle People for Baptism?

Baptism is the burial in water of an obedient believer, who has confessed that Iesus Christ is his Lord and Savior.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38)

When Jesus came to John to be baptized in the river Jordan, John was reluctant to baptize Him. So Jesus said,

"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15)

In other words, "John, this is my act of obedience to the Father." Some groups who promote the practice of "infant baptism" quote the verse in Matthew 19:14, where Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me...." But, small infants are not coming as an act of their obedience or repentance, and they are not yet mature enough to make a confession of faith or a covenant with God.

We believe that infants do not have a sufficient understanding to make a conscious choice to sin or respond to God, and they are not held accountable for sin. Therefore, they are not in danger if they die. The "age of accountability" will vary with individuals; but, it is certainly not in the diaper stage.

The biblical order for baptism is clear. Repentance and a confession of faith come first. Baptism is a choice for the one who is born again. Baptism does not save us. It is a covenant response of those who are saved by the power of God through regeneration.

Baptism cannot be decided for you by someone else, no matter how sincere they may be. There is also no record in the Bible of any infant baptism, although some like to mention that the Philippian jailer was baptized, "and his house," saying that "surely that included babies." No. It does not say that. We suggest that such assumption is presumption, and you cannot make such conclusions, unless there are scriptural grounds to do so. If you were "baptized" as an infant, consider it a nice form of dedication, but you still need to submit to Christian baptism.

The word "baptism" comes directly from a Greek word, "baptidzo," which means "to immerse completely, to submerge, to bury." The Bible says that we are buried with Christ by baptism into death. (Romans 6:4) You do not bury a person by sprinkling dirt on his head, and you cannot baptize anyone from a teacup. Sprinkling was a practice of convenience that was substituted after Bible times by some church leaders; but, is not consistent

with the example or the intent of the Word of God.

How Can We Exercise Faith in God?

We exercise faith in God by daily dying to self and concentrating our attention on God with praise, prayer, and thanksgiving.

"Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Matthew 17:20)

There are many who look at this word spoken by Jesus and draw the conclusion that He was referring to an amount of faith. However, notice that Jesus said that we should have faith "as" a seed. A seed is a little bundle of potential life. If it is planted, it "dies," or decays in the ground. However, when it is properly buried and receives water and heat, it can sprout, grow, and ultimately produce a plant, or "tree," producing many more seeds, which can produce many more plants.

The key to the seed principle is death. The key to spiritual life is death to self. When Adam belonged to God, he had joy, peace, life, and dominion over everything, except the one tree which was the reminder that God owned it all. When he disobeyed God to establish his own "lordship," he lost it all and set the death process in motion by sin. When we, as descendants of Adam, repent and give our lives to God as His possession, His grace reverses the process. We begin to live for Jesus instead of for self, and we live for

eternity, instead of for the moment. Jesus said,

"...whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." (Luke 9:24)

We do not exercise faith in God just by positive confession; but, importantly, by dying to our selfish purposes and goals, and by stimulating a God-centered vision as servants. As long as a seed maintains its identity, it cannot grow. It must "die." Many see the Christian faith as a way to get God to do what they want. But real faith sees the Lord and His purposes as the center and ourselves as part of His body and army. Real faith does not get God to do what we want, but rather moves us to trust His plan and purposes, and causes us to do what He wants. James 2:18 illustrates this point:

"Show me thy faith without works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

In other words, "I'm just trusting God to do it for me," as opposed to, "I do not understand it; but, God said to do it this way. So, I will obey."

George Müller was a great hero of faith in nineteenth century England. Through prayer, he raised over five million dollars to finance the support of thousands of orphans. He purposed that he would never ask people for money for his ministry. He had a goal. In his mind, even more important than the needs of the children, was the motive to show people the power of prayer. Mr. Müller said, "If you want to get anything from God, first, you must put your heart in such a state that you have no will of your own." Jesus did that when He prayed, "Father ... not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42) Like a seed, faith dies to self and seeks God's best, and God responds with power.

What Are Trials?

Trials are situations in life, designed by God to motivate us to draw closer to Him.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter 4:12-13)

Our human nature tends toward the path of least resistance. We have a knack for "drifting" in life, unless we are challenged and motivated to pursue a goal. We are motivated either away from perceived threats, or toward perceived rewards.

The "river of life" always flows downstream to a lower level. We need to be encouraged to "press toward the mark" in our spiritual lives. When we face a battle or hardship in life, we are stirred to evaluate our condition and situation, and motivated to seek help or shelter.

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10)

We have an enemy called Satan, who seeks to devour us; but, that fact also stirs us to get closer to God.

One type of trial is an "affliction." The word means "hardship, or trouble." James said, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him

pray." (James 5:13) It is time to turn to God seriously and look to Him as our source. The affliction causes us to check our course and respond to God.

"Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word." (Psalms 119:67)

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes." (Psalms 119:71)

Do not assume that every negative situation in life is from the devil. God builds our character through adversity.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;..." (different kinds of hardship). (James 1:2)

As we mature, we will face greater difficulties, and we will need the patience that comes from experience. David faced a lion and a bear. This helped him face the giant, Goliath; and that experience, in turn, prepared him for greater problems later in life.

Trials also keep us from becoming proud. The Apostle Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" which God would not remove, because it kept him humbly dependent upon the Lord. Job suffered through terrible trials. He did not understand why; but, he kept his faith in God and refused to

What Are Trials? Volume 10

become bitter. He said, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away...." (Job 1:21) He decided to believe that God was good, and he did not develop the mentality that God owed something to him.

Trials will make you better or bitter, depending upon how you respond to them. If you think only of yourself or other people, you will become bitter. If you respond to God, you will grow.

If life was too easy, we would not appreciate it or really enjoy it. You do not enjoy sunshine or water until you have been without them. In life, the height of your joy can never exceed the depth of your sorrow. "...But your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (John 16:20) If there is no battle, there can be no victory. The greater the struggle, the sweeter the song.

"Make us glad, according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us." (Psalms 90:15)

What Are Temptations?

Temptations are situations in life, which are designed by Satan to draw us away from God.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." (James 1:13)

Satan's goal in the world is to do all he can to keep people from loving and serving God. Satan hates the church, because Jesus said He would use the church to crush the gates of hell. (Matthew 16:18)

Satan hates Christians who dwell and work together in unity, and he hates anyone who is submitted to God's will for his life. Satan will try to lure anyone away from God's presence or from godly thinking, and his basic tool is deception. He has never really deviated from his original approach to seduce people away from God.

Satan first tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden by asking her this subtle question about God's Word: "...hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree"? Then Satan tried to assuage Eve's fear of God by saying, "...Ye shall not surely die...." and turned her attention to carnal things "...it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired...." Satan then presented the idea that there is pleasure in sin "...the woman saw that the tree was good for food." (Genesis 3:1-6)

It is not a sin to be tempted. It becomes sin when we set our hearts on that which God did not provide for us to use. Jesus was human and suffered temptation; but, He never yielded to it and never sinned.

"Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin ,when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14)

A man is "drawn away" from God by temptation, like a fish is lured by the bait. The purpose is the same: to hook us with the bondage of sin, which leads to death.

Satan is a liar and is the father of lies. (John 8:44) All temptations are based on illusion, because sin never satisfies the deep desires in a man. The more we get, the more we want. There are three basic temptations described in 1 John 2:16: "the lust of the flesh" -- the illusion that physical pleasure can bring satisfaction --"the lust of the eyes" -- the hope that wealth and possessions can satisfy the soul -- "and the pride of life" -- the quest for fame or popularity. Jesus was tempted in these three areas by three temptations in the wilderness. (Luke 4:1-13) Nevertheless, He concentrated on God's Word and God's purposes and chose that which was of eternal value over the temporal.

The Bible tells about many people who were deceived by temptations, and they lost their lives because of it.

- 1. The lust of the flesh. King Balak's people began to have illicit relations with the Israelites. This angered God, and he smote the Israelites with a plague. Twenty-four thousand Israelites died before God stayed the plague. This was not fun. (Numbers 25:1-9, Revelation 2:14)
- 2. The lust of the eye. An Israelite named Achan took some Babylonian garments and gold from Jericho, and his whole family was executed. He lost it all. (Joshua 7:19-26)
- 3. The pride of life. Herod was acclaimed a "god" because of his great speech. When Herod became proud, he was smitten by an angel of the Lord. He was eaten by worms, and died. How humiliating! (Acts 12:23)

Why Did Jesus Teach in Parables?

Jesus taught in parables to keep the mysteries of God veiled to those who would try to know God with only their minds or emotions.

"And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." (Mark 4:11-12)

A parable is an earthly story with a deeper heavenly meaning. Jesus illustrated many of the concepts of God's plan and ways with parables which had to do with farming, fishing, and other natural things. Generally, they were forms of analogies, which compare the similarities between two otherwise unrelated things.

Our natural thinking would be that Jesus spoke in parables to make things clearer to the hearer. That is not at all what He said to His disciples. They were asking Him, "Master, why do not you just tell the people in plain terms what God's kingdom is like, instead of using these mysterious parables?" After the crowd had gone and the disciples were alone with Him, they would often say, "Now please tell us what all that meant." Jesus would say, "I will tell you what it meant, because unto you it is given to understand the mystery of the

kingdom of God." A mystery is something with unknown factors, or a hidden meaning. There are many mysteries in the Bible, because God does not want people to know Him "in the flesh." He is looking for people who will have a relationship with Him in the spirit.

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." (1 Corinthians 1:22-23)

This is a general observation by the Apostle Paul about two nationalities of people, who both tended to be carnal in their religion. The Jews were looking for a messiah, who would excite their emotions with signs; and the Greeks were the intellectuals, who would not accept anything they could not analyze and comprehend with their minds. The Jews wanted a messiah who would set them free from Rome -- Jesus came to set them free from sin. The Greeks wanted a god they could know with their mind -- Jesus came to relate men to God in their spirit.

"...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63) Jesus was concerned that, if people understood concepts such as heaven, hell, and judgment, they would become religious and conform to His ethics without being born again and entering into a covenant relationship with God in love. Jesus was not looking for converts.

He was searching for worshippers. (John 4:23) Jesus did not want people to respond only to His message. He wanted people to respond to God with repentance and faith. Jesus did not want people only to change their way of life. He wanted them to be born again by the Spirit.

How Do We Strengthen Our Faith in God?

We strengthen our faith in God by building our hearts and minds with reminders of God's greatness, faithfulness, and love.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

Satan is the enemy of our soul. His goal is to get Christians to focus on themselves, on people, or on the things of the world, so that they will be spiritually ineffective in their warfare against him and his dark forces. When God's children walk in spiritual victory, joy, and harmony with each other, Satan is in trouble. He uses fear, deception, and temptation to turn our eyes and hearts away from God and His power. The more we think only on self, people, and things, the more fear we will have; and fear is the opposite of faith.

Every time we direct our attention toward the Lord and His Word, our faith grows. All through the Bible, we see that, in spite of men and their weaknesses and failures, God never fails. We see men being unfaithful and unreliable, while God is always perfectly faithful. Men break promises; but, God never does.

Even though we do not understand everything in the Bible, we always gain a sense that God is good and always wins. Notice that, when the book of the Revelation pronounces a blessing on those who read it, it does not say you have to understand all of it to get the blessing. No one fully understands Revelation; but, we

get the strong assurance that, when we are "in Christ," we will win.

Our enemy has attacked America with a religion called "secular humanism." It sounds like "humanitarian"; but, it is not. Basically, humanism is a way of looking at life as if God does not exist. It is based on the doctrine of evolution and the philosophy that "life just happens." Our society is flooded with books, newspapers, films, and broadcast media which portray life and society as if there were no God. This results in a dark fatalism. It leads to depression, witchcraft, new-age religion, abortion, sodomy, suicide, drunkenness, and other perversions.

On the other hand, we build our spirit and develop our faith by things that remind us of God and His power, His purity, and His purposes. We build faith by reading and hearing the Word -- scripture, preaching, teaching, etc.-- by worshipping with other believers; by genuine Christian fellowship; by praying; and by fasting.

The more we include God in our thinking, the more we can stimulate our faith, because faith is belief in God; reliance on His Word; and absolute confidence in eternal values. Everything about God is good. The only way the enemy can get us to turn against God is to distract us and to cause us to be

preoccupied with something else. It is important to develop a focus on God and to remind each other of Him every day,

because He is good. To know Him is to love Him; and to love Him is to obey Him.

What Are the Greek Words for "Love", and What Do They Mean?

"Eros" means "physical attraction"; "phileo" means "friendship"; and "agape" means "unselfish, covenant love".

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." (1 Corinthians 13:1)

The English language has only one word for "love;" and "love" has many meanings for different people in our culture. The Greek is much more exact. In fact, many Christian historians believe that God allowed Alexander the Great to conquer the known world so that Greek would be the prevailing language in the time that the New Testament would be written. The three principal Greek words for "love" relate directly to the three parts of man: body, soul, and spirit.

"Eros" is the root for our word "erotic." Obviously, it relates to physical attraction or infatuation. It is a very weak kind of love and cannot be the basis for a very fulfilling, sustained relationship. It is based on the desire for pleasure; or on pride in appearance; and it seeks selfish goals.

"Phileo" means "brotherly love." It refers to an emotional bond of friendship between people. We develop friendships based on common values, circumstances, or goals. The family is the first unit for establishing friendships. It is normal and

right for siblings to be friends. In fact, parents can and should be friends to their children, as well as authority figures. The Bible teaches that young men should treat young ladies as "sisters" and be friends, not as romantic quests like our western culture promotes. It is also important for Christians to develop friendships with other believers. This is one of the values of a large local church. We learn to defend one another and to protect our relationships, by going quickly to one another when we have interpersonal conflicts.

"Agape" is the word for godly, selfless love. In the King James Version, it is translated "charity." It is a love based on giving, rather than what we can get out of each other. It is a response to God's love for us, and not just to the person's attributes or benefits to us. Love is a fruit of the Spirit living in us; and, therefore, it is not diminished by the worthiness of the person who is receiving the love. "Charity never faileth." (1 Corinthians 13:8) Basically, love is the unselfish response of those people who fully receive God's love -- they naturally begin to care about the needs of others instead of self. "God so loved the world that he gave...." (John 3:16); and that is also our natural response when we love.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

There are other Greek words for "love", but these three relate to the basic parts of man. Notice that "eros" is a function of the flesh, or physical part of

man. "Phileo" is soul love. It is the response of emotion, intellect, and personality one to another. "Agape" is a function of the spirit. It is only by God's Spirit dwelling in us that our spirit can respond to others with genuine agape love.

What Is Righteousness?

Righteousness is our right standing with God: the legal result of being justified by faith.

"That I may ... 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." (Philippians 3:8-9)

"Righteousness" means "equitable in character or act;" "rightness;" "free from wrong or sin." Most people do not realize it, but sin is not really "natural," in the sense that it flows against the way we were designed by our Creator. Not only does sin cause guilt, fear, and emotional trauma, but it also damages our bodies.

"... But he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." (1 Corinthians 6:18)

Many diseases and injuries are caused or carried by sinful actions, such as sexual immorality, perversion, substance abuse, gluttony, etc. Of course, sin damages our spirit, because it separates us from God, who is holy. (Isaiah 59:2)

When we respond to God with repentance and faith, we are made legally righteous. Righteousness is not something we earn by being good. It is a gift from God. We are "in Christ" and stand clothed in His righteousness. It is a product of "justification," wherein we stand legally

pardoned, with our sins "washed away." In God, it is "just as if I" had never sinned.

Our response to temptation is different, not because we are trying to earn God's love, but because we have been changed and made right with God. Instead of reacting to life with fear and submitting to the bondage of evil habits, we are free to obey and to enjoy God. We are free to say, "no," to sin.

Seals and penguins are very awkward on land; but, in the water they are swift and graceful. They are "in their element." A shark will die out of the water; but, in his element, he is awesome. Man walking in sin is living beneath his human potential. His perception is limited to earthly things, and he is spiritually blind and deaf. He is also hindered by guilt and fear.

"The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." (Proverbs 28:1)

In the Bible, the word for righteousness refers to our character or actions. Righteousness as "right standing with God" is imputed to us when we are born again; but, it is also imparted:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our

sins" -- imputed righteousness -- "and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" -- imparted righteousness. (1 John 1:9)

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not" -- does not continue in a sin-dominated lifestyle. (1 John 3:6)

A man who is right with God and walking in the power of the Spirit is like one who "shall mount up with wings as

eagles...." (Isaiah 40:31) A man who is right with God will be free to love people and to live an honest life. The wicked man is perverted and bound by fear, although he will do good sometimes. The righteous man is spiritually alive and free to love others, because he has a new nature, although he may stumble sometimes and do something wrong. When he does, his Heavenly Father corrects him as a son, and he should repent, grow, and continue to "seek....his righteousness." (Matthew 6:33)

What Is Holiness?

To be holy is to live a pure and honest lifestyle as a response to God's transforming work of grace in our lives.

"...As he which has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)

While righteousness relates primarily to the gift of right standing with God and is imputed by His grace, holiness relates to right living in response to God's love and His Lordship. We are made the righteousness of God in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21) We are commanded to be holy in all aspects of "conversation." The word translated as "conversation" in the King James Bible refers to all aspects of our lifestyle, not just to our speech. It refers to the way we act, think, and respond to people and situations.

The writers of the New Testament wrote many things to believers about the need to pursue holiness in the fear of God.

Paul said,

"...put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Paul is telling us to put off our old sinful lifestyle -- our sin nature -- and change the way we think and respond in life. The word for "holiness" here means "purity from defilement, right in character."

The Hebrew word for "holy" was "Kodesh," and meant "sanctified; a sacred place or thing." Anything holy belonged exclusively to God and was to be used only for God's purposes. The people were not allowed to use anything holy for their own selfish desires. To be holy in purpose is to be "single-minded;" that is, we should seek to realize that we belong to God and that we exist for His pleasure. When we live for Him, instead of for self, we discover that it is the key to freedom and joy. (Luke 9:24)

King David was such a man.

"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, to behold the beauty of the LORD." (Psalms 27:4)

Jesus also had pure motives. He said, "I only came to do the will of my Father." He never did anything for a selfish reason. The Apostle Paul said,

"This one thing I do....I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God...."
(Philippians 3:13-14)

To be pure, water must be either highly filtered or distilled. Pure water has only water in it and is not defiled by dirt, microbes, bacteria, etc. Sin defiles, or pollutes, the heart of man and results in a corrupt lifestyle. Godly Christians try to get as much of God into their lives and thinking as they can, and they are not trying to get away with as much of the

world as they can. Romans 6:11 is a great lesson on purity. We are taught to reckon ourselves "to be dead ... unto sin, but alive unto God...." We see our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto holiness, with the end result being eternal life.

Holiness in this life should always be desired, pursued, and encouraged.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD." (Hebrews 12:14)

What Is the "Baptism of Fire"?

The "baptism of fire" refers to the trials and testing that come into every believer's life to develop his character and maturity in Christ.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me....shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor...." (Matthew 3:11-12)

There are three baptisms mentioned in this verse. "Baptidzo" means to "submerge completely". John the Baptist "buried" people in the Jordan River as a sign of their humility and repentance. After the resurrection of Jesus, Christians were baptized in water, as a sign of their covenant with God through the new birth, and for the "remission of sins." The preacher baptized in water; but, John said that Jesus would baptize believers "...with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matthew 3:11)

Notice that after Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended on Him. Immediately afterward, He was sent by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days of intense prayer, fasting, and trials. Many people hear only evangelistic sermons, which say that we should come to God and all our problems will be solved. Often, they are unprepared for difficulties, because they have been led to believe that life would be easy for them.

Many people envision Jesus as a babe in the manger. But, the Bible portrays Him as a mighty Judge with feet of brass and piercing eyes -- the mighty King of Kings. He is "...like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." (Malachi 3:2) His purpose is to purify and strengthen believers. He is

"...faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

This life is not the place of our rest and reward. It is the place of preparation for eternity. It is time for us to work and grow strong. It is not a playtime for the "King's kids." Life is not easy. If we are going to be mature, there are many things we can learn only through suffering.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings...." (1 Peter 4:12-13)

Notice how the Apostle Paul spoke to the Christians in Corinth about the way he developed such a love for them. He said, "...our heart is enlarged." (2 Corinthians 6:11) What caused his growth in love?

"...in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings;..."
(2 Corinthians 6:4-5)

The process of sanctification in the life of believers is often accomplished through trial and testing. God is not nearly as interested in our comfort as in our being "...conformed to the image of his Son,...." (Romans 8:29) The Bible does not give us the picture of an easy and pain-free life;

but, there is a glorious hope of victory through the struggle, and joy as we are found faithful as servants and soldiers: "...endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (2 Timothy 2:3)

God does not promise to keep us from fire; but, as He sustained Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego through the fire, so also He is able to be with us and make us overcomers through the test. (Isaiah 43:2) If you refuse to be tested, you are in the wrong army.

What Is the Tithe?

"Tithe" means "a tenth." It refers to the first tenth of our financial increase, which we pay to God through our local church.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10)

Tithing is not just an ordinance of the Mosaic law for Israel. It is a principle of God throughout the Bible. Abraham, as a part of his covenant with God, pledged to give one tenth of all his increase to Melchizedec, the priest. Isaac and Jacob also pledged to tithe.

The tithe is not really the only money that belongs to God. It is really the reminder that it all belongs to Him. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was Adam's reminder that he was a steward of God's property. The tithe is our reminder. We could use it for ourselves and "partake" of that portion; but, as an act of obedience and faith, we give God the first tenth, and reap many personal benefits.

God said to bring all of the tithe into the storehouse. It is not ours to decide where it should be used as we "feel led." It belongs to our home church, and the responsibility for handling it belongs to the pastor. This prophecy in Malachi was the most direct challenge God made to His people. He said, "prove me by tithing, and see if I do not pour you out a blessing." When we commit to tithing, we are constantly reminded of God's ownership of all things. We tend to become less possessive and less foolish with money.

Satan has many "devourers" of our money, such as impulse buying, depreciating investments, destructive habits, alluring advertising, interest on debt, and bad investments. As we express our faith in God by giving the firstfruits of our income, we establish the first principle in gaining financial freedom.

Jesus encouraged tithing in the New Testament in Matthew 23:23 when He said, "...these ought ye to have done...." However, the early church went far beyond 10%. They realized that it all of their increase belonged to God and they gave large offerings above and beyond the tithe.

What are the firstfruits of all our increase? "Firstfruits" was originally an agricultural term meaning, "God's offering comes first." As it applies to our giving, we believe that we should pay God's tithe before we pay the government's taxes. We should always tithe according to our gross personal income. However, we do not

tithe on the gross business income, since business often yields an increase of 10-20% or less after expenses. We are to tithe on all "increase." This includes earned income, business profits, inheritance, and any other financial gain.

Tithing is for our benefit; and, as one of God's principles, it helps establish our hearts and minds in wisdom. As we practice tithing, we are in a place to receive God's supernatural guidance, provision, and prosperity, because we are partakers of God's covenant.

What Does "Stewardship" Mean?

Stewardship is the concept that we are not really the possessors of things in this life; rather, we are caretakers who will give an account to God.

"...Know ye not that...ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Stewardship is a key principle in biblical Christianity. A steward is someone who is entrusted with the care of another's property. He may sometimes have the freedom to use that property; but, he does not own it, and he must be willing at any time to return it to the owner. He is responsible to handle that property wisely; and he is responsible to the owner if it is damaged, lost, or destroyed.

The Bible teaches that everything in this life is God's, and He gives things to us to teach us lessons, which will shape our character for eternity. Only at the judgment, after this life, will we be evaluated and then given eternal wealth as a reward. Everything we have physically is "temporal." (Matthew 25:14-30)

When Adam and Eve were in the garden, they were caretakers of God's property. The mark and reminder of the Father's ownership was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was just like any other tree; however, Adam and Eve did not have God's permission to partake of it. God gave them dominion over the earth and told them to rule His

perfect creation. All creatures submitted to man, who, in turn, was submitted to the Lord.

When man was seduced by Satan and then violated the command not to partake of the tree, man was asserting his ownership by questioning God's right to make the final decisions. Satan said,"...Ye shall be as gods..." — judges, the ones who make the final decisions. (Genesis 3:5) Adam and Eve were making their "declaration of independence," by disobeying God's law. They each were saying, "I'm going to be my own person, and I will not surely die." But, sin always separates us from God; and sin always brings death. The moment Adam and Eve assumed ownership, they lost dominion.

When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not just receiving Him into our hearts; we are also, by faith, repenting from the self-ownership mind-set established in the fall of man. We are declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord — owner — of our lives. We are submitting to His rule. We realize that we are "responsible servants," or "stewards," of the money God has enabled us to earn; of our bodies; of our children; of our possessions; and of our time.

Every day we are given the privilege to live. Everything belongs to God; and we

will give an account to Him for the way we have taken care of things in this life. The mark of God's ownership of money is the tithe. The mark of His lordship of our time is Sunday, the Lord's day.

Basically, sin is the establishing of self as owner. It destroys our ability to have dominion over our bodies and over other aspects of life. When we respond to God's Lordship in our lives by repentance and faith, we yield ourselves to Him; then we truly become free.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

What Is the Difference Between the Pounds and the Talents in the Parables of Jesus?

The parable of the pounds in Luke 19 and the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 illustrate two distinct, but related, aspects of our stewardship as God's servants in this life.

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matthew 25:21-22)

These two great parables of Jesus illustrate God's eternal principle of stewardship: that we are entrusted by our Lord God with potential and opportunities in this life; but, nothing is really ours to keep. We are servants, who will give an account of our faithfulness to use and to administrate God's property wisely. In eternity, we will receive rewards, according to what we have done with what we had on earth. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

In the parable of the **pounds**, as told in Luke 19:13-25, note that each servant was given the same amount: one pound. The man who used it wisely and returned ten pounds to his lord was commended and was given rule over ten cities. The one who gained five talents with the same investment was given a similar, but smaller, reward, exactly proportional to his level of productivity.

The pound illustrates the fact that in some things, we are alike, or equal. God has made our hearts alike. (Psalms 33:15) All of us tend to have the same basic needs and drives in life. Each of us has only one life on earth:

"...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:...." (Hebrews 9:27)

Jesus Christ has given everyone the potential to become a Christian by repentance through faith. He makes the same Holy Spirit available to all believers. All of us have the ability to love, to serve, and to be a witness for the Lord.

Notice that each servant in Luke 19 received one pound. The servants in Matthew 25 received different amounts of talents. The talent represents our different abilities, gifts, and opportunities in life. Some of us have been given greater natural abilities than others. Some have more money; years of life; influence; or physical beauty.

In this important illustration given by Jesus Christ, talents represent the gifts which God has entrusted to us in this life. We are tested in our administration of these gifts. God knows exactly what we are

able to achieve. He will judge the more "talented" person by a higher standard of expectation.

"...unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required:..." (Luke 12:48)

Another distinction here is that the five-talent man received basically the same reward as the two-talent man. (Compare Matthew 25:21 and 25:23) Each of them received a commendation, greater dominion, and the joy of the Lord. Our joy comes from doing what we are called and equipped by God to do.

Sometimes, Christians will excuse themselves from ministering, because they are feeling "down." They think that the ministry is a result of their joy. No. The joy is a result of serving and functioning in obedience to God.

"...Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter into...joy." (Matthew 25:21)

Be faithful, whether you feel like it or not; and joy will be a result.

What Is an Offering?

An offering is anything which we present to God, out of love and obedience, in expression of adoration and praise to Him.

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts." (Psalms 96:8)

Throughout history, it has been almost universal court etiquette to honor a king or great dignitary by offering gifts. When the wise men from the east came to Bethlehem in search of the young Messiah, they offered expensive gifts. By doing so, they were saying, "we recognize you as a great king." An offering is a part of worship. It says, "I offer myself and mine to you in honor of your greatness. I esteem you as greater than I am."

While Christian tithing to the local church is an expression of obedience to and faith in God, the practice of giving offerings is an expression of love and devotion. Not only are we paying the 10% we owe God, but we are also offering part of the 90% He entrusted to us as a gift. It represents the fact that we are giving ourselves to God.

In the Bible, an offering at great personal expense is called a "sacrifice." It is a sacrifice only when it costs us more than we can spare to give. When Jesus saw the widow giving her offering of two mites, He recognized that it was a sacrifice for her, because she could not afford to give anything. On the other hand, the rich men

were giving merely a token offering out of their excess wealth.

In the Old Testament, there were five offerings that the children of Israel were to bring to the tabernacle. In most cases, the family would offer an animal and then share portions of the cooked meat with the priests as a joyful celebration to the Lord. But, when they offered the burnt offering, it was burned completely as a sacrifice. This is a picture of the fact that we should give our complete devotion to God and give our lives to Him without reservation.

Jesus fulfilled the sin offering and became

...the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

Under the new covenant, we do not offer animal sacrifices to the Lord; but, we do offer ourselves as a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1), and we offer the "sacrifices of praise," (Hebrews 13:15) as well as financial offerings. If we are going to be effective Christians, it is important to give offerings to the Lord. God reproved the people of Israel for their selfishness and said "...ye have robbed me In tithes and offerings." (Malachi 3:8) By keeping all of the wealth that God had provided for

them, they were robbing God of the honor that was due Him as King.

God finances the ministry with tithes and finances buildings with offerings. God could have easily provided the materials for the tabernacle. Instead, He prompted the Egyptians to give gold and silver to the children of Israel, and then He asked the Israelites to give Him an offering. God knows that it is good for our hearts when we become givers.

"...God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

What Is Almsgiving?

We are giving alms whenever we share what we have with those who are in need.

"... give alms of such things as ye have..." (Luke 11:41)

In Acts 10:1-4, a military officer, named Cornelius, was mentioned as a man "who...gave much alms to the people." An angel came to him, telling him that God had noticed his prayers and his alms and had decided to bless him greatly. While our tithes and offerings are given to the Lord, our alms are given to the poor. Usually, alms are financial; but, they can be the giving of food or service, such as free mechanical or cleaning work. Solomon said,

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the LORD." (Proverbs 19:17)

Years earlier, Solomon's father, David, had written a song which began,

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble." (Psalms 41:1)

Jesus told us that, at the close of this life on earth, God will judge us by the way we respond to hurting and needy people. (Matthew 25:34-40)

It is very important that we learn to be givers to people in need, because it is part of our character development. Our basic sin problem is selfishness. The first mark

of spiritual and emotional maturity is altruism -- selflessness. No matter where we are, there will always be poor people in need. God often provides us with more than we need to test whether we will give to others or hoard it all for ourselves. You cannot grow spiritually and be stingy.

Jesus also taught that it was important to give alms "in secret" instead of publicly. (Matthew 6:1-4) He noticed that some religious people were very careful to let everyone see their almsgiving, so that people would admire and praise them. It is a lack of faith to think that you need people to provide your reward. God delights to see us give in secret, and Jesus said,

"...thy Father, which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:6)

Jesus also said to "Give to every man that asketh of thee;...." (Luke 6:30) It should be noted that in the culture of Jesus' time, it was illegal for someone to beg, unless they were legitimately destitute with no ability to maintain a living. Today there are those in our society who just will not work. They seek to live off of others by "panhandling." We are not obligated as Christians to support lazy people.

"If any would not work neither should he eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

Jesus was the greatest example of a giver who ever lived. He constantly went about doing good. When Paul spoke of Jesus, he mentioned Him as the one who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) He was not quoting anything in the Gospels; but, he saw from Christ's life that it was His life's message.

Remember that, when God provides extra for you, it is often given so you can share with those who have less than they need. In Acts 3:6, Peter and John were going to the temple when they passed a lame man, begging for alms. They had no money; but, they had faith for healing, so they said,

"...such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts 3:6)

What Is a Covenant?

A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties, whereby they commit themselves to each other, without reservation, and seal the agreement with blood.

"The LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." (Genesis 17:1-2)

The principle of a blood covenant began with Adam. After man sinned, God provided for man by slaying animals and then clothing Adam and Eve in coats of skins. Through the death of the animal, man received the first covering for his sin. Later, God instituted the practice of a blood sacrifice as an atonement for sin.

A covenant is symbolized by the shedding of blood. This is the reason Cain's offering was not acceptable to God. "Covenant" means "a giving of self for another". In fact, it implies a death to self and selfish motives in favor of the needs and desires of another.

The biblical plan of salvation is based on the blood covenant. Jesus Christ gave His life to provide the blood sacrifice as the basis for us to have a covenant relationship with God, as we respond with repentance and faith. Heaven was not really created as a place for everyone who merely accepts the idea that Jesus is God. Actually, heaven is prepared for all of

those who have a valid covenant relationship with God.

God's covenant with Abram is recorded in Genesis 15. God told Abram to cut some animals in half. As Abram slept, God caused a smoking furnace and a burning lamp to pass between the bloody halves of the carcasses. The Hebrew word for covenant is "berith," which means "to cut, or to choose." In a true covenant, we are saying, "I give myself to you for your benefit. I am more for you than I am for myself."

In a covenant, we identify with one another. In a marriage covenant, the woman takes the man's name. In a Christian covenant, we become known as "Christians," taking on the name of Christ. We recognize that all we are and have belong to Him; and His resources are available to us. Jesus took our sin and put His robe of righteousness on us.

God gave us an accurate image of His covenant with us by designing human marriage as an illustration. He created marriage to be a one-time, life-long union between a man and a woman. Just as the furnace and lamp passed through the sacrifices, so in a wedding a bride and groom walk between the families to seal their covenant. They are to give

themselves and their property to each other without reservation. They become vulnerable -- open and exposed -- to each other.

Today, many marriages are broken by people, who do not understand the meaning of a covenant. They break their covenant by reacting to hurts and failing to restore their partner. God never intended divorce for anyone, because it violates the covenant principle that is fundamental to Christianity. It is important that we make a solemn vow of covenant when we are joined in marriage, and that we realize that we must resolve our conflicts with each other.

What Is the Difference Between a Covenant and a Contract?

A contract is a mutual agreement between two or more parties and is contingent upon conditions. A covenant is an unconditional giving of oneself to another.

"Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul." (1 Samuel 18:3)

A covenant is a contract, a binding agreement, between two or more parties, with mutual benefits and designated responsibilities. A covenant is much stronger and more significant than a contract. A contract says, "I agree to do something beneficial for you in exchange for what you will do for or give to me." When one party to a contract fails to fulfill his part of the agreement, the other party is released from his obligation to the contract.

In a contract, we exchange goods or services. In a covenant, we are giving ourselves to each other. We are all familiar with the story of David and Goliath. However, few of us realize that the most significant encounter that day was not the one which took place between David and Goliath. It was the one which followed immediately, between David and Jonathan. In 1 Samuel 18:1-3, we learn that

"the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul....Then Jonathan and David made a covenant..."

Jonathan gave David his robe, which was the symbol of his identity as the heir to the throne of Israel. He was in fact, saying, "I would rather see you inherit the throne than to rule myself. I prefer your success to mine." In giving David his sword, Jonathan was saying, "I am committed to defending you and I will never turn against you."

A covenant is not easily broken. We are not released from a covenant every time our partner violates his part of the covenant. God said, "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Hebrews 13:5) When we sin as a Christian, we are violating our covenant with God, because we "...are not our own"; we are "...bought with a price." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) God does not turn against us; but, He does chasten us, and deals with us as His children.

A New Testament word which explains the word "covenant" is "agape," or, "selfless love." It means, "your good at my expense." This kind of love "...seeketh not its own,..." and "...never faileth;...." (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

When you give yourself to another, your motives and goals change. You live for another instead of for yourself. Christianity is not just an experience

where we assent to the validity of Christ's claims. It is a covenant relationship with God, based on receiving the blood of Christ for remission of our sins. God's purpose in the earth is not merely to find enough people willing to populate heaven by accepting Christ. God's purpose is to have a worshipping, covenant people who give themselves to Him and who live for Him.

When we enter into a blood covenant with God, we accept the blood sacrifice of

Jesus Christ and give ourselves to God in complete honesty and trust. We accept His lordship over our lives and begin to live for His glory and for His pleasure. As we give ourselves to God, His infinite resources become available to us as His adopted children.

"...as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God,..." (John 1:12)

Section 8

Lessons

Do Not Believe Anything That I Say

Volume 10

Lesson 1



Bible References

1 John 2:24-29; 4:1

1 Timothy 6:3-5

2 Timothy 3:12-15; 4:3-5

James 1:5

Acts 17:11

John 8:32, 44; 14:6



Theme

All teaching must be compared against the truth of the inerrant Word of God.



1 John 2:24-29

24 "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

26 "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27 "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

28 "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29 "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him."

Acts 17:11

11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."



James 1:5

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."



Outline

I. Truth Is of the Utmost Importance.

- A. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of truth. (John 14:6)
- B. Only truth can set us free. (John 8:32)
- C. What we believe determines our eternal destiny.

II. Potential Sources of Error.

- A. Teachers can be a source of error.
- B. Parents can be a source of error.
- C. The world can be a source of error.
- D. Satan is the source of error.

III. Sources of Information.

- A. The written Word of God (the Bible).
- B. The teaching of the Holy Spirit.
- C. Worldly (natural) wisdom.
- D. Satanic deception.

IV. Characteristics of Truth.

- A. Eternal -- regardless of time period.
- B. Unchanging -- regardless of circumstances.
- C. Universal -- regardless of culture.

V. Our Objective: The Pursuit of Truth.

- A. Applying the Word of God to our lives.
- B. Proving the relevance of God's Word.
- C. Teaching the student to research the Word.
- D. Testing the spirits. (1 John 4:1)



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.
- Our faith is not dependent upon human knowledge, but upon the Word of God.
- Man is subject to error, both deliberate and accidental.
- To know God's Word is to know God as the Author and Finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2)
- If our knowledge of the Lord is limited to the knowledge of other men, then our growth will be limited.
- If we are taught by the Holy Spirit, then the potential for growth in the truth is unlimited.
- Only the truth can make us free.



Lesson Material

To the Teacher:

It may seem strange that a teacher would begin a new year with the message, "Do not believe anything that I say." While we certainly desire that our students listen to us and heed our teaching, the point being made is that we want the students to search the scriptures for themselves; and, having made a habit

of doing so, we want the students to develop spiritual discernment.

Someone once said, "He who teaches best, teaches least." It is important that students at this age begin to find out for themselves what the Bible has to say. It is our job to encourage them to begin to think about what they are being told, ask questions, dig for answers, and test the spirits, whether they are of God. (1 John 4:1)

As teachers, we are only able to provide our students with an hour or two of truth on Sundays. The rest of their week is filled with all manner of deception, such as television, secular music, and the worldly news media. Our students must be grounded in the Word of God; and they must be equipped to ground themselves in the Word. This is the only way that their hearts can be guarded against error, both deliberate and accidental.

To the Students:

Do not believe anything that I say! Everyone speaks falsely from time to time. Sometimes the error is deliberate; and sometimes it is accidental, because of a lack of knowledge or understanding. But if someone is hurt by that mistake, it does not really matter whether it was deliberate or not.

Even the most sincere, educated, or godly of people can make mistakes. And some of the most sincere-appearing people will from time to time come across your path, with intentions of deliberate deception. Any human being is subject to error. Your parents may be in error from time to time, perhaps even deliberately. And even the most respected Bible scholars in the world have the potential to

make mistakes in their interpretation of the Bible.

The world also lies to you -- sometimes deliberately, and sometimes because of a lack of understanding. Satan always lies, because there is no truth in him. (John 8:44)

That is the bad news. The good news is that you do not have to be afraid of those lies, if you know Jesus and His Word. When you accept Jesus Christ into your life -- as Lord of your life -- the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you, in order to teach you the truth. (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27)

The better you know God's Word, the more you know God. The greater your knowledge, the greater your discernment, which reduces the possibility that you will be led astray by false teaching. Paul warns Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:3-5 to withdraw himself from those whose teaching is contrary to Paul's doctrine and the "wholesome words" of Jesus Christ. The only way to know whether a teaching is contrary to God's Word is to know God's Word in the first place. Then, we are prepared and equipped to deal with error and deception.

Paul warns Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:12-15, and again in 2 Timothy 4:3-5 that evil men and seducers will become worse and worse, as time goes on. They will even deceive themselves, thinking that they are proponents of truth; and many believers will be led astray by their false doctrine. These heresies will appeal to fleshly lusts and worldly wisdom; and they will always be in opposition to the true gospel of Jesus Christ. The end result is the exchanging of the true gospel for "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6); and the real Jesus for "another Jesus." (2 Corinthians 11:6)

The Bible promises wisdom for any who ask it of God. (James 1:5) God is ready and willing to reveal the truths of His Word to us. Paul called the believers in Berea "noble," because they both received the Word of God with readiness, and searched the scriptures — daily — to check out what was being taught to them in the name of the Word of God. (Acts 17:11)

The message of the Bible is the message of Jesus Christ, Who said, "...I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6) Our very life is at stake, when it comes to what we believe and accept as truth.

It is time for you to begin thinking for yourselves. Ask questions! Dig for the answers, and prove it to yourself! Do not believe what anyone says, just because they are supposed to know more than you. Test them; and hold them accountable to prove the truth of their words by the Bible. If you cannot or will not do that, then you are setting yourself up for deception and a difficult learning experience. And that will be much more painful than spending a few minutes each day in study of the Book that God wrote for you.



Methods

A good way to illustrate this lesson is through well-known, contemporary examples of false doctrine: 1.) Salvation earned by one's own works; 2.) Martin Luther and the Whittenburg Door; 3.) Philosophies of Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hindus, New Age, etc.

Another activity that can be used prior to the lesson is commonly called "telephone." Select a Bible verse, preferably the memory verse, and whisper it into someone's ear. Ask them to whisper it to their neighbor, and so on,

until everyone has had a chance to hear the message. Then, ask the last person to tell everyone what he was told. The result is usually quite amazing; and it can be very illustrative of the main theme of this lesson.

God's Plan for Man

Volume 10

Lesson 2



Hebrews 4:12

Ephesians 2:1-10

Genesis 3:15

John 14:6

Revelation 13:8



Theme

The theme of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is God's redemptive plan for man.



Ephesians 2:1-10

- 1 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
- 2 "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
- 3 "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
- 4 "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
- 5 "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved;),
- 6 "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
- 7 "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus.
- 8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
- 9 "Not of works, lest any man should boast.
- 10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which

God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."



Hebrews 4:12

"For the word of God (is) [quick], [and powerful], and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and (is) a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."



Outline

- I. The Eternal God.
- A. Without beginning or end.
- B. Creator of the universe.
 - 1. All matter.
 - 2. Time and space.
- C. Unchanging (immutable). (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8)
- D. Omnipotent (all-powerful). (Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26)
- E. Omnipresent (all-present). (Psalms 139:7-12)

F. Omniscient (all-knowing). (Romans 11:33-34)

II. Time Is a Creation of God.

- A. A framework of existence for man.
- B. Time has a beginning and an ending.
- C. God exists independently of (outside of) time.

III. God's Purpose for Mankind.

- A. Fellowship and relationship. (Genesis 3:8; Jeremiah 9:24)
- B. Praise and worship. (Revelation 4:11)
- C. Restoration and redemption. (Genesis 3:15; 1 John 4:10)

IV. The Condition of Man.

- A. Inherently sinful (sin nature). (Romans 3:23)
- B. Carnal (fleshly). (Romans 7:14)
- C. Spiritually dead. (Ephesians 2:5)
- D. Enemies of God. (Romans 8:7)

V. God's Plan of Redemption.

- A. An eternal plan. (Revelation 13:8)
- B. The promised Redeemer. (Genesis 3:15)
- C. The law and its purpose. (Galatians 3:19)
 - 1. To show man his sinfulness.
 - 2. To show man his Savior.

VI. Restoration of Mankind.

- A. Through Jesus Christ alone. (1 Timothy 2:5)
- B. Made spiritually alive. (Ephesians 2:1)
- C. Made children of God. (Romans 8:14-16)
- D. Co-heirs with Christ for eternity. (Romans 8:17; Titus 3:7)



Spiritual Truths

- The Bible is the account of the plan of God for mankind.
- God's nature is eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, and immutable.
- God's plan for man extends unto eternal life, beyond time as we know it.
- Mankind was created for fellowship and relationship with God.
- Salvation is the restoration of mankind to God's intended purpose.
- Our fulfillment of God's plan for our lives is determined by our choice to do so.



Lesson Material

The theme of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is God's redemptive plan for man. God is the Creator of mankind; therefore, in order for us to understand our purpose, we look to the Word of God and what it has to say.

All that we know about God has been revealed in His Word. God cannot be fully understood by man. (Isaiah 55:8-9) The nature of God is eternal and omnipresent, while we have a definite beginning and exist in this world within the framework of time and space. God is omnipotent; and, while man has deceived himself into thinking that he has no need of God, his very helplessness is evidenced by his own frailties and impending death.

Man was not created to exist independently of God. Man is actually dependent upon God for everything from his next breath to his eternal destiny in the life to come. It is, therefore, wise for man to discover the Creator through His Word, and to come into agreement with his Creator's plan (salvation).

God created man for fellowship and relationship with Himself. The desire of God to be in intimate relationship with man is evident throughout scripture, as He expresses His love for man, ultimately in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. (John 3:16) Man was created to minister to God in praise and worship. This is man's highest function and greatest satisfaction.

Because of Adam's rebellion against God, all of mankind is inherently sinful. (Romans 5:19; 1 Corinthians 15:22) This

God's Plan for Man Volume 10

refers to the sin nature of man. This sin nature is expressed in sinful acts, which are common to every human being. (Romans 3:23) Because of our sin nature, our spiritual condition is one of darkness and death. (Ephesians 2:5) This is not how God created Adam, but rather the condition of Adam, and all of Adam's race, that was brought about as a result of Adam's sin.

The mind of man is at enmity against God. (Romans 8:7) The natural (unregenerate) man cannot perceive the ways of God or the things pertaining to God; and indeed, it does not care to. (1 Corinthians 2:14) The condition of the natural, or carnal, mind is expressed in outward actions of fleshliness. (Galatians 5:19-21)

The Bible not only reveals the nature of God and the condition of mankind, but it also has as its theme the plan of God for the redemption and restoration of mankind to Himself. God did not suddenly come up with a "Plan B" when Adam sinned. God had purposed for Jesus Christ to be the Agent of redemption before the creation of the world. This is why Jesus Christ is called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8)

Our first glimpse of the planned provision of God for the Redeemer is found in God's prophecy in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In this scripture, God is addressing the serpent (Satan) and telling him of the coming Seed, Who would eventually destroy Satan and all of his works. (1 John 3:8) It is significant to note that this Seed would be the seed of a woman. This was a prophecy that the Seed

would be born of a woman, without a human father. (Luke 1:35) It was necessary that Christ be sinless; otherwise, His death would have only been the natural result of His own sin, just as is the case for all of mankind. And because the sin nature is passed on through the seed of man, we see God's plan to bypass that natural seed in the conception of the Savior of mankind.

God dealt with man over several periods of time through different dispensations, until the coming of the Redeemer. The Old Testament is actually the dispensation of the law. The law was two-fold in purpose. First, the law was given, so that man could see his sinfulness. No one could completely keep the law. And while the law provided restraints, it could not cleanse from sin. Secondly, the law was given, in order to point mankind to the Redeemer. The law is full of typology, showing the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

The dispensation that we are now in is called the dispensation of grace. That is, now that the Redeemer has come and has fulfilled God's plan of restoration, we are able to enter into relationship with God because of His grace. "Grace" refers to that which is given by God and which is not (and cannot) be earned or merited by man's own works. Jesus Christ is the only Way to God. (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5) Now, because of the provision of Jesus Christ, we can be made spiritually alive -children of God, and co-heirs with Christ for eternity. Because of Jesus Christ, we can be restored to our intended state and purpose.

Apart from the Word of God, man cannot understand the nature of God or his own purpose for existing. Apart from the Word of God, there exists no wisdom or anything of eternal value. We must avail ourselves of the Word of God. Our very lives depend on it.



Methods

One quick way to determine the importance of the Bible in the minds of your students is to get a show of hands as to how many have brought their Bibles to class today. Again, our emphasis is on the importance of the Word of God, and the need for the students to study it for themselves.

If any of your students do not have a Bible, now would be a good time to make sure that they get one. Make sure that you have Bibles available for those who are unable to purchase one.

Encourage your students to develop a consistent Bible reading plan. There are several such plans available; or, you can draw up a simple plan, such as a daily selection from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Psalms and Proverbs.

Daily Bible reading is to be devotional, inspirational, and educational. Encourage your students to equip themselves with the Word of God. (Ephesians 6:17)

Good and Evil: How Can This Be?

Volume 10

Lesson 3



Bible References

Romans 7:14-25; 8:1-2

Isaiah 14:13-14

Ezekiel 28:12-19

1 John 3:8

Galatians 5:19-23



Theme

Examining the existence of good and evil in the world, and recognizing that Jesus Christ has overcome all.



Romans 7:14-25

14 "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 "For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 "For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

- 22 "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
- 23 "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
- 24 "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
- 25 "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin."



Romans 8:1-2

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."



Outline

I. The Origin of Evil.

- A. The first account of evil in the Bible.
- B. The problem of evil in the world.

- 1. If God is so good, why does He allow evil?
- 2. Man has the freedom to choose between good and evil.

II. The Origin of Satan.

- A. A created being.
- B. Lucifer's ministry.
- C. Lucifer's rebellion.
- D. Satan's future.

III. Jesus Christ Has Conquered Evil.

- A. Works of Satan destroyed. (1 John 3:8)
- B. Deliverance from the bondage of sin and death. (Romans 7:24-8:1; John 8:36)
- C. The sovereignty of Christ. (Hebrews 2:8)

IV. The Responsibility of Man.

- A. A free moral agent.
- B. Choice determines eternal destiny.
- C. Outworkings of sin.
- D. Consequences of sin (immediate and eternal).



Spiritual Truths

- We live in a world in which both good and evil exist.
- Satan is the perpetrator of evil.
- Man is inherently evil.
- God and Satan are not equal opposites.
- God has given man the freedom to choose between good and evil.
- Jesus Christ has conquered Satan and all of his works.
- There are eternal consequences for man's choice between good and evil.



Lesson Material

Mankind has always asked the question, "If God is good and all-powerful, then why does He allow evil in the world?" In this lesson, we will examine the origin and nature of evil, as well as God's solution to the problem of evil and its consequences.

The earliest historical account of evil that is recorded in scripture is the sin and subsequent rebellion of Lucifer, from Isaiah chapter 14. The five "I wills" of Satan are recorded in verses 13-14:

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

Satan (whose original name is Lucifer) fell, because of the sin of pride. His desire was to exalt himself above God, rather than to exalt the God Who created Him. Lucifer was created as a special minister of praise and worship unto the Lord. (Ezekiel 28:12-19) He was specifically anointed as a "covering cherub." (Ezekiel 28:14, 16). He was created perfect (Ezekiel 28:15) and beautiful. (Ezekiel 28:13) It is interesting to note that Jesus Himself, as the preincarnate second Person of the Trinity, witnessed the fall of Satan from heaven. (Luke 10:18)

After being removed from ministry in heaven, Satan began his activity in the earth. Notice that he was present, in the form of a serpent, in the fall of Adam and Eve. (Genesis 3:1-15) Satan's plan has always been to disrupt (and attempt to usurp) the plan of God, particularly concerning mankind. Satan is mankind's adversary, seeking "...whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

Satan is a created being. Although God and Satan are diametrically opposed in nature, they are not equally powerful. There is no other being equal to God. (1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 45:6) God is not threatened by Satan. God has already planned for Satan's demise, when it suits God's purposes. Satan will spend eternity in the lake of fire, never to deceive again. (Revelation 20:10) The next time Satan reminds you of your past, remind him of his future!

In Revelation 20:14, we learn that death and hell are also cast into this same lake of fire for all eternity. Hell was created for the devil and those angels who rebelled with him. (Matthew 25:41) Hell was not created for man; man was created to spend eternity with God in heaven. But when man chooses to stay in his state of sin, separated from God, he forfeits God's provision of heaven and chooses what is left -- hell. God does not send anyone to hell. In fact, God has gone to great lengths, in order to ensure that "whosoever will" does not have to go there, by the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (John 3:16) The only way to go to hell is to ignore the love of God, the blood of Jesus Christ, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and the witness of creation itself. (Romans 1:20)

Jesus Christ has conquered Satan and all of his works. (1 John 3:8) It is very important to realize that the powers of evil are not as great as the power of good (God). Satan is a defeated adversary; and the Bible says that "...greater is he] that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4) In Christ, we are overcomers of Satan and all evil. In fact, we are called "more than conquerors," because the victory of Jesus Christ over Satan becomes our victory, when we are in Him. (Romans 8:37) God has put all things under the feet of Jesus Christ -- and that includes Satan and all manner of evil. (Hebrews 2:8)

Regardless of Satan's deception and God's provision, man is responsible for his own choices. Man has been created as a free moral agent. That is to say that man has a will, which no one, not even God, can violate. God has established this, so that man by his free choice enters into relationship with God. Otherwise, we would only be mindless, robotic slaves of God.

Because man is responsible for his own choices, man must also bear responsibility for the consequences of his sin. To blame all evil and its outworking on the devil is to avoid responsibility for one's own actions. The Bible specifically says that the carnal nature of man manifests itself in the "works of the flesh." (Galatians 5:19-21) To angrily accuse or question God for such evil as murder, sexually transmitted disease, incest, and war is to avoid responsibility for the natural consequences of man's sin. God cannot sin; and God cannot even tempt man with sin. (James 1:13) Man sins all by himself -- and the devil cannot make him do it.

As well as the immediate consequences of sin, the eternal consequences of sin are: separation from God; death (Romans 6:23); judgment; and the second death. (Revelation 20:12-14)

As believers, we continue to struggle with the problem of sin in our lives. (Romans 7:14-25) This is because our new (Spirit) nature is at war with our old (fleshly) nature. (Galatians 5:17) The only victory for us is staying in the Victor -- Jesus Christ. We do this by strengthening the inner man, through prayer, the Word of God, fellowship with other believers, and worship. When we do these things, the Holy Spirit forms in us the character of Jesus Christ, Who is inherently good. This character of Christ formed in us is called the "fruit of the Spirit." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Whether we choose God, and how we choose to live our lives within or without His plan, is our choice. God will never violate our will. The secret to a fulfilled, satisfying life is to walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16) In so doing, we will not give place to the works of the flesh; and we will not give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:27) Our choices will determine both our

present fulfillment and our eternal destiny.



Methods

Illustrating this lesson is best accomplished by examining current events around the world. For instance, the AIDS epidemic appears to be a terrible evil that man should not have to endure. Yet, God warns us in His Word against sexual immorality and promiscuity. AIDS is the natural consequence of sinful actions.

A key word in this lesson is "responsibility." Ask your students if they truly accept responsibility for their actions, their walk with God, and their attitudes.

Another key word in this lesson is "choice." Have a prayer time with your students; and encourage them to commit themselves to God's plan and God's Word.

God: How Do You Know He Exists?

Volume 10

Lesson 4



Psalms 14:1; 19:1

Romans 1:18-25

1 Corinthians 2:14

Colossians 1:17

Isaiah 40:22



Theme

Is it possible to prove the existence of God?



Scripture Reading

Romans 1:18-25

- 18 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
- 19 "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed (it) unto them.
- 20 "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, (even) his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
- 21 "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified {him} not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22 "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
- 23 "And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
- 24 "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
- 25 "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the

creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."



Psalms 14:1

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."



Outline

I. Proving God's Existence.

- A. Skeptics require tangible evidence.
- B. Believers stand on faith.

II. Who Can Prove the Existence of God?

- A. The natural mind can either reason in or reason out the existence of God.
- B. The natural man will not accept reasoning by faith.
- C. Only the Holy Spirit can convince man of God's existence.
- D. Creation stands as a witness to both regenerate and unregenerate man.

III. Evidence of God's Existence.

- A. Creation -- scientific evidence.
- B. Man's innate drive to worship.
- C. Historical accuracy of the Word of God.
- D. The Person of Jesus Christ.

IV. Unregenerate Man Rejects the Existence of God.

- A. Responsibility.
- B. Accountability.



Spiritual Truths

- It is difficult for skeptics to believe in a God Whom they cannot see, hear, touch, or sense in any tangible way.
- The evidence of God's existence is all around us.
- The evidence of God's existence is within us.
- Jesus Christ is the ultimate Evidence of God.
- The Bible is an accurate record of the truths of God and the origin of all things.
- The fool has said that there is no God.



Lesson Material

A commonly asked question is, "If God exists, why does He not show Himself in some tangible way?" In this lesson, we will examine the ways in which God has surely shown Himself, and the reasons that unregenerate man rejects the existence of God.

The natural mind of man can neither comprehend the nature of God nor understand His ways. (1 Corinthians 2:14) God is Spirit (John 4:24) The natural man cannot discern spiritual things, because he is spiritually dead. (Ephesians 2:1) For this reason, the natural (unregenerate) man rejects the argument of faith. To try to explain spiritual truths to an unregenerate man is like trying to talk to your dog -- you may have his attention, but he cannot have the faintest idea of what you are trying to communicate. Only the Holy Spirit can breathe life into the spirit of a man, thus renewing that man's mind and quickening that man's spirit.

How, then, can we attempt to prove the existence of God to the unregenerate man? We will look at four different arguments for God's existence.

The Bible says in Romans chapter 1 that creation itself is evidence of God's existence. Any man who looks up into the sky realizes that there is something greater than himself. "The [heavens declare] the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." (Psalms 19:1) The scripture instructs us that the witness of creation is so powerful, and so clearly evident, that men are without excuse before God. (Romans 1:20)

Science itself bears witness to the existence of the Creator, in the first and second laws of thermodynamics. The first law of thermodynamics has to do with cause and effect. Everything was caused by something, which was caused by something prior to it, etc. Following this logic, one goes all the way back to a "first cause" -- that which began the chain of events known as the universe. This first cause by definition could have had no cause preceding it. Everything in the universe had a beginning (hence, the "Big Bang" theory). But God, by definition, had no beginning. He is the first cause of thermodynamics.

The second law of thermodynamics states that all matter is proceeding from order to disorder. No exception to this law has been found in the universe at any time. And yet, the theory of evolution states that matter is actually organizing itself over a process of time, from disorder to order. The universe is actually disintegrating; and it is only by the power of God that it is held together at all. (Colossians 1:17)

Another evidence of the existence of God is man's universal, innate drive to worship something or someone greater than himself. As believers, we know that man was created for the purpose of God's pleasure (Revelation 4:11); and apart from that purpose, man is faced with a spiritual void, which he will always attempt to fill in some way.

Because the Bible is God's revelation of Himself to mankind, the historical accuracy of the Word of God lends great credence to its use in apologetics. Archaeological digs are constantly uncovering confirmations of facts already known by those who believe the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. It may take

scientists some time, before they can prove to themselves what the Bible already has revealed to us as truth. For example, it was widely held that the earth was flat, in the days of Christopher Columbus, in spite of Isaiah's revelation of the "circle of the earth." (Isaiah 40:22) Until men had the ability to sail around the earth without falling off, they were unwilling to believe what men of faith already knew to be true.

The greatest evidence of the existence of God is the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God's revelation of Himself to mankind -- God in the flesh. (John 1:14) Secular historians, such as Josephus, have recorded accounts of Jesus, His miracles, and His resurrection. Jesus Himself said that to see Him was to see the revelation of God Himself. (John 14:9)

Only the foolish choose not to believe. (Psalms 14:1) Unregenerate man chooses to not believe in God for two reasons. First, if man acknowledges God, then he becomes responsible with what he does with that acknowledgment. He is forced to deal with the God Whom he knows to be real; and he cannot blame a variety of unknowns for his behavior and its consequences. Secondly, if man acknowledges God, he becomes accountable to God -- accountable for his actions, his sin, and the stewardship of his life. The natural mind rejects God, because the natural mind rejects responsibility and accountability.

Only the Holy Spirit can convince men of God and of the things of God -- sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:8) Only the Holy Spirit can draw men toward

God; they will not naturally come to God on their own. It is our part as believers to bear witness of God's existence through the testimony of the Word that we speak and the testimony of the life that we live. A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. The most tangible evidence of Jesus Christ is His body here on the earth — us.



Methods

It is important to communicate to our students that they must know what they believe, and why they believe it. They must also see themselves as in this world for the purpose of witnessing to the existence of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Prepare for class, using several references; and prepare a list of reference materials to give to the students. Henry Morris' Biblical Basis for Modern Science is a hearty source of examples from the various scientific disciplines. Other sources of reference would be related articles from the news media.

Take time to allow the students to ask questions. For many students this age, it will be the first time they have ever thought of these issues.

Pride: The Root of All Sin

Volume 10

Lesson 5



Bible References

Isaiah 14:12-15; 55:8-9

Proverbs 8:12-14; 16:18; 26:12

1 Timothy 6:3-6

2 Timothy 3:1-5

Luke 1:51-53

Philippians 2:3-10

Matthew 22:36-40; 23:12

1 Peter 5:5-7

1 John 2:16



Theme

Pride is the root of all sin and all evil.



Scripture Reading

1 Timothy 6:3-6

- 3 "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
- 4 "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,
- 5 "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.
- 6 "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

1 John 2:16

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."



Proverbs 16:18

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."



Outline

I. Pride Is the Root of All Sin.

- A. Through pride, Lucifer became the devil.
- B. Pride is the complete anti-God state of mind.
- C. Proud men do not fear God.
- D. Pride is a spiritual issue.
- E. Pride and wisdom are mutually exclusive.

II. Humility Is the Opposite of Pride.

- A. Through humility and submission to God, salvation is possible.
- B. Humbleness before God allows for the accomplishment of His will.
- C. Humble men are not weak; they are strong in the Lord.

D. Achieving humility necessitates admitting pride.

III. Jesus Christ Is the Perfect Example of Humility.

- A. Jesus humbled himself in obedience to the Father. (Philippians 2:5-10)
- B. The obedience of Jesus led to His death on the cross.
- C. Because of His obedience, God exalted Jesus.

IV. In the Last Days, Men Will Be Proud.

- A. Proud men will be lovers of themselves.
- B. Proud men will not demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit.
- C. Proud men will not love God.
- V. God Honors and Gives Grace to the Humble.



Spiritual Truths

- Pride is an fleshly condition, from which no man is totally free.
- Pride is the root of all sin and all evil.
- It was through pride that Lucifer became the devil.

- Pride is an anti-God state of mind.
- Proud men are not godly men; and they cannot know God.
- Pride is an emotional need that is spiritual in origin.
- Pride, because it is sin, causes separation from God.
- Jesus Christ is the perfect example of humility, because He submitted Himself in every way to God the Father.
- God honors and gives grace to the humble.



Lesson Material

The renowned author, C. S. Lewis, has said that pride is the "root of all sin and all evil." It was pride that led Lucifer to rebel against God in sin, whereby he became Satan, the devil. (Isaiah 14:12-15) Pride always produces rebellion, because it is an anti-God state of mind. Proud men do not fear God, nor can they know Him. They think that they have power, but they are spiritually impotent. (Proverbs 8:12-14)

Pride is that powerful drive which is never content with having something, but which is only satisfied to have more than everyone else. It is the pleasure of being above others that makes one proud.

A proud individual is always looking down on others. As long as one is looking down, it is very difficult to see anything, or anyone, that might be above -- namely, God. A proud person stands before God, Who is infinitely superior to him (Isaiah 55:8-9), and will not acknowledge his inferior position.

Pride is not animalistic in origin, like hunger or thirst. Pride is an emotional need for superiority, which is purely spiritual in origin. Satan undoubtedly encourages its presence, because he knows it leads to sin and separation from God. (Luke 1:51-53) Whatever makes you feel like you are above someone else, even though it may be inherently good (e.g., prayer), understand that it is pride working to separate you from God.

The proud man refuses to believe what God has said. The refusal to believe the Word of God is a sin for which there is no pardon. It is, therefore, foolish to turn away from Jesus because of pride, because eternal damnation is the ultimate consequence. Pride prevents the application of God's grace to the sinner; and thus, salvation is not possible. (1 Timothy 6:3-5; Proverbs 26:12).

Humility is the opposite of pride. Humility is not the character quality so often portrayed by weak, wimpy persons of low self-esteem. The truly humble person is submitted to God; and he allows God's will to be done through him. Submission to God requires a magnitude of inner strength, which is unknown to the proud. True humility loves all others with the love of God, and takes an interest in their well-being, as Christ does. (Philippians 2:3-5)

If you want to be humble, the first step is to realize that you are proud. If you think you are not proud, then you are definitely proud, and only fooling yourself. Jesus Christ was the perfect

Example of humility. If you want to be humble, imitate Him. (Philippians 2:5-8)

The choice to exalt yourself is not wise, because God exalts the humble, but abases the proud, who exalt themselves. (Matthew 23:12) It is God Who will exalt you at the proper time, when you have submitted yourself to Him in every way. The glory, though, must go to God, by Whose power you are exalted. Jesus Christ submitted His will to His Father, even to the point of death. God later exalted Him above all others, but God received the glory. (Philippians 2:9-10)

Paul wrote to Timothy about the proud spirit that will be widely exhibited in the last days, whereby men would love themselves more than they would love God. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

Adhering to God's word in obedience is the antidote for a life controlled by pride. Pride is ultimately responsible for all sin, in those moments when we proudly refuse to submit our will to God's. Those who submit their wills fulfill the first two commandments -- to love God and their neighbors -- and, therefore, they fulfill the entire law of God. (Matthew 22:36-40) Only the humble in spirit are able to submit to God in this way. The proud man will never realize the grace that results from a heart submitted to God. 1 Peter 5:5-7 says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all {of you} be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

To be in right relationship with God, and therefore with others, we must allow

the Holy Spirit to cultivate in us the attitude of humility that was evident in the life of Jesus Christ. We must submit ourselves to the conviction of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, for only He can change our fleshly attitude of pride. We cannot change ourselves.



Methods

Pass out a sheet with the following discussion questions. Ask each student to answer the questions honestly; and then, discuss how the sin of pride is at work in their answers:

- 1. Why do you become angry, when someone makes fun of the way you look? How about when someone is mean to you, or talks behind your back?
- 2. What makes you want to be better than someone else at sports, physical appearance, academics, games, etc.?
- 3. What makes you look the other way, when you see someone who is lonely or is being mistreated by other people?
- 4. What makes it difficult to always do what your parents ask?
- 5. What makes you give in to peer pressure from your friends, and do something that you know is wrong?
- 6. What caused Adam and Eve to disobey God?
 - 7. What makes you sin?

Prayer: The Valid Solution

Volume 10

Lesson 6



Philippians 4:6-7

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Colossians 3:17

Matthew 6:5-6

Mark 1:35

Psalms 46:10



Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:6-7

6 "Be careful for nothing; but in everything 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."



Theme

Prayer is the valid answer to all of life's problems.



Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:17

"Pray without ceasing."



Outline

I. Do Not Worry about Anything.

- A. It seems impossible, but it is not.
- B. God is in control.

II. Pray about Everything.

- A. It seems impossible, but it is not.
- B. Prayer is simply communication with God.
- C. We can communicate with God in everything we do.

III. The Peace of God Will Set You Free from Worry.

- A. Peace with God is a product of salvation.
- B. The peace of God comes from communication with Him.

IV. Three Things to Notice about the Prayer of Jesus. (Mark 1:35)

- A. Jesus made time to pray.
- B. Jesus made prayer a priority.
- C. Jesus prayed alone.



Spiritual Truths

- If you are a Christian, you must pray.
- Prayer gives God the opportunity to do His will.
- We should always be in an attitude of prayer.
- God answers prayer; and He can give us peace, because we pray.
- The peace that comes from God can set us free from that which hinders or binds.
- Jesus made time to pray. He prioritized prayer.
- God's will is hindered when His people do not pray.



Lesson Material

Christians must pray. Prayer gives God the opportunity to do His will. God is hindered when His people do not pray. Prayer is simply communication with God, but it also demonstrates that we have faith. Who would waste their time praying to a God in Whom they had no faith?

Philippians 4:6 provides us with some enlightening information about prayer and its purpose in the life of the Christian. To make things even easier to understand

a paraphrase of this verse is useful at this point:

"Do not worry about anything; instead, pray about everything." Is it possible to live in this world without worrying about anything? With the ever-increasing prevalence of disease, crime, and war comes a feeling of insecurity about the world in which we live; and yet, God tells us not to worry. It is safe to say that we all worry about something, some of the time.

Psalms 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God:...." God says to His children, "Do not worry about it. I am God; and I am in control." If we really believe that He will take care of us, then worrying about things is a waste of our time and energy. Satan would like us to worry all the time, because he knows that worrying is not consistent with faith in God. When we attempt to carry the burdens of this life on our shoulders without consulting the Lord, it will stunt our spiritual growth. God has told us to cast all of our cares upon Him, because He cares for us.

We must pray about everything. If it seems impossible to live our lives free of worry, it would appear to be even more difficult to pray about everything. Someone once said, "You cannot have everything. Where would you put it?" In the same way, it may not seem possible to pray about everything. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing." Pray about everything; and pray without ceasing! It is possible to pray this way, as long as we understand that prayer is simply communication with God. We continually communicate in many ways: by verbal communication, communication, and by non-verbal communication.

Verbal communication is our primary method of communication with others, and it should be with God, too. Although it is not possible to talk to God out loud all of the time, it is something that we can do, whenever we are alone with Him or praying with others.

Mental communication is involved with our thinking processes. We probably spend more time thinking than talking. If we were to analyze the things that we spend time thinking about, much of our time is spent worrying. God can hear us, even when we are thinking. By praying this way, we can communicate with God anytime, anywhere, without disturbing anyone.

Another means of communication is non-verbal communication. We are always doing something. By our actions, we communicate with everyone who observes us. It is often said that "actions speak louder than words." This statement is true, because our actions communicate more about what we believe than our words. It is easy to say, for example, that I will read a chapter of my Bible every day, but it is quite another thing to actually follow through.

The things that we do communicate a message to God about our love for Him. (Colossians 3:17) When our behavior glorifies God, we are communicating our love for Him. When our behavior dishonors God, we communicate a completely different message to Him and to everyone who witnesses the behavior. It may not seem like prayer, in the classical sense of the word; but it is just as important to communicate with God through our actions as it is through our words and thoughts.

The peace of God will set you free. When the Holy Spirit is invited into a life, that individual has received the free gift of salvation and peace with God. The problem is that not everyone who has made peace with God has the peace of God.

Philippians 4:7 tells us that the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds, if we will but follow the advice given in verse 6: Do not worry about anything, but pray about everything. The peace of God surpasses all comprehension. It is the kind of peace that enables us to stand firm in our faith, even though our lives may be in chaos. To have peace in the face of death is something that those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior will never experience. To those who are perishing, the unknowns of death are to be feared above all else. But to those who know God, His peace can be their peace.

The most important point to understand is that we must communicate with God, in order to get to know Him. If we don not know Him, trusting Him is impossible. Through prayer and the study of His Word, we can get to know God. The more we get to know Him, the more we learn to trust Him, regardless of the circumstances we face.

Jesus gives us the best example of praying that we have. In Mark 1:35, we read: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." There are three things about the prayer of Jesus that are worth noting:

First, Jesus made time to pray. Jesus was very busy. He spent nearly all of His time ministering to others; and He had very little time alone to pray. Mark 1:35 tells us that He got up very early in the

morning, in order to spend time in prayer. He made time to pray.

We are no different. Our lives are filled with things that demand our time. Unless we set aside time to pray, the day will begin and end without spending any time alone with the Lord.

Secondly, Jesus made prayer a priority. Jesus got up early to pray, before He did anything else. Prayer was not the last thing on His agenda — it was first.

There is no better way to start the day, than in prayer. It gives us a chance to focus on Him, before our focus shifts to anything else. It gives God the opportunity to work out His will in our lives, as we turn over everything to Him.

Lastly, Jesus prayed alone. Jesus removed Himself from the distractions and demands of others, so that He could be alone with the Father.

God desires sincere, truthful praying. (Matthew 6:5-6) God wants to hear what is really on your mind. If there are others around, you may not feel free to be honest. God can keep a secret. If you tell God about a secret problem or fear, you can relax, because He is not going to tell anyone. He is going to help you with the problem. Find a place to pray, where you will not be disturbed, or forced to stop before you are finished.

Psalms 46:10 encourages us to "Be still, and know that I am God:...."



Methods

This lesson deserves a challenge. Invite your students to spend at least 15 minutes alone in prayer, each day this week. Make it a point to issue this challenge every time you meet with your students. Ask them if

they are able to set aside time each day to pray. Assign requests to each student to pray about during the week. Check up on their progress at the next meeting.

If time allows at the end of this lesson, break up into small groups of three of four, in order to share problems and prayer requests. Spend time in these groups praying for these requests.

Prayer: Its Power

Volume 10

Lesson 7



Bible References

2 Kings 6:8-17

1 John 4:1-4

Ephesians 6:10-13

Psalms 34:7; 113:4-5

2 Corinthians 10:4



Theme

The power of prayer.



Scripture Reading

2 Kings 6:8-17

8 "Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants,

saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

9 "And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

10 "And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 "Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?

12 "And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 "And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14 "Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 "And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 "And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."



1 John 4:4

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."



Outline

- I. Elisha Was Surrounded by the Armies of Ben-Hadad.
- A. Ben-Hadad had not been able to defeat Israel.
- B. Elisha had been informed by God of Ben-Hadad's secret plans.

II. Elisha's Servant Was Afraid.

- A. The servant went to Elisha in fear.
- B. Elisha prayed for his servant.
- C. The servant saw that there was nothing to fear.

III. God's People Are Surrounded by an Unbelieving World.

- A. Satan has not been able to defeat God's chosen.
- B. God's Word has informed us of Satan's devices and schemes.

IV. At Times, God's People Are Afraid.

- A. God wants us to go to Him, in times of need.
- B. He can help us to see that there is nothing to fear.
- C. God is greater than all of our problems.



Spiritual Truths

- As Christians, we are surrounded by a world that does not believe in the saving grace of Jesus Christ.
- Fear of the world can render us useless for God.
- Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces

that govern the hearts of unregenerate man.

- God's protection is all around us, even if we are not aware of it.
- The power of God within us, the Holy Spirit, is greater than the power that is in the world.
- We have nothing to fear, because there is no fear in the perfect love of God. He is the source of our strength.
- It is important that we pray for one another.



Lesson Material

Ben-Hadad was the king of Syria (Aram and the Arameans). He was warring with Israel. But every time he tried to defeat the Israelites, they would somehow slip through his fingers and escape.

Naturally, the Syrian king was very angry. So he called his servants together, in order to find out which one of them was a traitor. His servants assured him that there was no traitor; but somehow, the prophet Elisha knew the secret battle plans made by the king and his counselors. It was Elisha who told the king of Israel their plans.

Ben-Hadad sent his army to the little town of Dothan to capture Elisha. Dothan was built on a hill in a valley surrounded by other hills. In the middle of the night, his armies surrounded the city from the hills. Early in the morning, Elisha's servant went out and saw an army with horses and chariots circling the city. Afraid, he ran back inside and said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" Elisha said (v. 16-17) "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, I pray, open his eyes, that he may see." And the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Imagine if you were the servant who went out early in the morning, probably to get water from the well. Looking in every direction, there is the movement of hundreds of horses and chariots and shields flashing in the morning sun, as an army circled the city. You would be petrified with fear, especially if you thought that they had come for you.

Quickly, you run back inside to tell your master; and he says, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." You look around, and you do not see anyone else, except for the huge army that has surrounded you. Then your master prays, "Oh Lord, I pray, open his eyes, that he may see." You open your eyes again and see that, between you and the enemy, the mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire that outnumber the enemy.

1 John 4:1-4 says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now

already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

We, as Christians, are surrounded by a world that does not believe in Jesus Christ, and which does not like that fact that we do. John tells us that there are false prophets in the world, who are sent to deceive everyone by teaching that Jesus Christ was only a man, and not God. We are in the midst of a spiritual battle that we cannot see. The objective of the enemy is to destroy our faith in Jesus Christ. But God has both revealed our enemy to us and given us the protection and weapons to deal with our enemy. (Ephesians 6:10-13, 18.) Our enemy is not "flesh and blood" -- people. We must recognize that our enemy is the devil and his principalities. In the same way, our weapons and armor are not earthly, either. They are "...mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." (2 Corinthians 10:4)

Like Elisha and his servant, we are surrounded by what seems to be a great enemy. The devil seems to be winning. Sometimes, we are even scared to go out and live for Jesus, because evil is everywhere. But, we only see with our natural eyes. If God opened our eyes, like He opened the eyes of Elisha's servant, we would see that around this place -- around each of us -- are angels, who are given the responsibility to protect us. (Psalms 34:7) And, even more importantly, we have been given the Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. That is why John could say, "...greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4) The Holy Spirit indwells those who have asked Jesus into their hearts, to be their Lord and Savior. He is greater than anyone or anything we might be facing.

Psalms 113:4-5 says that "The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the LORD God, who dwelleth on high." Whatever you are facing today that has you worried or afraid, He is greater. Whomever you are afraid of, He is stronger. If you will ask Him for help, He will help. That is what prayer is all about. Like Elisha prayed for his servant, we should also pray for each other. Bearing each other's burdens in prayer is used by God to strengthen the entire body of believers. (Galatians 6:2) Remember, "...They that be with us are more than they that be with them." (2 Kings 6:16)



Methods

Take time to read the story aloud of Elisha and his servant from 2 Kings.

Make sure to emphasize the connection between these two key verses: 2 Kings 6:16 and 1 John 4:4. Also, be sure to emphasize that our battle is spiritual, and not natural, even though it may manifest itself in the natural. We are supernatural beings because of the new birth; and we do not deal solely on the natural level.

Break up into groups after the lesson for a time of sharing and prayer. Challenge the students to spend at least 5 minutes in prayer every day, before they go to school. Challenge them to look to God as the source of their strength, as they face difficulties in their lives. Ask for testimonies, in future meetings together.

The Sanctity of Human Life

Volume 10

Lesson 8



Bible References

Luke 1:15

Isaiah 49:5

Jeremiah 1:5

Galatians 1:15

Psalms 139:13-16



Theme

Human life is sacred, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death.



Psalms 139:13-16

13 "For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works: and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."



Memory Verse

Psalms 139:13

"For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb."



Outline

I. The Biological Perspective.

- A. There are many stages of a preborn baby's development.
- B. There are three main types of abortions.

II. Biblical Perspective.

- A. God views unborn babies and birthed babies the same.
- B. God acknowledges a person's existence both inside and outside of the womb.

III. What Does the Bible Say about Protecting Human Life?

- A. God hates the shedding of innocent blood. (Proverbs 6:16-17)
- B. Defend the poor and fatherless. (Psalms 82:3-4)

- C. Speak out for those who are appointed to destruction. (Proverbs 31:8-9)
- E. Do not ignore the cause of those unjustly delivered to death. (Proverbs 24:11-12)



Spiritual Truths

- All human life is precious and valuable to God, whether a person is handicapped, disabled, retarded, terminally ill, aged, preborn, or in good health.
- Human life is sacred; and it must be protected from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death, because it is created in the image of God.



Lesson Material

The Bible has much to say about the sanctity of human life. When human life is unjustly ended, it is murder. Biblically, the practice of abortion is murder. We will look at the biological and biblical perspectives on human life.

There are many stages of a preborn baby's development. Human life begins at conception. All human beings are made up of cells which contain 46 chromosomes. At conception, 23 chromosomes come from the father and 23 chromosomes come from the mother, making a totally new and unique individual. The baby needs only food and time to grow into an adult human being.

The baby's heart begins to beat at about three weeks after conception. The baby begins to move around; and the baby's brain waves can be detected at about six weeks after conception. The baby feels pain, responds to touch, and sucks its thumb, at about eight weeks after conception. His body is completely formed, including finger prints, at about ten weeks after conception. At about twelve weeks after conception, all organs are fully functioning; and nothing changes between now and birth, except for the child's size.

There are three main types of abortions. A suction abortion is done up to ten weeks from conception. A powerful suction tube is inserted into the womb (uterus); and the powerful suction tears the preborn baby into pieces. A D&C abortion is done up to twelve weeks from conception. A loop-shaped, steel knife is inserted into the womb; and it is used to cut the preborn baby into small pieces, so that it can be removed from the womb. A saline abortion is done after sixteen weeks from conception. This type of abortion is done by inserting a long needle through the mother's abdomen into the womb, and injecting a solution of concentrated salt. The baby breathes in and swallows the salt, and he is poisoned by it. It takes over an hour to kill the baby by this method. The mother will then go into labor, about 24 hours later, and deliver a dead baby.

The above methods of abortion are descriptive of the horrible torture and execution of live human beings. Based on biological facts, every abortion kills an innocent human life, which was created in the image of almighty God.

God acknowledges a person's existence in and out of the womb. For example:

- 1. God ordained Isaiah to be a prophet, while he was still in the womb. (Isaiah 49:5)
- 2. God ordained Jeremiah to be a prophet, while he was still in the womb. (Jeremiah 1:5)
- 3. The apostle Paul was set apart, or ordained, from His mother's womb. (Galatians 1:15)
- 4. God knew David in the womb. (Psalms 139:13)
- 5. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit, from his mother's womb. (Luke 1:15)

God has a plan for every human life, even before the conception of that life. (Psalms 139:16) Based on biblical truth, every abortion kills an innocent human life, which was created in the image of God.

What would your decision be? The father has syphilis and the mother has tuberculosis. They have had four children. The first one was deaf; and the fourth one has had tuberculosis. The mother is now pregnant with her fifth child. Would society counsel her to have an abortion? Would you? If you chose abortion, you would have murdered Beethoven, the world-famous pianist and composer.

The Bible has much to say about protecting human life. God hates the shedding of innocent blood; and it is detestable in His sight. (Proverbs 6:16-17) The unborn are the most innocent of all

people. They have committed no sin. Except for Jesus Himself, no one could be considered more innocent.

The scripture says to defend the poor and fatherless, and to do justice to the afflicted and needy. We are to "rid them out of the hand of the wicked." (Psalms 82:3-4) The unborn are afflicted. They are persecuted for simply being at the wrong place at the wrong time.

We are to speak out for those appointed unto destruction. (Proverbs 31:8-9) These unborn children have been unjustly singled out for destruction by abortion. The plight of the unborn is not to be ignored or disregarded. (Proverbs 24:11-12) Because God values these children, so also should we.



Methods

This material is best presented by lecture, with pictorial literature to support it. Exposing abortion for what it is helps the students to see that it is actually the murder of human beings.

It will also benefit your students to discuss alternatives to abortion, such as adoption.

If a student (or someone whom one of your students knows) has had an abortion, be sure to minister to them the love and available forgiveness of Jesus Christ. If someone is contemplating an abortion, be sure to assist by providing the means of an alternative, through referrals to godly counselors, etc.

The Rapture and the Second Coming

Volume 10

Lesson 9



Bible References

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 5:9

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

1 John 3:3

Acts 1:11

Revelation 19:11-21

Matthew 24:3-44



Theme

Examining the rapture of the church and the second coming of Jesus Christ, which are two separate events.



Scripture Reading

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 "Then we which are alive {and} remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Matthew 24:3-14

- 3 "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what (shall be) the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?
- 4 "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.
- 5 "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

- 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.
- 8 "All these {are} the beginning of sorrows.
- 9 "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.
- 10 "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.
- 11 "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.
- 12 "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.
- 13 "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.
- 14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."



1 Thessalonians 5:9

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"



Outline

I. What Is the Rapture?

- A. It is the "catching away" of the church.
- B. It is the blessed hope of the believer. (Titus 2:13)
- C. Events of the rapture.
 - 1. The Lord descends from heaven.
 - 2. The trump of God.
 - 3. Voice of the archangel.
 - 4. Dead in Christ rise first.
 - 5. Living believers rise next.
 - 6. Meeting the Lord in the air.

II. What Is the Second Coming?

- A. Jesus' return to the earth.
- B. Follows the tribulation period.
- C. The saints return with the Lord.
- D. Jesus conquers the kingdoms of the earth and the antichrist.
- E. Jesus begins His reign on the earth.

III. Two Gospels.

- A. The gospel of salvation (gospel of Christ). (Romans 1:16)
 - 1. The Great Commission. (Mark 16:15)
 - 2. Making disciples.

- B. The gospel of the kingdom. (Mark 24:14)
 - 1. Christ's impending return to the earth.
 - 2. All nations will submit to His reign.



Spiritual Truths

- The rapture of the church is the blessed hope of all believers.
- The rapture of the church is a separate event from the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- God has not appointed us to wrath.
- The tribulation period on the earth is the time in which God deals with national Israel.
- Jesus will come again to the earth, in order to set up His literal, physical kingdom.
- The saints will rule and reign with Jesus for eternity.



Lesson Material

The purpose of this lesson is to differentiate between the rapture of the church and the second coming of Jesus Christ, which are two separate biblical events.

The rapture of the church (from the Greek rapturos -- "catching away") is that event which is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. The events of the rapture of the church include the return of the Lord from heaven to meet believers in the clouds. Note that Jesus meets believers in the air, rather than setting His foot on the earth, as in the second coming. (Zechariah 14:4) In the second coming, Jesus will return, in a manner similar to when He ascended to heaven -- and to the same mountain. (Acts 1:11)

In the rapture, the saints who have died (the dead in Christ) will be raised and caught up, or raptured, to meet the Lord in the air. Then, living believers will be changed (instantaneous transformation, or resurrection -- 1 Corinthians 15:51-52); and they also meet the Lord in the air. After this, the believers will "ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

There has been much debate over the timing of the rapture of the church. Many Bible scholars tie the rapture of the church in to the tribulation period on the earth in the last days; and so, they place the time of the rapture of the church either in the middle of, or at the end of the tribulation. But many Bible scholars place the time of the rapture of the church before the tribulation period, as we will show.

The tribulation period on the earth is the time when God again deals with the nation of Israel, in order to bring them to repentance and reveal to them their Messiah, Jesus Christ. It is called "Jacob's trouble." (Jeremiah 30:7) It is the last week of the seventy weeks that Daniel prophesied. (Daniel 9:24-27) These seventy

weeks are "...determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city,...." (Daniel 9:24) The tribulation is God's dealing with Israel.

Because the Old Testament prophets could not foresee the church age (and therefore, it was a mystery), the prophecies concerning Christ's first and second comings were often blended together. For example, in Daniel's seventy weeks, we see the fulfillment of the first sixty-nine weeks in chronological order; but then, the seventieth week remains unfulfilled. This is the church age, when God's grace and the gospel of salvation are preached unto all, both Jew and gentile -- to "whosoever." (John 3:16) After the church is removed from the scene (by way of the rapture), God deals with Israel, and the seventieth week (the seven-year tribulation period) is fulfilled.

God has not appointed the church to wrath. (1 Thessalonians 5:9) In Jesus' Olivet discourse of Matthew 24 and Luke 21, after He describes the events preceding His second coming, He says, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36) The rapture of the church is that "escape" from the tribulation to come.

The full-scale unleashing of the powers of darkness and the revelation of the antichrist cannot occur, until the church is taken out of the way. (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8) The church is a hindering force to the powers of darkness. However, once the church is off the scene, the events of the tribulation rapidly unfold, culminating in the second coming of Christ with His saints.

Matthew 24, also called the "Olivet Discourse," was written to the Jews. In this discourse, Jesus answers the question, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what (shall be) the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3) The disciples at this time had not yet been given the revelation of the mystery of the church age; and their vision was limited to the earthly kingdom of the Messiah and when that kingdom would be established. The signs and events of the Olivet Discourse have to do with the second coming of Jesus Christ, rather than the rapture of the church.

When Jesus returns to the earth, the saints accompany Him. (Revelation 19:11-21) The saints of God come with Jesus, as He makes war with the rebellious nations of the world, the devil, and the antichrist. The saints come with Jesus, because they were already raptured into His presence, prior to the tribulation period. Jesus establishes His earthly kingdom for 1,000 years; and then, the New Jerusalem is ushered in, and the rest of our eternal life with God begins. (Revelation 20-22)

There is a difference between the gospel of salvation and the gospel of the kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) The gospel of salvation is the good news of Jesus Christ, with which we are commissioned to go into all the world and make disciples. But the gospel of the kingdom is that gospel which will be preached after the rapture of the church -- the gospel of the soon coming Messiah, Who will rule and reign upon the earth and subdue all earthly kingdoms beneath His feet. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached all over the world, before the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Not all who name the Name of Jesus Christ will be qualified, or accounted worthy, to go to be with the Lord in the rapture. In 1 John 3:3, we read: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." We must be living for Christ, in order to have hearts that are watching and waiting for His return in the rapture. We must "love His appearing." (2 Timothy 4:8) We cannot expect to neglect living for the Lord here and now, and think that we will live, and possibly die for Him later.



Methods

This lesson lends itself to a two-fold challenge to the students: 1.) Are they

living a life that would be accounted worthy to be received unto the Lord by way of rapture? and 2.) Are they fulfilling the Great Commission, by preaching the gospel of salvation to the unsaved?

There are many time-line charts available, which illustrate the chronology of end-times events. Such a chart, or a time-line drawn on the blackboard or overhead projector, can be helpful in explaining the events surrounding the rapture of the church and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Ask for your students' input on the following questions: What can we do, in order to ensure that we are watching and waiting for the Lord's return? How do we "purify" ourselves? Will all believers go in the rapture? What will it be like on the earth, for those who try to live for the Lord after the rapture?

Problems That Young Adults Face

Volume 10

Lesson 10



Matthew 11:28-30

Ephesians 2:2

Hebrews 5:8

Acts 5:29

Romans 6:17; 8:5; 12:1-2

James 1:2-4, 12, 19-20

1 Samuel 15:23; 20:34

Ephesians 4:26-27; 31-32

Proverbs 6:2-3

John 8:31-32

1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 10:13



Theme

Every young adult faces common problems, which can be overcome in the power of the Lord.



Matthew 11:28-30

- 28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
- 29 "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
- 30 "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."



1 Corinthians 10:13

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God {is} faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear {it}."



Outline

I. Obedience Is Often Difficult to Achieve.

- A. We are all born with a spirit of disobedience.
- B. Every situation in life requires a decision.
- C. Character is the accumulation of choices.
- D. There is pressure on us to disobey.

II. Rebellion Is the Opposite of Submission.

- A. God sometimes puts us in places of restraint.
- B. We choose to submit to, or rebel against authority.

C. Rebellion is as witchcraft.

III. Anger Is Curbed by Discipline.

- A. Fear causes anger.
- B. Frustration causes anger.
- C. Anger is a poison.
 - 1. Be slow in anger.
 - 2. Do not sin in anger.
 - 3. Put away anger.

IV. Lying Is Binding.

- A. Lies are habit-forming.
- B. The truth sets us free.

V. Sexual Desire Is Strong in Young Adults.

- A. Sexual desire develops with physical maturity.
- B. Sexual desire is of God.
- C. Sexual desire must be controlled.
 - 1. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Sex before marriage is not love.
 - 3. You cannot abuse your body, without paying a price.



Spiritual Truths

- Every situation in life lends itself to a decision that will be made in obedience or disobedience to God's will.
- Every person has the freedom to obey or to disobey authority.
- God puts us in places of restraint that force us to choose between submission and rebellion.
- Rebellion is as witchcraft.
- Anger is a natural reaction to fear and frustration, which must be dealt with promptly.
- Sexual desire is of God, but it must be controlled, and expressed only within the covenant bond of marriage.
- Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- It is unwise to sin against our bodies.
- Lies bind; but the truth will set you free.



Lesson Material

This lesson examines five areas of temptation and trial, which are common to all people, and in particular, to young people. They are: obedience, submission, anger, lying, and sexual temptation.

We are all born with a spirit of disobedience. Children do not have to be taught to disobey; it is part of the sin nature with which they are born. As cognizance of free will develops, the temptation to disobey also grows. Obedience, in contrast, is learned. Even Jesus learned obedience through His sufferings. (Hebrews 5:8).

Every situation in life requires a decision. Every decision is made in obedience or disobedience to authority (e.g., parents, teachers, government, God). These choices arise from a variety of sources several times each day. For many young people, obedience to God conflicts with their personal desires, including those of friends and peers. (Acts 5:29)

Character is the result of the accumulation of choices. As choices are made, character is developed. Those who seek after the flesh satisfy the desires of the flesh. Those who seek after God submit to the will of God. (Romans 5:8) Character is determined by the choices made. Good choices build good character. Poor choices build poor character.

There are at least three sources of disobedience. The first is the world system. It never directs you toward God, but always away from Him. The second is the body, the flesh. The flesh desires to be satisfied, even at the expense of obedience to God. The third source is the spirit world. Spiritual forces are continually at work, using the world system and the flesh to tempt you to disobey.

Obedience comes from the heart. (Romans 6:17) If the desire of your heart is to obey God, your mind can be renewed

unto obedience, despite pressure from the world system, the flesh, and the spirit world. If the desire of your heart is to satisfy the desires of the flesh, your mind and body will readily cooperate. Actions demonstrate intent.

There is pressure on us to disobey. (James 1:2-4) The source of the pressure is the spirit world as is manifests itself in the things of the material world. It is possible, however, to stand firm against temptation, patiently, so that Godly character is built. The desire to obey, to stand firm, comes from the heart, but the mind and body must be brought into submission to the will of God.

Rebellion is the opposite of submission. Rebellion is simply defined as opposition to authority. It usually involves disobedience. Rebellious individuals are unable to submit to the will of God, because they resist His authority. If Jesus had been rebellious, He would not have submitted to the cross. Jesus submitted to God, and then acted in obedience, even unto death. (Philippians 2:5-8)

Sometimes, God puts us in places of restraint, in an effort to teach us submission. It gives us a chance to exercise free will. As children and young adults, our parents are the primary figures of authority to whom submission is due. (Hebrews 12:9) Choices are made daily which result in submission to their authority, or rebellion against it. When rebellion is chosen, disobedience results. Submission obeys.

Rebellion is as witchcraft. (1 Samuel 15:23) Suicide and drug abuse are primary examples of the correlation between rebellion and witchcraft. Nothing good ever comes from rebellion. It is a sin

against the individual and God. Rebellion is an abomination.

Everyone experiences anger. It is an emotion that arises quickly, often without deliberation. Young people experience anger that arises from a variety of sources. Fear and frustration are common sources of anger.

Fear often results in anger, because it represents a lack of control. When someone is in control of a situation, fear is not usually active. When a situation is not under control, fear is usually an operative factor. Young adults often find themselves in places of restraint, in which they have very little control. As relationships develop between boys and girls, for example, both parties are vulnerable and capable of little control. The emotion that accompanies the lack of control is fear. As the relationship develops, trust (pseudocontrol) is established, and confidence displaces fear. Fear often turns into anger, when the relationship does not develop as planned. Fear that becomes anger manifests itself in the desire to hurt someone else, before they hurt you.

Frustration also causes anger. In 1 Samuel 20:34, we see that Jonathan was extremely frustrated because of Saul's attitude toward David, his best friend. Everyone becomes frustrated with themselves and others. Repeated frustration with one's own limitations, or with the behavior of others, often results in anger.

When we do poorly on an exam, or perform poorly on the athletic field, frustration builds. Over time, frustration becomes anger, which is usually directed toward the perceived source of the frustration. Anger turned against the self, inwardly, is self-defeating; and it causes

depression. Anger turned against others, outwardly, causes hurt and bitterness; and it often exacerbates frustration.

Anger can become a poison. It destroys, and it must be controlled. (James 1:19-20) The advice given in James, chapter one, is given as a means to control anger. We are to be slow to anger. When someone becomes angry quickly, he usually says or does things that are regretted later. The wise man will take time to think the matter through before acting in anger, if at all.

Ephesians 4:26-27 says "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil." Anger is not a sin. But anger that is not controlled leads to sin. When someone becomes angry and does not deal with the anger effectively, their frustration is often relieved in an act of sin, such as violence. When anger is harbored inside and not dealt with quickly, it poisons the mind and body, and hardens the heart against God's will. Young adults who harbor anger have difficulty submitting to the will of God, as well as to those who represent authority.

Anger can be controlled by exercising discipline. (Ephesians 4:31-32) It take discipline to put anger away, in favor of kindness, forgiveness, and love. If anyone had reason to be angry, it was Jesus Christ when He was condemned to death, though He had done nothing wrong. Yet, He submitted to the will of God and acted in love toward the whole world. He gave His life for ours. Jesus is the ultimate Example of submission.

Lying is never productive. Lying never results in lasting freedom. Lying always leads to bondage. (Proverbs 6:2-3) People often lie, in order to free themselves from

an unpleasant reality. They lie to escape. Others lie to obtain more than they could have obtained by being honest. Many young people rely on lying to avoid punishment and obtain privileges.

Unfortunately, lies breed more lies; and they often trap the individual in a web of deceit. Lies are habit-forming. Like any drug that someone might use to temporarily escape reality, lies can be used to achieve the same effect. People lie, in order to escape. The more lying is relied upon to escape an unpleasant situation, the more it will be relied upon in the future when the desire to escape arises. The more lying is used to obtain the unobtainable, the more it will be used to obtain in the future. Lying is binding.

But the truth is never binding. God does not desire that His children live in bondage. If we continue in obedience to the word of God, we continue in the truth, and we are made free. (John 8:31-32)

There is no reason to lie. If we are facing a difficult situation, God will be faithful to see us through it. (1 Corinthians 10:13) If we are in need of something, God will be faithful to provide it, according to His will. As Jesus faced His death on the cross, so should we face the difficulties of life, knowing that the testing of our faith will develop the character of Christ within. (1 Peter 1:7)

Sexual desire develops along with physical maturity. It is natural. It is of God. God placed sexual desire within man and woman as a means of procreation (reproduction) and pleasure in marriage. It is a gift, but it must be controlled.

In Bible days, men and women became married soon after the onset of puberty, concurrent with the development of sexual desire. Among other benefits, this helped to alleviate the problems associated with delayed gratification. Today, young people often do not become married for ten years or more after puberty begins. Therein lies a problem. Sexual desire must be controlled for a relatively long period of time. As difficult as it may be, however, self-control must be exercised until marriage becomes a reality, in obedience to the Lord.

Giving in to sexual pressure is not only a sin against the body, but against the Holy Spirit, as well. We belong to God, and not ourselves. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) God, in the form of the Holy Spirit, dwells within the body of every believer. When we sin against the body, we sin against the Holy Spirit. When we abstain from sexual immorality, we glorify God in our bodies.

Many young people confuse sex with love. Sex is not love. Sex is a physical act. In the context of a loving marriage relationship, sex can be an expression of love, but never the full embodiment of love. Sex outside of the marriage relationship is never love, nor can it become love, because God is love and He ordained sex for marriage alone.

When young people confuse sex with love, they get the wrong impression of love. Sex never fully satisfies the desire to love and be loved. Sex is the expression of the intimacy that only comes with the commitment of the marriage covenant. Young people who are rejected sexually, based on their appearance, often feel unloved because they do not understand love. Young people who equate sex and love never learn to love, as Jesus loves, because they understand love to be sex.

Any boy that uses a girl's body does not love her -- he is using her. Thousands of

women are "not loved" every day. Men have a sexual appetite that needs satisfied. That is why men brag about their sexual exploits. Most girls do not want sexual desire to be satisfied by just anyone, but by someone by whom they feel loved.

You cannot abuse your body without paying a price. Disease is a risk. Pregnancy is a risk. The memory of the experience is always present, and it never leaves. Young people often feel "dirty" and guilty. Comparison-based sexual problems often arise in a subsequent marriage, secondary to premarital sexual involvement. There is always a price to be paid for engaging in sex before marriage. There is no such thing as "free sex."

There is no substitute for obedience to God's Word. He has a plan for your life; and it is laid out in the Bible. All that you need to know about life is contained in His word. It is complete. Obedience to His Word will strengthen you to stand against the pressures that every young person faces. Learn to trust Him. Know that He loves you, unconditionally. Lay your life before Him. (Romans 12:1-2)



Methods

Divide your students into five groups. Assign each group one of the five problems every young person faces (obedience, rebellion, anger, lying, sex).

Have each group develop a skit that depicts the correct and incorrect reactions to a situation akin to the problem area assigned to their group.

The Light of the World: Jesus Christ

Volume 10

Lesson 11



Bible References

Genesis 1:1-4

1 John 1:1-10

John 3:18-21; 8:12

Psalms 27:1

Matthew 5:14a, 16



Theme

Jesus is the Light of the world.



Scripture Reading

1 John 1:5-7

5 "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."



Memory Verse

John 8:12

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."



Outline

- I. In the Beginning, God Created the Heavens and the Earth.
- A. The Holy Spirit was present with God in the beginning.
- B. Jesus was present with God in the beginning.
- II. Jesus Is the Light of the World.
- A. There is no darkness in Him.
- B. The Light is separate from the darkness.
- C. His light brings life.

III. Jesus Is the Word of God.

- A. The Word of God is Truth.
- B. The Word of God lights the path of the believer.
- C. The Word of God brings life.



Spiritual Truths

 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

- Jesus and the Holy Spirit were present with God in the beginning.
- All things were made by the Word, Jesus Christ.
- In Jesus was life, which became the light of men, and which shines in the darkness.
- Sin is always associated with darkness, because it separates men from the Light.
- The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.
- Those whose faith and trust is in Jesus Christ have come out of the darkness and into the light; and they are no longer under condemnation.
- As children of the light, we are to be a witness of the light to the world around us living in darkness.
- Jesus is the Light of the world; and through Him, we are the light of the world.



Lesson Material

The scriptures teach us that God is light. (1 John 1:5; Psalms 27:1) God is also described as omniscient, omnipresent, faithful, true, beneficent, and many other titles that further describe His eternal attributes. In contrast to the darkness, which is always associated with sin and the devil, God is the ultimate good, incapable of sin.

In the first verse of Genesis, chapter one, God is described as the Source (Creator) of all things. In the second verse of Genesis, chapter one, the Spirit of God is moving over the formless void, imparting motion and form to it. In the third verse of Genesis, chapter one, God speaks for the first time, saying, "Let there be light."

In verses three and four, God called the light into existence and separated it from the darkness, before the creation of the sun, moon, and stars in verse 16. Apparently, the light which God called in existence in verse 3 is somehow different from the natural light that emanates from the heavenly bodies.

God was present in the beginning. The Holy Spirit was present in the beginning. Where was Jesus?

John 1:1-5, 9 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. {That} was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

These verses suggest to us that Jesus was the source of light that was present with God in the beginning. This does not imply that Jesus was a creation of God, but rather the third Member of the Godhead, Who brought light and life to the entire creation. The concepts of light and life are intimately tied in this manner throughout the scriptures.

Jesus is also described as the "Word" in John 1:1 -- the incarnation of the divine wisdom and knowledge of God. In Jesus,

then, the Light and the Word of God are embodied in unity, as they are throughout the scriptures. (Psalms 119:105, 130; 2 Corinthians 4:6)

Jesus Christ is the living Word of God and the Light of the world. In Him is no darkness at all. Jesus Christ, at once the Word and the Light, is a Revealer of the things of God to those who choose to follow Him. (John 8:12; 14:6)

Eternal life, through Jesus Christ, is the gift of God to those who believe in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. The Light exposes the Word, which brings life. Those who choose to follow Him have chosen life. Those who choose not to follow Him have chosen death. (John 3:18-21)

Jesus is the Light of the world. As believers in Him, we are to be lights in the world, as well, whereby those who are in the darkness might be led to the true source of all light. (Matthew 5:14a, 16)

As believers, we should live our lives in such a way that everyone we meet will notice that something is different about us. They should notice that the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) is active within us, reflective of the character of the Lord. We are to be a light in a world darkened by sin. We are to be a light that bears witness of the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and the power of His Holy Spirit to transform and renew a life eternally.



Methods

Illustrate this lesson by darkening the room as much as possible. Use only a single candle to light the room, as you begin the lesson. When you get to Psalms 119:105, give each student in the class a candle. Have each student light their candle from the first candle only. Explain that the first candle represents Jesus, the Light that came into the world. He is the Source of all light. When we receive Him

as our Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us; and we become an extension of Him for the world to see.

After you read John 3:18-21, ask all of the students to blow out their candles. Notice how much darker the room becomes. Relate this to the importance of sharing the gospel with the world.

Discuss ways in which each of your students might be a more effective witness for the Lord by the way in which they conduct themselves. Ask your students to make a commitment to be a light for Jesus Christ every day.

The Light of the World: The Body of Christ

Volume 10

Lesson 12



Bible References

Matthew 5:14-16

Philippians 2:15

John 8:12

1 John 1:5

1 Corinthians 12

Ephesians 5:26-27



Scripture Reading

Matthew 5:14-16

14 "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

15 "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."



Theme

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are to reflect His light and life to the world in which we live.



Memory Verse

Philippians 2:15

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."



Outline

- I. White Light Contains All of the Colors of the Spectrum.
- A. Objects reflect some colors, and absorb others.
- B. The colors that are reflected give the object its color.
- II. God Is like Light, in that He Is the Source of All Things.
- A. His light is reflected in the life of every believer.
- B. Everyone does not reflect Him in the same way.
- III. The Body of Christ, When It Is Complete, Will Reflect the Character of the Lord Jesus Christ Perfectly.
- A. The body of Christ will be perfect, without spot or blemish.
- B. The body of Christ will bring glory to God.



Spiritual Truths

God is complete, lacking in nothing.

- The nature of God was demonstrated by His Son, Jesus Christ, Who lived a blameless life.
- Every believer is a reflection of the Lord in a unique way.
- Because of sin, none of us are a true reflection of the Lord.
- The body of Christ is being prepared to become the bride of Christ, perfect in every way through the redemptive power of the blood of Jesus.



Lesson Material

Light and color are all around us. In them, there is something that we can learn about God.

The light which we use to illuminate our surroundings is commonly called "white" light. White light contains all of the colors in the rainbow, or color spectrum. When we shine white light through a prism, the different colors are separated, and we see the familiar pattern of a rainbow. When sunlight shines through the mist after it rains, its colors are separated by the water droplets into the same pattern.

An object displays a particular color, based on the portion of the color spectrum that is reflected from its surface. If an object is red, it is red because it is reflecting the red spectrum and absorbing the other colors contained in the light. If an object is white, it is reflecting all of the colors in the

spectrum. If an object is black, it is absorbing all of the colors in the spectrum.

People differ from one another, just as colors do. No two individuals display the same combination of personality, intellect, temperament, talent, interests, etc. We are all unique.

Why are we all different? Why did God not make us all the same?

God is light. (John 8:12; 1 John 1:5) His Son, Jesus Christ, Who lived a blameless life on this earth, reflected perfectly the character of God the Father. He is God Incarnate, the Source of all things -- the Light of the world.

Before an individual comes to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is living in darkness, because of sin. When the Holy Spirit becomes a part of that individual, he becomes a new creation in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17) No longer is he living in darkness, but in the light of God.

As light, God shines on every believer in all of His fullness. In the life of every believer, a portion of the character of God is reflected, giving that individual a unique "color." Thus, from different people, it is possible to observe the various attributes of God.

No one is able to reflect an image of God that is perfect. We absorb certain characteristics of God and reflect others, depending on our spiritual giftings and maturity.

When we first become a Christian, the Holy Spirit becomes part of us. We "absorb" all of the attributes of God in the form of the Holy Spirit. However, because we are spiritually immature, we are able to reflect very little of God's character.

Gradually, as we grow in Christ through the study of His Word and communication with Him in prayer, we begin to reflect His nature more fully. We begin to get a little "color."

Others notice the change, as we become more like Christ. Soon, we are transformed from a formless void into a colorful representation of the Lord, that is both unique and beautiful. The more we grow, the more like Him we become.

Every person has been made just a little differently by God, so that His attributes might be demonstrated. God has a unique plan for the life of every one of His children. None of His children are more important than another. No color is better than another. All of us reflect a part of God that has become a special part of us. Our "color" is not nearly as important as is our faithfulness to use our uniqueness to glorify Him.

Unfortunately, it is possible to hide the light within. (Matthew 5:14-16) It is possible to live in such a way that our uniqueness in Christ, His light, is hidden from those around us. Perhaps we do not like our "color." Perhaps it is too bright. Perhaps it is too different from our peers. As a result, we do not seem to fit in with everyone else; and the temptation to cover the light begins to grow.

Jesus said to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father, Who is in heaven. It is important to realize that God has a particular purpose for every one of our lives. We will each come into contact with others, who will be affected by us. God arranges such meetings.

If we decide not to share the light within us, we have effectively robbed others of an opportunity to learn something about God. It may be that our uniqueness in Christ is just what someone else needs to finally make a decision for Him. Our willingness to share the new life that we have in Christ may make it easier for others to share what Christ has done for them.

Collectively, we make up the body of Christ, the church, representing Him to the world. (1 Corinthians 12) We are all important. We are all unique. We all have a particular function. No one is more important than another.

Christ gave Himself to redeem the church. He is now preparing the Church to be His bride. (Ephesians 5:26-27) One day soon, He will present the church to Himself, holy and without blemish. Let Him prepare you.



Methods

Pass out a half-sheet of paper to everyone in your class, with the following information:

Write out John 8:12 and Matthew 5:14-16 at the top of the paper.

Also write the question, "What makes me unique?"

Draw several blank lines.

Before teaching the lesson, pass out one of these papers to each student. Ask them to take some time to read the verses and write down some things about themselves which they feel make them unique. They can list talents and abilities, and also weaknesses and failures.

At the end of the lesson, ask them to read their remarks. Ask each student to share one way in which God might be able to use that student's uniqueness to bring someone closer to Him.

Challenge the students to examine themselves carefully, and to use all that God has given them to glorify His name every day.

The Light of the World: Using Your Gifts

Volume 10

Lesson 13



Bible References

Romans 12:3-10

Ephesians 4:11-12

1 Corinthians 12:25-28

Luke 12:42-43, 48b

Matthew 25:21



Theme

A study of the grace gifts and the apostolic gifts and their purpose.



Romans 12:4-8

- 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 showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."



Memory Verse

Matthew 5:16

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven."



Outline

- I. A Variety of Spiritual Gifts
 Have Been Given to the Body of
 Christ.
- A. Grace (charis) gifts. (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28)
- B. Apostolic gifts. (Ephesians 4:11)

II. The Purpose of These Gifts.

- A. The gifts are for the edification of the body.
- B. The gifts are for the spreading of the gospel.
- II. Every Member of the Body of Christ Is Important.
- A. Some members may have many gifts.
- B. Some members may have only one gift.

- C. No member is more or less important than any other.
- III. Faithfulness to One's Giftings Is a Key to the Health of the Body.
- A. One who possesses many gifts, but is unfaithful, is not fulfilling his role.
- B. Someone who has only one gift, but is faithful to use it, has fulfilled his function.
- C. If one member of the body suffers, the entire body suffers.



Spiritual Truths

- The body of Christ has been given many gifts, whereby it is edified and able to spread the gospel.
- Each member of the body is just as important as another.
- The most important factor is one's faithfulness to his gifting.
- Those who are faithful to do their part have fulfilled their calling.
- Those who are unfaithful, regardless of how many gifts they have, have not fulfilled their calling.
- When one member is unfaithful, the entire body suffers.
- God is more interested in faithfulness than ability.



Lesson Material

The purpose of this lesson is to examine two types of gifts which have been given to the body of Christ: the grace (charis) gifts and the apostolic gifts. The grace gifts are those giftings which are given by the Holy Spirit to each member of the body. Every believer has such a gift; and some believers may have been given more than one such gifting. The apostolic gifts of Ephesians 4:11 are people whom Jesus Christ has given to the body for its edification and maturity. These people are also gifted with grace gifts; but their function in the body is that of leadership, and they themselves are gifts to the body.

You will notice that this lesson does not address the nine "spirituals" or, as they are more commonly called, the nine "spiritual gifts" of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. (Some of the spirituals are repeated along with the grace gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28.) This is because these "gifts" (the manifestation of the Spirit) operate on an entirely different level than the grace gifts and the apostolic gifts. The spirituals are associated with the baptism in the Holy Spirit; and we will examine them in detail in a future lesson.

Grace gifts are given to every believer by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the body and the spreading of the gospel. If the body is unhealthy because it is not being edified, the spreading of the gospel will be less effective. Thus, the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the lives of the members of the body of Christ, as they exercise their giftings and put them to work for the glory of God. The following are definitions of the various grace gifts:

Exhortation: to admonish, entreat, advise, warn, encourage and impel.

Helps/ministry: to work, assist, aid, support, serve.

Giving: to share, impart, be generous.

Mercy: to be sympathetic, empathetic; to pity, have compassion; sensitivity.

Governments: to guide, steer, administrate, rule.

Everyone who is a member of the body of Christ is important. (1 Corinthians 12:20-22, 25) Even the one who seems to be unimportant has a vital function, so far as the entire body of believers is concerned, because everyone has been given at least one spiritual gift. Some individuals may manifest several giftings, while others may only manifest one or two. The most important factor is one's faithfulness to his calling. (Luke 12:42-43, 48b)

It does not matter if someone has all of the spiritual gifts listed above, if he is not faithful to use them as he should. It would be much better if someone had only one gifting that he was faithful to use, rather than several gifts that were rarely utilized.

Faithfulness to one's calling is the key to the health of the entire body. (1 Corinthians 12:26) When even one member is not doing his part, the entire body suffers. The reward of the Lord is not based on how much someone is capable of producing, but on how faithful they were to produce that of which they were capable.

The apostolic gifts of Ephesians 4:11 are actual people whom Jesus Christ has

bestowed upon the body as gifts from Himself. They are: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. Some definitions of these offices follow:

Apostle: Overseer, establisher of churches.

Prophet: One whose ministry is receiving and proclaiming ("forth-telling") the Word of the Lord.

Evangelist: Soul-winner.

Pastor: Shepherd of a local flock.

Teacher: One whose ministry is the exposition of the Word unto the body.

The purpose of the apostolic gifts is given in Ephesians 4:12-16. First, these gifts are given for the "perfecting" of the saints. The word "perfect" does not imply infallibility or sinlessness, but rather, maturity. Next, these gifts are given, so that the members of the body may do the work of the ministry. It is not the pastor's (or the apostle's or the evangelist's) job to do the work of the ministry. It is their job to equip the body to do so. Sheep beget sheep. The body is edified by the apostolic gifts, as each member is brought to the place of maturity and service (and reproduction) in the ministry.

The apostolic gifts are also given to bring the body into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. Our faith centers on the Person of Jesus Christ; and when we become sidetracked on lesser, minor points of doctrine (many of which are merely fads), we lose the unity of the faith and become divided. The apostolic gifts are given to the body to be the voice of unity, leadership and correct doctrine. God wants His children to grow up. (Ephesians 4:14-15) As mature

Christians, we will not be blown about by every "wind of doctrine." Our focus will remain true to our purpose -- Jesus Christ, and His gospel.

God has a unique plan for the life of every believer. He has provided both the grace gifts and the apostolic gifts for building up the body of Christ and the spreading of the gospel. As a young adult, it is a good time to begin to think about the giftings that you have been given, and to begin to exercise them within the local church.

Matthew 25:21 encourages us in our faithfulness in our service to the Lord: "...Well done, {thou} good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."



Methods

Describe each spiritual gift listed in the lesson, so that your students can understand what the gift entails. Use examples of people in your church, including yourself, to illustrate each gift.

Give your students a listing of the grace gifts and the apostolic gifts. Ask them to circle the gifts that they think they may have. It may be that they merely "enjoy" functioning in a particular gifting. At this point in their life, that "enjoyment" may be the precursor to later fulfillment of that role. It may be necessary to ask questions of some students, in order to draw out their abilities and interests.

Finally, discuss ways in which your students can become active within your local church, putting their spiritual giftings to work. Check back with them in the coming weeks, to see how they are being faithful to minister.

Who Is Satan?

Volume 10 Lesson 14



Bible References

Ezekiel 28:12-19

Colossians 1:16

Isaiah 14:12-14

Hebrews 2:14

Revelation 20:1-3, 10

1 Peter 5:8

1 John 3:8; 4:4

Genesis 2:27-28

2 Corinthians 12:7

Luke 10:19



Theme

The origin, fall, works and future of the devil, Satan.



Scripture Reading

Ezekiel 28:14-19

14 "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou has walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

16 "By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

18 "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

19 "All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."



1 Peter 5:8

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."



Outline

I. Who Is Satan?

- A. Lucifer is one of the angelic beings created by God.
- B. Lucifer was perfect in all of his ways, until he sinned.
- C. When he sinned, Lucifer became Satan, the adversary.

II. The Fall of Satan. (Isaiah 14:12-14)

- A. Pride caused Lucifer to sin.
- B. Lucifer desired to exalt himself above God.

III. Satan's Names and Attributes.

- A. Satan is our adversary.
- B. Satan is our accuser.
- C. Satan is the ruler of demons.
- D. Satan is evil.
- E. Satan is a liar and a deceiver.

IV. Satan's Purposes.

- A. Satan desires to remain in power over the earth forever.
- B. Satan tried to prevent the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ, from completing His work on earth by corrupting the hearts of men.
- C. Satan is still trying to prevent man from worshipping the true God.

V. The Power of Satan.

- A. A created being -- not the opposite of God. (Colossians 1:16)
 - 1. Not omnipotent.
 - 2. Not omniscient.
 - 3. Not omnipresent.
- B. Prince of the power of the air. (Ephesians 2:2)

- 1. His domain.
- 2. His court.
- C. The authority of the believer.

VI. The Future of Satan.

- A. Jesus has destroyed Satan's works. (1 John 3:8)
- B. Satan operates only by permission.
 - 1. Satan's time has not completely run out yet.
 - 2. God's plan for man is not yet complete.
 - 3. Paul's messenger of Satan. (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- C. Satan bound for 1,000 years. (Isaiah 14:15; Revelation 20:1-3)
- D. Eternity in the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10)



Spiritual Truths

- It was through the sin of pride that Lucifer became Satan, the devil.
- Satan is the adversary and accuser of everyone, including Christians.
- Satan is working hard to corrupt the hearts of men with evil, in an effort to prevent obedience to word of God.
- The ultimate plans of Satan were defeated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; but Satan's time has not completely run out.

- Satan is a created being; and he is not omnipotent, omnipresent, or omniscient, as God is.
- The next time Satan reminds you of your past, remind him of his future.



Lesson Material

Satan has not always existed. He is one of the countless number of angels created by God. (Ezekiel 28:13; Colossians 1:16) Before he rebelled against God, his name was "Lucifer," which means "son of the morning" or "shining one." In Ezekiel 28:12-15, we learn that he was the model of perfection, full of wisdom and beauty and anointed for service to God. The scripture records that he was "...perfect in thy ways from the that day thou created,...."(Ezekiel 28:15) He had one of the highest (if not the highest) ranking of all the angels.

What did Satan do wrong? Because of his beauty, power, and perfection, he became very proud. (Ezekiel 28:17) Eventually, he became so arrogant, that he began to believe that he was equal to the God Who created him. (Isaiah 14:13-14) He vowed to exalt himself, even above God! Pride is a sin that God hates.

After he sinned, God removed Satan from the position he held as the anointed one. His name was changed from "Lucifer" ("son of the morning") to "Satan," which means "adversary."

What are Satan's names and what do they mean? "Satan" means "adversary" or "opposer" (Hebrew satan). "Devil" means "slanderer" or "accuser" (Greek diabolos).
"Beelzebub" means "ruler of the demons."
"Belial" means "evil," "ungodly," or
"wicked." Satan is also referred to by many
other names:

Evil (Wicked) One. (Matthew 13:19,38; John 17:15, Ephesians 6:16)

Prince of this world. (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

God of this age. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Prince of the power of the air. (Ephesians 2:2)

Serpent. (Genesis 3:1, 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9, 20:2)

Accuser. (Revelation 12:10)

Tempter. (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)

Deceiver. (Revelation 12:9; 20:3)

Murderer. (John 8:44)

Liar. (John 8:44)

Roaring Lion. (1 Peter 5:8)

About 6000 years ago, God created man and gave him rule over the entire earth. (Genesis 2:27-28) Apparently, Satan recognized that his authority over the earth was being given to man. Almost immediately, he began working to disqualify man as the new ruler by causing him to sin, as he had also done. In fact, he tempted Adam and Eve with his own sin, by telling them that they would be like God if they ate the fruit. Satan and his angels are tried to disqualify and destroy mankind (and thereby destroy the Messianic bloodline), because through the human race, God promised to send a

Savior to the world Who would defeat Satan and put an end to sin and death. Now, knowing that his time is short, Satan's purpose is to resist the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ and spiritually neutralize believers.

Although we think of good and evil as being opposites, it is important to realize that God and Satan are not equal opposites. Satan is a created being. He had a beginning — and he will have an eternal end. Satan is not omnipotent (all-powerful). When God is finished with him, God will quite easily do away with him. Satan's power is great; and we must not minimize it. But he works largely through his network of principalities and powers, in order to accomplish his purposes on earth. He cannot be everywhere at once. Satan is not omnipresent, as God is.

Satan also is not omniscient (all-knowing). Satan cannot read your thoughts. He can suggest thoughts to the minds of people and then "read" them. And he can read "body language" and listen to peoples' words, and get a fairly accurate idea of what they are thinking. But he is not omniscient. One of the great things about praying in tongues is that Satan does not know what you are saying, for you are speaking mysteries unto God, as prompted by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:2) This is one reason why praying with the spirit is so powerful, and so powerfully resisted by the devil.

It is important here to note the authority of the believer over the works of Satan. In 1 John 4:4, we read: "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Because of the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we need not fear Satan or his works. We can resist Satan, and he will flee from us, when we are

submitted to God. (James 4:7) Jesus has given believers power to tread over all of the power of the enemy. (Luke 10:19) But, leave the rebuking of Satan to the Lord. (Zechariah 3:2; Jude 9)

Satan was defeated when Jesus died on the cross for our sin and then rose from the dead with the keys to death and hell. (Hebrews 2:14) The Son of God has destroyed the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8) Now, Satan only operates by permission of God, until God determines that it is time for his demise. For example, Paul was buffeted by a "messenger of Satan" by permission of God, lest he should become exalted above measure as a result of the revelations he experienced. (2 Corinthians 12:7) Satan is now trying to take as many souls with him as he can, because his time is short. Like a car that runs out of gas on the highway, it takes time for the car to slow down and come to a stop. Satan has been defeated; but God has not quite finished His work on this earth with man. In the meantime, Satan is working on our free will, urging us to follow him instead of God.

When Jesus Christ comes back the second time to establish His kingdom on the earth, Satan will be bound for 1,000 years to the side of the bottomless pit.

(Revelation 20:1-3) After he is loosed for a little season, he will then be cast into the lake of fire, for all of eternity. His works of pride and darkness and deception will be finished forever. The next time Satan reminds you of your past, remind him of his future!



Methods

Discuss how pride can cause us to sin, as Satan did. Examine the following "sins" and search for the root of pride within each of them: boasting, jealousy, stealing, lying, murder.

Emphasize to your students that they are not helpless before the works of the devil. Explain to them the authority of the believer, and how that authority is grounded in our submission to God.

Questions: If Lucifer, who had such a magnificent ministry in heaven, can fall, can we also fall? Can we be deceived by our own pride? How can we prevent such deception?

The Reality of Hell

Volume 10

Lesson 15



Bible References

Deuteronomy 32:22

Job 11:8

Psalms 55:15

Luke 16:19-31

John 3:16-21

Psalms 86:13

Romans 1:18-25; 10:9

Revelation 20:10-15



Theme

The reality of hell and its eternal punishment.



Scripture Reading

John 3:16-21

16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."



Romans 10:9

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."



Outline

I. Where Is Hell?

- A. The Bible suggests that hell is located somewhere within the earth.
- B. No one knows the exact location of hell.
- C. No one has ever come back from hell to tell of its location.

II. Why Do People Go to Hell?

- A. People go to hell because they refuse to believe God.
- B. Those who refuse salvation through Jesus Christ will go to hell.

III. Can It be Shown that People Go to Hell, Using the New Testament Only?

- A. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31), the rich man was in torment in hell.
- B. In Revelation 20, the dead in hell will be delivered up to be judged.

IV. Are There Different Levels of Hell?

- A. The Bible suggests that there may be different levels, but its significance to us is not well understood.
- B. The most important issue is to avoid hell altogether.

V. Once You Are In Hell, Is It Possible to Get Out?

- A. No one is able to leave hell, once they are there.
- B. At the Great White Throne Judgment, hell will deliver up its dead for the final judgment.

VI. Will People Who Have Never Heard the Gospel Go to Hell?

- A. Only God is able to determine the eternal destiny of each man.
- B. God has ensured that at least creation itself testifies of His existence.
- C. God will go to any length to reveal Himself to a willing heart.

D. We must trust God to act justly on behalf of everyone, because He is omniscient and sovereign.

VII. Will People Who Are In Cults, Like the Mormons, Go to Hell?

- A. Whoever believes that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead will be saved.
- B. Many cults deny the truth of the gospel.
- C. Those who refuse to believe the gospel will go to hell.



Spiritual Truths

- Hell is a real place of torment reserved for the ungodly.
- People go to hell, because they refuse to believe what God has said in His word, the Bible.
- People go to heaven, because they choose to believe what God has said.
- God does not send anyone to hell; people choose to go there by committing the sin of unbelief.
- God is willing that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
- If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.



Lesson Material

Where is hell? Does it really exist?

Many Bible scholars believe that hell is located somewhere in the earth, or deep inside of the earth. Many scriptures refer to hell as being "down" or "under." (Deuteronomy 32:22; Job 11:8; Psalms 55:15; 88:14; Proverbs 9:18; 15:24; Isaiah 14:9; Ezekiel 31:16-17; Amos 9:2; Luke 10:15; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 20:13) Obviously, no one has ever discovered hell anywhere on earth.

The most important things to know about hell is that it is a place of torment (Luke 16:19-31) and that it is a real place. Many people today are teaching that hell and the devil are not real, but only a myth. Do not believe them! Hell is mentioned in the Bible dozens of times. Revelation 20:10-15 tells us that in the end, Satan, the antichrist, death, hell, and everyone whose name was not found written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire. Hell is a real place!

Why do people go to hell? People go to hell because they refuse to believe what the Bible says. (John 3:16-21) If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and He is Lord of your life, your name is already written in the book of life. If you do not know for sure, you can ask Jesus to save you now, right where you are, just by asking Him to forgive you of your sins and come into your heart. If you do not understand this, ask a teacher or a friend right away. You never know when your life will end; and then, it will be too late to ask Jesus to save you. Do it now, and make sure that you will be with Jesus in heaven

when you die. He is waiting for you to make that decision.

Can it be shown that people go to hell by using the New Testament only? Read Luke 16:19-31 and Revelation 20:20-15. Hell is just as real as it has always been. God does not lie.

Are there different levels of hell? At least two verses suggest that hell may have different levels. Deuteronomy 32:22 says, "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell,..." Another verse that leads us to believe that there are higher and lower levels in hell is Psalms 86:13 -- "For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." It is difficult to ascertain from these scriptures whether hell has different levels of torment, and what might cause someone to be placed in a different level than someone else. The important thing is to avoid hell altogether! It is a terrible place to be.

Once you are in hell, can you get out? Can someone come back to earth from hell and try to communicate with the living? No! Once you are in hell, you cannot return to earth or go to heaven. Read about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. Hell is a temporary place of torment for those awaiting the Great White Throne Judgment. (Revelation 20:11-15) At that judgment, hell will give up its dead and each person will be judged according to his deeds. Death, hell, and anyone whose name is not found written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire, which is forever. (Revelation 20:10)

Any communication with those who have died is a hoax. Demons are great liars and imitators; and they will do anything to make you believe that you can

communicate with the dead. Nobody comes back from the grave to do anything!

Will people who have never heard about God go to hell? This is usually asked by everyone at some point in their life; but the answer is difficult to understand, because God's ways are higher than ours. Our wisdom is foolishness, compared to His. Romans 1:18-25 tells us that all men are without excuse, because God makes Himself known to all men. Only God knows the heart.

Will people who are in cults, like the Mormons, go to hell? There is only one true gospel and one true Jesus. (2 Corinthians 11:4) We cannot be saved any other way. The Mormons believe that Jesus is a god, not God (hence, another Jesus). They believe that we can become just like Jesus, by living a certain kind of life (hence, another gospel). The Bible teaches that Iesus Christ is very God and that salvation is found in no one else -especially in ourselves. Romans 10:9 says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Anyone who denies this truth is heading for hell.



Methods

Ask your students to describe hell in their own words. What do they think it will be like? Will they enjoy the company of others who are there? Is it somewhere that they want to go? Does hell motivate them to follow Jesus Christ?

Do they think that if Satan could make someone not believe in hell that the motivation to become saved would be less? This is what some of the cults do, in an attempt to nullify the teachings of the Bible. What is wrong with becoming saved, only to avoid hell?

This lesson lends itself to an altar call for salvation. Never assume that all of your students on a given Sunday have received Jesus Christ as their Savior.

What Is the Occult?

Volume 10

Lesson 16



Bible References

Exodus 22:18

Leviticus 19:31

Deuteronomy 18:10-12

1 Samuel 28

Psalms 37:23

Isaiah 47:13-14

Acts 8:11

Ephesians 6:10-20

Philippians 4:8

1 Thessalonians 5:22

1 John 4:2-4



Theme

Occult practices include involvement with the spirit world, which is strictly forbidden by God.



Deuteronomy 18:10-12

10 "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

11 "Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 "For all that do these things {are} an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."



Ephesians 6:12

"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."



Outline

I. What Is the Occult?

- A. The occult is comprised of various secret practices that deal with supernatural, demonic power.
- B. Delving into the occult is strictly forbidden by God.

II. What Is Astrology?

- A. Astrology is the occult practice of making predictions about people and events, based upon the movements of planets and stars.
- B. The practice of astrology can be traced to the Babylonians under the leadership of Nimrod.

III. What Is Witchcraft?

- A. Witchcraft is essentially the worship of nature.
- B. Witchcraft has roots in Babylonian paganism.
- C. There are many different forms of witchcraft, but all are pagan.

IV. Are Sorcery and Its Symbols Directly Related to Witchcraft?

- A. Sorcery is related to witchcraft, but it is more directly related to ritual magic, drugs, and communication with spirits.
- B. Acts 8:11 tells of a sorcerer encountered by the apostles.

V. How Does Satan Lure People into the Occult?

- A. The occult promises power and healing to its participants.
- B. People go deeper into the occult, seeking higher power.

VI. What Happens When Someone Wants to Get out of the Occult or Satanism?

- A. Spiritual forces try to keep the person from leaving.
- B. Members of the groups also try to prevent the person from leaving.
- C. The power of God can set anyone free.

VII. Is Halloween Related to the Occult?

- A. Halloween has always been a pagan holiday celebrated by witches and others involved in satanic ritual.
- B. Halloween is a celebration of evil.

VIII. Are Ghosts and Spirits Related to the Occult?

- A Many occult practices involve purported or real communication with the spirit world, for the purpose of discovering information about the past and future.
- B Spiritualism, which is communication with spirits, is forbidden by God.

IX. Are Ouija Boards Related to the Occult?

- A. The Ouija board is a widely used device for spirit contact.
- B. Participants must open their minds to the control of spirit forces.
- C. Seeking the advice of the spirit world is dangerous, because the intention of the spirit world is to deceive.

X. Are Drug and Alcohol Abuse Related to the Occult?

- A. Drug and alcohol abuse are often an entry point into the occult for those seeking an answer to their problems.
- B. Substance abuse is also a part of many occult ceremonies; they are used to alter the normal state of the mind.

XI. If You Are Interested in Satan, Does This Mean That You Are Against God?

- A. Everyone should be aware of the deceptive practices of Satan.
- B. Everyone should be careful to avoid spending more time learning about Satan than in learning about Jesus.
- C. Jesus is our example, and not Satan.

XII. How Does the Occult Affect Us, as Christians?

- A. The activity of Satan is all around us in the world today.
- B. Everyone is exposed daily to the work of Satan.
- C. The Bible instructs us to resist Satan, by putting on the full armor of God. (Ephesians 6:10-20)
- D. The Bible also instructs us to abstain from every form of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:22)



Spiritual Truths

- The things of the occult require one to become involved with the spirit world, which is controlled by Satan.
- Occult practices are strictly forbidden throughout the Bible.

- Witchcraft, sorcery, astrology, magic, Ouija boards, seances, palm reading, Tarot cards, crystal balls, spiritism, and many other secret arts make up the occult and have their roots in pagan worship.
- Satan uses the occult to draw people away from the true source of power found in Jesus Christ.
- As Christians, we struggle against the spiritual forces of wickedness operating in the world today. We are to avoid even the appearance of evil.
- The Lord would have us to dwell on His Word and those things that are true, honorable, pure, and worthy of praise. (Philippians 4:8)
- Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is of God. (1 John 4:2)
- Any spirit that denies the gospel of Jesus Christ is not of God.
- Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, Who came in the flesh to die on the cross for the sin of the world.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead represented an end to the reign of Satan, whose time is very short.
- Jesus Christ loves everyone; and He desires that all should come to a saving knowledge of His grace and love.
- Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)



Lesson Material

What is the occult? "Occult" means things that are "hidden," or "secret." Basically, the occult is anything relating to the supernatural, such as magic, astrology (horoscopes), palm reading, seances, witchcraft, satanism, Tarot Cards, Ouija boards, crystal balls, etc. The Bible warns us against these things. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

What is astrology? Is it wrong to read the daily horoscope? Most people associate astrology with the horoscopes that you read in the newspapers or magazines. Astrology is not the same as the science of astronomy. Astrologers write horoscopes based on the movements of the planets and stars, in order to make predictions about the future. They believe that the planets and starts that make constellations such as Libra and Scorpio have an influence on your life. Astrology is not new. It began in early Bible times with Nimrod and Babylon. In fact, the tower of Babel (which God destroyed) and the Egyptian pyramids are archaeological evidence of the ancient worship of the planets and stars. God's Word strictly forbids the practice of astrology. (Isaiah 47:13-14)

What is witchcraft, black magic, and white magic? Witchcraft is basically a worship of "nature." Its roots date all the way back to Babylonian paganism. Their ceremonies and festivals (sabbaths) follow the movements of the moon and other planets. Some witches claim to be "white" witches who use "white magic" to do "good things." Others are "black" witches

who use "black magic" to do evil things, in order to harm others. Nudity, sexual perversion, sorcery, violence, and drugs are often a part a witchcraft ceremonies.

There are three levels in the modern practice of witchcraft: 1.) Priest and Witch of the Great Goddess; 2.) Witch Queen or Magus; and 3.) High Priestess or Priest. There is an initiation into each of these levels. It is nothing like Shakespeare's "Macbeth," from which comes the famous image of three hags stirring steaming cauldrons and chanting; nor is it like Walt Disney's portrayal of the witch in "Snow White."

Unfortunately, a true witch denies that Jesus is the Son of God, and so the type of magic they perform is of little significance. Exodus 22:18 says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." God is serious about staying away from this kind of demonic activity. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

Are sorcery and its symbols directly related to witchcraft? Sorcery is very similar to the practice of witchcraft, but it tends to deal more directly with ritual magic, drugs, and communication with spirits. The magic used is not the same as when the magician makes the rabbit disappear into a top hat (illusion, or sleight of hand). This kind of magic involves the ceremonial use of candles, incense, herbs, swords, daggers, blood, fire, and other objects, in order to gain power. It is somewhere between witchcraft and true Satan worship, although both of these frequently use sorcery in their rituals and ceremonies. In Acts 8:11, a man named Simon is referred to, because he had astonished the people with his "magic arts." The root word in the Greek from which we get the word "sorcery" is the Greek word for "magic."

What does Satan do to lure people into the occult? The occult promises power and healing to those who get involved. Anyone who is looking for an answer to their problems might think they have found it in witchcraft, in magic, or in reading their horoscope. People will try almost anything to become more powerful or to be healed from a terrible disease -even if it might mean exposing themselves directly to the spirit world. They will be "sucked down" as fast as they want to be. The more they open themselves up to the influence of the spirit world, the faster they will find themselves in very, very deeply.

What happens when a person wants to get out of the occult or Satanism? It is usually very difficult, for 2 reasons: 1.) Spiritual forces will try to keep them from leaving; and 2.) The other members of the group in which they are involved fear exposure; and many times, they resort to violence, in order to keep someone from leaving. The bottom line is this: if they are not getting out of the occult to follow Jesus Christ, it is going to be very difficult, if not impossible, to break free. The powers of darkness are stronger than we can imagine. But the power of God can set anyone free, if they will sincerely ask Him for help.

What about Halloween? Is Satan involved? Should Christians be involved? Why is it bad? Is it wrong to dress up on Halloween like a monster, or witch, or ghost? Hundreds of years ago, the pagans began to celebrate an "Unholy Day" on October 31. On the evening of October 31, satanic, pagan, and occult rituals took place. This practice has carried over to the present day. All Hallows Eve (Halloween) is still one of the four major holidays (or sabbaths) for witches, in celebration of the coming of the fall season. Other sabbaths

are Candlemas (February 2, introducing winter); May Eve (April 30, introducing spring); and Lamas (July 31, introducing summer). Mike Warnke, a former Satanist High Priest, called Halloween the "devil's holiday." Human beings are sacrificed to Satan on that night. It is interesting to note that in America today, Halloween is just as popular, if not more popular, than Easter.

The "bad" part about Halloween is not the little children wearing costumes and collecting candy, but rather the history behind the celebration and what it really represents. If you choose to celebrate Halloween, you are perpetuating a tradition with roots in satanism, which is becoming increasingly more popular. The most important questions you should ask yourself are: 1.) Why do I want to do this? 2.) Could this keep someone else from knowing God? 3.) Does this glorify God, or bring dishonor to Him? If you can celebrate Halloween with a pure motive, without influencing anyone in a negative way, and without bringing dishonor to God by perpetuating a satanic tradition, then it would be hard to argue with your reasoning; however, it is impossible.

What about ghosts and spirits? You and I live in a material world that we can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. There is also a spirit world, which is just beyond our senses. However, the spirit world can and does make contact with us. God is a Spirit (John 4:24); and His Holy Spirit lives in the heart of every Christian. (Romans 8:9) Satan and his demons are also spiritual creatures. (Ephesians 6:12) Sometimes these spiritual forces make contact with our senses (vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste), in order to influence us. The Holy Spirit of God lives within the Christian, guiding and directing his steps. (Psalms 37:23) Many times in the Bible

angels appeared to men and women. Even Satan made a few appearances in the Bible.

Today, there is a lot of interest in making contact with the spirits of the dead and other spiritual forces. This practice is commonly called "spiritualism;" and it is strictly forbidden in the Bible. (Leviticus 19:31) In 1 Samuel 28, King Saul used a medium (witch) to contact the spirit of Samuel, in order to find out about the future. The next day, Saul committed suicide, and his sons were killed in battle.

The spirits contacted during seances and satanic rituals are more evil than we can comprehend. Their main purpose is to lie, deceive, and destroy people. This is why God forbids us from taking part in these things. We have no idea how dangerous it could be.

What about Ouija boards? Do you think that if people believe enough in the devil and his evil powers, that an Ouija board would work? The Ouija board is probably the most widely used device for spirit contact. It is a flat board, inscribed with the letters of the alphabet and a "Yes" and a "No" circle. Two people sit facing each other with their knees touching and the board resting on their laps. With their eyes shut and their fingertips resting on a triangular indicator, the participants have been instructed that the indicator will move over the letters to spell out a message from the spirit world. Usually, the participants ask questions and then try to clear their conscious mind of all thoughts, while awaiting the answer.

Anytime you open the door to learn something from the spirit world, you are opening the door to Satan. He loves it when someone shows interest in his "secrets." Ouija boards, Tarot cards, seances, witchcraft, magic (white or black),

What Is the Occult?

and astrology are all doors to the satanic spirit world (the occult). There is only one Door to God -- Jesus Christ -- and you can read about Him in a book called the Holy Bible. (John 10:7) In this book is everything you need to know about God and how to live your life the right way. Get to know it well. It is the Word of God.

What do you say to people who are starting to mess with Ouija boards and things like that, who think that they are just toys? First of all, ask them why they are doing it? Then, ask them if they know what they are "playing" with. Somehow, they need to be told that they are inviting the forces of darkness to "play" with them. Horoscopes, Ouija boards, Tarot cards, crystal balls, horror movies, etc. are controlled by demonic forces, which are waiting for anyone to show an interest in their world. To play with these things is to play with demonic forces, which have the power to take possession of your mind and body. God has a better way -- all that we need to know about the future is in His Word. He alone is all-powerful. There is no other true source of power. Tell them about Jesus! They might be looking for an answer.

Are alcohol and drug abuse related to satanism and the occult? Alcohol and drug usage are often an entry point into the occult for those who are looking for an answer to their problems. Drugs and alcohol are used in most occult ceremonies to enhance feelings of power and induce hallucinations. Not all users of alcohol or drugs are into satanism; but it can become such a powerful influence in your life, that you turn away from God. Whenever you turn away from God, the enemy is there to lead you down the wrong road — however horrible it may get.

If you are interested in Satan, does this mean that you are against God? It depends on what you mean by "interested in Satan." The best way to defeat an enemy is to know his ways and works. We need to know that Satan hates us -- that he is out to destroy us and our relationship with Iesus Christ. We need to know some of the tactics that he uses to confuse and deceive us. We need to know what he can and cannot do. If God did not want us to know anything about our enemy, it would not be recorded in His Word -- "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are ignorant of his devices." (2 Corinthians 2:11)

However, some people, even some Christians, are too interested in Satan. They concentrate on Satan, demons, the occult, witches, new age, etc., to the exclusion of the good news of the Bible. If someone knows more about the things of Satan than the things of God, that person needs to spend more time finding out about the Lord! In fact, that person is heading for serious trouble. Jesus is our Savior and our Example, and not Satan. Spend your time finding out about Jesus!

How do all of these occult things affect us, as Christians? The activity of Satan is all around us in the world today. The violence and hatred and suffering in the world is a direct result of his work. It is impossible not to feel the effects of these things. As Christians, we belong to God; and Satan cannot take anything from God. Our bodies and our minds, though, are attacked every day by the forces of darkness. One can hardly watch 5 minutes of television, without being exposed to Satan's world. Read Ephesians 6:10-20, for more information about standing up against the powers of darkness. Satan is powerless against you, as long as you stay close to the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." As long as we are on the earth, we will be exposed to evil; but we do not have to participate in it. Do your best to stay away from anything that appears to be evil. Christians do not have any business going to horror movies, listening to certain kinds of music, or doing anything that glorifies Satan.



Methods

Ask your students to share experiences that they, or their friends, have had with

the occult. What happened? Was it a positive experience? Would they do it again? What are the potential dangers?

Why are occult practices appealing to so many people, including Christians?

How does Satan use the occult to bind people?

Have prayer with your students; and challenge them to remove from their lives anything that is associated with satanism or the occult. Lead them in a prayer of commitment and deliverance.

The New Age

Volume 10

Lesson 17



Bible References

Genesis 3:1-5

Isaiah 14:12-14

Matthew 22:37-39

Luke 4:5-8

John 14:6

2 Timothy 3:1-5, 12-17



Theme

The New Age is not a set of new truths, but a cleverly disguised collection of old lies.



Scripture Reading

2 Timothy 3:1-5

- 1 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
- 2 "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 3 "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
- 4 "Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;
- 5 "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."



John 14:6

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."



Outline

I. The New Age Is Not New.

- A. New Age thought is a collection of old lies.
- B. New Age philosophy denies the deity of Jesus Christ.
- C. New Age philosophy denies the sovereignty of God.

II. The New Age Is a New Way to Play God.

- A. Sin results from self-sufficiency and pride.
- B. God's authority is resisted, because of pride.

III. New Age Philosophy Asserts that Godhood Is Attainable by Man.

- A. The process by which godhood is attained is dependent upon how we live our lives -- that is, on works.
- B. Self-love and self-actualization are the keys to attaining godhood.
- C. Self-love is prerequisite to agape love.

IV. The New Age Lies Can be Exposed by the Word of God.

- A. We do not live in a period of history unlike any before.
- B. Jesus Christ is the only hope of world peace.
- C. The efforts of men will never bring lasting world peace.
- D. Becoming more accepting of immorality and heresy is not God's will.
- E. In order to love others, we must first love God.

V. Jesus Christ Is the Only Pathway to God.

- A. Salvation through Jesus Christ is not by our works.
- B. Inner transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- C. Agape love is a fruit of the Spirit.



Spiritual Truths

- The New Age is not new, but a collection of ancient lies that deny the sovereignty of God and deity of Jesus Christ.
- New Age philosophy is a result of intense pride, which denies the authority of God over the individual.

- New Age followers teach that godhood is attainable by man, through a process of self-actualization and inner transformation.
- Man will never become God.
- The desire to be like God was the sin of Satan, and Adam and Eve.
- Jesus said that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one could come to God, except through Him. There is no other way.
- The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.



Lesson Material

The New Age is not new, but is merely a repackaged collection of ancient lies propagated by Satan throughout the ages. It has taken on many different forms; but it all denies the sovereignty of God: Occultism and Eastern Mysticism; Mystery Teachings; Psychology and Powers of the Mind; Science and Technology as Revelation; Hedonism; Evolution; and Pantheism.

The desire to be like God, or even to be God, is at the root of the false teachings listed above. Satan fell, because it was his evil desire to ascend to the throne of God. (Isaiah 14:12-14) Amazingly similar is the deception used by Satan to deceive Eve into eating the forbidden fruit -- "You will be as gods." (Genesis 3:1-5) Satan used a similar tactic with Jesus Christ, when he

promised power to Jesus, if He would worship Satan. (Luke 4:5-8)

Sin is a result of this attitude: "I am going to meet my needs, my way." In other words: "I am wise enough to know what is best for me. No one else, including God, is better prepared to guide and direct my life. I will do it my way. I will be God over my life."

How many have decided, for example, that their parents were not capable of understanding their needs, which led to willful disobedience of known rules, in pursuit of self-gratification? It happens every day. How many have decided that God, like their parents, is also unable to understand the complex needs of modern man, choosing to disobey the precepts of God's Word in pursuit of self-satisfaction? It happens every day.

The New Age movement, comprised of a myriad of beliefs and expressions, is just a new way that people have invented to play God. Its range extends from the lonely individual who wants to control his destiny to international political ideologies, which are designed to control the destiny of the world. Its pervasiveness within our society is incalculable.

A predominant New Age belief is that we are all in the process of evolving into gods (or God). Proponents of New Age philosophy teach that the god within each of us can be realized through a process of self-actualization and renewal. By performing spiritual surgery on our conscious and subconscious self, it is possible to tap into the hidden, inner potentials that have been subdued by negative thought processes. In short, it is through a process of intense self-love that the New Age promises power to the individual.

The use of New Age materials such as audio tapes, books, charts, videos, and individual counseling are the media through which self-actualization (godhood) can be obtained. While crystals, pyramids, and UFOs may be too "far out" for some, the more pragmatically minded are indoctrinated by more sophisticated means such as Christian Science, eastern mysticism, hypnosis, meditation, etc. There is something for everyone, except for the Christian.

The New Age represents a culmination of all religious beliefs, except those of the monotheistic, Judeo-Christian variety. The New Age teaches self-love and indulgence, but the Bible teaches something quite different:

Matthew 22:37-39 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second {is} like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The agape love of God is that love which is committed to the good of the one loved. It can only be produced in our lives as a result of the indwelling Holy Spirit, as He manifests the character of Christ in us as the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

New Age indoctrination contains many other lies. For example, New Age thought is that we are now living in a period of history unlike any before. But the Word of God says that there is nothing new "under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9) The New Age claims that world peace is possible through the united efforts of mankind; but we know that there will be no world peace, until the Prince of Peace comes to set up His kingdom on the earth. In the name of unity, the New Age

advocates the acceptance of deviant lifestyles and heretical doctrines, which are contrary to the Bible.

It is beyond the scope of this single lesson to thoroughly discuss the worldwide manifestations of New Age thought and influence, which are active today. There are several books now in print that describe the permeation of New Age beliefs into the cultures of the entire world. It is possible, however, to sum up the thrust of all New Age belief in two words: "I will." The original sin of Satan (and all of mankind throughout history) is still with us today, in the phrase, "I will." Instead of surrendering to the authority of almighty God, we say, "I will." God has a different plan in mind, which is our transformation. God does not want us to be conformed to New Age, or any other worldly thought. (Romans 12:2)

The gospel is under attack from New Age thinking, for such thinking contends that there is more than one way to God. They are deceived; and the gospel is being discredited. But the Word of God, the Bible, warns us that these things will take place in the last days. (2 Timothy 3:12-17) Our protection against New Age indoctrination is to be filled with the Word of God.

Until Jesus Christ is invited to be Lord and Savior of your life, you are spiritually dead. (Ephesians 2:1) There is no other way. All of the self-discovery techniques combined do not even come close to salvation. It is only attainable through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)



Methods

Look through the newspaper and magazines for articles that promote New Age thought. Read the articles in class. Then, ask the students to analyze the content of the article. Ask them to separate the true statements from the false statements, based on biblical principles.

Use the answers they give as a basis for discussion. Be prepared to get into debates over some of the material. Many of the New Age false teachings are very subtle distortions of the Word of God.

Again, encourage your students to study the Word of God for themselves, and never to accept any "truth," until they have compared it against the Bible.

World Religions

Volume 10

Lesson 18



1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Micah 5:2

Matthew 7:14; 10:30; 24:11

Acts 4:12

2 Corinthians 5:21

1 Peter 5:7

Genesis 1:27

John 1:1, 14; 3:16; 14:6

Hebrews 9:27

Ephesians 2:8-9

Romans 3:10-19; 5:8



Theme

There are many false religions in the world, but only one way to God -- Jesus Christ.



Matthew 24:11

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

Romans 3:10-19

- 10 "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:
- 11 "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
- 12 "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- 13 "Their throat {is} an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps {is} under their lips:

- 14 "Whose mouth (is) full of cursing and bitterness:
- 15 "Their feet {are} swift to shed blood:
- 16 "Destruction and misery {are} in their ways:
- 17 "And the way of peace have they not known:
- 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes.
- 19 "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."



Acts 4:12

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."



Outline

I. Religion Is Universal.

- A. It has always existed historically.
- B. It has always existed in every nation and culture.

II. The Word "Islam" Refers to Submission to God.

- A. The founder of Islam is Mohammed; and his religion has become the fastest growing religion in the world.
- B. The revelations which Mohammed claimed he received from Allah (God) have been recorded in the Quran.
- C. Islam is based on Five Pillars of Faith, which every Muslim must observe.
- D. The Five Articles of Faith are the main doctrines of Islam, which all Muslims are expected to believe.
- E. A comparison of Jesus Christ and Mohammed shows a great difference between the two.

III. Hinduism Is a Very Complex Religion.

- A. Hinduism does not point to any particular human founder or beginning.
- B. To the Hindu, Brahman is the supreme being; but there are also 33 million divine beings, or gods.
- C. There are no basic doctrines in Hinduism, except in keeping with family traditions.
 - There are certain beliefs common to all Hindus, such as karma and reincarnation.
 - 2. There is no sense of sin in Hinduism.
- D. A comparison between Hinduism and Christianity shows a wide divergence of beliefs between the two faiths.

IV. Buddhism Was Designed around the Avoidance of Suffering.

- A. The goal of a Buddhist is to end suffering and to reach Nirvana through the Four Noble Truths.
- B. Buddhism has no God in the Christian sense, nor does it have a savior.



Spiritual Truths

 God has not provided us with many ways to Him. God has given us one Way to Him; and that Way is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

- Jesus Christ Himself warned that false prophets will arise.
- Religion is man's attempt to reach God; but Christianity is God's reaching out to man.
- Man is inherently evil; and he does not naturally seek after God.



Lesson Material

Religion is universal. Wherever man lives, he is found giving some recognition to a power or powers beyond himself. Researchers say that all societies in the past have had one thing in common -- some form of religion. Religion has existed in every society, from the most primitive to the most advanced.

A common misconception is that all religions are basically saying the same thing, and that they eventually reach the same God. This is simply not true. Not only do the religions of the world have a diversity of sacred books, but they also worship a diversity of deities. The following material is a brief overview of three of the world's religions -- Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

The word "Islam" refers to "submission to God." Muslims believe that the primary duty of man is submission to God; thus they call themselves "Muslims" which means "those who submit."

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. Presently, it has nearly one billion adherents. Its founder, Mohammed, was born in A.D. 570, in Mecca. At the age of forty, Mohammed experienced a visitation; and as a result of this experience, Mohammed claimed that Allah had called him to be a prophet. Mohammed began receiving what he claimed to be revelations from Allah. All of these revelations were collected in book form; and it became known as the Quran.

Islam is based on five pillars, or acts of faith, which every Muslim must observe. The Five Pillars of Faith are as follows:

- 1. Creed: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah." One must state this aloud publicly, in order to become a Muslim. It is repeated constantly by faithful Muslims.
- 2. Praying five times daily, while kneeling in the direction of Mecca, the holy city.
- 3. Almsgiving: a share of each Muslim's income is given to support the poor.
- 4. The Fast of Ramadan: Throughout Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, faithful Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset each day. No food or drink may be consumed during the daylight hours.
- 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca: A pilgrimage to the holy city, Mecca, is expected of every Muslim at least once in their lifetime. The trip is an essential part in gaining salvation.

The Five Articles of Faith are the main doctrines of Islam, which all Muslims are expected to believe. They are as follows:

- 1. Allah: There is only one true God; and his name is Allah. Allah is all-knowing, all-powerful, and the sovereign judge; and yet, Allah is not a personal God.
- 2. Scriptures: There are four holy books in the Islamic faith. They are the Torah of Moses, the Psalms of David, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Quran. Muslims believe that the Quran is the only authentic book, as the other three have been corrupted through the years.
- 3. Prophets: In Islam, their God has spoken through numerous prophets down through the centuries. The six greatest prophets are: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed. Mohammed is considered the last and greatest prophet.
- 4. Angels: Each person has two recording angels -- one who records the good deeds, and one who records the bad deeds.
- 5. The Day of Judgment: Muslims believe that all men will be called to account for their actions on the Day of Judgment. God deeds will be weighed against bad deeds. If the good deeds outweigh the bad deeds, the reward is paradise. If not, the punishment is hell.

Islam claims that Jesus Christ was only a prophet, but that Mohammed was the last and greatest prophet. A comparison of the two follows:

The birth of Jesus was clearly prophesied in the Old Testament. For example, Micah 5:2 gives the very name of the town in which the Messiah would be born. In contrast, the coming of Mohammed was not predicted by pagan soothsayers, Old Testament prophets, or New Testament apostles. The birth of

Jesus Christ was miraculous, in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin, Mary. Mohammed, on the other hand, was the natural product of the sexual union of his father and mother.

According to the New Testament, Jesus Christ lived a sinless life. (2 Corinthians 5:21) When His enemies came to accuse Jesus before Pilate and Herod, they had to invent charges, because no one could find anything against Him. Nowhere in the Quran is Mohammed said to be sinless. Instead, Allah told Mohammed to ask forgiveness for his sins. (Quran-Sura 40:44) Mohammed was a normal human being who lied, cheated, lusted, etc. He was neither perfect nor sinless.

Jesus performed many miracles during his lifetime. He healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out demons, and even ruled the wind and waves. According to the Quran, however, Mohammed never performed a single miracle.

Jesus never used physical violence to force people to believe His message. Mohammed, on the other hand, frequently used physical violence to force people to give up their idols and accept Islam.

According to the Bible, Jesus Christ was divine, as well as human. (John 1:1, 14) Mohammed was merely a man. In the New Testament, Jesus was worshipped as God and Lord, but the Quran never speaks of worshipping Mohammed.

When Jesus Christ died, He died for the sins of others. (1 Corinthians 15:3) When Mohammed died, he died for his own sin. He did not die for anyone. And Jesus did not remain dead. He conquered sin, hell, and the grave; and He physically rose

again on the third day. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) When Mohammed died, he did not rise from the dead. Mohammed is dead, but Jesus Christ is alive.

According to the New Testament people can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In contrast, there is no personal relationship possible with Mohammed. He is dead.

The religion of Hinduism does not point to any particular human founder. The Hindu scriptures, written over a period of 2,000 years, are voluminous. Two of the most common scriptures are the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita. The Vedas, containing holy hymns and prayers, are the oldest of the Hindu scriptures. The Bhagavad Gita is the most sacred book, as well as the best known and most widely read.

To the Hindu, Brahman is the supreme being. Brahman is the creator; and yet, he is an impersonal god, who has no further concern for his creation. In addition, Hindus also believe in thirty-three million divine beings or gods.

Hinduism has no basic doctrines. except in keeping family traditions. The individual Hindu believes that he is doing right, if he is following the way in which he was raised. Hinduism teaches that no one can know the whole truth and that no particular religion teaches the only way to salvation. They believe that each individual should follow his part of the truth; and perhaps, someday, all of the truths will come together to make up the whole truth. For example, an individual can have their own god, because that is that individual's part of the truth. It is also acceptable to be an atheist, because that would be just another part of the truth.

Hindus believe in reincarnation. Their goal is to reach Moksha, which means that they will stop being reincarnated and become one with Brahman.

As stated earlier, there are no basic doctrines in Hinduism. However, there are certain beliefs common to all Hindus. Karma is a common belief. Karma is like the old saying "What goes around comes around." Do something good, and good happens. Do something bad, and bad happens. All Karma actions must be balanced, before reaching Moksha. If you do not balance it in one life, you will come back in another life, until Karma is balanced. So, you never know when you will reach the final stage. However, you cannot do right things, just because you desire Moksha. That will work against you, because Karma actions must be selfless. It is interesting to note that the Bhagavad Gita says it would take as many years to balance Karma as it would take a bird to chip away a big mountain.

There is no sense of sin in Hinduism. If a Hindu does something wrong, he may simply feel he is balancing his Karma.

A comparison between Hinduism and Christianity shows a wide divergence of beliefs between the two faiths. For example, Hinduism's supreme being is the impersonal Brahman. Christianity on the other hand, teaches that there is a Supreme Being Who is the infinite and personal Creator. The God of Christianity is loving; and He cares about the affairs of mankind. The Bible makes it clear that God cares about what happens to each one of us. (Matthew 10:30; 1 Peter 5:7)

Salvation in Hinduism is an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. However, the Bible says man will die only once and then face judgment. (Hebrews 9:27)

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that salvation cannot be obtained by any cycle of good deeds, but rather that it is given freely by God to all who will receive it. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Hinduism teaches that there are many truths and many ways to find the truth. The Bible says that the road is narrow and that there is only one Truth -- Jesus Christ. (Matthew 7:14; John 14:6; Acts 4:12)

Buddhism was founded in 500 B.C. by Gautama Siddhartha. Siddhartha was born into a royal Hindu family. When Siddhartha was born, there was supposedly a prophecy that if Siddhartha would stay at home he would be a great king, but if he left home he would be a savior for mankind. Siddhartha's father wanted his son to succeed him as king, so he did all that he could to keep him home. Siddhartha married and had a son, while still confined to the palace. One day, Siddhartha informed his father that he wanted to see the world. Although his father ordered the streets to be cleaned and decorated and the elderly and sick people to stay inside, Siddhartha still happened to see an old man, a sick man, a funeral, and a beggar. These things affected him so much that he immediately left the palace in search of enlightenment. Unsatisfied with the teachings of Hinduism, he wandered from place to place seeking wisdom.

One day, deep in meditation, he reached the highest degree of Godconsciousness, known as "nirvana." The truths he learned he would now impart to the world, no longer as Siddhartha Gautama, but as the Buddha, the "enlightened one." Buddha began his teaching ministry with five monks; but before his death, his teachings had been spread through India.

The goal of a Buddhist is Nirvana. Once you reach Nirvana, you are no longer reincarnated.

Buddha was protected from suffering for so long, that once he saw it, he built all of his truths and rules around the avoidance of suffering. Therefore, the life aim of a Buddhist is to end suffering. Once an individual avoids suffering, he will reach nirvana.

In order to avoid suffering and reach Nirvana, Buddha taught the following Four Noble Truths: 1.) Everyone suffers. 2.) Desire is the cause of suffering. 3.) Eliminating desire is the cure of suffering. 4.) The end of desire comes by following the Eight-Fold Path: a.) right belief; b.) right thought; c.) right speech; d.) right behavior; e.) right livelihood; f.) right effort; g.) right mindfulness; h.) right meditation. Buddhism leaves God out completely. They do not believe in a supreme being.

Two of the Buddhist's major scriptures are the Tripitaka and the Mahayana Sutras. Buddhism was made in the image of concepts about life and how life should be lived. Buddhism has no God in the Christian sense, nor does it have a savior or Messiah. It has Buddha, the "enlightened one." In contrast, the Bible makes it clear that a personal God does exist.

Man's body is a hindrance to the Buddhist, while to the Christian it is an instrument to glorify God. (Romans 12:1) According to Buddhist belief, man is worthless, having only temporary existence; while in Christianity, man is of

infinite worth, made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and will exist eternally. Although the image of God in man has been tarnished by the fall, man is still of infinite value to God. This was demonstrated by Jesus Christ. (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)



Methods

Who is Jesus Christ? This is the most important question to discuss, when talking with someone of another religion. There are many topics that could be discussed, but having the right Jesus is essential to salvation. Therefore, it is important to discuss what an individual believes about Jesus. For example, after comparing Jesus and Mohammed, ask your students what they conclude. Do they conclude that Jesus was only a prophet, but that Mohammed was the last and greatest prophet? Or do the students conclude that Mohammed was only a man and Jesus Christ is deity?

To a Muslim, Jesus Christ was a prophet. To a Hindu, Jesus Christ is one of many reincarnations. To a Buddhist, Jesus Christ was a great teacher, but Buddha was greater.

Challenge the students to be ready to give an answer about Who they believe Jesus Christ to be. One way to be ready is by memorizing Bible verses that defend the deity of Christ.

Modern Cults

Volume 10

Lesson 19



Matthew 24:5, 11

Deuteronomy 6:4

1 Peter 3:15

Isaiah 43:10

Exodus 3:14

Isaiah 44:6; 55:11

John 4:24; 8:58

2 Corinthians 11:4

Ephesians 2:8-9

Revelation 1:7-8, 17-18

Jude 3

Deuteronomy 18:21-22

Acts 4:12

2 Timothy 2:15

Colossians 2:9



Theme

We must make sure that we know the real Jesus, so that we are not deceived by a counterfeit Jesus.



Matthew 24:5

"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

2 Corinthians 11:4

4 "For if he that cometh preacheth [another Jesus], whom we have not preached, or {if} ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with {him}."



Memory Verse

1 Peter 3:15

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."



Outline

- I. A Cult Is a Group of People, Religious in Nature, Gathered around Someone's Interpretation of the Bible.
- A. Just because a cult member talks about Jesus, does not mean that he has the real Jesus.
- B. Cults grow rapidly for different reasons.
 - 1. Cult members are deceived by Satan.
 - 2. The teachings of the cults appeal to the worldly, or fleshly nature of man.
 - 3. Some Christians are unable to defend the faith.

II. Joseph Smith's "True Gospel."

- A. Joseph Smith believed that the creeds of all churches were an abomination to God.
 - 1. Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church, which today is called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.
 - 2. After Smith's death, Brigham Young became the new President and Prophet of the church.
- B. The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible are the four scriptures which the Mormon Church accepts.
 - 1. According to the Mormons, the Bible is not complete in its revelation.
 - 2. According to the Mormons, the book of Mormon is said to be the most correct book on earth.
- C. According to the Latter-Day Saints Church, there are an infinite number of gods in the universe.
 - 1. God the Father was once a mortal man, before attaining godhood.
 - 2. Jesus Christ is just one of an infinite number of gods.
 - 3. The reward for a Mormon's complete obedience is godhood.
- D. Mormons believe that all humans will go to one of three kingdoms.
 - 1. The wicked will go to the celestial kingdom.
 - Honorable people and Mormons who have lost their testimony will be assigned to the terrestrial kingdom.

3. Worthy Mormons will be a part of the celestial kingdom.

III. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses).

- A. The background of the Jehovah's Witnesses is full of prophecies that never came true.
 - 1. The founder, Charles Taze Russell, prophesied that the world would end in 1914.
 - 2. The Watchtower prophesied that the world would end in 1975.
- B. There is a difference between the Watchtower and the individual Jehovah's Witness.
- C. The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures is the Watchtower's official translation.
 - 1. Every year, the Watchtower prints a King James Version.
 - 2. The text of the New World Translation has been altered, in order to reflect Watchtower theology.
 - a. The Watchtower teaches that the Trinity is an unbiblical doctrine.
 - b. According to the Watchtower, more than faith is needed to obtain salvation.
 - c. The Watchtower does not believe in the deity of Christ.
 - d. The existence of a literal hell is not taught.
 - e. Only 144,000 faithful witnesses will go to heaven; and the rest will live on "Paradise Earth."



Spiritual Truths

- The gospel was delivered once for all; and it does not need to be altered, as the cults claim.
- Any further revelation that God gives must agree with His first revelation in the Bible.
- Christians should know what God's Word says, so that they can detect a counterfeit Jesus and then be ready to give an answer for the hope within themselves.



Lesson Material

False prophets! False prophets! False prophets! In Matthew chapter 24, Jesus was asked what the sign of the end of the times would be. Three times, Jesus said, "false prophets." Not only that, but He also said that it is possible for even the elect to be deceived.

A cult can be defined as a group of people, religious in nature, gathered around someone's interpretation of the Bible.

When talking with a member of a cult, the most important question to discuss is: "Who is Jesus Christ?" Just because someone talks about Jesus does not mean they have the real One. The Bible tells us

there is "another Jesus." (2 Corinthians 11:4)

Why do the cults grow so rapidly? The cults grow rapidly, because Satan is deceiving as many people as he can; and he does all that he can to keep them from knowing the truth. It is very important to remember that the cult members are deceived. They are not the deceiver. A deceiver is a person who knows that he is telling a lie. Cult members think that they know the truth. If you realize this, it may help you to show more compassion towards them.

Another reason why the cults grow will demonstrated in the following experiment:

(Everyone please stand.) If you believe the following five statements are true, then remain standing.

- 1. Remain standing, if you believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son.
- 2. Remain standing, if you believe in the nature of one God, within Whom there are three Persons, and yet, those three Persons make up one God.
- 3. Remain standing, if you believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.
- 4. Remain standing, if you believe in salvation by grace alone, and not by any works.
- 5. Remain standing ,if you believe Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead in a bodily form.

Now, if you cannot do the following, then sit down: Give me five Bible verses, from memory, to defend the deity of Jesus Christ. (At this point, most students will probably sit down.)

Again, why do cults grow so rapidly? Because, as the experiment demonstrates, most Christians know what they believe, but they do not know why they believe it. Thus, many Christians are not ready to give an answer, but the cults are ready, verse after verse — and we cannot get a word in edgewise.

Therefore, what should be the attitude of the church? Jude 3 says that we should "...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Christianity has not challenged the cults, but the cults have challenged Christianity. We need to be ready to give an answer. (1 Peter 3:15) How do we make ourselves ready to give an answer? By studying the Word of God, in order to thoroughly know it and handle (and apply) it. (2 Timothy 2:15)

The founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, was born on December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont. In 1820, Smith claimed to receive a vision, in which both God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him. Supposedly, they told him that all of the creeds of the churches were an abomination to God, and that Smith was to be the prophet who would restore the true gospel to the world.

In 1823, Smith claimed that the angel Moroni appeared to him and told him about the golden plates, which contained the true gospel. In 1827, Smith uncovered the plates, translated the plates, and as a result, the "Book of Mormon" was published in 1830. However, once the translation was complete, the plates were returned to Moroni; therefore, no one can inspect them for authenticity.

In 1830, Smith founded his church. Today, it is known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. After Smith's death, Brigham Young emerged as the new president and prophet of the church. He lead thousands of Mormons to Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1847. Today, Salt Lake's population is primarily Mormon, as is most of the state. The main temple for the Mormon Church is also in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Mormon Church accepts four scriptures: The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, The Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible. The King James Version of the Bible is the Mormon Church's official version, but it is only accepted "in so far as it is correctly translated." According to the Mormons, the Bible is not complete in its revelation, nor is it the final written authority. According to the Mormons, The Book of Mormon is said to be the most correct book on earth. It claims to be a history of two ancient civilizations, the Jaredites and the Nephites, who migrated to America centuries ago. However, no historian or archaeologist can confirm the authenticity of either of these two civilizations.

According to the Latter-Day Saints Church, there are an infinite number of gods in the universe, each of whom is the god of his own planet. However, only God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, three separate gods, are worshipped. God the Father has a physical body; and at one time, he lived on a planet as a mortal man, before attaining godhood. Jesus is not deity, according to the Mormons. He is just one of an infinite number of gods. He is also the spirit brother of Lucifer.

Mormonism teaches salvation by faith, combined with keeping the commandments of God. The reward for complete obedience is godhood. At death, Mormons go to Paradise, while non-Mormons are assigned to a temporary

spirit prison-hell to await resurrection and judgment. Baptism for the dead provides ancestors in the spirit prison-hell the opportunity to attain exaltation.

Mormons believe that Jesus Christ will return to reign for one thousand years before the judgment, when all humans will go to one of three kingdoms based upon their works. The ungodly wicked will be resurrected from a spirit prison at the end of the millennium, and assigned to the telestial kingdom. Honorable people and Mormons who lose their testimony will be resurrected at the beginning of the and assigned to the millennium, terrestrial kingdom. Worthy Mormons who have obeyed all of God's commandments will reign with Christ during the millennium, and will be a part of the celestial kingdom. Mormon men married in the temple can progress to godhood and receive a planet to populate, as God did before them. Mormons not married in the temple, but "worthy," will become angels in the celestial kingdom.

The founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, Charles Taze Russell, was born in 1852 in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. During his early years, Russell developed a terrible fear of hell. Eventually, he was convinced that hell did not exist.

In 1876, he was elected "pastor" of a Bible class that he had been teaching. In 1884, he founded Zion's Watchtower Society, which today is known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. Its main headquarters are in Brooklyn, New York.

Russell died in 1916; and "Judge" Franklin Rutherford took over the Jehovah's Witnesses' leadership, until his death in 1942. Under the training programs of the group's third president,

Nathan Homer, the religion spread rapidly throughout the world and into other countries.

Charles Taze Russell made several prophecies that never came true. He prophesied that the world would end in 1914. Obviously, it did not. Then, he changed the date to 1916. Again, the world obviously did not end. After another prophecy of the end of the world, this time in 1918, Russell died; and he was not here to see yet another prophecy fail. According to the Bible, one sign of a false prophet is that their predictions do not come to pass. (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)

Was Russell a false prophet? Yes! Russell is not the only false prophet in the Jehovah's Witness organization. Their entire background is full of prophecies that did not come true. For example, the Watchtower prophesied that the world would end in 1975. The world is still here, so should it be concluded that God gave the Watchtower the wrong date? Absolutely not! God cannot make a mistake. However, a false prophet can.

It is important to remember that there is a difference between the Watchtower and the individual Jehovah's Witness. Never confuse the two. The Watchtower is the "boss." They make up the "rules;" and the individual Jehovah's Witnesses carry them out. The Jehovah's Witnesses are victims of the Watchtower's false theology.

Every year, the Watchtower prints up a King James Version of the Bible. However, the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (NWT) is the Watchtower's official translation. The text of the New World Translation has been changed to reflect Watchtower theology. For example, in the New World Translation, John 1:1

reads, "...and the Word was a god," instead of "the Word was God." (KJV)

The Watchtower teaches that the Trinity is a false, unbiblical doctrine originated by Satan. They believe that there is one God whose name is Jehovah; that Jesus Christ did not claim equality with God; and that the Holy Spirit is the invisible active "force" of God.

Who is Jesus Christ to the Jehovah's Witness? Jesus Christ is a mighty god, but not the Almighty God. He is the son of God, but not God the Son. He is the firstborn of all creation. He was born of a virgin, but only as a human — not deity. He was resurrected as a spirit, but not in flesh. He is also known as Michael the archangel. But the Word of God declares Jesus to be God in the flesh. (Revelation 1:8, 17-18; Colossians 2:9; Isaiah 44:6; Exodus 3:14; John 8:58)

The Watchtower teaches that Jesus Christ came back to Earth in 1914., but it was an invisible coming. Only those with eyes of understanding are aware of his return. But the Word of God declares that Jesus's coming will not be in secret. (Revelation 1:7)

The Watchtower teaches that salvation is obtained first by having faith in Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. However, more than faith is needed. You must be baptized and also be a part of Jehovah's organization, in order to receive everlasting life. Biblical salvation is apart from works. (Ephesians 2:8-9;) And biblical salvation is only through One -- Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12)

Earlier, it was stated that Charles Taze Russell had a fear of hell. Consequently, Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in a literal hell. Instead, the wicked are simply put out of existence, or annihilated.

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that only 144,000 faithful Witnesses will go to Heaven and rule with Christ. The rest of the Witnesses will live forever on Paradise earth. This will take place after the great battle of Armageddon, which will be a battle between the Witnesses and all others who will here meet their final destruction. Christendom will also be destroyed during Armageddon. In the period between Armageddon and eternal life, there will be a great resurrection. First, the great people of the Old Testament, plus who have never had the those opportunity to hear the truth about Jehovah, will be resurrected. The rest of the dead will remain without life. The resurrected ones will then be educated for 1000 years. At the end of this time, Satan will be loosed, as a final testing. Those among the remaining who choose Jehovah over Satan will live on Paradise Earth forever. The others will be annihilated.

This is a very different account of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth with His saints, to rule and reign. This is truly "another gospel."



Methods

Let your students know that defending the truth may not always be easy. However, there is no reason to get frustrated, because God's Word promises that it will not return void. (Isaiah 55:11)

As Christians, our responsibility is to witness; and then it is God's responsibility to do the rest of the work in each individual's life.

A discussion of the differences between Mormonism and Christianity may be helpful. Mormon terms may often sound Christian, but most have been redefined. An examination of Mormon theology reveals that it is another gospel. (Galatians 1:8)

Be sure to emphasize what the Bible teaches, compared with Watchtower theology.

Also, encourage the students to be ready to defend the deity of Christ with specific verses from the Bible.

The Middle East: Ishmael and Isaac

Volume 10

Lesson 20



Bible References

Genesis 11

Genesis 15:18

Genesis 16:7-8, 18-21

Genesis 17

Genesis 25

Revelation 19:11-16



Theme

A look at the unrest between the nations of the Middle East -- the sons of Abraham.



Scripture Reading

Genesis 15:18

18 "In that same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

Genesis 17:7-8; 18-21

- 7 "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.
- 8 "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."
- 18 "And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!
- 19 "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

20 "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

21 "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."



Genesis 12:2-3

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."



Outline

I. The Unrest in the Middle East Can be Traced to Abraham.

- A Ishmael was born as a result of Abraham's unbelief.
 - 1. He was illegitimate.
 - 2. He was not the son promised by God.

- B. Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah by divine arrangement.
 - 1. Isaac was a legitimate son of Abraham.
 - 2. Isaac was the son promised by God.

II. God Established His Covenant with Isaac and His Seed.

- A. Ishmael and his seed had no part in the covenant.
- B. The sons of Keturah had no part in the covenant.
- C. The Redeemer was to come through the seed of Isaac.

III. The Land of Canaan Was Promised to Israel in the Covenant.

- A. The promised land represents a large portion of the Middle East.
- B. The Moslem nations refuse to recognize Israel's right to the land.
- C. The promised land is at the center of the conflict in the Middle East today.
- D. There will be no peace in the Middle East, until Jesus Christ establishes His millennial kingdom on the earth.
- IV. It Is Important that Christians Understand the Signs of the Time, as They Relate to Israel and the Church.
- A. Biblical prophecy appears to indicate that the Lord is drawing this age to a rapid close.

- B. The nation of Israel has been regathered in the land.
- C. Current world events fulfill biblical prophecy almost daily.
- D. Jesus is returning very soon.



Spiritual Truths

- God established His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and his seed, Israel.
- Through the nation of Israel, all of the world will be blessed.
- From the godly line of Abraham and Isaac came the Redeemer of the world, Jesus Christ.
- God has miraculously preserved the Jewish people through centuries of persecution.
- The presence of the nation of Israel today is a direct fulfillment of biblical prophecy.
- The Lord is getting ready to set up His kingdom on the earth.



Lesson Material

The Middle East today is the scene of constant conflict and tension. There is always some type of report in the daily news involving terrorism, war, riot, and other tensions in the area.

The conflict in the Middle East is actually a conflict between the sons of Abraham -- Isaac and Ishmael. The conflict continues over the possession of the land, and over the establishment of one of two world religions it its capitol city, Jerusalem. The conflict between Moslem and Jew is over 4,000 years old; and it will not be resolved until the second coming of Jesus Christ.

In this lesson, we will examine the history of the seed of Abraham from the scriptures, in order to understand the reason for the continuing tension in the Middles East. We will also apply biblical prophecy to current events involving the Middle East (and therefore involving the world). The events in the Middle East are of particular significance to the Christian, because their prophetic fulfillment is indicative of the impending return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

In Genesis, chapter eleven, God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldees to accomplish a very specific purpose: namely, to be the vessel through which the Redeemer would come. Abram was set apart to be the father of many nations in Genesis 17:4, although he and his wife, Sarai, were childless and growing old. (Genesis 15:1-6)

In Genesis, chapter sixteen, in a moment of impatience and weakened faith, Abram and Sarai decided to "help" God fulfill His promise. Abram had relations with Sarai's Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, who bore a Abram a son named Ishmael. They believed that this would be an acceptable way through which God would give Abram a son.

Thirteen years later, in Genesis, chapter seventeen, God made a covenant with Abram in which He promised to make Abram a father of many nations. It was then that Abram's name was changed to "Abraham," and Sarai's to "Sarah." God also made it clear that Ishmael was not the son whom He promised to give them, but that Sarah would have another son, Isaac, with whom God would establish His covenant.

Finally, in Genesis, chapter 25, Abraham took another wife, Keturah. Sarah had passed away, and Isaac had taken Rebekah as his wife. Keturah bore six sons to Abraham in his old age. Shortly thereafter, Abraham died, and was buried with his first wife, Sarah.

By three different women, Abraham indeed became a father of many nations. The descendants of Ishmael have continued as a distinct race of people, divided into many nations, for some 4,000 years. The descendants of Ishmael comprise a large portion of the Arabic people of today throughout North Africa and the Middle East. Mohammed and Anwar Sadat, as almost any true Arab would, claimed descent from Ishmael.

The descendants of Isaac, through Jacob and his twelve sons, have been preserved in the nation of Israel. Isaac was the promised son, the one through whom God would provide the Redeemer, the Messiah --- Jesus Christ. It is around the seed of Isaac that the scriptures are built. The descendants of the six sons of Keturah and Esau lost their separate identities long ago, probably through intermarriage with the descendants of Ishmael.

God made a covenant with Abraham, through Isaac and his seed only. A large part of the land of the Middle East was part of that everlasting covenant. The Moslem world, however, does not recognize Israel's right to the land. Hence, the conflict in the Middle East.

On May 14, 1948, when Israel declared her national independence for the first time since Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., the most recent conflict began. Shortly after the announcement, the nations of the Arab League (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Egypt) unsuccessfully attacked Israel, in an attempt to put an end to her status as a nation. God preserved the tiny nation of Israel in the face of tremendous odds. The conflict has continued to this day; and it will continue until Jesus sets up His kingdom on the earth. (Revelation 19:11-16)

As these events unfold day after day, it is important for Christians to view them with a biblical perspective. God's Word is very clear about what is to take place, and about the outcome of each event. Take time to get to know what the Bible says about Israel and the Middle East. As the Lord prepares to once again deal with national Israel, we know from prophecy that the church age is about to come to its close. This is the great significance of these events to the believer.



Methods

Ask the students in your class to bring in newspaper and magazine articles that pertain to current events in the Middle East. Discuss these events, in reference to the information contained in this lesson. Help them to see the relevancy of prophetic scripture in today's headlines.

Use this as an opportunity to share the gospel, and talk about what lies ahead for the world. Challenge them to evaluate their priorities. If they knew that Jesus was coming back in one month, what would they change? What would they do for His kingdom that they are not doing now?

You might also consider sharing relevant current events in future sessions. Depending on the time you have with

your students, discuss current events each week, or perhaps once a month. Make it a regular part of your class. It will help your students to maintain a different attitude toward the Bible and keep their priorities in perspective.

Emphasize the importance of being ready to meet the Lord, because we do not know when He is coming again. From viewing the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, though, we can be sure that He could come at any moment.

The Holy Spirit in You

Volume 10

Lesson 21



Bible References

John 16:7-15

Acts 2:38

Romans 8

Ephesians 2:1

1 Corinthians 6:11, 19; 12:13



Theme

The indwelling Gift of the Holy Spirit, and His 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:"



Romans 8:16

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"



Outline

I. The Gift of the Holy Spirit.

- A. The Holy Spirit Himself is a gift.
 - 1. Given by the Father.
 - 2. Given by Jesus Christ.
- B. The Gift is given to all believers.

II. The Indwelling Holy Spirit.

- A. The Holy Spirit lives within all believers.
- B. Our bodies become temples of the Holy Spirit.
- C. The Holy Spirit makes our spirits alive, when we are born again.

D. The Holy Spirit places us into the body of Christ.

III. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Regeneration.
 - 1. Children of God.
 - 2. Spirits made alive.
- B. Anointing.
 - 1. Empowered for service.
 - 2. Supernatural enablement for a specific task.

C. Infilling.

- 1. Changing our character.
- 2. The fruit of the Spirit.
- D. Baptism.
 - 1. Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Operation in the manifestation of the Spirit.
 - 3. Subsequent to, and separate from, salvation.

IV. The Ongoing Work of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Conviction.
 - 1. Of the world.
 - 2. In the life of the believer.
- B. Teaching.
- C. Sanctification.
- D. Inner Witness.
- E. Intercession.
- F. Resurrection.



Spiritual Truths

- The Holy Spirit is a Gift to all believers from the Father and from Jesus Christ.
- The Holy Spirit indwells all believers.
- The Holy Spirit makes our spirits alive, when we are born again.
- The Holy Spirit continually ministers in, and on the behalf of, all believers.



Lesson Material

God has given every believer the precious Gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38) The term, "gift" is not referring to anything that the Holy Spirit gives us, but rather to the Spirit Himself. Both God the Father and Jesus Christ have given the Gift of the Holy Spirit to all believers. (Matthew 7:11; John 16:7)

The Holy Spirit lives within, or indwells, every believer. (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13) We do not "get" the Holy Spirit later, sometime after we are saved. We cannot be any part of Christ, unless we have received the Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. As He lives in us, our bodies become His temple. (1 Corinthians 6:19) Since we have this Person living inside of us, we will do well to understand Him and His ministry, and recognize His work in our lives.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit can be shown in four main areas: regeneration, anointing, infilling, and baptism. (We will study the infilling and the baptism in the Holy Spirit in more detail in subsequent lessons.) For the sake of clarification, a brief overview of each of these four areas of the ministry of the Holy Spirit follows.

"Regeneration" refers to the new birth. (John 3) When we receive salvation, our spirits, which had been in a state of death or darkness, are "quickened" or made alive by the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 2:1) Now, we are able to relate to God; and now, we possess eternal life. When we are born again, the Holy Spirit baptizes us (places us into) the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Jesus spoke to His disciples concerning the impending ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Up to that time, they had known only the earthly ministry of Jesus; His Spirit did not yet indwell them. But Jesus promised them that the same Holy Spirit Who had been with them would be in them. (John 14:16-17) After Jesus' resurrection, He imparted the indwelling Holy Spirit to His disciples. (John 20:22)

The anointing of the Holy Spirit refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in empowering us in ministry. We receive a supernatural enablement, or strengthening, in order to accomplish a specific task. God never expects us to accomplish anything for Him on our own -- indeed, we cannot. Jesus said that without Him, we can do nothing. (John 15:5) The Holy Spirit will give us the power and strength that we need, in order to accomplish the work that He has given us to do.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is different than being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is an ongoing process, rather that a one-time event, as is the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The infilling has to do with the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) As we choose to let the Holy Spirit fill our lives (and it is our choice), the fruit of the Spirit becomes evident in us, as the Holy Spirit produces the character of Jesus Christ in us.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is that event in which Jesus Christ Himself immerses (baptizes) us in the Holy Spirit. The result of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is power -- power to witness, and power to function within the body of Christ. We are enabled by the baptism in the Holy Spirit to operate in the manifestation of the Spirit ("spiritual gifts") of 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

Our focus in this study is on the daily, ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit convicts both unbelievers and believers. To "convict" means to "bring to light." The Holy Spirit will never condemn us. (Romans 8:1) Condemnation only serves to make us feel guilty, resulting in our turning inward and separating ourselves from God. But conviction is the vehicle by which the Holy Spirit draws us back toward God in repentance; and, as a result, we receive cleansing and correction.

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. (John 14:26; 16:13) He helps us to remember God's Word. He bears witness to what is being taught to us in the name of godly teaching, comparing it to the truth of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit always glorifies Jesus and shows us the things of God. (John 16:14)

The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier. This means that He is working in us to conform us to the image of God's Son.

(Romans 8:29) To be "sanctified" means to be "set apart." God is changing us from what we were as natural, unregenerate humanity, to what we will be — the image of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit provides an inner witness that we are God's children. (Romans 8:16) He is called the "Spirit of adoption." (Romans 8:15) We know that we belong to God, because of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit makes intercession for us, according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26) When we do not know how to pray, He prays for us. Note that this scripture refers to the prayer ministry of the Holy Spirit Himself, and not to believers "praying in the Spirit." Even as Jesus, our Great High Priest, makes intercession for us, so also does the Holy Spirit intercede for the children of God.

The Holy Spirit is the One Who will quicken our mortal bodies. (Romans 8:11) Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, so also the Holy Spirit functions as the Agent of our own bodily resurrection. The Holy Spirit is active in every aspect of the believer's life -- spiritual, mental, and physical. We must make ourselves aware of His important ministry in us, in order to avail ourselves of all of the power and strength and resources of heaven, which are available through the Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.



Methods

Using either the blackboard or individual sheets of paper for each student, list the four main areas of the ministry of the Holy Spirit; and then, list the purpose, or result of each.

Ask your students whether they have received the Gift of the Holy Spirit. (This may be a good question with which to begin the class.) There will probably be some confusion between spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit Himself.

If your students do not know whether the Holy Spirit lives within them, make sure that they know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Filled with the Spirit

Volume 10

Lesson 22



Bible References

Ephesians 5:18-21

Galatians 5:22-23



Theme

In choosing to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is produced in our lives, which is the character of Jesus Christ.



Scripture Reading

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."



Memory Verse

Ephesians 5:18

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

- We must maintain attitudes of thanksgiving and submission, in order to be filled with the Spirit.
- The result of the infilling is the production of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, which is the character of Jesus Christ formed in us by the Holy Spirit.



Lesson Material

All believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18) In order to fulfill this command, we must understand just exactly what the infilling is, and how to be filled with the Spirit.

Being filled with the Spirit can be defined as the continual process of allowing the Holy Spirit and the things of God to fill our minds and hearts. It is the result of walking in the Spirit -- the daily yielding of our lives to God and choosing to live on the level of the spiritual man, rather than on the level of the natural man. Note that being filled with the Spirit is an ongoing process. The tense of the Greek verb for "be filled" actually means "be being filled and refilled," or "be ye continually being filled." Unlike the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is a singular event in the life of the believer, the infilling is a daily, ongoing process; and whether we avail ourselves of that process is a matter of our choosing to do

The scripture shows us several things that we can do, in order to be filled with the Spirit. First, we are to speak to ourselves in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. What we input into our minds will determine whether we will be filled with the Spirit, or filled with worldliness, fleshliness, or sin. We speak to ourselves constantly. We tell ourselves what we are planning to do; how we perceive what is going on; our impressions of those around us; how we are feeling today, etc. In order to be filled with the Spirit, we must tell ourselves of God and godly things. We can choose what we dwell on, in our thought life. (Philippians 4:8) As we rehearse the Word of God to ourselves, our focus is shifted from self to God and His purposes in our lives.

Next, we are to sing and make melody to the Lord. We cannot be filled with the Spirit, if we are not worshipping God. When we worship, we recognize God for Who He is; and we settle into submission to, and confidence in Him. Worship is an intimate way of relating to the Lord. It is expression of intimacy. If Jesus is our Lord, we will worship Him; and that worship will change our attitude and focus, and enable us to be filled with the Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit, we must maintain an attitude of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving expresses faith toward the Lord, for we are commanded to give thanks for all things. If we believe that our steps are ordered of the Lord (Psalms 37:23), we will have reason to thank God for all things, for He is faithful to work in our lives for our good and His purposes. (Romans 8:29)

Our relationships with the Lord and with others will affect our ability to be filled with the Spirit. We must be submitted to others and to the Lord. We not only submit to those in authority, but we also submit to each other in the fear of God. We are not out to get our own way

Ask your students to list the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit; and then, have them search the scriptures, in order to find each of these characteristics manifested in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Emphasize to your students the importance of filling their minds with the Word of God and the things of God. Encourage them to worship often, throughout the day. Encourage them to verbalize their worship and prayer.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Volume 10

Lesson 23



Bible References

Luke 3:16

Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 19:2-6

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-11

1 Corinthians 14



Theme

The purpose and power of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.



Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-11

- 1 "Now concerning spiritual (gifts), brethren, I would not have you ignorant."
- 4 "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
- 5 "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
- 6 "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.
- 7 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.
- 8 "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
- 9 "To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
- 10 "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another (divers) kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:
- 11 "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."



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. Jesus Christ immerses (baptizes) believers in the Holy Spirit. (Luke 3:16)
- B. Believers are supernaturally empowered and equipped by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)

II. What Is the Purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

- A. Empowered to witness. (Acts 1:8)
- B. Empowered to serve. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

III. What Is the Manifestation of the Spirit? (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

- A. Also called "spirituals," or "spiritual gifts." (1 Corinthians 12:1)
- B. Operate according to the will of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- C. Nine aspects of the manifestation of the Spirit.
 - 1. Word of wisdom.
 - 2. Word of knowledge.
 - 3. Faith.
 - 4. Gifts of healing.
 - 5. Working of miracles.
 - 6. Prophecy.
 - 7. Discerning of spirits.
 - 8. Kinds of tongues.
 - 9. Interpretation of tongues.

IV. How Do We Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

- A. We must be believers. (Acts 19:2-6)
- B. We must ask. (Matthew 7:7-8)
- C. The laying on of hands and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus Christ baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all believers.

- The baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers our witness and our service.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit enables us to operate in the manifestation of the Spirit.
- The initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is tongues.



Lesson Material

What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Why is it important? Do I have to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, in order to be saved? Are tongues really necessary; and if so, what is the purpose of tongues? All of these questions and more are commonly asked about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, these questions are asked out of fear or unbelief; and sometimes, these questions are asked out of hearts that are seeking the things of God.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is that act by which Jesus Christ immerses (baptizes) believers in the Person of the Holy Spirit. As a result, believers are supernaturally empowered by the Holy Spirit, in order to be witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be equipped in their function within the body of Christ.

One does not have to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, in order to be saved; our salvation is based upon repentance and faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. However, one must be saved, in order to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is both

contingent upon and subsequent to salvation.

The initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in unknown tongues. (Acts 2:4) Throughout the book of Acts, this outward sign always accompanied the receiving of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Only in one account is the actual mention of tongues omitted; and even there, something outward happened, which made the sorcerer, Simon desire the power to lay on hands, in order to minister the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:9-24) Notice that when we speak with tongues, it is as the Holy Spirit gives the utterance. (Acts 2:4) This is Holy Spirit-motivated and directed praying. It is the Holy Spirit giving voice to our human spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:14)

As Spirit-baptized believers, not only are we enabled to speak in unknown tongues, but we are also enabled to operate in all of the various aspects of the manifestation of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) The actual word for "spiritual gifts" in 1 Corinthians 12:1 is the word, spirituals." The King James translators have supplied the word, "gifts" to help clarify the verse. Actually, the spirituals, or spiritual gifts, are further defined as the "manifestation of the Spirit" in 1 Corinthians 12:7. The spirituals are nine different ways in which the Holy Spirit manifests His power in the lives of Spiritbaptized believers. These characteristics of the manifestation of the Spirit can be grouped into three categories.

The first group is the utterance gifts. These include tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy. Note that there are different kinds of tongues. In 1 Corinthians 14, we learn that some tongues are for private use (our personal prayer language); others are signs to

unbelievers; and still others are for public use (when accompanied by the interpretation of tongues). The important thing to remember is that it is the Holy Spirit giving the utterance as He wills. Prophecy, on the other hand, is speaking a message in the natural, known language, which has been inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit. The nature of prophecy must always be that of edification, exhortation, and comfort. (1 Corinthians 14:3)

The next category of spirituals is that of the revelation gifts, which are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits. The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge are similar, in that they both involve the supernatural imparting of specific revelation to the believer by the Holy Spirit. They differ, in that the word of knowledge is the imparting of specific facts, while the word of wisdom is imparting of specific direction, or application of knowledge. Discerning of spirits is differentiating between the expression of carnality (Galatians 5:19-21) and the manifestation of demon power; and further, to understand the difference between a demonstration of the flesh and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It is to recognize, when there is a conflict in the house of God, that it is the result of evil spirit forces; and lastly, it is to understand, when there is resistance to the will and purpose of God, that it is a result of principalities and powers.

The third category of spirituals have been called the "power" gifts. These are the working of miracles, gifts of healing, and faith. The same Holy Spirit Who empowers you to speak in tongues can also use you to work miracles! It is one and the same Spirit -- and one manifestation of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians

12:7, 11) Miracles are always to confirm the Word of God. They are not given to the church for the purpose of convenience or entertainment. The "faith" mentioned here is not the same as the fruit of the Spirit, faith. (Galatians 5:22-23) This faith is a supernatural imparting of faith, in order to accomplish a specific task. And lastly, notice that the scripture says "gifts of healing," rather than "gift of healing." The Holy Spirit has many different ways and methods of healing. He is not to be confined to just one way of manifesting His healing power.

If we are believers, we should be desirous of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. God wants to use us; and God wants to empower us. At times, believers receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit at the same time that they are saved, or at the same time that they are baptized in water. For others, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is received through the laying on of hands. Our focus must not be on how God is going to do it. Our focus should be on receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and then functioning in the supernatural power and enabling that it provides.



Methods

Review with your students the fourfold ministry of the Holy Spirit: regeneration, infilling, anointing and baptism. Make sure that the students associate regeneration with the new birth; infilling with the fruit of the Spirit; anointing with ministry; and baptism in the Holy Spirit with the spirituals. Be prepared with your teaching team to minister the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Or, ask your pastor or the local church elders to lay hands on those students who are desiring the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Encourage those students who may have already received the baptism in the Holy Spirit to make use of their prayer language on a daily basis, and to make themselves available for the Holy Spirit to use in any of the spirituals that He desires.

Agonizomai

Volume 10

Lesson 24



Bible References

Luke 13:24; 22:44-45

Colossians 1:28-19; 4:12

Philemon 23

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

1 Timothy 6:7-12

Matthew 28:19-20

James 4:14

2 Timothy 4:6-8



Theme

We must dedicate our lives totally to Jesus, just as He gave Himself totally for us.



1 Timothy 6:7-12

- 7 "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
- 8 "And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.
- 9 "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.
- 10 "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.
- 11 "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.
- 12 "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."



Luke 13:24

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."



Outline

- I. Agonizomai Is Used to Describe Intense Prayer.
- A. Jesus prayed fervently, in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- B. Epaphras prayed fervently for his Christian brothers.
- II. Agonizomai Describes the Pursuit of Holiness.
- A. Strive to enter by the narrow door that leads to salvation.
- B. Fight the good fight of faith.
 - 1. Some trade their faith for wealth.
 - 2. Some trade their faith for recognition.
 - 3. Some gave their lives for their faith.

III. Agonizomai Describes the Discipleship Process.

- A. We must strive to teach the truth.
- B. True disciples agonize for the faith.
- C. Spiritual growth and maturity is a product of striving to maintain the faith.

IV. Why Is It Important to Suffer for the Faith?

- A. The eternal rewards are worth any amount of temporal suffering.
- B. True disciples are not content to give anything less than their lives to Christ.
- C. God rewards faithfulness.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus prayed with intensity to the Father.
- We can also pray to the Father with intensity as His children, making our requests boldly before the throne of God.
- Spiritual training in righteousness is similar to physical conditioning, in terms of discipline and effort.
- We brought nothing into the world; and we can take nothing out.
- Spiritual wealth is far more valuable than earthly (material) wealth.

- Making disciples of men is a difficult process, requiring excellence in teaching and discipline in the application of God's principles.
- We will be judged according to our works and held accountable for everything done in the body.



Lesson Material

Agonizomai is a Greek word found many times in the New Testament. It is similar in form and meaning to the English word "agonize:" agonizomai — "to struggle, fight, labor fervently, strive;" "agonize" -- "to cause intense suffering in mind or body; to writhe in pain."

The Greek word agonizomai is used several times in the New Testament to describe the actions of Jesus and His followers. The word is found in 3 contextual settings: prayer; the pursuit of holiness; and discipling.

Agonizomai is first used to describe the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, just before He was betrayed by Judas. (Luke 22:44) Imagine how intensely Jesus must have been praying, to perspire so heavily until the sweat dripped from His body. This is the kind of perspiration that you work up after running about five miles on a hot and humid day. Jesus must have been really agonizing over His prayer to the Father. Fasting and praying is about as close as we ever come to that kind of prayer. One must have the perfect love of God at work within his heart, to pray as Jesus did.

In Colossians 4:12, agonizomai is used to describe the prayer of someone other than Jesus. Epaphras was a laborer with the apostle Paul. He was probably an ordinary guy. He was not one of the disciples. He is only mentioned three times in the entire Bible. Yet, we find him agonizing in prayer for fellow believers. Later, in Philemon 23, we find him in prison with Paul. There is no question about his dedication to the faith.

The pursuit of holiness is seen in Luke 13:24 and 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Exercising and training our physical bodies is compared to training our spiritual bodies, but for a different purpose. The pursuit of holiness involves rigorous spiritual training.

How well do each of us take care of and train our spiritual bodies, compared to our physical bodies? Most individuals spend much more time and effort improving and maintaining the condition of our physical bodies. A large part of the economy of the world in which we live today is built on maintenance and improvement of the human body. Not only do we spend vast amounts of time and money caring for the body, but we invest a large amount of time entertaining it, too!

The average American watches 2 hours of television every day. In a lifetime, that amounts to about 7 years. One could get a doctorate in theology in less than 7 years! Think how God could use us for His glory, if we endeavored to "entertain" our spiritual bodies as well as our physical bodies.

The pursuit of holiness also requires the man of God to desire spiritual wealth, rather than the material things the world has to offer. (1 Timothy 6:7-12) Satan would have you trade your soul for material things, in order to disqualify you from serving the Lord. It is a much simpler task to take candy from a baby, when you give him something that he thinks is even better. In the same way, Satan knows that if material things are more appealing than your relationship with Jesus Christ, you might just trade that relationship for the things of the world. Only God knows how many souls Satan has received in trade for wealth.

Fighting the good fight of faith means fighting and struggling to hold onto eternal life, even though Satan may be doing everything he can to take it away from you. It is amazing how people will fight and struggle to get what they want out of life. What do you want out of life so badly that you will do almost anything to get? Wealth? Popularity? Love? Power?

In case you are wondering how Timothy did when it came to fighting for the faith, history tells us that Timothy was hung upside down by his feet, tortured, his eyes burned out, and forced to listen to the cries of his wife being tortured by the Roman guards, as they tried to force him to deny his faith. They never succeeded; and he was subsequently put to death.

The last words Jesus spoke on earth were, "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: and, lo, I am with you alway, {even} unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:19-20). We are here to make disciples of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:28-29), and not to trick people into saying something with their mouths that they do not mean in their hearts. True disciples will ultimately agonize and suffer for their faith in Jesus.

It will cost them something. Those who really did not mean it will eventually fall away, because the love of God is not in them.

Making disciples is not an easy business. It takes a lot of effort. The apostle Paul used the word agonizomai to describe the process. Someone once said that a student can only become as advanced as his teacher. Discipling someone can be very difficult, because the teacher must constantly strive to learn, in order to be able to continue to challenge the student.

Your friends will probably never be any closer to God than you are. And that is OK, as long as you are growing. Remember, spiritual growth and maturity comes from striving in prayer and the pursuit of holiness. Unless you continue to grow and mature spiritually, it is unlikely that you will ever disciple anyone.

Part of being a Christian means sharing in the agony of Jesus -- for your friends (prayer, fasting, challenge, church); for the world (those that are suffering); and for the Name of Jesus Christ (fighting for the faith). Christians do not have an earthly perspective. We see things in terms of their eternal value. Women can relate to this very well, because children are born to women who are in extreme agony. But after the baby is born, and the pain is gone, there is a joy and happiness that is impossible to describe. A man will never know what that kind of joy is. Ask any woman who has had a baby, that wanted a baby, and she will tell you that it was worth it.

The pain was only temporary, just like our lives on this earth. James 4:14 says that our lives are like a vapor that vanishes away suddenly -- a puff of smoke. Whatever suffering we may have to go

through here will be forgotten, when we finally see Jesus and hear Him say, "...Well done, {thou} good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matthew 25:21)

If you are a true Christian, you will never really be happy on this earth, unless you are serving God to the best of your ability -- agonizing, striving to keep the faith. There will always be an emptiness that can only be filled by serving Him. Thousands of people try to fill that void with the things of the world (Satan's bargain), only to find that they are still unsatisfied. Only a life dedicated to loving the Lord Jesus Christ will ever satisfy that void.

3. God is keeping track of what you and I do. (2 Timothy 4:6-8) We will each be rewarded for our faithfulness in striving for the faith in prayer, the pursuit of holiness, and making disciples.



Methods

Illustrate the lesson with examples of ways in which people have given their lives to worldly as well as spiritual things. Stories of Christian martyrs, missionaries, and others who have given their lives to Christ are very effective, but be careful not to draw too much attention to the gruesome details. The media is full of stories of people who have given their lives to pursue worldly treasures and glory. Pick something that happened recently, perhaps nearby, that your students will know about.

Also, issue a closing challenge to strive for the faith in the following three areas:

- 1. Attend weekly prayer Meetings. At the very least, determine to pray every day for friends, family, the world, and yourself.
- 2. Consider serving God in full-time ministry. Billy Graham once said, "There are a million things you can do with your life, but how many of those things will you be able to look back on and say -- 'I have no reserve, no retreat, and no regrets?'"
- 3. Invite your friends to church, where they can hear the Word. Share your faith with others. Work hard to defend the faith when it is being slandered. Study to show yourself approved for every good work. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Seeking God's Will

Volume 10 Lesson 25



Bible References

2 Corinthians 11:14

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 5:21

1 John 4:1

John 10:4

Ephesians 5:17



Theme

We must seek the will of God with all of our heart, soul, and mind.



Scripture Reading

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

- 3 "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:
- 4 "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor;
- 5 "Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God."



Memory Verse

Ephesians 5:17

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the [will of the Lord] {is}."



Outline

- I. The Majority of God's Will for Our Lives Is revealed in the Bible.
- A. It is God's will for all Christians, according to the Bible:
 - 1. You should tell the truth in love.
 - 2. You should not steal.
 - 3. You should marry only Christians, and be faithful to the one you marry.
 - 4. You should love each other.
 - 5. You should forgive one another.
 - 6. You should repent of your sins.
 - 7. You should abstain from sex outside of marriage.
 - 8. You should spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - 9. You should pray.
 - 10. You should fellowship with other believers.
- B. The Bible should be our first resource, when seeking God's will for our lives.
- II. The Portion of God's Will for Our Lives that Is Not Revealed by the Bible Is Revealed through the Holy Spirit.
- A. Many Christians depend exclusively on their impressions, to determine the will of God for their lives. This is not a good idea, because impressions can come from three sources:
 - 1. Some impressions come from God.

- 2. Some impressions come from Satan.
- 3. Some impressions come from ourselves.
- B. It is our responsibility as Christians to test our impressions or feelings, in order to see if they are from God, Satan, or ourselves. (1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21) John Wesley wrote in the eighteenth century, "Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impression, visions or revelations to be from God. They may be from Him. They may be nature. The may be from the devil. Therefore, believe not every spirit but 'try the spirits whether they be from God."
- C. If you have an impression that you think is God's will, then you should ask yourself these questions:
 - 1. Is it scriptural? Evaluate the impression against the Word of God. Look at the entire text, and not just one verse.
 - 2. Is it right? Does it seem to be the right thing? If the impression devalues human worth, human life, or traditional Christian values, then it should be viewed with suspicion.
 - 3. Is it providential? God will open doors and lead us, when it is His will. We should not force doors open. (John 10:2-4)
 - 4. Is it reasonable? Does it make sense? Is it consistent with the character of God to require it? God gave us reasoning abilities for a purpose. We must be leery of an impression or feeling that has to be done on the spur of the moment or in a hurry, because the Bible says to wait on the Lord. Therefore, if the impression

requires you to act instantaneously, it is probably not from God.



Spiritual Truths

- God wants you to know His will; but you must seek it, like a treasure hunter seeks treasures.
- The Bible and the Holy Spirit are our sources for God's will.
- We can learn God's specific will in situations through communicating with God in prayer.
- The will of God will never violate the Word of God.



Lesson Material

The majority of God's will for our lives is revealed in the Bible. The portion of God's will for our lives that is not revealed by the Bible is revealed through the Holy Spirit.

Many Christians depend exclusively on their impressions to determine the will of God for their lives. This is not a good idea, because, while some impressions come from God, other impressions come from Satan, and still other impressions come from ourselves. It is our responsibility as Christians to test our impressions or feelings, to see if they are from God, Satan, or ourselves.

- 1. Is it scriptural?
- 2. Is it right?
- 3. Is it providential?
- 4. Is it reasonable?

We must be very careful not to assume something to be the will of God, without thoroughly testing it.

God desires for us to know His will, even more than we desire to find out His will for our lives. If we will seek Him, He is more than ready to reveal His will to us.



Methods

Give the students a list of different situations; and then, have them write what they think that God's will would be for them to do in each, and why.

Choose a scenario in which a decision must be made, using two or three students to role-play. Have the students refer to various sources, worldly and godly, in the making of their decision. The skit can end in several ways, in order to illustrate the different outcomes when making a decision according to (or not according to) the will of God.

Commitment

Volume 10

Lesson 26



Ephesians 5:22-32

Romans 5:8

Philippians 2:4-8

Colossians 3:2-4

Matthew 6:33



Theme

The commitment of marriage is a model of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church.



Ephesians 5:22-27

- 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;
- 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."



Romans 5:8

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."



Outline

I. Dating Relationships Can Be Primarily Selfish.

- A. When someone better comes along, the relationship often ends.
- B. When needs are not being met, the relationship often ends.
- C. Giving is done, only to receive.

II. Marriage Was Designed by God to be Unselfish.

- A. When someone better comes along, the marriage does not end.
- B. When needs are not being met, the marriage does not end.
- C. Giving is done, without expecting to receive.

III. Sometimes, Our Relationship with the Lord Resembles Selfish Dating.

- A. When something better comes along, the relationship is set aside.
- B. When needs are not being met, bitterness and separation result.
- C. Giving is done, only to receive.

IV. Our Relationship with the Lord Should Resemble a Godly Marriage.

- A. When something perceived to be better comes along, it is recognized as a stumbling block, and not a better offer.
- B. When needs are not being met, patience and trust in the sovereignty of God must prevail.
- C. Giving is done, without expecting to receive.



Spiritual Truths

- Marriage was instituted by God to be a model of His relationship to the church.
- The marriage relationship as described by the Bible is one in which both participants give everything to each other.
- Jesus gave everything that He could give, by laying down His life for us on the cross.
- The love that Jesus has for everyone was exemplified by His death on the cross for the sins of the world.
- As Christians, we should be willing to give ourselves up for Him, as He did for us.
- We are to put off the old man with his deeds of the flesh, and put on the new

man, which is renewed in knowledge in the image of God.



Lesson Material

Dating can be described as a series of trial relationships that are supposed to prepare one for the lifelong commitment of marriage. Unfortunately, dating seldom resembles the marriage relationship; and it is therefore a poor model on which to build a marriage.

The typical dating relationship between two people is often characterized by selfishness. With few exceptions, couples who enter into a dating relationship do so to get something for themselves. It may be the desire for companionship or sex that draws two people together. It may be the fear of growing old without someone to love or be loved by. Regardless of the reason, most couples expect to receive something tangible from the relationship, or they would never have entered into it.

The selfish aspects of dating can be observed when someone who is more attractive or more appealing in some way comes along. Unless there is a great deal of commitment to the relationship, a sudden lack of contentment with the status quo is likely to result, often putting an end to the relationship, in pursuit of "greener pastures."

Also illustrative of selfishness in dating is the intense reaction when needs or expectations are not met. For some men, the lack of sexual activity may cause discontentment with the relationship. For

women, it may be a lack of honesty and loyalty from her partner that is a source of disappointment. If the issue is not resolved quickly, it is usually only a matter of time before the lack of satisfaction in some area ends the relationship.

A third illustration of selfishness in dating can be observed in the practice of gift-giving. Quite often, a man will give flowers, jewelry, or some other gesture to his girlfriend, as an expression of his feelings. In like manner, a woman may give cologne or clothes to her boyfriend. Giving to each other in this manner is fine, as long as the motives are pure. Too often, however, gifts are given with the expectation that a deeper level of commitment will be achieved. A man might expect his partner to accept a proposal of marriage, or, perhaps, his sexual advances. A woman might expect her partner to devote more of his attention to her and less to his friends. It might even be expected that a gift might be the best way to end an argument. Unfortunately, the gift given with an impure motive is likely to result in disappointment, which may hasten the end of the relationship.

In the context of marriage as God intended it to be, the selfishness that often characterizes dating must be set aside. Wives are to submit to their husbands; and husbands are to love their wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Selfish motives have no place in marriage. Marriage is supposed to be a lifelong commitment between a man and woman, who have been brought together by the Lord. The world has perverted the institution of marriage. More than half of all marriages end in divorce, because the biblical principles of the relationship are not observed. The selfish motives that end

Commitment Volume 10

dating relationships often end marriages, as well.

If a couple is married and someone more attractive comes along, it should not matter, because true love always overcomes selfish desire. If expectations or needs are not being met, it is up to the couple to communicate openly, until the situation is resolved. Gifts should be given for the benefit of the other person. Giving with an impure motive is selfish; and it has no place in marriage.

Many times, our relationship with Jesus Christ is like dating. When something that we perceive to be more attractive comes along, the Lord is set aside. It is not until the substitute loses its appeal, that there is any hope of restoring the intimacy of our first love. (Revelation 2:4)

When we pray and the Lord does not seem to meet our needs, we become frustrated and bitter. Some may even lose their faith in the Lord altogether. When the answer to prayer comes quickly and is exactly what was ordered, the relationship with God mysteriously seems to improve. When we give of our time or money to the work of the Lord, but are disappointed with the results, we may never give again. When we give expecting to receive, we have given selfishly; and we will always be disappointed.

In contrast, the mature relationship with the Lord is like the successful marriage. God has created and designed the marriage relationship between a man and a woman to be an exact replica of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church. Christ, as the Husband, is the Head of the bride; but He has given Himself up for her. The church, as the bride, is in subjection to Christ.

As children of God, we have died to the former things of the world; and we now live for Christ. (Colossians 3:2-4) Our selfish desires are secondary to serving the Lord, Who has promised to meet all of our needs. (Matthew 6:33)

When something that seems to be more attractive that our relationship with Christ comes along, recognize that it is not to be a substitute for the Lord. God may allow us to have it, but it is never to take the place of Him.

When we ask God for something and do not get an answer right away, it is time to be patient and wait on the Lord. His timing is not always our timing. When we force things to happen before they should, the consequences are likely to be negative. God's timing is always perfect; and it serves the interests of everyone, and not a select few. Trust Him to work it out, according to His will.

When God denies a request, recognize that He may be withholding the request for your own good. Much of what we ask God to provide is the worst thing for us, but we do not have the wisdom to discern the danger. When He says, "No," we can be sure it is for the best. In fact, we should be thankful whatever the answer may be, knowing that He is omniscient and wants the best for us.

When we give of our time and money to the Lord, we should be thankful for the opportunity to give. If it were not for His provision, we would have nothing to give. We will not always be rewarded in this life for serving the Lord. We work for a heavenly reward, which will never pass away. Earthly rewards are only temporary; and they never satisfy.

All that we do for the Lord has eternal significance. Most of what we do for ourselves has no eternal consequence at all. Billy Graham made this statement before thousands of young people in Urbana, Illinois in 1987:

"There are a thousand things you can do with your life, but how many of those things will enable you to say at the end of your life that you have no reserve, no retreat, no regrets?"

Although He was God, Jesus Christ humbled Himself and was made in the likeness of man, so that He could demonstrate His love for us. (Philippians 2:4-8) Jesus Christ gave up His life for us on the cross; and He loves us unconditionally. In our lives, we need to humble ourselves and let God have control over our lives. We must yield ourselves to Him, and be willing to be used in any way that He might choose. And, as He loves us, we must love Him --with all of our heart and soul and mind. (Matthew 22:37)

If we can accomplish these things, our selfish desires will never be able to destroy our relationship with Him; and we will never be in danger of "dating" Jesus Christ.



Methods

This lesson could be easily illustrated with skits. Divide your students into three groups. Each group will act out two skits.

Group One should act out what happens when a couple is dating, but one of them wants to pursue a relationship with someone else who is more attractive or popular. Group One should then act out the correct response to the temptation in the context of marriage, in which the couple stays together, even though a "better" offer has been made available.

Group Two should act out a situation in which a girl becomes angry, because her boyfriend is not spending enough time with her. Group Two should then portray the same situation in the context of marriage, with the couple working out the problem by talking it through and trying to understand their partner's point of view.

Group Three should act out selfish gift-giving, where the boy gives the girl a gift, but expects to receive a goodnight kiss, even though the girl does not want to kiss him. Group Three should then portray gift-giving in the context of marriage, in which the gift is given unselfishly. Demonstrate the natural affection that would accompany such a gesture.

Rock Music: Words of Wisdom?

Volume 10

Lesson 27



Bible References

James 3:8-10

Matthew 6:24; 7:17-18

Colossians 3:16-17

Philippians 4:8

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22



Theme

Music can be used to bring glory to God or dishonor to Him.



Scripture Reading

Colossians 3:16-17

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

Philippians 4:8

"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."



Outline

I. Music Is Neutral.

- A. Music is not inherently good or evil.
- B. No particular style of music is good or evil.

II. Words Are Not Neutral.

- A. Our words either glorify God or dishonor Him.
- B. From the same mouth comes blessing and cursing.

III. Musical Artists Are Not Neutral.

- A. Some musicians love the Lord.
- B. Some musicians do not love the Lord.
- C. Musicians either endeavor to serve the Lord, or they do not.

IV. What Is the Difference between Christian and Secular Music?

- A. Christian music glorifies Jesus Christ.
- B. Secular music glorifies the world.
 - 1. The world is ungodly.
 - 2. The world is the domain of Satan.

V. How Can Someone Decide What Kind of Music to Listen To?

- A. Listen to music that brings you closer to
- B. Listen to music containing lyrics that glorify God.
- C. Listen to music performed by musicians who love the Lord.



Spiritual Truths

- The written and spoken word is capable of glorifying God and also of bringing dishonor to Him.
- Some musicians choose to glorify God with the music that they compose, while others choose to glorify another.
- If anything separates us from God, or glorifies another, it is evil.
- A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.
- No one can serve two masters. (Matthew 6:24)
- Whatever we do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, with thanksgiving to God.



Lesson Material

Music is something that nearly everyone in the world has had the opportunity to experience. It ranges from the complex rhythmic patterns of African drummers to the intricate melodies of a symphony orchestra, to the driving beat of rock-and-roll. Music is expressed in an infinite variety of ways by people all over the world, making it a universal phenomenon.

Music has also evolved over time. The advent of modern electronics has revolutionized both the performance and recording of music. There is a style of music to satisfy the tastes of everyone. Yet, the variety of musical expression is a source of contention between individuals who do not have an appreciation for the music enjoyed by another.

Rock music, though relatively new in the evolution of music, is a major source of contention between young people and adults, particularly between parents and their children. Rock music is often blamed for the decadence of modern society, especially among teenagers. It is frequently called "The Devil's Music" by its critics. Some of the accusations are based on fact; and some are not.

In reality, it is not fair to claim that a particular style of music is good or evil. The style of music (e.g., classical, rock, jazz, folk, bluegrass, country, fusion, punk, rap, alternative, etc.) is neutral. Particular styles of music (e.g., rock, rap) have been labeled "evil" because of the words, images, and musical artists associated with it.

Rock music, for example, is sometimes called "satanic" because some of the bands are actively involved in the occult and promote it through their music. Using this form of reasoning, some have concluded that all rock music is "satanic." Obviously, the logic behind such an accusation breaks down under careful examination of the facts. Any style of music can bring glory to God, as long as it was intended to do so. Any style of music can bring glory to Satan, if it was intended to do so. There is nothing inherently good or evil about any style of music.

Words, however, are not neutral. The words that we write or speak (or sing) either bring glory to God, or they do not. There is no neutral ground for words. (James 3:8-10) If the words do not bring glory to God, whom do they glorify? People? Material things? Sex? Other gods? Satan? These questions must be asked in an evaluation of any music to which we listen.

Some songs, especially "love songs," do not seem to glorify God or anything else. They seem neutral. If a song does not obviously bring glory to God, is it really worth your time? Why spend time with something that does not improve your relationship with God? It is unwise to use spare time pursuing "neutrality," when you could have been with the Lord.

Musical artists are not neutral. There are only two kinds of people in the world: those who love the Lord and do their best to serve Him, and those who do not. Musicians and song writers have either dedicated their talents to serving the Lord, or they are dedicated to another purpose. If they have given their talent to the service of God, it will be evident in their music, their concerts, and in the way they live their lives. Their lives (and music) will

produce good fruit. If the musician has not dedicated his talent to the Lord, then his music, concerts, and lifestyle will not glorify the Lord. His attitude toward the Lord will be evident in his lifestyle and in his music. His life will produce bad fruit. (Matthew 7:17-18)

There is no gray area. Words are not neutral. Musicians are not neutral. Evil words and evil musicians produce music which promotes evil. Godly words and godly musicians produce music which glorifies the Lord. What is the difference between Christian and secular music? The answer is simple. Christian music glorifies Jesus Christ. Secular music glorifies the things of the world.

The music industry has created a division between "Christian" and "secular" music. Thus, artists fall into one of two categories. Unfortunately, some artists have recorded music on a "Christian" label, which is full of false teaching. Others record music that is void of any direct reference to Jesus Christ, Christianity, or God. Music is not "Christian" unless Jesus Christ is glorified.

Similarly, some artists have recorded music on a "secular" label that is clearly intended to glorify Jesus Christ and spread the gospel. Because it was recorded on a secular label, does not necessarily make it worldly. The world is ungodly. The world is the domain of Satan. If music fails to glorify the Lord, then it glorifies the world, and, indirectly, Satan.

Do not be fooled by a label. Examine the words, find out the intentions of the artist, and then make your own decision. The Lord knows His own and those who belong to the world. Pray about it, if you are unsure. Avoid listening to it, until you are sure it is really "Christian."

Is it wrong to listen to music that sounds good but contains some bad language or messages? It is not good to do anything that might weaken your relationship with the Lord. Listen to music that brings you closer to God. If you know that a song, or an artist, includes messages that are obviously not wholesome, nothing is being gained by your involvement. In fact, you might influence someone else wrongly by your apparent support. Avoid even the appearance of evil, for your own spiritual growth, as well as the growth of others. (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

Music can be used by the Holy Spirit to bring someone closer to God. It can also hinder one's relationship with Him. In short, if you spend more time listening to music, or watching videos, than reading your Bible and praying, your relationship with God is being hindered. The song has not yet been written that can take the place of time spent alone with God, reading His Word and talking with Him in prayer. (Colossians 3:16-17)

How can someone decide what kind of music to listen to?

First, listen to music that brings your closer to God. If the music that you enjoy does not enhance your spiritual walk, do not listen to it. Find an artist whose music makes you think about God. Supplement your prayer life and Bible study with music that brings you closer to the Lord.

Secondly, listen to music containing lyrics that glorify God. Any music that promotes the following themes does not glorify the Lord: drugs, sexual immorality, the occult, false religion, violence, lawlessness. Exposing yourself to the promotion of these themes can make it

difficult to focus on the Lord. Avoid letting it crowd your mind!

Thirdly, examine the lifestyle of the musicians. What does their music intend to promote? Are their lifestyles consistent with Christian values? Do they profess to believe in Jesus Christ? Do they lead lifestyles that are consistent with their beliefs? Does their music reflect their beliefs?



Methods

Divide your students into discussion groups. Ask them to write down the

names of the musical artists they listen to. Discuss the "fruit" produced by these artists:

- 1.) Do the words that they use in their songs glorify God? (Yes or No)
- 2.) If not, what, or whom, do they glorify or promote?
- 3.) Is it a wise use of your time to listen to their music?
- 4.) How do you think God feels about their music?
- 5.) How do you think God feels about the time you spend listening to them?
- 6.) Could your time be used more productively?

The New Birth

Volume 10

Lesson 28



John 3:1-21

Ephesians 2:1-2; 4:22-24

2 Corinthians 5:17

Titus 3:5

Romans 8:15-17

1 Corinthians 12:13



Theme

When we are born again, we are transformed from darkness to light; and we become the children of God.



John 3:1-7; 12-21

- 1 "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:
- 2 "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.
- 3 "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.
- 4 "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?
- 5 "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and {of} the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- 7 "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

- 12 "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you (of) heavenly things?
- 13 "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, {even} the Son of man which is in heaven.
- 14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
- 15 "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.
- 16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
- 17 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
- 18 "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
- 19 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
- 20 "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.
- 21 "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."



Titus 3:5

"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;"



Outline

I. Man Is Born Spiritually Dead. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

- A. Man is inherently sinful. (Romans 3:10; 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22)
- B. Man is at enmity with God. (Romans 8:7)
- C. All have sinned. (Romans 3:23; 5:12)
- D. Death is the result of sin.
 - 1. Spiritual death.
 - 2. Physical death.

II. What Is the New Birth?

- A. Born of God. (John 1:12-13)
- B. Born of the Spirit. (John 3:5-8)
- C. Washing of regeneration. (Titus 3:5)
- D. Spiritually quickened. (Ephesians 2:1)

III. Results of the New Birth.

- A. Children and heirs of God. (John 1:12-13; Romans 8:15-17; 1 John 3:2)
- B. Placed into the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- C. Transformed from darkness to light. (Colossians 1:13 Ephesians 5:8)
- D. New creations. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- E. Spiritual discernment. (John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 2:14)
- F. Reconciliation. (Colossians 1:21-22)
- G. Justification. (1 Corinthians 6:11)
- H. Eternal life. (John 3:16; 1 John 2:25; 5:13)



- Man is inherently sinful.
- Man is naturally an enemy of God.
- Man is born spiritually dead.
- When we are born again, our spirit is made alive.
- When we are born again, we become the children of God.
- When we are born again, we have eternal life.



Lesson Material

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:7) When man understands his true spiritual condition, he understands his need for the new birth. Man is inherently sinful. This means that all of mankind has a sin nature. We are all sinners by nature. The sin nature was passed along through Adam; and it exists prior to any expression of sinful acts. This is why the Bible concludes that all have sinned.

Man (the natural man) does not have a tendency toward God. In fact, the natural man is at enmity with God. The natural man prefers to either ignore God or make for himself some substitute for God, thereby avoiding accountability to God. The natural man is separated spiritually from God; and he cannot enter into the kingdom of God in his natural state.

The result of man's inherent sinfulness is death -- both spiritual death and physical death. In Genesis 2:17, God told Adam and Eve that on the day in which they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would surely die. We know that Adam and Eve did not die physically on that day (although the process of death began working in their bodies at that time); however, they experienced spiritual death, immediately upon sinning. That spiritual death is passed along to all of Adam's race.

In order to relate to God, man must be reborn -- not born again physically, but born again spiritually. We are not talking about reincarnation here, which is a false doctrine which teaches physical rebirth in

The New Birth Volume 10

a continuous cycle. We know that we live only one life; and after our death, we face judgment and eternity, either in heaven or hell. (Hebrews 9:27) In fact, those who are not born again will experience the "second death" -- which is eternal torment in the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14-15) But those who are born again will only die once -- a natural, physical death. Therefore, those who are born once die twice; and those who are born twice die once.

We are born again, when we receive salvation through repentance and faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's Spirit makes our spirit alive; and the Holy Spirit makes His residence within us (Romans 8:9, 15) and places us into the body of Christ. Being born again has nothing to do with "turning over a new leaf." We cannot be born again by our own power or by our own works. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

The new birth is a real, tangible, sovereign act of God. We are spiritually quickened -- made alive spiritually. Now we can relate to God and to the things of God. Now we are reconciled to God and justified by God. Now we are new creations and children of God.

A common misconception by many is that we are all "children of God." This is not true. We are all children of Adam, in that Adam is the father of the human race, of which we are all a part. But God is not our Father, until we have been born of God. (John 1:12-13) Before the new birth, we are all called the "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3) and the "children of

disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2) When confronted by the unbelieving Jews, Jesus told them that they were "...of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do...." (John 8:44) God is the Creator of all men; but He is not the Father of natural, unregenerate man.

When we are born again, we receive eternal life. Eternal life does not begin the moment we die physically. Eternal life begins at the moment of regeneration. This is why we have the assurance of heaven, as believers.



Methods

This lesson lends itself to an altar call for salvation. Anyone who is not sure of their salvation may very well not be saved. We will have the inner witness of the Holy Spirit that we are God's children, as well as the assurance of God's Word that we have eternal life, when we are born again. And our changed lives will testify to the newness of life within.

Salvation is more than intellectually assenting to Jesus Christ. Salvation involves acknowledgment of sinfulness, repentance (turning away) from sin, and heartfelt commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Make sure that your students are not Christians in name only. Make sure that your students are genuinely born again.

Renewing the Mind

Volume 10

Lesson 29



Romans 8:5-11; 12:1-2

1 Corinthians 2:16

Philippians 2:3-8; 4:8

Colossians 3:16

2 Corinthians 10:5



Theme

God is doing a work of transformation in us, by the renewing of our minds.



Romans 8:5-11

- 5 "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.
- 6 "For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
- 7 "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
- 8 "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
- 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."



Memory Verse

Romans 12:1-2

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 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."



Outline

- I. The Natural Mind. (Romans 8:5-8)
- A. Enmity against God.
- B. Produces death.
- C. Self-preoccupied.
- II. Renewing Our Minds.
- A. A command. (Hebrews 12:2)
- B. A matter of our will. (Philippians 2:3-8)
- C. The mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16)
- D. The battle in the mind. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

III. Protecting Our Minds. (Philippians 4:7-8)

- A. The peace of God.
- B. Think on these things.



Spiritual Truths

- The battleground between the flesh and the Spirit is the mind.
- What we choose to think becomes what we choose to do.
- God can renew the mind that is submitted to Him.
- Allowing God to renew our minds is a matter of our will.
- We must actively endeavor to protect our minds.



Lesson Material

God is at work in the life of every believer to change the way we think. When we are born again, our spirit is made alive; however, we still have our old nature to deal with, as long as we live. The battleground between our old, fleshly nature and our new, spirit nature is our mind.

The fleshly (natural) mind is our natural way of thinking, and therefore, behaving. The natural mind of man is at enmity with God. It is anti-God (godless) by nature. The natural mind of man is self-occupied. It seeks only the gratification of fleshly desire and the self-righteousness of fleshly works. The natural mind attempts to reject, or at least ignore God. Paul describes his battle between the old and the new natures in Romans chapter 7. This battle is common to all. Indeed, if a believer does not feel that he is experiencing this battle, that believer has probably succumbed to the flesh.

God desires to transform us by the renewing of our minds. But God will never violate our will, even if we have become His children by the new birth. Notice that we are commanded to be transformed, in Hebrews 12:2. Again, in Philippians 2:3-8, we are told to "let" the same mind as Christ be in us -- to allow it to happen. Whenever we are thinking thoughts or doing things that do not contribute to our spiritual nature, we are acting out of our fleshly nature. No one can empty his mind. But we can control what is there. (Philippians 4:7-8)

In Colossians 3:16, we are told to "let" the Word dwell in us. Again, we see our responsibility in this battle for the mind. All of the resources of the Word of God and the Spirit of God are ready to assist us and transform us, if we determine by an act of our will that it will be so. We have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16); but it is a matter of choice as to whether we will appropriate it.

The scripture shows clearly the intensity of the battle of the mind in 2 Corinthians 10:5 -- "Casting down imaginations, and every [high thing] that exalteth itself against the knowledge of

God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." The word "imaginations" is quite descriptive of our thought processes. What we think we are, we are; and as we are thinking, we will behave. Jesus said that the evil deeds that we do are the outward expressions of the evil in our hearts. (Mark 7:20-23) As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. (Proverbs 23:7)

The good news is that we can protect our minds. The Word of God would never command us to cast down imaginations, if it was not possible to do so. The first way that we can protect our minds is by "letting" -- let the Word dwell in you; and let the mind of Christ be in you. Then, we can actively fill our minds with things that will strengthen the spiritual nature, rather than the fleshly nature:

"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." (Philippians 4:8)

We cannot stop certain thoughts from occurring; but we can keep ourselves from dwelling on things that will only serve to feed our fleshly nature and drain us spiritually. We can hold whatever we are thinking up to the standard of the Word. Is it honest? Is it just? Is it of good report? Is it pure, etc.? If it is not, stop thinking about it, and start thinking properly.

Finally, God's peace is available to protect our minds. (Philippians 4:7) When the scripture says that the peace of God will "keep" our hearts and minds, the Greek word for "keep" is actually a military term for "garrison." God's peace

will garrison our minds. It is a fortress of protection for us. And as we allow God to garrison and renew our minds, we are transformed.



Methods

This lesson is easily illustrated by drawing on television commercials, movies, musical lyrics, magazines, books,

etc. for examples of the vain philosophies of the world. Contrast them with the things of God.

List the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:16-26 in separate columns on the blackboard, or on sheets of paper. Match up these descriptors to the material contained in the media. Challenge the students to find a single fruit of the Spirit in these media.

Challenge the students to keep track of their thought life, and to judge their thinking against God's standard in Philippians 4:8.

The Cutting Edge

Volume 10

Lesson 30



Bible References

2 Kings 6:1-7

2 Timothy 3:3, 5

Luke 22:3-4, 34

James 1:17

Psalms 51:1-3

Matthew 10:39

1 John 1:9



Theme

It is possible to lose touch with the power of God in our lives, even in the midst of fellow believers.



2 Kings 6:1-7

- 1 "And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.
- 2 "Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.
- 3 "And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.
- 4 "So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.
- 5 "But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.
- 6 "And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither, and the iron did swim.
- 7 "Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it."



Memory Verse

Matthew 10:39

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."



Outline

- I. The Sons of the Prophets
 Needed a New Place to Live.
- A. The place they lived in had become too small.
- B. They asked Elisha to go with them to the new dwelling place.
- II. One Man Lost His Cutting Edge in the Water, While Cutting Down a Tree.
- A. It is easy to lose the "cutting edge," while serving God.
- B. The cutting edge was borrowed.

III. The Cutting Edge Was Recovered.

- A. The cutting edge was restored, when he was willing to say where it was lost.
- B. When we give our life to the Lord, He will restore it unto us.
- C. Iron is a symbol of judgment.



Spiritual Truths

- Some hold to a form of godliness that denies its power.
- It is possible to lose touch with the power of God, even while serving in the midst of other believers.
- Procrastination causes loss.
- Diligence is profitable.
- God is willing to restore us, when we acknowledge our sin and our need for Him.



Lesson Material

The sons of the prophets were in a place that was too small to live in. Realizing the need for more space, they asked Elisha if they could go to the Jordan river to build a larger dwelling. When

Elisha approved their request, one of the servants asked him to go along, and Elisha agreed to go.

One of the servants lost his axehead in the water as he was cutting down a tree. The servant became upset, because he had borrowed the tool from someone, and now it was lost. When he told Elisha what had happened, Elisha asked him to show him where it was lost. Elisha threw a stick he had cut into the water, and the iron axehead floated. It was then retrieved by the servant.

It is easy to lose our "cutting edge" for the Lord, even though we may be working for Him in the midst of other believers. We become less diligent, and then unproductive. The zeal to serve the Lord somehow becomes lost.

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, knew the Lord personally, but became the one who betrayed Jesus. (Luke 22:3-4) Peter, who probably had more zeal for the Lord than any of the other disciples, lost his "cutting edge" and denied Jesus three times. (Luke 22:34)

It is possible to lose our "cutting edge" — that is, the gifts and talents that the Lord has given us. Even though we may be actively involved at church in serving God, the cutting edge can become lost; and it may seem impossible to retrieve it.

It is important to realize that the Lord is the source of all good things. (James 1:17) Our talents, our time, and our lives are gifts from Him. They are borrowed. We often fail to remain aware that we belong to God, until our cutting edge becomes lost. Sometimes, we do not give Him the glory for that which we believe we have accomplished on our own. The

talents He has given us often become a source of self-sufficiency and pride.

The glory for all that we do should go to God alone. When we do great things for God, but take the glory for ourselves, we have taken on a form of godliness that denies His power. (2 Timothy 3:3, 5) Suddenly, we perceive ourselves as the source of the power, instead of the Lord. When this happens, we are in danger of losing the reason for our power -- our cutting edge. We look good on the outside, but God knows our heart. Our motives are seen clearly by Him. All that we are is from God. It is borrowed. It belongs to Him. He alone should receive the glory.

When we lose our cutting edge, we must be willing to discover the reason for the loss. When the servant realized that he lost the axehead, it was retrieved — but only when he was willing to say where he lost it. When we lose our cutting edge for the Lord, it is usually because of sin. We must be willing to acknowledge the sin that caused the separation, before the cutting edge will be restored. Reconciliation with the Lord must take place first. (Psalms 51:1-3)

It may seem impossible to regain the close relationship with the Lord we enjoyed before sin caused separation, but He is faithful. If we confess our sins, he is willing to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) As the iron was lifted from the water and restored to the servant, so, too, is the judgment of sin is lifted from our lives, when we confess our need of forgiveness and salvation. If we hide from Him, the relationship has no chance of being restored, and the cutting edge will be lost forever.

Serving God, but taking all the credit, is not serving God. That kind of godliness exists in form only, and not in substance. When we give our lives to Him, we must give all of ourselves to Him. Keeping a little for ourselves will cause us to lose that which we have been given. (Matthew 10:39) The Lord will restore the life that is given to Him in submission, and use it for His glory.



Methods

Break into groups for discussion. Describe how the following actions could cause someone to lose their "cutting edge."

- 1. Lack of prayer and Bible study.
- 2. Unconfessed sin.
- 3. Preoccupation with school, church, relationships, etc.

Discuss ways to counteract the negative effects of each situation. How is it possible to maintain a proper perspective, in all that life has to offer? It is important to go to school, maintain relationships, and be active in church. But, how do you know when God is no longer our number one priority?

Divine Healing

Volume 10

Lesson 31



Bible References

Mark 16:17-18

Isaiah 53:5

1 Peter 2:24

Matthew 7:7; 12:15

James 5:14-16

John 9:1-4

Romans 8:2

1 Corinthians 12:9



Scripture Reading

James 5:14-16

14 "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 "Confess (your) faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."



Theme

Divine healing is a part of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.



Memory Verse

1 Peter 2:24

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."



Outline

- I. Sickness and Infirmity Are Part of the Curse.
- A. The law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2)
- B. May or may not be the result of sins committed.
- II. Healing Is a Part of the Redemptive Work of Jesus Christ.
- A. Prophecy fulfilled. (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24)
- B. Jesus' earthly healing ministry. (Matthew 12:15)
- C. Healing is a touch of resurrection power.

III. Receiving Healing.

- A. Laying on of hands. ((Mark 16:17-18)
- B. Manifestation of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:9)
- C. Calling for the elders. (James 5:14-15)
- D. Confession and prayer. (James 5:15-16)
- E. Asking God. (Matthew 7:7)



Spiritual Truths

- The law of sin and death is working in every human being.
- Sickness and infirmity are part of the curse.
- Sickness is not necessarily a sign of a lack of faith or unconfessed sin.
- Sin can be a cause of sickness.
- Healing is a part of the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ.
- God's Word indicates many ways to receive a touch of healing power.



Lesson Material

Everyone becomes ill or has an infirmity at some time(s) in their lives. Sickness and infirmity are a part of the curse — the result of our sin nature. We live in a fallen, imperfect world, with fallen, imperfect bodies and minds. We are all subject to weariness, injury, sickness, disease, and various infirmities.

The scripture teaches that the law of sin and death is working in us. This law went into effect for mankind when Adam and Eve sinned. God told Adam that on the day that he ate of the fruit, he would surely die. (Genesis 2:17) We know that Adam lived for hundreds of years after

eating the fruit; however, he died spiritually when he sinned, and the process of decay and death began in his body. This same process, the "law of sin and death," is at work in our bodies.

Sickness, then, is a natural part of being a member of a fallen race. Sickness does not necessarily mean that a person is expressing a lack of faith, or that a person is living in sin. In John 9:1-4, a man who was blind from birth was brought to Jesus for healing. The question was asked whether the man's blindness was due to some sin in his life, or in the life of someone in his family. Jesus said that neither was true. Sickness is a part of the fragile human condition. But Jesus Christ has provided a way for us to be healed of any and all sickness and infirmity.

In Isaiah 53:5, it was prophesied of Jesus that "...with his stripes we are healed." Peter quotes Isaiah in 1 Peter 2:24, when he says, "...by whose stripes ye were healed." Notice that Peter uses the word "were." Healing is a part of the finished, redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Healing was always an important part of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 12:15) Jesus Himself commissioned His disciples to heal the sick. (Matthew 10:8) And Jesus prophesied that healing would continue to be a confirming sign to the preaching of the Word. (Mark 16:17-18) Jesus is our Healer; and the ministry of the body of Christ includes the healing of the sick. The Word of God shows us several ways in which the healing power of God is released.

First, as mentioned above, Jesus has given believers the authority to lay hands on the sick for healing. (Mark 16:17-18) Often, healings and other signs and wonders are used by God to confirm the

preaching of His Word. In this way, the healing becomes a sign to the unbeliever, as well as a blessing to the one healed.

Secondly, part of the manifestation of the Spirit ("spiritual gifts") is gifts of healing. (1 Corinthians 12:9) The manifestation of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit operating through believers in the nine different spirituals, or spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. As He chooses, the Holy Spirit operates in healing power through a Spirit-baptized believer. Note that the scripture says "gifts" (plural) of healing. This would indicate that the Holy Spirit has more than one way of operating in healing power.

Thirdly, we are commanded in God's Word to call for the elders of the church. (James 5:14-15) Just as we have expressed faith for our salvation, so also should we express faith for healing. Obedience to God's Word is the expression of faith. Do not wait for the elders to discover that you are sick; call for them. Their ministry is to anoint with oil and pray the prayer of faith.

Sin in our lives can cause sickness. If this is the case, we can confess our sins to one another and pray for one another. The Word of God promises healing, when we have done so. (James 5:15-16)

We can ask God for our healing. The scripture says, "Ask, and it shall be given you;...." (Matthew 7:7) The tense of the Greek verb "ask" indicates to "ask, and keep asking." Keep asking, until you receive an answer. Keep asking, even if you have had hands laid on you. A medical doctor will often prescribe medications for sickness, which must be taken in several doses, in order to be effective. Do not be afraid or ashamed to

keep asking God; and keep believing and obeying His Word concerning healing.

Our ultimate healing will come with the redemption of our bodies -- that is, our resurrection. We will then have bodies like the glorified body of Jesus Christ. (1 John 3:2) Our bodies will no longer be subject to sin, sickness or infirmity. Until then, Jesus has provided for our healing -a touch of His resurrection power.



Methods

Before class, ask your students to help you list reasons for sickness. It will be interesting to see how many associate sickness with sin, with natural causes, etc.

A good "object lesson" would be to bring in several medicine bottles ("overthe-counter," as well as prescription drugs). Have several students read aloud the dosage and administration instructions on each bottle. Show them that they must follow the instructions in God's Word, in order to receive physical healing.

Emphasize to your students that Jesus Christ is our Healer. Have a time of prayer for those who are sick. You may wish to have the church elders present, to anoint with oil.

Christian Liberty

Volume 10

Lesson 32



1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:21-24

Romans 14:21-23

Ephesians 5:18

Psalms 119:11

Galatians 5:1, 13-18



Theme

Christian liberty produces true freedom, but only in the context of obedience to God.



Galatians 5:13-18

13 "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

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."



1 Corinthians 10:23

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."



Outline

I. What Is Christian Liberty?

- A. God has given every man freedom of choice.
- B. As Christians, we are free to live as we choose.
- C. All of our choices are not necessarily expedient or edifying.
 - 1. Some things in life lead to bondage, rather than freedom.
 - 2. Some things in life weaken our relationship with the Lord.

II. How Should the Choices that We Make Be Evaluated?

- A. Does it strengthen your walk with Christ?
 - 1. All things are not expedient.
 - 2. All things do not edify.
- B. Does it cause someone else to stumble in their walk with the Lord?
 - Setting a bad example could hinder someone's relationship with the Lord.
 - 2. Failing to set a good example could lead someone else astray.
- C. Does it have the power to control you in any way?
 - 1. Some things are extremely difficult to break away from.

- 2. It is not wise to test your resolve, especially in your weaknesses.
- D. Does it bother your conscience?
 - 1. If it makes you doubt, it is wrong to continue.
 - 2. God's Word can protect you from making bad decisions.
 - a. You must listen to His Word.
 - b. You must obey His Word.



Spiritual Truths

- No one can serve two masters. One must choose to serve either the Lord, or serve the devil.
- It is wise to do things that will strengthen your relationship with Christ.
- The decisions that we make will either enhance or hinder our spiritual growth.
- Christian liberty does not produce bondage for us or for others.
- If we love one another, we will not do things that will cause someone to stumble in their obedience to the Lord.
- When we hide God's Word is our heart, we have garrisoned ourselves against disobedience.
- The indwelling Holy Spirit is faithful to convict us of sin and guide us in our decisions.

- Walking in the Spirit is our choice; and it is the only way to not walk in the flesh.
- True freedom is found in obedience to Jesus Christ.



Lesson Material

Christian liberty does not mean "How much can I get away with, and still be right with God?" The very fact that someone would ask a question like this indicates that they are contemplating pushing the limits of one of God's laws. This very dangerous game can be best defined in a single word: "compromise." The individual who might ask this question is searching for a loophole in God's law.

The logic behind such compromise is typically the false belief that one's actions (works) are somehow unrelated to his walk with Christ, as if obedience to God is optional for the Christian who wants to make his own decisions. God's Word paints a different picture. Faith in Christ is always associated with obedience. (James 1:22-25) Disobedience is always associated with unbelief. No one can lead a double life that chooses the desirable attributes of serving God and the things that please the flesh. The two are in opposition to one another.

The enemy will lead you to believe that it is possible to lead a double life and get away with it. Satan wants you to believe that sometimes, compromise is acceptable, in order to have friends and to be popular. Satan does not want you to know that "compromise" is another word for "disobedience;" and that it is the subtle path to finally giving in all the way.

One does not have to look far for evidence of Satan's lies. The things that we fight to have the freedom to do eventually bind us up. The liberties we claim as Christians do not maintain their liberating power for very long, because disobedience always has destructive consequences.

When a believer chooses to compromise his walk in the name of liberty, not only is his relationship with God hindered, but so are his relationships with other people. Others are often hurt in the process. Someone may observe such hypocrisy, and turn from God in unbelief. Someone else may become confused about their own walk with the Lord, and stray from the truth.

There is no middle ground called "compromise." There is only freedom and bondage. Bondage to sin does not stop with the sinner; it affects everyone who comes in contact with him. Those who are weak are hurt the most. (1 Corinthians 8:9)

In order to protect yourself and others from the deceitfulness of evil, it is necessary to evaluate every decision you make in light of its effects on everyone concerned. Below are four guidelines that can be applied to any situation that requires a choice between right and wrong:

1.) Does it strengthen your walk with Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:23) The word "expedient" is often translated "profitable." If something is expedient, or profitable, it produces more than it costs. All things are lawful for me as a Christian, but all things do not produce more than they cost. Many things cost much more

than they every produce. The word "edify" means to "build up," in the sense of promoting spiritual growth. All things are lawful for the Christian, but all things do not promote spiritual maturity. Many of the things that we have the liberty to do actually inhibit or destroy spiritual growth. Therefore, we must evaluate our decisions in the light of their consequences—whether they are profitable and edifying.

2.) Does it cause someone else to stumble in their Christian walk? (Romans 14:21) Not only is it important to be concerned about our own walk with Christ, but we also need to be aware that our actions may affect the spiritual growth of others. No one lives without having an impact on the lives of others. Every day, we come into contact with, and have a direct effect on, the lives of other people. For this reason, it is important to always set a good example -- one that will be pleasing to the Lord, and one that will reflect a life of faith and holiness. When a Christian fails to set a proper example, his witness becomes compromised, and the Name of the Lord is tarnished. To love others as ourselves is to desire God's very best for them. Leading a neighbor astray by our actions is not love at all.

It is also necessary to realize that others may not be able to handle the liberties you claim to have. Some people are able to realize the folly of their sin and control it, before it gets out of hand. A weaker brother, however, may become so entangled and dependent on a sin such as lying or drinking, that they are not able to break free. Love never imparts bondage to someone else. Love does everything possible to prevent someone else from becoming bound to a destructive habit. Your strength may be a neighbor's weakness. Your liberty may be another's bondage. Live your life in such a way that

your liberties are not imposed upon someone else. If you know that a brother is weak in some area, do not be the one to tempt him into sin by flaunting your liberty. If you do not know whether they are weak or not, then perhaps they do not know, either. It would be better to abstain from questionable activity for the sake of others, than to take a chance that someone might get hurt.

- 3.) Does it have the power to control you? (Galatians 5:1) No thing nor any person should have control over your life, except for Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection were the means by which Jesus freed us all from bondage, and even from the grave. It is amazing that so many Christians seem to repeatedly fall back into the bondage of some bad habit or sin, after making an attempt to be free from it. If we are bound to anything, it is by choice. We have the liberty to choose between life and death, freedom and bondage.
- 4.) Does it violate your conscience? (Psalms 119:11) The Holy Spirit speaks to your conscience. He is the still, small voice that makes you feel uneasy, when you are about to deliberately do something wrong. The Holy Spirit reveals the truths of God's Word, as we read it and hear it taught. In times of need, the Holy Spirit may reveal an appropriate verse or passage of scripture that can be used to guide us in making the right decision. It is this power of the Holy Spirit to use God's Word to convict us of our sin that can keep us on the right track.

Of course, you may choose to ignore the voice of the Holy Spirit. He will not impose Himself upon you. You are free to choose the road that you will walk on. If you are doubting whether it is right or wrong to go somewhere with your friends because your conscience tells you that it is not right, but you choose to go anyway, you have already sinned. Anything that you do in opposition to the leading of the Holy Spirit is sin. (Romans 14:23)

Walking in the Spirit means to have continual fellowship with Him through prayer and the study of His Word. Prayer is the means by which you communicate to God. The Bible, God's Word, is the primary means by which God will communicate to you. The more you pray and study His Word, the closer you will be to Him. When you are close to the Lord, your desire is to serve Him completely; and your desire to give in to the needs of your flesh will be minimized. (Galatians 5:16)

You cannot serve two masters. (Matthew 6:24) So, walk in the Spirit, and you will not give in to the flesh. If you are bound to anything, it has mastery over you. If you have the Holy Spirit within you, the power to master that which has mastered you is within. Ask the Lord to help you break free from it; and then, turn your back on it and run away, as fast as you can. Never look back. God wants you to be

free to serve Him and to live a life free from the bondage of sin and death.



Methods

Illustrate this lesson with examples of things that people often become in bondage to. Lying, cheating, drinking, drugs, pornography, and sexual promiscuity are good examples to use and discuss.

Discuss how the problem begins with a decision to participate in a minor way. Illustrate how the freedom to participate can grow into a habit that is nearly impossible to break away from. Share with the students how difficult it is to achieve victory over addiction to alcohol, drugs, or sexual perversion.

Allow them to share stories from their own experiences, or of someone whom they may know personally.

Thieves of Joy

Volume 10

Lesson 33



Bible References

John 15:11

James 1:3-4

Philippians 1:12; 2:2-5; 3:7-8; 4:4-7

Romans 5:1-4, .11



Theme

Our circumstances will not affect our joy, when our joy is grounded in our relationship with the Lord.



Romans 5:1-4, 11

- 1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
- 2 "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which 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:"
- 11 "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."



Memory Verse

John 15:11

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."



Outline

- I. The Lord Came to Make Our Joy Complete.
- A. Our joy is from the Lord and in the Lord.
- B. It is God's will that we be joyful.
- II. Satan Is Working to Rob Us of Joy.
- A. Circumstances rob us of joy.
- B. People rob us of joy.
- C. Things rob us of joy.
- D. Worry robs us of joy.

III. Rejoice in the Lord.

- A. The secret of rejoicing is having the right focus.
- B. The willingness to focus requires having the right attitude.
- C. The right attitude will always result in unquenchable optimism.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus came to make our joy complete.
- Satan will use anything he can to rob us of joy.
- We can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
- We can rejoice in tribulations, knowing that character is being developed.
- We can rejoice in the Lord through Jesus Christ, Who was the atonement for our sin.
- When our joy is in the Lord, our circumstances will not dictate our joy.



Lesson Material

Jesus came to make our joy complete. (John 15:11) Everyone wants to experience

more joy than mourning, and more happiness than sadness. "Joy" is often used synonymously with "happiness" to describe emotional elation and delight; but they do not mean the same thing.

Joy is independent of circumstances. Happiness is usually dependent upon circumstances. Joy is given to us by God. Happiness is what happens when joy is made complete. Happiness is a choice. It is possible to have the joy of the Lord (a product of salvation) and be unhappy, because we choose not to draw on that joy in difficult times.

Satan is working to rob us of the joy of our salvation. He will use anything that he can to rob us, if we let him. Satan uses the circumstances of life to divert our attention from the source of our joy, which is the Lord. When he has managed to distract us, he begins to use the daily events of our lives to rob us of joy and happiness. The response of faith is to "count it all joy" when our faith is tried. (James 1:3-4)

We will be less useful to God, if we allow our circumstances to dictate our actions. If we rise above our circumstances and remain flexible, the greater progress of the gospel will be served. (Philippians 1:12)

Sometimes, people will attempt to rob us of joy. People tend to do and say things that make us unhappy. If we allow the actions of others to make us unhappy, we have failed to draw upon the joy of the Lord within. If we remain patient and flexible, God can use the situation to bring joy, not only to us, but to those who are observing us.

The love of material things can rob us of joy. (Philippians 2:2-5) Sometimes, it is the addition of things that rob us of joy.

Material wealth, for example, never fills the void that only Christ can fill. More often, however, it is the loss of things that makes us unhappy, even to the point of becoming joyless.

Our attitude must be different toward the things of this world. Nothing that we can possess materially will last forever. Only our salvation lasts eternally. When we strive to gain and maintain things, we are holding on to emptiness. When we strive only to gain Christ, nothing else matters. (Philippians 3:7-8)

Finally, worry, or anxiety, can rob us of joy. We worry about money, health, war, politics, school, relationships, and just about everything else. What we usually fail to realize, however, is that worry does not change anything. Worrying about getting cancer is not going to change the future. If anything, worrying causes more health problems than it prevents. Worrying changes nothing. It only robs us of our potential to serve God. God's Word encourages us to not worry about anything, but rather, pray about everything. (Philippians 4:4-7)

The secret of rejoicing is in having the right focus. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:22) We focus on the development of the character of Christ within. The character of Christ is the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) We must remember that joy is not an emotion; it is part of the fruit of the Spirit, which is produced in us by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

When we are more concerned with the development of any other area of our life than the character that God is working in us, it is impossible to be happy, because our joy is no longer in the Lord. When we want the presence of the Lord more than

anything else, we will rejoice. David likened his desire for the Lord's presence to a great thirst: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." (Psalms 42:1)

The willingness to focus requires having the right attitude. Having the right attitude means being able to rejoice in our tribulations. Rejoicing in tribulation produces perseverance, which builds proven character, resulting in hope. (Romans 5:1-4, 11) If we allow difficult circumstances to cause us to focus on the alleviation of the trial, rather than on the development of the character of Christ within us, hope will never be produced. Without hope, there is no joy. Christ is the hope of glory and the motivation for our joy. (Colossians 1:27) Our attitude must be to joyfully accept the trials of life.

The right attitude will always result in unquenchable optimism. That is "glorying in tribulations." (Romans 5:3-4) When we rejoice in the God of our salvation, our entire outlook on life becomes optimistic, rather than pessimistic. Optimism draws on inner joy to produce happiness.

Romans 5:11 says, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now

received the atonement." Thus, Christ is the hope within that produces inner joy. Inner joy is the basis for optimism in all things. Through the completion of this process, joy is made complete, and true happiness is possible.



Methods

Ask your students if anything has ever happened to them that robbed them of joy or happiness. Then, ask the following questions about their experience:

- 1.) What robbed them?
- 2.) What is their attitude toward the situation now?
 - 3.) What should their attitude be?

Remind them that the right focus is this: development of the character of Jesus Christ in me. The right focus will always bring back hope and joy.

Taking out the Garbage

Volume 10

Lesson 34



Bible References

Romans 7:14-18, 24-25

1 John 1:9

Colossians 3:9-10

James 1:2-4

Ephesians 6:11-18

Psalms 139:23-24



Theme

Confession and repentance are necessary, in order for us to be cleansed of sin.



Romans 7:14-18; 24-25

14 "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that (it is) good.

17 "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but (how) to perform that which is good I find not."

24 "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."



Memory Verse

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."



Outline

- I. Christians Have to Deal with Two Natures. (Colossians 3:9-10)
- A. The old man.
- B. The new man.
- C. There is a struggle between the two natures. (Romans 7)

II. Taking out the Garbage.

- A. Waste disposal is analogous to confession and repentance.
 - 1. Confession and repentance are necessary, in order to maintain spiritual health.
 - 2. Confession and repentance allow God's forgiveness to cleanse us.
 - 3. Unconfessed sin is a blockade to spiritual growth.

- B. The process of waste disposal is humbling.
 - 1. Confession and repentance necessitate humbling ourselves before God.
 - Confession our sin is acknowledging it and agreeing with God.
- C. We are in a spiritual battle.
 - 1. The enemy takes notice of any move toward God.
 - The enemy will try to use our confession to his advantage.
 - 3. Expect to be attacked with temptation and trials.
- D. The process of confession and forgiveness is strengthening.
 - 1. We become closer to God through the process.
 - God can work through us more effectively.



Spiritual Truths

- As Christians, we must deal with daily sin in our lives.
- There is a struggle between our old, fleshly nature and our new, spiritual nature.
- We must maintain an attitude of humility before God, in order to stay in right relationship with Him.

- Unconfessed sin hinders our communication with God.
- Confession with repentance affords God the opportunity to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Satan will do whatever he can to hinder the process of confession and forgiveness, which brings us closer to the Lord.
- The testing of our faith produces endurance.



When we are born again, God once and for all deals with the legal penalty for our sin. We are delivered from our sin nature, in the sense that we have passed from death unto life and have been justified before God. However, in our daily lives, we still experience the outworking of our old sin nature -- and we will continue to do so, until we die. We will continue to sin. But God has established a remedy for our sins.

Sin includes acts of willful disobedience, as well as sins of omission. It involves making decisions that are contrary to God's law. God has made us in such a way, that we have to make decisions about everything that we do. Even doing nothing is a decision to do something. When we make a poor choice about something, in disobedience to God, it is called "sin."

Sin is a waste product which rots out the spiritual body, if it is not disposed of right away. The longer it remains within us, the more damage it does (e.g, jealousy turns to hatred). Unconfessed sin can destroy our spiritual life. Jesus died on the cross, so that we can ask Him to forgive us of the sin in our lives. Without the cycle of confession and forgiveness, there is no salvation. Without the shed blood of Jesus, there is no forgiveness.

1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confessing our sins to God is a humbling experience. It is agreeing with God that we have been wrong. It is the time when we dispose of all of the garbage that we have taken into our spiritual bodies. Sometimes it is embarrassing to admit our failures; but it is impossible to hide them from God.

When we begin to confess our sin to God and make an attempt to clean up our lives, Satan is alerted. Satan hates it when we begin to clean up our lives, because he has to work overtime to corrupt us again. He does not want us to humble ourselves before God. Satan wants us humbled before him, dying in our sin and worthless to the kingdom of God.

Expect to be attacked when you start to clean up your life. You begin to feel good about yourself, because the weight of all that sin is lifted from your shoulders; and then, Satan moves in for the kill. But the Bible says that we are not powerless in this spiritual battle. In Ephesians 6:10-18, we learn four important things about spiritual warfare.

First, we must always fight spiritual battles in the strength of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:10) Our own strength is not

sufficient for spiritual warfare. But the strength of the Lord is mighty and powerful.

Secondly, we must recognize the nature of our warfare and the nature of our enemy. (Ephesians 6:12) We do not battle with people. Our battle is with Satan and his principalities and powers. We must not become sidetracked from who our enemy really is.

Thirdly, we must put on the armor of God. (Ephesians 6:14-17) Notice that God does not stand us up and dress us in spiritual armor. We are commanded to put the armor on. We are protected from attack by our armor; and we can only use the offensive weapon of the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God), when we choose to pick it up.

Lastly, we must pray. (Ephesians 6:18) Prayer is our most effective weapon. This does not refer to superficial prayers ("Please bless this food, God."). This refers to praying earnestly. That is what "supplication" means. When we realize what an effective weapon prayer is, it will become our first resource, rather than our last.

We can rest assured that the Lord hears us when we pray. He protects us from the fiery darts of the enemy, when we look to Him for strength. As the process of confession makes us whole again, our faith is strengthened and we are ready to face the onslaught of the enemy. Without the regular completion of this process, however, we become weakened in our faith and powerless against the wiles of the devil. When we fail to deal with sin in our lives, we are subject to condemnation and bondage.

The key to victory over the sin in our lives is honesty before God. We must never try to hide or shrug off our sin. We must not try to stop our spiritual ears against the voice of the Holy Spirit. Just as we can become insensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit by failing to acknowledge our sin, so also we can become more sensitive to His voice, each time we respond to His conviction with confession and repentance. As we maintain an attitude of honesty toward God, we will allow Him to search us, so that He can reveal our hidden sin and self-deception to us. (Psalms 139:23-24)

Only God can cleanse us from sin -- and He is ready and willing to do so. Our part is to be willing to take out the garbage.



Methods

Ask your students how many of them have the household chore of carrying out the garbage. Why is it such an unpleasant chore? (Garbage stinks. It attracts maggots and insects and rodents. It is messy and germ-filled.)

Rotting garbage contaminates everything that comes into contact with it. So it is with sin in our lives. It contaminates us -- spiritually, emotionally, and even physically. And it contaminates those around us. Sin stinks. It leads to more uncleanness and more sin.

Emphasize to your students the seriousness of sin -- even a "little" sin. (See 1 Corinthians 5:6.) Encourage your students to repent -- turn around from --

their sin, and confess -- acknowledge -- it to God. And encourage the students to receive and believe the truth of 1 John 1:9

(the Christian "bar of soap"). God forgives us; and He desires to cleanse us of all sin.

The Spiritual Body: Taking Care of It

Volume 10

Lesson 35



1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 15:35-52

James 2:17-20

Hebrews 5:12-14

Philippians 1:6

1 Peter 2:2



Theme

It is important to take care of our physical bodies, but not to the neglect of our spiritual bodies.



1 Corinthians 3:16-17

16 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."



Memory Verse

1 Peter 2:2

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that ye may grow by it."



Outline

I. How Well Do We Care for Our Physical Bodies?

- A. Millions of dollars are spent on clothes, every year.
- B. Millions of dollars are spent on food, every year.
- C. Millions of dollars are spent on cosmetics, every year.
- D. Millions of dollars are spent on exercise and diets, every year.
- E. Millions of dollars are spent on vitamins and drugs, every year.
- F. Millions of dollars are spent on magazines, books, videos, and specialists, in order to find out how to best care for our bodies.

II. What Does the Bible Say about Our Bodies?

- A. Man was created by God in His image, and given rule over the earth.
- B. Our bodies are only temporary houses.
- C. Our physical bodies are compared to our spiritual bodies.
- D. We are to care for our bodies, as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

III. Our Physical Bodies Need Four Things, to Survive.

- A. Our bodies must receive adequate food and water.
- B. Our bodies must receive exercise.
- C. Our bodies need adequate rest.
- D. Our bodies need to receive consistent nourishment and care.

IV. Our Spiritual Bodies Also Need Proper Care, to Maintain Health.

- A. Our spiritual bodies need to be fed the Word of God.
- B. Our spiritual bodies must exercise, through prayer and works.
- C. Our spiritual bodies must receive rest from the Lord.
- D. Our spiritual bodies need to receive consistent care and attention.



Spiritual Truths

- Man is made in the image of God.
- Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit; and they should be cared for diligently, with respect for the Lord.
- The spiritual body is similar to the physical body in many ways; and it should also be cared for properly.
- Just as the physical body can suffer from a lack of nourishment, the spiritual body suffers from a lack of knowledge of God's Word.
- Just as the physical body can atrophy from a lack of exercise, the spiritual body can become weak from not exercising our faith.
- Just as the physical body becomes disoriented from a lack of rest, the spiritual body gets out of balance from failing to rest (trust) in God.
- Our physical bodies are only temporary, but our spirits live forever.



Lesson Material

The physical body is worshipped in our society today. This fact is evidenced by the billions of dollars spent each year on products and services that minister to the physical body. But as believers, our bodies

take on a new significance. They are the temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

We know that the earthly bodies which we now inhabit are only temporary. One day, we will live in a resurrected body like that of Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:35-52) We are to care for and use our physical bodies to serve the Lord while we are here on this earth — similar to a rental car. They are not to be abused, but they are to be used for the glory of God.

Several scriptures draw comparisons between the physical body and the concept of a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:9-20, 9:24-27) One of the general ideas put forth in these passages of scripture is that the physical body is intimately tied to one's spiritual make-up, and that the things done in the physical body have spiritual consequences, whether good or bad. Our bodies are literally the temple of the Holy Spirit; and they should be treated as such.

To further explore the analogous relationship between the physical and spiritual man, it will be useful to examine the ways in which we take care of the physical body. There are primarily four areas of attention to the proper maintenance of the health of the physical body: food and water; exercise; rest; and consistency and balance. Care of the spiritual body is very similar; but, instead of earthly means, our spiritual bodies require the corresponding things in the spirit, in order to maintain health and vitality.

The Word of God, the Bible, is the food which our spiritual bodies need to keep them alive and to help them grow. (1 Peter 2:2) The writer of the book of Hebrews even distinguishes between "baby food" and "adult food," in terms of nourishment

of the spiritually immature and mature individual. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

When an individual first becomes a Christian (born again), he is considered to be a "babe in Christ," in need of the elementary teachings of God. As that individual grows in Christ, "solid food" (higher level teachings) can be used to nourish and strengthen him unto maturity. A lack of knowledge, failing to study the Word of God, leads to spiritual weakness and inhibits growth.

Spiritual "food" can come from many sources: individual study, books and tapes, and the teaching of others at church and through fellowship. All of these sources are potentially good, but nothing can replace the personal study of God's Word. The Holy Spirit speaks directly to us through His Word like a father to his children, or like a friend to another friend. God still speaks to people today through His Word.

Thousands of Christians are spiritually deprived from a lack of spiritual food and growth. Some may even be considered spiritually anorexic. Because they do not want to be perceived as "spiritual" or "religious" by the world, they do not "eat;" therefore, they do not grow, and they begin to waste away. They are essentially of no value to the body of Christ, because of their weakness and lack of desire to grow.

Other Christians are grossly overfed. For a variety of reasons, they gorge themselves with knowledge that will never be used. The knowledge is stored in the form of spiritual "fat," and is never put to use for the glory of God. These individuals are of little value to the body of Christ, because of their complacency and unwillingness to let their knowledge be used to build the church.

Without regular exercise, our muscles become weak. Our spiritual bodies need exercise, too. Making use of the knowledge gained from the study of God's Word, through prayer and the pursuit of holiness, is spiritual exercise. It is absolutely necessary to the maintenance of the Christian. Without regular exercise, the knowledge gained through hearing the Word is rarely put to use. The potential for growth is there, but in a dormant state -- spiritual fat. And faith without works is dead. (James 2:17-20)

Through regular, earnest prayer and the pursuit of holiness, spiritual bodies that have been dormant can be used for the glory of God. Jesus trained a group of twelve disciples, who were subsequently used to spread the gospel to the entire world. The potential of the millions of Christians throughout the world today is just as great, if not greater.

Without rest, the physical body becomes disoriented and confused. The same is true spiritually. As too much exercise can cause "burnout" in the body, too much spiritual exercise (works) can cause "burnout" spiritually.

Sometimes, Christians get too caught up in working for the Lord and forget to let God be God. Instead of waiting on the Lord to use them according to His will and timetable, these eager individuals are forging ahead without the leading of the Holy Spirit. The result is usually disorientation and confusion. Activity is high, but productivity is low. Is that faith?

It is vitally important that we cast all of our cares upon Him and humbly submit to His will, His timing, and His direction. When the time is right, all of our energy can be focused on accomplishing the task at hand -- with the help of the Lord. God is still in control.

A consistent and balanced blend of food, exercise, and rest is necessary to build and maintain a healthy body. It is unrealistic to expect to break the world's record in the 100-meter dash, after overeating for years, with little or no exercise. One cannot go without sleep, and expect to concentrate at work or school. All things must be cone consistently and in moderation, if physical health is to be maximized.

One cannot soak up spiritual truth only three times a week, and expect to do great things for God. No one can starve themselves spiritually, and expect to resist Satan. No one can play God, and expect God to be glorified. Care of the spiritual body must entail consistency and balance in the three areas discussed above.

God has a plan for each of us. If we allow Him to guide and direct our lives, He will see that plan through to completion for His glory:

"Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)



Methods

This lesson can be illustrated easily using pictures of people and products in magazine or catalogs. Advertisements provide numerous examples of the products sold to care for the physical body (e.g., perfume, shampoo, cosmetics, clothing, dietary aids, vitamin supplements, exercise equipment and programs, etc.) Pass out some magazines; and ask the students to try to find examples of ads that do not offer such products!

Pictures of people who differ in physical conditioning are also useful to illustrate exercise, overeating, etc.. Try to find extreme examples of physical conditioning, and also of underconditioning, in magazines or catalogs that you can hold up at the right time.

Challenge your students with the following questions:

- 1. What does your spiritual body look like? What condition is it in?
- 2. What do you need to work on spiritually, in order to get in shape?
- 3. Is your physical body in better shape than your spiritual body?
- 4. How will you go about getting into shape, spiritually speaking?

Obedience: Doing the Do's

Volume 10

Lesson 36



Bible References

Deuteronomy 5:1-21

Ephesians 2:8-9

Psalms 19:9

Proverbs 10:27

Matthew 22:37-40; 23:27

Galatians 5:16, 22-23

2 Timothy 2:15

1 John 4:7-8



Scripture Reading

Matthew 22:37-40

37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 "This is the first and great commandment.

39 "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."



Theme

Concentrating on doing what God wants us to do is the best way to avoid doing what He does not want us to do.



Memory Verse

1 John 4:7-8

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."



Outline

- I. Laws Governing Behavior Are Necessary.
- A. Laws protect individuals from the irresponsible actions of others.
- B. Laws protect the innocent from the harmful behavior of others.
- II. Salvation Is Not Based on Obedience to Rules Alone.
- A. Salvation is the gracious, free gift of God, through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.
- B. Legalism often drives individuals away from God.
- C. The fear of God should drive individuals toward God, instead of away from Him.
- III. Concentrating on Doing What God Wants Us to Do Is the Best Way to Avoid Doing What He Does Not Want Us to Do.
- A. If you walk in the Spirit, you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)
- B. There is no law against demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

C. When we love God and our neighbor, we will fulfill all of the commandments.



Spiritual Truths

- Rules that govern behavior were given by God for man's own good.
- The rebellious heart of man has made it necessary for rules to be imposed.
- Salvation is not based on obedience to a list of rules alone.
- Salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ.
- No man can earn salvation by adhering to any list of rules, or by performing good works.
- The fear of God should be something that drives man to Him for help, instead of away from Him, out of the fear of punishment.
- Concentrating on doing what God wants us to do is the best way to avoid doing what He does not want us to do.
- If you walk in the Spirit, you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.
- If you are able to love God and your neighbor as yourself, you have fulfilled the whole law.
- He that loves, knows God, because God is love.



Lesson Material

It is very important to have rules to govern the behavior of people. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments for the protection of every person. He knew that the sinful heart of man would make such rules necessary. The reasons are easy enough to understand.

Most people are dangerous to themselves and others, unless guidelines are established that keep them from being destructive. If there were no laws against theft or murder, for example, the world would be a much more dangerous place in which to live. Even with these rules, the incidence of theft, murder, and other atrocities are reaching epidemic proportions in many parts of the world.

Some people are ignorant of their need for rules. Children, for example, do not always possess the knowledge and experience necessary to keep them from harming themselves. Anyone who is ignorant of the potential danger of any behavior needs to have some kind of protection or warning.

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments for our protection. Without some rules, man would have destroyed himself long ago. Because of ignorance to the natural laws of cause and effect, man may not have ever known what went wrong. God warns us to avoid sexual immorality, knowing of the consequences of such behavior (e.g., disease), and not to keep man from enjoying life. The prevalence of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is the result of ignoring God's warnings about

such behavior. Disease is not the punishment of God for disobedience; it is merely the consequence of the behavior.

Being a Christian does not simply require strict obedience to a list of "Do's and Do Not's;" it is much, much more. Salvation is based upon the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross. No one can earn their way into heaven by their good deeds. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Unfortunately, parents, teachers, and counselors often force lists of rules on their children that only tell them what they cannot do. It is the lists of "do not's" that often drive them away from God and away from authority figures, such as their parents and teachers. God is seen as a policeman, who is ready to punish them for making a mistake. Instead of looking at God as someone Who loves them, they perceive Him as a mean, old man that will strike them dead, if a mistake is made. It is the goodness of God that leads men to salvation, and not His wrath. (Romans 2:4)

Although God desires obedience to His Word, one's salvation is not based on strict adherence to any list of rules. Salvation is based upon faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Salvation based on works is contrary to the teachings of the Bible; and it can result in legalistic, performance-based behavior. Instead of obedience that arises out of love for God, obedience is based on the fear of punishment.

Are we supposed to be afraid of God? The answer is yes, of course, for only a fool has no fear in his heart of God. But, the fear of God is not the kind of fear that makes you want to run away; it is the kind of fear that makes you want to run to Him. (Psalms 19:9; Proverbs 10:27) It is

reverential respect -- the recognition of Who He is.

When someone is in the act of breaking the law, the most dreadful thing that could happen would be for a police officer to discover them. The natural inclination in this situation is to run away. When you are wrong and you know it, you want to escape the consequences of your behavior. Conversely, when someone is in danger from the criminal behavior of someone else, the protection of the police is usually sought. The same is often true of one's relationship with God. It usually is not until one recognizes their need for God, that He is actually sought after. Prior to recognizing that need, God is perceived as something other than a God Who is genuinely concerned for the wellbeing of man. Additionally, we fail to realize that we need Him all of the time. and not just when things are not going the way we would like. To be factual, if His hand suddenly lifted off of your life, you would instantly die. Life does not exist outside of God -- He supports it all.

For some reason, we spend most of our time running away from God, because we think He is going to punish us for breaking the rules. Instead, we should spend our time seeking after Him -- to keep us out of trouble, so that we do not have to fear the consequences of our actions. God will never lead us into sin (James 1:13); but He will always lead us out of it.

If you would simply put all of your energy into loving God and seeking to please Him in all that you do, you will never have to worry about breaking the rest of the rules -- you will not have time. (Matthew 22:37-40)

The Pharisees added over 600 rules to the original law of Moses, in order to ensure their holiness. Jesus said that they were like whitewashed tombs that looked good on the outside, but were full of dead men's bones and uncleanness on the inside. (Matthew 23:27) All they had to do was to follow the commandments to love God and their neighbor; and the rest would have fallen into place. Our love for God and for one another is the proof of our new birth. (1 John 4:7-8)

If you really love God, you will not let anything come in between you and Him; you will not worship any other gods; you will be obedient to your parents; and you will do all of the other "do's" in His Word.

If you really love your neighbor, you will not kill him; you will not desire to have his wife; you will not want what he has; you will not lie to him; and you will not steal from him.

The principle is easy to understand, but it is apparently ignored by most of the world. If you do the "do's," you will not have time to do the "do not's." The following "do," for example, should be sufficient to keep any Christian busy for his entire life:

2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."



Methods

Ask your students to write down the rules they dislike the most at school, home, or work. Then, ask them to try to come up with reasons why someone

might have made the rule. Who is it protecting? Why is it important? What could they do, in order to avoid conflict with the rule?

Challenge them to look at rules as another way to serve God, through obedience to authority, rather than as a restriction of their freedom.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Volume 10

Lesson 37



Titus 2:12-13

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Matthew 24:36-44

Genesis 6:5-8; 7:15-16

Romans 14:10-12

Hebrews 9:27-28

2 Corinthians 5:10

1 Corinthians 3:9-15

2 Timothy 4:8

Revelation 22:7, 12



Theme

Christians will all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, at which rewards will be given based on our works, whether good or bad.



Matthew 24:36-39

- 36 "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.
- 37 "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- 38 "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,
- 39 "And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."



Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 5:10

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."



Outline

I. The Rapture of the Church Will Take the World by Surprise.

- A. Jesus is coming at an unknown hour.
- B. His coming will be similar to the coming of the flood of Noah.
 - 1. There was no warning, except what was preached to them.
 - 2. The earth had become exceedingly wicked.
 - 3. Noah and his family entered into the ark before the flood.
 - 4. It took those on the earth by surprise.
 - 5. There was only one way to be saved.
- C. Only those awaiting the return of Jesus will be prepared to meet Him and the awaiting judgment.

II. Everyone Will Stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- A. Everyone will give an account of everything they did on earth.
- B. Everyone will be rewarded according to their works.
 - 1. Some will receive a great reward.
 - 2. Some will receive a small reward.
 - 3. Some will receive no reward.

III. Salvation Is Not the Issue, at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- A. Only Christians will appear at this judgment.
- B. We are saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works.
- C. Our works will only determine our eternal reward.



Spiritual Truths

- The grace of God has brought salvation within the reach of all men.
- Not everyone will choose the salvation provided for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The second coming of Jesus Christ will take the unbelieving world by surprise, just as the flood of Noah took the world by surprise.
- The condition of the world just prior to second coming of Jesus Christ will be

very similar to the condition of the world just prior to the flood of Noah.

- Those who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ will perish, just as those who refused to believe that God would send a flood perished.
- Believers in Christ will appear before Him in judgment one day.
- Every believer will be judged according to his works; and a reward will be given on that basis.
- Salvation will not be the issue at the Judgment Seat of Christ, because salvation has already been provided to the believers in Christ.
- We are saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works.



Lesson Material

Every believer should be prepared for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ at all times, as though He was coming today, because He could return at any moment. Titus 2:11-14 instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, that we may live in readiness for the coming of Christ. No man knows the day, or the hour of His coming. (Matthew 24:36-39) the rapture of the church precedes the Lord's second coming, when He will set up His earthly kingdom.

The coming of Jesus Christ, and the conditions in the world at the time of His coming, are foreshadowed in the days

preceding the flood of Noah. The people of Noah's day ignored the warnings concerning the impending flood; and they were living as they had always lived, in willful disobedience to God. (Genesis 6:5-8) With the exception of Noah, they refused to believe what God had said; and they were content to live in willful ignorance of the coming judgment upon the earth. Their lives had become exceedingly evil. so much so that God found it necessary to destroy them all. The description in Genesis 6 of the condition of man is not unlike that of the modern world in which we live. The mind of man is intent on satisfying the desires of the flesh, instead of the things of the Spirit.

Only those who know that His coming is near, and who live in obedience to His Word, will be prepared to meet Jesus when He comes again to receive the church to Himself in the rapture, as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. Noah and his family entered into the ark before the flood, just as the believers in Christ will enter into heaven before the tribulation period. (Matthew 24:4-28) The ark is symbolic of Christ, in that it was used to preserve the righteous through a time of judgment upon the earth. When the believers in Christ are ushered into the presence of the Lord, the judgment of the earth will not be far behind. Notice also in Genesis 7:15-16 that God closed the only entrance into the ark. Just as there was only one way into the ark, there is only one way into heaven, through faith in Jesus Christ. (John 14:16)

The flood of Noah took the world by surprise because of their unbelief. (Matthew 24:36-39) Families were forever separated; and the entire world was in a state of chaos, until after the flood. Only those who knew that the flood was coming were ready. In the same way,

the second coming of Jesus Christ will take the world by surprise, because of unbelief. Only those who are ready will be prepared to meet Him.

The time is coming when every believer in Christ will stand before God to be judged according to their works. (Romans 14:10-12; Hebrews 9:27-28; 2 Corinthians 5:10) Our salvation will not be in question, because only Christians will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, to give an account of their lives. A reward will be given according to all of the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad.

Jesus Christ is the Foundation, the Cornerstone, of every believer's life. All that we do with our lives is built upon that foundation. (1 Corinthians 3:9-15) The quality of that which we build upon Him will be tested with fire; and whatever remains will be the basis for our reward. Some will receive a great reward. Some will receive a small reward. Some will receive no reward at all, because they were unfaithful to their callings. Regardless of the reward, however, all will be saved because of the work of Jesus Christ.

It is important that we live our lives in such a way that God will be glorified in all that we do. The way in which we spend our time builds upon the Foundation of Jesus Christ; and it will be the basis for the future judgment. This is why Paul urged us in Titus 2:12-13 to lay aside all ungodliness and live righteously, looking always for the appearing of the Lord. Nothing else matters! The crown of righteousness is for those who love His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8) Jesus is the One

Who will award every one of us, according to our works. (Revelation 22:7, 12)



Methods

This lesson can be effectively illustrated by setting up a mock judgment seat of Christ. Prepare profiles of the lives of three or four students, who lived very different lifestyles. Have each student stand or kneel before a throne, where you are seated. Give them their life profiles; and require them to read them aloud.

Following the reading of the profiles, issue a reward to each of them, based upon their works; and allow them to enter into heaven.

You might also consider sending one of the students to "hell," on the other side of the room. Although salvation is not the issue of this judgment, you might explain that there will be another judgment, the Great White Throne Judgment, at which the eternal destiny of the rest of the world will be determined. (Revelation 20:11-15)

To make the presentation more effective, use costumes, and decorate the classroom as a throne room. Designate one side of the room as "heaven" and the other as "hell." Prepare rewards that vary in size or value.

Growing Up

Volume 10

Lesson 38



Bible References

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Galatians 5:1; 6:7-9

Ephesians 6:1-4



Theme

Growing up is a time in life, during which it is expedient to be obedient to parents and to God.



Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

1 "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven:

- 2 "A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
- 3 "A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- 4 "A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- 5 "A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 "A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- 7 "A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- 8 "A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."



Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:1

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."



Outline

I. Growing Up Is Difficult.

- A. Total dependency on the mother ends at birth.
- B. As a child grows, he becomes more independent.
 - 1. The parent's desire to nurture remains strong.
 - 2. The child's desire for independence becomes stronger.

II. The Principle of Sowing and Reaping Is at Work During Childhood.

- A. Children with no rules become unruly.
- B. Children with no freedom are prevented from learning.

III. Learning to Live with and without Others Is Vital to Maturity.

- A. It is important to learn to maintain relationships with those in authority.
- B. It is important to learn how to handle authority over others.

IV. There Is an Appointed Time for Everything We Experience.

- A. When the time is right, the results will be good.
- B. When the time is wrong, the results will undesirable.
- C. Seek God's will, in every decision to be made.



Spiritual Truths

- Growing up is a time for learning.
- Parents and teachers have the responsibility to help their children become mature adults.
- When parents become too zealous with their authority, children rebel.
- When parents become too lax with their authority, children rebel.
- Given the opportunity, children will make mistakes.
- Children can be taught to learn from their mistakes.
- God uses our mistakes to teach us and prepare us for His purposes.

Growing Up



Lesson Material

The most difficult thing about growing up is growing up. The process is an uphill battle from the beginning. Children must learn to become adults in a relatively short period of time. Parents must learn to allow their children to become adults, during the same period of time.

While a baby is developing within the mother's womb, he is completely dependent upon that mother for his life. If mother eats, baby eats. If mother drinks, baby drinks. If mother breathes, baby breathes. When the baby is finally born, he is no longer completely dependent upon the mother for his life. When the umbilical cord is cut, the baby must begin to breathe on his own, or die. He must continue to breathe on his own for the rest of his life. He must learn to eat, or he will die.

The older the child becomes, the more independent he must become. The more independent he becomes, the more his parents struggle to protect him from the harsher realities of life. Hence, the conflict between parents and their children. Most of the problems children experience at home are the result of the child's desire to exercise his independence conflicting with the parents' need to protect their child.

Children need to grow up, so that they can function one day as a mature adult. Parents need to provide protection, because children do not always make wise choices. The principle of sowing and reaping is at work while children are growing up. (Galatians 6:7-9) Parents reap the fruit of the decisions that they make

regarding their children. Children reap the fruit of their reactions to the authority of their parents. Both parties learn a great deal from the experience. Hopefully, mistakes will not be repeated, and wise choices will be made consistently in the future.

Galatians 5:1 "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Every child needs to have the freedom to make the mistakes that will teach him about the world he lives in. Children need to learn that falling down is a consequence of walking improperly. (Galatians 5:1) Children need to learn that people are not always loving and kind. Children need to learn that God loves them, just as much as He loves mom and dad.

Children who grow up in an environment characterized by complete domination never learn to think for themselves, because someone in authority is doing all of the thinking for them. They rarely have the opportunity to experience independence from their parents. Instead of being given the freedom to submit to authority with respect, freedom of choice is removed and voluntary respect for authority is diminished. When the time comes to take responsibility for themselves to function as adults, the difficult task is complicated by an extreme lack of maturity and disdain for authority.

Children who grow up with total freedom have difficulty adjusting to adult life, as well. Because no one took the time to care for them, they have difficulty caring for anyone else but themselves. They tend to have little respect for authority, because it is not understood. The lives of these individuals are

concerned primarily with preservation of the self. Responsibility for others is a lower priority.

A compromise between the two extremes is needed. A structured environment is needed that will maximize freedom within reasonably-prescribed boundaries. It is important to recognize the need of maturing young people for authority, as well as their need for freedom. Submission to authority will minimize your chances of making harmful mistakes. Freedom to submit to authority will make it easier for you to work within its boundaries.

Young people should learn how to maintain relationships with authority figures, such as parents, employers, and teachers. Take advantage of the knowledge that they have accumulated throughout their lives. Learn from their mistakes. Learn from their wise choices.

Young people should also learn how to handle authority. Take advantage of opportunities to supervise activities at home, work, and school. Experience the rewards and frustrations of being responsible for someone other than yourself. Learn as much as possible about managing authority.

Remember, there is a time for everything. Growing up is an ideal time to learn as much as possible about life. Whatever is not learned during childhood must be learned later, but the experience is usually more difficult. God, in His infinite wisdom, has given this universe order. In His wisdom, He has set aside a time and a place for everything.

Babies learn to walk, before they can run. Children learn to talk, before they can read. Students learn discipline at home and in the classroom, before they can exercise it at work. Teenagers learn to live with their families, before they can live without them. Young men learn to work and become leaders, before they become responsible husbands and fathers. Young women learn to care for their families and other children, before they become wives and mothers.

Most young people are not ready to function in the adult world -- and they know it. There are a lot of attractive things about being "grown up;" but there are a lot of ugly things that they are not ready to handle.

God has given you parents and teachers to help you to grow into mature adults. Rebelling against them only demonstrates that you are still very immature. Disobedience is a sign of your inability to submit to authority. Rebellion and disobedience are both indicators of a lack of submission to God, Who desires to guide and direct your life.

God's promise to the obedient is a good long life, not to mention the rewards that result from voluntary submission. (Ephesians 6:1-4) Obedient children tend to be given more liberty. Obedient students tend to do better in school. Obedient employees tend to have more successful careers. Obedient children of God tend to have a better relationship with Him.



Methods

Use the following questions for discussion:

Which of these styles of leadership at home or school would make you the most happy?

- 1. Total freedom: no rules, no responsibility, no authority.
- 2. Total domination: no freedom, no voice, no choice.
- 3. Total trust: understanding, communication, love.

What is wrong with number one? Number two?

What is appealing about number three? Why does it seem so rare?

What should be your attitude if you find yourself living under number one? Number two? Number three?

Discussion: If you find yourself living in an environment in which there is total freedom, it will be important for you to learn to discipline yourself. Because no one is providing you with a structured environment in which discipline can be acquired, you will have to structure your life on your own. Get a job. Join a club. Participate in organized athletics. Do things that will provide discipline and structure.

If you find yourself living in an environment in which there is no freedom, it will be important for you to be patient and learn to be submissive. Rebellion against the status quo may only exacerbate the situation. Submission to the system may lead to more freedom later. You may also have to learn to discipline yourself, because no one is allowing you to experience the need for discipline that comes with freedom.

If you find yourself living in an environment of complete understanding and trust, be thankful! Take advantage of your freedom to exercise self-discipline. Learn as much as you can about life, both as a leader and as a follower. Continue to submit to your authority figures; and learn from their example. You must continue to earn the trust you have, by being submissive and demonstrating maturity.

Become as Little Children

Volume 10

Lesson 39



Bible References

Psalms 51:9-12

Matthew 18:3-4

2 Corinthians 5:15, 17

Romans 8:11

Philippians 1:6

Hebrews 11:8



Scripture Reading

Psalms 51:9-12

9 "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

11 "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

12 "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a free spirit."



Theme

It is necessary for our spiritual growth to recognize that we are in need of instruction from the Lord.



Matthew 18:3

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."



Outline

I. Innocence Maintains Purity.

- A. The innocent goodness of children is responsible for their purity of heart.
- B. Sin robs us of the innocence that maintains purity.
- C. Regular fellowship with God can restore purity, where sin caused corruption.

II. If Any Man Is in Christ, He Is a New Creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- A. Children are thrilled by the simpler things in life.
- B. Simple things quickly lose their capacity to stimulate.
- C. Boredom with the Christian life often results from a lack of commitment.
- D. The same power the raised Jesus from the dead can restore wonder and excitement to the Christian life.

III. If God Begins a Work, He Will Complete It.

- A. Where God guides, God provides.
- B. Satan seeks to destroy dreams and goals.

C. Surrender to Christ guarantees the completion of His plan for your life.



Spiritual Truths

- Sin robs us of the innocence that makes it easier to maintain a pure heart.
- Regular fellowship with the Lord can restore purity of heart, as sins are forgiven and cleansing is received.
- If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation, no longer in bondage to the former things of the flesh.
- Whoever humbles himself as a little child will be great in the kingdom of heaven.
- Boredom with the Christian walk is often the result of a lack of commitment and fellowship with God.
- The Holy Spirit can restore excitement in the Lord, if He is given room to work in one's life.
- When God begins a good work, He will complete it, even though the task seems impossible.



Lesson Material

We live in a world that tends to force children to face the complexities of adulthood, long before they are ready. Teenage girls become mothers, before they are ready to raise a family. Young people leave their parents, in order to live in a world that will exploit and abuse them in ways that children should never have to hear about, let alone experience. Thousands of teenagers take their own lives, because they cannot handle the reality of life in the modern world. Millions have turned to drugs and alcohol, in order to help them alleviate or cope with the pressures of the world in which they live.

Regardless of the life one is forced to live, whether it is perceived as good or bad, we lose the precious traits that characterize all children. Yet, Jesus said that it was those childlike qualities that make it possible for a man to humble himself before the God of the universe.

Sin robs us of innocence and purity of heart. Nowhere is this more evident that in the life of a child. Children say and do things that adults would never do, because it might be considered inappropriate, or even rude in some instances. Because most adults lack innocence, that which the child believes to be pure may not be considered pure by an adult. To the pure, all things are pure. (Titus 1:15) Somewhere, in the transition into adulthood, innocence concerning the things around us is lost.

Jesus desires to make us as pure as little children. That is the purpose of the cross. He died on the cross, so that we could again be pure. There is not a single person who does not deserve the punishment of God every day; but, He died in our place, so that we could live.

Our sin nature expresses its loss of innocence in the things that we do. If you

begin to examine those things, you begin to realize that most of those things are what God calls "sin." They function as a blockage that keeps you from having the kind of communication with God that keeps you pure, and that keeps you from losing the innocence that only children seem to possess.

As you examine yourself, you can surely put your finger on something in your life that is a corrupting influence. It is a barrier that keeps you from giving your life completely to Jesus Christ. It is what is keeping you from experiencing the joy of salvation that was yours, when you first asked Jesus into your heart.

Restoring fellowship with God is the key to getting that innocence back. By simply asking Jesus to forgive you of those things, He will be faithful to restore to you the innocence that was there when you first fell in love with Him. As you read the Word, He will speak to you. As you pray, you can speak to Him. The more you fellowship with Him, the more you will regain the joy of your salvation.

Children are thrilled by the simple things in life. Nature, newspaper, garbage cans, and spoons are among the commonplace things that can occupy a child indefinitely. It is not long, though, before the simple things that once held the child's attention lose their ability to stimulate wonder and excitement.

The same is true of the Christian walk. Between the high points that might take place during a revival or other deep spiritual experience, there is often a period of relative boredom with the things of God. It is during low periods, such as these, that the things of the world become exceedingly more attractive.

The problem, however, is not that God has become boring. The problem is that your level of commitment to serve the Lord has decreased, relative to a previous level. When an individual surrenders his life to Iesus Christ and is filled with the Holy Spirit, there is a sense of excitement that compares to nothing in the world. The hope within, Jesus Christ, is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20) But when other things are allowed to take the place of that hope, the sense of wonder and excitement soon disappears. In its place is the emptiness of a life without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. He is still there, but He will never force Himself on anyone.

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work within every believer, to accomplish that which God has willed. (Romans 8:11) All that is needed is an honest effort to put God first in all things, so that His will can be accomplished. Nothing the world has to offer will be more exciting or more fulfilling than living life in surrender to Jesus Christ.

All children have dreams about becoming someone important, or doing something spectacular. They believe in their dreams, because nobody has yet told them that their dreams cannot be fulfilled. Nothing is more tragic than when dreams are crushed. Everyone has been inspired at some point with a vision of something great that God could do through you -- an idea for ministry to a needy group of people somewhere, or some other great thing that could be accomplished for God. Then, someone tells you that your idea is unrealistic; that it cannot be done; that you will not be happy. Suddenly, the dream dies. But God has promised to finish the marvelous work that He has begun in us. (Philippians 1:6)

True happiness and true fulfillment will never be found in the things of the world. True satisfaction can only be found when you have given your life completely to Jesus Christ, until the dream He has implanted in you is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 5:15) He sows dreams; but Satan tries to dig them up, before they can be harvested. Do not let it happen. Hold on to the dream, even as Abraham held on by faith, until his faith became sight. (Hebrews 11:8)

If you allow sin to rob you of your innocence, and the world to rob you of your zeal for God, and Satan to rob you of your dreams, you will have lost those things that make a child a child. You will have missed God's will for your life. Give your life over to God completely. You will not be disappointed. He will'renew, restore and uphold you. (Psalms 51:10-12)



Methods

Give each student piece of paper and something to write with. Ask them to write down the following information:

- 1. Write down anything that may be in your life that you know is wrong, such as unconfessed or secret sin, or recurrent, habitual sin. It may be an attitude toward something or someone.
- 2. Write down anything that might be taking the place of God in their life, such as television, sports, money, music, or a relationship -- anything that is more important to you than spending time with God.

3. Write down dreams that you have had of your future -- things that you might have been inspired at one time to do, but have forgotten about, or thought were impossible. Even if they seem ridiculous, write them down.

At the bottom of the page, have them write out Philippians 1:6. Challenge them to take the paper home and hang it up in

their room on a mirror or on the wall, where they will always see it. Make a copy to take to school with them. Make a copy for a friend who will be faithful to hold them accountable to stay on track.

Finally, challenge them to pray about each item every day -- that God will accomplish His will in their life, no matter what it might cost.

Submission to Authority

Volume 10

Lesson 40



Bible References

Matthew 5:17-19; 22:37-40

John 14:15

James 2:10-11

Ephesians 6:1-4

Luke 6:35



Theme

Obedience requires voluntary submission to the one in authority.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 22:37-40

- 37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
- 38 "This is the first and great commandment.
- 39 "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- 40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."



Memory Verse

John 14:15

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."



Outline

- I. God Gave the Ten Commandments to Moses.
- A. Jesus was the fulfillment of the law, and not the end of it.
- B. If we love God, we will keep His commandments.
- C. Jesus was the only One ever to live without breaking any of God's commandments.
- D. Breaking one commandment constitutes violation of the entire law, because the individual becomes a lawbreaker.

II. The Greatest Commandments.

- A. Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and soul, and mind.
- B. Love your neighbor as yourself.
- C. If you keep these two commandments, you will not violate any of the others.
- D. Putting the *agape* love of God into practice will keep one from disobedience to God's commandments.

- III. In Every Walk of Life, Someone Must Lead, and Someone Must Follow.
- A. Mutual submission is the godly principle governing leading and following.
 - 1. Leaders submit to God.
 - 2. Followers submit to leaders.
 - 3. Leaders submit to followers.
- B. Refusal to submit violates the principle of mutual submission; and the reward is lost.



Spiritual Truths

- Rules that govern behavior were given by God for man's own good.
- Jesus was the fulfillment of the law, and not the end of it.
- If we love God, we will keep His commandments.
- If you are able to love God and your neighbor as yourself, you have fulfilled the whole law.
- To love God and others is to practice agape love.
- If a leader is submitted to God, and a follower is submitted to the leader, both are in obedience to God's authority.
- He that loves, knows God, because God is love.



Lesson Material

It is very important to have rules governing the behavior of people. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments for the protection of every person. Some have been falsely teaching that Jesus came to deliver us from the law; therefore, we are free from any obligation to it. But Jesus came to fulfill the law. (Matthew 5:17-19)

Jesus Christ was the only Man ever to live without violating the law of God, as given to Moses. All others are guilty of breaking at least one of the Ten Commandments; thus, all are guilty of the whole law, because they have become a lawbreaker. (James 2:10-11)

Loving God completely and loving our neighbor as ourselves constitutes obedience to the entire law. (Matthew 22:37-40) The concept was further clarified by Paul, when he stated, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10) The principle is simple: If you love God, you will be obedient to all of His commandments. Furthermore, if you love your neighbor as yourself, you will not kill him, steal from him, lie to him, commit adultery with his wife, or be disobedient to your parents. True love does no wrong to others.

Love requires submission to the needs of others, as a servant would submit to his master. Submission is voluntary; and it is in obedience to God. Love that serves and obeys is agape love, the love of God. The Greek word agapeo is used throughout the New Testament to describe this love. In

Luke 6:35, we are even commanded to agape our enemies.

Agape love produces obedience to those in authority, whether they are parents, employers, teachers, or the government. The obedience is not only to the authority figure, but ultimately to God, Who gave them authority.

The principle of mutual submission is at work in the dynamic relationship that exists between parents and their children. (Ephesians 6:1-4) Children who have learned to love as Jesus loved, and gave Himself up for us, are not disobedient to their parents. Parents who have learned to love do not provoke their children to anger. When parents are obedient to God. they create an atmosphere of submission to His will. In this atmosphere, children are more apt to be obedient to parents who treat them with love and respect. When children are obedient, parents are more likely to submit to the legitimate desires of the children.

In every walk of life, someone must lead and someone must follow. Great leaders have learned the principle of mutual submission well. Great leaders are loved and respected by those under their authority, because of their love and respect for their followers. The principle is as follows: The leader must first submit to God. The follower must submit to the leader. When the follower submits to the leader, the leader is freed to submit to the follower. If the follower is rebellious, the leader cannot submit, for the follower's own good.



Methods

Ask your students to share experiences when they were disobedient. Encourage them to share the consequences of their disobedience, as well as probable

consequences of obedience, had they chosen that route.

Challenge them to practice obedience to parents, teachers, and the government, as if they were obeying the voice of God. Remind them that God gave power to those in authority; and obedience to them is the same as obedience to Him.

The Breath of God

Volume 10

Lesson 41



Bible References

Genesis 1:1; 2:7

John 20:21-22

James 1:18-22; 5:24

Romans 6:23; 10:17; 12:2

Psalms 119:11

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Corinthians 4:16

Hebrews 4:12



Theme

The breath of God brought physical life to man; the Holy Spirit brings life to man's spirit; the Word of God sustains both.



Scripture Reading

James 1:18-22

18 "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."



Memory Verse

Psalms 119:11

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."



Outline

I. The Breath of God Produces Life.

- A. God breathed life into Adam.
- B. Man became a living soul.
- C. Man disobeyed God and brought death into the world.

II. Jesus Imparted the Holy Spirit to the Disciples.

- A. The Holy Spirit was implanted within them.
- B. The imparting of the Holy Spirit brought new life to their spirits.

III. The Word of God Produces Faith.

- A. The implanted Word produces saving faith.
- B. The implanted Word empowers man to resist sin.
- C. The implanted Word brings and sustains life.



Spiritual Truths

- The breath of God brought life to the physical body of man.
- Continuing to breathe sustains physical life.
- The sin of Adam brought death into the world.
- Every man has sinned and will die physically because of sin.
- Jesus imparted the Holy Spirit unto His disciples.
- The imparting of the Holy Spirit brings eternal life through Jesus, Who died for our sins and was raised from the dead, in victory over death and hell.
- Continuing to receive the engrafted Word of God sustains man spiritually, and empowers him to resist sin by the renewing of the mind.



Lesson Material

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." Then, in Genesis 2:7, we read: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The word, "breathed" is naphach (Hebrew). It means "to puff" -- literally, "to

inflate; blow hard." The word, "breath" is the Hebrew *neshamah*. It means "breath, which brought life and also sustained life."

Life was imparted unto man by the neshamah of God (the breath of God). Continuing to breathe is necessary, if life is to be sustained. When breathing ceases, life ceases shortly thereafter.

After Adam and Eve had disobeyed God by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God pronounced this judgment on their sin: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou (art), and unto dust shalt thou return." (Genesis 3:19)

It is interesting to note that the name "Adam" comes from the Hebrew word adamah, which means "soil." God breathed life into a pile of soil that He had formed into the likeness of man. His breath brought life to Adam; and the withdrawal of that life sent him back to the dust. The wages of his sin, and the sin of every man, is death. (Romans 6:23) There is no way to escape the inevitability of death. It is the destiny of every man.

In John 20:21-22, we read, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace {be} unto you: as {my} Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on {them}, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:"

The word, "breathed" is emphusao (Greek). It means "to breathe on." Then, in James 1:21, a similar word is used for "engrafted." It is emphutos, meaning "implanted; engrafted;" and phuo -- "to inflate, in the sense of germination; growth; sprout; or, to spring up."

When Jesus breathed (emphusao) on His disciples, the Holy Spirit was implanted/engrafted (emphutos) into them, as if a seed were being planted. The Holy Spirit became a permanent part of their innermost being; and they were never to be the same again.

Illustration: It is possible to graft together two different trees, such as an orange tree and a grapefruit tree. If the grafting is successful, the tree will produce oranges and grapefruits. The natural function of the tree is changed forever; and its fruit is evidence of the change.

When an unbeliever receives the gospel of Jesus Christ, that individual receives the Holy Spirit; and he is never the same again. He inherits eternal life. His spiritually dead condition becomes one of spiritual life. (Ephesians 2:1) The necessary condition is reception of the gospel — the Word of God.

Every believer in Christ is born again, because he heard and received the Word of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ. (James 1:18) The Word of God is engrafted into the believer; and the Holy Spirit begins to reside within. Had the Word not been heard, it would not have been received; and salvation would not have taken place. This is why Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Anything we do can act as an obstruction that keeps us from hearing the Word of God and receiving it in such a way that it becomes part of us, bringing and sustaining life. Sin separates us from a holy God. Jesus Christ bridged the gap between sinful man and God. Receiving that truth produces saving faith. Continuing to receive the Word of God through study of the Bible empowers us to

resist temptation, keeping us from sin. (Psalms 119:11)

Out of chaos (Genesis 1:2), God brought order to the earth and breathed life into man. Out of chaos, God brings order into the life of every believer, by breathing into him (imparting) the Holy Spirit. The spiritually dead condition becomes one of eternal spiritual life, through Jesus Christ. There is no other way but through receiving Jesus Christ as one's personal savior. (John 14:6) At that moment, the Holy Spirit becomes a permanent (engrafted) part of that individual, to comfort, teach, guide, and direct.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The word for "inspired" is theopneustos -- "divinely breathed in; God-breathed." It is from two Greek words: theos (God) and pneuma (breath).

In the physical body, life is given initially by breathing in, and life is sustained thereafter by continually breathing in. In the spiritual, the Word of God saves us first, and then keeps us going, as we continue to take in (breathe) His Word.

Our minds can be renewed by washing it with the Word of God. As we are being renewed in our minds by the Word, we are transformed; and we naturally act out the will of God in our lives. There is no guessing involved. Day by day, we follow Him; and we let Him lead us, according to His will Our will becomes His will.

If we allow anything to prevent us from receiving the Word of God, spiritual decay begins to take effect; and soon, we are out of the will of God. Life is given initially by breathing in (receiving); and life is sustained thereafter by continuing to breathe (receiving).

The Word of God is alive. (Hebrews 4:12) Read the words of God; and let Him breathe life into you, sustain you, and show you His will for your life.



Methods

This lesson can be easily illustrated by asking your students to hold their breath, for as long as possible. You might have a contest to see who can hold their breath for the longest period of time. Relate the intense desire to breathe to the spiritually deprived condition.

You may also illustrate the leading of God by blindfolding someone and leading them by the hand through an obstacle course set up in your classroom. At the end of the course, ask them to jump from a table or chair, trusting you to keep them from falling. Relate the obstacle course to life, the blindfold to man's fallen condition, and the need for guidance from God Himself every step of the way.

Enoch: Walking with God

Volume 10

Lesson 42



Bible References

Genesis 5:21-24

Hebrews 11:5-6

Amos 3:3

1 John 1:6-7

Galatians 5:16-17

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Revelation 3:3-5



Scripture Reading

Genesis 5:21-24

- 21 "And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah.
- 22 "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:
- 23 "And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:
- 24 "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."



Theme

Maintaining a consistent walk with God is the best way to be prepared for the coming of the Lord.



Galatians 5:16

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."



Outline

I. Enoch Walked with God.

- A. Enoch began walking with God, after Methuselah was born.
- B. Enoch walked with God for 300 years, after Methuselah was born.

II. Walking with God Requires Reconciliation.

- A. Light has no communion with darkness.
- B. Enoch had to become more like God.
- C. Sin causes separation, but obedience leads to reconciliation.

III. Walking with God requires Consistency.

- A. Consistency facilitates growth.
- B. Growth prevents stagnation.

IV. Enoch Is a Type of the Church.

- A. Enoch was first reconciled with God.
- B. Enoch began to walk with God.
- C. Enoch was translated, before judgment fell upon the earth.



Spiritual Truths

- Fellowship with God requires reconciliation with God.
- Light has no fellowship with darkness.
- Maintaining a consistent walk with God requires regular communication with Him, through prayer and the study of His Word.
- Intense encounters with the Lord often begin the relationship anew; but it is maintained through consistent fellowship with Him.
- Enoch walked with God for 300 years, before he was taken by God.
- Walking by the Spirit of God prevents us from carrying out the desires of the flesh.
- The more time that is spent in fellowship with the Lord, the more one becomes like Him.
- Consistency in the faith produces growth in the faith.
- Like Enoch, those believers in Christ who are alive on the earth when Jesus returns will be taken to be with Him.



Lesson Material

The name "Enoch" means "dedicated." Enoch lived for 65 years, had a son named Methuselah, and then walked with God for 300 years. Whether or not Enoch walked with God before Methuselah was born, we are not told. Most likely, however, something happened to change Enoch when Methuselah was born. Something happened that changed his life so dramatically that he was never the same man he used to be. He became someone who walked with God.

Perhaps it was the name of his son that was significant. "Methuselah" literally means "when he is dead, it shall be sent." We are not told in the text whether or not Enoch knew that God was going to destroy the earth with a flood; but he certainly knew that the judgment of God would fall upon the earth in some form, because of the meaning of the name "Methuselah." There had to be a reason why this name was chosen. One wonders how carefully this child was cared for by his family, knowing that his death would bring judgment! Knowing that God would spare His judgment of the earth undoubtedly had a profound effect on the life of Methuselah, and upon Enoch, as well. A wise man would certainly have placed his house in order.

Enoch walked with God for 300 years, after he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch and his great-grandson, Noah, were the only two men in the Bible of whom it is written that they walked with God. It can be inferred that Adam and Eve walked with God, but this took place before they

were expelled from the Garden of Eden because of sin. Something was special about the relationship between these two men and God.

Imagine walking with God -- being so close, such good friends with Him, that it could be said that you walked with God. Most of us manage to fellowship with God on occasion, but the fellowship does not last long. Often, it is only during the minutes or hours following an emotional, spiritual experience that we feel close to the Lord. But Enoch walked with God for 300 years.

In order to begin walking with the Lord, reconciliation must take place. (Amos 3:3) God did not become more like Enoch; Enoch had to become more like God. He had to develop faith and trust in the Lord, before anything else could take place in the relationship.

Sin always separates us from God; and we cannot walk with God when we remain in sin. (1 John 1:6-7) The more one continues in sin, the more sinful he becomes. The more sinful he becomes, the less he resembles God. Enoch had to come to the place where he decided that the most important thing in his life was his relationship to the Lord. Like anyone, if there is something more important than the Lord, reconciliation will never take place, and a relationship will never develop. The decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is a prerequisite to any relationship with Him.

Reconciliation with God must take place first. Sin must be confessed and repented of, before a relationship with God can be established. What sin has separated, the Lord Jesus Christ can join together. His death on the cross paid the penalty for all of our sin. His free gift to us is eternal life, if we will reach out and accept it.

The chameleon is a reptile that can change the color of its skin, to blend in with its surroundings. Unfortunately, many Christians are like the chameleon, when it comes to their lifestyle. They do not stand out from the rest of the world, because of their faith in Jesus Christ; rather, they choose to blend in with the world. Yet, if we walk in the darkness of the world, 1 John 1:6-7 says that we are living a lie.

Consistency in our relationship with the Lord is necessary to maintain the relationship. This is why it is called a walk. (Galatians 5:16-17) If other things become more important than the time we spend in prayer or in the study of His Word, it is not long before God seems to be far away. When that happens, it is important to realize that God did not move -- we did. We must choose the direction in which we walk.

Consistency produces growth. Without growth, life becomes stagnant, because even the most exciting things in life eventually become boring. Through prayer, study, and fellowship with other Christians, growth can take place continually. Walking with Him becomes an exciting adventure, and not a duty.

A stagnant list of rules to live your life by is not the answer to spiritual growth. Children who are obedient to their parents never seem to have as many rules at home, because they have become like the responsible adults who make the rules. To love the Lord with all of your heart, and soul, and mind is the most important rule of all. If you love Him, you will keep His commandments. The guiding truth is this: the more time one spends in fellowship with God, the more one becomes like Him. As that relationship grows, the Holy Spirit begins to guide and direct that life. A transformation takes place that excludes the darkness and sin of the rest of the world, because the things of the Spirit are contrary to the things of the flesh (i.e., the world).

Just as Enoch walked with God and then was translated, we also should be found walking with God at His return, for the reward will be great. Those who have put their faith and trust in Him will be with Him forever. Those who put their faith in someone or something other than Jesus Christ will be forever separated from Him. Enoch is a type of those believers in Christ who will be alive on this earth when Jesus returns. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. (Hebrews 11:5-6)

The Lord is coming soon to rapture the church. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) He is coming for overcomers. (Revelation 3:3-6) Be ready for the return of Jesus Christ!



Methods

Illustrate this lesson with examples of ways in which people choose to live their lives. Emphasize that living in obedience to Christ is a choice that we make every day.

Some people choose to turn their back completely on God; and they live only to satisfy their desires. Others choose to maintain their walk with God, but also their fellowship with the world. Others manage to give their lives completely over to the Lord, in obedience to His Word.

Talk about the consequences of different lifestyles and choices. Ask the students to give examples from their own lives. Finally, challenge them to remove anything from their lives that would hinder their walk with the Lord. It may be a good time to confess some things and pray about them openly.

Hold each student accountable to maintain their commitment to walk with the Lord every day, minute by minute, hour by hour.

Obedience and the Cross: Abraham and Isaac

Volume 10

Lesson 43



Bible References

Genesis 12-22

Philippians 2:5-8

Isaiah 42:1-7

Luke 1:30-35, 37; 18:31-33; 24:37

Matthew 16:21; 23:1-19; 26:39

1 Corinthians 10:6, 13

Deuteronomy 6:5

John 3:16



Theme

Abraham and Isaac were types of the obedience of Jesus Christ toward the Father.



Genesis 22:1-3

- 1 "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.
- 2 "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.
- 3 "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him."



John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."



Outline

- I. God Told Abram to Leave His Home and Go to a Land that He Would Show Him.
- A. Abram left his father's home, in obedience to the Lord.
- B. Jesus left his Father's heavenly home, in obedience to Him.
- II. God Promised that Blessings Would Come from the Obedience of Abram.
- A. God promised to bless the earth through the seed of Abram.
- B. God promised to bless the earth through His Son, Jesus Christ.

III. God's Promises to Abram Would Come to Pass through His Son.

- A. God promised a son to Abram and Sarai, even though it seemed impossible because of their old age.
- B. God promised Mary that she would have a Son Who would be called the Son of God, even though it seemed impossible, because she was still a virgin.

IV. A Lack of Faith Caused Abram and Sarai to Sin.

- A. Abram and Sarai decided to help God fulfill his promise by bringing forth the promised son through Hagar, Sarai's handmaiden.
- B. A lack of faith in the promises of God always produces sin.
- V. When Isaac Was born, Abraham and Sarah Were Forced to Deal with Their Sin.
- A. Abraham and Sarah removed Ishmael and Hagar from them.
- B. The birth of Jesus meant that the world would now have to deal with its sin, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

VI. Abraham's Son, Isaac Was to be Offered as a Sacrifice.

- A. God asked Abraham to offer his only son, Isaac as a sacrifice.
- B. God gave His only Son, Jesus, as an atonement for sin.

Abraham Responded in Obedience.

- A. Abraham did not hesitate to obey God.
- B. God saw that Abraham had faith.

VIII. The Life of Isaac Was Spared by the Lord.

- A. God saw the obedience of Abraham: and He did not require the physical sacrifice of Isaac.
- B. God did not spare His only Son, but gave Him to the world in love.
- C. Even as Isaac was given back to his father, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and returned to His Father.

Spiritual Truths

- Jesus left His heavenly home, emptied Himself, and took on the form of a servant, in obedience to His Father.
- God promised that He would send a Savior to the world.

- God sent His Son, Jesus to be born in an impossible manner -- through a virgin.
- Unbelief is sin, because it denies the fulfillment of God's promise in the Person of Jesus Christ.
- · Because of Jesus, the entire world must deal with its sin, or face eternal life without God.
- Jesus Christ was sent to be a sacrifice for the sin of the world.
- Jesus died in our place for our sin, although He lived a blameless life.
- Jesus gave His life willingly, in obedience to the Father.
- Jesus was resurrected on the third day with the keys of death and hell; and now He offers eternal life, through faith in Him.
- God loved the world so much, that He sent His only Son to die for the sin of the world, that we might have eternal life.



Lesson Material

God asked Abram to leave his home, his relatives, and the land of his father, in order to follow Him. (Genesis 12:1) God called Abram out of an evil land, where the pagans offered babies in ritual sacrifice. Abram was called out of his comfortable surroundings, as evil as they may have been, to follow the Lord in obedience.

Jesus left his heavenly home, emptied Himself, and took on the form of a servant. In obedience to His Father, He was put to death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

God promised that great things would result from Abram's obedience. (Genesis 12:2-3) Through the seed of Abram would come a great nation and a great name. Through his seed, the world would be blessed, as they blessed the seed of Abram. Those who cursed the seed of Abram would be cursed, as well.

In Isaiah 42:1-7, God promised to send His Servant, Who would be a blessing to the world. Through Jesus, a great body (nation) of believers is being formed, which will one day be joined with Him eternally. One day, everyone will bow before Jesus, whose Name is above every name. (Philippians 2:10) Those who bless the Lord will be blessed. Those who curse Him, will also be cursed.

God promised Abram and Sarai a son of their own. (Genesis 15:5) It seemed impossible, because Sarai was barren and getting quite old, as was Abram. Sexually speaking, their bodies were "dead" and could not bring forth life. It seemed impossible.

In Luke 1:30-35, the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would have a Son, Who would be called the Son of God. Mary found it hard to believe, because she was still a virgin. It seemed impossible that she could bring forth a son, let alone the Son of God.

But Abram and Sarai decided to help God out. (Genesis 16:1-2) They felt that God was not going to give them a son in the usual way, and so perhaps He was waiting on Sarai and Abram to figure out

another way. It was the custom in those days that a barren woman could become the legal mother of a child, if the baby was born into the lap of the barren woman. Thus, Hagar became pregnant and gave birth to Ishmael.

Their lack of faith produced sin; and the sin produced a child that God would not use to fulfill his promise to Abram. Today, Abram's lapse into unbelief is still with us in the Arab people. The Arab people are predominately of the Islamic faith, and worship a false god, Allah. Mohammed, the founder of Islam, was a descendent of Ishmael. And Ishmael and Isaac are still at enmity.

In Matthew 23:1-39, the unbelief of the Pharisees in the promises of God was condemned by Jesus. Because of their unbelief and formal religious practices, Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites, blind guides, and fools. He compared their righteousness to a whitewashed tomb that was beautiful on the outside, but full of dead men's bones on the inside. Their unbelief had produced sin and the denial of Christ, just as the unbelief of Sarai and Abram produced Ishmael.

In Genesis, chapter 21, the promised son, Isaac, was born to Abraham, when he was one-hundred years old. Sarah was probably about ninety. With the fulfillment of God's promise, Abraham and Sarah were forced to deal with the product of their earlier sin, Ishmael. With the assurance of God, Abraham forced Hagar and Ishmael from their home. They confronted their sin; and they were then able to begin to receive the blessings of God.

The birth of Jesus, and what His life would bring, meant that the world would have to deal with its sin through the Son of God. Sin would have to be exposed and repentance would be required, before new life in Christ could be realized. Light and darkness can have no fellowship together. (2 Corinthians 6:14)

Abraham's only son, Isaac, was to be offered as a sacrifice. (Genesis 22:2-3) It must have been impossible for Abraham to understand why God would require such a sacrifice, after such an incredible promise had been fulfilled. Yet, Abraham responded in obedience, and planned to carry out the will of God.

God's only Son, Jesus was to be offered as the final sacrifice for the sin of the world. (Luke 18:31-33) As difficult as it may have been for Abraham to understand why God would require Isaac, it is just as difficult for us to understand why God allowed His Son to die in our place for our sin, when He had done nothing to deserve death. Yet, it was the will of God. Like Abraham before, Jesus yielded to the will of the Father. (Matthew 26:39) No questions were asked. No arguments were set forth.

The remainder of Genesis chapter 22 is devoted to the "resurrection" of Isaac. To Abraham, in verse 3, Isaac was as good as dead. Abraham had planned to carry out the command of God. Yet, in verse 5, there is a clue that suggests he might have known that somehow God was going to spare Isaac: "And Abraham said unto his young men, abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Abraham had been promised by God that through Isaac, His covenant with Abraham would be fulfilled. If God was going to require the life of Isaac, then God would somehow have to restore Isaac, in order to keep His promise. Abraham even told his young men to wait, because they would return after worshipping. All of this took place on the third day after Abraham obeyed God and began his journey to Mount Moriah where the sacrifice was to take place.

Even so, Jesus Christ returned victorious from the grave and hell. And even so, it was on the third day, as He had prophesied. (Matthew 16:21)

The parallels between the story of Abraham and Isaac, and the story of Jesus Christ are almost unbelievable. A child was promised under impossible circumstances, through whom the world would be blessed. With the arrival of the promised son, sin was confronted and a new life was to begin. The promised son was then to be offered as a sacrifice for sin. Two men accompanied the son to the mountain, where the sacrifice was to be offered. Wood was split and placed on the back of the son. The life of the son was restored, in fulfillment of the promises of God.

God has so carefully laid out his Word, that the same passage of scripture can teach us many things. (1 Corinthians 10:6) The story of Abraham and Isaac tells the story of Jesus. (Luke 24:27) It also gives us an incredible example of obedience, and the faithfulness of God to keep His Word.



Methods

Challenge your students with the following questions:

1. At the beginning of the story of Abraham and Isaac, Abraham left his

home and his family to go where God wanted him to go. Where does God want you to go? What is His plan for your life? Will you be obedient, like Abraham? How would you react if God wanted you to become a missionary, when you wanted to do something else?

2. God asked Abraham and Sarah to believe something that seemed impossible for them in their old age -- a child. Throughout life, whether you are in God's will or not, there are situations that seem impossible to overcome. Are you facing a decision, or a situation, that seems impossible to overcome? Are you having difficulty in trusting God with control of your life in some area?

Remember, God has a plan for your life. There is nothing impossible for God, except sin. (Luke 1:37) No temptation will be so great, that you cannot endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Trust God to work it out.

3. At the end of the story, God asked Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice. It must have seemed ridiculous to Abraham. What do you think went through his mind for three days, as he traveled to Mt. Moriah?

God asks us to love Him with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our might. (Deuteronomy 6:5) Jesus asks us for total commitment to Him. (Matthew 16:24-25) What is God asking you to give up, in order to serve Him? Is something in your life keeping you from being obedient to His Word or to His calling on your life? God loved us so much that He save us, like He saved Isaac. Instead, He gave up His only Son, so that we might have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The challenge for all of us as Christians is to see God clearly, as He is, to see the world as God sees it, and then to step out in faith to make a difference. Do not be afraid to serve God. He will never leave you, nor forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5)

Abraham and Isaac: Like Father, Like Son

Volume 10

Lesson 44



Genesis 20:1-10; 26:1-10

James 1:14

Romans 14:7, 23

Proverbs 29:25

2 Samuel 12:13-14

Ezekiel 18:20



Theme

Sin does not always stop with the sinner, but is often passed on to others.



Genesis 26:1-10

- 1 "And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.
- 2 "And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:
- 3 "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;
- 4 "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;
- 5 "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.
- 6 "And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:

- 7 "And the men of the place asked {him} of his wife; and he said, She {is} my sister: for he feared to say, {She is} my wife; lest, {said he}, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she {was} fair to look upon.
- 8 "And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac {was} sporting with Rebekah his wife.
- 9 "And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she {is} thy wife: and how saidst thou, She {is} my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.
- 10 "And Abimelech said, What {is} this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us."



Romans 14:7

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."



Outline

I. Isaac Dwelt in Gerar.

- A. He was supposed to pass through, unto the promised land.
- B. His disobedience got him into trouble.

II. Isaac Lacked Faith in God.

- A. Despite God's promise to bless him and his seed, he feared for his life.
- B. Fear is always associated with a lack of faith.

III. Isaac Followed in His Father's Footsteps.

- A. For some reason, Isaac repeated the sin of his father, Abraham.
- B. Sin does not stop with the sinner.
 - 1. Others may be led to sin, because it is modeled.
 - 2. Someone may be hurt by the liberty of another.

IV. Isaac's Sin Had a Negative Impact on Other People.

- A. Rebekah was forced to pretend that she was someone whom she was not.
- B. Abimelech rebuked Isaac.
- C. Isaac perpetuated the pattern of deception to his own sons.

V. Despite the Sin, God Was Able to Use Abraham and Isaac.

- A. They were not destroyed by their sin.
- B. They became great men of God, because of His grace.
- C. They learned to rely on God to sustain them.



Spiritual Truths

- Disobedience has consequences.
- Fear is always associated with a lack of faith.
- Anything not done in faith is sin.
- Sin is perpetuated from person to person.
- The effects of sin touch others, as well as the sinner.
- Placing one's confidence in the Lord is the best way to avoid sin.
- God is faithful to forgive sin in the lives of those who are repentant.
- God can transform the negative consequences of our sin into good, for His glory.



Lesson Material

In reading the stories of Abraham and Abimelech in Genesis 20:1-10 and Isaac and Abimelech in Genesis 26:1-10, one cannot help but be impressed by the similarities between them. Though the events took place more than seventy-five years apart, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, is a witness to both. Abraham and Isaac did exactly the same thing to the same person in the same place! The sin of Abraham was somehow communicated to Isaac in such a manner that it was duplicated.

Why did this happen? Abraham and Isaac were both men of God, men of faith. Through them came the nation of Israel and the Messiah. Yet, they struggled with sin, just as any other men.

God told Isaac to "sojourn" in Gerar. "Sojourn" means to "pass through," or "remain temporarily." Isaac had not arrived in the place that God promised to show him. In disobedience, Isaac decided to "dwell" in Gerar. Because he remained in Gerar for a long time, he was tempted to lie about Rebekah, knowing that the men of the land would begin to notice her. If he had passed through the land in obedience to the Lord, it would have been unnecessary to lie about Rebekah.

How often do we find ourselves tempted, because we are some place in we should not be, as Christians? James 1:14 tells us that "...every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Many times, we find ourselves in situations in which we know that temptation will come. If we keep our

eyes on the Lord, He will guide our steps, for He tempts no one. (James 1:13)

Isaac also demonstrated a lack of faith in God. He did not believe that God could sustain him. He was afraid. At the time, Isaac had no children. God promised that the land would one day belong to him and his seed. Unless God spared the life of Isaac, it would have been impossible to carry out the promise. Yet, Isaac was afraid.

Fear is always associated with a lack of faith. The two cannot coexist. If God has directed your steps, there is nothing to fear. If you are somewhere that you should not be and you are afraid, do not be surprised, because you have not acted in faith. Anything that is not done in faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

Proverbs 29:25 says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." Not only did Isaac disobey God and demonstrate a lack of faith, but he also followed in the footsteps of his father, Abraham. Somehow the story of Abraham and Abimelech was communicated to Isaac. Whatever the means of transmission, it is clear that Isaac received the message and relied on it in his weakness.

Romans 14:7 tells us that "...none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." The problem with sin is that it does not stop with the sinner. No one lives unto himself only. Our actions affect the lives of others, whether we realize it or not. Many times people say, "I know that what I am doing is hurting me, but I am the only one it is hurting. So, if I want to hurt myself, that is my business." It is a lie. Others are being hurt, too. The problem is that the sinner is blind to the effects of his sin on others. Sometimes, sin directly affects the life of another person in a

negative way, without the knowledge of the sinner. Sometimes, the sin keeps the sinner from having a positive influence on someone else. That also hurts.

As Christians, our lives are being observed closely, just as by children who observe and then take on the characteristics of their parents. What are we teaching others about our faith in God? We may be helping to set the pattern for a life.

The "Do as I say, not as I do" philosophy does not work. Anyone who looks to you as an example will do what you do. If you will not demonstrate obedience to God for yourself, at least do it for the ones who are watching you.

The effects of the sin of Isaac touched the lives of many people. Rebekah was forced to participate in a lie. She may have been exposed to the advances of the men of Gerar. She probably had to lie, in order to verify the story that Isaac told. Abimelech, a pagan king, rebuked Isaac, a man of God. When the moral standards of the world are higher than those practiced by the children of God, His children have become hypocrites; and the world will blaspheme God in unbelief. The children of God must live exemplary lives, in order to avoid becoming a stumbling block to others. (2 Samuel 12:13-14)

Finally, the sin of Isaac perpetuated the original sin of Abraham, which was deceit. Abraham and Sarah lied to Abimelech. Isaac and Rebekah lied to Abimelech. Rebekah and Jacob, Isaac's son, lied to Isaac. Jacob's sons lied to him about Joseph. The pattern of deceit was carried on through the generations. It did not stop with the originator.

Fortunately, the grace of God was at work in the lives of Abraham and his seed. They were not destroyed by their sin. They were neither destroyed because of the sin of their fathers (Ezekiel 18:20), nor were they great men because of them. They were great men of God, because of God's grace. God made something good out of a situation that the enemy intended for evil. God used their mistakes to draw them into obedience and teach them to rely on Him.

We have all failed to set a godly example to others. Our actions have had a negative impact on others at times. But, by the power of God's Spirit, we can set the example of the power of God to transform a life. We can demonstrate the power of God through our actions; and we can draw others closer to Him, as we live in obedience to His Word.



Methods

Use the following questions as a basis for discussion:

- 1. Whom do you look up to? Do you have a hero, or someone after whom you would like to pattern your life?
- 2. What do you want to become someday? What do you want to do with your life?
- 3. Is the person you listed in question one a positive role model? Why, or why not?
- 4. Does the person you listed in question one love the Lord and put Him first?
- 5. Does the life of the person you listed in question one glorify God?
- 6. What will you do with your life, in order to be a positive role model for others?
- 7. What will you do, in order to demonstrate the you love the Lord and put Him first in everything?
- 8. What will you do with your life that will bring glory to God?

Jacob, the Usurper: Sowing and Reaping

Volume 10

Lesson 45



Bible References

Genesis 25-35

Galatians 6:7



'heme

That which we sow, we will also reap, whether it is good or bad.



Reading

Genesis 25:24-26

24 "And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

25 "And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

26 "And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel: and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them."



Galatians 6:7

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



Outline

I. Jacob Was Born a Usurper.

- A. He grabbed onto Esau's heel when he was born.
- B. The birthright belonged to Esau, the firstborn.
- C. Jacob deceived his father, Isaac, in order to get the birthright.

II. Jacob Ran from His Sin.

- A. Esau vowed to kill him.
- B. Rebekah urged Jacob to flee to his uncle Laban.
- C. God made a covenant with Jacob, in the midst of his trouble.

III. Jacob Became the Victim of Deception.

- A. Laban deceived Jacob into marrying his firstborn, Leah.
- B. Jacob worked seven more years to marry Rachel.
- C. Jacob worked six more years, before he left Laban's house.
- D. Rachel stole her father's household gods.

IV. Jacob Was Forced to Face Esau.

- A. Jacob tried to handle Esau on his own.
- B. Jacob wrestled with God over His will.
- C. Jacob made peace with Esau.

V. Jacob Did Not Immediately Submit to God's Will.

- A. Jacob went to Succoth and bought a house.
- B. Jacob went to Shechem and bought some land.
- C. Dinah was raped in Shechem.
- D. Jacob feared the Canaanites.
- E. God again told Jacob to go to Bethel.

VI. Jacob Realized His Error and Chose to Seek the Lord.

- A. Jacob took control of his family.
 - 1. He put away the foreign gods.
 - 2. He told his family to purify themselves.
 - 3. He told his family to change their garments.
- B. God changed Jacob's name to "Israel."



 Jacob reaped the deception that he had sown.

- By submitting to God in the beginning, Jacob could have avoided years of turmoil.
- When Jacob submitted to God, he was blessed; and God was able to accomplish His will through Jacob.
- God's precepts are for our own good.
- We reap the consequences of rebellion, in further rebellion and separation from God.
- We reap the consequences of obedience, in continued obedience and the blessing of God.



Lesson Material

Many of us have been told by our parents that the rules that we must abide by at home are for our own good. Many of us have listened to these words, but have decided to find out for ourselves.

Often, parents, teachers, and those in authority expect us to live according to a list of rules that determine what we should not do, without providing an explanation and without a corresponding list of things that we are allowed to do.

Biblical guidelines are often presented no differently; and the listener becomes estranged from the practicality of the Bible. We need to be thankful for the laws of God, because they are for our own good. We also need to realize that there are many more "do's" in the Bible than "do not's." The first two of Ten Commandments given to Moses are "do's" of such enormous depth, that accomplishing them would eliminate the need for the remaining eight "do not's."

Regardless of how one feels about God's law, the choice is made either to live according to His guidelines, or live in opposition to them. When we choose to follow God's advice, we reap the benefits. When we choose to ignore God's Word, we will reap the destruction. We reap what we sow. (Galatians 6:7)

The name "Jacob" means "supplanter," or "usurper." A usurper is one who takes the place of another through scheming or plotting. When Esau was born (Genesis 25:24-27), Jacob grabbed his brother's heel as if to say, "Me first, brother." But it was not to be. Esau was the firstborn son of Isaac, and heir to the birthright given to the firstborn son.

Jacob's desire to have the birthright was evidenced later (Genesis 25:27-34), when he convinced Esau to sell his birthright for a bowl of stew. In a weak moment, Esau agreed; and Jacob had his wish.

Years later, when Isaac was old (Genesis 27), Jacob and his mother, Rebekah conspired to deceive Isaac. Through the use of an elaborate disguise, they led Isaac to believe that Jacob was Esau; and Jacob was given the blessing.

When Esau discovered what had happened, he confronted his father, Isaac; but it was too late. Esau hated Jacob, and he vowed to kill him for what he had done. (Genesis 27:41) Rebekah heard Esau's vow, and she sent Jacob to live with her brother, Laban in Haran, until Esau's anger subsided. Jacob left with the blessing of his father, Isaac.

On his way to Haran, Jacob stopped to sleep. In a dream (Genesis 28:12-15), the Lord affirmed to Jacob the same covenant He had made with Abraham and Isaac regarding the nation of Israel. Because of his experience there, Jacob named the place "Bethel," the "house of God."

In Genesis 29, Jacob arrived in Haran and found his mother's brother, Laban. Jacob fell in love with Laban's daughter, Rachel; and he offered to serve Laban for seven years, in order to marry her. When the day came for Jacob to marry Rachel, Laban tricked him into marrying his older daughter, Leah. Jacob did not find out, until it was too late. Because he loved Rachel, however, he agreed to work another seven years, in order to have her as his wife.

Jacob had twelve sons through Leah, Rachel, and their handmaids, Bilhah and Zilpah. The last two, Joseph and Benjamin, were the only sons born to Rachel. As Jacob's wealth grew, he desired to return to his own country. After he married Rachel, he served Laban for six more years, during which he was deceived ten times by Laban. God then ordered him back to Bethel. (Genesis 31:11-13)

Jacob decided to leave Haran, without telling Laban. As they were preparing to leave, Rachel stole her father's household gods. Three days later, Laban caught up with Jacob; and he was very angry. God protected Jacob and his family, but the household gods were not discovered.

In Genesis 32, Jacob discovered that his brother, Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was afraid; and he devised a plan to save himself. After this, he asked God to save him. After praying, he gathered together a bribe for

his brother, just in case God did not come through.

That night, Jacob wrestled with God, Who crippled his thigh. Following this encounter, God changed Jacob's name to "Israel," which means "he who strives with God." The next day, knowing that he would be confronted by Esau, Jacob divided his family into three groups. In the front of the caravan, he placed the handmaids and the children born to them. In the second group, he placed Leah and her children. In the third group, closest to him, were Rachel and Joseph. He was still trying to protect himself.

To Jacob's surprise, Esau did not want to kill him anymore, but he wanted to make peace. Esau did not want to accept the bribe, either. Only after much encouragement did Esau accept his brother's gifts. The two brothers then went their separate ways.

Jacob continued on to Succoth; and he built a house for himself and a barn for his cattle. He was not yet to Bethel, as God had commanded him. Jacob then continued on to Shechem, in Canaan, and bought a piece of land. While he was in the land, his daughter, Dinah was raped by the prince of the country. In revenge, Jacob's sons killed all of the men of the city and took Dinah out of the house of Shechem. When Jacob discovered what his sons had done, he became afraid of retribution from the Canaanites.

In Genesis 35:1, God again told Jacob to go to Bethel. This time, Jacob did as the Lord had told him. It was at this point that Jacob finally took control over his family. He ordered his family to get rid of the foreign gods, purify themselves, and change their clothes. After they had done this, they journeyed to Bethel.

In Genesis 35:10, God reaffirmed that Jacob was to be called "Israel," "he who strives with God." After leaving Bethel, Rachel died in Bethlehem, while giving birth to Benjamin, who became head of the warrior tribe of Israel. Rachel named him "Benoni," which means "the son of my sorrow." Jacob called him "Benjamin," which means "son of my right hand." In the two names given to the son born in Bethlehem is a picture of the suffering and victory of Jesus Christ.

Jacob reaped what he sowed. He sowed deceit, and he also reaped deceit. Laban deceived him. Rachel deceived him. Later, his own sons even deceived him. Because of disobedience, he was continually being confronted with fear. He was fearful of Esau, Laban, and the Canaanites. He could have avoided it all by living his life according to the will of God. Fear is always associated with a lack of faith.

Even though he was on the way to Bethel near the end of the story and had just stopped for a while, the delay cost him dearly. His daughter was raped and his sons retaliated, by killing the men of the town.

It never pays to disobey God. He has given us His Word to live by, for our own good. He loves us so much that He gave us a set of guidelines to live by. Without them, we would be lost. God desires that we live abundantly, free of the kind of problems that come when we stray from His will.

There is no middle ground, when it comes to obedience. You either obey God, or you disobey. When you obey, you reap

the benefits. When you disobey, you reap the consequences. Choose to obey!



Methods

Have your students write down the rules that they have at home. Ask them to record the things that they are not allowed to do, and also that which they are allowed to do.

Ask them the following questions about the rules and privileges they have:

- 1.) Which of the things that you are not allowed to do are really for your own good?
- 2.) Why do you want to disobey the rules and do your own thing?
- 3.) What are the possible consequences of your disobedience to the rules?
- 4.) What are the potential rewards of obedience to the rules?

Use the answers your students give as a basis for discussion about the principle of sowing and reaping, as it relates to obedience. Challenge your students to accept the rules of their parents with a good attitude, as if they were responding in obedience to the Lord.

In the weeks to come, encourage them to share testimonies of how obedience to their parents has kept them from getting into trouble, etc.

True Love, Part 1: What Does It Mean?

Volume 10

Lesson 46



Bible References

Matthew 7:12; 22:36-40

Romans 5:8

Psalms 127:1

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

John 3:16

1 John 4:7-8



Theme

True love considers the needs of others as greater than one's own needs, as demonstrated by Jesus Christ.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 22:36-40

36 "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 "This is the first and great commandment.

39 "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."



Matthew 7:12

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so

to them: for this is the law and the prophets."



Outline

- I. Agape Love Eliminates Many Problems in Premarital Relationships.
- A. Agape love is unselfish, loyal, and benevolent.
- B. Agape love does not hurt others.
- C. Agape love does not tempt others.
- D. Agape love should be the foundation of every relationship.
- II. Sexual Love Is to be Reserved for Marriage.
- A. Sexual love must be an expression of marital *agape* love.
- B. Sexual love outside of marriage is not based on *agape* love.
- C. Sexual love alone will not sustain any relationship.
- III. Relationships Based on the Love of God Will Last Indefinitely.



Spiritual Truths

- Loving relationships with others must be based on a loving relationship with God.
- Those who do not love God find it difficult to love others, except in selfish ways.
- Loving others as yourself means to desire God's best for them.
- Tempting another to commit sin is not love.
- Hurting someone else is not love.
- Sexual love is the expression of agape love within the marriage covenant.
- Sexual love alone is not sufficient to sustain any relationship for a long period of time.
- Sexual love, based on agape love, is impossible to attain outside of the marriage relationship.



Lesson Material

The word, "love" can take on many different meanings. To some, it is synonymous with "sex." To others, it is an emotion, or a feeling of attachment. It is commonly defined as "an intense affection or devotion to someone or something."

There are probably as many definitions for love as there are people on the earth, because it means something a little different to everyone.

In the Greek language, there are three words for "love" that are often used to more accurately describe the type of love being expressed: agapeo, phileo, and eros. Agape love, often referred to as the love of God, is completely unselfish -- always concerned for the well-being of others. Phileo love can best be described as brotherly love, or friendship. Eros is closely associated with romance and sexual love. Epithumia ("strong desire") and pathos ("lust; passion") are used to describe sexual desire.

Agape love is the kind of love that God has for His creation. It is the Greek word translated "love" in Matthew 22:36-40 and 1 John 4:7-8. Agape love is completely unselfish in its expression. It endures all things. It never seeks to hurt or to destroy. It does not tempt someone to commit sin. Agape love was demonstrated by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, when He was crucified for the sins of the entire world. While we were still sinners, Jesus Christ died for us (Romans 5:8), because He loved us. (John 3:16)

Agape love is at the basis of a God-centered relationship between two people. When relationships are based on physical (sexual) love alone, it is not long before the relationship ceases to exist. Physical love cannot sustain a relationship, since it only lasts for a short time. Because of its temporal nature, there is a limit to the level of devotion created by sexual activity. When the physiological limits of sexual activity have been reached, physical attraction quickly diminishes, leaving very little with which to sustain the relationship.

Sexual love is also innately selfish, when agape love is not the basis for the relationship. The selfishness of physical love is evidenced in the millions of relationships that quickly end, because the physical attraction that worked to form the relationship has dissipated. When sexual love ceases to satisfy, it usually is not long before the relationship ends. When one relationship ends, it usually is not long before another relationship begins that promises to bring satisfaction. This familiar cycle is typically repeated again and again, before it is realized that sex is not a firm foundation for a relationship. Often, this truth is never realized. In its wake are several potential friendships gone awry, because the physical ceased to satisfy.

God intended for physical love to be an extension of the love between a man and a wife, within the context of marriage. (Genesis 2:24) God intended marriage to reflect His love for mankind. In Ephesians chapter five, we find that the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church is to be exemplified by the relationship between a husband and wife. It is a dynamic relationship, in which both participants give themselves completely to each other. As Christ died for the church, so should a man give himself up for his wife. Wives are to be subject to their husbands, as the church is subject to Christ.

Sexual love was given to mankind by God to be enjoyed within the context of marriage and for procreation. As discussed above, physical love cannot stand on its own. A relationship based on physical love alone will not last. A relationship based on the love of God will last indefinitely, because the participants will want nothing but God's very best for their partner.

When sexual love is based upon agape love, the end result is everything that God intended it to be. Sex in this context is beautiful in its expression, because it is naturally unselfish. It is completely fulfilling, because it is done according to the plan of God. Sexual love outside of these confines is short-lived, empty, and a source of guilt and depression. God never intended for love to produce these negative emotions. Unfortunately, the rebellious nature of man has made it commonplace. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)

Any sexual activity outside of the marriage relationship is defined in the Bible as "fornication." Physical love outside of the marriage relationship can never be based on agape love, because it is done in disobedience to God. Whatever is done in disobedience to God's Word is doomed to fail. A relationship based on sin will never last, because God will not, and cannot support it.

Conversely, when both partners are completely committed to serve the Lord, the basis for a loving relationship can be established that will outlast the test of time and the inevitable storms of life. Should the relationship lead to marriage between a man and a woman, a firm foundation will have been built, upon which they can securely build their lives.

The foundation of any relationship, whether it is a friendship or a marriage, must be the abiding presence of God. (Psalms 127:1) When He is active in the relationship, true love can be expressed; and His will can be accomplished in the lives of everyone involved. Every one who operates in agape love is loving according to the will of God. (1 John 4:7-8)



Methods

Ask your students to describe the problems that they have experienced in relationships with the opposite sex.

Analyze the problems they had with respect to the concept of agape love:

- 1.) Was the problem rooted in selfishness?
 - 2.) Did the problem hurt someone?
- 3.) Did the problem cause someone to be tempted to do something that they knew was wrong?

True Love, Part 2: Redefining Dating

Volume 10

Lesson 47



Bible References

Colossians 3:9-10

Romans 15:1-3, 5-6

Philippians 2:3-4; 13-15

Proverbs 18:1-2

James 1:5

2 Corinthians 6;14

2 Timothy 2:22

1 Corinthians 15:33



Scripture Reading

Philippians 2:13-15

13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

14 "Do all things without murmurings and disputings;

15 "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."



Theme

Dating should be an opportunity for fellowship and growth with other believers in Christ, through which God is glorified.



Memory Verse

James 1:5

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."



Outline

I. Improper Dating.

- A. Dating is often superficial and fake.
- B. Dating is not always conducive to growth and understanding.
- C. Dating can be a source of emotional pain and depression.
- D. Dating can isolate you from family and friends.
- E. Dating can isolate you from God.

II. Date Within the Family of God.

- A. Only date committed Christians.
- B. Every date is a potential mate.
- C. Dating unbelievers will weaken your relationship with Christ.
- D. Committed Christians make committed husbands and wives.

III. Develop Friendships.

- A. Spend time with friends in the context of friendship.
- B. Spend time learning about each other.
- C. Spend time growing together in Christ.
- D. Maintain the friendship, until marriage is inevitable.

E. Keep God at the center of every relationship.



Spiritual Truths

- God should be at the center of every relationship.
- Some relationships are not conducive to spiritual growth.
- If a relationship with someone separates you from family, friends, and God, it is not worth pursuing.
- If a relationship causes you to discriminate against others, it is not the kind of relationship that God would desire you to have.
- Spending time with friends, especially fellow-believers in Christ, is a source of strength and love.
- Being unequally yoked with unbelievers will corrupt good morals; and it will ultimately lead to disappointment and pain.
- Commitment to Christ is a necessary component of any good relationship.



Lesson Material

The practice of dating in many societies is typically characterized by a series of

romantic interludes, culminating in either the cessation of the relationship or the decision to marry. In most instances, several dating cycles, each followed by a "break-up," are experienced, before the ideal mate is found.

Why this style of courting is commonly chosen is an interesting question, because the process is fraught with difficulty. Most couples usually know very little about one another before embarking on their first date, nor do they know much more about one another after several dates. In the interest of avoiding rejection and maximizing attraction, it is common to behave in socially-prescribed ways that may bear little resemblance to one's normal mode of behavior.

Thus, dating, as it is commonly practiced, rarely works as a highly reliable method of finding the ideal mate. Dating can actually be quite deceptive; and it is a rather flimsy basis for what is probably the most important decision that one will ever make. Candor and honesty are strangely absent from this process, in many cases. Unfortunately, it is usually not until after the couple becomes married that the masks come off, in a surprising revelation of their true identities. As Christians, our relationships need to be honest. (Colossians 3:9-10)

For this reason, it is important that couples who are dating seriously take time to get to know one another well. There are at least four areas in which couples should grow together before considering marriage:

1. Grow spiritually. Go to church together, as often as possible. Pray together about anything that might be a concern. Ask God to help you grow together spiritually, as friends with a common dedication to serve the Lord. Read the

Bible together, and discuss your impressions of the scriptures. Read Christian books on a wide variety of topics (and not just marriage); and challenge each other with what you learn.

- 2. Grow emotionally. Share your feelings honestly about everything. Share hurts, fears, triumphs, and what makes you happy. Do not cover up anything out of pride, or fear of exposure. Spend time building each other up emotionally. Compliment, exhort, and challenge each other as needed.
- 3. Grow intellectually. Find out what each other believes about God, abortion, war, poverty, wealth, suicide, euthanasia, social issues, etc. Read the newspaper or watch the news together, and discuss the stories. How do they relate to the Bible? How do you react to the stories? Discuss controversial issues. Take a class together. Volunteer at church for special service projects.
- 4. Learn to communicate. The things that you do together can sometimes act as a substitute for communication. Sex is probably the prime communication substitute, especially when you do not seem to have anything to discuss. Learn to express your feelings to each other in words. Build each other up verbally and by writing to one another. Give each other surprise gifts and cards, which help you to express your feelings. Do activities together that allow you to talk openly. Let everything that you do glorify God. (Romans 15:5-6)

Not only is dating somewhat precarious for those who participate, but many never have the opportunity to date, because they are not asked. The reasons why so many are not invited to participate appear to involve deliberate

discrimination based upon unattractive physical or personality characteristics. The result is a proliferation of "undesirables," who must find other ways to spend their time and find suitable mates. The biblical principles of love and charity are largely ignored. Loneliness and depression are common byproducts of a dating system that serves only a minority of the population. Biblical principles of the esteeming of others and the edification of others are ignored. (Philippians 2:3-4; Romans 15:1-3)

The practice of dating can be further characterized by the isolation of the couple from family and friends, throughout the course of the relationship. Although other couples may occasionally accompany them to a restaurant or theater, most of their time is spent alone, getting to know one another more intimately.

This type of dating process effectively isolates both participants from important sources of fellowship, during a time in their lives when such relationships should be cultivated, and not ignored. Family and friends are usually an objective source of wisdom and discernment, unlike the love-struck couple, blinded by the excitement of romance. Although virtually ignored during the dating cycle, it is expected that family and friends will be awaiting to provide their support, should the relationship end bitterly. (Proverbs 18:1-2)

All too often, in the excitement of the romantic dating game, one's relationship with God also suffers from a lack of attention. For the same reasons that family and friends are ignored, God, Who may have provided the opportunity, is treated as if He is not needed anymore. If ever the guidance of God is needed, it is when one becomes swept away by a romantic

encounter, and the prospect of marriage is at hand.

Only God knows how many couples have decided to marry in complete ignorance of His will for their lives, simply because He was not asked to participate. Someone may pray for years that God would bless them with someone to marry, and then leave Him out of the picture when the first prospect appears. Not only is it unwise to leave God out of the decision-making process, it is simply dangerous. Godly people who would not think of getting out of bed in the morning without spending time in prayer suddenly achieve a false sense of omnipotence and omniscience, when love knocks at the door.

It is important that the biblical principles which govern our relationships with family and friends be extended to include the choice of a spouse. When God is left out of the process, mistakes are likely to be made, which may culminate in disaster. God's Word promises wisdom to those who ask Him. (James 1:5)

Genesis 24 provides us with an interesting example of allowing God to govern in the selection of a mate. Abraham, who was growing old, sent his most trusted servant to the land of his ancestors to find a bride for his son, Isaac. He did not want Isaac to marry from among the Canaanites, in whose land they lived.

It was necessary that Isaac's bride be from the family of Abraham. She was to be a virgin, and someone brought up in the knowledge of the Lord. The servant prayed very specifically to the Lord, in asking Him to assist in the selection of the woman. If the servant was unable to find someone who met the specific requirements, he was

then to return home, rather than select someone who was less than perfect.

As it turned out, not only did the servant find someone who matched the requirements precisely, but Rebekah was much more. She was loving, humble and respectful. Rebekah was even willing to leave the security of her home the very next day, travel a long distance with a caravan of strangers, and marry a man she had never met. Only God could have orchestrated such a series of events.

Why should it be any different for God's people today? Abraham is a type of God the Father, Who sent his most trusted servant (the Holy Spirit) out into the world to find a bride (the church) for His only Son Jesus, of Whom Isaac is a type.

If God is that selective about those who will become joint heirs with His Son, Jesus Christ, should we not be just as selective about whom we join ourselves to in marriage? Christian marriage is intended to be an example of the relationship of Jesus Christ to the church.

This is why it is important to date only committed Christians. Because every date is a potential mate, it is not wise to become bonded to an unbeliever in the context of dating. (2 Corinthians 6:14) We must follow the biblical directives to flee lusts and not allow ourselves to be corrupted by those we fellowship with. (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 15:33)

As an alternative to the style of dating commonly practiced in many parts of the world, do not date. Cultivate and maintain friendships with everyone that God sends in your direction. Eventually, someone will become your friend who matches the standards you and the Lord have set for your future husband or wife. Pursue the

relationship as God leads, but strive to develop it only within the confines of friendship. Once you allow the romantic or physical elements to enter into the relationship, the "friendship" will never be the same again.

Grow together spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually -- as friends. Learn to communicate well. In time, you will either become convinced that they are someone whom you desire to marry, or you will be content to maintain the relationship as friends. "Breaking up" will not be required, and the friendship will not be in jeopardy. If you limit the development of the relationship to friendship, there will be no need to wonder whether God would have you to marry them. You will know for sure.

Friends are friends forever. Let God have control over your relationships with other people. If He is at the center, He will guide and direct your steps. Treat others as you would like to be treated, always wanting God's very best for their lives, as well as your own. Do not let your desires get in the way of God's will. God will give you the power both to desire and to do His will. (Philippians 2:13-15)



Methods

Ask your students to make a list of things that they like to do with their friends. Ask them to make another list of things that they like to do on a date. Then compare the lists.

Is there anything, except physical affection, that they like to do on a date, that they could not do among friends?

Discuss the reasons that they feel it is necessary to be alone with their date.

Discuss the dangers of being alone; and point out the experiences they are missing with family and friends.

True Love, Part 3: Sexual Immorality

Volume 10

Lesson 48



Bible References

Genesis 1:28; 2:18-25; 5:13-14

Psalms 51:3-4

Isaiah 59:2

John 14:15

Galatians 5:13-25

Ephesians 4:19

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

1 Peter 2:11



Scripture Reading

Galatians 5:13-14

13 "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."



Theme

The long-term consequences of sexual immorality are not worth the short-term pleasures.



Galatians 5:16

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."



Outline

I. Sexual Activity Outside of Marriage Is Wrong.

- A. It damages your relationship with God.
- B. It hinders your sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.
- C. It demonstrates that the sin nature is in control of your life.
- D. It robs you of peace.

II. Premarital Sex Will Affect Your Marriage in Negative Ways.

- A. You never forget the sexual encounters experienced before marriage.
- B. Comparisons are likely to occur between your spouse and previous sexual partners.
- C. Premarital sex will ruin your honeymoon and subsequent sexual relationship with your spouse.
- D. An unrepentant attitude toward premarital sex is a sign of moral weakness that will carry over into your marriage.

III. Premarital Sex Is Dangerous.

- A. The risk of pregnancy is great.
- B. The risk of disease is even greater.

C. Premarital sex can become a compulsive behavior that will control your life.



Spiritual Truths

- God blessed the sexual union as a means of companionship and procreation.
- The sinful nature of man has corrupted the God's gift of sexuality.
- Sexual activity outside of marriage is sinful, according to God's Word.
- Sexual immorality affects one's relationship with God.
- Sexual immorality is a sign of moral and spiritual weakness.
- God will bless obedience; but disobedience to His Word has consequences that are not pleasant.
- God wants us to love one another as He loves us, and not to use one another in an effort to satisfy the flesh.



Lesson Material

Galatians 5:19-21 says, "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, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told {you} in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

It is interesting that Paul begins this rather long list with four categories of immoral behavior that relate directly to the misuse of sexuality. "Adultery" means to have intercourse with the spouse of another. "Fornication" means sexual activity outside of marriage. "Uncleanness" means physical or moral impurity. "Lasciviousness" means indecent sinful acts, which are associated with a lack of restraint.

That Paul began the list with these four works of the flesh may have significance, in terms of their importance. In one of Paul's letters to the church at Corinth, he described fornication as the one sin that a man commits against his own body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit -- a holy vessel. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

There is something about the sin of sexual immorality, in its various forms, that is extremely repugnant to the Lord. From Paul's statements above, it is clear that God is not pleased when the sanctity of His temple, our bodies, is violated. The Holy Spirit of God resides inside of every believer in a very special way. It must be, then, that sin which affects our bodies directly affects the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. There is not room for the Holy Spirit and sin. Sexual promiscuity scores a direct hit on the spiritual life of the believer, in ways that are only God may fully understand.

Sexual activity outside of marriage will damage your relationship with God, just

as any sin. (Isaiah 59:2) Continuing to sin in this area of life causes further separation between you and the Lord. God has not turned His back on you. Your willful disobedience to His commandments have formed a wall that hides His face from you. Sin always separates. Jesus Christ suffered and died for the sins of the world, providing a bridge between the sinner and God. Continuing in sin after receiving this gift is still wrong; and it will always have a negative impact on one's walk with God.

It usually is not long, before the unrepentant heart forgets what the face of God looks like and grows cold to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit of God. Sexual immorality is one of those sins that hinders one's sensitivity to the work of the Holy Spirit inside. Paul urged the Ephesian church not to walk as unbelievers, who walk in the vanity of their minds and who are "given over" to their sin. (Ephesians 4:19)

Separation from anyone, especially the Lord, always makes communication more difficult; thus, the relationship suffers. That is why it is so important to put off the former self, controlled by the sin nature, and walk in the Spirit, Who will guide you in the way that you should go. (Galatians 5:16-17)

When someone gives in to sexual immorality, it is a sign of moral and spiritual weakness. The old sin nature is in a constant battle with the new nature through faith in Jesus Christ, like two animals that are fighting over territory. The animal that is the strongest eventually wins the battle. We have the power to decide which animal will win control over our lives. If we feed the sin nature and neglect the new nature, the sin nature will eventually gain control. The

result is a life controlled by the desires of the flesh. If we favor the new nature by walking in the Spirit and continually feeding it the Word of life, the sin nature will lose control over our lives, communication with God will be restored, and the Spirit of God will shine through us, as a light to the world. Our actions have very predictable effects on our spiritual lives. Sin always has a negative effect. (1 Peter 2:11)

David sinned against God, by committing adultery with Bathsheba. In his despair over this moment of weakness, he acknowledged that he was wrong and that his sin was ever before him. (Psalms 51:3-4) In other words, the memory and shame of his sin were always on his mind. He could not rest from the memory of it.

For the believer, sexual immorality robs you of your peace. We never forget our sins. The memory of past sin always seems to haunt us, especially if we continue to engage in it. When you turn your back on sin and begin to walk in the Spirit, the peace of God is at work, healing the wounds of separation. Conversely, when you cannot seem to let go of a particular vice, the peace of God is gone, and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit is at work to get you back on track.

Peace with God comes from receiving the gospel of Jesus Christ. The peace of God comes from obedience to His commandments. The unbeliever does not have either kind of peace. The believer in bondage to sin, although he has peace with God, does not have the peace of God, because his sin is continually before him. There is no substitute for obedience!

The effects of sexual immorality have consequences that reach beyond one's relationship with God and into one's

relationship with other people. Because premarital sexual encounters are never forgotten, their memory carries over into marriage. Guilt and shame are emotions that one has to deal with, often as the memories come back. These emotions can have a negative effect on the sexual relationship between you and your spouse. As a result, premarital sex is a common cause of sexual dysfunction in many marriages. The sexual union was designed by God to be shared only between those who are married. (Genesis 1:28, 2:18-25)

In addition, the memory of past sexual relationships are a basis of comparison between spouses. If the satisfaction provided by sexual relations with your spouse does not compare favorably to a previous relationship, it can be a continual cause of dissatisfaction with the marriage as a whole. If you both were virgins at the time you were married, there are no memories to carry over; thus, a potential source of contention has been effectively eliminated.

Few things have more potential to ruin a honeymoon more than a lack of excitement over the physical union. When couples who have been sexually active during their courtship begin their honeymoon, the sexual element holds very little excitement. As a result, the first few days and weeks of marriage, which should be a time of intimacy and learning, fall far below their potential to bond the couple together.

An unrepentant attitude toward premarital sex is a sign of moral and spiritual weakness, which will carry over into marriage. If someone freely engages in casual sex before marriage, there is little reason to believe that their attitude will change significantly after they are married. Outside of a life-changing renewal and

rededication to the Lord, one's commitment to abstain from extramarital sex will only be as strong as one's commitment to their spouse, which may vary significantly over time. Extramarital affairs are much more prevalent, when the relationship is not meeting the needs of one, or both, of the marriage partners. A casual attitude toward sexual promiscuity before marriage is likely to translate into further temptation, if it is not dealt with spiritually, before getting married.

As if separation from God and marital problems are not enough to deter someone from sexual immorality, there are other risks, as well. The risk of pregnancy, particularly at a very young age, cannot be discounted, even when contraception is employed. Contraceptives are not always effective in preventing an unwanted pregnancy. Contraception is not always used, when passion has overcome rational thinking. The every-increasing number of teenage girls who get pregnant each year should be evidence that the risk is greater than one might think.

Not only is there a significant risk of pregnancy, there is a much greater risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease. There are over fifty sexually transmitted diseases known today. Over twenty of diseases exhibit delayed manifestation of up to ten years. Someone may have multiple sexual encounters, without realizing that they have been infected with a deadly virus. No form of contraception can provide protection from all of the known diseases, let alone the diseases that have yet to be identified. Sexual promiscuity simply is not worth the risk of contracting a deadly disease, such as AIDS.

Another possible consequence of engaging in premarital sexual activity is

that of emotional dependence. For many individuals, sex becomes a compulsive behavior that is difficult to control. Unless the compulsion to engage in sexual activity is satisfied, the desire grows extremely intense. Unless the individual is able to gain control over these emotions, elements of his compulsive need will find its way into other areas of his life, as well.

When someone loses control of their sexual drive, they become a slave to it; and they are subject to the perils of such bondage. Only the power of the Holy Spirit, coupled with their desire to be free, can release them from that kind of bondage. God never intended for man to live in bondage to the flesh, but he does; and it has reached epidemic proportions, in the world today. There is no substitute for obedience to God's Word.

No one ever says, "I wish I had fooled around more, before I got married." If you have already started to engage in premarital sex and you want to stop, ask God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of your partner(s). (1 John 1:9) Decide that you will no longer subject yourself to temptation. (Galatians 1:10; James 1:14-15). Prioritize God and the things of God in your life. (Matthew 6:33) Fill yourself with the Word of God. (Proverbs 7:1-5; Psalms 119:9-11) Stay in submission to godly authority. (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20; Luke 2:51)

Do not allow yourself to get into a tempting situation. (Romans 14:21; James 1:14-15). Avoid situations in which you will be alone together. Stay accountable to someone in authority as to your whereabouts at all times. Do not date unbelievers, or anyone who is not walking in the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Maintain friendships with many Christian

friends, so that your needs in relationships are met in godly ways.

God has a plan for our sexuality; and it always works. Our happiness and our health (spiritually, emotionally and physically) depend upon our following His plan.



Methods

Discuss the possible consequences of premarital sex, with respect to the following:

- 1. The physical body.
- 2. Emotional health.
- 3. Spiritual health.

Is sexual involvement worth risking problems with any of these three areas of life? Which is worth more to you? Why?

Challenge your students to remain virgins, until they are married. If there is anyone who has already engaged in premarital sex, offer to talk with them after class. Be ready to counsel your male and female students who are already sexually involved.

Judging and Misjudging

Volume 10

Lesson 49



Bible References

Matthew 22:39

Romans 2:1

Matthew 7:1-5

James 5:19-20



Theme

It is easy to misjudge, but extremely difficult to judge.



Matthew 7:1-5

- 1 "Judge not, that ye be not judged.
- 2 "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.
- 3 "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?
- 4 "Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?
- 5 "Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."



Matthew 7:1

"Judge not, that ye be not judged."



Outline

- I. The Most Difficult Thing to Do Is to Judge Someone Else.
- A. The easiest thing to do is misjudge.
- B. We judge others because of pride.
- II. It Is Wrong to Judge, Because We Are Not Perfect.
- A. The fact that we judge is an indication of sin in our own life.
- B. We look for similar faults in others.
- III. Identifying Sin in Others Is Not Judging.
- A. Awakening others to their error might save them.
- B. Condemning someone for their actions constitutes wrongful judgment.
- C. God alone is perfect and qualified to judge rightly.



Spiritual Truths

 It is wrong for us to judge others, because we are all sinners.

- God alone is perfect and qualified to rightly judge.
- Exposing the error of a brother's way is not judging, but may save a soul from death.
- Condemning a brother for his error constitutes wrongful judgment.
- Everyone will someday stand before God in judgment.
- Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved.
- Those who refuse to receive the truth will be condemned.



Lesson Material

The most difficult thing in the world to do is judge someone. The easiest thing to do is to misjudge someone. The judgments we often make about others are based solely on the observable facts, all of which may or may not be known, and some of which may or may not be true.

Because we lack perfection, it is impossible to know the thought and intent of a brother's heart (i.e., his motives); therefore, it is impossible to judge.

Our lack of perfection makes the motive behind our judgment of another suspicious. We judge others because of pride. We judge others, because our own lack of perfection damages our ego. Often, the fact that we judge others reveals that

we are guilty of the same things ourselves. (Romans 2:1, 2 Samuel 12:1-10)

When we have sin in our lives, we have a tendency to look for the same fault in others. (Romans 2:1) There seems to be safety in those numbers. Misery loves company. Somehow, when we see someone else doing it, we do not feel so bad about our involvement anymore. Yet, because we recognize it as sin, we are compelled to condemn another for the same sin.

James 5:19-20 says, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Identifying sin in others is not judging. Recognizing the difference between right and wrong is essential. Converting someone from the error of their way may save them! It is your reaction to the sin of another that can be wrong.

If you judge them for what they did, then you have reacted improperly. The first reaction should be to examine your own life for the same sin. Chances are, it will be there, too. If you can somehow manage to remove the sin from your life, you will be more qualified to help.

Love for your brother (Matthew 22:39) must be the motive, when sin is to be exposed. Love does not judge. Love confronts, with the best interest of the other in view at all times. Exalting one's own position by degrading another in judgment is not love -- it is pride.

Below is a list of six indicators that expose a judgmental spirit:

- 1.) If his failure improves the opinion that I have of myself, I am judging.
- 2.) If his failure reduces the concern that I have for my own faults, I am judging.
- 3.) If his failure gives me a desire to see him punished, I am judging.
- 4.) If I am eager to tell others about his failure, I am judging.
- 5.) If his failure prompts me to review his past failures, I am judging.
- 6.) If his failure causes me to feel that I cannot forgive him, I am judging.

God is the Judge, and not you. If you find yourself judging someone, your eyes are on the wrong person.



Methods

Pass out a card with the "Six Indicators of a Judgmental Spirit" printed on it.

Share examples of ways in which people have judged you, or you have judged others. Identify the wrongful motive. Show where love could have operated, to improve the situation for the good of the individual being judged.

Challenge the students to keep track of the times when they are tempted to judge someone else according to the six principles. Are they guilty of the same thing? How do they feel about the other person? Is their motive pure? Discuss the following examples in class:

- 1.) Someone who listens to "heavy metal" music.
 - 2.) Someone who is in a gang.
 - 3.) Someone who smokes cigarettes.
 - 4). Someone who is sexually active.

5.) Someone who wears second-hand clothing.

How might these individuals be judged by others? What are the possible errors that might be made in judging them? What problem might they have, that is responsible for their behavior? What can we do as Christians to help them, instead of tear them down?

Orienteering

Volume 10

Lesson 50



Bible References

Psalms 119:105

James 1:5

1 Peter 2:2

Matthew 7:15-16a

1 John 4:1-3

2 Timothy 3:14-17; 4:3-4

Hebrews 4:12-13



Theme

Let the Word of God be your guide through life.



Scripture Reading

2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."



Memory Verse

Psalms 119:105

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."



Outline

- I. Some People Do Not Realize that They Need God's Word.
- A. Study the example of Jason and Amy.
 - 1. They were ignorant of their need for direction.
 - 2. They were too busy to recognize their need.
- B. They discovered their error, when it was too late.
- II. Some People Trust Their Friends to Do It for Them.
- A. Study the example of Tim and Mark.
 - 1. Tim trusted Mark to do his job perfectly.
 - 2. Mark did not do his job perfectly.
 - a. Perhaps he did not pay attention.
 - b. Perhaps he did not know what he was doing.
- B. They discovered their error, when it was too late.
- III. Some People Trust an Apparent Authority to Teach Them of God.
- A. Study the example of Aaron.
 - 1. Aaron was deceived by the appearance of an authority.

- 2. Appearances are sometimes deceiving.
 - a. Be aware of deception.
 - b. Be prepared to recognize deception.
- B. Aaron discovered his error, when it was too late.
- IV. Some People Try Short-cuts, Rather than Stick to Proven Methods.
- A. Study the example of Lisa.
 - 1. Lisa chose the unknown, out of convenience.
 - 2. Lisa departed from the wisdom of her father.
- B. Lisa discovered her error, when it was too late.



Spiritual Truths

- The Word of God is the source of all wisdom and direction.
- God gives wisdom to those who ask.
 He wants us to look to Him for answers.
- Wisdom that comes from God leads to salvation.
- Not everyone who claims to be an authority on the scriptures can be trusted to provide you with the truth. Outward appearance can be deceiving.

- We live in a world full of false prophets who preach a different gospel.
- Test the spirits to see whether they are from God, by holding their claims up to the Word.



Lesson Material

To the teacher:

The goal of this lesson is to motivate your students to start studying their Bibles. Use the materials discussed in the "Methods" section of this lesson as a basis for comparison between the journey of life and the familiar experiences of traveling. This exercise should be completed in groups, before sharing the answers during the discussion time. The students will not understand why they are doing this exercise, until you begin to share your answers and relate them to the Bible. Once they catch on to it, though, they will understand the concept very well.

To the students:

"Orienteering" is the sport of routefinding, using a map and compass. It is not a very popular sport, but there are many who enjoy testing their orienteering skills on hiking and mountain-climbing trips. If they are not proficient at finding their way through the wilderness, it will not be long before they realize their deficiencies.

Almost everyone practices a crude form of orienteering, when planning a trip away from home. Usually, we buy a road atlas from the store, which is used to plot out the shortest and quickest route. Unfortunately, some maps have errors or are not up-to-date, and they can lead you astray.

Traveling down the road of life is much different, though, because there is not such a thing as a personal, daily planner that lists everything that we are supposed to do each day. We can stumble along minute-by-minute, until something comes into our lives that slows us down or changes our direction. Many times, we make mistakes that could have been avoided, if we had been paying attention to the direction of our life.

Refer to the example of Jason and Amy. They are like many people, who do not recognize that they need directions. Because they are too busy with other things, time passes quickly by; and, sooner or later, they end up in trouble. If they had been able to recognize their need for direction sooner, they might have avoided the difficulty altogether. All of us need the Word of God to light our paths and keep us on the right road. Without knowledge of His Word, we are sure to get lost along the way. (James 1:5; 1 Peter 2:2)

Refer to the example of Tim and Mark. Tim trusted Mark to read the map correctly and make him aware of any necessary changes in their route. The problem is, that sometimes people cannot be trusted to do their job correctly. In Mark's case, it may have been that he was not paying attention to the map. Perhaps he was asleep, or distracted by the scenery. It may also have been that Mark did not know how to read a map, but was too embarrassed to let Tim know.

On the other hand, Tim trusted Mark totally. Instead of conferring with Mark before they left on their intended route, he Orienteering Volume 10

left it up to Mark to do it all. Unfortunately, it was too late when they realized their error.

As Christians, we often trust other people, especially our friends and parents, to help us make important decisions. God is often the last to be consulted in difficult times. When we leave God out, the potential for making serious mistakes is tremendous! If you ask ten different people for advice, you will probably get ten different answers. The Word of God is not like that. God never changes, and neither does His Word. He should always be consulted first, when decisions and problems arise. Advice from other sources should then be compared to the Word, in order to see if it lines up. If it does not line up, it is not worth exploring.

Refer to the example of Aaron. Aaron was deceived by the outward appearance of a person. Because Aaron sought direction from a police officer, he assumed that he would get correct information. Just because someone appears to be trustworthy, does not mean that they are. Just because someone holds an office, has a degree, or acts with authority, does not make them immune to making mistakes. Only the Word of God is free from defect. Unfortunately, human interpretation of God's Word sometimes leads us astray.

Even in the "religious" community, there are many people who are teaching things contrary to the Bible. The Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Moslems, and Buddhists all have their own "scriptures," from which they guide their lives. Unfortunately, they have been greatly deceived. They were deceived, because they did not know the truth. The ways in which the Bible is twisted are very subtle and difficult to spot, even to the trained Bible student.

It is important that we first ask God to give us wisdom in all things. Ask Him to show you the answer through His Word. It is the Holy Spirit Who gives us understanding; but we need to seek for the truth. If we begin to search for evidence that will support our opinion, though it may be wrong, there is a good possibility that we will end up in trouble, down the road.

There is not anything wrong with reading "Christian" books written by people just like you, as long as you recognize that they are capable of making mistakes, too. Always compare what you read and hear with the Bible. If it does not seem to line up, ask for clarification. Not everything or everyone who purports to be "Christian" really is. (Matthew 7:15-16a; 1 John 4:1-3)

Refer to the example of Lisa. Lisa made a couple of mistakes before she left for Bloomington, that could have saved her a lot of time. First, she chose an atlas that looked good and did not cost as much. Again, the deceitfulness of appearances led her to consider taking a short-cut. Instead of spending the extra money for the better atlas, she decided to save a little money on a cheap imitation.

There is no substitute for the Bible. There may be a lot of imitations that look the same and seem to be easier to understand, but they always cost more, in the end. People who spend more time reading books other than the Bible to learn about God and how to live their lives are taking a great risk. It only takes one wellwritten lie to send someone off on a "wild goose chase," ends which disappointment. Again, compare everything to the Word of God, in order to see if it lines up.

Secondly, she departed from the wisdom of her father. Not all parents are perfect. They make mistakes, just like anyone else. But, they also have the advantage of years of experiences, that their children do not have. It is amazing how much smarter our parents seem to get, as we get older!

If you were to rank information sources on their reliability, godly parents would rank just next to the Bible. In most cases, your parents will do their best to give you good advice. Because they love you more than anyone else in the world (except for Jesus), they will always look out for your best interests. Yes, you need to compare their advice to the Bible, because they can make mistakes, too. But, do not count them out, just because they are your parents. They probably know better than you.

The Bible is our source of wisdom and doctrine. (2 Timothy 3:14-17) It helps us to recognize false prophets and religious fads. (2 Timothy 4:3-4) It gives us discernment and direction; and it is the handbook of God's truth. (Hebrews 4:12-13) We must daily avail ourselves of the rich resources of the Word of God.



Methods

Use the exercise below entitled "Orienteering" at the beginning of class. It can be presented to the students either individually, or in groups. The students will not understand why they are doing this exercise, but the mystery will make the point of the lesson more obvious later.

As you address each example during the lesson, ask every group or student to give their evaluation of the mistakes made. After discussing their responses, proceed to give your answer; and tie it together with the spiritual correlation.

It is also fun to offer a prize to any student in the class who can correctly define the word, "orienteering." This can be done before breaking up into groups, as time allows.

You may also choose to prepare a humorous story about getting lost. It would fit in well before the lesson.

Orienteering

- 1. Jason and Amy were invited to a party at Phil's house, after the basketball game on Friday night. After the game, Jason and Amy went to the parking lot, got into Jason's car, and then discovered that they did not know how to get to Phil's house. What did Jason and Amy do wrong?
- 2. Tim and Mark were driving to Florida for spring break. It was Tim's car, and so he did most of the driving. Mark's job was to read the map and let Tim know when to change highways. Several hours south of Atlanta, Tim and Mark began to see signs for the University of Alabama. Confused, they stopped the car at the next exit and discovered their mistake. What do you think Tim and Mark did wrong?
- 3. Aaron started working for ACME Heating and Air Conditioning as a service man. On Wednesday, Aaron's boss sent him to Middlebury, Indiana to fix a broken furnace at Mister Donut. The map he was given took him right to Middlebury, without a single wrong turn. Unfortunately, the map did not have

Orienteering Volume 10

directions to Mister Donut. Suddenly, he saw a police officer sitting in his car at a gas station. He figured that the policeman would know how to get to Mister Donut (the police always hang out there). So, he stopped his car and asked the policeman for directions. Thirty minutes later, Aaron was still looking for the Mister Donut. What did Aaron do wrong?

4. Lisa's Mom and Dad gave her a car for graduation, in order to drive to college in Bloomington, Indiana. When it came time for Lisa to go to school, her dad gave her \$5.00 to buy a Road Atlas. At the bookstore, Lisa saw several different Road

Atlas's to choose from. The Rand-McNally Road Atlas was the one that her dad used, but it was \$4.50. The New Revised Official U.S. Road Atlas was only \$1.99; and it looked the same, except for the cover. When Lisa got to Indianapolis, the were 6 different exit signs off of Highway 69. She looked carefully at her map, but she could not decide which exit to take. Her new Road Atlas had left out some of the exits; and it only included exits for the major interstate highways. Lisa bought a Rand-McNally atlas at the gas station; and then, easily found her way around Indianapolis. What did Lisa do wrong?

Faith Is a Decision

Volume 10

Lesson 51



Bible References

Acts 16:6-10

Philippians 3:14; 4:13

Romans 8:28

Hebrews 11:6



Theme

Faith is a decision to act in obedience to God.



Scripture Reading

Acts 16:6-10

- 6 "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,
- 7 "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.
- 8 "And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.
- 9 "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.
- 10 "And after he had see the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."



Memory Verse

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."



Outline

- I. Guidance Does Not Come to People Who Are Sitting Still.
- A. We must decide to move.
- B. Movement necessitates guidance.
- C. Guidance comes from God.
- II. Decision-making Is Often Difficult.
- A. We are afraid of making a mistake.
- B. We are overly concerned with performance.
- C. God is concerned with maturity, rather than performance.
- III. Failure Is Never Associated with Moving Forward.
- A. Failure results from not moving.
- B. Focus on what is ahead, rather than what is behind.
- IV. We Receive Nothing, Apart from Faith.
- A. Faith is not the same as confidence.
- B. Confidence is a byproduct of faith.
- C. A lack of confidence comes from a lack of faith.



Spiritual Truths

- Everyone has been given a measure of faith.
- The decisions that we make are evidence of our faith.
- Man has been given the ability to make decisions for himself.
- We lack confidence, because we lack faith.
- God desires that we put our faith and trust in Him to guide our lives.
- God can be trusted to sustain us, even when we make poor decisions.
- We can do all things through Christ, Who strengthens us.



Lesson Material

Guidance does not come to people who are sitting still. Only a decision will move us; and every decision is an act of faith. Thus, faith is a decision. Without faith in something, we could do nothing. Every action requires faith.

We decide to step off of the bed in the morning, because we have faith in the ability of the floor to support the weight of our body. We decide to pour water into a container, because we have faith in the ability of the container to hold the water. We decide to give our lives to Christ, because we have faith in His ability to grant us salvation. Without that faith, we would not choose to follow Him.

In Acts 16, Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia or Bithynia. It was Paul's intention to spread the gospel in these regions, but he was stopped before he began. Although the text does not tell us the circumstances which led to the intervention of the Holy Spirit, it is clear that a decision was made to go.

Unless a decision is made, there is no need for guidance. Decision produces action, which necessitates guidance. Had Paul decided to travel directly to Macedonia, there would have been no reason for the Holy Spirit to forbid him from preaching in Asia or Bithynia. God had a purpose for Paul in Macedonia, which he was willing to carry out. He simply needed a little guidance.

Decision-making is usually a difficult process. Fear is often the reason. We are afraid of making a mistake. We fear the consequences of our mistakes to such a degree that decisions are not made. Fear and faith cannot coexist. When fear prevents us from making a decision, it is clear that faith is not being exercised. God must be trusted to guide us as decisions are made. We can rest assured that He has our best interests in mind, regardless of how difficult the situation may be.

Being overly concerned with performance also inhibits the exercise of faith in decision-making. When performance guides our actions, we tend to focus our attention on the outward appearance. The Pharisees were outwardly flawless in appearance, but Jesus said that they were full of dead men's bones on the

inside. (Matthew 23:27) Performance is not always an accurate indicator of ability, just as outward appearance does not always reflect character. God is concerned with maturity, rather than performance. Mature Christians trust the Lord to guide them.

And yet, too many of us want to test the water before we jump in, just to make sure that it is not going to be too hot or too cold. In this case, our concern is that we will be comfortable, and not that God's will is accomplished. Survey the situation, make the best decision you can, and let God handle it from there. Let your confidence be in Him. (Romans 8:28)

Failure is never associated with moving forward. Failure results from not moving. You do not fail because you started out, but because you never started out. It is neither necessary nor profitable to focus on where you came from. Keep your eyes on the Lord, and move ahead. Guidance does not come to people who are sitting still. Press onward! (Philippians 3:14)

Faith is not the same as confidence. Faith is a decision. Confidence is a byproduct of that decision; thus, confidence is a byproduct of faith. We often say, "I have lost faith in that person." What we are really saying is, "I have lost confidence in that person." Faith is a decision. Confidence is not a decision; it is based on the outcome of a decision, and it develops as we travel through adversity.

We receive nothing apart from faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6) By faith, Noah built an ark. By faith, Abram left his home, to follow the Lord. By faith, Moses chose to be used of God. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down.

The Lord can be trusted to sustain us, even when we make poor decisions. It is His desire that we put our faith and trust in Him. He will be faithful to supply all of our needs, according to His riches in glory. (Philippians 4:19) And He will strengthen us to do all that He asks us to do. (Philippians 4:13)



Methods

How is faith related to the following actions?

- 1. Taking a bite of food.
- 2. Taking a step.
- 3. Getting into a boat.
- 4. Making a decision to accept Christ.

Are you facing a decision today, that frightens you? Ask yourselves the following questions about that decision:

- 1. Examine the facts: What makes sense? What does not?
- 2. Does it violate any of God's principles? Will God be glorified?
 - 3. Does it hurt anyone else in any way?
- 4. What does God's Word have to say about it?
- 5. Have you asked God to help you make the right choice?

Examine the following issues, using the above questions. Each situation requires the individual to make a decision. How does each issue stand up to analysis?

- 1. Having an abortion.
- 2. Lying to your parents.
- 3. Spreading rumors about someone.
- 4. Going to church on Sunday.
- 5. Going into the ministry.

Preservatives

Volume 10

Lesson 52



Bible References

Genesis 1:1-5; 3:1-21

John 1:1-14, 29

2 Corinthians 4:6

Romans 6:23

Matthew 5:13; 26:26-28

Hebrews 9:22

1 John 1:8-9; 3:2-3

James 5:19-20



Scripture Reading

Matthew 26:26-28

26 "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it:

28 "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."



Theme

As the blood of Jesus Christ preserves us unto eternal life, so also the body of Christ has a preserving influence, as the salt of the earth.



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."



Outline

- I. God Created the Heavens and the Earth.
- A. God created light, and separated it from the darkness.
- B. The sun, moon, and stars were not created until later.
- C. God, His Spirit, and the Word were present in the beginning.
 - 1. All life came into existence through the Word.
 - 2. The Word was the light that shined in the darkness.
 - 3. The Word became flesh, in the Person of Jesus Christ.
- II. Sin Entered the World through the First Man, Adam.
- A. The perfect creation of God became corrupted, because of sin.
- B. The wages of sin is death; thus, a Savior was needed.
- C. Adam tried to cover the shame of his sin by his own means.

III. Only God Has the Answer for the Sin of Man.

- A. Innocent blood had to be shed, as a covering for sin.
- B. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.
- C. Jesus Christ was the final Sacrifice to cover the sin of the world.
- D. The blood of Jesus Christ preserves life.

IV. Jesus Called His Followers the "Salt of the Earth."

- A. Salt has been used for centuries, as a preservative.
- B. Salt was used in making sacrifice to God, in the Old Testament.
- C. As the salt of the earth, believers in Jesus Christ are to have a preserving influence on the world.
- D. We function as a preservative, when we love God and our neighbor by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- E. In order to maintain our effectiveness as a preservative, we must keep ourselves pure.



 The Word was present in the beginning with God and His Spirit, bringing light to the darkness.

- The Word became flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ.
- The wages of sin is always death.
- The shedding of innocent blood is required for the remission of sin.
- The shed blood of Jesus was the final sacrifice needed to cover the sin of the entire world.
- The blood of Jesus is sufficient to preserve eternal life.
- As the salt of the earth, the body of Christ is to have a preserving influence on the world.
- If the body of Christ loses its ability to influence the world for the Lord, it will have lost its reason for being.
- The body of Christ maintains its preserving influence by remaining pure, fixing its hope on the Lord and nothing else.

Lesson Material

In the first verse of Genesis, God the Father is shown to be the Source of all things. In the second verse of Genesis, the Spirit of God is moving over the formless void, imparting motion and form. In the third verse of Genesis, God speaks for the first time, saying, "Let there be light."

It is interesting to note that God made light appear and separated it from the darkness; but the sun, moon, and stars were not created until later (verse 16). We are accustomed to thinking of the sun, moon, and stars as the source of natural light; and yet, God made light appear, before He formed the heavenly bodies.

What was the light that is described in Genesis 1:3? John 1:1-10 suggests to us that Jesus was the source of light, Who was present with God in the beginning. This does not imply that Jesus was a creation of God, but the third Member of the Godhead Who brought light and life to the entire creation. The concepts of light and life are intimately tied in this manner throughout the scriptures. It is as if when God said, "Let there be light," He was also saying "Let there be life."

Jesus Christ is the living Word of God and the Light of the world (John 8:12); and in Him is no darkness at all. The Word of God, being the Light, is a revealer of all things; and it functions as a purifying and preserving influence on the world. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

In Genesis 3, sin entered the world through the first man, Adam. The perfect creation of God became corrupted by sin, the consequence of which is always death. (Romans 6:23) Sin always ends life. That is why God's creation needed a Savior.

In verse seven of Genesis 3, Adam and Even tried to cover their shame by their own means, with fig leaves. What they did not yet know was that man could never provide a suitable covering for sin. Only God could provide a suitable covering. In verse 21, God made coats of skins, and He clothed them. Innocent blood had to be shed, in order for the sin of man to be properly atoned for. (Hebrews 9:22)

The coats of skins are a type of Jesus Christ, Who was divinely provided as an atonement for the sin of the entire world.

Preservatives Volume 10

All throughout the Old Testament, blood was shed sacrificially, as a foreshadowing of the blood that would be shed on the cross by Jesus Christ. Jesus was the ultimate and final Sacrifice required by God to atone for the sin of the world. (John 1:29; Hebrews 10:10) Jesus, the Light of the world, is revealed to be the living Word of God. His blood purifies us and preserves us unto eternal life.

Jesus called his followers the "salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13) Salt has been used for centuries as a preservative. All food contains the bacteria that will eventually cause it to spoil. Salt preserves food by stopping the growth of bacteria. It only takes one bacterium to start the process that causes food to spoil. The application of salt retards the process.

Sin can be compared to bacteria, which contaminates and spoils otherwise good food. Like bacteria, sin is at work within everyone to make us unacceptable to a Holy God. Only the blood of Jesus is sufficient to cleanse us of our sin and preserve us unto righteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

As the salt of the earth, believers in Jesus Christ are to have a preserving influence on the world. We can function to retard the formation and spread of sin in the world, by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus that saved us can save anyone who will receive the truth. By sharing the love of Jesus Christ to a dying world, we become the salt of the earth, whose function is purification and preservation.

Jesus also said that it is possible for the salt to lose its savor, or saltiness. Pure salt is better than contaminated salt for preserving food. But even salt can become so diluted that it loses its power to preserve. In order to maintain an effective witness for Christ, we need to remain pure. (1 John 3:2-3)

We remain pure by fixing our hope on the Lord. When the things of the world pull us away from the Lord or gain our confidence, we begin to lose our saltiness -our witness for Jesus Christ. Keep your eyes on the Light, study the Word, and be the salt of the earth.



Methods

Illustrate this lesson by sharing examples of ways in which believers in Christ can be a light (witness) for Jesus Christ. Challenge your students to think of ways that they can reflect the Light to their world.

Also share examples of ways in which believers can function as salt (preservatives) in the world, to retard the effects of sin. Sometimes, even the presence of a Christian is enough to limit the opportunity the enemy. Often, it may be that we may have to speak out against what is wrong, in order to have an influence for good. (James 5:19-20) Ask your students to think of ways in which they can minimize the spread of sin and share the good news of Jesus Christ.